

CATESOL NEWSLETTER

SERVING TEACHERS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE



Letter from the CATESOL President

As I approach the one-year mark in my CATESOL Presidency, I want to take a moment to reflect on where things stand in the middle of my two-year term and what's coming up in the future with our organization.

My term began at the time of our 2021 State Conference which was our second consecutive online annual event. One encouraging development since the start of the pandemic has been CATESOL's ability to pivot to and create an online presence and provide high-quality, meaningful presentations for our members and the larger field by our Chapters, Interest Groups, and at the state level, all started under the leadership of our previous President, Susan Gaer. I have been so grateful for everyone who has worked on these events despite all of the challenges of working online. Even though we are meeting for our first in-person State Conference in Pasadena at the end of September and for the first time since 2019, I believe that CATESOL should strongly consider keeping an online presence for professional development, especially as it addresses issues of access and participation for those for whom time, travel, and finances limit their ability to be a part of CATESOL events and add their voices to the conversation. The full range of in-person, online, and hybrid programming is at our disposal moving forward and we should take advantage of this.

In year two, there are a few priorities that I will continue to use as a guide to my work and the work of our leadership. One is trying to help (Cont.)



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get our local in-person gatherings back in place. This will include both Chapter events across the state as well as our Regional Conferences that typically happen in the spring. These gatherings will help to recreate the community that has struggled to stay connected over the last two and a half years and are more possible for those who live close by to participate in the organization. The other priority is to keep working on our efforts to make CATESOL a financially viable organization with clear, transparent processes in place. The upcoming State Conference will challenge us financially, but we are looking at other models in the future that will shield CATESOL from financial uncertainty and give us the flexibility to continue with the variety of programming that we've offered for many years. In addition, thanks to the volunteer effort that powers CATESOL, we have many people who are interested in making the work easy and doable within the limits of everyone's busy schedules. Post-pandemic, this is an exciting time for CATESOL to look at new ways of operating as an organization and be responsive to members and the field in ways that might not have been considered before.

As always, feel free to reach out to me with your questions, suggestions, and big ideas at catesol@catesol.org. Have a restful and enjoyable summer, and I look forward to connecting and re-connecting with you in the coming months! Sincerely, Anthony Burik

Words from the Editor

Kara Mac Donald

This issue precedes the first f2f CATESOL Conference since COVID-19. There was a lot of work going into making this an impactful and memorable event after the obligatory virtual conference events due to COVID-19 in the past two years. The virtual conferences offered incredible professional development opportunities and a means to connect and collaborate as a community of practice. It also showed us as an organization potential models for professional development and collaboration that have been/will be incorporated into the association's practice. Nonetheless, it will be great to connect in person in Pasadea for those attending.

In this issue, the feature article examines translanguaging as an act of compassion, continuing the focus of equity and inclusion in this issue of the newsletter. Also along the lines of compassion, equity and inclusion, there is a call for submission to *Global Voices of Conflict and Change*, an anthology that will feature stories from self-described instances of conflict and change from across the globe. A member submission discusses language teaching associations (e.g. CATESOL) as multiple interconnected sub-teams (*team of teams*) working to various common goals. The third article in the language teacher as language learner explores the impact of being immersed in the target language culture on teaching approaches. Another member submission examines teaching listening through explicit approaches. The outcome of a small study from the CIRT-IG is shared. The Guest Authors submission is on technology tips for better online ESL instruction. The second article in the ELLs' Voices describes one learner coming to know himself academically. A second guest submission calls for awareness of equity and inclusion in instructional materials and asks instructors to consider what is and is not present in their textbooks. At the end of the issue, as call for submissions to a new Parents' Voices column series is shared and a request for contributions.

Lastly the newsletter operates and exists because of membership involvement. Member submissions of all types are welcome. So, if you are doing something in your classroom, your chapter, or IG, please share it. If your student, low and high proficiency levels, would like to share something, please reach out. When you have an idea or something to share, please think of the CATESOL Newsletter. Send submissions and questions to us at newsletter@catesol.org

Dr. Liza E. Martinez

This article will demonstrate through stories how translanguaging is a compassionate act that is beneficial to adult ESL students.

As an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher for over thirty-one years, I have strived to be compassionate towards my students. *Longman Advanced American Dictionary* (2005) defines compassionate as, “a strong feeling of sympathy for people who are suffering, and a desire to help them” (p. 278). For the last 20 years, I have taught ESL at a rural community college in southwestern Arizona; the city borders Mexico. During this time, most of my students have been Mexican. Because of the pandemic, however, I have taught classes through Zoom for over two years. Besides students from Mexico, I have also had students from Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and the Dominican Republic.

The Elephant in the Room

Since I began my teaching career, I have been plagued by the prohibition of using students’ L1 in the ESL classroom. At a department meeting, one of my colleagues stressed, “We teach academic English through an immersion program.” I remained silent and felt guilty. In the past, I have found myself using Spanish in instances where communication had broken down with my students. Besides the guilt, I felt frustration, especially when I recalled numerous conversations I had with my students. Students spoke to me about their other ESL classes. They did not understand their ESL teachers. When I suggested that they divulge their concerns to their teachers, the students said that they were unable to express themselves in English. I offered to talk to their teachers, but they said, “No.” They were embarrassed. I then offered to explain concepts they did not understand. They agreed, and yes, I used Spanish, and I still felt guilty.

One way to overcome this guilt was to become a language student myself. I took introductory French classes several years ago. The teacher mostly spoke in English; I was surprised! When she had us work in groups, she insisted that we speak in French. The problem was I did not have the vocabulary to hold a conversation in French. When my teacher heard my partner and me speaking in English, she snapped, “Speak in French!” At that moment, I felt very frustrated and angry. “I was unable to carry out a conversation in French,” I thought. I then realized that my ESL students, particularly the beginners, felt this way. While they could form individual sentences in English, they did not have the vocabulary to carry on a conversation. How could I help them? I combed the L2 literature. I recalled that Paul Nation (1990) had written about how translation can be used as a strategy in vocabulary development. I decided to look for articles under translation in the ESL classroom. One article on translation described the concept of translanguaging. I decided to look it up. I learned that it developed in Wales in the 1990s. The idea was that students use their entire language repertoire which included their L1 and English in the classroom. One of the leading proponents of translanguaging has been Ofelia Garcia.

From Garcia (2017), I have learned that bilinguals do not have to use L1 and L2 at distinct times as in the case of dual language learning. Instead, L1 can be used in planned and unplanned situations. The latter would depend on the teacher’s “reading” of her class. If students do not understand a concept, the ESL teacher can switch to the students’ L1. Likewise, the teacher can have the students use their L1 to explore a concept more fully in groups.

As I read about translanguaging, I experienced a considerable sense of relief. What I had (Cont.)

been doing was NOT wrong. Instead, treating ESL students as two monolingual speakers WAS. This reminded me of the notion that second language students need to think solely in the second language. I knew from my own experiences with learning French that I could not do that. Instead, I found myself drawing on what I knew in Spanish to understand French.

Being Compassionate through Translanguaging: Part 1

With translanguaging in hand, I have used Spanish in classes where all my students are Spanish speakers. I should stress that I do not use it all the time. For their part, students use it to affirm that they understand a new concept, ask questions, or share [firsthand experiences](#). As previously stated, I have taught through Zoom over the past two years. During that time, I have recorded classes occasionally for absent students to catch up as well as to see how Spanish is being used in the ESL classroom. At first, I was reluctant to watch the videos because I feared that I used Spanish all the time. Instead, I learned that I used Spanish in the following instances: 1) for grammatical explanations; 2) for instructions, and 3) to clarify a word. What has been the result? Over 90% of my students met the course competencies and passed their classes. I have found teaching using translanguaging is a significant way to share my knowledge with my students. Furthermore, I have learned a great deal from my students through their questions and comments. We have co-learned together.

Being Compassionate through Translanguaging Part 2

This summer (2022), I had the opportunity to teach two ESL classes face-to-face: pronunciation and intermediate conversation. I found they were quite different from teaching through Zoom. One notable difference was student participation. Whereas students tended to be silent in Zoom and ask few questions, everyone was participating in my face-to-face classes. Furthermore, they had an abundance of questions. One student even apologized for asking “too many questions.” I later learned that in her other classes (through Zoom), she did not speak. It was in this face-to-face class that she [found](#) her voice. The same was true for my other students. They were inclined to share their thoughts about learning English. While everyone had a story to share, I chose to highlight two non-traditional students. They were older than traditional college students and had already earned either a university degree or college certificate.

Jennifer

If I did not permit Spanish in the classroom, I would not learn much about Jennifer. She is Mexican, in her late twenties, and married. From her speech production, Jennifer was much weaker than the rest of the class. This was also reflected in her tests; she failed them with scores below 50%. If I were to judge her based on her performance, I would surmise that the class was too high for her, and she should drop it. Instead, the first thing I did was to tell her not to worry about her grade; she would do better. Next, I had her work with our embedded ESL tutor, Patricia, during group work. After the second time, she noted how she alone was working with the tutor. I had another student join her and the tutor. Finally, towards the end of the summer session, I had her work with other students. From her class presentation, we learned that Jennifer was a chef. She received her bachelor's in gastronomy in Mexico. On the last day of class, we had a party. Jennifer admitted that once when she got one of her tests back, she was distraught. She was ready to drop the class. She spoke to her husband who encouraged her to continue with the class. Jennifer decided that she would stick to the class. She did, and to her amazement, she made 80% on her final test. With a big smile on her face, Jennifer told everyone she had passed the test. She was particularly happy that she got all the answers correct in the listening section. Jennifer passed the class with an 84% or “B”. Not only did Jennifer have support (her husband, the embedded tutor, and me), but she also made the effort to learn new material. (Cont.)

Through a collaborative process, based on compassion, she successfully completed the course.

Marina

Marina is a fifty-something Mexican woman who has lived in the United States for many years. She says that she always wanted to learn English since she was a child. At that time, she lived in Mexico, and her dad said that only her brothers would learn English to work. It was not until she immigrated to the US with her family that she learned English. Marina also studied to be a Child Development Assistant (CDA). With a certificate in hand, Marina could work at a nursery, pre-K, or kindergarten; however, she never used it. Instead, she got a job at a big department store as a supervisor for 15 years. She left because it was stressful. Currently, she works part-time at a local grass-roots organization, which serves fieldworkers and their families. Marina returned to college to get re-certified in CDA. She also decided to take my intermediate conversation class to brush up on her English. On several occasions, Marina stated, "I don't speak English well." The fact is that she DOES. She can hold a conversation in English. She is also one of the best students in the class. I told her several times that she speaks English very well. When I asked her about future classes, she said, "CDA", and she would like to take another ESL conversation class. Because she works in the morning, she cannot take conversation classes. I told her that the college has an ESL club where students come to practice their English. She said that she would try to join the club in the fall. In the end, Marina did an excellent job in her final presentation. She also scored 93% or an "A" for her final grade. Like Jennifer, Marina put a lot of effort into this class, and it showed.

Conclusion

Throughout my career, I have strived to teach with compassion. This has involved going outside of my comfort zone to learn techniques and approaches that can facilitate my students' ESL learning. The goal has been to give my students a voice to navigate successfully through U.S. society.

Author

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Endnotes

¹ I have not tried it yet in classes where I have students from different language groups.

² Pseudonyms are used in this article.

Call for Submissions

How does translanguage practices influence your classroom?

Share with the CATESOL
community of practice.

Submissions: newsletter@catesol.org



Call for Submissions - New Anthology

Editors: Susan Gaer and Kelly Metz-Matthews

“There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.”

-Maya Angelou

If you, like us, have watched the news with horror these last few years; and if you, like us, have felt powerless to effect any real or lasting change, you can be part of a community of global transformation and support.

This proposed anthology, *Global Voices of Conflict and Change*, will feature stories from self-described instances of conflict and change from across the globe. The anthology will specifically encourage writing from second-language speakers of English who often have fewer resources and opportunities to publish their work in English-language collections, journals, and other artistic spaces. Upon publication, the anthology will be freely distributed via an ebook platform. This will, we hope, offer educators from around the world an opportunity to feature the stories as mentor texts in their classrooms.

In that light, we invite second-language speakers of English, especially refugees, to contribute their words—their voices, if you will—to this project tentatively titled *Global Voices of Conflict and Change*. We encourage both experienced and new writers to submit their writing to this project.

Submissions could include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Creative Nonfiction (i.e., journalism, memoir)
2. Poetry
3. Fiction
4. Art (to be featured alongside selected writing)

We suggest no more than 5 pages, single-spaced or 2500 words.

While we welcome any topic related to global conflict and change, we encourage submissions that grapple not just with the known horrors of war and crisis, but also with the humanity that threads itself through even the worst of situations. If you feel like you have something to share, but aren't sure if it would be appropriate for this project, reach out to the editors and we will happily provide insight. We strongly encourage submissions from those still developing their English-language skills. We want to read your work and have editors on hand to support you.

Send all submissions to globalvoicesofcc@gmail.com by **December 15th, 2022**.

General questions to the editors, Susan Gaer and Kelly Metz-Matthews, can also be sent to global-voicesofcc@gmail.com.

Selected submissions will be notified by **February 15th**.

Member Submission I – Language Teaching Associations (LTA) are a *Team of Teams*

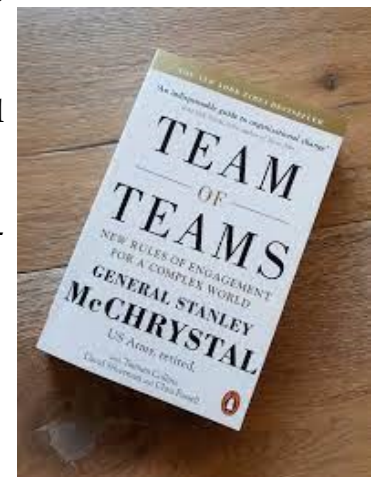
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Kara Mac Donald & Mirna Khater

A complex operational entity cannot be effective solely driven from top-down command, even if it appears as such from the outside. Even an international corporation and a military division understand the value of sub-teams and draw on such teams' input and actions in achieving a final determined goal. It may seem odd to make analogies to business and the military when examining language teaching associations (LTAs), but there are commonalities and insights to be gained for LTAs.

The authors principal professional experience is in teacher training and senior language program leadership at a degree granting foreign language (FL) government higher education institute offering instruction to members of the U.S. armed forces, with roots in ELT. The unique context offers an often-distinct lens through which to understand a variety of issues surrounding ESL and EFL. For example, the authors examined the difficulties FL faculty at their institute had in fostering teamwork beyond transactional communication during the initial stages of transitioning to online instruction in the Spring of 2020 due to COVID. The insights from not only the field of education, but also perspectives from the military complimented by the field of business, served to inform their practices and as a frame to share their experiences and professional learning with ELT in California on how to foster effective teamwork in the virtual context and f2f contexts (Mac Donald, Khater & Shevchenko, In Press).

An impactful work for challenging tasks before, during and post-COVID is the work of McCrystal, et al. (2015) that is written by a retired U.S. Army General, and among many lessons shared in the book the authors frequently draw on is the notion of 'Team of Teams'. Contrary to general perceptions of military command being solely top-down directive, the military also needs to train and have individuals who are autonomous, but also part of a sub-team with an objective, and drawing on these multiple sub-teams that function in unison and autonomously as needed to fulfill the final objective for the task at hand. McCrystal, et al. (2015) presents a comparison for advanced military training that does not aim to train individual *warriors*, but rather to train elite teams that operate like synchronized swimmers. The effectiveness of autonomous relationships founded on sustained trust are what create effective teamwork and success for a larger goal requiring communication with stakeholders.



Whether f2f or virtual, We never operate in silos.

References

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Language Teacher Series Submission II-Being a Language Teacher by Doing

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Lisa Fischler

Editor Series Introduction

As regular readers know, the newsletter is piloting a four-column series for Volume 55 issues in 2022 on English language teachers' experiences in being foreign language learners. In the first article, *Becoming a Language Student on Leave to Teach Better upon Return* by Rebekah Sidman-Taveau, shared the appreciation of the time and focus needed to study a language, the persistence it takes to move forward at an advanced level, the difficulties of testing, and the challenge of balancing study, work, and family. The second column by Michelle Skowbo shared content from an interview on how being a language learner influenced the teacher's negotiation of identity and what that has taught her about supporting English language learners' negotiation of their identity. The third article describes how being an active user of the language immersed in the society and cultures informed the author as a language teacher.

Being a Language Teacher by Doing Language

While the Buddhist distinction between "being" and "doing" guides my meditation practices, the process of "doing" or "hands-on" learning has made me a better English as a Second Language instructor. My experiences of learning French in Paris, Mandarin Chinese in Beijing, and Cantonese in Hong Kong are all the more vivid and enduring because of the language teachers who pushed me out into the streets of each city and invited me to learn each language by living in it.

After my first semester of French at a college in Washington state, I went on a short-term study abroad to Paris. The same instructor who taught me French in a college classroom also took a group of students, myself included, into the smaller bistros and neighborhoods of the city. While I saw famous museums, cathedrals, and palaces with my classmates, our instructor also gave us opportunities to negotiate places to eat, parks to visit, plays to see, and music clubs to enjoy without his assistance. This introduction to learning a language while living in it helped shape my language pedagogy.

The time I spent in Mainland China's capital city learning Mandarin so I could be an English as a Foreign Language teacher in the Southwest of China was an even deeper influence on my language teaching style. Barely a week into my summer immersion course at a small Ministry school in the Western Beijing suburbs, my Mandarin teacher took my class into the "hutongs" or small alleys of Beijing (which have now been resurrected as a tourist attraction). While there, usually at the end of the day, when most families were sitting outside with their kids to beat the




heat, we got to figure out how difficult it was to navigate a tonal language with lots of homonyms in it. Instead of saying, "Your daughter is lovely," to the proud mother we started talking to, we told her, "Your daughter is a grain ration ticket." The mother told us we were really stupid, which we probably sounded like in her language all because we switched around two characters in our sentence. Our teacher didn't blame us or correct us, he, like my French instructor, let the working-class people of Beijing do that for him. We learned more by living in Mandarin than any textbook (Cont.)

could have taught us. We needed the grammar to continue to learn, but we needed the motivation to speak and interact with native speakers who couldn't understand our English more.

When I went to Hong Kong to learn Cantonese, I took the valuable life lessons my language teachers had already given me and made them part of my own way to become really good at speaking and listening. I lived in the Chinese students' dorms, hung out with the Cantonese students, and lived and worked with Hong Kong Chinese well before I made many American friends. It was only after two years in Hong Kong that I chose to interact with other Americans who also had learned Cantonese. The ways in which my language instructors had chosen to teach me to live a language in order to learn it better made an indelible impression on me.

So, by the time I got to the Master's program in TESOL at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, the student-centered, communicative, and task-based instructional skills and strategies I learned in order to be an ESL teacher had already found their way into my pedagogical tool box. I didn't need convincing about their effectiveness because I had already lived them in my own language learning.



CATESOL
Professional Development

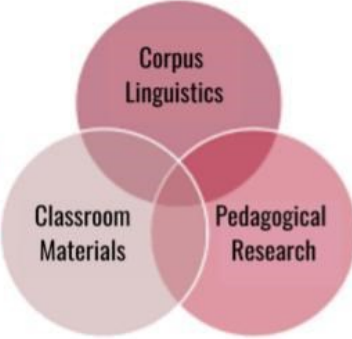
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CIRT-IG Coordinators: Margi Wald, Nicole Brun-Mercer, and Lily Lewis

Corpus Informed Research & Teaching IG


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Moderators: TELL-IG Hosts
Cara Lazarus and Kristi Reyes
#catesoltell

Technology Enhanced Language Learning Interest Group (TELL-IG)

Member Submission III– Focusing on Listening as a Process¹⁰

Natalia Barley

The importance of listening comprehension skill in language learning cannot be overstated. It is essential not only for successful communication, but also for language development as it allows learners to receive comprehensible input and feedback on the accuracy of their utterances and gives them a chance to notice the difference between their interlanguage and target language forms (Mackey & Goo, 2012). As a result, listening enables learners to adjust their utterances to make sure they are understood. Listening, therefore, is also foundational for speaking.

The listening process is a highly complex phenomenon mediated by individual physical and cognitive characteristics, not to mention situational, motivational, and attitudinal variables (Field, 2002; Lynch, 2002). It also has a characteristically covert nature: the multiple simultaneous cognitive processes involved in listening are invisible and we are not able to directly observe the listener's progress or emerging problems. Comprehension can only be measured through an overt response, such as a written answer, a comment, or an action. Its complexity and implicit nature makes listening a difficult skill to teach.

Indeed, “a Cinderella skill for second language learning” (Nunan, 2002), listening has been undervalued and overlooked in language classrooms for a long time (Vandergrift & Goh, 2009). All too often, listening lessons consisted of playing the audio, completing comprehension activities, and receiving feedback in the form of the “correct” answer in the hope that learners will somehow get better at it. In effect, such approach focused on testing of learners' listening ability, rather than teaching and developing their listening skills, overlooking the skill as the process and instead treating it as a product (Sheerin, 1987).

Today, scholars and practitioners alike agree that we must do more than repeatedly test listening skills using the “listen & answer comprehension questions” model. The question no longer revolves around whether we should teach the listening process (rather than focus on product), but how to do so effectively (Sheppard, 2022).

For this reason, the recently published book “Listening in the Classroom: Teaching Students How to Listen” (Reed & Jones, 2022) is a welcome addition to the body of literature on the topic. The editors approached the problem from a practical standpoint taking promising theory and research findings and turning them into classroom activities that focus on developing listening proficiency through explicit teaching of listening strategies. The editors carefully curated a collection of chapters that address both top-down and bottom-up listening strategies. Top-down processes are activated when learners use context and background knowledge (e.g., topic, genre, or culture) to build a conceptual framework for comprehension. Bottom-up processes involve constructing meaning through segmentation from word level to larger units of meaning, such as syntactic and rhetorical chunks. While these processes are distinct, they interact with one another and often occur simultaneously (Vandergrift, 2004). The book addresses a number of strategies, e.g., building metacognitive awareness for listening, identifying thought groups, segmenting streams of speech, paying attention to weak forms, and fostering word recognition, to name a few. You can access the complete book review here (<https://catesol.org/blog/catesol-blog/2022-07-30-catesol-book-review-listening-in-the-classroom-teaching-students-how-to-listen-by-marnie-reed-and-tamara-jones-editors>).

As a language teacher for almost 20 years, I have experienced my fair share of struggles with teaching listening due to the complexity of the process and lack of practical guidance on how to (Cont.)

approach this skill. Now being involved in curriculum development, I see a similar issue with instructional materials. When searching for English language teaching materials, there is clearly no shortage of textbooks and guides on listening. For the most part, these materials present authentic and/or scripted passages on a variety of topics. Unfortunately, in most of these materials there is little guidance for students and teachers alike on how to develop listening skills. A review of the scope & sequence of these textbooks often reveals a compilation of familiar strategies, e.g., listening for keywords, main ideas and supporting details, etc. The premise behind this approach is, again, focus on the product: the students are asked to develop the listening strategies by repeatedly listening and checking comprehension. There is still a palpable lack of focus on actual skill training for either students or teachers (Cole-French, 2022).

Now that the importance of teaching how to listen has been established, instructional materials should assist teachers in tackling the challenge of explicit listening skill instruction by incorporating activities that meet this objective. Inspired by the “Listening in the Classroom: Teaching Students How to Listen,” below are some of the strategies that should be addressed in listening textbooks to help instructors develop English language learners’ listening skills. As mentioned earlier, research suggests that learners need to learn how to use both top-down and bottom-up processes to their advantage, as they are employed simultaneously during listening. The below recommendations, however, predominantly focus on the bottom-up processes, as they are mostly underrepresented in instructional materials.

Lexical Segmentation

Lexical segmentation or parsing is the process through which listeners identify word and grammatical unit boundaries in the speech stream. During this process, listeners construct their understanding of an utterance by analyzing the sounds they hear and matching them to lexical and syntactic stores in their memory (Field, 2008). The inability to segment speech has been identified as a major source of comprehension issues (Goh & Wallace, 2018). Native speakers and proficient language learners are able to decode speech quickly and often automatically. Many learners, however, struggle with this skill because of limited linguistic knowledge and inefficient processing (Cutler, 2012). To support learners in developing decoding skills, textbooks should include exercises and language awareness activities that explicitly teach listeners to segment the speech stream in the context of meaningful discourse.

The interest in using dictation-based activities as a method of providing bottom-up listening practice has recently been reinvigorated (Kazazoglu, 2013; book p 101). Below is an example of a partial dictation activity originally proposed by Nation and Newton (2009) and later also endorsed by Goh and Wallace (2018). The activity involves writing the missing words to complete a text transcript. Learners hear a passage several times. First, they listen to the entire passage to get a general idea of the content. After that, they receive the passage transcript with groups of words blanked out and listen to the passage again to fill in the missing words. The number of listening rounds and the length of pauses after each group of missing words can be adjusted according to learners’ needs. The teacher then shares the full transcript of the text for the learners to check their answers. Finally, the passage is played again as the students follow along with the full transcript.

It is recommended that a text appropriate for this activity would be 100-150 words, contain connected language (not a series of unrelated sentences) with no unknown vocabulary or grammar. The text should also be something that students either have heard before or will hear in subsequent lessons. The words selected to be removed should be carefully selected based on lesson objectives and learner needs. (Cont.)

Listening for Thought Groups

The skill of listening for thought groups also involves segmentation, but on a broader, semantic level. In writing, thought groups (e.g., a clause) are clearly outlined by punctuation, e.g., a comma, semicolon, etc. In speech, this is achieved by prosody, i.e., changes in pitch, volume or pausing. Highly proficient listeners intuitively and effectively listen for clausal thought groups. In less proficient language learners, this skill is much less developed. One way to remedy this issue is to introduce controlled, accuracy-focused exercises in listening textbooks designed for declarative knowledge building. McAndrews (2022) recommends starting with the practice of perceiving prosodic cues, such as rising vs. falling pitch. He suggests starting with the following activity. The learners are presented with a pair of sentences that differ only in punctuation. For example:

1. Let's eat, grandma.
2. Let's eat grandma.

The teacher then speaks one of the sentences and asks learners to identify which sentence was read. In response, the students hold up either one or two fingers, providing instant feedback. During the activity, attention can be directed to rising vs. falling pitch, pauses, etc., as needed. To come up with additional sentence examples, McAndrews recommends identifying verbs that can be both transitive and intransitive, i.e., with optional use of direct object (e.g., *visit*, *call*, *leave*, *ask*, *watch*). As learners make progress acquiring the acoustic form and syntactic function of thought groups, the activities can shift towards more open-ended format, with the focus towards fluency practice. See McAndrews (2022) for examples of such activities.

Teaching Reduced Forms

Another challenge that English language learners often encounter is decoding and understanding weak word forms. A number of studies (e.g., Bassetti, 2008) revealed that learners' first language influences how they perceive English phonemes. The common practice of teaching the strong form before the weak form contributes to this problem as learners incorrectly assume that the strong form is the dominant one. Instructional materials could help language teachers address this challenge by introducing a series of activities that explicitly teach learners to identify and understand the weak forms. Gay (2022) recommends a game that directly contrasts weak and strong word forms. Students get to choose their own 'pronunciation path' based on which sound they hear using a pronunciation pyramid template (see Figure 1). (The letters can be replaced by the names of different cities.)

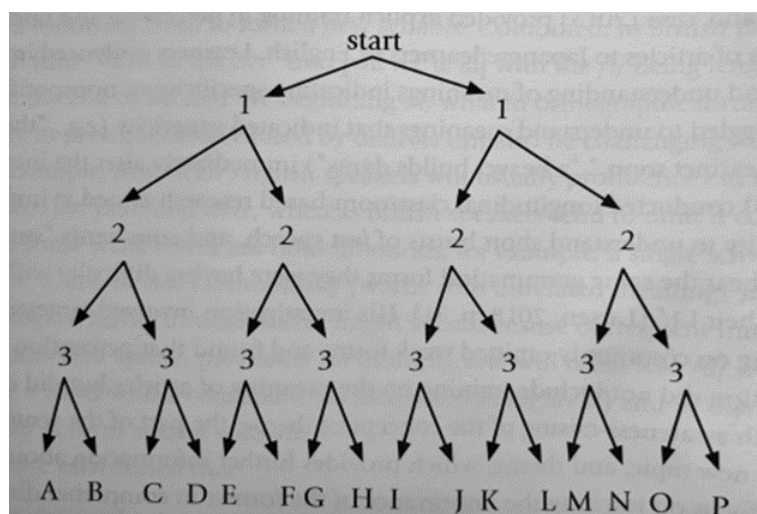


Figure 1. Pronunciation perception pyramid template (Gay, 2022)

(Cont.)

Once a copy of the pyramid is handed out to each student, the following can be written on the board (with the target word in the middle):

Left
weak form

some

Right
strong form

If a strong form of the target word is pronounced, the students move to the right of their map. If they hear a weak form, they move to the left. The word is pronounced four times and each time the students decide where to move. After four rounds, they can compare which city they ended up in. Additional activities that target weak forms, (e.g., discovery listening, dictation-based activities, and addressing polysemy) can also be found in the same chapter (Gay, 2022).

Well-developed listening skills are critical for English language learners not only to communicate successfully but to develop their overall language proficiency. Although largely invisible, listening is a process and should be treated as such by both teachers and curriculum developers. It is critical to teach learners how to listen and develop their listening skills and strategies. This can be done by augmenting instructional materials with activities that focus not only on top-down listening processes, but also explicitly teach and systematically practice bottom-up listening strategies. Doing so will ensure learners' long-term personal, academic, and professional success.

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***CIRT-IG Report*– A Mini Corpus Analysis of Academic Blog Submissions: Purpose and Writers’ Stance in Manuscripts**

Sonia Estima & Kara Mac Donald, with Lily Lewis

Academic blogs are a great way to foster a community of practice and provide accessible publication venues for faculty to share their experiences and to learn from each other. Blogs are not new venues for publication, but their conventions of writing may be less familiar to teachers who have been reared by more traditional and formal academic experiences through their university coursework and degrees. The standard for academic writing has long been the peer-reviewed journal, and publishing in academic journals is still often a requirement for tenure and advancement opportunities in the university setting (Cope and Phillips, 2014; Labaree, 2004; Lagemann, 1997).

Blogs, however, together with other new digital text forms have begun to expand the possibilities and affordances of academic writing; and tools such as social networking and other collaborative platforms allow teachers to engage in the field and begin to establish their academic presence (Barton and McCulloch, 2018; Cope and Phillips, 2014; Luzón, 2018). These new venues and new trends have tremendous implications for teachers, researchers and anyone who has an interest in the field of education, which is to say, all of us. This brings up additional questions and consideration of what constitutes academic writing and what counts as scholarship (Barton and McCulloch, 2018).

The two authors serve on the editorial committee for an academic blog for faculty at their workplace a large foreign language institute on the central California coast. The blog was initially launched in 2015 with the primary goal of providing a place and a space for faculty to share their practice, address common concerns and challenges encountered in their classroom, as well as share their successes, new ideas and innovations they have adopted.

After a hiatus, when all the school websites were moved to a new platform and it could not initially support all the blog features, the technical difficulties were finally resolved, and the blog was re-launched in the Summer of 2021. Gradually, the faculty blog has evolved to take on a much more active role in mentoring faculty through the process of getting published.

Submissions to the blog are rarely rejected, as long as the ideas presented in the piece are aligned with the current theories in the field of language acquisition; and the author is willing to continue revising the submission based on feedback received from the reviewers. Whether a peer reviewed piece requires slight revisions or a major reworking, the piece is accepted as the blog has incorporated two main functions aside from sharing information on instructional practice at the institute. The first is to offer an accessible venue for publication for instructors who are new to publishing and do not yet possess the skills for a rigorous review of a scholarly journal. It also serves to invite instructors to be producers of knowledge for the community of practice, not only recipients. Therefore, the second purpose is to assist authors to acquire the skills of crafting a manuscript for publication in the blog. In this way, the blog provides not only professional development resources in terms of its articles, but it also provides professional development training through mentoring authors.

The blog receives a wide range of submissions, from high quality articles that require little to no revision, to some that need to be significantly reworked. As the majority of faculty are non-native English speakers with a professional level of spoken and written communication, may be less familiar with the academic register of academic English publications. So, blog submissions present (Cont.)

CIRT-IG Report- cont.

a unique set of challenges and specific needs that make the job of the editors quite distinctive.

One particular aspect of the submissions that captured the interest of the authors was the seemingly drastic differences in registers used and writer point of view among submissions overall, regardless of the types of revisions required for publication. They found that some manuscripts were quite informal, almost conversational at times, while others were very formal. Also, at times an article with an informal and personal stance may also have a high incidence of the passive voice, as if a blending of two genres in one. This is not in and of itself an issue, as the blog aims to be flexible and support writers in publishing work that is meaningful to the faculty as a community of practice.

However, to better understand their role as part of the blog's editorial committee and to better support and mentor authors that submit manuscripts, the authors chose to do an initial mini corpus analysis on submissions between the Summer of 2020 and the Spring of 2022, simply examining the frequency of personal pronouns and passive voice use. Concordance lines were extracted, but at times the authors referred back to the full article submission to learn more about context of the chosen language use. The function of this inquiry was to identify how authors' use of point of view as a writer aligned with the article topic and frame of the discussion, and what implications may this have for the blog's editorial team (e.g. Should more explicit guidelines for writers be offered on the blog website, should more explanation on expectations on style be offered in workshops promoting blog submissions, and if so, at what level (institute or school/division)).

The expectation is that the authors will reconduct the same study on the frequency of personal pronoun and passive voice use, with concordance lines extracted, and an exploration of the use of cohesive devices in the stated blog submission corpus. Nevertheless, the current mini corpus analysis focus and its outcomes are sufficient as an initial inquiry as editorial committee members, and it is likely other blog editors and authors may find the findings and discussion insightful.

Blog's Purpose Ought to Guide Writers' Point of View

The point of view the writer takes in academic blogs is more flexible than in traditional academic publications (e.g. journal articles, conference proceedings, postgraduate theses) (Zou and Hyland, 2019). Use of the first-person creates a direct and personal connection with the reader and is often used for sharing more authentic personal stories and pieces with an ethnographic or self-reflection perspective. Use of the second-person places the focus on the reader and most often used in blogs offering instructional content. Use of the third-person and passive voice creates a sense of neutral objectivity and is often used in more formal academic pieces. Although there is flexibility in the writers' point of view, it's important to choose the point of view that fits the purpose and expectation of the intended audience. By picking the right voice, a meaningful connection is created with readers in offering both accessibility to the content and legitimacy.

It would be expected that submissions to the blog fall somewhere between the expected use of first-, second- and third-person among writers. First, use of the first-person in blog submissions offer content with the goal of serving its audience, faculty, as a resource for professional development and the fostering of a community of practice. The article content speaks directly to teachers, putting them and their interests or needs at the center of the conversation. Additionally, many blog articles share accounts on instructional practice and adaptations for different language schools at the institute, where use of the second-person is most appropriate as is instructional content (i.e. "how-to"). Lastly, second-person use is also most appropriate when the blog (Cont.)

requests content submission from its readers, as it serves to engage them in conversation as part of the community of practice. Also, use of the third-person is seems suitable as in more academic pieces, the writer may wish to generate a formal tone and detached viewpoint from the content, experiences or results being shared which makes the information appear more objective. This is typical in academic writing, drawing on the conventions of traditional scholarly publications and is appropriate for pieces describing the outcomes of an action research or practice description.

Many academic blogs and e-newsletters explicitly state that they are less formal venues for publication compared to traditional academic journals (e.g. FLTMag). In order to have the presence of the author's voice in articles, the use of first personal singular and plural is encouraged. Tone can also be positioned to include personal accounts, student quotes, and humor. Citations are welcomed, but there is an expectation that they will be references to frame content, and not an extensive use of citations. With all these submission criteria, academic blogs, and e-newsletters, provide accessible content for professional development for novice and experienced language instructors. This submission criteria also makes publication for those new to publishing work more accessible, as the rigor of peer evaluation in the publication process is more of a mentoring publication to encourage and enable novice writers get published.

As the blogs' editorial committee that serves as a mentoring publication, the authors expected submissions to possess a combination of first- and second-person, as a means of reducing distance between the writer and the reader. Use of the third-person was also expected in particular pieces if the nature of the content required the positioning of the writer as a neutral individual in presenting the information, in particular for reporting classroom action research. However, the authors wanted to explore how authors' use of point of view in their blog submissions aligned with the commonly described norms for point of the view in blog article posting.

Methods

For anonymity purposes, the article submissions had the authors' names and titles removed and each document was assigned a number. A total of 30 articles (files) were analyzed.

The files were loaded into [Sketch Engine](#) to create a corpus of 25,981 words. Sentences with personal pronouns were identified with simple concordance searches for *I, me, my, we, us, our, you, and your*. These searches showed the total number of times each word was found in the corpus and concordance lines displaying the text immediately preceding and following the target word.

Sketch Engine comes with [TreeTagger](#), a program that automatically labels the part of speech for each word in the corpus. This enables more complex queries, such as the search for passives. The searches were conducted using Sketch Engine's CQL (Corpus Query Language) advanced concordance search. Passives contain two essential components: a form of "be" followed by a past participle. After some trial and error, two searches were identified for passives:

Search 1

[tag="VB."]	[[]{0,1}]	[tag="V.N"]
Any form of "be"	0 words or 1 word (any word)	Past participle

Search 2

[tag="VB."]	[tag="V.N"]	[word="and"]	[tag="V.N"]
Any form of "be"	Past participle	The word "and"	Past participle

This search looks for sentences with coordinated verbs in passive form, such as "was *piloted* and *modified*".

Search 1 and Search 2 were then combined into a single search, which showed the total number of passives.

Results

In reviewing the data and the incidence of first person, second person and passive voice, we, as the authors and blog editorial team, encountered some interesting results. From the 30 samples analyzed, the table below shows the total number of incidences for each pronoun and the use of passive voice:

Pronoun	# of occurrences
I	104
we	101
you	85
my	33
our	37
your	59
me	22
us	7
passive	140

At first glance we see a high incidence of first person use in the articles submitted to the blog, which might indicate the writers' informal stance towards the medium and the audience. This was at least initially aligned with the literature and the researchers' expectations, based on the guidelines provided on the site. However, the table also shows a high incidence of passive voice, which could be an indication of a more formal stance taken by the writer, assuming a more traditional academic positioning, and distancing from the reader.

These findings seemed contradictory at first and required further investigation of the individual submissions to try to understand whether this pronoun distribution and usage reflects the level of formality intended by the writer, or whether other factors might be at play, such as linguistic ability, or positioning of the writer towards the intended purpose and audience.

Further investigation revealed that some articles had a distinctive preference for a particular pronoun, such as article #10 – with the highest incidence of second person – and upon reviewing the article, it is clear the writer intended to provide instructions and directions for other teachers who wish to try the same techniques and activities in their classroom. The author intentionally addresses the reader and provides directions for how to implement the ideas and activities introduced.

Several article submissions showed a higher incidence of first person, with very little use of the passive voice (articles # 4, 5, 8, 15, 25). This finding was in line with the expectations of pieces written by teachers to share new classroom activities they had tried with their students. These articles are written (Cont.)

in first person singular or plural, reflecting the work of a single teacher or a team of teachers describing the details and steps of innovative activities and self-reflection from the perspective of the authors.

Two articles showed a clear higher incidence of passive voice, with little or no use of the first person (article # 3 and article # 12). These articles were submissions reporting on action research conducted by the teachers, and as such were in fact written in a more formal and academic style, as would have been expected from this type of report.

The most surprising finding, however, were two articles (# 20 and #22) that showed a high incidence of both first person and passive voice. Although concordance lines had been extracted in the corpus analysis, it was necessary to review the original text to better understand the authors' pronoun use and the stance of the writers. In these two examples, the writers were reporting on an activity conducted by a team of teachers and included both mentions to the relevant literature as well as a detailed account of how the teachers implemented the ideas and the detailed steps followed by the team. The combination of first person and passive voice revealed a synergy between the more formal academic tone to report on current findings in the field, combined with a more informal personal account of the teachers' personal practice in their classroom.

Discussion and Implications

The current study is a preliminary investigation of the language and the types of article submissions received by the faculty blog published at the authors' institute. Although additional studies are needed to further investigate in greater detail how language, tone, and stance are interwoven in the blog posts, we, the authors, do see a parallel between some of the findings presented elsewhere in the literature (Zou and Hyland, 2019, Wang et. al., 2021).

The wide range of formality and variety of language used in the blog posts analyzed here reinforce the need to continue questioning the predominance of the traditional writing format in academic work and consideration of what counts as scholarly writing. We should question established assumptions about academic writing and begin to look at the affordances provided by new digital text formats, and how they can help promote knowledge making among novice teachers as well as make it more accessible to readers beyond the walls of the university and associated domains (Wysocki, 2005; Luzón, 2018).

Rather than taking a traditional prescriptive approach to what an academic blog should look like, we see a need to expand the notion of academic engagement and make it inviting to novice practitioners just entering the field, as well as seasoned teachers who may have felt intimidated in the past by the level of formality and rigorous review process encountered in the more traditional tier one journal articles. A wider range of styles, variety of web platforms and media options, can be used to widen the reach of academic work to both readers and writers alike. Blogs, social media and other web spaces create new venues for teachers to begin to engage with the field and to discover that they too may have something valuable to share and to learn from other colleagues.

As blog editors, the authors, we wish to learn more about how to encourage faculty to submit their ideas and articles to the blog, as well as read and respond to their colleagues' posts. One of the additional unique features of blogs is the ability to post comments and respond to each other. Writing is no longer a one-way communication venue as the case used to be in the traditional paper-based academic journals, but rather it can become a two-way communication between writers and (Cont.)

readers. This can have great implications for new writers.

Conclusion

The rhetorical situation deems or guides writers' register and stance. What the publication expects and what readers expect will direct authors in how they frame their manuscripts. The premier academic publications serve a traditional and fundamental function for the



field, but the emergence of digital media venues expands and alters the academic space. Less formal academic venues, such as blogs, have become legitimate communities of practice, altering the notion of scholarship and providing spaces for classroom practitioners, opposed to researchers and academics, to engage with each other as readers and as writers.

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Guest Authors – Technology Tools and Strategies for Better Online ESL Instruction ²¹

Terence Cavanaugh & Michelle Soonhyang Kim

COVID has changed education by transitioning many classes online, and even when the pandemic is over, it's likely that a good number of classes will stay online - or at least have the option to be online. If you're a teacher that works internationally, you're probably already teaching online. While many switched to Emergency Online Instruction and the physical locations were shut down, this did provide opportunities as teachers began to experience new ways to teach in the online environment. With Emergency Remote Teaching, the concept is to be a temporary shift to a different delivery format, such as online delivery, trying to quickly set up and provide access to instruction during the crisis (Hodges et al., 2020). In contrast with distance learning, you plan ahead of time and consider the best tools, strategies, and activities for effectively teaching your class online. It is recommended that effective and appropriate interactive instructional materials and technologies be incorporated into online instruction, as they are commonly suitable and promote active learning strategies (Durrington et al., 2006; Miloch, et al., 2012; Pavey & Garland, 2004). These tools can be used to improve course assessment, including meeting course objectives and measuring student learning outcomes (Cote et al., 2008; Jacobs, 2005; Miloch, et al., 2012). Thus, it is important for online instructors to take into consideration factors such as course content, student performance, and usability strategies (Miloch, et al., 2012).

This article is based on the observation of ELL teachers and students over twenty weeks in an online learning environment and its findings for improving technology interactions. While observing instructors working with ELLs online, it was noticeable that a minimal amount of technology was being used in various situations. It was essentially PowerPoint with video conferencing and then worksheet equivalents. A lack of written content support in most of the PowerPoint files was also observed, as exemplified by the lack of use of images. This is not to imply that these teachers were not effective in their teaching, just that their use of technology was not as effective as it could be. All of the observed online classroom situations were engaged and effective in their instruction.

This paper presents a number of strategies that can be applied to online ELL/ESL instruction to improve that situation, some are simple changes to your display to make things easier to see, others use higher technology applications like screen readers and listening teleprompters, and making communication cards, all of which were selected to assist ESL students in the online environment. Online instruction can be very different from in-person, so in this write up we suggest strategies and options that instructors can integrate at little to no cost that will improve the online English Language teaching/learning experience. The write-up covers six areas where instructors can improve their online instruction and interaction in the areas of adjusting the computer; PowerPoint skills; Word skills; Online tools; Voice interactions, and Zoom adaptations.

Adjusting the Computer

One of the first noticeable things during the observation was the lag between the instructor and the students, such as when the instructor was using their mouse to point out things, like words to be read aloud. Part of this is the transmission lag that occurs with tools like Zoom as the video is streamed from the instructor to the server and then to the student, but that didn't account for the observed student squinting. There were no issues when we used a large monitor, but when using a smaller monitor on a laptop, some of the screen elements on the instructor's shared screen became much harder to see, and one of the hard things to see was the mouse pointer. This problem (Cont.)

can be fixed within a few minutes by changing the size of the mouse pointer and using the built-in screen magnifier.

Change the mouse settings. Most people might not ever change from the standard pointer on the screen, but when others are trying to follow what you are pointing at on a screen within a screen (possibly a smaller screen), and as the students don't have the advantage of knowing where the instructor is going, the mouse pointer may become "lost".

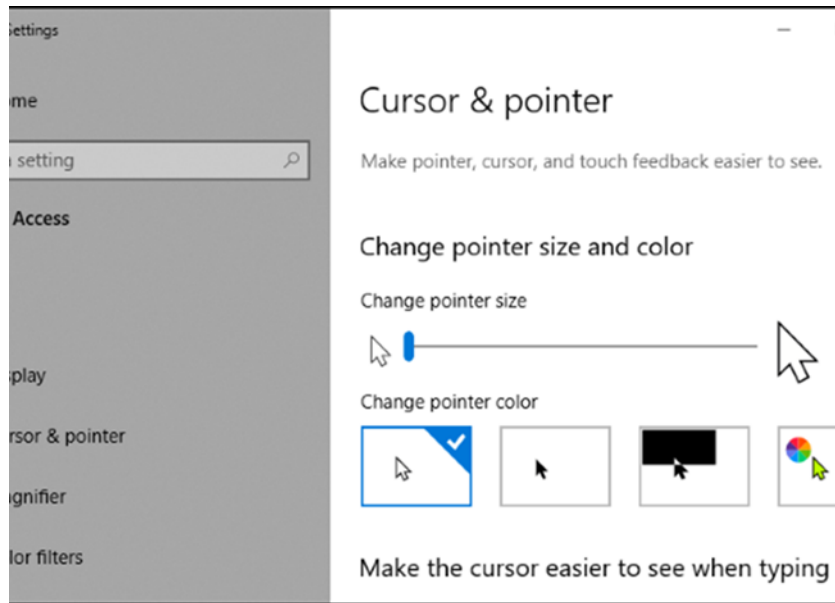


Figure 1: Cursor & pointer settings

Windows

1. To find this option, head to Settings > Ease of Access > Cursor & Pointer. (press Windows+I to open Settings)
2. To change the pointer's size, drag the slider under "Change the Pointer Size." By default, the mouse pointer is set to 1 – the smallest size. You can choose a size from 1 to 15 (which is very large).
3. The "Cursor and Pointer" menu in the Windows 10 Settings app.

Choose a new color in the "Change Pointer Color" section. There are four options here: white with a black border (the default), black with a white border, inverted or your selected color with a black border.

Mac

1. Click the Apple Logo in your Mac's top menu bar.
2. Click System Preferences
3. Click Accessibility
4. Click Display
5. Click Pointer
6. Use the Pointer Size slider to select your desired pointer size

(Cont.)

7. Use the outline and fill colors to change the mouse color

The Magnifier. Within a document or other tool, you will often have the option to change the zoom or font size to make things easier to see, but with that often elements like the menu bar won't change. Instead, use **Magnifier** for items that won't change font size, like menu items that don't enlarge. So if you are trying to show students menu elements or other things that don't zoom, such as the formula bar in Excel, you might use the magnifier. The magnifier enlarges part or all of your screen so you can see elements much better.

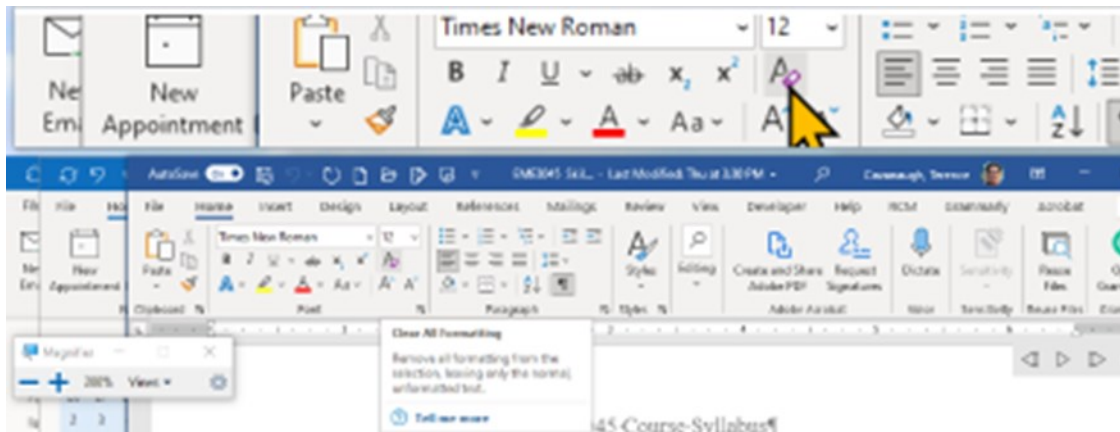


Figure 2: Using the magnifier to enlarge the toolbar.

PC

1. To open Magnifier quickly, press the **Windows logo key + Plus sign (+)**.
2. When Magnifier is open, use the **Windows logo key + Plus sign (+)** or **Windows logo key + Minus sign (-)** to zoom in or out.

To close the Magnifier, press the **Windows logo key + Esc**.

Mac

1. Click the Apple logo in the Menu Bar, and select System Preferences.
2. Click on Accessibility.
3. In the left-hand column, select Zoom. It will be under the Vision section, near the top of the list.
4. Tick the checkbox next to Use keyboard shortcuts to zoom.
5. Alternatively, click Use scroll gesture with modifier keys to zoom.
6. Once enabled, the feature is available immediately.

To turn off the features, simply reach the same menu and uncheck the relevant boxes.

PowerPoint Skills

As PowerPoint was commonly used in the online classroom, there were a few things we would like to highlight that can improve an instructor's PowerPoint skills. First, take some time to familiarize yourself with the **interactive tools that are built into PowerPoint**. These are the tools in the bottom left of the screen, such as the pen and the highlighter, that allow users to better (Cont.)

interact with the students, such as by identifying elements, like onsets & rhymes, when they are talking and trying to point things out.

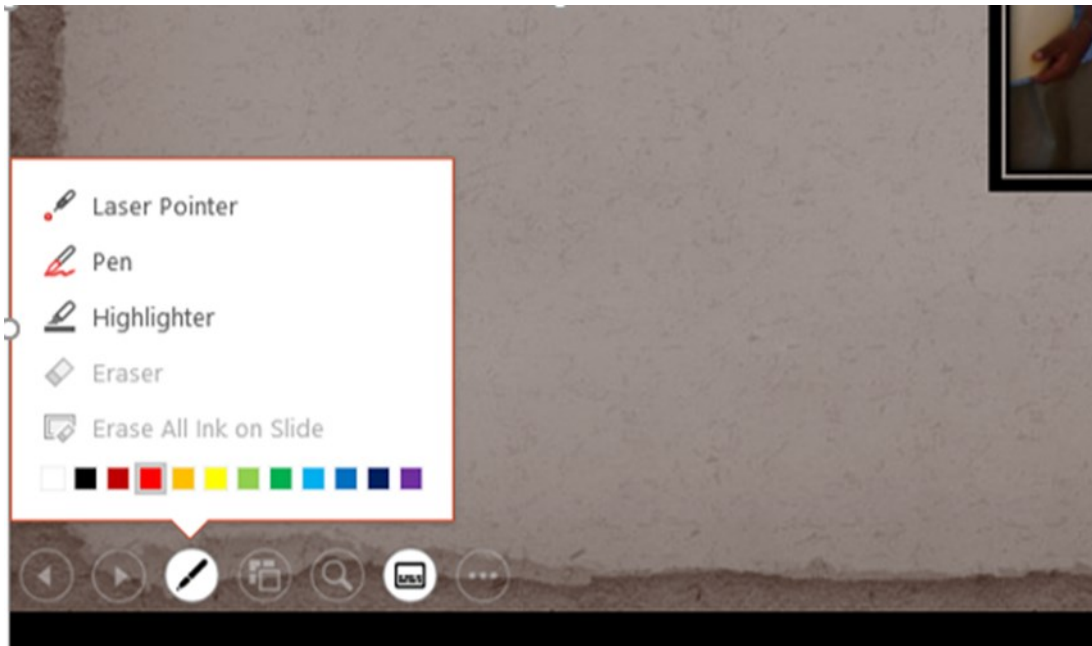


Figure 3: PowerPoint screen tools.

Another noticeable observation was that instructors would often create PowerPoint that had fill-in-the-blanks for the students. The instructors would often have a word list for the students to choose the words from, and then interaction with the students the instructor would write the word in the blank, often by trying to write with their mouse, which is very hard to do. Instead of trying to use a mouse or tablet, an instructor can use text boxes with word choices. Then you can drag the words you want over onto the blanks for the students to see.

Using Text Boxes: words to add to boxes:
beneath, blue, land, life, sailed, town

Yellow Submarine by the Beatles:

In the (1) _____ where I was born
 lived a man who (2) _____ to sea
 and he told us of his (3) _____
 in the (4) _____ of submarines

		town

Figure 4: Adding textboxes to a PowerPoint screen for movement.

During the observation, no instructors were making PowerPoints for the students to use on their own, such as for additional training or practice. Many people get caught up with the idea that PowerPoints are only for the instructor, but they can also be great tools for students to use on their own as well. For example, an instructor may want to give a PowerPoint to the students that has (Cont.)

the sight words that they are to practice on their own. The instructor makes the PowerPoint using time slides that display the words for a limited time and then progresses to a blank slide waiting for a push on the spacebar to show the next word. Someone else with the word list can check the student.

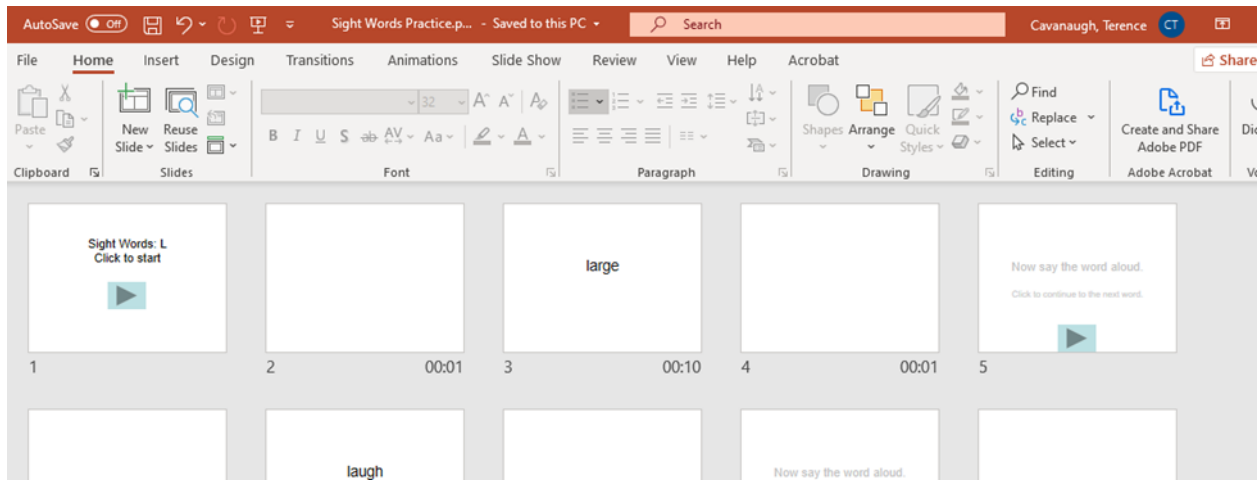


Figure 5: Sample PowerPoint for reading sight words.

Word Skills

In the online classes, a lot of documents, usually Word documents were being used, such as for worksheets and as part of live presentations, such as in Zoom. Here is another case where the instructor could provide the students with a Word document that they are to work with on their own. Students need to practice reading, but they also need to get there by having a variety of texts read to them. This experience can be enhanced by having text be highlighted as it is being read such as using the **Read Aloud** feature in Word – allowing for multiple modalities of learning, in a strategy called Reading-While-Listening.

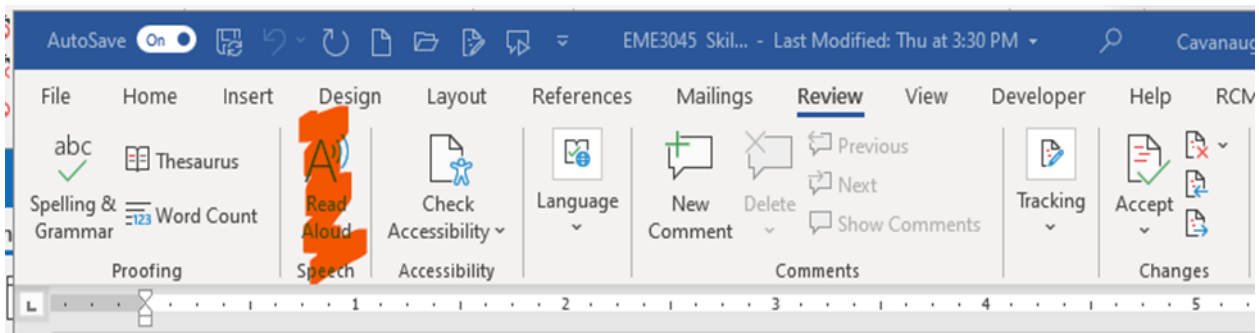


Figure 6: The Read Aloud Button in the Review tab.

Since MS Word is one of the most common word-processing programs used throughout the world, students can have Word read aloud to them as they practice reading. This can be a great strategy for students and once they learn it, they can use it on their own to select topics that they want to read, not just what the instructor provides.

To have Word Read Aloud

1. Copy some text into Word
2. Change to the Review tab
3. Click on Read Aloud Button
4. Click on the Gear Icon to Adjust Voice and Speed of the Reader

Online Tools

In some of the classes, the instructor and the students seemed to be restricted by the examples that were present in the textbook. In an online interactive environment, you should never feel that you must limit yourself to just the book. Usually, a quick search can find other and maybe even better things to use. For example, in one of the classes, the instructor was attempting to use pictures of a calendar and two clocks to get students to read aloud the date and the time. A quick search for 'interactive clock' will bring up a variety of clocks and one that we found from ToyTheater (<https://toytheater.com/clock/>) provides an online interactive clock that can be displayed in Zoom to teach time vocabulary and can be changed to any time that the instructor or student wishes.

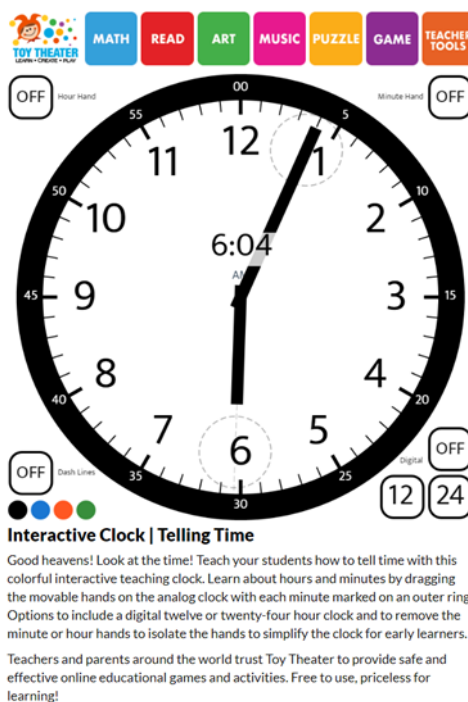


Figure 7: Toytheater's interactive clock for telling time practice.

Voice Interactions

In the Zoom classes observed, students often practiced speaking to the instructor in real-time for feedback. This did remind us of our own foreign language classes and the issue of practicing outside of the classroom. Unless students are living in an environment where the language they are learning is spoken, it can be hard to practice speaking it outside of class.

One way though is that they can practice speaking it to speak and record then listen, using **online recorders**. At one school during the observation, there was a situation where certain students were not able to speak in front of a mixed class of students taking a course on public speaking. So to overcome this issue all the students in that class had to record themselves and then that recording was played to the class. It turned out that when students had to make a speech using recording audio, they re-recorded their speeches at least ten times, till they were happy with how it sounded. So for some practice, we can let students hear themselves for comparison, and then they can also submit that recording as an assessment for the class, which can also be saved or shared with other assessors.

There are several free online tools that will allow students to hear what they sound like. (Cont.)

Online Voice Recorder <https://voicecoach.ai/voice-recorder>

Vocaroo <https://vocaroo.com/>

Rev Online Voice Recorder <https://www.rev.com/onlinevoicerecorder>

SpeakPipe <https://www.speakpipe.com/voice-recorder>

Another option for practicing speaking is to have students use a **listening teleprompter**. While designed to be a teleprompter for people making YouTube Videos, these teleprompters can be used for speech practice, as they not only display the text, they also listen for it to be spoken and then only advance when they hear what is written. If you go off text, then it just waits for you to start reading the presented text again.

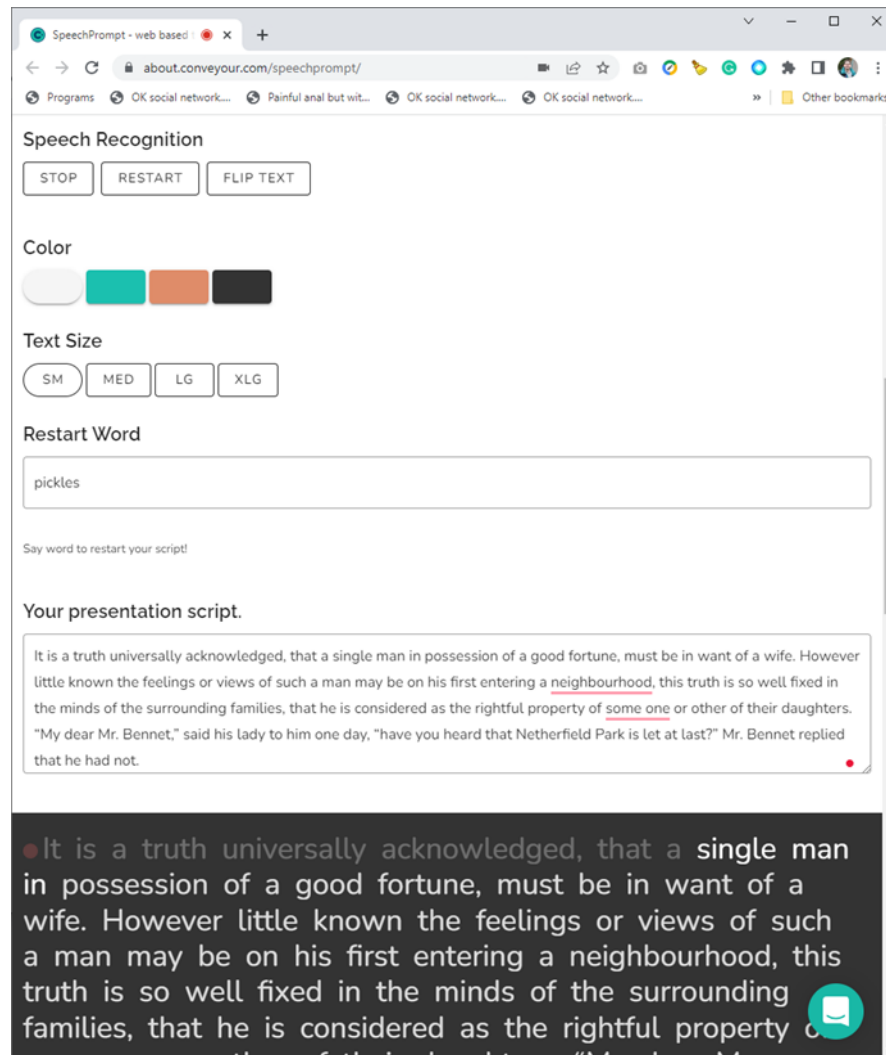


Figure 8: SpeechPrompt's listening teleprompter.

Two of the free listening teleprompters that I have used when teaching my students are:

Teleprompter Mirror: <https://telepromptermirror.com/voice-activated-teleprompter/>

SpeechPrompt: <https://about.conveyour.com/speechprompt>

(Cont.)

Zoom Adaptations

Lastly are some things that you can do with the Zoom telecommunication tool. It is a great tool and like using PowerPoint or Word many instructors can improve their teaching with it by learning more about the tool and taking some time to familiarize themselves with the options that are built into **Zoom**. For example, in watching the classes using Zoom, we did not see one where a teacher had the students Pin the teacher's thumbnail, which would then make it so that the teacher is always showing. Another example was when teachers were trying to play an audio or video file, but the sound was not playing, for that, you have to change your zoom settings to Share Sound from the Share Screen toolbar.

Another very useful tool is to create Communication Cards, which we use to communicate with my students such as when they are doing presentations. We make my communication cards using the PostCard template in word and then type the card's purpose and put on a simple picture to make it easy to understand, and then print them. With these communication cards, we can show them in my pinned thumbnail window for all the students to see, providing information without interruption. For example, during the online classes, the Pin This Window card is shown at the start to remind them which window to pin, and the timecard is shown during the presentation to remind them about how much time is left.



Figure 9: Sample communication cards

Conclusion

This paper presented a few free available options that teachers can utilize with their online students to keep them engaged and interested. The six areas discussed (Adjusting their Computer, PowerPoint skills, Word skills, Online tools, Voice Interactions, and Zoom adaptations) don't all have to be done, a teacher might want to just do *Adjusting their Computer*, to make their mouse pointer easier to see, and see if that makes things easier for their students to see and follow. Whichever you try, just remember that online is a different environment for teaching and learning for most people and with any new environment we need to learn new skills and strategies. (Cont.)

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CATESOL Newsletter Series Columns

Special Column Series– How Being a Language Learner Informs You as a Language Teacher

Special Column Series– Experiences and Stories from Language Learners

NEW Special Column Series– Insights from Parents, Sharing Experiences and Reflections on their experiences in support things child/children

Guest Author Column Series - Contributions from members of other affiliates and invited non-CATESOL members.

Consider offering a submission or encourage a colleague to contribute. Submission to newsletter@catesol.org

ELLs Voices, Column Series II, Discovering Who I am Academically³⁰

Rami Khamis, with academic writing mentor

Editor Introduction ELL Voices Column Series, Kara Mac Donald

Stephen Soresi (2010) in his book chapter, *Media Participation as and End Point for Authentic Writing and Autonomous Learning*, in the edited volume, *Effective Second Language Writing* by Susan Kasten describes how ELLs writing skills can be enhanced by having a real-world audience for them to write for can more meaningfully engage them in the writing process, including revising and attention to lexical and structural use their writing will submitted for publication. Soresi shares the writing activity framework he uses with EFL Japanese students where the outcome is submitting their articles to media outlets, as letters to the editor, reader forums and essay contest submissions (See CATESOL Blog Book Review, June 2022).

The first trial article was by a mature and advanced academic Lebanese American student, sharing her experience her experience and perceptions of her brother's experience in the California school system (See CATESOL Newsletter, 55-2, Yara Khamis). It was uncertain if subsequent interest for remaining issues would be available, as unlike in Soresi's situation, contributing to the CATESOL newsletter is not a requirement of a university writing course. Students of ESL teachers as CATESOL members have no obligation to write and submit their writing reflecting on their educational experiences. However, there has been a positive response just through word of mouth to secure a second article and possibly a third in an attempt to complete the pilot column over four issues (Issue 55-2 to 56-1). The fourth student author is yet to be slated, so if you have a learner that would like to contribute by sharing a personal experience, reflection, positive learning activity or anything else related to his/her journey as an ELL, I encourage you to encourage him/her and contact me at newsleter@catesol.org.

Introducing Myself, Rami Khamis

I see myself as a native English speaker. English is the language I have used in school. I have two other languages in my home, and I use them to speak to family and watch TV. I speak Levantine Arabic okay and understand pretty well, but I can't read or write. I speak French and understand so-so. I can read and write, but so not good. Yet they are part of my home as well as English.

I was labeled as an ELL and then, maybe a slow learner, and after an ELL. I think the reason I was designated as an ELL was that I knew more than one language and I wasn't doing great in school. I also had an IEP which maybe has had something to do with me being an ELL. I wasn't doing that great in my English when I was in high school, and I still needed some help. I know I was in some special classes, had academic counselors and out-of-class support. I have had an IEP as long as I can remember. I'm in community college now and the support continues for me.

I am shy and don't ask for help, until it's too late. It seems I get scolded for not speaking up for support. Even though my teachers are there for me, I didn't know what I didn't know. I always thought I knew what I needed to know. My grades were low, but I didn't worry about them expect that they stressed my family.



My View Changed

There was a time in 10th grade when I was struggling with special support in and out of school. I couldn't keep by grades above a D or C, even with a tutor at home. The school recommended an a special high school (Regional Occupational Program (ROP) high school) so I could graduate **and get** a diploma. My mom consulted other teachers and so, we went to see the school.

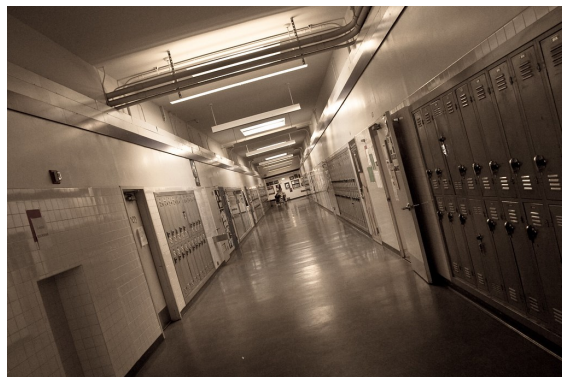
The teachers and the students seemed fine, but I didn't like the building. It was an older elementary school. Nothing shining and new, and everything was small and low for young kids. It didn't look like a high school. I couldn't see myself there.

Talking to my mom, I learned there are schools that offer different paths than the ones my sisters took, a traditional high school and off to university. I didn't know that before. I wasn't a super student at school but wanted to do what my sisters did.

COVID-19 Changed My School World for the Better

I graduated my regular high school in 2021. The lock down was good for me. I'm shy and having less distractions by studying online at home, I could control my routine more for my Junior and Senior years. Mom says I took on my responsibility. With a regular high school diploma in my hand, I started community college.

I am now doing culinary and baking courses at the community college this summer semester. I really like baking classes. I struggled in my first couple of semesters with regular English and Math courses (Fall of 2021 and Spring of 2022), even with Winter Semester break tutors. I couldn't keep up with the Spring semester English course. My mom got me some non-credit English and Math courses for the Fall semester to prepare me for the real ones I struggled with, but need to take. She told me to take classes that interest me in Summer semester to have a break.



I feel good at school on campus. I have some good friends and we even go places, like to the beach for a picnic. I am even thinking about getting my driving license. Not really interested in a job yet. For me, confidence comes slowly.

Conclusion

I'm supposed to say something that makes my experiences interesting to others. Maybe some students find themselves placed in schools [i.e educational systems] they don't understand and their parents too. Maybe some students need time. Maybe they don't move forward like everyone else. I think my teachers and family have always given me time.

The impact of writing for a real-world audience, not my teachers for a classroom assignment, made me feel like my voice matters. It made me feel like an adult, writing for adults. It made me feel like having the potential of my sisters.

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Guest Author II – Visual Analysis of the Textbooks, Considering Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion³²

Le Pham Hoai Huong & Tran Thi Thanh Thuong

Based on a formal study using visual analysis and the representational mode (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) to examine the images in the communication and culture section of the official series of EFL textbooks for high schools in Vietnam a potential implication for intercultural competence (ICC) was considered for the U.S. ESL context (e.g. Adult Ed, international students, new comers, and heritage speaker groups).

The authors did not explore ESL textbooks commonly used in Californian public school education as a comparison piece, but rather considered the original study's findings with respect to longstanding heritage community speakers (i.e. Vietnamese and beyond) and the constant recent changes in migrant population (i.e. ethnicity, country of origin, and first language) influx in the U.S. and in the state of California. The objective is to show how EFL textbooks in Vietnam are expansive in representing national, ethnic and language origin.

California is often most associated with Spanish language speakers outside of the English language speakers in the minds of many outside of the U.S. and maybe among most U.S. citizens and residents, but the San Francisco Bay area along with other regions of the state, are not only locations of prior and contemporary migration of Chinese, Japanese and Korean migration but also Vietnamese migration. The Vietnamese language is spoken by over 558,932 which is 1.43% of California's population (World Atlas, 2022), second to Spanish. San Jose, California has the highest number of Vietnamese speakers in the U.S. and outside of Vietnam (World Atlas, 2022).

Even though many Vietnamese settled in California at a specific historical period, the population and communities have integrated into the U.S. society, like many other national and ethnic groups, and they carved out their own cultural spaces, and these spaces serve to introduce the next/new generation of U.S. Vietnamese youth, and the diverse ethnic youth groups, to the customs and traditions of their heritage language and traditional culture.

However, how much do the current and new generations of U.S. immigrants (e.g. Iraqi, Afghani, Ukrainian, and more) see themselves in the school context, instructional materials, and beyond outside of their own households and community events. It is important for individuals to see themselves represented in everything from major commercial advertising to the educational classroom.

The following discussion is derived from our research on the representation of other nationalities and cultures in the official series of EFL textbooks for high schools in Vietnam, with implications for the Californian ESL context as the authors ask ESL teachers to consider and maybe critique the textbooks used in order to identify needed supplementation to the standard curriculum content for changing new comer needs.

ESL classrooms, in contexts like California are a common place of initial or final location of residence after various contexts/countries of asylum, are critical places of learning and socialization. (Cont.)



Summary of the Original Study

A total of 138 images from six student books were examined to explore which countries were included and what these images actually represented. The findings reveal that the countries of all the continents, except South America, were depicted. The host country, Vietnam, appeared with the highest frequency, followed by USA and Singapore. However, African countries, China, England, Europe, Malaysia, Poland, Russia, Sweden and the Philippines were mentioned only once. The results also indicate that these textbooks have more pictures of the conceptual process describing the activities people are doing than the narrative ones referring to certain characteristics or components.

Study's Findings -Countries Presented in the English Textbooks for High Schools in Vietnam

The series *Tieng Anh* (English) textbooks for high schools in Vietnam is nationally prescribed, with the aim to develop students' knowledge of international cultures and communicative competence. The section of communication and culture in the textbooks thus present pictures and exercises with culture contents. This section first explores how frequent and which countries are included in the textbooks. Frequency tallying of the countries represented in the textbooks is displayed in Table 1 below.

As can be seen from Table 1, the countries of all the continents, except south America were included in the textbooks in Vietnam. The host country, Vietnam appeared with the highest frequency (7/30 units), followed by USA (5/30 units) and Singapore (3/30 units). In comparison, African countries, China, England, Europe, Malaysia, Poland, Russia, Sweden and the Philippines were mentioned only once. The distribution of the target cultures or international cultures seem to follow no patterns. This could be explained by the fact that the topic of the units as well as the availability of reference material sources could probably decide which countries to be included in the book. For example, Singapore and UK were included three times whereas African countries and the Philippines only once.

Table 1

Countries in English Textbooks for High Schools in Vietnam

Country/Region	Frequency
African countries	✓
Australia	✓✓
Austria	✓
China	✓
England	✓
Europe	✓
India	✓✓✓
Indonesia	✓✓
Japan	✓✓

(Cont.)

Table 1 (Cont.)*Countries in English Textbooks for High Schools in Vietnam*

Country/Region	Frequency
Korea	✓✓✓
Malaysia	✓
Poland	✓
Russia	✓
Singapore	✓✓✓
Sweden	✓
Thailand	✓✓
The Philippines	✓
UK	✓✓✓
Unidentified	✓✓✓✓✓✓
USA	✓✓✓✓✓
Vietnam	✓✓✓✓✓✓✓

Culture Representations in English Textbooks for High Schools in Vietnam

The images in the textbooks depicting conceptual and narrative processes of cultural contents were first tallied and then analyzed in this section. Table 2 below displays the frequency.

As can be seen from Table 2, (next page) quite a large number of pictures (138) were used in the current English textbooks for high schools in Vietnam, with a higher frequency for conceptual processes (72) than narrative ones (66). The 72 images of the conceptual processes describe people are doing an activity, for example, teaching, driving or playing. In comparison, and 66 pictures were found in the series of English textbooks in Vietnam which describe the world as an entity. In general, more pictures of the conceptual process category than narrative ones were used in the textbooks.

Among the topics, the theme of electronic devices features the most images (9) whereas the topics of inventions and global warming have none. Other units in the books that have remarkably high numbers of images include: housework, ecotourism, the world of work, choosing a career, being part of ASEAN, each with 8 images. Illustrations make up 16 out of 138 visuals in the series with 14 illustrations to describe conceptual processes and only two for narrative processes.

(Cont.)

Table 2

Culture Representations in English Textbooks for High Schools in Vietnam

Theme in textbooks	Conceptual process	Narrative process
1. Cities of future	7	0
2. Housework	6	2*
3. Electronic devices	6	3
4. Ecotourism	5	3
5. Sports	4	1
6. Community	4	1
7. Healthy lifestyle and longevity	3	2
8. Artificial intelligence	3	4
9. Family	3	0
10. Gender equality	3	2
11. Communication	3	1
12. Becoming independent	2	3
13. Further education	2	4
14. The mass media	2	2
15. The world of work	2	6
16. Preserving the environment	2	1
17. Family	2	0
18. Life stories	2	0
19. Choosing a career	2	6
20. Being part of ASEAN	2	6
21. Urbanization	2	0
22. The green movement	1	0
23. Cultural identity	1	3

(Cont.)

Table 2 (Cont.)*Culture Representations in English Textbooks for High Schools in Vietnam*

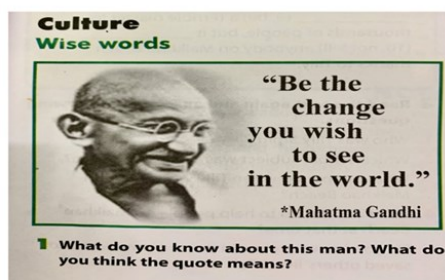
24. Endangered species	1	5
25. Our world heritage sites	1	0
26. Caring for those in need	<i>1</i>	3
27. Relationships	0	4
28. Famous people	0	4
29. Global warming	0	0
30. Inventions	0	0
Total	72	66

* *Italic numbers indicate illustrations, not photos.*

Cultural presentations address a range of topics. Below is an example from unit 3, becoming independent, English for grade 11, book 1, page 39 that has the following illustration showing the tasks of Vietnamese parents.



As for visuals to show narrative processes, the images range from people, places, objects to devices. One example is found in unit 4, for a better community, English textbook for grade 10 (page. 39). It is a photo of Mahatma Gandhi together with the quote “Be the change you wish to see in the world”. The following photo indicates Gandhi as an icon of change to the world, which suggests his worldwide influence.



(Cont.)

It can be said that this image of Gandhi when used as a classroom material for discussion would bring about some knowledge and understanding of an influential figure from India to Vietnamese ESL students.

A further example of the narrative feature can be found in unit 5, *Inventions*, of the textbook for grade 10, pictures of seven inventions in different countries in the world are illustrated to denote the products and tools that humans have made to serve their needs.

Culture
Do you know which countries these inventions are from? Match the country names with the inventions.

Countries	Inventions
1. China	a. medical incubator
2. Japan	b. PC sound card
3. Singapore	c. chopsticks
4. The Philippines	d. instant noodles

Questions

- What are the main issues of many Southeast Asian countries?
- Write the names of the inventions under the pictures.
- Which inventions have directly benefited farmers?
- Which inventions have helped to protect the environment? Pick out information from the text to support your answer.
- In your opinion, which of the three inventions from Thailand mentioned in the text is the most important? Why?

As the countries of which the inventions came from are mentioned in the table for the matching exercise, students would learn some facts about the other countries beside their own.

Regarding the conceptual processes, activities are shown for different themes. For example, for gender equality, the pictures in the textbook depict a primary male teacher teaching young children and a female police officer driving the police car.

Culture
Read the following text about gender equality in the United Kingdom and answer the questions.

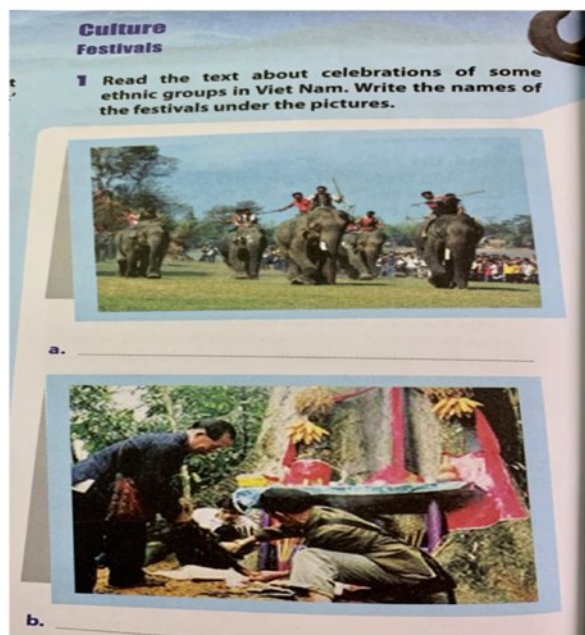
Gender equality in the United Kingdom

As a high-income country, the United Kingdom has made a remarkable progress in gender equality.

It should be noticed that in reality almost none of males in Vietnam work as primary teachers. Therefore, the photo above may lead to an exciting discussion when Vietnamese ESL students have to talk about the topic of gender equality. Simultaneously, they can learn about the issue in the UK.

As for the host culture of Vietnam, the books also provide pictures of festivals. The following pictures depict the processes of two festivals taking place and carried out by Vietnamese ethnic people. As not all Vietnamese students have opportunities to experience these festivals in real life, viewing them in classes to some extent teaches them about the home culture.

(Cont.)



Implications

First, the findings of the current study reveal that the total of 138 images of 30 themes ranging from family, household work, schools to global issues etc. was included in the high school English textbooks in Vietnam. These images to some extent are likely to foster students' understanding of the contents they are studying in textbooks. More specifically, the images represented the cultures of various countries in the world in forms of festivals, daily activities, inventions and people etc. which the majority of the Vietnamese ESL students have not been to or directly observed. These visuals to some extent provide the learners with input of cultural understanding and knowledge. They can serve as "tools" to scaffold students' learning processes about other cultures if used appropriately and effectively.

The analysis of the images of English textbooks used in high schools in Vietnam on the other hand show the conceptual and narrative meanings of 30 themes to compare the Vietnamese culture with many others in the world. These visuals may serve as the foundation to develop intercultural communicative competence of ESL learners. In other words, the culture contents of various countries used in the current English textbook in Vietnam could contribute to raise the awareness of ESL learners about the world around them and promote a sense of global citizenship.

It's understandable that the Vietnamese, and other Vietnam ethnic groups and southeast Asian populations, are not present in commercial ESL textbooks serving Californian ESL and EFL students. In fact, in particular periods, the ESL and EFL student population across a diverse state with dynamic change, placing content in formal textbooks could fail to serve certain populations. The authors in their study have come to understand how more representative the Vietnamese official government textbooks are beyond the inner circle L1 English speaking countries and wish to share this beyond their national community of practice. Also through international community of practice, we wish to share what inner circle L1 English speaking countries (e.g. U.S) can learn from our practice.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to investigate how the images of the countries in the world are presented in the communication and culture section in the English textbooks for high schools in Vietnam and what these images represent. The representational mode of visual analysis (Kress &...) (Cont.)

van Leeuwen, 2006) was employed to examine the images. Frequency tabulation shows a total of 138 images for 30 themes were used in the books. The findings also reveal that the countries of all the continents, except South America, were introduced in the textbooks and Vietnam appeared with the highest frequency, followed by USA and Singapore. These textbooks have more pictures of the conceptual process describing the activities people are doing than the narrative ones depicting certain characteristics or components. Several implications can be drawn from the current study's findings.

The findings of the current study may draw attention of textbook designers to make some changes to the visuals of the communication and culture section of the textbooks to have more systematic distribution of images/visuals of the home country and others. In the series of the English textbooks for Vietnam, two units do not have any images whereas some units contain a range of eight to nine pictures. Even when the purpose is to introduce culture, for the topic of AI, the lesson has photos of robots without referring to any countries. The unit in this case serves the purpose of displaying general knowledge only.

Second, the images depicting conceptual and narrative processes in this study do not follow any patterns but their frequency to appear in the English textbooks may provoke different use of grammar structures such as the simple present tense for describing concepts and the simple present continuous tense for expressing an activity in progress. Therefore, if the aim of the lesson is to introduce international cultures, teachers may need to direct students to make use of their knowledge of other cultures together with suitable tenses and English vocabulary to discuss or write in English.

Third, in this globalization era, the emphasis on knowledge of international cultures and cross-cultural communication competence, ESL teachers should teach with caution when using textbooks as they need to point out that the visuals represent a certain culture to some extent only. The images should not be taken as stereotypes, for example, not all males in the UK work as primary teachers and not all women to be police officers as shown in English textbooks for Vietnam. Besides, illustrations in textbooks may be understood in different ways, depending on perceptions of students and thus should be used appropriately. In other words, it is important that textbooks writers and users avoid stereotyping certain cultures for what included in the textbooks may be imprinted in students' minds.

This study was bound to visual analysis. Further studies examining how images facilitate/ scaffold learning tasks/exercises in the MDA framework would yield more specific findings regarding how both written language and pictures mediate the culture learning process in students.

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Hoang Van Van, Hoang Thi Xuan Hoa, Dang Hiep Giang, Phan Ha, Hoang Thi Hong Hai, Kieu Thi Thu Huong, Vu Thi Lan, and Dao Ngoc Loc (2012). *Tieng Anh 10, 11, 12*. Educational Publisher.

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Editor Series Introduction

Parents' Voices, What Can They Share with ESL Teachers - A Four Issue Series Pilot

Teachers intimately hear the accounts of their students' background and experiences. This is privileged information and not shared except with relevant stakeholders. Parents also have their own stories that intersect with their children's and their own experiences. If parents shared their children's learning experiences and their own in a community of practice these insights and lessons learned would be available to others educators. Laluvein, (2010), community of practice with regards to parent-teacher relationships, explores "how social inclusion/exclusion can be defined in terms of access, recognition, and meaningful participation issues ('equity')" (Raffo & Gunter, p. 397).

This is a pilot series column of four articles accessing accounts from parents to further provide ESL teachers insight across various socio-cultural, socio-economic, and regional communities across the state. The first slated article for the December 55-4 issue is a reflection by Lorena Garcia, a mother of three children, with the youngest now in middle school and the second in college, and the oldest in postgraduate studies. She describes her experiences as a U.S.-born, Mexican American in a predominantly Anglo neighborhood and school (now predominantly Hispanic), and how that influenced her own understanding of herself as a woman acquiring education and independence, and how this then informed the rearing of her children and their education as Mexican-Americans.

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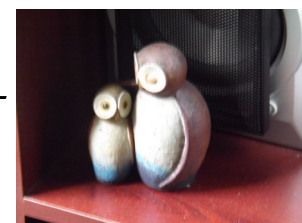
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Call for Submissions

Parents' Voices, What Can They Share with ESL Teachers Series

So you have friends that are parents of ELLs, do you have relationships of close trust with some students' parents, do you have colleagues at work, and the possibilities go on....that may wish to share their experiences with CATESOL members to offer personal insight into what experiences they have had or what issues matter to them?



Submission: newsletter@catesol.org

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- Have an innovative lesson activity or practice you can share to assist members? Write a short practitioner piece.
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