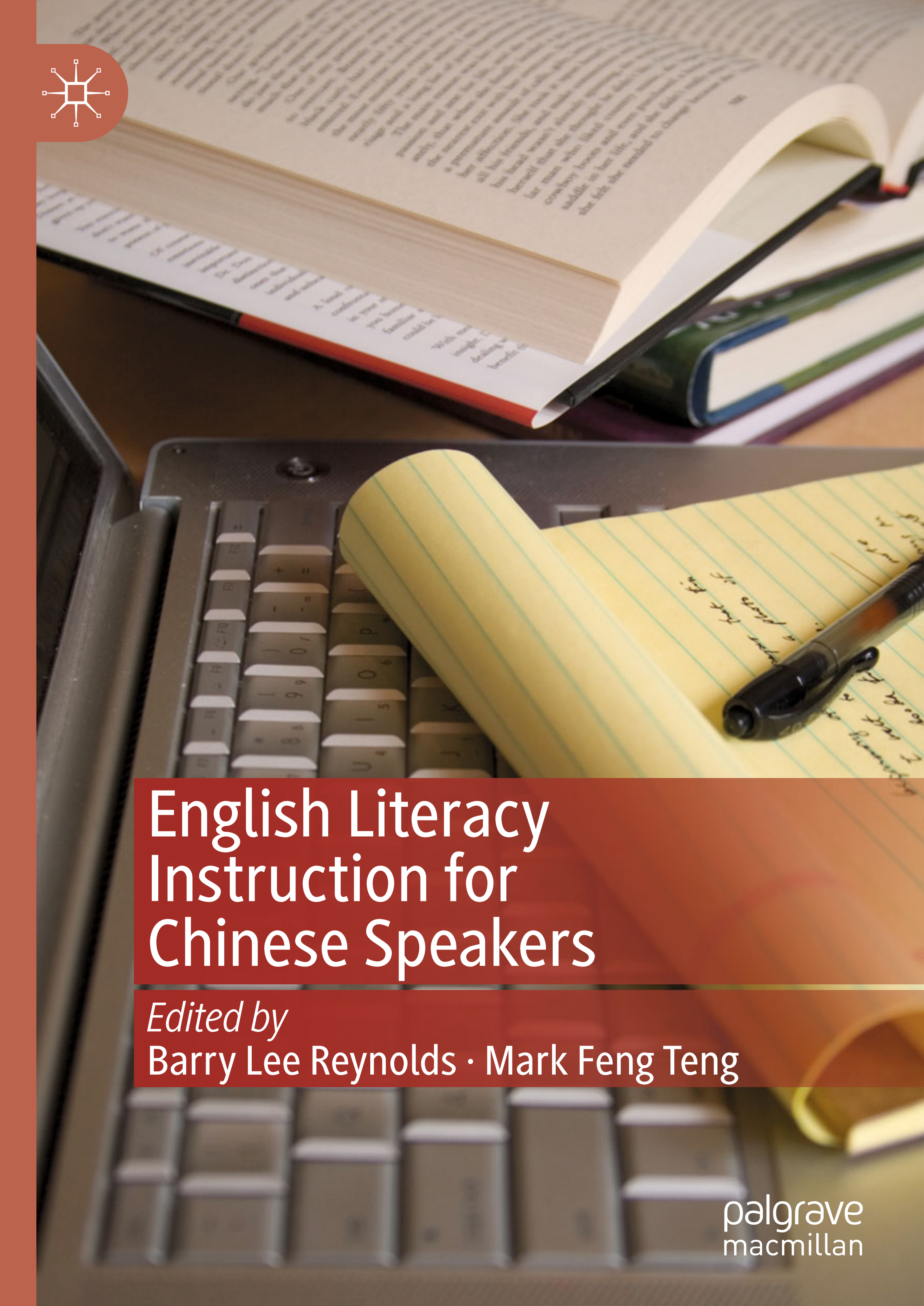

English Literacy Instruction for Chinese Speakers

Edited by

Barry Lee Reynolds · Mark Feng Teng

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Preface

It has been two years since Mark and I started discussing the prospect of co-editing a book together on English literacy instruction for Chinese speakers. When I initially told Mark that I did not have time for another project, he was somehow able to convince me with his mantra "We never have enough time. We must do everything bit by bit." Sure enough, bit by bit, two years have passed and here in front of me is a completed book. For this encouragement, Mark deserves my heartfelt thanks.

Mark and I knew from the start that this book should not only be for researchers but also teachers. That is to say, we wanted this book to draw heavily on research but also focus on the classroom applications of the research reported. This helped us to frame our decision making in a manner that encouraged contributors to write in an easily accessible, jargon-free, and citation-light style. We also welcomed contextualization of studies through the discussion of educational settings and targeted learners. We encouraged reporting of reflective practice and pedagogical implications. We hoped that submission of chapters that presented research in this manner would widen the audience of the book and get the information provided on its pages into the hands of those that are in critical need for its contents—pre-service and in-service teachers, teacher trainers, educational administrators, and policy makers.

Mark has teaching experiences in mainland China and Hong Kong while I have teaching experiences in Taiwan and Macau. The moment that this clicked with us—that we each represented two Chinese-speaking regions—we knew that our coming together on this project could also

be a way of bringing together a group of geographically distinct yet culturally related educators and researchers. We also figured out at that point the project was going to be a huge undertaking. We soon agreed to produce a balanced book in terms of geographic locations (mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan) and educational contexts (pre-primary/primary, secondary, and tertiary education). Soon after, we added the section on policy. As the workload grew in size, we continuously reminded ourselves that this project was needed by the Chinese speaking education community and it became a labor of love.

First language Chinese speakers constitute the largest population of English learners in the world—this population of learners will only continue to grow. This volume reports the current state of knowledge on the development of teaching English literacy to Chinese speakers. We hope that not only readers in the four regions but also readers in other contexts will find the research and discussions within the volume relevant and enlightening. Each chapter highlights a specific context, provides background information on the learners, and offers a look to the future of literacy instruction for Chinese speakers.

Taipa, Macau
December 2018

Barry Lee Reynolds

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We are grateful to all contributors of this edited volume. We want to express our heartfelt gratitude to their relentless efforts in revising the chapters and ensuring the quality of this book. Without their contribution, encouragement, and support, this two-year project would have never been completed. We appreciate the opportunity they have given us to read such a provocative set of papers. We are indebted to their hard work.

We are also thankful to Sylvia Liu for her assistance with the formatting of the book and willingness to handle our very tight turnaround time.

We would like to show our appreciation to the following reviewers for their help in evaluating the submitted chapters. Without the reviewers' effort, this book would have never been possible.

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Abbreviations

4Cs	Framework-content, cognition, communication and culture
B.Ed	Bachelor of Education
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
CMI	Chinese as medium of instruction
Curriculum Framework	The Curriculum Framework for Formal Education of Local Education System
DSEJ	The Education and Youth Affairs Bureau
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EDB	Education Bureau
EFL	English as a foreign language
ELF	English as a lingua franca
EMI	English as medium of instruction
ENL	English as a native language
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
GNP	Gross National Product
GNP	Taichung World Flora Exposition-Green, Nature, and People
IELTS	International English Testing System
L1	First language
L2	Second Language
LFE	Lingua Franca English

LPP	Language planning and policy
Macau SAR	Macau Special Administrative Region
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOI	Medium of Instruction
NEEA	National Education Examination Authority
NMET	National Matriculation English Test
NNS	Non-Native Speaking
NPC	National People's Congress
NS	Native Speaking
PA	Phonological awareness
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PHaVE List	PHrasal VErb Pedagogical List
PHRASE List	PHRASal Expressions List
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
PLP-R	Primary Literacy Program—Reading (Key Stage 1)
PLP-R/W	Primary Literacy Program—Reading/Writing (Key Stage 1)
PMI	Portuguese as medium of instruction
PRC	People's Republic of China
Requirements	The Requirements for Basic Academic Competences in Local School System
S-BLP	School-based literacy program
SJU	St. Joseph University
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
The Education Law	The Fundamental Law of Non-tertiary Education
The Plan	The Ten-Year Plan for the Development of Non-Tertiary Education (2011–2020)
The Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration	The signing of the Joint Declaration between the Government of PRC and the Government of the Republic of Portugal on the Question of Macau
TOEIC	Test of English for International Communication

TOFEL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TWFE	Taichung World Flora Exposition
UM	University of Macau
WE	World Englishes

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PART I

Introduction

CHAPTER 1

English Foreign and Second Language Literacy Development for Chinese Speakers: What Do We Know?

Mark Feng Teng and Barry Lee Reynolds

Introduction

The twenty-first century witnessed discussions of greater scope and depth in the teaching and reform of English literacy. At first glance, "literacy," referring to a skill in reading and/or writing, is easy to understand. But at the same time, literacy is both a complex and dynamic concept. Literacy is continuing to be interpreted and defined in a multiplicity of ways (Helman, 2016). The notion of literacy is influenced by not only institutional agendas, national contexts, educational policies, and cultural values, but also influenced by instruction, assessment, and classroom practices. In teaching English as a second language (L2) or a foreign language (FL), theories of literacy have evolved from those

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focused solely on changes in individual practices to more complex views encompassing broader social contexts (the "literate environment" and the "literate society"). These views encourage and enable literacy activities and practices to occur. As a result of these and other developments, understandings in the policy and practices associated with literacy have expanded. Literacy is no longer viewed as a simple process of acquiring basic language skills. Instead, literacy also encompasses the development of cognitive skills and the application of these skills in ways that contribute to socioeconomic development and critical reflection as a basis for personal and social change. Academics from a wide range of disciplines have engaged in an ongoing and, at times, highly contested debate over the meaning and definition of the term "literacy" and how it is related to the broader notions of education and knowledge acquisition.

Following UNESCO (2006), literacy is delineated as including four discrete elements: literacy as an autonomous set of skills (e.g., reading, writing, and oral skills); literacy as an applied, practiced, and situated process; literacy as a learning process; and literacy as text. However, as definitions of literacy have shifted, literacy is no longer exclusively understood as an individual transformation, but as a contextual and societal one. There is a need to build an international awareness of a specific social context, e.g., for first language Chinese Speakers, in which literacy is encouraged, acquired, developed, and sustained. "Chinese Speakers" is a term we use to refer to English learners in mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. The four geographic locations, although different, share connected cultural and economic ties. A broader understanding of literacy for Chinese Speakers can provide fertile ground for further research in the four locations, as well as fostering an international awareness of innovation and progress toward the development of effective English literacy programs for all first language (L1) Chinese speakers across the world.

For Chinese Speakers, English has been an integral component of school curricula. English literacy has been highlighted for academic pursuit and pragmatic needs of learners. The increasing reform in English literacy instruction has brought about learning opportunities but also posed challenges for learners who need to develop English literacy skills. Researchers and classroom practitioners have paid continuous effort to English curriculum reform at different levels. For example, teaching and learning English literacy for Chinese Speakers tends to draw on "the earlier, the better" ideology, suggesting that an early start on English learning will enhance learners' literacy skills. It is hoped that

starting English instruction in primary school will bring more learning opportunities to learners. To meet the needs of educational reform, new syllabi have also been continuously issued to guide English teaching for the secondary school level of education. The purpose of these refinements is to address the changing situation of English language teaching (ELT) and the higher demand for English literacy skills among secondary school learners. In addition, literacy instruction in university helps learners better prepare for the competitive job market after they graduate.

However, policy-makers, school administrators, and ELT classroom practitioners have doubted the effectiveness of English literacy instruction in China (Hu, 2005). Many challenges raised by researchers include the lack of pedagogical innovations in language policy, the traditional teacher-centered language instruction, and the lack of effective language assessment methods. Many learners, having studied English for many years, still could not read and write in English. The unsatisfactory outcome made language educators reflect on the existing curricula. An effective instruction mode for English literacy was also called for to address public concerns and social needs. In addition, EFL/L2 literacy instruction research agendas for Chinese Speakers have become increasingly cognizant of various learner needs. For example, EFL/L2 learners in under-resourced communities may be academically vulnerable because of their limited exposure to academically enriched environments, compared to those learners in socioeconomically advantaged regions. As argued by Ruan and Leung (2012), the provision of enhanced opportunities to develop language literacy skills at an earlier age is one mechanism of an EFL education setting. This has been shown to predict positive academic development among EFL learners from under-resourced communities. The development of language and/or literacy skills provides the groundwork necessary for the success of English education. For these reasons, English education researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers have long been concerned with identifying and replicating high-quality instructional practices that support the teaching and learning of English literacy. These practices are particularly important for Chinese Speakers as they not only constitute the largest EFL market in the world but also are vulnerable learners who need literacy instruction for numerous reasons. However, the region lacks a synthesis of research findings related to English literacy for various educational levels: pre-primary/primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of instruction.

Therefore, we may need to rethink the practices for teaching English literacy to EFL/L2 learners, e.g., the way we go about reading interventions, teaching vocabulary, and writing assessment. English language literacy is traditionally thought of as the ability to read and write in English to an appropriate level. However, in the modern age, literacy tends to encompass more elements whilst increasing diversity and complexity. Thus, teaching literacy must satisfy the needs of learners at various educational levels (ibid.). Concerning the definition of literacy, Mackey (2004) argued that literacy has never been a set of fixed skills and that it must be dependent on the context. Meek (1991) described literacy as a part of history, and literacy changes as societies change. Edwards and Potts (2008) defined literacy not as a static and impersonal state, but rather one which is individuated and enacted as social practice. In the case of EFL/L2 settings, English literacy can be conceived as a set of actions and transitions in which EFL/L2 learners are allowed to use reading and writing for personal and social purposes. From this perspective, the basic foundational skills in learning to be literate in English for EFL/L2 learners are the skills to read and write in English in different situations for different purposes. In addition, EFL/L2 learners need to build upon these skills for higher order thinking, cognitive awareness, negotiating meaning, adapting to conventions, and familiarizing themselves with new discourses. Given that literacy is not a set of basic competences to be taught and learned based on a pattern of instruction, there is a need to explore current changes in English literacy practices and instruction.

Recent initiatives related to literacy have been undertaken. For example, the National Matriculation English Test (NMET) reform in mainland China, the "Biliterate and Trilingual" policy in Hong Kong, the role of EFL as a subject and English as a medium of instruction (EMI) with implementation of Taiwan's 12-year basic education, and the "triliterate" and "tetra-lingual" policy in Macau. Attention has been paid to practices, instruction, and measuring levels of literacy and in the seriousness with which the outcomes from curriculum reform are regarded. The process of literacy development is complicated. This process requires an extensive knowledge base and repertoire of strategies. While reading texts, learners need to overcome greater conceptual demands and barriers, figure out more detailed graphics, and possess a greater ability to manipulate and synthesize information across a broad array of text genres. A call for reframing pedagogical practices for literacy instruction is not an ending fad (Lems & Miller, 2017). Responding to this call, this book attempts

to provide teachers with strategies and new ideas to enhance L2 literacy development through a collection of studies targeted at pre-primary and primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education in mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. The region and the learners from this region deserve attention for a number of reasons. First, L1-Chinese speakers are the largest group of English language learners around the world. Second, along with this wide acceptance of the English language, education policies for Chinese Speakers have further increased learners' exposure to English through compulsory lessons at all stages of education. Third, the introduction of EFL/L2 literacy is happening at an ever increasingly earlier age, resulting in the need for ELT researchers and practitioners to seek routes to enhance L2 literacy instruction at all levels of education.

While it can be argued that much has already been written about L2 instruction at the tertiary level, the literature published has not directly addressed the numerous issues related to L2 literacy instruction and learning for other levels of education and the attention that has been given to tertiary education has not been equally divided among the four geographic locations. Given the limited research on the literacy development of English language learners at all levels of education for Chinese Speakers, this book is of great value for both academic and practical reasons. In terms of academic reasons, first, literacy provides a good foundation for learning English in an L2 or EFL context. For example, when L2/EFL students are literate in key literacy-related skills, including phonological awareness, print concepts, decoding skills, and extended discourse, they possess funds of knowledge about various aspects of reading and writing, and this knowledge provides an experiential base for furthering their English literacy development (McKenna & Robinson, 2013). Second, the ability to acquire literacy skills is the core of lifelong learning. That means students need literacy to enable lifelong learning. For example, our knowledge environment changes fast and higher education today is much more in the mode of providing basic information literacy along with the skills needed to pursue lifelong learning and keep up with our changing world (Crawford & Irving, 2013). In other words, obtaining basic English reading and writing skills allows learners to locate and apply the right information for the right purpose throughout life. In terms of practical reasons, there is little doubt that the study of English is extremely popular with Chinese Speakers. The teaching and learning of English in Hong Kong and Macau occupy a high position.

Language schools are also increasingly flourishing in mainland China and Taiwan. Furthermore, the time has come to discuss ways of supporting ELT practitioners in bridging the gap between literacy instruction during the early years to those of higher and adult education.

However, discussing how to develop an effective approach to language teaching should not be undertaken lightly and will surely pose future challenges. It has been compared to a muscle that needs the constant constraining discipline of exercise to strengthen individuals' innovative thinking and problem-solving. In this case, we need to consider ways of diffusing good practice, and perhaps most important of all, ways of integrating modern approaches across the curriculum and across institutions so that professional innovation can influence L2 literacy instruction for Chinese Speakers. This includes critical issues in the teaching of basic literacy skills, e.g., reading and writing, covering the pre-primary, primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education. Thus, this edited volume provides suggestions for helping learners at all levels of proficiency and academic levels. This volume is a practical resource designed to help English language educators incorporate literacy-related approaches into their content classrooms by applying a core set of instructional techniques that are evidence-based. Drawing upon studies in different contexts, this book provides an up-to-date outlook which focuses on teaching literacy skills to L2/FL learners. Each chapter is contextualized and hands-on, featuring:

- Critical discussion of basic literacy skills, e.g., reading and/or writing;
- Practical tips, ideas, and suggestions which teachers can adapt/adopt for L2 literacy instruction, practices, and assessment;
- Primary research relevant to school teachers (either pre-primary/primary-level, secondary-level, or tertiary-level teachers); and
- Easily applied principles and techniques.

Literacy, traditionally defined as reading and writing, is often regarded as a simple notion. However, it opens up a world of complexity in modern society. Still, there is no up-to-date general agreement on the definition of literacy. With a focus on L2/EFL literacy, we may conceptualize literacy as the development of literacy skills for L2/EFL learners in terms of reading, writing, assessment, and word building,

which in a deep way may affect both the substance and style of educational programs. From a functionalist perspective, a focus should also be placed on teaching skills that learners need for complex demands of a changing technological and economic environment. However, literacy also goes beyond basic skills and includes a capacity of higher order thinking, even some discernment for practical language use. In addition, literacy should be beneficial for learners' personal growth. This advocates for inclusion of enjoyable reading and writing materials, and other ways to engage learners who are not proficient in English to ready them for independent lifelong learning through the English language. This requires language educators and policy-makers to approach literacy in a new way. In particular, we need to consider critical literacy, a type of literacy which needs a critical consciousness of the social conditions in which learners find themselves. Finally, literacy is constructed through three ways: adaptation (for real-world survival), power (cultural and economic advancement), and a state of grace (self-knowing) (Donehower, Hogg, & Schell, 2011).

According to UNESCO (2008), one who is literate is a learner who can read and write a short simple statement on his or her everyday life. The UNESCO definition of literacy is problematic for English language learners, particularly those EFL/L2 learners who require extensive support because they often do not read and write in conventional ways as L1 English speakers. From our perspective, literacy for EFL/L2 learners is required for effective functioning in their learning community and also for enabling them to continue to use reading and writing for their own and their community's further development. We argue that literacy is highly dependent on the context of the learner's community. Thus, we may need a specific focus, where different methods and practices in mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan may inform each other. In doing so, we have aimed for the book to be balanced in terms of geographical distribution (mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan) as well as learning context (pre-primary/primary, secondary, tertiary).

To address critical issues in EFL/L2 literacy, we need to provide an interface between applied linguists and ELT practitioners—to provide a link between theory and pedagogical practice. The utility of skill-based literacy for EFL/L2 students with an extensive need for support has been challenged over the past two decades. With each section of the book,

there is a focus on pre-primary/primary, secondary, higher education, and policy for all four geographic locations: mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. This book will provide a systematic and comprehensive overview of the critical issues in teaching and learning literacy for all four of the geographic locations. The book goes beyond providing support on how to aid learners in reading and writing a second language but also delves into what it means for learners to be literate in a second or a foreign language. While previous studies have been conducted on the four geographic locations—mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan—previous research has not discussed and compared the four regions in an integrated way. This book serves as our attempt to do just that.

This book is of practical interest to language teachers, language teacher educators, EFL/L2 classroom practitioners, and English education researchers in search of new teaching ideas, techniques, and literacy practices. Additionally, this book will also provide insight for future researchers and scholars as a reference for conducting literacy research with Chinese Speakers, as well as in similar contexts.

Overview of the Volume

As is evident in EFL/L2 literacy research, reading and writing is impossible to separate. To be literate necessitates and supports a good level of reading and writing, not one or the other. The work in this volume brings together the effort of scholars whose goal is to improve learners' reading and writing, as well as basic skills. The instruction practices that are discussed in the chapters can support conceptual learning and aid learners in the comprehension of various text genres. We have organized this body of research into four sections that can help readers of the book—for example, those responsible for educational policy and practice at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels—frame policies and practices related to EFL/L2 literacy development.

Part I the introduction and Part VI the conclusion serve as bookends to the four main parts of the volume. Upon reading the two chapters, readers will understand an overview of what literacy is and why it is important, along with being introduced to some critical issues related to English literacy teaching and learning targeting Chinese Speakers. Recommendations are also provided for teachers and teacher trainers to deepen their understanding of literacy and to facilitate planning effective English literacy instruction for Chinese Speakers.

Part II focuses on English literacy instruction for the pre-and primary school levels. Teaching English to young learners is different from adult learners (Teng, 2019). Topics in this section include the development of a school-based reading program, measuring the vocabulary knowledge of young English learners, literacy instruction through stories, songs, and games, employing tailor-made learning materials, and investigating how a government-funded award scheme on instructional design affects primary school students' literacy development. We can see that although initiatives were made to improve literacy instruction, developing English literacy skills for pre- and primary school students was challenging. The chapters in this section show that English literacy skills can be developed through extensive reading programs, stories, songs, games as well as creating content and language integrated learning (CLIL) materials or through government-funded initiatives. These chapters show how English teachers can tap into students' understanding of reading and vocabulary strategies to help learners make meaning of texts, and vocabulary knowledge can be enhanced through young learner reading programs.

Part III focuses on English literacy instruction for secondary school students. The topics cover formulaic language, spaced multi-draft composing and feedback, evolution of writing assessments, critical thinking skills, the use of English as a lingua franca, and critical issues in teaching reading. While the topics in this section are varied, the insights gained for literacy instruction are focal. Secondary school students already have acquired English learning experiences. However, there is a need to maximize on these learning experiences while catering to their diverse needs and abilities. Doing so will prepare them for their future academic studies. Research in this section supports that secondary school students learn by doing and literacy activities are acquired through meaningful participation. More specifically, enhancement of literacy skills requires practice of those skills: Secondary school learners need to participate in vocabulary (e.g., formulaic language and lexicon), reading, and writing activities (e.g., feedback). While developing English literacy skills through language practice is important, learners and educators alike still have some tough issues to consider. Genuine dialog among stakeholders are vital for internalizing assessment for learning and assessment as learning. The research reported in this section of the book also highlights the need of secondary school students to begin the practice of becoming reflective learners. Educators and learners alike must acknowledge the effects of English having become a lingua franca in the global community and how critical thinking must start to take a central focus in secondary school classrooms.

Part IV focuses on literacy development for university students. Topics include critical language awareness and intercultural literacy, innovating writing instruction, focused feedback, writing assessment, and assignment design. Academic literacy in university contexts has been the focus of numerous investigations for years. However, the outcome is not as expected because Chinese-speaking university students entering the university context lack sufficient English proficiency to take advantage of language learning practices, e.g., feedback, assessment, and project-based assignments, to cope with different reading and writing activities required in the higher education context. Literacy in academic reading and writing requires students to be competent readers and writers of different academic genres. This process involves students' intercultural awareness, for which teaching English should be recognized as a global lingua franca.

Part V focuses on literacy development from the perspective of policy in different regions. Policy-makers nowadays exert much more influence over English literacy practice than ever before. The four chapters in this section show that literacy development is related to policy-makers' interests and is influenced by the political decisions of the government. Policies that have been implemented indicate that expectations have been high, carrying the assumption that students' English literacy can be enhanced. However, in practice, there is a gap between policy and outcomes. We can still notice some asymmetries in agenda-setting and in forms of accountability. We need to value all stakeholders' opinions, but we also need to listen especially to frontline teachers' and students' voices. Research supports that more effort and support from local and national governments and education ministries or bureaus are needed to achieve the desired outcomes outlined by regional policy.

Concluding this volume in Part VI with the topic of developing EFL/L2 literacy demonstrates that a substantial amount of research continues to be needed. By the same token, as is evident in the chapters in this book, much is known about the need for reading and writing instruction and the features of such instruction. However, the development of EFL/L2 literacy, as discussed in this book, is not only related to reading and writing, but also students' vocabulary, thinking skills, intercultural literacy, and language policy. If a higher level of English literacy is to be achieved, then EFL/L2 literacy instruction and practice requires intensive and extensive attention. Recommendations for future English literacy studies and EFL/L2 literacy development are presented in the concluding chapter.

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PART II

English Literacy Instruction for Pre-primary and Primary Education

CHAPTER 2

Developing a School-Based Reading Program for Lower-Grade Primary Learners: The Case of a Primary School in Hong Kong

Benjamin L. Moorhouse and Kevin M. Wong

Introduction

The position of the English language in Hong Kong is unique compared to that in other parts of Greater China. It is the language of the former colonial power, Great Britain, one of the official languages of government and the principal language of higher education. English is often seen as one of the key reasons for Hong Kong's continuing prosperity as a global business hub and a necessary skill for any individual who wishes to be successful. This places a high social and economic value on English, which is manifested at all levels of education. At the primary

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school level, parents see English as a gatekeeper to entering prestigious English-medium secondary schools as well as their child's future prosperity. Therefore, English language teachers often feel pressure to raise their students' English proficiency and prepare them for high-stakes assessments. This has led to a *backwash* effect on the teaching and learning of English, which has historically been dominated by "established factual knowledge, being taught through teacher-centered and textbook-driven pedagogy, and assessing children's learning through norm-referenced procedures" (Adamson & Morris, 1998, p. 196).

For a long time, reading instruction has been dominated by a plethora of textbooks, workbooks, and exercise books designed to prepare students for the high-stakes assessments. Typically, a reading lesson would involve the use of texts included in commercial textbooks, which are chorally read aloud followed by multiple choice comprehension questions. The aim of reading lessons appeared to be about extracting information from a text to answer questions (Lin, 1999), rather than developing reading skills or an enjoyment of reading.

A paradigm shift in English reading instruction has begun to take place in Hong Kong primary schools. Following recent educational reforms in Hong Kong, a new emphasis has been placed on early reading development. Now, English language teachers are advised to allocate 40% of lessons to reading instruction (Curriculum Development Council [CDC], 2004, 2017). Moreover, curriculum documents suggest that *real books*, in contrast to textbooks, should be used to "[boost] learners' interests and reading skills, and [help] them become lifelong readers of English" (CDC, 2004, p. 100). To meet the expectations of these reforms, many primary schools have joined a government-developed literacy[1] program, while others have developed their own school-based programs. Although these programs are becoming increasingly common in Hong Kong schools, there has not yet been an examination of how such programs are developed and implemented or critiqued for their effectiveness in developing young learners' reading skills and enjoyment of reading.

This chapter provides an overview of early English reading programs in Hong Kong, followed by the case of a school-based reading program designed to meet the needs of the educational reforms. It reports on the program's rationale, development, and implementation. This is followed by a critique of the program's effectiveness through lessons learned in the development and implementation process. The chapter concludes

with a discussion on how similar school-based programs in Hong Kong and Greater China have the potential to engage young learners in developing reading skills while cultivating an enjoyment of reading in English.

Hong Kong Educational Reforms

In 2004, the Hong Kong Education Bureau (EDB), previously named the Education and Manpower Bureau, launched the English Language Curriculum Guide for Primary one to six (CDC, 2004). This document was written in support of the English Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide: Primary One–Secondary Three (CDC, 2002) with a specific focus on English in the primary years. It provided guidelines, teaching ideas, suggestions, and exemplars in various aspects of English teaching, learning, and assessment "to help primary school principals and teachers plan, develop, and implement their own school-based English Language curriculum" (CDC, 2004, p. 3).

The document placed a new emphasis on reading instruction. This was the first time that schools had been explicitly advised to allocate 40% (or three out of eight) of their weekly English lessons to reading. Reading instruction was to be more than just reading a textbook text and answering questions. Now teachers were tasked with developing a curriculum that cultivated a "reading to learn culture" (CDC, 2004, A27). The document stated that,

> …reading not only provides a source of satisfaction and pleasure, but it also serves as a means to seek information; acquire, develop and apply knowledge; develop thinking skills'; broaden horizons and enhance language proficiency. (A27)

Reading lessons were to be places where students could learn reading skills and become "confident about their abilities as readers and acquire and maintain positive attitudes to reading" (CDC, 2004, A28). To help teachers, the documents provided guidelines and suggestions encouraging teachers to use various activities and tasks, giving students a purpose for reading, and developing their reading skills, including decoding words and skills to comprehend texts. When decoding new words, readers draw on *semantic knowledge (knowledge and experience), syntactic knowledge (structure)*, and *graphophonic knowledge (letters and sounds)* (CDC, 2004). Proficient readers use this knowledge simultaneously and

unconsciously. However, educators can help students develop and use these different kinds of knowledge by explicitly teaching them certain skills, such as using pictorial clues, recognizing sentence structures, and sounding out individual letters or chunks of words. To develop learners' skills to comprehend texts, educators can teach comprehension skills such as predicting, questioning, and summarizing.

Whereas in the past, *read after me* and *choral reading* dominated reading lessons, the focus shifted to teaching reading through different strategies depending on the needs of the students and difficulty of the texts. Teachers were encouraged to use storytelling, reading aloud, shared reading, supported reading, guided reading, and independent reading (for details of these teaching reading strategies, see CDC, 2004). However, to many in Hong Kong, these reform documents seemed idealistic (Cheung, 2014). They advocated for a radically different way of looking at reading instruction from teachers' historical practices. Moreover, implementing the recommendations successfully required knowledge and skills beyond what English language teachers had received in pre-service education (Chien & Young, 2007; Morris & Adamson, 2010). Pre-service teacher education had predominantly focused on classroom practice with little time devoted to curriculum development (Chien & Young, 2007). Therefore, they often lacked the knowledge and skills necessary to ensure successful implementation of the reforms.

Government Programs

To support schools in implementing the reforms and to facilitate the professional development of teachers, the Native-speaking English Teaching Section of the EDB launched a pilot program, "Primary Literacy Program – Reading (Key Stage One)" [PLP-R] in 104 schools in 2004 and an additional 67 schools in 2006 (CDI, 2010). In 2007, the program was modified to include a writing component and became, "The Primary Literacy Program – Reading/Writing (Key Stage One)" [PLP-R/W].

The PLP-R/W was designed to be a holistic, systematic literacy program specifically for Hong Kong primary schools (CDI, 2013). It included eighteen units to be taught over three years (primary one to primary three). Each unit lasted for eight lessons of 110 minutes each, conducted over four weeks. A unit was based on one *big book* (an enlarged

text which can be shared with a class). The lessons were then divided equally between reading focused lessons and writing focused lessons. In the lessons, two main strategies were used to teach reading: *shared reading* and *guided reading*.

- Shared reading is a teacher-led, whole class routine where the teacher and students read a big book or enlarged text. The teacher models and demonstrates reading strategies and what a good reader does as they read.
- Guided reading is a teacher-led, small group routine where students read a book at their instructional level (90–95% accuracy rate when the child reads independently). The teacher guides the students to “talk, read and think” through the book (Washtell, 2008, p. 60).

The units were specifically designed to introduce decoding and comprehension strategies, and the big book was used to ensure a shared low-pressure reading experience. Reading lessons were separated into pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages (see Fig. 2.1 for the structure of a typical PLP-R/W reading lesson).

In addition to using shared reading and guided reading teaching strategies in lessons, schools were encouraged to implement a “home reading” program (CDI, 2010) with books provided to students for them to read independently at home.

The EDB provided all English teachers in program schools with extensive professional development training through centralized workshops as well as school-based support. Teachers were encouraged to co-plan and co-teach the sessions each week to ensure successful implementation.

The PLP-R/W was well received with about half of all primary schools in Hong Kong implementing it today. The EDB self-evaluation report found students’ confidence and reading ability improved as they were able to use a broader range of reading skills (CDI, 2013). Moreover, students enjoyed the PLP-R/W lessons and teachers were also more confident and could see the benefit of teaching reading in a systematic and explicit way (CDI, 2013).

However, as the program was developed to cater to a wide number of teachers and learners, it could not meet the needs of all school contexts. For example, the big books were relatively simple and did not challenge students who are more proficient in English. Students in Hong Kong

Pre-reading

- **Warm-up activities** – The teacher leads students to sing a song or read a simple poem, usually matching the theme of the big book. This prepares them for learning in English and creates a relaxed learning atmosphere.
- **Phonological awareness and phonics activities** – The teacher revises previous sounds and teaches a new sound or spelling pattern. She/he uses songs, flashcards and phonics games to develop students' sound-spelling relationships.
- **High-frequency words activity** – The teacher introduces high-frequency words using word cards. She/he uses a *whole-word approach*: reading out the word and the students repeating. Often high-frequency words have irregular spelling and are function words, which do not carry concrete meaning. The teacher may then invite students to make oral sentences with the words to link the words to meaning. All the words introduced appear in the 'big book.'

While-reading

- **Book cover** – The teacher shows the cover of big book and asks questions about it, such as, 'What can you see?' 'What do you think the book will be about?' 'What is the title?' 'Who is the author?'. This develops an interest in the book, stimulates participation and develops students' awareness of book features.
- **Picture walk** – The teacher goes through the book, focusing on the illustrations. Simple questions can be asked, and key content can be introduced or elicited. Students get to preview the book and can then focus on the words in the reading part.
- **Shared reading** – The teacher reads the book with the whole class. The teacher models and demonstrates reading strategies and what a good reader does as they read.
- **Questions** – The teacher can ask some questions about the book, such as, 'Did you like the story?' and, 'Why did you like it?'

Post-reading

- **Reading skills practice** – Students work on an activity or task that develops a specific reading skill or strategy, such as sequencing or reading for specific information.
- **Sharing and conclusion** – The teacher wraps-up the lesson, giving the students feedback on their performance and giving them the home reading book to take home.

In the subsequent lessons, teachers revisit the big book in various ways to develop and reinforce students' reading and writing skills.

Fig. 2.1 Structure of a typical PLP-R/W reading lesson

have varying proficiencies in English due to previous educational experiences, out-of-school learning opportunities, and family background. Another issue with the big books was that while they were specifically written for the program and were not authentic or "real" as suggested by the curriculum documents (CDC, 2004). Instead, they were simplified texts written to illustrate specific language features, which can appear unnatural and do not always match the genre (e.g., stories written in present continuous tense in primary one and two). Furthermore, teachers were advised to follow the lesson plans exactly as they were written. This made the program quite rigid and did not give teachers much flexibility to adapt or modify the content to meet the needs of their learners.

School-Based Programs

An alternative to the PLP-R/W is the development of a school-based reading program. School-based reading programs (S-BRP) are specifically designed for a school and the learners in that school. By developing a S-BRP, schools and teachers have greater autonomy to develop a program to meet the diverse needs of their learners. Teachers can choose what texts they use, what strategies they wish to develop, and how they will teach reading between and within grade levels. At the same time, changes to the program can be made to respond directly to students' needs, the expertise of the teachers, or other factors.

Although the number of schools that have adopted their own S-BRPs is currently unknown, those that have developed their own programs have found benefits from doing so. Lee (2017) introduced a school-based reading program that was developed by the teachers in his school. The program was implemented in all primary grades and focused on developing students' reading skills. This was done through the development of specific guidelines and schemes of work, with modules focusing on different skills and genres. He found that teachers gained a better awareness of the benefits of teaching reading skills explicitly while the program had a positive impact on their professional growth. Lee concludes with some useful suggestions on how a skills-oriented reading program can be developed.

Similar to Lee's program, the program introduced in this chapter focuses on developing reading skills. However, unlike Lee's program, the program included specific teaching strategies for reading instruction such as shared reading and guided reading and also the use of authentic

1. Is there a core team of English teachers willing and able to develop the program?
2. Which grade will you introduce the program in and how will it develop over the next three to five years?
3. Does the school have the resources, manpower and time to spend on the program's development?
4. What reading skills do our students need to develop?
5. How do we ensure our students develop an interest in reading and enjoy reading for meaning?
6. How do we structure a reading program?
7. What teaching reading strategies should we use?
8. Should we use authentic text or text specifically written for language learning?
9. What activities should we use?
10. How do we integrate the reading lessons with other parts of the English curriculum?
11. How do we ensure all English teachers are capable and comfortable to teach reading?
12. What are the indicators of successful implementation of the program and how frequently will this be monitored?

Fig. 2.2 Key questions for developing a school-based reading program

texts. Other school-based programs have emphasized the development of a reading culture, providing books for students to read at home, buddy reading, extensive reading, reciprocal reading, and online reading.

Although S-BRPs provide schools and teachers with more flexibility, they also come with challenges. Teachers need to have the skills and knowledge base to design the program to satisfy the demands of the reform, create monitoring and assessment tools to evaluate the success of the program, and meet the diverse needs of learners in the school. In order to develop a successful school-based program, there are a number of considerations and decisions that need to be made (key questions to help develop a S-BRP can be found in Fig. 2.2). The list of questions in Fig. 2.2 can help program developers remember holistic elements of reading, instead of focusing primarily on preparing students for assessments.

The School

The previous sections have provided an overview of the educational reform and its impact on the teaching of reading in Hong Kong. The rest of the chapter introduces a S-BRP that was developed and implemented in one Hong Kong school and provides lessons learned along the way.

The reported case is a government-aided primary school founded in 2000 and situated in the Eastern District of Hong Kong Island. It has a student population of about 1000. The students all speak Cantonese as their mother tongue and come from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

The school was an original PLP-R pilot school, which decided to develop its own program instead of joining the revised PLP-R/W program. The teachers were able to build on the professional knowledge and skills gained from their experience with the PLP-R.

Rationale

In 2013, the core English language teaching team, which included the English panel chair, two vice-panels, and the Native-speaking English Teacher, decided that the PLP-R no longer met the needs of their lower-grade primary students and that it was an appropriate time to develop a S-BRP for primary one to primary three.[2] The key reasons for this decision were both pedagogical and practical.

Pedagogically, the team felt that the PLP-R was not well aligned with the general English curriculum. Students could not easily review and transfer what they were learning between the two curricula. Moreover, some of the PLP-R books were not interesting, which the teachers felt influenced their effectiveness. Furthermore, the team felt the phonics part of the program was not comprehensive enough. It focused on teaching individual letter sounds in isolation without developing learners' decoding and encoding skills. They believed students were not learning the graphophonic knowledge needed to read successfully. Practically, the team had recently finished implementing a new and successful process writing program (Lee & Wong, 2014) in primary three to six, which provided them with increased confidence to engage in school-based program design and development. This was supported by the school's management who ensured time and resources were allocated to the program's development.

The team decided that the S-BRP would be developed in the first three grade levels simultaneously to speed up the S-BRP's implementation, following a small-scale pilot in primary one. A coordinator with experience in PLP-R and curriculum development was assigned to each year to oversee its development and implementation. Like the PLP-R/W, she/he would co-teach the S-BRP with another English teacher. This ensured more teachers would develop the capability and become comfortable with the teaching of reading.

The team all agreed that the S-BRP should be based on the curriculum reform principles that provided learners with meaningful, purposeful, and enjoyable literacy experiences. Furthermore, the team felt that the S-BRP needed to be systematic, developmentally appropriate, and to complement the general English program. This would ensure the program best met the needs of the learners as they moved through the primary years.

Development

Before the S-BRP could be implemented, the team made important decisions regarding the number of lessons to devote to the program, its structure, texts and activities, reading strategies to incorporate in each grade level, and how these strategies might be spiraled and reinforced with each year. The team decided to allocate a 110-minute lesson to the S-BRP each week, with three to four lessons devoted to one unit. There were to be about eight units in one school year. A program overview was developed showing details of each unit (see Fig. 2.3, for an example of a primary one unit).

To facilitate the transition to the new S-BRP, the structure of each lesson was designed to be similar to the PLP-R/W with pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages. In primary one, all lessons would be based on shared reading. This ensured that students who were new to the language received high-quality reading input in a low-risk environment. In primary two, as students' reading abilities increased and their reading levels were assessed for guided reading groups, the S-BRP structure included both shared reading and guided reading. The same structure was used for primary three.

When selecting texts for shared reading, there was a consensus among the team to use authentic texts with fun and engaging activities developed to complement the books. Books were chosen based on their level

Unit	Book	Related Textbook Unit(s)	Number of lessons	Lesson	Focus decoding skills	HFW	Focus Comprehension Strategies	Post-Reading activities
5	The Enormous Turnip	6, 12	3	1	Phonics: Consonant D G J Short Vowel U	man, woman, boy, girl, dog	Predicting / Sequencing	Story Sequencing
				2	Blending : E.g. gut, jug, dug, rug, bug	some, old, want, but, help, up		Role-play the story
				3	Introduce syllabification: ***E.g.*** tur /nip, e / nor /mous	can't, to, us, say(s), you, pull		Modifying the story

Fig. 2.3 Example primary one unit overview

of difficulty (with an increase in difficulty over the three years of the program), interest to the learners (considering their preferences and previous experiences), themes (as close as possible to those of the textbook and general English curriculum), and potential scope for teaching and developing students' reading skills (e.g., books with repetitive stories to help develop predicting skills). While books that were physically large were preferred, small books could be used with the aid of a visualizer (see Fig. 2.4, for examples of books selected for the primary one level). Guided reading books, where possible, were selected to match the theme of the "shared reading" book or general English curriculum.

1) *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* By Bill Martin Jr.

2) *Where is Max?* By Nigel Croser

3) *The Sandwich*. By Pat Edwards

4) *It's not easy being a Bunny*. By Marilyn Sandler

5) *The Enormous Turnip*. By Dan Goldman

6) *Mr. Noisy's Helpers*. By Rozanne Lanczak Williams

Fig. 2.4 Selection of the primary one book

The team decided that there should be a specific focus on developing students' decoding words skills and comprehending texts skills. For decoding skills, the team established a teaching sequence for phonics instruction, which focused on individual letters as well as blending sounds to make words. This strengthened the relationship between letter sounds and word formations (see Fig. 2.5, for a sample of the teaching sequence).

As high-frequency word recognition is essential to reading fluency and accuracy, the team devoted time in each lesson to explicitly introduce and revise these words (Washtell, 2008). As with the PLP-R/W, the whole word approach was adopted along with interactive games to motivate students and increase their retention of the words.

Lesson	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***	***6***
Focus sounds and blends	Consonant S T M Short Vowel A	Blending E.g. Sat, Sam Tam, Mat	Consonant F R B Short Vowel I	Blending E.g. bib, rib, fib, Biff fit, sit	Consonant L C H Short Vowel O	Blending E.g. hot, lot, call, cat

Fig. 2.5 Sample of the teaching sequence for phonics

For comprehending texts skills, each unit focused on a different skill such as predicting, visualizing, questioning, inferring, and summarizing. These were incorporated in the questions asked while-reading and also in the post-reading activities. Post-reading activities included role-play, sequencing activities, cooking, board games, and writing new stories or new endings to the stories (see Fig. 2.6, for an example of a post-reading activity from a primary one unit).

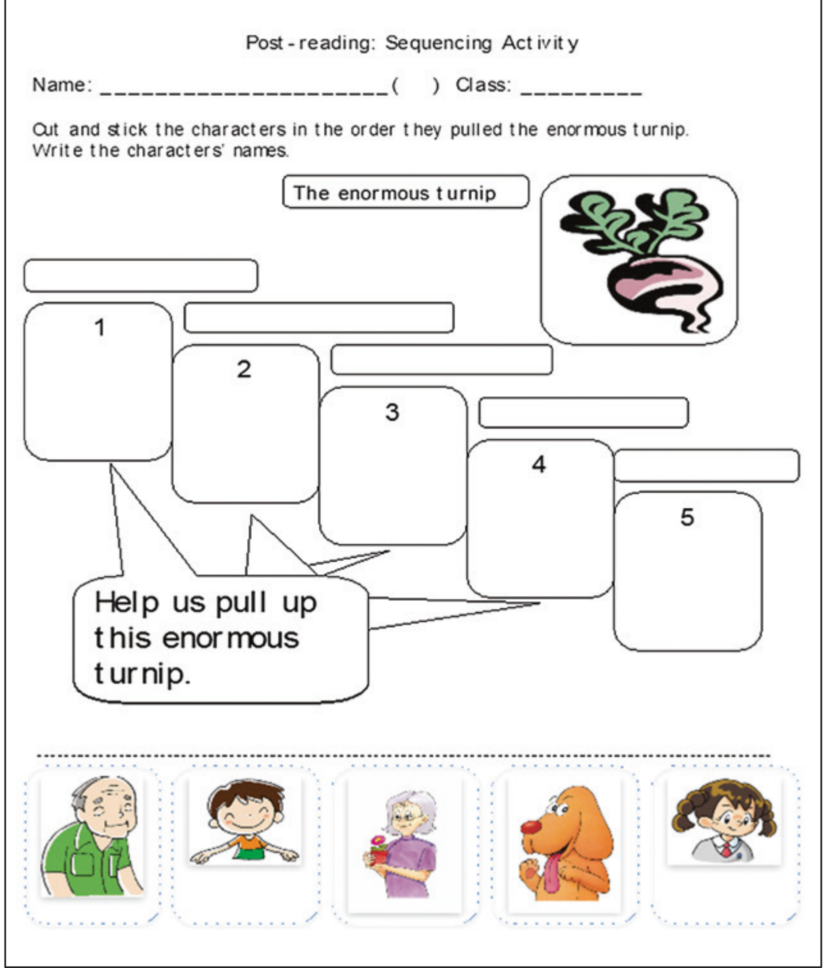

Fig. 2.6 Example post-reading activity from a primary one unit

To aid teachers in the implementation of the S-BRP, lesson plans were written and PowerPoint presentations were made by each grade-level coordinator for each unit (including objectives and pre-reading activities). Coordinators were given a single period per week in the timetable to work on the curriculum development. All materials were stored on a shared drive. These initial decisions about the S-BRP were critical in laying a foundation for successful implementation.

An important part of the PLP-R that was retained was "home reading" or extensive reading where students were provided with a book to take home each week at their independent reading level (CDI, 2010). The opportunity for independent reading is seen as essential for the development of learners' reading skills and enjoyment (CDC, 2004). While it is ideal for books to be self-selected by learners (Renandya, 2007), the books were assigned to students due to logistical constraints in a school with 1000 students. Careful consideration was given to ensure there were a variety of topics and texts to interest different learners.

Implementation

With any new program development, it is essential to evaluate and adapt the program during its implementation to meet the teaching and learning needs of students. Regular co-planning meetings were held between the grade-level teachers to evaluate the program's delivery and effectiveness, with particular focus placed on students' enjoyment and strategies development. This ongoing development, implementation, and evaluation allowed for appropriate and timely changes to be made.

Throughout the implementation, teachers paid attention to students' responses and engagement during lessons through informal observations and shared this during the co-planning meetings. Teachers commented that students were more engaged in the reading lessons than they had been previously. Students enjoyed reading authentic texts and participating in the shared literacy experience. The use of shared reading meant that reading occurred in a low-pressure environment, and they could focus on meaning and enjoyment of each big book. The *guided reading* lessons in primary two and three provided opportunities for students to practice the strategies they were learning in the shared reading lessons with the support of the teacher. This encouraged greater participation. Teachers also took the opportunity to observe the skills students used,

which allowed teachers to adapt future lessons and units to meet the needs of different students in different classes.

With the coordinator taking the lead role in each year level, adaptations could be made easily based on the observations of students' development. If students found a book too easy, difficult, or boring, another book could be selected. If students seemed to struggle with specific decoding or comprehension strategies, greater focus could be placed on these skills in subsequent lessons with specific activities designed to reinforce them.

Lessons Learned

Although the program was seen by the teachers as successful in developing students' reading skills and enjoyment, its development and implementation were not without challenges. Drawing from conversations with the S-BRP coordinators, English panel chair, and English teachers at the end-of-year department meeting, as well as minutes and conversations from weekly co-planning meetings, the following section offers lessons learned to educators interested in developing a similar S-BRP. It describes these challenges in three areas: aligning assessments with teaching and learning, aligning differentiated materials by genre and theme, and enhancing teachers' knowledge and skills in program development and implementation.

Align Assessments with Teaching and Learning

One benefit of S-BRP is the ability to adapt the curriculum to meet the specific needs of students. This flexibility, however, is challenging for curriculum development that aims to be systematic and sustainable for teachers to use in future years. For example, teachers may change the sequence of phonic sounds introduced to students according to their performance in class. However, this becomes difficult when trying to standardize phonic sounds that are spiraled and reinforced throughout the years. Another challenge arises when students are given high-stakes assessments, as all classes should receive the same instruction, so they are equally prepared for end-of-term tests. To address these types of challenges, teachers were given more autonomy to determine what students should learn in class, and assessments became more adaptable to reflect what was being taught in each classroom. For this reason, it was critical

that teachers were in constant communication about their progress, which was facilitated during the timetabled weekly co-planning meetings.

Align Differentiated Materials by Genre and Theme

One reason why the school adopted a S-BRP was because materials in the PLP-R program did not meet the diverse learning needs of students. In particular, books selected for *shared reading* were generally targeted toward students with lower levels of English proficiency. Using the PLP-R program as a model, the school selected a variety of books at various difficulty levels to include in both the shared reading and guided reading programs. This included books from a variety of genres, which were spiraled throughout the years, as well as books that loosely aligned with the themes visited in textbooks used in the general English classes. By selecting books around the theme of the textbook, students could build related vocabulary and knowledge of the theme at the same time as developing reading skills (Brewster & Ellis, 2004). These extended students' vocabulary around a particular theme or category. Unlike the PLP-R program, however, teachers adapted the text in *shared reading* books to meet the English proficiency needs of different classes. *Guided reading* books were also aligned with the theme of the *shared reading* book. Although it was challenging to find guided reading books with a similar text type and/or theme at varying reading levels, this was particularly beneficial for students' overall literacy development.

Enhance Teachers' Knowledge and Skills in Program Development and Implementation

With the development of a S-BRP, the third challenge involved developing the necessary skills and knowledge in teachers to implement the new program. This was a challenge because many of the teachers were educated before the educational reforms were enacted in Hong Kong and were accustomed to a traditional one-size-fits-all approach to reading instruction (Cheung, 2014). Therefore, teachers needed professional development to understand the rationale behind the curriculum and how to teach it. To address this, the school strategically introduced the school-based reading program by first piloting the program in primary

one. This was led by the team of teachers who then became grade-level coordinators in the consecutive years. Assigning a coordinator position at each grade level provided teachers with an *expert* to address concerns and challenges, incorporate suggestions for future development, and facilitate communication among the teachers of each grade level.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of early English literacy programs in Hong Kong and presented the case of a S-BRP that was designed to meet the specific needs of students. While government-based literacy initiatives were developed to meet the needs of the educational reform and have been implemented widely across Hong Kong primary schools, this chapter shows that school-based literacy programs can offer more flexibility and autonomy to meet the diverse needs of learners.

Although a considerable amount of work and commitment are required to develop and implement a S-BRP, schools and teachers in Hong Kong and Greater China are encouraged to explore the potential benefits that such a program can bring to their English learners. As our students' English abilities are becoming more diverse, we need to move away from standardized reading instruction and consider ways to cater to their various needs. S-BRPs have the potential to develop students' reading skills while cultivating an invaluable enjoyment of reading. As English continues to take a front seat as a globalized language, it is critical that schools equip students with a robust English literacy foundation in the early years, providing students with the social and language capital needed to be competitive in the twenty-first century.

Notes

1. Literacy is a complex term that has been interpreted (and debated) in different ways. In a narrow sense, it refers to reading or to reading and writing. In a broader sense, it refers to the ability to interpret, access, and construct texts which are social-situated and functional and can be multimodal (Gibbons, 2009).
2. The team chose primary one to primary three for the development and implementation of the S-BRP as the PLP-R had been implemented in primary one to primary three. The school focused on a school-based process writing program in primary three to primary six.

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CHAPTER 3

Measuring the Vocabulary Knowledge of Hong Kong Primary School Second Language Learners Through Word Associations: Implications for Reading Literacy

Qing Ma and Hung Yuk Lee

Introduction

When acquiring a language, lexical knowledge is undoubtedly one of the vital components. Taking the construction of a house as an analogy, words are the bricks to be added progressively to the structure of the first language (L1). This analogy can also be applied to understand how a second language (L2) is acquired; thousands of vocabulary items are progressively added to the L2 structure and thus forming a systematic L2 mechanism. The expansion of the lexicon is obligatory to enhance the

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learners' L2 reading literacy. This study probed into the lexical knowledge of young Hong Kong L2 learners by looking at the word association (WA) patterns and exploring possible factors that influence them. Given the close relation between lexical knowledge and reading literacy, implications for L2 lexical development will be discussed in order to facilitate young Hong Kong L2 learners' reading literacy development.

Literature Review

L2 Reading Literacy Development and Vocabulary Knowledge

Literacy refers to "the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute" (UNESCO Education Sector, 2004, p. 13), with the use of spoken and written materials related to various contexts. The process of literacy development involves a range of complex elements of a language including the awareness of speech sounds, spelling patterns, patterns of word formation, word meaning and grammar; in other words, phonology, orthography, morphology, semantics and syntax. It is commonly agreed that adequate reading literacy skills are essential for receiving formal education and subsequently gaining full participation in society. Research into L2 reading has long established that L2 vocabulary knowledge plays an important role in developing learners' L2 reading comprehension for both young (Lervåg & Aukrust, 2010) and adult learners (Qian, 1999, 2002). In investigating the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension for a group of young L1 and L2 learners in Sweden, Lervåg and Aukrust (2010) came up with the conclusion that "vocabulary appears to be a critical predictor of the early development of reading comprehension skills in both L1 and L2 learners. The limitations in vocabulary skills in the L2 learners seemed sufficient to explain their lag in developing reading comprehension skills" (p. 612).

Word Association as a Way to Measure L2 Learners' Vocabulary Structure/Knowledge

Word Association (WA) Tests have been used to examine the content and organization of lexical entries in the mind. There is a popular notion among many researchers that WA responses could reflect L2 learners' developmental proficiency (Meara, 2009; Namei, 2004; Wolter, 2001). It is common for L2 learners' WA responses to be compared against

those of L1 speakers; the rationale behind this is that the more advanced the L2 learners' proficiency is, the more similar are the WA responses to those of L1 speakers. Such studies either used WA to measure L2 learners' general language proficiency or compared L2 learners' WA responses to those of L1 speakers. More recently, research interest has shifted to how the responses can be used as a tool to fathom how L2 learners' mental lexicon is organized and accessed (Fitzpatrick & Izura, 2011; Fitzpatrick, Playfoot, Wray, & Wright, 2015).

The mental lexicon is defined as a collection of lexical entries which contain phonological, semantic and syntactic information (Jackendoff, 2002). Ma (2009) holds the view that the lexicon is dynamic and can be represented in the form of a network, showing the highly complex relations among numerous entries in both L1 and L2. Ma (2009) concludes that many factors, such as L1 proficiency, L2 lexical knowledge, L1 influence and learning environment, may affect the structure of the L2. Meara (1996) believes that words in the mental lexicon are connected via three types of association, namely paradigmatic, syntagmatic and form-based. First, the paradigmatic association shows a clear semantic relationship: for instance, hyponymy (e.g. *animal-tiger*), coordination (e.g. *spoon-fork*), synonymy (e.g. *small-tiny*) and antonymy (e.g. *high-low*). Second, syntagmatic relationships denote words that usually co-occur in a well-formed syntactic structure, such as *read books* and *lemon tea*. Third, form-based association refers to words that are formally, phonologically or inflectionally similar to each other. Examples include *cube-cute* and *simulate-stimulate*. In addition to these often-cited three categories of WA, McCarthy (1990) points out that words may be associated with each other via encyclopedic information. For example, Li and Wang (2016) adopted this category and included a fourth type, i.e. encyclopedic, which is formed by drawing on one's previous experience, e.g. *picnic-happy* and *father-superman*. This type of WA response is connected to the prompt word in general meaning, but neither are they in the same semantic category nor can they collocate directly with the prompt word.

Two Key Factors That Influence WA Patterns: Word Knowledge and Word Class

Some researchers (e.g. Meara, 1996; Söderman, 1993; Sökmen, 1993) have argued that L2 users demonstrate a syntagmatic-paradigmatic shift, i.e. L2 learners start with more form-based and

syntagmatic associations and they tend to produce more paradigmatic associations and less form-based ones as they grow older and their language proficiency advances. However, other researchers (Fitzpatrick, 2006, 2007; Nissen & Henriksen, 2006) have challenged this assertion. One factor that may alter such a general syntagmatic-paradigmatic shift is the participant's knowledge of a prompt word. For example, Wolter (2001) pointed out that the degree of vocabulary knowledge of each individual word, instead of the general language proficiency of the speaker, is the vital and decisive factor that accounts for varying types of association. Native adult speakers even tend to produce form-based associations when they are unfamiliar with the prompt words. This view was further supported by Namei's study (2004) where both the L1 and L2 mental lexicons were found to be organized along a word-knowledge continuum. Unfamiliar words are organized according to the form, moderately known words syntagmatically and well-known words paradigmatically.

Another factor that may affect the claim regarding the syntagmatic-paradigmatic shift is the word class of the prompt words, which was documented by a number of researchers starting from the 1960s but nonetheless was insufficiently explored by researchers in recent decades. A study by Nissen and Henriksen (2006) showed that while nouns elicit more paradigmatic responses, verbs and adjectives elicit more syntagmatic responses even when the prompt words are well known to participants. Li and Wang (2016) similarly found that both verbs and adjectives lead to more syntagmatic responses than nouns. A study by Zareva (2011) revealed a slightly different picture: nouns and adjectives prefer paradigmatic responses, whereas verbs tend to result in more syntagmatic responses.

The participants in the research cited above were usually L1 speakers or adult L2 learners. There is little research that investigates young L2 learners' WA. However, it is worth conducting such research with young L2 learners as a way to tap their lexical knowledge and to understand how it may affect their L2 reading literacy development. This small-scale study, therefore, focused on the WA responses produced by a group of young L2 learners of English in the context of Hong Kong primary schools. The objectives were to investigate the influence of word knowledge and word class on the WA responses of young Hong Kong

L2 learners. Based on the understanding of their WA responses, efforts were made to link their vocabulary knowledge measured by WA to their L2 reading literacy development. The research questions are set out below.

1. How does word knowledge affect young Hong Kong L2 learners' WA responses?
2. How does word class affect their WA responses?
3. What factors influence the L2 learners' WA responses?

Methodology

Participants

Six Hong Kong primary school students, aged from 8 to 10 and attending grades 3–5, participated in this study: Three girls and three boys, with Cantonese as their mother tongue. Informed verbal consent was obtained from each participant as well as from their class teacher. All of them were learning English as a second language in a government-aided local primary school. They experienced traditional textbook-based teaching in developing their L2 reading literacy. Their English proficiency was considered intermediate compared to that of their classmates. Table 3.1 is the general background information of the participants with pseudonyms used to protect their identities.

Table 3.1 Participant details

Name	*Gender*	*Age*	*School level*	*School type*	*Language proficiency*	*The school's general way of developing L2 reading literacy*
John	M	8	Primary 3	Aided	Intermediate	Textbook-based
Rebecca	F	8	Primary 3	Aided	Intermediate	Textbook-based
Franky	M	9	Primary 5	Aided	Intermediate	Textbook-based
Chloe	F	9	Primary 4	Aided	Intermediate	Textbook-based
Vincent	M	10	Primary 4	Aided	Intermediate	Textbook-based
Emily	F	10	Primary 5	Aided	Intermediate	Textbook-based

Test Instruments

Two test instruments were used in this study: A Word Association Test and the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale. First, the Word Association Test adopted in this study is a modified version of the one used in Li and Wang (2016). The test was originally developed for university students. Given the smaller vocabulary size of primary school children, 12 low-frequency vocabulary items were replaced with some high-frequency words. All 18 prompt words were selected from the first 1000 and the second 1000 word high-frequency levels to make sure they were suitable for young L2 learners. Examples include "dog", "eat", "long" and "beautiful". Following Li and Wang (2016), the modified 18 prompt words include three word classes, i.e. nouns, adjectives and verbs, i.e. 6 words per word class, in order to examine the word class influence on the learners' WA patterns. Words of both high concreteness and low concreteness were included. The full list of prompt words is shown below (Table 3.2).

The Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) (Paribakht & Wesche, 1997) was employed to measure the participants' lexical knowledge for each prompt word. This is a test combining a self-report rating and performance on lexical items that can measure initial vocabulary development in educational settings. It takes into consideration both the breadth and depth dimension and the reception and production dichotomy in measuring word knowledge (Ma, 2009). For each word, the test produces a five-point rating indicating progressive degrees of lexical knowledge: (1) means nil knowledge, (2) recognition of the word form, (3) vague word meaning, (4) word meaning, and (5) productive use (the highest degree). See Table 3.3 for details of the five scales. Despite the criticism the VKS received, i.e. it might not reveal the knowledge differences in the five scales (e.g. Wolter, 2001), it has been adopted in various studies

Table 3.2 Prompt words in the test

		Sample words
High concreteness	Noun	dog; kitchen; skyscraper
	Verb	eat; climb; sink
	Adjective	long; beautiful; dark
Low concreteness	Noun	faith; dream; memory
	Verb	want; suggest; belong
	Adjective	important; wrong; brilliant

Table 3.3 Word knowledge assessed in VKS

Rating	*Sample question*	*Word knowledge type*
1.	I don't remember having seen this word before	Nil knowledge
2.	I have seen this word before, but I have little idea about its meaning.	Recognition of word form
3.	I have seen this word before, and I know it means (synonym or Chinese translation)	Vague word meaning
4.	I know this word well. It means ________ (synonym or Chinese translation)	Word meaning
5.	I can use this word in a sentence: ________________	Productive use

for measuring L2 learners' initial vocabulary development given the ease in implementing the scale. In addition, Read (2000) points out that it is sensitive and able to capture increases in vocabulary knowledge.

Procedure

The participants completed two tasks: a WA task and a test of vocabulary knowledge (VKS). First, they were instructed to listen once to each prompt word. Then, they were required to write down the first English word that came to mind regardless of whether they could spell the associated word correctly or not. After all 18 prompt words were processed this way, then participants were asked to rate their level of familiarity with each prompt word using the VKS. All the participants took the test individually and completed the two tasks in about 15–20 minutes. A follow-up interview was conducted with each participant to clarify the words they wrote down as well as to resolve spelling mistakes or some apparent irrelevant responses.

Data Analysis

Following Li and Wang (2016), all responses were categorized according to the four typical associations, namely paradigmatic, syntagmatic, form-based and encyclopedic relations. All data were coded by two well-trained researchers and an inter-rater reliability of 85% was reached; disputed cases were discussed until agreement was reached. The assignment of each WA to each category follows carefully the definition of each

WA type. The frequency and percentage for each of the four categories were tallied; subsequently, chi-square tests were conducted to measure whether the two key factors, i.e. word knowledge and word class, would have an effect on the participants' WA responses. These quantitative results can answer the first two research questions. As for the third research question—what other factors will influence their WA responses—a more qualitative approach was taken since this question is left open and exploratory in nature. All interview data were coded and categorized. All codings were checked, negotiated and agreed on by the two researchers. A content analysis of the interview data, together with the results regarding the individual WA responses, was used to answer the last research question.

Results and Discussion

The Influence of Word Knowledge on the WA Patterns

Table 3.4 shows the distribution of word association types based on the scale of vocabulary knowledge as measured by VKS. On the one hand, it demonstrates that responses to unfamiliar prompt words (nil knowledge and word form) are form-based predominantly: 42 (91%) out of 46 and 8 (73%) out of 11, respectively. Then, the form-based responses decrease as the degree of knowledge of the prompt words increases: vague word meaning (25%), word meaning (20%) and productive use (5%). On the other hand, when knowledge of the prompt word is good (word meaning or productive use), there are more paradigmatic (14, 35%) and syntagmatic associations (15, 37.5%) plus a considerable number of encyclopedic associations (9, 22.5%).

Table 3.4 Distribution of WA type based on the scale of vocabulary knowledge as measured by VKS

	Nil knowledge	*Word form*	*Vague word meaning*	*Word meaning*	*Productive use*
Paradigmatic	0 (0%)	1 (9%)	0 (0%)	2 (40%)	14 (35%)
Syntagmatic	3 (7%)	2 (18%)	1 (25%)	2 (40%)	15 (37.5)
Encyclopedic	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	2 (50%)	0 (0%)	9 (22.5)
Form-based	42 (91%)	8 (73%)	1 (25%)	1 (20%)	2 (5%)
Total	46	11	4	5	40

Since there are a few cases where the frequency falls below 5, a Fisher's exact test (similar to a chi-square test) was conducted to find out whether there is any significant difference in the WA patterns for each type of word knowledge. Since there are several "0"s for *word form*, *vague word meaning* and *word meaning*, these three categories were combined into one larger category, i.e. partial word knowledge. The result shows a significant difference between the three types of word knowledge, namely nil knowledge, partial knowledge and good knowledge; $\chi^2 = 58.15$, $df = 6$, $p = 0.00$. Figure 3.1 shows the distribution patterns.

The results also show that form-based associations persist to some extent even for well-known words, which is in line with the finding of Li and Wang (2016). For example, "kitchen", when the meaning is a well-known word, yielded a form-based response "chicken" from one participant who said in the interview that the word kitchen sounds like chicken. Apart from a sound similarity between the two words, this phenomenon can be explained by the impact of the learner's early learning experience where kitchen and chicken were often confused and hence one word will trigger automatically the other even though the words are now well distinguished, as suggested by Li and Wang (2016). This may be regarded

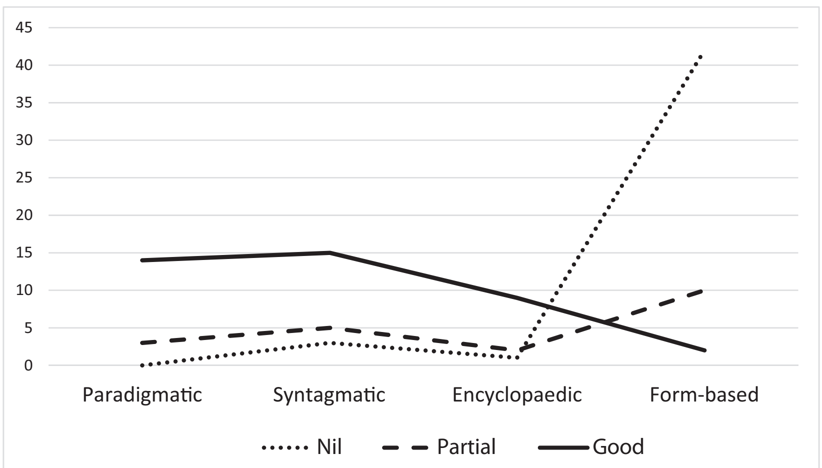


Fig. 3.1 WA distribution patterns for three types of word knowledge: nil, partial and good

as one distinct feature of L2 learners' WA as compared to that of L1 speakers, where such responses are rarely reported.

Table 3.4 also shows that the primary school children failed to recognize a considerable proportion of the prompt words, i.e. 46 (43%), including many familiar, first 1000 frequency words such as "eat", "dream", "wrong", "dark" and "memory". Since the majority of Hong Kong students start learning English at the age of 3 (K1), this shows an inadequate vocabulary size for primary 3–5 grade children that have been learning English formally for 6–8 years.

The Influence of Word Class on the WA Patterns

Table 3.5 shows the number of associations participants produced for prompt words of different word classes of which participants had partial or good knowledge. Unknown words were excluded from this analysis since as shown above they typically produced form-based responses that had little to do with the meaning or collocate(s) of the prompt words.

Table 3.5 shows that different word classes may favor different types of associations. For example, nouns largely elicit paradigmatic (6, 31%) and encyclopedic associations (5, 26%); verbs mainly syntagmatic associations (11, 52%); and adjectives paradigmatic (9, 43%) and syntagmatic associations (8, 38%). A chi-square test showed a significant difference in the WA patterns for different word classes: $\chi^2=14.50$, $df=6$, $p=0.02$. Figure 3.2 clearly shows the distribution patterns for each word class.

The results in both Table 3.5 and Fig. 3.2 suggest that word class plays an important role in determining word association responses. These results accord with the observations of other researchers (e.g. Li & Wang, 2016; Nissen & Henriksen, 2006; Zareva, 2011): prompt words of different word classes tend to trigger different types of word associations. Nouns and adjectives tend to elicit more paradigmatic responses while verbs more syntagmatic responses.

Table 3.5 Distribution of WA type based on three different word classes

	Noun	*Verb*	*Adjective*
Paradigmatic	6 (31.5%)	2 (10%)	9 (43%)
Syntagmatic	2 (10.5)	11 (52%)	8 (38%)
Encyclopedic	5 (26%)	3 (14%)	3 (14%)
Form-based	6 (32%)	5 (24%)	1 (5%)
Total	19	21	21

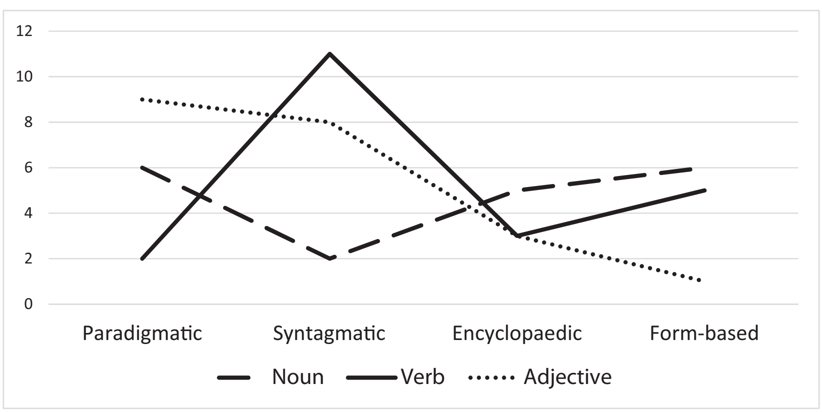


Fig. 3.2 WA distribution patterns for word classes: nouns, verbs and adjectives

The fact that both nouns and adjectives tend to yield more paradigmatic associations can be explained by how words are believed to be organized in the mental lexicon (Miller & Fellbaum, 1991). Nouns are thought to be organized via meanings in a hierarchical manner, e.g. synonyms, meronyms or hyponyms for adult L1 speakers. This also appears to be true for young L2 learners when the L2 words are known. For example, the results of this study show that the most frequent WA for the prompt word "dog" was "cat". In addition, nouns tended to lead to a considerable proportion of encyclopedic associations, yielding responses such as "grandmother" or "mother" for the prompt word "kitchen", which is related to the participants' life experience. Adjectives were usually connected with each other via meanings, antonyms or synonyms. For instance, the prompt word "long" repeatedly triggered its antonym "short" by the participants. Adjectives were also prone to syntagmatic associations, resulting in a + n pattern, such as "important dictation", "long hair" or "beautiful people". This can be explained by the fact that most adjectives are abstract in nature and require "a noun for a fully-fledged interpretation since they are semantically underspecified" (Li & Wang, 2016, p. 454) if in isolation.

The Influence of Other Factors

Each of the six participants' WA patterns, together with their background information on L2 learning and reading verified in the interview,

underwent a detailed qualitative analysis. It appears that three additional factors[1] will further influence the individual's WA pattern: (1) being a L2 reader or non-reader, (2) age of the participant, and (3) L1 influence.

Readers vs. Non-readers in the L2

In the interview, three participants, John (aged 8), Vincent (aged 9) and Emily (aged 10), were identified as L2 readers, i.e. they had formed the habit of reading English books. In addition, John and Vincent used English with their domestic helper or even their parents at home. With such a comparatively rich environment of language input, they had a larger vocabulary size as measured by the VKS, reaching a mean word knowledge of 3.53 (out of 5) for the prompt words. On the other hand, Franky (aged 10), Chloe (aged 9) and Rebecca (aged 8) were non-L2 readers who mainly confined their English learning to the classroom with few outside language learning opportunities. Compared with the non-L2 readers, WA patterns of L2 readers are characterized by more paradigmatic (3.67 vs. 2) and encyclopedic (3.33 vs. 0.67) WAs. Although the L2 readers also possessed a considerable number of form-based WAs (mean=6.67), they were, nonetheless, much lower than that of non-L2 readers (mean=11.33). See Table 3.6 for the WA pattern and background information for all the L2 readers and non-L2 readers. See Figs. 3.3 and 3.4 for the distribution patterns of WA for L2 readers and non-L2 readers.

The Age Influence on Encyclopedic WA

Table 3.6 shows that the two eldest children, Vincent and Emily who were both aged 10, produced more encyclopedic WAs than those of the younger ones. They produced 8 (67%) out of the 12 encyclopedic responses to well-known prompt words made by all six participants. This implies that well-known prompt words tend to trigger a past event or other relevant experiences for more mature participants. For example, Emily wrote down "sad" on hearing the prompt word "want" because she immediately thought of the disappointing experience associated with making wishes. In a subsequent interview, it was revealed that what she wanted to have or do was usually not fulfilled, so she felt sad on encountering the word "want". The prompt word in this case aroused a sentimental encyclopedic memory. Emily

Table 3.6 Each individual's WA pattern and their background information

Student	*Paradigmatic*	*Syntagmatic*	*Encyclopaedic*	*Form-based*	*VKS (Max=5)*	*Age*	*L2 Readers*	*English at home*
John	6	2	2	6	3.44	8	Y	Y
Rebecca	2	5	1	10	1.89	8	N	N
Vincent	3	5	4	6	3.94	10	Y	Y
Chloe	2	4	1	11	2.22	9	N	Y
Emily	2	4	4	8	3.22	10	Y	N
Franky	2	3	0	13	2.11	9	N	N

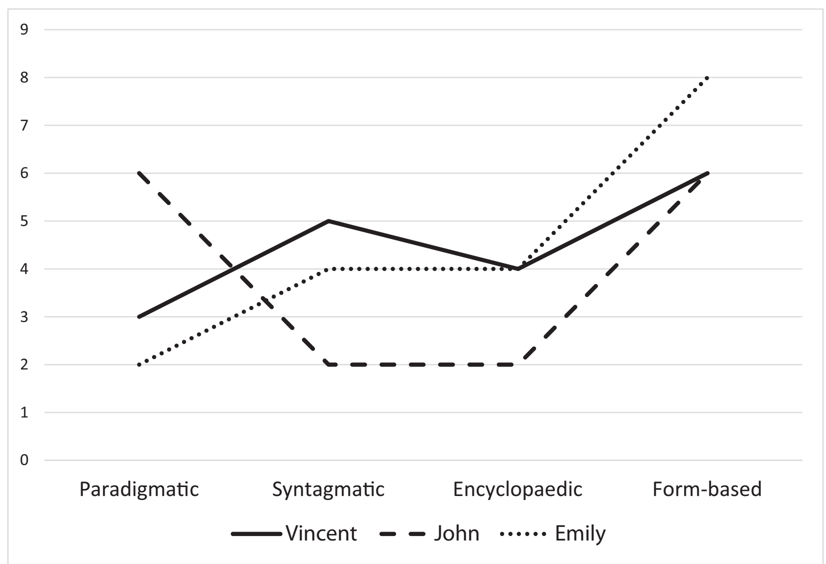


Fig. 3.3 WA distribution patterns for L2 readers: John, Vincent and Emily

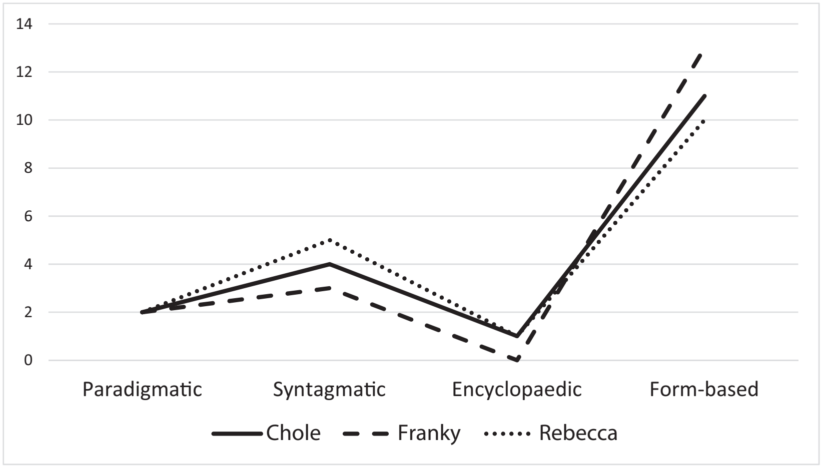


Fig. 3.4 WA distribution patterns for non-L2 readers: Chloe, Franky and Rebecca

also wrote down "mother" for the prompt word "kitchen" since it was her mother who cooked in the kitchen every day. Vincent also gave a number of encyclopedic responses. His examples include associating "wrong" (prompt word) with "English" and "climb" (prompt word) with "fall". He indicated that he often made mistakes in English and his teacher frequently commented that he was wrong in using English. Thus, the word "wrong" reminded him of his poor English performance evaluated by his teacher. As for "climb", he once climbed up a tree and fell down. Thus, "fall" was the first word that came to his mind.

Reliance on L1 in Producing the L2 WA

The interview data revealed that the participants relied on their L1 when attempting to retrieve a WA for a prompt word. When they took the WA test, some of them asked for the English word they intended to produce, such as 山 (hill), 短 (short), 衣服 (clothes), to name just a few. In addition, it was also apparent that they mainly relied on a back-translation strategy in producing the WA, i.e. they first translated the prompt word into Chinese, associated it with another Chinese word and then back translated this word into English. They would seek help from the tester if they did not know the associated word in English or how to spell the English word. Sometimes they knew the pronunciation of the English words but they did not know their orthographic forms and thus made quite a lot of spelling mistakes in the WA test.

A heavy reliance on L1 was commonly observed when the participants encountered unfamiliar words. For instance, on hearing the prompt word "brilliant", the Chinese word "人" (people) immediately popped up in Franky's mind as it occurred to him that the Cantonese pronunciation of "人" rhymed with "brilliant". Rebecca thought of dogs when she heard "wrong", which rhymes with the barking sound (汪) of dogs in Chinese.

Meara (1996) pointed out that learners sometimes produce odd word associations as a consequence of mistaking a prompt word for another phonologically similar vocabulary item in either the L2 or L1. This phenomenon also occurred in this study. For example, Emily and Chloe wrote down "eyes" for "faith" as they mistook it for "face".

Pedagogical Implications

This study shows that young L2 learners tend to produce form-based WAs on encountering unfamiliar words even though the words are highly frequent. This suggests that these primary school students may not have sufficient vocabulary to deal with L2 reading. Lexical knowledge plays a critical role in L2 reading, especially in lexical processing (Koda, 1997). The failure to use context for lexical decoding can be largely attributed to word misidentification (Huckin & Bloch, 1993). When such word misidentification takes place, L2 learners assume that they know the word and tend to "ignore various contextual clues that highlight the semantic incongruity resulting from the misidentification… inefficient orthographic processing can lead not only to inaccurate lexical retrieval, but to poor comprehension as well" (Koda, 1997, p. 35) in the L2 reading process. In this connection, it is essential to help the young Cantonese L2 learners of English enlarge their vocabulary size to reach a threshold level for L2 reading, especially the 1000 frequency level. Apart from the primary school textbooks which are adapted to the level of primary school students, teachers may consider using graded readers to control the vocabulary within the 2000 frequency level and lessen the reading difficulty. Guessing unknown words encountered in L2 reading is the main strategy to deal with unknown words; however, research shows that the learner needs to know 95% of words in the text in order to make successful guesses (Liu & Nation, 1985). Using graded readers can significantly reduce the vocabulary difficulty of the text and make the reading a more enjoyable process. As stated by Nation and Wang (1999, pp. 356–357), "Graded reading schemes allow learners to have early contact with easy material in the second language".

This study shows that being an L2 reader appears to lead to better vocabulary knowledge as measured by the VKS and yields more paradigmatic, syntagmatic and encyclopedic WAs and considerably fewer form-based WAs. In this sense, the development of L2 vocabulary knowledge and L2 reading literacy appears to mutually support each other; more reading leads to more vocabulary knowledge and a better vocabulary knowledge facilitates the L2 reading process. Consequently, language teachers may consider developing a L2 reading program with a focus on vocabulary enhancement. By so doing, both L2 reading literacy development and vocabulary learning can be made more efficient and effective.

The results show that words of different syntactic categories prefer words of certain categories, i.e. nouns favor nouns (paradigmatic: synonyms or hyponyms), adjectives both adjectives (paradigmatic: synonyms) and nouns (the modified part: red *hat*) and verbs nouns (syntagmatic: the noun collocates of the verbs). This suggests that teachers may be advised to teach words by associating them with relevant words from different syntactic categories. Specifically, when teaching nouns, the teacher may associate the new noun with other synonymous nouns or its hyponyms. If the target word is an adjective, the teacher may elicit from students nouns which it can modify, e.g. bright (eyes). When teaching a verb, the teachers may tell students what nouns collocate with the verb. All these can help the learners form a link between the new word and other known words in their L2 mental lexicon.

This study also tentatively shows that age is related to one type of WA, i.e. encyclopedic. Children may produce more encyclopedic responses as they grow older. This can be explained by the fact that older children tend to have richer life experience as they mature cognitively. Teachers may therefore be advised to seek links with learners' L2 life experience to motivate and boost their learning. As pointed out by Sökmen (1997), connecting L2 words to personal experience of learners could make the learning more interesting and engaging. This also fits in well with the idea of scaffolding embraced in a sociocultural learning framework. For example, when teaching the word "climb", the teacher may ask questions such as "Have you climbed up a tree/mountain?" or "What happened to you?" These interactive opportunities could supply rich language input as well as make the learners eager to use the L2.

Limitations of the Study

This study has certain limitations. The number of participants is relatively small. The results would be more representative if more participants could have been involved. Although this study reveals some evidence that older children tend to produce more encyclopedic WAs, this result could be better validated with participants with a bigger age range than in the current study. Furthermore, it is possible that some participants hesitated in writing down the first word that popped into their mind because they wanted to avoid spelling mistakes. Efforts should be made to address these limitations and aim for more precise and reliable data in future studies.

Conclusion

This study shows that the type of word association depends on various factors, including L2 vocabulary knowledge, word class, age and L1 influence. While the word knowledge of the target word appears to be an important factor that influences the WA pattern, the word class also affects the associations of equally well-known words. Other factors also play their part, such as age and personal experience. Another point worth noting is that the relations among lexical items are highly complex and dynamic. The structure of the mental lexicon indeed undergoes constant change, as pointed out by Ma (2009). A sizable and systematic word bank can in turn facilitate young learner's reading literacy development.

Note

1. Given the small number of participants involved in this study, the results of the additional three factors, largely emerging from the qualitative data analysis, should be treated with caution. These factors are better to be confirmed with a larger sample size.

Appendix 1: Word Association Test and Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (English Version)

Data Set: ______________________ Age: _________ Gender: M/F

Word Association Test (Li & Wang, 2016, modified)

1 Dog	7 Kitchen	13 Skyscraper
2 Eat	8 Climb	14 Sink
3 Long	9 Beautiful	15 Dark
4 Faith	10 Dream	16 Memory
5 Want	11 Suggest	17 Belong
6 Important	12 Wrong	18 Brilliant

Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (Paribakht & Wesche, 1997)

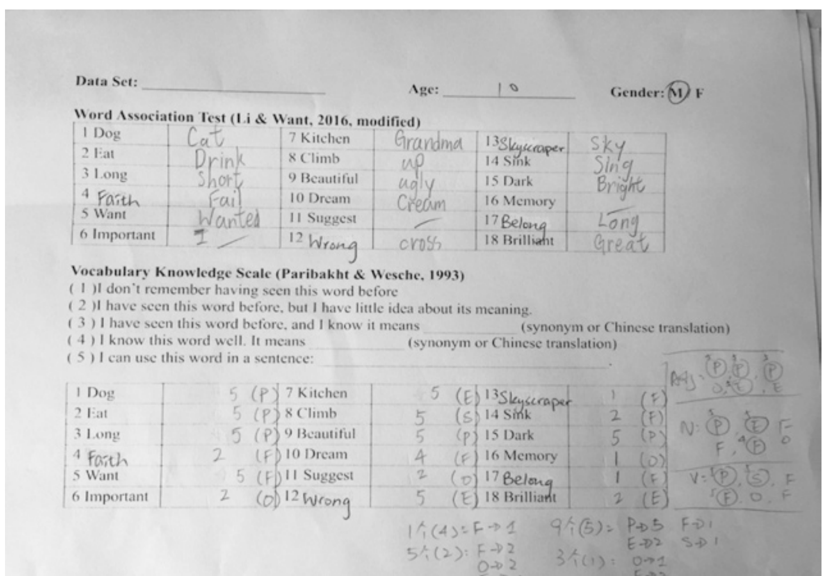
(1) I don't remember having seen this word before.
(2) I have seen this word before, but I have little idea about its meaning.

(3) I have seen this word before, and I know it means ___ (synonym or Chinese translation).
(4) I know this word well. It means ___________ (synonym or Chinese translation).
(5) I can use this word in a sentence: _________________________ _________.

1 Dog	7 Kitchen	13 Skyscraper
2 Eat	8 Climb	14 Sink
3 Long	9 Beautiful	15 Dark
4 Faith	10 Dream	16 Memory
5 Want	11 Suggest	17 Belong
6 Important	12 Wrong	18 Brilliant

Appendix 2: Sample Word Association Test and Vocabulary Knowledge Scale Collected from Students

John



Data Set: ____________ Age: 10 Gender: (M) F

Word Association Test (Li & Want, 2016, modified)

1 Dog	Cat	7 Kitchen	Grandma	13 Skyscraper	Sky
2 Eat	Drink	8 Climb	up	14 Sink	Sing
3 Long	Short	9 Beautiful	ugly	15 Dark	Bright
4 Faith	Fail	10 Dream	Cream	16 Memory	
5 Want	Wanted	11 Suggest		17 Belong	Long
6 Important	I	12 Wrong	cross	18 Brilliant	Great

Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (Paribakht & Wesche, 1993)

(1)I don't remember having seen this word before
(2)I have seen this word before, but I have little idea about its meaning.
(3) I have seen this word before, and I know it means ________ (synonym or Chinese translation)
(4) I know this word well. It means ________ (synonym or Chinese translation)
(5) I can use this word in a sentence: ________________.

1 Dog	5 (P)	7 Kitchen	5 (E)	13 Skyscraper	1 (F)
2 Eat	5 (P)	8 Climb	5 (S)	14 Sink	2 (F)
3 Long	5 (P)	9 Beautiful	5 (P)	15 Dark	5 (P)
4 Faith	2 (F)	10 Dream	4 (F)	16 Memory	1 (O)
5 Want	5 (F)	11 Suggest	2 (O)	17 Belong	1 (F)
6 Important	2 (O)	12 Wrong	5 (E)	18 Brilliant	2 (E)

Rebecca

Data Set: 1 Age: 10 Gender: M/F

Word Association Test (Li & Want, 2016, modified)

1 Dog	cat	7 Kitchen	food	13 Skyscraper	Sorp
2 Eat	egg	8 Climb	chese	14 Sink	sang
3 Long	beg	9 Beautiful	btt	15 Dark	Dog
4 Faith	Had	10 Dream	food	16 Memory	we
5 Want	What	11 Suggest	Song	17 Belong	long
6 Important	food	12 Wrong	Dog	18 Brilliant	Be long

Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (Paribakht & Wesche, 1993)

(1)I don't remember having seen this word before

(2)I have seen this word before, but I have little idea about its meaning.

(3) I have seen this word before, and I know it means ________ (synonym or Chinese translation)

(4) I know this word well. It means ________ (synonym or Chinese translation)

(5) I can use this word in a sentence: ________.

1 Dog	5 (P)	7 Kitchen	3 (E)	13 Skyscraper	1 (O)
2 Eat	1 (O)	8 Climb	4 (S)	14 Sink	1 (O)
3 Long	4 (P)	9 Beautiful	5 (S)	15 Dark	1 (F)
4 Faith	1 (F)	10 Dream	1 (O)	16 Memory	1 (F)
5 Want	1 (F)	11 Suggest	1 (F)	17 Belong	1 (F)
6 Important	1 (O)	12 Wrong	1 (O)	18 Brilliant	1 (F)

Data Set: 2

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CHAPTER 4

Second Language Literacy Instruction for Pre-primary Learners in Hong Kong: Using Stories, Songs, and Games

Mei Lee Ng

Introduction

This chapter situates itself against the background of a global prevalence of the early learning of English as an L2 in pre-primary settings. The chapter's scenario is Hong Kong, an Asian city with a British colonial background and a long history of English education. This chapter focuses on the L2 literacy instruction that happens within kindergartens using Chinese as the main medium of instruction and teaching English as a specific subject during a certain period in the day. These contexts are regarded as low L2 exposure contexts because children are exposed to a limited input of the target language (L2) both within and outside school settings. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section describes the dual challenges of the young learners who are cognitively immature for abstract language learning and who are constrained by the limited L2 exposure in their environment. The second section proposes that informal instruction strategies, which include stories, songs, and

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games, better fit the pre-primary learners' developmental characteristics and their low L2 exposure contexts. The chapter then concludes with insights gained from research evidence, shedding light on how age-appropriate L2 literacy instruction raises children's motivation and interest in L2 learning.

Dual Challenges for Hong Kong Pre-primary L2 Learners: Formal Instruction in Low L2 Exposure Contexts

With the important role of English as the international language of communication and of social and economic advancement, the teaching of English to children has increased rapidly worldwide since the early 1980s, as has been documented by many sources. This global trend of learning English as an L2 in the early years is clearly identifiable in Hong Kong. Ng and Rao (2013) conducted a comprehensive survey of 256 kindergartens (38% of the total registered local kindergartens that use Chinese as the main medium of instruction). Their results showed a prevalence of English language teaching along with a trend for such instruction to include younger age groups. All of the sampled kindergartens (100%) offered English teaching at K2 and K3 levels (ages 4 and 5, respectively) and 97.3% of the sampled kindergartens offered English teaching to K1 children (age 3).

Survey data in Ng and Rao's study also revealed a formal approach to L2 instruction, which specifically focuses on the production of language forms as the main learning goals. The formal teaching of English as an L2, as a specific subject following a textbook-based curriculum, commonly took place several times a week, with about 20–30 minutes per session. The total instruction time of English throughout the week varied among the sample schools but was generally limited, with an average median of 64 minutes per week in a half-day session of 180 minutes. The authors categorize these cases as low L2 exposure contexts because children are having limited input from both within and outside the classroom.

Yeung, Ng, and King (2016) followed up the situation and found that in local kindergartens whose medium of instruction was Chinese and were in low L2 exposure contexts, the teaching of English relied extensively on the use of textbooks. Such instruction generally focused more on print learning and using the whole word method (e.g., copying target

words) than on oral language skills. Formal print-oriented exercises, such as copying words and sentences, were found to be more dominant than oral activities such as singing, reading stories, or playing language games. Story-based English teaching is not commonly found or systematically implemented in Hong Kong kindergarten classrooms. When teaching vocabulary, kindergarten teachers mainly focus on recognition and memorization rather than on understanding and the use of vocabulary (Lau & Rao, 2013).

The formal approach to L2 learning in low L2 exposure contexts present dual challenges to the kindergarten L2 learners. Extensive exposure to the target language is not readily available, and yet the more efficient L2 formal and explicit language instructions do not meet the distinctive learning needs of kindergarten-age children, which are found to be very different from those of older learners.

Distinctive Learning Needs of L2 Pre-primary Learners

How are young children different from older learners in learning English as an L2? Piaget's theory has pinpointed that pre-primary children are still in the pre-operational stage and do not have the cognitive maturity to handle abstract language forms on paper, nor can they be analytical about language. Hence, pre-primary children often resort to the abilities they have in acquiring their first language to cope with the learning of their second.

Enever (2015) cited Halliwell's six proposed main categories of these abilities: "grasping meaning, drawing on paralinguistic features of communication to get across their meaning in a second language, acquiring through continuous exposure and use, their instinct for play and fun, the need to make sense of the world around them and their instinct for interaction and talk" (p. 19). Pre-primary children have a natural instinct to understand and make sense of any situation by looking for meaning rather than by paying attention to words or language forms. They rely on sensory experience to make sense of oral language and on experiential forms of learning with physical or visual situational clues. With regard to their instinct for play and fun, they are still developing and learning how to regulate and manage their behavior and feelings. Pre-primary children need to play and have fun to fuel the motivation for learning an L2 that they do not need to use often in their daily life.

In summary, pre-primary children are different from older learners who can learn both analytically and experientially. Hence, they very much need more meaning-driven language experience to compensate for the limited input they receive beyond classroom instruction. Considering the abovementioned conditions of the learners and the context, we argue for an informal L2 literacy instruction approach for pre-primary learners who are learning their L2 in low-exposure contexts.

Informal L2 Literacy Instruction Approach for Pre-primary Learners in Low L2 Exposure Contexts

For pre-primary learners who have to cope with the learning challenges of a low-exposure context and limited cognitive resources, a specific L2 instructional approach that adopts informal L2 instructional strategies based on stories, songs, and games should be the ideal path forward. These informal strategies not only (1) promote oral language skills (vocabulary and phonological awareness in particular), which are found to be the essential building blocks for later literacy, but also (2) cater to the unique learning needs of pre-primary L2 learners.

Vocabulary and Phonological Awareness (PA) as Important Foundational Skills for Early Literacy

Extensive research has consistently confirmed that oral language skills are important building blocks for future reading and writing skills, and that they are important determinants of school readiness and future literacy development. Oral language skills include vocabulary, syntax, oral listening and comprehension, oral narratives, and communication. Among them, vocabulary is supported by empirical evidence as being a particularly important oral language skill and highly predictive of future literacy skills, including word reading, comprehension, and achievement outcomes years later. Liu, Yeung, Lin, and Wong (2017) showed that both the initial level and the growth of vocabulary predict English reading among Hong Kong Chinese ESL children of kindergarten age. Their study highlights the importance of vocabulary for kindergarteners who learn English as an L2.

In addition to oral language skills, language theorists have regarded phonological awareness as another important early literacy skill that

forms the building blocks for the decoding skills needed in reading. Phonological awareness (PA) refers to the conscious ability to identify and manipulate oral speech sounds. This includes the ability to identify environmental sounds, segment words into syllables, identify words that rhyme, and begin to identify beginning sounds in words. This awareness of the sound structure in English then paves the way for the knowledge of phonics with which children are able to match individual sounds to print. The effects of phonological awareness combined with phonics teaching on predicting reading skills have been strongly supported with substantial evidence in Western studies (e.g., Hatcher, Hulme, & Ellis, 1994).

The above literature supports the conclusion that literacy instruction for young learners should begin with and focus on the early literacy skills which provide the building blocks for other literacy skills. This sequence makes more sense to young L2 learners who do not have the cognitive resources to cope with abstract symbols and coding in reading and writing. Instead, by providing considerable listening and speaking experiences, the active constructive cognitive processes in listening comprehension help listeners to work on meaning, which serves as a good foundation for comprehending messages. The spoken language opportunities also provide fundamental skills for building a vocabulary bank and for becoming aware of sound systems and language structures, thus providing a foundation for the literacy skills of reading and writing in English.

As far as the pre-primary level is concerned, stories, songs, and games are regarded as desirable L2 literacy instructional strategies more so than the formal instruction based on copying abstract symbols and learning the abstract rules of grammar and sounds. On the one hand, these informal instructional strategies suit the unique learning abilities of the very young and, on the other hand, they have been supported by extensive research as being effective in developing the vocabulary and phonological skills that form the foundation for later literacy development.

How Do Stories, Songs, and Games Develop Vocabulary and PA?

Well-selected storybooks are age-appropriate tools for pre-primary learners because they capitalize on the young learners' need for contextualized and concrete here-and-now experiences. Good quality children's

stories offer language learning opportunities for young children by facilitating their understanding of vocabulary and engaging them in the active pronunciation of words and in discussions of their meanings during story reading. Good quality illustrations also help children make sense of the content and the text of the story.

Stories Contextualize Vocabulary Learning

Stories provide an organizing framework to contextualize the vocabulary of words that are otherwise isolated from one another and that do not make much sense to children. Take the classic story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle as an example. The story provides a vivid and concrete storyline to connect the vocabulary for food and for the days of the week in a context that is meaningful and familiar to young children. Children learn the names of the food that the hungry caterpillar eats every day when they recall its concrete experience of searching for food on different days. Story reading activities thus offer meaning-focused input and present language within a meaningful context. They enable L2 learners to experience how language is used in real life. These concrete experiences scaffold their understanding and recall of the vocabulary presented in the story.

Apart from having quality stories with contextualized vocabulary input and quality illustrations to assist young children with word meanings, the way in which a story is read or told to children also helps vocabulary development. The literature has noted that the story-based instruction of vocabulary is effective in teaching new English words to children. Three instructional approaches to teach vocabulary through story reading have been discussed in literature, namely incidental, embedded, and explicit. Yeung et al. (2016) study demonstrated that, consistent with the literature, the explicit instructional approach, which provides children with multiple chances to interact with the target words in the stories before, during, and after the reading the stories, was found to be most effective in making children learn new words. Many of the predictable books with repeated phrases and words lend themselves best to this type of explicit instructional approach. Take Eric Carle's book *From Head to Toe* as an example. The book introduces the basic body parts and simple body movements through a playful and rhythmic question-and-answer word game. Each page presents one animal who

can do something with a certain part of his body, e.g., the penguin says "I can turn my head, can you do it?" Before reading the story, the teacher pre-teaches the target words of body parts and briefly explains their meaning to children with pictures. During the reading, the teacher also pauses and briefly explains the target words once again when they appear in the story. The children can be asked to act out the action or to show the body parts to their friends, to show their understanding of the words. Consolidating activities in the form of games and songs can be conducted after the story reading to provide children with multiple exposure to the new words.

Stories and PA

Phonological awareness can be intentionally taught through storybook reading, which provides a meaningful context for children to develop an awareness of sounds in the environment, words, syllables, rhymes, onset-rimes, and phonemes. Different books may easily lend themselves to focusing on many different components of phonological awareness. For example, books such as *The Listening Walk* by Paul Showers incorporate opportunities to listen to sounds in the environment; *Pete the Cat* by Eric Litwin has compound words and repetitions that provide opportunities for children to develop word awareness; *The Lion Zoo* by Rod Campbell has the names of various animals that provide opportunities for the children to identify syllables in words; *Sam I Am* by Dr. Seuss and *Silly Sally Went to Town* by Audrey Wood are classic rhyming books that provide multiple opportunities to raise rhyme awareness; and *Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See* by Eric Carle contains simple rhyming words (e.g., see, me) which can be used to practice identifying the ending sounds in words and to play with words by substituting sounds and creating new words.

Using Songs, Chants, and Rhymes to Consolidate PA and Vocabulary

Other than story reading, phonological awareness can also be supported through listening activities such as songs, nursery rhymes, and games in which children are asked to listen to and to manipulate the sounds they hear.

Songs and PA

The link between phonological awareness and songs is explained from the perspective of active listening by Fleta (2015, pp. 143), who highlights the importance of active listening in second language learning in the early years. She proposes that "children's voices cannot reproduce the L2 sounds that have not been registered through their ears in the initial stages of L2 language learning. Songs, chants and rhymes offer listening opportunities to develop auditory awareness and phonological awareness." Chanting and singing help children refine their auditory skills by tuning their ears to the musicality of the L2 that takes children on the journey toward literacy.

Songs, chants, and rhymes are also ideal ways to help children get the rhythm of English right. In contrast, Chinese is a syllable-timed language that gives exactly each syllable the same amount of stress when people speak. English is a stress-timed language, which means that stressed syllables are spoken at fairly regular intervals, and unstressed syllables often become shorter or disappear completely. Singing, chanting, and moving their whole bodies can help children internalize the rhythm of English because music and language share similar features: pitch, volume, prominence, stress, tone, rhythm, and pauses. Children pick up these sound features spontaneously through exposure. Songs, chants, movement, and finger plays within a group, for example, provide a safe situation in which they can use English. Children are more likely to sing when they can move in rhythm. Yang, Ma, Gong, Hu, and Yao (2014) conducted a longitudinal study with 250 elementary Chinese students learning English as their L2 (aged 78 months) and found that musical children outperformed non-musical children on second language development (overall performance on the L2 tests rather than any specific part of the test).

They argued that songs are a valuable teaching resource in EFL classrooms. The sounds, rhythm, and intonation in songs are believed to be important for developing children's pronunciation skills, while the melody and repetitive structure facilitate the retention of key vocabulary and language patterns.

Songs and Vocabulary Learning

Song activities can provide word exposure that goes beyond the storybook setting. Children are more likely to use words when they are

having fun, and when they feel safe, relaxed, and confident. Songs are effective tools to consolidate vocabulary learning in a fun-oriented, socially oriented, and multisensory approach. Songs in particular can provide a classroom environment that is rich in meaningful input in English, making English comprehensible in addition to being interesting and relevant to the learner. Coyle and Gracia (2014) studied a small sample of Spanish pre-primary children learning English as an L2, who were exposed to three 30-minute lessons organized around the presentation and practice of a well-known children's song. Their intervention results indicated that teaching a new language through a song can lead to the development of children's receptive knowledge of vocabulary.

The choral repetition of certain forms through songs and chants also helps young learners who are less spontaneous and more inhibited in an unfamiliar L2 to feel more confident about joining in chanting or choral singing. They are encouraged to speak up in a comfortable environment. Herrera, Lorenzo, Defior, Fernandez-Smith, and Costa-Giomi (2011) applied two eight-week periods of phonological training with and without music over two years to both native and L2 speaking children with a mean age of 4.5 years. The results showed that early phonological and musical intervention improved both naming speed and phonological awareness, both of which are good predictors of reading readiness. It was also found that L2 learners who received training with music developed naming speed skills and phonological awareness of the ending of words more rapidly than Spanish children in the control group.

The chorus, songs, chants, and rhymes can also be repeated many times in different ways to help children to understand and remember words. Puchta and Elliott (2017) reiterated that lively tunes and rhymes have a positive effect on memory. Repeated hearing helps reinforce language patterns, and singing is an easy way to remember things. For example, in chanting the popular rhymes of "London Bridge is falling down," the entire lexical chunk of "is falling down" is remembered well through singing. With other opportunities to practice this chunk and to use it in various contexts, children remember the phrase "is falling down" as a set chunk and not as a collection of words. This sets the preliminary foundation of grammar: Lexical items linked in logical ways with a proper order so that children do not make the mistake of saying "falling up" or "falling in." The collocation of "falling down" is naturally built into the spoken language of children. This example shows how

repetitive lyrics help children to store the lexical patterns that can be effortlessly retrieved during oral interaction.

However, simple exposure to the input may not be insufficient to develop productive knowledge in the majority of children, particularly among those who receive limited input in low-immersion contexts. Millington (2011) proposed that using songs as language learning tasks can maximize their potential as teaching and language learning tools. A language learning task must have clear language goals, a beginning and an end, and actively involve the learners. He proposed a three-stage song task: preparation—locate and focus on target words or set phrases; a core activity—sing with movement to help understanding; and follow-up—mini activities or games to reinforce the use of the target words or phrases.

Games Facilitate Vocabulary and PA

Games cater to children's instinct for play and fun. This instinct can be turned to great learning advantage by creating engaging activities that children enjoy.

Games and Vocabulary Learning

With regard to language learning, games provide the intense and meaningful practice of language through the repeated occurrence and use of a particular language form. Take the same example of Eric Carle's book of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Children can be offered a variety of vocabulary games to consolidate their understanding of the meaning of the food. The games can also provide children with a real motive to name the food. In the pretend play, the teacher can act as the very hungry caterpillar to ask for the food from the children. Teacher: "I am very hungry, what food do you have to feed me?" Child: "I have an orange." The game then creates a need for dialog in which children experience the naming function of language and use the language for real communication.

Hence, language games present English as a communication tool to be used rather than as a specific subject. They are essential in the creation of a rich learning environment that integrates another language into everyday learning and results in it being meaningful, useful, and playful for pre-primary children. Games can encourage all children to use

language in a non-threatening environment. For very young learners, games are fun and enjoyable and involve them as active learners. Games can be changed in many different ways for variety and can be sufficiently flexible to be tailored to the needs of the group or to individuals in the group, thus reinforcing language. As far as vocabulary learning is concerned, games expose children to the meanings and the use of words in different settings in multiple ways. This matches best with the young learners' need to acquire L2 through continuous exposure and use, as proposed by Halliwell (cited by Mourao, 2015).

With regard to the positive effect of games on vocabulary learning, the literature reports more data for older learners than for pre-primary learners. Taheri (2014) studied the effect of using language games on the vocabulary retention of 32 female students aged 11–16. The results showed that vocabulary knowledge of both groups improved. Although the improvement in the experimental group was higher than in the control group, the difference between groups was not very significant. However, over time the participants in the experimental group were able to recall the vocabulary more than the control group. The effect of the game-like activities was more significant in the delayed than the immediate assessment. Honarmand, Rostampour, and Abdorahimzadeh (2015) investigated the effect of the game Tic Tac Toe and flash cards on 50 zero beginners aged 5–7 on elementary students' vocabulary learning and found that the game and the flash cards, as educational tools for training, had a more positive influence than traditional methods. Even though the data do not specifically come from pre-primary students, the evidence generally supports the positive effects of games on language learning.

Games to Develop PA and Phonics

PA and phonics knowledge provide the foundation skills for reading and the spelling skills for later literacy. Puchta and Elliott (2017) argued that "if the explicit teaching of the relationship between letters and their sounds is done in the spirit of play, it can add significant information to children's early literacy development" (p. 6). This approach gives them practice in saying and hearing the phoneme more clearly. Many phonic stories offer good opportunities for these games to be played. For example, after reading the phonic story *Silly Sally went to Town*, the children became all the more motivated to play the

rhyming game to identify all of the words ending in the same sound as "town" and "down." Many PA games can engage children actively in their noticing and processing the syllables and in raising their phonemic awareness. These games include tapping the body to count the syllables in a word, playing the Round the Robin game to list all of the words with the same beginning or ending sound, and playing the matching game to pair up the letter and the sound.

When children play, they are emotionally engaged. Multiple sensory channels are activated in their brains because a game can involve looking, listening, and moving-all simultaneously. The emotional and sensory involvement makes language all the more memorable. To tighten the link between play and learning, language games, like songs, are best used if they complement the language target being taught while the game is being played, or if the specific language target, be it a vocabulary word or a phrase, could be used in a game as a learning strategy.

In summary, informal instruction that includes using stories, songs, and games is found to be an effective strategy for learners in low L2 exposure contexts on two levels. First, such instruction offers learning experiences that are motivating, meaningful, and suited to the cognitive and linguistic levels of very young learners. Second, these informal instructional strategies take into account children's specific instincts and the six categories of abilities of learning as proposed by Halliwell (cited by Mourao, 2015). These informal instructions offer a holistic integrative approach that facilitates the development of the whole child, whose learning needs are qualitatively different from those of the older learners at the primary level. These strategies address the cognitive, social, physical, and emotional needs of the pre-primary children in learning an L2 and can, to a certain extent, motivate children to be active learners and to listen and use the L2 language with confidence. In one way or another, this compensates for the pre-primary children's limited L2 exposure.

Conclusion

The increase in teaching English as an L2 to ever-younger learners in Hong Kong kindergartens presents challenges to teachers and researchers in identifying the appropriate pedagogies for effective L2 literacy instruction. Formal instruction on the language forms and rules that work for older learners are not applicable to the very young, who have their own specific developmental needs. Another challenge is the context

of learning. These very young learners are often not exposed to extensive L2 input in many of their low-exposure contexts, where the target language can only be used in the classroom for a limited time during the week. To overcome these double challenges, stories, games, and songs are found to be age-appropriate pedagogies and desirable learning tools for very young learners, who pay attention to language meaning more than to the abstract forms in L2 literacy learning. Story reading with rich instruction in vocabulary can be a good starting point for the exposure to vocabulary and phonological awareness, which are essential building blocks for later literacy. The use of songs and games can further consolidate the language by offering a repeated application of the target language (words or sounds) in different contexts that are meaningful and concrete. (See Appendix 1 for an example lesson and Appendix 2 for a resource list of stories, songs and games to be used in the pre-primary level.) The insightful message here is that it is the availability of conditions, rather than an early start, which provides the key to success in children's L2 learning. In addition to age-appropriate pedagogies, the conditions for supporting effective teaching of English in young learners' programs must also include sensitivity to kindergarten teachers who are sufficiently equipped to deliver age-appropriate L2 instruction. This may be the next major challenge for teacher educators.

Appendix 1

An example lesson integrating the activities of story, songs, and games for vocabulary learning.

Picture book used	*From Head to Toe* by Eric Carle
Source link	https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3iVRZPQcM-qSDREYWlQc2lwU3M/view?usp=sharing
Age level	4–5 years old (non-native speakers)
Duration	30 minutes
Objectives	Children are able to: 1. Understand the commands (e.g., turn your head) and act them out (Listening) 2. Give commands to their peer in the game "Teacher says" (Speaking) 3. Match the correct word card to the body parts of the animal (Reading)
Activities	1. Stories 2. Songs 3. Games

(continued)

(continued)

Two sets of Target/ magic Words to be learnt	1. body parts (head, shoulders, knee, chest) 2. body actions (turn, raise, bend, thump)
Time	30 minutes
Activities	**Activity 1**: Story reading (10 minutes) Teacher shows the story "From head to Toe" to children. Teacher introduces the author and front cover of the book and tell the story with actions, pause to explain the target words with actions when they appear in the story **Activity 2**: Song singing (5 minutes) Teacher plays the song with the book twice. Children listen to it for the first time and imitate the action of the animal at the second time **Activity 3**: Game: Teacher says (5 minutes) **Round 1**: Teacher calls out a command (e.g., Teacher says turn your head). Children only do the action if the teacher says "teacher says……" ***T*: *Teacher says turn your head. C*: *(Turn their head)*** ***T: Turn your head*** ***C*: *(Stand still)*** **Round 2**: Teacher exchange role with children. Children can take the lead. Children call out a command (e.g., Turn your head) and ask the teacher whether he/she can do it. Teacher has to reply and do the action ***C*: *Turn your head, can you do it?*** ***T*: *I can do it (and turn his/her head)*** **Activity 4**: Whispering game (5 minutes) Teacher pass on the instructions to the children who are lined up in two lines. The last one of each line who do the action correctly will be the winner *T: Turn your head (thump your chest, raise your shoulders etc.)* **Activity 5**: Matching game (5 minutes) Teacher prepares a set of words of the different parts of the body (e.g., head, shoulders, knees, chest) and explain to children the meaning of the word card by putting them next to the body parts of a big paper Gorilla. Children are divided into teams and have to search for the right card and put it on to big paper Gorilla. Teams who get most correct matches are winners

Appendix 2

A brief resource list of stories, songs, and games for pre-primary level

	Stories
1	**Name of book**: *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* **Author**: Eric Carle **Publisher and Publication date**: World Publishing Company. June 3, 1969 **Youtube link**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbLPMjxUXmI
2	**Name of book**: *From Head to Toe* **Author**: Eric Carle **Publisher and Publication date**: HarperFestival. March 27, 1999 **Youtube link**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnoSD3TPz1o
3	**Name of book**: *The Listening Walk* **Author**: Paul Showers **Publisher and Publication date**: HarperCollins. January 28, 1993 **Youtube link**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLs4r8lHUSg
4	**Name of book**: *Pete the Cat* **Author**: Eric Litwin and James Dean **Publisher and Publication date**: HarperCollins. May 8, 2014 **Youtube link**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8iU1svFU8o
5	**Name of book**: *Dear Zoo* **Author**: Rod Campbell **Publisher and Publication date**: Macmillan. July 2, 2010 **Youtube link**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rudDGRQ9QGA

	Songs
1	*The Very Hungry Caterpillar* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_tUBBh4QzTU
2	*From Head to Toe* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xxyZSdYEmM
3	*Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h4eueDYPTIg
5	*Dear Zoo* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KsHXDPxozTk
Useful Web site for more songs : Super Simple Songs https://www.youtube.com/user/SuperSimpleSongs	

	Games
1	Whispering game ("Whispers") https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drwkuv3_RXk
2	Tic Tac Toe https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ktPvjr1tiKk
3	The round the robin game https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTiSngHXNlw (couldn't find a proper one)
4	Bingo game https://www.fluentu.com/blog/educator-english/esl-bingo/
6	Matching game https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1tuDwG0GRg

Useful Web site for worksheets for games:
https://toolsforeducators.com/

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CHAPTER 5

The Effectiveness of Tailor-Made Content and Language Integrated Learning Materials for Taiwanese Primary School Students' Literacy Development

Tsui-Ying Lin, Wei-Hua Shih and Min-Shan Lee

Introduction

Taiwan has been undergoing a series of basic education reforms for over a decade. The years of compulsory basic education were extended from nine to twelve. The new general curriculum guidelines were promulgated in 2014 and are ready to be put into practice in 2019. It has been provisioned that the new general curriculum guidelines are going to bring

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great impact on the traditional teaching and learning in primary and secondary levels of education in Taiwan for their emphasis on "student-centered" and interdisciplinary learning. There is also a further goal to scaffold students in Taiwan to develop higher-order thinking skills, such as problem-solving skills, which are needed to cope with the challenges in the rapidly changing world. This revolutionary change also forces language teachers to explore new approaches gearing to reconceptualize how language can be learned and taught effectively.

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL), a dual-focused educational approach widely implemented in Europe and some Asian contexts such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Hong Kong, has attracted considerable interest from English practitioners of all levels in Taiwan and is viewed as an innovative alternative for language teachers as well as content teachers to respond to the demands and expectations of the new curriculum guidelines. Evidence in Europe and other parts of the world shows that CLIL implementation successfully enhances learners' motivation, and the relevant literature reveals that child cognitive development is closely linked to their language development (e.g., Lee & Chang, 2008). However, a plethora of studies also report various challenges encountered either from content or language teachers' CLIL applications in their classrooms and among them, the shortage of appropriate CLIL learning materials is probably the most frustrating and common reason for setbacks (e.g., Mehisto, Marsh, & Frigols, 2008).

In light of Taiwan's current education reform which lays great emphasis on cross-field integration and real-life application, this chapter describes two Taiwanese primary English teachers' pioneering experiences in tailor-making CLIL materials for improving primary school students' reading comprehension and writing ability. The chapter starts with a brief literature review of CLIL development, CLIL application in Taiwan primary education, and how CLIL improves young learners' literacy development; then the two teachers' experiences of tailor-making CLIL materials for an ongoing theme-based project are addressed; next, the preliminary results of the effectiveness of applying the tailor-made CLIL materials for young learners' literacy development are reported through the analysis of the teachers' teaching journals; finally, the two teachers' perspectives on developing and applying the tailor-made CLIL materials to improve students' foreign language literacy are revealed.

The Introduction of CLIL

The rise of globalization has made the world tightly interconnected and has resulted in the urgent demands to integrate language learning into subject learning in mainstream education all over the world; in Taiwan, as well as in the other parts of the Greater China Region, English is the main foreign or second language taught in the primary all the way to tertiary education. Thus, the innovative CLIL approach has emerged to serve as a tool for teaching and learning. Because of its potential, we set off this part of the chapter by presenting a brief literature review of the following issues: What CLIL appears to be, CLIL in Taiwan primary education, and CLIL and literacy development.

What Is CLIL?

CLIL was coined within the European context as a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language. Mehisto et al. (2008) further emphasized this twofold aim is the essence of CLIL; in that, language learning is included in content classes and content from subjects is used in language-learning classes. Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010) claim that CLIL is an innovative fusion of both subject and language educational approaches. Therefore, while CLIL can be achieved by the subject teacher or language teacher individually, it is usually expected to be achieved by the two teachers' collaboration in a CLIL program or module. However, a wealth of research indicates the collaboration is challenging due to the great demands of extra time and effort required for course planning and implementation by both parties. Empirical studies related to CLIL have sprung up in recent years. Although different stakeholders' beliefs, perspectives, and difficulties are reported in the body of CLIL research, many of the studies set their focus predominantly on examining learning outcomes, such CLIL effectiveness in terms of content learning (Fernández-Sanjurjo, Fernández-Costales, & Arias Blanco, 2017), language achievement (Dalton-Puffer, 2008), motivation enhancement (Fernández Fontecha, 2014), and increasing intercultural awareness (Pérez-Cañado, 2012). Few CLIL studies tackle issues related to teachers' perspectives and experiences (Coonan, 2007). Research related to the effect of CLIL on language performance

generally states unsurprisingly positive outcomes for its immediacy and meaningful use of the learned language. This positive result has encouraged language teachers to conduct language-oriented CLIL courses as an alternative to the traditional second or foreign language teaching course, where the linguistic form is the end itself. For example, students use a scientific text, such as a climate change report, to learn key vocabulary or phrases (language *of* learning), and useful expressions for class discussions or task completion (language *for* learning), and are expected to learn new language from the process (language *through* learning) (Coyle et al., 2010). Although this language-oriented CLIL is viewed as a weaker or softer version of CLIL, it is considered as a solution to the time-consuming and effortful cooperation between content teachers and language teachers, as well as a solution to content teachers' lack of double qualification in content and language (Fernández Fontecha, 2012). This model of CLIL is also currently advocated in Taiwan primary education. This is not a common practice in the European context and demands more research to investigate the effectiveness of this softer version of CLIL in EFL primary settings.

CLIL in Taiwan Primary Education

In Taiwan, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has been encouraging institutions of higher education to establish CLIL programs in order to improve college students' global competitiveness and some studies have revealed gains in professional knowledge and English proficiency enhancement for college aged learners (e.g., Yang, 2015). Now, to cope with the upcoming twelve-year basic education reform, schools and education authorities are looking for ways to achieve the goal to build the interconnection among disciplines and real-life applications of knowledge and skills. CLIL's main feature, simultaneous learning of content and foreign language (mainly English in Taiwan), is in agreement with the new core curriculum guideline and has attracted great attention from primary and secondary teachers, especially language teachers in primary schools. Although CLIL has captured primary teachers' interests, for many of them, CLIL is still a new acronym. Since CLIL in Taiwanese primary schools is in its trial phase and has begun to gain momentum, teachers are starting to face a major problem. Many primary school teachers have not received sufficient

professional training and may not have solid background knowledge and practical experiences to implement a CLIL course. Therefore, in Taiwan, the MOE and professional learning communities, such as regional Compulsory Education Advisory Groups, have taken action, such as holding CLIL workshops and teacher training programs, to develop both language teachers and subject teachers' CLIL qualifications, to help them gain more confidence in CLIL practice, and to encourage more collaboration among the teachers from various disciplines. On top of that, those courageous teachers have been encouraged to share their pioneering CLIL experiences to inspire and engage more primary teachers in CLIL.

CLIL and Young Learners' Literacy Development

Literacy development for young learners has long been a concern of both educators and parents in Taiwan who have often argued that the teaching of content knowledge via a foreign language may bring negative effects on mother tongue or first language literacy development. However, in a longitudinal study in Finland, Merisuo-Storm (2006) found young learners in CLIL classes were especially advanced in reading comprehension skills and had more confidence and positive attitude in writing their first language; also, positive attitudes toward reading and writing in the foreign language (English) was shown. However, research regarding the influences of CLIL on young learners' literacy development is not so clear cut. Some studies examining the issue of academic or disciplinary literacy development unveiled that students' productive langauge skills (i.e., speaking and writing) were not promoted in CLIL classrooms (Dalton-Puffer, 2004) and poor academic writing skills were found by Vollmers (2008). On the contrary, Alrabah and Wu (2017) found a CLIL course improved students' writing competence within and beyond the sentence level and Tsai and Shang (2010) also reproted on the enhancement of cogitive skills and reading comprehension with the implementation of CLIL. According to Marsh et al. (2005), reading comprehension is essential in the CLIL approach because it facilitates access to content and language. Writing is viewed as the evidence for learning which shows a student's understanding of content and demonstrates their ability to use language in a meaningful way. As the reviewed research above reveals, CLIL research related to young

learner literacy is rare and more investigations are needed to understand the relationship between a CLIL apporach and young learners' literacy development.

In the following, we present two primary English teachers' CLIL material development experiences for thematic unitis of an ongoing project. We were interested in whether the use of the materials enhanced primary students' literacy development (i.e., reading comprehension and sentence-level writing). Moreover, the two teachers' perspectives and challenges were also revealed and discussed.

The Tailor-Made CLIL Materials

The existing literature points out one of the great challenges of CLIL implementation is the lack of appropriate ready-made learning materials. This is especially true in EFL primary education in Taiwan since these young learners still have not achieved sufficient linguistic competence for content learning, so the majority of textbooks available are focused on providing language learning input. That is, the learning materials in Taiwan may require revision by the teachers to properly meet young learners' language abilities. To accomplish the goal to develop proper CLIL materials for young learners, guiding principles for dual-focused material development are crucially needed; however, the existing literature provides few guidelines for developing CLIL materials for EFL/ESL young learners (Garcia Esteban, 2013; Ioannou-Georgiou & Pavlou, 2011). Moreover, there is no universal CLIL context that exists; thus, guidelines should be adapted to different learner contexts. In the next section of the chapter, we first describe the guidelines set by the two primary English teachers for their CLIL materials development and then the developed CLIL materials.

The Guidelines of the CLIL Materials Development

Coyle's et al. (2010) 4Cs framework—content, cognition, communication, and culture and the core features of CLIL methodology presented by Mehisto et al. (2008, p. 31) have been considered as the practical guidelines for CLIL implication and material development. Underpinned by the 4Cs framework and the 30 core features, in this present work, the two primary English teachers and the researcher worked collaboratively

to set the following principles for creating and evaluating the appropriateness of the CLIL materials for primary students. Since the current work presents two language-oriented CLIL implementations, we consider Zydatiß's (2007) version of the 4Cs framework where the center is communication, where a higher involvement of language is stressed. As the set language objective of this work is to improve young learners' reading comprehension and writing ability, we further specify Zydatiß's (2007) "communication" for literacy development, reading comprehension, and writing ability (Fig. 5.1).

Then, the core features of a CLIL approach presented by Mehisto et al. (2008) were selected and integrated into the four conceptualized building blocks—content, communication, cognition, and culture—to provide clearer guiding principles for the two primary English teachers' material development.

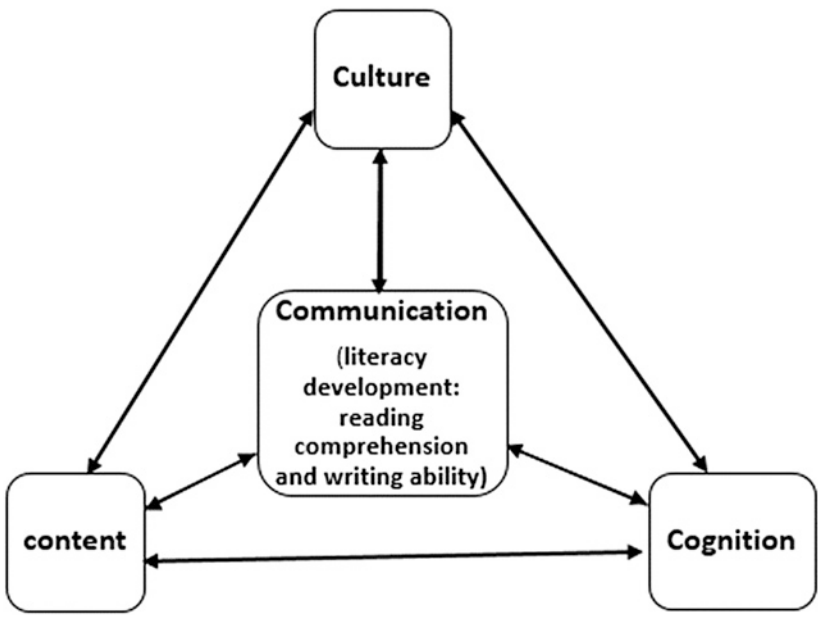

Fig. 5.1 The 4Cs framework of CLIL adopted from Zydatiß's (2007) with a specification of literacy development for communication

- **Content**: As Coyle et al. (2010) points out, content is the subject or the CLIL theme. It is the knowledge, skills, and understanding that we would like learners to access. Thus, at the beginning of planning the materials, the two teachers consented to develop *2018 Taichung World Flora Exposition* (TWFE) theme-based materials. To support content learning in language classes, English literacy development was integrated with Science and Arts learning. To connect the learning with students' lives, authentic materials from the media and other sources such as brochures and web pages were adapted by rewriting.
- **Communication**: The language objectives in the CLIL theme were beyond the lexical and grammatical competence of the learners, but the learners were encouraged to learn to use the language to communicate with teachers and peers. However, due to the scope and time of the current CLIL program, all communication skills were not covered. Therefore, the main focus of English learning was to enhance reading comprehension and sentence-level writing ability.
- **Cognition**: Cognitive ability was developed from the lower-order to higher-order thinking, and it allowed the young learners to construct their own understanding and develop new skills through the leanring materials. For example, visual aids such as pictures or videos were used to elicit new vocabulary and knowledge of content (lower-order thinking). Tasks such as collaborative writing of a transcript and a matching activity were designed to help students develop higher-order thinking skills—they were taught to "create" and "analyze."
- **Culture**: Designing CLIL learning materials about an international event held in the young learners' hometown helped the learners to become familiar with the local culture and provided them access to global culture; furthermore, this content helped the young learners develop "self" and "other" awareness.

The Process of Materials Development

The resources of the two developed thematic units were mainly taken from the official *2018 Taichung World Flora Exposition* website (https://2018floraexpo.tw/En). It is the biggest international event that has ever been held in the students' hometown. Thus, the

learning material was authentic and closely connected to the students' lives. According to the web site introduction, the purpose of this international event was to encourage people to reflect on the intimate relationship between humanity and Mother Nature as well as to redefine the ice-cold statistical term "GNP" (Gross National Product) into a warmer one, Green (green production), Nature (ecosystem), and People (humanity). GNP served as the theme to encourage people to rediscover the value of harmonious development of the three words. Based on the information gained from the Web site, the two teachers integrated English learning with Science, mainly dealing with the global issue of environmental protection and with Arts, mainly dealing with the appreciation of Mother Nature's beauty. Although the two thematic materials were developed based on the guiding principles underpinned by the 4Cs framework, the presentation of the material examples here are mainly related to communication (literacy development). This was the two teachers' primary concern for this language-oriented version of CLIL implementation. The material design framework is further presented in Fig. 5.2, where Taichung World Flora Exposition is the major theme used for creating materials for content (Science and Arts) and language (English) integrated learning.

All the learning materials were planned with specific learning objectives and learning outcomes. The content and language were tailor-made

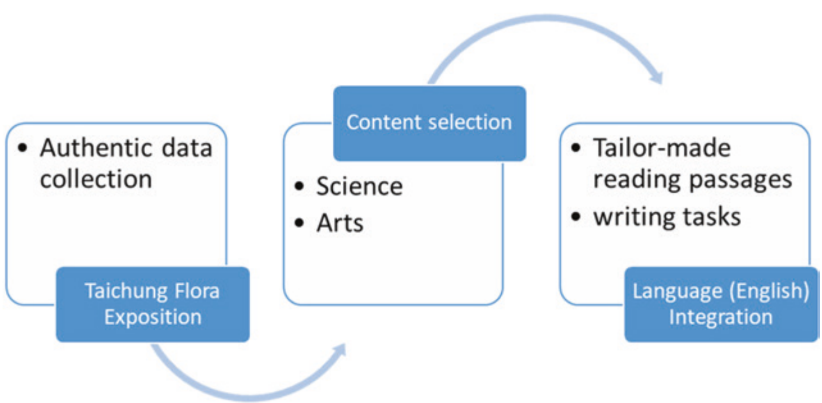

Fig. 5.2 The framework of CLIL material development

with the concern of the young learners' linguistic and cognitive level of competence. The target students were from two different public primary schools in central Taiwan. There were eleven fifth graders in the *Arts and English* class and twenty-six sixth graders in the *Science and English* class. Both classes consisted of students with varying levels of English ranging from beginner to upper-intermediate. In order to access students' prior knowledge of Science and Arts, we consulted their subject teachers to get an overview of the students' learning performance; also, we referred to the general curriculum guidelines of the two subjects to gain more information of what students have learned and will learn next.

After collecting the learners' background information, the two teachers started to draft their learning texts based on the material development framework. The two teachers were senior primary English teachers and chief members of a regional English Advisory Group, which was composed of scholars, researchers, government officials, and experienced English teachers. The main mission of the advisory group was to try out new teaching approaches, demonstrate how to teach lessons, organize professional training programs/workshops, and promote new education/language policies. As the chief members of the advisory group, the two teachers pioneered CLIL materials development, shared their materials in the advisory group meetings, and received feedback on their materials during these meetings that led to further revisions. Sample pages of the final versions of their tailor-made materials are presented below.

Science and English Integrated Learning Materials

First, the GNP logos and mascots (leopard) were used as visual aids to elicit class discussion of environmental protection followed by two short reading texts that focused on logos and the leopards. Then a video from the official TWFE Web site was revised to help introduce the event and its theme—harmonious development of environment (Green), Mother Nature (Nature), and people (People). The learning objectives are presented below:

Subject objectives: Students will be able to:

1. understand the concept of GNP (Green, Nature, and People).
2. develop environmental awareness for promoting sustainable development through TWFE.

Fig. 5.3 Sample pages from tailor-made Science and English materials for grade 6, Min-Shan Lee

Language objectives: Students will be able to:

1. answer *Wh*-questions.
2. learn and apply the reading strategy: making predictions.
3. complete a collaborative writing task to introduce the TWFE.

Sample material pages (Fig. 5.3).

Arts and English Integrated Learning Materials
First, the teacher used a poster of the Taichung Flora Exposition to replace the traditional color wheel to introduce primary colors (red, yellow, and blue) and secondary colors (purple, green, and orange). Then a learning passport with a short story of the leopard family was designed to engage students in reading descriptions of indigenous flowers, and it was utilized as a model for students to write descriptions for their flower paintings. The learning objectives are presented below:

Subject objectives: Students will be able to:

1. learn primary and secondary colors.
2. experiment with the mix of primary colors and apply them to their flower paintings.

Fig. 5.4 Sample pages from tailor-made Arts and English materials for grade 5, Wei-Hua Shih

Language objectives: Students will be able to:

1. understand the target vocabulary such as colors, seasons, and flower names.
2. recognize story structure and identify content of categories such as characters, setting, events, problems, and resolution.
3. use the vocabulary and sentence patterns learned to compose a description for their flower paintings (Fig. 5.4).

The Applications of the CLIL Materials

The two primary English teachers wanted to know how their materials assisted young learners in developing English literacy. Therefore, along with the creating of their CLIL materials, the two teachers also worked on lesson plans for the materials to be used in their classes. Since the two tailor-made CLIL materials were part of an ongoing CLIL project of the regional English Advisory Group, the materials have not been pervasively

applied to investigate the effectiveness on young learners' literacy development. Therefore, in this section of the chapter, only preliminary results gained from the two teachers' classes are reported.

Code-mixing of Mandarin Chinese and English was used as the medium of instruction in both teachers' EFL classes where the tailor-made CLIL materials were implemented. Using learning objectives as guides, the effectiveness of the tailor-made CLIL materials in improving the students' reading comprehension and writing ability was evaluated. Data were collected and analyzed from the students' performance on class tasks and the teachers' journals. The overall results from the two teachers' classes showed that the tailor-made CLIL materials improved the young learners' motivation and literacy development. Evidence of the improvement in reading comprehension and sentence-level writing ability from the two classes is provided below.

In the Science and English integrated learning class, ongoing formative assessments were used to evaluate whether the students' reading comprehension improved. Reading comprehension was assessed via two tasks; one was matching the descriptions of the concepts of the TWFE logo to its correct parts (Fig. 5.5) and the other required students to respond to *wh*-questions, such as "What message does the logo want to convey?" In the latter task, students were divided into groups and each group had to discuss and submit the answer for each reading comprehension question through their tablets (iPads) and the teacher immediately checked whether the correct information related to the content was addressed. The teacher's journal entries also revealed students' reading comprehension improved.

> …students could identify the pictures and make predictions about the event as well as its logo and theme,……..the learning objectives were achieved ……. (Pamela Lee)

To achieve a better understanding of the facts and concepts of the TWFE, an interactive video was presented as the learning material to help students accomplish the final task-writing collaboratively to introduce the event. This writing task was structured from low cognitive thinking skills—memorizing the information and writing down complete sentences as answers for questions presented in the video—to high cognitive thinking skills—creating a collaboratively written text to introduce the TWFE. First, students' sentence-level writing ability was evaluated by whether

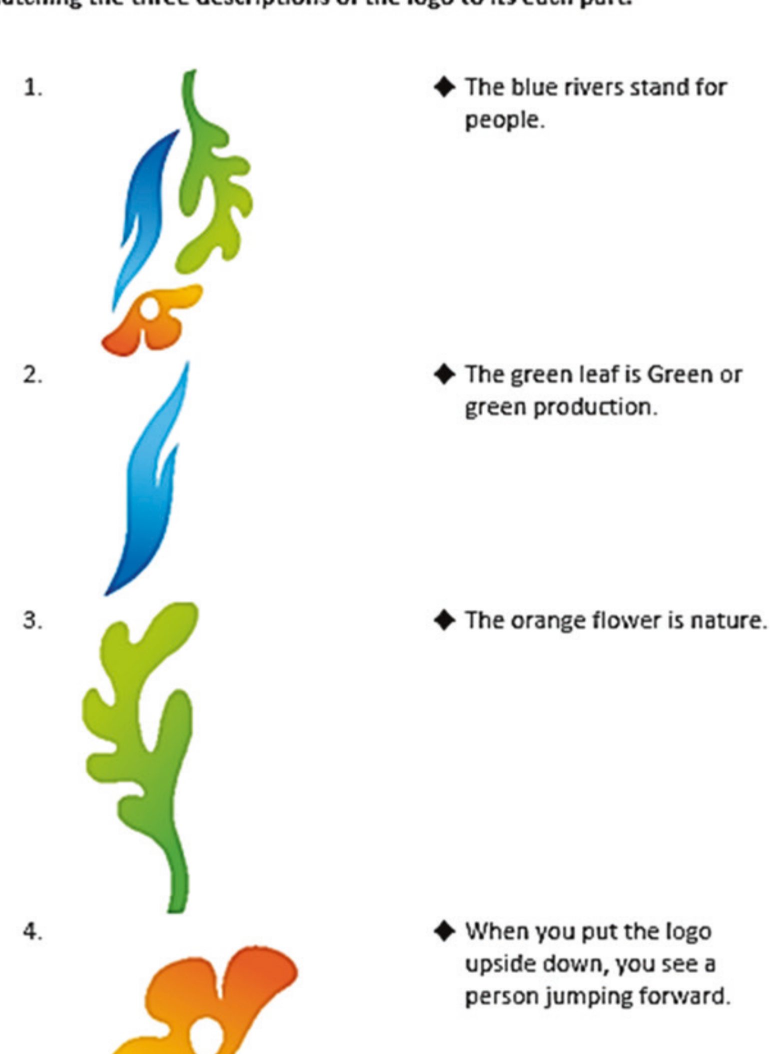

Fig. 5.5 Worksheet for checking reading comprehension in Science and English integrated learning class for 6th graders, Pamela Lee

they were able to write down the questions and their corresponding answers in complete sentences with their group members during and after watching the video. Then, each group took turns reading aloud their sentences and the teacher checked the group work to see if the goal, in terms of the correct use of the learned key vocabulary and sentence structures, was fulfilled. According to the reflections found in the teacher's journal, she expressed high satisfaction in students' sentence-level writing, stating:

> …my students were passive in asking or responding to the questions in the textbook, but they seem to be active in the Q&A exercise on the App-EdPuzzle (the interactive video)……it facilitated to improve the students' reading comprehension and writing skills…. (Pamela Lee)

It is a pity that in this trial phase of the tailor-made CLIL materials, the teacher did not encourage students to complete the higher-order cognitive collaborative writing task. However, in her journal, she indicated that more hours should have been planned for the duel-focused CLIL lessons and it seemed that the lack of sufficient teaching/learning hours was one of the reasons that detered her from complete CLIL implementation.

In the Arts and English integrated learning class, reading comprehension was evaluated by whether students could correctly respond to the teacher's questions about the reading. Questions related to story details such as "How many members are there in the leopard's family?"; "What is Life going to do for his family?" were raised to check students' understanding of the reading text. After reading a short story about the leopard's family, students were directed to complete worksheets to assess their reading comprehension. Then, after the completion of their flower paintings, students were to write a short description of their artwork to assess writing ability. However, due to the fact that the art took up the majority of the class, most students did not finish their writing (Fig. 5.6).

In her teaching journal, the teacher clearly indicated that she was delighted that this life-centered CLIL material and student-centered instruction positively engaged and motivated students in reading and writing. She felt that it helped students achieve a better understanding of reading texts as well as develop a better command of sentence-level writing. However, to achieve better comprehension of authentic reading materials such as the indigenous flower profiles required more visual support due to the insufficient academic and linguistic knowledge of her young learners.

In terms of writing, although the students were found to use the target sentence patterns presented in the materials with ease, students encountered great difficulties in using appropriate words to descript their favorite flowers. Thus, more assistance and time were required to complete the worksheets.

The Teachers' Perspectives on Developing Young Learners' Literacy with Tailor-Made CLIL Materials

Through a focused interview and analysis of their teaching journals, the two primary English teachers were found to have held a positive atittude toward CLIL and were willing to continue to develop appropriate learning materials to teach English literacy. They were also highly contented with their CLIL materials and their applications.

> To conclude, I think these two lessons are great in that I am very confident in teaching beyond the textbook and my students benefit a lot from learning the content of TWFE and doing the real-life tasks ……. (Pamela Lee)

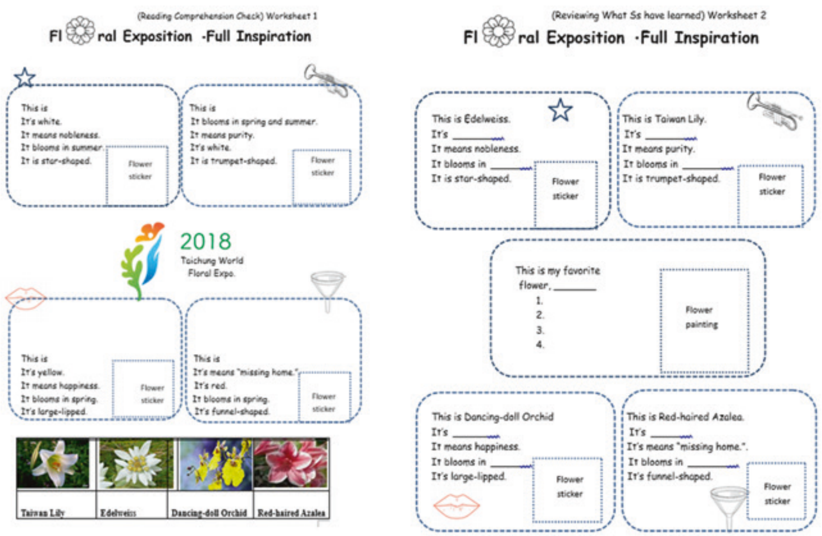

Fig. 5.6 Worksheet for assessing reading comprehension and sentence-level writing in Arts and English integrated learning class for grade 5, Grace Shih

> The down-to-earth concerns still did not overshadow the value of this CLIL methodology. Based on the features of life-centered and student-centered instruction, the students were much more involved and motivated in the learning. (Grace Shih)

According to the data collected, the teachers felt that developing CLIL materials for primary learners may offer the best solution for coping with the implementation of the new curriculum guideleines. The two teachers expressed a concern for a lack of CLIL materials for primary learners as well as professional knowledge attained by primary teachers. Additionally, both of them mentioned only initial training from a few workshops were received before this CLIL practice and expressed a need for CLIL training courses. Thus, while developing the materials, they were struggled with how the content knowledge could be integrated into language learning. Since the two teachers in this study are both language teachers, it was found that the lack of sufficient content knowledge decreased their confidence in developing appropriate CLIL materials as well as in teaching content knowledge in their language classrooms. Therefore, a request for a top-down language policy and interdisciplinary CLIL workshops or training courses are essential to promote the collaboration of teachers from both content and language backgrounds. Only through the contribution of two parties' expertise will better CLIL materials be developed and better teaching and learning effectiveness be achieved in primary education.

After deciding on the theme for the CLIL materials, the two teachers spent a lot of time and effort looking for resources from various channels. They also sought assistance from subject teachers to create these materials. As English textbooks still played a major role in their classrooms, the two teachers were concerned whether they will be able to squeeze extra time for CLIL materials if their English language textbooks continue to dominate their classrooms. Therefore, as one option to ease the load when developing self-tailored materials, they considered whether it is feasible to cooperate with the local publishers to develop localized CLIL textbooks. The teachers' points are valid and some ready-made materials would make it easier for teachers to modify and create their own contextualized materials. This line of thought is in line with the results of previous studies (Coonan, 2007; Fernández Fontecha, 2012).

Conclusion

CLIL has started making its way into Taiwanese primary language education classrooms. The two primary English teachers' ideas, difficulties, and suggestions presented in this chapter should be viewed as a great leap toward Taiwanese primary English education reform. Although the CLIL practice results were quite positive and learners' literacy was enhanced, issues related to language-oriented CLIL practice, such as how content knowledge develops effectively in language classes, the language use (first language and English) in the CLIL classrooms, and EFL young learners' attitude and their parents' perspectives toward the CLIL practice, remain unexplored. These will need to be tackled to realize the goal of developing young learner's English literacy through the integration with content learning.

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CHAPTER 6

English Literacy Instruction in Macau Primary Education: What Can We Learn from the Award Scheme on Instructional Design?

Kan Kan Chan

Introduction

Despite the fact that English is not an official language in Macau, English is perceived as an important language for its socio-economic development. Because Macau is a world heritage city and an international tourist destination, English is extensively used in the service sector such as the hotel, tourist, and trade industry. The Macau Development Strategy Research Centre and the Macau Association of Economic Sciences have purported that English learning should be promoted as a long-term strategy for the development of Macau as an international city (Ieong, 2000). In fact, after the liberalization of the gaming industry in 2002, English has become an indispensable part of the community. Similar to other international cities, the Macau government is keen to

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raise the overall language ability of the local citizens, so funds were set up to encourage Macau citizens to improve their English proficiency in order to meet the challenges of having more international tourists.

In primary and secondary education, many schools in Macau use Chinese (Cantonese or Mandarin) as the medium of instruction, and only some schools use English as a medium of instruction.[1] The majority of schools teach English as a foreign language. The complexity of teaching English in the trilingual environment of Macau has been a long-term issue. Students usually speak Cantonese in day-to-day communication but they learn Mandarin and English in school. This implies that their usage of English in daily life is limited. Even though students have the chance to learn English once they start kindergarten education at the age of three, many local students in university have reported that they were not satisfied with their proficiency levels of spoken and written English (Young, 2009). Ieong (2002) pointed out that the English language teaching in Macau is problematic. English teachers have limited time to teach, and students are not motivated to learn. Besides, there are great variations in students' ability in English. Students' exposure to English is limited to classroom English, which only focuses on a particular forms of the language. They do not watch English television programs and news in daily life (Young, 2009). English teachers also find it difficult to create an environment for students to apply knowledge and skills learned in the classroom. This is because the textbooks used in school focus on the forms of the language and the functions of the language in specific scenarios (Tam & Loi, 2018).

In recent education reform in Macau, the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ, Direcção dos Serviços de Educação e Juventude in Portuguese) has established the Requirement for Academic Attainments of Basic Education with the intention to improve the quality of education (Guo, 2016). The Requirements of Basic Academic Attainments of English as a second language specifies the rationale of instructional principles and the curriculum goal of English as a second language. Littlewood (2007) reported that many East Asian countries were moving from a teacher-centered approach toward a more active and authentic pedagogy of communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching. As CLT has the potential to improve students' proficiency in English (Littlewood, 2007), CLT is being promoted in the curriculum guideline of Macau primary English instruction (DSEJ, 2016). As specified in the curriculum guideline for English

as a second language (DSEJ, 2016, p. 13), it is hoped that Macau schools will achieve the following curriculum goals in English language learning.

1. Enable students to master the basic skills of English language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing and begin communicating and applying English learned in their daily lives;
2. Develop students' positive attitudes toward learning English. Provide students with opportunities to listen, speak, read, write, question, and think in order to acquire the relevant skills;
3. Nurture students' interest and self-confidence in learning English in order to enhance their motivation to learn English and to improve their proficiency;
4. Nurture students' spirit of cooperation and respect for a collaborative environment in learning English;
5. Cultivate students' ability to analyze and organize information, and develop their creativity and problem-solving ability in English;
6. Cultivate students' respect for cultural differences, and broaden their views;
7. Cultivate students' abilities and strategies to learn English on their own in order to establish a foundation for future development of English skills; and
8. Prepare students for practical application of skills and competencies learned in the classroom.

These goals serve as a set of directions that Macau teachers are expected to refer to and fulfill. From the 2016/2017 academic year, all primary schools in Macau should have been following the requirements outlined in the guideline.[2] A review of the literature showed that teachers in Macau are exploring new and innovative approaches to foster students' proficiency and interest in English. For example, Tam and Loi (2018) proposed using a literature-based language arts lesson in traditional Chinese schools so that students have more time to read and use the language. Wong and Chan (2016) proposed using a student-response system to create a more interactive and engaging environment for the instruction of grammar rules. In order to understand how primary teachers in Macau are implementing the Requirements of Basic Academic Attainments, this study reviewed the awarded instructional design entries of primary English for the 2016/2017 academic year.

The Award Scheme on Instructional Design, set up in 1996 to promote teaching effectiveness, quality of education, and professional development of teachers, has been an annual initiative of the DSEJ. All teachers in Macau's formal education and recurrent education system are eligible to join the scheme. In order for teachers to demonstrate the capacity of curriculum development, teaching materials development, teaching performance, and research ability, the scheme accepts different types of projects such as teaching plans, teaching research reports, teaching aids, and open class teaching.[3] The focus of this study is on teaching plans, so information on other types of projects was not analyzed. Three types of teaching plan projects are accepted: unit teaching plan, theme teaching plan, and academic year teaching plan. The unit teaching plan is an educational activity with at least four teaching periods. The theme teaching plan and academic year teaching plan may consist of several units for a duration of at least half of an academic year and a complete academic year, respectively. Teachers are encouraged to refer to the contents in one or interdisciplinary areas of the Requirements of Basic Academic Attainments proposed by the government. Submitted teaching plans were assessed based on the criteria of creativity, practicability, effectiveness, accuracy, and rigorousness with reference to the Requirements of Basic Academic Attainments. Therefore, the awarded teaching plans were considered as effective and promotable in Macau contexts. They are kept in the educational resource center of the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau and online (http://www.dsej.gov.mo/cre/tplan/award.php) so that all interested teachers may refer to them and apply them to their own context. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to unveil the innovative practices of the subject of English in Macau's primary education system.

Methods

To better understand the innovative practices of English literacy instruction in Macau primary education and identify gaps that need attention, all the awarded instructional design entries of primary English for the 2016/2017 academic year were collected through the website listed above. There were 18 awarded primary English education entries with 321 lessons ranging from primary 1 to primary 6, as shown in Table 6.1. There were more awarded entries among the lower primary than among the upper primary levels. Awarded entries represent six different schools in Macau, and three schools seem to be implementing instructional reform

Table 6.1 Awarded entries by class level, school, and type of teaching plan

Primary level	*Number of awarded entries*	*Number of lessons*	*School*	*Number of awarded entries*	*Type*	*Number of awarded entries*
1	5	87	S2	1	Unit	12
2	5	51	S9	1	Theme	5
3	2	44	S14	5	Academic	1
4	2	74	S29	1		
5	2	40	S32	4		
6	2	25	S118	5		
			S155	1		
Total	18	321		18		18

in English education. Because their awarded entries were either theme teaching plans or academic year teaching plans, two-third of the awarded entries (12 out of 18) are unit teaching plans that have 4–8 lessons in each plan. For the unit teaching plans, a typical sequence of instruction begins with vocabulary, followed by reading comprehension, sentence structures, and finally listening and writing tasks. Five entries were theme based, covering instruction with 30–59 lessons. These entries focus on specific areas of English literacy instruction, e.g. poems and songs, story reading, and drama. These lessons usually begin with reading a storybook. So, they usually extend over more than 4 weeks. Only one awarded entry was designed for the whole academic year, covering 36 weeks of reading and writing instruction with stories. All the unit teaching plans and three theme-based teaching plans were read and coded. Due to limited time and resources, two thematic teaching plans and one academic year teaching plan were excluded. A total of 15 awarded entries with 186 lessons were read and analyzed covering more than half of the lessons.

Data Analysis

Awarded instructional design entries were read and coded by two trained research assistants. With reference to the Requirements of Basic Academic Attainments of English as a second language and the principles of effective teaching and learning of English, the collected data were analyzed using the quantitative content analysis approach (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Awarded entries were coded and critically compared to the official primary English education curriculum in Macau in terms of teaching

objectives, teaching resources, learning activities, and assessment methods. The analysis was undertaken to uncover similarities and differences in terms of curriculum guidelines and award scheme commendation. Two trained research assistants first identified the teaching objectives in each lesson of the awarded entry and checked if the instruction in the awarded design met the intended objectives. Afterward, the teaching objectives were coded in terms of the learning outcomes specified in the official document. Each awarded design was given an identification number for the purpose of referencing. For example, in the awarded design, P79, students in primary 1 learned how to describe and name ten toys using the practice of Teaching Handwriting, Reading, and Spelling Skills (THRASS). English teachers use the THRASS strategy in the teaching of vocabulary to make learning more effective and comprehensive. After that, teachers would divide newly taught vocabulary items into individual phonemes, read the phonemes aloud, and then students were invited to combine the phonemes to read out the vocabulary items during a guessing game. This lesson is given the code of "Vocabulary" under the theme of "Teaching Objectives" and the code of "Game" under the theme of "Assessment Methods".

Results

Teaching Objectives

Reading comprehension objectives represented the most frequent type of teaching objective (Table 6.2), followed by objectives written to develop students' oral ability. There were a nearly equivalent proportion of writing and vocabulary lessons, and grammar lessons were the least represented. A typical awarded entry usually had one lesson for teaching vocabulary. Dialogs or a story followed the teaching of vocabulary. Oral practice

Table 6.2 Distribution of teaching objectives in the awarded entries

	Teaching objectives	*Number of lessons*	*Number of awarded entries*
1.	Reading comprehension	95	12
2.	Speaking	47	10
3.	Writing	28	12
4.	Vocabulary	27	15
5.	Grammar	10	8

or a writing lesson was planned afterward for students to consolidate learning. Explicit instruction to develop listening skills was not located in any of the awarded designs. However, a listening activity was often part of the reading comprehension instruction, where students were provided an opportunity to listen to vocabulary and stories. They learned the pronunciation of new vocabulary through listening tasks. In speaking activities, students played roles, spoke dialogs, and narrated stories. Besides reading comprehension, students were explicitly taught reading strategies. They were invited to use drama so that teachers could assess their understanding of stories and their abilities to apply knowledge and skills learned in previous lessons. In lower primary years, teachers planned fewer writing and speaking tasks for students compared to upper primary years. The teaching of grammar (sentence structures) was also identified in the awarded entries.

Half of the awarded entries had the clear intention of fostering students' interest and self-confidence in English. To achieve this goal, many awarded entries used different techniques to make their instruction fun and interesting. For example, teachers used interesting storybooks like *Pooh Gets Stuck* by A. A. Milne or *James and the Giant Peach* by Roald Dahl to attract students' attention and motivate learning. Another common approach was to use songs, poems, riddles, and rhymes. For example, students learned about the poem "If I Were King" by A. A. Milne in awarded entry P181.

Learning Activities

Lecture and interaction in the form of questions and answers are the two common forms of activities located in the awarded entries. These modes of instruction usually happen in a whole-class situation. Teachers seem to be quite skillful in teacher-centered instruction. They encouraged students to use action to help comprehension, and they also allowed students to move around the classroom whenever necessary. In these innovative instructional designs, teachers also employed more interactive activities such as role-plays, songs, games, presentations, sharing sessions, discussion, and writing tasks for students to become engaged. These interactive modes of instruction usually took the form of group work and pair work. A number of awarded entries had the rationale of applying cooperative learning in instructional design. For example, English teachers in the awarded entry, P093, integrated the concepts learned in mathematics to the English lesson topic of shopping. Students worked

in groups or pairs to use English and mathematics to communicate in order to buy and sell. Teachers also employed cooperative learning theory (Johnson & Johnson, 1986), believing that students will enjoy class more through interaction with their peers. Review of these awarded entries showed that teachers incorporated a wide variety of teaching methods in the instructional plans. However, only two awarded entries explicitly specified the rationale of instructional design as communicative language learning.

Teaching Resources

Teaching resources are used often by teachers to facilitate students' learning of English. Among the types of materials, teachers used digital resources such as videos, presentation software, and e-books. The use of presentation software with a projector is common due to its affordance of sharing information to the whole class, while e-books enable students to interact with the teacher. Online videos and music enable teachers to present multimedia information for students to learn from songs and riddles. Teachers also liked to use real objects and flash cards to make the learning activity more authentic. For example, students might be given headbands and paper money props to portray a shopping scenario. These objects are relevant and helpful to arouse students' interest in instruction. Flash cards are useful in practice activities. Digital resources are commonly located in many awarded entries and used to supplement regular instruction. Teachers showed online stories, played songs, or played video for students. With the availability of more digital tools for language learning, the teacher of the awarded design, P105, introduced an online thesaurus for students to consult to look up synonyms. Students were also introduced to online platforms such as Storybird to record their own stories. A teacher of the awarded design, P100, used online resources for students to solidify grammar rules. The integration of technology into English literacy instruction was quite common. However, only one awarded entry specified the use of digital technology for the purpose of cultivating students' English literacy. It seems that the concept of English literacy for Macau teachers is limited to printed text. In fact, skills and knowledge necessary for comprehending language in a digital format might be very different from those necessary for a paper-based format. For example, the students should have been guided to apply the use of the online thesaurus to write in English.

Assessment Methods

Classroom assessments in these awarded entries were diverse. Various types of assessment methods such as games, worksheets, writing tasks, questioning, role-play, and presentations were used (Table 6.3). The majority of classroom assessment was based on questioning. All the awarded entries contained writing tasks and questions for students to respond to. Teachers guided students to achieve learning objectives in many ways. Teachers, for example, gave students reading materials or listening tasks to work on and then questions would be used to check comprehension. Students were expected to show their understanding and learning through the completion of a worksheet or textbook activity. Therefore, a writing task was the most common way of assessing students' knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension.

Oral practice and presentation was other types of common assessment approach that teachers used. Two-thirds of the awarded entries contained oral practice or presentation sessions to assess students' oral literacy. Students had to speak with their peers to practice dialogs. For example, students in the awarded entry, P103, practiced sentence structures with their peers orally, and then they were invited to read their dialog to the whole class. In another awarded design, P158, students were asked to recite a poem. Some teachers had students give a presentation with the intention of developing their speaking confidence.

Alternative assessment approaches like role-play and games were also used by nearly two-thirds of the awarded entries. Matching games were designed to help students cope with learning vocabulary, grammar, and

Table 6.3 Distribution of formative assessment approaches in the awarded entries

	Formative assessment approaches	*Number of lessons*	*Number of awarded entries*
1.	Writing and questions in paper formats	115	15
2.	Oral practice and presentation	61	10
3.	Role-play and games	37	9
4.	Visual representation	5	3
5.	Digital assessment	4	3
6.	Peer assessment	1	1

phonics. This echoes the rationale of the instructional design. Teachers mentioned that students were not motivated in the classroom, so they devised games to arouse their interest. Teachers also encouraged students to use visual elements to represent their understanding. For example, students may have used concept maps to represent their understanding of a story. Role-plays and games were used as alternative assessments to measure reading comprehension and application of knowledge. For example, in the awarded entry, P093, students worked in pairs to simulate interaction between a customer and a shopkeeper. In another awarded entry, P100, students played a vocabulary detective game to learn new vocabulary.

Digital assessment and peer assessment were also used for assessment. Some teachers employed digital resources to diagnose students' learning problems. For example, in awarded entry, P093, students used a digital concept map to describe their favorite toys. Story writing on an online platform enabled students to express their thinking using words and pictures. Students were also asked to use the recording function of tablet computers to record their oral exercises. Besides self-recording, peer recording of performances was also used in the awarded entry, P175, where students prepared a play script. Teachers encouraged students to provide constructive feedback to their peers based on the video recording.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to understand the innovative practices of primary English instruction in Macau. With respect to the Requirements of Basic Academic Attainments, these awarded designs meet some objectives of the curriculum goals of English as a second language. For example, teachers have planned various activities to help students master the basic skills of English language proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing. Teachers included interesting stories that meet students' cultural and social needs and may have promoted their classroom participation (Yoon, 2007). However, none of the awarded designs used activities to sharpen students' listening skills. Teachers may have assumed that since the medium of instruction in English lessons is English, so students are given opportunities to practice listening skills in English. Listening activities were integrated into reading comprehension, where students practiced listening through the teacher's reading or the playback of an audio

file. There was no explicit guided training on listening skills. Carrier (2003) indicated that English as a second language instruction often neglects the importance of instruction in effective listening strategies. He argued the need for instruction of explicit listening strategies on a regular and repeated basis to develop students' transfer of knowledge and skills beyond the English as a second language classroom. Instruction of listening strategies may improve students' ability to comprehend oral input, video input, and note taking.

Developing students' communicative competence is a long-term process, and educational activities of the awarded entries for primary 1–6 are rich in terms of their formats and teaching materials. English primary teachers understand the need to cultivate students' positive attitude toward English learning. They have designed different ways to help students learn English. Despite the fact that traditional approaches were still common in the awarded entries, teachers enhanced traditional instruction with action, pair activities, and group learning activities.

With reference to the framework proposed by Littlewood (2007), many awarded activities can still be considered at the form-based end of the continuum. That is, students were often given a predictable range of language to practice. Spada and Lightbown (2008) argued that both isolated and integrated form-focused instructions are beneficial to language learning. Isolated lessons may be helpful for learning language features that are hard to perceive in the normal stream of communication. Integrated lessons may be more effective for communication outside the classroom, as they provide a planned instruction of repeated and natural context for the use of a particular language form. Therefore, the awarded instructional design entries are still considered as relevant and helpful for language acquisition. New interactive ways of language arts instruction were also found. Due to the interactive nature of these activities, they are more likely to develop students' interest in learning English. Results showed that primary English teachers in Macau are making efforts to enrich the learning experiences of primary students and foster students' English literacy in different areas using various innovative approaches.

Classroom assessment activities were designed to focus on four language skill areas. As shown in the results section, most of the assessment activities were based on questioning, and students were given different ways to indicate their understanding and application of knowledge.

Alternative forms of assessment, such as oral practice and presentation, were also common, as were role-playing and games. Results seem to suggest that teachers are using varied types of assessments that are essential for learning success. This contrasts with the finding of Morrison and Tang (2002), who found that alternative assessment has limited value in Macau English education. However, this study only represents teachers in six primary schools and may not represent the whole picture of Macau primary English instruction.

Information technology is being used by teachers to facilitate instruction of language learning. In fact, the content and pedagogy of English language education is changing due to the impact of information technology. Macau teachers' use of technology in English instruction is still primitive compared to innovative approaches of English instruction described in the literature (e.g., García-Carbonell, Rising, Montero, & Watts, 2001). This might be due to the limited time and resources available. Some Macau teachers are exploring ways to teach using technology such as online story writing and concept maps. These approaches enabled the teachers to collect students' responses in an efficient way. However, the use of technology for the purpose of assessment is still limited (Chan, 2018). Another issue of concern is the low number of peer assessments in the awarded entries. Because it is known that peer assessment is conducive to students' learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998), it is hoped that more English teachers in Macau would incorporate peer assessment in their classrooms.

Results of the study seem to suggest that the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau should continue the Award Scheme on Instructional Design, as it helps to enact the Requirements of Basic Academic Attainments. A more active approach to promote the awarded entries should be devised so that more teachers are aware of these innovative designs and can make changes in their own classrooms. For example, designers of the awarded entries might be invited to share their experiences with teachers in Macau. The bureau may invite the designers to revise the awarded entries in detail to avoid typographical errors and grammar mistakes before the online dissemination of the instructional designs. Teacher educators should provide training to Macau primary teachers about communicative language learning, especially about its misconceptions (Wong, 2015), concepts of English literacy (National Council of Teachers of English and International Reading Association, 1996), and the sharing of innovative uses of information technology in

instruction and assessment. Even though the number of schools represented by the awarded entries is still small when compared with the total number of schools in Macau, the awarded entries do show that some teachers and schools are reforming English instruction to meet the current trends in English education in Macau. This indicates that they want to cultivate students' interest in English.

Conclusion

The Award Scheme on Instructional Design seems to show that English literacy instruction in Macau primary education is moving toward a more student-centered pedagogy. The Requirements of Basic Academic Attainments are changing English teachers' implementation of English instruction. Teachers are paying more attention to arousing students' interest, and they are integrating various activities, teaching materials, and assessment approaches to help students learn English.

Notes

1. https://portal.dsej.gov.mo/webdsejspace/internet/category/parent/Inter_main_page.jsp?id=8425.
2. http://www.dsej.gov.mo/crdc/edu/requirements-e.html.
3. https://www.dsej.gov.mo/cre/tplan/file/tplan1819regul-c.pdf.

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PART III

English Literacy Instruction for Secondary Education

CHAPTER 7

English Literacy Development in Mainland Chinese Secondary English Classrooms: Pedagogical Recommendations for Enhancing Formulaic Language

Chen Ding and Barry Lee Reynolds

Introduction

Literacy in Latin means "one who knows the letters." In modern times, literacy, in its simplest but most direct sense, has been referred to as how to read and write in a language—whether that be a first (L1) or second language (L2). While these definitions are succinct, they cannot encompass all the intricacies and complexities of literacy. For example, according to Kucer (2014), a holistic view of literacy would interpret reading and writing processes through the following perspectives: linguistic (i.e., language and textual dimensions), cognitive (i.e., mental processes that are used to generate meaning through and from print), social

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culture (i.e., expressions of group identity that signal power relations), and developmental (i.e., strategies employed and the patterns displayed in the learning of reading and writing). Among such dimensions, literacy in this chapter will focus on the linguistic and developmental dimensions which examine language knowledge and skills (i.e., formulaic language) that learners need to function in the target language for communication (i.e., accurate and fluent written language). Another aspect of the complex nature of formualic language literacy is the difference between L1 and L2 literacy development. L1 users, in general, acquire the ability to read and write after the ability to listen and speak has developed. However, L2 learners begin to develop L2 reading and writing ability before fully acquiring listening and speaking ability. This contrast along with the assumption that literacy can be better acquired when spoken language has developed (Knell, 2018) highlights the necessity to develop L2 literacy by promoting not only written proficiency but also spoken proficiency (i.e., listening and speaking). Thus, although generally defined, L2 literacy in this chapter will be reconsidered as the ability to communicate appropriately through both spoken and written language.

Once we contextualize and agree on the definition of L2 literacy, a more challenging question comes to mind. How does one become literate in an L2? Just as literacy cannot easily be defined nor can this question be answered too swiftly. We must reflect on how one obtains the abilities to perform well at receptive and productive L2 tasks.

According to the time-on-task principle, "the more time you spend doing something, the better you are likely to be at doing it" (Nation, 2007, p. 2). In the same vein, if a L2 learner wants to be a good reader, the learner needs to read extensively and intensively for accurate and speedy comprehension of texts of various kinds; likewise, the same goes for being a good writer—one needs to practice for writing accuracy and fluency. In fact, reading and writing skills are connected—to be a good L2 writer one first needs to become a good L2 reader. To do this, the prerequisite is a well-developed knowledge of L2 vocabulary. This is often accomplished in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom through the teaching and memorization of single isolated lexical items. However, learners cannot become successful readers or writers only by grasping the meaning of individual words. This is because the learning

and use of an individual word occur in conjunction with the words surrounding it. Thus, vocabulary learning and teaching should also include a focus on word chunks or phrases (i.e., formulaic language). This can be accomplished through a wide range of formulaic language awareness-raising reading and writing activities.

Unfortunately, compared to the attention given to learning and teaching of single words in mainland China, formulaic language has been neglected. This is due to the long-established intensive grammar-based teaching methodology. In addition, learning materials made available to learners, such as dictionaries and textbooks, cater to approaches focusing on individual words as targets for vocabulary learning and teaching. While it can be argued that English language teaching and applied linguistics researchers have attempted to draw attention to the role formulaic language plays in language learning and teaching, at present less attention is being given to how formulaic language is taught or learned in language classrooms. This is especially apparent at the secondary education level in mainland China where purposeful and communicative language learning, teaching, and use are sorely needed. It is with these thoughts that this chapter sets out to give an overview of formulaic language, its relation to L2 literacy development, and how the learning and teaching of formulaic language can be brought into the Chinese secondary EFL classroom.

The Role of Formulaic Language in L2 Literacy Development

Formulaic Language

According to Wray (2002), formulaic language is

> "a sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other elements, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated: that is, stored, retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar" (p. 9).

Formulaic language comes in many forms and has been referred to by many names; however, the discussion into these differences goes beyond the scope of this chapter. Instead, the term formulaic language is adopted as an umbrella term to describe a group of words that occur together and adhere to native speaker conventions. Formulaic language

can include lexical collocations consisting of nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs (e.g., walk the dog), grammatical collocations consisting of a noun, an adjective, or a verb plus a preposition or grammatical structure (e.g., take on), idioms whose meaning of the whole is not obvious from the meaning of the parts (e.g., kill two birds with one stone), speech formulas which refer to word combinations that have a range of functions and uses in speech communication (e.g., how do you do?), and sentence structures which are semi-fixed expressions that allow for open slots to generate sentences (e.g., If I were you, I would…). Now that we have operationalized L2 literacy and formulaic language, the discussion turns to a number of reasons why secondary school teachers in mainland China should give formulaic language a crucial place in their classrooms.

Formulaic Language Acquisition Promotes L2 Literacy

When it comes to beginner L2 learners, formulaic language can best serve as an expedient communicative strategy as the use of formulaic language compensates for inadequate L2 knowledge. Mastering formulaic language improves L2 reading comprehension and fluency while also increasing L2 writing fluency and accuracy. In other words, the more L2 formulaic language one acquires, the readier one becomes to comprehend and produce L2 texts. This is because formulaic language is believed to be stored and retrieved holistically from memory, thereby reducing processing time. Research has also indicated that knowledge of formulaic language better predicts reading comprehension than syntactic and single word knowledge (Kremmel, Brunfaut, & Alderson, 2017). This is due to the nature of English language and in fact all languages, in that language is composed of formulaic language. Formulaic language studies have also revaled that learning formulaic language can be more problematic than the learning of individual words. Martinez and Murphy (2011) found even when the frequency of the individual words that made up formulaic language has been controlled to match learners' proficiency level, the formulaic language itself still lays at the core of the difficulty EFL learners face when comprehending a text.

The appropriate use of formulaic language also improves the quality of language output—this is also an indicator of native-like proficiency. Verspoor, Schmid, and Xu (2012) found the most important variable that made English writing by L1 Dutch speakers move from a low-intermediate to a high-intermediate level was the quality of formulaic language used. Besides, the majority of vocabulary errors in the learners'

written work were the misuse and underuse of formulaic language. Likewise, in research involving L1 Chinese secondary school writers, collocation errors such as **circle eye* (*round eye*) and **wear…on his neck* (*wear…around his neck*) have often been cited as reasons for low L2 writing performance (Fan, 2009).

Learning Environment in Secondary Schools in Mainland China

Mastering formulaic language is very challenging for L2 learners. Besides the complex nature of formulaic language, such as the ungrammatical combinations (e.g., *so as to*), semantic opaqueness (e.g., *kick the bucket*), and distance between L1 and L2 (e.g., *eat soup* as the Chinese equivalent of **drink soup*), the major problem that EFL learners encounter in formulaic language acquisition is the lack of rich formulaic language input and appropriate teaching methodologies that encourage awareness raising.

Compared with native speakers and English as a second language (ESL) learners, EFL learners in mainland China have no naturalistic input outside the classroom and the major input in the classroom does not provide adequate exposure to formulaic language. In fact, textbook analysis has revealed formulaic language was not sufficiently provided and systematically recycled for adequate exposure (Tsai, 2015). Without clear curriculum guidance, it is also an overwhelming challenge for textbook compilers to select appropriate formulaic language that should be incorporated into textbooks. For example, in mainland China, the newly revised Compulsory English Curriculum Standard (2017) issued by the Education Ministry does not include any required idioms and phrases in the appendix. Consequently, it might impose on teachers the requirement to make informed decisions on what type of formulaic language to teach and at which stage of learning to introduce the concept of formulaicity of language.

A grammar-centered teaching approach still plays a major role in secondary-level English language learning in mainland China, which may further prevent L2 learners, including advanced learners, from developing sound formulaic language knowledge even after years of English learning. As for vocabulary teaching, the focus is still on individual words. Moreover, recent years have witnessed a rising popularity in communicative approaches which may have gone toward the other extreme in that some teachers may feel they do not need to emphasize accuracy in

terms of linguistic forms. The conflict between teaching grammar as content and using language communicatively has thus narrowed the opportunities for the appearance of formulaic language in classroom language tasks and teaching materials.

What Formulaic Language to Teach?

Considering the importance of formulaic language in language learning, clarity is needed in regard to what formulaic language is worth teachers' and learners' attention, especially when classroom time is limited. However, there is a lack of consensus in defining criterion for teachers to apply when selecting useful formulaic language for teaching and learning. Although corpus-based formulaic language lists developed in recent years provide systematically verified resources, they have not always been implemented in classroom teaching, especially at the secondary level. Furthermore, teachers may need to take a balanced approach, where lists are considered as guides with several key criteria related to learners' needs and learning burdens also considered (see Table 7.1).

One of the most important factors examined when deciding on which formulaic language should be taught is their frequency of occurrence in a relevant corpus. Nation (2013) suggests attention be given to high-frequency formulaic language and low-frequency formulaic language made up of individual words that occur at a high frequency. Formulaic language made up of the most frequent 2000 words in English is worth

Table 7.1 Factors that affect formulaic language selection in the EFL classroom

Factor	*Description*	*Wordlists*
Frequency	Teaching focus should be given to high-frequency formulaic language, especially those in the most frequent 2000 words, e.g., *there was a…* Less frequent formulaic language made up of individual words that occur at a high frequency, e.g., *heavy rain*	PHaVE List (Garnier & Schmitt, 2015)
Range	Formulaic language occurring in many different types of texts, e.g., those having a high presence in both written and spoken genres, should be the focus	PHRASE List (Martinez & Schmitt, 2012)
Semantic transparency	Non-semantic transparent formulaic language whose meaning cannot be derived from its parts should be taught explicitly	PHRASE List (Martinez & Schmitt, 2012)

spending time on teaching explicitly (Nation, 2013). For example, over 90% of 505 phrases of common use in Martinez and Schmitt's (2012) PHRASal Expressions List (PHRASE List) are composed of the most frequent 2000 words of English. The other types of formulaic language worth spending classroom time teaching are those that are composed of high-frequency words, such as *give up* and *heavy rain*. Another formulaic expression list adhering to this frequency criterion is Garnier and Schmitt's (2015) PHrasal VErb Pedagogical List (PHaVE List). It is comprised of the 150 most frequent phrasal verbs in English whose key meaning senses and examples are ordered by frequency. This list can be an ideal reference for teaching phrasal verbs which are a lexical type, especially difficult for L2 learners due to their large number and polysemous nature. Teachers can use the list as a reference to identify target phrasal verbs and decide the sequence of introducing the meanings of a phrasal verb from most to least commonly used. In the case of *take off* (Garnier & Schmitt, 2015, p. 658), for example, teachers can first introduce the meaning of *remove something (especially a piece of clothing or a piece of jewelry from one's body)* as 41% of its uses refer to this meaning. The next most common meaning denoting *a plane leaving the ground and rising into the air* constitutes 14% of uses and thus can be dealt with after the first sense has been introduced and learned.

Range is another factor that teachers need to consider when selecting target formulaic language for teaching. Seeing that some formulaic language occurs repeatedly in a limited range of texts—for example, *only and only if* occurs frequently in the academic discipline of computer science—classroom time and effort should be spent on formulaic language that occurs in a wide range of texts. This is especially important for the teaching of English for general purposes, as the teacher will want to teach formulaic language that is applicable to all learners, regardless of what future needs they may have for using the language.

After frequency and range, the next factor to consider for selecting formulaic language is semantic transparency. This refers to the extent that the meaning of the whole phrase can be derived from its parts. Semantic non-transparent expressions (e.g., *show off*), compared with transparent expressions (e.g., *walk in*), need to be explicitly taught as they pose a heavier learning burden. The resource available that considers both range and transparency is the PHRASE List, which provides frequency ranking of occurrence of target non-transparent phrases in spoken, written, and written academic genres.

How to Teach Formulaic Language?

With the chore of selecting what formulaic language will be given priority during classroom time, teachers then need to imbed the formulaic language into their regular teaching through adequate speaking, listening, reading, writing, and linked skills activities. For younger learners at an early stage of language learning, exposure to spoken input and output should occur along with written input and output to help L2 learners acquire words and formulaic language (Knell, 2018). Thus, the formulaic L2 instruction recommendations also cover listening and speaking activities in hopes that L2 oral literacy development, in turn, will benefit L2 literacy in reading and writing. Linked skills activities combine the skills for tasks that deal with one topic that allows for learners to improve their accuracy and fluency in a language. The rationale behind the execution of linked skills activities is that the multiple interactions with the target language and multiple encounters with the target language will naturally lead to better language performance.

Formulaic Language Learning in Speaking Activities

Nation (2013) advocated the 4/3/2 speaking technique to promote L2 fluency development. In this activity, learners first form pairs with one learner taking the lead to talk about a topic continuously for 4 minutes and the other learner taking the role of listener. Next, the speaker in each pair finds a new listener to talk about the same topic but must finish within 3 minutes. The change continues for a third time but with speakers only provided 2 minutes. The listeners can become speakers on another day. The pedagogical purpose of this activity is to encourage learners to fluently rely on spoken speech under a time constraint. To further foster speaking fluency, formulaic language pre-speaking input preparation activities can be executed. This can be done by teachers providing learners a formulaic language word bank related to a topic for memorization. For example, if the topic is *eating out*, a vocabulary bank might include lexical collocations such as *an apple pie*, *chicken nuggets*, and *a medium-sized pizza*, grammatical units of measurement such as *a can of*, *a bowl of*, and *a cup of* and speech formulas for making an appointment (*invite/ask somebody to dine out*), restaurant reservation phrases (*reserve a table at 6 o'clock/for two*) and sentence frames related

to ordering food (*would like to have*). The pedagogical purpose of this activity is to ease the lexical burden of speaking while encouraging fluent production of formulaic language. To facilitate learners' spoken fluency, guided questions or an outline can also be provided. For example, the following questions could be made available to learners on a handout or the whiteboard:

1. What food do you like the most? The least? Why?
2. How can you ask your friend out for dinner?
3. How to make a reservation at a restaurant?
4. How to place an order in a restaurant?

Formulaic Language Learning in Listening Activities

As spoken language contains more formulaic language than written language, extensive listening is suitable for incidental learning of formulaic language. The uptake and acquisition of formulaic language can be increased if learners receive multimodal exposure—following along with a printed text while they listen to it being read to them. To further help increase listening fluency, formulaic language pre-listening preparation activities and meaning-focused post-listening activities can be conducted. For pre-listening activities, the teacher can lead learners in brainstorming to produce formulaic language related to the listening topic, and then introduce other relevant formulaic language to raise the learners' awareness of language targets they will be exposed to during the listening task. The pedagogical purpose of the activity is to train fluent listeners as they will become better able to attend to formulaic laden aural input. For example, if the listening topic is *grocery shopping*, teachers can offer up several typical scenarios (e.g., asking about products and their prices) for which learners should provide useful expressions, such as, *Do you have…?* and *How much is…?* as cues for listening. For after-listening activities, a retelling task can be conducted using the 4/3/2 technique, mentioned earlier in this chapter, that requires learners to regulate their spoken language during a meaning-focused relay activity where the amount of time given to complete the task is gradually reduced. Such an activity provides the learner taking on the role of speaker the opportunity to increase formulaic language speaking fluency while the learner taking on the role of listener to increase formulaic language listening fluency.

Formulaic Language Learning in Reading Activities

Nation (2013) noted that reading allows learners to incidentally acquire formulaic language. Extensive reading—reading a large quantity of self-selected texts at an appropriate level of difficulty with the purpose of enjoyment—is an excellent method of gaining repeated exposure to formulaic language. Extensive reading of graded readers is ideal for beginner and intermediate L2 learners as they are adapted to suit learners' language proficiency and the vocabulary are recycled systematically. Graded readers are also shown to be a rich source of formulaic language. Eye tracking studies have also shown that as the exposure to formulaic language through reading increases, EFL readers tend to begin to read formulaic language as chunks instead of isolated words, thereby increasing reading fluency and comprehension (Huang, Wible, & Chou, 2012). Teachers can encourage learners to read extensively by helping them select graded readers at the appropriate level. Publishers of graded reader series, for example, Oxford Graded Readers (https://elt.oup.com/student/readersleveltest/), provide online reading level tests to assist learners in selecting the appropriate graded reader level. Another approach is to conduct a quick self-test by asking learners to read through the first few pages of a graded reader and mark all unknown words. If more than 5 unknown words are marked on any page, the book might be too difficult for the learner and they should select another book. Teachers are also advised to encourage reading in class and act as a role model by reading with the learners. Once learners' reading habits are formed, they can be left to read on their own outside the classroom.

Besides reading extensively, teachers can integrate consciousness-raising activities into reading activities; this will increase learners' awareness of formulaic language. An example of such an activity is exemplified by Jiang (2009), who suggested that teachers ask learners to search a paragraph of text for formulaic language they deem useful and then compare their findings to what has been identified by their teacher as important. Next, the teacher can execute reading activities that focus on the formulaic language (e.g., true or false questions to check the inferencing skills targeting unknown formulaic language). Finally, learners should use the formulaic language targets as a guide to retell or rewrite the paragraph. The pedagogical purpose of this activity

is to promote a change in mind-set so that learners get into the habit of noticing formulaic language in language input. This contrasts with having learners focus on grammar or individual words when reading intensively; this lexical approach can develop and solidify learners' knowledge of formulaic language during the text reconstruction phase (Lewis, 2002). For secondary school learners, easier and shorter texts, for example, paragraphs from graded readers, can be adopted as the target texts for the activities. Another benefit of directing learners' attention to larger chunks is that it will help improve their reading fluency.

Formulaic Language Learning in Writing Activities

To increase the amount of formulaic language in learners' L2 writing requires awareness-raising writing activities. In prewriting activities, teachers should provide a targeted list of formulaic language with or without L1 translations that will act as a prime for learners before beginning the writing activity. Another prewriting activity that teachers can make use of in class to prime formulaic language is the delayed copying technique. Learners will be asked to break down a paragraph into formulaic language chunks. Then, they should read the paragraph by language chunk pausing between chunks to try to jot down the chunk using only their memory. Once learners have completed a few sessions of delayed copying containing several repetitions of the same formulaic language, ten-minute writing can be used to encourage written fluent production of the formulaic language. During ten-minute writing, learners are instructed to write as much as they can about a topic. If any feedback is provided to the learners, it should be focused only on the targeted formulaic language—doing so will reinforce salience of the targeted formulaic language forms. Teachers can simply highlight formulaic language errors and request learners to revise these errors through use of a collocation or other formulaic language dictionary. Alternatively, teachers can ask learners to exchange their work to provide peer feedback that attends to the formulaic language by correcting inappropriate usage (e.g., **powerful coffee*) and substituting concrete expressions (e.g., *stormy night*) for abstract expressions (e.g., *bad weather*). The pedagogical purpose of these activities is to encourage awareness raising and consolidate learners' knowledge of formulaic language through meaningful contexts.

Formulaic Language Learning and Other Awareness-Raising Activities

Activities for individual word learning can also be adapted for formulaic language learning. For example, word cards with targeted formulaic language on one side and the corresponding L1 translation on the other can be used for intentional vocabulary learning. When a set of word cards is used, teachers need to avoid presenting semantically related formulaic language together as they are likely to make beginner L2 learners confuse targeted word forms, such as *fast cars*, *fast food*, *quick glance*, and *quick meal*. Word cards can be reviewed as an individual or peer activity. Two learners, for example, can work together with the cards, one pointing to a card and the other providing the L1 translation.

One of the most common exercise formats found in popular ELT textbooks is matching, where learners are asked to pair up words from two different word lists to form meaningful formulaic language. For example, a teacher may provide the word group (A) *change*, *restore*, and *fight* and the word group (B) *war*, *order*, and *money* for learners to match up and create meaningful collocations. However, it is necessary for teachers to note that broken-up formulaic language may cause confusion, so it is better for intact phrases to be introduced in awareness raising activities. The same goes for another very popular phrase exercise—gap-filling—where learners are asked to fill in the blanks using targets.

change money, *restore order*, *fight crime*

1. Soldiers were sent into ____ after the uprising.
2. You can ____ some ____ at the airport.
3. The statesman resolved to ____ so that the city is safer for the citizen.

In this type of exercise, the phrases are presented as intact wholes which tend to build up a stronger mental connection between the words.

Text memorization and imitation is also an effective technique for learners to attend to formulaic language in input and produce formulaic language as output. Teachers can first select useful and relevant sentences, conversations, or paragraphs with clusters of formulaic language from textbooks, graded readers, or animation episodes for learners to

study and recite. Recitation of formulaic language in context may impose less analytical burdens on younger learners while also proving to be more effective in getting the learners to reproduce the formulaic language. For example, by memorizing formulaic language *despite the fact (that)*, learners tend to successfully engender the pattern in actual use. This practice is more effective compared to conducting grammar analysis or teaching a rule that *despite* is followed by a noun (Yu, 2009). While reciting the targeted expressions embedded in the discourse, learners should be instructed to imitate the chunking of the passage as closely as possible, namely the place where native speakers pause when reading aloud. During practice, teachers may also introduce signals of where segmenting should occur to make meaningful chunks. For example, chunk boundaries naturally occur at punctuation marks (e.g., commas and periods), and they correspond with phrase boundaries including multi-word connective devices (e.g., *as long as* rather than *as long/as*), and syntactic units (e.g., *it is high time that*… rather than *it is high/time that*…). Practicing the segmenting of a text into meaningful units aims to foster fluent L2 reading as the reading rate and fluency could be increased if learners possess efficient formulaic language recognition skills (Huang et al., 2012).

Mnemonic methods can be effective for learning formulaic language. The repetition of alliteration or rhyme (e.g., *face the fact, black and white, bride and bridegroom*) can play an important role in building up sound patterns that will aid in memorization of formulaic language. Teachers can simply draw learners' attention to the repetitive patterns and how the feature of one word can trigger another word (e.g., *from hero to zero*). The keyword technique also enables learners to memorize words and formulaic language more efficiently as the imagery combined with an L1 association allows for easier retrieval of the L2 form. In practice, the target word or formulaic language is presented with its L1 translation. Then, an L1 word or phrase that sounds similar to the English target is selected. Finally, the learner creates a mental picture that includes the L1 word and the L2 target. For example, learners could be asked to use the Chinese word *hong chang (red sausage)* as the keyword to help them remember the spoken form of the lexical collocation *hold tongue*. Learners could be shown or asked to visualize a picture of a hand carrying a tongue. However, it should be noted that this technique is limited in that it may be more applicable to formulaic language consisting of concrete words.

Dictionary use has been suggested as an effective way to improve reading comprehension and vocabulary (Nation, 2013). Teachers will need to introduce learners to dictionaries that cater to formulaic language, for example, the Online Oxford Collocation Dictionary of English (http://www.freecollocation.com/). Learners need to be told how to search for the main word of a collocation or language chunk. To encourage dictionary use, teachers can ask learners to exchange written work and correct formulaic language errors made by a peer with aid of a specialized formulaic language dictionary. An alternative activity would be for teachers to extract sentences with instances of inappropriate formulaic language use from learners' written work and then ask learners with the aid of formulaic language dictionaries to identify the errors and mark their corrections. For example, to correct the sentence *She likes to drink *powerful coffee*, learners look up the word *coffee* in the Online Oxford Collocation Dictionary of English to find the collocates (e.g., *strong*, *weak*, *back*, *dark*, *hot*, *cold*) and then substitute *strong* for *powerful*.

Recording formulaic language in a vocabulary notebook for periodic review rather than individual words is also an effective method for memorization. If learners are recording the meaning of a collocating pair of words, for example, the L1 translation and an example sentence could be organized under a node word. If the learner encounters related collocates (e.g., *endure pain/hardships/losses*) or topics (e.g., eating out), these can be easily added to the record. As a student's formulaic language notebook grows, teachers can further encourage the learner to expand the vocabulary network according to the meaning or function of the node word. For example, under the entry *endure pain/hardships/losses*, *alleviate/relieve pain/hardships*, and *make up for losses* can be added to create a vocabulary network for problem-solution relationships. In addition to spaced repeated review, teachers could also ask learners to construct sentences using the formulaic language recorded in their formulaic language notebooks. These self-selected formulaic language notebooks could also be used for a variety of other linked skills activities.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we first discussed the relationship between formulaic language and L2 literacy development: A good mastery of formulaic language can improve L2 reading comprehension and fluency while also

increasing L2 writing accuracy and fluency. Then, we partly attributed the formulaic language deficit of secondary L2 learners in mainland China to a lack of rich L2 input and the teaching methodologies widely used at present. Next, we answered two core questions: *Which formulaic language should be taught in secondary schools in mainland China?* and *How should formulaic language be taught in secondary schools in mainland China?* We suggested teachers to select high-frequency semantically non-transparent formulaic language that occurs in a wide range of written and spoken discourse types as their teaching focus. In addition, teachers that may feel unsure about how to go about selecting formulaic language could initially rely on formulaic language wordlists generated from the before-mentioned reference criteria. We also provided examples of how formulaic language activities can be integrated into listening, speaking, reading, writing, and other linked skills activities which have the potential to facilitate learners' L2 reading and writing. We hope that this chapter has drawn attention to the lack of formulaic language teaching and learning in Chinese secondary schools. We firmly believe that if teachers can begin to make small and incremental adjustments in their classrooms, they will see changes in the variety and quantity of formulaic language produced by their learners.

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CHAPTER 8

Spaced Multi-draft Composing and Feedback in Mainland Chinese English as a Foreign Language Secondary School Writing Literacy

Gavin Bui and Rhett Yu

Introduction

Different from a talk-mediated society, contemporary social relationship has been understood as textually mediated as texts afford different meaning-making resources than talk (Barton, 2006). Knowledge, power, and social relationships are constructed through text mediation, which has far-reaching implications for literacy development. Fostering abilities in reading and writing texts have long been the major components of literacy in the traditional sense, especially for young learners. In Hong Kong or even all of Greater China, traditional L2 writing instruction has been teacher-centered; students are at the receiving end of instruction, a designated topic for a "one-shot" essay, and a score probably accompanied with some feedback at the end. However, the quality of feedback varies considerably.

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The effectiveness of feedback is questionable as little is known about students' acceptance and uptake of teacher comments in their future writing in a conventional single-draft writing practice (Lee, 2016). From a perspective of process writing, this study explores a different method of implementing multi-draft composing by *spacing* (Bui, Ahmadian, & Hunter, 2019) three drafts of the same essay through eight weeks among *unwitting* secondary school students with or without *feedback*, with an aim to shed light on writing pedagogy among students of younger ages.

Literature Review

Writing as a major component in literacy development can be conceived as a product and be treated as an object that may be broken down to be taught separately. The focus is the final composition that a learner produced, which is to be graded by the teacher. This product perspective is a contrast to the view of process writing (probably originated from Murray, 1972) as an ongoing process, either in linear progression or in a recursive fashion. Murray believes that teachers should work with students in all three stages of composing: prewriting, writing, and revising. Since then, Hairston (1982) made the conclusion that a paradigm shift from a focus on written products to writing processes had happened in literacy education.

Several features underpin process writing. First of all, process writing recognizes the need for time in writing. A good piece of writing takes several rounds of writing, rewriting, and revision, which could not be accomplished through conventional writing classes where a teacher decides a topic and expects a completed essay to be submitted by students. Second, process writing focusses on feedback *during* writing, either from the teacher or from the peers (Lee, 2017). As mentioned above, this timely feedback motivates students to consider feedback more seriously in their next draft, which makes a contrast to teacher comments received together with a grade. Third, writing serves as a channel for communicating ideas and experience of learners rather than testing their language, so language errors are not the central concern in process writing. As White and Arndt (1991) put it, correcting language infelicities "improves neither grammatical accuracy nor writing fluency" (p. 33). They argued that the content and organization should be prioritized in feedback during writing instruction. Finally, teachers have to reconstruct their identity from being a judge with absolute authority to

a reader-collaborator. This transformation does not only entail a change in the teacher's role but also encourage students to be more sensitive to reader response, hence a sense of audience in writing.

Though the multi-draft practice is a gold standard in process writing, students may have a negative reaction to reworking the same composition as it would induce boredom and fatigue, especially when facing brevity of interval between drafts. Young learners, characterized by their short attention span (Wilson & Korn, 2007), could grow impatient for having to "repeat" a topic and become uninterested given the lack of novelty. Supportive measures should be taken to avoid student frustrations like this. One possibility is to space out the time between drafts so that there is a certain degree of memory from previous drafts, but students have to reorganize quite an amount of their writing in the current version. Another possibility is that, instead of notifying students of the number of drafts at the beginning, the teacher keeps students uninformed until the writing task, which becomes an opportunity for students to revise their writing and improve their marks. To the knowledge of the authors, little English as a foreign language (EFL) writing research has investigated the spacing effects between drafts—still less the impact of the uninformed multi-draft practice. This study includes both means and explores their effectiveness among secondary school students.

From a cognitive perspective, writing could impose enormous pressure on a learner's working memory and shut down the writing process. This may be a more serious issue for EFL learners as one should not assume composition writers and EFL writers to be the same (Eckstein, Chariton, & McCollum, 2011). Kellog's (1996, 2001) model describes the writing process as consisting of formulation (planning and translating), execution (programing and executing), and monitoring (reading and revising). All three stages imply a demand for working memory (WM) resources as each is linked to subsystems of the WM (visuospatial sketchpad, central executive, and phonological loop). When required to attend to all complex processes in writing at the same time, EFL learners, especially those at younger ages, may encounter great difficulty even if the writing task seems simple (MacBeth, 2010). Worse still, a negative attitude toward writing could be induced. Constraints in one's WM capacity limit one's ability to attend to all areas of concern, such as selecting topics, generating ideas and creativity, structuring and restructuring texts produced so far, and revising during and after writing. One solution is training learners to become automatized in one or several of these areas (e.g., the typical

structure of a narrative or a specific genre, as discussed in Bui, 2018). It will be, however, effortful and time-consuming. Another way is to allow more time for learners to focus on each area separately, hence higher task-readiness (Bui & Teng, 2018), and provide guidance (feedback) for these areas. Multi-draft composing practice seems to make a great deal of sense in this regard and is thus worth revisiting in the context of the current study.

In EFL/ESL (English as a second language) writing classrooms, feedback is a topic of sustained interest to teachers (Lee, 2017). Reviewing previous literature, Lee (2017) defines feedback in L2 writing as information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, parent, and self) on different areas of performance or understanding, with direct, helpful insights into current performance, given tangible differences between current performance and desired performance. The effectiveness of feedback for EFL writers is definitely an issue of controversy. It is conventionally believed that a writing teacher's role inevitably involves passing on feedback to students in the hope of improving their future writing. However, how much feedback becomes uptake by students and how it could benefit improvement in writing have always been thorny questions in EFL/ESL instruction (Lee, 2016; Truscott, 1996). Current research on the manner of feedback in an EFL context seems to suggest that focused and selective rather than arbitrary feedback still plays a facilitative role for learners (Lee, 2016, 2017), but such arguments are far less than conclusive as "there is yet no established evidence" that focused written corrective feedback is more effective than comprehensive feedback (Lee, 2016, p. 523). Similar results were also found in Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, and Takashima's (2008) study pertaining to the effects of focused and unfocused feedback on EFL writing. Teacher feedback is usually given shortly after a student essay is written. In the EFL context of the current study in Shenzhen, China, secondary teachers are required to provide feedback (often with a score) to student's writing in the next class (one or two days later). The benefits of prompt feedback are timeliness and fresh memory of learners. However, if we are to apply this practice to *spaced multi-draft* composing that this research aims to explore, there is a concern whether quick feedback could still facilitate the next draft weeks afterward. It appears that the manner and timing in which feedback is administered remain research lacunas in EFL writing research.

In view of all these related questions, this research aims to address the following research questions (RQ):

RQ1: What are the effects of spaced multi-draft composing on secondary school EFL writing quality and fluency?
RQ2: What are the effects of teacher feedback on secondary school EFL writing quality and fluency?
RQ3: Will students' English proficiency level mediate the effects of multi-draft composing and teacher feedback?

Methodology

Participants and Grouping

Eighty-seven Junior Two (K8) students, aged 13 to 14, at a leading secondary school in Shenzhen participated at the screening stage. A total of 40 candidates were shortlisted from this pool of students based on their English proficiency, which was based on the mean score of the results from the mid-term exam one week before the first draft, the final exam of the last semester, and a unit test in between. All three assessments included reading, writing, and grammar but the two exams further tested listening and speaking. It is therefore assumed that this composite score could reliably reflect their EFL abilities. The 40 students consisted of 20 students with the highest scores and 20 with the lowest, which naturally formed high- and low-proficiency groups. Within each cohort, 10 received teacher feedback and the other 10 did not (see section "Task Design" below for details). As one student in the low-proficiency group was absent from the second writing task and had to be excluded, data of 39 participants (14 males and 25 females) were collected. All 40 participants were informed about the nature of the research and agreed to take part in this project by signing a consent form also containing their parents' signatures.

A univariate test with the English proficiency score as the dependent variable showed that there was a significant difference between high and low groups ($F=250.15$, $p=.00$) but not between the feedback and non-feedback groups ($F = .264$, $p = .610$). No interaction effect was found between proficiency and feedback ($F= .017$, $p = .90$).

Task Design

The current study included three drafts on the same topic "Changes in my life after my entry into X School (the students' own school)" over a

span of eight weeks. The topic was chosen on the basis that every participant had sufficient information to complete these timed writing assignments and that no other prior background knowledge (Bui, 2014; Bui & Huang, 2018) was required of them—hence feasibility and equity among participants. To reduce the effects of fatigue and boredom, the three drafts were completed in Week 1, Week 4, and Week 8, respectively. All writing took place during their normal 40-minute English classes and students were instructed to meet the minimum requirement of 150 words per essay. Similar to their previous regular classes, the feedback group received their own compositions with teacher feedback within three days after each writing. The teacher provided detailed comments on local problems (e.g., spellings, vocabulary, and grammar) and global problems (the structure of the text and overall comments). The scripts had to be returned to the teacher on the same day after they had read the feedback. The non-feedback group, on the other hand, could neither receive any feedback nor review their own scripts after writing. The reason why they were not allowed to go over their own scripts during the study was that the course instructor in fact provided feedback on every essay indiscriminately. The non-feedback group, like their feedback-receiving counterparts, also obtained their own scripts with feedback but they did so after the research (Week 9). One important feature of this study was that students remained uninformed about any future drafts. This design was to motivate them to work their utmost each time they wrote. This way the effects of uninformed repeated drafts could be investigated.

Scoring

A totally of 117 valid scripts were collected, which were scored based on the marking scheme of Shenzhen Senior High School Entrance Exam at the time of this study (highest mark = 10). Writing quality was assessed based on four aspects: spelling, grammar, completeness of the content, and appropriateness of language. Writing fluency was measured by the number of words produced in each draft during the 40-minute session.

The assessment took place after the third performance. As teacher scoring inevitably involves grader subjectivity (Ferris, 2002), the following measures were taken to safeguard the findings of writing quality. First, all essays were anonymized, randomized, numbered, and photocopied so that no personal information or the order of drafts could be

identified. The copies were then read and marked against the marking scheme individually by two teachers from the same school who had experience as markers for public examinations in Shenzhen. Second, if the difference in marks of the same script between the two markers was less than two, the mean score would be the mark for that script. However, if the difference was larger than 2.5 marks, a third teacher's opinion would be sought, after which the average of the two closest marks became the final adjudication. Third, a post-marking SPSS parallel model reliability test was conducted to verify the effectiveness of the procedures. The results showed that the final two scores for the essays reached high reliability (*Cronbach Alpha* = .88, inter-rater correlation $r = .79$). It appears that this writing quality assessment achieved satisfactory reliability with grader subjectivity largely diminished.

Data Analysis

The dependent variables for the present study were writing quality and writing fluency. Writing quality was operationalized as the marks for the scripts. Writing fluency was indexed as the number of words written within a 40-minute class. There were two inter-group independent variables (English proficiency and teacher's feedback) and one intra-group independent variable (three drafts). Therefore, a repeated measures ANOVA in SPSS 15.0 was employed for data analyses.

Results

This section reports the effects of multi-draft composing, teacher feedback, and English proficiency on writing quality and fluency.

Writing Quality

Table 8.1 provides the descriptive statistics for teacher rating of overall writing quality in different groups. It was shown that uninformed multi-draft composing had a statistically significant effect on the quality of writing ($F = 14.95$, $p = .001$), with a partial $eta^2 = .47$ showing a large effect size. Meanwhile, no interaction effect was found between multi-draft composing and English proficiency ($F = .98$, $p = .39$), between multi-draft composing and teacher feedback ($F = 1.90$; $p = .17$), or among these three independent variables ($F = .98$; $p = .39$). These results indicate

Table 8.1 Mean scores of writing quality (SD in parentheses)

Between-participant variables		*Within-participant variable*		
		Draft 1/Wk 1	*Draft 2/Wk 4*	*Draft 3/Wk 8*
Proficiency	*High*	6.50 (1.09)	7.18 (.88)	7.48 (.72)
	Low	5.05 (.98)	5.53 (.79)	5.63 (.80)
Feedback	*Yes*	5.68 (1.21)	6.44 (.77)	6.74 (.62)
	No	5.88 (.85)	6.28 (.92)	6.38 (.85)

that offering three chances to rewrite these students' compositions would improve the overall writing quality in spite of EFL proficiency or teacher feedback. To further examine the specific improvement trajectories over the eight weeks, *LSD* post hoc tests were performed. The results suggested that the differences between Weeks 1 and 4 ($p=.00$) as well as Weeks 1 and 8 ($p=.00$) were significant, while the difference between Weeks 4 and 8 was not ($p=.08$). This entails that the second scripts generally showed improvement over the first, but such improvement did not extend to the third draft.

A close examination of the essay scores in Table 8.1 shows that the magnitude of changes in writing quality seems to vary according to the proficiency (high/low) of and feedback (with or without) given to the participants. Therefore, we further investigated the possible influence from the two independent variables, namely proficiency and teacher feedback. Separate *LSD* post hoc tests for each group showed that the high-proficiency group was the only group with significant improvement from the second to the third draft ($p=.03$) while the low-proficiency group was not ($p=.58$). In contrast, the feedback group and the non-feedback group alike did not make any significant difference in writing quality between week 4 and week 8.

As for the between-participant variables, a significant discrepancy in terms of writing quality between the high- and the low-proficiency groups existed ($F=45.42$; $p=.000$). However, the difference between the feedback and the non-feedback groups was insignificant ($F=.20$, $p=.66$). It seems, therefore, that teacher's feedback played a minor role in *spaced* repetition (Bui et al., 2019) of writing over a course of eight weeks. Nonetheless, this finding might be a result of how feedback was provided and the relatively long intervals between drafts (see section "English Proficiency" for a discussion).

Writing Fluency

Table 8.2 presents the descriptive statistics for writing fluency in each group. Similar to writing quality, the effect of multi-draft composing on writing fluency reached a statistically significant level ($F = 17.66$; $p = .00$) with an effect size even larger than that of writing quality (partial $eta^2 = .51$). This is indicative that uninformed multi-draft composing had a major influence on writing fluency. Moreover, no significant interaction effects between multi-draft composing and English proficiency ($p = .40$), multi-draft composing and teacher feedback ($p = .91$), or among these three variables ($p = .24$) were observed. These findings lend support to the argument that multi-draft practice per se promotes writing fluency regardless of proficiency levels and teacher feedback. Unlike the results of writing quality, the differences in writing fluency between Week 1 and Week 4, and between Week 4 and Week 8 were both statistically significant. This means that every subsequent draft (at least twice, as in this experiment) leads to a lengthier piece (and may give a hint of enriched content in the essay).

As seen in Table 8.2, the high-proficiency group produced 61.79 more words on average in each written production than the low-proficiency group did in Week 1. The numbers increased to 70.28 words in Week 4 and 83.31 words in Week 8, indicating a widening gap between students of different English abilities. The inferential statistics confirm that the high-proficiency group could always produce longer compositions ($F = 17.20$; $p = .00$) than the low-proficiency group. However, no significant differences were found between the feedback group and the non-feedback group ($F = .14$; $p = .71$). This suggests that teacher's feedback did not exert a noticeable impact on writing fluency.

Table 8.2 Mean scores of writing fluency (SD in parentheses)

Between-participant variables		*Within-participant variable*		
		Draft 1/Wk 1	*Draft 2/Wk 4*	*Draft 3/Wk 8*
Proficiency	*High*	259.90 (71.00)	282.12 (68.85)	316.21 (67.07)
	Low	198.11 (50.96)	211.84 (40.43)	232.90 (43.23)
Feedback	*Yes*	233.15 (62.74)	251.05 (48.82)	276.30 (51.24)
	No	224.60 (61.86)	243.35 (60.18)	273.25 (57.11)

Discussion

This section will interpret the results reported in the section "Results" in response to the three RQs. On top of this analysis, implications for writing pedagogies will be discussed.

Spaced Multi-draft Composing

A recapitulation of the results shows that spaced multiple drafts did result in improved performance in both writing quality and fluency, though to different extents, which provides an answer to RQ1 about the effects of spaced multi-draft composing on EFL writing among uninformed students. Under time constraint, the three steps of writing in Kellog's (1996, 2001) terms, namely formulation, execution, and monitoring, have to be carried out simultaneously and therefore compete for limited cognitive resources (Bui & Skehan, 2018; Skehan, 2014). Delay or hesitation in one stage would inevitably impede on others. The second draft in this study significantly improved writing quality and fluency, even with a time interval of three weeks after the first draft. This may have been a result of reduced pressure in the second performance, where the participants could plan the content and the structure of their proses with relative ease and retrieve relevant information in the previous draft from their long-term memory more efficiently. A more efficient planning process then happened, which freed up additional processing capacity for the two subsequent steps, i.e., writing and proofreading. Since the first draft provided a schema for subsequent drafts with overall content, structure, and even a quite large lexis previously employed, attentional resources could be saved for monitoring the accuracy of syntax, appropriacy of lexis, as well as the completeness of the content. Learners may move from a what-to-write to a how-to-write-better stage, which in a way explains enhancement in writing quality in the second draft. The effect of such multi-draft composing on writing fluency was even more powerful. As shown in Table 8.2, writing fluency, as indexed in the length of a timed essay, was markedly raised in both the second and the third drafts. This finding seems to suggest a considerable impact of multiple drafts on writing automatization, at least for composing on the same topic. It is also indicative that the participants had higher confidence in attempting the same topic again. The increase in the length of the written piece also signaled enhanced sentence and content complexity. To conclude, firstly,

the augmented simultaneous processing capacity after multiple drafts can increase writing complexity—hence the length of sentences. Secondly, an easier extraction of information from the long-term memory as a result of the retention from the first draft eases the burden on working memory, making it easier for participants to include more details in their writing within the same time restriction, leading to the greater length in writing.

A noticeable finding, however, is that writing quality of the third draft did not exhibit significant improvement along with the enhanced writing fluency. This observation can be ascribed to the following two reasons: First, repeated performances like this are subject to the power law of practice (Anderson, 2000). Practice brings quick improvement at the very early stage, but the learning process soon slows down as the number of trials increases. Second, some participants might feel fatigue or boredom (see section "English Proficiency" for a discussion on individual differences). In anticipation of these effects, we had already spaced out the drafts three to four weeks apart. However, we could still observe signs of boredom from some students while writing, especially in the low-proficiency group. Supportive measures and guidance for lower proficiency learners should be taken to counter this situation (see section "Pedagogical Implications").

Teacher's Feedback

This study found, contrary to the lay view about the importance of feedback, that teacher's written comments on drafts play almost no role in spaced multi-draft composing. It appears that the effects of feedback have been overridden by those of multiple drafts and even proficiency. The teacher's feedback specified in the present experiment included in-text comments about spellings, vocabulary, grammar, and end-of-text feedback on the structure and content of the whole passage. Theoretically, these comments should facilitate students in their following drafts but the results, in line with Truscott (1996), did not support this assumption. An important reason may be the long intervals between drafts. As mentioned in section "Task Design", the design of three- to four-week intervals between drafts was an attempt to minimize possible effects of fatigue and boredom; nonetheless, feedback received shortly (within three days) after the composition means there was a long gap between feedback and the next draft. It seemed that a lot of the teacher's

feedback did not sustain long enough in memory to be useful for the upcoming writing.

Another possibility concerns the students' acceptance of teacher feedback. According to Pienemann's (1998) Processability Theory, learners cannot skip an inherent language learning schedule. If teachers comment on or introduce topics of grammar or vocabulary items that are beyond the learner's current stage of acquisition, they will fail to process them, let alone learn them. In view of this, we reviewed feedback given by the teacher in this research and found that she was inclined to provide detailed comments which involved a great amount of meta-language and terminology, including complex attributive clauses and uncommon tenses and aspects, even in passive forms. This became a problem as the essays with feedback were returned to them in the morning without further explanation from the teacher. These scripts were collected again in the afternoon. Some students might find it difficult to follow the comments and others may not even read them thoroughly.

That said, as reported in section "Results", the feedback group still displayed a trend to outperform the non-feedback group, especially in terms of the magnitude of improvement in the third attempt ($p = .083$). In contrast, there was no discernible difference for the non-feedback group ($p = .494$). It is possible that at least some learners benefited from the feedback. Overall speaking, however, the influence of teacher's feedback was negligible.

English Proficiency

In response to RQ3, three observations about the possible mediating role of proficiency in writing performance can be made. Firstly, the high-proficiency group in general outperformed the low-proficiency group regarding both writing quality and writing fluency. This finding is not surprising given the great inter-group discrepancy in proficiency. Secondly, learner proficiency did not influence the performance of writing fluency which showed improvement in subsequent drafts in both proficiency groups. Thirdly, English proficiency is a mediating factor in the development of writing quality in multi-draft composing. The results showed that high-proficiency students made significant improvements in writing quality in both the second and the third drafts, while their low-proficiency peers only managed to improve on the second draft.

A plausible explanation is that the less able students in this study had not passed the linguistic threshold needed to take full advantage of multi-draft composing and teacher feedback. The 19 low-proficiency students were those who scored the lowest in the pretests among the 87 candidates. Their limited English vocabulary and syntactic knowledge prevented them from benefiting from either rewriting the same essay or uptaking teacher feedback. Moreover, the learning motivation of these less able students could further complicate the situation, where they might suffer from impatience in the repeated drafts and showed little interest in working hard for the third draft. It appears previous literacy base does impact subsequent literacy development. At the same time, it should be noted that multiple drafts of writing benefited the low-proficiency group at least in the second attempt, where significant improvements were noticeable. More importantly, the low-proficiency group enhanced their writing fluency just as the high-proficiency group did over all three drafts.

Pedagogical Implications

Three pedagogical implications can be drawn from the findings for EFL literacy development at the secondary school level. To begin with, providing opportunities of multiple drafts is helpful for secondary school students to reflect on and polish their own writing, which could be a viable means of EFL writing instruction, even when they become unwitting participants of this writing process. Then, a teacher's written comments may lose their effectiveness when such feedback is implemented too long before the next draft. It appears that teachers should pass on their responses to the previous essay right before a second draft so that students can better incorporate them into their current writing. Finally, low-proficiency students seem less capable of utilizing the benefits of multiple drafts and feedback and should therefore receive more support from teachers. Such support includes somewhat individualized feedback, which is focused and selective to suit their needs and proficiency level. Each draft should be provided with different selective areas of feedback in order not to overwhelm the low-proficiency learners. Teachers should also give them encouragement during the whole writing process, especially during later drafts when they may lose motivation and develop boredom over repeated topics.

Conclusion

This study investigated the effects of multi-draft composing and teacher feedback on EFL writing quality and fluency. Results showed that the three drafts of the same topic, spaced out over a span of eight weeks, had a significant positive influence on writing fluency for all learners. Such multi-draft composing practice also exerted a significant impact on overall writing quality for both rewritten drafts among high-proficiency participants, but such an effect only happened to the second draft among the low-proficiency group. Quite disappointingly, teacher feedback appeared to be ineffective and its influence may be overridden by multiple drafts and proficiency. This study highlights both effective and ineffective aspects of multi-draft composing and teacher feedback for literacy development among young EFL learners.

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CHAPTER 9

Evolution of Writing Assessment in Hong Kong Secondary Schools: Policy, Practice, and Implications for Literacy Development

Ricky Lam

Introduction

In writing, there is a wide range of instructional approaches being adopted in the second-language (L2) classroom settings, namely product-based, process-based, and genre-based approaches. Generally, teachers are well equipped with these approaches, as they have received respective training in their teacher education preparation programs. In L2 writing assessment, two major methods are adopted, namely alternative assessments and large-scale testing. The former refers to portfolio assessment, self- and peer assessment, self-reflection, and conferencing. These assessment approaches rely on learners to use feedback to improve writing. The latter refers to timed impromptu essay testing, such as the writing component in IELTS. Alternative assessments usually take place

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in the classroom and are evaluated by pupils' own teachers and their content of assessment is usually contextualized, whereas large-scale testing mostly takes place in exam halls and is scored by external raters. Their content and format are highly standardized for the purpose of fairness and statistical comparisons. Because teachers are used to training pupils to take public exams, most of them may not be proficient in conducting classroom-based alternative assessments (Davison & Leung, 2009). There are studies reporting how teachers utilized alternative assessment data to improve their literacy instruction effectively (Roehrig et al., 2008; Romeo, 2008), but teachers remain underprepared when it comes to evaluating pupil writing at the classroom level, not to mention how to enhance pupil literacy development in a larger L2 context (Crusan, Plakans, & Gebril, 2016). More often than not, they mainly simulate the format and content of large-scale essay testing, which tends to negatively impact pupil learning and increase anxiety for writing. It appears that except these pen-and-paper tests, L2 teachers have no other alternatives to evaluate writing on a formative and sustainable fashion. Hence, the government in different educational jurisdictions has fervently promulgated various assessment initiatives including assessment for learning (AfL) and assessment as learning (AaL). The former refers to using assessment to support pupil learning of writing through ongoing feedback and interactive pedagogical approaches, whereas the latter emphasizes pupil active engagement in self-monitoring their progress in writing development. Both assessment initiatives have great pedagogical potential to maximize pupil literacy development.

Notwithstanding the top-down, effortful promotion of these learning-oriented assessment initiatives, teachers still find it challenging to carry out these alternative assessment practices owing to multiple constraints including belief systems, levels of assessment training, and an exam-oriented culture (Fulmer, Lee, & Tan, 2015). Another issue is that teachers may not fully understand the rationale behind AfL and AaL (Lee, Mak, & Burns, 2016), and simply focus on technical rather than on the pedagogical aspects, namely how AfL and/or AaL can positively inform teaching and learning of writing and broaden wider pupil literacy development (Marshall & Drummond, 2006). Against this backdrop, the chapter investigates the extent to which the government policy on assessment reforms and application of alternative assessment practices correspond to one another, and how these assessment policies and practices provide implications for literacy instruction with a focus on L2

writing. Using a documentary analysis approach, I compare and contrast the three curriculum guides published in different eras and narrative frames composed by four teachers. The chapter starts by describing the Hong Kong education context and features of learners, followed by a theoretical discussion on writing assessment development in the first language (L1) and L2 classroom settings. Then, the method of review is described. After a complete analysis, I report on the outcomes of the review. The chapter closes with a discussion on the findings and then pedagogical implications of how to extensively promulgate alternative assessment practices in support of literacy development. The next section explains the educational context and learners in the Hong Kong writing assessment landscape.

Education Context and Learners

Hong Kong is an exam-oriented society, emphasizing test outcomes over learning experiences. Since exams are a gateway to tertiary education and high-status professional careers, it is inevitable for students, teachers, and parents to be grade-conscious. In L2 writing classrooms, teaching writing chiefly simulates the content and genres of the writing exam paper in the public exam, namely the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination, especially in Grades 10–12. Pupils are assigned a writing topic, mostly extracted from the textbook. Word limit varies, depending on different grade levels. For Grades 7–9, pupils write a text between 150 and 250 words. For Grades 10–12, pupils write about 200 words for a short task and 400 words for a full-length composition. They are then asked to complete their written tasks within an 80-minute English lesson resembling exam conditions. Pupils usually write eight to ten compositions in a year, excluding other written assignments. Drafting is normally not required. Self- and peer assessment is seldom practiced. Writing instruction is chiefly limited to explicit teaching of related vocabulary items and genre structures within the first 20 minutes of a composition class. After grading, pupils have copy-editing corrections before proceeding to the next composition. Overall, teaching and assessing writing in Hong Kong is largely product-based and exam-focused.

Learning to write in Hong Kong classrooms appears to be demotivating. Pupils generally find English writing academically unattractive, personally frustrating, and cognitively challenging. First, writing topics tend

to be contrived and uninteresting, providing no incentives for authentic communication. Outside the classroom, pupils are not motivated to write in English nor have a felt need to write, provided that writing is collectively considered instrumental and functional such as passing exams and writing for good grades. Second, teacher response to pupil writing is discouraging as pupil compositions are usually over-marked (Lee, 2011). Because it is common for Hong Kong teachers to adopt comprehensive marking which refers to detailed marking of all errors in a piece of writing, they believe that marking every grammatical and syntactical error is their responsibility. Besides, owing to a culture of mistrust, principals and parents seem to buy comprehensive marking, which symbolizes teacher diligence and commitments at work. Third, writing in an L2 is linguistically demanding, given the composing environment is somewhat unfriendly. Pre-writing scaffolding is scarcely provided owing to the issue of fairness and time constraints. When pupils write, they may not receive adequate support regarding how to brainstorm, draft and revise a piece of work effectively. Collaborative mode of writing is forbidden, since teachers are concerned with classroom management problems. To a certain extent, all of the above challenges are likely to impede L2 learners' writing literacy development. After introducing the education context of this chapter, the next section includes a literature review of writing assessment development over the past two decades.

Writing Assessment Development

Change in Standardized Assessment

In the following, I discuss changes in standardized assessment including test frequency, writing prompts, scoring methods, and focus of assessment. After the return of sovereignty in 1997, Hong Kong has witnessed waves of reform initiatives in large-scale writing assessment. In response to the pre-1997 Education Commission Reports and Review of Public Examination System (Hong Kong Baptist University and Hong Kong Examinations Authority, 1998), the senior secondary academic structure changed from four years to three years. Previously, there was one exit exam at Form 5 (Hong Kong Certificate of Education Exam, HKCE) and the other at Form 7 (Hong Kong Advanced Level Exam, HKAL). In 2012, the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Exam (HKDSE) for Grade 12 school-leavers was substituted for the two public

exams. In this regard, pupils may have less study-related stress as they take only one standardized writing assessment at the end of their secondary schooling. Regarding the test content, before 1997, writing topics in the HKCE and HKAL were impromptu and mostly decontextualized, although there were prescribed genres to be tested in each year's exams. Yet, pupils had no opportunities to study for any subject matters relating to the writing assessments except putting efforts to familiarize themselves with specific genre structures. When the new senior secondary structure was implemented in 2009, writing topics became situational, contextualized and highly relevant to the teaching curriculum delivered in school. Selection of topics has increased from three to eight, which align with the elective courses pupils have studied in Grades 11 and 12 (Curriculum Development Council, 2007).

Since 2007, the scoring methods of HKCE writing assessment changed from norm-referencing to criterion-referencing, meaning that pupils were no longer compared among each other (Qian, 2008). Instead, pupil performances are evaluated according to well-constructed assessment criteria, which are transparent to pupils, teachers, and parents. With this modification, the standardized writing assessment can be said to be fairer and more valid when it comes to evaluating pupils' actual writing performances. Besides, the official curriculum guide has encouraged the use of exemplars and rubrics in internal assessments, so that actionable feedback can be generated to support learning writing (Curriculum Development Council, 2017). Likewise, the focus of writing assessment has been shifting over time, namely from the psychometric to hermeneutic paradigms. The former paradigm highlights standardization and reliability, serving the purpose of selection and certification, and the latter paradigm underscores contextualization and ecological validity of writing assessment, serving the purpose of diagnosis and learning enhancement (Davison & Leung, 2009). The paradigm shift in writing assessment resonates with the global assessment trend, namely AfL. When the new senior secondary curriculum was in place, the alternative approaches to writing assessment have been widely promulgated including self- and peer assessment, writing portfolios and project work. Nevertheless, these alternative assessment practices are never parts of the writing assessment in the HKDSE like the School-Based Assessment[1] in speaking. The next section reviews how teachers attempted various AfL-focused assessment practices in the writing classroom settings.

Change in Classroom-Based Assessment
Although writing assessment in Hong Kong remains exam-oriented, there have been bottom-up assessment innovations advocated by individual teachers including peer assessment, selective marking,[2] and portfolio assessment.[3] In Tsui and Ng's (2000) study, senior secondary pupils were appreciative of the usefulness of peer assessment, but they still incorporated more teacher feedback than peer feedback into their revisions. Lee, Mak, and Burns (2016) have investigated how two teachers attempted selective marking in their schools, with one teacher trying out selective marking once but reverting to comprehensive grading owing to peer pressure and the other teacher failing to implement the feedback innovation owing to an exam-oriented school culture. In portfolio assessment, Lam (2018) has reported that the two teacher informants had dichotomous experiences when piloting their portfolio programs. In line with the whole-school learning-how-to-learn policy, one informant successfully introduced a portfolio program emphasizing end-of-units and end-of-program reflection, whereas another informant attempted his portfolio program with skepticism because of the teacher appraisal system. From these studies, it is implied that in order to initiate change in L2 writing assessment, practitioners need to solicit support from principals and parents as they are key stakeholders in the school decision-making process including choice of assessment methods. Also, teacher misinterpretation of AfL appears to be a barrier to the implementation of alternative assessment practices, because to certain teachers, AfL is considered a top-down reform initiative rather than a bottom-up pedagogical approach which promotes pupil literacy development. A conservative school environment and a larger exam-oriented culture would influence the extent to which alternative assessment practices can be successfully introduced in L2 writing classrooms (Lam, 2018).

Despite the continuous efforts in innovating classroom-based assessment, teachers and administrators remain unable to synergize the purpose of standardized writing assessment (assessment of learning; AoL) and the purpose of classroom-based assessment practices (AfL and AaL), since the former tends to dominate and the latter is only considered as an option. The government reform rhetoric emphasizes a healthy balance between assessment of and assessment for pupil writing. In reality, teachers tend to ignore the pedagogical benefits of AfL practices and mainly teach to the test by replicating the contents and genres of standardized writing assessment (Lee & Coniam, 2013). Similar

to other Confucian-heritage culture societies, Hong Kong teachers and pupils are preoccupied with summative assessment (standardized writing assessment) more than formative assessment (self- and peer assessment; Kennedy, 2007). Since pupils and parents pay undue attention to summative assessment, it is easy to understand why some teachers find it particularly challenging to attempt alternative assessment approaches in their work contexts. Another concern is teacher levels of writing assessment literacy, provided that not every teacher is professionally ready and has full mastery of understanding, knowledge, and skills to introduce AfL- and AaL-focused practices (Parr & Timperley, 2010). In view of ever-changing assessment policy and ongoing evolution of classroom assessment applications in L2 literacy instruction, it is necessary to review the extent to which the government reform initiatives are faithfully translated into classroom-based assessment practices, which could positively benefit L2 learners' literacy development. The ensuing section describes the method of review on three official curricular guides and four writing teachers' narrative frames.

Methods of Review

The chapter evaluates how and why assessment policy and classroom practices diverge or converge in the Hong Kong secondary school context relating to pupil literacy development. By so doing, I analyzed three official government curriculum guides published in 1999, 2007, and 2017, and four English teachers' narrative frames from two schools. The purpose of reviewing the curriculum guides was to identify the evolution of writing assessment trends in Hong Kong, and the purpose of analyzing teacher narrative frames was to collect retrospective accounts of how writing assessment has been practiced in schools and corroborate whether these practices corresponded to those advocated by the Education Bureau. The four teacher participants volunteered to join this research project, two of whom worked in a top-tier school and the other two worked in a middle-range school. Their teaching experience ranges from 11 to 25 years. The participants were asked to fill in a four-page narrative frame, which includes demographic information; past and current writing assessment practices; rationale behind these practices; knowledge about AfL and AaL in L2 writing; perspectives of the official assessment policy by the Education Bureau; perspectives of the effectiveness of their past and current assessment practices; and assessment ideas

they consider applicable to enhance pupil writing. Prior to data collection, informed consents were obtained from the four participants. To analyze the qualitative data, I adopted an open coding approach by looking into the patterns, features, and emerging themes of the two salient ideas—policy and practices. The review was conducted by identifying key features of the three curriculum guides relating to assessment issues and innovations, followed by matching these features with the past, current, and ideal assessment practices as reported by the four teachers. Coding and categorizing of all policy-practice nexus were further analyzed and interpreted. The following section reports on the outcomes of the review.

Outcomes of Review

This section delineates an ongoing transformation of assessment policy and classroom-based assessment practices over the past two decades.

Assessment Policy

The overarching aims of three English curriculum guides published in 1999, 2007, and 2017 remained with almost no change, emphasizing the multiple roles of learning English including expansion of knowledge, experience, and personal development to cope with an ever-changing society. The commonality of the three curriculum guides is fourfold. First, the three curriculum documents encourage a communicative approach to teaching English, namely task-based learning and teaching. Then, they emphasize learner-centeredness in teaching and learning for literacy development such as promoting reading-to-learn. Next, they promulgate extensive use of formative assessment to support learning. Consequently, they underscore the importance of acquiring high-order learning/thinking skills such as problem-solving, analyzing, evaluating, and self-reflection. Despite these similarities, there have been apparent shifts in assessment approaches, especially in assessing writing. In the 1999 guide, while there were suggestions on using formative assessment to evaluate pupil writing, e.g., portfolios and observations, not much was mentioned as to how these learning-oriented practices can improve pupil results in external examinations. Besides, the guide did not elaborate the conceptual rationale behind writing portfolios, conferencing and observations, and expected that frontline teachers could translate these ideas in reality automatically.

In the 2007 guide, it appears that the document spared more pages on using formative assessment in the writing classroom. Likewise, there were new components in the guide including catering to learner diversity and integrating internal and external assessment to enhance learning, such as School-Based Assessment. Another obvious change is that the term "AfL" was used throughout the guide, which perhaps aligns with the development of global and localized assessment trends. The 2007 guide has witnessed a reiteration of using AfL productively in order to inform teaching and learning writing. For instance, there were detailed explanations of adopting selective marking and providing pupils with learning-focused feedback. The guide also gave lots of practical recommendations on how to use classroom-based assessment to support learning and elucidated the premise of incorporating AfL into external assessment via School-Based Assessment for the first time. Regardless of School-Based Assessment, the gap between summative and formative assessment remained wide.

The 2017 guide was drafted based on the Basic Education Curriculum Guide (Primary 1–6) published in 2014. It mainly carried forward a majority of instructional and assessment initiatives from the 1999 and 2007 guides including the promotion of learner diversity, life-wide learning, and task-based learning and teaching. The 2017 guide has some brand-new elements which are not found in the previous two curriculum documents. The following points illustrate four major additions regarding L2 writing assessment strategies:

1. Emphasis on AaL and training pupils to be self-regulated
2. Promotion of e-learning and e-assessment (e.g., e-portfolios)
3. Use of standardized assessment data to improve teaching and learning (e.g., Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Exam)
4. Enhancement of teacher assessment literacy.

The first new initiative is concerned with shifting assessment focus from AfL to AaL. In AfL, teachers are expected to create interactive pedagogical moments to support learning. In AaL, students are encouraged to self-monitor their learning reflectively. In brief, AfL is chiefly public, teacher-led, and dynamic, whereas AaL is relatively private, student-initiated, and metacognitive. Despite these discrepancies, feedback remains at the heart of AfL and AaL which activate self-regulation of learning. Under the renewed curriculum, pupils are trained to be

self-regulated in language learning in general and learning writing in particular. The Education Bureau suggests that AaL be made an integral part of classroom teaching and assessment, which facilitates pupils to acquire the twenty-first-century skill—learning-how-to-learn. The second initiative is indispensable in today's digital world, given that e-learning is a trend of the future. The 2017 guide proposed use of e-assessment, namely web-based e-portfolios to support literacy instruction. The third initiative promotes further integration between internal and external assessment by utilizing summative assessment formatively. For instance, teachers are encouraged to use standardized assessment data to make informed decisions on literacy instructional practices, which could enable them to diagnose pupil learning needs. The fourth initiative is about developing teacher assessment literacy. In the earlier curriculum guides, this point was never mentioned and the Education Bureau assumed that frontline teachers have been well-versed with introducing new assessment practices. The subsequent section details an evolution of classroom-based assessment practices by four teachers.

Assessment Practices

The four teachers are Anna, Betty, Clara, and Daisy. The two schools are Holy School and Rosary College. All teachers' and schools' names are pseudonyms. The narratives of the four teachers are reported below. In the 1990s, teaching writing equated to exam preparation. Internal writing assessments simulated external ones. Pupils were taught to practice the most tested genres in the public exam including narratives, explanation, and exposition. School-based writing curriculum was mainly exam-oriented. The process approach to teaching and learning writing was rarely encouraged. Teaching writing was mostly textbook-bound and school-based curriculum was not common. Anna recounted that in her schools, colleagues never heard of AfL and how it could be used to support learning writing. Yet, she personally attempted self-assessment and conferencing in the writing classroom. In Anna's narrative frame, she put down: "*I attended an assessment seminar and learnt about self-assessment of writing. Then, I implemented it with my students. To look back, I did not really understand its rationale, and made lots of mistakes when trying it out. At that time, I was alone and none of my colleagues asked their students to perform self-assessment.*"

Since 2009, because of the HKDSE, school-based writing curriculum and exam content have been mostly aligned. As advocated by the 2007 and 2017 guides, the teachers started utilizing self- and peer assessment and process writing sparingly if not regularly. Some teachers (Betty's and Clara's colleagues) adopted process writing by inviting pupils to write in drafts but not requiring them to revise substantially. It appears that they followed a "weak" version of process writing. Another teacher, Daisy tried out writing portfolios for record keeping and summative evaluation of writing, but not for learning enhancement. Interestingly, these four teachers remained unclear about what AfL and AaL entailed despite a fervent promotion of AaL in the 2017 curriculum guide. Some of them considered AfL as mini-summative assessments. For instance, Daisy explained: "*I know that EdB is promoting AaL and portfolio assessment. That's why I want to try them out in my class. But, to admit, I am still learning how to use the portfolio approach, since it is very much different from the product-based approach. Also, teaching students to do self-reflection is challenging.*" Regarding School-Based Assessment, the four teachers did not agree that it was a blend of AfL and AoL, because it was still high-stakes to pupils although the assessment might generally reduce pupil test anxiety. Besides workload and fairness, they welcomed School-Based Assessment as it helped pupils improve speaking. In fact, Clara admitted that despite the curriculum reform, she still practiced a drilling-to-learn approach as she worried about pupil results in the public exam. Clara claimed that "*If I do not understand what AfL and AaL really mean, why do I waste time to attempt these assessment practices? After all, it is me who is responsible for pupil exam results and I cannot take risks.*"

When asked about their ideal assessment practices, Anna and Daisy preferred trying out selective marking when grading pupil compositions. However, parents were to be briefed about its benefits and rationale. Betty planned to implement portfolios as an alternative writing assessment to track pupil learning progress and promote self-reflection, yet the issue of portfolio scoring had to be negotiated such as how many pieces of drafts needed to be summatively marked. For Clara, she wanted to encourage pupils to attempt self-assessment as a post-writing task, because pupils were typically unable to self-correct some common language errors. While self-assessment in writing could raise pupil language awareness, Clara added that she had to provide pupils with adequate training before its full application. Yet, her only concern was the format and content of

training, given that she was not knowledgeable about self-assessment practices. In sum, informed by the reform initiatives, the four teachers have intention to try out alternative writing assessments although they may not have full conceptual understanding of AfL and AaL.

Discussion

From the review, I discuss the pacing, fidelity, and initiative of implementing alternative writing assessments in the local secondary school context. First, the assessment reform policy has gone much faster than the evolution of alternative writing assessments, especially in the era of 1990s. With the advent of School-Based Assessment in 2005, teachers were motivated to innovate their internal writing assessments by adopting AfL and AaL. Speaking of pacing, the development of alternative writing assessments between the policy and the practice levels is somewhat converged although teachers are expected to attempt more learner-centric assessment practices such as self-reflection. Second, the four teachers and their colleagues displayed minimal, if not superficial, applications of alternative writing assessments such as the weak version of process writing in Betty's and Clara's schools. Notwithstanding a wider exposure to AfL/AaL in the 2007 and 2017 curriculum guides (assessment principles plus exemplars), these teachers may not manage to implement the *spirit* of certain alternative assessment practices like process writing. The word "*spirit*" here refers to the application of an alternative assessment approach by conforming to its theoretical rationale and principles. Instead, they only replicated the *letter* of these approaches. The word "*letter*" refers to the application of an alternative assessment approach by simply imitating a set of prescribed procedures. For instance, in what ways the teachers can use process writing to enable literacy development and evaluate pupil writing formatively, they possibly have no thorough understanding apart from asking pupils to brainstorm, draft, and edit a text repeatedly. As to fidelity, the assessment policy and classroom practices obviously diverged. Third, teachers are on the receiving ends of assessment reforms like AfL and AaL. The three curriculum guides primarily serve as external resources to inform what, why, and how teachers should follow when adopting writing assessment practices. The teachers are seldom encouraged to take initiatives to adopt a bottom-up approach to assessment innovations. Regarding initiative, there remains a clear hierarchy among policy makers and in-service teachers. After all, assessment change initiated by teachers proves to be sustainable.

Pedagogical Implications and Conclusion

To end this chapter, I draw upon three pedagogical implications relating to how the assessment policy and practices can positively align when teachers attempt alternative writing assessments with a focus on L2 literacy development. These implications include (1) genuine communications among stakeholders; (2) promotion of writing assessment literacy; and (3) integration between internal and external assessment. First, genuine dialogs among stakeholders are vital when it comes to trying out alternative writing assessments. Without having endorsement from parents and principals, teachers may find it challenging to innovate selective marking, self-assessment, and portfolio assessment. After all, these assessment practices require a tremendous shift of pupils' mindsets and learning behaviors to support their overall literacy development. To increase the transparency of alternative assessment initiatives, parents become less cynical and pupils are likely to be enthusiastically involved. Second, implementing AfL/AaL in L2 writing requires pertinent knowledge, skills, and philosophies. The development of writing assessment literacy is essential if assessment reforms aim to enhance L2 literacy development in general and writing instruction in particular. Promoting writing assessment literacy comes in many forms, one of which is to provide on-the-job training on how to internalize the theoretical underpinnings of AfL and AaL rather than simply sharing practical tips about teacher classroom applications. Third, it is imperative to synergize internal and external assessment more fully. Helping teachers to interpret and utilize external assessment data to inform literacy instruction would integrate the purposes of internal and external assessment pedagogically. Utilizing teacher judgments in internal writing assessment as part of external assessment empowers teacher professionalism and reduces the undesirable impacts of assessment on pupil learning, although this initiative calls for extra resources for intensive teacher professional training and territory-wide mark standardization.

In closing, the present chapter has made a theoretical contribution by revealing how and why writing assessment policy and practice have diverged. Nevertheless, the use of teachers' self-reported data without providing observation data for triangulation is one limitation of this study. The four teachers' practices also cannot be overgeneralized to all writing teachers' practices in Hong Kong. In the twenty-first century, it is inevitable to witness a continuous shift of assessment paradigms, namely from a testing to an assessment culture to cope with an

ever-changing society. Because of the progressive writing assessment trend in Hong Kong secondary schools and beyond, teachers, parents, principals, and the Education Bureau personnel need sustained professional dialogs, extensive collaboration opportunities, and mutual understanding toward one another's work constraints before alternative writing assessment approaches can be productively implemented. At times, assessment policy and practice may be at odds, yet with joint efforts, teachers and administrators can narrow the policy-practice gap via dialogs, training, and synergy of assessment purposes to promote learners' literacy development in a much successful sense.

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Notes

1. School-Based Assessment of English is one form of classroom-based assessment, where senior secondary pupils' speaking performance is evaluated by their teachers based on prescribed print or non-print texts the pupils have read or viewed. The assessment takes place in the pupils' senior years and carries 15% of the English Language Paper in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Exam.
2. Selective marking refers to a focused approach to identifying grammatical and syntactic errors in a piece of writing. Its purpose is to help pupils tackle their writing errors progressively.
3. Portfolio assessment refers to a dossier in which pupils compile their works-in-progress reflectively for formative and summative evaluation.

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CHAPTER 10

Developing Thinking Skills in English Literacy Instruction in Taiwanese Secondary Schools: Teachers' Perspectives

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Introduction

As noted in the epigraph on the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages Website, literacy in the twenty-first century is seen as dealing with more than a set of language skills, and literacy instruction should also include thinking skills such as analyzing, comparing, evaluating, and synthesizing information of various kinds (ACTFL, 2018). Indeed, critical thinking as well as problem-solving is listed as one of the key learning and innovation skills in the Framework for 21st Century Learning brought forth by the USA-based, national organization, Partnership for 21st Century Learning. In the OECD PISA global competence framework in 2018, analytic and critical thinking skills are listed one of the three major components for global competence.

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The importance of critical thinking in the contemporary world cannot be overemphasized.

The origin of critical thinking in the West can be traced back to Socrates 2500 years ago. It permeates in many Western cultures and education systems. A strong renewed interest in critical thinking in American education was observed in the early 1980s after numerous studies criticized American schools for mediocre performance. They all noted that "American students were on the whole poor thinkers, especially where higher-order cognitive processes were concerned" and these reports "called for the need to teach thinking in some direct way or as a prerequisite of education in the 21st century" (Presseisen, 1986, p. 15). As a response, many schools in the USA started to integrate critical thinking into their curriculum in various disciplines, including first-language or second-language learning (Thompson, 2002). A number of studies (e.g., Davidson, 1998; Hashemi & Ghanizadeh, 2012; Liaw, 2007) further reported positive correlations between critical thinking (or critical thinking instruction) and learners' L2 achievement. This zeal for critical thinking has even found its way into the EFL curriculum at primary and secondary school levels in Asia, such as Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong, mainland China, Taiwan, and South Korea, as revealed in the official curriculum guidelines in these regions.

Relationships Between Critical Thinking and Thinking Skills

Despite its long tradition, critical thinking has been interpreted in numerous ways. The journey of exploring how critical thinking could contribute to one's personal, academic, and social lives has always been accompanied by a long search of definitions of critical thinking itself (Presseisen, 1986). Ennis' (1962, p. 6) conceptualization of critical thinking as "the correct assessing of statements" is one of the most influential sources on this topic. Also proposed in Ennis (1962) are twelve abilities in critical thinking, which center on evaluating verbal assertions with relevant logical principles in the use of language, including accurate interpretation of data, appreciation of logical reasoning, concern for the nature of evidence, and examination of the role of evidence in reasoned arguments.

Ennis later replaces the 1962 definition with a broader view: "*Critical thinking is reasonable reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do*" (1987, p. 10). Moreover, stressing the importance of critical thinkers' dispositions in critical thinking, he adds fourteen dispositions, on top of the twelve abilities, as the second kind of goal for critical thinking curricula. These fourteen dispositions are further classified as three major dispositions as follows:

1. Care that their beliefs be true and that their decisions be justified; that is, care to "get it right" to the extent possible.
2. Care to understand and present a position honestly and clearly, theirs as well as others'.
3. Care about every person (Ennis, 2011, p. 1).

Ennis' inclusion of dispositions in his conceptualization of critical thinking is said to be a response to Paul's (1987) call for the need to consider critical thinkers' dispositions to use critical thinking skills. Taking into account the dispositions of a critical thinker, Paul (1987) proposes two forms of critical thinking: critical thinking in the strong sense and in the weak sense. Paul defines critical thinking as "disciplined, self-directed thinking which exemplifies the perfections of thinking appropriate to a particular mode or domain of thinking" (p. 2). The weak-sense critical thinking refers to using critical thinking skills to attack others' arguments and defend one's own viewpoints so as to serve the interest of a particular individual or group. The strong-sense critical thinking is the ability to fully and fairly examine all relevant arguments and positions, including one's own, taking into consideration the interests of diverse persons and groups. The latter thus requires exploring issues from multiple perspectives and staying open-minded to viewpoints with which one disagrees. Paul is therefore credited for expanding the scope of critical thinking to thinkers' dispositions and highlighting such dispositions of a strong-sense critical thinker as *fairmindedness*, *intellectual humility*, and *intellectual empathy*.

Other scholars also provide broad conceptions of critical thinking. Allen and Rott (1969, as cited in Presseisen, 1986) propose three distinct approaches to conceptualizing critical thinking in a broad sense: critical thinking as an act of *evaluation*, as an act of *inquiry*, and as a *pluralistic* act. The evaluation approach, the narrowest definition of

the three, echoes Ennis' twelve abilities of critical thinking, or his logical dimension. The inquiry approach addresses both the critical thinking skills in a logical sense and "the proactive dispositional qualities of a critical thinker" (Presseisen, 1986, p. 11). Here, learners' disposition to actively inquire and think critically points to the attitude dimension of critical thinking, that is, the thinker's willingness to be critical in processing information. The critical thinking as a pluralistic act approach, the broadest of the three, covers both the critical and creative acts in the process of thinking.

Different from the above-mentioned scholars' efforts in defining the nature of critical thinking, many researchers and educators draw upon Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson et al., 2001) of educational objectives by defining critical thinking as "the upper three levels (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation), or even with the addition of the next two levels (comprehension and application)[1]" (Ennis, 1993, p. 179). This approach is criticized for being inadequate for the purpose of assessing critical thinking because "synthesis and evaluation generally do require analysis, and analysis generally requires synthesis and evaluation" (Ennis, 1987, p. 18). Rhoder and French (2011, p. 195) also maintain that "the Taxonomy does not allow for the recursive, interdependent nature of the skills of critical thinking." In spite of such criticism, reference to Bloom's taxonomy in the definition of critical thinking has been very common in many studies.

It is worth noting that in the literature on critical thinking, thinking skills is a term used interchangeably with critical thinking in many early studies (e.g., Ennis, 1962; Presseisen, 1986), in some of which creative thinking was seen as part of critical thinking. In contrast, some scholars use "thinking skills" to refer to all different kinds of thinking processes. For example, in discussing foreign language education, Richards (2001, p.137) refers to the three types of thinking—exploring ideas/situations, thinking creatively, and analyzing and/or evaluating ideas—in Singapore's English Language Syllabus (Primary) as thinking skills instead of critical thinking. In a similar vein, the national curriculum guidelines for senior high school English in Taiwan takes thinking skills as a curriculum goal, under which "logical thinking" and "creative thinking" are differentiated as two different kinds of thinking skills. Such classification is similar to Lipman's (2003) use of the term "higher-order thinking" under which there are critical thinking and creative thinking. He maintains that critical thinking involves reasoning and critical judgment while creative thinking involves craft, artistry, and creative judgment.

Thinking Skills in Formal Education in Taiwan

In Taiwan, the Ministry of Education (MOE) revises the national curriculum approximately every ten years. This allows the formal education system to respond timely to changes in educational policies of the country as well as to academic innovations in each individual discipline. The 2010 Curriculum Guidelines for Senior High School English is characterized by two major innovations. The first is the differentiated curriculum in response to students' disparity in English proficiency in senior high English classes. The second change is the incorporation of thinking skills as one of the five curriculum goals in English education. This goal, Thinking Skills—Logical Thinking, Judgment and Creativity, aims to "develop students' abilities of logical thinking, analysis, synthesis, judgment and innovation in English" (MOE, 2009). To illuminate the goal, the 2010 Guidelines provides eight competence descriptors of thinking skills. These competences are classified into two levels: basic abilities and advanced abilities (see Table 10.1).

This curricular innovation represented a response of the English-subject curriculum committee to the call in the academia for higher-order thinking skills in foreign language education (MOE, 2009). It also echoed the zeal for thinking skills in EFL/ESL curricular reforms at the turn of twenty-first century that swept Asian countries, such as the

Table 10.1 Competence descriptors for thinking skills

Basic abilities
Basic-1 Able to analyze, categorize, and prioritize various kinds of information
Basic-2 Able to clarify the cause-and-effect relationships among different information based on the context
Basic-3 Able to differentiate facts from opinions
Advanced abilities
Advanced-1 Able to analyze various information and conclude or generalize the similarities
Advanced-2 Able to analogize learned principles to new contexts and solve problems
Advanced-3 Able to synthesize information and predict possible development
Advanced-4 Able to evaluate different information and propose reasonable judgments or suggestions
Advanced-5 Able to reorganize and integrate information/resources creatively

English Language Syllabus-Primary in Singapore (1991), the Critical Thinking Syllabus in Hong Kong (1999), and the National Education Act of Thailand (2001) that stipulates teaching of thinking skills in every subject.

Teachers' Perceptions of Developing Thinking Skills in EFL Classes in Taiwan

Although scholars have long recognized the importance and feasibility of teaching thinking skills in a language classroom, including ESL and EFL classrooms (Chamot, 1995), practitioners may not share the same belief or interpret the curricular innovation in the same way as the scholars, as revealed in Mok's (2010) study of English teachers in Hong Kong. What is more, some scholars even consider that cultivation of thinking skills is a Western idea, and it may not be consonant with a non-Western culture (Atkinson, 1997; Song, 2016).

In addition to potential incongruity with the local culture, implementation of thinking skills education could be challenging in EFL classes, where the foreign language poses an obstacle to many learners in the first place. It is thus important to understand to what extent the new curricular policy in Taiwan can be implemented in the reality from the perspective of teachers, who play a decisive role in the implementation of curricular policies. How teachers perceive and react to teaching thinking skills will provide valuable information for the critical thinking instruction, and also possible modification of the educational reform with respect to critical thinking.

Although no formal research in Taiwan specifically addressed high school teachers' responses to the policy of incorporating thinking skills teaching into English classes, a few studies have explored teachers' reactions toward the 2010 Curriculum Guidelines, including those related to thinking skills. Among the few, three studies were conducted or supervised by the authors. Part of these studies' findings can shed light on teachers' views of nurturing thinking skills in high school English classes. In the following sections, information regarding the three studies will first be presented; relevant findings will then be drawn to reveal English teachers' perceptions of teaching thinking skills in Taiwan.

Three studies on the 2010 Senior High School English Curriculum Guidelines of Taiwan

The first study (Cheng, Yeh, & Su, 2011) was a survey research conducted one year prior to the launch of the 2010 Senior High School English Curriculum Guidelines. The main purpose of the survey was to uncover practitioners' perceptions and attitudes toward the Guidelines before it was implemented. A questionnaire was administered to senior high school English teachers enrolled in various workshops on the Guidelines across Taiwan. In addition to demographic questions, the questionnaire consisted of 14 closed-ended and 6 open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions explored teachers' perceptions regarding the adequacy of the Guidelines' contents, planning, and implementation, as well as the Guidelines' potential positive and negative impacts on teaching and learning. The open-ended questions asked the respondents to freely articulate their thoughts, concerns, and suggestions for the Guidelines itself and for its implementation at the classroom and school levels. A total of 702 valid questionnaires were collected.

The second study (Chen, 2012) was also a survey, which aimed to explore both teachers' and students' perceived importance of the 87 competence indicators/descriptors specified in the 2010 Guidelines, including the eight indicators on thinking skills presented in Table 10.1. The respondents were invited to rate the importance of each indicator on a five-point scale (1 = not important; 2 = not very important; 3 = moderately important; 4 = fairly important; 5 = very important) and to indicate whether they would include the indicator as their teaching or learning objective in high school English classes. Convenient sampling was adopted to collect data from 15 senior high school schools in different areas of Taiwan. A total of 1422 students and 110 English teachers completed the questionnaires.

The third study (Cheng, 2015) was part of a large-scale three-year research on the formulation and implementation of the 2010 Senior High School English Curriculum Guidelines, which involved policy documents analysis, textbook analysis, classroom observations, and interviews with crucial policy stakeholders, including key members on the National Committee of Curriculum Guidelines, writers and lead editors from four publishers for high school English textbooks, and English teachers. Cheng (2015) focused on the policy of incorporating

thinking skills into the senior high school English curriculum. Data obtained through policy documents and interviews were synthesized to unveil the rationales and assumptions underlying the formulation of the curricular policy and to discern how or whether textbook writers and school teachers abided by the policy in textbook writing or classroom teaching.

Findings Related to Teachers' Perceptions of Thinking Skills Instruction

In Cheng et al. (2011), around 60% of the surveyed teachers ($N=411$) responded to the open-ended question that asked respondents to identify the new features of the Guidelines. Among them, around 45% considered incorporation of "critical and creative thinking" into English teaching as one of the most salient innovations of the Guidelines. This result indicates that a fair number of teachers had noticed the curriculum innovation even before it was officially enacted. However, when asked to express their view about implementation of the 2010 Guidelines, around 16% of the respondents expressed grave concerns for the cutting down of teaching hours (from 5–6 class periods per week to 4–5 periods). Many teachers called into question the feasibility of incorporating thinking skills instruction into English classes under such time constraint, as the following two excerpts reveal[2]:

> Competence descriptors in the new guidelines seem to demand more teaching activities to accomplish. Four class periods a week, plus one period of after-school class…we don't have sufficient time to do so. (H25)

> When designing curriculum, teachers very much desire to add activities that develop creativity. However, the practical time constraints do not allow them to do so. In order not to take up much of their class time, it is more likely for teachers to conduct one such special activity for two hours between two midterm exams, or try to have students write short pieces of creative writing at home. [Limited teaching] time is still the issue. (A3)

Given the test-oriented culture in Taiwan, some teachers also worried that students would question the value of teaching thinking skills in class[3]:

> Students would question the need to implement the curriculum innovations. They would ask, "Would college entrance exams contain questions that assess these skills? [If no,] why do we need to spend time on training critical thinking and multicultural [literacy]?" (O 33)

Similarly, Chen's (2012) study also reveals teachers' reservations about incorporating thinking skills training into English instruction. All of the competence descriptors related to thinking skills received a score above 3.8 on a five-point scale (1 = very unimportant to 5 = very much important) from the teachers. Nevertheless, among all the nine categories of competence descriptors (i.e., "listening," "speaking," "reading," "writing," "integration of four skills," "thinking skills," "learning strategies," "learning attitudes and motivation," and "cultural understanding and global view"), those related to thinking skills received the lowest average rating of importance ($M = 3.99$), which was in a sharp contrast to the high value assigned to those related to reading skills ($M = 4.39$), learning strategy ($M = 4.35$), and writing skills ($M = 4.33$). Competence indicators related to thinking skills were also chosen by the lowest percentage of English teachers (ranging from 60 to 70%) as their course objectives, in contrast to teachers' high recognition of reading and writing skills. Competence indicators related to reading and writing skills were endorsed by 80–98% of the respondents as their instructional goals. Chen's study indicates that senior high school English teachers in Taiwan tended to consider thinking skills in English curriculum important, but thinking skills might not be their instructional priority.

Teachers' ambivalent attitude toward developing thinking skills in English classes figured prominently in Cheng (2015) as well. Based on her interviews with 25 teachers, Cheng found that most of the interviewees acknowledged the importance of cultivating thinking skills in students, but they considered it very difficult to implement thinking skills activities in senior high school English classes under the constraint of large class size, limited teaching hours, no thinking skills sections on the college entrance exams, and inadequate English proficiency of the students. The following excerpts illustrate the concerns of the teachers[4]:

> I feel that if we want to have students express their opinions [about an issue] or grasp more opportunities to express themselves, basically there will not be enough time. There are too many students in a class. So, the time for each student to express himself/herself is certainly limited. The

> most efficient way is still for teachers to lecture. The teacher just keeps lecturing, and everyone can listen…. (3-F-2-E)

> There are twelve lessons in each textbook, and we are even unable to cover them all [in one semester], just owing to insufficient time. That is to say, you absolutely will not have time to work on "critical thinking" in class. More realistically speaking, it's good enough for you to cover all the lessons and give what students want. (3-F-3-C)

> Will [College Entrance] Exams assess what the Guidelines expects us to teach? I think this is very down-to-earth…Because like Chinese, it's our own language, the Chinese test papers [on College Entrance Exams] have a section on creative writing. It requires much critical thinking…But our own [English] test papers involve traditional writing or, at most, picture description only. If this kind of writing is said to reflect "critical thinking," then the exams do not seem to differ very much from the previous ones. It seems somewhat far-fetched if vocabulary questions and cloze tests [on the Exams] are thought to reflect "critical thinking". (3-F-5-B)[5]

> I think teachers' backlash against it is not because critical thinking is not good, but because our kids are very poor at English. How could you require them to use such a difficult language to think critically. (3-F-3-B)

It is clear that Interviewee 3-F-5-B considered critical thinking less feasible in foreign language literacy instruction than the first language. Cheng (2015) describes the implementation of this curriculum innovation as a beautiful, yet remote ideal. From the teachers' perspective, this curriculum innovation seems to present to them a huge gap between the ideal and the reality, as shown in the last quote given in Cheng (2015, p. 52):

> I think all that is stipulated [in the Guidelines] looks gorgeous. Nothing is too odd or awful. The idea of developing logical and critical thinking is pretty good…The intention is good…Nevertheless, there would be many flaws in actual implementation…In fact, the Guidelines still left a gap between curriculum design and educational affordances and support. (20090402YYH)

Discussions, Suggestions, and Conclusions

As illustrated in the findings of the above-mentioned studies (Chen, 2012; Cheng, 2015; Cheng et al., 2011), most senior high school teachers in Taiwan recognized the importance of developing thinking

skills. However, teachers were worried about time constraint for successful thinking skills instruction. Besides, they also felt puzzled about the priority of learning in an EFL class, that is, whether thinking skills or English language skills should be the priority. To address these concerns, the MOE needs to provide more class hours for English class and offer advice on how to conduct thinking-skill activities under time constraint and how to provide extra assistance for low-proficiency learners to develop basic thinking skills via English.

Teachers, on the other hand, should set a more achievable goal in thinking skills instruction. It should be noted that teachers in Cheng (2015) seemed to over-interpret the curriculum innovation, aiming much higher than the Guidelines. When talking about thinking skills in the Guidelines, the interviewed teachers referred to "critical thinking" and meant thinking in a critical way. They thus considered it difficult to develop these skills in English classes. However, as reflected in the eight competence descriptors, thinking skills in the Guidelines cover a set of "cognitive skills," ranging from so-called basic abilities such as "*analyzing, categorizing, and prioritizing various kinds of information*" and "*clarifying the cause-and-effect relationships among different information based on the context*" to advanced abilities such as "*evaluating different information and proposing reasonable judgments or suggestions*," and "*integrating related information/resources creatively*." Apparently, these competence descriptors are developed based on Bloom and his followers' cognitive model of human cognition, which consists of a hierarchical scale of skills. In his critique of Bloom's Taxonomy from the perspective of the critical thinking movement, Paul (1995) notes that the common association between the Taxonomy and critical thinking "is largely misconceived" and that the Taxonomy's "attempt to be value neutral is impossible and incompatible with values presupposed in critical thinking education" (p. 519). In other words, the epistemology of the 2010 Guidelines is incompatible with that of critical thinking movement. Moreover, not all of the thinking skills specified in the 2010 Guidelines involve "thinking in a critical way." This may explain why the Guidelines used the term "Thinking Skill" rather than "Critical Thinkings."

It is also worth mentioning that the interpretations of thinking skills by teachers in Cheng (2015) show an interesting contrast to the findings of Chuang's (2017) study on junior high school teachers. Chuang (2017) explored teachers' perceptions of the provisional Guidelines for Junior High English Curriculum to be implemented in 2019, in which

four logical thinking skills are listed as the goals for instruction. The four thinking skills are quite similar to the basic thinking skills in the 2010 Senior High School English Curriculum Guidelines and include "*synthesizing related information to make reasonable guesses*," "*comparing, categorizing, and sorting two to three pieces of information*," "*clarifying the cause-and-effect relationships among different pieces of information based on the context*," and "*differentiating facts and opinions based on the textual clues (e.g., in my opinion, maybe) from the context*." Surprisingly, none of the 17 interviewees in Chuang's (2017) study showed worry about cultivating students' thinking skills because to them, these basic skills resembled reading comprehension skills, which have been stressed in their English class. In fact, the resemblance between junior high school thinking skills descriptors and reading comprehension skills can also be found in some thinking skills descriptors in the 2010 Guidelines for Senior High School English Curriculum. For instance, "*clarifying the cause-and-effect relationships among different information based on the context*" may resemble a reading comprehension process focusing on the reasons for an act or the causal relationship between two events. And, "*analyzing various information, and concluding or generalizing the similarities*" may resemble a reading comprehension skill involved in searching for the main idea of the text. Chuang's (2017) findings suggest that teachers may not feel so resistant to incorporating thinking skills instruction in English classes if they could see the connection between thinking skills and language learning. In light of the problems arising from teachers' misinterpretations of the thinking skills in the Guidelines, the MOE should take measures to help English teachers more accurately interpret the thinking skills promoted in the curriculum guidelines and connect thinking skills development to English language learning.

Measures should also be taken to solve the problem that students usually study to the (high-stakes) test and teachers teach to the (high-stakes) test in Taiwan. In particular, the College Entrance Exam Center needs to highlight the thinking skills component on the test. On the other hand, to ease teachers' and students' anxiety over the subjectivity involved in assessing thinking skills, the MOE may need to provide some concrete principles or specific rubrics for classroom-based assessment of thinking skills.

Finally, modification of the Guidelines regarding thinking skills should be considered. For some descriptors of thinking skills in the 2010 Guidelines are very basic and similar to reading comprehension skills.

It may be more appropriate to rephrase some basic descriptors, such as *clarifying the cause-and-effect relationships among different information based on the context* (Basic-2), which have already caused practitioners some confusion and move the revised descriptors to the categories of comprehension skills like reading and listening. More importantly, following the contemporary conceptualization of critical thinking as a combination of cognitive abilities and affective dispositions, some "disposition" descriptors such as "fairmindedness," "intellectual humility," and "intellectual empathy" could be added in the Guidelines.

Notes

1. Ennis made comments on the Original Taxonomy using the old terms, which in the Revised Taxonomy refer to "create, evaluate, analyze, apply, and understand" as the top five levels.
2. The two excerpts are translated from the quotes provided in Cheng et al. (2011, p. 114), which is written in Chinese.
3. The excerpt is translated from the quote provided in Cheng et al. (2011, p. 118).
4. The excerpts are selected and translated from Cheng (2015, pp. 49–51), which is also written in Chinese.
5. With regard to the nature of writing tasks on the College Entrance Exam, Yeh's (2011) analysis of English writing was based on a series of four pictures in 2007, which allowed students to reshuffle the sequence of the four pictures, identified all eight descriptors in Table 10.1. The same study identified only the first seven descriptors in the multiple-choice sections, including Vocabulary in Context, Cloze Tests (with both complete sentences as the options in one type, and fragments of a sentence as the options in another type), and Reading Comprehension.

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CHAPTER 11

Literacy Skills Education from the Perspective of English as a Lingua Franca: A Case Study on Taiwanese Students' Secondary English Language Education Experience

Melissa H. Yu

Introduction

There were discussions about the pros and cons of designing and implementing ELF listening-focused courses to facilitate international communication (e.g., Galloway, 2013; Sung, 2015). These studies also demonstrated that specific programs were developed to deepen undergraduates' or teacher trainees' understanding of

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ELF-related communication topics (Chang, 2014; Ke & Cahyani, 2014). Even though the studies on literacy skills from a global perspective are increasing, they are still at an infancy stage. It becomes unrealistic to envisage the introduction of an ELF perspective to plan courses to strengthen students' literacy skills for international communication if there is little evidence on what support is needed to develop literacy courses and how students may benefit from such courses. The discussion above encourages a review of how the existing ELF-related research has explored the topic of literacy skills education for international communication in Taiwanese contexts. The lack of research into literacy skills from a global perspective also calls for a study to consider how reading and writing skills are taught to students for international communication, and whether such students have received sufficient training to do so.

Although the topics related to ELF in Taiwanese contexts remain a research area for further exploration, the number of studies on English language education from the perspective of ELF has increased during the past decade. I reviewed the main topic(s) that 12 research papers set out to consider and found out that the majority recruited participants from universities; none of them investigated secondary-level students. Evidently, employing the ELF perspective to investigate Taiwanese secondary education to enhance literacy skills has still not been recognized as a deserving research topic.

In addition, most studies discuss participants' principles or perceptions of teaching, learning, or using general English for international communication. Very few studies focus on teaching, learning, and using specific skills, such as literacy skills training, in English for international communication, not to mention research into the ideas and curricula plans to develop these skills. For instance, among 12 reviewed studies, only one paper covered the topic of learners' use of literacy skills for online communication, despite the focus of Ke and Cahyani's (2014) study on undergraduates' language skills in general. Still, none of these studies explored the ways in which secondary English language education encourages or discourages the development of literacy skills from an ELF perspective. This calls for a study to explore literacy skills education at Taiwanese secondary schools.

ELF Perspectives on Literacy Skills Development

In light of the global status of English for communication, the early literature and empirical studies focused on the postcolonial perspective on codifying local varieties of English (Kachru, 1992) as well as on English as a lingua franca (ELF) to describe linguistic variations of English during communicative use (Jenkins, 2000). In the recent five years, scholars have claimed that ELF has become a non-static approach to explain the multilingual nature of English language usage for communication (Jenkins, 2015). While the paradigmatic growth continues, ELF research has also contributed to advance knowledge regarding various aspects of international communication. I now will focus my discussion on the advancement of knowledge in teaching and learning English language skills.

In the past decade, ELF researchers have proposed several pedagogical suggestions, such as introducing different kinds of English to students to listen to (Galloway, 2013) and using listening materials to help students familiarize themselves with varieties of English (Galloway & Rose, 2014). Scholars also have suggested ideas with regard to the teaching and learning of other English language skills, such as strengthening oral skills and pronunciation for international academic presentation (Schaller-Schwaner, 2015). To enhance the four skills, the pedagogical suggestions for strengthening listening and speaking are relatively more than those for strengthening reading and writing skills.

There are also implications for research innovations. For instance, the ELF perspective has been applied to establish a theoretical framework in considering English language use, education, and policies for professional purposes (Gonçalves, 2015; Lu, 2018). As Nickerson (2013) argues, ELF paradigmatic knowledge has added a global dimension to ESP (English for Specific Purposes) studies. This motivated me to find out how ELF studies on literacy skills education can provide a new perspective on the secondary English language education in Taiwan.

While the ELF research paradigm has contributed to the exemplified research areas illustrated above, Applied Linguistics and TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) researchers have begun to challenge the established approach of ELF research to explore English language use and education. For instance, Hyland (2018) and Tribble (2017) question the claim made by ELF scholars that the

NS perspective is inadequate as a mainstream or sole approach to English for Academic Purposes (EAP) literacy, or for the NS approach to set models for academic literacy development. I thus reviewed the ELF-related literature and found the perpetuation of NS-NNS dichotomous approach to consider literacy development over the past 15 years.

For instance, Wallace (2002) discussed literacy from the perspective of English as a global language. In opposition to the homogenous and de-contextualized approach to literacy, Wallace adopts Street's (1984) definition of literacy as being able to read and write in order to socialize in specific contexts. Working within this definition, Wallace further discusses readers' and writers' use of English in myriad social contexts. Taking the postcolonial perspective of English to discuss the native-speaking (NS) normative approach to literacy, Wallace distinguishes ways in which literacy is categorized as "English literacy," which refers to reading and writing in conformity with the traditional perspective of English as a native language (ENL), in contrast to "global literate English" in which reading and writing texts are not necessarily "standard in form" (2002, p. 106). While the term "literate English" problematizes the ENL perspective as the primary approach to literacy establishment, still these concepts related to "literate English" do offer insights into the literacy research and education.

While Wallace criticized the ENL perspective as the only or primary approach to develop literacy, her point, nevertheless, may run the risk of reinforcing the dichotomous approach to literacy studies/education at the expense of the possibility of an ENL approach to promote the literacy of NNS learners for international communication. A decade later, Wallace (2012) was still using NS in opposition to a non-native-speaking (NNS) approach in discussing ways to strengthen reading skills. It is not surprising that the NS-NNS dichotomous approach has been perpetuated in the literature on literacy education because this approach is also prevalent in the established ELF studies on other topics. I observed that the reproduction of this NS-NNS approach mainly derives from the following well-accepted assumptions: (1) the prevalence of the NS-based approach to literacy (e.g., Leung & Street, 2012), (2) the NS approach as the major obstacle to literacy development (e.g., McKay & Brown, 2016), and (3) any non-NS approach to better facilitate lingua franca literacy. One question arises from the above-mentioned assumptions: whether the NS-NNS dichotomous approach is the only factor to be

blamed for preventing secondary students from acquiring literacy skills from an ELF perspective.

In addition, new terms have been coined in considering the issues related to English language use and their implications for pedagogy. A case in point is the term lingua franca English (LFE) that has been proposed by Canagarajah (2007, 2013) to discuss language acquisition which should respond to communicative contexts. Jenkins (2015) criticizes this concept as static in scope, with varieties of English or a particular way to use English being reinforced. Six years later, Canagarajah revisited the concept of LFE by arguing for learners' and users' English that emerges "from the contexts of use" (2013, p. 68), representing a non-static perspective on English language. Both positions regarding LFE have provided insights into learning and the use of literacy skills of English. Despite so, both positions encourage the rethinking of literacy skills of English for international communication, not by juxtaposing static-emergent dichotomous categories as illustrated above, but by what literacy skills of English for international communication mean to readers, writers, and the contexts in which reading and writing to communicate or literacy education takes place.

The above review suggests the consistent use of NS vs. NNS or a dichotomous perspective on literacy skills. One question arising from the prevalence of the NS-NNS dichotomous perspective on English language use and education is whether a dichotomous approach introduces a normative scope of ELF on the language use and education if alternatives are unavailable. In order to avoid following this either-or paradigmatic path toward literacy skills education, this chapter uses the phrases "literacy skills" to suggest the freedom for local users/learners to propose their approach to interpret how reading and writing skills are learned in their teaching contexts, used under their international communication circumstances, and conceptualized from their own perspective. So, I decide to use the term "literacy skills," not "LFE or ELF literacy skills" because student's literacy skills development should not be understood in a way prescribed by researchers but a way outlined by students themselves. Hence, it is necessary to scrutinize what LFE or any other similar concept, such as ELF, means to learners when they are learning or using English literacy skills for international communication.

As discussed, there is little ELF research into literacy skills development at Taiwanese secondary schools, so this calls for a study on how

literacy skills training has been offered to high school students. The implication arising from the perpetuation of a NS-NNS or a static vs. non-static dichotomous approach to English language education is the need to challenge the normative use of the existing approach at expense of alternative perspectives in considering English language use and education. To address the above concerns, research questions are posed to understand literacy skills development under the Taiwanese national secondary education system. Sampling strategies and methods to collect and analyze data are considered herein. The findings of this study are then presented and drawn upon to evaluate how adequately the established approach of the ELF research paradigm can explain literacy skills or English language education in Taiwan. This chapter ends with a summary of the major findings and considers the implications for future research and literacy course development.

Research Methodology

This section begins with research questions to be considered and moves on to consider sampling strategies. After that, the process of data collection and analysis is summarized.

Research Questions

To address the concerns arising from the literature review above, two questions were formed.

1. How does the Taiwanese secondary English language education develop students' reading and writing skills?
2. How do students relate learning English language reading and writing skills to international communication?

Participants

Instead of recruiting secondary school students, one hundred and eighty undergraduates were invited to participate in the questionnaire survey. The main reason for using this sampling strategy was to create the opportunity for those students who have completed their secondary education.

With the completion of secondary education in mind, participants were able to summarize the 6-year high school English language learning experience, thereby providing a full picture of secondary English language education for literacy skills development. In addition, undergraduates had started their tertiary level of English language education when this study was conducted so they can compare their English language learning experience in secondary schools with that at the university level.

Convenient sample strategy was employed to recruit one hundred and eighty-one undergraduates based on my access to their teachers and university faculty staff. In addition, students from as many disciplines as possible were sampled in order to generalize how the secondary English language education strengthened the literacy skills of students from different professional study backgrounds. In this study, the undergraduates from forty-two departments or programs of thirteen faculties in three Taiwanese universities were recruited to participate in the questionnaire survey (Appendix 1).

Eighteen students volunteered to be interviewed. When this study was conducted, they attended Freshmen English and Oral Training Courses and learned English from six teachers.

Data Collection and Analysis

To answer the above-mentioned research questions, I collected and analyzed questionnaire and interview data. One hundred and eighty-one undergraduates responded to the questionnaire, focusing on their English language learning experience at the high school level. Eighteen semi-structured interviews were then conducted with students, discussing their responses to the questionnaire survey about their four skills learning experience with additional comments on literacy skills development. Questionnaire and interview questions are presented in Appendices 2 and 3, respectively.

These students responded to the questionnaire and were interviewed in Chinese. So, the extracts were translated from Chinese into English. All data resources were dealt with in confidentiality by using pseudonyms to represent the students. The transcription convention is illustrated in Appendix 4.

Content analysis was carried out to analyze the questionnaire and interview data. The analysis of questionnaire data identified three themes: the orientation of secondary English language education, students' learning goals, and the focus of secondary English language education. Interviews were coded under the themes that emerged from the results of analyzing the questionnaire data.

Findings and Discussion

Questionnaire Survey

Among one hundred and eighty-one students, only twelve students had experienced attending short-term English language courses for a few weeks or one to two months abroad. Most of them attended such courses in the countries where English is mainly used as a native language, such as the USA, Canada, the UK, and Australia. The results above suggest that students relied heavily on national English language educational provisions to develop their literacy skills for international communication.

About 90% of students indicated that secondary English language education was examination oriented. Although 23% of students mentioned learning English for international communication as one of the learning goals, only eleven out of one hundred and eighty-one students indicated that developing communicative skills was their only learning goal before their university education. Other reasons for learning English that also mentioned included: the access to the information, becoming competitive, interests in learning English, or English as a favorite foreign language to learn. Since learning was not communication focused, it is very likely that literacy skills development was not aimed at the international communication.

When students were asked what aspects of language were often taught and learned in classrooms that they have experienced, grammar, vocabulary, and familiarizing themselves with English language use/expressions were cited by most of the students as the foci of secondary English language education. Only 6% of students mentioned that their previous English language education offered four skills-related training. Clearly, four skills training is not the center of high school English language education.

When students responded to the question about what aspects of English language are least explored in high school English language education, most participants indicated that they received rather limited education in the four skills. According to participants, training in the skills ordered from the most to the least emphasized were reading, writing, listening, and speaking. That is, speaking and listening skills were taught less than reading and writing literacy skills although the four skills were still not the center of secondary English language education.

When discussing students' needs in learning English to be communicative, more than one hundred students mentioned that they needed to improve their speaking skills, fifty-seven students replied that listening skills needed to be improved, and only seven students listed reading and writing literacy skills requiring improvement. Among these seven students who said they needed to enhance their literacy skills to be communicative, all indicated that they needed writing training; only three thought reading skills education was also necessary.

The results obtained from the questionnaire data analysis indicate that Taiwanese secondary English language education was examination oriented, not communication oriented. In addition, the focus of education was more on students' vocabulary and grammar enhancement and less on literacy skills development. Lastly, learning literacy skills for international communication was not the students' learning priority. Hence, the English language education did not seem to have a direct or strong link to students' literacy skills development in terms of learning focus and needs.

Despite these results, it is too simple to conclude that secondary English language education failed to develop students' literacy skills for international communication because the four skills training still played a part in the secondary English language education. Besides, students did not necessarily learn grammar, vocabulary, or listening and speaking skills at the expense of literacy skills development. Thirdly, learning vocabulary and grammar may facilitate literacy skills development for international communication because learning vocabulary and grammar was claimed to be essential for developing students' communicative competence (Nation, 2014; Widdowson, 2012). Examples of this are the learning needs of Taiwanese nurses (Lu, 2018) and engineers (Spence & Liu, 2013) who advocated enhancing vocabulary and grammar to communicate in international professional contexts. Lastly, learning vocabulary and grammar may be a part of literacy skills training. The discussion above calls for a deeper understanding of how literacy skills were actually

taught and learned inside of classrooms and how students perceive such training for international communication.

Interviews

In the interviews, all the undergraduates pointed out that English was usually taught and learned in accordance with the resources presented in textbooks. According to students' reflections on the roles that textbooks played in English language teaching and learning, VS1 indicated that "… Yes, of course {**teaching based on textbooks**}, teaching usually begins with vocabulary, grammar, and then reading." Other students held the same view of a heavy reliance on textbooks to teach and learn. The result further suggests that textbooks were the main learning materials used to develop students' literacy skills.

Since students indicated that their learning was textbook based, the discussion below focuses on how their literacy skills were strengthened by using textbooks. In the interviews, all students identified vocabulary and grammar as the center of textbook-based English language education. Learning vocabulary, reading, and grammar constituted most of the learning activities. When students were asked to summarize how textbooks were used to teach reading and other skills, ES1 indicated that "they (teachers) taught English in a similar way, beginning with teaching [reading], then analyzing vocabulary and grammar. That's all." Another example is ES2's reflection on high school English language education, and he indicated that "he{teacher} taught vocabulary first and moved on to reading skills training."

Albeit students' literacy skills were enhanced, the results reveal that reading skills were often strengthened in combination with vocabulary and grammar. VS2 exemplified such learning experience by saying, "In fact, the ways that teachers used textbooks to teach were similar. They usually taught **reading** first, or they let students listen to texts {as a part of reading skills training}. Students did silent reading sometimes. Then, they taught **grammar and vocabulary**." This result resonates with that of the questionnaire data analysis, indicating vocabulary, grammar, and reading constitute most of the learning activities. As can be seen, Taiwanese secondary English language education pays more attention to reading than to writing skills development, presenting unbalanced literacy skills training. However, developing reading skills was mainly related to examination preparation, not communication.

Table 11.1 Examples of students' language needs

GS1: In senior high school (.), we had the least training **in speaking skills**. **GS2**: I [felt that] senior high school English language education was very different from the English language courses offered at my university now. Before (.), **there was no training for speaking at all**. I did not realise that I **needed to learn speaking** in addition to reading and writing skills until I studied here {university 1, U1}.
VS1: Right, but I feel my reading is good enough. As for listening, it may not be so good… Yet, [**I want to learn speaking**]. I feel I have no confidence to speak. That is (.). Even though I am good at reading and listening, I feel, we Taiwanese, still care too much about grammar, …; I still have no idea how to **practice speaking**. **VS3**: From junior to senior high school, learning was for examination preparation. {During junior high school}, the language education focuses more on examination preparation. **There is no training for listening. There is no speaking, reading and writing skills training**. It was just about examinations…After high school, I want to enhance my **listening and speaking skills.** **L3**: Before university, it {learning English} was all related to examinations, focusing on grammar and vocabulary. **There was some listening training but very little training for speaking skills.** That's secondary English language education. … It was all about examinations. **IS1**: During junior high school, Taiwanese English language education focused on entrance examination preparation. So (.), the focus was on (.), hm, that is, with **rather little interactive language use and speaking**. In junior and senior high schools, it {learning English}was examination oriented. We **learned grammar and vocabulary, sometimes listening skills**. However, listening skills training aimed at test preparation; 7- to 8-hours English learning per week focused on what I just mentioned to you{examination}. **ES1**: Among four skills, my [**speaking skills**] are really bad. **ES2**: …**listening and speaking** are my learning priorities. Hm, (.), perhaps pronunciation training too because my pronunciation sounds strange. **ES3**: f I do not learning **listening** skills, I will not understand what people say. If I do not understand others, how can I **speak** to respond?

All interviewees indicated that they had the least training in speaking skills and this resonates with the finding from the questionnaire survey. Participants identified learning needs for communication, speaking, listening, and/or conversing were prioritized rather than literacy skills. For instance, VS3 reported that "from junior to senior high school, learning was for examination preparation. {During junior high school}, language education focuses more on examination preparation. **There is no training for listening. There is no speaking, reading, and writing skills training**. It was just about examinations…After high school, I wanted to enhance my **listening and speaking skills**." Holding a similar view, ES2 indicated that **listening and speaking** are my learning priorities.

Learning priorities and needs of these undergraduates echo those of nurses and engineers in the ESP (English for Specific Purposes) studies on Taiwanese contexts (Lu, 2018; Spence & Liu, 2013). Table 11.1 illustrates the examples of participants' language priorities and the reasons why they needed certain skills training. The results indicate that students did not associate their learning needs for communication with literacy skills development, presenting a weak link of the former to the latter.

Eleven students made additional comments on the importance and advantages of acquiring literacy skills for communication, how their literacy skills helped them acquire other skills for communication, their needs in developing writing skills for academic rather than general communication purposes, and the limitations of literacy skills for online effective communication. For instance, IS1 & VS2 emphasized the function of literacy skills in his online international communication when listening and speaking skills fail to achieve their intended functions. LS2 mentioned that writing English to communicate internationally on MSN Messenger facilitated his speaking fluency. LS3 also made a similar comment by indicating how reading skills helped develop his speaking skills. VS3 highlighted his needs to learn writing by saying, "I needed to learn **writing experimental reports {in English}**." The additional comments show the users' perspectives on literacy skills for communication and professional purposes in international contexts. Their comments also link the use of literacy skills to the acquisition of other skills and communication effectiveness.

Summary and Conclusion

As indicated above, Taiwan's secondary English language education system offers students unbalanced literacy skills training, focusing more on reading than writing skills enhancement. Besides, the secondary English language education is examination oriented. While examination-focused English language education does not equate to failure in preparing students for communication, the quality of strengthening students' literacy skills for international communication may be reduced when the training is not balanced or communication focused. It is reasonable to claim that Taiwanese secondary English language education is not well connected to literacy skills development for international communication.

As for students' perception of literacy skills development for international communication, they tend to relate their literacy skills training,

especially reading skills, to examinations, not international communication. The finding also reveals that students tend to recognize listening and speaking, and not reading and writing abilities as the essential skills for international communication. Overall, learning literacy skills did not have a direct connection to communication. This finding resonates with that of the research into Taiwanese people's perception of English as an international language, suggesting a loose link of English language learning under Taiwan's English language education system to communicative use (e.g., Lin, 2012; Seilhamer, 2015).

As discussed previously, the findings reveal the marked tendency for students to take examinations and a speaking-based perspective on literacy skills education and English language skills for international communication. The literacy skills education is not much related to NS-NNS approach to literacy skills development in the existing ELF literature (e.g., Leung & Street, 2012; McKay & Brown, 2016; Wallace, 2002, 2012). The static or non-static perspective on English as a lingua franca for international communication (Canagarajah, 2007; Jenkins, 2015) appears not to be very relevant to Taiwanese students' scope of learning and using literacy skills. For instance, students' comments show their concern about the effective use of literacy skills, and not a static or non-static perspective on language use in international communicative contexts.

The evidence cited from this current study may not be sufficient to back up any claim here about the best way to ensure literacy development and research literacy skills education from the perspective of ELF. Nevertheless, one implication arising from the discussion above for developing literacy skills training courses is to plan courses to address the students' language needs. Another implication for literacy skills development is to rebalance the reading and writing skills education. More writing training in high schools should be encouraged in order to increase the quality of literacy skills training for international communication. However, these suggestions should be realized on the proviso that students have learning needs in writing rather than reading or other skills, as VS3 indicated (see Table 11.2).

Finally, the findings highlight the value of conducting similar investigations, in order to deepen the understanding regarding what aspects of literacy skills students have acquired and need in order to communicate internationally. In addition, the findings of this study show the significance of seeking an alternative approach to understanding literacy skills development, which directly link local people's language

Table 11.2 Students' additional comments on literacy skills development

IS1 & VS2: I will **write down what I want to say** {when listening and skills fail to achieve their communicative function}.
LS2: Yes, **I can express myself very well {through writing English to communicate}**.
LS3: **Sure {**writing English to communicate may help to speak English to communicate**}; it is the use of my own words, not the words prescribed by outsiders** (i.e., teachers, learning materials or other users of English).

IS2: No, I read the word and heard the pronunciation simultaneously but **I just could not associate the pronunciation with the word**. …{He suggested the reading skills did not help him understand what the other online game player wanted to say}.
VS3: For me, I needed to learn **writing experimental reports**. When writing group reports with international students, I could not write the group reports by myself so I needed to think how to describe the colors {of chemicals} in English, what colors, … (.) to record the results of experiments, I used English to write, so I needed to force myself to learn writing. I wrote through translating Chinese into English so the English in the report did not read well.

learning and needs in their language contexts, and not merely those approaches prescribed by researchers. The use of approaches such as NS vs. NNS may present only the tip of the iceberg in understanding teaching and learning literacy skills for international communication. In this study, the ways in which students conceptualize their literacy skills acquisition and use have successfully added another layer of understanding of how English should be taught and learned for international communication.

Appendix 1: Student Participants' Professional Studies in Taiwanese Universities 1, 2, and 3 (U1, U2, and U3)

University	*Faculty*	*Department/Program*
U1	1. Art College	1. Department of Foreign Languages
U2	1. Faculty of Science	1. Department of Physics
		2. Department of Chemistry
		3. Department of Earth Sciences
		4. Department of Mathematics
		5. Department of Photonics

(continued)

University	*Faculty*	*Department/Program*
	2. Faculty of Engineering	6. Department of Mechanical Engineering 7. Department of Chemical Engineering 8. Department of Resources Engineering 9. Department of Material Science and Engineering 10. Department of Civil Engineering 11. Department of Engineering Science 12. Department of System and Naval Mechatronic 13. Department of Environmental Engineering
	3. Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science	14. Department of Electrical Engineering 15. Department of Computer Science and Information Engineering
	4. Faculty of Liberal Arts	16. Department of History 17. Department of Taiwanese Literature 18. Department of Chinese Literature
	5. Faculty of Social Science	19. Department of Psychology 20. Department of Political Science 21. Department of Law
	6. Faculty of Management	22. Department of Business Administration 23. Department of Accountancy 24. Department of Statistics 25. Department of Transportation and Communication Management Science
	7. Faculty of Planning and Design	26. Department of Architecture
	8. Faculty of Bioscience and Biochemistry	27. Department of Biology 28. Department of Life Sciences
	9. Faculty of Medicine	29. Department of Medical Laboratory Science and Biotechnology 30. Department of Nursing 31. Department of Occupational Therapy
U3	1. Faculty of Education	1. Department of Education 2. Department of Special Education 3. Department of Early Childhood Education
	2. Faculty of Science	4. Department of Applied Physics 5. Department of Applied Mathematics 6. Department of Computer Science 7. Thin Film Science 8. Bachelor Program in Robotics
	3. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences	9. Department of Cultural and Creative Industries 10. Department of Social Development

Appendix 2: Student Questionnaire into Students' Secondary Education Experience

A. Background

Please complete the following personal information.

1. My nationality is

   ☐Taiwanese ☐non-Taiwanese (Please specify your nationality if you are a non-Taiwanese: ___________.)

2. How long have you learned English language in Taiwan?

   ☐ 5 years or less ☐between 5 and 10 years

   ☐ more than 10 years ☐Other: Please specify__________

3. Are you an English major?

   ☐Yes, I am.

   ☐No, my major is _______________________.

4. Have you ever attended or are you going to attend an English language program in another country?

   ☐Yes. Please provide the information about where and how long you have attended/are going to attend this program. _________________________________

   ☐No.

B. Students' learning experience in English

5. The main purpose of learning English in the past is to

   ☐pass the examination

   ☐use English for the real world communication

   ☐access to resources in English

   ☐Other: Please specify__________

6. Now you learn English in order to ________. (You can tick other option(s) if your answers are different from that to the last question).

   ☐prepare for the examination

   ☐use English for the real world communication

   ☐access to resources in English

   ☐Other: Please specify__________

7. What aspects of language are very often taught and learned in classrooms that you have experienced?
8. What aspects of English language are least explored in the classrooms that you have experienced?
9. What level of English language do you want to acquire in the classroom?
10. What aspects of English language do you think you need to acquire or need to be enhanced in Taiwan in order to use it for communicative purposes?

Appendix 3: Interview Questions

1. Can you describe how junior and senior high school English language education was about?
2. Through secondary English language education, what aspects of language were most and least taught and how?
3. How did you relate high school English language learning experience to international communication?
4. According to your English language learning experience, what aspects of English do you think you should prioritize or require more support in order to communicate?

Appendix 4: Transcription Convention Systems for Content Analysis of Interviews

1. Student participants are presented as follows: S1, S2, S3—the first student, the second student, and the third student to represent the order in which students speak in class. The letters G, V, S, I, L, and E are added to students' pseudonyms, such as GS1, VS2, SS1, and IS3, to distinguish students from one learning group from those from another.
2. Content of interviews

Conventions	*Used to indicate*
(.)	short pause, less than 3 seconds
{text}	the commentary of any kind (e.g., to indicate in conversation about whom the interviewee referred to when interviewee used pronouns)
[overlapped words]	the words overlapped
…	the omission of student's talk
"text"	text for emphasis
bold	the content of interviews to analyze and discuss in this chapter

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CHAPTER 12

Teaching Reading in the Macau Secondary English Classroom: Some Critical Issues to Consider

Matilda Wong

Introduction

As a language skill, reading is one of the most important. It is beneficial for second or foreign language acquisition as it can be a major source of comprehensible input (Krashen, 2004), especially in a context where the language is not commonly used outside of the classroom. The process of reading helps learners internalize grammatical structures and build vocabulary, which can help learners improve their writing (Grabe, 2003; see Extensive Reading Hypothesis in Krashen, 1984; Park, 2016; Renandya, 2007; Tsang, 1996). A number of studies in the literature (Beglar, Hunt, & Kite, 2012; Mason & Krashen, 1997; Suk, 2017) show that extensive reading helps improve reading comprehension and leads to gains in reading abilities. To this effect, English language learners should read extensively and should read often. Successful mastery of reading would enable them to read to learn and gain knowledge and to

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achieve different goals such as reading for studies, for work, for pleasure, for information particularly in some specialist subjects, or even for multimedia-based interaction over the Internet.

There have been different research studies that investigated the relationship between L1 reading ability, L2 proficiency, and L2 reading performance (e.g., Bossers, 1991; Carrell, 1991). As Hudson (2007) pointed out, there are interrelationships between all three. Studies in the literature that investigated the interactions between L1 and L2 reading processing (e.g., Lin & Yu, 2015; Paige & Smith, 2018; Siu & Ho, 2015) indicate that there are different aspects of L1 to L2 transfer in aiding reading comprehension. Specifically, Siu and Ho's (2015) study suggested that understanding L2 texts could benefit from an L1 to L2 transfer of syntactic skills while Lin and Yu's (2015) study showed that high-proficiency readers used their L1 metacognitive strategies to help them better monitor their reading processes for better reading comprehension in L2. In the context of online reading, Taki's (2016) study also supported the finding that L2 readers use similar metacognitive reading strategies in L1 and L2, suggesting a transfer of strategies from L1 to L2. Learning to read in the first language is typically meaning-focused (Nation, 2009), implying that teachers teach reading with techniques which give primary attention to help native-speaking learners understand and enjoy the text. Unlike first-language reading, learning to read in another language is more complicated and involves a great deal of language learning as well. There are facilitation and interference effects between the two languages. Second-language learners may already be able to read in their first language. They have general cognitive skills, preconceptions and attitudes to reading, so they do not need to learn what they can transfer from their first language but they may have to learn a different writing system and may need to change their attitudes to reading.

Learners with little exposure to the second language have difficulty in reading. To avoid learners' frustration, teachers are advised to use graded readers or modified texts that suit readers' ability levels or assign reading tasks whose difficulty matches the readers' ability (Day & Bamford, 1998). Nation (2009) also recommended the following guiding principles for second-language reading teachers. Apart from ultimately helping learners develop reading fluency through speed reading and extensive reading practice, reading teachers should select reading materials appropriate to learners' language proficiency level, design reading activities that are

related to other language skills (e.g., discussions or writing tasks), help learners develop the skills and knowledge needed for effective reading (e.g., phonemic activities, spelling practice, vocabulary learning and grammar study) and give learners training and practice in a range of reading strategies such as previewing, predicting, using background knowledge, paying attention to text structure, guessing words from context, critiquing and reflecting on the text. Findings in various studies (e.g., Chen & Chen, 2015; Li & Wilhelm, 2008; Oyetunji, 2013) supported the effectiveness of explicit reading strategy instruction in the L2 classroom. Lee's (2017) case study on a reading program in a Hong Kong primary school explained how a team of English teachers in the school involved students in different class activities and homework assignments that promoted reading strategies training. In particular, Lee (2013) emphasized the importance of making inferencing a part of the reading curriculum as this is an essential reading strategy that enhances reading comprehension. He encouraged teachers to explicitly teach inferencing in class through a think-aloud process in the while-reading stage of the lesson.

Although there has been much discussion in the literature on the different characteristics, suggestions or principles for second-language reading instruction recommended to teachers, it is not uncommon to find frustrated teachers who are faced with a big group of learners who find reading a difficult task that they would want to avoid. Li and Wilhelm's (2008) study on reading teachers' pedagogical practices in middle school classrooms in China discussed the different difficulties such as poor comprehension or inadequate vocabulary that learners encountered in reading. This could be due to the long tradition of adopting a grammar-translation approach in foreign language teaching and a bottom-up approach in teaching reading. From a psychological perspective, other studies (e.g., Shao, Yu, & Ji, 2013; Zhou, 2017) identified some major sources of foreign language reading anxiety that hindered learners' success in learning. These sources of anxiety included worries about comprehension, unfamiliar topics, or unknown pronunciation.

Possibly like second or foreign language learners in other contexts, secondary school students in Macau face a lot of challenges as they develop their second-language literacy and, in reality, this might be related to the reading instruction they receive. With particular reference to the EFL context of Macau, this chapter examines a number of common phenomena in L2 reading instruction in the secondary

English classroom, and with an attempt to explain the pedagogical practices in Macau, the chapter also discusses some of the factors that may hinder learners' development of second-language reading proficiency and fluency.

The Context of Macau

To begin with, it is essential to understand the background of Macau, its history, people, official languages and learning of English as a foreign language in this context. Macau is situated on the western shore of the Pearl River in South China and is 64 kilometers to the west of Hong Kong. It is a small place of 30.8 square kilometers with a population of 658,900 (Direcção dos Serviços de Estatística e Censos, 2017). It has a long historical link with Portugal: It was leased to Portugal in 1557 and declared as a Portuguese colony in 1849. A century later in 1999, its sovereignty was returned to China and, since then, Macau has become a special administrative region of China. The overwhelming majority (95%) of the population are ethnic Chinese with the remaining percentage as Macanese (people of mixed Portuguese and Chinese ancestry), Portuguese and others (Direcção dos Serviços de Estatística e Censos, 2017).

Despite the fact that the Portuguese government colonized Macau more than 400 years ago and despite the fact that Chinese and Portuguese are specified as the official languages, the colonial government did not adopt a compulsory policy in language planning and made very little effort to promote Portuguese because they were primarily interested in Macau for economic reasons. Cantonese, a dialect spoken in the southern coast of China, is the mother tongue of the Chinese residents in Macau and the speech community of Macau is essentially monolingual (Cantonese-speaking). The population using Portuguese as the home language is only less than 1% of the population and Portuguese is mainly used in the government, legislative offices, and in formal documents (Direcção dos Serviços de Estatística e Censos, 2017).

In Macau, English is a second foreign language after Portuguese. The spread of English in Macau may be partly attributed to the influence of Hong Kong English media—television and radio—and partly to the fact that English occupies an increasingly important position in the domains of education, business, and tourism (see Moody, 2008 for a more detailed discussion). In the past decade, Macau experienced a drastic increase in its demand for English because of the blooming tourist and gaming industries which have provided the city with a huge

amount of income. English has become the favored foreign language displacing Portuguese and it extends through international trade and education reform. In schools, with the government's support in funding school-based training for the English teaching panel team, offering local English teaching seminars or workshops and organizing overseas intensive teacher-training programs for in-service English teachers, more resources have been put on the teaching and learning of English (Brock, 2005; Young, 2011).

In general, students in Macau start learning English as a foreign language at the pre-school level and have at least twelve years of English learning when they graduate from the secondary school (Brock, 2005). However, when students get to university, it appears that not a lot of them have become successful learners of English or are competent enough to cope with the English language demands required by different programs in the university. There is a gap between students' English proficiency levels and the English language requirements of the local tertiary institutions (Bray, Butler, Hui, Kwo, & Mang, 2002). English learning among students seems to remain unsatisfactory despite the government's efforts to provide more resources on enhancing English language teaching in the primary and secondary school sectors. Students' English proficiency is still limited and quite a large number of them cannot operate English or communicate in English with confidence. There might be a number of reasons for this. For one thing, although English has gained more importance in society, there is still little English influence in the community which is basically Cantonese-speaking. For another thing, the majority of the whole student population in Macau study in Chinese-medium schools (Young, 2011). Outside of the English classroom, these students do not have much input of English or opportunity to use the language and, as a result, a lot of them encounter different kinds of difficulties in their struggle to master the language.

Reading Instruction in the Macau Secondary Classroom: Problems and Discussions

For the last fifteen years, I have been involved in teacher education work for both pre-service and in-service teachers in Macau. Apart from teaching undergraduate students in the Bachelor of Education program in the university where I work and prepare them to be English teachers in secondary schools, I also provide school-based teacher-training programs

for English teachers in local secondary schools. The discussions in this chapter are insights drawn from my experience in the teacher education work I did in Macau.

Between 2007 and 2016, I was invited at different times to conduct school-based teacher-training programs in four secondary schools in Macau. These schools were typical, private Chinese-medium schools; all content subjects in the curriculum were taught in Chinese while English was only used in English language lessons. In general, students had seven English language lessons per week and each lesson lasted forty minutes long. Like many other Chinese-medium schools in Macau, these four schools allocated different focuses for the seven English language lessons in a week. Each week, there were basically reading comprehension and vocabulary lessons as well as grammar lessons. The frequency of writing (or composition) lessons and oral/listening lessons varied among different schools. If these lessons did not get a weekly arrangement, they could be conducted just once every two weeks or once a month.

In the four secondary schools, I conducted teacher-training programs related to teaching methodology and language testing. I spent 150 hours within two school years (totaling six terms) in one of the schools, 60 hours within one school year (involving two terms) in another school, 30 and 20 hours within one term in the remaining two schools, respectively. The teacher-training programs consisted of English curriculum review, class observations, interviews, discussions, and training courses. In the first two schools, each teacher in the English panel was observed twice during the program and at least one reading comprehension lesson was selected for observation. In the remaining two schools, the teachers were observed once during the program and most teachers were observed in their reading comprehension lessons while a few teachers were observed for grammar or oral teaching. I arranged a post-observation meeting for each teacher in order to have a better understanding of their teaching including their planning, rationale, concerns and challenges. I also discussed with the teachers issues that I observed from their teaching and tailor-made some courses to enhance the teachers' instructional practices.

Based on the class observations in these four schools, the following scenario is what I commonly observed in a reading lesson. When students have to tackle a reading text, they generally do some preparation work for their reading. The teacher either requires them to highlight all the difficult words in the text and look up the Chinese meaning of these words in the dictionary before class or has them go through the

definitional meanings of a long word list of discrete vocabulary items found in the text before they even look at the text. Because of such practice, students gradually develop a habit of filling up the space in the text with Chinese meanings when they read any English passages. They need to ensure that they understand every single word in the text before they attempt to comprehend the general idea of a phrase or a sentence. It seems that, in general, students lack the necessary strategies to develop their reading and vocabulary skills. Even though they might have acquired some skills when they read in their first language, they are trained to focus very much on pre-learning the Chinese meaning of all the difficult vocabulary in the passage when they read in English and, as a result, they might not fully make use of their first-language reading skills which they probably have developed.

The belief in mastering individual vocabulary items as a way to facilitate reading comprehension is deep-rooted in many secondary English teachers, especially those with years of teaching experience, who claim that they generally learnt to read English in this way. This belief is reflected in teachers' traditional pedagogical practices in reading lessons. According to some teachers whom I observed, one common pre-reading activity that they use is a review of the new vocabulary items that students will encounter in the reading passage. Teachers usually prepare a vocabulary sheet with all the words and bilingual meanings and spend at least one lesson to go through all these words with students. To make sure that students are able to pronounce the words accurately, they ask them to read aloud each word in the vocabulary sheet several times as practice. When students start reading the passage, teachers explain every sentence in the text and encourage students to refer to the vocabulary sheet for word meanings. In a way, students are much used to transferring the Chinese meanings to the English vocabulary and they try to comprehend the text with the help of these Chinese meanings.

In fact, this kind of reading practice is typical in English learning in Macau. As explained by some teachers in my post-observation discussions, students in their primary school years usually use a general English textbook which contains units of simple reading texts, vocabulary, and grammar items. The focus of learning is mainly on the pronunciation of the words in the sentences or passages that students have to read aloud, the meaning of the vocabulary they come across and the grammar structures they need to master. During reading lessons, teachers emphasize largely the decoding process in reading and encourage students to work

from individual meanings or grammatical characteristics of the basic units of the text before progressing to the whole text. With such focus on bottom-up processing, students gradually build up a conception that it is essential to make use of their first language to help them understand this foreign language, English. As they encounter individual vocabulary items in the text, they adopt a translation approach to understand the meanings of these words. In the end, they consider reading an English text as a matter of being able to comprehend all the ideas in their first language. Some teachers that I interviewed also revealed that they did not pay too much attention to how much reading proficiency students had mastered in the primary school or whether students had learnt any basic skills and strategies to tackle reading in a foreign language. So, when students proceed to their secondary schooling, most teachers in the secondary schools continue with a reading instruction approach that mainly focuses on bottom-up processes.

There are a number of problems with such an approach of reading instruction. First, when teachers solely emphasize bottom-up processing during reading, students mainly focus on decoding every single word they are reading and their understanding of the text remains much at the literal level. Although bottom-up strategies are helpful in the decoding process, reading is certainly more than decoding. Students also need top-down strategies, which include making use of background or prior knowledge such as knowledge about the world, expectations and predictions about the context and overall meaning to process the text; these strategies are often made use of when one reads in their first language. In principle, it is more effective for second-language learners to use a combination of bottom-up and top-down processing. Top-down cues about the context can often compensate for a lack of vocabulary and help learners guess meaning through context. However, if learners focus too much on individual words and sentences, they might be relying too heavily on bottom-up processing at the expense of useful top-down cues. Students in the Macau secondary classroom stress too much these bottom-up strategies when they tackle an English text. This explains why they often find reading a tedious task because they need to look up every single unknown vocabulary before they read.

Second, if teachers stop at the literal level of a text and mainly allow students to locate or retrieve information from the text as practice, students will not be aware that there are other aspects or mental strategies that readers use to negotiate their way into a text and these are essential

in the development of reading literacy. Mental strategies such as the ability to integrate and interpret or to reflect and evaluate are higher-order reading skills. These skills enable students to make inferences, analyze and review a text critically. Again, students in the Macau secondary classroom often lack training in the development of these higher-order reading skills as they usually stick to the literal level of the text that they are reading. They are capable of finding relatively simple information that is directly and plainly stated in the text; but when they have to reflect on or interpret ideas of the text which requires them to draw on knowledge or ideas external to the text or relate their own experience to the text, they are not competent enough to complete such tasks. According to the Program for International Student Assessment 2009 (PISA 2009, in short) in which reading was the focus of assessment in that round of survey, the test results report that 15-year-old test-takers in Macau (i.e., students who are studying at the secondary school level) are much stronger in their performance of accessing and retrieving information in a text as compared to their performance of integrating, interpreting, reflecting on, and evaluating information in a text (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development—OECD, 2010). As a matter of fact, Macau students' performance in using higher-order reading skills is statistically significantly below the OECD average. In other words, in terms of reading literacy, they are not compatible with students of the same age in a lot of other countries that belong to the OECD.

A few other problematic instructional practices are also commonly observed in the English reading lessons and this might be partly attributable to students' poor performance in using higher-order reading skills. For instance, when dealing with a long passage, some teachers divide students into different groups and assign each group to read a section of the passage only. Students in each group concentrate on reading the assigned paragraph(s) and ignore the rest of the passage. When they finish, each group may be asked to summarize the section that they are responsible for or to present some of the ideas they have read. In this case, teachers are more concerned about the main ideas in the passage in general. Once they make sure that all the ideas are covered by each group of students, they consider that they have taught the passage. If students practice reading in such a manner, they only focus on partial sections of a text and are unaware of the importance of the context and the whole passage as a unit; as a result, they will not develop the strategy to make use of the necessary contextual clues to aid comprehension when they tackle other texts.

Other practices such as reading aloud and grammar learning in reading lessons can side-track students from proper reading skill development. Like many English teachers in the primary school, quite a number of secondary school teachers put much priority on pronunciation or reading-aloud practices. When they have explained the reading text, they often instruct students to read aloud the whole passage one or two times or they play the audio version of the text and encourage students to listen carefully to the reading aloud as a means to help them remember the pronunciation of the words in the passage. This kind of practice, however, may give students the impression that reading aloud and pronouncing every word accurately is the major thing that they should master when they read and it is the only thing that they need to pay attention to during the reading process. Similarly, some teachers tend to pinpoint grammatical structures found in the passage and divert students' attention from their reading. They spend a substantial amount of time on teaching the grammar points they highlight in the reading passage or they even ask students to do some practice work on those grammatical structures in the midst of reading. In the post-observation discussions, teachers explained that it is important for students to understand how particular structures work in a passage, which helps improve students' writing accuracy. Although these teachers may have a point, this kind of practice brings out the problem of hindering the flow of reading that ought to be the original focus of the lesson. It is, in fact, more advisable to leave grammar teaching in a separate lesson where teachers can deal with the target structures more intensively.

In the classroom, teaching, learning and assessment are complementary to each other and assessment informs teachers how effectively teaching and learning are taking place. In terms of reading assessment, a peculiar phenomenon is observed in some Macau secondary schools. In some reading tests and examinations, teachers assess students' knowledge of the passages that they have read in the textbook. The test items require students to remember facts from seen reading passages. To prepare for this type of test item, students need to memorize information in their textbook passages. In the teachers' explanation, the purpose of including such questions is to allow students the opportunity to do some revision for reading tests. If students are given unseen passages in the test, they might not be able to get a good score for their test because there are unknown vocabulary items that could affect students' reading performance. The mentality of these teachers shows a serious

misconception about reading assessment and again reflects teachers' deep-rooted beliefs in the need to master all new vocabulary in order to comprehend a text. Even teachers themselves are worried about students' ability to tackle an unseen passage but they are unaware that they are now testing students' ability to remember facts in a passage that they have previously read rather than testing students' real reading proficiency. The root of the problem lies in the fact that teachers' typical reading pedagogy and assessment mode have not taught students what the reading process means or helped them develop adequately the essential skills required for reading comprehension.

Some Suggestions for Teaching Reading in Macau Secondary Schools

To deal with the issues related to reading instruction that Macau secondary English teachers might not be aware of, the following are some suggestions for improving teaching and learning reading at the secondary level. In the first place, English teachers need to know what students have learnt about reading before they get to the secondary school. In other words, how do students access an English reading text? Are they able to make use of any first-language reading strategies? Do they find the foreign language—English—a major hindrance when they attempt to read the text? Do they need to rely heavily on first-language translations? All this information helps secondary school teachers understand the kind of difficulties students face in their process of learning to read in English. When language and vocabulary is a big challenge for students, teachers should review the choice of textbook materials they use in English lessons. If students find the unknown vocabulary in the texts too overwhelming, it possibly indicates that these texts do not match students' ability levels. In reality, there are not any locally published secondary English textbooks in Macau, so Hong Kong textbooks are the major source for use in Macau schools. Teachers should take note that Hong Kong textbooks may not suit the standards of Macau students. If teachers adopt these materials simply according to the levels set for Hong Kong students, this may be inappropriate for Macau students. Caution has to be taken in the selection of suitable reading texts. Ultimately, there is a need for local textbook publications which can cater to the requirements set in the English curriculum guidelines for Macau secondary schools.

When teaching intensive reading, teachers are advised to take a more balanced instructional approach that guides students to make use of both bottom-up and top-down strategies to process reading. Students need language knowledge to help them decode the text they are reading, and at the same time, they should be able to draw upon their prior knowledge or experience to build the necessary content schema to help them understand the text. In the literature, studies such as Chen and Chen (2015), Lee (2017), and Oyetunji (2013) have pointed out how reading strategies training can help enhance students' reading abilities. Therefore, more attention should be given to students' development of higher-order reading skills such as the ability to analyze, interpret, evaluate or reflect on a text. Unskilled readers comprehend a text mainly at the literal level but proficient readers are able to tackle a variety of text types and engage with a text in a critical way. They have a repertoire of approaches and purposes for reading; they are able to access and retrieve information in a text, integrate and interpret what they read, or reflect on a text and relate it to their own experience. Teachers need to help students develop such reading proficiency and move beyond the level of simply understanding all the vocabulary and ideas in the text. In this respect, it is necessary for teachers to abandon the old vocabulary instructional practices and allow students to learn to use contextual and referential clues in a text to facilitate their comprehension of difficult vocabulary.

To supplement the intensive reading practice students have in class, extensive reading programs can be organized for students. Extensive reading is a form of learning from meaning-focused input (Nation, 2009). During extensive reading, students can read with their attention on the meaning of the text rather than the language features of the text. In this way, they can be more interested in what they are reading and can enjoy reading at a reasonably fluent speed. Extensive reading can occur within class or outside of class. In reading lessons, graded readers or storybooks that suit students' levels can be used for extensive reading purposes and teachers do not need to go through the text in an intensive way with the students. Instead, they can pick up some points of interest in the story to discuss with students. Outside class, teachers can arrange a timeslot of 20–30 minutes (daily or weekly, where appropriate) for students to choose and read from a selection of interesting and appropriate books, after which they can take turns making a simple oral book report to the class. Such extensive reading assignments can encourage students' reading fluency and, as students build up a good reading habit, they eventually will not find reading in English such a terrifying task.

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PART IV

English Literacy Instruction for Tertiary Education

CHAPTER 13

Critical Investigation of Intercultural Communication Instruction: Building Mainland Chinese University Students' Critical Language Awareness and Intercultural Literacy

Fan (Gabriel) Fang and Lianjiang Jiang

Introduction

Intercultural communication (IC) has become a popular aspect of today's English language teaching (ELT) (Baker, 2012; Byram, 1997; Nieto, 2017), supported by the traditional belief that culture is an integrated element of language teaching. Language practitioners do not deny the link between language and culture. Traditionally, the English language represents its target culture; thus, language learners need

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to learn the Anglophone cultures at its core. However, as English has become the world's lingua franca, language teachers may inquire about what types of English should be taught and what types of culture the students will be exposed to through the use of English for IC purposes. Therefore, based on the framework of English as a lingua franca (ELF), it is more sensible to understand the relationship between language and culture as complex and subtle, as well as rethink the purpose and the goal of ELT. Seidlhofer (2011, p. 7) defines ELF as "any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option." Based on the ELF paradigm, the ownership of English is also being challenged, especially considering that the number of non-native speakers of English has surpassed its native speakers. In this sense, the notion of IC has been revisited based on the ELF paradigm by recognizing the "multifarious and dynamic nature of ELF communication" (Baker, 2015, p. 3).

As English is used by a large number of multilingual and multicultural speakers, a concern is whether traditional Anglophone cultures should serve as the sole norm for authenticity in ELT practices (Liu & Fang, 2017; Wen, 2016). For instance, Liu and Fang (2017) investigated how Chinese students' perceptions and awareness of their home culture may influence their practice of IC and concluded that although this aspect is important, many students have a superficial understanding of their home culture in the IC process. Liu and Fang (2017) argue that the home culture aspects will serve to challenge the native-speakerism ideology and help stakeholders develop critical culture awareness in ELT. Guo and Beckett (2007, p. 124) also raise their concern about idolizing "Anglocentric culture in the name of authenticity." However, many current ELT practices still accentuate Anglophone cultures, and the native-speakerism ideology still permeates many local ELT practices (Holliday, 2005; Kubota, 2016), leading to a fixed, monolithic and unilateral view of culture. To a large extent, ELT has "privileg[ed] native speakers and marginaliz[ed] non-native speakers in matters related to language use, language learning, and language teaching" (Kumaravadivelu, 2016, p. 71). However, many ELT practitioners and students take the language-and-culture relationship for granted and assume that the Anglophone culture is the target when learning English. For example, Gray (2010) has analyzed ELT textbooks that represent the discourse of the new capitalism to reflect an Anglo-American ideology. Furthermore, Shin, Eslami, and Chen (2011) found that inner circle cultural content dominates most of the internationally distributed

ELT textbooks. This situation does not reflect the current landscape of the dynamic linguistic and cultural backgrounds of English speakers (Fang & Baker, 2018; Fang & Ren, 2018; Norton, 1997). Thus, we need to apply more critical approaches of viewing IC to build "more complex, sophisticated and deeper understandings" (Shin et al., 2011, p. 23) in order to reflect the complexity of language and culture. Therefore, this chapter argues that a critical perspective on IC instruction should be recognized to underline both covert and overt ideologies from the perspective of economic and sociocultural globalization (Baker, 2015; Nakayama & Halualani, 2011; Piller, 2011).

The incorporation of a critical perspective into IC instruction is necessary to challenge the ideologies of the privileged and to empower the unvoiced group. This study acknowledges the importance of adopting a critical stance to view curricula, texts, and practices related to intercultural study and IC instruction (Nieto, 2017; Piller, 2011). However, with a lack of critical language awareness of English as a global language and intercultural literacy to view IC from the ELF paradigm, and with the native-speakerism-oriented textbooks and teaching materials related to IC (Fang, 2011; Gray, 2010; Shin et al., 2011), it is by no means an easy task to develop students' critical language awareness and intercultural literacy through IC instruction. Therefore, how some students developed their critical language awareness and intercultural literacy from IC instruction merits further research.

Critical Language Awareness and Intercultural Literacy

The *Association of Language Awareness* defines language awareness as "explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use." It covers a wide range of topics, and this chapter explores how students develop their own critical understanding during the ELT process. Therefore, we view critical language awareness, not only from the perspective of language per se, but also with an understanding of language as a social, political, and ideological practice (Fairclough, 1992). This concept is particularly important to develop learners' intercultural literacy through the process of questioning, reflecting on, and challenging what they have seen, read, and been told. Hence, intercultural literacy is viewed as a social practice with "understandings, attitudes, competencies and

identities which enable effective participation in a cross-cultural setting" (Heyward, 2004, p. 19). This chapter deals with how critical cultural awareness and intercultural literacy can be developed through various means of instruction.

We understand the intertwined nature of language and culture and realize that "it is difficult to teach language without an acknowledgement of the cultural context in which it is used" (Baker, 2012, p. 62). Thus, the instruction of cultural knowledge may become a must in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms. As language practitioners and researchers, we do not deny the necessity of incorporating culture and IC instruction during the process of developing students' second language literacy, but we also lament the underrepresentation of culture and IC instruction in ELT. From a traditional perspective, teachers and students may only passively learn certain cultural knowledge in relation to restricted topics from texts or textbooks. They may take the authors' cultural and ideological stance for granted without questioning the authors' perspective from a critical perspective. In this way, IC instruction may present a limited amount of cultural knowledge and thereby fail to reflect IC from a multilingual and multicultural perspective where users of English may face different emergent situations to deal with cultural references and practices and to "negotiate and mediate between these dynamic resources in intercultural communication" (Baker, 2012, p. 67). In this sense, the adoption of critical literacy in IC instruction may empower learners to voice and reflect upon their views and thus develop their language awareness and intercultural literacy.

To unpack the term *intercultural literacy*, we take the view that it emphasizes the importance of empowering participants and encouraging them to move beyond classroom instruction that may simply ask them to passively accept the texts they read. They are invited to question, examine, and readdress the power relations between readers and authors. Thus, reflection and transformation become important in this process to trigger any actions. The idea echoes IC from an ELF perspective which better reflects the current linguistic landscape. As Baker (2012) states, against the backdrop of globalization and the ELF paradigm, successful IC instruction should no longer simply ask learners to understand fixed cultural knowledge. Rather, culture should be viewed from a more fluid perspective and seen as an emergent and negotiated resource in IC. An incorporation of critical literacy through IC instruction thus becomes necessary to challenge the essentialist perspective of

understanding culture, although this is not a simple task and requires systematic instruction and reflection. From the ELF paradigm, the critical stance of language awareness and intercultural literacy thus moves beyond the fixed relationship between language and culture.

This chapter features a discussion on an IC course delivered by the first author to build students' critical language awareness and intercultural literacy. By teaching a course related to IC, he has realized several limitations of the course design and learning outcomes, including the native-speakerism-oriented textbook content and traditional means of assessment that lead to students' lack of critical understanding of IC. Although the findings of this chapter as a case study can hardly be generalized to a broad context, the data indicates that by engaging students in extensive reading, through a workshop and reflective-thinking journal writing as some pedagogical approaches, students have developed their critical language awareness and intercultural literacy.

Methodology

Research Setting and Participants

This study was conducted at a university located in south-east China where an English enhancement program was initiated in 2003 by the English Language Centre (ELC). As for developing students' instructed cultural literacy, the first author collected data based on a course focusing on IC in the 2017–2018 autumn semester. As mentioned in the syllabus, this is "a content-based integrated skills course focusing on intercultural communication and discussion skills." As English is the medium of instruction of the ELC, this course was lectured by a team of both Chinese and international teachers in English. As the first author was one of the lecturers with different colleagues for this course during the 2016–2017 autumn semester, he realized the course mentioned above was native-speakerism oriented, which does not reflect the nature of IC from the ELF paradigm.[1] Therefore, he started to incorporate a critical perspective of IC instruction to develop students' critical language awareness and intercultural literacy during the course in 2017–2018 autumn semester.

The students were all in their second year with more than six years of English learning experience. At the time of study, most of the students did not have experience studying or traveling abroad and only

used English on a limited daily basis. For example, they used English in English classes, for preparing and taking English exams and for communicating with international teachers and students on campus. However, it was evident that the students might need to use English after graduation for many purposes, such as job interview, further study and work or travel aboard. Such future IC encounters make the inclusion of IC instruction in English learning necessary.

The study was conducted to investigate to what extent the students developed their critical language awareness and intercultural literacy during their IC learning experience with an incorporation of critical perspective in classroom instruction and after-class reflection. After explaining the purpose of this research to both the students and other lecturers, a group of ten students agreed to participate for additional reading and a two-hour workshop. Among these ten students, six were recruited from the first author's classes, and four were recommended by colleagues. To minimize participant subjectivity, all the participants received a clear explanation that the research would not affect their final scores in the course.

Instruction Process and Activities

During the instruction in the beginning weeks of the semester, the first author tried to incorporate the notion of critical thinking into the class by asking his students to challenge some fixed ideas, including "individualist versus collectivist culture" and "Chinese culture versus western culture." The first author and his students discussed those fixed notions in further detail to challenge the essentialist view of culture. The first author then asked his colleagues to recruit four more students from other classes for further instruction and participation in this research. They were all given ethical forms, and all agreed to participate in this research. They were provided with clear explanations about what they should do during the semester and assigned articles to read when taking the course; they also participated in a workshop conducted by the first author.

These ten students were first given academic papers about critical literacy for their reading and reflection in their journals. By reading the academic papers, the students could actively participate in this research to develop their academic literacy, while journal writing enabled them to further develop their critical thinking skills and reflect on their thoughts

regarding their participation (Lin, Li, Hung, & Huang, 2014). They were told that they could write their comments in either English or Chinese. After six weeks of taking the course and being exposed to the notion of critical literacy, they also participated in a workshop conducted by the first author in week nine. The workshop aimed to determine how much the participants understood the topic through the course and extra reading. We adopted McLaughlin and DeVoogd's (2004) framework when conducting this workshop by asking the students to discuss relevant questions[2] in order to promote reading from a critical stance. This is an example of action research to enable the students and the researchers to discuss the issues together as a group compared with individual journal writing. The participatory nature of action research is a key feature of critical theory (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). After the journal writing and the workshop, four unscripted group interviews (with two to three students in each interview based on their availability) were then conducted in weeks ten to twelve, with each interview lasting around 30–40 minutes. The high degree of interactivity in the group interviews enabled the researchers "to probe understandings and engage interviewees in a dialog about what they mean by their comments" (Schutt, 2006, p. 31). The interviews were conducted in Putonghua to enable the students to discuss their ideas in greater depth.

Data Analysis

Qualitative content analysis (QCA) was adopted for the purposes of data analysis (Schreier, 2012) "to explore the deeper meanings so as to add interpretive depth and breadth to the analysis" (Jenkins, 2014, p. 128). Pointing out the advantages of using this analytical method, Schreier (2012, p. 5) states that "it is a systematical method, it is flexible, and it reduces data." This chapter explores how the participants evaluated the textbook contents and their perceptions on the necessity and the effectiveness of IC instruction. All the interviews were transcribed by a student assistant. The authors then listened to the recordings, comparing them with the scripts to double check the transcription, as well as to manually code the data. In this chapter, we choose to analyze two main themes emerging from the data: *textbook contents on cultural knowledge* and *IC instruction*. We focused on the students' interview and journal data related to these two themes in the coding process and in the subsequent analysis.

Findings

Generally, the students developed a sense of critical literacy, albeit a limited one, through the class. Therefore, students might be able to gain certain cultural knowledge and build critical language awareness and intercultural literacy, but various means of instruction and long-term exposure are required for such development.

Interview Findings

Textbook contents on cultural knowledge

The students expressed their concerns over the limited focus on Western cultures in the course textbook. For example, S9 said, "The textbook only focuses on American cultures but not on cultures of other countries." During the same interview, S8 mentioned, "I expected the textbook to cover various cultures for IC. The current textbook only covers two fixed cultures – us and them." In a similar vein, in another interview, S3 expressed that the textbook "only introduces some cultural differences and cultural concepts, and how people should change the way of thinking when encountering such situations." When discussing the intercultural encounters found in the textbook, S1 noted, "I think the examples provided seem to give us a way of thinking about that problem from the foreigner's (mostly American) point of view. These are simple and typical examples asking readers to think and develop ideas already set from the author's perspective. In another sense, these examples reinforce stereotypes." S4 argued that the textbook does not reflect on the reality of IC, as "Why are we always required to think from their point of view?" S2 also expressed her opinion: "When using the textbook as a Chinese person, instead, I see the author's cultural self-confidence, so that Chinese students will think how to learn from their point of view." S1 expressed her idea more directly, by saying that the textbook only represents Anglo-American culture as the main focus throughout the whole book: "I think it may be better and more comprehensive to expand the cultures in different countries and regions to in this book."

Generally, the students challenged the equalization of English culture with Anglophone (particularly American) culture and pointed out the importance of contextualizing culture contents in the textbook design. This finding echoes those of previous studies that textbooks tend to view *culture* from a fixed and essentialist perspective with a focus on

Anglocentric culture (Baker, 2012; Fang, 2011; Guo & Beckett, 2007). Furthermore, the students noted that the textbook simply listed various intercultural encounters but did not explain these in further detail in terms of IC and did not reflect cultural diversity. The students, to some extent, were able to adopt a critical perspective when evaluating the textbook to reflect on their own needs and the goals of IC. This outcome also reflects previous studies' views that a target culture is likely to be presented at a superficial level and that a pre-determined assumption of learners' identity is established in textbook contents (Baker, 2015; Gray, 2010; Liu & Fang, 2017).

Intercultural communication instruction

Students acknowledged the importance of IC instruction. Some expressed the belief that textbook instruction only formed a limited and superficial understanding of IC, and some highlighted the dominance of mainstream culture in IC instruction with a failure to emphasize the concept of cultural diversity (cf. Fang & Baker, 2018). For example, S3 mentioned that "IC instruction in general practice focuses too much on mainstream cultures and neglect minority cultures." S8 expressed that "We only learn IC from a superficial perspective." In terms of minority cultures, S1 said, "I think it is necessary to understand them because you cannot understand the cultures of all nations. However, if people could understand as much about cultural diversity, they can think more consciously and broadly when dealing with different situations of IC." Again, the students, in all the interviews, expressed the importance of getting exposure not only to Anglophone cultures but to a diversity of cultures to help them understand IC strategies and language ideologies through IC instruction. This echoes the concept of not viewing culture as an *entity*, but from a more dynamic and fluid perspective—from an ELF perspective (Baker, 2015).

The students also believed in the importance of considering their own culture in the process of IC instruction (cf. Liu & Fang, 2017). However, many IC classrooms still neglect the importance of the home culture in the process of IC instruction, and the adoption of cultural diversity from an ELF perspective is only lip service (cf. Baker, 2015; Jenkins, 2014). For example, S8 noted, "If one is rooted in his/her own culture as the foundation for IC before absorbing other cultures, he/she will then be critical and able to have a deeper thinking rather than simply accept it. If one is familiar with his/her own culture, he/she can better

explain some IC encounters." S2 said, "If one knows enough about his/her own culture, he/she can understand better in terms of cultural diversity in the process of IC. Some new common ground can even be reached during the IC process." In terms of IC instruction, the students lamented the overemphasis on Anglophone cultures, which does not reflect the nature of IC. They also felt it important for their own culture to be considered in the IC process, thereby reinforcing the concept of cultural diversity because "effectively understanding other cultures requires adequate comprehension of one's own home culture" (Liu & Fang, 2017, p. 33).

Reflective journals

In their journal entries, students also gained more critical language awareness from their additional learning and training experience. For example, S4 reported her own understanding of multiculturalism in ELT. She believed that the multilingual background also urged teachers to consider "how to assist students to recognize the concept of multiculturalism," while "students should take the initiative and go beyond language classroom to form an intercultural awareness." S5 wrote about the issue of how to empower minorities and raise awareness of their own cultures. She also learned that language and societal ideology might lead to education inequality. However, she wrote that "it is hard to pursue cultural equality between the mainstream and the minorities, but it is more important to negotiate between cultures and emphasize people's own culture." S3 and S7 both mentioned about the overemphasis of the *utilitarian* perspective of English learning, in which the humanities and sociocultural perspective of the English language are neglected. In particular, S7 pointed out that "we should break the fixed notion that learning the English language is to advocate Anglophone cultures." From an ELF perspective, S7 also believed the importance of envisaging the various English accents for the purpose of communication. She developed a sense of critical perspective: "I learn a lot from this experience. I did not think of viewing things from another perspective and empowering the unvoiced before. […] I am happy to learn to perceive things from another perspective, especially from the interviews." S8 summarized that "intercultural communication and contact is becoming increasingly popular in multiple areas. […] it is important for us to jump out of fixed circles and to think and treat different culture critically." S10 voiced the key of "reader awareness" to develop critical language awareness and

intercultural literacy. He expressed the belief that critical stance requires readers to stand from their own perspective to analyze and critique the reading if possible: "Readers should learn to be the centre to decode the text, rather than passively accept from what they have read. The goal lies not only to understand the text better, but also go beyond the text." All such comments above demonstrate that the students developed a sense of how to be a "critical reader" of the texts and started to build their own critical language awareness and intercultural literacy from these reading materials.

Implications for Language Teachers

Situated in a Chinese tertiary EFL context, this chapter investigates how the students have developed critical language awareness and intercultural literacy by participating in a semester-long critical IC instruction. The findings show further empirical support to a multilingual approach to unpacking an essentialist understanding of culture in ELT. Aligning with Liu and Fang's (2017) statement about the importance of integrating the home culture in IC instruction, this study adds that such integration could be fulfilled by engaging students in critical reading workshops. However, it should be noted that critical intercultural literacy cannot be easily developed solely through instruction. Long-term involvement and students' various channels of exposure are required, including extensive reading, real-life intercultural encounters, and critical reflections. The application of "interculturality" in ELT is key as it "represents a language-and-culture learning pedagogy which believes that the goal of language learning is to become intercultural speakers, mediating between different perspectives and cultures, rather than to replace one's native language and culture with 'target' ones" (Zhu, 2014, p. 209). Although the findings presented in this chapter are from a small-scale study, they offer several practical implications for language teachers, especially if they have to deal with IC and want to develop students' critical language awareness and intercultural literacy in their courses.

First, teachers and students need to be aware that the link between the English language and its culture has become blurred from an ELF perspective. The over-representation of *Anglophone cultures* should thus be revisited with the complex understanding of the relationship between language and culture from an ELF perspective (Baker, 2015). Drawing on the insights about ELF and multilingualism for an expanded

view of IC, this chapter argues that Anglophone cultures should no longer be regarded as the priority when teaching IC content (Leung, Lewkowicz, & Jenkins, 2016). From this standpoint, native English speakers also need to raise awareness about the nature of IC from an ELF perspective (Liu & Fang, 2017). Therefore, instead of reinforcing the idea of using English to communicate with its native speakers and teaching English to fulfill this end, classroom practices should focus more on cultivating students' real-life abilities in handling intercultural encounters—for instance negotiation skills and accommodation strategies in various circumstances when communicating with people from different linguistic-cultural backgrounds. In this way, students also "do" cultural identities "through a range of interactional work and discursive practice" (Zhu, 2014, p. 212). Teachers should encourage students to deal with some real-life intercultural issues from up-to-date cases and experiences by expressing their own thoughts and suggestions. If possible, teachers can also invite guest speakers to share their cultural knowledge and IC experiences, and students can have conversations with the speakers. If possible, students should be encouraged to step out of the classroom to experience and share their intercultural experiences with people from other (not limited to Anglophone) cultures. Students should also be trained to negotiate their cultural identities through interactions and discursive practices (Baker, 2012; Dooley, 2009; Zhu, 2014). In this way, cultural identity is viewed "as a process and outcome of negotiation, rather than something *a priori*" (Zhu, 2014, p. 218).

Second, teachers and students should critically evaluate the textbooks used for IC instruction. As the student participants in this study challenged the representation of the idealized mainstream Anglophone cultures in the textbook for an IC course, it is high time that language practitioners become aware of and understand the ideologies represented by the textbooks used. For example, Gray (2010) critically evaluates the cultural contents of global textbooks by arguing about *the culture of the new capitalism* and *the ideology and the practices of neoliberalism*. Gray (2010) also finds that while some teachers are aware of the ideological dimension, others tend to uncritically accept and even enjoy those new capitalist values embedded in textbook contents. Although the present study has not investigated teachers' perspectives, we emphasize that teachers should possess a sociocultural perspective (not a value-free and passive perspective) when using ELT materials, as well as adopt and adapt to the cultural content represented in a course

textbook in a critical manner to develop students' critical language awareness and intercultural literacy. This strategy requires language practitioners to extensively read the sources related to the topic and experience and reflect on their own intercultural encounters to develop their own critical stance before teaching IC in their classroom settings. As Liu and Fang (2017, p. 34) argue, materials about the home culture should be included in IC instruction, "added as supplementary listening and reading assignments, and discussed and reflected on from a critical perspective by both teachers and students against the backdrop of globalization." Teachers should also take the initiative to contextualize and learn to adapt to cultural knowledge and intercultural encounters to fit their own teaching contexts. One major contribution of this chapter is its argument that moving beyond the textbook content, students can be trained to read some academic articles and participate in relevant workshops or extra-curricular activities as a way to build their critical language awareness and intercultural literacy.

Third, teachers and students also need to understand the importance of moving from a traditional perspective of IC to a translingual and transcultural perspective of communication (Canagarajah, 2013; Hepp, 2015; Pennycook, 2017). For example, to explain the notion of translingual practice, Canagarajah (2013, p. 28) believes that it is important to "consider how people engage with each other, tailor their language uses reciprocally, display uptake, resist dominant conventions, and co-construct meanings in relation to existing norms and ideologies in actual interactions." The application of a translingual and transcultural perspective in language classroom requires language practitioners to apply a complex sociocultural perspective into English teaching and IC instruction. The translingual and transcultural perspective of communication does not view *language* and *culture* as fixed or static within certain borders but conceptualize language and culture from a more dynamic and fluid perspective. Thus, it has been urged that language educators eschew the simplistic and essentialist perspective of the relationship between language and culture from a traditional IC perspective. Teachers should be careful not to reinforce some cultural stereotypes when instructing culture in IC. They need to broaden their understanding of the complexity between language and culture. Instructed critical literacy in IC also requires language educators to understand the notions of student mobility and recognize students'

future selves[3] in classroom practice. In short, a translingual and transcultural perspective requires teachers not only to instruct, but to speculate, reflect and challenge the taken-for-granted culture knowledge in the IC process.

Concluding Remarks

Before drawing any conclusion, we would like to reiterate that the study conducted was not an evaluation of the effectiveness of the textbook or the course itself, nor was it an evaluation of students' progress of learning English or understanding IC. However, students' voices provided first-hand sources for both language practitioners and students to pursue their IC teaching and learning journeys.

This chapter has argued for the importance of moving beyond the fixed relationship of language and culture from an ELF paradigm. Teachers and students should take a step further to critique the representation of language and culture from what they have seen and read in the IC process. As Pennycook (2017, p. xii) argues, '[w]e are never just teaching something called English but rather we are involved in economic and social change, cultural renewal, people's dreams and desires'. Students should also foresee the complex and emergent situations that may require the use of English for IC encounters from a multilingual perspective to incorporate the concept of future selves when learning and understanding IC. In this way, they also develop critical language awareness and intercultural literacy by not only reading and listening to their instructions but also speculating and questioning during the whole process of learning and experiencing to become critical learners.

Furthermore, developing critical language awareness and intercultural literacy needs to raise the awareness of "teaching English in a way that recognizes its role as a global lingua franca rather than principally as an Anglophone language" (Fang & Baker, 2018, p. 620). It is hoped that language practitioners and learners will view language and culture from a multilingual perspective and move beyond the cultural content from the textbooks to *sensing* the critical moments of IC encounters. Building critical language awareness and intercultural literacy requires a prolonged process entailing different means of exposure and experience. In this chapter, some suggestions for IC instruction were offered and readers are required to apply the ideas to their own contexts. By doing

this, we hope that readers can also learn to develop their own critical IC awareness and transfer the notion of critical intercultural literacy into practice.

Notes

1. In the IC course, the textbook used was entitled *Encounters with Westerners: Improving Skills in English and Intercultural Communication* (Snow, 2014)—from the title, the author has assumed that the so-called Western culture should be the target of understanding intercultural communication. The syllabus also states that one of the intended learning outcomes is "to discuss common generalizations concerning Western and Chinese cultures." However, in this chapter, we do not want to evaluate the textbook itself, but this research was conducted to expand students' understanding of critical language awareness and intercultural literacy against the backdrop of globalization and the complexity of intercultural communication from an ELF perspective.
2. The students were asked questions from McLaughlin and DeVoogd's (2004) research, including the following: Whose viewpoint is expressed? What does the author want us to think? Whose voices are missing, silenced or discounted? How might alternative perspectives be represented? How would that contribute to your understanding the text from a critical stance? What action might you take on the basis of what you have learned?
3. It is important for students to realize in what contexts and to what extent they will use English in the future (see, e.g., Dörnyei's [2005] notions of the *Ideal L2 Self* and *Ought-to L2 Self*). Due to the space limitation, this concept is not explored in this chapter (for English learning and study abroad, see, e.g., Fang & Baker, 2018, and the articles in *System*, *71*: Special Issue on *Study Abroad in Contemporary Times*).

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CHAPTER 14

Innovating English Literacy Instruction: A Writing Center at a Chinese University

Jing Zhang

Introduction

In this modern age, to enable Chinese students to become multilingual "global citizens" (Grimm, 2009), there are ongoing efforts across China to improve English literacy. Among such efforts, one innovative exploration is the implementation of writing centers, which provides writing support for students through face-to-face and/or online one-on-one tutoring sessions. In the past two decades, mainland China along with regions including Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan has witnessed both the establishment of a variety of writing centers and preliminary scholarly inquiries of writing center work across China.

To explore how writing centers can support and innovate English writing education in China, in this chapter, I discuss how a Chinese writing center facilitates the English literacy development and innovates the traditional classroom teaching of English writing at a Chinese university. I begin with an overview of the operational model of the School of International Studies (SIS) Writing Center, a multilingual writing center

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housed in the School of International Studies at Sun Yat-Sen University in Zhuhai, China. Then, I review scholarship on the use of multilingual tutors at writing centers and the writing center practice across China. In this chapter, the research question, “How does the SIS Writing Center facilitate English literacy instruction?” is exemplified and analyzed through two affordances of the SIS Writing Center, i.e., the peer tutoring model and post-tutorial discussion workshops. Three vignettes of a tutoring transcript and two anecdotes of discussion workshops are analyzed as examples to provide answers to the research question.

An Overview of the SIS Writing Center

The SIS Writing Center was established on April 15, 2014. Rather than a top-down administrative assignment, the SIS Writing Center was initiated and founded by my colleagues and I out of enthusiasm to improve the English writing education at the School of International Studies. This seems to be the common way writing centers are built in L2/EFL contexts (Tan, 2011; Turner, 2006).

To create a culture of English writing and a collaborative, relaxing atmosphere for Chinese students to discuss their writing, the SIS Writing Center adopted the peer tutoring model (Bruffee, 1984), a widely accepted writing center practice in North America. The goal of the SIS Writing Center was twofold: First, by involving peer tutors rather than using faculty as tutors, we intended to create a new channel for students to discuss and study English writing; second, peer tutors can offer English writing assistance for their Chinese peers in their shared L1, which can spare students the pressure to discuss complex writing issues in English.

Peer tutors are recruited among English majors ranging from undergraduates to MA graduates, who have taken English writing courses for at least one semester. Throughout the semester, tutors receive biweekly/monthly training workshops held by native English-speaking teachers to further their understanding of English rhetorical strategies and writing skills. Such training consolidates and supplements what tutors have learned from their English writing classes to equip them with a more extensive repertoire of writing knowledge. Since September 2015, as with the inclusion of a native English-speaking teacher with years of experience conducting writing center work both as a tutor and as an administrator in the USA, tutor training at the SIS Writing Center has

encompassed topics ranging from writing center history, theory, and research to tutoring techniques.

Staffed with 13–20 Chinese peer tutors, 5–6 native English-speaking teachers, and 2 Chinese teachers, the SIS Writing Center offers one-on-one conferences to up to around 1400 undergraduates who major in English or other foreign languages at the School of International Studies. Thirty-minute tutoring sessions are held three nights a week, with each tutor offering two tutoring sessions on each night. During tutoring sessions, 1–3 teachers are present at the writing center to provide on-site support for tutors when they encounter questions beyond the scope of their knowledge. A 30-minute discussion workshop is held among peer tutors and teachers after all the tutoring sessions are completed each night, during which participants discuss questions that they glean from their tutoring/teaching/studying experience of English writing both in the classroom and at the writing center.

Literature Review

Multilingual Tutors at the Writing Center

Whereas it has been a commonplace practice to recruit students as peer tutors to work at writing centers in the USA, it is still open to discussion whether multilingual tutors, with English as their second/foreign language, are qualified to work effectively at the writing center and provide their peers with adequate writing assistance. Such concerns are voiced in the literature: Turner (2006), the director of an English writing center in South Korea, maintains that it is difficult to implement the Western peer tutoring model in Asia due to the respect for seniority and authority in Asian cultures (Cultural Consideration section, para. 1); likewise, in their study on a Taiwanese writing center staffed with faculty instead of students, Yang and Sun (2012) point out that EFL students in Taiwan are more used to a directive teaching style and lack the ability to discuss writing during consultations, which leads one to question naturally about the feasibility of a peer tutoring model. Similarly, multilingual tutors such as Habib (2006) and Wang (2017) have also described feelings of doubts, anxiety, and fears that emerged when they worked at a writing center; specifically, they were unsure whether they were competent enough to provide English writing support for their peers.

Despite the ostensibly tenable reservations about multilingual tutors, the discussion of multilingual tutors' efficacy and the feasibility of the multilingual writing center approach need to be considered within the context of the global age. Take the USA as an example: With the tremendous increase of international students in the American higher education system, writing centers in the USA, originally designed for native English-speaking undergraduates, have witnessed growing multilingual participation since the 1990s (Yang & Sun, 2012). Due to the longstanding monolingual norm that privileges Standard Written English, multilingual students have been historically labeled as "deficient writers" in need of remediation due to their non-nativeness and accented writing (Matsuda & Cox, 2009). However, with the underpinning ideology shifting from monolingualism toward multilingualism (Rafoth, 2015) and in order to remain as an inclusive space for all students on campus, writing centers in the USA have been working to empower multilingual students and one such effort is the inclusion of multilingual tutors. Such an inclusive approach, i.e., the multilingual approach, is viable due to multilingual tutors' unique advantages such as their strong empathy (Rafoth, 2015), their potential to code-switch/-mix with clients who share their L1 during bilingual tutorials (Dvorak, 2016), and their "metalinguistic ability to identify tacit attitudes, values, and belief systems operating within a given context" (Grimm, 2009, p. 18). Furthermore, through staff evaluations and exit surveys, Balester's (2012) empirical study reveals that international tutors on average perform as well as their American counterparts, which further confirms the feasibility of using multilingual tutors at writing centers.

Therefore, it is not only reasonable to dismiss the doubts against the use of multilingual tutors at the writing center, but it is also necessary and promising to probe into the application of a peer tutoring model that enables multilingual tutors to exploit their talents at writing centers in L2/EFL contexts such as China.

Writing Center Practice in China

Since its inception in Asia during the 1990s, writing center work and research in the Asian context have still been in an embryonic stage (Yang & Sun, 2012), and China is no exception. In Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan, writing centers have demonstrated various explorations to adapt

the North American writing center approach to their local contexts, such as housing their institutions in the university self-access centers or language centers (Chang, 2013), using faculty members as tutors (Lee, 2015; Yang & Sun, 2012), and providing writing support in both English and Chinese (Lee, 2017).

With a considerably different sociolinguistic context, mainland China has seen a relatively late development of writing centers. However, recently, mainland China has been on the threshold of writing center development and is about to move forward with great momentum. During the first Writing Centers Association of China Conference held in Suzhou in 2017 and the International Symposium of English Writing Center in Chinese Universities 2018 held in Haining, scholars from China and abroad engaged in heated discussions about implementing new writing centers and investigating practices of existing writing centers in various locales in China. As one of the very few studies on writing center work in mainland China, Li's (2017) research analyzes one-on-one writing conferences under the framework of Sociocultural Theory, exemplifies the operational model of a Chinese writing center, and argues for the feasibility and necessity of establishing writing centers to improve English writing instruction in China. To answer Li's (2017) call and to advance the development of writing center work in China, more research is needed to delve into the affordances and value of viable writing center models in China, which is the primary emphasis of this chapter.

With writing centers as a novel contributing factor at Chinese universities, Chinese peer tutors play an unconventional and even iconoclastic part in English writing education in China. The SIS Writing Center demonstrates one form of doing writing centers in L2/EFL contexts, and its operational model is worth discussion in that it provides a window of inquiry into how writing centers can work to support and innovate the traditional instruction of English writing. The next section reports on the analysis of the affordances of a peer tutoring model and discussion workshops at the SIS Writing Center.

A Chinese Writing Center: Two Affordances

To quote North (1984), "Nearly everyone who writes likes—and needs—to talk about his or her writing, preferably to someone who will really listen, who knows how to listen, and knows how to talk about

writing too" (pp. 439–440). To provide Chinese students with opportunities to talk about their writing with a trained peer, the SIS Writing Center operates with two affordances: (1) a peer tutoring model that utilizes the versatility of Chinese tutors to establish scaffolding, and (2) discussion workshops which create a contact zone that allows Chinese peer tutors and native English-speaking teachers to generate knowledge collaboratively.

Peer Tutoring: Scaffolding Through Meaning Negotiation

Guided by the North American peer tutoring conception (Bruffee, 1984), Chinese tutors at the SIS Writing Center are advised to adopt a generally non-directive and student-centered approach that facilitates the dialog about students' writing through leading questions and negotiation. As Li (2017) maintains, the peer tutoring model proves to be effective at her Chinese writing center because it enables students to scaffold during one-on-one conferences and improve collaboratively within the participants' zone of proximal development. Such scaffolding enables tutors to engage writers in an interactive process of knowledge-making by "talking about writing" (North, 1984, p. 4), especially with multilingual tutors' various advantages, such as their mastery of grammatical knowledge (Rafoth, 2015), their ability to negotiate meaning with their peers in their shared L1 (Dvorak, 2016), and the comfort and rapport that they can create with their L2 peers (Wang, 2017).

Below are three vignettes from the transcript of a tutoring session between a junior peer tutor (PT) and a freshman student writer (SW). This transcript was acquired from a tutor training project at the SIS Writing Center during the 2016–2017 academic year, when tutors were guided to record, transcribe, and analyze one tutoring session of their choice, with the aim of raising tutors' metacognitive awareness in reflecting on and improving their tutoring skills. One such transcript is included in this chapter with informed consent from the peer tutor and the student writer. Although each peer tutor has their individual and unique tutoring approach and each tutoring session may vary depending on the student writer and the text in question, the following tutoring session can still showcase how the SIS Writing Center's peer tutoring model promotes meaning negotiation and enacts scaffolding with the help of a shared L1 among Chinese students.

Vignette 1

PT: The bad? 什么? [The bad? What does it mean?][1] bad 是形容词吗 [Is "bad" an adjective here?]
SW: 不好的东西。[Something not good.] 对。呃…… [Yeah. Um…]
PT: 形容词吗? [Adjective?] 然后呢? [And then?]
SW: 就……不好的东西呀。[It's just… something not good.]
PT: 不好的东西? [Something not good?]
SW: 噢, 我前面加了一个the, 就是指这一类的。[Oh, I put "the" before it, so it means a category.]
PT: 噢, 你说的the poor、the rich这样的? [Oh, do you mean like "the poor," "the rich"?] 嗯, 可以, 但是不觉得"不好的东西"是一个模糊的概念吗? [Um, it works. But don't you think that "the bad" is a vague concept?] 我们应该是在写作文的时候尽管没有学英语的时候, [I think when we started to learn writing, even before we learned English,] 我们写中文的时候老师也会要求你尽量避免一些很宽泛的词, [our Chinese teachers would also require that you avoid using some vague terms] 你看,"你是一个好人","你是一个好人",你会觉得它有什么实际意义吗?没有吧。[See, "You are a good person." "You are a good person." Do you see any specific meaning in it? Perhaps not.] Good, great, bad 这些,甚至于我们觉得高级的 excellent, extraordinary, outstanding 这些其实都没有太实际的意义。[Words such as "good," "great," and "bad," and even words that we think are advanced, such as "excellent," "extraordinary," and "outstanding," they don't deliver that much meaning.]

This part of the conference shows how meaning is negotiated through the back and forth of communication between the peer tutor and the student writer. By asking leading questions, the peer tutor prompts the writer to clarify her meaning. Among these questions, some are to elicit the writer's explanation of the use of a specific term, such as "Is 'bad' an adjective here?," while others, like "Something not good?," are deliberate questioning aimed at building toward a more in-depth discussion, e.g., a rhetorical convention of avoiding vagueness. Another noteworthy move that the tutor makes is to help the student writer better understand Western rhetorical conventions by referring to their shared Chinese rhetorical knowledge ("Our Chinese teachers would also require that you avoid using some vague terms."). Such an analogous approach would be difficult to implement without the shared understanding of the L1 rhetorical knowledge between tutors and writers.

Vignette 2

PT: 就从上面这儿开始看，你的主语在哪里？[Starting from up here, where is the subject?]
SW: 嗯……I, 嘿嘿嘿。[Um…I. (giggling)]
PT: 在哪里呀？你不可以心里有I就不写I了。[Where is it? You shouldn't omit 'I' because you have 'I' in your mind.]
SW: 因为我写中文作文的时候我经常不用主语， 然后就带到英文里面来了。[Because I often omit the subject when I write in Chinese, I carry my habit over to English writing.]
PT: 既然你发现这个问题, 那你写的时候就一定要注意, 只要有句号, 那你下面就是一个全新的句子, 对吧。[Now that you realize this problem, you need to pay more attention to it while writing. Whenever there is a period, a new sentence begins, right?]

In this vignette, through questions, the tutor leads the writer to come to notice her transfer of the Chinese "zero-subject" habit to her English writing. Rather than pointing out the mistake directly, the tutor's guidance allows the writer to self-discover her writing issue. The guidance places more agency and ownership in the hands of the writer. After the writer detects the problem, the tutor consolidates the discussion by articulating a rule ("Whenever there is a period, a new sentence begins."). Hence, with a non-directive approach and her familiarity with grammatical knowledge, the tutor manages to carry out a metalinguistic discussion with the writer. Additionally, through the writer's honest explanation and her giggling, one can infer that some rapport has been established, creating a comfortable, relaxing dynamic.

Vignette 3

PT: 还有这个地方, such as A and B, C, D and so on. 为什么是这样的搭配？[And here, "such as A and B, C, D and so on." Why did you arrange them like this?]
SW: 我想到了什么就写上去了。[I simply put whatever came into my mind.]
PT: 就是, 这个 and 为什么放这里呢？[I mean, why did you put "and" here?]
SW: 这两个是合在一起的, "青山绿水"。[A and B go together, "green mountains and blue waters."]

PT: 噢, 这样, 青山绿水啊。[Ah, I see. "Green mountains and blue waters."] 啊, 就不如把它分开, 逗号,这个、这个都分开。[Ah, why not separate them, with a comma, between this and that?]

This brief conversation shows how shared linguistic backgrounds promote the negotiation of meaning. Through discussion, the misplaced "and" turns out to concern the student writer's direct translation of a Chinese four-character idiom, "青山绿水," into English. Because "青山" and "绿水" are grouped together as one phrase in Chinese, the student chooses to put an "and" instead of a comma between them in English so as to present them as an integrated whole. Without her Chinese background, the tutor would not be able to understand the writer's explanation instantly and might dismiss this issue simply as a mechanical mistake without the opportunity to achieve such a nuanced understanding of the writer's rhetorical move.

Therefore, the three vignettes above exemplify how the L2 peer tutoring model functions at the SIS Writing Center to achieve scaffolding through negotiation among Chinese students who share similar linguistic, cultural, and rhetorical backgrounds.

Discussion Workshops: Shuttling in the Contact Zone

After all the tutoring sessions are finished each night, a 30-minute workshop is led by native English-speaking teachers for peer tutors to exchange tutoring experience, discuss tutoring strategies, and make linguistic and rhetorical inquiries. Such workshops create a "contact zone," where Chinese tutors' and native English-speaking teachers' distinctive language backgrounds, rhetorical knowledge, and writing expertise are very likely to "meet, clash, and grapple with each other" (Pratt, 1991, p. 34), generating new knowledge collaboratively through cross-cultural communication. Two anecdotes in my observation are presented as follows to illustrate discussion workshops.

A popular topic that appears during discussion workshops at the SIS Writing Center is Chinglish/direct translation. Here is a snapshot of a workshop discussion: When a peer tutor quoted from a student writer's essay, "The changes happened not like a revolution, but spring rain dropping into the soil without so much noise," all Chinese tutors burst into laughter, describing it as "Chinglish" and "poor translation," and explained to the native English-speaking teachers that "spring rain

dropping into the soil without so much noise" is literally translated from the Chinese idiom "春雨润物细无声," which refers to a change that happens smoothly and gradually instead of suddenly. On hearing this explanation, the native English-speaking teachers recalled other "awkward expressions" in students' writing, such as translated idioms loaded with Chinese culture that fail to make sense to a Western audience. Both Chinese tutors and native English-speaking teachers agreed that it requires high language proficiency and rhetorical competence to combine two cultures in writing. They came up with suggestions such as creating one's own metaphors/similes rather than translating Chinese idioms word for word, consulting online resources or a native English speaker to seek for a counterpart expression in English, etc.

In the snapshot above, by shuttling between two languages and two rhetorical systems and with their L1 as a resource, the Chinese tutors made use of their "double vision that enables them to understand the possibilities and constraints of competing traditions of writing" (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 602); in other words, the Chinese tutors managed to turn student writers' linguistic/rhetorical deviations into opportunities for negotiation and knowledge-making. Because of their insider perspective as Chinese speakers, Chinese tutors can offer insights to native English-speaking teachers regarding where a specific expression comes from and which issues are more of "a trans-cultural translation issue" (Habib, 2006, p. 9) rather than an English as a second language (ESL) issue; meanwhile, as L2 English learners themselves, the Chinese tutors can also gradually accumulate new knowledge of English writing, adding to their rhetorical and linguistic repertoire both as writers and tutors. Thus, such workshops can be reciprocal for both groups of participants: Chinese tutors can improve their English literacy by learning and providing insights, while native English-speaking teachers can achieve a more nuanced, in-depth understanding of their L2 students' literacy background, with the potential to further translate such understanding into a more effective pedagogy in classroom teaching.

In addition to serving as cultural/rhetorical/linguistic informants, Chinese tutors can also work as a bridge between Chinese students and native English-speaking teachers who both teach English writing and work at the writing center. For example, during a discussion workshop, a student explained to her tutor that she shifted the person from "I" to "you" and then to "we" because her teacher had told her that it was good to do so in English writing. Confused and unsure, the tutor voiced her concern

during the workshop and tried to confirm with the student's native English-speaking teacher, who happened to be on duty. It turned out that the student misunderstood her teacher who had suggested against "constant shift of the person." Although it was a coincidence that the peer tutor worked on the same night as the student writer's instructor, the communicative avenue between Chinese tutors and native English-speaking teachers at the writing center does allow tutors to conveniently raise questions that they glean from tutoring sessions, as representatives of student writers. At the same time, the tutors can relay the answers that they have gained from the native English-speaking teachers to the student writers through the post-tutorial summary report that they are required to send to student writers. In this way, peer tutors can mediate between Chinese students and native English-speaking teachers, facilitating the delivery of knowledge.

As is shown above, the meaningful insights that Chinese tutors bring into discussion with native English-speaking teachers have altered the dissemination of knowledge. As is shown in Fig. 14.1, unlike the classroom pedagogy where teachers impart knowledge in a unidirectional manner, the SIS Writing Center enables native English-speaking teachers and L2 tutors to generate knowledge collaboratively. Such collaborations not only challenge the predetermined power hierarchy in the traditional instruction of English writing, but also create a reciprocal learning process of writing, language, and cultures for both Chinese tutors and native English-speaking teachers.

Therefore, as Fig. 14.1 demonstrates, Chinese peer tutors function as a conduit at the SIS Writing Center: On one end, Chinese peer tutors provide support for Chinese students during one-on-one tutoring

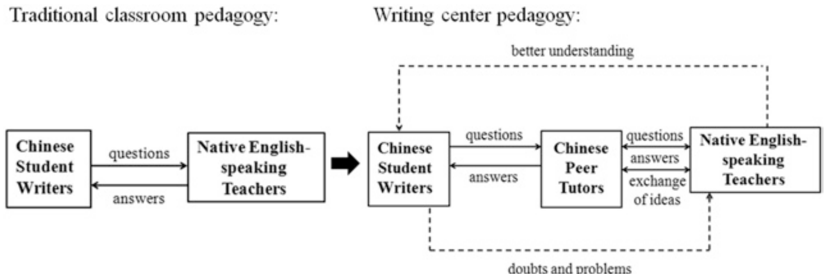

Fig. 14.1 Shift of pedagogy: A collaboration-based, multilingual writing center model

sessions; on the other end, Chinese peer tutors work closely with native English-speaking teachers, contributing their insights and facilitating the generation and delivery of knowledge. In other words, Chinese peer tutors serve as an active mediator among Chinese students and native English-speaking teachers; their participation is an innovation on the traditional English writing pedagogy because it empowers L2 peer tutors and promotes collaboration between native English-speaking teachers and Chinese students. To summarize, the SIS Writing Center functions with its two affordances with a negotiation-based, multilingual approach: The one-on-one conferences supplement classroom teaching and the discussion workshops turn the dissemination of knowledge from a unidirectional process to a reciprocal one.

Implications and Future Research

The significance of this chapter lies in sharing the philosophy that underlies the two affordances of the SIS Writing Center: a collaborative orientation enacted by scaffolding, negotiation, and discussion. For writing center practitioners across China, regardless of the methods with which their writing centers are implemented, the concept of collaboration is worth consideration. In the case of the SIS Writing Center, collaboration exists at two levels: Tutoring-wise, tutors, and writers collaborate through scaffolding to negotiate meaning and generate revision decisions in a concerted effort; discussion workshop-wise, Chinese tutors and native English-speaking teachers collaborate through discussion to create knowledge regarding the teaching and learning of English writing that goes beyond each party's knowledge base. With such collaborations, Chinese peer tutors, student writers, and native English-speaking teachers are equipped with a new platform to discuss writing, which innovates the English literacy instruction at the School of International Studies.

Based on my experience establishing and directing the SIS Writing Center, the following tips might be helpful for teachers and administrators who are interested in adopting a collaboration-based, multilingual writing center approach that engages Chinese peer tutors:

1. Behind collaboration lies the ideology of multilingualism, which respects linguistic, cultural, and rhetorical diversity. It is under such an ideology that collaboration can be enacted smoothly and effectively, with all stakeholders collaborating and negotiating

respectfully, regardless of their language backgrounds, roles, nationalities, etc.

2. Peer tutoring sessions and discussion workshops can provide opportunities for collaboration and promote multilingualism; however, if not managed properly, the inherently unequal power dynamics between student writers and peer tutors as well as that between Chinese peer tutors and native English-speaking teachers might be intensified and even hinder learning. Thus, writing center directors need to promote explicitly and repeatedly a respectful, egalitarian, and relaxing tone at their institutions to ensure that the image of the writing center reflects a safe and welcoming space for literacy learning rather than one where students feel intimated, their writings get judged, and peer tutors find it difficult to engage in free exchanges with native English-speaking teachers; otherwise, writing centers might do our literacy instruction a disservice.
3. As writing center practices and philosophies are novel concepts in China, the implementation of writing centers as a way to innovate the current English literacy pedagogies requires incremental efforts and ongoing explorations: Initially, writing centers in L2/EFL contexts can begin with surveys to gauge students' needs for writing support, start small scale, and expand later; during practice, staff should keep discussing, reflecting on, and enhancing their expertise through regular training sessions, staff meetings, etc., to optimize the operational model of their center.

There exists a great dearth of scholarly inquiries regarding the efficacy of writing center practices in China. Future research can be guided by but not limited to the following questions, particularly with an empirical approach:

- In addition to a collaboration-based, multilingual writing center model, what kinds of models have been implemented at other writing centers across China?
- How have writing centers been perceived by participants such as Chinese peer tutors, Chinese students, and native English-speaking/Chinese teachers of English writing?
- How effectively does a writing center approach supplement the English writing instruction in terms of post-tutorial revisions and improvement in student writing?

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Note

1. Chinese translations within square brackets are provided by the author.

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CHAPTER 15

Developing Second Language Literacy: Taiwanese College Students' Error Types in Focused Feedback Effectiveness

Chian-Wen Kao

Introduction

In second language (L2) literacy development, two important issues have drawn much attention. One is to explore the relationship between reading and writing; the other is to examine the effects of certain instruction on L2 literacy development (August & Shanahan, 2008). This chapter is an attempt to explore the latter. In terms of the writing system for L2 literacy development, researchers have put much effort into investigating how to design meaningful scenarios where student writers could use language to satisfy communicative demands. However, the great emphasis on communicative meanings has caused learners not to pay attention to the accuracy of language forms used (Skehan, 1996; Skehan & Foster, 2001).

Over the past three decades, there have been a growing number of studies looking at whether grammar correction is useful for second

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language writers (Ferris, 1999, 2010; Truscott, 1996, 1999, 2010). Attention given to the effect of corrective feedback has increased since Truscott (1996) provided the most widely cited review of the literature, claiming that error correction plays no facilitative role in improving learner writing. However, Ferris (1999) argued that error correction is still necessary and useful because most students prefer, need, and trust teachers' feedback. She considered it premature to conclude that error correction does not work.

Researchers have conducted meta-analyses to explore correction effects across studies. Truscott's (2007) meta-analysis showed a small negative effect of corrective feedback. His conclusion that error correction is harmful to students' written accuracy prompted criticism from Bruton (2010), who argued that Truscott simply reiterated the studies he reviewed earlier in 1996 in his 2007 meta-analysis. It is, therefore, not surprising that, even after 10 years, he still found grammar correction to be ineffective for correcting errors. Following Truscott's (2007) criteria concerning studies for inclusion, Kao and Wible (2014) included more studies published after his meta-analysis, running a new meta-analysis to assess feedback effects in second language writing. Since studies have suggested that the scope of feedback might mediate the effectiveness of written feedback and researchers have attempted to distinguish focused feedback from unfocused feedback (e.g., Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, & Takashima, 2008), Kao and Wible (2014) tested the influence of the scope of feedback as a potential moderator variable and found focused feedback to be effective and clearly more effective than unfocused feedback.

A few gaps could be identified in the literature on focused feedback. For example, focused feedback studies have investigated the effects of correction mostly on students' uses of the English article system (i.e., Bitchener, 2008; Ellis et al., 2008; Sheen, 2007). Little feedback research has been conducted, however, on other grammatical knowledge acquisition. An important question that has not been addressed is whether the effects of focused correction would differ depending on the sort of error targeted for focused correction. As a step toward addressing this limitation of previous research, rule-based error types and lexically based error types are distinguished in the present study, targeting correction for different participant groups.

In what follows I further elaborate on the rationale for targeting the two broad types of errors: rule-based errors and lexically based errors. Focused feedback has been found to be effective for the English article

system, and these errors have been classified by some researchers as rule based (e.g., Bitchener, 2008; Sheen, 2007; Yu & Cheng, 2017). Feedback researchers have considered article errors as rule-based errors because they focus only on two functions of indefinite and definite article usages: *a* as first mention of referent and *the* as subsequent mentions of referent. What I want to suggest is that it would be premature to assume that focused feedback is effective for rule-based error types in general based on this limited number of samples that have been investigated in feedback studies. In addition to the English article system, subject-verb agreement is therefore targeted for correction because this error type has been found to be one of the most common rule-based errors in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' writing. Furthermore, since focused feedback has been found to be effective for the rule-based error type, whether focused feedback can be effective for other error types different from rule-based error types is worth exploring. The lexically based error type, verb-noun collocations consisting of a verb and a noun, account for the largest portion in learners' collocation errors; this error type was thus investigated (Liu, 2002). The purpose of the study is to investigate whether focused written corrective feedback can help learners of English become more accurate in the use of articles, subject-verb agreement, and verb-noun collocations separately. The following research question is therefore posed:

To what extent does written corrective feedback facilitate EFL learners' acquisition of articles, subject-verb agreement, and verb-noun collocations?

Methodology

Participants and Groupings

Research participants recruited in the present study were 45 college students (including 35 females and 10 males) majoring in Public Finance and Tax Administration from northern Taiwan. Since some students did not produce the errors types I attempted to target for corrections, only 28 students who produced the targeted error types were included in this study. They possessed a low-intermediate English proficiency, their TOEIC scores ranged from 440 to 472. Their CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching Assessment) level was approximately at A2. Three focused feedback groups were formed based on what error types were treated.

Table 15.1 Experimental groups and control group

Group	*Targeted linguistic errors*	*Number of participants*
Experimental group 1	Article errors	7
Experimental group 2	Subject-verb agreement errors	7
Experimental group 3	Verb-noun collocation errors	7
Control group	No linguistic errors corrected	7

One group received corrections on English article errors, another group on subject-verb agreement errors, and a third group on verb-noun collocation errors. Additionally, a comparison group received no correction on linguistic errors. Table 15.1 shows how participants were grouped.

Targeted Errors and Corrective Feedback

Three types of grammar errors were targeted for correction, one type for each of the experimental groups. The first type was English article errors. I corrected English article errors based on the definite and indefinite distinction when students failed to use articles appropriately in their writing. The rule for the use of the definite and indefinite article that I targeted is as follows: The indefinite article is used for the first mention of a referent in a discourse, and the definite article is used for subsequent mentions (Bitchener, 2008). Article uses found in the students' writing that violated the rule of this distinction between definite and indefinite articles were corrected. Examples of students' article errors are given in (1–2). (1) is a misuse of the definite article for first mention. (2) is a misuse of the indefinite article for a previously mentioned referent.[1]

(1) *I am looking for the* job opening at 104 Job Bank. I am interested in the job opening.*

(2) *Besides the application letter, I also show you a resume for more details about my qualification. A* resume contains information about my ability.*

The second error type targeted for correction was subject-verb agreement errors. Lexical verbs were particularly targeted. Specifically, errors where a lexical verb should have been inflected with –s for agreement

with a third person singular subject but did not show this agreement were marked and corrected. Examples of students' subject-verb agreement errors are given in (1–2). (1) is an error which leaves off the third person singular inflection. (2) is an error which overuses the third person singular inflection.

(1) *The information show* that my qualification suit* the job requirement.*
(2) *Administrative assistants needs* to answer phones and entertain foreign guests.*

The third error type was collocation errors. Collocations cannot be explained by rules. For example, *I take medicine*. The word, *take*, cannot be substituted by *eat*, and no general rule could be provided to explain why *take* should be used. Verb-noun collocations have been reported to account for the largest portion of learners' collocation errors (Liu, 2002). Thus, I targeted verb-noun collocation errors for correction. Specifically, only four verb-noun collocations were selected for corrections in the study. Since Liu (2002) indicated that students produced more verb miscollocates than noun miscollocates in verb-noun collocation errors, nouns (i.e., *application, course, interview, appointment*) were targeted to investigate whether students can use appropriate verbs with these nouns. Four verb-noun collocation errors produced in students' writings are listed in (1–4). (1a) and (1b) show verb miscollocates with the noun *application*; (2a) and (2b) miscollocates with *course*; (3a) and (3b) with *interview*; and (4a) and (4b) show verb miscollocates with *appointment*.

(1a) *I am interested in the job opening and would like to undergo* an application.*
(1b) *Since this job opening attracts me a lot, I want to do* an application.*
(2a) *I made* some relative courses and received training at that time.*
(2b) *I have read* courses and received training about reception for foreign guests, accounting affairs and computer operation.*
(3a) *I hope you can give me an opportunity to participate* an interview in your company.*
(3b) *Please give me a chance to join* an interview to your company.*

(4a) *I would like to appoint* an appointment with you whenever you are available.*
(4b) *I want to try* an appointment when you have time.*

Following the practice in most focused feedback studies, where errors are marked and the correct language forms given, I also gave direct corrections to the experimental groups' writing. Examples of corrective feedback on article, subject-verb agreement, and verb-noun collocation errors that were provided are shown in (5–7).

(5) *Direct correction on article errors*

a

I am looking for ~~the~~ job opening at 104 Job Bank. I am interested in the job opening.

(6) *Direct correction on subject-verb agreement errors*

shows suits

The information ~~show~~ that my qualification ~~suit~~ the job requirement.

(7) *Direct corrections on verb-noun collocation errors*

took

I ~~made~~ some relative courses and received training at that time.

Writing Tasks

Focused writing tasks were designed to elicit uses of certain language features targeted in this study. As stated in the section of participants and groupings, three experimental groups received corrections, each of them on a different error type. The control group received no correction on any errors. All groups were given the same writing tasks and instructions from the same teacher who had taught them business English for one semester. In these writing tasks, students were given a job opening ad as a writing prompt (a different ad describing a different job opening for each task) and were requested to play a role of job applicant and produce three different job application letters answering the ads, one in a pretest, one in a posttest, and one in a delayed posttest. Since the difficulty of writing tasks across the three testing sessions might moderate the feedback effects, to ensure the equal difficulty, the writing tasks were designed to provide the same writing instruction and nuanced job ads (the three different ads are all related to administration job openings) for participants in the pretests, posttests, and delayed posttests. In addition,

two native English-speaking teachers were invited to rate the difficulty of writing tasks with a scale from 1 (easiest) to 5 (most difficult) and no significant difference was evident (Mann–Whitney U: 3.50, $p > .05$) across the three writing tasks. The writing prompt was designed to elicit students' uses of articles, subject-verb agreement structures, and verb-noun collocations. In terms of the verb-noun collocations, only four verb-noun collocations were targeted for corrections. The nouns (i.e., *application*, *course*, *interview*, *appointment*) were provided under a writing prompt (see Appendix). The writing prompt instructed students to use these nouns and was designed to elicit the use of verbs with them. The writing prompt was the same for all the writing tasks, one task at each of the three stages, but the job advertisements changed for each stage. All tasks were presented to students in Chinese in order to avoid any exposure of targeted language features to students.

Procedures

Using a pretest–posttest-delayed posttest design, the first writing task served as the pretest; the second, an immediate posttest; and the third, a delayed posttest. Performance on the first task was used to calculate all participants' accuracy in their use of the targeted language features in obligatory contexts. One week following the first task, the experimental groups received their writings from the first task with corrections on targeted language errors while the control group received their writings with no corrections on language errors. Both experimental and control groups received content feedback aimed at their writing organization. After receiving their corrected writings, they were asked to read the feedback for ten minutes[2] and then return the corrected essays. Neither experimental groups nor the control was asked to revise these writings from their first task. Immediately after returning these corrected writings to the proctor, they were then asked to complete the second writing task as a posttest. The second task shares the same writing prompt with the first task but differs from the first task in the content of the job advertisement. The advertisement in the first task is an opening for an administrative assistant whereas the advertisement in the second task is an opening of an office assistant. One month later,[3] a delayed posttest in the form of a third writing task was administered to determine whether any effects of corrections resisted decay over time. The prompt for the third task was for a job opening for a strategic planning manager.

Data Analysis

To examine whether students' writing accuracy improved in subsequent writing tasks after receiving error feedback, a percentage of correct usage was calculated (Bitchener, 2008). The following equation shows how the percent accuracy was calculated.

$$\frac{n\,\text{correct usage in contexts}}{n\,\text{obligatory contexts}} \times 100 = \text{percent accuracy}$$

To obtain more reliable outcomes from the analyses, two trained research colleagues were invited to calculate the accuracy rate of usages. Inter-rater reliability calculations between two raters revealed 92% agreement on the accuracy rate of English article usages, 98% agreement on the accuracy rate of subject-verb agreement structures, and 90% agreement on the accuracy rate of verb-noun collocations in the initial analyses. Finally, 100% agreement was reached for the accuracy rate of the three linguistic structures after collaborative analyses on the instances in which two raters initially disagreed with each other. Gain scores were calculated by subtracting pretest scores from posttest scores and by subtracting pretest scores from delayed posttest scores. Data of students' gain scores were analyzed using a Mann–Whitney U test to determine the effects of the treatments shown in immediate posttests and delayed posttests. Since the sample size of this study is small in each group, the p value is set at .01 to determine statistically significant levels.

Results

Tables 15.2, 15.3, and 15.4 show the descriptive statistics for English article accuracy, subject-verb agreement accuracy, and verb-noun collocation accuracy, respectively. The pretest results indicated that there was no significant difference between the feedback group and the control group in terms of their English article accuracy ($Z = -1.65$, $p > .01$), subject-verb agreement accuracy ($Z = -1.03$, $p > .01$), and verb-noun collocation accuracy ($Z = -0.625$, $p > .01$). This means that the two groups of students began the study with similar accuracy levels in their use of the targeted grammatical forms.

Descriptive statistics of gains in immediate posttests (subtracting pretest scores from posttest scores) and gains in delayed posttests (subtracting pretest scores from delayed posttest scores) for the accuracy of

Table 15.2 Descriptive statistics: English article accuracy by group and testing session

	Pretest		*Immediate posttest*		*Delayed posttest*	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Focused feedback group (*n*=7)	37.14	9.06	82.46	22.34	87.40	17.20
Control group (*n*=7)	44.94	10.21	55.07	14.67	51.86	18.90

Table 15.3 Descriptive statistics: English subject-verb agreement accuracy by group and testing session

	Pretest		*Immediate posttest*		*Delayed posttest*	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Focused feedback group (*n*=7)	41.06	11.24	92.71	9.09	95.14	8.30
Control group (*n*=7)	44.04	10.45	45.90	15.76	54.96	17.20

Table 15.4 Descriptive statistics: English verb-noun collocation accuracy by group and testing session

	Pretest		*Immediate posttest*		*Delayed posttest*	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Focused feedback group (*n*=7)	42.86	23.78	89.29	19.67	67.86	31.34
Control group (*n*=7)	35.71	19.67	42.86	18.90	39.29	19.67

English article usages, subject-verb agreement structures, and verb-noun collocations is provided in Table 15.5.

To determine whether focused feedback is effective for the three error types, Mann–Whitney U tests were performed for each error type. The results are shown in Tables 15.6, 15.7, and 15.8. The Mann–Whitney U test was performed to analyze the effects of the feedback on the immediate posttests of the targeted linguistic structure and the other Mann–Whitney U test was to analyze the effects of the feedback on the delayed posttests of the targeted linguistic structure. Results for the gains in immediate posttests show focused feedback to be effective for the

Table 15.5 Gains in immediate posttests and delayed posttests: By treatment session

	Language accuracy	*Groups*	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Gains in immediate posttests	Article accuracy	Focused feedback group	7	45.31	22.38
		Control group	7	10.13	14.42
	Sv agreement accuracy	Focused feedback group	7	51.66	13.19
		Control group	7	1.86	16.59
	Vn collocation accuracy	Focused feedback group	7	46.43	33.63
		Control group	7	7.14	12.20
Gains in delayed posttests	Article accuracy	Focused feedback group	7	50.26	12.22
		Control group	7	6.91	19.19
	Sv agreement accuracy	Focused feedback group	7	54.09	10.47
		Control group	7	10.91	17.39
	Vn collocation accuracy	Focused feedback group	7	25.00	45.64
		Control group	7	3.57	17.25

Table 15.6 Mann–Whitney U test on gain scores: Article usages

Group	*n*	*Mean rank*	*Mann–Whitney U statistics*	*Wilcoxon W statistics*	*Z test*	*p*
Gains in immediate posttests						
Control group	7	4.86	6.00	34.00	–2.39	.017
Focused feedback group	7	10.14				
Gains in delayed posttests						
Control group	7	4.43	3.00	31.00	–2.78	.005
Focused feedback group	7	10.57				

Table 15.7 Mann–Whitney U test on gain scores: Subject-verb agreement structures

Group	*n*	*Mean rank*	*Mann–Whitney U statistics*	*Wilcoxon W statistics*	*Z test*	*p*
Gains in immediate posttests						
Control group	7	4.00	.00	28.00	−3.14	.002
Focused feedback group	7	11.00				
Gains in delayed posttests						
Control group	7	4.14	1.00	29.00	−3.01	.003
Focused feedback group	7	10.86				

Table 15.8 Mann–Whitney U test on gain scores: Verb-noun collocations

Group	*n*	*Mean rank*	*Mann–Whitney U statistics*	*Wilcoxon W statistics*	*Z test*	*p*
Gains in immediate posttests						
Control group	7	4.00	.00	28.00	−3.38	.001
Focused feedback group	7	11.00				
Gains in delayed posttests						
Control group	7	5.86	13.00	41.00	−1.59	.113
Focused feedback group	7	9.14				

Table 15.9 A summary of findings

Is focused feedback effective?	*Article errors*	*Subject-verb agreement errors*	*Verb-noun collocation errors*
Gains in immediate posttests	No	Yes	Yes
Gains in delayed posttests	Yes	Yes	No

two error types: subject-verb agreement structures ($Z = -3.14$, $p < .01$) and verb-noun collocations ($Z = -3.38$, $p < .01$) but not article usages ($Z = -2.39$, $p > .01$). As to the gains in delayed posttests, the benefit persisted for subject-verb agreement structures ($Z = -3.01$, $p < .01$), but not for verb-noun collocations ($Z = -1.59$, $p > .01$). Additionally, the focused feedback, beyond all expectations, showed effective for article usages ($Z = -2.78$, $p < .01$) in delayed posttests.

Table 15.9 summarizes the findings of the present study. Focused feedback was shown to be effective for subject-verb agreement errors and verb-noun collocation errors but not for article errors in immediate posttests. The effects of focused feedback were retained for subject-verb agreement errors but not for verb-noun collocation errors in the delayed posttests. What was surprising was that the focused feedback became effective in correcting article errors in the delayed posttests.

Discussion

Focused feedback has been shown to be effective for linguistic errors (Bitchener, 2008; Ellis et al., 2008; Kao & Wible, 2014; Sheen, 2007). In the current study, a distinction has been made between rule-based

and lexically based errors in evaluating focused feedback effectiveness. As to the rule-based errors, it seems that I have corroborated previous findings that focused feedback is effective for English article errors (e.g., Bitchener, 2008; Ellis et al., 2008; Sheen, 2007). The effects of focused feedback, however, are shown in delayed posttests but not in immediate posttests. This finding echoes Ellis' (2003) delayed effect hypothesis. That is, learners might not immediately learn from teachers after they receive corrections. Instead, they might benefit from teacher corrections after a certain period of time. Specifically, focused feedback shows such delayed learning effects for article errors involving the first mention of a referent in a discourse requiring the indefinite article and subsequent mentions requiring the definite article. Since the concept of English article usages involve not only syntactic structures but also semantic contexts, it might take time for learners to recognize the binary division targeted in this study between the first mention of a referent (indefinite article "a") and the subsequent mentions of the referent (definite article "the") (Master, 1990).

Pica (1983) has argued that teaching students "a" and "the" for introduction and second mention of an item may compound students' difficulties with article uses because sometimes, counter to that rule, "the" is required as an introductory use, typically when the writer believes the word's referent to be identifiable by the reader. Previous research has shown focused feedback to be effective for article errors in immediate and delayed posttests in terms of the use of the indefinite article for first mention of a noun referent and the definite article for subsequent mentions. The study reported in this chapter showed a slightly different result from previous ones. That is, focused feedback became effective for such article errors in only delayed posttests, which reflects the complexity of acquisition of the English article system (Master, 1990; Pica, 1983). Another question worth asking is whether focused feedback is still effective for errors in other uses of the article system, for example, where when "the" is to be used as an introductory mention of a noun whose referent is assumed by the writer to be identifiable by the reader (e.g., the moon). Yu and Cheng (2017) investigated the focused feedback effects on all functional usages of English article system, and no significant effect was found. Therefore, it would be worthwhile for future researchers to explore how narrowly or broadly an article error type should be defined for focused feedback effectiveness.

Bitchener (2008) found English article errors treatable through correction, claiming this result is due to English article usage being rule based and discrete. My findings indicate that focused feedback is effective for subject-verb agreement errors as the target of focused feedback in both immediate and delayed posttests. More specifically, focused correction of agreement errors on lexical verbs was shown to be effective in both short and long terms. This involved the third person singular—sending, which has been considered formally and functionally simple at the syntactic level, and could be easily acquired by giving focused feedback. What should be noted is that I limited my attention to agreement inflection on lexical verbs and did not target agreement errors in the use of copula *be*, for example. The agreeing forms of the copula *be* are, however, far more complex morphologically than lexical verbs (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). Errors of the copula *be*, therefore, should be included to further explore whether or not they respond similarly to focused correction of agreement errors on lexical verbs.

In addition to the rule-based errors, I targeted lexically based errors for corrections. Specifically, the verb-noun collocation errors were corrected. The effects of focused feedback for the verb-noun collocation errors, however, were not retained in delayed posttests. Unlike rule-based errors, no grammatical rules can be consulted for corrections in terms of the lexically based errors such as mis-collocations (Ferris, 1999) and acquisition of formulaic language requires frequency of exposure (Ellis, 2002), one chance of correction might be insufficient for the acquisition of verb-noun collocations. Since the acquisition of collocations requires learners' attention, the form of corrective feedback giving (i.e., simply to provide the correct verb form without marking the noun that governed the choice of that collocating verb) might fail to help learners pay attention to how the verb correctly collocates with the noun. What types of corrective feedback can facilitate learners' acquisition of verb-noun collocations thus needs to be further explored.

Limitations of the Study

There are some limitations regarding the research methodology which could be addressed in a future study. Since the sample size in this study is quite small due to the unpredictable loss of subjects, a large-scale

study in which more participants are recruited should be encouraged. Additionally, it is suggested that more qualitative analyses on students' first drafts and corrected drafts should be provided to obtain a more comprehensive picture of focused feedback effectiveness.

Implications for Teaching

Based on the above findings, the following pedagogical implications are provided for writing classroom teachers to correct students' rule-based and lexically based errors. As to the rule-based errors, teachers are advised to use focused corrections to facilitate students' acquisition of the use of article and subject-verb agreement. What should be noted is that the scope of article and subject-verb agreement errors targeted in this study is limited to only certain linguistic usages. As for the lexically based errors, some researchers (e.g., Ferris, 1999) explicate that lexically based errors such as collocation errors are considered untreatable due to their being no rules for consultation while some (e.g., Truscott, 1999) argue that rule-based errors such as article or subject-verb agreement errors as in the current study are involved in complex syntactic systems and the least correctable. The finding in this study supports these researchers' propositions that lexically based errors are untreatable by corrections. It is, nonetheless, worth pointing out that the verb-noun collocation errors corrected might not have been salient enough for learners to notice because students might receive corrections on only one or two out of four collocation errors targeted in this study. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to correct more lexically based errors with similar language features in a single or series of writings to draw learners' attention, such as verb-noun collocation errors in this study. This study suggests that teachers should think over the characteristics of different error types while deciding which sorts of correction are effective for errors.

Although focused feedback has been shown to be effective for certain types of linguistic errors in this chapter, the feedback practice has been criticized to simplify the issue of written accuracy. Since student writers tend to produce more types of errors, focused feedback has been questioned to be less pedagogically valuable (Ferris, 2010). Focused feedback has long been criticized for selecting linguistic errors for a research focus.

It is, therefore, suggested that teachers should target certain linguistic errors for a more pedagogical focus. For example, focused feedback could be given to address those error types which are not successfully corrected by unfocused feedback. A series of experiments should be meticulously conducted to examine the effects of such feedback practice on specific linguistic features in future studies.

This chapter is not an attempt to offer a guideline to correct language errors but an attempt to suggest to writing instructors that the one-size-fits-all approach commonly seen in writing classrooms is not effective for language errors of all sorts. This also suggests that teachers' knowledge regarding how to correct errors might be insufficient. Hence, workshops to help teachers address students' grammatical and lexical errors are called for. Error feedback teams should be formed by both researchers and practitioners to discuss problems they face and brainstorm how to improve the quality of feedback content. Successful examples about providing beneficial feedback for students should be demonstrated for teachers' references.

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Notes

1. There are other exceptions of definite article usages like "the sun rises in the east" where "sun" is mentioned for the first time but "the" should be used. Such functional usage is excluded in this study.
2. Since most focused feedback studies gave students ten minutes to read the feedback, ten minutes were given as the benchmarking.
3. The learners in the four groups received formal instruction of business English from the same teacher during the one-month period. Although students in the classroom were inevitably exposed to the linguistic usages targeted in this study, since the four groups were taught by the same teacher with the same teaching materials, the effects of linguistic input could have been counterbalanced.

Appendix: Writing Tasks over the Three Testing Stages

Writing Prompts in Pretests, Posttests and Delayed Posttests

請根據以下的職缺廣告，針對該職缺的***職務說明***及***寫作要求***，運用***所提供的單字***寫一封約120字的英文求職信給雇主。

寫作要求：

1. 敘述在哪裡看到該職缺，並表達想要提出申請的意願。
2. 敘述該職缺所需能力為何，簡述自己與該職缺相關的經驗(如：修過什麼課程、參加過什麼訓練…等)，並說明這些經驗使自己具備了哪些能力。
3. 敘述所附履歷包含哪些資訊，並指出這些資訊顯示所擁有的資格符合該職缺需求。
4. 請求雇主給予參加面試的機會並預約可見面的時間。

單字：application, course, interview, appointment.

Job Advertisement in Pretests

104 人力銀行

皇隆建設股份有限公司 (Huang Long Construction Corp.)

行政助理 (需求人數：1 人)

求才內容 應徵方式

求才內容說明

【職務說明】	1.接聽電話、外國訪客接待。
	2.總務工作。
	3.電腦操作及文書處理。
	4.協助會計事務。

【詳細上班地點】	台北市中山區南京東路二段206號10樓
【工作待遇】	面議
【上班時段】	日班、08:30~17:30
【休假制度】	週休二日

應徵方式:

【職務聯絡人】	徐小姐

Job Advertisement in Posttests

104人力銀行

法商迪卡儂有限公司 (Decathlon Production Corporation)

辦公室助理人員 (需求人數：1 人)

求才內容 應徵方式

求才內容說明

【職務說明】	1. 人事/行政管理協助。 2. 會議及活動安排。 3. 公司總務規劃。 4. 員工旅遊行程規劃及外國訪客接待。

【詳細上班地點】 台中市南屯區永春東一路812號

【工作待遇】 面議

【上班時段】 09:00~18:00

【休假制度】 週休二日

應徵方式:

【職務聯絡人】 王小姐

Job Advertisement in Delayed Posttests

104 人力銀行

藝珂人事顧問股份有限公司 (Adecco Corporation)

策略規劃經理人 (需求人數:1 人)

求才內容 應徵方式

求才內容說明

【職務說明】 1. 協調及監督產品計畫流程。

2. 協助發展及執行長期商務計畫。

3. 建立及維持長期與中期策略的關聯。

4. 直接與客戶建立關係。

【詳細上班地點】	彰化縣福興鄉永春東一路812號
【工作待遇】	面議
【上班時段】	09:00~18:00
【休假制度】	週休二日
應徵方式:	
【職務聯絡人】	陳小姐

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CHAPTER 16

Hong Kong College Students' Perceptions of Continuous Assessment in the Context of Academic Literacy Instruction

Jingjing Ma

Introduction

Hong Kong is characterized by an exam-oriented educational system in which summative assessment is dominant (Carless, 2012). In many of its L2 writing classrooms, teachers are adopting summative assessment while downplaying formative assessment (Lee, 2017). One example of the summative assessment in use is continuous assessment. It refers to "the use of tests over a learning unit, and the accumulation of results in a final grade" (Miller, Imrie, & Cox, 1998, p. 34). Given that summative assessment is a necessary reality in an exam-oriented context like Hong Kong, and formative assessment is a powerful tool in enhancing students' learning and learner self-regulation (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006), productive synergies should be developed between the two (Carless, 2012). This research investigated a group of Hong Kong college

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students' perceptions of continuous assessment in relation to its summative and/or formative aspects in the context of their acquisition of academic literacy, defined as the ability to "use, manipulate, and control language and cognitive abilities for specific purposes and in specific contexts" (Van Dyk & Van de Poel, 2013, p. 56). It is part of a larger study on students' perceptions of their writing teachers' classroom assessment practices. Its findings may shed light on forging a fruitful relationship between the summative and formative elements of continuous assessment in similar contexts in the region.

Literature Review

Purposes of Assessment

There are three main purposes of assessment: to promote student learning, to judge the quality of student learning, and to satisfy the needs of accountability (Carless, 2012). The first purpose fulfills a formative role while the other two fulfill a summative role. Particularly, regarding formative assessment, it performs the dual function of promoting students' learning and facilitating their self-regulation (Hawe & Dixon, 2014). Formative assessment has been found to produce significant benefits in learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998). In the context of higher education, it should also help students become self-regulated learners who "judge performance relative to goals, generate internal feedback about amounts and rates of progress towards goals, and adjust further action based on that feedback" (Butler & Winne, 1995, p. 258). Learners who are more self-regulated are more effective learners (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). The following principles of good formative assessment practice can facilitate learner self-regulation in cognitive, behavioral, and motivational aspects, including (1) helping clarify what good performance is, (2) facilitating the development of self-assessment (reflection) in learning, (3) delivering high-quality information to students about their learning, (4) encouraging teacher and peer dialog around learning, (5) encouraging positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem, (6) providing opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance, and (7) using feedback to improve teaching (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

Although assessment may be predominantly summative (i.e., to judge the quality of student learning and to satisfy the needs of accountability) or formative (i.e., to improve and accelerate student learning), a positive relationship should be built between the two through combining elements of formative and summative assessment to make assessment learning oriented in test-dominated settings such as Hong Kong (Carless, 2012). For instance, summative tests can be used formatively to promote students' learning.

Student Perceptions of Continuous Assessment

Despite limited research on student perceptions of continuous assessment in academic literacy instruction at the tertiary level, university students' views of this type of assessment have been investigated in discipline-specific modules related to history, geography, archaeology, business, and so on (Frost, De Pont, & Brailsford, 2012; Holmes, 2015; Isaksson, 2008; Trotter, 2006). For example, the business students in Trotter's (2006) study reported that the low-stakes continuous assessment called tutorial file extrinsically motivated them to work harder and continuously, gave them a chance to be exposed to regular and early feedback, and helped them improve their learning and revise what they learned. The geography students in Holmes' (2015) study felt that the low-stakes weekly continuous e-assessment had a positive impact on their engagement with the module and learning. In particular, the students perceived that continuous assessment enhanced their understanding of course material, and they appreciated immediate feedback that they could use to keep track of their progress throughout the module. The above studies show that summative continuous assessment can be used formatively to foster a positive relationship between summative and formative assessment.

College students' perceptions of continuous assessment in academic literacy instruction seem to be an under-researched topic. Their perceptions are important as they are one of the key stakeholders in assessment, and their perceptions may provide particularly valuable insights into the assessment processes. This study explores students' views of continuous assessment in an exam-oriented educational context (i.e., Hong Kong). It seeks to address the following research question:

What are the college student participants' perceptions of the continuous assessment in their academic English writing classrooms?

The Study

The study was conducted in the context of a 14-week English for Academic Purposes course for year-one non-English major students. It was essentially an academic English writing course. When the course coordinator was asked to revamp the course in 2013, she introduced the in-class continuous assessment tasks to enhance deeper learning of important topics concerning academic writing and create more dialogs, discussion, and hands-on experience (C. Cheng, personal communication, October 16, 2017). There were a total of 10 continuous assessment tasks (e.g., writing an introduction, writing a conclusion, and using transitional words) in the course (Table 16.1). They were related to the intended learning outcomes that expect the students to develop knowledge and skills for producing academic papers at appropriate levels. Student performance from the best three would be counted. In addition to the continuous assessment tasks, which accounted for 15% of the total score, the other assessment tasks included an informative essay (20%), an argumentative essay (40%), presentation of features of academic writing (15%), and participation (10%).

A case-study approach was employed to obtain in-depth information concerning students' perceptions of continuous assessment in their academic English writing classrooms. The teacher, Jenny, volunteered to participate in the study. She earned a master's degree in comparative and general literature and had 2.5 years of teaching experience at the time

Table 16.1 Continuous assessment tasks

1.	Pre-course writing
2.	Paraphrasing and summarizing
3.	Writing topic, supporting, concluding or transitional sentences
4.	Writing an introduction
5.	Use of connectives
6.	Peer feedback workshop
7.	Identifying features in academic writing I
8.	Identifying features in academic writing II
9.	Writing a conclusion
10.	APA quiz

Table 16.2 Student perceptions of continuous assessment tasks

	Mean or percentage	*N*	*SD*
1. In-class assessment tasks were given in this course	Yes (100%)	21	N/A
2. In-class assessment tasks were used to assess my performance for "Assignment 1"	4.90	21	0.436
3. In-class assessment tasks were used to help me understand what I needed to improve	4.86	21	0.655

of the study. There were two rounds of data collection. The first round focused on one class of year-one students taught by Jenny in the 2014–2015 academic year while the second round focused on a different class of year-one students in the 2015–2016 academic year. There were 21 students in each class. The class met twice each week, and each session lasted for one and a half hours. Before data collection, the teacher and students were informed of the purpose of the study and agreed to participate in it. Pseudonyms were used to protect their identity.

Multiple sources of data were collected. During both rounds of data collection, a student survey was used to gauge the students' general perceptions. Six-point Likert scale items (see Table 16.2) forming part of a survey about Jenny's classroom assessment practices were employed for the first round. Eleven males and ten females responded to the survey items. In the second round, two questions (i.e., Do you think the continuous assessment in your writing class is useful? Why or why not?) forming part of a survey about students' opinions of Jenny's classroom assessment practices were utilized. Fourteen females and seven males provided their responses. All the survey participants were approximately eighteen years old. One focus group interview was conducted with four students and another with six students for the first and second rounds, respectively. The interview questions focused on students' views of the continuous assessment and their suggestions. To understand how Jenny implemented the continuous assessment, classroom observations were conducted on a bi-weekly basis. Six lessons were observed for each round of data collection, with each lesson lasting one and a half hours. Observation notes were written down and developed into full notes later.

Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted. SPSS 23 was used to generate descriptive statistics for the survey items in the first round of data collection while content analysis was conducted for the survey questions in the second round. Against the dual functions of

formative assessment, which is to promote learning and learner self-regulation (Hawe & Dixon, 2014), constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2002; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used to identify emerging themes from student interview data. Member-checking interviews were conducted with the student interviewees after data analysis.

Findings

Teacher Implementation of Continuous Assessment

Classroom observation revealed that Jenny conducted the in-class continuous assessment in the following way. Before each assessment task (e.g., writing an introduction), she shared with the students the requirements for successful task completion (e.g., qualities of a good introduction). Students were then given the freedom to choose whether they would like to do the task on an individual or group basis. During their task performance, Jenny encouraged her students to seek teacher oral feedback if they had any questions, and the students also interacted with one another actively if they chose to work as a group. After they finished the continuous assessment task, Jenny provided both marks and feedback on each group's or student's performance, with the same group of students receiving the same marks. As part of her feedback on the finished work, she also showed all the students an example of a good answer and explained why it was good in class.

Student Perceptions

The following presents student perceptions of the continuous assessment in their academic English writing classrooms. Student quotes are unedited.

Recognizing the Summative Aspect of the Continuous Assessment and Attaching Importance to Marks

The students were aware of the summative function of the continuous assessment. For example, as shown by the survey data in the first round of data collection (Table 16.2), all the 21 students in Jenny's 2014–2015 class acknowledged that continuous assessment tasks were given in the course and they tended to agree that these tasks were used to assess their

performance for "Assignment 1," the name given by the teacher for the in-class continuous assessment.

The students attached great importance to the marks of the continuous assessment, although it was low-stakes. For example, H said in the interview: "After we receive our score, if I can get a high mark, I will be very happy." The students also reported that they were motivated to perform well on future tasks if they did not do well in a particular task. For example, T mentioned: "But we have ... a lot of chance…, if we really didn't do well, we still have chance." C commented:

> We have like 10 in-class exercises but just count 3, and we can also brave in our writing, and even if it is wrong and we got zero mark …we can also improve in the future and got a higher mark in …maybe the next in-class assessment.

The importance attached to marks seems to reflect the students' awareness of the summative nature of the continuous assessment.

Enhancing the Understanding of Weak Areas and Writing Knowledge

The students talked about how the continuous assessment enhanced their understanding of the weak areas. Survey data collected in the first round show that the students tended to agree that in-class assessment tasks were used to help them understand what they needed to improve, although the level of agreement among the students did not seem to be as high as the case for item 2 (Table 2). In the interviews, the students mentioned that the continuous assessment can help them discover the things they need to know. M stated:

> …You understand all she said but doesn't mean that you know how to apply it and you still will make some mistake and you still have some misunderstanding. You misunderstanding you are right, but it can show it in your assessment that you are not…you can discover something that you need to know.

The students also pointed out that the continuous assessment helped them apply the newly learned writing knowledge and enhance their understanding of it. According to the survey data gathered in the second round of data collection, in response to the question of whether the continuous assessment is useful, 18 out of the 21 students in Jenny's class

thought that it facilitated their learning because it gave them an opportunity to "apply the things learnt in class," "help us understand practically," and "help improve students' understandings." In the focus group interview, H reported: "Yes, they are useful. We can practice. After we learn the knowledge, we can practice just after the teaching…. We can know the topic better." Y mentioned: "… I think the in-class assessments are quite useful, because we can apply the things Jenny have taught us immediately into the in-class assessment, and we can internalize more about the knowledge into our mind…" The survey and interview data indicate that the continuous assessment gave the students a chance to apply the writing knowledge learned from Jenny and enabled them to understand and internalize such knowledge better.

Having Dialogs with Teacher and Students During Continuous Assessment

The students reported that they had dialogs with their teacher and peers so that they could improve their work. The students were encouraged to seek teacher oral feedback during task performance if they had any questions. They appreciated the opportunities to do so because they could act on teacher feedback for further improvement. For example, Su stated:

> So maybe we can ask Jenny. It is important for us. Maybe we ask Jenny what is her standard and… maybe the correct direction of the assignment, maybe we can … find the way how to do the assignment, so we can step out the first step of the assignment.

C mentioned:

> I think asking help is more good in the in-class assessment, because when Jenny is teaching, we will feel confused and not clear about how to write maybe introduction, and during the in-class assessment, when we face some problems and we are confused, we can seek help immediately and improve.

The two quotes above indicate that the students were able to assume an active role in the process of continuous assessment by dialoging with Jenny to seek a clarification of her standard and a shared understanding of how to produce quality work to improve their performance.

The students were also given the freedom to choose whether they would like to work on an individual or group basis. They appreciated the chance to do the continuous assessment tasks with their peers. For example, M mentioned:

> I think I want to do it in group, as… sometimes they can give you some comments, and you can discuss with your friends, and … she may know something that you don't know, and she can provide some opinion for your work.

Y stated: "I think interactions are good because through interactions, we combine different minds together and what we think are more wider than one person, and through group interactions, the results are usually better than just one person doing the assessment." The two quotes above indicate that the students were given the opportunity during the performance of the continuous assessment task to interact and dialog with each other to provide peer feedback that was used to improve the quality of their work.

Being Able to Self-Evaluate After Continuous Assessment

The students mentioned that they were able to self-evaluate their work against the teacher-provided sample after performing the continuous assessment. Before each in-class assessment task, Jenny shared with the students the requirements for each task (e.g., the requirements for a good conclusion). After she marked the students' work, as part of her feedback she offered them a sample of a good answer and explained why it was good. She emphasized that it was only for her students' reference and that it was not the only good answer. St stated:

> Just like you need to rewrite the whole paragraph in around 25 words, and you don't know how to organize your words, so maybe you are thinking about it, and then after Jenny gave her version, and you can, oh, maybe I can just make a change like this, and what is my main problem.

This quote shows that St could identify his own problem in the rewriting task based on a comparison between his and Jenny's version. It also suggests that after being exposed to the productive strategies in Jenny's version, he realized that he could use similar ones to improve his work.

Being Motivated to Write After Doing Continuous Assessment

The students felt that they became more intrinsically motivated and confident to write after experiencing the in-class assessment. S mentioned: "I think with so many in-class practice I become more interested on writing, because it become a routine work to me, come to the lesson and then in class practice… yes, I have the motivation to write." N stated: "I think the in-class assessment gave me the confidence to write essay and … I like writing more, more than week one." The above quotes suggest that frequent in-class assessment can give students more motivation and confidence to write.

Suggesting the Use of Different Group Formations Across Different Tasks

The students also provided suggestions on the continuous assessment. A salient theme is that a different group formation should be used each time if the students choose to do the task as a group. For example, St pointed out:

> Maybe we can change our group mates every time. I think if you are working with a very good student, you didn't really pay much attention because you would think people would do it, and you can receive the same mark. So if you don't know … who your group mates are, maybe you are more serious about the task teacher gave you.

Discussion

This study has sought to investigate a group of Hong Kong students' perceptions of in-class continuous assessment in academic literacy instruction (i.e., their academic English writing classrooms) in an exam-oriented educational setting (i.e., Hong Kong). It has found that the students were aware of both the summative and formative aspects of this type of assessment.

Particularly, regarding the perceived formative aspect of the continuous assessment, the students reported that it helped them discover the things they need to know and promoted their learning of academic writing knowledge. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that continuous assessment was perceived to help improve students' learning (Holmes, 2015; Trotter, 2006).

In addition, the students pointed out that they had the opportunities to interact with their teacher and peers during task performance to

improve the quality of their work, that they self-evaluated their work after the continuous assessment based on a comparison between their own work and the teacher-provided sample, and that they had more motivation for and confidence in academic writing. These perceptions indicate that the continuous assessment tasks appeared to facilitate teacher and peer dialog around learning, to provide opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance, to facilitate the development of self-assessment in learning, and to encourage positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem. These salient themes reflect four of the seven principles of good formative assessment practices to facilitate learner self-regulation (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006) and suggest that the continuous assessment in the study had the potential to help the students to regulate aspects of their thinking, behavior, and motivation during their learning of academic writing, a part of academic literacy.

Taken together, the students' perceptions indicate that the continuous assessment combined both the summative and formative elements of assessment. On the one hand, it was perceived to serve the purpose of judging the students' course performance. On the other hand, it was perceived to facilitate their learning and self-regulation. In this sense, the summative continuous assessment was learning oriented (Carless, 2015) and reflected a synergy between summative and formative assessment.

However, it should be noted that the continuous assessment tasks alone cannot automatically realize the perceived dual functions of formative assessment (i.e., facilitating learning and learner self-regulation) or forge a synergy between the summative and formative functions of assessment in academic literacy instruction. It is the design and implementation of the tasks that afford such potential. The following principles regarding task design (principles 1 and 2) and implementation (principles 3, 4, and 5) can be inferred from the findings.

1. Relating continuous assessment tasks to the intended learning outcomes.

The students reported that the continuous assessment tasks enhanced their learning of academic writing knowledge. The writing knowledge learned was consistent with the intended learning outcomes of the course. In this sense, the continuous assessment facilitated the development of these outcomes. When both the continuous assessment and the major assignments were aligned with the intended learning outcomes of

the writing course, it can also be inferred that the students were likely to apply what they had learnt from doing the continuous assessment to the major assignments that required the manifestation of similar writing knowledge to improve their performance.

2. Incorporating frequent low-stakes continuous assessment tasks into a course.

The students said that they became more motivated and confident to write after experiencing the continuous assessment. A total of 10 low-stakes tasks were embedded into this course, and the students had to do each despite the rule that performance from only the best three would be counted. Including many low-stakes assessment tasks in a course is more likely to enhance motivation and self-esteem (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). This may be the reason why the students became more intrinsically motivated and confident to write. The students also stated that they were extrinsically motivated to obtain higher marks for future performance due to the rule of mark calculation. They were thus engaged to work consistently rather than on a one-off basis, a finding that is consistent with previous studies on continuous assessment (Holmes, 2015; Trotter, 2006). With the extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and confidence, the students were more likely to engage actively with the continuous assessment tasks (and possible other assessment tasks in the course) and to be committed to self-regulation of their learning of academic writing.

It has to be acknowledged that intrinsic motivation is generally considered to be more valuable than extrinsic motivation (Biggs, 1999). However, in college settings, students may understandably strive to obtain good grades (Harackiewicz, Barron, & Elliot, 1998), so both intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation seem to be necessary. This study shows that when continuous assessment tasks are low-stakes and frequent, they may provide both types of motivation to college students.

3. Embedding dialogic feedback into continuous assessment.

During task performance, the students were given opportunities to discuss with their teacher and peers to obtain a shared understanding of criteria for good work and/or how best to produce quality work so that they can use teacher or peer feedback for further improvement.

In this way, the continuous assessment incorporated a dialogic feedback process, which "involves iterative processes in which interpretations are shared, meaning negotiated and expectations clarified in order to promote student uptake of feedback" (Carless, 2015, p. 196). In turn, the students knew how to adjust their writing behaviors to improve their work. Adjusting future actions in response to feedback is a key condition of self-regulated learning (Butler & Winne, 1995). From a Vygotskian perspective, the teacher–student and student–student feedback dialogs engaged the teacher and her students in co-regulation, referring to "the temporary sharing or distributing of self-regulatory processes and thinking between a learner and a more capable other (peer or teacher), where the learner transitions toward self-regulatory practice" (Hadwin & Oshige, 2011, p. 249). Such co-regulation may in turn facilitate self-regulation because self-regulatory functioning and control may occur first on a social level and later are transferred from the social to the individual level (Vygotsky, 1978).

4. Clarifying requirements for successful task completion and providing sample work.

The students stated that they self-evaluated their work after the continuous assessment. Opportunities to conduct self-evaluation may help build self-regulatory capacities. Jenny not only explained the assessment criteria or requirements before task performance, but also provided and commented on a good example after it. Therefore, the students might have a better understanding of expected quality of good work to facilitate self-evaluation. The use of exemplars, in addition to descriptive statements, is a good way to develop a concept of quality (Carless, Chan, To, Lo, & Barrett, 2018; Sadler, 1989, 2010). Being exposed to exemplars addressed to the same task also expands students' repertoire of moves that they can use (Sadler, 1989), as illustrated by the student interviewee's opinion that he could "make a change like this" after self-evaluation.

5. Ensuring each student's active participation in group-based continuous assessment.

The students voiced the concern that they tended to rely on more capable students to do group-based tasks. In order to ensure each learner's active participation, teachers need to change group formation across

different continuous assessment tasks or to ask students to report the distribution of workload (e.g., in the form of percentages) after task performance. In this way, the formative potential of continuous assessment may be maximized for each student and a more positive relationship between its summative and formative elements may be created.

Conclusion

The study reported in the chapter involved only two small cohorts of students taught by one teacher, and its purpose has not been to generalize the findings. Nonetheless, the study has shown that the continuous assessment was perceived to be both summative and formative and was viewed positively in relation to the students' learning of academic English writing and learner self-regulation. Based on students' perceptions, it has provided principles regarding the design and implementation of continuous assessment to build a fruitful relationship between its summative and formative elements in academic literacy instruction in an exam-oriented setting like Hong Kong. Teachers in similar contexts may find the principles relevant. This study, with its purpose of exploring students' perceptions, was limited in the sense that it mainly relied on students' self-reported data. Future research may investigate the impact of continuous assessment tasks on students' development of academic literacy and self-evaluative capacities by utilizing both self-reported and other data sources.

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CHAPTER 17

A Longitudinal Study of Second Language Literacy Instruction Through Assignment Design at the University of Macau

Alice Shu-Ju Lee

Background

In the special administrative region of Macau, second language (L2) literacy is a complicated matter, to say the least. While Hong Kong advocates biliteracy (Chinese and English) and trilingualism (English, Cantonese, and Putonghua) and appears to have a systematic methodology to its implementation, at least in its secondary schools (Wang & Kirkpatrick, 2015), the same cannot be said for Macau.

To better understand L2 literacy instruction for students at the University of Macau, the context for how these students come to attend the university should be introduced. According to the Macau Government's Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (2017), the instructional languages available to non-tertiary students include Chinese (Cantonese), Portuguese, and English, with the vast majority of students receiving their education in Chinese. In these Chinese and Portuguese

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medium schools, English is learned as a foreign language. However, the Catholic and international schools use English as their medium of instruction. The students accepted into the University of Macau are overwhelmingly comprised of students who have graduated from secondary schools in Macau, i.e., students who have received their education in Chinese, English, or Portuguese.

The University of Macau is the only tertiary institution in Macau that offers a bachelor's degree in education training pre-service English language teachers, and in the 2011/2012 academic year, the university implemented its planned general education (GE) curriculum reform. As a result of this undergraduate program reform, the English Education major program removed 36 credits from its program to accommodate the in-coming GE courses (M. Wong, personal communication, July 4, 2017). Included in the removed courses were 24 credits or eight semesters' worth of practical English courses whose purpose was to improve the accuracy and fluency of the English Education major students. These mandatory English improvement courses, designed to be taken one course at a time every semester over a period of four years (unless students placed out of the courses based on proficiency), were replaced by 6 credits of English language courses to be taken by all undergraduates under the GE umbrella program (University of Macau, 2011). In other words, eight semester-long courses were reduced to two.

The eight practical English language courses served the purposes of advancing the basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) of the English Education major students (Cummins, 2008). First, courses 1 through 4 were designed to train students on their conversational fluency (University of Macau, 2010). Because the English Education students—who came from both English medium and Chinese medium secondary schools—did not have similar English language proficiency levels upon entry to the university, the first four courses aimed to develop the interpersonal language aspects of students with lower proficiency (M. Wong, personal communication, July 4, 2017). Second, courses 5 through 8 aimed to advance the students' academic language skills (University of Macau, 2010). The English Education students were required to write academic papers and do discussion work in their major courses in English, so the last four courses in the eight practical English language courses provided the academic skills support these students needed.

L2 Literacy Instruction, Pre- and Post-general Education Reform

The eight English language courses before the GE curriculum overhaul were underpinned by a more cognitive understanding of literacy in their focus on helping students acquire academic reading and writing skills as separate skills. The assessment designs—which employed reading examinations and academic essay writing—reflected this cognitive interpretation. After the undergraduate curriculum revision, a different set of intended learning outcomes was created to address the English language learning needs of undergraduates from various majors. Although the number of English courses was reduced for English Education majors, the curriculum revision provided an opportunity to review and revise the learning goals of these English courses. Specifically, a sociocultural interpretation of literacies worked its way into the intended learning outcomes of the revised courses to allow students to practice more application of skills rather than the demonstration of skills.

Literacy from a Sociocultural Perspective

From a sociocultural perspective, literacy is defined as a set of social practices performed by people who want to accomplish certain tasks and not as a cognitive skill (Gee, 2006). In more detail, Gee describes literacy as "control of secondary uses of language (i.e., uses of language in secondary discourses)" (p. 35). To him, language used in secondary institutions constitute secondary discourses, and Gee defines secondary institutions as "social institutions beyond the family" (p. 35). Although examples of these types of institutions are too many to name, the main focus of Gee's definition of literacy is on the skill of *situated doing* rather than on the skill of *knowing*. While Gee still conceptualizes literacy as reading and writing, emphasis is placed on how these skills are put to use in various social situations, particularly in secondary institutions, some of which include schools and businesses. Because the concept of literacy is recast from a type of knowledge into some type of action that takes place as a result of such knowledge, scholars such as Gee argue that literacy should be presented as *literacies*.

Perhaps no other scholar has arguably had more influence on second language assessment than Lado (1961). His seminal work influenced the way language competence was assessed for decades. Underpinned by structuralism and based on a cognitive understanding of literacy,

skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking were assessed separately. Much of this tradition was in place in the established course outlines for the language improvement courses for the pre-service English Education students at UM. Challenging the notion that language skills can be learned in isolation, the New Literacy Studies (NLS), as Gee (2015) explains, contended literacies should focus more on application rather than cognition. From the NLS perspective of literacies, L2 literacy instruction and hence assessment should ideally take into account not only *doing school* (for academic purposes) but also preparing the students for other types of English literacies events they may encounter in their future careers. Within UM, the GE curriculum revision offered an opportunity to bring in both a sociocultural perspective of literacies and a different means of assessing student literacies so that the focus was more on *situated doing* rather than *doing school.*

The purpose of this longitudinal study is twofold: (1) to review one instructor's cognitive literacy instruction, along with how students reacted to such instruction, for seven years before the GE curriculum revision, and (2) to discuss the sociocultural changes that occurred to the courses after the GE curriculum revision. Using corpus linguistics methods for such a comparison allows for a global reflection of the impact of these English courses on student learning.

L2 Literacy Instruction Before GE Reform

Before 2011, the practical English courses were designed to help English Education students enter the academic discourse community. As such, course assignments mostly focused on the discrete skills of academic reading, writing, and speaking. Sample assessment types co-designed by the author, one of several who taught the course, included academic essays, reading tests, reading responses, academic presentations, and small group discussions. Besides these assessments, one small-scale project-based learning (PBL) assignment was introduced to students immediately before the GE curriculum reform, and this PBL assignment served as a pilot project. On the whole, however, most of the assignments before the reform could be considered to be the more traditionally oriented assessment types whereby skills were evaluated separately.

Take the reading response assignment co-created by the author for the course as an example. From the course outline descriptions, this assignment asked students to complete two tasks: (1) apply the reading skills they had learned in their reading textbook and (2) synthesize

the information they had gathered into a presentation format. The assignment was designed to extend the reading skills from the textbook, often learned out of context, to real-world experiences that students may have. Although aspects of Bloom's (1956) taxonomy such as synthesis were incorporated into the assignment design, the assessment for each task type nonetheless focused on singular skills. That is, students read articles, made decisions on which parts of the readings they wanted to synthesize, and then created presentations to share their ideas—all on their own and without much interaction with others during the process of producing these materials. To complete the reading response task, students applied their reading, writing, and speaking skills in a compartmentalized and segmented manner. Because students applied their language skills in a discrete manner, it can thus be argued that assignments such as reading responses align more closely with the cognitive understanding of literacy. In other words, students used these discrete skills because the assignment called specifically for the use of these skills. Without the context to make the reading information meaningful, students were basically *doing school* in the sense that they were performing tasks created in academia for a classroom audience.

Using a Corpus to Review Course Materials and Student Feedback

Besides these specific examples of the reading responses, a global review of instructor-created materials during the pre-GE era can help provide an overview of the types of literacy instruction provided to the English Education majors. Although by no means comprehensive, using corpus linguistic methods to analyze the frequency count of a course instructor's materials can lend further support to content analysis of data sources such as assignment descriptions. A frequency count may not offer evidence to support a claim of the types of literacy instruction given to students; however, a frequency count does give an indication of the words and ideas emphasized to students through repetition of these concepts in materials used for instructional means (Hunston, 2002). Corpus can be used as a tool for instructors to reflect on their own teaching practices by reviewing a large volume of their own instructional materials. As in this longitudinal case, a corpus of instructor-created materials allows a global view of the types of ideas emphasized to students over time. For this study, instructor-created materials including course outlines, assignment descriptions and instructions, and assignment rubrics were used to generate a specific corpus for the English courses taught by the instructor.

Table 17.1 Word frequency for instructor-generated materials, pre-GE and post-GE

Number	*Pre-GE Word*	*Count*	*Weighted percentage*	*Post-GE word*	*Count*	*Weighted percentage*
1	using	669	0.88	use	528	1.34
2	reads	524	0.69	writing	435	1.10
3	group	446	0.59	group	375	0.95
4	sentence	406	0.53	discussion	350	0.89
5	audience	394	0.52	assignments	294	0.74
6	students	391	0.51	informed	279	0.71
7	clearly	366	0.48	presentation	277	0.70
8	ideas	340	0.45	article	252	0.64
9	one	335	0.44	following	248	0.63
10	topic	333	0.44	learning	248	0.63
11	presenters	328	0.43	topic	247	0.63
12	informative	319	0.42	working	233	0.59
13	speech	311	0.41	writer	233	0.59
14	following	308	0.40	includes	225	0.57
15	discussion	293	0.39	course	221	0.56
16	questions	282	0.37	audience	219	0.55
17	timing	282	0.37	project	218	0.55
18	point	279	0.37	academic	208	0.53
19	podcast	267	0.35	bibliography	206	0.52
20	paragraph	261	0.34	appropriate	198	0.50

Another corpus was generated for student-created materials including course evaluations and reflections.

Using QSR International's (2016) NVivo 11 software, a frequency count at the stemmed-word level (i.e., instead of only counting the word *write*, words such as *writing* and *written* would be included in the same word group) was conducted. Table 17.1 presents the 20 most frequently used content words that appeared in the instructor-generated materials, pre- and post-GE. Worth noting from the pre-GE section of the table (from 2004 to 2011) are the words one might find in a traditional academic curriculum focusing on writing literacy instruction. For example, the words *reads, sentence, audience, clearly, ideas, topic, informative, point*, and *paragraph* are commonly found in academically oriented reading and writing courses. As one might expect students to learn about different facets of writing from idea communication to paragraph control and sentential correctness in a writing course, it would be difficult

to teach these ideas without using these words. The high frequency of these words in instructor-generated materials before GE reform does not necessarily mean that the courses were exclusively focused on writing instruction. It should be noted that Table 17.1 also shows words that are less commonly found in academic reading and writing courses, including *group, presenters, speech, discussion*, and *podcast*. The presence and relative frequency of these words allow one to infer that the instructor included instruction and assignments involving various types of speaking. Overall, the high usage rate of words commonly associated with a writing-focused curriculum is a logical conclusion to make based on the results in Table 17.1.

Regardless of the inclusion of speaking-related activities in the instructor-generated materials for these practical English courses, the types of words present indicate alignment with a cognitive interpretation of literacy instruction. This approach focuses on the mental—rather than the social and interactional—aspects of literacy. Specifically, the words *reads, sentence, ideas, topic*, and *paragraph* conjure up images of students doing the mental work of essay writing. The instructor hopes that students may read to get some background information and then prepare some type of reaction or response to the reading. The heavy emphasis on writing-related words suggests that students should focus on writing as a discrete skill, which is not to claim that writing as a discrete skill should be neglected. What the data from Table 17.1 suggest is that if there is only an emphasis on writing as a discrete skill, students are not experiencing writing as part of a more meaningful activity that can only come when writing is embedded within larger tasks. The specific differences between the pre-GE and post-GE results will be discussed in a later section.

Besides instructional materials, it is worthwhile to review student perceptions of the English courses during the same time period from 2004 to 2011. The two methods used for the review include (1) the creation of a corpus using student course evaluations and reflections and (2) content analysis of the reflections themselves. Table 17.2 presents the 20 most frequently used content words from these student materials. Interestingly, in the pre-GE era, students mentioned words such as *good, helps*, and *well*, all words with positive attributes. They also included the words *groups, discussion, projects, members*, and *speech*. While these words are by no means a sign that the students thought positively of their assignments, the frequency count can indicate the types of assignments they remembered to reflect upon and evaluate. The student materials

Table 17.2 Word frequency for student-generated reflections and evaluations, pre-GE and post-GE

Number	*Pre-GE word*	*Count*	*Weighted percentage*	*Post-GE word*	*Count*	*Weighted percentage*
1	works	621	1.37	groups	2970	3.01
2	good	571	1.26	person	2434	2.47
3	groups	568	1.25	pifp[a]	2007	2.03
4	thinks	503	1.11	members	2004	2.03
5	also	500	1.10	assignments	1694	1.72
6	timing	494	1.09	complete	1534	1.55
7	helps	467	1.03	form	1495	1.51
8	ideas	421	0.93	presenting	1401	1.42
9	students	392	0.86	implementation	1344	1.36
10	lot	378	0.83	times	1094	1.11
11	discussion	371	0.82	name	944	0.96
12	using	336	0.74	works	939	0.95
13	projects	334	0.74	evaluation	909	0.92
14	giving	334	0.74	learning	908	0.92
15	always	324	0.71	one	879	0.89
16	well	322	0.71	activity	806	0.82
17	making	314	0.69	thinking	792	0.80
18	members	292	0.64	comments	757	0.77
19	speech	287	0.63	participation	753	0.76
20	parts	276	0.61	helps	691	0.70

[a]pifp is short for Pay It Forward Project

corpus reveals that the students wrote about their group members and project experiences, rather than about their essays or reading responses. Incidentally, *read* was the 90th most frequent content word used, and *essay* was the 941st most frequent content word. These two words are more closely associated with a traditional academic reading and writing course, and that they appear so far down on a frequency list suggests that students may not have found anything memorable upon which to evaluate or reflect for these types of assignments.

Because the content of student course evaluations differs in nature with their course reflections, a closer interrogation of the reflections through content analysis can reveal insights not obtainable with a word frequency list. At the end of each semester, students are asked to reflect on the improvements they have made on their own learning and the goals they have yet to achieve. By reviewing these student reflections for

the same seven-year period, it is easier to see how students judged their own learning. These student reflections were read and coded for their general content.

Interestingly, these student reflections contained evaluations of the students' English ability. First, the students most often placed themselves in a position of low language proficiency. From this position of weakness, they wrote about the need to improve their four skills and vocabulary. Second, students tended to discuss their language competence in relation to these four skills and vocabulary. They rarely mentioned their need to integrate their skills or their need to complement their skill development with pragmatics. Third, some students recognized the importance of the meta-skills of pragmatics and critical thinking that are fundamental to their language competence development, yet they reverted to referring to the four skills and vocabulary when they discussed their plans for improvement.

In the pre-GE reform era, data from both the instructor-generated materials and student evaluations and reflections revealed a consistency and alignment with a traditional academic curriculum. This curriculum focused on literacy instruction via discrete skills of mostly reading and writing with some interspersed speaking tasks. Although the course materials tipped toward reading and writing, students used more words to discuss speaking and group work-related tasks. Only by reviewing students' learning reflections in detail was it possible to find out what they thought of their own literacy acquisition.

Small Innovations in the Pre-GE Era

Within the confines of the stipulated course outcomes in the pre-GE era, the course instructor implemented a small project-based assignment in 2010, one year before UM's GE reform, to foster transferrable twenty-first-century skills such as collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. A project-based assignment was included in the fourth series of the practical English courses. Bell (2010) posits that students who engage in PBL often learn to collaborate with others and are better organized. PBL gives students more freedom to explore topics of their own interest with the instructor serving more as a facilitator of the students' learning. It also calls on students to learn how to work together to create materials that have real-world applications. Students who are allowed to choose their own projects, Bell argues, are more likely to perform better because

choice often leads to ownership, and ownership can drive the students' motivation for deeper learning.

The challenge for the course instructor was to create a PBL task that the English Education students could use in their future teaching career. Book Builder was an experimental PBL task given to these students taking their last of eight total practical English courses. From the course outline, the project's aims were threefold: to enable students to learn in a collaborative manner, to provide opportunities for reflective learning to take place, and to produce materials with real-world applications for a real-world audience. An added bonus was that Book Builder (http://bookbuilder.cast.org), a site that allowed users to create and publish e-books, involved technology. The project, described in further detail in Lee (2014), placed the focus not only on the students' ability to read and write, but also on their ability to adapt their reading and writing skills to meet the language learning needs of an audience not of their peers but of their future students. In other words, the project asked that students consider much more carefully their rhetorical situation—purpose, audience, and subject (Bitzer, 1968)—because their creations would be read and reacted to by real people. The purpose of this type of multi-dimensional dialogic activity, where students negotiate their project ideas with each other and consider the needs of their future students, allowed application, rather than demonstration, of the students' literacies.

In class, students used English to brainstorm ideas, divide workload, and solve problems as they occurred. Out of class, they read the available sample books on Book Builder for inspiration on the types of stories they should create. To incorporate some basic pre-, while-, and post-reading activities and exercises into their e-book, students applied the knowledge they learned in their content courses. The project ended with students introducing their e-books and reflecting on their experience.

Results from a student survey conducted after the project was completed revealed several insights relating to literacies as well as twenty-first-century skills (Lee, 2014). On the literacies front, students felt that they understood how to address the rhetorical situation better in writing. Although respondents gave a comparatively lower score on the question of whether they felt that their English improved, they suggested that the project allowed them to synthesize their speaking, reading, listening, and writing skills. On the twenty-first-century skills end, students reported that they enjoyed their collaboration experience and

wished to recommend the experience to other students. They also rated this particular collaboration more positively when compared to their prior group work experiences. Respondents gave comments suggesting that they enjoyed solving problems together when they encountered challenges.

Although this was a small-scale study involving only one class and one project, it can nonetheless provide clues as to how practical English courses can move beyond a cognitive interpretation of literacy to a sociocultural understanding. In terms of literacies instruction, Street (2009) showed that the definition of competence in writing cannot be confined to surface-level knowledge such as grammar, vocabulary, and organization. Rather, "literate practice is a dialogic activity in which the reader or author is always in conversation with another" (Moje, Luke, Davies, & Street, 2009, p. 434). Through the Book Builder PBL, students were provided with an opportunity to practice such a dialogic activity not only with their peers but also with future readers of their work beyond the ivory towers. The Book Builder PBL attempted to bring more meaning into students' production of writing by moving students toward *situated doing*.

Despite the small innovations to incorporate more authenticity into course assessment and move it toward a NLS perspective of literacies, assessment design in the pre-GE era for these courses at UM remained solidly entrenched in the traditional interpretation of literacy instruction. Focusing on singular and discrete skills such as reading and writing, students mostly practiced *doing school* rather than the preferred *situated doing* espoused by NLS. The next section of the chapter discusses how one instructor's course and assessment design changed to incorporate a general education mission as well as how students responded to these changes.

L2 Literacy Instruction After GE Reform

As a result of the undergraduate GE curriculum overhaul, not only was the number of English courses reduced for the English Education majors but also the GE-era English courses were enrolled by students from various majors. No longer only taken by English Education majors, the practical English courses had to cater to a new student population with diverse interests and academic disciplines. As such, the course descriptions and intended learning outcomes were revised to focus on the university's broad aims of providing students with opportunities

for interdisciplinary learning, critical thinking, and social responsibility (University of Macau, 2011). The university's dictum signaled a desire to change how classes were being conducted and presented an opportunity to align the English courses with a more sociocultural perspective of literacies and of *situated doing*. The revamped courses would continue to focus on English for Academic Purposes, but they would also incorporate projects that encouraged critical thinking as well as explorations of the rhetorical situation.

An example of one such project, which incorporated the university's GE goals of social responsibility and critical thinking, was inspired by Catherine Ryan Hyde's *Pay It Forward* novel and carried out in 2011. Integrating aspects of writing for specific purposes, competition, and real-world project implementation and reflection, the Pay It Forward project spanned an entire semester. Students began by observing their everyday milieu and asking themselves if what they saw made sense. In groups, they decided on a specific problem they had noticed from their observations and researched possible solutions to these problems. Groups pitched their solutions to a live audience and competed for votes. The top vote-getters moved to the stage of implementing their solutions while the non-winning group members were integrated into the winning groups. After the solution implementation stage, everyone in class reflected upon their experiences in a group discussion.

Because of the variety of activities included in this project, students had to engage deeply with the rhetorical situation to address a real audience. Whether they were writing their proposals or presenting their solutions, real people within the university environment evaluated their work. Once students moved into the implementation stage, people outside of the ivory towers evaluated the practicality, impact, and creativity of their solution by giving them immediate feedback. When the students returned to the classroom for reflection, they had real experiences and concrete feelings to share. According to Gee (2015), "People do not just read and write texts; they *do* things with them, things that often involve more than just reading and writing. They do them with other people" (p. 36). In this semester-long project, students thought about how language should be used to achieve the purposes they wanted to achieve, they manipulated language differently for different audiences, and they selected different genres to maximize the effect of their messages. In other words, the students were engaged in the social practice of literacies rather than the cognitive practice of literacy.

Referring back to Table 17.1, it is interesting to note the contrast before (from 2004 to 2011) and after (from 2011 to 2015) GE implementation for the instructor-generated data. The emphasis of the list remains academic, with words such as *writing*, *assignment*, *article*, *topic*, *writer*, *audience*, *academic*, and *bibliography* in the list of 20 most frequently used content words. However, comparing the post-GE section of the table with the pre-GE section, the emphasis has more clearly shifted from local aspects to global aspects of writing. For instance, in the pre-GE reform era, the words *reads*, *sentence*, *ideas*, *topic*, and *paragraph* focus mostly on the sentential level. In the post-GE reform instructor data, words such as *assignment*, *article*, *audience*, and *academic* focus more on a broader understanding of reading and writing. Oracy remains on the list, with words such as *group*, *discussion*, and *presentation*. The word *project* supports the number of times the Pay It Forward project was mentioned. It is perhaps not surprising that the data from the instructor-generated materials do not vary too greatly from the academic realm. After all, the instructor still needs to achieve the intended learning outcomes dictated across all sections of each course. However, a move away from addressing the local issues of writing can clearly be seen in the differences between the two lists.

On the students' end, Table 17.2 shows a substantive change in their lexicon when comparing their post-GE list to their pre-GE list. Not only do they refer to their group work, with words such as *groups* and *members*, but they also include words typically used in projects. Those words are: *complete*, *presenting*, *implementation*, *times*, *evaluation*, *activity*, and *participation*. The word *pifp* (referring to the Pay It Forward project) is the third most frequently used on the list. Overall, these post-GE reform words differ drastically from the words the students used in the pre-GE reform era. While students discuss group work and speaking aspects of the course far more than the other aspects on both lists, the students' post-GE era list encompasses many more project-oriented words. In other words, the post-GE list focuses on projects as a whole, which means that the language aspects of the course are embedded within their evaluation. Instead of foregrounding individual and discrete skills, the post-GE list revolves around activities that need to happen to achieve a task. The post-GE list shows students not thinking about English, but rather using English to achieve their goals.

Thus, while a frequency count cannot provide conclusive evidence of the types of literacy events with which the students engaged, it can serve

as supporting evidence that the students chose to reflect on and evaluate these events over other activities conducted in class. The students' focus on project-oriented lexicon moves them away from thinking about English itself as a literacy event and toward activity-based events that require the use of English to complete. Instead of learning English for its own sake, it can be argued that English becomes a conduit through which larger group goals are accomplished. In other words, students are pushed toward *situated doing*.

Like the pre-GE reform data, the post-GE reform era student course reflections were interrogated separately from their course evaluations to enable a closer view of their learning progress. Despite the differences shown in Table 17.2, students for the most part discussed the development of their discrete language skills when they reflected on their own learning progress. While their reflections included more group project work because the project occupied a sizable portion of the course, students only sometimes mentioned the value of collaboration. Instead, their reflections largely continued the trend of discussing their language competence development in terms of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and vocabulary. In this aspect, there was no discernible difference with the pre-GE students. The data used in this study do not allow for further speculation as to why students continued this trend of seeing their literacies development in terms of discrete skills. However, it is possible that students' prior educational experiences in their secondary schools emphasized skill-specific knowledge, as one Chinese medium secondary school teacher attested (V. Lam, personal communication, August 2, 2018). If students are more accustomed to discussing their language development progress in terms of discrete skill development, it would be easier for them to continue to refer to their progress using these familiar terms.

Concluding Remarks

From this decade-long review of the two sets of practical English language courses at the University of Macau, several practical teaching suggestions can be made. On a curriculum development level, instructors should consider activities and assignments that involve more *situated doing* rather than language knowledge development. Assignments that help students apply language in different circumstances encourage them to think deeper about their rhetorical situation and develop their critical

thinking skills. The language students choose to use for the different situations presented to them take on more meaning than the typical and perhaps bland academic essays and presentations. As teachers prepare their students for the twenty-first century, it is no longer sufficient to train students on L2 literacy only. Teachers must incorporate the skill sets valued in the twenty-first century into their curriculum so that students can be adequately prepared for their future careers.

Especially relevant from the NLS perspective of literacies instruction is the fact that most of the pre-service students in the B.Ed. program become in-service teachers in Macau's secondary schools. The more these pre-service teachers engage with PBL, the more opportunities they will have to see the inherent value of using language rather than knowing language. Positive experiences with PBL may encourage these eventual in-service teachers to introduce aspects of PBL into their own teaching. Curriculum reform to move toward a sociocultural perspective of literacies is a long and arduous road in L2 literacies acquisition, but it can start with the inclusion of PBL-associated tasks in pre-service teacher training programs.

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PART V

Education Policy Towards English Literacy Instruction

CHAPTER 18

Language Tug-of-War: When English Literacy Education Encounters the National Matriculation English Test Policy in Mainland China

Fang He and Mark Feng Teng

Introduction

In China, great advancements in various fields have brought opportunities and challenges to the development of education. As a core subject, the assessment of English has been adjusted several times in terms of content and question types, thus meeting university admission requirements and reforms of high school English literacy education. Very recently, a National People's Congress (NPC) member proposed that the National Matriculation English Test (NMET) should be canceled (Xinhua News, 2017). It has been argued that Chinese students have spent too much

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time and energy learning English, after which they have failed to use this language well even after more than ten years of learning (Teng, 2018). Being inseparable from national political orientation, the National Matriculation English Test (NMET) policy has introduced both challenges and opportunities to English education at the secondary level.

English was once promoted as being essential to the modernization of China by policy makers as China grew into a multilingual country since its opening-up in the 1970s (Lam, 2002). What may occur to NMET policy has aroused significant influence on the whole education system in China, as students across the country participate in different training centers aiming for an advantage in English learning (Wei & Su, 2012). The popularity of English in China indicates that in addition to policy makers, other stakeholders, including teachers and students, should be involved in NMET policy making (Kaplan, Baldauf & Kamwangamalu, 2011; Muthanna & Sang, 2016). For instance, students' perceptions should count as they are the NMET takers. In addition, teachers' perceptions of the NMET reform also matter as they are the course planners and implementers. Given the lack of studies related to this, this chapter focused on the impact of NMET reform on teaching and learning English in mainland China. The present study attempted to address the following research questions: (1) What are teachers' and learners' perceptions toward the NMET policy reform? (2) How does the NMET policy reform affect English literacy teaching and learning in mainland China?

English Literacy Education at the Secondary Level in Mainland China

The term "literacy," one of the key educational objectives of compulsory schooling, is generally defined as the ability to read and write to an appropriate level of fluency (Teng, 2019). Before the 1980s, according to the National Literacy Strategy, English literacy teaching focused more on intensive learning and grammatical structure of this language (Li, 1990) while less emphasis was placed on the linguistic competence (namely, speaking, listening, reading, and writing), not to mention communicative skills (Harvey, 1985). Entering the year 2000, two official documents, English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (MOE, 2011) and Full-time Compulsory Education Standard of English Course for Senior Middle School (Experimental Draft) (MOE, 2007),

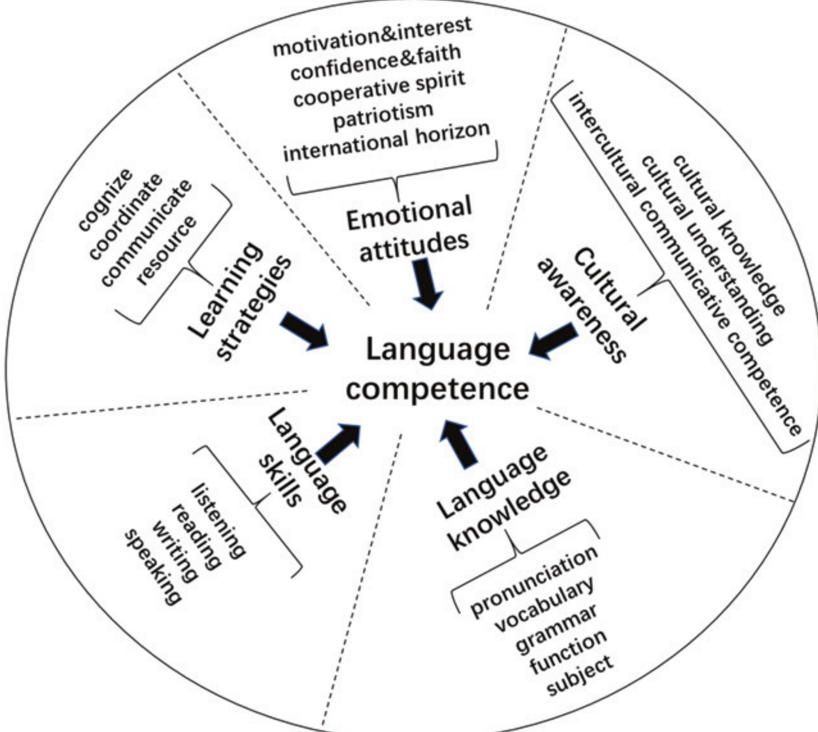

Fig. 18.1 English education scope at the secondary school level

depict a vivid picture of English literacy education at the secondary level (hereafter named as the Standards). As stipulated by the MOE (2011), the fundamental English literacy education scope at the secondary level mainly focuses on language competence (see Fig. 18.1, translated by the authors).

Understood from the figure, the general goal of an English course at the secondary level is to develop the learner's competence to comprehensively apply the language based on the overall development of language skills, language knowledge, emotional attitudes, learning strategies, and cultural awareness. Moreover, language competence is rated in nine levels stipulated in the Standards, with level 1 at the top and level 9 at the bottom (see Fig. 18.2). Different academic grades have differently specific

Level	Description of teaching objective
Level 1	The students are able to do something under the teacher's command in simple English, including playing games, colorizing, role play, and understanding short English stories with the help of pictures....
Level 2	The students are able to do some communicative activities about daily life, including greetings, sharing family members or friends' information; understand and tell a simple English story with the help of pictures; sing English songs....
Level 3	The students are able to understand some paragraphs about familiar topics or brief stories by listening, oral communication or in written form; describe something in simple English ....
Level 4	The students are able to understand dialogues stories about daily life; describe one's own or other's experience and express one's own opinions in simple English; comprehend short passages of general literary forms or corresponding articles from English papers....
Level 5	The students are able to understand familiar topics by listening and participating in discussions; communicate with others and express one's own ideas; obtain the general information of corresponding reading materials, newspapers and articles despite the new words; adopt some reading strategies; write a short passage based on the given outline; cooperate with others to finish learning tasks....
Level 6	The students are able to understand an idea conveyed in oral or written materials and express one's own opinions; effectively describe one's personal experiences in oral or written form; plan and implement learning activities with the help of teachers....
Level 7	The students are able to raise questions and elaborate on one's own opinions and suggestions; comprehend simplified versions of original English readings and newspapers; write some practical short passages (e.g. letter of invitation); plan and participate in some language-related field activities under the teachers' guidance....
Level 8	The students are able to have brief communications with native English speakers; elaborate on some evaluative opinions; write cohesively, well-structured, short essays; autonomously plan and implement various practical language activities....
Level 9	The students are able to independently and autonomously plan and implement learning activities; acquire general ideas of familiar topics in speech, discussion, debate or report; elaborate on one's own opinions in English about the problems that people all over the world are concerned about (e.g., environment problems); grasp every possible moment in real life situations to communicate in English; widely read science essays and literary works with the help of a dictionary....

Fig. 18.2 The goal of language competence rated in nine levels (adapted and translated by the authors)

curricula to help the students achieve English literacy education at the stipulated level, and the learners are supposed to achieve level 8 upon senior middle school graduation (the time to take NMET). The NMET

Syllabus for the Year 2018 revealed the goal of assessing a learner's language competence in listening, reading, writing, and speaking, while being consistent with the general scope of English education at the secondary level (National Education Examination Authority [NEEA], 2017).

Snapshot of the NMET Policy

This section delineates the reform of the NMET policy. As a core subject of Gaokao (National Higher Education Entrance Examination), NMET is the college entrance English exam administered in the People's Republic of China, aiming to assess the Gaokao candidates' English language ability. On the road to better meet the demand of Gaokao reform and conform to the purpose of English education, the NMET has undergone ten tremendous revolutionary reforms in terms of question type, test format, number of questions as well as the weight given to English scores as one part of the Gaokao (Liu, 2017).

In 1977, when the MOE announced the renewal of the Gaokao, only candidates who selected English as a major were required to take the English test (named as the NMET afterward). At that time, the exam paper was stipulated by provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities. In 1978, question types were nationally designed and standardized, but the score was not counted as part of the total Gaokao score and only served as a reference. In 1979, the MOE announced that English language scores would gradually be counted in the total Gaokao points. However, given the actual English learning and teaching circumstances at the time, only 10% of the English scores were added to the Gaokao total points. The proportion changed to 30% in 1980, 50% in 1981, 70% in 1982, and 100% in 1983. In 1985, the national university entrance English test was renamed the Matriculation English Test (MET), implemented, respectively, in provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities and gradually unified throughout the entire country by 1992. By then, it was formally named the National Matriculation English Test (NMET).

Due to economic development and increasing need for English professionals, the MOE changed marks of the English test to 150 points and English language competence began to be the main focus of assessment in 1991. From 1996 to 1999, importance was attached to candidates' oral expression ability for the NMET. In 2000, listening comprehension became part of the NMET. However, it took time to be completely implemented throughout the entire country and the year 2012 marked the use of the last NMET without a listening comprehension section. The reduction of students' burden to study English was a response to a

rising need for Chinese learning; the Beijing Municipal Commission of Education delineated in 2013 that the NMET marks would be decreased from 150 to 100 starting in 2016. Students could also take the English test twice a year, and the highest score would be included in their total Gaokao score. At the same time, students' scores in first-language learning (Chinese) were adjusted from 150 to 180 points. After encountering fierce public opposition, in 2014, it was decided that the testing marks of Chinese, mathematics, and English would remain the same as before. Thus, since 2017, the testing marks of all three subjects—English, mathematics, and Chinese—have equally been set at 150 points across China. In June 2018, nearly 9.75 million senior high school students took part in NMET of the 2018 Gaokao (Sohu Education, 2018).

The changes in the weight of English in total Gaokao points have reflected the official mindset toward English teaching and learning in China, revealing the prevailing inclination of the education administration system, as English teaching has experienced alternating stages of being emphasized, then deemphasized, and finally reemphasized (Liu, 2016). The reforms of the test contents demonstrated the views of English education held by the policy makers. Changing it from a reference item to a compulsory course in the national college entrance examination confirmed the gradual increase in the position and function of English in China's national education. However, the aim of effective language teaching in practice cannot be fulfilled by simply increasing or decreasing marks. Whether NMET policy reflects the requirement of the secondary English education syllabus is still an open question.

NMET Policy Reform and Social Development

As language education is considered a possible threat to the integrity of the country (Adamson, 2002), it is natural for the policy makers to think carefully when it comes to foreign language education. The history of English education in China has been controversial, and the MOE has been attaching great emphasis to NMET reform. Official evidence of language education reform can be found in the speech given by state councillor Liu (Liu, 2011) in honor of the 10th anniversary of the National General Language Law. The following is a translated excerpt from the speech:

> For foreign language learning and use, it should be obvious that it is a necessity to strengthen contacts and exchanges with the rest of the

> world; it is also essential to learn advanced science and technology and to absorb the achievements of human civilization. However, regarding the one-sided emphasis on foreign language learning and improper use of foreign languages—especially the phenomenon of neglecting or weakening the learning and use of the mother tongue—necessary corrections should be made. (Liu, 2011, Translated by the authors)

Such statements have acted as two sides of the same coin. The speech could be used as a politically effective weapon for those either advocating English education or calling for reducing the weight of English learning. The choice of a suitable model of bilingual education (Zheng, 2014) arguably appears to be the primary educational issue confronting China today, and it is an issue that the Chinese government needs to deal with. In the era of globalization, *the One Belt, One Road initiative* urged many Chinese provinces to establish close economic ties with worldwide regions. As the new framework of China's neighborhood policy, *One Belt, One Road* emphasizes openness, bilingual education would be a feasible solution as language policy would be influenced by the complex array of historical, cultural-political, social-economic, and practical factors (Bolton & Graddol, 2012; Guo, 2012). However, it seems also to be an open question as to whether NMET policy reformers have considered the balance of bilingual education.

Methodology

Participants

Five English teachers and eleven students participated in this study in one senior high school in Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. This is a government school. It is a prestigious and well-equipped senior high school. Expressions of interest to participate in the research were illustrated prior to the study. All the students were those who showed willingness to take part in the study, and their consents were obtained. Of the eleven students aged 15 to 18, two were from the first-year class, four second-year, and five third-year. They began to learn English from grade three in primary school, though their English learning experiences as children were mostly in various training centers. Five English teachers also volunteered to take part in this study. All were

certified English teachers, each with a master's degree; three of them had normal university education backgrounds, while one had an overseas education experience. All of them had at least three years teaching experience.

Data Collection

In addition to related document analysis, the current study also included interviews. The interviews were designed to explore the attitudes of the students toward English study, NMET, and their views on the three core subjects of Gaokao. As for the English teachers, their involvement with and perceptions of NMET policy and English teaching were probed. For smooth communication, Mandarin Chinese was the language used in the interviews. Upon consent, the first author took notes while communicating with the participants. Each interview lasted about 40–60 minutes. Some sample questions used during the interviews are listed in the Appendix.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was conducted to analyze the data. First, iterative reading of the transcripts was conducted by the authors to gain a general understanding. More specifically, we paid particular attention to the content related to the participants' perception of NMET policy, the way they learn or teach English, and factors that influence their learning or teaching. Categories were established and used to code the data. Overall, the data analysis process was recursive and repetitive so as to reveal the findings that best help answer the research questions of the present study. Further, the draft of data interpretations was read and commented on by the participants for the sake of member-checking. The practice of member-checking ensures trustworthiness of the findings.

Findings

NMET Policy and English Teaching and Learning

The interviews revealed that most students (6 out of 11) attached great importance to English study as it was related to their university

entrance examination. Learners' motivation should be taken into consideration when adopting and implementing policies related to the NMET. Learners' real demand for English learning is fundamental to policy making. For example, one student mentioned,

> English is an important subject, not only for the exam, but also for our future development. We paid a lot of attention to English learning but received little effects. While we are struggling in English learning, then the change of NMET policy is not a blessing but a curse to us. Because of the NMET policy, I lost my motivation in English learning. (Student 2, interview)

Being framed by political, economic, and social forces, the language education policy planning in China reflected the influence of a hierarchical social system with the top leaders being the main decision makers. This has led teachers into a desperate situation because they were not empowered with any teaching autonomy. Four out of five teachers expressed negative feelings toward the top-bottom system. For example, one teacher accounted,

> The language education policy is mostly the decisions of the top management, like the Ministry of Education and related provincial bureaus and branches. The policy is like 'a direction wand', we, the English teachers, are the actors upon the go-signal. I am annoyed at hearing that English teaching or NMET polity is a political mission. English teaching or NMET policy should be conducted for students' practical needs. (Teacher 1, interview)

After being forwarded to the Education Department at provincial and lower levels, the educational policies, including the NMET policy, were put into practice in actual teaching activities. However, the English teachers just acted as the "passive adopters of the official curriculum" (Leung, 1991, p. 76). Responding to this, three out of five teachers expressed the lack of autonomy in curriculum implementation. For example, one teacher said,

> I don't think the stipulated curriculum is suitable to our students. But we are not allowed to do some modification and use our own way based on the students' individual differences. In the end we have to meet the final goal of the school, which is to help students score higher in NMET. (Teacher 2, interview)

In terms of English teachers' perceptions toward policy making, all five teacher interviewees replied that they were "just implementers of the language education policy." This finding echoes a previous empirical study in which no opportunities for teachers to participate in policy making relating to English language education in primary and secondary schools was found (Li, 2010). The five teachers emphasized the importance for EFL teachers to get involved in the NMET policy making as they are important stakeholders. For example, one teacher said,

> NMET policy should not solely be decided by the leaders. We were the main parties who should have a say on this. We were one of the most important parties in English teaching. But policies were made without considering our needs, expectations, and requirements. We were just implementers of the language education policy. (Teacher 3, interview)

English Education and the Learning of Other Core Subjects

English had received the highest attention and the greatest reform efforts. Upon analysis of related documents on NMET policy, the original intention of the decision was to reduce the burden on students and relieve the pressures on students, parents, schools, and society brought upon them by the Gaokao. For example, documents related to Beijing Municipal Commission of Education (2013) stated that English education should return to its proper position and concentrate on the practical application of language. This perspective begs the questions: Has English education really been over-addressed? Can it return to its former position by reducing the weight of English scores? In responding to these questions, three teachers expressed their fear of losing their jobs due to the marginalized position of the English subject. For example, one teacher said,

> English had much less weekly lessons than other two core subjects, mathematics and Chinese, though English regained the same weight of a core subject alongside them. Does this mean that English is in a marginalized position? Will we lose our jobs? (Teacher 3, interview)

In terms of the students' attitude on whether English affects the learning of other subjects, 8 out of 11 student participants agreed that English

learning would not affect other subjects, including Chinese education. They agreed on the fact that English should not be marked as an obstacle that impedes candidates from gaining higher scores for other subjects. For example, one student said,

> I don't think English study had negative impact on me, sometimes it acts like "an appetizer", saving me from the fatigue. Actually, it is a kind of pleasure to review the content of Chinese course in English with my classmates. (Student 5, interview)

Out of five teachers, three expressed that English education should be treated equally to other subjects. They all agreed on the role of English in accelerating China's opening-up and social modernization. Hence, English education should be treated fairly without either paying it special attention or otherwise belittling it. Reform should focus on investigating practical applications to enable students to attain competence with English and place emphasis on communicating in that language. For example, one teacher stated,

> English is an important tool for students to know what is happening around the world. It opens a window for China's open-up policy. The development of China's economy, e.g., the One Belt One Road Initiative, means that we do need English. Actually, English is effective at helping other subjects rather than a disaster to the learning of other subjects. (Teacher 5, interview)

Additionally, since differences still exist in receiving education between rural and urban areas (Jia & Ericson, 2017; Qi, 2016), the NMET policy needs to become more humanistic by further promoting social equality and fair opportunities. Two out of five teachers expressed the same sentiment. For example, one teacher said,

> Some students were from rural areas and some are children of migrant workers. The unbalanced allocated teaching resources laid them a different foundation, so it is somewhat difficult for them to catch up despite the devotion. The NMET reform should consider this issue. (Teacher 4, interview)

Language Tug-of-War: English and Chinese Literacy Learning

Three teachers expressed that in the era of globalization, culture—as the core of soft power—is becoming more and more significant through its influence on people throughout the world and therefore has started attracting the attention of governments. One reason is that international economic trade is becoming prevalent, further resulting in constant language dispersal and exchange. Therefore, when implementing language promotion, teachers need to pay more attention to promotion of the culture. Thus, teachers believed that it is a common practice in English class to mention relevant Chinese culture as a parallel or comparison. For example, some teachers shared the following opinions,

> We agree with the importance of One Belt, One Road initiative. We need to design more assignments for students to illustrate something about China in English, like 'the cultural customs of my hometown'. (Teacher 1, interview)

> It is necessary and useful for us to select something else from other sources, like newspapers, and choose some culture-related topics to supplement the teaching, thus gradually cultivating their cross-cultural awareness. (Teacher 3, interview)

The foreign language educational policies in China are often stimulated by the socioeconomic situation and the political agenda of the country (Li, 2007); this is reflected in the position and role of English as a school subject. Three teachers expressed opinions that the position of English had become marginalized because of the increasing priority to the teaching and learning of Chinese. For example, a teacher recalled,

> We understand that the emphasis on mother tongue education as well as Chinese culture spreading during recent years might shift the status of English education. Is it necessary to belittle English learning because of the need to learn Chinese? (Teacher 5, interview)

All five teachers agreed that the English test should be designed in a way that reflects the pragmatic function of the English language. They recalled that it worked rather well when the students were trained to use English to narrate the story of China. For example, one teacher commented,

> The language competence can be improved when the students try to illustrate Chinese culture in English. English literacy learning was conducive to spreading Chinese culture. (Teacher 1, interview)

According to the teachers, policy makers should pave the way for spreading Chinese culture to the west. Although it is true that more and more people have begun to take notice of Chinese culture, most have become familiar with China from translated English copies of Chinese volumes. Three teachers said that, bearing China's dream in mind, China needs to adhere to the importance of English education while spreading Chinese culture to the rest of the world. For example, one teacher said,

> English is still considered as a lingua franca. English learning benefits a lot for China on the way of introducing Chinese culture to the international community. (Teacher 4, interview)

Chinese Learning and English Literacy Education Complement Each Other

The students recalled how Chinese learning facilitated English study. Six students regarded Chinese as beneficial to English learning. For example, according to the students, there is an indirect influence of Chinese learning on English learning. The students reported,

> I find it is amazing when something I learned in Chinese class pop out in English lectures. It is wonderful when I read the content of Chinese course in English. (Student 9, interview)

> What I've learned in Chinese course was somewhat helpful in my English study. It seems that there is a magic bridge connecting both languages. (Student 10, interview)

According to the five teachers, there may be positive transfer of language-related cognitive skills between the first language and the second language when certain thresholds of competence are achieved in both languages. Skills and metalinguistic knowledge acquired in learning one language can be drawn upon when learning another language. Hence, Chinese learning and English education complement each other

as language-specific and language-general knowledge and skills in one language may facilitate learning other language(s). This is evidenced by how the teachers responded,

> The knowledge and emotional experience obtained by English language learning enables students to better comprehend and apply their mother tongue. (Teacher 3, interview)

> The learning of one's native language can bring out an individual's best foreign language learning. Therefore, it is theoretically and practically easier for students with a certain level of native language competence to learn a foreign language. (Teacher 1, interview)

Furthermore, the teachers also said that English language learning has not been determined to have an impact on mother tongue learning but has improved students' ability to perceive the mother tongue. English literacy learning and Chinese literacy learning are not contradictory. Actually, the teachers said that exposure to English language was found to improve learners' speed of response and degree of sensitivity during the process of adapting to the different pronunciation and intonation. For example, one teacher said,

> Learning foreign languages helped students discover the characteristics in their first language, thus increasing their sensitivity and response to language as well as their language competence, including the different pronunciation and intonation. (Teacher 4, interview)

Discussion and Conclusion

According to teachers, the educational policy in China is inseparable from the political orientation. The NMET policy was influenced by the complex array of historical, cultural-political, social-economic, and practical factors (Bolton & Graddol, 2012; Guo, 2012; Liu, 2016). In addition, learners' motivation should be taken into consideration when adopting and implementing policies related to the NMET (Qi, 2016). Furthermore, it might be of significance for EFL teachers to get involved in policy making (Li, 2010).

Overall, we should not claim that English would affect the learning of other subjects. In fact, as expressed by the teachers in the present study, English has become a large part of the process of spreading

Chinese culture to the world. In addition, English language learning has become a necessity in the process of opening-up and enhancing contacts and exchanges with the rest of the world. The teachers also mentioned that English should be regarded as a common course similar to corresponding subjects and deserves equal attention by students as with other courses. English education should not be jeopardized by the necessity of transferring concentration to the learning of Chinese language and culture. English literacy education and Chinese learning complement each other as there may be a positive transfer of language-related cognitive skills between the mother tongue and the foreign language. The language policy reform should be concerned with how to enable students to use this language efficiently under the current social environment.

Based on the teacher interviews, English literacy learning should cultivate students' language competence and cultural competence, while focusing on the development of students' intercultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence. Through the study of English, students could be oriented to reflect on their native language and understand the general rules of languages, and especially to understand the relationship between language, society, and culture. Through cultural integration and exchanges, learners could better comprehend their native culture.

The teachers also suggested that, in order to realize the dream of changing China from being just a big country to becoming a big and strong country, the Chinese government should not only improve the hard power of the economy but also develop the soft power of culture as well. Learning Chinese is thus perceived as a prerequisite for promoting Chinese culture and strengthening the country's soft power (Liu, 2011). Likewise, spreading Chinese culture to a greater breadth and depth is conducive to further bridging China with the rest of the world. However, English should be used as a tool to broaden the international influence of the Chinese language and culture as the language power of English still exists (Phillipson, 2009). Apart from Chinese learning, English literacy education still plays a certain role in laying a solid foundation for the effective promotion of Chinese soft power in the global village. It is appropriate for Chinese students to handle a foreign language so that they can better keep up with the development of the world. To address this concern, the Chinese government may need a shift in mindset and should not focus solely on enhancing language

ability in Chinese, but on establishing a bilingual educational site where English and Chinese operate alongside each other in a complementary way.

This study still has some limitations. First, due to time constraints, only one round of interviews was conducted for a limited number of teachers and students in one school. The findings of this study are thus tentative and more research involving a bigger sample and more schools is needed. Second, data collection through more sources, e.g., classroom observation, should be conducted for an in-depth understanding of teaching and learning practice. Finally, a quantitative method, e.g., by using questionnaires, can be combined with qualitative results to understand more about teachers and students' perceptions of NMET. Despite these limitations, this study sheds light upon the NMET policy reform as the perceptions of more stakeholders, including English teachers and learners, are considered. It also provides knowledge about the current practice of English literacy learning and teaching at the secondary level in China.

Appendix: List of Some Sample Questions for the Interview

Section 1: Sample interview questions for the students.

1. Do you like learning English? Is English study a burden to you? Why?
2. Does English learning influence your study of other subjects, like Chinese?
3. What do you think of the relationship between English study and Chinese learning? If positive, what are they? If negative, in what way?
4. Is the NMET policy suitable to your practical English learning?

Section 2: Sample interview questions for the teachers

1. Do you think it is necessary for English teachers to take part in the NMET policy making? Why?
2. Is the NMET policy suitable to your practical English teaching? Why?

3. Do you think English learning may influence the studying of Chinese? Why?
4. Have you ever intended to consider the learners' Chinese learning when planning your English teaching? Why?

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CHAPTER 19

The "Biliterate and Trilingual" Policy in Hong Kong Primary School Education

Lixun Wang

Background

Hong Kong, a special administrative region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China, is composed of three main areas: Hong Kong Island (the second largest and the most populated island), the Kowloon Peninsula, and the New Territories (new towns on the outskirts of the Kowloon Peninsula). Hong Kong is one of the most densely populated areas in the world. According to the 2011 census, 93.6% of the Hong Kong population are ethnic Chinese. 89.5% of them use Cantonese as a usual language/dialect. However, under the British colonial rule for about 155 years, English has been a prominent language in government, business, and education domains in Hong Kong.

Cantonese, English, and Putonghua are the majority languages spoken in Hong Kong both as the usual languages of interpersonal communication and as additional languages/dialects. According to the statistics in the Hong Kong 2016 Population By-census, the proportion

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of the population aged 5 and over able to speak Cantonese is 94.6%, Putonghua 53.2%, and English 48.6%.

In this chapter, "Hong Kong people" refer to all people holding a Hong Kong identity card regardless of their ethnic origin, and "local Hongkongers" refer to native inhabitants of Hong Kong who speak Cantonese as the mother tongue, while the Mainlanders refer to those people coming from mainland China who normally speak Putonghua as their mother tongue.

Bilingualism in the Colonial Era

Hong Kong is a multilingual society whose principal languages are: Cantonese, English, and Putonghua. The local population in Hong Kong mainly speaks Cantonese. However, English has been the official language under the British colonial rule, while Chinese (MSC) only became a co-official language in 1974. Diglossia, the use of Cantonese as the community's everyday language, and English as the highly codified language in situations such as formal education and legal settings, can "best describe the language scene since early colonial days till the late 1980s" (Poon, 2004, p. 54). The two languages used in the mainstream of the school system in Hong Kong are Cantonese and English. Schools that use English as the medium of instruction (MoI) are EMI schools and those using Cantonese are CMI schools. By the 1960s, Hong Kong schools went through a period of "*laissez-faire*" or "positive non-intervention" during which they had the freedom to choose their own medium of instruction as the Hong Kong government did not formulate and implement a clear language policy and took a more flexible stance to the issue of MoI (Pan, 2000). Such policy, together with pressure from parents, had encouraged most secondary schools to adopt English as their official MoI.

The focus of the language policy in Hong Kong in the 1980s was "bilingualism." In 1982, the government approved the provision of additional graduate and non-graduate teachers for secondary schools in the public sector to improve the standards of English and Chinese (MSC). In the same year, the Llewellyn Report (Llewellyn, Hancock, Kirst, & Roeloffs, 1982) (a report to review the overall education system of Hong Kong) suggested that the government should support "bilingualism." In addition, the Report (p. 28) concluded that "mother tongue is, all other things being equal, the best medium of teaching and learning," suggesting the adoption of mother tongue education in the

early compulsory years. The publication of the Report of the Working Group which was set up to Review Language Improvement Measures in 1989 stated that Cantonese or English could be equally used as a medium of instruction in schools (Education Department, 1989, pp. 73–74). Meanwhile, education in Hong Kong expanded in the 1970s and 1980s. During this period, Cantonese was the predominate MoI in primary education where everything was taught in Cantonese except the English Language subject (Sweeting, 1991), while English was the main MoI in secondary education where all subjects except Chinese Language, Chinese History, and Chinese Literature were supposed to be taught in English (Bray & Koo, 2004). By the 1980s, 90% of secondary school students in Hong Kong studied in English medium schools (So, 1992). By the early 1990s, around 90% of primary schools in Hong Kong were Cantonese medium (Bacon-Shone & Bolton, 2008, p. 28). The use of Cantonese as the MoI at the primary level was generally accepted (Evans, 2011) as it was believed that students could learn the best in their mother tongue. But in most secondary schools, the MoI switched to English (Hoosain, 2005). A much smaller number of primary school graduates stayed on in the Cantonese secondary schools where Cantonese was the MoI and the English Language was taught as a school subject. Before 1997, at the secondary level, most schools were officially English medium, but in reality used both English and Cantonese to varying extents, with most textbooks in English, but much classroom discussion and management conducted through Cantonese (Bacon-Shone & Bolton, 2008, p. 28).

During the colonial era, Putonghua played a minor role in the education system, being learnt as an optional subject on the timetable or as an extra-curricular activity (Zhang & Yang, 2004). In one word, the teaching of Putonghua, the national language of the People's Republic of China, as a subject and its use as the medium of instruction were very restricted before the 1990s (Zhang & Yang, 2004).

The "Biliterate and Trilingual" Policy in the Post 1997 Era

The political transition in 1997 has greatly affected Hong Kong society, including language education. Ever since 1995, the official language policy of the Hong Kong government has been that of promoting a "trilingual" and "biliterate" society, and this policy has been rather consistently

followed after the 1997 transition. The "biliterate and trilingual" (兩文三語) policy aims to develop students' proficiency in writing English and Modern Standard Chinese (MSC, with traditional characters), and their capability to communicate in the local language of Cantonese, the international language of English, and the national common vernacular of Putonghua. The policy was officially announced in the first Policy Address delivered by the Chief Executive of the SAR, Tung Chee-Hwa in October 1997. Since then, English, Cantonese and Putonghua have become official languages. However, no framework and concrete implementation plan were put forth by the HKSAR government.

In preparation for and since the handover in 1997, Putonghua has been promoted in Hong Kong. The new language education policy enacted in 1997 included the introduction of teaching Putonghua as a subject like English and Chinese (MSC) in all Hong Kong primary and secondary schools, and the long-term plan of turning Putonghua into the medium of instruction for the Chinese Language subject. The rationale for using Putonghua rather than Cantonese in teaching the Chinese Language subject is that the national language corresponds closely to the Modern Standard Chinese (Li, 2006). Originally as an independent language subject, Putonghua has recently become the medium of instruction of the Chinese Language subject in many schools. In 2000, Putonghua even became an elective subject in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination. This indicates that Putonghua has become a core component of the primary and secondary curricula after the handover (Davison & Auyeung Lai, 2007).

Since then, the HKSAR government has made a series of language policy reforms, mostly advised by the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) set up in 1996, aiming to create a reasonable balance among the three languages: Cantonese, English, and Putonghua, in Hong Kong. In 1997, the HKSAR government released the "Medium of Instruction Guidance for Secondary Schools" demanding the use of Chinese as MoI with Secondary One students in the 1998–1999 school year. Those who wanted to keep English as MoI had to show that they met the requirements of teacher and student competencies as well as infrastructure support. However, the guidance did not apply to primary schools. Meanwhile, Cantonese is used as the medium of instruction for teaching content subjects in CMI primary and secondary schools. The ultimate language goal of the "biliterate and trilingual" policy is to achieve trilingualism to facilitate communication and exchange with the Mainland and the outside world (Pan, 2000, p. 61). The policy of "biliteracy and

trilingualism," now guiding the curriculum design in Hong Kong language education, is significant in terms of controversy and impact. The purpose of our study is to find out how MoI is enacted in Hong Kong primary schools in the post-1997 era under the "biliterate and trilingual" policy.

The Implementation of Trilingual Education in Hong Kong Primary Schools

The HKSAR government has never laid down any policy about MoI guidance for primary schools, and Hong Kong primary schools do not have an agreed approach or method for implementing trilingual education (Wang & Kirkpatrick, 2013, 2015); therefore, it remains blurred how the "biliterate and trilingual" policy is implemented in Hong Kong primary schools. To find out more about the situation of trilingual education in Hong Kong primary schools, and the potential implications, a large-scale study was carried out in 2014 by the author, and a questionnaire was sent to 474 primary schools in Hong Kong, addressed to the school principals. These included all 34 government schools, all 420 aided schools, and all 20 Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools. Altogether 155 schools (4 government schools, 145 aided schools, and 6 DSS schools) responded to the survey, representing a response rate of 32.7%.

Government schools are operated and funded by the government, which enroll local students, use the standard design school buildings, follow the local curriculum recommended by the Education Bureau (EDB), and prepare students for the local examinations. Aided schools are fully subsidized by the government but operated by non-profit-making voluntary bodies such as local charitable and religious organizations. They are administered in accordance with the Code of Aid and have to observe the conditions laid down in the service agreement signed with the EDB. Though aided schools also receive funding from the government, they enjoy more freedom and flexibility in recruiting their own staff. The Direct Subsidy Scheme schools (DSS schools) are financed by their individual providers/investors or education trust foundations but at the same time are subsidized or assisted by the government under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS), in the form of capital grants based on enrollment. They need to observe the conditions laid down for admission to the DSS scheme and in the service agreement signed with the EMB. However, they are allowed complete freedom with regard to curricula, fees, and entrance requirements that is consistent with the basic educational standard.

The principal of each surveyed school was invited to complete the questionnaire. The survey form was completed either by the principal or a representative from each school's senior management. The questionnaire was mainly designed to find out how the "biliterate" and "trilingual" language policy was implemented in Hong Kong primary schools, to find out the MoI policies of the language subjects and other subjects: Mathematics, General Studies, Visual Arts, Music, Physical Education, and Information Technology/Computing, and to see how effective the trilingual education models were implemented in the schools by looking at students' proficiency level in the three languages. Demographical information of the school was also gathered. Various types of questions were included in the questionnaire, for example, contingency questions, matrix questions, closed-ended questions such as yes/no questions and multiple choice questions, and open-ended questions. An example of a matrix question is that five aspects of students' proficiency level in Cantonese, Putonghua, Spoken English, Written Chinese, and Written English are compared across five levels: well above average, slightly above average, about average, slightly below average, and much below average. The sections below serve to respond to the following research questions:

RQ1: What languages are used to teach which subjects in the surveyed schools?
RQ2: What is the relationship between the origins of students and the MoIs chosen by the surveyed schools?
RQ3: Is code-switching/code-mixing allowed in Hong Kong primary schools?
RQ4: What are the difficulties in the implementation of trilingual education encountered by the surveyed schools?
RQ5: What is the graduates' proficiency level in the three languages in the surveyed schools?
RQ6: What is the role of Putonghua in teaching the Chinese Language subject in the surveyed schools?

What Languages Are Used to Teach Which Subjects in the Surveyed Schools?

Of the 155 schools surveyed, we found that: (i) Putonghua was commonly used as the MoI in the Chinese Language subject as 65 schools (41.94%) used almost 100% Putonghua in teaching this subject,

6.45% of schools used Putonghua only in senior grades, 34.84% used Putonghua in some classes in the same grade, and 14.84% of schools allowed the use of mixed code of Cantonese and Putonghua in the subject. (ii) Six schools (3.87%) did not offer the Putonghua subject as they used Putonghua as the MoI in teaching the Chinese Language subject. (iii) 63.87% of schools used almost 100% of English as MoI in the English Language subject and about 40% of them allowed the use of mixed code of English and Cantonese in the subject. (iv) The majority of schools (87.74%) used almost 100% of Putonghua as the MoI in the Putonghua subject, while 12 schools (4.52%) used mainly Putonghua, supplemented by Cantonese in this subject; the use of mixed code of Putonghua and Cantonese was not commonly adopted, as only 7.74% of schools allowed this. (v) Cantonese was the predominant language used as the MoI in other subjects, such as Mathematics, General Studies, Visual Arts, Music, Physical Education, and Information Technology/Computer. Less than 10% of schools adopted English and Putonghua as the MoI in these subjects. It is worth noting that, the six Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools were predominately EMI schools, as English was the main medium of instruction in all subjects except the Chinese Language and Putonghua subjects, and Putonghua was used to teach the Chinese Language subject. All four government schools and the majority of the Aided schools (about 90%) were CMI schools, as almost 100% Cantonese was used in teaching all the other subjects except the language subjects (Chinese Language, English Language, and Putonghua), and Cantonese was used in teaching the Chinese Language subject in around half of the schools, sometimes supplemented by Putonghua.

Prior to this large-scale survey, the author carried out a pilot study in one Hong Kong primary school where English was used as the MoI in teaching PE (Wang & Kirkpatrick, 2013). In the interview, the PE teacher, who had taught PE in English for 9 years, was very positive regarding the use of English as the MoI. She expressed that the nature of the PE subject (involving many body movements) made it easier to use English as the MoI compared to other subjects. If she found that the students had difficulty understanding English instructions, she would use body gestures to facilitate students' comprehension. In most cases, students would be able to understand.

What Is the Relationship Between the Origins of Students and the MoIs Chosen by the Surveyed Schools?

The majority of students in the 155 surveyed schools were local Hongkongers (83.57%), while around 12.58% of the students came from mainland China, 3.18% came from a South Asian area, and only 0.67% of the students came from other areas such as Britain. Fifteen schools (9.68%) have 100% local Hongkongers, mainly in Kowloon and the New Territories. Four schools (one in Kowloon and three in the New Territories) out of the 155 surveyed schools comprise over 70% of Mainlanders. However, only two of them use Putonghua as the MoI in teaching the Chinese Language subject in some grades, but not in other subjects. The one with the highest percentage of Mainlanders (90%) actually uses only Cantonese as the MoI in teaching the Chinese Language subject and other subjects. Putonghua, the mother tongue of the Mainlanders, is not adopted as the MoI in teaching other subjects in these schools. A school on Hong Kong Island which constitutes 37% of students from other areas of the world (19 nationalities) uses Cantonese mainly supplemented by English or vice versa in teaching other subjects. One school in Kowloon and another in the New Territories have the highest percentage of students coming from a South Asian area, comprising 98% and 60%, respectively. They are non-Chinese ethnic minority students, and it is impossible to adopt their mother tongues as the MoI, as Cantonese, English, and Putonghua are the three languages used as MoIs in Hong Kong. We can say that there is no distinct relationship between the origins of students and the MoIs chosen by the surveyed schools.

Is Code-Switching/Code-Mixing Allowed in Hong Kong Primary Schools?

Hong Kong is essentially a monolingual Cantonese-speaking society where a large number of students are brought up in Cantonese-speaking environments. The majority of secondary schools claimed to be EMI schools under the *laissez-faire* MoI policy prior to 1997; however, many actually used a mixed code (Pan, 2000; Poon, 2000). Poon (2000, pp. 149–150) also states that the majority of teachers resorted to the use of a mixed code, mixing both English and Cantonese.

The Education Commission Report Number Four (ECR 4) proposed by the Education Commission is believed to have dealt with the increasing use of mixed code in secondary schools. However, no special attention has been paid to the use of mixed code in primary schools. In the survey, the Chinese Language subject teachers in 23 schools (14.84%) switched between Cantonese and Putonghua in teaching the subject. For the English Language subject, teachers in 53 schools (34.19%) might use Cantonese in teaching English, depending on teaching and learning needs. Teachers teaching the Putonghua subject in 7 schools (4.52%) used both Putonghua and Cantonese in junior grades only. Among the three language subjects, a majority of the schools (87.74%) used almost 100% Putonghua in teaching the Putonghua subject, while about 50–60% used almost 100% Cantonese in teaching the Chinese Language subject, and about 50–60% used almost 100% English in teaching the English Language subject. I am aware that the survey data may not fully reflect the reality about the use of mixed code in teaching the three languages in primary schools, given the official policy, which was stipulated in the Education Commission Report 4 in 1990, is to avoid the use of mixed codes.

What Are the Difficulties in the Implementation of Trilingual Education Encountered by the Surveyed Schools?

To answer this research question, the following questionnaire item was used when surveying the school principals:

What are the difficulties encountered during the implementation of trilingual education? (Please tick ☑).

□curriculum design
□class scheduling
□choosing textbooks/teaching materials
□making assessment arrangements
□finding qualified and suitable teaching staff
□students' low level of Putonghua standards
□students' low level of English standards
□students' low motivation in trilingual learning
□teachers' low motivation in trilingual teaching
□other (please specify) ______________________________

The greatest difficulty reported by the 155 surveyed schools when implementing trilingual education in schools was "finding qualified and suitable teaching staff" (53.55%). All four government schools agreed to this. Some 50% of the surveyed aided schools and 33.33% of the DSS schools also agreed. One reason for the lack of qualified teachers may be due to the government's language proficiency requirement requiring all the serving and new English teachers and Putonghua teachers to meet the language benchmark requirements such as the Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers (LPAT).

According to the survey, the least difficulty is "teachers' low motivation in trilingual teaching" (7.74%) ("teachers" refer to all teachers within the school), while 47.1% of the schools considered "students" low level of English standards' as the second greatest difficulty. This seems to suggest that students' low motivation and low language levels were to be blamed for any failure in implementing trilingual education rather than the teachers' motivation. Again, the survey data may not fully reflect the reality, as the survey form was completed either by the principal or a representative from the school's senior management.

The surveyed government schools and aided schools found the students' low level of English standard to be the second greatest difficulty. However, the six DSS schools found no difficulty at all in this aspect because they can have control over admitting students and these students are believed to have higher motivation in trilingual learning.

What Is the Graduates' Proficiency Level in the Three Languages in the Surveyed Schools?

In the survey, the schools were asked to compare their graduates' proficiency level in the three languages based on the graduates' language benchmark test results before graduation with other primary schools in Hong Kong. The schools made reference to the Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA) reports and school reports when filling in this part of the survey.

Only 4 of 155 surveyed schools did not provide information for this part, and this may be due to the reason that they did not want to release their graduates' perceived proficiency level in the three languages to others. Apart from these four schools, two more schools did not show their graduates' proficiency level in Putonghua. In fact,

it is difficult for schools to tell their graduates’ proficiency level in Putonghua before graduation since the TSA provides assessment only for speaking skills in English and Cantonese but not in Putonghua. Putonghua materials are only provided when assessing students’ listening skill in Chinese. Therefore, the schools might have to guess their graduates’ proficiency level in Putonghua and the Putonghua proficiency data I collected may not be reliable. The backwash effect of the TSA might lead to more emphasis on Cantonese but less emphasis on Putonghua.

The DSS schools are the most confident regarding their graduates’ proficiency in the three languages with 100% above average, except that 16.67% of them think the Putonghua of their graduates is about average. The perception of the graduates’ proficiency level in both spoken and written English from aided schools and government schools is far less positive. First, an average of about 7% of aided schools think their graduates’ proficiency level in both spoken and written English is well below average. Second, about 25% of aided schools think their graduates’ proficiency level in both written and spoken English is slightly below average, while 75% of the government schools think their graduates’ proficiency level in these two aspects is slightly below average.

What Is the Role of Putonghua in Teaching the Chinese Language Subject in the Surveyed Schools?

Using Putonghua as the MoI for teaching, the Chinese Language subject (a subject which develops learners’ Chinese language proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking) has become a new phenomenon after the handover in 1997 with the government’s adoption of the “biliterate and trilingual” policy. Having considered their own circumstances, such as readiness of teachers, standards of students, curriculum planning, and availability of learning and teaching resources/support, primary and secondary schools may use Cantonese and/or Putonghua in teaching the subject. Among about 1000 primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong, a total of 160 schools had implemented PMIC on a pilot basis, largely as a result of parental preference and government policy to subsidize school’s financial outlay in employing more Putonghua teachers under the Support Scheme from 2008–2009 to 2013–2014

school years (Legislative Council, 2016, p. 2). There has always been much public debate about the effectiveness of using Putonghua versus Cantonese as the medium of instruction in Chinese language lessons, but more and more primary schools are using Putonghua as the medium of instruction for teaching the Chinese Language subject, mainly as a result of parental preference. Most parents believe that a knowledge of Putonghua is critical if their children are to earn a good living as China's economy is prevailing.

In our study, 65 schools (41.94%), mainly Aided Schools, use almost 100% Putonghua in teaching the Chinese Language subject, 6.45% of schools use Putonghua only in senior grades, 34.84% use Putonghua in some classes in the same grade, and 14.84% of schools allow the use of mixed code of Cantonese and Putonghua in the subject. Six schools (3.87%) do not offer the Putonghua subject (a subject focusing purely on the pronunciation of Putonghua) as they use Putonghua as the MoI in teaching the Chinese Language subject.

At present, limited research has been conducted to show whether students who learn the Chinese Language subject in Putonghua outperform their counterparts who learn it in Cantonese. However, I found that there are schools which use Putonghua as the MoI in teaching the Chinese Language subject mainly in junior grades, while switching back to use Cantonese in senior grades. This might reflect a phenomenon that these schools are reluctant to risk their students' results in TSA, as Cantonese is used in this important territory-wide oral exam. Despite all the controversies, it is important for primary schools to provide students with enough exposure to Putonghua so as to ensure that they gain satisfactory proficiency in this important national language. It would be desirable that Putonghua and Cantonese are used as MoIs in a balanced manner based on learners' needs, so as to facilitate proper development of students' Chinese literacy skills and Putonghua/Cantonese proficiency. It is important that literacy in the national language (Putonghua) and the foreign language (English) should be preceded by literacy in students' mother tongue (Cantonese). Mother tongue literacy should be in its own right rather than simply as a channel to second language literacy. Developing their mother tongue, students will develop other essential skills, such as critical thinking and literacy skills, and the skills learned in the mother tongue will transfer to the other languages learned in school (Savage, 2017).

Conclusion

It is clear from the survey that, without government guidelines, individual primary schools in Hong Kong have adopted their own policies regarding the use of medium of instruction in teaching different subjects, even across the same type of schools, i.e., government schools, aided schools, and Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools. The findings of my study have provided a rough picture of the current situation of trilingual education implementation in Hong Kong primary schools. Some patterns have been identified: The majority of the schools use Cantonese as the major MoI in most subjects except the English Language and Putonghua subjects, but the DSS schools are predominately EMI schools. Many schools do not encourage code-switching/code-mixing in the classroom, but some allow a certain amount of code-switching/code-mixing, mainly in junior grades. The DSS schools seem to be more confident than the aided schools and government schools regarding their graduates' proficiency level in the three languages, and the aided schools and government schools have rather low confidence in their graduates' English language proficiency (both spoken and written). Regarding Putonghua, currently the TSA only has oral assessments on English and Cantonese but not on Putonghua, and therefore, it is difficult for primary schools to know their graduates' proficiency level in Putonghua. The EDB and the HKEAA should consider modifying the existing TSA or develop a new mechanism so that students' proficiency of Putonghua can be assessed properly as well. When asked about difficulties encountered in the implementation of trilingual education, the surveyed schools found that finding qualified and suitable teaching staff was the biggest challenge. Around half of the schools also found that students' low level of English standards has hindered the implementation of trilingual education. The current survey has its limitations as it only covered 155 primary schools. However, based on the findings, we may conclude by recommending the following to policy makers and school administrators to consider when formulating language policies in education:

- The three languages should be used as media of instruction, but the ratio of each should alter as students progress through primary education, with the emphasis on Cantonese in the early years.
- Either Putonghua or Cantonese could be used as the MoI for the Chinese Language subject from P1. Students should be allowed to

choose the MoI they prefer. If Putonghua is not used as the MoI for the Chinese Language subject, other opportunities should be provided so that students get enough exposure to Putonghua in school.

- Tutorial classes in Cantonese should be provided for P1 students whose mother tongue is not Cantonese.
- English could be used as the MoI for the English Language subject and for PE from P1, as based on our research findings, body gestures in PE lessons can help students to understand English words more easily. Maths, General Studies, Music, IT, and Visual Arts should be taught in Cantonese, but the other languages can be introduced whenever appropriate.
- All teachers sharing the same MoI should work together more closely and develop cross-curriculum activities which require the use of that particular language.
- Code-switching and code-mixing can be adopted in the classroom where appropriate, with the aim of enhancing students' trilingual development.

Hong Kong is considered as China's gateway to the outside world; the "Biliterate and Trilingual" language policy plays a significant role in shaping Hong Kong into a multilingual and multicultural world city. It is of paramount importance for the Hong Kong government to provide clear guidance to the education sectors regarding the implementation of the "Biliterate and Trilingual" language policy in Hong Kong.

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CHAPTER 20

Moving Toward Content-Integrated English Literacy Instruction in Taiwan: Perspectives from Stakeholders

Chiou-lan Chern and Jean E. Curran

Introduction

Taiwan is similar to many settings in Asia which have seen an interest in English steadily rise in recent decades (Bolton, 2008). Despite the fact that Taiwan is an expanding-circle context where English is learned as a foreign language (Kachru, 1990), the globalization of the economy, communications, media, and technology have spurred greater interest in learning English (Graddol, 2006).

In Taiwan, English is neither an official nor a second language. As in many Asian contexts, it is a foreign language, though the dominant one, taught as a subject at various stages of education. It is usually taught with a focus on linguistic knowledge and language skills, although communication has been advocated. In this era of technology and information,

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English has become a language of wider communication in both the real and virtual worlds, and therefore should go beyond oral communication and be considered as a tool to gain new knowledge.

The curriculum guidelines currently in use have undergone a number of revisions since nine-year compulsory education was implemented by the Ministry of Education (MOE) in 1968. The latest version of the Nine-year Integrated Curriculum was initiated in 2010. In this 2010 version, a newly added component of the English curriculum was critical thinking skills at the senior high school level.

New Policy: Twelve-Year Basic Education Curriculum Guidelines

As the Nine-Year Integrated Curriculum was being adopted in 2010, the push for the Twelve-Year Basic Education Curricula had reached a consensus (Fan & Yu, 2013). In 2014, the Twelve-Year Basic Education Plan was implemented and general guidelines for this new curriculum were approved that same year, while specific guidelines for each subject were to be developed later following the general guidelines (Chen & Fan, 2014). The new curriculum guidelines for primary and secondary education for the Twelve-Year Basic Education program are still under review and will be implemented in 2019.

There are several new features in the Overall Curriculum Guidelines for the Twelve-Year Basic Education Curricula; these were developed based on the spirit of "whole person education" (Ministry of Education, 2014). The three guiding principles in its conceptual framework are: Taking the Initiative ("Spontaneity"), Engaging the Public ("Communication and Interaction"), and Seeking the Common Good ("Social Participation") (National Academy for Educational Research, 2015). In other words, the new curriculum aims at (1) cultivating students' motivation and passion for learning so that they become autonomous learners; (2) guiding students to interact positively with the self and others, as well as with the broader society and the natural world; and (3) helping students apply what they learn to explore the meaning of life and engage with the social, natural, and cultural environments. The ultimate goal is to develop an interest in lifelong learning in each student. In addition, the key directions governing the Twelve-Year Basic Education Curricula include: (1) promote learning progression as well as cross-discipline integration; (2) emphasize the application of knowledge gained to real-life scenarios; (3) highlight

school-based curriculum development; and (4) promote personalized learning.

A set of nine core competencies, grouped under three categories in sync with the three guiding principles (i.e., Spontaneity, Communication and Interaction, Social Participation), have been adopted to replace the traditional definition of skills and abilities.

The three categories and their core competencies are:

A. Spontaneity
   - A-1 Physical and mental wellness, self-advancement,
   - A-2 Logical thinking and problem solving
   - A-3 Planning, execution, innovation, and adaptation

B. Communication and interaction
   - B-1 Semiotics and expression
   - B-2 Information and technology literacy, and media literacy
   - B-3 Artistic appreciation and aesthetic literacy

C. Social participation
   - C-1 Moral practice and citizenship
   - C-2 Interpersonal relationships and teamwork
   - C-3 Multi-cultural and global understanding

Teachers and students will work together to explore how these competencies are developed and exhibited in real-life scenarios.

Similar to other educational systems internationally (British Columbia Performance Standards, British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2015; United States Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2009), the implementation of the Twelve-Year Basic Education Curriculum Guidelines represents a significant change in all areas of education as the curriculum shifts from one that is knowledge-based to one that is competency-based. The core competencies students are asked to master are considered vital to their future success in university, the workplace, daily life, and their membership in the international community (Chen & Huang, 2017).

Different from the previous curriculum, which outlined a set of courses to be followed by all schools, the twelve-year curriculum specifies eight areas of study as the MOE-stipulated national curriculum: Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Natural Science, Arts, Integrated Activities, Technology, and Health and Physical Education.[1] In addition to these

areas of study, the Twelve-Year Basic Education Curriculum also encourages individual schools to develop their own school-based curricula, which can include required, elective, and activity-based courses. Under a school-based curriculum, subject integration, project-based/experiential learning, group-activity, and skill-based hands-on courses are encouraged.

Special Features of the English Curriculum

English curriculum guidelines are being developed following the Twelve-Year Basic Education General Curriculum Guidelines. Like the Nine-Year Integrated Curriculum currently in use, English instruction begins in the third grade of the Twelve-Year Basic Education Curriculum. The Twelve-Year Basic Education English Curriculum encompasses the following features: (1) Learning is student-centered. The principles of adaptive instruction and learning motivation are emphasized. (2) Language is for communication and interaction and a tool for gaining new knowledge. (3) Learner autonomy and the habit and ability of lifelong learning in English should be developed. (4) Critical thinking abilities should be fostered, and the ability to manage and use information should be developed. (5) Language is learned to explore different cultures so that students can engage in cultural reflection and social participation to develop a global perspective. (6) Students' logical thinking and creativity should be cultivated. This focus is consistent with other standards for foreign language learning that emphasize what a student knows and is able to do with a language, such as those outlined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). Similar to the characteristics outlined above, the ACTFL guidelines emphasize "the 5Cs" in regard to foreign language learning: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015).

Other features in the English curriculum of the Twelve-Year Basic Education program include an emphasis on using language at the discourse level, in contrast to the traditional emphasis of teaching at the word or sentence levels. Overall, English is considered a tool to learn and process information, rather than a subject for study in the new curriculum. This direction of English instruction, especially the idea of integrating English with other subjects, is new to many English teachers. Therefore, it is important to examine how curriculum administrators and school teachers will cope with this change. The focus of this chapter is on

literacy instruction, which refers to the development of effective reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, and the ability to apply those skills effectively in different content areas. Therefore, elementary school teachers and administrators were the focus of this study.

The Impact of Policy Changes

As implementation of the new curriculum approaches, teachers, and administrators are beginning to explore how the key features of the curriculum will be put into practice in their schools. This chapter shows how two groups of stakeholders—teachers and administrators—view the new curriculum, especially the component that calls for more subject integration. Two examples will be discussed. The following information was gathered during 2016 and 2017.

The first example illustrates how a primary school curriculum administrator, who is also an English teacher, plans to implement the new guidelines in her school, with a particular focus on how literacy instruction will be incorporated into an interdisciplinary approach. As the new curriculum emphasizes content integration, teaching science in English is a possible option. The second example, therefore, examines how English teachers incorporated science-related vocabulary and concepts into their lessons in a week-long summer science camp for elementary school students. This example discusses how the English component was perceived by the English teachers and the science teachers who accompanied their students to the camp.

Reaction to the Policy: An Administrator's Viewpoint

In metropolitan cities like Taipei City, English has long been included in the first-grade curriculum. However, in the new curriculum, English will no longer be taught as a subject to students in first and second grades in elementary schools. However, schools and parents in Taipei City will still want to continue the current arrangement. In order to know how elementary school administrators in Taipei City will cope with this change, the director of academic affairs at a small elementary school in Taipei City was interviewed. There are six grades in the school and approximately 200 students in total. There are 19–25 students in each class. In addition to her administrative responsibilities, the director, Ms. Ting (a pseudonym, used for the purpose of privacy) also teaches several English classes. Thus, she was uniquely positioned to comment on how the

Twelve-Year Basic Education Curriculum might impact the school as a whole. Ms. Ting was interviewed in the fall of 2017 by the two authors. The interview was conducted in Chinese, and the recording of the interview was transcribed and then translated into English.

Ms. Ting was asked to discuss the reactions of the teachers at her school to the Twelve-Year Basic Education Curriculum, specifically the exclusion of English as a subject in the lower-grade levels and the emphasis on content integration. Ms. Ting commented that the English teachers and homeroom teachers in her school have different reactions:

> I think for English teachers, maybe the teachers at our school are an exception; they seem to be pretty open to this concept. But for homeroom teachers, in actuality their first response was, the curriculum has changed again!

Ms. Ting had no doubt that her school, as well as all elementary schools in Taipei, will keep English in the first- and second-grade curriculum, but English will be integrated with other subject content. She elaborated on how first- and second-grade teachers will integrate English into other content courses. For example, for Grade 1, the focus will be for students to know their own body and how to dress properly. For Grade 2, the focus will be on how to eat a healthy diet. Ms. Ting elaborated:

> At the start of first grade, we try to help the kids learn how to take care of themselves. For example, at first they get to know their classmates, and know themselves, and then they get to learn about their body. And for the second semester, there would be a separate theme; it might be how to dress properly for the weather.
>
> And for the second graders, the most important thing we want to teach them is how to eat a healthy diet, and what the components of a good meal are. …We hope to give children something that would tie in with daily life or health education classes.

In other words, what Ms. Ting planned for the first- and second-grade curriculum is to incorporate English into two subjects: *Life Curriculum* (Grade 1) and *Health and Physical Education* (Grade 2). Storybooks related to the topics will be incorporated, too. For example, Eric Carle's picture book *From Head to Toe* will be introduced when talking about parts of the body; *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* will be

used when talking about food and diet. Also, the concept of *My Plate*,[2] instead of the traditional food pyramid, will be introduced when talking about a balanced diet. It is very clear that these courses Ms. Ting described are concept-driven rather than linguistically oriented.

As to the topics for middle-grade levels, since English will be part of the curriculum from Grade 3 onward, Ms. Ting commented that the English curriculum will basically follow the textbook adopted by the school, with some integration of content from other subjects. For example,

> For the third graders, we will make use of the small garden in our school. And we will let students observe the growth of plants because for science class in the third grade, part of it is dedicated to introducing children to plants and the life cycle of plants as well. For the fourth grade, we want to talk about the importance of health, while also teaching students what daily routines are. To combine this concept with elementary English content, we will talk about what they do each day…… so we want to cultivate healthy habits.

According to Ms. Ting, though the focus of English instruction will basically follow the content of the textbooks adopted by the school, content from other subjects and topics related to students' daily life will be incorporated. In other words, the idea of content and language integration will be adhered to in the middle-grade levels.

Similarly, for the upper-grade levels, the topics will come mainly from the textbooks, with some expansion based on the particular features of the student population. For example, Ms. Ting said,

> For fifth graders, the original courses had the concept of "What's wrong with you? I have a headache." And we want to use this to teach students how to take care of themselves. And as for the sixth graders, we want to expand on this; this is because we have many students who are from Vietnam. They currently make up 40% of our student body. For some students, both of their parents are from Vietnam.

Ms. Ting's interest in incorporating her students' cultural roots into the classroom context can promote students' pride in their family background and enhance the school-family partnership (Chen, Kyle, & McIntyre, 2008). It is also an opportunity for all students in the class to explore the culture of an Asian neighbor and to achieve one of the goals of the Twelve-Year Basic Education Curriculum.

English teachers in Taiwan often comment that one of the difficulties in working with their students is the wide range of proficiency levels they encounter in the classroom. Ms. Ting was asked if the new curriculum might make this challenge even more pronounced. She responded that this would depend on the approach that teachers take, and she provided an example of a class where students were combining science and English:

> If you continue the mindset of teaching and evaluating English in the same manner that we used to have, that indeed puts a lot of pressure on the children. But we could do this from a different perspective using the core concepts of the Twelve-Year Curriculum to examine learning. I used English to teach a science lesson. I asked the students to discuss the topic in groups. One of the children who excelled in that particular class doesn't usually do well in English, but his math and logic are very good. He was happy to help others understand the science concepts. The ones with better English skills could assist him. Thus they could all make a contribution.

The conversation with Ms. Ting shows that when an administrator is positive and enthusiastic about a new curriculum, there are ways for the changes to be implemented, regardless of how challenging they might be initially to teachers. The information provided by Ms. Ting indicates that schools in Taipei will find ways to keep the English component in the first- and second-grade curriculum by integrating it with other subject areas. Even with middle- and upper-grade levels, where English is an official part of the curriculum, related content knowledge will be integrated into English courses.

Voices from English Teachers and Subject Teachers

In a science camp organized in 2016 by a chemistry professor with a grant from the MOE, the participants included 180 elementary school students and 17 teachers who came to accompany their students. The camp was a five-day event conducted at a university campus so that the lab facilities could be utilized. The third day of the five-day program was conducted in English and taught by English teachers to incorporate what students had learned in the lab. Seven English teachers who served on the advisory team that functioned as a liaison between the MOE and

schools taught the English components. They were surveyed to explore their overall impression about interdisciplinary cooperation and the reactions of the campers to the science English materials and activities. In addition, the teachers who accompanied the students were surveyed to discover what they thought of the lesson units that integrated English and science concepts.

The English teachers were asked questions about the planning process, their impressions after giving the English classes, the reactions of the students, and their opinions on interdisciplinary cooperation. The English teachers completed the questionnaire in English. The teachers who had accompanied the students to the camp and who also sat in on the English classes were queried about what their students had learned, which lesson was most helpful, whether the students' current level of English proficiency played a role in their understanding of the science English content, and whether they would consider using English in their own classes in the future. The questionnaire for these teachers was written in Chinese. Their responses were transcribed and translated into English.[3] While the questions answered by the English teachers and the science teachers were different, several areas of commonality in the participants' responses were found. These are summarized below.

The English teachers were responsible for presenting science content in three areas—the composition of air, states of matter, and air pressure. Part of the planning process included a laboratory visit and information session to become familiar with the topics, but the English teachers were solely responsible for delivering the science English content during the camp. The English lessons introduced basic scientific principles, laboratory safety procedures, as well as vocabulary and simple sentence patterns associated with the three topics. Group activities designed by the English teachers allowed the students to practice using both the science and English content they had studied in the lessons.

> When asked what they thought the students had learned from the English components, both the English teachers and the science teachers accompanying the students to the camp were positive about what they had observed. The following are excerpts quoted from the surveys.[4]Air pressure: Students have become familiar with the topic, and the teacher conducted the class in a lively manner. (ST-Chinese/Math/Science)

> Air pressure and Composition of Air: There were poster-making activities and students could learn to cooperate with others while making posters. (ST-Natural Science)

> The students liked to make the vocabulary cards and sentences. Some of the students helped those who were struggling speakers. (ET-JG)

> The majority of the students could work together with the group and carry out the communicative tasks. (ET-JJ)

> They needed to collaborate with their team members to complete their tasks. The tasks required that they collaborate with their group members. (ET-ER)

When the science teachers were asked if they thought the English proficiency level of their students was adequate for them to understand the English used in the English component, half of them gave affirmative answers while the other half thought it was difficult for their students to fully understand the content. The English teachers also remarked that there was a great disparity in the levels of the students in the camp.

> I thought it would be difficult, but the results showed that it was great. (ST-Chinese/Math)

> There was a huge gap among students depending on whether their schools were located in an urban or rural area. (ET-EB)

> Students' language proficiency showed great variety. … Two or three teams had some trouble following my instruction. Their proficiency levels were much lower than I had expected. I noticed two or three students could not even write a basic sentence. (ET-JM)

> Some kids felt so nervous when I first spoke in English. Yet they later found that they could always get support from others. (ET-ER)

When asked to give suggestions regarding the contents of the three science English lessons, the science teachers thought that more topics could be included in game-like activities and that perhaps a science teacher could be present to offer support. The English teachers also said that it was beneficial to have a content teacher present to answer questions that arose during the teaching.

> If a science teacher is present, then some clarification can be made to clarify misconceptions. (ST-Natural Science)

> There can be more topics, for example, balloons are related to air pressure. (ST-Science, PE and Computer Science)
>
> Besides showing videos, real objects can be included to show the three states of matter. (ST-Natural Science/PE/Computer Science)
>
> I find some school teachers are very eager to encourage their students and give some struggling learners remedial instruction in class. This actually helps them and the instructor very much. (ET-EB)
>
> The school teachers who were present were also very helpful. They know their students and they know exactly how to help and encourage them. With their help, the camp went smoothly. (ET-JG)

When the science teachers were asked if they would, in the future, incorporate English in their content courses, all of them agreed that they would:

> I have learned how to further incorporate English into my courses. (ST-Chinese/Math)
>
> Yes, you kill two birds with one stone. You have both cross-disciplinary cooperation and teacher collaboration. (ST-Science/PE/Computer Science)
>
> Indeed, I must. But relevant materials are difficult to find. (ST-Natural Science)
>
> If we want students to learn something, then we must work with English teachers. (ST-Science/Life Technology)

However, the following comment summarized the view of most of these teachers regarding science and English integration:

> This kind of ESP is very helpful to students with some English proficiency, for those with lower English proficiency, it is very challenging. If possible, maybe students can be grouped based on their English proficiency levels. (ST-Natural Science)

The English teachers were quite positive about future interdisciplinary cooperation:

> I think each discipline has its own logic and way of thinking and in teaching the emphasis may not be the same for all disciplines. If we can learn from teachers

of other disciplines, their teaching experiences and their way of thinking, it will be very helpful when trying to solve students' learning problems. (ET-JJ)

In the future, when we integrate English with another subject, it's better to invite teachers of that particular subject to join us and plan the lesson together. (ET-JG)

How do we learn the knowledge of other subject areas? From our colleagues of course. With the cooperation of colleagues from other subject areas, both sides benefit. (ET-EB)

From my personal experience, there are always sparks of inspiration when collaborating with teachers from different subject areas. Another benefit of interdisciplinary cooperation is that students are better able to integrate their knowledge, skills, and attitudes, achieving a more holistic perspective on learning. (ET-ET)

Discussion

Policy changes can often cause anxiety and resentment among those affected by the new policy. Policy changes in educational settings can be particularly contentious because of the large number of stakeholders affected and the long-term effects that may result. This chapter reported on how some teachers in Taiwan are responding to the new Twelve-Year Basic Curriculum, which is scheduled to go into full effect in 2019. The new curriculum will make significant changes in the focus of teaching and learning. Similar to other subject areas in the curriculum, English education will stress what students can do with the language while they are engaged in their studies, and how their progress in English will enable them to continue their studies and later move into the workplace.

Two cases were examined in this study to show how stakeholders are responding to the proposed changes that will be included in the Twelve-Year Basic Curriculum. Some key observations are discussed below.

In English language education, words are important in developing a context for students to learn more about the content subject. However, vocabulary should not be taught in isolation; the aim is to eventually progress to the discourse level. It is thus necessary for the language teacher to provide rich opportunities for students to use the vocabulary that will be necessary to understand the content knowledge (Lundgren, Mabbott, & Kramer, 2012). In the lower grades, English language literacy is developed alongside subject knowledge. The English component

of the science camp is an effort in this direction. Ms. Ting's incorporation of English learning into the Life Curriculum class is another example. This introduction of vocabulary and concepts provides the scaffolding that students need to advance their English language and content language (Faulkner & Kinney, 2012). Additionally, the activities built into the language lessons allow the students to produce the language they are learning (Lundgren et al., 2012). Ms. Ting, through connecting to her students' Vietnamese heritage, also allowed her students to realize the goals of intercultural communication in the new curriculum.

Teachers typically want their students to have opportunities to develop both their language skills and the language needed to successfully comprehend other subject material presented in English. Meeting the needs of students at all levels of English proficiency is thus a concern. Ever since English was first introduced into the elementary school curriculum in 2001, there has been a concern about the disparity in students' English proficiency (Chen, 2012), and some teachers worry that interdisciplinary projects will exacerbate this problem (Chen, 2017). Both Ms. Ting and the English teachers in the science camp believed that interdisciplinary cooperation will allow them to become more fully aware of their students' strengths and challenges. They pointed out that collaboration increases their shared focus on better meeting the educational needs of the students in their classes (Aube, Baer-Simahk, & McLinden, 2012).

Conclusion

Effective collaboration between a language teacher and a content teacher allows for better planning and overall delivery of content in the classroom. The English teacher can provide expertise in second language acquisition to develop the best strategies for both language and academic content learning. The content teacher can provide guidance on the subject matter that needs to be learned in the various grades (Bell & Walker, 2012). The teachers who provided feedback for this chapter are not intimidated by the proposed new curriculum. Nor are they viewing it with dread or a sense of resignation. Nonetheless, this does not mean that there will not be hurdles to overcome as the Twelve-Year Basic Education Curriculum goes into effect. The courses offered in teacher training programs at universities in Taiwan will need to reflect the principles of the Twelve-Year Basic Education Curriculum. Administrators

will need to provide support, particularly by allocating time in the school schedule, for language teachers and content teachers to develop interdisciplinary classes. The MOE will also need to offer professional development training in which teachers can learn more about language and content integration and discuss efforts in their own schools. Through this kind of commitment, the Twelve-Year Basic Education Curriculum can indeed be viewed as an opportunity.

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Notes

1. At the lower-grade levels, Grades 1 and 2, the national curriculum only includes four areas of study: Language Arts, Math, Life Curriculum, and Health and Physical Education. In other words, subjects such as Social Studies, Natural Science, Arts, and Integrated Activities are replaced by Life Curriculum in the lower-grade levels.
2. *My Plate* is a program developed by the United States Department of Agriculture with the goal of developing healthy eating behaviors throughout one's lifetime. For more information, see https://www.choosemyplate.gov/MyPlate.
3. Comments made by the English teachers have been edited for clarity when quoted in this paper.
4. The identity of the participants is kept confidential and coded with the first two letters indicating whether they are science teachers or English teachers. What follows the first two letters for science teachers (ST) are the subjects they teach, and for English teachers (ET) are the grade level of their schools (E for elementary school and J for junior high school) and the initials of their first names.

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CHAPTER 21

An Examination of Language Planning and Policy: Implications for Language and Literacy Education in the Macau Education System

Sou-Kuan Vong and Xiaomeng Wu

Introduction

Macau was a Portuguese overseas territory from the sixteenth century until 1999. The colonial period and the handover to the People's Republic of China (hereafter PRC) has had a strong impact on Macau's culture and identity. This specific historical condition contributes to the formation of a very different context of language and literacy education and makes Macau a very special case in the Greater China region. Throughout history, the language planning and policy (hereafter LPP) in Macau has been deeply affected by the political discourse. The co-existence of Portuguese, Chinese, English, and other languages made it a multilingual society in which the LPP and the corresponding language and literacy education are complex and have developed in a non-linear

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B. L. Reynolds and M. F. Teng (eds.),
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manner. The development of language and literacy education in Macau involves the negotiation of local and national identity together with the re-positioning of Macau in the global context.

The signing of the Joint Declaration between the Government of the PRC and the Government of the Republic of Portugal on the Question of Macau (hereinafter as "the Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration") in 1987 had accelerated the holistic social development in Macau, which officially brought the long-neglected language issue to the fore. The current chapter takes the Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration as a demarcation point for discussing the language planning and policy during the pre- and post-1999 eras in Macau, aiming to examine the practices and impact of LPP on language education and literacy (especially English) in the education system of the Macau Special Administrative Region (hereafter Macau SAR). The chapter will begin by presenting the context under study and provide a brief account of the language environment in Macau. The main study adopts a document analysis approach to comprehensively scrutinize and analyze the LPP of Macau SAR, through four categories of documents, including education legislation, curriculum frameworks, teacher training programs, and the government funded school improvement projects. Finally, the focus of analysis, involving discussions from the main study, will be developed and suggestions will be proposed.

Languages in Society and LPP

Macau, a melting pot of Western and Eastern cultures since the sixteenth century, is a small city of around thirty-one square kilometers, with a population of 656,700, located at the mouth of the Pearl River Delta. It comprises the Macau peninsula and two islands—Taipa and Coloane. According to the 2016 Bi-census, Chinese make up 88.4% of the population, Portuguese 1.4%, and the remaining 11.6% is composed of Filipino, Indonesian, Vietnamese, and other nationalities (Direcção dos Serviços de Estatística e Censos [DSEC], 2017).

Regarding the language situation in Macau, although Portuguese is one of the official languages in Macau, its use is confined to 2.3% of local residents, Cantonese is the language in everyday use and accounts for 80.1% of the population; Putonghua and English have gained growing prominence since 1999, constituting 50.4% and 27.5%, respectively (DSEC, 2017). English, an especially dominant lingua franca, has played an important and irreplaceable role in Macau society with the rapid

development of the economy, particularly the establishment of transnational corporations and casinos during the past two decades.

The notion of language planning, according to Haugen (1993, p. 109), refers to "an attempt to guide the development of a language direction desired by the planner" and "a deliberate effort" to achieve the desired goals. More specifically, it refers to "a broad range of decisions affecting the structure, function, and acquisition of language in schools" (Tollefson, 2017, p. 17). However, language policy, according to Mesthrie, Swann, Deumert, and Leap (2000, p. 384) relates to "the more general linguistic, political and social goals underlying the actual language planning process." Poon (2004, p. 54) considers that the two concepts are related and yet different, "language policy covers a wider range of situations than language planning, which is government-directed and deals with status planning and corpus planning only." Furthermore, Spolsky (2017) points out that there are three interrelated components, namely practices, beliefs and ideologies, and management. In Spolsky (2017)'s term, "practices" refer to the "normal" or "practiced" language behavior of the community; "beliefs and ideologies" mean the desirable language behavior and "management" indicates the ways in which the interested parties of the community attempt to take measures to influence the "beliefs and ideologies."

Literacy and Medium of Instruction

Education is one of the important sites for LPP while literacy is the core of education (UNESCO, 2005). Literacy is a broad concept which has an indivisible relationship with education and knowledge. In effect, the way literacy is defined has an enormous impact on "the goals and strategies adopted and the programs designed by policy makers as well as the teaching and learning methodologies, curricular and materials employed by practitioners" (UNESCO, 2004, p. 12).

The adoption of a medium of instruction (hereafter MOI) and the teaching of languages demonstrate both the real language situation and also the projection of desired language practice in the future. In Macau, the education system is subdivided into two systems tertiary and non-tertiary which includes recurrent education and continuous education and others. This study focuses on non-tertiary education, particularly on that in formal school education. The school system in Macau is diverse with curricula adopted from Portugal, PRC, Taiwan, and Hong Kong

(Bray & Koo, 2004). However, it is worth noting that, to date, whatever the curriculum a school follows, the English language remains an important teaching subject. In practice, schools using Chinese as their MOI (hereafter CMI) adopted English as a foreign language; schools using Portuguese as the MOI (hereafter as PMI) selected English as a foreign language; schools using English (including international schools, Anglo-Chinese schools or school with special English section) as the MOI (hereafter EMI) took English as their first or second foreign language; whereas in Luso-Chinese schools, the CMI was adopted and Portuguese and English taught as first and second foreign languages, respectively. For this reason, Moody (2008) points out that English is enjoying a de facto official status in Macau. Young (2009) also found that English was students' second preferred MOI and community language, and favorite language in Macau. Given this unique demographic background and language situation, the language issue in Macau has become complicated and dynamic. In the academic year 2017/2018, there were 77 schools registered in Macau with a total of 76,346 students, among which 943 are students enrolled at Portuguese speaking schools, 10,749 at schools with EMI and the remainder 64,654 students enrolled at schools with CMI (Macau Education and Youth Bureau, 2018c). Details of Macau's LPP in different periods will be examined and analyzed in the following section.

Development of LPP in the Macau education system

This section adopts a chronological perspective to recount the development of LPP in the pre- and post-1999 periods in order to reveal the changing discourses.

LPP in the Political Transition Period

The language issue was a battlefield for political negotiation during the transition period in Macau (Bray & Koo, 2004). After the signing of the Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration in 1987, the Macau-Portuguese government adopted two major measures, namely localization of the civil servant corps and the production of extensive legislation. The purpose of both measures was to promote Portuguese and to extend Portuguese influence beyond the political transition. In the area of school education, for instance, after the promulgation of the first Education Law in 1991,

the Macau-Portuguese government attempted to make the Portuguese language a compulsory subject in schools that were receiving funding from the government (Bray & Koo, 2004). However, this political-motivated attempt did not have any effect on language teaching, owing to the opposition of two major local education associations, namely the Macau Catholic Schools Association and the Macau Education Association. This incident demonstrated the unequal power between the private sector and the government and the conflicts between the "desired" language behavior expected by the government and normal "practice" of language behavior in the local community. The language situation during the said period was a form of "practice-as-policy" in which "policy" was ad hoc in nature and loosely shaped by common practices. In the meantime, English language, though offered as one of the main subjects in school, did not receive much emphasis and promotion in both the political and educational dimensions. During this period, the LPP was driven by the political agenda and attempted to influence the "practiced" language behavior (Spolsky, 2017), however, it was unsuccessful. Furthermore, LPP remained mainly a loose policy without planning.

LPP After the Sovereignty Handover Period

Macau has undergone extensive social change since 1999. The proliferation of casinos has attracted a huge influx of foreign capital, resulting in it being named the "Las Vegas of the East." The once small fishing village has been transformed into a transnational trading platform. This dramatic economic development has fundamentally contributed to framing the landscape and goal of education, specifically the language policy. In response to this, the local government advocates the discourse of "triliterate" (Chinese, English, Portuguese) and "tetra-lingual" (Cantonese, Putonghua, English and Portuguese) in schools so that these needs can be met. De facto, "language-as-policy" appeared in the first *Ten Years Plan of Non-tertiary Education Development (2011–2020)* which gives weight to the enhancement of language ability, including the use of Putonghua and one foreign language, preferably English, being taught by most local schools. Additionally, under the guidance of the Central Government, Macau has specific roles to play as One Center and One Platform which immediately projects the needs of local people who are required to be fluent in languages, for instance, Putonghua, English and Portuguese in order that they are able to take the lead in these new

roles. In the post-1999 era, LPP has been driven by both the political and the economic agenda. During this period, the development of LPP has been supported by more elaborate measures to effect change including curriculum reform, in-service teacher education, and school-based reforms. These will be analyzed in the following section.

Analysis of LPP in the Macau Education System

This section provides an examination of the practices and impact of LPP through the analysis of official documents. Macau has a civil-code legal system and it is significantly modeled on, or derived from, the judicial framework of the Portuguese legal system which is characterized in the form of written text, including legislation and codes. Therefore, legislation is the foremost source of planning and policy in Macau. Drawing on the two concepts of language planning and language policy mentioned earlier, four categories of official documents are included in this analysis.

1. The first category lays the legal foundation for education development which describes the desired goals of the Macau SAR, including the *Fundamental Law of Non-tertiary Education* (Macau SAR Government, 2006) and the *Ten-Year Plan for the Development of Non-tertiary Education (2011–2020)* (Macau SAR Government, 2011).
2. The second category concerns the local curriculum, including the *Curriculum Framework for Formal Education of the Local Education System* (Macau SAR Government, 2014), the *Requirements for Basic Academic Competences in the Local School System* (Macau SAR Government, 2015b) and *Requirements for Basic Academic Competencies* for Early Childhood Education (Macau SAR Government, 2015a), Primary Education (Macau SAR Government, 2016), Junior Secondary (Macau SAR Government, 2017b) and Senior Secondary Education (Macau SAR Government, 2017a). These documents define the detailed planning and measures required to achieve the desired educational goals specified in the *Fundamental Law of Non-tertiary Education*.
3. The third category is related to teacher education development in Macau, including the legislation regarding teacher training (Macau Government, 1997) and initial teacher education programs provided by the local universities. Teacher education has

a decisive impact on the quality of teaching and learning in all schools (Sahlberg, 2010; Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2016). It is one of domains for making education goals possible. The inclusion of teacher education in this analysis, with particular reference to English language teaching, can provide substantial evidence to explain the status quo of English language education.

4. The fourth category of documents under analysis is related to school projects approved by the Education Development Fund (Education Development Fund, 2018) in the area of language education and literacy. Taking the results of the academic year 2017/2018 as an example, the applications from 68 schools including 110 school sections are scrutinized. The allocation of funding is a direct way of making the planning of school projects possible. Therefore, the analysis of approved school projects is one of the ways to cross-check government intent with real practice.

From the above definitions and the classification of documents under analysis, Fig. 21.1 shows the flow of development of LPP and their relationship in three domains, namely curriculum, teacher education, and school-based projects. The first category of documents belongs to that of the policy level which describes the holistic and desired goals of education in general. According to the collected documents, there are two levels of planning, namely "Planning 1" and "Planning 2"; the former is a loose frame which delineates the scope for further action, while the latter provides more detailed measures and actions to achieve the goals.

Relationship Between LPP and the Curriculum

The Fundamental Law of Non-tertiary Education (hereafter the *Education Law*) is the "Basic Law" of education. In this law, there are three major points related to language and literacy education. The first lies in Chapter 2, which is the principle of the law; it states that education in Macau has to cultivate citizens who can sustain the economic development of Macau and who will possess diverse abilities and competitiveness for integration in the global community. This echoes the needs of recent economic development which requires local citizens to have a good command of foreign languages (English and Portuguese) in order to integrate with the global community. The second point

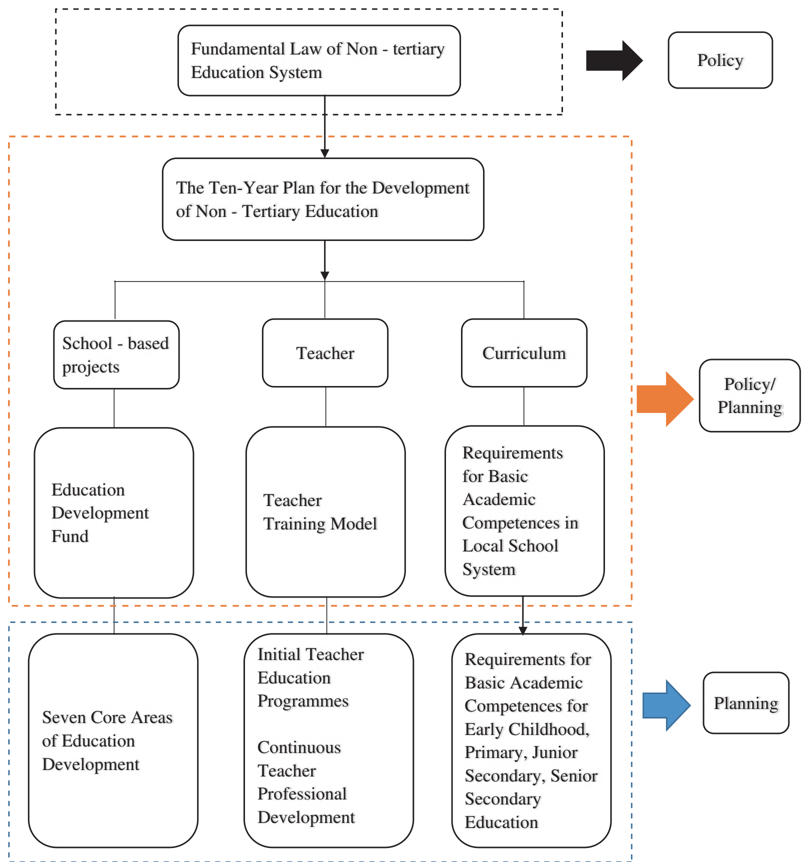

Fig. 21.1 Relationship of LPP in curriculum, teacher education, and school-based projects

is scattered throughout Chapter 3 and relates to the organization of non-tertiary education, including early childhood, primary, and secondary education. Communication, cultural understanding, and global integration are strongly emphasized under the support of language and literacy education at different stages. The third point stated in Article 37 of Chapter 7, educational institutions and education system, specifically refers to the teaching of languages. This Article defines the teaching of languages in schools. Government schools must adopt one of the

official languages as a MOI and provide students with an opportunity to learn a second language, whereas private schools can either use the official language or other languages as the MOI. This Article is explained in an implementable form in a later document, *Curriculum Framework for Formal Education of Local Education System* and *Requirements for Basic Academic Competencies* for various education levels.

The Ten-Year Plan for the Development of Non-tertiary Education (2011–2020) (hereafter the *Plan*) is a strategic education development plan. The rationale of the *Plan* is to cultivate talents and produce high-quality citizens who can sustain future development. The enhancement of language and literacy is one of the measures accentuated. It explicitly outlines three directions for enhancing language and literacy education. The first is the improvement of language proficiency through "enhancement of students reading interests, writing ability, writing skills and literary literacy. Secondary school graduates are able to master at least one foreign language. Students from schools using CMI can speak Putonghua fluently" (Macau SAR Government, 2011, p. 125). The second is the elevation of the language proficiency of teachers who are teaching foreign languages. The third direction is the government utilizing the Education Development Fund to enhance foreign language ability through the professional support of teachers, curriculum and instruction, and learning environment innovations. Although the *Plan* does not specify the foreign language, it is well understood that it refers to English. This can be further found later in the analysis of the school-based development projects sponsored by the Education Development Fund.

The Curriculum Framework for Formal Education of Local Education System (hereafter *Curriculum Framework*) is the key document related to teaching and learning. The function of this framework is to standardize the learning domains and learning time among diverse schools. The major feature of the *Curriculum Framework* is to incorporate "leisure time," previously known as extra-curricular activities, into the formal curriculum, and the extension of school days from 180 to 195 per academic year. These two changes have had a direct impact on students. For instance, according to the *Curriculum Framework*, junior secondary students now have less learning time (1120–1600 minutes/week) in the area of academic subjects compared with the previous framework (1480–1850 minutes/week), within which English teaching has also been proportionally reduced. This, as related by some frontline English teachers,

has translated into the reduction of teaching time which is unfavorable for learning.

The Requirements for Basic Academic Competences in Local School System (hereafter *Requirements*) is an amplification of the *Curriculum Framework* in terms of the requirements of students' academic competence at the end of each education level. The *Requirements* were further elaborated by four pieces of legislation embracing the four education levels, early childhood (K1–3), primary (Grade 1–6), junior secondary (Grade 7–9), and senior secondary (Grade 10–12). These three (Macau SAR Government, 2015a, 2016, 2017a, 2017b), the exception being early childhood, have a common classification of MOI and second language teaching. The legislation clarifies the different roles and goals of the MOI and the teaching of foreign languages, for instance, English or Portuguese. Taking the *Requirements* for languages of senior secondary education as an illustrative example, it states that English acquisition is significant for preparing students to meet future challenges in social and economic circumstances. The major difference between the English language in CMI and EMI schools is that English learning is to improve the efficiency of the remainder of the subjects in the EMI schools.

The relationship between LPP with the curriculum, similar to that of many other areas, is in a hierarchical linear flow. Along with curriculum development, the Education and Youth Bureau (Direcção dos Serviços de Educação e Juventude, DSEJ) has introduced the concept of literacy by joining some international assessment programs, for instance, PISA in 2003 and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2016, respectively, in order to have a form of global benchmarking and to effect changes in language education and literacy.

Relationship Between LPP and Teacher Education

It is widely acknowledged that high-quality teacher education can cultivate high-quality teachers who can foster students' achievements. There are four types of teacher education, namely initial/pre-service, in-service, continuous, and specific teacher education (Macau Government, 1997). The concept of in-service teacher education, according to the legislation, purposely aims to upgrade current in-service teachers with a higher academic degree or certificate. Continuous teacher education, also known as teacher professional development, serves to refresh teachers with new teaching methods and required skills. Specific teacher education

principally intends to equip teachers with special competences for specific roles. The focus of analysis in this chapter is confined to initial and continuous teacher education, intending to reveal the state of teacher education in Macau and discuss the relationship between LPP and teacher education. In effect, one of the measures stated in the *Plan* also concerns the enhancement of language proficiency of language teachers.

Currently, in Macau, there are three higher education institutions that offer initial teacher education, namely the University of Macau (hereafter UM), the Institute of Macau Polytechnic, and the St. Joseph University (hereafter SJU). As the Institute of Polytechnic offers teacher training in the subjects of Arts, Music, and Physical Education, it will not be included in this study. The UM has the longest history in providing teacher education in Macau, to date, the Faculty of Education provides programs for producing qualified Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics, Early Childhood, and Primary Education school teachers. The SJU began offering Bachelor of Education (hereafter B.Ed.) programs leading to qualified school teachers in 2013 (the first cohort of B.Ed. students graduated in 2017). Subjects include English Language, Religious Education, Primary, and Early Childhood Education. In addition to the B.Ed. programs, the two universities also offer Postgraduate Certificate in Education (hereafter PGCE) programs for those who already hold a Bachelor's degree and want to join the teaching profession. The PGCE offered by UM is CMI, while SJU adopts EMI. In terms of language teacher education, the UM has assumed a major role in preparing Chinese and English teachers for secondary schools. For more than a decade, the UM has offered summer English and Chinese language immersion programs for student-teachers. However, unlike the practice of Hong Kong, such language immersion programs are not an obligatory element in the initial teacher education programs.

Regarding the training of primary school teachers, the two universities similarly offer comprehensive training programs for teaching a variety of school subjects. This means that teachers will not specialize in a certain subject, for instance, language education. At the present time, most language teachers in primary education graduate from these comprehensive training programs. There are also some secondary English school teachers who move to teach at the primary level after receiving a supplementary program. These teachers are well-received by schools because they are more specialized in English language education. To a great extent, the longstanding absence of a dedicated English language education

program is unfavorable for the development of English language education and literacy.

Continuous teacher education has gained more importance especially after the introduction of the *System Framework for Private School Teaching Staff of Non-tertiary Education* (Macau SAR Government, 2012) in 2012 which aims to establish the career regime and build a professional body of teachers. According to this law, teachers are divided into six levels of rank (the lowest rank is level 6) so that they are required to fulfill certain hours of professional development within a specified period before they can progress to the next level. It can be understood that this requirement has effectively driven teachers to enroll in professional training courses for further progression. The DSEJ is the major provider of these professional training courses. According to the 2017/2018 Teachers Training Program Schedule (Macau Education and Youth Bureau, 2018b), the total hours of training offered amounts to 3565.5 hours, amongst which, language education occupies 910 hours, around 25.5%. In the category of language education, the distribution of training hours is as follows: English 388 hours, Cantonese 365, Putonghua 101, and Portuguese 65, respectively. In addition, some extra language education courses were also offered throughout the year, with a total of 278 hours, of which English occupied 166 hours, Cantonese 41, Putonghua 40 and Portuguese 31. Since 2007, the DSEJ has also organized an English immersion program in Australia (the first cohort was in New Zealand) for in-service primary and secondary English teachers. From this, it is clear that English language education has gained more importance and is prioritized among the remaining three languages.

As stated, good teacher education is essential to foster quality education. From the evidence demonstrated above, it is conspicuous that the non-uniform MOI between different institutes and the absence of dedicated English language education programs specifically in the preparation of primary English school teachers does not develop fully in line with the goals stated in the *Education Law* or the *Plan*. On the contrary, the continuous teacher education which is principally administered by the local government develops in line with the LPP with increasing emphasis on English language education in enhancing teachers' language proficiency and teaching skills. Furthermore, since 2007, a new and specific position entitled "Reading Promoter" was created with the support and encouragement of the DSEJ; this position was designed to play an essential role to foster student interest in reading. A qualified Reading Promoter is required to obtain a higher education degree in literature, education, or

library science and receive continuing training in classroom-related reading courses provided by the DSEJ for not less than 120 hours within three years after joining the position. According to the DSEJ's summary table of 2018/2019 training activities for teaching staff, 120 hours courses, involving parent-child teaching, reading instruction, reading methods, and picture books teaching for Reading Promoters are still in operation. There is every reason to believe that the aim of the cultivation of professional full-time staff is to efficiently promote the reading ethos and enhance reading literacy among students and schools. Although the current reading literacy enhancement committed to by the DSEJ is principally in the Chinese language, it is worth noting that the formation of the reading habit can provide a solid ground for developing reading literacy in other languages.

Relationship Between LPP and School-Based Development Projects

The private school sector plays a significant role in the school system. Throughout the years, with the continuous increase in funding, private schools have gradually developed a close working relationship with the government. In addition to normal annual funding which amounts to 80% or more of the basic operational cost of the schools, private schools can also apply for funding from the Education Development Fund (hereafter Fund) for school improvements. The Fund was founded in 2007 with a specific responsibility to aid non-profit-making schools to develop education plans and activities in the following seven core areas: (1) Optimization of school education planning; (2) Betterment of the school environment and facilities; (3) Improvement of the school-based curriculum and teaching; (4) Promotion of the professional development of teachers; (5) Assurance of the students' balanced development; (6) Support for special education development; and (7) Advancement of continuing education development (Macau Education and Youth Bureau, 2018c).

The Fund is a form of "money/policy-driven-school-based activities," which is well-received among local schools. The Fund calls for applications with a prioritized list of funding agenda annually. In effect, the prioritized list has successfully directed school development and practice in a subtle way. It is also evident that, for the past few years, English language education has been prioritized. Taking the subsidized results of the academic year 2017/2018 as an example showed that among the applications from 68 schools including 110 school sections (in Macau

some schools have 4 sections including kindergarten, primary, junior secondary, and senior secondary), there were 46 schools including 71 school sections successfully receiving school-based projects funding for the enhancement of English. In addition, 30 school sections, particularly senior secondary, applied for funding for students to sit public language examinations, such as the International English Testing System (IELTS), the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOFEL) and the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) (Macau Education and Youth Bureau, 2018a). In line with this, continuous teacher education mentioned earlier also provides courses to train IELTS teachers for better preparing students for the examination. From the approved school-based projects in English language education mentioned above, it is apparent that the local government is making use of the global language testing systems as a measure for effecting language and literacy improvement in Macau.

Conclusions

LPP is Highly Politicized in the Pre- and Post-1999 Eras

In Macau, LPP was initially employed to perpetuate colonial influence during the political transitional period with the emphasis on the promotion of Portuguese. While at present, the Macau SAR Government places great weight on encouraging and promoting English education in order to increase competitiveness in the globalized economy, for instance, to take a role in the "One Centre and One Platform." From the discussion above, one common feature is that LPP is highly politicized during both periods.

To date, the Macau SAR government, accompanied with a series of rapid social developments in Macau, has already actually realized and admitted the importance of English as a lingua franca. Hence, various resources to promote English education and literacy are actively employed in the current education system.

English Language Education is Confronting Different forms of Challenge

The Incompatibility Between Planning and Policy in the Curriculum

It can be summarized that LPP in Macau has become more focused with clear directions in the post-1999 era. The Macau SAR has positioned

language highly as a way to enhance global competitiveness in the different pieces of legislation and in documents, especially in the area of English language which continues to be the core teaching subject in CMI or EMI schools in the newly published *Requirements* in 2015. However, in the newly published *Curriculum Framework*, the time for the core subjects (including language) is reduced. Although there is still no evidence to show how this reduction of learning time in the formal curriculum has had an impact on students' performance, it is worth hearing the experiences and difficulties of frontline teachers in this new setting, especially if we take what we learned from previous experience into consideration, that is, the fragmented LPP during the colonial period which made language and literacy education unsustainable and unfavorable for teaching and learning. To avoid such a situation, more dialog between teacher education providers and language policy makers is necessary to ensure the consistency and reliability of LPP.

Initial/Pre-service English Teacher Education Lags Behind the Needs of the Local Community

It is evident that continuous teacher education under the administration of DSEJ as a substantial form of government-led policy (Poon, 2004) has effectively developed planning in line with the language policy. Meanwhile, initial teacher education, specifically English language education, has assumed great responsibility in providing qualified teachers. However, it lags behind, and does not meet, the emerging requirements of society, for instance, a specialized primary English education program, which is greatly needed. Hence, more dialog between teacher education providers and language policy makers is necessary.

As noted, most schools in Macau adopt CMI, student-teachers in the initial teacher education also principally come from CMI schools, and this means that they may require a more favorable environment in order to enhance their English ability. As such, an native English immersion program, with reference to the successful practice of Hong Kong, should be considered a compulsory component incorporated in the B.Ed. program in order to enhance their English proficiency. In the face of the current situation, there is the reason to believe that, based on the experiences of what the DSEJ has offered for teachers during the past summer programs, the implementation of this kind of immersion program has sufficient operability, together with benefits for filling the disparity existing between the community's needs and the teachers' abilities.

Building up a Permanent University-School Partnership to Foster Language Education and Literacy
The Fund has successfully initiated school-based English teaching reforms. Currently, the application for the Fund is confined to non-profit-making private education schools. It means that academic staff in Higher Education who are involved in teacher education and have helpful ideas for improving school practice are not eligible to apply. This is not favorable in building the University-School partnership which is currently a new force in fostering school improvements. Furthermore, the current Fund is limited to subsidizing teaching and learning activities. It does not explicitly include research in the funding guidelines. It is well acknowledged that good research informs practice. Therefore, the scope of the Fund should be broadened in order to bring new possibilities for school improvements.

External Assessment and Language Testing Systems Emerge as a New Driving Force
The introduction of international assessment such as PISA and PIRLS to Macau have effectively influenced the conception of language education and literacy in the education system. These international assessments have contributed in shaping the teaching/learning in schools. In addition, the financial incentive to encourage students to sit international English testing examinations is also one of the direct ways to effect change in teaching and learning. It is obvious that these external forces have the power to shape language teaching and learning. However, we argue that there is the risk of "teaching to the test" being placed at the core of language education. For instance, the reading literacy of Hong Kong students in PISA is always in the top rank. However, they do not actually enjoy reading (Faculty of Education, HKU, 2017). This is an example which requires some reflection. In view of the global influence and local needs, the LPP of Macau should develop a more appropriate and balanced way to embrace current and future challenges.

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PART VI

Conclusion

CHAPTER 22

English Foreign and Second Language Literacy Instruction for Chinese Speakers: Future Directions and Implications

Mark Feng Teng and Barry Lee Reynolds

Rethinking English Literacy Issues

English is widely taught as a foreign language (FL) or second language (L2) in kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools, and universities throughout the globe. English literacy is high on the agenda in Chinese-Speaking contexts, where there is a lack of clarity about what knowledge should be taught and learned when English is a subject (Pine & Yu, 2012). EFL students have a low level of motivation and language attainment due to loss of engagement in learning (Xu, 2013). The inadequate effort provided to English learners to train them in literacy skills is not due to lack of concern on the part of educators, researchers,

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policy makers, classroom practitioners, or politicians. Instead, a combination of factors makes literacy development a conceptually difficult topic for English learners, particularly those in a context where English exposure is limited. Among these factors are: the dynamic and evolving policies related to EFL/L2 literacy, the fluidity of what it means to be literate depending on learning context and the tremendous diversity of learners, the controversial state of literacy research in general, and the insufficient and inconsistent research findings on EFL/L2 literacy processes and programs. This book may not be able to address all the inherent problems in EFL/L2 literacy instruction nor was it our aim for this book to do so. However, the contributors have attempted to address some of the emerging problems. These chapters have been written from the perspective of those that have firsthand contact with learners (i.e., classroom teachers) and by those that are actively involved in policy development or critique.

It is hoped that, this book, offering a balanced perspective on key issues facing literacy instruction for students at various levels of education, can act as a springboard to others interested in this area of research and practice. It has been our aim for the book to provide comprehensive, up-to-date, critical and authoritative ideas on the EFL/L2 literacy instructional practices for Chinese speakers. We hope this collection of studies and commentaries will become standard reading for teachers in training and serve as an inspiration to in-service teachers as they dip into the contents. By reading the chapters from each region, readers may begin to form a picture of the practices in each region, thereby gaining an awareness of key issues in English literacy development relevant to Chinese speakers. This collection provides a synthesis of research findings that encourages reflection on language policy so that we may begin to formulate probable responses to the demands of literacy instruction.

There are still challenges related to EFL/L2 literacy instruction to be taken on in the future. First, it should not be assumed that the concept of literacy has been watered down to only that of reading and writing—instead, it has been developed beyond this simple definition into a meaning-making enterprise. For example, students need different linguistic and knowledge (i.e., funds of knowledge) resources to comprehend and produce English texts. Second, one's first language (L1) influences reading-writing relationships, thus the connection between the two literacy skills and systems should also be highlighted (Carson, Carrell, Silberstein, Kroll, & Kuehn, 1990). L2 literacy research on

the transferability of skills across languages has remained inconclusive. Future research needs to reconceptualize EFL/L2 literacy in terms of learners' L1 background.

In summary, EFL/L2 literacy as an academic subject is a relatively recent arrival but has gained a prominent place in schools and universities. Learning to read and write is a laborious process, and it is the ability to read and write which makes a person *literate*, with varying degrees of fluency (Inglis & Aers, 2008). However, literacy cannot continue to only be defined as the ability to read and write. Thus, schools and universities are striving to reconceptualize L2 literacy for the twenty-first century and develop curriculum that corresponds to the need of promoting literacy as a basic subject. This speaks well for the need of this book. We are also looking forward to reading the future research that the contributors to this volume will produce and we encourage the authors to follow up this line of research. For example, there are chapters in the current volume that critique language and literacy policies especially in terms of how literacy has been or is being defined and how such policies are actualized in language classrooms by language teachers. Furthermore, Second-Language Acquisition (SLA) and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) have traditionally defined being literate in English as aiming for or adhering to native speaker norms; while some authors of the current edited volume also fall in line with this traditional notion of being literate in an L2, other authors tackle issues that have not been previously handled. These include whether native-like language acquisition is necessary to be literate in an L2. Lastly, what is arguably most appealing about the current volume is the practical approach taken to discuss major issues. Many of these issues are discussed from a bottom-up perspective, meaning many of the chapters deal with issues that are of immediate interest and importance to English language teachers. In other words, the issues of literacy instruction, language acquisition/instruction, English as a Medium of instruction (EMI) among others are being brought out of the ivory towers and into the hands of those that actually deal with them—teachers. We applaud such efforts.

Reflections on the Issues

The chapters in this book tackle eight main issues. First, literacy instruction should be focused on lexical knowledge and focused feedback. Development of reading and writing literacy is an active process,

which requires learners to continually acquire lexical knowledge (see Ma & Lee, Chapter 3) and formulaic language (see Ding & Reynolds, Chapter 7). Acquiring adequate lexical knowledge, including depth and breadth of vocabulary knowledge, is essential to learners' capacity to function well in a reading literacy context (Teng, 2018a). Vocabulary and reading comprehension are multidimensional, incremental, context dependent, and develop in a connected relationship (Paris, 2005). Given that vocabulary knowledge is multifaceted (Teng, 2016, 2018b), students' comprehension of reading texts can become elusive (Shih & Reynolds, 2018). In addition, in response to rule-based and lexically-based errors, teachers' feedback as error correction can facilitate both grammatical and lexical acquisition (see Kao for Chapter 15). However, as argued by Bui and Yu (Chapter 8), teacher written comments may lose their effectiveness when such feedback is implemented too long before the next written draft is produced by learners. Teachers should give students encouragement during the whole writing process, especially when revising previously written drafts as students may easily lose motivation or become bored (Reynolds, 2016). Hence, if we believe that literacy development should involve the basic elements of reading and writing, then development of lexical knowledge and feedback practices is extremely important to build a solid foundation in reading and writing skills.

Second, development of content knowledge is essential to reading comprehension. EFL/L2 learners' intractable problems of poor reading comprehension are partly related to the lack of content knowledge (Shawna, 2014). Steady acquisition of content knowledge is the key to sufficient reading literacy and well worth the instructional adjustments and innovations in curriculum development (Shih & Reynolds, 2018). Reading literacy is dependent on the provisions of content knowledge for learners to make coherent sense of what is being read. Without content knowledge, EFL/L2 learners may get caught on partial details of a text. The learners can be distracted, and comprehension of the text can be disrupted. The understanding of content knowledge acts as a road map for learners, allowing them to not stray from the text. Once printed materials have been decoded into words, reading literacy requires learners' active construction through inferences made based on content knowledge explicitly or implicitly present in the text. However, in teaching content knowledge for improving EFL students' reading literacy, teachers tend to use bottom-up strategies. The use of bottom-up

processing, according to Wong (Chapter 12), should be cautiously applied, as students often overuse such strategies by mainly focusing on decoding every single word in a text. This is limiting in that their L2 reading and understanding of L2 texts remains much at the literal level.

Third, literacy involves multimodal, technological, and symbolic representations. Given the multiple dimensions of literacy, developing project-based learning activities are an important way of providing extensive practice outside the classroom. For example, as described in Lee (Chapter 17), the project of Book Builder, using technology, allowed learners to create and publish e-books. This project improved learners' ability to read and write, as well as their ability to adapt their reading and writing skills to become better prepared for future language learning requirements. Other activities, e.g., stories, songs, and games, can also increase students' interests and engagement in language learning. Becoming literate does not need to be mundane. As argued by Ng (Chapter 4), using stories, songs, and games can motivate students, particularly those at the pre-primary level, while they learn to listen and read in English because these activities activate multiple sensory channels in their brains. Other researchers and classroom practitioners also discussed activities for enhancing EFL students' literacy skills. For example, Lin, Shih, and Lee (Chapter 5) suggested teachers should tailor-make content and language integrated learning (CLIL) materials for improving primary school students' reading comprehension and writing ability. Chan (Chapter 6) also reported on how the Award Scheme on Instructional Design promoted by the Macau government has been instrumental in moving primary education toward a more student-centered pedagogy.

Fourth, writing assessment is an important topic in EFL/L2 literacy development. Assessing literacy has been an important topic for discussion and research, for which EFL/L2 teachers should cope with the changing and challenging demands to support learning. Assessment cannot be only for the evaluation of learning outcomes but also for the creation of learning opportunities. The development of assessment literacy requires teachers: (1) to have an understanding of what they are assessing, (2) accept that how they assess literacy should be based on the purpose or purposes for becoming literate in an L2, and (3) be comfortable with making learner assessment decisions (Inbar-Lourie, 2008). Assessment of literacy can be achieved through a sound understanding of the nature of assessment, providing assessment training and workshops, engaging in educational practices and innovation, and

making assessment resources available to language teachers (Coombe, Troudi, & Al-Hamly, 2012). However, we should also acknowledge the challenges of assessing literacy. The development of literacy assessment does not only concern teachers, but also policy makers, test developers, and school administrators. As proposed by Lam (Chapter 9), teachers are usually only on the receiving end of assessment reforms (e.g., assessment *for* learning and assessment *as* learning). Teachers are seldom encouraged to take initiatives to adopt a bottom-up approach to assessment innovations. There still remains a clear hierarchy among policy makers and in-service teachers. The way to bridging this gap seems rather elusive. Related to this, Ma (Chapter 16) suggested a need for continuous assessment, both summative and formative, which is related to the students' learning of academic English writing and learner self-regulation.

Fifth, there is a need to attend to the different aspects of reading programs or writing centers. Developing a reading program, as acknowledged by Moorhouse and Wong (Chapter 2), is challenging. For example, one difficulty is meeting students' specific needs and developing their abilities to adapt to the curriculum. Another challenge arises when students are given high-stakes assessments. When students receive the same instruction, they have to prepare for end-of-term tests. To address these types of challenges, teachers need more autonomy to determine what students should learn in class, and assessments should be more adaptable to reflect what was being taught in each classroom. However, teachers are often not empowered with adequate autonomy, and this becomes a difficulty when developing learner-centered reading programs. In a similar vein, developing a writing center can benefit university students but it can also be a challenging endeavor. For example, as acknowledged by Zhang (Chapter 14), the inherently unequal power dynamics between student writers and peer tutors as well as that between Chinese peer tutors and native English-speaking teachers might hinder students' learning to write in the L2. The main problem with developing a writing center is how the writing center directors can promote explicitly and repeatedly a respectful, egalitarian, and relaxing tone at their institutions to ensure that the writing center can reflect a safe and welcoming space for writing literacy learning rather than one where students feel isolated. The effectiveness of a writing center lies in a collaborative orientation characterized by scaffolding, negotiation, and discussion between student writers and tutors.

Sixth, we acknowledge the importance of becoming aware of the cultural knowledge and norms associated with literate language use. The importance of intercultural awareness, as suggested by Fang and Jiang (Chapter 13), reflects the value of researching cultural literacy, referring to learners' ability to understand and participate fluently in a given culture (Hirsch, 1983). Indeed, learning to read and write cannot be separated from the culturally assumed knowledge that affect students' learning practices. Culture is an integrated element of English literacy and the relationship between literacy and culture is complex and subtle. Literacy and culture are not static but dynamic and fluid. Thus, language teacher educators should value the relationship between literacy and culture. Rather than reinforcing cultural stereotypes for the instruction of culture, language teachers need to broaden their understanding of the complexity between literacy and culture. This suggests a need to develop literacy skills for international communication from a global English as a lingua franca perspective. However, as Yu (Chapter 11) suggested, the quality of strengthening students' literacy skills for international communication may be reduced when literacy training is not balanced in terms of reading and writing or focusing too much on exams in the examination-oriented culture in Chinese-speaking regions.

Seventh, there is a need to cultivate students' thinking skills. Students practice thinking as a function of reading and writing. Thinking skills to EFL learners is an ability to explain and manipulate complex systems involved in English learning. Learning to think requires frequent, repeated, and deliberate practice. To become clear, flexible, and coherent thinkers, learners need to work with both the process and the product in learning to read and write. The only way to teach the process and product of thinking is to recognize the profound relationship between thinking skills and literacy. However, as suggested by Cheng and Yeh (Chapter 10), teaching students thinking skills is challenging because teachers are always worried about time constraints for successful thinking skills instruction. In addition, teachers often feel puzzled about the priority of learning in an EFL class, that is, whether thinking skills or literacy skills should be the priority. In responding to this constrained situation, teachers may need to use a wide variety of content reading strategies to help students build up their reading literacy and encourage students to think about the process and product of writing literacy (Shih & Reynolds, 2015). Lee (Chapter 17) also suggested appropriate assignment design

helps students apply language in different circumstances by encouraging them to develop their critical thinking skills.

Eighth, we need appropriate policies for developing English literacy skills. Literacy development is influenced by policies and these polices are set based on policy-makers' interests. In practice, there is a gap between policy and literacy development outcomes. In He and Teng (Chapter 18) and Wang (Chapter 19), the educational policies in mainland China and Hong Kong are inseparable from politics. Policy is influenced by a complex array of historical, cultural-political, social-economic, and practical factors. In addition, we have to be aware of the influence of external assessment. For example, as Vong and Wu (Chapter 21) suggested, the introduction of international assessment such as PISA and PIRLS can influence the conception of language education and literacy in an education system. Related to this, school administrators need to provide support, particularly by allocating time in the school schedule, for language teachers and content teachers to develop interdisciplinary classes (see Chern & Curran, Chapter 20). Otherwise, simply changing policy will not necessarily constitute change in the realities of what takes place inside classrooms.

Concluding Remarks

As concluding remarks, we note that although much research has been conducted during the past decades on literacy development, some significant areas, e.g., the development of reading and writing skills, still need more exploration. Specifically, there is limited research on EFL/L2 literacy for pre- and primary school levels. Research on sociocultural factors, including instructional issues and policy, also needs more attention. We believe that, to achieve the goal of developing literacy for EFL and L2 learners, classroom teachers and school-based educators need to assume responsibility for the teaching of students' literacy skills. They also need to continuously evaluate their teaching practices and theories to validate and improve the teaching of literacy skills. We strongly believe that this can be accomplished by encouraging more practitioner-based research. For example, more case studies and action research studies need to be conducted by classroom teachers to give a clearer picture of what is actually going on in EFL/L2 classrooms.

We link educational practice with research findings throughout the book, making this volume a practical guidebook for classroom practitioners and school-based educators. This book includes classroom examples to illustrate main ideas and provide practical references for teachers of English literacy. Teaching English literacy to EFL/L2 learners is challenging. All classroom teachers, teacher trainers, school administrators, and the language learners share a crucial responsibility in learning how to help students become more literate in English reading and writing. English literacy requires the use of various linguistic skills to investigate further, probe, and hypothesize about various situations, and doing so requires new approaches in pedagogy. In addition, technology is a major force in changing literacy. For example, digital content and people's engagement with digital literacy have already become a major research issue in many parts of the world and Chinese speakers should be prepared for the changes that digital literacy will have on the teaching of English. Through incorporating digital technology into the classroom, EFL/L2 teachers can support students in building their skills in phonics, phonemic awareness, and language fluency while also expanding vocabulary and comprehension skills needed for future academic learning (Reynolds, 2016). Teachers will need to begin to ask questions about how technology can offer more than just delivery of content but how it may also enhance or hinder L2 learners' literacy development. There is no doubt about the centrality of literacy to education in a literacy-dependent global society. While the empirical evidence in this book is encouraging, we feel confident in speaking for the chapter authors by saying that developing English literacy for Chinese speakers is still likely to remain an enduring battle. We will remain vigilant.

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