Foreword
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Articles

Foreword
Leah Espada Gustilo ................................................................. 2

The Use of Translation in the EFL Classroom
Yi-chun Pan and Yi-ching Pan ..................................................... 4

On the Relationship between Iranian EFL Students’ Critical Thinking Ability and Their Reading Comprehension Micro-Skills
Farhad GhorbanDordiNejada and Mokhtar Heydarib .............................. 24

Exploring the Lexical and Syntactic Features of the Learners’ Narratives
Jessie S. Barrot ........................................................................ 38

Move Analysis of Philosophy Research Article Introductions Published in the University of Santo Tomas
Roy Randy Y. Briones ................................................................. 56

Conversational Topic Preferences, Taboo Words and Euphemisms: The Case of Philippine Male and Female University Students
Teresita D. Tajolosa ...................................................................... 76
Foreword

The editorial board extends their deepest gratefulness to all who have a significant contribution to the success of Philippine ESL Journal, which has become an important forum through which research in ESL, language teaching, and linguistics not only in the Philippines but also in other countries in Asia and the Pacific is propagated. Our heartfelt gratitude goes to Dr. Aileen Barrios, Dr. Ariane Borlongan, and Dr. Maria Cequena, fulltime faculty in De La Salle University, Manila, for their invaluable help in reviewing the articles. Our special thanks go to this issue’s contributors who chose PESLJ as a venue of their publication. Lastly, PESLJ is indebted to its growing readership who disseminates information about the journal and cites its articles, helping PESLJ thrive as a prominent journal that provides notable contributions in the field of ESL research across Asia.

In this final edition of 2012, five papers from conscientious authors provided rich findings and insights that have important implications for ESL research.

From Taiwan, Yi-chun Pan and Yi-ching Pan’s paper has given cogent arguments to justify the effectiveness of translation method in EFL classroom, brushing aside two major criticisms that support those who consider it as an obstacle to language learning. The paper explored how translation can aid in the development of students’ language proficiency through task-based activities.

From Iran, Farhad Ghorban Dordinejad and Mokhtar Heidary’s paper buttressed other previous findings regarding the relationship between critical thinking ability and reading comprehension skills. Their study involving 120 Iranian EFL students indicated that there is a close relationship between critical thinking and reading comprehension and that these two variables are not dependent on gender.

Jessie Barrot’s discourse analytic study involving 60 elementary pupils proffered rich findings regarding the lexical and syntactic features of the pupils’ narratives. His study may benefit publishers, material developers, and classroom teachers as its findings can help guide in the selection of reading materials.
Roy Randy Briones’ paper, another discourse analytic study, utilized Genre analysis to examine the Move patterns found in research article introductions published in the University of Santo Tomas, Philippines. The study is important because it offered new insights regarding the conventions that writers in a local discourse community adhere to.

Lastly, Teresita Tajolosa’s paper, which compared male and female university students’ use of taboo words and euphemisms and topic preferences, offered clear implications for sociologists and educators regarding the language of the youth which may have been influenced by language contact and varied cultures including the culture of the internet and the media.

Leah Espada Gustilo, Ph.D.
Managing Editor
Philippine ESL Journal
The Use of Translation in the EFL Classroom

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Abstract

Translation is an efficient teaching method to facilitate students in the acquisition of foreign languages. Through the process of doing translation, students apply their linguistic knowledge into practical use and raise awareness of the similarities and differences in morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics between the two languages. The incorporation of translation into task-based activities teaches students that translation is not a discrete and useless grammar drill but rather a communicative tool to help them achieve real-life tasks.

Keywords: Translation, EFL classroom

Introduction

The use of the translation method in the EFL classroom is often criticized based on two general arguments. First, translation involving the use of the mother tongue deprives students of opportunities to receive sufficient L2 input. Second, translation triggers L2 learning errors due to negative interference from the mother tongue. EFL teachers are therefore strongly encouraged to abandon the translation method.

While some researchers have advocated the monolingual approach in the EFL classroom, others propose the use of translation as an aid to EFL teaching. In response to the belief that there is
insufficient L2 input when translation is used in the classroom, these researchers question the point of providing sufficient L2 input if it is incomprehensible to learners. In contrast, using translation to assist students in comprehension first then moving on to further learning is more helpful. Regarding negative interference by the mother tongue, supporters of the translation method claim that translation increases students’ awareness about both the similarities and differences between the two languages, which thus prevents them from producing utterances that deviate from the target language.

The use of translation in the EFL classroom has also been proven beneficial by a significant number of research studies. By undertaking a clear comparison between the two languages, translation promotes students’ acquisition of difficult structures and elements in the target language. In addition, translation facilitates students’ quicker comprehension of the target language. Translation also provides an opportunity for students to apply what they have learned by, for example, enabling them to transform their knowledge of vocabulary and sentence structure into real use. Linguistic knowledge, in the translation method, is no longer comprised of discrete pieces of information but is rather a communication tool for them to convey a message or get their meanings across. Overall, translation does not hinder L2 learning at all, but rather assists students to elude the interference of the mother tongue on the first step and then further enhance their L2 learning.

Despite the effectiveness of the translation method in the EFL classroom, it is unfortunate that many teachers still consider it an obstacle to language learning. Translation actually can be used as a cognitive, memory, affective, communicative, and compensatory learning strategy to boost learning effects, on the one hand. On the other hand, it can help develop reading and writing skills. This paper attempts to justify the use of translation in the EFL classroom by first
describing the role of translation in EFL learning, then exploring how translation can be regarded as an effective teaching method to elevate students’ language proficiency, and, finally, demonstrating an incorporation of translation into task-based activities.

**Review of the Literature**

This section seeks to justify the use of translation in the EFL classroom by reviewing the evidence documented in the existing literature. Four issues are addressed. The first defines translation, the second points out the positive effects of translation on foreign language learning, the third explains how translation as a learning strategy facilitates the development of foreign language proficiency, and the fourth shows how translation helps foreign language teaching.

**Definition of Translation**

Translation is defined by Oxford (1990) as converting the expression of the target language into that of the native language, or the reverse. Another definition of translation, according to Lin (2008), is “expressing the sense of words or text in another language,” either from English to Chinese or vice versa in the Taiwanese context. Based on the above two definitions, for EFL learners, translation is a transfer between the first (L1) and the second (L2) language.

**The Positive Effect of Translation on Foreign Language Learning**

Because translation involves a significant amount of the use of the mother tongue (or L1), some foreign language teachers are concerned that errors might occur because students carry L1 usages over in their efforts to comprehend and express L2. These teachers
believe that the best way for learners to develop native-like language proficiency is to think in that language rather than translate the target language or their mother tongue into the other language. As a result, in order to avoid and eliminate the errors caused by L1 interferences, students are encouraged to suppress the use of translation as a means of learning L2.

However, extensive second language acquisition research studies (e.g. Dulay & Burt, 1973; Johnson & Newport, 1994) have revealed that the difficulties and errors of foreign language learning are not completely attributable to interference by the learners’ first language. In an investigation analyzing the sources of errors among native-Spanish-speaking children learning English, Dulay and Burt (1973) found that only 3% of errors came from L1 interferences and 85% of errors were developmental in nature. Developmental errors are those that naturally happen during the process of language learning regardless of learners’ L1.

In the area of second-language acquisition research, the role of L1 or translation in foreign language learning has evolved from the earliest refusal to accept its potential to its gaining credit as a viable learning tool. Ellis (1985) claims that foreign language learners consciously or unconsciously refer back to their L1 as a source of knowledge to acquire L2. Likewise, Corder (1981) views L1 as a valuable resource that learners can use during translation to make up for their limitations in learning L2. Based on these studies, learners’ L1 has a positive place in their acquisition of L2.

Other researchers, such as Husain (1995), Prince (1996) and Baddeley (1990), regard translation as a facilitator of students’ language acquisition. In the opinion of these researchers, once learners can make use of their knowledge of their L1 in L2 learning, the burden of learning L2 may decrease. Stated another way, acquisition of L2 might be facilitated if L1 can be effectively
incorporated into the process of L2 learning.

In addition, Lin (2008) states that translation from L1 to L2 offers learners opportunities to apply what they have learned before—for example, vocabulary and sentence structure—into practical use. Words, phrases, collocations, and grammar points are not at all discrete pieces of information but rather become communicative tools for learners to convey the original writers’ meanings. Furthermore, during the process of translating text from Chinese to English, students recognize the means of expression (e.g. vocabulary, sentence structure) needed in order to successfully transmit the original writer's intended meaning. This, in turn, promotes an accumulation of knowledge about how to apply vocabulary and syntax in practical use. Translation is an avenue for facilitating English learning.

Chellappan (1991) also contends that translation raises learners’ awareness of the similarities and differences between the two languages. This is in turn facilitative for learners' discovering how to use grammatical structure correctly and vocabulary items appropriately. According to Chellappan, translation does not get in the way of the acquisition of L2 learning but instead helps learners, through contrastive analysis—a systematic comparison between two languages in terms of their morphology, syntax, and semantics—elude negative interferences from L1.

In summary, the basic requirement of learning is to incorporate new knowledge into old (Baddeley, 1990). Translation allows learners to facilitate their L2 learning through utilizing their native L1. For quite a long time, the use of translation has been discouraged if not totally banned in the EFL classroom. With positive evidence of the benefits of translation in L2 learning, it is perhaps time for EFL teachers to take another look at it.
Translation as a Facilitative Learning Strategy in Foreign Language Learning

Learning strategies, according to Oxford (1990), are specific behaviors employed by learners in order to make the process easier, quicker, more pleasant, more active, and more efficient. Oxford divided strategies into two main categories: direct strategies and indirect strategies. Direct strategies refer to those directly related to learning, including memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies. On the other hand, indirect strategies are those that manage learning behaviors, the three subcategories of which are metacognitive, affective, and social strategies.

In terms of direct strategies, learners use memory strategies, such as creating mental linkages and applying images and sounds, to store, index, and retrieve messages from the brain. With cognitive strategies, for example, practicing, analyzing, and creating structure for input and output, learners manipulate or code switch raw data to facilitate comprehension. As for compensation strategies, they are used to comprehend or express a foreign language in order to make up for limited grammar and vocabulary knowledge. Common compensation strategies include guessing and using body language (Oxford, 1990). Regarding indirect strategies, metacognitive strategies are used to plan and monitor learning and evaluate learning efficacy. With affective strategies, learners can lower anxiety resulting from learning by, for example, encouraging themselves or discussing their feelings with someone they trust. Social strategies refer to interaction with others in order to promote learning; these strategies include asking for outside help and cooperating with others (Oxford, 1990).

Translation has usually been identified as one of the cognitive learning strategies (Chamot & Kupper, 1989; Oxford, 1990). Learners receive, process, and transfer the target language based on the mother
tongue. Husain (1995) claims that by using translation, foreign language learners can quickly and efficiently analyze and comprehend the complex structure of the target language.

Other than simply a cognitive strategy, studies have demonstrated that translation is used as a memory, affective, social, and compensation strategy to assist learners to efficiently learn foreign languages via a variety of channels. For example, consider translation as a memory strategy. Liao (2006) and Chern (1993) have pointed out that Taiwanese EFL college students quite often write Chinese translation in the margins of their textbooks to help them remember the meanings of English words and phrases. Although they are discouraged from using translation as a means to learn English by some of their teachers, a majority of students interviewed state that with limited English proficiency, translation is the only effective way for them to acquire vocabulary in L2. The positive effect of translation on the acquisition of L2 vocabulary is also found in Prince’s research (1996). He believes that strategic learners can make intelligent use of the repertoire of their L1 skills and translation in order to increase the quantity of words they learn.

In addition, as an affective strategy, translation is able to lower or reduce foreign language learning anxiety. In interviewing adult learners about their use of learning strategies, Wenden (1986) found that the interviewees felt anxious and fearful when speaking English. The strategy they used to calm themselves was to plan what they were about to say in their mother tongue and then expressed their thoughts through translation. They reported that planning their thought in L1 and expressing it in L2 through translation could ease their negative emotions.

In terms of social strategies, learners use their L1 or translation to ask questions or cooperate with others, and this, in turn, promotes their learning outcomes. Cheng (1993) found that Taiwanese EFL
college students cooperatively translated textbooks on technological subjects and discussed their contents based on the translations. In this case, translation functions as scaffolding through which language proficiency is elevated to a further step.

As far as compensation strategies are concerned, translation is used by learners to make up for their insufficient knowledge in L2 in order to get their L2 jobs done. Kobayashi and Rinnert (1992) investigated Japanese college students writing English essays and found that lower-level students resorted to compensation strategies to solve their writing problems. The strategies Japanese college students used included planning and developing thoughts in Japanese and then asking their peers or consulting resource books to translate their Japanese essays into English.

In summary, extensive research studies have demonstrated that translation is a positive and facilitative learning strategy. The role of translation in foreign language learning is multiple; it can be used as a cognitive, memory, affective, social, and compensation strategy to promote learners in the development of reading, writing, and vocabulary.

**Translation as an Aid in EFL Teaching**

Some EFL teachers don’t favor translation in the classroom because in their opinion, translation equals dull vocabulary memorization and grammar drills, which are futile in terms of improving students’ communicative competence. In the traditional translation method, students usually memorize discrete words with their corresponding translation, comprehend L2 grammar with their L1 knowledge, and do translation at the sentence level. However, translation as a teaching technique or activity goes far beyond vocabulary memorization and grammar drills. Rather, translation can
be used as a communicative tool to help learners get their message across to people of other languages. In fact, many researchers (e.g. Tudor, 1987; Titford, 1985, Husain, 1994) suggest the incorporation of translation into communicative language teaching to result in more effective learning. They believe that translation can be the optimum post-communicative activity to consolidate the language skills learners have previously acquired.

Husian (1994) pinpoints three principles when incorporating translation into communicative language teaching. First, the teacher has to offer students opportunities to do translation in contexts, rather than in discrete sentences. Lin (2008) recommends consecutive translation; that is, the whole text should be divided into consecutive and related sentence units. This ensures that single sentences will not be too heavy of a burden for students in terms of processing the language. Consecutive and related sentences also provide students with a complete text. Second, translation material to be must be authentic and meet student needs, avoiding obsolete and extremely difficult subject matter and structure. Last and not least important, translation is used to increase students’ awareness in recognizing the similarities and differences between two languages.

Translation is not the final goal of foreign language learning, but it can be a useful learning tool, by which students can grasp grammar, acquire vocabulary, comprehend text, and develop listening and speaking skills. Zohrevandi (1982) once described a communication activity integrated with translation. In this activity, students were divided into groups, and each group was assigned words and phrases in their L1. The students then had to complete a short English dialogue by using the given words and phrases in L1. Following that, each group engaged in a role-play of their dialogue, and the group that performed the best received an award. In addition, students were asked to analyze their dialogue in terms of semantics, syntax, and
pragmatics. Other communicative activities recommended by Zohrevandi include having students translate movies into English or having students act out movies in English. These activities incorporated with translation develop students’ four skills in reading, listening, speaking, and writing, and the fifth skill, i.e., translation, as well.

Levenston (1985) likewise regards translation as an efficient teaching and evaluation tool in communicative language teaching. He suggested teachers use interpretations in role-play activities. For instance, a student played a foreign visitor. He went to a department store and had a communication breakdown with a sales clerk there. At this time, another student came as an interpreter to give help. These situations can be extended to other contexts, such as post offices, banks, restaurants, airports, and so on. In these authentic situations, translation serves a communicative purpose rather than as static grammar drills out of context.

Not only has positive evidence for incorporating translation into foreign language teaching been obtained in overseas countries, but beneficial results have appeared in a Taiwanese EFL context. In Hsieh’s (2000) vocabulary and reading class, she asked groups of students to translate the English text into Chinese, and then orally reported how they translated specific vocabulary items and syntactic structures. By the end of the course, questionnaires reveal students’ positive response to translation employed in teaching, and the post-test showed students’ improvement in English reading comprehension, reading strategies, vocabulary quantity, and cultural knowledge.

Additionally, Chan (2000) has stated that parallel reading between the original text and the translated version is an effective teaching method. In Chan’s view, when students have difficulties comprehending the original text, the translated version is a better
resource than dictionaries to assist students’ comprehension of the text. She has further suggested using English versions of famous Chinese literary works to teach advanced EFL students, letting students learn how to use English to express Chinese cultural contents. Meanwhile, while reading the English version, students might even recognize some points they overlook when reading the Chinese version.

Departing from the contrastive analysis between Chinese and English, Huang (2003) revealed that cross translation can strengthen students’ awareness of English idiomatic expressions. Huang asked students to translate the Chinese portion of Chinese/English dual language storybooks into English, and then to compare their English version with the book’s. By conscious comparison between their English version and the book’s English version, students can notice the differences in both semantics and syntax. The ‘Chinese English’ translation problem is likely to be eliminated through a systematic contrastive analysis between the two languages.

Another researcher, Liao (2002), has also observed that when English is the only medium allowed in discussions, students are quiet due to nervousness or lack of English competence. In contrast, when both Chinese and English are allowed as media for discussions, the atmosphere gets heated. Students immediately offer help when their peers are unable to make themselves understood in English. Generally speaking, there is more participation and meaningful communication sustains longer when both Chinese and English can be used in class discussions.

Evidence, both domestically and abroad, has demonstrated that properly designed translation activities can enhance the four skills. The use of translation is a natural tendency for L2 learners, so the total eradication of its function is not so convincing. Translation should develop its highest function if it can be integrated with
communicative language teaching. EFL teachers can design meaningful tasks such as having students do English dubbing for TV programs or having students act as interpreters in simulated real-life situations. All these activities can provide students with a different view of translation; they won’t find translation boring but interesting and practical in these communication-oriented translation activities.

A Design of Task-based Translation Method

While decontextualized translation teaching should play a minimal role in the classroom, translation itself, if taught in a way that resembles the real-life activity of translating, can bring into play the four basic language skills and yield benefits in L2 acquisition. Therefore, Gonzalez Davies (2004) has proposed a combination of the task-based approach and translation method. In her view, the task-based approach appears to lend itself particularly well to the use of translation in language teaching. The focus of the task-based approach is on using language for communicative purposes. Similarly, translation pedagogy in the literature emphasizes the need to present translation as a communicative activity.

In the task-based approach, students need to complete a task, which requires them to process language pragmatically. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive and oral or written skills, and also various cognitive processes.

Nunan (2004) provides a three-phase model for developing a task-based lesson: the pre-task, during-task, and post-task phase. The purpose of the pre-task phase is to prepare students to perform the task. During the pre-task phase, teachers introduce the topic, set the context for the task, and teach key vocabulary and phrases needed
to carry out the task. The pre-task phase functions as a scaffolding that builds up and consolidates students’ language skills.

Moving on to the during-task phase, students are instilled with grammatical knowledge, which is different from the traditional approach, in which the presentation of grammatical knowledge always occurs in the first phase. The linguistic part is postponed because it is easier for students to understand abstract grammatical concepts after hearing, seeing, and speaking the target language within a communicative context. After being given form-focused instruction, students are introduced to and presented the classroom task itself. The task should integrate the knowledge gained and the language skills practiced in the previous steps. For example, if students have been instructed on the topic of finding a B&B and given a significant amount of language practice in this area, the classroom task can be to ask students to go on the internet, choose a suitable B&B after considering prices, services, and locations, and, finally, interpret the information from English to Chinese for their fellow classmates, who pretend to be their non-English-speaking friends who want to join them on a trip.

Finally, in the post-task phase, students are encouraged to reflect on how the task is performed, such as any good points to keep and any bad points to eliminate. Also, they are encouraged to pay attention to form, in particular, to those forms that proved problematic to the students when they performed the task. Through consciousness-raising tasks, production practice activities, and analytical activities, students will be more likely to become aware of their weak points and improve those weak points through reinforcement activities.

A task-based translation method regards translation not as an isolated language element, but as an integrative skill necessary to help students to complete an assigned task. The following is a
demonstration of a task-based translation method for college students at the beginner level. The lesson plan describes the procedures in the pre-task, during-task, and post-task phases.

Where do we go for our graduation trip?

The motivation behind designing this task is that in Taiwan, college students usually go on a trip (the “graduation trip”) as a whole class before they graduate. Choosing a destination for the graduation trip and persuading peers to agree on that destination may be an activity that will motivate students because they will have to complete a real-life task with the language they are learning.

**Pre-task phase.** During the pre-task phase, the teacher introduces the task, telling students they must choose a destination for the graduation trip and present it in terms of its scenic spots and prices to the class. During the presentation, the students have to state why they chose this particular place and try their best to persuade their peers to agree with them. After each presentation, the students vote for their favorite graduation trip destination. The student who receives the most votes will be rewarded with extra credit.

Because lower-level students are less likely to write something in English to introduce a place, here we can ask students to browse the internet for a Chinese article to act as a model for describing the place they wish to go on their graduation trip. Rather than asking students to translate the whole text into English, which might be beyond their ability, the teacher can ask the students to underline 10 sentences they think best describes the features of the places. After the students have marked 10 sentences that they feel offer the best descriptions, ask the students to write a first draft of the
Chinese-to-English translation. During this time, the teacher circulates the classroom to offer assistance to students on words and phrases they do not know in L2. At the end of the class, the teacher collects students’ drafts and revises them. The revision of students’ writing helps the teacher recognize what grammar points must be explicitly instructed and what vocabulary items must be supplemented.

**During-task phase.** The teacher explicitly instructs grammar points that students require for the task but in which they are not yet proficient. Students are then asked to complete some practice exercises for reinforcement. After that, students check their revised writing for this task and ask questions if they are not clear about the revisions. As stated previously, grammar points are not introduced in the beginning. The introduction of these points is postponed until after the students have written their articles in the target language. The reason for this is that after students experiment with the language, they will notice their grammatical problems and it will be easier for them to understand the grammatical concepts.

Once the language problem has been addressed, students are given time to prepare their presentations. The teacher can suggest that students prepare PowerPoint files to make their presentation clearer, more interesting, and more inviting. After students have prepared, they take turns presenting their favorite destinations for the graduation trip. During the presentations, students are given a sheet to answer. On this sheet, the teacher asks students some questions, such as “Where is the presenter’s favorite graduation trip destination?” and “Give two reasons why the presenter has chosen this place.” The purpose of this sheet is for the teacher to assess whether the students understand their peers’ English presentations. The students can answer the sheet either in Chinese or in English.
After students finish their presentations, they vote for their favorite graduation trip destination. Also ask students to talk about why they voted for a particular student either in Chinese or in English. Do not force beginner students to express their ideas in English; their English proficiency may not be adequate to express what they mean.

**Post-task phase.** This phase consolidates what students have previously learned. The teacher asks students to reflect on their presentations, paying particular attention to the errors they made. Students should also be given a variety of practice exercises to strengthen their proficiency levels. A model can be demonstrated to students so that they will have greater clarity regarding what they can do to improve their proficiency.

In this phase, follow-up listening activities can be incorporated with translation. For instance, the teacher can play a recording or show a video about a scenic spot and ask students to interpret two or three key points. Following that, related vocabulary or important points of grammar can be taught to expand students’ linguistic knowledge.

A reading activity can be also given as a follow-up activity. Students are given an article about traveling abroad. Each group can be assigned a paragraph to translate to the whole class. During a verbal translation of the passage, students can recognize which parts require improvement. After the teacher gives modeling and guidance, it will be easier for them to learn something in which their abilities are lacking.

A combination of translation with a real-life task offers students an opportunity to use the language. Through translation, students are more likely to notice the differences between the two languages, and this is facilitative in their development of foreign language
Conclusion

EFL learners have a natural tendency to use translation. Rather than simply attempting to ban students from using this latent language processing, EFL teachers should help their students to take advantage of their already existing L1 to facilitate the learning of L2.

Extensive research studies have revealed that translation is not only an efficient learning tool but also a useful teaching method if translation activities are well designed. On the one hand, students use translation to facilitate their comprehension process and to reduce insecurity that arises from limited language proficiency. On the other hand, teachers use translation to consolidate what students have learned about the English language, such as vocabulary, sentence structures, and cultural aspects.

Integrating translation into task-based activities is a new direction for EFL teachers to consider in the classroom. Translation does not actually equal the instruction of discrete words, phrases, and grammar out of context. Rather, translation can be incorporated into task-based communicative activities in which students can use it as a medium to accomplish tasks, such as translating material about Chinese winter solstice customs and orally presenting it to exchange students from foreign universities.
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On the Relationship between Iranian EFL Students’ Critical Thinking Ability and Their Reading Comprehension Micro-Skills

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Abstract

It is hypothesized in the present study that when learners read an English text, they use their critical thinking ability beyond the language components such as meaning of words and structure of sentences to understand it better. The major goal of the present study is to examine whether there is any relationship between the learners’ critical thinking ability and their reading comprehension score in general and their micro-skills (i.e. inference, main idea, and specific details) in particular. Also, this study tries to investigate the difference between the learners’ critical thinking ability and their reading comprehension skills with regard to their gender. For this purpose, 120 (68 females and 52 males) Iranian EFL students majoring in Translation, English literature and English teaching of the English department in Isfahan state university in Iran participated by accomplishing two tests. This study showed that there is a close relationship between the learner’s critical thinking ability and their reading comprehension score ($r = .73$), and their reading micro-skills: inference ($r = .64$), main idea ($r = .63$), and specific details ($r = .53$). On the other hand the study showed that gender is not a determinant in critical thinking ability nor in reading comprehension.

Keywords: critical thinking ability, reading comprehension, micro skills, EFL students

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Rationale

Critical thinking includes the cognitive skills of using reasoning, making inference, making decisions and evaluating. Humans use critical thinking skills to analyze arguments and solve problems. Reasoning well is a skill which is valuable to anyone who wants to understand and deal with the natural and social worlds. Scientists need to reason well in order to understand the causes of phenomena. Politicians need to reason well in order to be able to adopt the right polices. Hence, we cannot leave reasoning to scientists and politicians because we all want to know whether what they tell us and what they prescribe for us is right. Reasoning well is an important skill for all of us.

In the educational fields, critical thinking has recently been noteworthy. Much has been said, written and done on critical thinking and its relation to other subjects. Roghanizadeh (2011) reported a linkage between self-regulation and critical thinking. His study indicated that among the components of critical thinking, ‘evaluation of arguments’ and ‘interpretation’ have the highest correlations with teachers’ self-regulation. In addition, significant correlations were found between teachers’ self-regulation, their teaching experience, and their age.

Babamohammadi and khalili (2005) showed that the students of continuous BS level in nursing had a higher level of critical thinking skills than the students of interrupted BS studies. According to them, the students in advanced years of study own higher levels of critical thinking skills than those in lower terms. In other words, nursing education and higher education have led to a development of students’ critical thinking skills.

In another study Nikoopour, AminiFarsani and Nasiri (2011) reported a significant relationship between specific direct and indirect language learning strategies such as cognitive, metacognitive, and social with critical thinking. They showed that memory, compensation, and affective strategies have no relationship with critical thinking.

Jamshidian and Khamijani Farahani (2010) conducted a research on the relationship between critical thinking and nativeness, age, and gender. Their study showed that there is a significant relationship between nativeness and the level of critical thinking;
however, there is no relationship between age, gender and the critical thinking level.

Einav and Miriam (2011) conducted a study to explore whether teaching specially designed learning unit would enhance the students’ critical and or creativity thinking. According to Einav and Miriam, unit “Probability in Daily Life” was taught to a group of tenth-grade students with the purpose of encouraging critical thinking dispositions such as open-mindedness, truth-seeking, self-confidence and maturity. The findings of their research would likely be used to plan new study programs and methods that can be based on the connection between critical thinking, creative thinking and the study of mathematics.

Nuray and Sezgi (2010) explored the common belief that eastern learners, including Turkish learners, lack critical thinking skills due to their traditional social structure. As language and cognition were tightly related in the process of language production, their main concern was whether the problem was rooted in cultural disposition. Their study supported the ongoing discussion on the eastern way of thinking, which is fostered by such social maxims as social harmony, respect and humbleness.

Mendenhall and Johnson (2010) conducted a study to determine whether there was a change in reading comprehension, critical thinking and meta-cognition skills by using the SAM-LS instructional strategies. Results indicated that HyLighter may help students in several areas including enhancing the students’ ability to think critically.

In 2009, VanTassel, Bracken, Feng and Brown conducted a longitudinal study of student growth gains to assess growth in reading comprehension and critical thinking. Results suggested that all students benefited from the intervention of Project Athena units of study designed for high-ability learners. In addition, the study suggested that the comparison curriculum also benefited learners.

Fitzpatrick (1994) showed that teachers can assist improving the reading comprehension skills of students by using critical thinking strategies which can be integrated into the curriculum and adapted to many grade levels. He described strategies grouped under microcomputer instruction, cooperative learning, and higher-order questions and commended that teachers integrate critical thinking strategies into their reading curriculum.
Long (1992) showed that reading strategy checklist can be used as a cooperative learning program to increase reading comprehension, develop critical thinking skills, improve written communication skills, and enhance whole class discussions.

In another study, Kaufman (1992) used the teaching techniques of semantic webbing and brainstorming to improve students’ reading skills. According to her, some behavior changes were observed, including improved skills in critical thinking, increased brainstorming for problem-solving, better interpersonal communication and use of positive challenges, and application of thinking skills to other subjects. These indicated that the technique was somewhat effective in increasing reading comprehension and developing critical thinking skills.

Verawati, SitiRahayah, Rodiah and Nor Azaheen (2010) conducted a study to determine the critical thinking ability of male and female students in Malaysia aged 16-17 years using MyCT instrument. Their study showed that there was no significant difference between the critical thinking of male and female students.

Dehghani, Jafarisani, Pakmehr and Malekzadeh (2011) in a study aimed to investigate the relationship between students’ self-efficacy and critical thinking in Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran. Their findings showed a significantly positive relationship between students’ self-efficacy and critical thinking. They believed that self-efficacy as a motivational factor should be considered in developing learners’ critical thinking skills.

Cavus and Uzunboylu (2009) investigated the effect of mobile learning over the critical thinking skills. They found that students’ attitudes toward the usefulness of a mobile learning system and creativity improved significantly at the end of the experimental study.

In another study Tae-II (2004) examined the effect of gender on English reading comprehension of Korean EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners. The results of the study indicated that items classified as Mood/Impression/Tone tended to be easier for females, whereas items classified as Logical Inference were more likely to favor males regardless of item content.
Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions of this study are as follows:

1. Is there any relationship between Iranian students’ critical thinking skills and their reading comprehension ability?
2. Is there any relationship between Iranian students’ critical thinking skills and reading comprehension micro-skills – main idea, specific details and inference scores?
3. Is there any difference between Iranian male and female students’ reading comprehension micro-skills - main idea, specific details and inference scores?
4. Is there any difference between Iranian male and female students’ critical thinking skills?

Based on the above research questions, there are four null hypotheses:

1. There is no relationship between Iranian students’ critical thinking skills and their reading comprehension ability.
2. There is no relationship between Iranian students’ critical thinking skills and reading comprehension micro-skills – main idea, specific details and inference scores.
3. There is no difference between Iranian male and female students’ reading comprehension micro-skills - main idea, specific details and inference.
4. There is no difference between Iranian male and female students’ critical thinking skills.

Method

Participants

The population of this study composed of all the state university BA students studying EFL in Iran. The EFL students in Iran study in three different majors namely Translation, English Literature and Teaching English. In choosing our sample, the researchers decided to include all three majors in the study. As Isfahan State University offers all three majors, this university was chosen in order for the sample to be a true representative of the
population. The researchers had to have students from state universities all around Iran, but because it was impossible, we decided to use students in a university that come from different parts of the country. Again because Isfahan State University accepts students through National Examination (Konkoor) coming from all over Iran, we believe that these students are a true sample of the whole population – Iranian state university students. In our sample we have students from Sistan and Baloochestan, Ilam, Khoozestan, khorasan, Azarbayjan, Hamadan, Kerman, Tehran, Isfahan and some other places.

**Instrumentation**

Two tests in this research were used. The first instrument is the reading comprehension test from TOEFL which was a bit modified to meet the requirements of the present study. Because only three micro-skills of reading comprehension namely main idea, inference and specific details based on their commonality and importance were taken into account, questions related to other micro-skills such as understanding sequence, making comparisons, and making predictions were discarded. The reading comprehension test includes six relatively short readings, each followed by five questions: one main idea question, two specific details questions and two inference questions.

The second test is the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST Form B), which was used to differentiate the level of critical thinking skills of the participants. The test is intended for college level and post-baccalaureate student populations. It includes 34 multiple-choice items which tests five different skills: analysis, interpretation, inference, explanation, evaluation and self-regulation.

**Procedure**

We started the study by collecting information about the theory, background, and the related literature. Then, considering all available critical thinking scales, the CCTT form B was chosen because of its wide use in the academic fields and because of its reliability and validity support as valid and reliable scale used in Iran. Also, scrutinizing the available scales for reading comprehension
assessments, the reading comprehension test was taken from TOEFL. Then, we modified the TOEFL reading test to meet our requirements. In an appropriate time, at first the participants answered the questionnaire (CCTST), then they take the reading comprehension test.

Data Analysis

Like most of the research studies on humanities the significance, level of the study was set on 0.05 to decide whether the hypotheses are accepted or rejected. Based on the research questions, different statistics were used. First, descriptive statistics were used to describe the characteristics of the sample. To test the first hypothesis, correlation coefficient was run to find the relationship between Critical Thinking and reading comprehension micro-skills. Correlation coefficient was also used to test our second hypothesis concerning the relationship between Critical Thinking skills and reading comprehension micro-skills. To find the difference between reading comprehension micro-skills among males and females, a multivariate analysis of variance was run in which gender was assumed as the independent factor and reading comprehension micro-skills as dependent variables to test the difference between male and female scores in reading comprehension micro-skills.

Results and discussion

Research question 1:

"Is there any relationship between Iranian students’ critical thinking skills and their reading comprehension scores in general?"

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to analyze the data. The following table shows the correlation coefficient between reading comprehension and critical thinking.
Table 1

Correlation coefficient between reading comprehension and critical thinking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total critical thinking</th>
<th>Total reading comp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total critical thinking</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total reading comp</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.730**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violations of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. As is shown in table 1, there was a strong, positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .73$, $n = 120$, $p < .000$, with high level of reading comprehension associated with high level of Critical Thinking. This indicates that the hypothesis is rejected and there is a strong relationship between Iranian students’ critical thinking skills and their reading comprehension skills. This finding is consistent with other findings in this area in Iran and other countries, such as Nikoopour, AminiFarsani and Nasiri (2011), Jamshidian and Khamijani Farahani (2010), Dehghani, Jafarisani, Pakmehr and Malekzadeh (2011), Roghanizadeh (2011), and Nuray and Sezgi (2010).

Research question 2:

"Is there any relationship between Iranian students’ Critical Thinking skills and reading comprehension micro-skills - main idea, specific details and inference skills?"

Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violations of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity.
Table 2 shows the results of correlation between critical thinking and reading comprehension micro-skills.

Table 2
Correlation between critical thinking and reading comprehension micro-skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total critical thinking</th>
<th>Total specific detail</th>
<th>Total inference</th>
<th>Total main idea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total critical thinking</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.537**</td>
<td>.647**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total specific detail</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.537**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.571**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total inference</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.647**</td>
<td>.571**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total main idea</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.635**</td>
<td>.337**</td>
<td>.555**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As shown in Table 2, there was a strong, positive correlation between critical thinking and reading comprehension micro-skills: main idea, specific details and inference. The interesting point here was that the correlation between critical thinking and inference and main idea was much stronger, respectively, r = .64, n = 120, p < .000 and r = .63, n = 120, p < .000, than the correlation between Critical Thinking and specific detail, r = .53, n = 120, p < .000. These results reject the null hypothesis. There is a strong relationship between critical thinking and reading comprehension micro-skills. Returning back to the stronger correlation between critical thinking and inference, this may be related to the findings of other studies like Einav and Miriam’s (2011).
Research question 3:

"Is there any difference between Iranian male and female students’ reading comprehension micro-skills: main idea, specific details and inference?"

A one-way between groups multivariate analysis was performed to answer this question. Three dependent variables were used: main idea, specific details and inference. The independent variable was gender. Preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers and homogeneity, with no serious violations noted. Table 3 shows that the assumption of homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices has not been violated: $p = .014 > .001$. Table 3 shows the results of multivariate analysis of variance between male and female students’ reading comprehension micro-skills. As is evident in Table 3, the value of $p = .188 > .05$ indicating that the difference between male and female students’ main idea, specific details and inference mean scores is not significant. Hence, our hypothesis is not rejected.

This confirms the studies done by Verawati, SitiRahayah, Rodiah and Nor Azaheen’s (2010). Their study showed that there was no significant difference between the critical thinking of male and female students. Cavus and Uzunboylu (2009) also reported similar results indicating equality of males and females in respect with critical thinking skills. This is however, in contrast with Tae-II (2004) study on the effect of gender on English reading comprehension of Korean EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners. The results of the that study indicated that items classified as Mood/Impression/Tone tended to be easier for females, whereas items classified as Logical Inference were more likely to support males regardless of item content. Maybe this can be explained by the nuanced differences between males and females regarding main idea, specific details and inference that we found in the present study.
Table 3
*Multivariate tests*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Hypothesis df</th>
<th>Error df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>Pillai's Trace</td>
<td>.967</td>
<td>1.133E3</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>116.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilks’ Lambda</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>1.133E3</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>116.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotelling’s Trace</td>
<td>29.306</td>
<td>1.133E3</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>116.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy’s Largest Root</td>
<td>29.306</td>
<td>1.133E3</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>116.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td>Pillai's Trace</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>1.622</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>116.000</td>
<td>.188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilks’ Lambda</td>
<td>.960</td>
<td>1.622</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>116.000</td>
<td>.188</td>
<td>.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotelling’s Trace</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>1.622</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>116.000</td>
<td>.188</td>
<td>.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy’s Largest Root</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>1.622</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>116.000</td>
<td>.188</td>
<td>.040</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Exact statistic
b. Design: Intercept + gender

**Research Question 4:**

"Is there any difference between Iranian male and female students’ critical thinking scores?"

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the critical thinking skills of males and females. Table 4 shows the results of independent-samples t-tests.

As the table shows, because the significance of Levene's test for equality of variances is larger than .05; the assumption of equal variances has not been violated; therefore the first line in the table which refers to the Equal variances was considered. Considering t-test for equality of means, the value of significance (2-tailed) = .86 >.05; shows that there is no significant difference between males and females with respect to their critical thinking skills; hence, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The discussion provided for question
three is also true about question four. There seems to be a discrepancy in the results of studies regarding males and females' critical thinking skills. This may be due to some sex bias.

Table 4

*Independent-samples t-test results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total critical thinking</td>
<td>.325</td>
<td>.570</td>
<td>.172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>.173</td>
<td>112.</td>
<td>.863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>.173</td>
<td>112. 257</td>
<td>.863</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

This study showed that there is a close relationship between reading comprehension and Critical Thinking in general and between Critical Thinking and reading comprehension micro-skills: main idea, specific details and inference in particular. In fact reading and thinking and especially critical thinking are interconnected, and they are dependent on each other closely. Making inferences, getting the main idea and reaching to the conclusions based on details, assumptions, arguments and premises are common to both reading comprehension and critical thinking processes.

**References**

Babamohammadi, H., & Khalili, H. (2005). Comparison of critical thinking skills in students of nursing in continuous and
interrupted BS sections of Semnan University of medical sciences. *Journal of Medical Education, 6*(2), 169-174.


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Exploring the Lexical and Syntactic Features of the Learners’ Narratives

Jessie S. Barrot
De La Salle University, Manila

Abstract

This study investigates the lexical and syntactic features of the pupils’ narratives using a discourse analytic method. The narratives written by 60 randomly selected pupils were used as subject for analysis. The writing of the narratives was prompted by allowing pupils to view the film “Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me”. The findings revealed that the narratives steadily increase in complexity as pupils advance by grade level. This steady increase manifests that pupils’ linguistic ability improves as they mature linguistically.

Keywords: learner’s narratives, lexical features, syntactic features

Introduction

Apart from learner’s interest (Cecil, 1984; Bugel & Buunk, 1996), topic familiarity (Al-Issa, 2006; Long, Johns, & Morris, 2006; Hudson, 2007), cultural background (Pritchard, 1990; Malik, 1995; Chen & Donin, 1997; Droop & Verhoeven, 1998; Barry & Lazarte, 1998), decoding skills (Al-Issa, 2006), and linguistic knowledge (Carrell, 1991; Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995; Vandergrift, 2006), another major contributory factor to text readability is the linguistic complexity of the texts. Linguistic complexity refers to the properties of language features (patterns, rules, and items) or systems (phonological, syntactic, lexical, and morphological) (Housen & Kuiken, 2009).

One of the constituents of linguistic complexity is lexical complexity which refers to the complex composition of a lexicon or word denoting the total number of morphemes, the total number of different words, and the number of words that are unfamiliar to readers. It is believed that word frequency influences reading comprehension (NICHD, 2000); that is, long and infrequent words
can be expected to cause problems for a larger proportion of pupils. Studies on vocabulary reveal that there is a great possibility that learners will understand concepts more if very few rare words are present in a text (Qian, 2002; Vellutino, 2003). But this intuition has always been subject to serious question among researchers. In fact, Anderson and Davison (1986, p. 19) argued that lexical complexity does not seem to directly cause text difficulty because “most long, infrequent words are transparent derivatives and compounds that would not be expected to be difficult for the typical student by the time he/she reaches the middle grades”. Even words that are unfamiliar to learners do not appear to adversely affect their comprehension, unless the text is dense with such words (Schmitt, Jiang, & Grabe, 2011).

Another component of linguistic complexity is syntactic complexity which relates to the number and type of transformations used in a sentence (Distefano & Valencia, 1980). Some researchers have maintained that a sentence becomes more complex as more transformations are added or as different types of transformations are adjoined. If syntactic complexity does influence the difficulty of the sentence, then it should follow that syntactic complexity influences the comprehension level of subjects reading complex sentences. However, Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki and Kim (1998) argued that the length of sentences is not a sole predictor of complexity because there are long sentences that are easier to understand and there are short sentences that are difficult to comprehend. For instance, the complex sentence ‘Two workers have strong hands which help them lift baggage and push carts’ is easier to understand than saying a series of simple sentences ‘Two workers have hands. These hands are strong. These hands help them lift the baggage. They help them push carts’ (Arya, Hiebert, & Pearson, 2011). Moreover, Agnihotri and Khanna (1991) claimed that several studies in syntax show that simple declarative and active sentences are easier than complex and passive sentences; however, derivational complexity of a sentence may have little bearing on comprehension. Davison, Wilson, and Herman (1986) also asserted that sentence length does not greatly influence the readability of texts. This is based on their study on the effects of syntactic connectives and organizing cues on text comprehension. Results revealed that seventh grade readers (except
the poor readers) comprehended long texts as much as they comprehended short texts.

Though readability formulas such as Fog formula and Flesch-Kincaid grade level have been generally accepted by the educational community as a tool for measuring readability, L1 and L2 researchers have criticized them for not taking into account other essential variables such as cohesion, rhetorical organization, propositional density, and syntactic complexity resulting in weak construct validity (Crossley, Greenfield, & McNamara, 2008).

Given these issues, the present study investigates the lexical and syntactic features of the pupils’ narratives. The aim of this exploratory study is to better understand the production level of the participants as to lexical and syntactic features which will guide the teachers and textbook writers for selecting and preparing reading materials for second language learners.

**Method**

**Population and Sampling**

The present study employed a discourse analytic method which has the purpose of describing, analyzing, and interpreting data (Talja, 1999). Narratives written by 60 randomly selected pupils (20 pupils from each grade level: Grade 2, 4, and 6) from two private elementary schools in Metro Manila were used as subject for analysis. Only Grades 2, 4, and 6 were selected because Grades 1, 3, and 5 are assumed to bear lexical and syntactic knowledge similar or nearly similar to Grades 2, 4, and 6, respectively (Mendiola, 1978).

**Instruments**

A narrative film was selected for viewing for two reasons: (a) it is the most frequent discourse among young learners (Preece, 1987) and (b) the realities of children are largely organized around narratives (Ghosn, 2002). The film “Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me” by Eric Carle was used to elicit the narratives from the subjects. It was also evaluated by two experts to ensure that the film contains
no detrimental content and is within the pupils’ schema which will ensure better understanding of the text (Armbruster, 1986). Before the narrative elicitation, the participants were also surveyed to ensure that they have not watched the film to level off familiarity among the participants.

Procedure

Data gathering involved film viewing (i.e. without audio and subtitle) and subsequently retelling of the movie in writing. Film viewing was done twice for retention and comprehension purposes. The first viewing took the subjects more than seven minutes; hence, watching the film twice took them a little over 14 minutes. After viewing the film, the pupils were asked to write about the story according to how they understood it. Pupils were not given limits as to time and number of words, for them to be relaxed in their narrative production. After which, the narratives were collected and subjected to textual analysis by the researcher.

The analysis of syntactic features focused on the total number of T-units or LENGTH (raw number of T-units in the pupils’ narratives), mean length of T-units in words or MLT-W (average length of T-units in the pupils’ narratives), total number of complex T-units or COMPLEX (total number of T-units containing an independent clause and one or more dependent clauses in the pupils’ narratives), total number of coordinating conjunctions or COORD (frequency of coordinating conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) and conjunctive adverbs when used to coordinate independent clauses), total number of subordinating conjunctions or SUBORD (frequency of subordinating conjunctions when used to coordinate independent clauses), and proportion of complex T-units or PROP COMPLEX (COMPLEX divided by LENGTH). The analysis of lexical features, on the other hand, focused on the total number of words or TNW (total number of content words in the pupils’ narratives), total number of different words or NDW (total number of different content words in the pupils’ narratives), and total number of morphemes or TNM (total number of morphemes in the pupils’ narrative).
Results and Discussion

Lexical Features of Pupils’ Narratives

The notion of lexical features includes the total number of words (TNW), the total number of morphemes (TNM), and the total number of different words (NDW) in the narratives of pupils.

Table 1
Means of Lexical Features in Pupils’ Narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>TNW Mean</th>
<th>TNM Mean</th>
<th>NDW Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>83.40</td>
<td>97.50</td>
<td>42.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>97.35</td>
<td>117.05</td>
<td>48.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>141.15</td>
<td>180.55</td>
<td>77.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 1, a linear increase in the means for all lexical features exists with a small variation between Grades 2 and 4 and high for Grade 6. Results revealed that lexical output increases steadily with grade level.

From the given TNW mean of 83.40 for Grade 2 and 97.35 for Grade 4, the midpoint value between the two levels can be assumed as the lexical level that Grade 3 pupils can handle; consequently, the lexical level below the Grade 2 means implies the lexical features that Grade 1 pupils can manage. Similarly, the midpoint value between the lexical means of Grade 4 and Grade 6 can be assumed as the lexical level manageable for the Grade 5 pupils.

However, the statistical description of the lexical features may not bear complete descriptions without exemplifying the specific words, morphemes, and varied words used by the pupils. Qualitative factors are, therefore, considered. The words used by the pupils in their narratives are classified as high-frequency words or familiar words. These are basic general English words that belong to first 1,000 most frequently used words (Laufer & Nation, 1999). Some words become more common for higher grades as they must have been exposed to such high-frequency words in their younger years.

In addition, inflectional morphemes are added to nouns: -s for the plural number and -‘s for possession; to main verbs: -s for the
third person singular present tense, -d for the past tense of regular verbs, -ing for the present participle form, and -en for the past participle form; and to adjective: -er for the comparative degree and -est for the superlative degree were included in pupils’ lexical repertoire. Dominant suffixes in the narratives of all pupils are -ed and -ing which comprise inflectional morphemes for familiar words. Also added as a morpheme for familiar words is -s (third person singular) to denote a singular main verb. A few instances of its use per grade level were noted because the pupils tried to be consistent in narrating using the past form of the verb. Likewise, -s to denote plural nouns was also minimally activated in pupils’ narratives which may be attributed to the type of stimulus used.

Additionally, words using inflectional morphemes increase in density as the grade level steps up chronologically except for the -inflectional morphemes -er which has a minimal decreasing number of samples and -est with a lower frequency in Grade 2. Since there is a minimal decrease of adjectival morphemes, this does not affect the notion that lexical output increases in number and use with chronological grade level. Likewise, the list shows that the words used by the pupils are familiar ones because it is dominated with the inflectional morphemes -ed and -ing which, according to Gunning (2003), are morphemes that denote familiar words in any linguistic output. The increasing density of words with inflectional morphemes suggests that pupils are most exposed to common words which may be fed by the teacher’s linguistic input and in turn used by pupils in their narratives. This may also manifest that the kind of words pupils can easily process or handle are familiar words, which further suggests that reading materials should have a close fit to readers’ linguistic ability to ensure comprehensibility. Thus, familiar words should be used as the kind of lexical input appropriate for grade school pupils to facilitate comprehension. However, pupils should also be exposed to words that challenge their linguistic ability in order for them to progress as they mature linguistically.

Moreover, derivational morphemes, which are also used to denote change of word taxonomy, show pupils’ ability to manipulate diversity of words. Following are the derived words used by pupils per grade level:
Table 2
List of Words and Their Derivational Morphemes in Pupils’ Narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Derivational Morpheme</th>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-ion (noun)</td>
<td></td>
<td>negotiation, direction</td>
<td>determination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ness</td>
<td>sadness, happiness</td>
<td>prettiness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ance</td>
<td></td>
<td>remembrance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ment</td>
<td></td>
<td>amazement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-y (adjective)</td>
<td>piggy</td>
<td>lonely, lovely</td>
<td>starry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ly</td>
<td>beautiful,</td>
<td>beautiful,</td>
<td>tiredly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ful</td>
<td>careful</td>
<td>wonderful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-al</td>
<td></td>
<td>original, magical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>enthusiastic, ecstatic,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>attractive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>childish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ly (adverb)</td>
<td>quickly, really,</td>
<td>accidentally,</td>
<td>brightly, extremely,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>perfectly,</td>
<td>really, happily,</td>
<td>heavenly, immediately,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>happily,</td>
<td>mysteriously,</td>
<td>really, slowly, quickly,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>slowly</td>
<td>sadly, quickly,</td>
<td>luckily, surely, sadly,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>brightly,</td>
<td>happily, safely, wildly,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>immediately,</td>
<td>exactly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lovely, lonely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is worth emphasizing that “derivational morphemes generally change the grammatical category of words while inflectional morphemes do not” (Yule, 1997, p. 63). Narratives that are dense with derivational morphemes are difficult to read because they require higher semantic cognition of word category; thus, they complicate lexical inputs. Given these, Table 3 reveals that the derivational morphemes used by Grade 2 pupils are limited to -y and -ful for adjectives and -ly for adverbs. These grammatical categories function as modifiers which mean that adjectival morphemes develop earlier than other lexical-forming morphemes. These are denser in Grade 4 except the -y morpheme but with -al as the adjectival morpheme and -ness for nominal morpheme. Derivational morphemes highly increase in Grade 6 with additional morphemes such as -ion, -ation, -ance, and -ment for nominal morphemes and -ic, -ive, -ish for adjectival morphemes. This also means that derivational morphemes increase in pupils’ narrative repertoire as they gain more linguistic ability. There seems to be a smooth transition of
morphemes from one grade level to another. As mentioned earlier, Grade 2 pupils can only create varying word categories in a limited fashion, Grade 4 pupils slightly improve in building new word categories, and Grade 6 pupils significantly develop their handling of derivational morphemes. Hence, lexical inputs should be fairly observed with limited derivational morphemes in the first two elementary levels, moderately improved in the middle levels, and highly explored in the last two levels. There should be a gradual incorporation of derivational morphemes so as not to make materials difficult to read.

Furthermore, a number of words used by the subjects are single morpheme. Variation appears with some words having two morphemes as well as a few words with three-morphemes and a very least occurrence of words with four morphemes. All of them used one to two morphemes and in a very rare instance, three to four morphemes especially for Grades 2 and 4. Grade 6 pupils, however, demonstrate a little increase of words with three morphemes and a few use words with four morphemes. Although there is an increase of morphemes in the narratives of pupils, complex morphemes do not show sufficient density in all grade levels. One to two morphemes seem to be the number of morphemes the pupils can handle. This further shows that the structure of words in their narratives reflects the length of words available to them, which also shows the length of words that they can easily process for comprehension. However, the pupils’ use of a few three to four morphemes in words implies that pupils, especially in the last grade level, should also be given inputs that contain this length of words for them to be exposed gradually to words with complex structure. But this should be observed with caution so as not to frustrate the readers.

Likewise, many of the words used in the lexical production of the pupils were single words (i.e. not hyphenated or compounded). A few compound words, specifically two-words, were used by Grades 2 and 4, and an increase in Grade 6 with a single use of three words. This result shows that there is an increasing use of two words in the narratives of pupils by grade level. The gathered data strongly suggest that Grade 2 pupils tend to use the least number of two words while Grade 4 with a minimal increase of use and Grade 6 with a modest increase of two words in their narratives. This further
reveals that the use of two to three words increases as the pupils grow chronologically with language maturity. Grade 2 pupils should not be provided with words that are complex since they can only handle simple words. On the other hand, few advanced words can be introduced to Grade 4 pupils for them to be familiar with other lexical structures appropriate to their level. Grade 6 pupils, however, should be exposed to a controllable number of compound words so as not to impede their comprehension. Lexical structures should be tailored appropriately according to a particular instructional level.

Given these descriptions, the lexical features of the pupils increase steadily as the grade level increases. Filipino pupils, as second language learners of English, can only handle common or familiar words with one to two morphemes and a few compounds. Results also imply that reading materials to be used for grade school pupils should show increasing complexity in lexical features and not change in structure to a certain level. This finding debunks Anderson and Davison’s (1986) claim that difficult words (longer or less frequent words) do not affect complexity of texts. Derivatives and compounds, in spite of being longer than primitive words, are normally easier to interpret. However, Filipino pupils need scaffolding of lexical features because they may find a word difficult in terms of its structure. The longer or less frequent the words are, the more difficult the text becomes. Lexical complexity is dictated by its structure. Therefore, scaffolding should be observed with the help of the teacher. Inflections, derivations, and number of words or compounds should be used with caution considering the language ability of the pupils per grade level.

**Syntactic Features of Pupils’ Narratives**

The syntactic features, in this study, refer to the syntactic elements that pupils written production contain. The total number of T-units (LENGTH) constitutes the units of analysis as they can be recognized without difficulty and provide a more accurate means of gauging the complexity of sentences in written texts (Sotillo, 2000). Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998) also assert that the number of dependent clauses per total clauses, the clauses per T-unit, or the number of dependent clauses per T-unit are the best measures of syntactic
complexity. The Minimal Terminable Unit (T-unit) is the shortest unit of a particular passage that contains one independent clause with its dependent clause/s and can be segmented without “leaving any sentence fragments as residue” (Hunt, 1970, p.189). T-units with errors in typography but do not damage the clarity and meaning were considered for analysis. Other than the LENGTH, the mean length of T-units in words (MLT-W), the mean length of T-units in morphemes (MLT-M), the total number of complex T-units (COMPLEX), the total number of coordinating conjunctions (COORD), the total number of subordinating conjunctions (SUBORD), and the proportion of complex T-units (PROPCOMPLEX) are considered syntactic variables.

Table 3
Means of Syntactic Features in Pupils’ Narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>LENGTH</th>
<th>MLT-W</th>
<th>MLT-M</th>
<th>COMPLEX</th>
<th>COORD</th>
<th>SUBORD</th>
<th>PROPCOMPLEX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>22.35</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>6.65</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>25.35</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>7.85</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>32.60</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>5.53</td>
<td>7.05</td>
<td>5.95</td>
<td>7.80</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 reveals that the LENGTH of pupils’ narratives steadily increases as pupils grow chronologically by grade level. This is also true to MLT-W and MLT-M since the lexical features in terms of TNW and TNM improve as pupils mature linguistically. Generally, there is a linear increase of all syntactic measures as pupils progress to a higher level except for COORD which is densest in Grade 4 then followed by Grade 2 and subsequently by Grade 6. The use of coordinating conjunctions by Grade 4 pupils shows that they seem to concentrate on COORD which reduces their use of SUBORD and thus affects a little organization of COMPLEX and PROPCOMPLEX. They tend to join T-units together into sentences of coordinating conjunctions; hence, their fewer use of SUBORD as compounds manifest that their outputs are less complex as compared to the outputs of Grade 6. Likewise, Grade 2 pupils use more coordinating conjunctions with low means in SUBORD and COMPLEX which successedly affect PROPCOMPLEX. This further implies that Grades 2 and 4 pupils show connected T-units in a sentence using more coordinating conjunctions than subordinating ones which make their syntactic organization less complex. On the other hand, the
lowest mean attributed to the Grade 6 pupils’ use of COORD signifies their skill in varying the use of conjunctions. Given this finding, it is apt to say that there is a spread of conjunction use from SUBORD to COORD which advances the highest mean in COMPLEX and PROPCOMPLEX, as opposed to the means calculated for Grades 4 and 2. Therefore, Grade 6 pupils display their ability of weaving narratives using varied types of conjunctions which indicates that the use of conjunctions by Grade 6 pupils decreases on COORD but fulfills the use of other conjunctions and further demonstrates availability of other conjunctions that may be used in expressing meanings of connected clauses.

In terms of coordinating conjunctions used, there is a repetitive instance of usage by pupils in the three grade levels. Coordinating conjunctions such as but, so, and and are repeatedly used in their organization which make the T-units complex in a single construction. Construction is used here as a composition of T-units within a terminal punctuation that is used to signify a single sentence. Likewise, the conjunctive adverb then which is used to conjoin two independent clauses that coordinating conjunctions realize is included as part of COORD, as specified in the methods of tabulation and calculation of words. The repetitive use of the four connectors in pupils’ narratives reveals that from the coordinating conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs, only the four connectors are activated to structure multi-clauses sentences. Conjunctive adverbs that were used in the narratives but were not used to conjoin independent clauses served as transitions but never calculated as a measure of COORD. Consider the following language samples in the narratives parsed into T-units:

Grade 2:  
(Pupil 6)  
One night a girl was sleeping/
and she woke up/
and she went outside and said/
“Papa can you get the moon for me” “Ok”/
then his dad carry her/
and she can’t still get it./ (6 T-units)

Grade 4:  
(Pupil 9)  
Then the girl played with/
then accidentally she threw it so high/
then it disappeared suddenly/
then the girl started to frown/
then she went back to her bedroom and went back to
sleep./ (5 T-units)

Grade 6:  The father grabbed the nearby star/
(Pupil 4)
and the ladder learned on the star/
and the ladder slopped moving./ (3 T-units)

The COORD show a repetitive use in the constructions which
implies pupils’ inability to determine meanings of connectors
appropriate in conjoining connected clauses. This further means that
most of these coordinating conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs are
not yet available to pupils even in the last grade. Considerably,
Grades 2 and 4 pupils demonstrate run-on sentences with recurring
use of conjunctions. However, the last grade shows that the
LENGTH of the construction is reduced but still with repeated
COORD. This implies that Grade 6 pupils seem to monitor LENGTH
which may be attributed to their ability to simplify constructions but
complicate such using other cohesive devices like SUBORD.
However, the given samples reveal that although Grades 2 and 4
pupils tend to use more T-units in a single construction, these do not
guarantee developing complexity of their narratives. It is on the
spread of syntactic complexity measures: COORD and SUBORD that
denote increase of COMPLEX and PROPCOMPLEX which lead to
syntactic complexity. Following are the subordinating conjunctions
used by the pupils by grade level:

Table 4
Subordinating Conjunctions Used in Pupils’ Narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>where, when, as</td>
<td>as, when, that, while,</td>
<td>when, where, as,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>until, so, that</td>
<td>because, so that, so,</td>
<td>until, if, that, because,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>if, because, after</td>
<td>until, till, if, after, no</td>
<td>while, since, after, so,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>matter, instead of</td>
<td>in order, so that, as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>soon as</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evident in Table 4, all subordinating conjunctions are single
words in Grade 2, mostly one word in Grades 4 and 6 with only two
two-word subordinators in both grades, and one three-word subordinators in Grade 6. This reveals the grammatical length of subordinators used by the pupils as they step to higher grade levels – that there is a slight use of two- or three-word subordinators. The finding challenges the claim of Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998) that a nonlinear relationship exists between subordination and development. This implies care in using simple subordinators in all levels, especially in Grade 2 and a scaffolding of structurally complex subordinators in Grades 4 and 6. Likewise, the data also prove that there is an increasing use of subordinators in the narratives of the pupils. It should, therefore, be observed that what is available and decodable for Grade 2 pupils are one-word subordinators while Grade 4 is from one- to two-word subordinators, and Grade 6 from one- to three-word subordinators.

Subordinating conjunctions are “typically said to be types of cohesive devices, lexical expressions that may add little or no propositional content by themselves but that serve to specify the relationships among sentences in oral written discourse, thereby leading the reader/listener to the feeling that the sentences ‘hang together’ or make sense” (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999, p. 519). Interestingly, Grade 2 pupils demonstrate their ability to embed and subordinate clauses in their constructions. Though capable of using such subordinators, the measures of syntactic complexity do not yield a high degree of usage.

Hence, the connectors and subordinators both statistically and subjectively aforementioned are the cohesive devices available to pupils by grade level, suggests that teachers and coursebook writers should observe caution in introducing conjunctions of other kinds. Pupils should only be presented with conjunctions that are within their ability; however, as the grade level steps up, pupils should also be exposed to other subordinators although meanings should be expressed explicitly with the teacher’s help. Since the given conjunctions signal what is decodable by pupils, reading texts that are used to foster interest and comprehension should contain only cohesive devices that are within pupils’ ability.

Likewise, pupils’ syntactic constructions yielded phrases and clauses. The number and type of clauses used by pupils denote syntactic complexity and reveal that such type of clauses are
determined by the kind of conjunctions used in the constructions. Grade 2 pupils are already capable of producing clauses, be it dependent or independent. This ability improves as they go to higher instructional levels.

**Conclusion**

From the findings obtained from this study, it can be concluded that the narratives steadily increase as pupils grow chronologically by grade level. Both lexical and syntactic features of the narratives increase in complexity, although findings suggest that there should be scaffolding of features as pupils progress linguistically. This steady increase manifests that pupils’ linguistic ability improves as they mature linguistically.

Lexical features affect complexity of texts for grade school pupils. Such features increase steadily as pupils improve with language ability and chronological even grade level. Lexical complexity is influenced by variables such as types of words, length of words, number of morphemes, and inflectional and derivational morphemes. On the other hand, it is on the spread of complexity measures which lead to syntactic complexity. The presence of complex syntactic features in a text in some way may not directly cause difficulty, but may ease comprehensibility. Therefore, the lexical features should be assessed before providing reading texts to grade school pupils. Assessment of this kind may be generated using commercial language analysis software or may be subjectively appraised by experts who have gained sufficient experience in and exposure to text analysis. Significantly, the inflectional and derivational morphemes that pupils can handle should be included as bases of text analysis. Teachers and coursebook writers should be guided by the fact that knowledge of derivational morphemes develops later than knowledge of inflectional morphemes (Anderson & Davison, 1986). Inflectional morphemes in pupils’ narratives are denser than derivational morphemes. Compounds should also be taken into account since they also increase in use as pupils progress linguistically.

Syntactic features are defocused in text comprehensibility. Certainly, it is worthy to qualify that what is comprehensible syntax
is simple—with minimal use of connectors. Readability formula is limited to lexical features and thus cannot measure syntactic complexity. There may be other factors about readers and texts which cannot be described in terms of the readability formula such as pupils’ interest or motivation, schema, type of reading materials, and an approach that can capture reading performance for older pupils. Syntactic features of reading texts may also be appraised like the lexical features to determine appropriateness of syntactic constructions for pupils. As found, it is on the spread of syntactic complexity measures: COORD and SUBORD that denote increase of COMPLEX and PROPCOMPLEX which lead to syntactic complexity.

Even though the present study was conducted in the Philippines, it offers valuable insights for publishers, material developers, and classroom teachers worldwide. They can use the findings in selecting the reading texts to be incorporated in the coursebooks and used in the language classrooms.

References


**About the Author**

Jessie Barrot is a teacher, teacher-trainer, researcher, and textbook reform advocate. He is a full-time faculty at the Department of English and Applied Linguistics, De La Salle University, Manila. He has already published books and professional articles and presented papers in various international conferences in Singapore, Macau, Hong Kong, and the Philippines. His research interests include SLA, text analysis, language teaching, materials development, pedagogical linguistics, and language testing and assessment.
Move Analysis of Philosophy Research Article Introductions Published in the University of Santo Tomas

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Abstract

Swales’ Create A Research Space (CARS) model for Moves Analysis of Research Article Introductions (RAIs) has been frequently applied in different disciplines. However, in the case of research conducted among RAIs written in the field of Philosophy in the setting of the University of Santo Tomas, research needs to be done to determine how the local discourse community structures this important research article component. To achieve this, thirty (30) RAIs from the said discipline were examined on a per-sentence level to identify the Moves and underlying Steps that characterize each of the samples. These Moves and Steps were then summarized to reveal distinct RAI features that help provide the field of Philosophy research writing its own identity.

Keywords: Philosophy; research articles; CARS model; Moves Analysis; research article introductions; research paper writing; second language writing

Introduction

While this research will focus on identifying the distinctive features or “Moves” that characteristically mark Research Article Introductions (RAIs) in the field of Philosophy, much remains to be said on the over all concept that embraces this investigative attempt. This “umbrella” concept deals with the terms “Genre” and “Genre Analysis” and it is to this effect that such will be accorded prior importance before any further discussion of matters is undertaken.

Miller (1984) defines “Genre” as recurrent social action that occurs in equally recurrent rhetorical situations within specific discourse communities. Swales (1990) articulates the concept of Genre as particular forms of discourse that feature a common structure, style, intended audience, and content and which are aimed
at completing certain communicative functions. He furthers that genres are forms of hierarchies, chains, sets and networks that are shared by members of discourse communities (Swales, 2004). Fairclough (2003) likewise describes genres as various ways of discourse interaction, while Bhatia (1993) details Genre in terms of language use in professional settings.

Using Genre Analysis as framework in numerous researches has resulted in the identification of principles that govern the same. Berkenkotter & Huckin (1993), Miller (1994), and Connor (1996) highlight the influence of cultural communities and socio cultural factors on the construction of particular genres. They add that genre is shaped by the source’s knowledge of the audience or to whom a particular genre is directed at. Swales and Feak (1994) maintain that many considerations arise in the production of a genre and these include purpose, organization, presentation, and audience with the audience as most important. Paltridge (2001) attests to this when he discussed the concepts of context and audience as important factors that influence the formation of a genre. Berkenkotter and Huckin (1993) and Paltridge (2001) also concur that genres differ along varying disciplinary contexts. As such, genre analysis is an interesting field of study because genre patterns can always be subjected to evaluation (Swales, 1990) given their varying nature across culture, language and field of discipline. With this diversity, Hyland (2004), along with Coe (1994), posits that findings can be translated to their effects on the teaching and pedagogy, respectively, of second language writing in English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

With this being said, numerous studies have been conducted in the field of genre analysis across disciplines. For example, the field of medicine has had its fair share of genre-based research: Nwogu (1990) on medical texts, Berkenkotter (2000) on psychotherapy, and Ding (2007) on application essays to medical and dental schools. Sales promotion letters, grant proposals, and business letters of negotiation have also been extensively analyzed by Bhatia (1993), Connor & Mauranen (1999), and Pinto dos Santos (2002) respectively. Lastly, genre analysis of academic writing has been likewise investigated: argumentative essays (Hyland, 1990), academic essays (Kusel, 1992), evaluation comments on student writing (Smith, 1997), and written academic discourse (Pique & Posteguillo, 2006).
With the concepts of Genre and Genre Analysis previously discussed, it would be significant now to note that the Research Article (RA) as a genre deserves emphasis as this will segue onto studies that have informed the writing of Research Article Introductions (RAIs).

According to Hyland (2000), RAs are considered to be the most important channel for the presentation of new knowledge in today’s scientific arena. As with other genres that maintain their own structure, writing style, and audience, RAs also possess their own conventional structure (Brett, 1994) and this has led to multi disciplinary researches that highlight the development of particular portions of RAs. For instance, Kanoksilapatham (2005) and Nwogu (1997) analyzed the rhetorical structure of biochemistry research articles and the structure and functions of the medical research paper, respectively. Postequillo (1999), on the other hand, researched on the schematic structure of computer science research articles. Ridley (2000) and Kwan (2006) both investigated literature reviews of doctoral theses, while Li & Ge (2009) conducted a genre analysis of English medium research articles. With respect to specific portions of the research paper, the generic structures of dissertation acknowledgements, for example, were analyzed by Hyland (2003). Research paper abstracts in Social Science written in English and Spanish were studied by Martin (2002). Lim (2006) explored the Methods section of management research articles whereas Brett (1994), Williams (1999) and Yang & Allison (2003) explored the Results sections of Sociology, Medicine, and Applied Linguistics research articles respectively. On the other hand, the Discussion portions of research articles in History, Political Science and Sociology, and Medicine were probed by Holmes (1997) and Azirah (2001). Lastly, the structure of the PhD theses conclusion chapters were analyzed by Bunton (2005).

Since this paper primarily deals with research on Introduction portions of RAs, it must be noteworthy to consider the extent of scholarship that is available in this area.

Subscribing to the definition of Genre, Swales (1990) explains that Research Article Introductions (RAIs) possess a well-defined purpose and over all organization thus qualifying RAIs as genres in themselves (Bhatia, 1997) or in the case of Dudley-Evans (1997), as a
sub genre because the RAI is part of the Research Article which is a genre in itself. In addition, research on the RAI reveals that it can vary among different disciplines (Swales & Najjar, 1987; Swales, 1990; Samraj, 2002, 2005, 2008) and even across different languages (Ahmad, 1997) and cultures (Loi & Evans, 2010).

In Swales’ (1990) analysis of 158 RAIs across various disciplinary areas, he has formulated the Create A Research Space (CARS) model which basically presents the “Moves” of the functional units in the Research Article Introduction. Connor, Davis & De Rycker (1995) define Moves as the means to identify textual regularities in certain genres of writing. Moreover, Moves describe the functions of particular portions of texts in relation to the overall task and this observation thus supports the finding that Moves vary in length (Connor & Mauranen, 1999). Lastly, Ding (2007) adds that Moves can be helpful tools in genre studies. An updated version of Swales’ (2004) CARS model is presented below:

Table 1


Move 1: Establishing a Research Territory
   a. Showing that the general research area is:
      a.1. important
      a.2. central
      a.3. interesting
      a.4. problematic
      a.5. relevant (OPTIONAL)
   b. Introducing and reviewing items of previous research in the area (OBLIGATORY)

Move 2: Establishing a Niche (OBLIGATORY)
   a. Indicating a gap in the previous research
   b. Extending previous knowledge in some way
      b.1. extending findings in immediate research literature
      b.2. drawing a conclusion from survey of previous research

Move 3: Occupying the Niche
   a. Outlining purposes or stating the nature of the present research (OBLIGATORY)
   b. Listing research questions or hypothesis (PISF)*
   c. Announcing principal findings (PISF)
   d. Stating the value of the present research (PISF)
   e. Indicating structure of the research paper (PISF)

*PISF – Present In Some Fields
Surveying research specifically conducted on the CARS model, Bunton (2002) argues that generic moves in PhD theses introductions exist. Moreover, textual organization can be identified in RA introductions written in the field of Applied Linguistics, for instance (Ozturk, 2007). However, in spite of the clear identifiability of the CARS model in these introductions, research has also indicated that there is an evolving thought in the model (Johns, 2008) and that has been observed in the following: the formation of two new steps in the CARS model (Arvay & Tanko, 2004), the realization that some moves are frequent compared to others (Jogthong, 2001), and the general absence of a “Gap” in Malay Research Article Introductions (Ahmad, 1997). Locally, a study aimed at assessing the particular Moves employed in the introduction sections of twenty one (21) graduate research papers from a university in Manila reveals that a majority of the writers employed the Move 1, Steps 2 and 3 sub moves, the Move 2 – Indicating a Gap sub-move, and the Move 3 – Outlining Purposes and Announcing present research sub-moves (Madrunio, 2012).

It is in this regard that this research is being conducted to identify the Moves that can be observed in the writing of Philosophy RAIs. Finally, in the just mentioned field, which will be the main focus of this paper, Samraj (2008) has discovered that Philosophy theses introductions typically followed this Move:

Move 1: Introduction to the topic without much reference to previous research
Move 2: Statement of the goals of the thesis
   a. Philosophical argument
   b. Solution to an identified philosophy problem
Move 3: Overview of the organization of the paper

In spite of the substantial amount of international research that has already been conducted on Research Article Introductions (RAIs) in particular, there still exists a dearth of research that deals with the Moves in Philosophy RAIs particularly in the setting of a comprehensive university in the Philippines. Even the above mentioned study by Samraj focuses on theses introductions and not on RAIs and this makes this study more interesting as it becomes clear that Introductions in theses and RAIs may follow different Moves and Steps.
It is on the basis of this gap that this research was conducted. Using Swales’ (2004), Create A Research Space (CARS) model, this study examines a corpus consisting of thirty (30) Philosophy RAs written in selected journals published in the University of Santo Tomas. The aim of the study is to identify the Moves and Steps that characterize the RAs written in the field. It is hypothesized that RAs in Philosophy carry their distinctive features or Moves that help inform the field’s individuality and character. The underlying Moves identified can present numerous possibilities for future research and implications on the teaching of second language writing, characterizing Philippine English and even for performing contrastive rhetorical analyses on Philosophy RAs written by other non-native speakers from other countries.

**Methodology**

To identify the Moves that characterize RAs in Philosophy, a total of thirty (30) Introduction portions of RAs published in selected academic journals at the University of Santo Tomas, Manila were chosen and individually analyzed using the Swales (2004) Create A Research Space Model. Selection of the research articles was conducted randomly. Each RAI was analyzed using Swales’ CARS Moves with Move 1 being used as basis for inspecting any of the following optional steps: Important, Central, Interesting, Problematic, or Relevant, in addition to the obligatory review of previous research in the area. The texts were also analyzed for Move 2 as to whether they revealed any of the following steps: indication of a gap in the previous research or extension of previous knowledge in some way. Lastly, each text was similarly analyzed for Move 3 specifically on whether the texts demonstrated any of the following steps: outlined purposes or stated the nature of the present research, listed research questions or hypothesis, announced principal findings, stated the value of the present research or indicated the structure of the research paper.

After analysis of each text, each of the results was tabulated to identify the following: any Move that may be apparent in each of the texts but is not included in the Swales CARS Model, any Move 1 steps, Move 2, and every underlying step in Move 3. After tabulation
of the Moves and Steps of each RAI, the dominant Moves and Steps were identified in separate tables, thus providing us with the pattern on the Moves that have dominantly figured in the corpus.

As for the research’s methodological limitations, the absence of a triangulation system that includes inter-rating procedures, non inclusion of surveys among writers of Philosophy RAIs and the relatively limited scope of the corpus exist.

**Results and Discussion**

This research hypothesizes that RAIs in the field of Philosophy carry their own distinctive Moves and such distinctions provide this genre with its own identity. In the course of the investigations of each of the thirty RAIs, tables that present the Moves and Steps of the RAIs are provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move 1a</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>86.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problematic</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quote</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal experience</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using Swales’ (2004) Create A Research Space (CARS) model, while Move 1a generally establishes the research territory by showing the above tabulated Steps in varying frequency, it was apparent that a majority of the RAIs inspected adhered to the use of background information in developing an intended philosophical concept (26/30 or 86.66%). Background information per se is not explicitly identified in Swales’ (2004) CARS framework but this finding on the research’s corpus runs parallel with Samraj’s (2008) analysis of Master’s theses.
in the field of Philosophy, where it is discussed that the initial yet basic Move in Philosophy theses introductions includes an introduction to the topic in the form of literature reviews or topic generalization. Using Samraj’s findings and connecting these with the results of this study, it is evident that a majority of the RAI writers in this corpus employed the use of background information to create topic generalization.

Table 3
*Summary of Move 1b Steps identified from thirty (30) RAIs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move 1b</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review of Related Literature</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>63.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Still in adherence to Swales’ CARS Model, the second most prevalent Move 1 Step (19/30 or 63.33%) was the Review of Related Literature (Move 1b). Such discourse feature in the research corpus is expected because based on the researcher’s informal interviews of Philosophy professors in the University, background information (as identified as Move 1 step) based on the RA writer’s schema no matter how extensive will still be insufficient in the absence of supplementary review of literature. In addition, while RAIs in other fields commonly use the Review of Related Literature (Move 1b) to present pertinent works of other researchers, it was noticeable among this study’s corpus that RRLs were based on sources bearing the names of the actual theorists themselves and this can be observed through the following examples:

Text # 1: Review of Related Information

_Ferdinand de Saussure_ for one saw no fundamental connection between the sign and its referent in terms of the linguistic representation of reality. ²

Another interesting exploration…is through _Umberto Eco’s_ enigmatic _platypus_. ⁴ Through CS Pierce’s semiotics, Eco evinces the problematic of…

Text # 3: Review of Related Information
One of his avowed goals as a communist was to develop a Marxist aesthetic philosophy, in contraposition to twentieth century art, literature, and music...

It is this emphasis on social relationships that became the basis of his aesthetics. In another remarkable work, *Writer and Critic (WAC)*, Lukacs bewailed...

In the case of this study’s corpus, it can be remarked that a Move 1 feature of the Philosophy RAIs written in the University reveals that Background Information and the Review of Related Literature can be interspersed with each other to bolster the claims of the RA writer.

In addition to the Steps that Swales (2004) presents, other Move 1 Steps such as the use of quotations, dialogues, and experiences were identified from the sample. Some examples for each are presented below:

Text # 1: Quote
“...because Philosophy has its being essentially in the element of that universality which encloses the particular within it, the end of final result seems...”

-Hegel, Phenomenology of the Mind, p.1

Text # 13: Quote
*I just want to live as a simple Buddhist monk, but during the last thirty years I have made many friends around the world and I want to have close contact with these people...*

The XIVth Dalai Lama

Text # 18: Dialogue
Meno: Can you tell me, Socrates, whether virtue is acquired by teaching or by practice; or if neither by teaching nor by practice, then whether it comes to man by nature, or in some other way?

The Dialogue starts with this apparently easy question. I say apparent because, after a long discussion, the Dialogue ends with Socrates saying: “But we shall never know the certain truth until...”

Text # 7: Experience
While in the second grade my son had to do a report on the theme “What does my Daddy do?”...
I remember how, fifteen years ago, I would always be given a critical look that borders on hesitancy and skepticism by people I talked to...whenever I made mention of the philosophy of pope John Paul II...

Text # 12: Experience

...my first encounter with Gandhi dates back to the time of my early grades when I was struck by the headlines of the Old Tribune that my father was reading... And so we ask, what kind of man is this...?

It is worth noting that the above Move 1 Steps were not previously identified in Swales’ CARS model. However, the presence of these among the Introductions analyzed reveals that owing to the humanistic albeit complex topics that characterize research articles in Philosophy, researchers and writers in this field may appear to adapt to the levels of the readers by using writing techniques that initially “level” with the readers’ existing schema and eventually proceeding to more complex themes and discussions as the research article progresses. The use of quotes, dialogues, and experiences can therefore imply that writers in this field of study exercise some flexibility in ensuring that their articles will appeal to the readers from the start up to the end.

As for Move 2 or the Establishing of a Niche, while Swales’ Model clearly establishes the research gap in the course of the article introduction, the results of the analysis of this study’s corpus reveals similarities with Samraj (2008) and Ahmad’s (1997) research on Masters theses introductions in Philosophy and research article introductions in Malay, respectively. Samraj and Ahmad’s studies reveal the non-prevalence of specific Research Gaps and the same occurrence can be observed in this study’s Philosophy RAIs. When tabulated, the corpus reveals that only seven (7) RAIs out of thirty (30) established research gaps and the attributes of these research gaps are shown in Table 4 below:

While Swales (2004) again mentions that Gaps in the research or theory were often indicated in the form of questions and/or statement of need, in the case of this corpus, such niche was commonly established in the form of real-world problems, the apparent non-conformity of the theory to modern research, and the
highlighting of an actual need for further explanation of the philosophical theory.

Table 4
*Summary of Move 2 Steps identified from thirty (30) RAIs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text No.</th>
<th>Move 2 Step</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency = 7 of 30; Percentage = 23.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Real-world problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lack of discourse on topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Real-world problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Non-conformity of theory with modern research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Non-conformity of theory with modern research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Inconsistencies of theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Real-world problem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some samples that reveal the nature of these “niches” in the corpus are presented below:

Niche: Real world problem
Text 1:
The problem that this issue raises is on the impossible possibility of the transference of meaning through communication...

Text 7:
The demand to integrate philosophy with the drama of human subjectivity was especially strong among the seminarians that I taught... I believe that this demand is legitimate, and so those seminarians have always remained in my thought.
Niche: Non-conformity of theory with modern research

Text 17:
Modern anthropological research does not support the view of Bachofen and Engels that a matriarchal stage in human development existed…

Text 20:
For Popper, the two approaches mentioned above are untenable, leading to paradoxes and contradictions… They do not contribute to the growth of knowledge, nor explain the development of ideas which are the interest of epistemology…

Although obligatory in other fields, this corpus of Philosophy RAIs reveal that Move 2 may not be as prevalent as writers in this discipline would tend to move from background information/review of related literature to the immediate elaboration of the theories in question.

Table 5
Summary of Move 3 Steps identified from thirty (30) RAIs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move 3 Steps</th>
<th>Frequency*</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the research</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of the research</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Move 3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fronted Move 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research question</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of the research</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of the research</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitation of the study</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal findings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Number of research articles out of thirty (30)

As for the Move 3 Steps, Table 5 above reveals that the most frequently used Move 3 steps were statement of the “Purpose of the Research” and “Nature of the Research”. In contrast to the findings
in Move 2 where research gaps were not as common among the corpus, Move 3s written in this corpus’ Philosophy RAIs reveal consistencies with Swales’ model; that is, writers tended to present the purpose of their research and the nature of their research at the end of the introduction. This is on top of other Move 3 Steps like statement of the research question, the value of the research, and the structure of the research among other steps. However, there were also RAIs where the writers simply proceeded to the discussion of their philosophical concepts without stating any Move 3 steps. These RAIs account for 26.66% of the corpus.

Finally, Swales’ CARS Model presents that Move 3s are typically located at the end of research article introductions. However, as this research suggests, some writers can opt to write their introductions by outlining the research’s purposes, specifying limitations of the study, and presenting the nature of the present research at the beginning of the introduction. Swales (1990) identifies this as Fronted Move 3 and the same phenomenon can be observed in texts two (2), nine (9), and twenty (20). Examples for which are presented below:

Text # 2: Identifying the paper’s purpose:
PRELIMINARY REMARKS
This paper will tackle the miserable plight of Filipino philosophy in the twenty first century from a historical point of view.
Unlike other post colonialist accounts, however,... this paper will neither go that far nor to that extent. Instead, this will merely examine our immediate historical backyard,... and assume that our Filipino philosophers at that time wielded enough power...
This paper will also attempt to visualize a possible pathway for the rehabilitation of Filipino philosophy.

Text # 9: Specifying limitations
I have no pretensions about making this presentation an exhaustive and detailed evaluation...of Karol Wojtyla. I do hope, however, to bring to the attention of the students... his philosophical approach and his book.

Text # 20: Presenting the nature of the present research
One of today’s leading philosophers of science is Karl Raimund Schiff Popper. This paper is a descriptive exposition of his logic of science which is the foundation of his other theories, including his philosophy of politics...

The implications for using Fronted Move 3s can be drawn from the research writers’ need to present the paper’s purpose right at the beginning of the introduction as doing this will already provide readers with a readily available idea on what the research article will present.

Conclusion

Examining the over-all results presented above, it can be concluded that the thirty (30) Philosophy RAIs taken from selected journal publications in the University of Santo Tomas reveal similarities with Swales’ CARS model (2004) although minor differences were likewise noted. Specifically, a majority of these RAIs typically exhibited a Move 1 that featured the use of Background Information supported by Review of Related Literature. Move 2s, on the other hand, were not as observable among the majority of the RAIs; although when present, they centered on the presentation of real-world problems and/or inconsistencies of the philosophical theory with modern research. Lastly, Move 3 steps were also noted in the corpus and the more prominent steps include statement of the purposes and nature of the research. In addition to other steps, instances of Fronted Move 3s were likewise observed although these were located at the beginnings of the introductions.

Noting the findings from the study, the following implications to the teaching of writing can be drawn:
1. Teachers of research writing must recognize the writing conventions that are inherent in different fields of discipline.
2. Even though Swales’ model establishes a framework for structuring how research articles are written across disciplines, it is clear that other research articles in fields like Philosophy can assume their own identities which are to a certain extent different from what Swales has designed. A certain degree of flexibility in structuring research articles must then be applied even as writing teachers strive to strike a balance with the
writing conventions that dominate the research writing landscape.

3. Writing, in a general sense, has the capacity to evolve along the lines of disciplinary cultures and even race. This phenomenon then calls for more scientific inquiry.

While this study dwelt on analyzing the Moves and accompanying Steps of selected RAIs from the University of Santo Tomas, much remains to be done to extend the results that have been achieved so far. For future directions that can be taken, inter-raters who will examine each text for their Moves and Steps can be employed to provide a means for comparing the researcher’s identifications with those of the inter-raters’. As with the utilization of an inter-rating procedure, statistical analyses that determine inter-rater reliability can be included in the methodology. Interviews of prolific Philosophy RA writers in the university can also be performed to serve as benchmarks for comparing analysis with usual writing practices. Covering Philosophy RAs from at least 3 more universities in the Philippines can be conducted to produce results that can be conclusive of the overall Moves and Steps in Philosophy RAIs. Lastly, a contrastive analysis on Philosophy RAIs written among Outer and Expanding Circle countries can also form part of the investigation. At any rate, this study provides future researchers with a generous serving of ideas for further inquiry.

References


About the Author

Roy Randy Y. Briones is a full-time, tenured faculty member of the University of Santo Tomas. He completed his Master of Arts in Teaching - major in English Language degree (with Distinction) from De La Salle University in 2001 and since 1999, has been teaching English to college level students in De La Salle University, Manila, Jubail Technical Institute in Saudi Arabia, and presently in the University of Santo Tomas. During his 2-year teaching stint in Saudi Arabia, he worked as English Instructor and Curriculum Enhancement and Development Committee Coordinator. Under the said posts, he is credited with the co-authorship of Jubail Technical Institute’s English Language Program Level 1 and 2 writing course books in addition to the development of the Institute’s language testing materials. He has also taken part in training pre-service English language teachers and has taught ESL courses to foreign students in DLSU’s Center for Language Learning (CeLL) and UST’s Language Center. His research interests include discourse analysis and second language classroom writing and his current pursuits include among others textbook writing for high school students and road bike racing.
Conversational Topic Preferences, Taboo Words and Euphemisms: The Case of Philippine Male and Female University Students

Teresita D. Tajolosa
Palawan State University

Abstract

The present study investigates the conversational topic preference, taboo words, euphemisms, and cathartic expressions of private and state university male and female students. Among the important findings were: 1) the opposite sex is not ranked as the most preferred topic of conversation with friends by students although they are among the favorites. Instead, sports, is the most preferred topic by male students from the private university while school matters, girls and computer games were listed with almost the same frequency by males from the state university. School matters and lovelife topped the list of female students from the private and the public university; 2) despite the seeming openness, teen-agers feel it improper to discuss personal problems, love life, secrets and sex with mere acquaintances; 3) there is more tendency for Manila-born and bred students to express irritation or anger more strongly through cathartic words than their counterparts who were born and bred in the province; 4) when provoked, both groups of respondents tend to utter harsh words to inflict insult or hurt on other people. What is remarkable is the capacity of males from the private university to utter more varied and more degrading expressions; 5) pertaining to the use of taboo words, the private university students prove to recognize more taboo words than do state university students. Contrarily, some of the terms used to refer to sexual intercourse, excretory process and masturbation were not meant to soften the taboos for their negative connotations and vulgarity; and 6) as can be expected, friends prove to be the most influential in the teenagers language and behavior, followed by media and neighborhood backgrounds. These findings suggested that gender differences may be influenced by socio-economic backgrounds.

Key words: taboo, euphemisms, cathartic words, gender differences

Introduction

There has been a remarkably large number of studies conducted on the characteristics of men’s and women’s language
(among others, Lakoff, 1975; Poynton, 1989; Cameron, 1990; Coates, 1986; Batibo & Kopi, 2008; Tannen, 1990; Hysi, 2011; Bakhtiar, 2011). Such studies highlighted gender differences in language. According to Hysi (2011) gender differences in communication cross linguistic borders and take cultural, ethnic and psycho-social dimensions. For instance, women tend to use linguistic forms which are closer to the polite language variety and are more hesitant to use taboo in public and while men have more freedom in using taboo language, women have always been expected and trained to talk ‘lady like’ (Bakhtiar, 2011, p. 15). Similarly, Gumperz (1982) maintained that women and men have different cultural rules for friendliness, and these different rules can sometimes create miscommunication between them. Jones (1990) shows that, “women are not only sharing information, but are asking each other” (p. 246). With respect to topic preferences in conversations, Holmes (1991) emphasizes that women tend to talk about their feelings and their relationship, while men tend to compare their knowledge, experiences, and recount competitive exploits. The same finding was found in Eschholz, Rosa and Clark (1990), who established that men could practically talk about anything except personal feelings. In Poynton (1989), it was concluded that men’s greatest conversational interests seem to be business and money, followed by sports and amusements, while women tend to talk about men and clothes. Besides, topics about person play a larger part in women’s conversation than in men’s. In an analysis of conversations of males, female and mixed-sex groups of some university students, Nugroho and Agustin (2003) found that ‘persons’ is the typical topic in female group, while ‘objects/belongings’ is the most favorite topic in a male group. Interestingly in the mixed-sex group, topics are chosen depending on how well male or female participants negotiate a particular topic they like for discussion.

Aside from topic preferences, another focus on the sociolinguistics of male and female language is the use of euphemisms. According to Cabej, (1978, in Hysi, 2011), euphemisms emerge out of the fear and shame, fear of hurting other people’s feelings or breaking the rules of society. They are used to hide unpleasant or embarrassing ideas even in those cases where the direct words are not necessarily offensive. According to Hysi, (2011) it is a
given fact that use of euphemisms is a distinct linguistic feature employed by women. In her investigation of categories of female speakers that frequently use euphemisms and the main areas in women’s language that abound in euphemistic expressions, Hysi (2011) found that the use of euphemisms is not only gender-related but is closely related to other factors such as education, culture and social class especially in environments where women have a secondary role in communication and where women’s freedom of expression is suppressed. A very interesting study on sex-related euphemisms in Setswana with the incidence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic was conducted by Batibo and Kopi (2008). Among the important findings were: (1) more euphemisms have been created for private parts, sexual activities, sexual secretions, sexual diseases and related phenomena; (2) these euphemisms have slang origins and use; (3) most of these euphemisms are used by the younger generation; the incidence of HIV/AIDS has created more lexical items for sex-related euphemisms especially those that are related to safe sex, abstinence, and condoms; (4) attitudes toward sexual indulgence has shifted from positive to somewhat negative; and (5) euphemisms that began as casual expressions of slang nature have spread and have become officially part of the Setswana language.

Similarly, Shurta (1999, in Hysi, 2011, p. 245) found that euphemisms as a category of vocabulary in Albanian, have undergone a significant decrease among the young owing to the development and changes in spiritual and cultural world of the Albanians in cities and across villages. Another important finding by Hysi (2011) is that one very rich area of euphemisms is that of diseases (e.g. the big C for cancer, the earth disease/the evil of the world for epilepsy and other dangerous diseases), death (e.g. left/ lost one’s life/deceased/departed for the term ‘dead’), and sexuality (e.g. bird, chick, grapes, peach and plum for ‘penis’ or ‘vagina.’ Moreover, such euphemisms abound in women’s language.

In a similar study by Simkins and Rinck (1982) on the terminologies used by male and female to refer to male and female genitalia and the act of copulation, it came out that regardless of the interpersonal context (i.e. mixed company, friends and lovers) both gender prefer the formal terminologies (i.e. penis, vagina and sexual intercourse) although when discussing with same-sex friends, males
tend to use slang (i.e. use pussy to refer to female genitalia; use ‘fucking’ or ‘screwing’ to refer to sexual intercourse) while females tend to use euphemism (i.e. making love to refer to sexual intercourse).

Still another focus of studies on gender differences is the use of taboo words. Taboo (a borrowed word from Tongan, an Austronesian language) means ‘prohibition’ because something is believed to be dangerous for individual or society. Societies whether primitive or modern have their own set of taboos for certain objects or names. Many euphemisms are product of superstition that words have the power to attract bad things. In most societies that frown at the use of taboo language by women, it is generally held that men use taboo words more than women. In such societies, women therefore tend to use what are described as “polished” and “more refined” words than men (see also, Lakoff, 1975; Salami, 2004).

Philippines is a country where women are expected to be less aggressive, more polite and more circumspect in their speech. Especially in the old days, women’s modesty, indeed, is considered a virtue. With the western influence on fashion, speech and behavior and the advent of technology, some changes must have taken place. Montenegro, in her 1982 dissertation, made an exploratory study of Filipino university students’ language dealing with linguistic features characterizing male and female language in Filipino, analysis of conversational topic preference, topics not considered in good taste, taboo words, euphemisms, cathartic expressions and cuss words and the analysis of male and female perception of each other’s language and their own. Specific findings revealed that the opposite sex tends to be male and females’ favorite topic in conversation although female tend to prefer gossips too. A significant difference in the use of cathartic expressions was found. While 53% of the males were predisposed to the use of cuss words, women on the other hand, tend to be less explicit, more repressed in their use of cathartic expressions. For the use of taboo words and euphemisms, Montenegro (1982) found that men and women’s taboo words centered around the excretory processes, sexual organs and sexual acts where euphemisms are used. Overall, the study confirmed some differences in male and female language and even in the way both sex groups perceive their languages. The study has also indicated in which
features of language male and female share similarities. Acknowledging the fact that the data for the study were taken from one type of respondents only, the author was careful not to generalize the differences found in male and female language. Rather, the study suggested that future study involving rural, lower class and middle age respondents may alter some findings in her study. The study conducted by Montenegro was then the first of its kind in the Philippines. Since it focused on a single type of samples, university students who are Manila-born and bred, the author admitted that the research did not investigate variables like socio-economic status and place of residence.

**Statement of the Problem**

The present study replicated Montenegro’s study with some modifications. This time, the data were taken from two groups of respondents. Secondly, the paper concentrated on the description and analysis of conversational topic preferences, use of taboo words, euphemisms and cathartic words of the respondents. Moreover, the paper is interested in determining whether some changes have taken place in Filipino youth’s language after more than two decades. Specifically, it aimed to satisfy the following questions:

1. Do male and female respondents from a private and a state university differ in the following:
   a. topic preferences
   b. use of taboo words
   c. use of euphemisms
   d. use of cathartic words

2. Which among the following are the sources of students’ cathartic words?
   a. parents
   b. peers/friends
   c. neighbors
   d. media (e.g. newspaper, TV, movies, radio)

**Method**
The corpus of study came from two groups of respondents. The first group consists of 101 undergraduate students from a prestigious private university in Manila, consisting of fifty one males and fifty females. The second group consists of 114 students of a state university in Region IV-Mimaropa, composed of fifty-nine males and fifty five females. The private university students belonged to four different classes. One class came from the College of Liberal Arts whose majors were Developmental Studies, Political Science and International Studies. Another class came from the College of Computer Science whose specializations were Computer Science and Information Systems. The third class came from the College of Biological Sciences whose majors were Premed Physics and Phy-Mat. The fourth class came from the College of Business whose major was Accountancy. The respondents from the state university also came from four classes consisting of BS Civil Engineering, BS Petroleum Engineering, BS Electrical Engineering and BS Psychology students. The students ages from both groups ranged from 16 to 19 years old.

Each student was provided with a blank sheet on which they would indicate their sex, age, major subject and first language. The first part of the research consisted of eliciting answers to several questions which were administered orally in order to elicit spontaneous responses and not to give students time to think twice or to change their first response. It is important that the responses be spontaneous since what is being studied is supposed to be the respondents’ actual language use (e.g. use of cuss words, euphemisms, etc.) Another reason for administering the questions orally was for the researcher to provide explanations while administering the questions.

The questions consisted of the following:

1. Pag kakuwentuhan mo ang friends mo, ano ba usually ang mga topics na pinagkukuwentuhan ninyo? (When you are exchanging stories with your friends, what topics do you usually talk about?)
2. Anong topic sa palagay mo ang hindi in good taste na pagusapan ng mga magkakakilala lamang? (What topics do you think should be spoken about only with those whom one is intimate with?)
3. Pag ikaw ay galit na galit sa isang tao o sa pangyayari, ano
For example, you're getting off a jeep then suddenly it moves.

4. Anong bagay/mga bagay ang hindi mo masabi ng tuwiran o matawag sa tunay nitong pangalan, halimbawa-magjingle? Ilista mo at ibigay mo ang mga ters na ginagamit mo para dito. (What are the things you cannot say directly or call by their real names, for example: to urinate-mag-jingle? List these and give the terms you use for them.)

5. Kailan ka nagmumura? ano ang pinakamasakit na murang nasabi mo o masasabi mo sa isang tao? Bakit? (When do you cuss? What is the worst thing you have used or you can use with a person, Why?)

6. Kanino mo natutuwan ang pagmumura- sa magulang mo ba, sa barkada, kapitbahay, pagbabasa, T.V., pelikula o radio? Pumili ng tatlo. (From whom did you learn to cuss- from your parents, your gang/peers, neighbors, from your reading, TV. movies or radio? Choose three.)

The subjects wrote down their responses as each question was presented to them. Frequencies of responses were tabulated and analyzed.

Results and Discussions

The Conversational Topic Preference of Men and Women

Data revealed that sports (43%) tops among the list of favorite topics in conversations with friends of male students from the private university while school matters ranks first (42%) among the list of most favorite topics by their female counterparts. As a matter of fact, school matters is not listed among the males’ most favorite topics. In contrast, state university males listed school matters with the same frequency as computer games and girls while sports ranks fifth only. This suggests that while males maintain their interest in the opposite sex and the usual favorite computer games, school matters remains high in their list.
The difference in topic preferences of males from the two groups may have been influenced by their economic backgrounds. The private university students mostly come from financially well-off families who by virtue of their entry to that prestigious university in Manila are also well-performing students. Sports and sports clubs abound in Manila and for male teen-agers whose parents can afford to support their enthusiasm for sports, it is not surprising that male students from the private university have taken so much interest in them. Male students from the state university however, generally come from low-income families although a few are raised by middle class families. The hard work therefore, that male students show during college is generally motivated by the desire to prove themselves, please their parents and the desire to prepare themselves for a better future. Such interest in education is reflected in male students’ conversations along with their interest in computer games and girls. Except when students are also athletes, sports are not much a priority by male students from the state university.

The ability to balance their interest in school matters and lovelife are reflected by female students from the private and the state university. Both groups listed school matters and lovelife with almost the same frequency. This is not surprising since females are generally known to be hardworking, sometimes more hardworking than males.

It can be noted however, that there is no one to one correspondence in the responses given by respondents since they were allowed to list as many preferred topics without ranking them. Most respondents if not all, tend to list as many as three favorite topics when conversing with friends. What is worth noting is that while the males in both groups have high preference for ‘chicks’ or girls, boys do not seem to receive very high preference in females in both groups. This is contrary to Montenegro’s findings that males and females have the opposite sex as their first choice for conversational topic.

Topics Considered Not in Good Taste by Students

For topics that should be discussed with intimates only, both male and female students from the private and state university rank
personal problems and family matters first and while lovelife ranks second among the private university students, secrets ranks second among the state university students, followed by sex, lovelife and gossip as third, fourth and fifth respectively by females from both groups and males from the state university. It was noted that the private university males did not list gossip as among those topics which should be discussed only with intimates, most probably because males generally are not fond of gossip.

**Male and Female Use of Cathartic Expressions**

Cathartic expressions include a whole range of obscenity, blasphemy, profanity and invectives (Montenegro, 1982, p. 188). These expressions are usually said within a level of awareness and spontaneity caused by strong emotions.

Table 1.1 and 1.2 shows the respondents’ favorite cathartic expressions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Private University</th>
<th>Private University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.Putang-iná</td>
<td>1.Putang-iná</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.Fuck</td>
<td>2.Nakakainis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.Gago</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1  
*Private University Respondents’ Commonly Uttered Cathartic Expressions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State University</th>
<th>State University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.Shit</td>
<td>1. Shit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.Putang-iná</td>
<td>2. Buwisit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.Putik</td>
<td>naman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.2  
*State University Respondents’ Commonly Uttered Cathartic Expressions*
As shown in Tables 1.1 and Table 1.2, while almost 53% of the private university males would utter Putang-ina and its variations, 12% only of their female counterpart would utter the same. Interestingly, barely 12% of the state university males would utter the expressions Putang-ina while remarkably none of their female counterpart reported uttering it. Instead, state university female students use the less offensive Nakakainis naman, Ay putik and Ay asar talaga to express irritation about a person or event. This shows to some extent the female abhorrence for the Putang-ina and what it connotes. Similar to Montenegro’s findings, males tend to be more explicit and intense in their use of cathartic expressions and while there is a tendency for few females to be expressive as well, a greater number of the female in both groups appear to be less explicit, more repressed in their use of cathartic expressions. What is remarkable in the present study is the state university female’s use of softer cathartic expressions, which is an act of hedging and reflects Jesperson’s (1922 in Coates, 1986) observation that women feel an instinctive shrinking from coarse and gross expressions.

**Use of Cuss Words**

Cuss words, unlike cathartic expressions, are deliberately meant to hurt or insult (Montenegro, 1982, p.189). Tables 2.1 and 2.2. present the harshest words men and women respondents can utter to anyone.
Table 2.1
*The Harshest Cuss Words One Can Utter to Anyone*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Private University Students</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Putang- ina mo</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Putang-ina mo</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. gago ka</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. gago/gaga</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. fuck you</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>3. bullshit ka</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. wala kang kuwenta</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>4. ulol</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. mamatay ka</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>5. asshole</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. pokpok nanay mo</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6. I hope you die</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. tarantado</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7. bitch</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. shit</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8. fuck you</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. utak ipis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9. mamatay na</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. bobo ka</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>10. fucking hell</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. baho ng puwet mo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>11. tae mo</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. dugong aso ka</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>12. tanga</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. mamatay sana mama/papa</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>13. worm</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. linti</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>14. letse ka</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. son of a bitch</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>15. landi</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. damn you</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>16. buwisit</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. asshole</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. tanga</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.2.  
The Harshest Cuss Words One Can Utter to Anyone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State University Students</th>
<th></th>
<th>State University Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Putang-inamo</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1. putang-inamo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. gago ka</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2. shit ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. bobo</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3. gago ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ulol</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4. tang-tanga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. putang-inang buhay yan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5. bullshit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. bullshit ka</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6. punyeta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. shut the fuck up</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7. fuck you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. pucha</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8. mamatay ka na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. fucker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9. puta ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. wala kang kuwenta</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10. lintik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. walanghiya ka</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11. pangit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. pesteng yawa ka</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12. gagong hayop ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. tarantado</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13. walanghiya ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. tanga ka pala e</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14. tangala ka talaga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. buwisit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15. what the fuck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. badtrip ka</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16. insane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. darn you</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18. tirim</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Tables 2.1 and Table 2.2, both males and females in the two groups of respondents rated ‘Putang-in-a mo’ as the harshest word they can utter to anyone. The males and females in both groups have almost the same number of words they consider harsh. What is remarkable is the capacity of male from the private university to utter more varied and more degrading expressions such as *wala kang kuwenta, pokpok nanay mo, dugong aso ka, utak ipis, baho putwet* among others. On the contrary, both the private university and state university female cuss words are relatively the same except that the state university females make use of *Putang-in-a* without the *mo* which may be considered less harsh. According to Montenegro (1982, p. 190), *Putang-in-a* may not be considered insulting anymore, for it can be uttered in jest, out of frustration, or sometimes even a way of complimenting. It is the *putang-in-a mo* with the *mo* that is considered insulting and derogatory.

### 3.4. Use of Taboo Words and Euphemisms

Tables 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 present the taboo words listed by private university males and the euphemisms they employ to soften them.

**Table 3.1**

*Taboo Words and the Corresponding Euphemisms Employed by Males from the Private University*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taboo Word</th>
<th>f Euphemisms Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. to defecate</td>
<td>14 mag-oo, napupu, tawag ng kalikasan, magjejes, japoinks, jerbax, nafloflowbert, ebak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. penis</td>
<td>6 etits, chix, ari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. sex</td>
<td>5 making love, tutut, sisibak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. naiihi</td>
<td>5 jingle, maccr, magwawashroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. vagina</td>
<td>4 kepkep, pussy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. masturbation</td>
<td>2 zonrox, my time, jakol</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 3.1, *defecating* is the most tabooed word among males followed by *penis*, then *sex*. *Defecating* has the most
number of euphemisms among the six enumerated taboo words. In addition, male taboos seem to surround on the excretory process, private body parts and sex. Compared to their male counterparts, the state university males identified only three taboo words which are related to excretory process and sex. It should be noted however, that some of the euphemisms identified by males from the private university are not really euphemisms because they prove to be more vulgar and have negative connotations. For instance, while mag-oo, napupu and tawag ng kalikasan may be considered euphemisms for defecating, ebak and jerbax are considered vulgar and offensive for they connote at the same time that the act is disgusting and ‘does not smell good’. In the same way, the ‘tutut’ and ‘sisibak’ although identified as euphemisms for sexual intercourse, do not really soften the term instead highlight the negative connotations of the word.

Table 3.2
Taboo Words and the Corresponding Euphemisms Employed by Females from the Private University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taboo Word</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Euphemisms Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. to defecate</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>call of nature, maccr, jebs, shit, pupu, poop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>dick, yung sa boys, male thing, oh-okay , thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. penis</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>flower, perky perk, oh, yung ano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. vagina</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>yung ano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. naiihi</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>wiwi, jingle, ginagawa, ah, yung, you do it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. sex</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>nagganun, nagchuchu, tut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. breast</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>boobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. bad odor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>BO, may jabar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. menstruation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>thingy, meron ako</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 3.2, aside from excretory, sex and private parts, private university female taboos include those which are related to personal hygiene (i.e. bad odor, menstruation). It can be noted that the euphemisms identified by the female are not vulgar and offensive in nature except the ‘shit’ for defecating.

Table 3.3 presents the state university female students’ recognized taboo words and the euphemisms for them.

Table 3.3
State University Female Taboo Words and Their Corresponding Euphemisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taboo Word</th>
<th>f Euphemisms Used</th>
<th>f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. to defecate</td>
<td>17 magjejbs, pupu, natootoot, deposit mag-bodywaste, padumi, papoosh, magbabawas muna, tawag ng kalikasan</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. to urinate</td>
<td>7 wiwi, jingle churva, nagdutdut, jirjir,</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. sex</td>
<td>4 chukchak</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. vagina</td>
<td>2 flower</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. menstruation</td>
<td>1 red tide</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be noted from Table 3.3 that compared to their counterparts from the private university, the state university females did not include breast and bad odor in their list of taboo words. Except the ‘churva’ and chukchack’ which are identified as gay language and are quite vulgar, the rest of the terminologies listed may be considered as euphemisms.

Overall, similar to Montenegro’s findings, male and female’s taboo words centered around the excretory processes, sexual organs and sexual functions. The respondents in both groups have almost the same number of euphemisms for the act of defecating. It can be noted also, that the state university male and female have less number of taboo words compared to the private university male and female. Although majority of what the respondents listed as
euphemisms are supposed to be softer terms for the taboo words, some terms connote mechanization and vulgarity of the act itself. Some of these are nagdudut, sisibak and chukchak for sexual intercourse, naeebak and shit for to defecate, dick for male genitals, and zonrox and jakol for masturbation. A similar observation was made by Montenegro on the data from her male respondents. According to her, the euphemisms used by males for sexual intercourse tend to convey connotations of distaste or blunt hostility. The use, for example of yumari, slice, tonting and biyak, to refer to sexual intercourse, and magjakol to mean masturbate, according to her, does not connote joyous actions but tiring, hurtful and negative ones. As a matter of fact, the present study considers the actual words a lot more refined than their substitute names.

Sources of Cuss Words

Table 4 presents the sources of cuss words of the two groups of respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Private University</th>
<th>Private University</th>
<th>State University</th>
<th>State University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.friends</td>
<td>1.media</td>
<td>1.friends</td>
<td>1.friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.media</td>
<td>2.friends</td>
<td>2.media</td>
<td>2.media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.neighborhood</td>
<td>3.neighborhood</td>
<td>3.neighborhood</td>
<td>3.neighborhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.parents</td>
<td>4.parents</td>
<td>4.parents</td>
<td>4.parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.relatives</td>
<td>5.siblings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4, friends (peer group) were the first source for learning cuss words by both private and state university students, except by female university students where media and friends with almost the same number of frequency. Media and neighborhood generally rank second and third as the major sources of cuss words. These findings are expected because friends are the constant companions of the teenagers. In addition, unlimited exposure to
movies, TV, internet and printed materials make the youth acquire behaviors which are seen, read or heard. Moreover, the direct and indirect influence of neighborhood in the youth’s attitudes and behaviors cannot be underestimated.

4. Conclusion

Based on the available data, the present study has revealed the following: 1) the opposite sex is not ranked as the most preferred topic of conversation with friends by students although they are among the favorites. Instead, sports, is the most preferred topic by male students from the private university while school matters, girls and computer games were listed with almost the same frequency by males from the state university. School matters and lovelife topped the list of female students from the private and the public university; 2) despite the seeming openness, teen-agers feel it improper to discuss personal problems, love life, secrets and sex with mere acquaintances; 3) there is more tendency for Manila-born and bred students to express irritation or anger more strongly through cathartic words than their counterparts who were born and bred in the province; 4) when provoked, both groups of respondents tend to utter harsh words to inflict insult or hurt on other people. What is remarkable is the capacity of males from the private university to utter more varied and more degrading expressions. It was noted also that the female state university students avoided the more insulting and derogatory cuss word; 5) pertaining to the use of taboo words, the private university students prove to recognize more taboo words than do state university students. Contrarily, some of the terms used to refer to sexual intercourse, excretory process and masturbation were not meant to soften the taboos for they have negative connotations and vulgar; and 6) as can be expected, friends prove to be the most influential in the teenagers language and behavior, followed by media and neighborhood.

This study has supported previous findings on gender differences in communication and has shown that such differences may be influenced by socio-economic backgrounds. However, this paper does not aim to make generalizations out of the differences for there may be some sociolinguistic variables that were not investigated here. It
would be best to pursue what was started here, involving larger samples and more variables.

Language and gender is indeed a very interesting subject of research but to be more useful, it should not only serve researchers and linguists. More importantly, its results should serve the respondents themselves and the educational system. People’s language, their taboos and use of euphemisms have always been inextricably linked to their culture. More than the linguistic side, the findings about teen-agers’ language is a reminder to sociologists and educators how much the Filipino youth have changed. From their choice of words alone, it can be derived that they are no longer the modest and sometimes passive Filipino youth who are careful about their language. If there is anything most glaring in this study, it is the fact that regardless of the kind of homes that reared our students and whether they are a product of a Catholic school or not, their peers and the media will always be there to teach them something, like the use of obscene words. With language contact and the existence of many cultures including the culture of the internet and the media, it is not surprising that our youth speak and act differently from the way previous generations of Filipinos do. In the midst of the many things taking place in the lives of our youth at present, education has remained the most important and the most powerful tool in transforming their hearts and minds, making them better persons in thoughts, words and actions. Lessons on the sociolinguistic functions of taboos and euphemisms are best learned in school.

Teen-agers should realize this early that humility and politeness are virtues often attached to female. Vulgarity in language therefore, is not only unbecoming but a sign of lack of education. And while assertiveness and straightforwardness are qualities associated to males, they are nevertheless expected to show sensitivity to feelings of other people. To refrain from making strong remarks in order not to offend the hearer or to spare oneself from a compromising situation is an admirable attitude that should be possessed by any person belonging to any civilized society whether that person is a male or female. The ability to use euphemisms to soften an otherwise offensive expression, a taboo, and the ability to control oneself from outbursts of anger are the hallmark of a learned person.
With the advent of the internet, it is necessary that parents and teachers alike prepare the students for the real life ahead, whereby they are not just expected to demonstrate competence in their field but more importantly, that they possess the confidence and ability to communicate with people of various cultures. Numerous benefits await individuals who know how to say the right words at the right time to the right persons and under the right circumstances.

References


### About the Author

Teresita D. Tajolosa is an Assistant Professor at the English Department of Palawan State University, in Puerto Princesa City where she has served for seventeen years. Her primary interests are discourse and genre analysis and sociolinguistics of endangered Philippine languages. She has published her first important research work which is on the sociolinguistics of the Tagbanua language at the Philippine Journal of Linguistics (June 2006 issue). The same research was presented during the 10-ICAL held in Puerto Princesa City in December 2005. Her other research articles (e.g. self-presentation of Filipino and Indian women in online dating sites, analysis of hedging and boosting devices employed by university students, Tagbanua and Batak folklores) were published in Palawan State University Journal. She is a candidate for Ph.D in Applied Linguistics at De La Salle University-Manila (tesstajolosa.psu@gmail.com). An article from her dissertation on the ethnolinguistic vitality of the Batak communities in Puerto Princesa Palawan is published in the 2011 issue of the Philippine Journal of Linguistics.