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Synaesthetic Metaphors of Television Food Commercial Ads in Mandarin Chinese

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Abstract

Synaesthesia is one of the most interesting phenomena in neurology, psychology, or cognitive linguistics. It is one of the most common types of metaphoric transfer in all languages (Williams, 1976). This paper focuses on synaesthetic metaphors of television food commercials in Mandarin Chinese. The data are collected from Taiwanese national television channels in the early evening hours on a weeknight in the winter of 2010 with the first 100 commercials that appeared being analyzed. The 26 food ads are analyzed by Yang's (2000) classification and Day's (1996) "hierarchical distribution". The research goals are: (1) In regard to food commercial ads, which synaesthetic transfer has been used most frequently; (2) Do those conceptual mapping roles support Day's (1996) theoretical framework of "hierarchical distribution"? The results show that the synaesthetic transfer from *vision* to *taste* is the most frequent route, and *taste* and *emotion* are the first two target domains. This mapping direction contradicts Day's (1996) hypothesis of "hierarchical distribution." Furthermore, the result also reflects language diversity in that synaesthetic metaphors may vary from culture to culture. To conclude, this study sheds light on how synaesthetic metaphors are applied in television food commercials in Mandarin Chinese.

Key words: Food commercials, Synaesthesia, Synaesthetic metaphor, Mandarin Chinese

INTRODUCTION

Food supplies energy and nutrition for human beings. The relationship between food, language and culture interacts one and another. In Mandarin Chinese, there is an old saying that goes *min2 yi3 shi2 wei2 tian1* 民以食爲天 ‘bread is the staff of life’. Under this cultural norm, Chinese people treat food seriously and they enjoying eating as well as tasting.

Taste, according to Bourdieu (1984: 190), is “an incorporated principle of classification which governs all forms of incorporation, choosing and modifying everything that the body ingests and digests and assimilates, physiologically and psychologically.” In other words, taste consists of our everyday life experiences, motions, perceptions, and values (Strauss, 2005). By using each sensory organ, people can feel and enjoy the pleasure or displeasure gave by taste and then create taste expression.

Research on taste usually investigates taste vocabularies in various languages perceived through any of the five senses or via a combination of sensory receptors (Strauss, 2005). These studies provide the corresponding language-specific descriptor, which is known as synaesthesia. Synaesthesia comes from Greek, where “syn” means “together”, and “aesthesia” is derived from “aistheesis” means “sensation”. Thus, it is the neurological mixing of the senses. In other words, one sensation is stimulated by another sense modality, for example, if one ‘hears’ colors or ‘sees’ sounds. When synaesthesia comes into language, it forms phrases such as *warm voice*, *soft light*, and *velvet smile* (Hsieh, 2009) which makes the abstract sensation, *sound* and *vision*, concrete. As many researchers reported, there is a universal tendency of the synaesthetic transfer (Ullmann, 1959; Williams, 1976, Lien, 1994, Day, 1996; Yu, 1992, 2003). That is, concrete senses, *taste* and *touch*-. are usually served as the source for referring to abstract referents, *vision* and *sound* (Bloomfield, 1933).

This paper builds on the current literature by analyzing synaesthetic transfers as they appear in a specified context, food commercials from Taiwan. As mentioned earlier, synaesthetic metaphors have caught linguistic interest long before. In 1959, Ullmann proposed a theoretical framework of “hierarchical distribution.” At that time, there were five general senses, *touch*, *taste*, *smell*, *vision*, *hearing*, were covered in the scheme. When Day (1996) started the research on synaesthesia and synaesthetic metaphors, he added the sixth sense, temperature, to make the transfer more detailed.

Thus, in the current study, some issues are touched upon. First, in regard to food commercial ads, which synaesthetic transfer is used most frequently. The reason for choosing food commercials as the data is that TV commercials convey their concepts to the target audience in an efficient and precise way within a limited time through language and entire content. In other words, synaesthetic transfer, a phenomenon which contains senses mapping from each other, may play a role in this integration.

The second issue touched in the present research is whether the roles of the synaesthetic mappings therein support Day's (1996) theoretical framework of "general distribution". Third, compared to Strauss' (2005) research, who compared and contrasted languages and culture across three languages, Japanese, Korean, the U.S., what the differences are in terms of cultural norms.

In what follows, the related research covering how synaesthesia is integrated into language will be discussed in Section 2. The theoretical framework will be covered in Section 3, including Day's (1996) "general distribution" and Yang's (2000) classification, as well as the data collection. The results analyzed by source domains are laid out in Section 4 and are followed by a discussion. Lastly, there is a summary of present study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The focus of this section deals with previous studies of synaesthetic metaphor and synaesthetic metaphor in television food ads.

Studies of Synaesthetic Metaphor

In 1959, Ullmann, the pioneer of synaesthetic transfer, analyzed synaesthetic metaphors existing in 19th century poetry and proposed a theoretical framework of "hierarchical distribution." This framework concluded three tendencies in terms of synaesthetic transfers. First, the direction of synaesthetic transfer moves from the "lower" to the "higher" sensory modality. That is, those who obtain qualities of lower senses would occur on the left of the hierarchy, such as *touch*, and *taste*. When synaesthetic transfer happened, these "lower" sensory modality would map part of their sensory meaning onto a "higher" sense, such as *sound* and *color*. Based on them, Ullmann also summed up that this "hierarchical distribution" is unidirectional. In other words, *sound* and *vision* are more often described by touch than vice versa. Since then how these transfers interact with each other has been the interest of several linguists (Strauss, 2005; Hsieh and Kolodkina, 2007; Ling, 2009; Shen and Gadir, 2009).

In 1976, Williams followed the synaesthetic transfer patterns in daily English and brought up a similar regularity with a refinement to the generalization. The differences between Ullmann (1959) and Williams (1976) are:

(1) The sensory modes are more refined in Williams' than in Ullmann's treatment. Unlike Ullmann's sensory categories, *vision* was separated into *dimension* and *color* in Williams' mapping.

(2) Both *touch* and *dimension* could serve as an independent source domain in Williams' synaesthetic transfer while there was single source, *touch*, in Ullmann's

“hierarchical distribution”.

(3) In Ullmann’s tendency, the transfer was single and unidirectional. Since there were two senses provided as the source, the transfer route was more complicated in Williams’ schedule but still it was unidirectional.

(4) *Sound* and *color* could transfer back and forth in Williams’ while *vision* was more often transcribed to *sound* than vice versa in Ullmann’s scheme.

In order to prove the universal validity of Williams’ (1976) synaesthetic scheme, Lien (1994) applied his generalization to the synaesthetic words in Southern Min (henceforth SM). Unlike Williams’ scheme where *touch* and *dimension* were independent, they were interacted in Lien’s transfer. That is, *dimension* could be transferred to *touch* but not the other way round. Moreover, Lien’s scheme also explained the exceptions in Williams’, such as *color* to *taste* and *dimension* to *touch*. Despite the differences, Lien viewed that the unidirectional metaphorical mapping was existed. Combining Williams’ (1976) framework and Lien’s (1994) pattern, Yang (2000) examined synaesthetic words in Mandarin and found that the taste terms in Mandarin Chinese were related to the internal self (Sweetser, 1990) and could be used for describing personal likes and dislike. Likewise, this argument was also reported by Tsao (1997) who proposed that taste terms in Chinese could also express the meaning of experiences (Hsieh, 2009; Chen, 2010), such as ‘taste the joys of freedom’.

In addition, in the comparison of gustatory synaesthetic metaphors in Mandarin Chinese and Russian, Hsieh (2009) indicated that *emotion* and *touch* are the most popular senses for *taste* transfer both in Mandarin Chinese and Russian, except that Russian had a much wider distribution. Chen (2010) used Taiwanese songs from the 80’s and 90’s as data and discovered that gustatory synaesthetic metaphors played an important role in synaesthetic transfer for *sour*, *sweet*, *bitter*, *spicy*, and *salty* were perceptions represented not only in taste, but also in love and life.

The Synaesthetic Metaphor of the Television Food Ads

Strauss (2005) conducted a cross-cultural analysis of taste terms in food commercials from Japan, Korea, and the United States. It pertained to the sensory perception, *taste*, and examined its semantic characteristics used in commercial advertisements. The cross-linguistics analysis combined two levels, macro and micro level. In the macro level, Strauss argued on the basic structure, content, and organization of the discourse, that is, the surface meaning. As for the micro-level, she focused on language use, such as grammatical structure, comparative lexical semantics, lexical choice, prosody, and pragmatic implicatures.

The data was collected from national television channels in Yokohama, Seoul, and Los Angeles in the spring of 1996. Strauss used the first 100 commercials that were shown during a three-hour recording in the early evening hours on a weeknight. The target commercials were 42 out of 100 from Japan, 30 from Korea, and 23 from

the U.S. She analyzed the data according to how taste and tactility were combined to aestheticize the food products in order to attract the target audience in each country.

The results indicated that the taste terms in the Japanese corpus tended to be less descriptive and included fewer synaesthetically derived descriptors than those in the U.S. and Korean corpora. Hence, compared to the “softness” found in the Japanese ads, the U.S. database evoked both visual and tactile sensations such as “it tastes richer, much creamier”¹ (Strauss, 2005: 1443). In addition, the taste terms of the Korean corpus were more complex in terms of sensory expression than the Japanese and U.S. databases. For instance, the Korean commercials applied sounds, textures, and impressions phonologically recreated in the actual pronunciation of the words.

All in all, Strauss (2005) argued that from the food and beverage database, the discourse positively evoked synaesthetic descriptions through the combination of gustatory, visual, tactile, and auditory transfers. However, can this result be generalized into Mandarin Chinese? In order to expand the scope of this research and discover the conceptualization of synaesthetic metaphor, the goal of the present paper is to discover the conceptual mapping rules that underlie Chinese synaesthetic metaphors of *taste*, especially in the commercial genre.

In order to expand the scope of Strauss’ (2005) research and examine Day’s (1996) “general distribution” of synaesthetic metaphor in terms of Mandarin Chinese, the method that Strauss used and Day’s theory will be applied in the present paper.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA

In Day’s (1996) general distribution, he added a sixth sense, *temperature*, which is separated from *touch* as shown in Figure 1. He examined printed and electronic English texts and found that the general distribution of synaesthetic metaphor was shown as bellow.

touch → taste → temperature → smell → vision → hearing

Fig. 1 Day’s general distribution (1996: 15).

From this scheme, the sense on the left of the arrow could serve as the source for the one on the opposite side of the arrow. For example, “a sour smell” indicates *smell* goes to *taste*. Thus, in Day’s general distribution, *touch* is the primary source in terms of synaesthetic transfer while hearing is most frequently expanded and elaborated by other senses. This implies that synaesthetic metaphor transfers from the “lower” to the “higher” sensory modes as well.

In order to expand the scope of Strauss’ (2005) research on *taste*, researchers

¹ In Strauss’ (2005) paper, the original text is ‘it tastes richer, much creamier’.

follow Strauss' (2005) way of data collection. The commercials were recorded from four national television channels, Taiwan Television (TTV), China Television (CTV), Chinese Television System (CTS), and Formosa Television (FTV), in Tainan, Taiwan in the early evening hours on a weeknight in the winter of 2010. The first 100 commercials, excluding public service announcements and repetitious ads that appeared during a three-hour recording period were collected as the data base in the present study. Within these 100 ads, only the commercials which contained food, beverages, and retail food establishments were regarded as food ads and analyzed in this research. The programs surrounding the commercials were rebroadcast variety shows, cartoons, game shows, rebroadcast fashion shows, talk shows, and news broadcasts.

The sense classification is based on Yang's (2000) criteria, which was reorganized from Langacker (1987), Gleitman (1981), and Ogura & Wang's (1995) findings and *Online Chinese Dictionary* (National Science Council Digital Library and Museum, 1994) as well. Based on Yang's (2000) classification, *da4* 大 'big', *xiao3* 小 'small', *man3* 滿 'full', *nong2* 濃 'dense', *chun2* 純 'pure', and *qing1* 清 'clear' are categorized as visual lexemes. Olfactory keywords are *xiang1* 香 'fragrant', *chou4* 臭 'smelly', and *xing1* 腥 'offensive smell.' The tactile perception could be expressed by *zhong4* 重 'heavy', (*guang1*) *hua2* (光)滑 'smooth', *rou2* 柔 'mild', *ruan3* 軟 'soft', *ying4* 硬 'hard', *nen4* 嫩 'tender', *ren4* 韌 'pliable but strong', and *cui4* 脆 'crisp.' Lexemes of temperature are like *han2* 寒 'chilly', *leng3* 冷 'cold', *re4* 熱 'hot', *liang2* 涼 'cool', *wen1* 溫 'warm', *nuan3* 暖 'warm', and *tang4* 燙 'very hot'. Words for representing taste are *suan1* 酸 'sour', *tian2* 甜 'sweet', *gan1* 甘 'sweet', *ku2* 苦 'bitter', *xin1* 辛 'pungent', *su1* 酥 'crisp', *dan4* 淡 'light', and *xian1* 鮮 'fresh'. As for hearing, Yang did not state is specifically. Thus, the judging point is based on the familiarity of Mandarin Chinese and *Online Chinese Dictionary*. Once the phrase contains sensory lexemes, it is selected as potential data. The syntactic structure and category do not concern us in the present research. In addition, a good commercial could easily arouse audiences' feeling of purchasing. Hence, a new criterion is adapted in the present study, that is, *emotion*. Viewing the concept of synaesthesia from a broader perspective, psedo-synaesthesia, *emotion* plays an interactive role in forming synaesthesia (Bardovskaya, 2002; Cytowic, 2002; Hsieh, 2009). Therefore, *emotion* is also applied in the present study.

Turning now to the aims of present study, the following section will analyze the collected commercial ads and examine Day's (1996) "general distribution" to discuss whether there are universal general rules governing the synaesthetic metaphor and to what extent they are sensitive to and associated with cultural differences.

SYNAESTHESIA IN FOOD DESCRIPTIONS

Of the 100 collected data, 26 of them are related to food commercial ads, food, beverages, and retail food establishments. Within these food advertisements, 35 synaesthetic transfers are identified in terms of Yang's (2000) classification of sensory lexeme. Then, Day's (1996) "general distribution" is applied and the results are examined. Table 1 shows the frequencies of synaesthetic transfers. The vertical column is the source domain and the horizontal is the transferred sensation. For instance, *xiang1 nong2* 香濃 'smell thick, something has a thick smell' means the smell of the food is very strong. According to Yang's (2000) classification, she discovered that the original sensory domain of *nong2* 濃 'dense' is *vision*. Thus, the synaesthetic transfer of *xiang1 nong2* 香濃 maps from the vertical column of *vision* to the horizontal one, *smell*.

Interestingly, in this particular frame, food commercial ads of synaesthesia, the "higher" sensory mode, *vision*, is the prominent primary sense while the "lower" sensory mode, *taste*, is the dominant synaesthetic sense. This mapping direction goes against what Day (1996) discovered, who observed that English synaesthesia is transferred from the "lower" to the "higher" sensory modes. This distinction will be discussed below.

Table 1

The Domains of Synaesthetic Transfers in Mandarin Food Commercial Ads

	vision	hearing	smell	touch	temperature	taste	emotion	Total
vision	-	-	5	-	-	9	2	16
hearing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
smell	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	4
touch	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	5
temperature	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
taste	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3
emotion	1	-	1	-	-	4	-	6
Total	1	-	6	-	-	21	7	35

* - = no data are found

Synaesthetic Expressions through Vision

Vision is the dominant source domain of the synaesthetic metaphor transfers as we can see in Table 1, which occurs 16 times. Within this category, *taste* is the most frequent target domain with 9 occurrences followed by *smell* and *emotion*. As for *hearing* and *touch*, there are no mapping results within the 35 synaesthetic transfers. Example (1) indicates synaesthetic transfer from *vision* to *taste* which mapping

direction goes against Day's (1996) general distribution. In terms of semantic salience, *mei3* 美 'beautiful', which is received by vision is used frequently. When it combines with *wei4* 味 'taste', *xian1* 鮮 'fresh', and *gan1* 甘 'sweet', it uses its positive semantic feature, good and beautiful, to describe the taste.

The second most frequent visual lexeme in this category is *nong2* 濃 'thick', which transfers its semantic feature of thickness, identified by eyes, to taste. In (1g), the word *wei4* 味 'taste' is modified by the word of *vision*, *nong2* 濃 'thick' condensing the image of strong taste. Similarly, in (1h), *nong2* 濃 'thick' maps onto the word of *taste*, *tian2* 甜 'sweet', to create the rich sweetness of Charlie King's black tea.

In addition to *mei3* 美 'beautiful' and *nong2* 濃 'thick', there are other visual words gathered in food commercial ads, that is *xin1* 新 'new' and *ceng2 ci4* 層次 'layer'. The quality of *xin1* 新 'new' is judged by eyes and it contains the meaning of "just picked" in Mandarin Chinese. Hence, when it has the synaesthetic transfer to *xian1* 鮮 'fresh', the overall meaning becomes "fresh". In (1b), the ads uses the visual phrase, *ceng2 ci4* 層次 'multi-storey', to describe the texture, *kou3 gan3* 口感 'mouthfeel' of the food. This synaesthesia helps the audience to visualize the texture of the food and arouse the desire to purchase it.

(1) vision → taste:

- a. *xin1 xian1* 新鮮 'new fresh, fresh'
- b. *duo1 ceng2 ci4 de kou3 gan3* 多層次的口感 'multi-storey sequence mouthfeel, it has different layer's of taste'
- c. *mei3 wei4* 美味 'beautiful taste, delicious'
- d. *xian1 mei3* 鮮美 'fresh beautiful, fresh and delicious'
- e. *gan1 mei3* 甘美 'sweet beautiful, sweet and refreshing'
- f. *jian4 kang1 hao3 he1* 健康好喝 'healthy good drink, this drink is good to drink'
- g. *nong2 nong2 ri4 shi4 feng1 wei4* 濃濃日式風味 'thick thick Japanese wind taste, it has strong Japanese flavor'
- h. *cha2 li3 wang2 de ying1 shi4 hong2 cha2 xiang1 tian2 nong2 yu4* 茶裏王的英式紅茶 香甜濃郁 'Charlie King's black tea fragrant sweet thick fragrant, Charlie King's black tea has strong fragrant flavor'

The examples in (2) and (3) below show other mapping domains for *vision*; namely, *smell* and *emotion*. The image in (2a) is as similar as in (1b) in that the "smell" is shaped by *ceng2 ci4* 層次 'multi-storey', which makes the audience sense

the fragrance of the product. It involves a “high to low” mapping, *vision* → *smell*. In (2b) and (2c), the “fragrance” of the product is “thickness” and “spreading out”. Apparently, the producers create the visible “smell” to draw consumers’ attention. Still, they are *vision* → *smell* synaesthetic transfers.

For the examples in (3), *emotion* is another target domain for *vision*. In order to sell the products, the mappings are positive. In (3a), the commercial tries to convince the audience that its beverage could make them “full” of “energy”. Another example is found in (3b), where the feeling of the product is described in terms of a color lexeme, *zheng4* 正 ‘pure’, which belongs to *vision*. Both (3a) and (3b) undergo the synaesthetic transfer from *vision* to *emotion*.

(2) *vision* → *smell*

- a. *duo1 ceng2 ci4 de dou4 xiang1* 多層次的豆香 ‘multi-storey sequence beans fragrant, the smell of beans are various’
- b. *xiang1 nong2* 香濃 ‘fragrant thick, the fragrance is richness’
- c. *xiang1 qi4 si4 yi4* 香氣四溢 ‘sweet smell four spill, it is full of fragrance’

(3) *vision* → *emotion*

- a. *jing1 li4 chong1 pei4* 精力充沛 ‘energy plentiful, energetic’
- b. *chun2 zheng4 xiang3 shou4* 純正享受 ‘pure enjoy, enjoy purely’

Synaesthetic Expressions through the Olfactory Sense

The examples in (4) below demonstrate synaesthetic metaphorical transfer from *smell* to *taste*. The taste, *zi1 wei4* 滋味 ‘taste’ in example (4a) is reinforced by the lexeme of smell, *yu4* 郁 ‘fragrant’. The mapping from *smell* to *taste* has evoked the fragrant deliciousness of the food. (4b) creates a similar image of taste: the taste, *tian2* 甜 ‘sweet’, is reinforced by the sense of smell, *xiang1* 香 ‘fragrant’ and *yu4* 郁 ‘fragrant’. The above powerful feeling is conveyed by the synaesthetic metaphor: *smell* → *taste*, which is another backward transfer in regard to Day’s scheme.

(4) *smell* → *taste*

- a. *nong2 yu4 zi1 wei4* 濃郁滋味 ‘thick fragrant taste, the taste is thick and full of fragrance’
- b. *cha2 li3 wang2 de ying1 shi4 hong2 cha2 xiang1 tian2 nong2 yu4* 茶裏王的英式紅茶 香甜濃郁 ‘Charlie King’s black tea fragrant sweet thick fragrant, Charlie King’s black tea has strong fragrant flavor’

Synaesthetic Expressions through the Tactile Sense

The examples in (5) and (6) below represent synaesthetic expressions through the tactile sense, *temperature* and *touch*. Within the collected data, *emotion* and *taste* are

found to be the target domains. In example (5), the synaesthetic transfer from *temperature* to *emotion* conveys a friendly image of the trip by using the sense of temperature, *wen1 nuan3* 溫暖 ‘warm’. The three examples in (6) are mappings from *touch* to *taste* and conform to Day’s route. In (6a), the texture of the product is modified by a Taiwanese loan word in touch, Q, which means toughness. This synaesthetic transfer, *touch* to *taste*, gives an impression of chewing to customers. When using a tactile lexeme, *zhong4* 重 ‘heavy’, as in (6b) to describe the taste, it has nothing to do with the weight but with “strong flavor”. In (6c), the taste is said to be described by the Mandarin Chinese lexeme, *shun4* 順 ‘smooth’, which appeals to the sense of touch. It brings the connection of *taste* and *touch* and leads the audience to have a vivid image of the product. In (7), when people can handle, *shou3* 手 ‘hand’, things without any effort, the positive feeling, relaxed and skillful, occurs. The synaesthetic transfer in this example is the sense of touch maps onto the sense of emotion.

(5) temperature → emotion

mai3 guan1 dong1 zhu3, wen1 nuan3 xiao3 lü3 xing2 a. 買關東煮，溫暖小旅行
‘buy Kantoni warm little trip, after buying some Kantoni, the trip becomes warmer’

(6) touch → taste

a. *wu3 Q wu3 Q 舞 Q 舞 Q* ‘dance Q, it has toughness texture’

b. *zhong4 hong1 pei2 na2 tie3* 重烘培拿鐵 ‘heavy baked Latte, the Latte has strong coffee flavor’

c. *mian2 mi4 hua2 shun4* 綿密滑順 ‘silk dense smooth, it tastes silky and smooth’

(7) touch → emotion

de2 xin1 ying4 shou3 得心應手 ‘get heart accept hand, skillfully’

Synaesthetic Expressions through the Gustatory Sense

In the gustatory source domain, *emotion* is the only synaesthetic transfer demonstrated in example (8). The common feature in this example is that the negative taste maps onto the negative emotion while the positive transfers to the delightful feeling. In (8a), when someone feels “suffering” and “tough” about work, the emotional state is similar to taste something is hot or pungent. The metaphorical transfer composites the synaesthetic mapping from *taste* to *emotion*. Since *xin1* 辛 ‘pungent’ conveys hardship, *tian2* 甜 ‘sweet’ tells the opposite story. Viewing from the neurological perspective, the taste of *tian2* 甜 ‘sweet’ could easily trigger happiness and contentment. Making good use of this connection, the synaesthetic transfer implies to the audience that the dessert could give them happiness.

(8) taste → emotion

- a. xin1 lao2 辛勞 ‘pungent work, it takes lots of effort to work’
- b. xing4 fu2 tian2 dian3 幸福甜點 ‘happiness dessert, the sweet dessert tastes like happiness’

Synaesthetic Expressions through Emotion

Example (9), (10), and (11) show synaesthetic transfers from *emotion* to *vision*, *smell*, and *taste*, respectively. In (9), the ad guarantees the audiences that the company uses its “whole heart” to manufacture the product. Even from seeing its “layers”, the customers could feel how careful the food is been made. Thus, the synaesthetic transfer maps from *emotion* to *vision*. In (10), the commercial claims that by drinking this beverage, the costumers could “enjoy” its “mellow taste”. In addition, after “tasting” some products, costumers could have the feeling of being “loved”, as shown in (11b) or they could become “love-eaters”, as shown in (11a). The synaesthetic transfer from *emotion* to *taste* is to create the happy atmosphere for audiences trying the products.

(9) emotion → vision

ceng2 ceng2 yong4 xin1 層層用心 ‘layer layer use heart, uses heart in each layer’

(10) emotion → smell

xiang3 shou4 xiang1 chun2 享受香醇 ‘enjoy fragrant mellow, to enjoy the fragrance and taste’

(11) emotion → taste

- a. ai4 chi1 愛吃 ‘love eat, love-eater’
- b. ai4 de zi1 wei4 愛的滋味 ‘love taste, the taste is full of love’

All in all, there are eleven different synaesthetic transfers found in 35 examples, as listed in (12) below:

(12) a. vision → taste

- b. vision → smell
- c. vision → emotion
- d. smell → taste
- e. temperature → emotion
- f. touch → taste
- g. touch → emotion
- h. taste → emotion

- i. emotion → vision
- j. emotion → smell
- k. emotion → taste

Of these 11 kinds, only (12f) follows Day's (1996) general distribution, which transfers from "lower" to "higher" sensory mode. Three of them, (12a), (12b), and (12d), move downward from "higher" to "lower" sensory modalities. Six of them, (12c), (12e), (12g), (12h), (12i) (12j), and (12k) show that emotive factors play a role in forming synaesthesia which is proved by psychologists and neurophysiologists (Hsieh, 2009). The most frequent synaesthetic transfer is from vision → taste. However, in food commercial ads, there transfers related to *hearing* are not found. These results deserve further discussion in the following section.

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CULTURAL REFLECTIONS

In this section, the potential causation that influences the universal tendency proposed by Day (1996) will be discussed as well as the socio-cultural comparison with Strasuss' (2005) finding. In Mandarin Chinese, people often use the phrases, *se4 xiang1 wei4 ju4 quan2* 色香味俱全 'color fragrant taste complete all; the food looks good, smells great and tastes the best' to describe delicacies. In other words, *vision*, *smell*, and *taste* are three important criteria for tasty food. Since the sensual evocation of television commercials is built mainly through vision with some help from music, *vision* plays an important role in synaesthesia. In this view, *vision* is applied as the main source domain in terms of synaesthetic transfers. Not only does the mapping from *vision* to *taste* have the highest frequency, but the transfer from *vision* to *smell* runs second. Under this particular situational context, three out of eleven synaesthetic types go against Day's (1996) "general distribution", which is evident from the English printed and electronic texts.

Therefore, in the present finding, six out of eleven synaesthetic types are related to *emotion*, which supports what psychologists and neurophysiologists have proved. That is, *emotion* is one element in forming synaesthesia (Cytowic, 2002; Hsieh, 2009). Interestingly, the mapping direction between *emotion* and *vision*, and *emotion* and *taste*, can be transferred back and forth. In addition to the linguistic descriptors, the synaesthetic mapping could be also conveyed by non-verbal content, such as the background music, and commercial settings. In Dove chocolate, for example, there is a woman lying on a deck chair with silk curtains as the background. Although there is only one slogan during its 30-second show, seeing the flying "brown silk curtains" elicits the "smooth texture" of tasting the chocolate. Through this metaphorical implication, the audience could imagine what Dove chocolate tastes like, smooth.

Thus, the synaesthetic metaphors in the food commercial ads are not only found literally but also symbolically, the setting. A similar transfer is also discussed in Strauss' (2005) finding. One of the Japanese food commercials she analyzed used the image of a baby, thus referring to the softness of the product. On the contrary, there is no evidence for mapping backward from *taste* to *vision* in the present data. This phenomenon is also argued by Hsieh (2009) who conducted comparative synaesthetic metaphors of *taste* between Mandarin Chinese and Russian. She indicated that "transfers from taste to vision are abundant in Russian but not obvious in our Mandarin data" (Hsieh, 2009: 109).

From the point of view of food commercials as the culturally-driven outcome, different cultures prefer different discourse genres. In the present findings, Taiwanese food commercials tend to use positive connotations, such as *nong2 yu4* 濃郁 'strong fragrant', *mian2 mi4 hua2 shun4* 綿密滑順 'it tastes silky and smooth', *xiang1 chun2* 香醇 'fragrance and taste', which describes the taste perceived by the tongue and inside the entire mouth. These expressions are similar to the U.S. database in Strauss' (2005) research. While the Korean food commercials emphasize 'what is hard and tactually stimulating' (Strauss, 2005: 1448), the Taiwanese ads stress on what is rich and comforting. Unlike the Korean and U.S. food commercials which prefer to employ hyperbole and emphatic exclamations in direct response to the tasting of the products (Strauss, 2005), the Taiwanese food ads are closer to the Japanese ones in that there are fewer examples of hyperbole and vocal exclamations in response to the advertised products.

To sum up, in the Taiwanese food commercials, the most frequent synaesthetic transfer is from *vision* to *taste*, while there is no mapping for the sense of *hearing* in either the source or target domains. In addition, neither *vision* nor *touch* is treated as a target domain. However, from the eleven types of synaesthetic transfers, *emotion* is a basic element in forming synaesthetic mappings. As for Day's (1996) "general distribution", there are some downward transfers observed in the present data, such as the mapping routes from *vision* to *taste*, *vision* to *smell*, and *smell* to *taste*. Moreover, the cross-cultural comparisons of food commercial ads are observed via Strauss' (2005) findings.

CONCLUSION

The present study demonstrated synaesthetic metaphor in Mandarin Chinese focusing on food commercials in light of Yang's (2000) classification and Day's (1996) "general distribution." Among the collected data, the most frequent tendency of synaesthetic transfer was from *vision* to *taste*, followed by *vision* to *smell*. The interactions between these three senses, vision, taste, and smell, could be the

socio-cultural factor why *se4 xiang1 wei4 ju4 quan2* 色香味俱全 ‘the food looks good, smells great and tastes the best’ is the most common way to comment on delicacies in Mandarin Chinese.

Moreover, unlike Day’s (1996) hypothesis of “general distribution” where the synaesthetic transfer tends to go from the “lower” to the “higher” sensory modes, touch → taste → temperature → smell → vision → hearing, *vision* is used as the most frequent sensory perception in Taiwanese food commercials, while *taste* is the most frequently occurring target sensory and *emotion* in the second place. This diversity could be caused by the particular context selected in the present research, food commercials. The activated emotional synaesthesia confirms modern neurological and psychological theories that *emotion* is involved in intermodal associations and processes of cognition (Hsieh, 2009). Surprisingly, the sense of *hearing* was absent in both the source and target domains. As mentioned, hearing was not observed serving as the focus for judging delicacy. According to this, producers rarely use sound related expressions to describe their products, nor do they guide their audience to have any sound impression of food.

From the point of view of time restriction in data collection, the types of food commercials could be different. During the evening hours, for example, the food advertisements are more related to children’s or family products. When the night comes, the commercials shift to more adult-like ones, such as coffee and alcohol. Thus, the language use could be influenced by time. In order to examine the universal tendency and cultural differences among the synaesthetic transfers, an expanded data source, other types of television commercials or print ads, is needed. All in all, the findings could be interpreted in terms of cultural difference, as “the associations should vary from culture to culture” (Day, 1996).

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從食品廣告探討華語的聯覺隱喻

摘要

聯覺現象不管在神經學、心理學或認知語言學的範疇都受到廣泛的重視。本研究旨在探討華語食品廣告中的聯覺隱喻現象，研究問題是：(1). 在食物廣告裡，何種聯覺轉移最顯著；(2). 華語廣告的聯覺現象是否支持 Day (1996)的階層詮釋？首先，我們從台視、中視、華視和民視蒐集到 100 筆廣告語料。接著我們以 Yang (2000)的分類及 Day (1996)的階層詮釋 (hierarchical distribution) 來探討這些語料。研究結果顯示：(a). 在食品廣告中聯覺現象由視覺到味覺最為明顯，味覺與情感是最主要的轉移目標。(b). 聯覺轉移路徑顯示與 Day 的階層詮釋有所抵觸。進一步比較英語的相關研究，我們看到聯覺隱喻因不同文化而反映出語言的多變性。總之，透過本研究我們補充了 Strauss (2005) 的研究結果，也提供聯覺隱喻在中文食物廣告裡的面向。

關鍵字：食品廣告 聯覺 聯覺隱喻 文化對比

How Words and Pictures Work in the Translation of Maurice Sendak's Picture Books

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Abstract

Chinese versions of foreign picture books have been for decades a staple segment of the children's book market in Taiwan, but academic interest in translating picture books for children has only started to emerge in recent years. A picture book, unlike common literary works characterized by verbal language, is best understood in light of the interaction between the words and pictures in the book. A translator of a picture book is thus faced with a challenging and significant task, that is, the task of deciding whether the visual can be translated or whether the visual should be referred back to when translating. By looking at the translation theories developed by Liang Lin and other scholars in Taiwan, we suggest in the first part of the paper that the prevailing concept in children's literature in Taiwan, i.e., *the art of plain language*, was underlined by the common assumptions toward childhood, and that word-and-picture interactions should be considered in the translation of a picture book. In the second part of the paper, we follow Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott's categorization of word-and-picture interactions in picture books and examine Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*, *In the Night Kitchen*, and *Outside Over There*. In addition, we concentrate on the relationship between words and pictures and how that relationship influences translators' strategies. Through a comparative analysis of both the English and Chinese versions of Sendak's books, we indicate the noticeable changes in the word-and-picture interaction in the translated picture books. Those changes imply that the Chinese-language translations *per se* are *different* versions from their source texts, and that a translated picture book inevitably embodies a translator's assumptions toward children as well as a translator's understanding of the word-and-picture relationship in picture books.

Key words: picture book, Maurice Sendak, children's literature in translation

The term picture book covers a wide variety of children's books, ranging from Mother Goose books and toy books for very young children to picture books with plots that satisfy more experienced, older children. When giving a working definition of picture books, Perry Nodelman states clearly,

“Picture books—books intended for young children which communicate information or tell stories through a series of many pictures combined with relatively slight texts or no texts at all—are unlike any other form of verbal or visual art. Both the pictures and the texts in these books are different from and communicate differently from pictures and texts in other circumstances” (1988: vii).

It is worth noting that one characteristic many picture books have in common is the use of the pictorial text to present all or most of the content of a book. The pictorial text is integral to the story line, enhancing the actions, settings, and characterizations (Norton 1995: 235). In a well-written picture book, however, the verbal text and the pictorial text complement each other, so children cannot deduce the whole story merely by reading the verbal text or by viewing the pictures alone (Stephens 1992; Evans 1998; Sipe 1998; Mallan 1999; Lewis 2001). In quality picture books, the words and the illustrations work together to tell a story or present content, and the full meaning of the book is created by the interaction of the author's words and the artist's pictures (Nodelman and Reimer 2003). Picture books can be seen as a literary genre different from literary works which feature only verbal language.

For decades translations of foreign-language children's literature have been a staple segment of the children's book market in Taiwan (Lin 1989; Hung 1994, 2004). Most children's books in Taiwan have been translated from foreign languages, adapted from folk tales, or rewritten from old publications. From the end of World War II to the twenty-first century, this phenomenon has stayed unchanged. More than half of picture books published in Taiwan to date are translated from their foreign-language versions. The picture book market in Taiwan has long been dominated by foreign picture books, mainly award winners from the US, UK, and Japan. The total number of original books is no higher than twenty percent (Hung 2004). There may be two major reasons for this phenomenon. For parents and educators in Taiwan, picture books are important resources to develop young children's Chinese proficiency and thus remain the *prima donna* of the children's reading materials. And for the publishers, translated picture books require lower publishing costs in the way of translation and provide a greater opportunity for co-publishing. Less resources are spent on translators and the number of copies printed increases, thus making it a more economical venture for publishers to publish translated picture books than originally-created picture books. For example, the Mandarin Daily News Association introduced a handful of Caldecott winners in Chinese translation “to develop children's literacy and to popularize Mandarin or

Chinese since the mid-sixties" (Bradbury and Liu 241). Other publishers like Hsin Yi Foundation, Han Sheng, and Grimm Press also joined in publishing a wide variety of translated picture books for the young readers.

Maurice Sendak (1928-) is one of the prominent picture book artists that have been introduced to Taiwan through the Chinese version. Best known for his book *Where the Wild Things Are*, awarded the Caldecott Medal in 1964, Sendak has been translated into Chinese since 1987. Selma Lanes indicates that Sendak's books "employ a good deal of background crosshatching", and "the foreground figures are painted in clear, soft watercolor tints reminiscent of comic-strip art of the 1930s" (Lanes 117). It may be Sendak's admiration of Randolph Caldecott (1846-1886) that leads him to create his own style and to improvise in his illustration (Lanes 110-111). The jury's citation of the Swedish government's Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award for Literature in 2003 further confirmed his talent and importance in the picture book genre.

"Maurice Sendak is the modern picture book's portal figure. He's unparalleled in developing the picture books unique possibilities of narrating—to the joy of constant new picture-book illustrators. Furthermore, he is one of the most courageous researchers of the most secret recesses of childhood—to the delight of constant new readers (qtd. in Kushner 6)."

For his exploration into the complexity of childhood with picture books, Sendak is even praised as the Picasso of children's literature (Sendak 2008).

This paper will center on "the unique possibilities of narrating" in three of Maurice Sendak's picture books, *Where the Wilds Things Are*, *In the Night Kitchen*, and *Outside over There*. The Chinese versions of those books were published respectively in 1987, and 1996. They remain popular, like their English counterparts, in the market of children's books. Through a comparative analysis of both the English and Chinese versions of the titles above, we hope to throw light upon the narrative art of Sendak's books when they are presented in different languages.

As mentioned earlier, picture books are a special genre in which pictorial and verbal texts tell the story at the same time. If a picture book is best understood in light of the interaction between words and pictures in the book, it follows that a translator of a picture book is faced with a challenging and significant task, that is, the task of deciding whether the visual can be translated or whether the visual should be referred back to when translating. A translated book is usually defined as one originally written in its source language and then translated into a target language. In the case of Sendak, a translated book is one originally written in English and subsequently translated into Chinese and published by a Taiwanese publisher. If translation is a change of two languages at the micro level of the text, questions of language are important for the translators when they translate English into Chinese. Besides the verbal text, do translators consider the verbal-and-pictorial dynamic in the translated picture books?

This will be important questions to explore when we consider both the English and Chinese versions of Sendak's books. Let's look at the recent discussion over the translation of children's literature before we examine versions of Sendak's books.

Translation of Children's Books in Taiwan

Chinese versions of foreign picture books have long been the most important reading material for young children, but academic interest in translating for children has only started to emerge in the recent years. Instead of reading children's books from pedagogical, psychological or linguistic perspectives, literary scholars have begun to accord serious attention to the literary qualities of the books in the last decade. They are investigating and re-evaluate the translation theories which have been applied to translated children's books.

When translated children's books are considered, Liang Lin is definitely a pioneer in promoting what he calls *the art of plain language*. In Lin's view, "children use language differently from adults. Children name and describe things in everyday life, and they tend to use simpler and easier words" (23). Assuming that children's literature is written for children, Lin maintains that children's book should be written in words children can follow and understand. His views towards children and picture books have strongly influenced many translators, and most commentators on the translation of children's literature inevitably mention the use of plain language as a criterion.

Now Lin's art of plain language is seen as being underlined by his assumptions toward childhood. Ku (2008) and Chen (2008) have examined his translated works, arguing that Lin's assumptions about children influence the books he translated. Lin's concept of plain language, Chen argues, caters to children and underestimates children's ability to appreciate literature. She believes that the concept of children is constructed by adults, questioning whether children are really like what adults think they are—simple, helpless, and weak. Considering translation as a transformation, moving from source language culture to target language culture, Ku goes further to discuss Lin's theory and translation practice by analyzing his translation of *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin* (1903) and *The Tailor of Gloucester* (1903) written by Beatrix Potter. She is convinced that translators usually abandon or highlight some components to fit the literary criteria in the source language culture while in the process of translating texts (23). In the translation of *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin*, Ku suggests, Lin transforms the relationship between Old Mr. Brown and Squirrel Nutkin, changing it from a superior-to-inferior relationship into an elder-to-youth relationship, and "politeness" also became the major theme (16). She also notes that Lin's translation may result in the loss of the information that Potter tried to convey. According to Ku,

Lin's translation embodies his own translation theory in order to fulfill the needs of the potential readers, children.

In addition to assumptions toward childhood, translation theories that have commonly been applied to children's books are also discussed and examined. Translation is normally assumed as an act to convey the form and meaning of the original as accurately as possible. However, the common assumption of language equivalence is obviously not theoretically adequate to handle the translation of a picture book, in which types of language, like verbal language, visual language, including visual images and media, and artifacts as well, require attention and translation. If a translator does not take the pictures and the word-and-picture relationships into account, mistranslation may occur. A lack of caution may cause the translator to miss some information in picture books. In the Chinese version of *Snow-White and the Seven Dwarfs* written by Randall Jarrell and illustrated by Ekholm Burkert, for example, the translator did not pay attention to the picture, and therefore mistranslated the scene by changing it from "a queen sat and sewed a hat" into "a queen sat and sewed clothes" (Chen 2003).²

Despite the fact that commentators have begun to notice the word-and-picture relationship in picture books, some of the studies remain focused on the equivalence between the source text and the target text. Lu (2000) discussed translation of picture books by using modern translation theories, Nida's dynamic equivalence theory and functional equivalence as a theoretical framework, and argued that translation of picture books should not only translate words, but must also think about the synthesis of texts, pictures, sounds and rhymes, the format of picture books, and printing (208). Here, the idea of equivalence is applied to not only the word level, but also non-word level, even including the printing. Lu further argued that "although visual texts do not need translating, they should be analyzed to make sure what the register and spirit should be used in the verbal texts" (208). In other words, the visual texts play an important part in a picture book, and if the visual texts are not included in the process of translation, misinterpretations will occur and translations will be poor.

In order to open up more possibilities other than equivalence theory for exploring the complicated word-and-picture interactions in picture books, Yang (2008) goes one step further to discuss the word-and-picture interactions in translated picture books. She has examined two different Chinese versions of Chris Van Allsburg's *Jumanji*, concentrating on the relationship between words and pictures, and how that relationship influences translators' strategies and specific solutions. In addition to the translation of the verbal text, Yang has drawn our attention toward the underlying fact that a translation can inevitably embody a translator's assumptions toward childhood as well as a translator's understanding of the word-and-picture relationship in a

² The word "a hat" is not shown in the picture book. Yet, it could be detected by reading the picture. However, the translator did not notice that and mistranslated it as "sew clothes".

picture book. This paper is to examine the word-and-picture interactions in both English and Chinese versions of Maurice Sendak's books on the basis of the arguments made in recent translation studies in children's literature.

A Comparative Analysis of Versions of Sendak's Books

In order to obtain a basic concept of the word-and-picture relationship in translated picture books, the classification scheme proposed by Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott in *"The Dynamics of Picturebook Communication"* (2001) is employed here. Nikolajeva and Scott discriminate between types of word-and-picture interaction by analyzing hundreds of picture books, providing the reader with useful terms to describe a wide spectrum of word-image relationships in picture books. Translated picture books are categorized into such categories as symmetry, enhancement, complementary, and counterpoint. First of all, symmetrical interaction is that "words and pictures tell the same story, essentially repeating information in different forms of communication" (225). Secondly, enhancing interaction is that "pictures amplify more fully the meaning of the words, or the words expand the picture so that different information in the two modes of communication produces a more complex dynamic" (225). Thirdly, when enhancing interaction becomes very significant, the dynamic becomes "truly complementary" (225-226). Fourthly, "a counterpointing dynamic may develop where words and images collaborate to communicate meanings beyond the scope of either one alone" (226).³

Although the categories are not wholly watertight, this scheme of categorization offers a preliminary distinction between types of word-and-picture interaction. Nikolajeva and Scott, as David Lewis has indicated, "not only discriminate between types of interaction, but also explore the way they intersect with narrative features such as character, setting and point of view" (39). To refine Nikolajeva and Scott's categorization for a study of translated picture books, a comparative analysis is done with both the English version and the Chinese translation from a social semiotic approach. Samples drawn from Sendak's picture books and their Chinese translations are scrutinized to see how social or literary meaning is created through words, images and their interaction. Special focus is placed on how pedagogical interaction with the reader is created, and how child images are constructed in translated picture books.

As we have mentioned above, three of Maurice Sendak's award-winning picture

³ In Nikolajeva and Scott's *The Dynamics of Picturebook communication*, "contradictory interaction is an extreme form of counterpointing, where words and pictures seem to be in opposition to one another" (226). Besides, there are other subcategories classified by different strength, such as minimal enhancement and significant enhancement, or categories with a certain focus or function, such as ironic counterpoint and counterpoint in characterization. However, only four of the main categories are detected in Sendak's books and their translations.

books, *Where the Wild Things Are*, *In the Night Kitchen*, and *Outside over There*, are analyzed here. The three picture books are not only similar in style, but they also have a similar plot in which the child protagonist tries to deal with different emotions, such as anger, anxiety, and fear. After some disturbing emotions are aroused by a certain event, the protagonist usually falls into a fantasy, undergoes some adventure, and comes back to the real world at the end of the story. For Sendak, children are not what the adults think they are. As he has put it, children are

“more catholic in taste; they’ll tolerate ambiguities, peculiarities, and things illogical; they will take them into their unconscious and deal with them as best they can.” (qtd in Lanes 125)

As regards the readership of his books, Sendak does not think that children are the only readers of picture books. He “is often ‘infuriated and insulted’ when his books are considered mere trifles for the nursery” (Lanes 124). He has complained, saying,

“If you’ve worked as much as two or three years on a book, and put your life into it, you expect the point of view of the professionals to be somewhat larger, more expansive. You certainly hope the book will be read by people of all ages.” (Lanes 124)

Above all, Sendak values the total design of a picture book, accentuating the dynamics of word-and-picture interaction in a book. As he has put it,

“There is a juxtaposition of picture and word, a counterpoint, which never happened before. Words are left out and the picture says it. Pictures are left out and the word says it. To me, this was the invention of the picture book.” (qtd in Lanes 110)

Sendak indicates clearly that the most fascinating part of a picture book lies in various interactions between words and pictures. If translation is a change of two languages at the micro level of the text, do translators consider the verbal-and-pictorial dynamic in Sendak when translating his books into Chinese? Do the translators recast the translation of Sendak as texts for a sophisticated adult audience if adults are regarded as a group of potential readers, at least for Sendak? Are translators’ choices affected by their desire to cater to an adult views on childhood? These factors, i.e., interaction between words and pictures, readership of picture books, and a translator’s assumptions toward childhood may influence the translation of a picture book.

To facilitate a comparative analysis of the versions of Sendak’s books, the word-and-picture interactions drawn from both English and Chinese versions are sampled, marked and compared. In the present study, the translated version is expected to have the same word-and-picture interaction, because according to Sendak, the interactions are purposely designed by picture book artists. However, if the interactions are changed, it is possible that the translator adopted certain strategies to deal with the gaps while translating, such as the constraints of language, the concept of childhood, and even a consideration for readers. It is also possible that the

translator was aware of the interaction and manipulated the interaction on purpose. The samples are juxtaposed together with the literal translation and the phonetic transcription in Pinyin system in the tables. Noticeable changes in the translated picture book are then analyzed and suggestions are given for further discussion.

The Chinese version of *Where the Wild Things Are* was translated by Han Sheng Publisher. It was sold in subscription sets. As Bradbury and Liu mentioned, “the sets were impressive on several accounts. The editors’ choices were superb, the translations were excellent, and ...” (241). In first and second openings, however, the word-and-picture interaction is changed. In the first opening, Max⁴ was nailing to the wall a rope which was tied together with clothes, and made the room a mess. In the second opening, we see that Max was chasing a dog downstairs. But the translator changed the interaction. The verbal texts in the first opening are:

The source version	The target version
The night Max wore his wolf suit and made mischief of one kind	The night Max wore his wolf jacket and at home..... wǎnshàng , Ā-qí chuān shàng yěláng wàitào , zài jiā lǐ..... 晚上，阿奇穿上野狼外套，在家裏..... ⁵

In the first opening of the original version, the pictorial text shows what Max looked like and what he was doing in a confined room. The picture enhances the verbal text, indicating that Max was in a white suit with a big black tail behind, and that he appeared mischievous when he was nailing with a hammer. However, in the Chinese version, the verbal text does not mention the mischief the boy was doing in the picture. And in the second opening, the verbal texts are:

The source version	The target version
and another	act extremely wildly dà sāyě 大撒野

⁴ In Chinese version, Max’s name changed into Ā-qí (阿奇).

⁵ Here, in the column of the translated text, the first part is the English equivalent of the Chinese translated text, the second part is the pinyin of the Chinese translated text, and the third part is the Chinese translated text.

The words in the original version are supplementary, but the words in Chinese version emphasize the boy's naughtiness or misbehavior. If we look at both the pictorial and verbal texts again, the pictures show that Max did a lot of mischief, and the words in the next opening, "and another" emphasize a series of things that Max made when he was alone. However, the translated text does not point to the *sequence* of annoying tricks the boy was playing, but notes that Ā-qí acted very wildly. Here the translation does not render the sequential pranks the boy had been doing in the pictorial text. Indeed, this kind of change may be due to linguistic limitations or because the translator wants to create a unique rhythm for the Chinese version. However, the change of the interaction between words and pictures may create a subtle difference between the English and the Chinese version.

Visible changes in the word-and-picture interaction can also be detected in the other two of Sendak's book. *In the Night Kitchen*, translated by Guang-Cai Hou, describes a boy, Mickey, who heard a racket in the night. He shouted to stop it, and when he fell asleep, a series of fantastic events occurred. In the verso page of the second opening, there are two pictures juxtaposed to show that Mickey⁶ was entering dreamland where he was naked. The verbal texts of the two versions are:

The source version	The target version
AND FELL THROUGH THE DARK, OUT OF HIS CLOTHES	SUDDENLY HE FLOATED IN THE AIR AND HIS BODY WAS NAKED. hūrán tā piāo shàng bàn kōng , quánshēn guāngliūliū 忽然他飄上半空，全身光溜溜

In the two versions above the word-and-picture interaction seems symmetrical. However, if we go back to the recto page of the first opening, we will perceive something different. In the recto page of the first opening, Mickey was standing on his bed and shouting out toward a dark place with his body slightly leaning towards a dark place where there is a big speech bubble with the words "QUIET DOWN THERE!" inside. And in the next page, we find that Mickey's head was lower than his legs with his mouth wide open. When reading along with the texts, "AND FELL THROUGH THE DARK, OUT OF HIS CLOTHES", we see clearly that Mickey fell through the dark rather than floated in the air. Thus, if the word-and-picture interaction in original version is symmetrical, the interaction in Chinese version becomes enhancing or misleading. One common feature of the three books under

⁶ Mickey is the name of the boy in the picture book; in Chinese version, his name is "Mǐ-qí (米奇)".

discussion is a special entrance Sendak creates to allow the protagonist to go from a realistic world into an imaginary or adventurous world. In *Where the Wild Things Are*, the forest which grows in the room is the entrance, in *Outside over There*, the window with growing sunflowers is the entrance, and the dark place is the entrance in the book of *In the Night Kitchen*, which should not be ignored or omitted even in the translated version.

The pictorial text of a picture book should not be overlooked, and unnecessary information or wordy messages should not be added to the translation, either. In the verso page of the sixteenth opening, the picture shows that Mickey stood on a milk bottle at dawn, giving the message that morning was coming. The verbal texts are:

The source version	The target version
NOW MICKEY IN THE NIGHT KITCHEN CRIED (text in the speech bubble) COCK-A-DOODLE DOO!	MICKEY CRIED OUT LOUD MORNING IS COMING. (text in the speech bubble) COCK-A-DOODLE DOO! Mǐ-qí dàjiào yì shēng tiānliàng luò 米奇大叫一聲 天亮囉 (text in the speech bubble) “咕咕咕！”

The capitalized words in the speech bubble in the picture enhance the drama of the sound Mickey made. In the Chinese version, however, the word-and-picture interaction becomes symmetrical because the verbal texts explicitly points out to the reader “it is morning time” rather than keeping the sound effect the original text has made. Is it necessary to substitute a literal translation of “morning is coming (tiānliàng luò) for the metaphor of “COCK-A-DOODLE DOO!”? The sound COCK-A-DOODLE DOO reminds the readers of “a rooster,” and motivates them to connect its sound to “morning.” If the words “morning is coming” are directly given in the verbal text, the potential readers do not need to think why Mickey said “COCK-A-DOODLE DOO”. The translation here does not render, but explains or interprets the source text for the target readers.

Though the meaning of COCK-A-DOODLE DOO both in the English and Chinese versions is almost the same, it is argued here that very young readers, who have little experience in reading and have little world knowledge, may not be able to understand the meaning of the onomatopoetic word. That is, COCK-A-DOODLE DOO may not have a clear meaning in their mind when reading it. Thus, the readers who do not know the meaning of COCK-A-DOODLE DOO have to explore the

meaning of the word. However, the addition of "MORNING IS COMING" will become a facilitating device in the Chinese version for inexperienced readers. On the contrary, adult readers may not be aware of this facilitating effect because COCK-A-DOODLE DOO is a term with the meaning as "MORNING IS COMING".

It is definitely a challenging task for a translator to decide how the visual can be translated into the verbal or whether the visual should be referred back to when translating picture books. *Outside over There*, translated also by Guang-Cai Hou, describes a girl, Ida, who was full of anxiety and fear about the responsibility she had to take of looking after her baby sister. She even fantasized that her sister was being kidnapped by goblins and that she had to *be* like a mother to save her baby girl. In the third opening, the picture shows that while Ida was blowing a horn with concentration to calm down the crying baby, two goblins climbed into their room from the window. The verbal texts are:

The source version	The target version
Ida played her wonder horn to rock the baby still – but never watched.	<p>Little sister cried out loud, Ida blew the golden horn, trying to make her sister calm. Ida focused on blowing without noticing the goblins' coming.</p> <p>xiǎo mèimèi , kū yòu nào , àidá xiǎng hǒng mèimèi búyào chǎo 。 àidá zuǐgù zhe chuī , méi zhùyì lái le xiǎomóguǐ 。</p> <p>小妹妹，哭又鬧，愛達想哄妹妹不要吵。愛達只顧著吹，沒注意來了小魔鬼。</p>

Compared with the scene mentioned above, the verbal text in the original version is supplementary, indicating why and how Idea blew the wonder horn. The existence of goblins is shown in the next opening where a certain suspense is created when some unknown creatures in black cloaks come into the room from outside the window. In the Chinese version, however, the word-and-picture interaction becomes symmetrical because the translator specifies the pictorial text in which the goblins were coming. In other words, the verbal description runs parallel to the picture in which the kind of fear latent in Ida is embodied in the goblins.

It seems that symmetrical interaction is more comprehensible than other types of interactions because the pictorial texts tell the same story as the verbal texts. Thus, it is plausible that the translator changed the interaction from supplementary to

symmetrical in this case. It helps readers to detect the goblins sneaking into the room and trying to kidnap Ida's sister. In fact, the goblins had appeared in the first and second openings (and even in the endpaper), but the translator did not include the goblins into the renderings. Instead, he chose to reveal the existence of the goblins in the third opening because it was the very beginning of the goblins taking action to kidnap Ida's sister.

In addition to the changes in the word-and-picture interaction, it is worth noting that the translator's assumptions toward childhood also play a significant role in the translation. In the ninth opening, the sailor papa's song is the key to saving Ida's sister. Here the picture shows that Ida was flying "backwards" in the air. The verbal texts are:

The source version	The target version
"If Ida backwards in the rain would only turn around again and catch those goblins with a tune she'd spoil their kidnap honeymoon!"	I'm not afraid of raining blow the horn and keep forward rowing Do Re Me Fa Sol La Si blow down the honeymoon, laugh and sing ⁷ dà yǔ huā huā wǒ bú pà , chuī qǐ hào jiǎo xiàng qián huá 。 dōu ruǐ mī fā shǒu lā xī , chuī pò mì yuè xiào hā hā 。 大雨嘩嘩我不怕， 吹起號角向前划。 都蕊咪發手拉西， 吹破蜜月笑哈哈。

The source version is written from the third-person point of view, indicating that however difficult it might be, Ida was trying to save her baby sister, and pondering on her next move. The Chinese translation does not overlook the kind of internal monologue Ida was making. The translated passage is rendered from the first-person point of view, pointing out that the words were said by Ida herself. Rather than retell the fact that it was a challenging task for Ida to save her sister, the Chinese version "blow the horn and keep forward rowing (chuī qǐ hào jiǎo xiàng qián huá)" is

⁷ My translation back to English may have lost a lot of information, and the form is also somewhat different. However, the English translation may help non-Chinese speakers to understand the difference between the original texts and the translated texts.

semantically different from the original version wherein Ida “backwards in the rain would only turn around again.” It should be noted that the verbal description is clear about *how* Ida was going to save her sister, and that the key word “backwards” should not be missed. Moreover, the translated version is adapted from a household Chinese song: “Fishing Song” (bǔyú gē). Like its source version, the target version is also song-like. However, the Chinese version does not display Ida’s dilemma and thinking, but turns them into her optimism and dream of a triumphant outcome.

If the Ida of Sendak’s version is a girl who is full of anxiety about her responsibility, the translated one turns out to be about a high-spirited girl yearning for a happy adventure. In the example above, the translator’s assumption toward childhood is distinguished from Sendak’s. For him, childhood is never as sweet or simple as adults wish it to be. In his Caldecott acceptance speech, Sendak stated cogently, “what is just as obvious—and what is too often overlooked—is the fact that from their earliest years children live on familiar terms with disrupting emotions, that fear and anxiety are an intrinsic part of their everyday lives, that they continually cope with frustration as best they can. And it is through fantasy that children achieve catharsis” (Sendak 2008). The vulnerability of children and their struggle to make entranceway to some fantasy world have also been found in the three books under discussion. In the Chinese version, however, Sendak’s vision of childhood is translated into a localized ideal of childhood which is innocent and fearless.

It is worth mentioning that the prevailing readership of picture books in Taiwan remains children; therefore, when translating a picture book, translators inevitably put themselves in children’s shoes and apply what they or other adults (especially parents) think fit children’s abilities. Consequently, it is not uncommon for translators to mitigate the complexity and difficulty of the interaction between the words and pictures in the translated version. It is also worth noting that, as mentioned earlier, the translation theories are strongly influenced by Liang Lin’s concepts of the plain language. Nevertheless, it seems that the emphasis on simpler and easier words has become even simpler and easier word-and-picture interaction to cater to the major readers—children. As a result, the translators have had to accommodate themselves to the difference between Sendak’s concept of picture books and the prevailing translation theories.

Concluding Remarks

The samples drawn from Sendak’s *Where the Wild Things Are*, *Outside Over There* and *In the Night Kitchen* attest the unique language of a picture book, which contains both verbal and pictorial texts. Moreover, word-and-picture interaction

within a picture book is never fixed but dynamic. A common attitude toward picture books in general is that they are “easier” than books created for grown-ups, and that they have “pretty pictures” inside. Despite their impressions upon the common reader, pictures in the picture books as well as interactions between words and pictures are often overlooked in the process of translation, at least on a conscious level. A comparison between the English and Chinese versions of Maurice Sendak, however, has brought us to a better understanding of the unique language of a picture book, and the dynamic interactions between words and pictures.

A comparative analysis of the word-and-picture interactions in versions of Sendak has also confirmed that the issue of the interaction between words and pictures is far more complicated when translating occurs. “In an original work,” Riitta Oittinen has put it well, “the author, illustrator, source-language readers, and publisher are involved in a dialogic relationship. In a translation, the dialogic constellation expands and involves a translator interpreting the text and illustrations, target-language readers with a different cultural background, a new publisher, and even, possibly, a new illustrator participating in a collaborative dialogue with the translator” (144). Taken together, the samples drawn from the Chinese version of Sendak’s books are not exactly the same as their originals. Just as the word-and-picture interaction in a picture book is dynamic, so it is changed in the translated picture book. With the change of the verbal text, the word-and-picture interaction is inevitably changed in the translated picture book. Translated picture books are printed in co-production, pictorial text components of the source text are combined with new verbal components in the target text. The Chinese-language translations *per se* are thus *different* versions from their source texts.

It must be pointed out that strictly speaking it is incorrect to assume that the translation is exactly equivalent to its source version. If such equivalence existed, the gaps or discrepancies between the translation and its original would never exist, whereas the case of Maurice Sendak contradicts any such assumption. The most that can be said, therefore, is that the relationship between the translation and its original is unique and subtle. The translation cannot be the same as its original, nor can it be totally independent from its source. The source version and its target version are not directly or immediately equivalent. In his well-known essay “The Task of the Translator,” Walter Benjamin cogently states, “Just as a tangent touches a circle lightly and at but one point — establishing, with this touch rather than with the point, the law according to which it is to continue on its straight path to infinity---a translation touches the original lightly and only at the infinitely small point of the sense, thereupon pursuing its own course according to the laws of fidelity in the freedom of linguistic flux” (*SW* 1: 261). Through a comparative analysis of both the English and Chinese versions of Sendak’s books, we have indicated the noticeable changes in the word-and-picture interaction in the translated picture books. Those

changes imply that the Chinese-language translations *per se* are *different* versions from their source texts, and that a translated picture book inevitably embodies the consideration of readership, a translator's assumptions toward childhood as well as a translator's understanding of the word-and-picture relationship in a picture book.

Future studies may be able to focus on the unique feature of picture books, i.e., the interaction between words and pictures, to see whether different word-and-picture interactions of the same content yield different comprehension of a picture book for readers of different ages. If word-and-picture interaction may influence readers' comprehension, educators using picture books as materials should take the interaction into consideration when choosing quality picture books for children.

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比較分析莫里士·桑塔克中英文版本圖畫書裡的圖文關係

摘要

自二十世紀後半葉迄今，台灣的圖畫書一直是以翻譯作品為主流。但是，直到最近幾年圖畫書的翻譯才逐漸受到學術界的注意和討論。不同於傳統以文字表述為主的文學形式，圖畫書是以文字和圖畫二種語言媒介（有時甚至只有圖像語言）共同表陳講述故事。翻譯者在面對圖畫書時，應否處理或如何處理這種同時包含圖像和文字的文學藝術形式成為一個棘手卻重要的課題。本文旨在透過莫里士·桑塔克(Maurice Sendak)的中、英文版本圖畫書，了解圖畫書在翻譯後圖文關係的變化。本文首先檢視近幾年臺灣學界關於兒童翻譯圖畫書的重要觀點，主要為林良和其他學者所提出之相關翻譯理論和對兒童的預設，以期開展本土圖畫書翻譯的理論範疇。接著，本文以桑塔克的三本作品：《野獸國》、《廚房之夜狂想曲》、《在那遙遠的地方》為例，採用瑪莉亞·尼可拉亞娃(Maria Nikolajeva)和凱洛·史考特(Carole Scott)所歸納的圖文關係分類，比較分析上述三部作品，並討論英文原作與中文譯作裡圖文關係顯著改變的部份，討論其圖文關係對翻譯的影響。尼可拉亞娃和史考特的圖文關係分類則針對圖畫書的語言特質，提出具體且有效的詞彙描繪圖文關係。根據她們的分類架構，研究結果進一步證實了圖畫書本身的圖文關係並非一成不變。而且，在文字語言與圖像語言的層面，因應文字的改變，翻譯圖畫書與原文版本裡的圖文關係也隨之改變。因此，本文建議，檢視翻譯圖畫書時，應考量譯者對孩童的預設以及譯者對書中圖文關係的理解和詮釋。

關鍵詞：圖畫書 莫里士·桑塔克(Maurice Sendak) 兒童文學翻譯

How Do Children Learn to Read Story Books in an EFL Setting?

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Abstract

This paper explores the reading development of 4 EFL young learners who learned to read through story books. The author reviews the reported history of the 4 cases and examines how these young learners gained the access to the oral language to which the written language is connected and recognized. This linkage in turn leads to the emergence of literacy. Though each case adopts slightly different approaches at some point, there are key elements through which these young learners find their entry point to literacy. It is found that in an EFL environment (a) auditory input is the primary source to offer access to oral language which is the basic requirement for learning to read. (b) the acquired oral language, either at word, phrase, or sentence level, if repeatedly linked to its written form, will have a great contribution to the development of early reading. (c) books extensively used are the best teaching materials for learning to read in an EFL setting. (d) teachers and parents who know when and where to intervene and provide needed scaffolds play an important role in the development of early reading.

Key words: teaching EFL young learners, emergent literacy, book-based learning, parental help in learning to read

INTRODUCTION

Compared with the other language skills--speaking, listening and writing--learning to read in Taiwan is probably the skill that is least confined by the learning environment (Chen, 1996, 2003). Nevertheless, the author found most students who have studied English for at least 6 years do not read for pleasure. Of 50 students investigated in the author's class, there are 28 students who never voluntarily read any story book before freshman year. This finding is consistent with the study of Liaw (1998) which finds that the majority of Taiwanese students are not trained to read independently. Lee (2005a) and Huang (2006) also find students who are non-active readers have difficulty dealing with simplified graded readers or reading authentic materials. All these findings point to the conclusion that English reading education in Taiwan does not take the advantage of reading to create a language learning environment, nor does English reading education reach the point of independent reading, an important language skill for EFL learners who desire to achieve academic success.

The fact that years of colossal investment in English teaching produce functional illiterate or non-active readers is a serious issue that all of the English teachers in Taiwan have to deal with. Most experts contend that the goal of a good reading program should be to promote students to read independently in their early school years (Elley, 2000). In most of the L1 teaching curriculum, book-based reading is incorporated in the early reading program. It starts right from the beginning when teachers or parents read books aloud to children or assist them to read. But it wouldn't take long before they begin to read independently, when, as Krashen (2004) argues, the book-based self-teaching process takes over. Students at this point learn to read for meaning without relying on classroom teaching. (Goodman, 1982; Flurkey & Xu, 2003; Smith, 1994b) Given that this is how literacy happens in L1 reading development, what components of a successful early reading program are missing from the reading program in Taiwan?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading Books as an End and a Means to Improving L1 Reading Skills

Perfetti, Landi, and Oakhill (2005) claim there are two major elements in reading comprehension processing: the identification of words (Stanovich, 1992) and the engagement of assembling these words into messages. In a word, comprehension can not be successful without the identification of words and the retrieval of their meanings. However, the development of high-quality word representations is reflected in fluent reading and must be acquired in large through reading itself (Perfetti, 1985;

Perfetti & Bell, 1991; Stanovich, 2000) because reading is a self-teaching process which provides children with access to “prolonged practice” at decoding (Share, 1995; Nell, 1988). In a word, we learn to decode words through the act of reading. Besides, Krashen (2004) and Anderson (2006) both argue that extensive reading (ER) is the basis to acquiring academic and complex language. There are conclusive findings that show the effectiveness of ER on learners’ language development and attitudes toward language learning: positive attitudes (Dupuy et al., 1996), vocabulary acquisition (Cho & Krashen, 1994; Nation, 1997), grammar (Elley, 1991; Hafiz & Tudor, 1989), reading comprehension (Elley, 1991; Hafiz & Tudor, 1989; Lai, 1993), and reading strategy (Hayashi, 1999). These findings all point to one variable which is the continuous exposure to print. In contrast, in his study of practiced and unpracticed non-native readers of English, Cooper (1984) finds that unpracticed readers can’t deduce word meanings from context, understand lexical cohesions or understand the semantic relationships between sentences.

Book Reading and L2, FL Reading Skills

Elley is probably the one who initiated the most comprehensive studies of the effectiveness of extensive reading in third world ESL countries. Elley’s studies (1991, 2000) investigated book-based projects in several developing countries from the 1970’s to 1980’s. He points out that, in these developing countries, the English curriculum mostly consists of audio-lingual programs with drills for new words and sentence structures in which he found little room for reading as a way of acquiring the new language. The intervention of the Book Flood Project does better by extensively introducing the vocabulary and structures and increasing the time spent interacting with the language. In addition to providing a large quantity of books, the project introduces the books to beginners, using the Shared Books Method; some even use the Language Experience Approach (Singapore) to cater to the needs of younger learners, such as grade 1 students.

The Shared Book Approach (SBA) (Holdaway, 1979) consists of several elements in which the teacher introduces the story by discussing the author and the illustrations and then encourages students to predict the content of the story. The teacher next reads the story with expression, pausing occasionally to check understanding or to encourage predictions. The story is reread several times over the next few days. Follow-up activities may consist of drawing, acting out the story, reading in pairs, or even rewriting the story, which puts more emphasis on reading for meaning and enjoyment than as a means of language teaching. The examples of the SBA approach include several countries, for example Niue and Fiji, two small islands in the south Pacific. A report on the Fiji study caught the attention of the Administration of Education in Singapore that called for a revision of the approach to English teaching in 1984. The Reading and English Acquisition Program (REAP) was

then introduced in 1985 with a sample of 512 children in grade 1. The program incorporates three elements. In addition to the Shared Book Approach and the Book Flood project of high-interest illustrated story books, the program introduces the Modified Language Experience Approach (MLEA), which requires students to engage in an interesting experience that gives rise to a class discussion, followed by writing up their response, and reading aloud this self-written text to others. Students gain the privilege of creating something to be read to others. This method owes much to Lee and Van Allen (1963) and Ashton-Warner (1963). It was also used by REAP, particularly for beginning grade 1 students in Singapore. Encouragingly, of the 65 language test comparisons, REAP pupils showed significant superiority in 53 improvements, including reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, composition, and listening. There were more than 30 schools involved, with students aged between 6 and 9 for one to three years. The results were so encouraging that the Ministry of Education of Singapore has since adopted REAP on a nationwide basis.

Elley's studies are especially significant because they show that high-interest reading materials rapidly improve reading and listening comprehension in a second language in developing countries where teachers are not highly educated. Salyer (1987) and Janopoulous (1986) also find that L2 learners who read more also write better. Day, Omura and Hiramatsu (1991), Dupay and Krashen (1993), and Pulido (2003) all confirm that L2 learners improve vocabulary with ER. Actually, more such studies in L1 and L2 are summarized in Krashen's study (2004).

There have been few examinations of the effects of ER on EFL learners. Elley's study (2000) and Kuruppu's study (2001) on Sri Lanka are two of them. In Sri Lanka, English is introduced in the third grade. The book-based study of grade 4 and grade 5 students was undertaken in 1995. Twenty schools were selected for the project while 10 schools matched on mean reading achievement served as a control group. The experimental group teachers were asked to use books to perform shared book reading and reading aloud for 15 to 20 minutes each day. After 10 months the project groups showed significant gains in reading achievement: approximately 3 times that of control groups. This "Books in Schools" project was most impressive because the subjects were primary EFL learners who had been learning English for only one or two years. However the design of the project didn't stay at the level of individual words or sentences. Another extensive reading study examines the effects of recreational reading on older EFL children. Cho and Kim (2004) conducted a study of 140 6th grade low-level EFL students in Korea. Both the experimental group and control group had 70 students. For 16 weeks, students in the control group followed the regular textbook-driven curriculum for two 40-minute periods per week, while the experimental group followed the regular curriculum for one 40-minute period but read English story books from the internet during the second weekly period. Those who spent time reading story books made superior gains in reading, vocabulary, spelling

and writing and showed superior attitudes and confidence toward reading and writing in English. Wang and Lee (2007) report a group of 10 to 11-year-old Taiwanese EFL learners whose instructors had read them stories twice a week for more than 3 years had developed the ability of independent reading and a love for silent reading. Except for these studies, few of the studies of voluntary reading have focused on beginning EFL children. They tend to look at older subjects. Mason and Kreshen's study (1997) in Japan fits this catalogue. In this study, the researchers asked an experimental group of university students to read graded readers both in class and for homework. After one semester, these students who had previously failed English made larger gains than the control group and nearly caught up with them. Most impressively, the study found that many of the once reluctant EFL university students became eager readers. Lao and Krashen (2000) report similar results for university EFL students in Hong Kong who participated in a popular literature class that emphasized reading for content and enjoyment. The popular literature group made far greater gains in vocabulary and reading speed than the control group. Also, in a case study of a low proficient learner at a university in Taiwan, Shih and Lee (2006) found that the participant's attitude toward English learning and reading became more positive after one semester of an ER program.

The Threshold of Extensive Reading in EFL Setting

Since language is symbolic, either in spoken or written form, most researchers (Goodman, 1982; Flurkey & Xu, 2003; Smith, 1994b) contend there exist perceptual dimensions of reading/listening and the decoding of linguistic symbols which beginning learners need to acquire. In the case of reading, it is more than understanding what is written down. Reading is linked to speaking, as written words are "decoded" into spoken words. In short, reading brings together visual information from written symbols, phonological information from the sounds of the written symbols, and semantic information from the meanings associated with these written and spoken symbols. All three types of information are used while reading. The problem is that the skills required to acquire the three types of information each take time to learn.

(a) Oral language as an entry point to literacy

Krashen (1997) argues that comprehensible-based input is the central consideration in any FL curriculum. Beginning level learners may acquire aural comprehensible input with the Total Physical Response Approach (Asher, 1994) or Natural Approach (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). These approaches put no pressure on students to use the language production beyond their capacity. The lesson plans are based on activities students will find interesting and comprehensible. Krashen (1997) suggests beginners at this stage like listening to teachers reading aloud from

interesting, comprehensible texts, and like stories. He also contends that given enough comprehensible input, all aspects of skills will be present in the input and the acquisition of grammar will take care of itself if the presented message is interesting and comprehensible.

Since listening is rather important at beginning levels, Krashen (1997) suggests beginning learners may self-collect brief recordings of topics they find interesting, then listen to the recordings as many times as they like (Dupuy, 1999; Rodrigo & Krashen, 1996). In fact, Krashen's emphasis on comprehensible narrow listening or conversational language input in the early stage of language acquisition is consistent with the opinions of many reading experts. Anderson et al. (1985), Hall (1987), Steinberg (1993) and Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) all contend that sufficient auditory input and oral language competence are basic requirements for the development of reading because oral vocabulary acquired is a predictor of reading proficiency later on (Snow et al., 1998; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998, 2001). Except for building larger vocabularies and greater understanding of spoken language, Krashen (1997) does not explicitly explain how oral language is connected to text reading. He does mention a three-stage plan for ER. He suggests that students read artificially constructed text at stage one which will bring the students to a level of competence where easy authentic texts (light reading) are comprehensible.

From what Krashen has argued, it appears that he hypothesizes that beginners' reading ability is built on conversational language, both in its listening and written forms in stories. In other words, the acquired conversational language is the source of comprehensible input and a basis on which to begin a large exposure to reading, starting with children being read aloud to in order to introduce the written language in its listening form. Krashen's emphasis on using conversational language in the beginning reading is consistent with the natural development of L1 readers. The question now is how beginning EFL readers learn to read through conversational language which is not provided in the EFL environment.

(b) Conversational (oral) language and word recognition

In the first place, L1 language learners build the lexicon through oral communication with people around them. Reading starts to happen when a child successfully decodes written words into speech sounds in order to associate them with the acquired listening/speaking vocabulary for comprehension. This means beginning readers need to establish strong links between orthographic forms and the sound of the language in order to phonologically process oral and written information. At this point, phonological awareness, word recognition proficiency and vocabulary knowledge are good predictors of successful reading for beginning readers (Bowey, 2005; Perfetti, Landi & Oakhill, 2005; Wagner et al., 2006). However, Moustafa (1993) contends that these skills, even for L1 learners, are acquired through extensive exposures to whole,

meaningful texts. The exposure may not be deemed to be “reading”; it is a gesture of reading. Reading books in this sense is performed through being read aloud to, guided oral reading, echo reading, paired reading, repeated reading and extensive use of rhyme books. Words are sounded out to make associations with word meanings and orthographic symbols (Barchers, 1998). The more they read, the more phonic patterns and generalizations they absorb, which helps them to decode words even better.

(c) FL setting and word recognition

If conversational language (either in listening or written form) is the prerequisite for learning to read, FL learners have more problems acquiring oral target language than L1 or L2 readers. L1 readers acquire their conversational language through oral communication. L2 learners are immersed in the target language environment in school, and the language is also put to use in settings other than schools. In contrast, FL learners painstakingly “learn” the conversational language in the classroom setting and do not have the chance to practice oral vocabulary in a social context. The quality and quantity of oral lexicon acquired is less likely to be immediately put into use in reading stories. Moreover, oral vocabulary has to be associated with its written representatives in order to make the first step toward reading.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

From the previous literature review, we know book-based researches have confirmed the effectiveness of books used in developing reading skills. However, these studies do not explicitly explain how oral language is learned and connected to early reading. Their subjects tend to be older learners who have passed beyond the level of word recognition but do not have book reading experience. Their process of learning to read through the use of books is unclear to most EFL reading teachers. This study will involve a close investigation of 4 young EFL learners who learn to read extensively. Four questions will be examined:

1. how oral language is learned in an EFL environment;
2. how acquired oral language is connected to text reading;
3. how extensively books are used to learn to read books extensively;
4. what teachers/parents do to help children learn to read.

CASE STUDY OF FOUR SUCCESSFUL YOUNG LEARNERS

METHOD

Participants

The 4 subjects are the author's daughter Alice (freshman student, class of 2006), a female student Betty (class of 2007), who is a neighbor of the author, and two female students Carol and Donna (classes of 2006 and 2007) in the author's English novel classes.

Instruments and Procedures

Except for Case 1, which is a review of a long-term observation, the other three cases are reports of the interviews. This study focuses on how the subjects build their reading abilities before they can read extensively. The patterns of their reading behavior and attitudes toward book reading are also analyzed.

RESULTS

Case 1 (Alice)

Although the subject is the author's daughter, it is claimed that this report is not a pre-prepared experiment but a review and analysis of the subject's previous language development. In fact, the author did not have the notion of EFL early reading process when the subject was in contact with the new language. The purpose for reading aloud with the subject was merely to help her explore English picture books. It was not until she could read extensively that the author started to trace back and analyze this particular process.

When the subject was 2 years old and could communicate in Chinese, the author would read her bed-time English stories. The stories were read aloud in a mixture of Chinese and English. Since the author used the oral vocabulary learned from the books in daily life, the subject gradually acquired the meaning and sound of the words. The author also read aloud on a variety of topics (such as people, animals, culture, science, society) for 30 minutes a day, three to four days a week. The subject was allowed to choose the books she liked to read. Conversations from Disney videos were also sources from which she learned the oral language. Moreover, the movie-related Disney picture books were also her favorites.

The subject went to America when she was three years and ten months old and attended an American preschool for 8 months. She rarely spoke English in class, but her listening ability was more than enough to make her quite happy to go to school. Activities in school were mostly sports, games, and social interaction. There were no formal language lessons, but the teacher would read aloud one or two picture books every day before the school was over. English bedtime stories read by the author at

this time were also her favorites. The author found that because the subject had repeatedly listened to some of the stories, she could join in with reading aloud, spotting words, or finishing the sentences. One particularly interesting thing was the subject started trying to write the words she could understand by ear. The spelling might not have been correct, but the attempt showed her phonological awareness of written words. At this time, she was also eager to read books that play with sounds, e.g. Dr. Seuss's books, at this time. The subject came back to Taiwan at the age of four years and ten months old and started to attend a Chinese kindergarten. There were still bedtime stories read to her until the age of 6 after which a lot of her favorite books were not repeatedly read for her. Therefore, the subject started to read on her own half a year before she attended elementary school. Most of the books she read during this period had already been read aloud, but she also read a lot of new books on her own. The author found that she focused on stories and ignored unknown vocabulary. When she wanted to know the story in detail, she would repeat it again and again. The subject did not ask for explanation when she couldn't understand, nor did the author add any Chinese translation in her books.

When the subject reached elementary school and picture books no longer satisfied her, she started to try half-picture books. This stage lasted for 2 years. By grade 3, the subject started reading chapter books. At the beginning of this stage, the reading was mainly of narrow reading because the subject focused on book series, such as *The Box Car Children*, *Little Apple Series*, *Magic School Bus*, *Full House*, and *Sweet Valley Junior High*. Also, listening input was crucial to the effects of reading. At that time, the subject listened to tapes of English plays, *Adventures in Odyssey*, when the author took her to and from school every day. The content of the tapes included Bible stories, moral teachings, stories of friendships, family relationships, and so on. They served both educational and entertainment purposes, with characters and plots full of mystery and intrigue. The subject would listen to the tapes for about 40 minutes a day and repeat each story until she fully understood it. It may be that her acquired conversational language helped her understand the initial reading of the chapter books in which the text was full of dialogue. The tapes also provided background cultural knowledge necessary for reading the chapter books.

Apart from independent reading, the subject did not take any English lessons before or after middle school, nor did she listen to English lessons on the radio. She learned to read extensively since grade 3. In grade 7, she passed the first stage of the High Intermediate Test of GEPT (General English Proficiency Test).

Case 2 (Betty)

The subject is a neighbor of the author. The author met her at her school English recitation contest when the author was one of the judges. The subject's oral reading performance convinced the author that she had the ability to read independently and

this was confirmed.

The subject started taking private English classes twice a week with an ESL speaking teacher in grade 2. The teacher introduced letters and sounds. After several weeks, the teacher applied word cards with pictures, making sounds and showing words to help students connect the semantic, phonological and orthographical information. In addition to teaching with word cards, the teacher also used picture books, reading one small book each semester and focusing on one or 2 sentences each class. A lot of time was spent explaining and practicing these sentences. Actually, this is an audio-lingual approach used in most English classes in Taiwan.

After a year, the subject's mother decided to add an English language broadcast *Let's Talk in English*, and began listening to this broadcast with her daughter every day. At that time, the content of *Let's Talk in English* mainly consisted of children's stories. There would be a story read aloud and explained from Monday through Friday. The teachers in the broadcast used both Chinese and English to tell the stories. The knowledge of letter-sound correspondences was promoted on Saturdays. In addition to *Let's Talk in English*, the subject's mother bought her a lot of books to read. Since the mother was not confident about her own pronunciation, she did not read to her daughter. However, she asked her daughter to read to her in order to check her comprehension of the oral reading. By grade 5, the subject had progressed to listening to *Studio Classroom* and reading half-picture books. She started reading chapter books in grade 7 and has continued reading books and listening to advanced English broadcasts ever since. Although she took English classes between grade 2 and grade 4, the subject did not go to English cram schools while at middle and high schools.

Case 3 (Carol)

This subject is one of the students in the author's reading class. The subject appeared to be an ER reader, since her performance in writing assignments was far better than average students in the class. It was confirmed that she was an ER reader. She had been reading books since grade 8.

The subject went to the same private school from grade 1 to grade 12. Even though private schools tend to focus on English learning, the subject's mother was worried that she was not improving as quickly as her classmates and decided to send her to an English cram school in grade 2. In the cram school, conversational language and activities were the main focus of the class. The school streamed students by levels. The subject began attending this cram school at grade 2 and achieved the highest level by grade 8. However, the cram school never required book reading.

It was not until the subject took on an intensive winter English course in the US and saw the *X-Files* novels in a book store that she started reading extensively. The *X-Files* stories were the subject's favorite movie series, and the books were written with a lot of dialogue. Although the subject was familiar with the stories, she admitted

to using a dictionary while she first started reading the novels. After some time, though, she changed her strategy, focusing on what she understood and forgoing the use of a dictionary. She then started reading detective novels in grade 9. From then on, the subject was engrossed in novels. She gradually added science and general fiction to the list. To this day, she always carries a book wherever she goes and even has her own English blog to share the stories she has read.

Case 4 (Donna)

The subject was a student in the author's English novel reading class. At the beginning of the semester, the class had to answer a survey and the subject indicated that she had read quite a lot of books since elementary school.

The subject entered a private English class in grade 3 where the native English teacher played games, sang songs, and created a lot of activities to provide comprehensible listening input for his students while bearing teaching story reading in mind. The class met 5 days a week and the teacher would read a book a day. The author was told this teacher focused on content rather than language, pausing a few times to explain the key words with word cards. With this approach, students might not understand every word or sentence in the book, but the affective aspects of the shared book reading encouraged students subsequently to view the book voluntarily. In this way, students were motivated to borrow the books to read and savor the illustrations and at the same time engage in guessing the language from the context, as well as from pieces of semantic information revealed from the teacher's reading aloud. The subject said the teacher would repeat the book several times during the next few days, which gave students more opportunities to confirm their guesses. They were thus encouraged to read what had been read to them.

When the students had been in the class for a year, the teacher divided them into several groups and assigned each group a book each week which they would read and use to role-play the story. This activity integrated the skills of listening, reading and speaking and sometimes the re-writing of the story. The subject said she had formed the habit of independent reading since then. In the interview, when asked how she dealt with language difficulties, she replied that since she read for meaning and content, language difficulties were not her primary concern. She would share her thoughts with someone who had read the same book and discuss the story or go back and read the book again. She reported that she took this class in grade 3 and started to read half-picture books at grade 4. Though she left the class in grade 5 and joined a conversational class at a cram school, she continued to read half-picture books until grade 7 when she met a fellow student from the US who introduced chapter books to her. She has been in the habit of reading English books ever since.

DISCUSSION

Language Development Features of the Four Subjects

In Case 1, English oral vocabulary, including both semantic and phonological information, was gained through Chinese translation and pictures. These words were put into daily use to reinforce their meanings. At the same time, the words were encountered and recycled in further reading. In addition to reading stories, there were subject/topic matter book readings, which catered to Alice's interests and cognitive development. Like her L1, English provides Alice with a tool for collecting information through the use of English words.

In contrast with Alice's learning-centered perspective of language learning, Betty's new language was introduced in grade 2 with simultaneous phonological, visual, and semantic information. Her first teacher used a small book as the source of text. The concept behind the teaching approach was that words are learned to build up sentences, while grammar teaching can help recognition of sentence structures, which in turn improves reading comprehension. This concept of language learning is very different from that of Case 1, where Alice tried to understand whatever she got interested through the new language, which is from content learning to language learning.

However, Betty did not only take this private English class but also started listening to stories. The phonological, orthographical and semantic information of the words was learned through explanation of the stories, using both English and some Chinese. Though this was not a face-to-face or one-on-one interaction between teacher and learner, the quantity and quality of the model language input was quite high for an EFL environment. Moreover, the continuous exposure to print ensured the repetition of previously learned words. Unfortunately, Betty's mother did not provide scaffolding during the period of word recognition. Betty took more than 5 years to move from picture books to chapter books which is a little longer than Alice (Table 1).

In this case before the age of 5, it was easier for Alice to learn by listening than by recognizing written text, which is a heavy demand for children before this age. Alice's learning of the new language before the age of five concentrated on oral vocabulary, phrases, and conversational discourse patterns. As more books were read, and along with her cognitive development, Alice was getting aware of the relationships between letters and sounds. In rhyming or poetic language books, though lacking the intricate plots of stories, it was fun to play with the sounds, which thus helped word recognition at that time. She got a sense of achievement by actually "reading" words in terms of sounding out the written symbols. The spoken forms learned by heart were connected to the written forms at this point. In paired reading, Alice could spot some of the words or even finish parts of the sentences in the text.

This word recognition stage was critically important since it was the first sign of

attempting to read. However, it was not until Alice went beyond this stage that the emergence of literacy was detected. After Alice moved toward reading half-picture books, the reliance on word recognition to get semantic information was more obvious than her use of picture cues to predict the content. As the skills of fast recognition of words, phrases and sentence structures were required at this stage, the pictures in the half-picture books were simply used to support or confirm her comprehension. The stage of reading a large amount of half-picture books thus serves as a prerequisite to reading chapter books.

Different from the cases of 1, 2, and 3, Donna's first English teacher was an experienced native speaker who developed tasks, activities, and theme-based activities around story reading. This activity-based language teaching approach, though effective in providing model language, is extremely demanding on teachers in both planning and implementation in an EFL setting. The oral language is gained through the use of the new language as a tool in the activities, tasks and games. Like the effect of the Total Physical Response (TPR) used in the early FL curriculum, these activities demand heavy listening to the key words and use what is comprehended to make a response to the activities. The story telling in this context is like a guessing game, with listeners solving language comprehension problems. Though the teacher did not expect every sentence to be understood, he did care if students got the gist and enjoyed the content by guessing the meaning from his vivid, impressive, and expressive story telling. The approach was so successful that students were enthusiastic about borrowing the book and "reading" the pictures to review what they had guessed from the story telling. After Donna had acquired enough oral and written vocabulary, she began to read not only pictures but written words in the books, and tried to find meanings through the visual, phonological and semantic information. The emergence of literacy was found at this point.

In addition to everyday story telling routines, Donna's teacher created a lot of literacy events in his EFL classroom. He would ask students to draw pictures of their own stories and explain their stories to the teacher. The teacher would then help them put a simple text to these pictures. This approach is similar to the Modified Language Experience Approach used in Singapore (Elley, 2000). These students got the chance to practice writing so that sounds, reading, and writing mutually reinforced each other. Actually, it is also a meaningful phonics self-teaching approach which is much more meaningful than the abstract and unconnected chanting of the words.

Betty learned to read simply by listening to stories and reading books. This phenomenon is, to some extent, similar to the language development that tends to occur in an L1 situation where children seem to learn to read without any formal teaching but through exposure to text and to reading (Hall, 1987). Children may find their own entry point and begin to work out for themselves the patterns that link spoken and written texts. However, emergent literacy only works for some children in

an EFL situation. In retrospect, Betty's success owes much to the multiple skills built up through listening to storytelling and her mother's support of further book reading. This "book-flood" practice is consistent with Elley's studies, showing that highly interesting materials rapidly improve reading and listening comprehension even where teachers are not highly educated.

Carol did not start reading books until 8th grade. However, from this time, she read chapter books full of dialogues. It was found the oral language she acquired in cram school helped her find an entry point into dramatized texts. Also the *X-Files* books are similar to the half-picture books used by Alice, Betty, and Donna. All four subjects reached a point where they were quite capable of word recognition and were working toward learning discourse patterns. Carol may use her previous knowledge and images obtained from the television series as the cues to help her look for meaning in the printed text while Alice, Betty, Donna relied on the pictures in books. As Carol's reading fluency improved, she did not have to rely on oral language. She then tried other novels, like detective stories and science fiction.

The reading history of Carol indicates that there are both disappointments and hopes in the teaching of reading in Taiwan. Reading teachers seem to have less confidence in the power of reading than the power of directly teaching vocabulary and grammar. They are still waiting for their students' competence and confidence to read books. This lack of confidence is revealed in the arrangement of the syllabus because book reading is not incorporated in the curriculum, except a very few graded readers during the summer or winter break. However, the success of the 4 subjects indicates that students of various levels and stages of language ability can find their home-run books as the entry point to literacy and teachers and adults bear the responsibility to help them find these books.

Table 1
Comparisons of Four Cases

Source of conversational language input	Alice	1. Picture books read aloud 2. Daily use at home 3. <i>Adventures in Odyssey</i> (drama listening) 4. Disney Movies
	Betty	1. ESL English teacher 2. Story listening from <i>Let's Talk in English</i> radio program
	Carol	1. Conversation classes at school 2. Conversation classes at cram school
	Donna	Games, storytelling, activities, drama
Parental involvement	Alice	Reading aloud between age 2 and 6 Paired reading at age 5 and 6

	Betty	1. Listening to <i>Let's Talk in English</i> 2. Parent checking oral reading comprehension 3. Help finding books to read in glade 3
	Carol	None
	Donna	None
Starting age of language contact	Alice	Age 2
	Betty	Grade 2
	Carol	Grade 1
	Donna	Grade 3
Age vs. language development	Alice	Half year before glade 1: picture book Glade 1: half-picture book Glade 3: chapter book
	Betty	Glade 3: picture book Glade 5: half-picture book Glade 7: chapter book
	Carol	Glade 8: chapter book
	Donna	Glade 3: picture book Glade 4: half-picture book Glade 7: chapter book

Auditory Input in an EFL Fashion

Oral reading directly from a text is merely incomprehensible if the young learners have not acquired sufficient oral lexicon. However, in an EFL environment like Taiwan, children are not prepared with the oral English lexicon that native speakers have acquired before they go to school. Nevertheless, this study found all of the 4 subjects used various ways to learn auditory language before learning to read (Table 2).

However, except for Carol, who learned the oral language in a classroom setting, the source of the oral lexicon of the other subjects was in large part from story listening. This approach has several features. First, there is no planning as to the extent of how many or what words are to be learned before book listening. The teaching materials mostly cater to the young learners' needs or cognitive development. Since children use new vocabulary as a tool to collect information or to fulfill their needs, either for curiosity or for pleasure, the vocabulary is learned in a meaningful context. Second, the oral lexicon is incidentally learned through bilingual story listening in which children concentrate on story content. This meaning-driven listening approach helps children focus on key words, either at the word, phrase or sentence level. The story listening, in this context, is more like a guessing game than a language learning process. Since the learned oral lexicon is encountered in more story listening, new vocabulary is further accumulated on a reciprocal basis. As more oral

language listening take place, more complex oral language is comprehended, along with more discourse patterns which improve the reading of more complex written language.

Table 2

Source of Oral Lexicon Learning

Subject	Source of oral lexicon learning
Alice	1. bilingual translation in English story telling
	2. story language used in daily life
	3. further storytelling, encountering the words previously learned
	4. Listening to tapes: <i>Adventures in Odyssey</i>
Betty	1. native ESL teacher as a source of beginning listening input
	2. listening to English radio programs
Carol	Conversation classes both in and out of the school from grade 1 to grade 8
Donna	1. games, activities, drawing, and writing their own stories
	2. contextualized story book telling (e.g. stage props, visual aids, rich body language)
	3. group-reading & replaying the story.

From Listening to Reading and Shared Books to Reading Books

In the cases of Alice, Betty and Donna, books were the primary source and site for oral listening and oral lexicon. The acquired oral lexicon, if put to extensive exposure to text reading in books, would gradually be linked to intensify the relationships between sounds and letters. This link manifested itself in the phenomenon where children are enthusiastic about sounding out words while reading. Experienced teachers or parents, like Donna's and Alice's, are knowledgeable about providing more picture books or artificially constructed small books, for example nursery rhyme books or Dr. Seuss's books. Adults at this period play a critical role in providing scaffolds for these readers using guided reading, paired reading or echo reading. They may as well take this opportunity to pass on meaningful chunks, thought groups, or even discourse patterns of the written language through their meaningful oral reading.

This study found that as the subjects accumulated more reading lexicon and increased the reading fluency, they were less likely to rely on pictures than on words. Afterwards, they would begin reading half-picture books. This phenomenon is a significant and reliable indicator of progress toward more advanced reading, which is chapter book reading.

However, most of the subjects in this study took longer period of time to reach chapter book than from picture books to half-picture books. A self-access strategy was noticed among these beginning chapter book readers, who would start with narrow

reading in which they either choose meaning-centered home-run books or book series with familiar background knowledge.

From the above analysis, the book-based approach not only provides a natural environment for language acquisition. It is also based on the comprehensible input theory. The arguments are as follows. First, meaning is encoded through dual-code input, picture and language symbols, where pictures offer cues to guess the language. Secondly, the story or content of the book is predictable and related to life experience. Thirdly, children's books contain carefully controlled language patterns and deliberately regulate vocabulary size and vocabulary knowledge which match children's cognitive development. Fourthly, story-based books intend to attract children to focus on the story rather than on language. In the long run, book-based children tend to focus on what is comprehensible and ignore what is incomprehensible. Gradually, their concept of reading is focused on meaning, which is similar to the reading strategy of advanced proficiency readers (Devine, 1984; Carrell, 1989).

Also self-teaching started to happen once the subjects had learned to read independently. The self-teaching phenomenon was more manifest because these subjects did not have to stay in the classroom to learn. For example, Betty attended a private English class in grade 2 and grade 3. After she listened to *Let's Talk in English* and began to read picture books in grade 3, she left the class in grade 4 and never attended any English classes outside school. Donna attended a book-based class in grade 3 and learned to read in grade 5. She never joined any language class outside school after grade 7. This self-teaching phenomenon is consistent with what 蘇復興 (1999) and 曹逢甫 (2004) recommended: English teachers should help students to bring them to a level where they can read independently so that they are not confined to the classroom to learn the language.

The Role of Teachers and Parents

This study finds oral lexicon is not the only prerequisite for successful early reading. Teachers and parents need to intervene and help at some points. All 4 successful readers prepared their oral lexicon before they really engaged in book reading. However, Carol took English conversation classes both in and out of school for 8 years before she got interested in book reading. In contrast, Betty's mother accompanied her in listening to *Let's Talk in English* in grade 3 and bought her picture books to practice decoding the words at the same time. Donna's teacher and Alice's parent also play an important role in creating an oral language environment and reading to them at the same time. From this study, we conclude how teachers or parents intervene to help beginning readers is very critical to early reading development (Bush & van Ijzendoorn, 1995; Powell-Smith, Stoner, Shinn & Good, 2000). However, parents do not have to be reading experts in order to help their children. For example, Betty's mother used a listening medium to build up her oral

lexicon and bought her story books to read. Though she hesitated to read stories to her child, she knew how to use a good medium and a good strategy to help her child to learn to read. We can conclude that as the child's first language teacher, the parent's concept of learning is very important for their success in reading.

This finding is also consistent with the study by 張顯達 (2006), which finds that among the 5 institutes in which English is taught (bilingual kindergarten, cram school, individual tutor, parents and church), those children whose parents are involved in teaching their children make the best gain in English learning. Their achievement was far beyond the second best of those who had individual tutors.

CONCLUSION

For young learners, spoken language is a medium for cognitive development through which the new language is naturally encountered, understood, practiced and learned. With this concept in mind, teachers or parents can identify the particular opportunities of a task or activity and then develop them into a learning experience for children. The tasks or activities in turn create an environment for learning the foreign language.

As the teacher uses task to construct an environment for the use and learning of the spoken language in a foreign language situation, it seems non-native teachers or parents may not be ideal models of the new language. Nevertheless, in this study, it is discovered that spoken language practiced at word, phrase and sentence level still has an enormous impact on building discourse skills which are essential to early reading.

However, while prolonged direct teaching of vocabulary and grammar may never lead to the competence and confidence necessary for extensive reading if book reading is not emphasized in time, this study finds that young learners are helped by extensive use of interesting stories which lead to reading extensively.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

Since the conventions and rules of the written language take time to learn, young foreign language learners need to be provided with opportunities for literacy events, the social activities that involve reading and writing, to connect oral language to written forms. For example, students may draw pictures to make their own picture books in which the written form of their oral language is practiced. While reading their favorite books to them, teachers may encourage them to spot certain words or finish part of a sentence.

For children from the age of 5 and up, spoken forms should have priority, but the

written forms of the acquired oral vocabulary can be introduced soon after. Children at this age are capable of finding the literacy entry point and connecting the written form to the spoken form. They are eager to read books with rhymes or chants and have the ability to sense the relationships between written and spoken forms.

As children move from picture books toward half-picture books, it is shown that they recognize more words and gain reading speed. Exposure to a large amount of print is extremely critical to the emergence of literacy during this period. Once they find they are able to read one or two books on their own, they will be confident enough to find more books to read.

It should be noted that the design of the class does not have to stay at the level of individual words or sentences when EFL learners have been studying the language for less than one or two years. As long as students are eager to *guess* the story from the book, teachers may begin to challenge them to write and present a play, for example, based on the book they choose to read. In the process, students read the book, discuss or share the content, rewrite the story and then use the story to role-play. This approach, which integrates the story telling, actually creates a language ecosystem for EFL young learners.

As the first person to introduce English to Alice, the author did not understand the importance of phonological awareness at that time. There was no particular plan to teach her rhyming, segmenting, or blending. As long as children acquire sufficient oral lexicon, they would gain more from being read aloud to, paired reading, echo reading or guided reading than from formal teaching of phonological processing for sound awareness and letter-sound correspondence. Also, the involvement of parents or teachers may eliminate the frustration sensed by beginners when they try to decode words through sounds. Best of all, oral reading by parents presents the structure of the language (semantics, morphology and syntax) and narrative discourse in a meaningful context, which children will meet in more advanced reading later on.

A good reading program in the early school years would reduce the tremendous cost of educational investment. Given that the market of English teaching to children is like a war zone, it is not surprising to find that the earlier children begin their language lessons, the sooner they give up learning. The government should provide parents and teachers with guidelines for the preparation of early literacy.

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兒童如何在英語為外語的環境下學習閱讀故事書

摘要

本論文透過 4 位案例之學習過程的回顧資料，分析這些案例在英語為外國語言之環境下如何經由書籍接觸學習口說語言，以至將口說語言連結至書寫語言及至最後成功地獨立閱讀書籍。他們成功的路徑雖然個別稍為不同，然而此研究結果顯示：1. 初階外語閱讀教學極為依靠聽語來源以取得口說語言。2. 已習得之口說語言，不管其內容是單詞、單語或單句，只要能大量接觸並對照、連結至書寫語言，都會對早期閱讀學習有一定程度之貢獻。3. 書籍是英語為外語環境下用來連結口說與書寫語言，以至使閱讀發生最好的教材。4. 父母及教師在兒童外語學習的每一階段，及時正確的介入並給予足夠的輔助是這些兒童成功的最重要關鍵。

關鍵詞：英語為兒童外語之教學 初階閱讀 以故事書為主之閱讀學習
家長對閱讀學習之幫助

Influence of Improvised Dramatic Approach on English Learning

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Abstract

This study conducted a one-year experiment to investigate whether process-centered drama-based or improvised dramatic approach (IDA) enhances learners' oral competence in large EFL conversation class in Taiwan. The actual language growth of (control-group) learners who have stopped receiving such teaching approaches and were treated with more traditional teaching approaches instead were also investigated. The study began by examining learners' initial level of oral English competence at the beginning of the one-year conversation course, it then applied the present study's teaching approaches to both groups of learners during the first half period of the study. Halfway through the study, while test-group learners still received the present study's teaching approach, a more traditional English teaching approach was applied to control-group learners. At the end of the research, it examined the differences in the teaching/learning effect of both groups of learners by again comparing their current level of oral English competence, to see whether the present study's teaching approach was actually facilitating English teaching/learning. The findings suggest that IDA does have a positive influence on the enhancement of students' oral English learning outcomes.

Key words: process-centered, IDA, EFL

BACKGROUND

Having applied a product-oriented drama activity to some EFL conversation classes at one university of technology in Central Taiwan, the author has had some observations. First, generally speaking, during the performance, great amount of well-structured English sentences were spoken fluently by the performing students. Second, the audience (the rest of the class who were not performing on the stage) seemed to show great enthusiasm. In addition, it could be seen that a relatively large amount of creative props were made by most of the performance groups. The above phenomena seemed to show a certain degree of learning motivation on the students' part. In examining a drama activity's effect in enhancing learners' willingness and confidence in speaking English, the results derived from Lin's (2002) study have indicated that, after the activity's application, in comparison to the same statements, "You practice English in your daily life," and "You are able to speak English in front of people," there is an obvious increase in learners' self-ratings, which led to the conclusion that—to a certain degree—the drama activity has its effect in enhancing learners' willingness and confidence in speaking English.

While the results of those preliminary studies (Lin, 2002; Lin, 2003; Lin 2004) have been found to be relatively positive regarding (a) subjects' attitude towards English learning, and (b) certain aspects of English learning outcomes, particularly in the area of the increase of English speaking- and listening-opportunities after one semester of drama activities' treatment in English conversation class, they did show some weaknesses as well; the results (Lin, 2002) have revealed that the drama activity does not seem to be considered by many subjects to be very effective in enhancing their listening ability (when listening to other groups' performances). The qualitative study of Phase-One Study (Lin, 2002) showed that the drama activity enhances subjects' listening ability mainly when they are listening to the dialogues of the same⁸ group. The fact could also be partly evidenced by the results of the post-test in Lin's previous study (2002), wherein some relatively simple questions were not successfully answered by many subjects due to their failure in understanding the scorers. For instance, of a total of 155 subjects, 35 (about 20%) failed to answer the question, "What's your height?" And 34 (about 20%) failed to answer the question, "Is Taichung in the north or south of Taiwan?"

As Lin's (2002, 2003) previous studies have suggested optimistic results regarding product-centered drama activities' power in enhancing learners' learning motivation and confidence, and in increasing speaking-opportunities, the incorporation of process-centered (or improvised) drama activities into the curriculum

⁸ As mentioned under Results and Discussion of Phase-One Study in Chapter 4 of Lin's (2002) study, according to the subjects, in order to be able to jump in at the right point to speak their lines, they had to understand first what their partners were expressing, hence forcing them to listen to others more carefully each time during the practice.

might be worth considering in achieving better learning outcomes, since improvised drama activities seem to have the characteristic of being able to foster learners' spontaneity. In light of the above findings and considerations, this study intended to—incorporating improvised dramatic approach (IDA hereafter) into the conversation course—conduct a longer observation to investigate (a) the actual language growth of those subjects who were given the present study's teaching approach for two consecutive semesters, and (b) the actual language growth of those subjects who were not given a drama-based teaching approach for the second semester.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to:

- (1) Derive from the present version of drama-based teaching approach a role model of appropriate application procedures for adapted IDA which enhances the speaking ability of college learners in large EFL conversation classrooms; and
- (2) Investigate learners' actual language growth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

For thousands of years, drama has existed in various art forms spread through community life. In the ESL classroom the use of creative drama techniques such as role-playing, pantomime, or skits has proven extremely beneficial in the acquisition of all language skills (Maley and Duff, 1993; Verriour, 1985). A review of the literature shows that drama activities contribute considerably to enhancing learners' communicative competence (see, for example, Griffiee 1986; Holden, 1982; Lin, 2005; Lin, 2003; Lin, 2002; Lindsay, 1974; Maley and Duff, 1982; Moss, 1971; Schewe and Shaw, 1993; Somers, 2001; Via, 1987; Wessels, 1987). Drama activities' lively actions and highly contextualized characteristics not only attract students' attention and give students great joy during the process, but also engage students in real dialogue and help students to explore aspects of real language use which generate meaningful communication and in turn facilitate language acquisition. According to Ernst-Slavit and Wenger (1998), in addition to the intimate connection between drama and reading, writing as well as listening skills, a primary value of drama is the opportunity it affords for oral communication. In addition, Heath (1993) has pointed out:

Both language learning theorists and practitioners of teaching English as a second language or dialect have argued that role playing moves language learners beyond their usual performance in ordinary classroom presentations.

(p. 177)

Polsky (1989) has claimed that improvisational drama can be experienced almost anywhere—in the classroom, at home, or on stage—and by anyone, from children to senior adults. It was mentioned that players in improvisational drama need not be concerned with expensive props or elaborate costumes and stage settings. From “mere” space alone, a marvelous and diverse world of familiar and fantasy activity can be constructed and shared. According to Polsky, improvisation means the spontaneous response to new and unexpected situations under structured circumstances, a way of “letting yourself go” with self-control. He has maintained that as one becomes increasingly aware of one’s body as a vitally expressive instrument, inner confidence is fostered. He has noticed that quite frequently in schools, “drilling and grilling” of facts is stressed in place of creative exploration of the meaning of those facts regarding the learners’ world. By using their dramatic imaginations to explore open-ended problems, learners are stimulated to perceive new ways of connecting with unrelated materials learned in the past and begin to experience and live with creative changes. He argued that change is growth, and growth is learning and that retention of knowledge takes place more readily in a creative atmosphere. It was mentioned that “facts and concepts become more permanently fixed in the minds when the experience is a visceral one involving the emotions, when they can actively express feelings and get ‘inside’ the particular subject they are studying” (p. 231-232). It was pointed out that acting out words in an enjoyable atmosphere helps to enlarge both listening and speaking vocabularies. The focus of mind necessary for looking and listening helps young people to be alert and to perceive the importance of getting the right words ready for expressing themselves.

In discussing the effect of creative drama English teaching on creativity and learning achievements for the students in the extensive education division of a university of technology, Chen (2009) has found that Creative drama English teaching significantly promoted student’s creativity and advanced students’ English, especially in the facets of “Fluency” and “Listening”. Creativeness has been found to be of great importance also by numerous studies (Chang, 2007a; Chen 2006; Hong, 2007; Huang; 2007; Mages, 2008; Yeh, 2006). Phillips (1999) believes that training in improvisation is the best way for EFL students to acquire the ability to interact spontaneously in real-life communication settings. As has been mentioned by Shimizu (1993), improvisation is in fact a folk tradition at any age and in any country. It can be seen in our daily verbal behaviors. Improvisation is any kind of spontaneous (dramatic) performance tried “here and now and new” in a particular context, using our daily skills of perception, movement and speech, whether verbal or nonverbal, whether based upon certain material or not, and either roughly or not prepared at all. According to Shimizu, the process of communication is more significant than the product, it should be much more creative, unpredictable, spontaneous, and less formal.

As opposed to the skill oriented, text- and audience-centered work of the Speech and Drama specialists flourishing in England during the 20s, 30s and 40s, Slade concluded that the pleasure of a child in the so-called “dramatic” make-believe has not much to do with any appreciating audience, absence of which along with the addition of the element of Spontaneity are the most important in Slade’s drama (Slade, 1954).

DEFINITIONS OF PROCESS-CENTERED DRAMA-BASED ENGLISH TEACHING

In the application of the drama-based teaching approach in the present study, process-centered elements were incorporated into the curriculum. Dramatic activities were planned and practiced *by* learners and tutors usually as part of, or associated with, the timetable (therefore typically intra-curricular), learners placed greater emphasis on the creative process and spontaneity; being non-exhibitional and process-centered, creative dramatics suggests the informality of classroom drama as opposed to the rehearsed play; spontaneity is seen as the hall-mark of this kind of dramatic activity. It could be described as a drama or role-play activity that is created by the participants being guided by a leader to imagine, enact, and reflect upon human experiences as depicted in the teaching material. The purpose is to deepen understanding and strengthen the performers rather than to perfect a product (McCaslin, 2000). Short episodes are enacted in front of the class by small groups in turn, with much freedom for interpretation.

METHOD

This study intended to investigate the application of IDA teaching activities by exploring its use and effects as well as its contribution to English learning. A total of 84 students of different majors at one university of technology in Central Taiwan participated in the study for the length of one academic year (two semesters). The participants were all under the author’s instruction. Following is a description of the procedures of the study:

- (1) The students were randomly assigned into control-group and test-group, respectively.
- (2) A pre-test was conducted to both of the groups at the beginning of the course to examine their current level of oral English competence.
- (3) During the first period (the first semester) of the study, the present study’s teaching approach was applied to both groups of learners. From the beginning of

the second half (the second semester) of the study, while test-group learners still received the present study's teaching approach, control-group learners were instructed under a more traditional English teaching approach (Audio-lingual method combined with grammar-translation method).

- (4) At the end of the study, a post-test was conducted to both of the groups to elicit information about their current level of English competence.

The reason for the test-group learners to receive the present study's teaching approach during the second half (the second semester) of the study, while control-group learners were instructed under a more traditional English teaching approach was due to the author's consideration that the results of a longer period of experiment of the present study's teaching approach might be more reliable. The author adopted the design of two different instructional methodologies for the second half of the study in order to make comparisons between the two groups' learning outcomes. It was so designed so that control-group students' perceptions could also be investigated after the change of the teaching approach had been applied to them, the findings of which, however, were not included in the current study due to length limitations.

The Course and Classroom Activities

The Instructional material adopted for this study was "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" by J. K. Rowling (Published 1997 by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc). During each semester, two written examinations related to the introduced materials of the textbook were administered to ensure the subjects' minimal learning of basic structures. These written examinations were basically achievement tests which were not related to the pre- and post-test of the study aiming at measuring the students' advancement in speaking.

During the first half period of the study, both groups of students were divided into several sub-groups of 4 to 5 persons of mixed levels of English competence, and were treated with the same teaching approach (IDA). At first it was necessary for the teacher/researcher to introduce various scenes or situations and to sketch the background simply, and to indicate certain character roles. Students were encouraged to give free rein to their imaginations. Later on, role playing was called for; the students of this study took turns to come to the front of the classroom and, under the guidance/help of the teacher/researcher, role-played different scenes from the teaching material. More emphasis was placed on the role itself and its characteristics than on the other dramatic conventions involved (e.g., the preparation of costume, props, and script-memorization on the students' part, etc. were not the focus in this study's practice). Care was exercised to allow some time for discussion and evaluation once

the role playing was completed. Some of the scenes⁹ adopted for use in class are as cited from chapter one (p. 7 and p. 9) of the instructional material.

After a few minutes' discussion among group members, some students were called on to the front of the classroom to role play a certain paragraph on the page. Possible lines (taking the scene from page 7 of the instructional material for instance) generated by the students (playing the roles of Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, respectively) may be as follows:

Mr. Dursley: Dear, how is your sister? We haven't seen her for a long time, right?

Mrs. Dursley: (looking shocked) Hush! Don't speak so loudly. The neighbors may overhear.

Mr. Dursley: (lowering his voice) I'm sorry.

Mrs. Dursley: We don't want our neighbors to know that I have a sister who is a witch, do we?

Mr. Dursley: You're right. That would scare people away from us.

Mrs. Dursley: Anyway, I haven't seen her for many years already.

Mr. Dursley: You're not curious about how they are doing?

Mrs. Dursley: It's better off this way. You know how I feel about her and her useless husband. I'd rather not to have a sister like that.

It's very normal that students encountered many difficulties in producing grammatically correct sentences, those were the times when the teacher/researcher came into play, making suggestions or helping them in completing whatever sentences they had started.

During the second half period of the study, while test-group learners still received IDA treatment, control-group learners were instructed under more traditional English teaching approach (Audio-lingual method combined with grammar-translation method).

Validity/Reliability/Scoring of Pre- and Post-Test (Oral Interview)

An oral interview with the same questions for both of the groups was used for the pre- and post-test of this study. Since the students of this study were, generally speaking, of relatively low English competence (Lin, 2002, p. 219), it was necessary to design a test that suited their level. The questions for the pre- and post-test were

9 For instance: (1). "The Dursleys had everything they wanted, but they also had a secret, and their greatest fear was that somebody would discover it. They didn't think they could bear it if anyone found out about the Potters. Mrs. Potter was Mrs. Dursley's sister, but they hadn't met for several years; in fact, Mrs. Dursley pretended she didn't have a sister, because her sister and her good-for nothing husband were as unDursleyish as it was possible to be" (p. 7) . (2). "Mr. Dursley stopped dead. Fear flooded him. He looked back at the whisperers as if he wanted to say something to them, but thought better of it. He dashed back across the road, hurried up to his office, snapped at his secretary not to disturb him, seized his telephone and had almost finished dialing his home number when he changed his mind. He put the receiver back down and stroked his moustache, thinking ... no, he was being stupid" (p. 9).

designed according to Madsen's (1983) techniques in testing and have been reviewed by two experts in the field of English teaching. It would have been difficult to judge the difference of students' learning outcome between the beginning and end of the study if different sets of questions were adopted. In order to obtain a more objective result, the students participating in this study were not provided with any information about the tests beforehand. Following is a description regarding the validity and reliability of these two tests, which proceeds in the order of (a) construction and administration, and (b) scoring.

(a). Construction and administration

Two testers/scorers conducted a face-to-face interview in a relaxed, quiet and informal setting. In order to standardize the test for the candidates, a guided oral interview was used. A wide variety of elicitation techniques were utilized. Either/or questions, yes/no questions, and information questions were included. In addition, items (2, 6 and 11) that provide information that needs qualifying, revising or correcting, as well as encouraging students to carry on the conversation were used. The candidates were given as many "fresh starts" (separate items) as possible. Care was taken to avoid spending too much time on one particular function or topic. Candidates were given only the tasks and topics that would be expected to cause them no difficulty in their own language. The initial stages of the interview were made within the capacities of all reasonable candidates (Hughes, 1990:106), for example, straightforward requests for personal details, remarks about the weather, and so on, were used.

(b). Scoring

For the purpose of obtaining valid and reliable scoring, objectified scoring was adopted, since in the area of speaking, the criteria of oral communicative competence are less well defined, and the vast majority of language teachers do not have the sophisticated training needed to provide consistent, accurate holistic grading of speech (Madsen, 1983:170). Adopting part of the American FSI (Foreign Service Institute) procedure, the two testers/scorers concerned in each interview were required to rate candidates on a six-point scale (See Appendix 1: part 1) for each of the following aspects: accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension. These ratings were then weighted and totaled (See Appendix 1: part 2) and divided by ten. Care was taken that irrelevant features of performance were ignored, and any logically appropriate and comprehensible response was acceptable. Since speaking tests are always productive, partial credit was allowed for partially correct responses (Madsen, 1983:171).

For training of scorers, descriptions of the above criterial levels were clearly written and the two testers/scorers were trained to use them. Recordings of past interviews were played to clearly represent different criterial levels. The two testers/scorers assessed each student (of both the test- and control-group) together,

taking turns asking the questions. Care was taken to avoid the situation that the testers/scorers were seen to make notes on the students' performance during the interview. Scoring was done immediately¹⁰. The mean of the two sets of score derived was the final score for each student. A recording of each session was made to assist in the solution of possible occurrence of disagreement between the scorers. A third scorer was invited to interview the student for whom the score difference between the two scorers was higher than 20%. In such cases, the final score for the student was the mean derived from the three sets of score.

Data Collection

A pre-test was conducted at the beginning of the course, while a post-test was conducted at the end of the study. Both of the tests were oral interviews administered by two scorers. Data of other tests (e.g., written mid-term and final examinations of both of the semesters) or means of evaluation (e.g., record of class attendance) were also collected. Since mid-term and final examinations of both of the semesters were related to the introduced materials of the textbook to ensure subjects' minimal learning of basic structures, they had no particular relationship with the pre- and post-tests.

Subjects

A total of 84 freshmen of different majors in the four-year college program taking a general English course participated in the study, and were randomly assigned to two classes (control-group and test-group). Each class met two hours a week over the semester starting in September, 2009. The demographic data revealed that about three-fifths (60.5%) of the group were male. Students had studied the language for an average of 6 years in junior and vocational high school. All in all, the participants seemed to be a fairly typical group of technological college students beginning their first year of language study. The distribution of the students participating in the study is shown in Table 1:

Table 1

Students Participating in Study (Control-Group)

Department	Control-Group	Department	Test-Group
Finance	10	Film	10
Information Management	11	Insurance	12
Architecture	11	Accounting	9
Environmental Protection	10	Business Management	11

¹⁰ As Madsen (1983:173) has put it, "The scoring of a speaking test is more accurate when it is done during the exam."

Source of information: present study

Data Analysis

The study chose reliability analysis, descriptive analysis, and *t*-test as statistic methods for data processing and analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of Descriptive Analysis

The statistics of test-score distribution shown from the comparison between students' pre- and post-tests indicate that, generally speaking, both groups of students have made progress. Following are the twenty questions of the pre- and post-tests. The test results of both groups are shown in Tables 2 to 3. As can be seen from the comparison of the mean between the pre- and post-tests, the test-group gets lower grades for items 2 (I suppose that most people in Taiwan speak Mandarin as well as Taiwanese.), 6 (Is Taichung in the north or the south of Taiwan?), 10 (Would you like to study for a master's degree after you graduate from college?), 12 (When did you enter this university, and why?), 15 (What are the advantages of living in a house?), and 17 (Did your family suffer from the 921 earthquake?). The results for items 6 and 15 are statistically significant, suggesting that test-group students did not make progress especially for items that required them to provide real world knowledge or analysis of a certain situation. The result of students' failure in answering item 2 could be due to the reason that generally it is difficult for students to answer or give a reply to sentences that are out of context. On the other hand, the control-group gets lower grades only in one question (question 2). One possible reason could be that, control-group participants are of relatively higher level of English competence (which could be evidenced from the comparison of means between the two groups in the pre-test). Due to the fact that a real teaching context did not allow the author to have two groups of learners of equivalent oral English competence, *t*-test was used to compute language growth for each of the group, respectively.

Questions for Pre- and Post-Tests

1. What languages do you speak?
2. I suppose that most people in Taiwan speak Mandarin as well as Taiwanese.
3. Where do you come from?
4. Do your parents still live there?
5. You're the only member of your family in Wufeng?
6. Is Taichung in the north or the south of Taiwan?
7. How long have you been studying English?

8. Would you tell me some of your hobbies?
9. What do you major in?
10. Would you like to study for a master's degree after you graduate from college?
11. It's certainly hot outside today!
12. When did you enter this university, and why?
13. Do you like to study here? Why?
14. Do you live in a house or an apartment?
15. What are the advantages of living in a house?
16. Would you tell me a little about your high school?
17. Did your family suffer from the 921 earthquake?
18. What's your height?
19. Would you tell me a little about your best friend?
20. Would you take a piece of paper to the teacher in the next room?

Table 2

Results of Pre-Test's Descriptive Analysis

Item No	Mean		Std.		Variances	
	Control- Group	Test- Group	Control- Group	Test- Group	Control- Group	Test- Group
1	2.90	1.14	1.30	1.55	1.68	2.40
2	0.10	0.05	0.30	0.21	0.09	0.04
3	4.28	2.68	1.06	1.89	1.13	3.57
4	1.33	0.41	1.62	0.79	2.64	0.62
5	1.20	0.80	1.36	0.90	1.86	0.82
6	0.35	0.30	0.95	0.73	0.90	0.54
7	2.68	1.39	1.31	1.35	1.71	1.82
8	2.83	0.48	1.82	1.25	3.33	1.56
9	0.73	0.23	1.50	0.91	2.26	0.83
10	0.35	0.18	0.62	0.66	0.39	0.43
11	1.33	0.45	1.93	1.13	3.71	1.28
12	0.55	0.09	1.24	0.47	1.54	0.22
13	2.28	1.07	1.93	1.72	3.74	2.95
14	2.18	0.45	2.21	1.21	4.87	1.46
15	0.00	0.18	0.00	0.76	0.00	0.57
16	2.13	0.52	1.74	1.15	3.04	1.33
17	0.53	0.14	1.09	0.77	1.18	0.59
18	0.35	0.05	0.95	0.30	0.90	0.09
19	2.05	0.50	2.11	1.28	4.46	1.65
20	0.05	0.02	0.22	0.15	0.05	0.02

Source of information: present research

Table 3

Results of Post-Test's Descriptive Analysis

Item No	Class	Mean		Std.		Variances	
		Control-Group	Test-Group	Control-Group	Test-Group	Control-Group	Test-Group
1		3.63	1.45	1.50	1.90	2.24	3.60
2		0.08	0.02	0.27	0.15	0.07	0.02
3		4.83	3.41	0.50	1.77	0.25	3.13
4		2.18	0.98	1.84	1.09	3.38	1.19
5		1.23	0.98	1.10	0.95	1.20	0.91
6		1.08	0.00	1.37	0.00	1.87	0.00
7		3.00	2.20	1.68	1.39	2.82	1.93
8		2.95	1.27	1.57	1.68	2.46	2.81
9		1.75	0.43	2.24	0.95	5.01	0.90
10		0.55	0.11	0.75	0.39	0.56	0.15
11		1.83	0.55	2.21	1.27	4.87	1.60
12		0.65	0.00	1.33	0.00	1.77	0.00
13		3.03	1.77	1.58	1.70	2.49	2.88
14		2.55	1.00	2.02	1.66	4.10	2.74
15		0.25	0.07	1.01	0.45	1.01	0.20
16		2.90	1.07	1.53	1.50	2.35	2.25
17		0.50	0.02	1.18	0.15	1.38	0.02
18		0.58	0.39	1.17	0.99	1.38	0.99
19		2.98	0.84	1.49	1.33	2.23	1.76
20		0.03	0.02	0.16	0.15	0.03	0.02

Source of information: present research

Results of t-test

According to the *t*-tests' results, in comparison to the control-group, the test-group has more items (items 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 18) that show a statistically significant difference, suggesting that the test-group made progress in more items of the post-test questions than the control-group (items 1, 3, 4, 6, 9, 16 and 19). Tables 4 and 5 show the results. The four items that show a statistically significant difference in both of the groups are items 3 (referring to the question: Where do you come from?), 4 (Do your parents still live there?), 6 (Is Taichung in the

north or the south of Taiwan?) and 16 (Would you tell me a little about your high school?). The three items that show statistically significant difference only in control-group are items 1 (What languages do you speak?), 9 (What do you major in?), and 19 (Would you tell me a little about your best friend?). The four items that show statistically significant difference only in test-groups are items 7 (How long have you been studying English?), 8 (Would you tell me some of your hobbies?), 13 (Do you like to study here? Why?), 14 (Do you live in a house or an apartment?), 15 (What are the advantages of living in a house?) and 18 (What's your height?).

A comparison of the results suggest that in addition to yes/no questions, test-group students seem to make progress also in most of the open-ended questions that require more elaboration in answering, such as questions 8, 13, and 15. Even though control-group students also made progress in two (questions 16 and 19) of the open-ended questions, it seems that questions such as talking about one's high school and best friend are not of the same kind as those of eliciting information regarding the reasons why they want to study at current university, or analysis of dis/advantages of living in a house/an apartment, with the former being less challenging and more straightforward. It seems that neither of the groups showed significant progress in responding to items that require revising, correcting, or carrying on of the conversation (e.g., item 2: I suppose that most people in Taiwan speak Mandarin as well as Taiwanese; item 11: It's certainly hot outside today!).

Other Comparisons between the Test-group and the Control-group

Some other tests or means of evaluations were used to compare the differences between the test-group and the control-group, e.g., mid-term examination of the first and second semester (mef and mes), final-examination of the first and second semester (fef and fes), total grade of the first and second semester (tgf and tgs), students' total count of speaking during the first and second semester (tcsf and tcss), and students' total count of absences during the first and second semester (tcaf and tcas). As can be seen, both of the groups show an increase in the mid-term examination grade (27.41 to 30.07 for the test-group, 45.05 to 47.73 for the control-group), and in the final-examination grade (19.09 to 29.73 for the test-group, and 31.40 to 38.29 for the control-group). Both of the groups show a decrease in the total grade comparison (34.1 to 30.60 for the test-group, 45.33 to 38.90 for the control-group) between the two semesters. Both of the groups show an increase in the total count of absence (0.32 to 1.55 for the test-group, 0.65 to 1.88 for the control-group). However, the test-group's students show an increase in total count (10.89 to 11.75) of speaking, while control-group' students show a decrease (12.80 to 7.53). The results seem to indicate that under the administration of IDA, students had more speaking opportunities. Table 6 shows the results.

Table 4

Control-Group's Pre- and Post-Tests' t-Test

	Mean	Std.	Standard Error of Mean	95% confidence level		t	Degree of Freedom	Sig.
				Down	Up			
PRET1 - POT1	-0.73	1.80	0.28	-1.30	-0.15	-2.55	39	0.01**
PRET2 - POT2	0.03	0.42	0.07	-0.11	0.16	0.37	39	0.71
PRET3 - POT3	-0.55	1.08	0.17	-0.90	-0.20	-3.21	39	0.00***
PRET4 - POT4	-0.85	2.18	0.34	-1.55	-0.15	-2.47	39	0.02**
PRET5 - POT5	-0.03	1.56	0.25	-0.52	0.47	-0.10	39	0.92
PRET6 - POT6	-0.73	1.09	0.17	-1.07	-0.38	-4.22	39	0.00***
PRET7 - POT7	-0.33	1.86	0.29	-0.92	0.27	-1.11	39	0.28
PRET8 - POT8	-0.13	1.84	0.29	-0.71	0.46	-0.43	39	0.67
PRET9 - POT9	-1.03	2.08	0.33	-1.69	-0.36	-3.11	39	0.00**
PRET10 - POT10	-0.20	0.99	0.16	-0.52	0.12	-1.27	39	0.21
PRET11 - POT11	-0.50	2.50	0.40	-1.30	0.30	-1.26	39	0.21
PRET12 - POT12	-0.10	1.81	0.29	-0.68	0.48	-0.35	39	0.73
PRET13 - POT13	-0.75	2.23	0.35	-1.46	-0.04	-2.13	39	0.04
PRET14 - POT14	-0.38	2.52	0.40	-1.18	0.43	-0.94	39	0.35
PRET15 - POT15	-0.25	1.01	0.16	-0.57	0.07	-1.57	39	0.12
PRET16 - POT16	-0.78	1.70	0.27	-1.32	-0.23	-2.88	39	0.01**
PRET17 - POT17	0.03	1.05	0.17	-0.31	0.36	0.15	39	0.88
PRET18 - POT18	-0.23	1.33	0.21	-0.65	0.20	-1.07	39	0.29
PRET19 - POT19	-0.93	1.97	0.31	-1.55	-0.30	-2.98	39	0.01**
PRET20 - POT20	0.03	0.28	0.04	-0.06	0.11	0.57	39	0.57
PRETO - POTO	-8.38	10.44	1.65	-11.71	-5.04	-5.07	39	0.00***

*P<0.1 **P<0.05 ***P<0.01 Source of information: present research

Table 5

Test-Group's Pre- and Post-Tests' t-Test

	Mean	Std.	Standard Error of Mean	95% confidence level		t	Degree of Freedom	Sig.
				Down	Up			
PRET1 - POT1	-0.32	2.04	0.31	-0.94	0.30	-1.03	43	0.31
PRET2 - POT2	0.02	0.26	0.04	-0.06	0.10	0.57	43	0.57
PRET3 - POT3	-0.73	1.69	0.25	-1.24	-0.21	-2.86	43	0.01**
PRET4 - POT4	-0.57	1.28	0.19	-0.96	-0.18	-2.94	43	0.01**
PRET5 - POT5	-0.18	1.21	0.18	-0.55	0.18	-1.00	43	0.32
PRET6 - POT6	0.30	0.73	0.11	0.07	0.52	2.67	43	0.01**
PRET7 - POT7	-0.82	1.76	0.26	-1.35	-0.28	-3.09	43	0.00***
PRET8 - POT8	-0.80	1.65	0.25	-1.30	-0.29	-3.20	43	0.00***
PRET9 - POT9	-0.20	1.36	0.20	-0.62	0.21	-1.00	43	0.32
PRET10 - POT10	0.07	0.79	0.12	-0.17	0.31	0.57	43	0.57
PRET11 - POT11	-0.09	1.27	0.19	-0.48	0.30	-0.47	43	0.64
PRET12 - POT12	0.09	0.47	0.07	-0.05	0.23	1.27	43	0.21
PRET13 - POT13	-0.70	2.14	0.32	-1.36	-0.05	-2.18	43	0.03**
PRET14 - POT14	-0.55	1.65	0.25	-1.05	-0.04	-2.19	43	0.03**
PRET15 - POT15	0.11	0.89	0.13	-0.16	0.39	0.84	43	0.40*
PRET16 - POT16	-0.55	1.45	0.22	-0.99	-0.10	-2.49	43	0.02**
PRET17 - POT17	0.11	0.78	0.12	-0.12	0.35	0.96	43	0.34
PRET18 - POT18	-0.34	1.06	0.16	-0.66	-0.02	-2.14	43	0.04*
PRET19 - POT19	-0.34	1.43	0.22	-0.78	0.09	-1.58	43	0.12
PRET20 - POT20	0.00	0.22	0.03	-0.07	0.07	0.00	43	1.00
PRETO - POTO	-5.48	8.05	1.21	-7.92	-3.03	-4.51	43	0.00***

*P<0.1 **P<0.05 ***P<0.01 Source of information: present research

Table 6

Comparison of Other Areas of Evaluation

Items	Mean		Std.		Variances	
	Control-Group	Test-Group	Control-Group	Test-Group	Control-Group	Test-Group
Mef	45.05	27.41	12.22	13.19	149.38	174.06
Fef	31.40	19.09	11.39	10.71	129.78	114.69
Tgf	45.33	34.1	12.34	13.1	152.34	171.62
Tcsf	12.80	10.89	9.16	10.13	83.86	102.66
Tcaf	0.65	0.32	0.86	0.74	0.75	0.55
Mes	47.73	30.07	15.86	15.10	251.69	228.11
Fes	38.29	29.73	17.05	12.14	290.83	147.28
Tgs	38.90	30.60	14.92	12.78	222.60	163.38
Tcss	7.53	11.75	2.56	6.75	6.56	45.54
Tcas	1.88	1.55	1.73	1.85	2.98	3.42

Source of information: present research

CONCLUSIONS

A general look at the results derived from the adopted statistic methods reveals that both groups of learners made a certain degree of progress in oral competence. However, IDA did have a positive influence on students' learning outcome. In addition to the provision of more speaking opportunities, test-group students (who were of lower oral competence in comparison to control-group students at the beginning of the study) made progress in more items than control-group students—under a longer treatment of the current study's teaching approach. With the instructor introducing various scenes or situations and sketching the background simply, and indicating certain character roles, learners were encouraged to give free rein to their imaginations. Even though role playing was called for, more emphasis was placed on the role itself and its characteristics than on the other dramatic conventions involved. Through the present study, we may have gained some insights into how the “length” factor comes into play in influencing learning outcome, which

may be offered for future reference regarding related teaching methodology.

It may be understandable that in an EFL context where there is scarcely the need for using English for survival, it is relatively difficult to greatly enhance students' speaking ability in an academic year's (about 8 months) time, no matter what kind of teaching methodology is adopted. What the above drama activity has achieved, in the area of speaking, may be mainly in the aspect of producing opportunities for students to speak English and to witness the fact that they are indeed capable of speaking English. The present version of the drama-based teaching approach seems to be able to present a possibility for an application procedures/model which enhances speaking ability for learners in large EFL conversation classrooms. The author believes that, while a handful of practitioners in the field have attempted with some success to break new ground, further research is needed regarding more varieties of methodological procedure of drama-based English teaching/learning activities to put it into a sound educational context.

LIMITATIONS

Due to the nature of this study being a quantitative one, it is relatively difficult for the author to derive—from the data—a clear answer as to what aspects the subjects have made progress in, e.g., in the aspect of fluency, accuracy or use of grammar, which therefore may be a possible direction for future research.

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Appendix 1

Proficiency Descriptions

Part 1.

Accent

1. Pronunciation frequently unintelligible.
2. Frequent gross errors and a very heavy accent make understanding difficult, require frequent repetition.
3. "Foreign accent" requires concentrated listening, and mispronunciations lead to occasional misunderstanding and apparent errors in grammar or vocabulary.
4. Marked "Foreign accent" and occasional mispronunciations which do not interfere with understanding.
5. No conspicuous mispronunciations, but would not be taken for a native speaker.
6. Native pronunciation, with no trace of "foreign accent."

Grammar

1. Grammar almost entirely inaccurate phrases.
2. Constant errors showing control of very few major patterns and frequently preventing communication.
3. Frequent errors showing some major patterns uncontrolled and causing occasional irritation and misunderstanding.
4. Occasional errors showing imperfect control of some patterns but no weakness that causes misunderstanding.
5. Few errors, with no patterns of failure.
6. No more than two errors during the interview.

Vocabulary

1. Vocabulary inadequate for even the simplest conversation.
2. Vocabulary limited to basic personal and survival areas (time, food, transportation, family, etc.)
3. Choice of words sometimes inaccurate, limitations of vocabulary prevent discussion of some common professional and social topics.
4. Professional vocabulary adequate to discuss special interests; general vocabulary permits discussion of any non-technical subject with some circumlocutions.
5. Professional vocabulary adequate to discuss special interests; general vocabulary permit discussion of any non-technical subject with some circumlocutions.
6. Vocabulary apparently as accurate and extensive as that of an educated native speaker.

Fluency

1. Speech is so halting and fragmentary that conversation is virtually impossible.
2. Speech is very slow and uneven except for short or routine sentences.
3. Speech is frequently hesitant and jerky; sentences may be left uncompleted.
4. Speech is occasionally hesitant, with some unevenness caused by rephrasing and grouping for words.
5. Speech is effortless and smooth, but perceptibly non-native in speech and evenness.
6. Speech on all professional and general topics as effortless and smooth as a native speaker's.

Comprehension

1. Understands too little for the simplest type of conversation.
2. Understands only slow, very simple speech on common social and touristic topics; requires constant repetition and rephrasing.
3. Understands careful, somewhat simplified speech when engaged in a dialogue, but may require considerable repetition and rephrasing.
4. Understands quite well normal educated speech when engaged in a dialogue, but requires occasional repetition or rephrasing.
5. Understands everything in normal educated conversation except for very colloquial or low-frequency items, or exceptionally rapid or slurred speech.
6. Understands everything in both formal and colloquial speech to be expected of an educated native speaker.

Part 2.

Weighting Table

	1	2	3	4	5	6	(A)
Accent	0	1	2	2	3	4	
Grammar	6	12	18	24	30	36	
Vocabulary	4	8	12	16	20	24	
Fluency	2	4	6	8	10	12	
Comprehension	4	8	12	15	19	23	
						Total	

(Adams and Frith 1979:35-8)

Criteria levels

1. 5 points for complete answers with appropriate usage/expressions and correct use of grammar.
2. 4 points for complete answers with slightly grammatical error.
3. 4 points for complete answers with opposite use of “yes” or “no” at the beginning of the answer.
4. 3 points for incomplete answers with clear meaning.
5. 3 points for mostly correct answers with wrong usage of the subject.
6. 2 points for incomplete answers with only correct usage of the tense.
7. 2 points for complete answers with inappropriate usage of the verbs.
8. 1 point for generally comprehensible meaning with wrong usage of tense and subjects.
9. 1 point for answers with only the words “yes” or “no”.
10. Zero for totally wrong/incomprehensible answers. Zero for answers with only the words “yes” or “no” given after a long pause

即席式戲劇教學活動對英語學習之影響

摘要

本研究於目前台灣非主修英語之大班制英語教學情境中，實施以著重「過程」導向之即席式戲劇教學活動，經由一年之研究以檢測此教學法是否在提昇學習者口語能力上有其效用。本研究係在一年之學習流程中，於期中變動調整教學方法，進而比對不同組群中在學習成效上之差異。本研究的方法乃於英語會話課程開始之初先檢測兩組學生群的英文口說程度，然後於本研究前半段期間之課程進行中將上述教學法實施於全數(兩組)之學生。至後半段研究期間，檢驗組之學生仍將持續接受本研究之教學法，而控制組之學生將回歸傳統之教學法受教。本研究於課程結束時，再次檢驗、比較兩組學生目前的英文口說程度，以便瞭解此一戲劇教學法經由長時程之實施是否確實有助於英語教學。本研究之結果發現，「過程」導向之即席式戲劇教學活動在提昇學習者口語能力上有其效用。

關鍵詞：過程導向 即席式戲劇教學活動 英語為外國語

Evaluating the English Reading Comprehension Items of the SAET and the DRET

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Abstract

This study aimed to evaluate the reading comprehension items of the Scholastic Ability English Test (SAET) and the Department Required English Test (DRET) from 2004 to 2008. Specifically, the study intended to answer the following three research questions: (1) What reading skills were measured on the SAET and the DRET reading comprehension sections and what was the percentage of the items for each of these skills identified? (2) How did the examinees in general perform on reading comprehension items measuring each of the reading skills on the SAET and the DRET? (3) For both tests across the five years, which reading skill identified could consistently best discriminate between the high scorers and the low scorers? For the purpose of answering the research questions, Nuttall's (2000) categorizations of reading skills and question types were mainly used as the coding scheme. Two experts in the field of English were invited as raters to classify each of the 134 reading comprehension items into one of the 11 reading skills. The results showed that six reading skills were identified on the SAET from 2004 to 2008, including (1) *Interpreting* (39.24%), (2) *Comprehending literal meaning* (25.32%), (3) *Reorganizing* (18.99%), (4) *Recognizing implications and inferences* (7.59%), (5) *Recognizing functional value* (6.33%), and (6) *Recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices* (2.53%). As for the DRET, the same six reading skills were also identified along with one more sub-skill, *Recognizing style and tone*. The respective percentages of the seven reading sub-skills identified on the DRET were: *Interpreting* (40%), *Recognizing implications and inferences* (18.18%), *Reorganizing* (16.36%), *Comprehending literal meaning* (12.73%), *Recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices* (5.45%), *Recognizing functional value* (3.64%), and *Recognizing style and tone* (3.64%). The SAET takers performed best on the *Comprehending literal meaning* items, but worst on the *Recognizing functional value* items, whereas the DRET takers performed best on the *Recognizing functional value* items, but worst on the *Recognizing style and tone* items. Furthermore, the examinees generally performed better on the SAET than those on the DRET, in terms of the mean passing rate for each of the reading skills identified. Finally, none of the reading skills could consistently best discriminate the high scorers from the low scorers for both tests across the five years.

Key words: reading comprehension, Bloom's taxonomy, Nuttall's categorizations of reading skills, interactiveness, construct validity

INTRODUCTION

The College Entrance Examination in Taiwan, a two-stage testing system, has been implemented every year by the College Entrance Examination Center (CEEC) to serve as a nationwide college placement test. The major purpose of this examination is to determine which university each third-year senior high school student will be admitted to. In the first stage, students are required to take the Scholastic Ability Test (SAT) in late January or early February, which aims to evaluate whether students have acquired the basic scholastic knowledge and abilities for college education. The second-stage test, the Department Required Test (DRT), is intended to identify those students who perform well in certain subject areas required by university departments. With such a purpose, the DRT tends to focus on the assessment of students' higher-order cognitive abilities, such as judgment, inference, and analysis (Yin, 2005).

Both the SAT and the DRT include the assessment of students' English achievement since English is commonly taught as an academic subject in Taiwan's senior high schools. One similarity shared by both the English Achievement Test of the SAT (abbreviated as SAET) and that of the DRT (abbreviated as DRET) is that students' reading comprehension is one of the main components in assessing their English reading ability. In both tests, a reading comprehension section consists of a series of passages, each followed by three to five multiple-choice questions. These questions are intended to assess an array of different reading sub-skills.

With regard to the reading sub-skills, several studies (Fan, 2008; Hsu, 2005; Lan, 2007; Lu, 2002) have been conducted to categorize the reading comprehension questions on both the SAET and the DRET into different reading sub-skills or question types. For example, using Mo's (1987) classification of question types, Lu (2002) attempted to categorize each test item of the SAET from 1995 to 2002 into various question types designed to measure different reading sub-skills. Likewise, Lan (2007) analyzed and categorized the reading comprehension questions on the SAET and the DRET into various reading sub-skills based on the revised Bloom's (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) Taxonomy. However, Mo's classification contains only six categories of question types, while the revised Bloom's Taxonomy is not specifically designed for language learning. As such, further research is warranted to evaluate the test items of the SAET and the DRET using categorizations that not only are specifically intended for language learning but also include a fairly extensive list of reading sub-skills.

Given that the test scores of the two high-stake tests have a tremendous impact on students' future study in university, results obtained from research along this line can be of great value to English teachers in Taiwan's senior high schools. Specifically, with the results of this study, they can better understand what specific reading sub-skills are most needed for students to achieve high test scores on the SAET and

the DRET. That said, they can then design or modify their reading instructions or teaching materials accordingly. In addition, the results of this study can also provide SAET and DRET constructors with information on whether or not certain reading sub-skills are over-represented or under-represented in the tests.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Defined by Almasi (2003) as “the ability to understand and construct meaning from what one reads” (p. 74), the construct of reading comprehension is generally viewed as a group of receptive skills. With its unobservable nature, one cannot see the process of reading, nor can one observe a specific product of reading. Therefore, the challenge for language test writers has always been to construct test tasks which will not only cause test takers to exercise reading, but also result in behavior that will demonstrate successful reading. To deal with the challenge, language test writers often believe in the multi-dimensional nature of the reading comprehension construct and translate it into various reading sub-skills, which are usually based on taxonomies or categorizations proposed by researchers in the related fields. The following describes taxonomies or categorizations used to construct or evaluate reading comprehension tests.

Taxonomies / Categorizations

Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives in the Cognitive Domain, being widely influential in the classroom instruction and language tests, encompasses the following six major categories: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation (Bloom, Engelhart, Frost, Hill, & Krathwohl, 1956). Except for the Knowledge category, the remaining types are labeled as abilities or skills. Five of the six categories comprise sub-categories (see Table 1). These categories are hierarchically arranged from simple and concrete entities to complex and abstract constructs. The mastery of simple categories is a prerequisite for the advancement into the complex constructs (Krathwohl, 2002; Kreitzer and Madaus, 1994). However, this taxonomy is questioned with regard to this hierarchical structure. Some demands for the sub-categories under Knowledge level appear more complex than certain demands for those under the Analysis or Evaluation levels. Similarly, some demands for the sub-categories under the Evaluation level seem less complex than those under the Synthesis level, because several researchers, such as Kreitzer and Madaus (1994), believe that the Synthesis level in fact also involves evaluation.

Table 1

Structure of the Original Bloom's Taxonomy

1.0 Knowledge

1.10 Knowledge of specifics

1.11 Knowledge of terminology

1.12 Knowledge of specific facts.

1.20 Knowledge of ways and means of dealing with specifics

1.21 Knowledge of convention

1.22 Knowledge of trends and sequences

1.23 Knowledge of classifications and categories

1.24 Knowledge of criteria

1.25 Knowledge of methodology

1.30 Knowledge of universals and abstractions in a field

1.31 Knowledge of principles and generalization

1.32 Knowledge of theories and structures

2.0 Comprehension

2.1 Translation

2.2 Interpretation

2.3 Extrapolation

3.0 Apply

4.0 Analyze

4.1 Analysis of elements

4.2 Analysis of relationships

4.3 Analysis of organizational principles

5.0 Synthesis

5.1 Production of a unique communication

5.2 Production of a plan, or proposed set of operations

5.3 Derivation of a set of abstract relations

6.0 Evaluation

6.1 Evaluation in terms of internal evidence

6.2 Judgments in terms of external criteria

Note. Adopted from "A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy: An Overview," by D.R. Krathwohl, 2002, *Theory into Practice*, 41(4), p.213.

Nowadays, meaningful learning is deemed as one of very important educational goals from the constructivist perspective. That is, with meaningful learning, students tend to engage themselves in active knowledge processing and meaning construction of their selective information through integration with their existing knowledge (Mayer, 2002). What learners know (knowledge) and how they think (cognitive processing) are thus highly emphasized in constructivist learning (Anderson and

Krathwohl, 2001). Learners' acquired knowledge enables teachers to know what to teach, whereas their cognitive processing provides teachers with information on ways to help them retain and transfer their acquired knowledge. Based on the above constructivist position, Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) revised Bloom's Taxonomy and divided the framework into two dimensions: the knowledge dimension and the cognitive process dimension. The knowledge dimension entails four types of knowledge—factual knowledge, conceptual knowledge, procedural knowledge, and metacognitive knowledge. Under each type of knowledge, a number of subtypes are also listed. For the cognitive process dimension, the revised taxonomy encompasses six categories or levels: Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyze, Evaluate, and Create. Each of the six levels also includes its sub-categories (see Table 2).

One thing to note is that both the original and the revised Bloom's Taxonomies are not specifically developed for language learning, though they have been used by several language researchers (e.g., Chern, 2006; Lan, 2007; You, 2004) in Taiwan to evaluate reading comprehension items of some nationwide English entrance examinations. There are several other categorizations that particularly aim at language learning, such as the categorizations by Mo (1987) and by Nuttall (2000). Each of the two classifications is described in the following.

The taxonomy proposed by Mo (1987) focuses on what cognitive strategies or abilities are involved in language test tasks. Specifically, he claimed that a reading test should include questions that assess textual comprehension and questions that require test takers to clarify the organization of the text. Accordingly, he came up with a classification of reading sub-skills, which includes the following six categories: (1) identifying the main idea, (2) comprehending literal meaning, (3) finding implications

Table 2

Structure of the Cognitive Process Dimension of the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy

1.0 Remember—Retrieving relevant knowledge from long-term memory
1.1 Recognizing
1.2 Recalling
2.0 Understand—Determining the meaning of instructional messages, including oral, written and graphic communication
2.1 Interpreting
2.2 Exemplifying
2.3 Classifying
2.4 Summarizing
2.5 Inferring
2.6 Comparing
2.7 Explaining
3.0 Apply—Carrying out or using a procedure in a given situation

- 3.1 Executing
 - 3.2 Implementing
 - 4.0 Analyze—Breaking material into its constituent parts and detecting how the parts relates to one another and to an overall structure or purpose
 - 4.1 Differentiating
 - 4.2 Organizing
 - 4.3 Attributing
 - 5.0 Evaluate—Making judgments based on criteria and standards
 - 5.1 Checking
 - 5.2 Critiquing
 - 6.0 Create—Putting elements together to form a novel, coherent whole or make an original product
 - 6.1 Generating
 - 6.2 Planning
 - 6.3 Producing
-

Note. From “A Revision of Bloom’s Taxonomy: An Overview,” by D.R. Krathwohl, 2002, *Theory Into Practice*, 41(4), p.215.

and drawing inferences and conclusions from the text, (4) recognizing style and tone, (5) clarifying text organization and cohesive devices, and (6) determining the meaning of words or phrases in the text.

More recently, Nuttall (2000) suggested an extensive list of reading sub-skills. In her list, she further classified them into two kinds of text-attack skills: skills necessary to read for plain sense and skills necessary to read beyond plain sense. According to Nuttall, the skills necessary to read for plain sense belong to bottom-up strategies which encompass (1) understanding the syntax, (2) recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices, and (3) interpreting discourse markers. The skills necessary to read beyond plain sense pertain to top-down strategies. They include (1) recognizing functional value, (2) recognizing text organization, (3) recognizing the presuppositions underlying the text, (4) recognizing implications and making inferences, and (5) predicting. In addition to these two kinds of text-attack skills, Nuttall classified most reading comprehension questions into the following six types: (1) questions of literal comprehension, (2) questions involving reorganization or interpretation, (3) questions of inference, (4) questions of evaluation, (5) questions of personal response, and (6) questions concerned with how writers say what they mean.

Taken together, of the four taxonomies or categorizations mentioned above, the last two categorizations proposed by Mo (1987) and by Nuttall (2000) are specifically developed for language learning. Furthermore, several sub-skills, such as the skill of recognizing implications and making inferences, are included in both categorizations. Finally, when language test writers construct reading comprehension questions or

when language test evaluators analyze, evaluate, or validate reading comprehension questions of nationwide entrance examinations, the four categorizations have been used as a sort of framework, together with some of the criteria that will be described in the next section.

Criteria Used to Evaluate Language Tests

For decades, the four criteria commonly used to evaluate a language test are reliability, practicality, washback, and validity (Hughes, 2003). Each of the four criteria has played an important role in both developing a language test and evaluating an existing assessment procedure. However, in 1996, Bachman and Palmer added two more criteria and proposed a model of test usefulness for designing and evaluating language tests. They believed that the most important quality of a test is its usefulness, which can be described as a function of six different qualities, including reliability, practicality, impact (washback), construct validity, authenticity, and interactivensness.

The last two qualities are the added criteria. The first added criterion, authenticity, according to Bachman and Palmer (1996), means “the degree of correspondence of the characteristics of a given test to the features of a target language use (TLU) task: task that the test taker is likely to encounter outside the testing situation, and to which we want our inferences about language ability to generalize” (p.23). If a test task is authentic, then this task is likely to be acted out in the real world. Take a reading comprehension test for example. In general, the text is a crucial part in any reading comprehension test. Therefore, if the topical content of each text in the reading test matches the kinds of topics that the test taker may read outside the testing situation, then we can assume that this reading test/task is authentic. The other added criterion, interactivensness, as defined by Bachman and Palmer, is “the extent and type of involvement of the test taker’s individual characteristics in accomplishing a test task” (p.25). According to Bachman and Palmer, there are three aspects of the test taker’s individual characteristics that are most relevant for language testing: language ability (including language knowledge and strategic competence, or metacognitive strategies), topical knowledge, and affective schemata. Therefore, if a language test has a high degree of interactivensness, then the test taker’s areas of language ability, topical knowledge, and/or affective schemata are engaged when he/she takes the test. On the contrary, if a language test lacks interactivensness, then the test taker may get points simply by using his/her common sense rather than his/her language ability, topical knowledge, and/or affective schemata.

Furthermore, Bachman and Palmer (1996) confined the criterion of validity to construct validity, which refers to the degree to which scores on an assessment instrument permit inferences about its underlying trait(s). Specifically, construct validity consists of two aspects. First, it pertains to “the meaningfulness and appropriateness to which we can interpret a given test score as an indicator of the

ability or construct that we intend to measure” (p.21). The second aspect of construct validity deals with the generalization of the test score to the TLU domain that the test tasks correspond to. That is to say, we want our interpretations of test score about language ability (construct) to generalize beyond the testing situation itself to a particular TLU domain.

Following Bachman and Palmer’s definition, one can easily see that interactiveness is closely related to the first aspect of construct validity, which concerns the meaningfulness and appropriateness of a given test score. If a language test has a high degree of interactiveness, then the test taker should be required to use his/her language ability, topical knowledge, and/or affective schemata when s/he takes the test. If any of these three aspects of interactiveness engaged by the test taker is what the language test intends to measure, then one can make inferences, based on his/her performance (i.e., the test score), about the targeted language ability, topical knowledge, and/or affective schemata of the test taker. In other words, if a test taker employs the targeted or intended language ability, topical knowledge, and/or affective schemata while taking the language test, the test then is said to have a certain degree of interactiveness, which would in turn lend some evidence to the construct validity of the test. It is in this sense that interactiveness is linked with construct validity.

Studies on Evaluation of Reading Comprehension Items

Among the three aspects (i.e., language ability, topical knowledge, and affective schemata) of interactiveness, language ability has been used implicitly as a criterion to analyze, evaluate, or validate the reading comprehension questions of some nationwide English entrance examinations in Taiwan. Take, for example, the reading comprehension items of the Basic English Competence Test (abbreviated as BECT) at junior high school level, which is held in late May and mid July each year. The test objectives of the BECT are based on the Core Competence Indicators of the Grades 1-9 Curriculum Guidelines. On the BECT, the test items range from 40 to 45 and the test format consists of multiple-choice items only. Among the test items, about 15 to 20 items measure test takers’ knowledge of vocabulary, phrases, and grammar, and around 20 to 25 items measure their reading comprehension. In a study that analyzed all the reading comprehension items of the BECT from 2001 to 2003, You (2004) concluded that the BECT items had high validity because each item of the BECT can be categorized into Bloom’s taxonomy. However, it seems that You’s conclusion may not be appropriate because Bloom’s taxonomy is not specifically aimed at language learning. Other categorizations of reading skills that are particularly for language learning, such as Nuttall’s categorizations of reading skills, should have been used instead.

Therefore, a more recent study was conducted by Chern (2006) to find out what cognitive or reading skills were involved in the reading comprehension items of the

BECT from 2001 to 2006 by using not only Bloom's learning taxonomy but also Nuttall's categorization of text-attack skills. The results of her study showed that the majority of the test items fell into the first two levels in Blooms Taxonomy, i.e., Knowledge and Comprehension, and that the sixth level (i.e., Evaluation) in the taxonomy was not tested. As to Nuttall's categorization, she found that more items of the BECT measured top-down than bottom-up reading skills.

Likewise, the reading comprehension items of the SAET and the DRET at the senior high school level have also been evaluated and validated implicitly by the criteria of the language ability aspect of interactiveness. Both the SAET and the DRET contain two major parts: one is multiple-choice items and the other is non-multiple-choice items. Multiple-choice items intend to measure test takers' vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension, whereas non-multiple-choice items aim to measure test takers' writing ability. In general, non-multiple-choice items include English translation and essay writing.

To date, several studies (Fan, 2008; Hsu, 2005; Lan 2007; Lu, 2002) have been conducted to examine the test by categorizing each of the reading comprehension items into various different question types or skills. For instance, Lu (2002) ran a study in 2002 to classify each reading comprehension item of the SAET from 1995 to 2002 into various question types using Mo's (1987) classification of question types. Her study showed that the items on details (56%) were the major question type category whereas the organization items (1%) were the minor category. She also computed the mean passing rate for each question type for the eight years. Her results showed that the examinees generally performed best on the word meaning items (mean passing rate = 55.04%) and performed worst on the style/tone items (mean passing rate = 27%).

Unlike the study of Lu (2002), a more recent study by Lan (2007) analyzed the items of the SAET and the DRET from 2002 to 2006 by applying the revised Bloom's Taxonomy. Her results indicated that the reading comprehension items on both tests only measure the following four lowest cognitive levels of the revised Bloom's Taxonomy: Remember (41%), Understand (46%), Apply (4%), and Analyze (9%). She also found that the question type preferred was different between the SAET and the DRET. Specifically, Executing questions (i.e., questions requiring test takers to use a procedure to carry out a familiar task) were more common on the SAET, whereas Inferring questions (i.e., questions requiring test takers to draw a logical conclusion from presented information) were favored on the DRET. Moreover, Lan also compared the performance between the high scorers and the low scorers on each question type. She concluded that it was hard to determine which type of question could best discriminate the high scorers from the low scorers on both the SAET and the DRET because no significant effect was found in the major question types on the discrimination index.

To sum up, the BECT, the SAET, and the DRET have been examined with the implicit use of the criterion of interactiveness. With regard to the BECT, the original Bloom's Taxonomy of educational objectives in the cognitive domain has been used by both You (2004) and Chern (2006). However, this taxonomy is not specifically developed for language use. As such, in addition to the original Bloom's Taxonomy, Chern (2006) also applied Nuttall's categorization of text-attack skills. As for the SAET and the DRET, Lu (2002) used Mo's classification, which contains only six categories of reading sub-skills, and Lan (2007) employed the revised Bloom's Taxonomy, which is not specifically aimed at language learning. Hence, further research is warranted to evaluate the items of the SAET and the DRET by using categorizations that not only are specifically intended for language learning but also include a fairly extensive list of reading sub-skills. For the purpose of knowing more clearly about to what extent the reading comprehension questions of the SAET and the DRET are interactive, a taxonomy that specifically aims at language learning and includes a relatively extensive list of sub-skills, such as Nuttall's taxonomy, should be used instead. Moreover, in Lan's study, she invited two graduate students rather than domain-specific experts as raters to categorize each of the test items into various reading skills. The credibility of Lan's study may therefore tend to be low. Hence, the need is warranted to conduct a study that evaluates and validates the reading comprehension questions of the SAET and the DRET by adopting Nuttall's taxonomy of reading skills and including experts' judgments.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of the study was mainly to evaluate and validate the reading comprehension questions of the SAET and the DRET from 2004 to 2008. Specifically, the present study intended to answer the following research questions: (1) To what extent were the reading comprehension questions of the SAET and the DRET interactive, from the aspect of language ability involved? That is, what reading skills were involved and measured on the SAET and the DRET reading comprehension items and what was the percentage of the items for each of the skills identified? (2) How did the examinees in general perform on the reading comprehension questions measuring each of the reading skills identified on the SAET and the DRET? (3) For both tests across the five years, which reading skills identified could consistently best discriminate between the high scorers and the low scorers?

METHOD

For the purpose of answering the three research questions, two experts in the field of English were invited as raters to analyze and evaluate the reading comprehension items on the SAET and the DRET by classifying each of the test items into 11 reading skills, which were mainly based on Nuttall's (2000) categorizations of reading skills and question types. The test items evaluated, the domain-specific raters involved, the instrument used, the data collected, and the coding procedures followed are briefly described in the following.

The Test Items

This study included a total of 35 reading passages and 134 reading comprehension items of the SAET (20 passages with 79 items) and the DRET (15 passages with 55 items) from 2004 to 2008. Table 3 presents, for each of the five years, the topic categorizations and the number of reading passages, and the number of the test items that were evaluated.

Table 3

The Topic Categorizations and the Number of Reading Passages and the Number of Test Items

Year	SAET			DRET		
	No. of reading passages	No. of test items	Topic	No. of reading passages	No. of test items	Topic
2004	4	15	Medicine Culture Animals Education	3	11	Sports Science Art
2005	4	16	Education Nature Health Animals	3	11	Art Communication Business
2006	4	16	Health Culture Technology Language	3	11	Environment Animals Ethics
2007	4	16	Health Business Animals Education	3	11	Literature Medicine Ethics

2008	4	16	Animal	3	11	Business
			Nature			Medicine
			Professions			History
			Medicine			
total	20	79		15	55	

Two Domain-specific Raters

Two female professors from the Department of English Instruction at one public university in northern Taiwan were recruited to serve as the domain-specific raters of the study. Both professors had more than eight years of English teaching experience in senior high schools. The first rater (Rater A) graduated from the National Taiwan Normal University with a PhD in English Literature; the other rater (Rater B) graduated from Fu Jen Catholic University with a PhD in Comparative Literature.

The Instrument

The instrument used in this study was the coding scheme sheets administered to the raters to classify the 134 reading comprehension items into 11 categories of reading skills. The coding scheme sheets included the definition and the example item for each skill. Table 4 presents the 11 reading skills used on the coding scheme sheets. As shown in Table 4, Nuttall's (2000) categorization of text-attack skills was used in the present study as the major framework for raters because her categorization not only is specific for language learning but also is quite extensive. As stated earlier, Nuttall's extensive list of the text-attack skills includes three bottom-up skills (i.e., *Understanding syntax*, *Recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices*, and *Interpreting discourse markers*) and five top-down skills (i.e., *Recognizing functional value*, *Recognizing text organization*, *Recognizing presuppositions*, *Recognizing implications and inferences*, and *Predicting*). However, a close examination of her descriptions about the three bottom-up skills indicated that her first bottom-up skill, *Understanding syntax*, tends to be very broad, and overlaps her remaining two bottom-up skills (*Recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices* and *Interpreting discourse markers*). Therefore, the skill *Understanding syntax* was dropped from the framework of the present study. Furthermore, after a preliminary check of the 134 items on the SAET and the DRET, it was found that Nuttall's categorization of text-attack skills still was not comprehensive enough. As such, two (out of six) categories from Nuttall's classification of question types were also included in the framework of the present study: *Questions of literal comprehension* and *Questions involving reorganization or reinterpretation*. As each category of Nuttall's text-attack skills was named with a gerund in the beginning, the two question types included in the present study were therefore renamed. As such, "*Questions of literal comprehension*" was renamed as "*Comprehending literal meaning*", and "*Questions*

involving reorganization or reinterpretation” was renamed as “*Reorganizing*”.

Table 4
The 11 Reading Skills Used on the Coding Sheet

Reading skill	Code		Derived from
1. Comprehending literal meaning	LM	Bottom-up	Nuttall’s question type
2. Recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices	CD	Bottom-up	Nuttall’s text-attack skill
3. Interpreting discourse markers	DM	Bottom-up	Nuttall’s text-attack skill
4. Recognizing functional value	FV	Top-down	Nuttall’s text-attack skill
5. Recognizing text organization	TO	Top-down	Nuttall’s text-attack skill
6. Recognizing presuppositions	PS	Top-down	Nuttall’s text-attack skill
7. Recognizing implications and inferences	IF	Top-down	Nuttall’s text-attack skill
8. Predicting	PD	Top-down	Nuttall’s text-attack skill
9. Reorganizing	RO	Top-down	Nuttall’s question type
10. Interpreting	IT	Top-down	revised Bloom’s taxonomy
11. Recognizing style and tone	ST	Top-down	Mo’s taxonomy

Taken together, a total of nine categories of reading skills from Nuttall’s (2000) classification of text-attack skills and her categorization of question types were used as the main framework in the present study for the raters to classify the 134 reading comprehension questions of the SAET and the DRET. The nine categories of reading skills included Nuttall’s two bottom-up text-attack skills, five top-down text-attack skills, and two question types.

However, as shown in Table 4, in addition to the nine categories, two more reading skills from other taxonomies were also included in the framework of the coding scheme sheets because, after a further check of the 134 items on the SAET and the DRET, some items were found to measure the skills that were not yet included in the categorizations by Nuttall (2000). The two added skills were the skill “*Interpreting*,” which is one of the sub-categories from the second level (Understand) of the revised Bloom’s taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001), and the skill “*Recognizing style and tone*,” which is derived from Mo’s (1987) taxonomy. The former skill “*Interpreting*” refers to the test-taker’s ability to identify a restatement of a sentence or a passage. The latter skill “*Recognizing style and tone*” pertains to the test-taker’s ability to recognize the author’s tone, mood, voice, attitude, or the text style. The two skills were added in the framework of this study.

Consequently, as listed in Table 4, at the final stage a total of 11 reading skills were employed in the coding scheme in the present study. They were *Comprehending literal meaning* (LM), *Recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices* (CD), *Interpreting discourse markers* (DM), *Recognizing functional value* (FV),

Recognizing text organization (TO), *Recognizing presuppositions* (PS), *Recognizing implications and inferences* (IF), *Predicting* (PD), *Reorganizing* (RO), *Interpreting* (IT), and *Recognizing style and tone* (ST). The definition for each skill is presented in the Appendix.

The Data Collected

The data collected in this study included three parts. The first part was the passing rates of all examinees for each reading comprehension question on the SAET and the DRET from 2004 to 2008. The second part of the data contained 10 sets. The first five sets of data were responses from a group of 5000 randomly-selected examinees to each item on the SAET each year from 2004 to 2008. Similarly, the other five sets of data were responses from a group of 5000 randomly-selected examinees to each item on the DRET each year from 2004 to 2008. Both parts of the data were provided by the CEEC. The last part of the data was the raters' coding. The 11 skills were numbered from 1 to 11. For each item the raters would assign a number from 1 to 11 after they had decided the category of skill that each item attempted to measure.

The Coding Procedures

In this study, every reading comprehension question was coded by the two domain-specific experts. Prior to the formal coding, a rater training was arranged. During the training phase, the two domain-specific raters first read over the coding scheme sheets (see Appendix). The raters then practiced coding together. The reading comprehension questions of the SAET and the DRET for 2002 were provided as practice items. Both tests included 15 items. Based on the coding scheme sheets, the two raters categorized each item into one of the 11 reading skills. Then the raters practiced coding independently the reading comprehension questions of the SAET and the DRET for 2003. Each of the two tests for every year contained 15 items. Similarly, they classified each item into one of the 11 reading skills. If there was a disagreement between the two raters, a consensus-building discussion was then followed. Finally, Cohen's Kappa, which is one type of inter-rater reliability index, was computed. Specifically, the inter-rater reliability between the two raters was 100 percent for the SAET and 90.73 percent for the DRET.

After the inter-rater reliability was calculated, the formal coding was then implemented. All the reading comprehension questions from 2004 to 2008 were coded by the two raters. The correct answers to the reading comprehension questions of the SAET and the DRET from 2004 to 2008 were provided for raters as reference. Similar to the training phase, if there was a disagreement between the raters, a consensus-building discussion was followed. The final results were obtained after 100% agreement had been reached through the discussion.

Calculation of the Mean Passing Rate for Each Reading Sub-skill

To examine how the examinees in general performed on the reading comprehension questions that measured each of the reading skills on the SAET and the DRET, the mean passing rate for each item measuring each reading skill was calculated. The passing rate refers to the proportion of the test takers who answered an item correctly. For example, an item with 50 percent passing rate means that 50 percent of the test takers answered the item correctly. The mean passing rate for each reading skill was obtained by summing up all passing rates and then dividing that number by the number of items identified for that reading skill. Take, for example, *Comprehending literal meaning* items. Six items were identified to measure this skill in the 2004 SAET. The passing rates for the six items measuring the skill were 48, 50, 52, 83, 73, and 77. To obtain the mean passing rate for the skill *Comprehending literal meaning* items, the six passing rates for the six items were summed up and then the number (383) was divided by six. The obtained value, 63.83, was the mean passing rate for *Comprehending literal meaning* items in the 2004 SAET. If there was only one item identified to measure a certain skill, the mean passing rate for that skill would be the passing rate for that single item. Similarly, to compare the mean passing rates for each reading skill across the five years, the average of the mean passing rates over the five years was calculated. The average was obtained by summing up the mean passing rates of a particular skill from 2004 to 2008 and then dividing that number by the number of years (i.e., five). Again take, for example, *Comprehending literal meaning*. The mean passing rates for this skill from 2004 to 2008 were 63.83, 67.33, 60.75, 58.33, and 68.75 respectively. To obtain the average of the mean passing rates for the skill, the mean passing rates for this skill over the five years were summed up and then the number (318.99) was divided by five. The obtained value, 63.80, was the average of the mean passing rates for *Comprehending literal meaning* from 2004 to 2008 on the SAET.

Calculation of the Mean Discrimination Index for Each Reading Sub-skill

To understand how well the items identified for each skill can discriminate between high and low scorers, the mean discrimination indices were also computed and examined. The discrimination index D_i (where $i = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6$) for item i was obtained by subtracting the passing rate (PH) for the low scorers from that (PI) for the high scorers. The mean D for items measuring one particular reading skill was obtained by summing up the D_i 's and dividing the number by the number of items identified for that reading skill. Take, for example, the skill *Comprehending literal meaning*. Six items were identified to measure this skill in the 2004 SAET. Suppose the D_i for each of the six items was 55, 63, 31, 42, 53, and 47. To obtain the mean D

for the skill *Comprehending literal meaning*, the D_i 's for the six items were summed up and then the number (291) was divided by six. The obtained value, 48.50, was the mean for *Comprehending literal meaning* items in the 2004 SAET. Furthermore, the average of the means for each reading skill over the five years was also calculated. The average was obtained by summing up the D 's for a particular skill from 2004 to 2008 and dividing the number by the number of years. Again take *Comprehending literal meaning* for example. The means for this skill from 2004 to 2008 were 48.50, 59.67, 62.75, 56.67, and 61.00 respectively. To obtain the average of the means for the skill *Comprehending literal meaning*, the D 's for this skill over the five years were summed up and then the number (288.59) was divided by five. Hence, the obtained value, 57.72, was the average of the means for *Comprehending literal meaning* over the five years from 2004 to 2008 on the SAET.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reading Skills Measured on Both Tests

In this study, a total of 134 reading comprehension items for the SAET (79 items) and the DRET (55 items) over the five years from 2004 to 2008 were evaluated by the two raters. The percentage of the items identified for each of the 11 reading skills is presented in Table 5. As seen from Table 5, the 134 items were classified into seven (out of the 11) reading skills. The seven skills were *Comprehending literal meaning*, *Recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices*, *Recognizing functional value*, *Recognizing implications and inferences*, *Interpreting*, *Reorganizing*, and *Recognizing style and tone*. Of the seven reading skills identified, *Interpreting* (53 items or 39.55%) was the most frequently measured skill on the SAET and the DRET. The second most frequently measured skill was *Comprehending literal meaning* (27 items or 20.15%), followed by *Reorganizing* (24 items or 17.91%) and *Recognizing implications and inferences* (16 items or 11.94%). The three least frequently measured skills were *Recognizing functional value* (7 items or 5.22%), *Recognizing and interpreting cohesive device* (5 items or 3.73%), and *Recognizing style and tone* (2 items or 1.5%).

The remaining four skills, *Interpreting discourse markers*, *Recognizing text organization*, *Recognizing presuppositions*, and *Predicting*, were not identified on either tests. Several plausible reasons may explain why these four skills were not identified. First of all, the skill *Interpreting discourse markers* is usually tested on the cloze section of the two tests. Similarly, the skill *Recognizing text organization* is normally assessed in the discourse structure section of the DRET. The items measuring the skill *Recognizing presuppositions*, they tend to measure the background knowledge or experience that the test writer expects examinees to have in order to answer them correctly. However, it is hard to be certain that all examinees possess the

particular background knowledge. Hence, this type of question is normally not included on the two tests for the sake of fairness. As to the failure of locating items measuring the skill *Predicting* (i.e., the ability to predict what is likely to come next and what is not), the reason is not quite clear, given the ease and importance of constructing this question type. This finding may serve as a reminder for future SAET and DRET item constructors to include items measuring the sub-skill *Predicting*.

Table 5

Percentage of the Items Identified to Measure Each of the 11 Reading Skills

Reading skill	No. of items	% of total
Interpreting	53	39.55
Comprehending literal meaning	27	20.15
Reorganizing	24	17.91
Recognizing implications and inferences	16	11.94
Recognizing functional value	7	5.22
Recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices	5	3.73
Recognizing style and tone	2	1.50
Interpreting discourse markers	0	0
Recognizing text organization	0	0
Recognizing presuppositions	0	0
Predicting	0	0
Total	134	100.00

Table 6 shows the respective percentage of the items on the SAET and the DRET categorized into each reading skill. Of the 79 items on the SAET, 31 items (39.24%) were identified as measuring *Interpreting*, which was the most frequently measured sub-skill, and *Recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices* was the least frequently measured sub-skill with only 2 items (2.53%) identified. Of the 55 items on the DRET, 22 items (40%) were identified as measuring *Interpreting*, which was the most frequently measured skill. The two least frequently measured skills were *Recognizing functional values* (2 items or 3.64%) and *Recognizing style and tone* (2 items or 3.64%).

Table 6

Percentage of the Items Identified for Each Reading Sub-skill on the SAET and the DRET across the Five Years

Reading skill	SAET		DRET	
	No. of items	% of total	No. of items	% of total
Comprehending literal meaning	20	25.32	7	12.73
Recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices	2	2.53	3	5.45
Interpreting discourse makers	0	0	0	0
Recognizing functional value	5	6.33	2	3.64
Recognizing text organization	0	0	0	0
Recognizing presuppositions	0	0	0	0
Recognizing implications and inferences	6	7.59	10	18.18
Predicting	0	0	0	0
Reorganizing	15	18.99	9	16.36
Interpreting	31	39.24	22	40.00
Recognizing style and tone	0	0	2	3.64
Total	79	100.00	55	100.00

A close look at Table 6 reveals some similarities between the SAET and the DRET over the 2004-2008 period. One similarity worthy of mentioning is that, for both tests, *Interpreting* was the most frequently measured skill. Specifically, for both tests the largest proportion of items measured the skill *Interpreting*, accounting for 39.24% and 40%, respectively. This finding appears to suggest that both tests emphasized the importance of measuring examinees' ability to identify a restatement of a sentence or a passage. Another similarity between the two tests is that *Reorganizing* was the third most frequently measured sub-skill for both tests, with 18.99% for the SAET and 16.36% for the DRET.

In terms of the percentage of items measuring each reading sub-skill, several interesting differences between the SAET and the DRET can also be observed from Table 6. For example, one striking difference between the two tests is that the skill *Recognizing style and tone* occurred only on the DRET (in 2006 and 2007). In other words, *Recognizing style and tone* was never measured on the SAET over the 2004-2008 period. A possible reason for this finding may be the decision on the part of test constructors to differentiate the purposes between the two tests. As noted by Yin (2005), the SAET is designed to measure examinees' general scholastic ability whereas the DRET is intended to assess their relatively advanced scholastic ability.

Hence, it is reasonable to observe the sub-skill *Recognizing style and tone* only on the DRET, as the skill is usually perceived as a relatively advanced reading sub-skill. This perception is also evidenced in Lan's (2007) classification of the sub-skill into the subcategory "Attributing" under "Analyze", a higher (the fourth) level of cognitive processing in the revised Bloom's Taxonomy.

Table 6 also reveals a few more differences in the skill type preferred between the two tests. For instance, the SAET had more *Comprehending literal meaning* items than the DRET. Specifically, the percentage of *Comprehending literal meaning* items was 25.32% for the SAET, considered as the second most frequently measured skill; on the other hand, the percentage of *Comprehending literal meaning* items for the DRET was only 12.72%. As for the sub-skill *Recognizing implications and inferences*, more items were identified for the DRET than for the SAET. In particular, the percentage of *Recognizing implications and inferences* items for the DRET was 18.18% (the second most frequently measured skill), whereas for the SAET it was only 7.59% (the fourth largest proportion). These findings, roughly in line with those of Lan's (2007) study, appeared to suggest that the SAET puts more emphasis on the skill *Comprehending literal meaning* while the DRET underscores the skill *Recognizing implications and inferences*. A possible reason might be that the *Comprehending literal meaning* skill, which is normally viewed as a reading skill that is relatively important but basic, better fits one of the main purposes of the SAET (i.e., to measure examinees' basic scholastic or reading ability). As for *Recognizing implications and inferences*, it is similar to *Recognizing style and tone* in the sense that the two skills are usually considered to be associated with high-level reading skills, which fit the general aim (i.e., to measure examinees' advanced scholastic ability) of the DRET. Hence, it is quite reasonable to find that the DRET includes more *Recognizing implications and inferences* items than the SAET.

Another interesting finding was that, of the seven reading skills identified in the two tests, only two (i.e., *Comprehending literal meaning*, and *Recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices*) are considered the bottom-up processing skills, according to Nuttall (2000). The other five identified reading skills are categorized as the top-down processing skills. In fact, the ratio of bottom-up processing skills to top-down processing skills was found to be 27.85: 72.15 (1: 2.59) for the SAET and 18.18: 81.82 (1: 4.5) for the DRET. Similar to the results of Chern (2006) about the BECT, our findings indicate that, like the BECT, both the SAET and the DRET (especially the DRET) tended to measure more top-down reading skills than bottom-up skills. However, no matter what ratio was found between the top-down and bottom-up reading skills, the six reading skills identified on the SAET and the seven on the DRET appeared to suggest that the test takers were assumed to have employed these reading skills while completing the items. Hence, the findings seemed to, according to the definition of Bachman and Palmer (1996), provide evidence for the

interactiveness (and thus the construct validity) of the reading comprehension items in both tests.

Similarities and Differences between the Two Tests in the Percentage of the Reading Sub-skills by Year

Table 7 presents the percentage of the reading sub-skills identified on the SAET and the DRET for each year over the 2004-2008 period. One similarity between the two tests was that the number of reading sub-skills measured in both tests each year ranged from four to six. Specifically, both tests measured five reading sub-skills in 2004 and four sub-skills in 2008. In 2008, the two tests had not only the same number of sub-skills but also measured exactly the same sub-skills — *Comprehending literal meaning*, *Recognizing implications and inferences*, *Interpreting*, and *Reorganizing*. Another similarity between the two tests was that the sub-skill *Interpreting* had the highest percentage in 2008 — 50% for the SAET and 54.5% for the DRET. Further, for both tests, the sub-skill *Recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices* was measured in two years only and the respective percentages of the items tended to be low.

One major difference between the two tests, also shown in Table 7, was the variation in the percentage of items measuring certain sub-skills over the 2004-2008 period. In particular, the percentage of *Reorganizing* items on the SAET was quite stable over the period, ranging from 13.3% to 25%, whereas the percentage of *Reorganizing* items on the DRET varied widely from 0% to 45.5% over the same period. Similarly, for the sub-skill *Recognizing Implications and Inferences*, the percentage of items on the SAET was fairly stable over the five years, ranging from 6.2% to 12.5%; on the other hand, the percentage of *Recognizing Implications and Inferences* items on the DRET changed considerably from 9.1% to 36.4% over the five years. This greater variation with respect to the DRET calls for close attention on the part of DRET item constructors in order to maintain year-to-year stability in the percentage of items measuring certain sub-skills.

Table 7

Percentage of Each Reading Sub-skill Identified on the SAET and the DRET by Year

	LM	CD	DM	FV	TO	PS	IF	PD	IT	RO	ST	
SAET	2004	No. of items	6	1	0	0	0	1	0	5	2	0
		% of total	40.0%	6.7%	.0%	.0%	.0%	6.7%	.0%	33.3%	13.3%	.0%
	2005	No. of items	3	1	0	3	0	2	0	3	4	0
		% of total	18.8%	6.2%	.0%	18.8%	.0%	12.5%	.0%	18.8%	25.0%	.0%
	2006	No. of items	4	0	0	1	0	1	0	7	3	0
		% of total	25.0%	.0%	.0%	6.2%	.0%	6.2%	.0%	43.8%	18.8%	.0%
	2007	No. of items	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	8	3	0
		% of total	18.8%	.0%	.0%	6.2%	.0%	6.2%	.0%	50.0%	18.8%	.0%
DRET	2008	No. of items	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	8	3	0
		% of total	25.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	6.2%	.0%	50.0%	18.8%	.0%
	2004	No. of items	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	5	2	0
		% of total	.0%	18.2%	.0%	9.1%	.0%	9.1%	.0%	45.5%	18.2%	.0%
	2005	No. of items	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	5	0
		% of total	9.1%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	9.1%	.0%	36.4%	45.5%	.0%
	2006	No. of items	2	1	0	1	0	3	0	3	0	1
		% of total	18.2%	9.1%	.0%	9.1%	.0%	27.3%	.0%	27.3%	.0%	9.1%
	2007	No. of items	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	1
		% of total	18.2%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	36.4%	.0%	36.4%	.0%	9.1%
	2008	No. of items	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	6	2	0
		% of total	18.2%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	9.1%	.0%	54.5%	18.2%	.0%

Note. LM refers to comprehending literal meaning. CD refers to recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices. DM refers to interpreting discourse markers. FV refers to recognizing functional value. TO refers to recognizing text organization. PS refers to recognizing presuppositions. IF refers to recognizing implications and inferences. PD refers to predicting. IT refers to interpreting. RO refers to reorganizing. ST refers to recognizing style and tone.

Examinees' Performances on the Reading Comprehension Questions of Both Tests

The averages of the mean passing rates for each reading sub-skill over the 2004-2008 period are shown in Table 8. With respect to the SAET, the average of the mean passing rates for each sub-skill was greater than 50%, which indicates that the items were easy to medium-difficult. Of the six reading sub-skills identified on the SAET, *Comprehending literal meaning* items (63.80%) earned the highest average of the mean passing rates and *Recognizing functional value* items (50.67%) obtained the lowest average of the mean passing rates. The finding about the test-takers' best performance on the *Comprehending literal meaning* items appeared to be consistent with that of Lu's (2002). As to the DRET, only two reading sub-skills (i.e., *Comprehending literal meaning* and *Recognizing functional value*) obtained an average of the mean passing rates that was higher than 50%. This finding suggests that, in general, the items for the DRET over the 2004-2008 period were medium-difficult to difficult. Of the seven reading sub-skills identified on the DRET, *Recognizing functional value* items had the highest average of the mean passing rates (65.50%), and *Recognizing style and tone* items (28.50%) had the lowest average of the mean passing rates. The fact that test takers performed the worst on *Recognizing style and tone* items was also found in Lu's (2002) study, where an average of the mean passing rate as low as 27% was found.

A close examination of Table 8 reveals one similarity between the SAET and the DRET in the average of the mean passing rates for each reading sub-skill. That is, the averages of the mean passing rates for the *Comprehending literal meaning* items were found to be very high for both tests. Specifically, for this sub-skill, the items for the SAET had the highest average (63.80%) of the mean passing rates and those for the DRET had the second highest average (51.13%) of the mean passing rates. This finding seems to suggest that, for both tests, examinees tended to perform quite well on items measuring the skill *Comprehending literal meaning*, which is categorized as a bottom-up skill and is considered to be relatively essential and basic. This similarity was also found for items on *Recognizing functional value*. That is, the averages of the mean passing rates (50.60% for the SAET and 65.50% for the DRET) for this reading sub-skill were higher than 50%.

Table 8
Averages of the Mean Passing Rates for Each Reading Sub-skill Identified on the SAET and the DRET over the 2004-2008 Period

Reading skill	SAET		DRET	
	N	M	N	M
Comprehending literal meaning	20	63.80	7	51.13
Recognizing and Interpreting cohesive devices	2	57.00	3	37.75

Recognizing functional value	5	50.67	2	65.50
Recognizing implications and inferences	6	55.90	10	44.17
Interpreting	31	58.74	22	44.75
Reorganizing	15	54.25	9	48.97
Recognizing style and tone	0	.	2	28.50
Total number	79		55	
Average		56.73		45.82
SD		4.42		11.51

Note. N refers to the number of items measuring each particular reading skill from 2004 to 2008

On the other hand, a further examination of Table 8 also brought out several differences in examinees' performance between the two tests. The first difference was that the averages of the mean passing rates for the six reading sub-skills on the SAET fell into a narrow range, between 50.67% and 63.80% (with a standard deviation of 4.42%), whereas those on the DRET ranged widely from 28.50% to 65.50% (with a standard deviation of 11.51%). That is, the level of item difficulty for the DRET tended to vary more drastically for different reading sub-skills than that for the SAET.

The second difference, again revealed in Table 8, was that, except for the sub-skill *Recognizing function value*, the average of the mean passing rates for each sub-skill identified on the SAET was higher than that on the DRET. This finding suggests that the reading comprehension items on the DRET are in general more difficult than those on the SAET. Several reasons can explain this phenomenon. First of all, based on the results of a related study of Yin (2005), the length of the sentence in the reading passages on the DRET was found to be generally longer than on the SAET. Similarly, the length of the passages (around 200 to 300 words) on the DRET on average was found to be longer than the length of the passages (around 150 to 250 words) on the SAET. In addition, compared with that on the SAET, the sentence structure of the reading passages on the DRET was found to be more complex. A similar comment was also made by Yu (2006) who recommended that the use of words and the readability level of the text are more difficult on the DRET than on the SAET. Hence, one would expect the text difficulty of the passages and the difficulty level of the reading comprehension items on the DRET to be higher than the corresponding items on the SAET. Another possible reason resulting in the lower passing rates for DRET examinees than for SAET examinees is the difference in the length of time allowed for the two tests. Although both tests have an equal number of test items, the length of time allotted for the SAET is 100 minutes while for the DRET it is 80 minutes. Finally, a difference in the grading scheme may also account for the difference in the passing rates for the two tests. Unlike that for the SAET, the grading scheme for the DRET penalizes examinees for answering test items incorrectly. Hence,

DRET examinees tend not to answer items they only have partial knowledge about. With all the above reasons possibly at work, it is not surprising to find that DRET examinees did not perform as well as SAET examinees.

Another difference, which can also be found from Table 8, was that DRET takers tended to perform best on items measuring *Recognizing functional value*, while SAET takers tended to perform worst on items measuring this sub-skill. Specifically, the average of the mean passing rates for the *Recognizing functional value* items was 65.50% for the DRET and 50.67% for the SAET. In other words, *Recognizing functional value* items seemed to be the easiest items on the DRET but the most difficult items on the SAET. One possible reason for this unexpected finding is difference in item stems used between the two tests. On the DRET, the item stem used to measure this skill was "This passage is most likely taken from a ____." DRET takers can determine the answer simply by using their topical knowledge and the key words appearing in the text. On the other hand, the item stem used on the SAET to measure the skill was "The main purpose of the passage is to ____." To answer this type of item correctly, SAET takers need to read through the entire passage before obtaining a thorough understanding of the text. Obviously, items with this type of stem on the SAET tended to be more difficult than those on the DRET. This may explain why SAET takers performed much worse on the *Recognizing functional value* items, while DRET takers performed much better on items measuring this skill.

Another point to note is that DRET takers performed considerably worse on *Recognizing style and tone* items, with an average of the mean passing rates of 28.50%, which is below the minimum standard rate of 33% set by Jeng et al. (1999). The finding may be due to two possible reasons. First, this type of item may be too difficult for most DRET takers. Second, DRET takers may not have received enough formal instruction on this skill during their study in senior high school.

One final finding worthy of mention is that the top-down sub-skills (e.g., *Recognizing functional value*, *Reorganizing*, and *Recognizing style and tone*) did not necessarily result in averages of the mean passing rates lower than those of the bottom-up sub-skills (e.g., *Comprehending literal meaning* and *Recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices*). Take the DRET for example. The sub-skill *Recognizing functional value*, a top-down sub-skill, had an average of the mean passing rates of 65.50%, much higher than that of 37.75% for *Recognizing and interpreting cohesive device*, a bottom-up sub-skill. This was also the case for the SAET, where the top-down sub-skill *Interpreting* was found to produce an average of the mean passing rates of 58.74% slightly higher than that of 57.00% for the bottom-up sub-skill *Recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices*.

Table 9 presents the mean passing rate for each reading sub-skill measured on the SAET and the DRET each year. For the SAET, the mean passing rate ranged from 31.00% to 76.00%. Three (out of six) reading sub-skills had quite stable mean passing

rate over the 2004-2008 period, including *Interpreting cohesive devices* ($SD = 1.41\%$), *Comprehending literal meaning* ($SD = 4.36\%$), and *Interpreting* ($SD = 5.34\%$). In addition, the mean passing rate for each of the three sub-skills in each year was all above 50%. The other three sub-skills, on the other hand, varied widely over the five years. As for the DRET, the mean passing rate for the seven sub-skills identified ranged from 27.00% to 71.00%. The mean passing rates for two reading sub-skills (out of seven) were relatively quite stable over the five years. The two sub-skills were *Recognizing style and tone* and *Recognizing functional value*, with an SD of 0.71% and 3.54%, respectively. On the other hand, the mean passing rates for the other five sub-skills varied relatively widely over the five years.

Table 9

Mean Passing Rate for Each Reading Sub-skill by Year

Reading skill		LM	CD	FV	IF	RO	IT	ST
SAET	2004	63.83	56.00	–	66.00	54.00	52.40	–
	2005	67.33	58.00	54.00	55.50	38.25	65.33	–
	2006	60.75	–	31.00	76.00	51.67	55.86	–
	2007	58.33	–	67.00	41.00	61.67	57.00	–
	2008	68.75	–	–	41.00	65.67	63.13	–
<i>M</i>		63.80	57.00	50.67	55.90	54.25	58.74	–
<i>SD</i>		4.36	1.41	18.23	15.41	10.59	5.34	–
DRET	2004	–	44.50	63.00	27.00	37.50	37.00	–
	2005	57.00	–	–	38.00	55.40	47.00	–
	2006	50.50	31.00	68.00	38.33	–	36.33	28.00
	2007	42.00	–	–	46.50	–	51.25	29.00
	2008	55.00	–	–	71.00	54.00	52.33	–
<i>M</i>		51.13	37.75	65.50	44.17	48.97	44.78	28.50
<i>SD</i>		6.66	9.55	3.54	16.52	9.96	7.68	0.71

Note. LM refers to comprehending literal meaning. CD refers to recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices. FV refers to recognizing functional value. IF refers to recognizing implications and inferences. RO refers to reorganizing. IT refers to interpreting. ST refers to recognizing style and tone.

The Mean Discrimination Index (D) for Each Reading Skill

Table 10 provides the average of the mean D 's for each reading sub-skill on the SAET and the DRET over the five years. For the SAET, the averages of the mean D 's

over the five years fell in a narrow range of between 46.11% and 58.50%. In fact, the average of the mean *D*'s for each reading sub-skill was higher than 50%, except for *Recognizing functional value* (46.11%). The highest average of the mean *D*'s was found for *Recognizing implications and inferences* items. Unlike those on the SAET, the averages of the mean *D*'s on the DRET varied widely from 20.00% to 56.80%. Of the seven reading sub-skills, the *Comprehending literal meaning* items had the highest average of the mean *D*'s (56.38%) while the *Recognizing style and tone* items had the lowest average of the mean *D*'s (20.00%).

Table 10

Averages of the Mean Discrimination Indices (D) for Each Reading Sub-skill on the SAET and the DRET

Reading skill	SAET		DRET	
	D	SD	D	SD
Comprehending literal meaning	57.72	5.61	56.38	12.84
Recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices	58.50	0.71	45.25	4.60
Recognizing functional value	46.11	7.70	44.50	9.19
Recognizing implications and inferences	55.80	10.57	39.25	13.83
Interpreting	50.46	3.96	50.94	6.46
Reorganizing	52.37	11.57	52.93	8.67
Recognizing style and tone	—	—	20.00	11.31

A close look at Table 10 indicates some similarities and differences between the SAET and the DRET. One similarity between the two tests was that three skills (*Comprehending literal meaning*, *Interpreting*, and *Reorganizing*) had their averages of the mean *D*'s higher than 50%. Furthermore, on both tests, the averages of the mean *D*'s for the skill *Recognizing functional value* were lower than 50%, being 46.11% and 44.50% respectively. As to the differences between the two tests, it is clear that, except for *Interpreting* and *Reorganizing*, the SAET items tended to outperform the DRET items in terms of the discriminating power of the items measuring each reading skill. In fact, all averages of the mean *D*'s for the six reading skill identified on the SAET over the five years were higher than 50%, except for the skill *Recognizing functional value*. On the DRET, only three skills (*Comprehending literal meaning*, *Interpreting*, and *Reorganizing*) had averages of the mean *D*'s higher than 50%.

Two possible reasons may account for the finding that the discriminating power obtained for the DRET was lower than that obtained for the SAET. First, many

examinees did not take the DRET because they had been admitted to their desired universities based on their acceptable SAET scores. As a result, the range as well as the variance for DRET scores would diminish, which in turn would decrease the discriminating power of the items on DRET test. Second, one may speculate that the more complicated sentence structure of the texts and thus higher difficulty level for the texts on the DRET may have led to a poorer performance for both high and low scorers, which in turn would lead to a smaller variance for DRET scores. However, the second reason is merely a speculation and awaits future investigation.

Another finding to note was that the overall pattern of differences in the discriminating power between the items on the bottom-up skills and those on the top-down skills was not the same between the SAET and the DRET. For the SAET, items classified as the bottom-up skills (e.g., *Comprehending literal meaning*, *Recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices*) had discriminating power of items higher than those classified as the top-down skills (e.g., *Reorganizing* and *Interpreting*). This was not necessarily the case for the DRET. For example, the items on *Comprehending literal meaning* (a bottom-up skill) for the DRET did produce an average of the mean *D*'s (56.38%) higher than that of 52.93% for the items on *Reorganizing* (a top-down skill). However, the average of the mean *D*'s (45.25%) for the items on *Recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices* (a bottom-up skill) was much lower than that of 52.93% for those on *Reorganizing* (a top-down skill).

One final point worthy of mentioning is that, as seen from both Tables 8 and 10, the averages of the mean passing rates and those of the mean *D*'s for the SAET seemed to be less varied across the types of reading skills than those for the DRET. Specifically, for the SAET, the averages of the mean passing rates for the six reading skills fell in a relatively narrow range from 50.67% to 63.80%, whereas the averages of the mean passing rates for the seven reading skills for the DRET ranged widely from 28.50% to 65.50%. Similarly, the averages of the mean *D*'s for the SAET fell in a narrow range between 46.11% and 58.50%, whereas the averages of the mean *D*'s ranged widely from 20.00% to 56.38%. That is, over the five-year period, the level of item difficulty and the discriminating power for the DRET tended to vary more widely across different reading skills than those for the SAET.

Table 11 presents the mean *D* for items measuring each of the reading sub-skills on the SAET and the DRET each year over the 2004-2008 period. As shown in Table 11, the mean *D* for each reading skill on the SAET ranged from 37.50% to 69.00%. In addition, the *Comprehending literal meaning* items had the highest mean *D* in 2005 (59.67%) and in 2006 (62.75%); the *Reorganizing* items had the highest mean *D* in 2008 (66%); and the *Recognizing implications and inferences* item had the highest mean *D* in 2004 (69%) and in 2007 (64%). As for the DRET, the mean *D* for each reading skill ranged between 12.00% and 68.50%.

Similar to the SAET, the *Comprehending literal meaning* items had the highest

mean *D* in 2005 (63%) and in 2006 (68.50%), and the *Reorganizing* items had the highest mean *D* in 2008 (59%). Furthermore, the *Recognizing functional value* items had the highest mean *D* in 2004 (51%) while the *Interpreting* items had the highest mean *D* in 2007 (53.75%). These findings, which were consistent with those of Lan's (2007) study, appear to suggest that, for both tests over the five years, none of the reading skills identified could be found to consistently best discriminate between the high-scoring group and the low-scoring group.

Table 11

Mean Discrimination Index (D) for Each Reading Sub-skill on the SAET and the DRET by Year

Reading skill		LM	CD	FV	IF	RO	IT	ST
SAET	2004	48.50	59.00	–	69.00	37.50	51.60	–
	2005	59.67	58.00	53.33	50.00	44.00	46.67	–
	2006	62.75	–	47.00	53.00	59.67	46.29	–
	2007	56.67	–	38.00	64.00	54.67	52.13	–
	2008	61.00	–	–	43.00	66.00	55.63	–
<i>M</i>		57.72	58.50	46.11	55.80	52.37	50.46	–
<i>SD</i>		5.61	0.71	7.70	10.57	11.57	3.96	–
DRET	2004	–	48.50	51.00	22.00	43.00	40.60	–
	2005	63.00	–	–	43.00	56.80	53.50	–
	2006	68.50	42.00	38.00	30.00	–	49.33	12.00
	2007	39.00	–	–	43.25	–	53.75	28.00
	2008	55.00	–	–	58.00	59.00	57.50	–
<i>M</i>		56.38	45.25	44.50	39.25	52.93	50.94	20.00
<i>SD</i>		12.84	4.60	9.19	13.83	8.67	6.46	11.31

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the above results, the following conclusions can be made in the order of the three research questions stated earlier: (1) Six out of the 11 reading skills were identified on the SAET over the 2004-2008 period, including *Comprehending literal meaning*, *Recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices*, *Recognizing functional value*, *Recognizing implications and inferences*, *Interpreting*, and *Reorganizing*. For the DRET, *Recognizing style and tone* was also identified in addition to the above six

reading skills. Of the seven identified skills, *Interpreting* was the most frequently measured skill for both tests. Given the reading skills identified in this study, it appears that the two tests could be considered interactive. (2) SAET takers performed best on the *Comprehending literal meaning* items but worst on the *Recognizing functional value* items, whereas DRET takers performed best on the *Recognizing functional value* items but worst on the *Recognizing style and tone* items. In addition, DRET takers generally did not perform as well as SAET takers on the reading skills identified. (3) For both tests, the reading skill found to best discriminate high scorers from low scorers tended to change over the five-year period. Hence, none of the reading skills identified could be claimed to consistently best discriminate high scorers from low scorers for the two tests over the period.

Given the results of this study, several pedagogical implications can be made for classroom practice. First, knowing that a total of six to seven reading skills were identified from the two tests, English teachers should help their students develop and master these reading skills. In particular, given that a high percentage of items were identified on both tests to measure the *Interpreting* skill, teachers need to make certain that this basic but essential skill is taught or assessed in the classroom. Second, teachers are strongly recommended to strengthen their students' ability to recognize style and tone, and their ability to recognize and interpret cohesive devices, based on the results that the DRET takers showed relatively low passing rates on items assessing these two sub-skills. Third, most items on the DRET had lower passing rates than those on the SAET. As stated earlier, one of the reasons for this finding, also found by some previous studies (Yin, 2005; Yu, 2006), was that the reading passages on the DRET generally contain more difficult words, longer sentences, and more complex sentence structure than those on the SAET. Hence, teachers should not only assist students in building up their reading skills identified on the DRET, but also make efforts to help students improve their lexical and syntactical competence.

Apart from the implications for classroom practice, the differences in the results of this study between the SAET and the DRET can also have some implications for the construction of reading comprehension items. To begin with, most of the SAET items had higher mean passing rates (and thus higher mean item difficulty indices) than the DRET items. Simply put, the SAET items in general were easier than the DRET items. Similarly, the SAET items in general tended to outperform the DRET items in terms of the discriminating power of the items measuring the reading sub-skills. Hence, given the fact that items with medium item difficulty indices tended to have high discriminating power, if a goal of the DRET is to discriminate among examinees, these findings may serve as a reminder for the DRET constructors when constructing items with a medium (rather than higher) level of item difficulty. In the meantime, considering the reasons mentioned earlier for the lower passing rates and the discriminating power of the DRET items, DRET constructors may need to think

about not only whether to remove the penalty for answering DRET items incorrectly, but also whether to lengthen the time for the DRET test. In addition, over the 2004-2008 period, the level of item difficulty and the discriminating power of the DRET tended to vary more drastically across different reading skills than for the SAET. This finding may also point to a need for DRET constructors to reflect on the causes for such a big variation across various reading skills. Finally, the current study found that *Recognizing functional value* items seemed to be the easiest items on the DRET, while they appeared to be the most difficult items on the SAET. One possible reason, as mentioned earlier, is the difference in the item stems used between the two items measuring the same type of reading skill. This finding, suggesting that items assessing the same reading skill but being phrased differently in the item stems could result in a huge difference in their item difficulty, may help to remind test constructors to exercise extra caution when phrasing the item stems during their item construction.

The results of this study were subject to some limitations. First, this study employed only two raters to categorize the test items into one of the 11 reading skills. Hence, in some cases, the results may not be consistent with those of other studies employing different raters. Second, the two raters' item categorization could only represent their predictions about the cognitive or language processing that each item attempted or intended to assess. The question about whether test takers really applied the cognitive or language processing skills identified while answering the items requires further investigation. As Alderson, Clapham, & Wall (1995) pointed out, information on how test takers actually respond to test items -- the process they undergo and the reasoning they engage in when responding -- can be crucial indications of what the test is gauging. This kind of introspective data can be gathered concurrently or retrospectively in the form of "think aloud" or "in-depth interviews." Third, due to the limit of its scope, the present study did not take topic variation into consideration when discussing the differences in the passing rate and discriminating power among the items measuring different reading sub-skills. Future studies incorporating topic variation could be useful in providing DRET and SAET constructors with more insight into various potential reasons affecting examinees' performance on these reading comprehension tests.

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APPENDIX

Definition and Sample Question for Each Reading Skill

Reading skill	Definition
LM	Ability to locate or identify specifically stated facts.
CD	Ability to interpret the pro-forms, the elliptical expressions, and the lexical cohesions.
DM	Ability to recognize markers that signal the sequence of events, markers that signal discourse organization, or markers that signal the writer's point of view.
FV	Ability to identify the functional value of the sentence or the whole paragraph. Types of functional value include defining, classifying, asserting, exemplifying, instructing, apologizing, and so on.
TO	Ability to identify the principle by which the text is organized and recognize how the ideas hang together.
PS	Ability to recognize the presuppositions underlying the sentences or text. Presuppositions can be divided into two groups: the background knowledge and/or experience that the writer expects the reader to have, and the opinions, attitudes, or emotions that the writer expects the reader to share or to understand.
IF	Ability to identify the meaning that is not explicitly stated but can be inferred.
PD	Ability to predict what is likely to come next and what is not.
RO	Ability to combine information from various parts of the text and put it together in a new way (e.g., by calculating).
IT	Ability to identify a restatement of a sentence or a passage.

ST	Ability to recognize the writer's tone, mood, voice, attitude, or the text style.
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Note. LM refers to comprehending literal meaning. CD refers to recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices. DM refers to Interpreting discourse markers. FV refers to recognizing functional value. TO refers to recognizing text organization. PS refers to recognizing presuppositions. IF refers to recognizing implications and inferences. PD refers to predicting. RO refers to reorganizing. IT refers to interpreting. ST refers to recognizing style and tone.

大學學科能力測驗及指定科目考試 英文閱讀測驗題目之評鑑

摘要

本研究的主要評鑑民國93年至97年大學學科能力測驗及指定科目考試的英文閱讀測驗題目。本研究主要探討以下三個研究問題：一、大學學測及指考的英文閱讀測驗題目評量哪些閱讀技巧？評量這些閱讀技巧的題目各佔百分之多少？二、學測及指考的應試者針對評量不同閱讀技巧的題目的表現為何？三、哪一項閱讀技巧最能在這五年的學測及指考中一貫的鑑別出高分組與低分組？閱讀測驗題目的分類法主要採用 Nuttall (2000) 對於閱讀技巧及問題類型的分類。兩位英文領域的專家，將134題英文閱讀測驗題目個別分類至十一個閱讀技巧中。研究結果顯示，大學學科能力測驗的英文閱讀測驗題目，主要評量以下六項閱讀技巧：一、詮釋(39.24%)，二、字面上的理解(25.32%)，三、再組織(18.99%)，四、理解言外之意及推論(7.59%)，五、辨別句子或文章的功能價值(6.33%)，六、解釋關聯詞語(2.53%)。指定科目考試的英文閱讀測驗題目，除了上述這六項技巧外，尚有還有評量「辨別文章風格及作者論調」這項技巧。這七項技巧出現的百分比呈現如下：詮釋(40%)、理解言外之意及推論(18.18%)、再組織(16.36%)、字面上的理解(12.73%)、解釋關聯詞語(5.45%)、辨別句子或文章的功能價值(3.64%)，及「辨別文章風格及作者論調」(3.64%)。此外，學測應試者對於評量「字面上的理解」的題目表現最好，但對於「辨別句子或文章的功能價值」的題目表現最差；指考應試者對於評量「辨別句子或文章的功能價值」的題目表現最好，但對於「辨別文章風格及作者論調」的題目表現最差。普遍來說，應試者在學測的表現比應試者在指考的表現來得好。另外，在這五年的學測及指考中，沒有一項閱讀技巧被發現最能夠一貫的鑑別出高分組及低分組。

關鍵字：閱讀理解 布魯姆分類 Nuttall 閱讀技能分類 參與性 構念效度

《北市大語文學報》稿約

內容範圍

本學報每年出版兩期（六月及十二月），園地公開。所收學術論文分為「中國語文領域」與「外國語文領域」兩部份，刊載以下稿件，歡迎海內外學界人士投稿：

- 一、「中國語文領域」登載有關中國文學、語言學、文字學、中國語文教育、華語文教育等學術論文。本領域之學術論文於每年於十二月發行，來稿之審查統一於每期截稿（九月底）後處理。
- 二、「外國語文領域」刊載英美文學、語言學、外語教學（含文學教學）與文化研究等學術論文或國內外相關書籍與教材之評論。本領域之學術論文於每年六月發行，來稿之審查統一於每期截稿（三月底）後處理。

投稿須知

一、稿則

1. 來稿以未發表者為限（會議論文請確認未參與該會議後經審查通過所出版之正式論文集者）。凡發現一稿兩投者，一律不予刊登。
2. 稿件內涉及版權部分（如圖片及較長篇之引文），請事先取得原作者同意，或出版者書面同意。本學報不負版權責任。
3. 來稿經本學報接受刊登後，作者同意將著作財產權讓與本學報，作者享有著作人格權；日後除作者本人將其個人著作集結出版外，凡任何人任何目的之重製、轉載（包括網路）、翻譯等皆須事先徵得本學報同意，始得為之。
4. 來稿請勿發生侵害第三人權利之情事。發表人須簽具聲明書，如有抄襲、重製或侵害等情形發生時，概由投稿者負擔法律責任，與本學報無關。
5. 本學報編輯對擬刊登之文稿有權做編輯上之修正。
6. 凡論文經採用刊登者，每一撰稿人致送本學報二本、抽印本二十份，不另致酬。
7. 來稿請使用以電腦打字印出的稿件。請避免用特殊字體及複雜編輯方式，並請詳細註明使用軟體名稱及版本。英文以 Times New Roman 12 號字，中文以細明體 12 號字打在 A4 紙上，並以 Word 原始格式（上下留 2.54 公分，左右各 3.17 公分）排版（請勿做任何特殊排版，以一般文字檔儲存即可）。

二、審查與退稿

1. 本學報所有投稿文章均送審，審查完畢後，編輯小組會將審查意見寄給作者。
2. 本學報來稿一律送請兩位學者專家審查，審查採雙匿名制，文稿中請避免留下作者相關資訊，以利審查作業。
3. 編輯委員會得就審查意見綜合討論議決，要求撰稿人對其稿件作適當之修訂。本學報責任校對亦得根據「撰稿格式」作適當之校正。
4. 來稿未獲刊登，一律密退。本學報將通知作者，但不退還文稿，請作者於投稿前自行留存底稿。

三、文稿內容

「中國語文領域」

1. 著者：來稿請附個人簡介（註明最高學歷及畢業學校、所屬學校機構及職稱、學術專長），並附通訊地址、電話、傳真或電子郵件等聯絡資料。
2. 標題：請附中英文標題，文字力求精簡；若加副標題，亦以簡要為尚。
3. 摘要、關鍵字：來稿請附中英文摘要（中文摘要限五百字以內；英文摘要以一頁為限）、中英文關鍵詞（五個為限）。
4. 字數：以中英文稿件為限，中文稿以 10,000 字至 30,000 字（以電腦字元計，並含空白及註解）為原則，英文稿以 15 頁至 30 頁打字稿（隔行打字）為原則。特約稿件則不在此限。譯稿以學術名著為限，並須附考釋及註解。所有來稿務請按本學報「中國語文領域撰稿格式」寫作，以利作業。
5. 撰稿格式：本學報「中國語文領域」論文之撰寫，請依照《漢學研究》所定之寫作格式，內容參考見 <http://ccs.ncl.edu.tw/ccs/TW/doc1.doc>。

「外國語文領域」

1. 著者：來稿請附個人簡介（註明最高學歷及畢業學校、所屬學校機構及職稱、學術專長），並附通訊地址、電話、傳真或電子郵件等聯絡資料。
2. 標題：請附中英文標題，文字力求精簡；若加副標題，亦以簡要為尚。
3. 摘要、關鍵字：來稿請附中英文摘要（中英文各一頁），各約 500 字；中、英文關鍵字，各 3-5 個。
4. 字數：中文稿，請維持在 8,000-15,000 字，英文稿則為 10,000-16,000 字，含中英文摘要、參考書目與圖表。
5. 撰稿格式：本學報「外國語文領域」參考資料登錄方式主要依據 APA 或 MLA (APA 格式請參後)，中文排列方式以作者姓名筆劃由少到多排列。

四、文稿交寄

來稿（包括文件稿三份、姓名資料(另紙書寫)及前述內容之電子檔）請寄：

「中國語文領域」來稿（文稿三份連同磁片）請寄：

臺北市愛國西路一號

臺北市立教育大學中國語文學系

《北市大語文學報》編輯委員會

「外國語文領域」來稿（文稿三份連同磁片）請寄：

臺北市愛國西路一號

臺北市立教育大學英語教學系

《北市大語文學報》編輯委員會

※APA 格式請參考以下範例：

在內文中使用格式： 姓氏 (出版或發表年代)... 或... (姓氏, 出版或發表年代, 頁碼)

- 同作者在同一段中重複被引用時，第一次須寫出日期，第二次以後則日期可省略。
- 在正文中引用多位作者時，以 and 連接，但正文之引用若為圓括弧形式，則使用 & (3 人以上在 & 前要加,) 符號連接。

範例：

1 位作者→Porter (2001)...或...(Porter, 2001)/

吳清山 (2001) ...或... (吳清山, 2001)

2 位作者→作者為兩人時，兩人的姓氏 (名) 全列

Wassertein and Rosen (1994)...或... (Wassertein & Rosen, 1994) /

吳清山與林天祐 (2001) ...或... (吳清山、林天祐, 2001)

3-5 位作者→作者為三至五人時，第一次所有作者均列出，第二次以後僅寫出第一位作者並加 et al. (等人)

[第一次出現] Warstein, Zappula, Rosen, Gerstman, and Rock (1994) found...或 (Wasserstein, Zappula, Rosen, Gerstman, & Rock, 1994)...

[第二次出現] Wasserstein et al. (1994)...或... (Warstein et al., 1994)

6 位作者以上→作者為六人以上時，每次僅列第一位作者並加 et al. (等人)，但在參考文獻中要列出所有作者姓名。(Rubin et al., 1989)

- 作者為組織、團體、或單位時，易生混淆之單位，每次均用全名。簡單且廣為人知的單位，第一次加註其縮寫方式，第二次以後可用縮寫，但在參考文獻中一律要寫出全名。

[第一次出現] National Institute of Mental Health[NIMH] (1999) 或(National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 1999)。

[第二次以後] NIMH(1999)...或 (NIMH, 1999)...

參考文獻格式：

- 第一行靠左，第二行起向右縮排四個字母。
- 外文之書名採斜體格式，中文之書名採粗體格式。
- 外文作者姓名以倒置形式出現，名字部份均以縮寫方式表示。若所引用之著作包含多位作者時，在正文中六位以內均需全部列出，六位以上才可以第一作者代表，但在參考書目中則不計作者人數多寡，均需全部列出。在正文中引用多位作者時，在參考書目中則一律使用 & 符號連接。
- 外文期刊一律採斜體方式處理。

(一) 期刊、雜誌、新聞、摘要文獻：

中文期刊：作者 (年代)。文章名稱。期刊名稱，期別，頁別。

外文期刊：Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (1999). Title of article. *Title of Periodical*, xx(xx), xxx-xxx.

例如：沈嫻嫻 (1996)。教育選擇與控制理念的另類思考。教育資料與研究，4，14-15。

Powers, J. M., & Cookson, P. W. Jr. (1999). The politics of school choice research. *Educational Policy*, 13(1), 104-122.

中文雜誌：作者 (年月日)。文章名稱。雜誌名稱，期別，頁別。

外文雜誌：Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (2000, November 10). Article title. *Magazine Title*, xxx, xx-xx.

中文報紙：記者或作者 (年月日)。文章名稱。報紙名稱，版別。

推動知識經濟發展須腳踏實地【社論】(2000年9月5日)。中國時報，第2版。

英文報紙：Author, A. A. (1993, September 30). Article title. *Newspaper Title*, pp. xx-xx.

(二) 書籍、手冊：

中文書籍：作者（年代）。書名（版別）。出版地點：出版商。

作者（主編）（年代）。書名（第#版，第#冊）。出版地點：出版商。

外文書籍：Author, A. A. (1993). *Book title* (2nd ed.). Location: Publisher.

Author, A. A. (Ed.). (1991). *Book title*. Location: Publisher.

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Eds.). (1991). *Book title*. Location: Publisher.

中文翻譯：原作者中文譯名（譯本出版年代）。書名（版別）（譯者譯）。出版地點：出版商。
（原著出版年：####年）

英文翻譯：Author, A. A. (1951). *Book title* (B. Author, Trans.). Location: Publisher. (Original work published ####)

中文文集：作者（年代）。篇名。載於編者（主編），書名（頁碼）。地點：出版商。

外文文集：Author, A. A. (1993). Article title. In B. B. Author (Ed.), *Book title* (pp.xx-xx). Location: Publisher.

(三) ERIC 報告格式

Author, A. A. (1995). *Report title* (Report No. xxxx-xxxxxxxxxx). Location: Research Center.
(ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED xxxxxx)

(四) 會議專刊或專題研討會論文：

作者（年月）。論文名稱。研討會主持人（主持人），研討會主題。研討會名稱，舉行地點。

Author, A. A. (1995, April). *Paper title*. Paper presented at the Meeting of Title, Place.

(五) 學位論文：

作者（年代）。論文名稱。○○大學○○研究所碩士或博士論文，未出版，大學地點。

Author, A. A. (1986). *Dissertation title*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University Name, Place.

(六) 網路等電子化資料引用及參考文獻的寫法

Email 的引用：在文章中如以 Email 當作參考資料，比照個人通訊 (personal communications) 格式，僅在文中註明不列入參考文獻中。

例如：(L. A. Chafez, personal communication, March, 1997)/ 吳清山 (個人通訊，2001 年 2 月 19 日)

網頁的引用：

1. 如不直接引用網路資料，但建議讀者直接上網查詢相關資料，此時，可以直接寫出網頁名稱，並註明網址，此種引用方式也僅在文中註明不列入參考文獻中。

例如：從柴爾德的黑皮窩網頁中，可以獲得幼兒教育的重要訊息 (<http://www.tmue.edu.tw/~kidcen>)。

Please refer to APA Web site (<http://www.apa.org/journals/webref.html>).

2. 在文章中引用到網路資料時，其寫作方式與一般參考資料的寫法一致，一般引用時寫出作者及年代，全文引用時須加註頁碼。網路資料參考文獻的寫法大致與一般格式相同，必須指出作者、時間、文章名稱或書名、雜誌名稱等基本資料，另以 Retrieved from 取代 [On-line] 以及 Available 等字，如無日期可查括弧內的時間英文文獻需註明 (n.d.) 中文文獻需註明 (無日期)。但網頁的內容會不斷的修正，有的網址甚至會變動，因此必須特別寫出上網的日期，以利參考。

例如：林天祐 (無日期)。日本公立中小學不適任教師的處理構想。2001 年 2 月 20 日，取自：<http://www.tmue.edu.tw/~primary>

3. 電子資料庫參考文獻的寫法：電子資料庫參考文獻的寫法，主要的改變包括以 Retrieved from 取代 Available、註明搜尋的日期以及文字敘述方式，格式包括 CD-ROM 資料庫、網路資料庫、線上資料庫三類。

(1) CD-ROM 資料庫：

Federal Bureau of Investigation. (1998, March). *Encryption: Impact on law enforcement*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from SIRS database (SIRS Government Reporter, CD-ROM, Fall 1998 release)

(2) 網路資料庫：

Schneiderman, R. A. (1997). Librarians can make sense of the Net. *San Antonio*

Business Journal, 11(31), pp. 58+. Retrieved January 27, 1999, from database (Masterfile) on the World Wide Web: <http://www.ebsco.com>

(3) 線上資料庫：

Davis, T. (1992). Examining educational malpractice jurisprudence : Should a cause of action be created for student-athletes? *Denver University Law Journal*, 69, 57+. Retrieved January 27, 1999, from WESTLAW on-line database (69 DENULR 57)

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