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**The IAFOR Journal of Language Learning**

**Volume I – Issue I – Winter 2014**

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## Introduction

Ebru Melek Koç, Editor-in-Chief

Dear Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to announce the publication of the first issue of the IAFOR Journal of Language Learning published by the International Academic Forum (IAFOR). The IAFOR Journal of Language Learning is an open access, peer-reviewed, international journal. It encourages interdisciplinary research, with the primary focus being on language learning and its relation to the other academic disciplines such as applied linguistics, educational technology, sociology, and psychology.

The objective of the IAFOR Journal of Language Learning Journal is to publish up-to-date, high-quality research papers; to provide significant contributions to the knowledge and practical application in language learning and teaching; and to provide a forum for scholars, researchers, language educators within the Asian context as well as around the world.

The first issue of the journal involves four articles, three of which are research papers and one review article. The first article focuses on polite requests in English. **Masahiro Takimoto** examined the effects of two types of input-based approaches—combination of pragmalinguistics- and sociopragmatics-focused instruction (CI) and sociopragmatics-focused instruction (SI) on learners' recognizing and producing English request hedges. Since there are only a few studies that have explicitly linked classroom resources to the effects of sociopragmatics-focused learning on L2 pragmatic competence, the results of this study contribute to our understanding of the effectiveness and usefulness of the sociopragmatics-focused activities in teaching English request hedges. In the second article, **Elvira Sanatullova-Allison**, reviewed the essential theoretical and empirical research literature that discusses the role of memory in second language acquisition and instruction. She examined underlying issues of memory retention in second language acquisition (e.g., attention and awareness, explicit and implicit language learning and knowledge) and specific instructional approaches fostering memory retention (e.g., incidental vocabulary learning, grammar processing instruction, and focus on form method). **Masoumeh Mehregan**, investigated the impact of language games on the vocabulary achievement of Iranian learners. In line with the significance of task-based teaching in the promotion of language learning and the importance of games for teaching language to young learners, the present study tackles a fundamental question of whether games have any effect on young language learners' vocabulary learning. The last research article, which is very interesting, is about Mother Tongue – Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). **Jane K. Lartec**, and the co-authors **Anastacia M. Belisario**, **Jamaica P. Bendanillo**, **Hanni K. Binás-o**, **Novfirst O. Bucang**, and **Jan Lorie W. Cammagay**, explored the effective strategies of teachers in implementing the MTB-MLE in a multilingual education and the problems that they encountered.

This inaugural issue of the journal owes much to many people. First of all, thanks are due to the members of the editorial board, and the volunteer reviewers, who have

generously contributed their time and expertise. Thanks are also to the IAFOR office staff for their help and guidance in bringing out this first issue.

Finally, I hope you enjoy reading the articles featured in the first issue of the IAFOR Journal of Language Learning. We welcome your comments and thoughts and submissions which will make a substantial contribution to the development and success of the journal.

Ebru Melek Koç  
Editor

**Evaluating the Effects of Input-based Approaches to the Teaching of  
Pragmalinguistics and Sociopragmatics in Second Language Pragmatics:  
A Case of English Request Hedges**

**Masahiro Takimoto**

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**Abstract**

The present study examined the effects of two types of input-based approaches—combination of pragmalinguistics- and sociopragmatics-focused instruction (CI) and sociopragmatics-focused instruction (SI) on learners' recognizing and producing English request hedges. 45 Japanese learners of English participated in the study. Treatment group performance was compared to that of a control group on the pre-tests, post-tests, and delayed post-tests: an unplanned written-production test, an unplanned written-judgment test. The results showed that the CI and SI groups performed significantly better than the control group on an unplanned written-judgment test. There were no statistically significant differences between the two treatment groups on the unplanned written-judgment test, which indicated that the sociopragmatic features of English request hedges directly, and the group perhaps then transferred their attention to the pragmalinguistic features of English request hedges. As a result, the sociopragmatics-focused activities alone had some effects on recognizing English request hedges. However, a comparison of those learners in the two experimental groups in the unplanned written-production test demonstrated an advantage for the CI group and implied that the input-based learning through not only sociopragmatics-focused activities but also pragmalinguistics-sociopragmatics connection activities contributed more to deep perceptual and mental processing of English request hedges, thereby resulting in developing more firmly established explicit knowledge.

**Keywords:** sociopragmatics, input-based, hedge, pragmatics

## 1. Introduction

Schmidt (1993) argued that three senses of consciousness (attention, awareness, and intention) are all useful and necessary in second language (L2) learning, and the recent studies in L2 pragmatics within the consciousness-raising instruction framework have provided empirical support that some forms of consciousness-raising instruction help learners *notice target pragmalinguistic* and *sociopragmatic* features (e.g., Alcón, 2005, 2012; Koike & Pearson, 2005; Martinez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005). The term “pragmalinguistics” refers to the knowledge of the strategies for realizing speech intentions and the linguistic items used to express these intentions, whereas the term “sociopragmatics” refers to the knowledge of the social conditions governing language use. (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983). The findings of L2 pragmatics suggest that without a pragmatic emphasis on L2 or foreign language lessons, learners would not pay attention to or be aware of the target pragmatic features. These studies have mainly been designed to raise learner consciousness of the pragmalinguistic factors of target pragmatic features. That is, in the aforementioned studies, the pragmalinguistic features had priority over the sociopragmatic features. However, in regular communication, the sociopragmatic factor plays a key role and people first raise their consciousness toward the sociopragmatic features and then enhance their awareness of the pragmalinguistic features, arriving at their own generalization with respect to contextually appropriate language use. Thus, a key issue here is the extent to which it is possible for learners to reach their own generalization regarding contextually suitable language use based solely on sociopragmatics-focused activities.

### 1.1. Input-based Studies of L2 Pragmatics

Schmidt (1993) suggested that consciousness as awareness, consciousness as attention, and consciousness as intention play significant roles in language learning. According to Schmidt, awareness and attention are closely related. In other words, what we are aware of is what we attend to, and if attention is required for learning, then awareness is also required for learning. The attention- and awareness-oriented instruction is to some extent linked with input-based explicit/implicit instruction. Among the interventional studies in the teaching of pragmatics, some have found that pragmatic features can be taught either explicitly or implicitly together with certain input-based activities (e.g., Fukuya & Clark, 1999; Rose & Ng, 2001; Takahashi, 2001, 2005; Tateyama, 2001; Tateyama, Kasper, Mui, Tay, & Thananart, 1997). Ellis (2008) suggested that it is the manipulation of input rather than output that is more likely to result in the integration of intake into learners’ implicit/declarative knowledge. A review of these limited available attention- and awareness-oriented input-based L2 studies of pragmatics demonstrates that they were largely motivated by the theories and frameworks built for consciousness as attention and awareness in L2 language learning. Thus, the present study is also more motivated by the attention- and awareness-oriented theory and framework and, as such, is interested in investigating whether learners’ attention and awareness of sociopragmatic features alone lead them to successfully reach their own generalization for contextually appropriate language use.

Thus far, there have been only a few studies that have explicitly linked classroom resources to the effects of sociopragmatics-focused learning on L2 pragmatic competence. Ohta (2001) examined how two adult learners of Japanese as a foreign language developed the ability to use listener responses in Japanese, in particular

expressions of acknowledgement and alignment. The analysis indicated the variability of the developmental pace of the two learners, but implied that the two learners followed similar developmental paths moving from expressions of acknowledgement to alignment. The results also indicated that natural learning through the interaction activities of the classroom setting is possible. Taguchi (2012) examined, in an immersion setting, how classroom discourse influenced the development of pragmatic comprehension and production of learners of Japanese as a foreign language. She noted that a number of jokes, expressions of sarcasm, and indirect communications assumed shared context and background knowledge between teachers and learners and that these opportunities made a contribution to learners' development of pragmatic comprehension. The studies by Ohta (2001) and Taguchi (2012) may be the only existing studies that explicitly relate classroom resources to sociopragmatics-focused learning of L2 pragmatics through classroom interactions. They disclosed that sociopragmatics-focused output-based learning is effective and that classroom interaction contributes to raising learner consciousness toward sociopragmatic factors first and pragmalinguistic factors of L2 pragmatic features second. While their output-based studies in sociopragmatics-focused learning are noteworthy, the present study goes further and examines whether sociopragmatics-focused input-based learning is effective in developing L2 pragmatic competence.

Among all attention- and awareness-oriented input-based L2 studies of pragmatics, the studies by Takahashi (2001, 2005) are the only studies that explicitly associate classroom instruction with sociopragmatics-focused input-based L2 pragmatics learning outcomes. Takahashi (2001, 2005) examined the effectiveness of four types of input enhancement conditions for Japanese learners regarding the acquisition of polite request strategies and the results of discourse completion tests and self-reports indicated that the explicit group learned all of the request strategies more successfully than the other three groups, but she found that some of the participants in the explicit teaching condition and the form-comparison condition used non-target forms in the discourse completion tests and were inclined to use the phrase *I wonder if you could VP* predominantly across all situations, regardless of degree of imposition. This indicated no clear evidence of developing sociopragmatic competence and attested to the necessity of developing not only pragmalinguistic but also sociopragmatic competence. This leads to the debate as to what sort of input-based approach is most appropriate for allowing learners to quickly and efficiently access and integrate sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge.

To date, only a small number of studies have compared the effects of the combination of pragmalinguistics- and sociopragmatics-focused input-based instruction with sociopragmatics-focused input-based instruction on recognizing and producing L2 pragmatic features. For this reason, there is no conclusive evidence in the literature as to whether sociopragmatics-focused input-based learning is effective in L2 pragmatics learning. The present study aims to explore the effects of sociopragmatics-focused input-based learning on recognizing and producing English polite requests. The following research question is investigated in the present study:

What are the effects of sociopragmatics-focused input-based instruction on recognizing and producing English polite requests?

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Participants

Forty-five university students in three intact classes (three sophomore listening comprehension classes) at a university in Japan participated in the present study. The participants were non-English majors, studying in the College of Science and Engineering, who did not know that English hedges were the target features of the study. The participants' English proficiency level was assessed to be at the intermediate level, as defined by a TOEIC score between 500 and 700. The three intact classes were randomly assigned to two treatment groups and one control group. The two treatment groups received the following input-based instructional treatments: a combination of pragmalinguistics- and sociopragmatics-focused instruction (CI) (n = 15: female = 0, male = 15) and sociopragmatics-focused instruction (SI) (n = 15: female = 1, male = 14). The control group consisted of 15 participants (n = 15: female = 3, male = 12). The participants' first language was Japanese, and their average age was 20 years. All participants studied English for eight years at schools in Japan, and the results of a pre-test indicated that they had not learned any target pragmatic features.

### 2.2. Target Structure

Finding the fact that Japanese EFL learners tended to use the mono-clausal English request forms (e.g., *Would/Could you VP?*) when bi-clausal request forms (e.g., *Would it be possible to VP?*) were more appropriate, Takahashi (1996, 2001, 2005) explained that Japanese EFL learners lack the L2 pragmalinguistic knowledge that an English request can be mitigated by embedding one clause within another clause. In addition, Hill (1997) discovered that even though the proficiency of Japanese EFL learners increased, they continued to under-use clausal hedges, lexical hedges, and syntactic hedges (past tense and progressive form). Hedges belong to the subcategory of mitigation, which is a strategy for softening or reducing the strength of a speech act whose effects are "unwelcome to the hearer" by trying to make the act more palatable (Fraser, 1980).

Hill (1997) concluded that the under-use of those hedges attributed to L1 interference because those structures are not available in the Japanese language. Thus, the focus of the present study is on teaching lexical/clausal hedges and syntactic hedges in English request forms.

Lexical/clausal modal hedges soften the difficulty that the speaker experiences when asking the hearer to perform a request by modifying the request form lexically or clausally, whereas syntactic hedges modify the Head Act syntactically by mitigating the level of difficulty that the speaker experiences when asking the hearer to perform a request through syntactic choices<sup>3</sup>. Takahashi (1996) argued that there are three types of clausal modal hedges: "(a) mitigated-preparatory questions (the speaker asks a question concerning preparatory conditions or poses a permission question by embedding it within another clause), (b) mitigated-preparatory statements (the speaker states a preparatory condition by embedding it within another clause), and (c) mitigated-want statements (the speaker states his or her want or wish that the hearer will perform the action in a hypothetical situation)" (p. 220). A list of hedges used in the present study is presented in Table 1.



**Table 1***List of hedges used in the present study*

<b>Syntactic hedges</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Progressive form	<i>I am wondering</i> if you could lend me a book.
Past tense	<i>I was wondering</i> if you could come.
<b>Lexical and clausal hedges</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Modal adverbs	Could you <i>possibly</i> come here?
Mitigated-preparatory questions	<i>Would it be possible</i> to come here?
Mitigated-preparatory statements	<i>I wonder</i> if you could come here.
Mitigated-want statements	<i>I would appreciate it</i> if you could come here.

In the dialogues and situations included in the instructional and testing materials, three variables were carefully controlled: (a) power (the status of the speaker with respect to the hearer), (b) distance between actors (the relationship between the speaker and the hearer), and (c) imposition level of the request (the difficulty that the speaker experiences when asking the hearer to perform the request). These three variables were chosen because in cross-cultural pragmatics, they are viewed as the three independent and culturally sensitive variables that subsume all other variables and play an important role in speech act behavior (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

### **2.3. Instructional Treatments**

Each teaching session for the two treatment groups and the control group lasted 20 minutes, and the instructor presented all directions in Japanese during each teaching session. Teaching sessions were conducted by the same instructor once a week for four weeks in three intact classes at a university in Japan. The instructor was also the researcher.<sup>1</sup> No extra activities or explicit metapragmatic explanations containing the target pragmatic features were given during teaching sessions. Special care was taken to ensure that all groups spent equal amounts of time (20 minutes) on activities and that they received equal amounts of exposure to the target pragmatic features.

**2.3.1. Pragmalinguistics- and sociopragmatics-focused instruction (CI).** The experimental treatment for the CI is composed of three tasks.

*Task 1: Pragmalinguistics-focused activities (5 minutes).* The participants read each situation and dialogue in their handouts and then listened to them. The target pragmatic features were highlighted and boldfaced. The participants were asked to copy the underlined requests in two dialogues and compare the underlined request forms in the two dialogues. They were then required to find the differences between the two requests.

*Task 2: Sociopragmatics-focused activities (10 minutes).* The participants were instructed to rate the closeness between the two characters and the difficulty level of the request in the two dialogues.

*Task 3: Pragmalinguistics-sociopragmatics connection activity 1(5 minutes).* The participants were asked to rate the level of politeness of the requests in the two dialogues and write a list of ways the requests could be made more polite.

**2.3.2. Sociopragmatics-focused instruction (SI).** The experimental treatment for the SI consists of two tasks.

*Task 1: Reading and processing for meaning activities (10 minutes).* The participants read the same situation and dialogue for general understanding in their handouts as the ones included in the handouts for the CI, and they then listened to them. The target pragmatic features were neither highlighted nor boldfaced.

*Task 2: Sociopragmatics-focused activities (10 minutes).* The participants were instructed to rate the closeness between the two characters and the difficulty level of the requests in the two dialogues.

**2.3.3. Control group.** Lessons for the control group were designed to help participants learn new English words and phrases. The participants in the control group watched a short English video for 10 minutes and were taught about words and phrases used in the video by the instructor. The participants were not exposed to any target pragmatic features through the video and were not taught about any target pragmatic features during the lessons.

#### **2.4. Testing Instruments and Procedures**

The present study adopts a pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test methodology to evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional treatments. The pre-test was administered a week prior to the first instructional treatments, the post-test was given a week after the treatments, and the delayed post-test was administered four weeks after the treatments to determine the long-term effects of the treatments. Each test was composed of a discourse completion test (an unplanned output-based test) and an acceptability judgment test (an unplanned input-based test) because Hudson, Detmer, and Brown (1995) suggested the necessity of multiple modalities in the testing instruments in order to investigate variability of learners performance based on data collection methods. The DCT is adopted because Kasper (2000) argued that the DCT is an effective data collection strategy when the purpose of the study is to inform about learners' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge of the target pragmatic expressions studied in class, even though the DCT does not produce naturally occurring conversational data. The test items do not overlap with the treatment materials.

The study targeted situations with a high level of imposition combined with power and distance because English request hedges tend to be used in situations with a high level of Imposition (Hill, 1997; Hudson, Detmer, & Brown, 1995; Takahashi, 2001).

The situations with high levels of imposition were modified from those validated by Hill (1997), Hudson, Detmer, and Brown (1995) and Takahashi (2001). Three

versions of the discourse completion test and the acceptability judgment test were developed and employed to minimize test-learning effect.<sup>2</sup>

**2.4.1. Discourse completion test (DCT).** The discourse completion test was an unplanned written-production test that required the participants to read short descriptions of each situation in English and write what they would say in each situation in English. The appropriateness of the request forms was evaluated on a 1- to 5-point Likert scale. A request that reflected the most appropriate use of request hedges was awarded five points. For example, for a high imposition item, one point was awarded for *Please ~*, two points for *Can you ~*, three points for *Could you ~*, four points for *Is it possible for you to ~*, and five points for *I was just wondering if it would be possible for you to ~*. The more appropriate the syntactic and lexical hedges the participants used in their requests, the higher the scores they obtained. As there were 10 high imposition items on the test, the maximum score was 50 points.

**2.4.2. Acceptability judgment test (AJT).** The acceptability judgment test was an unplanned written-judgment test that required the participants to read written descriptions of each situation in English and then evaluate three isolated requests on an 11-point scale<sup>3</sup>, one at a time, in a 10-minute period. The participants who evaluated the three requests in accordance with the acceptability judgment of native English speakers<sup>4</sup> were awarded five points. The participants who did not assess all three requests consistent with native English speakers were awarded zero points. As there were 10 high imposition items on the test, the maximum score was 50 points.

### 3. Results

With respect to internal consistency, average Cronbach alpha reliability estimates for the discourse completion test and acceptability judgment test were calculated to be .841 and .837, respectively, indicating fairly high internal consistency for the two tests.

Content validity rather than criterion and construct validity was assessed because of the small number of cases. To ensure content validity, situations of the two tests were carefully planned and matched to a theoretical framework based on imposition, power and distance variables as follows:

**Table 2**

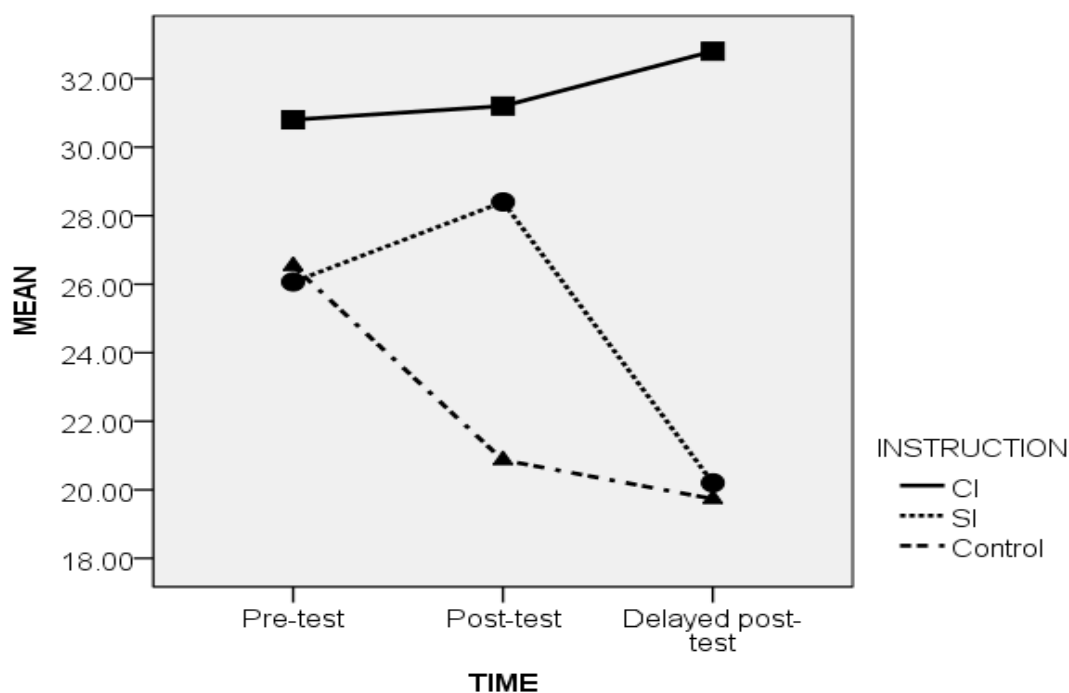
*Distribution of Variables (Version A for the DCT and AJT)*

	S4	S6	S10	S18	S2	S8	S12	S14	S16	S20	S1	S3	S5	S11	S13	S7	S9	S15	S17	S19
I	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
P	±	±	±	±	-	-	-	-	-	-	±	±	±	±	±	+	+	+	+	+
D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

*Note:* S = Situation; I = Imposition; P = Power; D = Distance  
+ = More; - = Less; ± = Equal

The normality assumption was verified through SPSS, which did not show a violation of the normality assumption. The following section summarizes the results for the discourse completion test and the acceptability judgment test. The overall alpha level was set at .05.

**Results from the discourse completion test.** The results of a two-way ANOVA with repeated-measures showed a significant main effect for instruction (the CI, SI, and control),  $F(2, 42) = 18.46, p = .000 < .05, \eta^2 = .976$  and a significant main effect for time (the pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test),  $F(2, 42) = 3.19, p = .046 < .05, \eta^2 = .071$ . However, no significant interaction effect between instruction and time was found,  $F(4, 42) = 3.49, p = .142 < .05, \eta^2 = .142$ . The post-hoc Scheffé tests for the main effect of treatment indicate the following contrasts: (a) the pragmalinguistics- and sociopragmatics-focused instruction (CI) group performed significantly better than the sociopragmatics-focused instruction (SI) group and the control group; (b) there were no statistically significant differences between the sociopragmatics-focused instruction (SI) group and the control group. Results of the one-way ANOVA analysis in Figure 1 and Table 2 disclose that, although there were no statistically significant differences between the three groups on the pre-test scores [ $F(2, 42) = 1.54, p = .226 > .05, \eta^2 = .068$ ], the two treatment groups indicated gains from the pre-test to the post-test, and the pragmalinguistics- and sociopragmatics-focused instruction (CI) group demonstrated further gains from the time of the post-test to the delayed post-test test, whereas the sociopragmatics-focused instruction (SI) group demonstrated losses from the time of the post-test to the delayed post-test.



### Figure 1. Interaction plot for DCT

Note: CI= Pragmalinguistics- and Sociopragmatics-focused instruction; SI= Sociopragmatics-focused instruction.

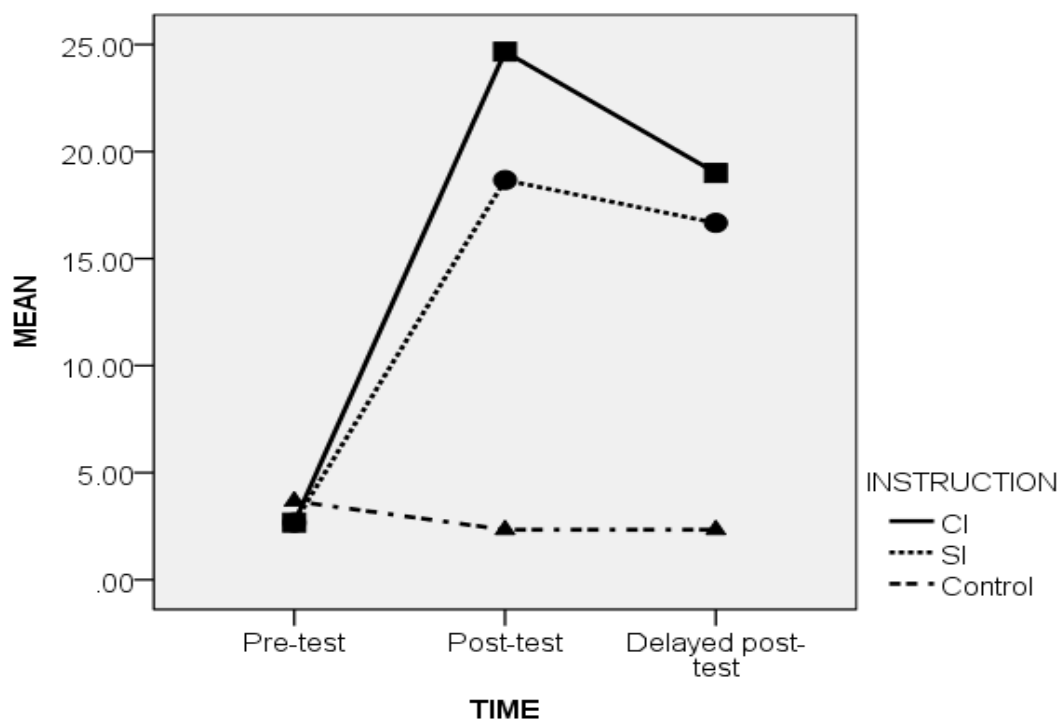
**Table 3**

#### *Descriptive statistics for DCT*

	Treatment	Score	Mean	SD
Pre-test	CI	50	30.80	10.80
	SI	50	26.07	7.45
	Control	50	26.53	5.18
Post-test	CI	50	31.20	12.27
	SI	50	28.40	5.88
	Control	50	20.87	1.19
Delayed post-test	CI	50	32.80	7.99
	SI	50	20.20	0.86
	Control	50	19.73	1.33

Note: CI= Pragmalinguistics- and Sociopragmatics-focused instruction; SI= Sociopragmatics-focused instruction.

**Results from Acceptability Judgment Test (AJT).** The results of a two-way repeated-measures ANOVA for the acceptability judgment test revealed a significant main effect for instruction, (the CI, SI, and control),  $F(2, 42) = 6.78, p = .003 < .05, \eta^2 = .244$ , a significant main effect for time (the pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test),  $F(2, 42) = 21.56, p = .000 < .05, \eta^2 = .339$ , and a significant interaction effect between instruction and time,  $F(4, 42) = 7.12, p = .000 < .05, \eta^2 = .253$ . The post-hoc Scheffé tests for the main effect of treatment show the following contrasts: (a) the pragmalinguistics- and sociopragmatics-focused (CI) and the sociopragmatics-focused instruction (SI) groups performed significantly better than the control group on the post-test and delayed post-test test; (b) there were no statistically significant differences between the pragmalinguistics- and sociopragmatics-focused instruction (CI) and the sociopragmatics-focused instruction (SI) groups on the post-test and the delayed post-test. The results displayed in Figure 2 and Table 3 demonstrate that although there were no statistically significant differences between the three groups in a one-way ANOVA analysis of the pre-test scores, [ $F(2, 42) = .17, p = .847 > .05, \eta^2 = .008$ ], the two treatment groups made significant gains from the pre-test to the post-test,  $F(1, 28) = 44.92, p = .000 < .05, \eta^2 = .616$ , and the positive effects for the two treatments between the post-test and the delayed post-test were maintained,  $F(1, 28) = 2.29, p = .141 > .05, \eta^2 = .076$ , as evidenced by results from a two-way ANOVA with repeated-measures.



**Figure 2. Interaction plot for AJT**

Note: CI= Pragmalinguistics- and Sociopragmatics-focused instruction; SI= Sociopragmatics-focused instruction.

**Table 4**

*Descriptive statistics for AJT*

	Treatment	Score	Mean	SD
Pre-test	CI	50	2.67	7.76
	SI	50	2.67	3.72
	Control	50	3.67	3.99
Post-test	CI	50	24.67	18.27
	SI	50	18.67	15.06
	Control	50	2.33	3.72
Delayed post-test	CI	50	19.00	16.71
	SI	50	16.67	21.10
	Control	50	2.33	3.72

Note: CI= Pragmalinguistics- and Sociopragmatics-focused instruction; SI= Sociopragmatics-focused instruction.

#### 4. Discussion

The results indicate that the two treatment groups performed significantly better than the control group as measured by the acceptability judgment test. However, the results also demonstrate that the CI group exhibited more statistically significant improvement than the SI group in the discourse completion test, whereas no difference was evident on the acceptability judgment test.

As no information regarding the psycholinguistic processing involved in either the two types of treatments or the testing instruments are available, any explanations to the research question must be speculative and explanatory in nature. During the CI and SI treatments, the participants in both treatment groups seem to have noticed by themselves the target pragmatic features by paying attention to and becoming aware of not only the relationship between the forms and meanings of the target features but also the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic features of English request hedges, a finding that is consistent with Hyland's (1998) argument that learners must identify hedging items and appreciate the circumstances under which they can be used appropriately for the purpose of being able to use hedges appropriately. With respect to the CI treatment group, the participants engaged in the three types of activities - the pragmalinguistics-focused activities, sociopragmatics-focused activities, and the pragmalinguistics-sociopragmatics connection activities. Craik (2002) claimed that the quality of a memory trace relies on the level or depth of perceptual and mental processing where meanings and forms are linked. Meaning, in this case, encompasses both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic meaning. In other words, when the participants focused more on the pragmalinguistic-sociopragmatic connections of the target features, they are inclined to heighten their consciousness of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic meaning. The pragmalinguistics-sociopragmatics connection activities in the CI treatment were designed to require the participants to access and integrate their pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic factors of English request hedges. Thus, it is likely that the pragmalinguistics-sociopragmatics connection activities raised greater consciousness of processing pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic meaning, thereby resulting in improved pragmatic competence.

On the other hand, the participants in the SI group engaged in the two types of activity - the reading and processing for meaning activities and the sociopragmatics-focused activities. However, they did not work on the pragmalinguistics-focused and pragmalinguistics-sociopragmatics connection activities. Nonetheless, the participants in the SI group performed as well as the CI group in the acceptability judgment test. This suggests that the sociopragmatics-focused activities in the SI treatment focused the attention of the participants on the sociopragmatic features of the target pragmatic expressions directly, and the participants perhaps then transferred their interests and attention to the pragmalinguistic features, thereby guiding them to connect the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features. Accordingly, in view of the results of the acceptability judgment test, the sociopragmatics-focused activities alone within the SI treatment appear to be effective. Furthermore, the treatments in the two treatment groups were repeated in view of Sharwood Smith's (1993) suggestion that initial enhancement becomes more effective through repeated exposure as it guides the participants to have more opportunities to analyze discrete features and derive rules, thus internalizing the features in their systems.

The question now arises as to why the SI group did not perform as well as the CI group on the discourse completion test while no difference was observed in the acceptability judgment test. First, this is likely owing to the different types of activities. The participants in the CI group engaged in the pragmalinguistics- and sociopragmatics-focused activities, whereas their counterparts in the SI group engaged in only the sociopragmatics-focused activities. It is natural to think that the pragmalinguistics- and sociopragmatics-focused activities in the CI treatment directed the participants' attention to and made them more aware of the specific relevant linguistic forms, functional meanings, and relevant contextual features. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the participants in the CI group attended to the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic resources of English request hedges more intensively than their counterparts in the SI group, thereby developing explicit knowledge that was more firmly embedded and thus more easily and rapidly accessed on the discourse completion test.

Second, the present study speculates that the disadvantage of the SI treatment may be related to how strongly established the participants' explicit knowledge is. The participants in the SI group were able to address the acceptability judgment test, an unplanned written-judgment test because the test required only judgment and relatively lower demands than a production test. However, the SI group was not able to cope with the discourse completion test, an unplanned written-production test to the same extent as the CI group because their working memories were weighted down with the higher demands of the test, which made it difficult for them to access their more weakly entrenched explicit knowledge. Ellis (2008) suggested that the terms explicit/implicit label the type of knowledge learners have according to whether it is conscious or intuitive, whereas the terms declarative/procedural address the degree of control the learners have over their explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge. Ellis (2008) further explained that procedural explicit knowledge refers to the conscious knowledge or explicit knowledge of L2 items that can be accessed relatively easily and rapidly and which can be used for production, whereas the declarative explicit knowledge refers to the conscious knowledge or explicit knowledge of L2 items that are accessed more slowly. Therefore, it can be surmised that explicit knowledge formed through the CI treatment is procedural, whereas explicit knowledge established through the SI treatment is declarative.

The results of the present study are different from those of Takahashi (2001, 2005) with regard to the fact that the present study found evidence of learners acquiring sociopragmatic competence. The most apparent causal factor for this distinction may be attributable to the focus of activities in which the participants in the present study engaged. Both studies examined instructional approaches for Japanese learners acquiring English polite request strategies from the input-based perspective. However, the instructional approach in Takahashi's studies focused more on pragmalinguistics, whereas the sociopragmatics-focused activities in the present study emphasized sociopragmatics. Takahashi (2001, 2005) reported no clear evidence of developing sociopragmatic competence among some participants and attested to the essentiality of encouraging learners to engage in not only pragmalinguistics-focused activities but also sociopragmatics-focused activities. Rose (2005) suggested that sociopragmatics is frequently an area of difficulty for language learners. Thus, it could be hypothesized that the sociopragmatics-focused activities rather than the



pragmalinguistics-focused activities may have helped the participants grasp difficult sociopragmatic features and then directed their attentions to pragmalinguistic features.

## **5. Conclusion**

The present study investigated the relative effects of two types of input-based approaches on recognizing and producing English request hedges. The results show that the pragmalinguistics- and sociopragmatics-focused instruction involving the processing of English request hedges through pragmalinguistic-sociopragmatic connections has a stronger impact on the recognition and production of English request hedges. In addition, the results also indicate that sociopragmatics-focused instruction is effective on the unplanned written-judgment test only if learners are able to attend to and become aware of both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic resources of English request hedges.

One pedagogical implication for teachers, then, is that teachers should be aware that effective input-based instruction can occur when the tasks provide learners with opportunities for processing both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features of the target structures. Furthermore, it is advisable for the task to be repeated so that the connections between pragmalinguistic-sociopragmatic factors of target features are significantly reinforced. Such tasks may prove of great value in improving learners' L2 pragmatic competence.

One major limitation of the present study, which involves the selection of testing instruments, should be taken into consideration in future research. The present study adopted the discourse completion test, which is a non-interactive instrument that does not produce natural conversational data. Accordingly, as the discourse completion test is limited as a testing instrument for assessing the participants' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge for English request hedges, the data from the discourse completion test in the present study led us to discover only what the participants noticed. A natural interactive testing instrument would have allowed us to better determine more about what the participants are actually capable of doing. In addition, the evaluation questionnaire or interview should be administered to supplement the present study qualitatively to consider whether the aims of the instructional treatments had been achieved and how the instructions could be improved for future use.

Despite the shortcoming, the present study contributes to our understanding of the effectiveness and usefulness of the sociopragmatics-focused activities in teaching English request hedges. However, more research is needed to confirm the outcome of the present study, especially the effects of teaching sociopragmatics in L2 pragmatics. Issues regarding the effectiveness of teaching sociopragmatics in L2 pragmatics have generated more questions than answers in terms of optimal instructional approaches for pragmatic development. Nevertheless, going through the unique challenges and opportunities to determine the real nature of effectiveness and usefulness of teaching sociopragmatics in L2 pragmatics will definitely be rewarding and certainly serve to expand future scholarship not only in the area of interlanguage pragmatics but also in the wider field of applied linguistics.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>In behavioral research, researcher expectancy can be a problem when the researcher teaches and selects experimental groups. The researcher followed the instructional guidelines rigidly controlled for the effect with the double-blind technique after the data were collected to minimize any researcher expectancy effect during the treatments.

<sup>2</sup>If the study begins with the pre-test, the test with the same items can influence performance on the post-test and follow-up tests. To minimize the influence, three versions of the instruments were developed.

<sup>3</sup>The acceptability judgment test used an 11-point Likert scale. According to Hatch and Lazarson (1991), a broader range in scale encourages more precision in respondents' judgments.

<sup>4</sup>Ten native speakers provided three isolated requests in each situation. Ten native speakers of English were required to read written English descriptions of 20 situations. They were asked to write what they would say in each situation, and they were then presented with a series of isolated requests and instructed to score the first request on an 11-point scale and then to score subsequent responses proportionally higher or lower in accordance with the degree of perceived acceptability. The native speakers' data were relatively uniform and consistent ( $SD = .82 \sim 1.08$ , range = 2.00 ~ 4.00). These data were used as the baseline data for the DCT and AJT.

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## **Memory Retention in Second Language Acquisition and Instruction: Insights from Literature and Research**

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### **Abstract**

This article reviews some essential theoretical and empirical research literature that discusses the role of memory in second language acquisition and instruction. Two models of literature review – thematic and study-by-study – were used to analyze and synthesize the existing research. First, issues of memory retention in second language acquisition (e.g., attention and awareness, explicit and implicit language learning and knowledge) are investigated. Second, instructional approaches conducive to memory retention in second language acquisition (e.g., incidental vocabulary learning, grammar processing instruction, focus on form method) are examined. Additionally, created by the author with the Inspiration software program, a literature map of the reviewed and additional research related to the topic is presented in the Appendix for reader's reference.

**Keywords:** memory, memory retention, second language acquisition, second language instruction

## **Introduction**

This article presents a review of some essential theoretical and empirical research literature that discusses the role of memory in human learning, in general, and in second language acquisition and instruction, in particular. I used two models of literature review – thematic and study-by-study – to analyze and synthesize the existing research on the topic. I start with an investigation of underlying issues related to memory retention in second language acquisition and proceed with an examination of specific instructional approaches conducive to memory retention in the context of second language learning. To provide a visual summary of the reviewed and additional research, I created a literature map with the Inspiration software program, which is included in the Appendix 1.

## **Memory Retention in Second Language Acquisition**

In this section, I provide an overview of related theoretical and empirical research by first examining the fundamentals of human learning and memory and, second, by investigating the issues of memory retention directly associated with second language acquisition.

## **Fundamentals of Human Learning and Memory**

Houston (2001) analyzed the basis of human learning and memory presented in theoretical and experimental psychological research. According to Houston, retention processes cannot be separated from the acquisition and transfer parts of the entire learning process defined as “a relatively permanent change in behavior potentiality that occurs as a result of reinforced practice” (2001, p. 4). All of these processes are interconnected and distinctions among them are somewhat arbitrary.

The information-processing approach to memory is based on the separate-storage model and the levels-of-processing approach. In the separate-storage model, the individual is seen as an information-processing system. Once an item is perceived, it enters primary memory (PM) with short-term storage. Rehearsal is necessary for the item to remain in PM and, if rehearsal is long enough, the item may enter secondary memory (SM), which is long-term storage. Bruning, Schraw, and Ronning (1999) state that metacognition, the knowledge people have about their own thought processes, guides the flow of information through the three consecutive memory systems: sensory memory, short-term memory, and long-term memory. Long-term memory is made of declarative and procedural knowledge: the former is the knowledge about facts and the latter is the knowledge about how to perform tasks. Houston (2001) argues that in the levels-of-processing approach, “the durability of a memory trace is determined by the depth to which it is processed” (p. 270). Semantic-network models of memory deal with the storage of semantic, meaningful material. According to this model, knowledge is stored through multiple interconnected associations, relationships, or pathways (Houston, 2001). The issue of the distinction between long-term versus short-term memory, recall versus recognition, episodic versus semantic memory, automatic versus controlled processing, contextual cues and state-dependent memory are some of the essential issues in memory retention. Research shows that the processes of organizing to-be-remembered information improve retention. For instance, chunking, word associations, recall by category,

stimulus or cue selection, verbal and visual coding, use of pictures and mnemonics can improve memory through organization, elaboration, and imagery. Language enables humans to retain information and communicate in highly sophisticated ways. The psycholinguistic approach to language argues that language usage is genetically based and involves hypothesis testing as well as creative thinking. Word storage is thought of in terms of the principles of semantic-network models such as hierarchies, matrices, feature comparisons, and spreading activation. According to the principles of Chomsky's transformational grammar, by applying different transformations to the deep-structure content (the meaning of a sentence), humans can develop different surface structures (organization of words) to express the same ideas.

Now, I turn to the analysis of the issues of memory retention directly concerning second language acquisition, such as types of memory, awareness and attention, and implicit and explicit language learning and knowledge.

### **Memory in Second Language Learning**

Ellis (2001) described the types of memory used in second language learning. He proposed a Working Memory (WM) Model, in which a Supervisory Attentional System (SAS) regulates information flow within the working memory. Ellis applied a constructivist approach to second language acquisition, which holds that general processes of human inductive reasoning lead to language learning. "There is no language acquisition device specifiable in terms of linguistic universals, principles and parameters, or language-specific learning mechanisms" (Ellis, 2001, p. 38). Bates, Thal, and Marchman, as referenced by Ellis (2001), found that "learners' language comes not directly from their genes, but rather from the structure of adult language, and from the constraints on communication inherent in expressing non-linear cognition into the linear channel provided by the human vocal-auditory apparatus" (p. 38). Chunking is a major principle of human cognition. Its essence, which is bringing together a set of already formed chunks in memory and welding them together into a larger unit, represents a fundamental associative learning process occurring in all representational systems.

### **Attention and Awareness**

Attention and awareness seem to play a major role in understanding language learning and retention. How do attention and awareness affect learning and retention?

Schmidt (2001) stressed that attention is necessary in order to understand every aspect of second language acquisition. If there can be learning without attention, then unattended learning is possible. However, its relevance and scope seem to be limited for second language acquisition. Attended learning is far superior, and is also important and necessary for practical purposes in second language learning. Preparatory attention and voluntary orienting vastly improve encoding. Intentionally focused attention may be a practical necessity for successful language learning. Passive approaches to learning are likely to be taken by slow and unsuccessful language learners. A sole reliance on reading and listening for vocabulary learning is very inefficient. To choose between the encoding specificity hypothesis and the global attention hypothesis, Schmidt (2001) argues that attention must be specifically directed to a particular learning domain and not just global. Noticing, or relatively

concrete input data, is the interface between the input and the developing of language system.

### **Implicit and Explicit Language Learning and Knowledge**

The question of how implicit and explicit language learning and knowledge occur enables a better understanding of the nature of language learning and retention.

**Definitions.** N. Ellis (1994a) pointed out that implicit learning is the acquisition of knowledge about the underlying structure of a complex stimulus environment by a process which takes place naturally, simply, and without conscious operations. In contrast, explicit learning is a more conscious operation where the individual makes and tests hypotheses in a search for structure.

**Nature of implicit learning.** Winter and Reber (1994) defined implicit learning as a “generalized, domain-free inductive process that derives information about patterned relationships in the stimulus environment, and represents these relationships in an abstract and tacit form” (p. 117). Presented with complexly structured sequences of stimuli of an artificial grammar, subjects are asked to memorize them. The crucial issue is not “to establish that no participation of consciousness is possible, but only that conscious knowledge as assessed by available indicators is insufficient to account for the subjects’ performance on a given task” (p. 130). Knowledge from implicit learning is at least partly tacit (implicit) and unavailable to conscious introspection. From an evolutionary perspective, the primacy of the implicit in unconscious processes encompasses the fundamental primary cognitive faculties that serve as the foundation for conscious capabilities. A generalized process of induction that is essentially content free is given innately. The process specific approach is contrary to the Chomskyan content specific approach that supposes an innate structure of language.

**Role of explicit knowledge.** R. Ellis (1994) described the theory of instructed language learning, the goal of which is to explain how instructed learners develop the ability to use their linguistic and pragmatic knowledge in their production of correct and appropriate sentences. If the acquisition of explicit knowledge involves memorization, problem-solving, and inductive and deductive teaching approaches, the input can become implicit knowledge when the learner carries out noticing (paying attention to specific linguistic features in the input), comparing (comparing the noticed features with the features the learner typically produces in output), and integrating (constructing new hypotheses in order to incorporate the noticed features into the interlanguage system). The process of developing implicit knowledge also has two stages: first, input becomes intake through the operations of noticing and comparing, and second, intake becomes part of the learner’s interlanguage system. “Intake occurs when learners take features into their short or medium term memories, whereas interlanguage change occurs only when they become part of long-term memory” (p. 93). Although adult learners benefit more than children do from explicit knowledge, explicit knowledge cannot substitute for implicit knowledge: “Ultimately, the success in L2 learning depends on implicit knowledge” (p. 97). Even though practice is the principle means of developing both types of knowledge, the forms of practice are different. Implicit knowledge becomes automatic by using corrective action, retrials, continual communicative practice, and confronting the mismatch



between flawed and model performance. The automatization of explicit knowledge may be attained through controlled and constant grammar practice activities. Achievement of automatization allows the learner to release attention for the controlled processing of new L2 forms. The learner's knowledge of the world and L1 are other types of knowledge that contribute to instructed and naturalistic second language acquisition.

Contrary to the input and interaction hypothesis, it is not comprehension of input per se that leads to learning, but rather a lack of comprehension and a gap in knowledge leading to mis- or non-understanding that aids learning: "Learning becomes possible when the learner admits responsibility for the problem and so is forced to pay close attention to the input" (Ellis, 1994, p. 103). In conclusion, not all input becomes intake. Explicit knowledge plays a central role in language pedagogy and formal instruction contributes primarily to explicit knowledge which can facilitate later implicit knowledge. Since automatizing their existing knowledge may interfere with acquiring new knowledge, learners will need to choose whether to process to achieve communication or to acquire knowledge.

Ellis (1994b) reviewed research to determine which human cognitive capabilities are acquired implicitly and which are learned explicitly. By reviewing implicit, incidental, and explicit vocabulary learning hypotheses, Ellis cited Jensen who said that "the crucial variable in vocabulary size is not exposure per se, but conceptual need and inference of meaning from context, which are forms of education. Hence, vocabulary is a good index of (academic) intelligence" (p. 220). Also, Stenberg, as cited by Ellis, added: "...simply reading a lot does not guarantee a high vocabulary. What seems to be critical...is what one has been able to learn from, and do with, that experience" (p. 219). Although interrelated, input and output processing abilities do not correlate highly with either cognitive mediational components or intelligence. Repetition priming with the use of lexical decision, word identification, and word stem completion tests are the main techniques for studying implicit memory. Imagery mediation using keywords methods, semantic mediation, and metalinguistic strategies for inferencing and remembering are explicit, deep processing, and mediational strategies in L2 vocabulary learning. To conclude, while naturalistic settings provide learners with exposure and motivation and reading for implicit acquisition of orthography, explicit, deep, and elaborative processing of semantic and conceptual/imaginal representations through explicit inferencing from context enhances memory retention of the multiple meanings of vocabulary.

**Tasks and rules.** Robinson (1996) examined if complex rules can only be learned implicitly whereas conscious explicit learning is effective when the rules are simple and salient to the learner. The study involved 104 intermediate adult English language learners in Hawaii, who were native speakers of Asian languages. The results indicated that the implicit and incidental conditions were not superior to the rule-search and instructed conditions in accuracy or speed of performance on complex rules. Participants' responses to simple rule sentences were significantly faster than responses to complex rule sentences in all conditions.

## Second Language Instruction for Memory Retention

In this section, I review relevant research literature pertaining to two sets of issues: learning and teaching principles that improve second language acquisition and instructional approaches that enhance memory retention in second language learning.

### Learning and Teaching Principles

The literature highlights the following principles in regard to effective second language learning and teaching: intentional versus nonintentional learning, sentence processing, task-based instruction, and task-induced involvement construct.

**Incidental versus intentional learning.** Hulstijn (2001) noted that the majority of L2 learners have to learn a large amount of vocabulary. Is incidental or intentional vocabulary learning more conducive to language learning? Three issues were considered: first, the quality of information processing when an unfamiliar word is first encountered; second, the quantity and quality of rehearsal activities needed for a word to be permanently available; and, third, the training of automatic access to word knowledge necessary for fluent language use. Functional architecture-style models and connectionist models are two means by which lexical knowledge is represented and processed. It is unclear which L2 lexical features must or may be acquired. For any lexical entry, an individual's mental lexicon will often comprise both less and more than the information included in dictionaries. The practice of discouraging procedures of intentional vocabulary learning is an ill-informed understanding of the terms 'incidental' and 'intentional' learning. Telling or not telling students that they will be tested afterwards on their knowledge is the critical operational feature distinguishing incidental from intentional learning. The quality and frequency of the information processing activities, such as elaboration on aspects of a words' form and meaning and rehearsal, and not the learner's intention, the task itself, or the presence or absence of post-test determines retention of new information.

Distributed practice with increasing intervals after correct retrievals and short intervals after incorrect retrievals generates a much higher retention rate than massed practice does. Items that are difficult to learn should be overlearned to ensure long-term retention (Hulstijn, 2001). Encountering new words in context and extensive reading, as advocated in current L1 and L2 pedagogy, are neither necessary nor sufficient for efficient vocabulary expansion. Readers should apply a variety of decontextualization skills and write down the lexical information encountered during reading. New information should be frequently reactivated, beginning with short intervals and leveling off at approximately monthly intervals (Robinson, 2001). To attain automaticity of high-frequency words, learners should be exposed to reading and listening texts which contain only familiar words, which is the 'i - 1' ('i minus one') level. Lexical information must be reactivated regularly for it to remain quickly accessible. Intentional vocabulary learning, as well as drill and practice, must have a place in the L2 classroom, complementary to (not instead of) the well-established principles of incidental and contextual learning. Computer programs and other electronically-mediated technologies can be well suited to help in that.

**Task-induced involvement construct.** Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) stated that elaboration and motivation in L2 vocabulary demonstrated higher retention and

proficiency. However, there is a need for further theoretical exploration and empirical investigation concerning the development of cognitive concepts. Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) proposed a construct of task-induced involvement with three motivational and cognitive dimensions – need, search, and evaluation – that are conducive to elaboration necessary for learning. No Interface (no effect of the explicit knowledge on the acquisition of implicit knowledge), Strong Interface (explicit knowledge transfers into implicit knowledge), and Weak Interface (explicit knowledge may indirectly affect the acquisition of implicit knowledge by focusing learners' attention on features in the input) are three known positions for grammatical knowledge. Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis is the development of the Weak Interface position. Being subject to manipulation, incidental learning design enables the researchers to investigate the effect of the particular kind of information processing of interest. Involvement as a motivational-cognitive construct explaining and predicting learner's success in the retention of hitherto unfamiliar words combines three factors to determine vocabulary retention: need, search, and evaluation. The need component – a motivational and non-cognitive dimension of involvement – is based on a drive to comply with the task requirements which can be either externally (a moderate need) or internally (a strong need) imposed. Search and evaluation – the two cognitive dimensions – are contingent upon noticing and allocating attention to the form-meaning relationship (Schmidt, 1994a, 2000). Search is the attempt to find the meaning of an unknown L2 word by consulting a dictionary or another source/authority, such as a teacher. Evaluation entails a comparison of a given word or a specific meaning with other words or meanings. According to the second assumption, the higher the involvement load will be, the better the retention of words will be. According to the third assumption, teacher/researcher-designed tasks with a higher involvement load will lead to higher vocabulary retention. The Involvement Load Hypothesis does not give any preference to input or output tasks nor does it depend on different types of mode, such as visual, aural, or oral. It only predicts that higher involvement in word induced by the task – either input or output – will result in better retention.

Now, I proceed with a closer examination of the following instructional approaches and conditions which prove to be conducive to memory retention in second language acquisition: incidental vocabulary learning, grammar processing instruction, and focus on form method.

### **Incidental Vocabulary Learning**

Here, I address the question of vocabulary learning in incidental condition, tested and implemented in second language research and instruction. The literature pertaining to methodological questions and to issues of input, output, and tasks is also analyzed.

**Historical and methodological perspectives.** The term 'incidental learning' has been consistently used in psychological literature since the beginning of 20th century. Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) indicated that from the standpoint of methodological meaning of incidental learning adopted in research experiments "learners are typically required to perform a task involving the processing of some information without being told in advance that they will be tested afterwards on their recall on that information" (p. 10). So, a test unexpected by language learners that measures their vocabulary retention after the information-processing task is essential to so-called

“incidental learning design” (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001, p. 10) and distinguishes it from intentional learning design in which learners are forewarned about the presence of a subsequent retention test. During the 1960s and early 1970s there was a shift from the behaviorist paradigm toward the cognitive paradigm, resulting, in the case of incidental learning, in the recent interest on the part of second language researchers in the nature of the way in which stimulus information is processed by learners. It seems that a deeper understanding of the way in which information is processed can enable language educators to enhance learners’ incidental vocabulary learning and overall language acquisition.

**Input, output, and tasks.** Research shows that particular types of input, output, and tasks enhance information processing in incidental vocabulary learning.

*Vygotskiiian Activity Theory.* McCafferty, Roebuck, and Wayland (2001) applied Zinchenko’s hypothesis, based on Vygotskiiian Activity Theory, to second language acquisition to test if materials connected with the goal of an action would be better remembered than the materials connected with the means or conditions of action. Five university English-speaking learners of Spanish in their third semester were randomly assigned to experimental and control conditions. The results showed that increased mental effort and the relation of a word to the goal of an activity enhanced vocabulary learning.

*Generative and communicative tasks.* Joe (1998) investigated whether generative processing tasks lead to vocabulary learning for 48 adult learners of English who were randomly assigned to experimental, comparison, and control treatments. The results indicated that the participants who performed the task and had high background knowledge outperformed those who did not perform the task and had low background knowledge. In conclusion, greater levels of generation led to a greater vocabulary knowledge gains for completely unknown target words as opposed to partially known words.

*The role of modified input and output.* Ellis and He (1999) investigated the effects of various exposure conditions for 50 university intermediate learners of English who performed a listen-and-do task in three experimental groups: the premodified input, the interactionally modified input, or the negotiated output treatment. Despite high levels of acquisition in all conditions, the results indicated that the modified output group scored significantly higher on the comprehension of the directions, vocabulary recognition, and vocabulary production. Negotiation of new vocabulary in a collaborative and problem-solving manner led to deeper input processing.

### **Grammar Processing Instruction**

Grammar Processing Instruction is an explicit focus on form that aims to alter the way in which learners perceive and process input. It seeks to provide learners’ internal learning mechanisms with richer grammatical intake by explaining, practicing, and experiencing input data with learner strategies (VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993). It is opposed to explicit grammar instruction involving explanation and output practice of a grammatical point.

VanPatten (1990) explored if learners could consciously attend to both form and meaning when processing input. Two hundred and two university students of Spanish on three levels – first and fourth semesters and third-year conversation – were randomly assigned to four conditions: attention to meaning alone, simultaneous attention to meaning with an important lexical item, a grammatical factor, and a verb form. Results indicated that simultaneous processing was rather difficult for learners. The following questions arise as possible implications for future research and instructional practice: Is consistent and constant awareness of form in the input improbable if the learner's task is to process the input for meaning? Do learners concurrently process the form subconsciously while consciously processing for meaning? If all forms are processed consciously, does the ability to consciously process both meaning and form develop over time?

### **Focus on Form Method**

Doughty and Williams (1998) referred first to Long (1991) to distinguish focus on formS from focus on form (FonF). Focus on formS “characterizes earlier, synthetic approaches to language teaching” which is focused on “the accumulation of individual language elements” (Doughty & Williams, 1998, p. 3). However, focus on form “entails a prerequisite engagement in meaning before attention to linguistic features can be expected to be effective” (Doughty & Williams, 1998, p. 3). Focus on form “overtly draws students’ attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication” (Long, 1991, pp. 45-46) and “often consists of an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features...triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production” (Long & Robinson, 1998, p. 23).

**Communicative focus on form.** Doughty and Varela (1998) discussed whether and how learners’ attention can be drawn to formal features without distracting them from their original communicative intent in a content-based ESL classroom. Thirty-five middle schools students studying science at an intermediate ESL level were assigned to FonF and control groups. Results indicated the effectiveness of incidental focus on form tasks in a communicative content-based classroom.

### **Conclusions**

The research literature reviewed in this article addressed the following two themes pertaining to the role of memory in second language acquisition: underlying issues of memory retention and specific instructional approaches fostering memory retention. Regarding the former, the fundamentals of human learning and memory (What are the bases of learning and memory?), memory in second language learning (What type of memory is used in second language learning?), attention and awareness (How do consciousness, attention, and awareness relate to each other and affect language learning?), and implicit and explicit language learning and knowledge (What factors affect both kinds of learning and knowledge?) provide a better understanding of the memory retention mechanism in second language acquisition. Concerning the latter, specific teaching and learning principles (What teaching and learning principles enhance language learning?), incidental vocabulary learning (What reading and writing, input and output tasks and research conditions promote incidental vocabulary learning?), grammar processing instruction (How and why does processing instruction

lead to language learning?), and focus on form method (How and why does focus on form increase language learning?) prove to be conducive to language learning and memory retention.

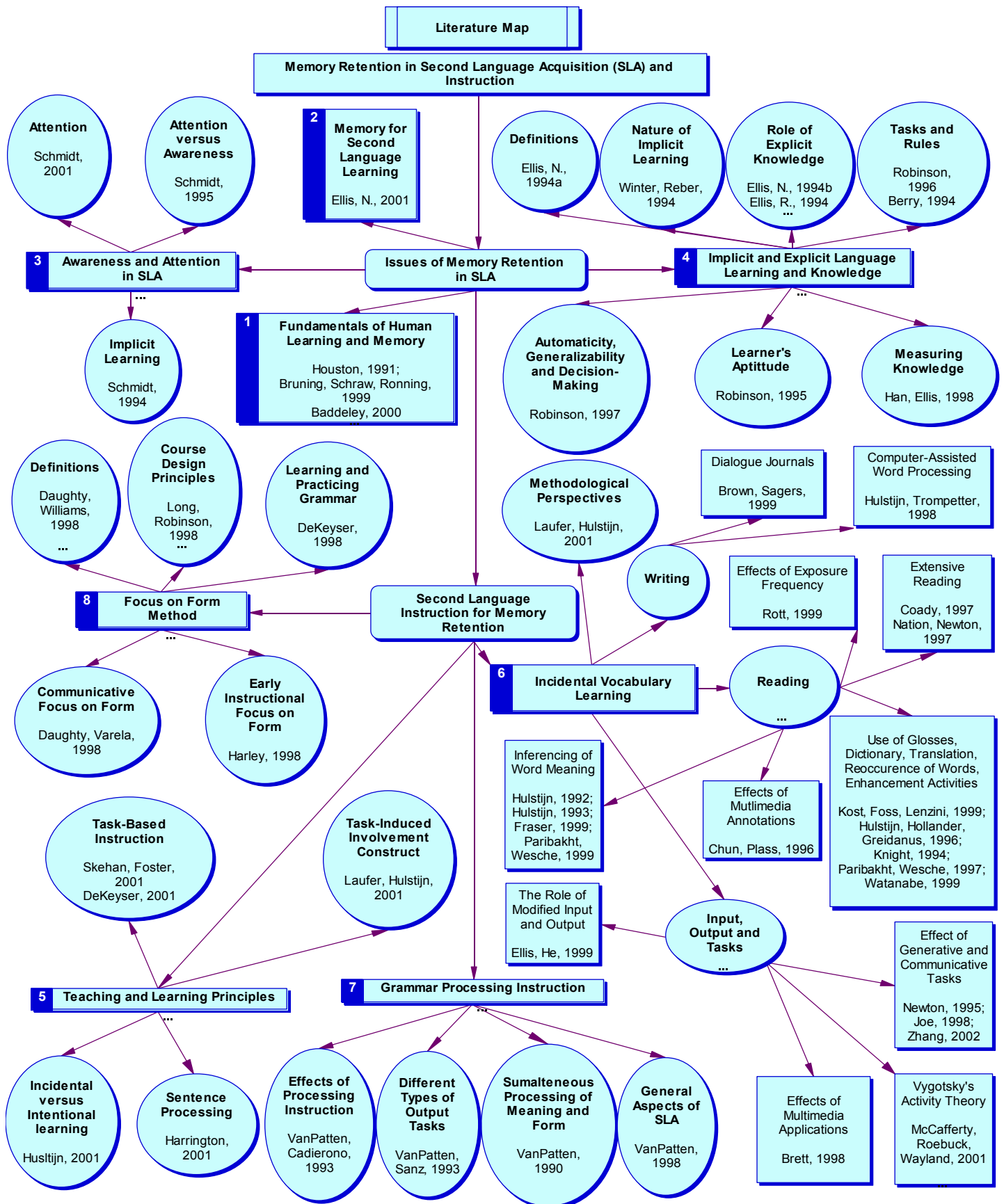
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### Appendix 1





## **Game-Based Tasks for Foreign Language Instruction: Perspectives on Young Learners' Vocabulary Acquisition**

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### **Abstract**

The present study attempted to investigate the impact of language games on the vocabulary achievement of Iranian learners. The study also examined the possible differences between male and female participants in terms of their vocabulary learning in game-based tasks. To this end, 40 young language learners (comparison group = 20 and experimental group = 20) were selected. They were administered the KET, after which homogeneity of the participants according to their proficiency level (i.e., elementary level) was ascertained. Four types of games including 'hangman', 'flash card memory game', 'bingo', and 'odd man out' were used in the experimental class, each of which lasting for five sessions. After twenty sessions of total treatment, the participants in both groups were given a teacher-made proficiency test which included 30 items. After ensuring the psychometric properties of the post-test and the assumptions of independent samples T-test, the analyses were carried out. Results of T-test for the first research question showed statistically significant differences between the comparison and the experimental groups. However, the results of the T-test for the second research question were statistically non-significant. The discussions of the findings are further discussed in detail.

**Keywords:** vocabulary learning, task-based teaching, games, gender

## 1. Introduction

Orientations in teaching second language vocabulary are often metaphorically specified as a twisting pendulum, with the approaches in favor getting exposed to continuous serious evaluations and being progressively substituted by the new (however, mostly, in their nature, old) good approaches. And, it is at least risky to assume that we are advancing another step if we do not look back to consider how far we have walked. Vocabulary has aroused the attention of researchers in the field, while it was overlooked before 1980 (Meara, 1980). One reason of this attention is the abrupt growth of some specialized language teaching textbooks in the years after 1980 (e.g., McCarthy & O'Dell 1994; Rudzka, Channell, Ostyn, & Putseys, 1981; Seal, 1991). The second reason is the development of a number of research articles and books dedicated to the area of vocabulary teaching and to the using of various vocabulary-teaching techniques (e.g., Allen, 1983; Coady & Hukin, 1997; Gairns & Redman, 1986; Nation, 2001; Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997). Many second language teachers assume that students can learn new words incidentally and on their own, through reading or other related activities (Zimmerman, 1994).

The use of games as an approach in the teaching of vocabulary focuses on the issue of tasks in language classrooms. Task-based teaching attends to the accomplishment of significant tasks in the learning process. It is formed by the idea that if learners center on the completion of a task, they are just as likely to learn language as they are if they are concentrating on language forms. Instead of language syntax and function to be acquired, learners are presented with a task they have to carry out or a problem they have to solve.

“The current task-based approaches to second language (L2) instruction encourage the use of small group work (including pair work) in the L2 classroom as a means of providing learners with more opportunities to use the L2” (Storch & Aldosari, 2013, p. 39). When teaching is aimed at promoting the communicative competence, classroom interaction assumes a significant role. Interaction and communication are isomorphic, the existence of which implies the existence of the other. If interaction does not exist, communication does not either. Tamah (2007) argues that “in classroom interaction, students use language to negotiate meaning. They get the chance to make use of all they have of the language. This implicitly means that it is crucial for the teacher to provide more chance for the students to interact for the sake of real-life exchanges” (p. 6). According to this definition, learners should be provided with numerous opportunities to engage in interactive activities rather than passive learning. Games pave the way towards reaching this objective. In line with the significance of task-based teaching in the promotion of language learning and the importance of games for teaching language to young learners, the present study is aimed at the comparison of games and traditional approaches in learning. The study set out to seek answers to the following research questions:

1. Do games have any effect on young language learners' vocabulary learning?
2. Is there any significant difference between male and female young language learners in terms of vocabulary learning by means of games?

In spite of the common thought, games are not limited only to beginner levels. Learners at elementary and upper levels can also take the advantages of playing language games and learn more vocabulary. Games add interest to what students might not find very interesting. Sustaining interest can mean sustaining effort (Thiagarajan, 1999; Wright, Betteridge, & Buckby, 2005). Game-based tasks provide a stress free and joyful environment for learning more vocabulary and a longer retention. Game-based tasks also help the teacher to create a context in which vocabulary is useful and meaningful. The variety and intensity that games offer may lower anxiety (Richard-Amato, 1988) and encourage shy learners to take part in interactions (Uberman, 1998). The emotions aroused when playing games add variety to the sometimes dry, serious process of language instruction (Bransford, Brown, & Coking, 2000). This is especially useful for teaching young learners in the sense that they cannot tolerate the strict and less enjoyable tasks and may not learn the target subject as is expected. Using concrete tasks is in line with the capacities and abilities of young learners. The use of game-based activities and tasks presents an effective way of teaching vocabularies concretely to the young language learners who do not have the advantage of thinking abstractly. Therefore, teaching can be accomplished by telling and persuading, by showing and demonstrating, guiding and directing the learners' efforts or by a combination of these actions or it might rely on professionally prepared materials, resource people, or the combination of talents, skills and information already present in learners (Lefrancois, 1991).

This meaningful communication provides the basis for comprehension input (Krashen, 1989), i.e., what students understand as they listen and read interaction to enhance comprehensibility, e.g., asking for repetition or giving examples (Long, 1981), and comprehensible output, speaking and writing so that others can understand (Swain, 1993). Gardner has suggested the idea of communication as a dynamic process to stimulate communication in the classroom through task-based activities and techniques such as role playing and information gap activities and techniques which can be considered as the core of language games. Larsen-Freeman (1986) supported the impact of games on error correction in ESL classroom such that games are important because the speaker receives immediate feedback from listener on whatever or how he has successfully communicated. In attempt to provide more information about the efficiency of games in the language learning of young learners, the present study was carried out.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1. Participants**

Participants of this study consisted of 40 Iranian male and female young learners at Kish English Language institute. They were all elementary level learners according to the results of the key English test (KET) which was administered before the conduction of study. Their age varied from 10 to 15 and they had never been in an English speaking country before the study.

### **2.2. Instruments**

#### **2.2.1. KET**

Key English test was used as the test of proficiency for homogenization purposes. Only the reading section of the test was employed since the major goal of the present

study was to evaluate the vocabulary knowledge of participants. The test consisted of 35 questions evaluating the participants' reading and vocabulary competences.

### **2.2.2. Teacher-made Vocabulary Test**

A teacher-made vocabulary test was designed to evaluate the experimental group students' vocabulary achievement. The test was examined for its psychometric property of reliability and it was found to have an acceptable estimate.

### **2.2.3. Course Book**

The book entitled "Happy Earth 1" (by Bowler & Parminter, 2002) was taught at this level according to the syllabus of the language school. The book consists of 8 units and the total units are normally covered in 4 terms (2 units each term). Each unit works on vocabulary, grammar, speaking, reading, and listening activities. The book has an audio CD for listening parts as well as the activity book and a work sheet. Since this book puts heavy emphasis on the learning of new vocabulary items by young learners and because the book is successful in providing the vocabularies in very attractive ways to children, it has been considered as an appropriate course book to be used in the present study. It should also be mentioned that there has been no other additional sources used alongside this book.

### **2.2.4. Procedure**

For the purpose of the present study, four games for vocabulary instruction were adopted from "Games for Young Learners" book. New vocabulary items in "Happy Earth 1" (Bowler & Parminter, 2002) were taught and practiced via four games with the first group in the last 20 minutes of every session. Since the whole treatment took 20 sessions, every game was practiced for 5 sessions. The games were: hangman, flash card memory game, bingo, and odd man out. The games required the learners to interact with each other to achieve the end product. When considered necessary, learners were arranged into small groups randomly and were given the planned games to carry out. In the first 5 sessions, hangman games were played by the students. In this game the teacher put blanks on the board as many as the number of the new word students have learned, then in groups they should guess the letters one by one, at the end the first group made a correct guess of the word goes to the board and completes the blanks then takes another hangman card from the teacher. The group that had the more correct guesses was the winner. In the second 5 sessions, memory flashcards game was played (again in groups). The teacher brought some photo flashcards from newly learnt words. She showed them to all of the students and then covered them. One person from every group came over to the front and tried to remember the photos (words). The group could help if necessary. At the end, the group with more words was the winner. The third 5 sessions went on with Bingo game. The teacher had 16 photo cards. She drew a chart with 16 spaces (called Tic Tac Toe). The class formed two groups from which one participant came over to the front of the class and the teacher showed the photo, if the learner could say what it was, the group got a number in the chart. A group that first filled a row of numbers was the winner. The last 5 sessions continued with odd man out. Again, the teacher had some cards with 4 words from newly learnt vocabulary. Each group should guess which word was not related to the others and circle it. At the end, the group with more cards and logical reasons for their choice was the winner. Throughout these games, the instructor monitored the process and after the completion of the tasks asked the learners to provide their answers and give reason for their answers. This technique helped develop the

interactional patterns among them and indirectly led to the development and learning of vocabulary items.

In the control group, the participants were not given any task-based instruction including games. The teacher initiated the instruction and explained the new words and grammatical points to the learners. The target language of the learners was used primarily but when learners had comprehension problems their native language was also utilized. After the 20 sessions of treatment, both control and experimental groups were given the vocabulary post-test to measure their attainments in vocabulary learning.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Piloting Vocabulary Test Used for Homogenization

In order to estimate the reliability index of the vocabulary pre-test, the Cronbach's alpha was used. The reliability value of the pretest was 0.87 which showed a high and acceptable index (Table 1).

**Table 1.**

*Reliability Estimate of the Vocabulary Pretest Used for Homogenization*

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.874	30

In order to provide an answer to the first research question, the ANCOVA test was run. But, since one of the assumptions of ANCOVA (i.e., the homogeneity assumption) was violated, an independent samples T-test was used to examine the question. Prior to the conduction of the independent samples T-tests, the assumptions of normality of distribution were tested through the histograms, Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, and box plots. First, the histograms for each of the experimental and comparison groups are illustrated in figure 1.

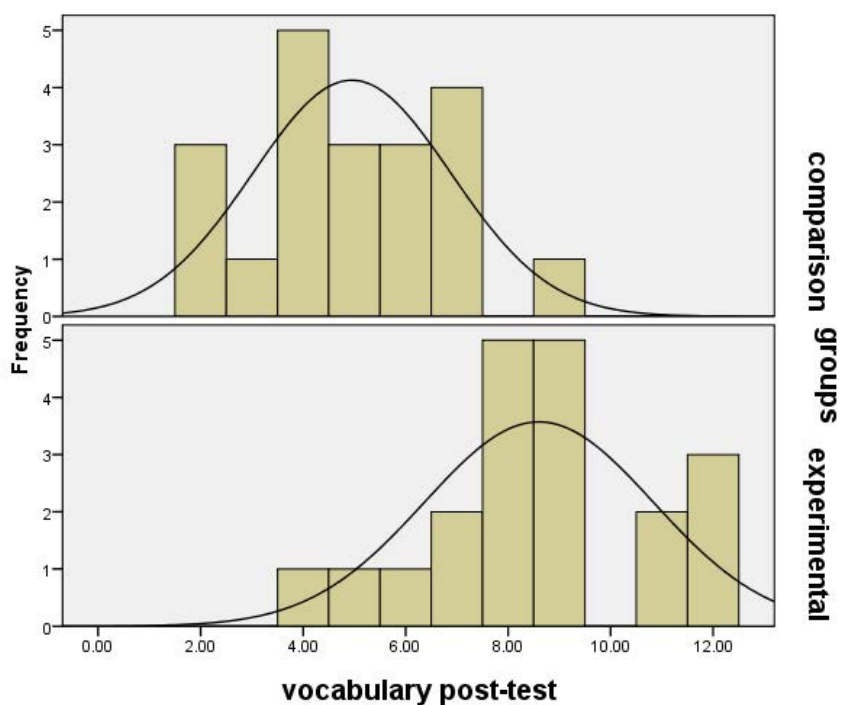


Figure 1. Histogram results for vocabulary post-test performances

Below the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for post-test vocabulary scores are indicated.

**Table 2.**

*One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Post-test Vocabulary Scores*

		Post-test scores
N		40
Normal Parameters <sup>a</sup>	Mean	6.7750
	Std. Deviation	2.76876
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.092
	Positive	.092
	Negative	-.082
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.581
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.888

a. Test distribution is Normal.

The results of the table show that the distribution of scores are normal ( $p > 0.05$ ). As the last test of normality, the box plot for the post-test scores is shown in graph 2 below.



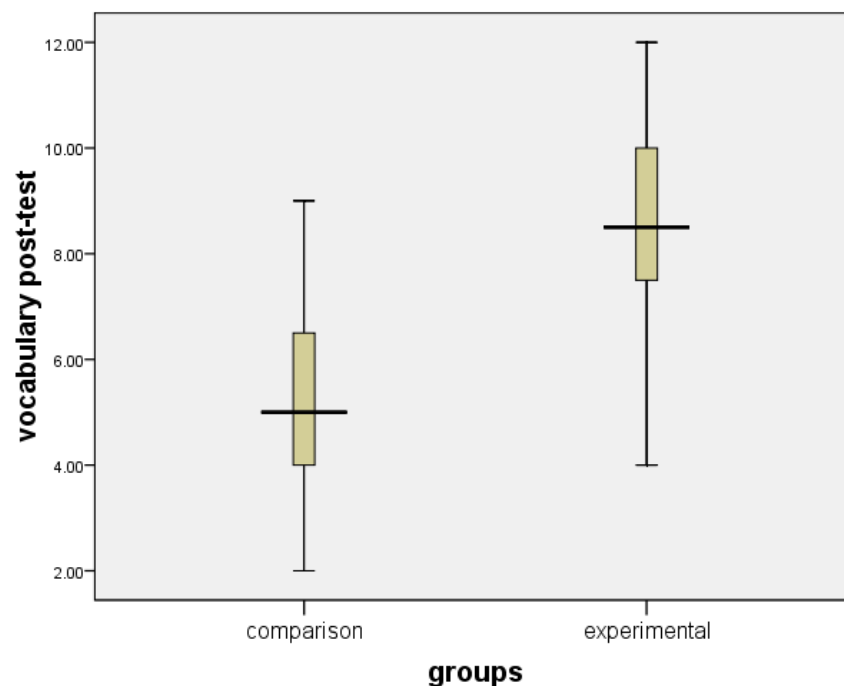


Figure 2. Box plot results for post-test vocabulary scores

Having ascertained the assumptions of independent samples T-test as a parametric test, the next step was to conduct the T-tests. Table 2 below demonstrates the descriptive statistics of the vocabulary performance of the two groups.

**Table 2.**

*Descriptive Statistics Results for Groups' Differences on Vocabulary Post-test*

	groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Vocabulary post-test	comparison	20	4.9500	1.93241	.43210
	experimental	20	8.6000	2.23371	.49947

As the mean and standard deviation scores in table 2 show, there are differences between experimental ( $M = 8.60$ ,  $SD = 2.23$ ) and comparison ( $M = 4.95$ ,  $SD = 1.93$ ) group learners' performance in the vocabulary post-test. However, in order to get more accurate and reliable results, an independent samples T-test was run, the results of which are displayed in table 3.

**Table 3.***T-test Results for Groups' Differences on Vocabulary Post-test*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower		Upper
Vocabulary post-test	Equal variances assumed	.13	.71	-5.52	38	.000	-3.65	.66	-4.98	-2.31
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.52	37.22	.000	-3.65	.66	-4.98	-2.31

The results show that the significance level of Levene's test is  $p = 0.71$ , which means that the variances for the two groups (experimental and comparison) are *the same*. The results of independent samples T-test show statistically significant differences ( $t(38) = -5.52$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) between the experimental and comparison groups in the post-test. The descriptive statistics, too, point to the same finding showing that learners in the experimental group ( $M = 8.60$ ,  $SD = 2.23$ ) outperform those in the comparison group ( $M = 4.95$ ,  $SD = 1.93$ ).

In order to examine the differences between male and female learners' performances in the vocabulary post-test, an independent samples T-test was run. First, the results of descriptive statistics are shown.

**Table 4.***Descriptive Statistics Results for Vocabulary Achievement Differences across Gender*

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
experimental	male	10	8.7000	2.31181	.73106
	female	10	8.5000	2.27303	.71880

As table 4 shows, the mean differences between the male ( $M = 8.70$ ,  $SD = 2.31$ ) and female ( $M = 8.50$ ,  $SD = 2.27$ ) participants in the experimental condition are not very high. T-test results are shown in table 5 below.

**Table 5.***T-test Results for Vocabulary Achievement Differences across Gender*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
										Lower	Upper
experimental	Equal variances assumed	.13	.71	.19	18	.84	.20	1.02	-1.95	2.35	
	Equal variances not assumed			.19	17.99	.84	.20	1.02	-1.95	2.35	

The results show that the significance level of Levene's test is  $p = 0.71$ , which means that the variances for the two groups (male and female) are *the same*. The results of independent samples T-test show statistically non-significant differences ( $t(18) = 1.95$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) between male and female participants in the experimental group.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the present study showed that the game based experimental group outperformed the comparison group in vocabulary achievement. In fact, the results of the present study are logical and acceptable given the fact that the participants of the study were at the elementary level of proficiency and therefore were more at ease with the game-based approach. In other words, the elementary level learners can have extreme difficulties in receiving and retaining the abstract and complex facts and issues than more concrete and tangible ones. Game-based approach provides a sort of task-based approach in which learners cooperate and work together to achieve the end result. They use the language subconsciously as a means towards the end.

Uberman (1998), for example, observed the enthusiasm of her students in learning through games. She considers word games a way to help students not only enjoy and entertain with the language they learn, but also practice it incidentally. Whither (1986) states that word play and verbal humor provide excellent opportunities for teaching inferencing as students interpret or intelligently guess at the author's meaning. Warnock (1989) holds that the appropriate use of pun is a powerful tool that can help adult educators positively affect changes in people's knowledge, attitudes, skills, and aspirations and the didactic process.

The findings of the present research are in line with the abovementioned studies, therefore, encourage an implicit and task-based approach to teaching vocabularies centering especially on the games.

In addition, the results of the statistical analyses for the second research question of the present study indicated no significant differences between male and female language learners. In other words, both could benefit from the use of games in the classroom regardless of their gender.

Further studies can be conducted to examine and compare the advantages associated with different types of games. Also, it would be more logical to investigate if the performance of the participants in the groups differs with regard to their individual characteristics such as level of proficiency, age, educational background and so forth.

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## **Strategies and Problems Encountered by Teachers in Implementing Mother Tongue - Based Instruction in a Multilingual Classroom**

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### **Abstract**

The use of mother tongue in teaching in a multilingual setting affects the way pupils learn. A melting pot and the educational center of the North, Baguio City, Philippines demands teaching strategies that not only adapt to the interplay of the different cultures and languages but give importance to them, too. Specifically, this paper analyzed the strategies of teachers in implementing Mother Tongue - Based Instruction in a Multilingual Classroom and identified some problems that teachers encounter in implementing them. The study used qualitative analysis with interview as the main data gathering tool. The respondents were teachers purposively selected from the suggested pilot schools of Mother Tongue - Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) in Baguio City. From the phenomenological analysis of the data, the findings showed that the teachers used strategies such as translation of target language to mother tongue, utilization of multilingual teaching, utilization of lingua-franca, improvization of instructional materials written in mother tongue, remediation of instruction, and utilization of literary piece written in mother tongue as motivation. Some problems encountered by the teachers in implementing mother tongue - based instruction include absence of books written in mother tongue, lack of vocabulary, and lack of teacher-training. Nevertheless, the study indicated that major attention and effort are still necessary to be given to the approach.

**Keywords:** practices, mother tongue - based instruction, multilingualism, and multiculturalism

## 1. Introduction

The role of language as a medium of instruction in promoting an effective teaching and learning is an issue that has occupied many scholars all over the world for many years (Orr 1987a, 1997 as cited by Deyi, et al., 2007). This role of language as a medium of instruction has been a concern mostly in countries where immigrant children are in the minority such as United States and Canada (Krashen, 1981 as cited by Deyi, et al., 2007). It is in these countries where research has been widely conducted and a number of legislations have been passed and amended throughout the years. Despite such developments, debates on the use of language persist.

One of the latest developments in the Philippine educational system is the Mother Tongue – Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). MTB-MLE refers to the use of students' mother tongue and two or more additional languages as Languages of Instruction (LoI) in school. In other contexts, the term is used to describe bilingual education across multiple language communities—each community using its own mother tongue aside from the official school language of instruction. In South Asia, multilingual education usually follows the first definition, learning and using multiple languages in school. In some countries, MTB-MLE includes four languages—the students' mother tongue or first language, a regional language, the national language and an international language (Malone, 2007).

According to the official language policy of the 1987 Educational Act (revised in 2004), children in Grades 1 – 3 were to be instructed in their first language, while those in Grade 4 onwards are set to be instructed using a second language (L2), which is English. This language policy can be identified as a possible model for bilingual education (Borch & Tombari, 1997 as cited by Ndamba, 2008).

Many studies have already revealed that teaching using the mother tongue in the early grades enhances children's ability to learn better compared to the use of a second or foreign language (UNESCO, 2003; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2003 as cited by Rai, et al., 2011). It has also been reported that if children are taught in languages which are different from their home language or mother tongue, they drop out from school, have low academic performance, and repeat classes due to a high failure rate. This state of affairs is still persistent in Nepal (Yadava, 2007; Awasthi, 2004 as cited by Rai, et al., 2011). Research on L2 acquisition shows that when a child masters the first language then learning another language becomes less problematic in the habits of speech, listening, reading, and writing (Maclaughlin, 1987; Krashen, 195; Ndamba 2008 citing Cummins, 1981; Hawes, 1979; Obanya, 1985; & Dawes, 1988). Research that has been conducted on language education has also shown that children are quicker to learn, to read, and to acquire other academic skills when instructed in the language that they speak at home rather than taught in an unfamiliar language (Langer, et al., 1990; Unicef, 1999).

Recently, in the educational reforms in the country, the mother tongue in the regions plays an important role especially in the educational system. To strengthen this, the Department of Education (DepEd) has implemented the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction (DepEd order No. 74, series of 2009).



No research has been conducted on the effective strategies of teachers in implementing the MTB-MLE in a multilingual education. The city of Baguio (Philippines) is considered to be a home to many immigrants from other parts of the country and other countries. A significant population of foreigners and local people contributed to the diversity of the city's culture. The languages that are commonly spoken are Kankanaey, Ibaloi, Ilocano, Kapampangan, Pangasinense, Tagalog, English, Chinese, and recently Korean. Having different languages in the city has been a concern. The problems include what strategies can be employed by the teachers in successfully implementing MTB-MLE.

This study explored the strategies employed by the teachers in implementing MTB – MLE and the problems that they have encountered. It specifically dwelt on answering the following research questions: What are the strategies employed by the teachers in using MTB-MLE in the multilingual classrooms? And, what the problems encountered by the teachers in employing the MTB-MLE?

## **2. Methods**

### *2.1. Participants*

Twelve teachers from Kindergarten to Grade 1 from the three pilot schools in the city of Baguio were chosen by the researchers as respondents based on the inclusion criteria set for the study (teachers who are teaching in the pilot schools and teaching Kinder to Grade 1). These teachers had their rich experiences in employing and implementing the MTB-MLE in the pilot schools and they have tried different strategies in teaching in the early grades in a multilingual classroom. These pilot schools were chosen because they implemented the MTB-MLE for the city considering the nature of the learners in these schools. Baguio City is known to be a melting pot of different language and culture in the Northern Philippines, so the pupils have diverse background in terms of language and culture.

Having 12 interview subjects for the study was arrived at based on phenomenological inquiry and data saturation criterions. According to Creswell (1998), phenomenology requires in-depth interviews from 3 to 13 subjects.

### *2.2. Data Collection Tools*

A semi-structured in-depth interview (Patton, 1990) was used as data gathering tool. An aide memoire which probed the dynamics of the teachers' experiences in employing MTB-MLE in teaching the Kinder and Grade 1 in the pilot schools was developed by the researchers based on a priori code. Their sharing revolved around the questions, "What were your experiences with teaching the Kinder/ Grade 1 using MTB-MLE? What are the strategies that you used in using MTB-MLE? What do you think were the best strategies that you have employed helped facilitate the learning of the pupils? What were the problems that you have encountered in using MTB-MLE? Why do you consider these as your problems?"

If the interviewer is skilful, Best and Kahn (1993) believe that the interview can be regarded as data gathering device which is often superior to others as people are more willing to talk than to write, and confidential information may be obtained from respondents who might be reluctant to put it in writing. The interview was considered suitable in this study in order to determine respondents' opinions, attitudes or trends

of beliefs (Sharma, 1994 as cited by Ndamba, 2008). Also, classroom observations were conducted to further witness the actual setting, especially how the teachers applied the strategies and how effective their practices were with their pupils. Video and tape recordings were used during the interview and observation.

### *2.3. Data Collection Procedure*

To capture the essence of the phenomenon under investigation, a letter of request was addressed the principals of the pilot schools and to the respondents informing them of the nature of the research, the topic to be discussed and extent of their participation. After seeking their permission and willingness to participate, an appointment was scheduled for a one-on-one interview based on their availability. To elicit natural responses for questions, all the respondents were interviewed in locations of their own choice and lasted for at least 45 minutes to one hour per respondent.

The in-depth and semi-structured interview was conducted in English language since the respondents are proficient in English but they were given the freedom to answer the questions in other languages like Filipino, the national language or in their native language that they are comfortable with to ensure the richness of data. The interview sessions for teachers have closed and open-ended questions to allow the researchers to follow up points which needed elaboration and to clarify questions that were misunderstood by the respondents (Mouly, 1978 as cited by Ndamba, 2008). The interview focused /centered on the best strategies employed by the teachers and the problems they encountered in using MTB-MLE. Best and Kahn (1993) stated that interviews are particularly appropriate in getting responses from respondents.

For the classroom observation, one teacher for every level and pilot school was chosen. The respondents were oriented about the observation done in their classes. Dates for trial and final observations and video recordings were scheduled. The recorded classroom proceedings were transcribed to produce the field text which was utilized for the analysis. Two observations and video recordings for each subject-teacher were undertaken. These excluded the trial observation and recording for each teacher before the final collection of data. The trial observations and recordings were conducted for the teachers and their students to get used to the process, thus reducing any “halo effect” during the final data collection. The data gathered during the trial observations and recordings were not included in the analysis of the data.

### *2.4 Data Analysis*

The video and tape recorded interviews and classroom observations were transcribed into field texts (Clandinin & Connely, 2000) where both anchors and phenomenal themes were extracted. The text was subjected to phenomenological reduction by means of repertory grid. The grid presented the significant statements made by the respondents which were classified using themes and were interpreted carefully. Simultaneous re-reading of the significant statements of each respondent facilitated the surfacing of the important ideas and experiences of the respondents. For the warm analysis, highlighted words or phrases were proof-read and analyzed to formulate categories and themes. The validity, truthfulness and trustworthiness of the emerging patterns and themes were done through correspondence with the participants where the consistency of the transcription and interpretation made by the researchers on the respondents' statements were verified individually with the study participants. Member-checking procedure (Graneheim & Lundan, 2004 cited in Valdez, De

Guzman & Escolar-Chua, 2012) and a critical friend technique involving expert were also employed.

### 3. Results and Discussions

Findings in this paper described the strategies and problems of teachers in employing MTB-MLE in their classrooms as pilot schools. The thickness and richness of the field text gathered afforded the identification and emerging of the six interesting themes relative to the strategies employed by the teachers and three interesting themes relative to the problems they encountered.

#### 3.1. *Strategies Employed by Teachers in Implementing Mother Tongue - Based Instruction in a Multilingual Setting*

Based on the answers given by the respondents and the observation conducted on the strategies employed by teachers in the implementation of mother tongue - based instruction in a multilingual setting, several themes emerged. These themes are (a) translation from target language to mother tongue, (b) utilization of multilingual teaching, (c) utilization of lingua-franca, (d) improvization of instructional materials written in mother tongue, (e) remediation of instruction, and (f) utilization of literary piece written in mother tongue as motivation.

##### 3.1.1. *Translation of target language to mother tongue.*

Translation is very beneficial to learning when it comes to learning through the use of the students' mother tongue because it serves as a bridge to connect students to the lesson. Translation is sometimes referred to as the fifth language skill alongside the other four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. "Translation holds a special importance at an intermediate and advanced level: in the advanced or final stage of language teaching, translation from first language (L1) to second language (L2) and from L2 to L1 is recognized as the fifth skill and the most important social skill, since it promotes communication and understanding between strangers" (Ross, 2000 as cited by Kavaliauskiene, 2009). It is commonly believed that translators are better at translating into their native language than into a second language.

For the respondents, translation is important for the reason that it helps them address the needs of the pupils who have different languages. Moreover, teachers need to translate the lesson using all the pupils' mother tongue for better understanding. This is evident from the following statements of the respondents: "*So for some pupils I use Ilocano as a medium of instruction but for those pupils who can't understand Ilocano, I go to the extent of using Kankanaey for a better understanding of the lesson.*" And, "*So I will translate it all in Ilocano to Tagalog to English.*"

The statements indicate that the respondents are using translation in their lesson. The first statement shows that the teacher is using Ilocano as a medium of instruction but if there are pupils who do not understand Ilocano, she translates the discussion into another language that the said pupils understand. The second statement signifies that the teacher translates in one native language to another native language used by the pupils. It implies that pupils learn more if the lesson is translated to their mother tongue. The respondents mentioned: "*Teacher-made IM's and big books written in English language but I translated in mother tongue.*"; "*As a teacher, you will do the*

*translation, that is what we use as instructional materials. All the alphabets should be translated into mother tongue.”*

As seen from the responses above, translation can be applied in every aspect of learning. The respondents use books written in English and translate the content to the pupils' mother tongue. The teachers have no option but to use English books because there are no available books written in the mother tongue. Through translation, it helped the students understand more the materials that they are using. Furthermore, the second statement points out that alphabets should also be based on the pupils' mother tongue. This means that translation plays a vital role in teaching and in learning.

The above statements support the claim of Dickins (2005) as cited by Jabak (2013) that translator training normally focuses on translation into the mother tongue, because higher quality is achieved in that direction than in translating into a foreign language.

Moreover, teachers translate for the learners to have a better understanding of the lesson. The effectiveness of this strategy is confirmed by the following statements of the respondents: *“It’s effective because my pupils respond positively. They also interact during discussions, games, and the like.”*; *“It’s effective because half of the class are participating during class discussion. So they will understand; actually if English is used, only 2 or 3 pupils recite unlike in Ilocano.”*

*“Through add evaluation, tests, and checklist.”*; *“Formative and summative test are given to my pupils.”*

Thus, this means that majority of the learners understand the lesson better when being translated in mother tongue and its effectiveness is being tested through the use of the assessment tools. As mentioned above, the teachers use assessment tools such as formative and summative tests, add evaluation, and checklists to evaluate the students work or performance.

Also, the pupils respond actively to the discussion and many of them participate when their mother tongue is used as a medium of instruction, unlike when the teacher use English where only two or three take part in the discussion as revealed from the observation conducted.

### *3.1.2. Utilization of multilingual teaching*

Multilingual teaching is when teachers use varied languages in the whole duration of teaching for the reason of accommodating students who do not speak a particular language and including them in the discussion. This is defined as speaking two or more languages in a growing worldwide phenomenon (Milambiling, 2011).

Since the people who live in Baguio City are speakers of different languages, the teachers need to explore and use all possible languages in order to cater to the needs of the learners having different mother tongues. A teacher uses each mother tongue for the pupils to understand the lesson. *“I use Ilocano aah...Kankanaey and for those...who cannot speak or still understand Kankanaey and Ilocano I use the Ibaloi language.”*

The above statement denotes that the teacher uses varied language such as Kankanaey, Ilocano, and Ibaloi in delivering her lesson. It is clearly stated that she has the capability to use different mother tongues which makes a good point of what a mother tongue teachers should be since they are multilingual themselves. Through this, the teacher can say that this strategy is effective because the pupils are seen motivated. This was also observed in the video of the classes where the pupils tend to be very active in recitation and other activities when the teachers use varied languages in giving instruction and explaining the lessons. One respondent stated: *“So for some pupils I use Ilocano as a medium of instruction but for those pupils who can’t still understand Ilocano I go to the extent of using Kankanaey for better understanding of the lesson.”*

This means that the teacher is versatile in making ways to cater to the needs of the students. Therefore, being a multilingual teacher is an advantage in teaching pupils with different languages. The teacher’s flexibility in using other languages means that there are fewer problems in translation. In line with translation of the different mother tongues, being a multilingual teacher is needed to match the skill of translating. If the teacher knows every language of his/her pupils then the demands of every learner to use his/her own language will be met. The teacher can cater to the individual needs of the learners by translating the lessons he/she is teaching in the different mother tongues of the learners in the classroom.

The above response of the respondent provide support to the concept of Garcia (2008) as cited by Milambiling (2011), that multilingual language awareness is a necessity for teachers of multilingual students. Besides knowing about languages, subject matter, and teaching methodology, teachers should have an understanding of the political struggles and social circumstances of pupils. This strategy also allows the students to explore and learn the language of others.

Milambiling (2011) further states that those who speak more than one language are also generally more aware of sociolinguistic variables and functions than those who speak one language, and they are adept at switching between different regional varieties, registers, and formal and informal language styles. This same author stated that the advantage of being a multilingual is that it creates different kinds of connections in the brain, which gives multilingual individuals an advantage in some respects compared with monolingual individuals.

### 3.1.3. Utilization of lingua-franca

Lingua-franca is a language that is widely used as a means of intercommunication among speakers of different languages. Seeing that the dominant language that is being used in Baguio City is Ilocano, the respondents prefer it as their medium of instruction since it is the language that is widely used by the learners in the school and at the same time at home. The respondents shared, *“In English subject, I use Ilocano then bridge to English.”*; *“Here in Baguio, Ilocano is really the language they use.”*; *“So for some pupils I use Ilocano as a medium of instruction but for those pupils who can’t still understand Ilocano I go to the extent of using Kankanaey for better understanding of the lesson.”*

The respondents use Ilocano as a medium of instruction because majority of the class understand Ilocano. If the teacher uses Ilocano in delivering the lesson then majority

would understand and take part, and with those who do not understand Ilocano, it is where translation is used. The statements revealed that the first choice of the teachers when it comes to using mother tongue is Ilocano due to the fact that Ilocano is the most dominant language in class.

This is also confirmed from the observation conducted by the researchers, that is, it was evident that all the learners were very participative in the discussion because majority of them are using Ilocano when communicating in school and at home.

According to Swadesh (1951), lingua-franca is a folk language; it can be used with all the advantages of any other mother tongue as an effective instrument of instruction in the areas where it is the folk language. The fact that the language may be pidginized will not detract from this value on the lower level of instruction; a pidginized mother tongue is nonetheless a mother tongue. For more complex purposes than elementary instruction, there may be problems of adapting the medium to the subject matter. Finally, using common language in a multilingual setting allows the learners to become active participants during class discussion and activities since they understand each other.

#### *3.1.4. Improvization of instructional materials written in mother tongue*

Instructional materials are the basic channel of communication in the classroom for the purpose of bringing about effective teaching and learning.

Instructional resources in teaching and learning make students learn more and retain better what they have been taught and that these instructional resources also promote and sustain students' interest. These resources also allow the learners to discover themselves and their abilities. The respondents mentioned, "...I use improvized materials like stories, songs, poems, and charts written in Kankana-ey and Ilocano."; "To motivate the pupils, I use songs and poems written in Kankanaey and Ilocano."; and "Teacher-made IMs and big books written in English language but I translated in mother tongue." From the given responses of the respondents, the materials are written in the learners' native languages to motivate students and for the learners to participate.

These instructional materials are entertaining at the same time educational and can cater to the different senses. This is one way of motivating the class to participate during the discussion. Instructional materials are vital to teaching-learning process (Sunday & Joshua, 2010). Teaching can only be effective when adequate and relevant instructional materials are used (Afolabi, Adeyanju, Adedapo & Falade, 2006 as cited by Sunday & Joshua, 2010).

With the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction, instructional materials should also be written in mother tongue to achieve consistency. These instructional materials are prepared based on the interests and needs of learners. The poems, songs, and stories were translated by the teacher because there are no books written in the mother tongue. Thus, the use of instructional materials written in mother tongue enhances students' awareness of their own language which can lead to their proficiencies of the said language. This is also a way of appreciating their own language, using it in the class and making materials with it.

The effectiveness of this strategy can be seen in the following statements: *“It’s effective because my pupils respond positively. They also interact during discussions, games, and the like.”* And *“It’s effective because half of the class are participating during class discussion. So they will understand; actually if English is used, only 2 or 3 pupils recite unlike in Ilocano.”*

The respondents also explained that their learners interact well if the materials that they are using are written in their mother tongue. The result also revealed that the pupils are actively participating when their mother tongue is used as a medium of instruction to further the discussion of the lesson. This means that pupils prefer materials which are written in their mother tongue because they can comprehend. Another respondent added, *“Our signages are also in written in mother tongue”*.

It was seen during the observation that there are signages everywhere written in the learners’ mother tongue. There are also headings and letterings written in mother tongue and English equivalent beside them. This means that learners can better understand and follow the signs posted in the classrooms and school surroundings if they are written in mother tongue. Instructional resources in teaching and learning make students learn more and retain better what they have been taught and that they also promote and sustain students’ interest (Abimbade, 1997 as cited by Sunday & Joshua, 2010). These instructional resources also allow the learners to discover themselves and their abilities.

#### *3.1.5. Remediation of instruction*

This requires pupils to stay after class hours for an extra learning especially for those pupils who have difficulty with the lessons and for those who are behind in their lesson. This means that the teacher will tutor to accommodate all the learners despite of their levels of intelligence. In conducting remedial classes, the teacher uses mother tongue as the medium of instruction. This is a strategy that was suggested by one of the respondents saying, *“We use remedial class. I see to it that in the afternoon I have one or two pupils to have remedial classes. So I have 40 minutes remedial, but not all students.”*

The school thought of this as best for they know that it will help their pupils who are failing to excel or follow in the class. Having their proof that most of the class are always participating by the help of the mentioned strategy and that the discussion is more interactive, the teachers concluded that this strategy is an effective one for both the teachers and students.

Also, a remedial class is a learner’s opportunity to ask the teacher about his/her difficulties in understanding the lesson especially when the problem has something to do with the mother tongue the teacher is using during the class discussion. In this case, it will also help the pupils learn most, from utilizing their mother tongue.

#### *3.1.6. Utilization of literary piece written in mother tongue as motivation*

Literary pieces are used by teachers as a springboard to teach other concepts or ideas that are beneficial to the pupils. Teachers integrate literature within the discussion and these literary pieces are already translated in preferred mother tongue.

There are four main reasons that lead a language teacher to use literature in the classroom namely: valuable authentic material, cultural enrichment, language enrichment, and personal involvement (Hişmanoğlu, 2005 citing Collie & Slater, 1990). One respondent cited, *“To motivate the pupils, I use songs and poems written in Kankanaey and Ilocano”*.

The respondent shared that in order to get the interest of the learners, she used songs and poems that were written in mother tongue because if she uses native songs, the learners will develop love and appreciation of their own language and culture. In addition, using songs written in mother tongue allow the students to understand the meaning of the song or poem because they are mother tongue users inside and outside the school.

Literature of any kind can be important for children of other cultures and is a powerful tool to weaken and dissolve racism. Multicultural literature can also play a very important role for teachers. This serves as an instrument for the teachers to see first in themselves the importance of being a multicultural person in order to appreciate the different cultures found or emanating from the literature that they are reading or they are teaching. Through this, they can impart to their students the importance of having a multicultural literature so that in turn the students will also understand and appreciate different cultures. The teachers must be very keen in selecting the different literatures that can show the diversities of cultures of the pupils especially those that are found in the classroom. Multicultural literature can be used as a tool to open pupil's minds. It helps to stimulate an understanding of diversity in the classroom and helps to build an understanding of and respect for people from other cultures (Boles, 2006). Also, multicultural literature can be used to eliminate racism (Colby & Lyon, 2004 as cited by Boles, 2006).

Finally, in the case of Baguio City having different languages, the mentioned strategies are beneficial for the pupils to have a meaningful learning since the learners are exposed to different languages and cultures.

### ***3.2. Problems Encountered by Teachers in Implementing Mother Tongue - Based Instruction in a Multilingual Setting***

Aside from the best strategies mentioned by the respondents, there are also themes that were developed regarding the problems they encountered in the implementation of mother tongue - based instruction in a multilingual setting. These are (a) absence of books written in mother tongue, (b) lack of vocabulary, and (c) lack of teacher-training.

#### ***3.2.1. Absence of books written in mother tongue***

This is the condition of having no textbooks or dictionaries in the mother tongue that are needed to accommodate the needs of the learners having different mother tongues. Although one of the strategies in implementing MTB-MLE is the improvisation of instructional materials written in mother tongue, still teachers need books that are accurate and reliable.

The respondents' emphasized that they really need books written in mother tongue so that they will be able to implement MTB-MLE successfully. The absence of books



written in mother tongue affects the teaching specifically when translating since their pupils are speakers of different languages. The respondents said, *“There are no big or small books in Ilocano that you can buy, so as a teacher will just translate it”* and *“The problem is that, there are no books written in mother tongue.”* The responses paralleled the statement of Hall, (2010) as cited by Dekker, et al., (2008), that is, no teacher can teach effectively without appropriate materials that are based on two components: established government curriculum goals and pupil’s prior knowledge, culture, and value systems. With few books available for most of the 170 languages of the Philippines, materials development appears a daunting task (Dekker, et al., 2008). Books are one of the most needed materials in the learning process of the pupils. Teaching and learning cannot be effective without adequate and relevant use of instructional materials (Grant, 1978 as cited by Sunday & Joshua, 2010). One of the respondents emphasized that in order to effectively implement MTB-MLE, curriculum should be updated and textbooks and teaching materials should be made available in advance.

In implementing MTB-MLE, goals are not being attained if there is deficiency of materials needed; hence, there is a need for the provision of the books and instructional materials that are helpful to the learning of pupils which will increase their understanding. Malone (2007) stated that literacy can only be maintained if there is an adequate supply of reading materials.

This problem can be a hindrance in the success of the implementation of mother tongue - based instruction since the teachers are not that literate in all the different languages of their learners; thus, the production of mother tongue textbooks and dictionaries is a must in the city of Baguio.

### 3.2.2. Lack of vocabulary

This is considered to be the dearth of words to use when delivering a message or information. There is no wide range of the words or phrases used in discussing the lesson using mother tongue; therefore, it is considered as one of the problems being encountered by the teachers. Two of the respondents said, *“The vocabulary of the teacher is not enough because we are not really used to Baguio Ilocano. And not all pupils really understand Ilocano, although there are some who can but have low level of understanding of the language.”* and *“We lack vocabulary to be used in translating an English and Filipino word.”*

The above statements explain that though teachers are residents of Baguio City, their knowledge on the different languages of the city is not enough to deliver the lesson. They cannot say that they have enough vocabulary especially that their pupils are not fluent in the lingua franca and not all words from the target language have equivalent terms in the first language.

In addition, the respondents are experiencing difficulties in teaching their pupils because they cannot think of the right word that is exactly the equivalent of the source language, putting them in a situation that will bring confusion to the pupils.

Moreover, since Baguio City is considered as the melting pot of cultures and languages, all of the respondents revealed that they are pressured to use mother tongue as their medium of instruction because they are teaching pupils with different

languages. This problem was very evident from the given statements of the respondents, *“The pupils are a mixture of Ilocanos, Kankanaey, Kalanguya, and even Ibaloi aah. So that they will be able to understand our lesson, I use Ilocano aah Kankanaey. I use Ilocano as a medium of instruction but for those pupils who can’t still understand Ilocano, I go to the extent of using Kakana-ey for better understanding of the lesson.”* ; *“ First, they should all be speakers of their mother tongue, should they? So it cannot be that half of them speak Tagalog. Well, here in Baguio City we cannot avoid that some are mixed speakers of different languages.”* And, *“ Of course many of them understand Ilocano; they just cannot speak straight Ilocano.”*

Although the teachers are trying their best to explain the lesson using mother tongue; still, the learners cannot interact well during the discussion because the pupils are not that fluent in using the same mother tongues. This adds to the teachers’ problem on how to address their needs.

This scenario implies that the teachers need to be a linguist and/ or polyglot in order to address the needs of the pupils. This makes their learning interactive and meaningful. This means that the task of educating children becomes much more difficult when teachers have to face a heterogeneous group with multilingual and multicultural background (Pai, 2005).

### 3.2.3. Lack of teacher-training

Lack of teacher-training includes unpreparedness of the teachers to teach their learners with the use of mother tongue as their medium of instruction considering that their pupils have different mother tongues.

The respondents felt that training and seminars for teachers should be provided regularly and academic support from the specialist on various issues of mother tongue teaching is also required. One of the respondents stated that *“ All of a sudden you will teach using mother tongue. I never expected to teach using it. All of a sudden they called me to teach. What? Mother tongue?! I told them I don’t really know Ilocano. Even the pupils are having a hard time.”* From the statement, it is very evident that the teacher is not prepared because she has not undergone any training regarding MTB-MLE. Having limited background in using mother tongue as a medium of instruction can hinder in becoming an effective teacher.

Training and seminars are important for teachers who are teaching multilingual learners because they need to be oriented and guided on how to handle learners with different languages. Also, through training and seminars, the teacher’s knowledge is enriched because they are being involved in the different workshops during seminars. Seminars and training also served as an opportunity for the teachers to learn from and interact with the different participants.

The sharing of the respondents lends support to Dutcher (2004) who stated the teachers need training in using first language in the classroom and that the materials have to be appropriate, available, and interesting to the pupils, as well used. If they are not being used (the case in Guatemala from the recent study of the Grade 6 graduates) learning is not progressive. Most teachers need training in methodology so that they can exploit the advantages of teaching in the language that children can understand

(Dutcher, 2004). This means less emphasis on rote learning, repetition and copying, and more on peer-to-peer interaction and on encouraging students to think for themselves, read, and come to their own conclusions (Dutcher, 2004).

Also, the respondents were just prompted to use mother tongue in teaching regardless of their background knowledge about the languages of their learners. One of the respondents mentioned, *“The vocabulary of the teacher is not enough because we are not really used to Baguio Ilocano. And not all pupils really understand Ilocano, although there are some who can but have low level of understanding of the language.”*

Finally, this suggests training programs for teachers to enhance their skills and to enrich their knowledge regarding the implementation of mother tongue - based instruction and to improve their vocabulary with the use of mother tongue they are using.

With pupils who are not all speakers of the same mother tongue, teachers have difficulty when they are not expert of the different mother tongues. In this situation, the teacher would rather use the language that is understandable to the pupils. This weakens the implementation of mother tongue.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The study successfully surfaced the teachers' experiences from the three pilot schools in implementing the MTB-MLE in a multilingual setting reflected in the use of the strategies like translating of target language to mother tongue, utilizing multilingual teaching, utilizing lingua-franca, improvising instructional materials written in mother tongue, remediating instruction and utilizing literary piece written in mother tongue; and the problems they encountered like absence of books written in the mother tongue, lack of vocabulary, and lack of teacher training. Through these strategies employed by the teachers, they are able to effectively implement the use of MTB-MLE in helping their pupils acquire the necessary information and learning in the classroom. These innovative strategies help the students attain the maximum learning and helps build firm foundations, valuing and developing the oral and written skills that young children bring to school without rushing literacy. The problems indicated the major attention and effort necessary to be considered so that it will not hinder the meaningful learning and will not affect the way the teachers deliver their lessons.

The study advances the current literature by illuminating areas on the strategies and problems of MTB-MLE instruction previously not cited as well as concurring with the previous investigations. Clearly, findings generated in this study affirm the vital role of teachers in supporting pupil's learning relative to the implementation of the MTB-MLE through their innovative strategies and overcoming the barriers. Hence, the Department of Education are challenged to initiate a mechanism by which the teachers' innovative strategies and problems are assessed, monitored and evaluated at the same time design an effective program or model of MTB-MLE that is geared towards supporting these teachers' role in its effective implementation. This study however, has a certain limitation. Given the study site, the findings may not reflect the experiences of all teachers locally and internationally. Nonetheless, this study surfaced trends worthy of further investigation. We end this study with a view to

increasing administrators and teachers' awareness and improving MTB-MLE policy in a multicultural and multilingual setting.

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