Ohio TESOL Journal

Autumn 2016 - Vol. 8, No. 2

► The Pragmatic Awareness of English Tag Questions
► Building a Sustainable ELL Program
► International Adoption and ELL – A Parent’s Perspective
► Questions and Considerations for the New School Year
► A Thai Student’s Perspective on Creative ESL/EFL Writing
► Modifying Content Area Tests for English Language Learners
► Building Connections Through Outreach Opportunities!
► Book Review: Key Topics in Second Language Acquisition
► Implementing Mediated Imitation Technique:
  Lesson plans for promoting ELL oral production awareness
Ohio TESOL Board

Executive Committee - Voting Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email/Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>David Brauer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:brauer.11@osu.edu">brauer.11@osu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Lejla B. Maley</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lejla.bilal@gmail.com">lejla.bilal@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Vice President</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Jennifer Fennema-Bloom</td>
<td><a href="mailto:fennema-bloom@findlay.edu">fennema-bloom@findlay.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording Secretary</td>
<td>Jill Kramer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kramerjill@sbcglobal.net">kramerjill@sbcglobal.net</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interest Section Representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Representatives</th>
<th>Email/Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post Secondary/Higher Ed.</td>
<td>Ivan Stefano</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stefanoi@ohiodominican.edu">stefanoi@ohiodominican.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Education/Refugee</td>
<td>Wendy Buckey</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wendytesol@yahoo.com">wendytesol@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ahmed Fahad</td>
<td><a href="mailto:FahadAk@mail.uc.edu">FahadAk@mail.uc.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Teacher Education</td>
<td>Rosaire Ifedi</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rifedi@ashland.edu">rifedi@ashland.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>Cori Stevens</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stevens255@gmail.com">stevens255@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Advisory Board - Non-Voting Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email/Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past President</td>
<td>Elizabeth McNally</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mcnally.48@osu.edu">mcnally.48@osu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Coordinator</td>
<td>Sara Levitt</td>
<td><a href="mailto:saralevitt1@gmail.com">saralevitt1@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>Francine Lasley</td>
<td><a href="mailto:swclv@sbcglobal.net">swclv@sbcglobal.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFLA Liaison</td>
<td>Derek Braun</td>
<td><a href="mailto:derekdbraun@gmail.com">derekdbraun@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODE Lau Resource Center Liaison</td>
<td>Paula Mahaley</td>
<td><a href="mailto:paula.mahaley@education.ohio.gov">paula.mahaley@education.ohio.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Donna Villareal</td>
<td><a href="mailto:donna.villareal@education.ohio.gov">donna.villareal@education.ohio.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio TESOL Advisor</td>
<td>Dan Fleck</td>
<td><a href="mailto:d_fleck@sbcglobal.net">d_fleck@sbcglobal.net</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Committees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awards and Grants</th>
<th>Emily Williams</th>
<th><a href="mailto:eawohio@gmail.com">eawohio@gmail.com</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016 Conference Chair</td>
<td>David Brauer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:brauer.11@osu.edu">brauer.11@osu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Mike Dombroski</td>
<td><a href="mailto:md108091@ohio.edu">md108091@ohio.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sara Levitt</td>
<td><a href="mailto:saralevitt1@gmail.com">saralevitt1@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cori Stevens</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stevens255@gmail.com">stevens255@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>Jessica Burchett</td>
<td><a href="mailto:burchettjes@gmail.com">burchettjes@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Communications Team

| Web Manager               | Mike Dombroski         | md108091@ohio.edu                                     |
| Journal Editors           | Content: Jennifer Fennema-Bloom | fennema-bloom@findlay.edu                           |
|                           | Layout: Ivan Stefano   | stefanoi@ohiodominican.edu                           |
| Listserv Manager          | Lejla B. Maley         | lejla.bilal@gmail.com                                 |

Ohio TESOL Journal is published twice a year by Ohio TESOL. Ohio TESOL is not responsible for any opinions expressed by contributors to the Journal. Submissions accepted for publication may be edited and / or republished on the Ohio TESOL website and other media. Photo credit - front cover: Sky and Water (Explored) by Jeff Wallace via Flickr (CC BY-NC 2.0).
Dear Ohio TESOL Members and Journal Readers,

Salutations! In the last issue of this journal, I pledged transparency and dedication. Accordingly, I would like to update you on some of Ohio TESOL’s recent action.

TESOL 2016 International Convention & English Language Expo. Lejla Maley and I attended the TESOL Convention in Baltimore in April. We participated in a series of workshops that move affiliate chapters forward. We shared ideas on membership engagement, advocacy, and other best practices in association management.

Ohio Department of Education, Lau Resource Center. In May, Dr. Jennifer Fennema-Bloom and I met with Dr. Abdinur Mohamud, Dr. Donna Villareal, and Andrea Mallory of the Lau Resource Center. We discussed ways in which Ohio TESOL and Lau can continue to support English learners and educators, and agreed that one way to do this is through the continued support of our annual conference. Resources from Lau are critical to the conference’s success and to Ohio TESOL’s sustainability.

Ohio Seal of Biliteracy. Ohio TESOL representative, Dr. Brenda Custodio, submitted proponent testimony on behalf of Ohio TESOL in support of the Ohio Seal of Biliteracy Bill (Ohio H.B. 487). Dr. Custodio joined Ohio Foreign Language Association (OFLA) representatives to advocate for the bill. Preliminary reports indicate that the bill is advancing favorably. Thank you, Brenda!

Every Student Succeeds Act. Ohio TESOL representatives (Jill Kramer, Cori Stevens, and Emily Williams) met with the Ohio Department of Education’s Center for Accountability and Continuous Improvement to discuss The State’s implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and how it will affect English learners and educators. Ohio TESOL shared concerns about ESSA as it affects TESOL and looks forward to continuing this important conversation.

TESOL Advocacy & Policy Summit. Francine Lasley, attended the TESOL Advocacy & Policy Summit. This unique professional development event helps educators learn about U.S. federal education issues and advocate for policies that support English learners and English language education. Ohio TESOL will better engage legislators and policymakers at both the state and federal levels with information gleaned at the summit.

Ohio TESOL Conference Planning. Lastly, we have been planning this year’s conference. We have received a record-setting number of proposals and are in the process of reviewing them. This year’s theme is Every Student Succeeds and our keynote speaker is Dr. Alba Ortiz, Professor of Special Education and Director of the Office of Bilingual Education at the University of Texas at Austin. The conference is earlier
than usual this year (October 7-8), so mark your calendars. Conference registration is open.

I am proud of all Ohio TESOL has accomplished so far this year, and thank the Ohio TESOL Board of Directors and Advisory Members for their service. Your efforts are advancing our organization and the field. I am looking forward to the rest of the year and to seeing all of you at the conference! ☺️

Sincerely,

David Brauer

---

**Notes from the Editors**

Welcome to The Ohio TESOL Journal! We are pleased to launch our newest edition. In this edition you will find the formatting and layout has changed and that we are now including submission domain sections entitled: Notes from Ohio TESOL, Teaching Tips, Featured District Highlights, Advocacy, Research, Book Review and Resources. Under this new structure we encourage you, our readers, and your colleagues, schools, and students to submit articles from any of our intersection strands: K-12, Adult/Refugee Education, Post-secondary/Higher Education, Teacher Education and Applied Linguistics. If you have questions regarding a topic’s fit for our journal or an idea that you would like to consider writing feel free to contact the content editor. As always we encourage advocacy, research and articles pertaining to teaching ESL students such as methods, techniques, and lesson plans that have proven successful. Together we can make this journal a wonderful resource for members of Ohio TESOL! ☺️

Sincerely,

Dr. Jennifer Fennema-Bloom
Dr. Ivan Stefano

---

Ohio TESOL seeks submissions on topics of interest related to the field of TESOL, Applied Linguistics and TESOL related fields; particularly attention will be given to submissions relating to one of our four intersection: K-12, Research/Teacher Education, Adult/Refugee Education, and Postsecondary/Higher Education. Submission on advocacy issues across the intersections are also welcomed. For submission guidelines please see http://ohiotesolmoodle.org/site/ohio-tesol-journal/submitting-to-the-journal/. Submission deadlines for the Spring 2017 issue are due by December 15, 2016.
The Pragmatic Awareness of English Tag Questions

Fahad Alzahrani

People use language as a means to communicate and deliver messages. English native speakers do not just utter words, but use linguistic tools to deliver certain messages. One of these linguistic tools is Tag Questions (TQ). Zhang (2010) and Knudsen (2011) described tag questions as one of the important elements in everyday communication. English tag questions have been frequently discussed in the literature (Holmes, 1982; Tottie & Hoffmann, 2006; and 2009). Most attention given to TQ in the literature has been in exploring their syntactic components and pragmatic functions. However, little has been said on the difficulties faced by English language learners when using the pragmatic functions of English tag questions appropriately.

Lakoff (1975) defined a tag question as “a declarative statement without the assumption that the statement is to be believed by the addressee: one has an out, as with questions. The tag gives the addressee leeway, not forcing him to go along with the views of the speaker”. Sailor (2009) used the term “tag question” and referred to it as the process of transforming a statement into an interrogative form. Syntactically speaking, they usually consist of two parts; a statement and a question tag as in You have a meeting today, don’t you? Pragmatically, scholars found that TQs can be used to fulfill various functions, such as: establishing a relation, eliciting information, summarizing and confirming information, and expressing empathy (Harres, 1998).

Different studies have been conducted on the challenges that ESL learners encounter in using English tag questions syntactically when learning English as a second language (Cheng 1995; Cheng & Warren, 2001; Al-Nabtiti 2012). The results of these studies showed that ESL learners use tag questions far less frequently than native speakers.

Using tag questions appropriately requires significant conversational skills because they require a syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic competence of forming and using tag questions adequately (Al-Nabtiti, 2012). Therefore, explaining English tag questions to ESL learners from a syntactic point of view is not sufficient in increasing the learners’ comprehension and proper use of such forms. Moreover, stress in teaching tag questions needs to be placed on the tag’s pragmatic use in various social situations.

The purpose of the current study is to investigate the awareness of the pragmatic functions of English tag questions. More specifically, the researcher aims at investigating how likely English language learners can identify and interpret the pragmatic functions of English tag questions in different scenarios. Thus, the researcher’s primary goal is to find an answer for the following question: How likely can Saudi international students identify and interpret the pragmatic functions of English tag questions in different situations?

To achieve this aim, thirty-seven Saudi international students were recruited in this study. The participants were adult Arabic native speakers aged between 18-50. Out of the total number of the participants, there were 6 students attending Preparatory Adult English Language Program; 2 intermediate level students and 6 advanced level students, 11 undergraduate students and 20 graduate students from different majors.

The data was collected through a listening test with four-point multiple-choice answers. The test consisted of fifteen scenarios and dialogues between two speakers that contained a use of tag questions. To effectively test the functionality of the English tag questions, the researcher used contexts in which the tag questions were presented in dialogues due to their important role in terms of intonation. A short description of a scenario was given for each conversation. Subjects, then, were allowed to listen twice to the speech sample that lasted less than 30 seconds before answering the question. Microsoft Excel was used as a means of analyzing the collected data in terms of the functions of English tag questions. The collected data was scored by giving each correct item a 1 point, whereas a false item a 0. The researcher then compared the participants’ answers in order to get an item-by-item analysis. The data was then compared with the findings in the literature.

The listening test was corrected out of 15 points, one point was given to each correct answer. Overall raw scores were calculated to get the mean score and then converted to percentages, out of one hundred. The mean score of the participants’ performance was 7.29, which is equivalent to 48.64%. Table 1 shows the subjects’ overall performances in the listening test.
Table 1: The Overall Subjects’ Performances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Raw score</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Mean Score</td>
<td>7.29</td>
<td>48.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Highest score</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>86.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lowest Score</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As table 1 illustrates, none of the participants scored 100% in this test. The highest overall score achieved by participants was 13, which is equivalent to 86.66%, while the lowest score was 2, which is in the 10th percentile. Only 2 out of 37 participants scored in the 80th percentile.

The results of the scenarios and dialogues in the test were accumulated together to reach an average score for each function. Table 2 shows the participants’ correct answers of each function after accumulation along with the percentages.

Table 2: Number of participants’ correct answers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Correct Answers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seeking confirmation</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insulting the Listener</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational Request</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation Initiation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing a Command</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Function #1: Seeking Confirmation
The mean number of participants’ correct answers in choosing this function is 19 which is equal to 51% of the total number of participants as indicated in table 2. In other words, almost half of the participants failed to select the function “confirmation check” correctly.

Function #2: Insulting the Listener
Although the results revealed that the mean number of participants’ correct answers in this function is slightly higher than function #1, almost half of them failed to identify and interpret this function correctly. Table 2 clarifies that the number of the subjects who succeed to choose the correct answers of this function is 20, which is equal to 54%.

Function #3: Request for Information
This function is the only function that uses a rising intonation. Nevertheless, 20 participants answered questions representing this function accurately as illustrated in table 2. That is, approximately 54% could achieve the determination of this function correctly. In fact, nine participants answered all three scenarios given on this function correctly.

Function #4: Conversation Initiating
The test’s data analysis on this function showed that this function was the least correctly selected by the participants. The average score of the subjects’ correct answers of this function is 9. This means that only 9 participants successfully answered this function, which is equal to 24% as shown in table 2. Regardless, only one student answered all the three given items expressing this function correctly. Accordingly, this function seemed to be the most difficult one for the subjects compared with the other target functions.

Function #5: Reduce the Command
This function had the highest number of participant success in selecting it correctly. The mean number of subjects’ correct answers is 21, which is equivalent to 57%. Yet, the results showed that twelve participants selected all the three tested scenarios correctly whereas six participants failed to choose the correct answers in any given items that represented this function.

The overall scores of the participants’ results were very low which demonstrate a lack of awareness of these pragmatic functions of tag questions and the social contexts that the tag questions were occurred in.

Pedagogical Implication
The difficulties that Saudi international students have been facing confirm the need of implementing a pragmatic theory as suggested by Bublitz (1979). According to Bublitz, the pragmatic theory explains tag questions through their real uses in different social contexts. Therefore, teachers are highly recommended to follow a pragmatic-based approach in teaching English tag
questions in ESL classrooms. They need to be aware that tag questions should not be taught only through explaining their syntactic components, but from their pragmatic functions as well.

In order to explore the awareness of the pragmatic functions of English tag questions by English language learners, two suggestions are made for future research. In chapter two of this study, it was shown that TQs can serve many functions. Thus, as a recommendation, future research may focus on the other pragmatic functions of English TQs, other than the ones targeted in this study.

Second, future research may need to set some independent variables, such as gender and major, to investigate if there is any correlation between variables and subjects’ performances in regards to the pragmatic awareness. This study correlated the participants’ results with only one variable: the participants’ current programs: mainstreamed (e.g. undergraduate/graduate program status) or pre-admission (e.g. Peremptory Adult English Language Program).

Furthermore, the author in this study targeted Saudi international population in the investigation. As a recommendation, future research may target another population other than Arabic native speakers, or may target Arabic native speakers but a non-Saudi population, such as Jordanian or Qatari.

The primary limitation of the present study is that the number of the participants from each level of study varied considerably. Although the number of Saudi international students who were enrolled in the preparatory adult English language program at the time of running this study was not very low, only 6 students attending this program participated in this study from both levels: intermediate and advanced. This low number may have impacted the analysis of the participants’ current programs: mainstreamed (e.g. undergraduate/graduate program status) or pre-admission (e.g. peremptory adult English language program).

In sum, it can be said that English TQs were proven to be pragmatically very complicated for English language learners. This complication is due to the need of being familiar with the social and cultural contexts in which tag questions are used and satisfying the appropriate intonation in order to be able to use them properly. Accordingly, ELLs in this study did not identify and interpret them appropriately, with the most difficulty arising from the function: conversation initiation. Therefore, teachers need to follow the pragmatic-based approach in teaching English TQs rather than explaining their structural components.

Fahad Alzahrani after completing his MA TESOL from the University of Findlay in 2020 is now a doctoral candidate majoring in Applied Linguistics at the University of Memphis, with research interests that revolve around the connections between linguistic form, meaning, and function in discourse. He has seven years of teaching experience within the U.S. and overseas.

References

During a recent presentation on the English Language Learner (ELL) program currently in place for South-Western City Schools (SWCS), I was asked how SWCS had decided upon the course that our department has been following for years. This question provided me with an opportunity to reflect on the development and growth of the ELL Department for SWCS, as well as an opportunity to reflect on the importance of establishing a sustainable framework of instruction for our work with the ELL students and families in our district.

The number of English Learners (EL’s) has increased significantly in SWCS in both overall numbers and percentage of overall students since the mid to late 1990’s. What initially started as less than 100 ELLs in the mid 90’s has grown to more than 3,000 identified Limited English Proficient (LEP) students heading into the 2016-17 school year. Based on an overall student enrollment of 20,000 students, the number of identified LEP students represents 14.9% of the district’s overall student population. With another 6% of the district’s student population comprised of LEP students who have exited the program, the LEP population in SWCS represents more than 20% of the district’s overall student population.

An attempt to more clearly define the role of schools in educating EL’s was put forward in 2002 when the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) clarified the focus of ELL programs “to help ensure that children who are limited English proficient attain English proficiency, and to assist all limited English proficient children to achieve at high levels in the core academic subjects so that those children can meet the same challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet.” (Section 2, Title III—Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students – of the No Child left Behind Act, January 2002)

The transition to the Every Student Succeeds Act signed in 2015 served to ensure that districts clarified their work with ELL students and families, and in a district with more than 20% of its students identified as LEP, we have certainly scrutinized our efforts in SWCS in meeting these goals. Adjustments to our programming have been made in order to make sure that accountability standards established in providing services for ELLs have been met, and to be certain that our ELLs have been given opportunities to demonstrate growth in SLA and academic achievement standards.

As our ELL population grew we realized that we were going to need to increase our staffing, resources, and professional development (PD) opportunities in two directions: our Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) staff, and just as importantly, we were going to have to identify content-area teachers who could support growth and achievement in the core content areas identified in NCLB. As SWCS worked with the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and other districts throughout the state to try and arrive at an appropriate ratio of TESOL staff to ELLs that would allow for a reasonable expectation of opportunities for growth and achievement for our ELLs, we also worked to find a framework of instruction that would allow us to pull content-area teachers into our work in a focused, sustainable approach.

The Coordinator of ELL Services for SWCS at that time, Rene’ Phillips, traveled to Oregon to visit schools that had begun PD around a framework of instruction known as the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, or SIOP. Rene’ returned to SWCS convinced that if we could incorporate this framework into our work by training content-area teachers identified as being strong candidates for developing SLA and content-based strategies for, we could dramatically increase the number of stakeholders working with our ELLs on not only a daily basis, but on a period by period basis. With the seeds of a plan for building a sustainable ELL program planted, the focus next shifted to finding the most effective strategies and resources for our TESOL and SIOP staff, and then building a PD model that would support this work.

As a Literacy Collaborative (LC) district, SWCS has been a district rich in literacy resources and PD opportunities for our mainstream teachers in grades K-6. However, those resources and PD opportunities had not been as accessible for our TESOL staff at the K-6 level, and not at all for any staff beyond grade 6. Our data clearly indicated that literacy was a vital tool in helping to move our ELLs at the elementary level, particularly when used in conjunction with the SLA work being done by our TESOL staff. This left us with the question of how to better provide PD focused on blending SLA and literacy instruction in a way that would provide growth opportunities for our ELLs.

Our solution was to work with our personnel department and building principals in identifying TESOL staff who could be trained as LC coaches whose role could be repurposed in a way that would allow them to provide support to TESOL staff in blending SLA and literacy strategies in their work with our ELLs while still serving as TESOL teachers in their respective buildings. This effort showed such strong and immediate results in our district’s growth scores for our ELLs that we expanded from two literacy-sup-
port TESOL teachers to five so that all of our TESOL staff, from grades K-12, could receive support in blending SLA and literacy strategies.

Similarly, we also focused on identifying and training strong staff in our content-area SIOP classes to provide support through resources they had either found or developed, and PD opportunities to assist our math, science, and social studies SIOP teachers working with our ELLs from grades 5-12. It has been interesting to observe how much of the PD around working with SIOP teachers has involved both SLA and literacy strategies since the adoption of Ohio's Learning Standards. The increased focus on literacy across all content areas has provided opportunities for our literacy support team to work closely with our SIOP support team in best meeting the needs of our staff as they work to best meet the needs of their ELLs.

As we continue working to sharpen our focus on aligning all department resources around the work we are doing with blending literacy with SLA and with supporting the work done in our SIOP classes, we have also strived to support the work done with our ELLs and their families by embracing resources, strategies, and PD opportunities associated with 21st Century Learning, Response to Intervention, and working with students and families living in poverty. We feel very strongly that these areas are the pillars of our department, and that by aligning our efforts and resources around these areas, we have begun to shape the work we feel needs to be done to increase growth opportunities in English-language proficiency and in rigorous academic achievement standards in core content classes in a way that is impactful now and sustainable for the future.

Ed Kennedy is the Coordinator of ELL Services for South-Western City Schools, the third largest ELL district in Ohio. This is his 27th year in education, where he has served as a Sheltered Instruction classroom teacher, a building administrator, and a district administrator.

Register now and join us!
As educators we know that each child is a unique and special individual. The diversity that each child brings to our classrooms adds to the richness of the experience for everyone in the class. Occasionally that diversity may include a child who was adopted internationally. These children face many challenges, and learning English is nearly always one of them.

Most international adoptions these days involve children who are older. In adoption land, an older child is defined as one who is age three or older. While language issues can arise for any internationally adopted (IA) child, issues are much more obvious and frequent for older children. This often becomes an issue in school. Many IA children must start school soon after they arrive home and have not yet mastered the English language. English Language Learning (ELL) services are often a resource sought out to provide additional support for these children. IA children, however, often do not fit the typical ELL student situation. What follows are some thoughts to keep in mind as you are called on to provide services for these children.

**Respect Their Background** - A key piece in understanding IA students is respecting their background. Each will have a unique story, and for a variety of reasons, they may not want to talk about it. Some will share willingly, and others will not. Talking with the parents will be helpful, so that you do not put the student in uncomfortable situations. Parents do not need to share every detail, but they can give you enough information so that you can respect the history of the student. Also keep in mind that the parents are still learning about their child, and there are many things they do not know, and quite likely will never know. Information is often very limited in international adoptions, and much of the information that parents are given is inaccurate or incomplete. These children do not have baby pictures, and even their birthdays may be made up. One of my children was given the birthday of his finding day, which could be many months (or years) off. Another of my children had paperwork that said he had a repaired cleft lip/palate. He never had clefts. Some children may have been in foster care, and just like in America, the quality of the foster experience varies. Some children have been treated like valued members of their foster family, and when they first arrive, they are grieving the loss of those people in their lives. Others are treated as just a paycheck and may have difficulty trusting adults as a result. Some have been institutionalized, and the quality of care varies a great deal as well. In some cases only basic needs are being met. One of my children had never been outside, never held a crayon, never seen an animal and was non-verbal from institutionalization.

**Trauma of Adoption** – Everyone has his or her own views on what adoption means. I admit my own views have changed over time as I have come to understand the process more intimately. Adoption is based on a HUGE loss for the child. This is true for any adoption. With IA children, I would suggest that the loss is magnified even greater as not only have they lost their birth family, but they have lost their entire birth culture, the familiar foods, smells, friends, routines, customs and every person they ever knew. The stress of this for a child cannot be overstated. Be sensitive to these students. Do NOT tell them how lucky they are. They may not be feeling very lucky right now. They just lost EVERYTHING. They are not yet aware of the opportunities ahead of them, or the work it will take to make those opportunities work for them. Tell them you are glad they are here and that you will help them in any way you can.

**Students May Regress After a Period of Time** - In the beginning, children may be on their very best behavior. Everything is new for these children, and they are often hyper-focused. As the students settle in and become more comfortable, expect them to regress a bit. This is actually quite healthy in my opinion. Some of the children have been told by their nannies or foster families that if they don’t behave, their new parents will send them back. Several months after being home, my 13-year-old child asked me if I was going to send him back if he was bad. Over time, as children understand and believe that they are not going to be sent back, and they learn to accept love, they relax and often regress. These children have grown up too fast. I do not believe that you can skip developmental stages, and many of these children had to. They need to back up and revisit the stages they missed.

**Students Lose Their First Language (L1) Very Quickly** – Unless the new family makes specific efforts to help the IA child maintain their L1, the language will be lost very quickly. Some have suggested that this can happen in a matter of months. It is also quite possible that the student was never proficient in their L1 in the first place due to limited educational experiences and institutionalization. Educationally this is imperative to understand. Providing resources in L1 will be ineffective very quickly in
these cases. This will happen long before L2 is mastered. So essentially these children have no fluency in any language for a long period of time. This makes significant scaffolding of material essential. If the material is not accessible to the student at his or her current level, there is little hope of the student mastering the material.

**Students are Fully Immersed in Their Second Language (L2)** – The flip side of the language loss is that these students are likely FULLY immersed in the L2. As a matter of daily survival, they will begin picking up daily personal language very quickly. Over time this becomes very deceiving. As teachers realize that the students are communicating with peers and others reasonably well, they begin to think that the student has mastered English, and teachers decrease or discontinue scaffolding and accommodations. This is a monumental mistake as academic language takes much longer to master. Also, speaking well with peers does not equate to reading and writing well. These IA children are still very much at risk and need services to master the academic part of the language: reading and writing skills. Please be aware and open to the fact that they may also need speech services.

**Respect the Family** – Just as the IA child has a new family, the adopting family has a new member as well. They will spend years getting to know each other. The typical kindergarten child has had five or more years with his or her family. New IA children may not have even five weeks with their family before the new school experience begins. Most parents will be very attentive and supportive of the efforts in school, but please do not expect them to be the teacher at home. They are learning to be the parent for this child. Trust is being established. Bonds are being formed. This is hard work for everyone. They are establishing routines, building relationships and making memories. Families recognize the importance of school, but home life needs to be just about home for a long time.

**Lacking Experiences** – Many IA children are lacking the life experiences of the typical child: family vacations, holidays, baking cookies, swimming lessons, riding a horse. Even sitting with someone to read a book may be a new experience for these children. They often lacked these early nurturing experiences. The list is endless. The IA child may need more background building than the average ELL student because of the many experiences they simply did not have.

**Parents** – Generally speaking, parents of IA children are a well-networked and well-informed group of people. The process of international adoption is long and arduous. These parents have navigated laws and paperwork for two countries. Their lives have been scrutinized in ways that most families never experience. They fought to bring these children into their homes, and they are determined to do everything they can to help their child be successful. Getting them in your corner is essential. In the beginning, even the parents have trouble communicating with the child as they rarely share a common spoken language. However, communication between schools and parents is certainly easier than the typical ELL family. Expect these parents to ask questions. Expect them to be involved and have a role in the educational plan for their child. Expect that they will need a great deal from you, and they can give you a great deal in return.

International adoption is a complex process. IA children rarely fit the traditional mold of an ELL student, and each child is unique. Schools and teachers need to be understanding and flexible in these situations, and work together with the family to create an educational plan for the child. Many IA parents have expressed frustration with their school districts because the ELL instruction was only geared toward Spanish speakers, which represent only a small portion of IA children. Many have expressed frustration because schools are not often receptive to the unique situation of their child. Often these children have attachment issues, sensory issues, self-esteem issues, and trauma that take years to discover and work through. ELL staffs need to educate themselves and their regular education staff about the unique needs of IA children. There are many things that can go wrong with an older child international adoption. With good planning and communication, school does not need to be one of them.

Debbie Skarsten is an ELL teacher at Lakeview Junior High in Pickerington. She is mom to eight children - 3 adopted domestically, 5 adopted internationally, and one honorary child.
Questions and Considerations for the New School Year

Jill Kramer

The 2015 – 2016 school year was certainly a transitional year in the world of K-12 TESOL. New standards and a new assessment (OELPA) brought about many changes in our field. With the new school year ahead of us, this is the ideal time to reflect back on what we have learned about the standards and the assessment, and to change our practice accordingly.

Now that the new school year has began, here are some questions to ask ourselves.

**Instruction**
- Does my instruction truly reflect the new ELP Standards?
- Am I teaching all four domains (listening, speaking, reading and writing) explicitly?
- Am I focusing on the functions of language and communicative competence, rather than grammatical correctness?
- Do I teach the language that the students need to access Ohio’s Learning Standards in ELA, math, science and social studies?
- Do I integrate technology into my instruction?
- Do I have systems in place to collaborate with classroom teachers in order to ensure that ELLs receive support and accommodations?

**Assessment**
- Do I have rubrics, checklists and other types of formative and summative assessment that are aligned to the ELP Standards?
- Am I assessing all four domains throughout the year?
- Do I use technology in formative and summative assessments?
- Do my students have the computer skills to take online tests such as OELPA?

**Materials**
- Are my instructional materials and units of study aligned to the ELP Standards?
- Do I have materials that teach to all four domains?
- Are my materials culturally appropriate and relevant to my students’ lives?

If there are areas where you need resources, plan to attend the Ohio TESOL Conference on October 7 and 8. There will be sessions on some of these topics as well as networking time. The Ohio TESOL k-12 Facebook page and website are other places to share and gather information.

*Jill Kramer has a Masters in TESOL and teaches ESL for Dublin City Schools. Jill also serves on the board of Ohio TESOL.*
A Thai Student’s Perspective on Creative ESL/EFL Writing

Gwendolyn Glover DeRosa

In December of 2015, I attended the Annual Writers Conference in the enchanting location of Chiang Mai, Thailand, partially due to the Marcie Williams International Travel Grant through Ohio TESOL. The conference was organized by Dr. Salinee Antarasena, who is the Assistant Professor of English Creative Writing at Chiang Mai University. The conference focused on an emerging field: Creative ESL/EFL Writing. Rather than write about the worth of teaching creative writing from a native English speaker’s point of view, I interviewed one of Antarasena’s Thai students about his experience with creative writing in English.

Aditad Imsawat is an MA in English student in Thailand. Imsawat began studying English in fifth grade. Although his studies focused mostly on the rote memorization, he began to wonder about this strange language. He decided to find the answers to his linguistic inquiries in college. I was curious about why he was interested in creative writing when many EFL students study English for purely business reasons.

DeRosa: Why do you like creative writing in English?

Imsawat: Creative writing impressed me a lot, then – after finishing a few writing courses in Ramkhamhaeng University. It was like I opened a new window to another world where I met the arts of language. It was not just for communication; in other word, creative writing provided me new visions of language usage making reader imaginative views. An author works like an artist who illustrates his feeling through each stroke on a canvas; each line narrates a story, but an author does with words.

DeRosa: What is the most challenging part of creative writing in English?

Imsawat: There are two parts that I find they are challenging, I reckon. Firstly, how to play with words is the most challenging thing for creative writers. I have ever seen those whose works are interesting, good plots, excellent ideas but their word choice seem so weird that some readers (like me) cannot stand going on reading. It is just confusing with the words they use. Secondly, making readers believe that the characters in the story are realistic even they are imaginary ones. There must be a reason lies behind human's action. An author should give reader a clue, but not very clear to detail why those characters are doing that, and leave a trace for keep reader’s interest. It is about planning plots.

DeRosa: How has Dr. Salinee Antarasena influenced you?

Imsawat: She quite contrasts with many Thai lecturers I have studied with. The assignment she gave taught me that if I have a key I can unlock every door to meet the new worlds behind it, and the key is “imagination”. Before writing especially creative writing, it is important to have a picture in mind. If someday I become a writing teacher, her teaching that I learnt will be applicable to my class.

DeRosa: What did you learn from the conference?

Imsawat: Creativity is the heart of most of things. It does not mean you have to build the rainbow bridge yourself just to be call you are creative. However, it is about changing the plain perspectives to see the new things. You can create new learning media or activities for special education just because you alter you visions and make it interesting; that is creative. This conference is very useful for me to develop my further works in creative writing study.

Learning language requires playfulness, flexibility, and imagination. Perhaps that is why non-native English speakers are becoming enchanted by creative writing in English. Creative writing gives these students an authentic connection with their target language. They have rare opportunities to express their voice through storytelling, poetry, and narrative essays. As educators, we can benefit our students by incorporating creative writing techniques and activities into ESL coursework.

--Travel to the conference was funded in part by the Eleanor & Milton Percival Fund of The Columbus Foundation.

Gwendolyn Glover DeRosa is the writing coordinator for Otterbein’s ESL Program. She is often spotted while riding her blue Schwinn cruiser around Westerville.
My ESL students often have difficulty with tests in their content classes (English, history, math and science) because of the tests themselves and not because of the content. This article describes two techniques: simplifying/rewording and structural consistency, as two simple ways to modify the structure of the tests without compromising the subject content in order to make it easier for English Language Learners (ELLs) to complete tests successfully.

Simplifying/Rewording

Native English speaking content teachers often do not understand how difficult the wording on questions can be for ELLs. Simplifying/rewording questions makes it easier for ELLs to understand what is being asked so that they can more easily provide an answer to the question. Thus, the test results are based on the students’ acquisition of the content and not on the level of their English. I have found from personal experience that simplifying/rewording questions has a significant positive effect on students’ grades on tests.

The following question was from a 10th grade English quiz given on an article about mindfulness training for athletes.

How might this study change what psychologists believe?
(A) Psychologists may stop recommending that athletes play basketball and replace it with yoga.
(B) Psychologists may stay away from athletes with mindfulness.
(C) Psychologists may start using more mindfulness to support athletes.
(D) Psychologists may start using more traditional sports psychology.

Since the use of “believe” in the question does not correspond well with the verbs used in the answers (“start”, “stop”), I suggested two possible rewordings that would allow the question to fit the answer choices better.

The results of this study might change how psychologists do things. In the future, they might ...
Because of this study, psychologists might...

With the change in the question, the structure of the answers can also be simplified. For example item (A) is long and a bit confusing and item (D), “traditional sports psychology” might be too hard depending on the students English level and whether or not that specific vocabulary was explicitly covered in class. The content teacher chose to use the second, shorter, question wording and removed “Psychologists might” from the answers, below is what the test question and answer items looked like after rewording.

Because f this study, psychologists might...
(A) stop recommending that athletes play basketball and replace it with yoga.
(B) stay away from athletes with mindfulness.
(C) start using more mindfulness to support athletes.
(D) start using more traditional sports psychology.

The next two examples of simplifying/rewording are taken from a 9th grade world history test.

The imperialist policies followed by Japan after World War I were based on a desire to
a. convert people to the Shinto religion
b. acquire markets for its oil exports
c. compete with Chinese trade policies
d. obtain natural resources for manufacturing

The difficulty here is mostly with vocabulary. I rewrote this question as follows.

The Japanese government tried to increase the size of the Japanese empire after World War I.
They did this because they wanted to ____.
(a) have more people join the Shinto religion
(b) have more places to sell their oil
c. (left blank)
d. get natural resources for their factories

The next two examples of simplifying/rewording are taken from a 9th grade world history test.

The imperialist policies followed by Japan after World War I were based on a desire to
a. convert people to the Shinto religion
b. acquire markets for its oil exports
c. compete with Chinese trade policies
d. obtain natural resources for manufacturing

The difficulty here is mostly with vocabulary. I rewrote this question as follows.

The Japanese government tried to increase the size of the Japanese empire after World War I.
They did this because they wanted to ____.
(a) have more people join the Shinto religion
(b) have more places to sell their oil
c. (left blank)
d. get natural resources for their factories

In the above history test example I reworded the more difficult vocabulary and simplified the grammar. I also removed choice c but left it blank. This allows teachers who are using bubble sheets to still scan ELL tests and collect the data easily. Finally, by
using ____ at the end of the question, we are going to follow a consistent format for this sort of question. A word of advice in simplifying/rewrading answer options, when you remove answer options, be sure to check with the content teacher. One time, I accidentally removed the correct answer! The teacher was not amused.

The next question is about Europe in the 1930s.

*During the mid-1930’s, which characteristic was common to Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and Communist Russia?*

- a. government ownership of the means of production and distribution
- b. one-party system that denied basic human rights
- c. encouragement of individual freedom of expression in the arts
- d. emphasis on consumer goods rather than on weapons

Here is my rewritten question.

*During the 1930’s, one thing that Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and Communist Russia, had in common was that ____.*

- a. the government owned the means of production
- b. there was only one political party, and it denied basic human rights
- c. they encouraged people to express themselves through art
- d. ____

Again, some vocabulary is simplified, and the question is rewritten to end in ____. The answer choices are also modified. As above, one was left blank. I left the vocabulary means of production in one answer choice because the content teacher had explicitly taught it in class, so it should stay. Vocabulary that has been explicitly and properly taught should stay on the test.

**Structural Consistency**

The second way of modifying a test to make it more comprehensible to the ELL is consistency in the formatting of the tests. Consistency reduces confusion and helps students focus on the content. At my school, these are the strategies that we use most frequently on tests for ELLs.

We do not have to end questions with ____, but I recommend choosing one or maybe two styles for questions and using them consistently. I have seen tests that have questions in most or even all the following styles.

- a blank (____) at the beginning, end, or middle of the sentence
- three dots (ellipsis) in the middle or at the end of the sentence
- a colon at the end of the sentence

Though these are common styles of cloze questions, mixing these in one test can confuse students. Similarly, the way that answer choices are formatted can be confusing. Do some start with capital letters (as if they are new sentences) and others do not? Do some end with punctuation and others do not? Native speakers may not even notice these inconsistencies, but ELLs can be confused by them.

**Content Subject Teacher Concerns**

Many content teachers worry that rewording tests is bad for the students because the students will not get “simplified” versions of state standardized tests. This is a legitimate worry, but misplaced, in my opinion.

Rewording tests should not be a problem because content area tests should not be practice for standardized tests. Content area tests are for determining how much of the content the students acquired. Mixing testing practice with standards acquisition measurement is not fair to ELLs (or other students).

Test practice can be a valid use of classroom time, and students need to learn vocabulary as well as test structures that they might see on standardized tests. However, without explicit instruction, a content area test is not the place to be doing test preparation.

Rewriting and being consistent with formatting can help students do better on content subject tests. Content teachers and ESL teachers can and should work together to make sure that students are tested appropriately on the content standards and language that the students have been taught.

*Chris Spackman is the ESL Coordinator for The Graham Family of Schools. In his free time, he enjoys doing cool things with Free/Open Source software.*
Building Connections Through Outreach Opportunities!

Shari Granados

Ohio TESOL advocates best practices for districts and teachers in the State of Ohio. The following article highlights Pickerington Local Schools’ efforts to build strong community membership by forging connections both in and outside the classroom. By sharing Pickerington Local Schools’ approach we hope to encourage other districts to consider making similar efforts in student, parent and community outreach for improving the educational experiences of English Language Learners in your districts.

English learners from Pickerington Local School District (PLSD) represent 5 continents and speak over 43 different languages. Teachers and students are embracing the district’s diversity by building connections to provide community outreach opportunities for parents, families, community, and beyond. The district feels outreach is an important aspect in their English Learner (EL) program and helps in creating valuable learning experiences while using 21st century skills. District EL coordinator, Erica Dumm states, “Research shows that strong family-school relationships provide a welcoming school community and can increase student success. At Pickerington, our goal is to ensure parents have access to their children’s education by providing them with the tools and resources needed to participate meaningfully in their education.” When families and community actively participate in our educational system, globally minded students are developed, which encourage connections beyond our district to be made.

In order to help build a connection between school and family, Adult English Classes are offered in hopes of bridging the gap. The focus of the class is to provide parents “school English” and equip them with tools and resources to show them how best to help their EL students succeed in school. The classes allow the parents to better understand American culture, develop social English themselves, and become equipped with skills needed to function as a contributing member within the community. Families are acquainted with blended learning programs, visit local businesses, and tour the library.

High School teacher, MaryAnn Miller, connects with her students’ families by conducting home visits. Home visits allow MaryAnn to learn more about her high school students in a more personal and relaxed environment. Home visits are extremely beneficial, especially for newcomer families in that they help build an instant rapport and connection with the EL teacher. The student’s home environment plays an important role in culture and linguistic development. During home visits, parents are also provided community resources for health, food, and clothing needs. The information gained from the home visits can be used to both extend and enrich the classroom environment and curriculum.

Elementary EL students at Tussing and Fairfield participate in an international program called, The Global Read Aloud (GRA). The GRA connects learners all around the world through social media to discuss selected books in a six week period. The goal is to increase linguistic awareness through authentic reading and writing opportunities while making worldly connections. Twitter, Facebook, Blogs, and Padlet are a few tools English learners use to converse about literature. Participation occurs in small groups, as well as whole group co-teaching models. Connections beyond GRA have been previously made as 2nd grade and 3rd grade EL students participated in a postcard exchange. Last year, postcards arrived from China, Nepal, and many U.S. states!

As a result of a connection made during the GRA, Maggie Herrmanns’ 1st grade class became pen pals with a class in San Diego, CA. Monthly Skype sessions and letter writing allowed the EL students to engage in real world scenarios and practice the lost art of letter writing. Integrating Skype helped the students practice their speaking and listening skills while taking turns asking and answering questions. Students were able to connect with their pen pals “face-to-face” and engage in learning activities across the content areas. A few different Skype sessions included “Mystery Number”, “True/False”, and “What’s The Weather?”.

ESL Summer Camp is a yearly camp offered for K-12 English Learners. PLSD, in conjunction with Muskingum University, offers a three-week intense, hands-on day camp. Grade appropriate ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies vocabulary and concepts are amplified for English learners giving them a jump start on curriculum for the following year. The camp extends learning, and students are able to continue practicing their English skills during the summer through small groups, large groups, blended learning, and field trips.

The 1st annual District Wide Culture Fair is scheduled for August 27th, 2016. This event will build connections amongst students, families, and community members. It is a way to celebrate the diversity in Pickerington and help build a climate of acceptance and understanding. The fair will include vendors from our community, singing, dancing, authentic dress, language lessons,
food, crafts, and more! Erica Dumm, states, “The Culture Fair will be a family engagement activity that allows our district to tap into the strengths of our families and communities within Pickerington. This event will allow us to build partnerships and maintain strong parental engagement for improved student outcomes.”

Taste of Tussing is an annual event held at Tussing Elementary. Tussing has the largest EL population in the district. Students, families, and staff connect through sharing ethnic dishes, potluck style. Over fifty dishes represent 20 different countries and 5 continents. Matt Dansby, the principal of Tussing, says this is his favorite event of the school year!

Pickerington Local Schools value the outreach experiences for their K-12 EL students and is always looking for ways to build upon what is already being offered. In order to build the literacy of the first language, we have just started working with the Pickerington Public Library to build a native-language story-telling night.

Making connections, both inside and outside the classroom, provides ethnic opportunities that encourage English language acquisition while maintaining their first language. Building connections through outreach develops a relationship between schools, families, and community. It improves the quality of education the students receive and increases linguistic competence and cultural awareness. Outreach opportunities are a multi-faceted approach to growing and empowering lifelong learners as well as fostering understanding and acceptance for diversity.

Key Topics in Second Language Acquisition

Eunjeong Park


Key Topics in Second Language Acquisition is a volume that addresses basic concepts and principles in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), providing the extensive realm of SLA research for readers aligned with in-depth inquiries. Reading this volume will aid second language (L2) teachers to acquire a better sense and understanding of their L2 students’ language learning process, the unique characteristics of L2 learners, appropriate instruction of language skills, and theoretical frameworks of language teaching methodologies. Since age need not be the most major factor of acquiring L2, this work illustrates the importance of paying more attention to students’ affective factors, such as motivation and attitudes, in terms of the attainment of L2 proficiency and it encourages L2 researchers to delve into research regarding L2 learners’ attitudes and motivation of language learning. Overall, this volume plays a critical role in SLA and satisfies a craving for L2 educators’ scholarship in SLA. The numerous questions allow readers to ponder each topic that they encounter before or after reading it, encouraging the reader to engage in reflective thinking to solve their own classroom problems. Furthermore, the independent chapters empower readers to browse through the volume in any order based on their interest and needs. This volume is worth reading as it provides practical applications that can be adopted in L2 classrooms.

Eunjeong Park is currently a PhD candidate in Teaching and Learning at The Ohio State University, specializing in Foreign and Second Language Education under the advisor of Dr. Alan Hirvela.
Implementing Mediated Imitation Technique: Lesson plans for promoting ELL oral production awareness

Hasan Zuhair Alshuhri
Jennifer Fennema-Bloom

Shadowing and imitation techniques have a strong association with behaviorist forms of education, and thus were discouraged from use in a communicative approach to teaching and learning a second language (c.f. Murphey, 2001; Meltzoff & Prinz, 2011; Hurley & Chater, 2005; and Brown, 2014). However, such techniques have merit in the improvement of oral production, especially with regards to the students’ self-confidence and development of correct stress, intonation and other prosodic features. This article defines Mediated imitation’s communicative use in the development of oral production and provides lesson plans as used in one pre-university admissions adult English language program’s communicative class.

Definition of Mediated Imitation
Mediated Imitation (MI) is a teaching technique that combines different assumptions from shadowing and imitation techniques. Shadowing is defined as an active and highly cognitive activity in which learners track a given speech and vocalize it clearly while simultaneously listening (Hamada, 2014). Imitation is a systematic process that requires the imitators’ intelligence and effort in observing what is present in speech and repeating the production (c.f. Ding, 2007). In both shadowing and imitation comprehension is not a necessary component, rather the focus is on parroting the event to replicate a native-like spoken production of the text. The difference between shadowing and imitation is that shadowing occurs simultaneously with listening, while imitation has a listening component but does not require simultaneous production. MI draws on the techniques of both shadowing and imitation but relies on a communicative intent that is based on the comprehension of their production. Thus, MI is defined as a systematic process that occurs under formal and informal instruction that includes a reading and listening comprehension unit where the learners read, comprehend, practice, listen, notice and practice again until they produce a close copy of the original utterance or text.

The following lesson plans were implemented in a larger ethnographic case study on MI. The MI unit is designed for a two-week period consisting of a total of six hours of instruction. However, this length of time can be tailored to the individual level and time available in one’s own curriculum.

Unit/Lesson Procedures:
• Select an audio-visual text – the teacher should select a text slightly above the current readability level of the students being taught. Access to the audio-visual recording and a printed copy of the text should be available to the students. The text used for our purposes was: The art of choosing, by Sheena Iyengar (2010). This text consisted of 375 words and was divided into two parts of 188 words each.
  • Lesson One
  The class should be divided into groups of three or four. Students should be given the text and asked first to do a silent reading and then to work in groups to identify and discuss difficulty vocabulary. Problematic vocabulary should be recorded by the teacher and defined as a class. The students are then asked to re-read the text as homework.
  • Lesson Two
  The class is again broken down into small groups of three to four. The groups should be given a sheet of poster paper and asked to identify and record the main ideas and supporting statements on a graphic organizer of your choice, (e.g. fishbone or topic matrices). These completed main idea graphic organizers are then recorded on the poster paper and posted around the classroom. One person from each group remains with their poster paper to present their groups work while the rest of the class cycles through the presentations. At each group cycles the presenter can be switched out to give all group members practice presenting. At the end of the presentation the teacher should clarify and discuss as a whole class any further comprehension issues that may be found through the presentations.
  • Lesson Three
  Working in groups of three or four students, the students should be asked to practice reading aloud the text and to give each other constructive feedback on their pronunciation difficulties. The groups should then be given comprehension questions and/or extension questions (such as text-to-self, text-to-world/application) for discussion.
  • Lesson Four
  The teacher teaches basic notation scripts that mark intonation, rate of speech, stresses, pause and pronunciation. When creating these notation scripts keep in mind pronunciation patterns or L1 negative transfer items relevant to your group of
students (e.g., rate of speech among Indian continent learners, or the drop of [s-plural] among Mandarin speakers). On an overhead or smartboard, the teacher should display a master copy of the text as well as the notation script that will be used. As the whole class listens to the text, the teacher uses the intonation markers to mark up the master copy on overhead while the students follow along using the notations to mark their own copies. For homework, the students are asked to record their reading of an assigned section of the text using a recording device and or program that can be shared with the whole class (we used Voice Thread and posted them to our University BlackBoard system).

• Lesson Five
The teacher should review the notation scripts and chooses a sample recording from the students. As guided practice for student-to-student analysis of the recordings, as a whole class the teacher plays the recording and pauses when the scripts reading varies from the notation ascribed. The teacher then highlighting sections that need further practice. The teacher then puts the class into groups of three and four. Each member takes turns reading and/or listening (if recorded) to a portion of the text/recording. Students are asked to listen to and analyze the reading/recording and then discuss the reader’s strengths and weaknesses; noting, correcting and practicing areas that need to be adjusted in their readings. The teacher circles through the groups helping where necessary. For homework the teacher then assigns the students to do another recording of their same assigned portion of the text.

• Lesson Six
The teacher once again reviews how to analyze the recorded readings using a student’s first recording and the second recording as an example. In pairs, the students listen to each other’s first and second recordings analyzing the differences between the two recordings. Again the students should discuss strengths and weakness, as well as highlighting continued problematic areas for further practice. If using for grading purposes: a third or final recording can be made and submitted to the teacher.

Benefits:
As stated previously, the above lesson plans were used as part of a larger ethnographic case study on mediated imitation. Feedback from the students illustrated that this technique not only improved their comprehension and readability of the text, but also fostering a more native-like production of the text. Students became more aware of prosodic features and mirrored their own production to more native-like standards of stress and intonation, pause, and pronunciation. It also increased their production confidence and made them more aware of their own L1 negative transfers that effects their production of English.

A female student from Nepal notes: “I have found a vast difference in my English tones and pronunciation. I have learned a lot about falling and raising intonation that are very useful to indicate the attitude and emotion of the speaker. My level of speaking was really boosted up from attempt #1 to my attempt #2.”

A male student from China notes: “After this activity, I learned that even one sentence can have a lot of meaning in the way you say it. In the second time [recording], I feel I became more confident. I speak more powerfully.”

Hasan Zuhair Alshuhri is a May 2016 graduate of The University of Findlay MA TESOL Program. Dr. Fennema-Bloom is The University of Findlay Director of Graduate TESOL and thesis sponsor for Mr. Alshuhri’s unpublished MA Thesis entitled “Implementing Mediated Imitation Technique for Promtoing English Language Learners’ Oral Production, from which these lesson plans were developed.”

References
Hamada, Y. (2014). The effectiveness of pre- and post-shadowing in improving listening comprehension skills. The Language Teacher (38), 1, 3-10.