

# The English Connection

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Autumn 2011 Volume 15, Issue 3

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Making Writing Communicative and Collaborative

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Teaching Smarter So  
Students Learn More  
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International Conference  
Preview Section  
Featuring Dr. Stephen Krashen



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# Editor's Welcome

Dear Reader,

The KOTESOL International Conference is once again upon us. The TEC editorial team has assembled a collection of short articles by many of the invited and plenary speakers to get you excited about the 2011 conference. Special thanks go out to David Shaffer and Julien McNulty as well as all the amazing contributors for making this possible. We hope that the International Conference Pullout section will attract your interest and create the desire for you to come hear these ELT professionals speak at Sookmyung University on October 15th and 16th.

We also received a letter regarding the NEAT test that is becoming a hot topic among ELT circles in Korea. You can find it below. We hope you enjoy this autumn issue and will send us your feedback at [tecfeedback@gmail.com](mailto:tecfeedback@gmail.com).

Sincerely,

*Tim Thompson*

Tim Thompson  
Editor-in-Chief



## Readers' Voices

I wanted to share some thoughts with you about the Korean government's new NEAT test. In an English class last year, I was talking with one student who was unprepared for class and kept chatting with her classmates. Approaching her, I asked why she was not paying attention during my class. She answered, "We don't need to study English anymore. I watched the news last night and it said that we don't have to take the English section of the CSAT (College Scholastic Ability Test) anymore." Her answer surprised me and suddenly made the class noisy. Students began to talk about the news program and they kept asking me how the English section would be changed. I could feel the concern of the students regarding this change in English evaluation. The students asked my opinion on the change, but I was unable to give it. I knew that many innovations in English education policy come and go, but the English section of the CSAT was fixed. So I thought it would be difficult to change.

However, this massive change for reforming the English section of the CSAT is currently happening in schools and I am forced to keep pace. It started with teachers' training. Last spring, all of the English teachers in our school (probably all of the English teachers in Kyunggi province) were required to complete an online course to increase competence in examining and evaluating students' productive skills, so as to prepare for NEAT (National English Ability Test). The lessons were overwhelming and the time provided was limited. I could feel the urgency.

While I was taking this online course, I visualized how it would be actualized in my English class. Though the English section in the CSAT will be replaced by NEAT, midterm and final exams will still be taken from textbooks, which focus on reading and grammar. I wonder if English teachers have enough time to teach textbook materials as well as prepare students for NEAT. In many schools, classroom size is also a problem. It is important to give as many chances as possible for students to create output in the class. With a large classroom size, however, group work is often ignored for better classroom management. We spend more time on controlled, whole-class activities. We do not have enough time to observe students' responses carefully and give appropriate feedback in a timely manner. Given the aforementioned problems, without addressing these problems first, our students should endure different tasks in order to prepare for school exams as well as NEAT at the same time.

However, I believe adopting NEAT in a timely manner can lead to emphasizing students' communicative competence. As English teachers, we cannot ignore the fact that our English classes, which focus on grammar and reading skills, make it very difficult to achieve fluency in English. Students want confidence in speaking and writing English. They need it! They desire it! And that is the exact reason we need to reform English education. As the manner of evaluation changes, students will be able to acquire various functions and actualize their own output. I hope this positive backwash actually happens in our English classrooms. We are responsible for this change. If not, it will turn into a policy which was attempted but not realized.

Min-Jeong Jeong, Siheung Neunggok High School

# Teaching Smarter So Students Learn More

## Barbara Hoskins Sakamoto shares four steps to improve teachers' success

Students want to learn more, even if they don't verbalize the desire. Parents also want their children to learn more, and are frequently quite verbal in sharing their desires. And teachers, of course, are happy when their students learn more—that's one of their main goals!

The mistake that teachers sometimes make in trying to reach this goal is that they simply try to teach more—more grammar, more vocabulary, and more homework. Unfortunately, the usual result is that students (and teachers) end up feeling frustrated and overwhelmed.

We can help our students learn more by teaching smarter. There are four steps:

**Remember:** Help students remember what they already know, so you don't have to teach the same things over, and over, and over again in class.

**Recycle:** Use familiar language to introduce new language. Use familiar grammar to introduce new vocabulary. Use familiar grammar to practice new grammar structures. Try to keep the learning load to one new thing at a time.

**Reinforce:** Support the meaning of vocabulary and grammar by introducing them in context. Reinforce pronunciation with rhythm.

**Expand:** Help students do more with the language they've learned. Let them personalize language to make it their own. Let them use language to do something, or learn new skills with familiar language.

Let's take a look at how teachers might incorporate these four steps in a typical lesson.

### Remember

Always begin by remembering. Whether students are starting a new book, or a new class, if you review the language they should already know, you can be sure that everyone starts at the same level. It's not uncommon to have a student or two join a continuing class at the beginning of a school year. If your continuing class is beginning phonics, and your incoming students have not yet mastered the alphabet, lessons will be frustrating for everyone involved. If you take the time to pre-teach the alphabet to the new students while reviewing it with your continuing students, you'll eliminate a level gap before it begins.

The same principle applies to planning lessons. We should begin every lesson by reviewing language students have learned that will help them with the new language in the lesson.

In this lesson from Let's Go 1, students are going to learn the language to ask and answer questions about objects found in an electronics store.



What do students already know that will help them with this lesson?

They already know how to add an -s to create plurals, so we shouldn't need to take valuable class time to teach this language point again. If we do help students "remember" plurals, what might look like eight new vocabulary words in the lesson is reduced to four new words, and their plural forms: a CD, CDs, a cell phone, cell phones, a computer, computers, a video game, and video games.

Similarly, students already know one of the two question and answer patterns in the lesson: What's this? It's (a book). That means that only half of the grammar in the lesson is actually new—the plural question and answer: What are these? They're (CDs).

How do we remind students that they already know language that will help them learn new language? The fastest and easiest way is to make remembering the focus of your warm up activities. Here, for example, we might do an activity like this:

Use a set of pictures showing familiar vocabulary in singular and plural forms (crayon/crayons, marker/markers, pencil case/pencil cases, notebook/notebooks, etc.). Place the pictures of plural items in various locations around the classroom. Show students a picture of one (singular) item and ask "What's this?" Students answer "It's (a notebook)" and then race to find a matching plural card and say the plural form of the word (notebooks).

You can have students ask the questions as well as answer, you can use real objects under a cloth to make it more like a guessing game, you can give each student one of the plural cards and ask them to stand up and say their word when they hear the singular form. There are many ways to include recycled language in your warm up activity in order to help students remember what they know. Warm up activities should always be short (5 to 10 minutes of a 60-minute class) so that you have plenty of time for the new language.

If we use 10 minutes to help students remember what they already know, the lesson will be much easier. If we skip the remembering step, this could be an intimidating page with eight new words and two new question and answer patterns. Take the time to remember.

## Recycle

In the example lesson, the recycled language is “What’s this? It’s a (book).” If we use this familiar pattern to introduce the four new vocabulary words (a CD, a cell phone, a computer, a video game), then students only have to focus on learning the new words rather than new words and a new grammar pattern at the same time.

After introducing the singular vocabulary, help students come up with the plural forms of the words. Finally, introduce the new plural question and answer pattern and practice the new vocabulary in context.

When we use familiar language to introduce new language, it cuts down on our students’ learning load, and they are able to remember more of the lesson. Recycling allows us teach one new thing at a time.

Recycling also allows students to discover the generative power of English by combining familiar patterns to build new language. If we combine the language from this lesson with language from earlier lessons, students can learn that English grammar and vocabulary are flexible, and that they have the ability to create language without having been explicitly taught a new pattern. By recycling previous language with the language in this lesson, students can learn to build these patterns (among others):

- They’re red cell phones.
- These are my CDs.
- I like computers. I want a computer.

Recycling helps our students learn to manipulate language in creative ways.

## Reinforce

Most teachers of children reinforce the meaning of new vocabulary with picture cards or real objects. Pictures or objects help children attach meaning to new English vocabulary without initially translating it into their first language.

We can provide the same support for grammar by introducing it in context. If we embed the language in a context where students might hear the same type of language in their own country, we can reinforce the meaning without having to translate it.

In our example lesson, Kate and Jenny are at an electronics store. Many students will have been in a store like this, and it’s a likely place to hear questions like “What’s this?” and “What are these?” They may have even asked those questions.



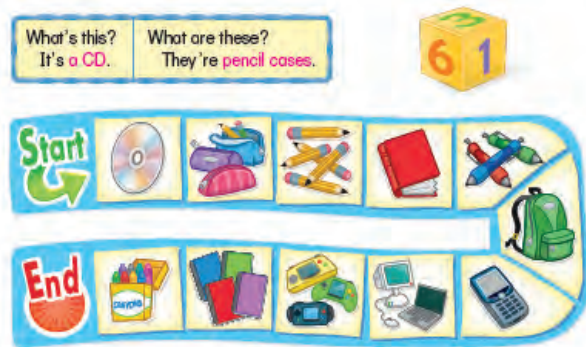
We can reinforce pronunciation with rhythm. Most teachers are familiar with the power of songs and chants to help children remember language. Before children are literate, rhythmic reinforcement increases the amount of language they can remember and recall.

Even after they’re literate, rhythm can help with pronunciation. Clapping the beats to a question or statement can reinforce natural stress and speed. For the questions and answers in our example lesson, the beats look like this:

What’s this?      What are these?

I don’t know about you, but my students have a hard time making a distinction between ‘this’ and ‘these,’ so the two questions are sometimes confusing for them. Reminding them that “What’s this?” has two beats and “What are these?” has three beats is a simple way for them to remember the difference (without any additional explanation from me).

Games can also be an effective way to reinforce language. If you keep the pace quick, the instructions simple, and the number of players low, games can provide as much pattern practice as a drill. Students focus on the game and don’t notice how many times they’re repeating the target language.



If you recycle game boards, or if your textbook includes games, then you can use them long after the original lesson is over. They can turn an extra 5 minutes at the end of class into fun practice. The trick is to remember that you’re not limited to playing the game the same way each time. For example, this game is designed to practice “What’s this?” and “What are these?” to reinforce the question and answer patterns from the lesson. But, it can also be used to practice other language:

- Students can use the game to practice other language patterns - Is this a CD? These are pens, I like video games, Do you want a cell phone? etc.
- Students can time themselves as they race to make sentences about each item. They can either race to beat the clock, or race to beat each other.
- Students can use the game spaces to play Vocabulary Race. Student A begins on the “Start” space, and Student B begins on the “End” space (at opposite ends of the game). Both players begin moving toward each other, pointing to objects in order (from their starting point) and making sentences

about them. When students meet at the same space, they play Rock, Scissors, Paper. The winner continues to move forward, but the loser must return to his or her beginning position. The first student to reach the opposite end of the game path is the winner (Taken from *Let's Go Teacher's Book*).

## Expand

By expanding on what children can do with the language they've learned, we help them to own the language. The more they learn to do using English, the more likely they'll see the language as a useful tool, rather than as a classroom subject. There are three easy ways to expand on the lesson language: personalize it, use it in a new way, or use it to learn a new skill.

The simplest way to personalize language is to have students create a role play. In our example lesson, students can use language they already know, plus the language from the lesson, to create a role play about shopping in an electronics store. They can include other items they might see in the store (iPod, Nintendo DS, mouse, camera, camcorder, etc.) and take turns being the customer and the sales clerk. For classes that enjoy a challenge, you can add prompts to set the back story for the customer and the clerk: you only have 5,000 won to buy a gift for your father, you're tired and want to go home, etc.

We can also expand on familiar language by using it to teach new skills. In this lesson, we can give students practice reading the questions and answers they've learned orally. On a pocket chart (or on a board), display one of the question and answer patterns from the lesson: What's this? It's \_\_\_\_\_. Insert a picture card for an object, and read the sentence together. Point to or run your finger under the words as you read. Change the card and read again. As students are able, let them 'create' sentences with the cards, and lead the reading. Soon, students will be reading the sight words. Do the same with the plural question and answer. Then, let students choose the singular or plural question, and select appropriate answers.



One of the main themes of this article has been the importance of limiting the amount of new language students have to process. Our goal is to introduce one new thing at a time. Therefore, when we begin to teach reading skills, we want to do this by using familiar language. The skill is new, so the language should be recycled. As much as possible, phonics instruction should use familiar vocabulary so that students only have to learn one new thing—attaching sounds to letters.



In our example lesson, the new skill is learning the sounds to go with 'd' and 't' so the lesson uses words that students have learned— desk, duck, door, tiger, two, toys—so they can focus on the new skill. The story in the lesson is designed to reinforce the reading skills in context. Again, since reading is a new skill, the grammar and vocabulary are all recycled. Students can practice reading language they've learned orally, which keeps teachers teaching one new thing at a time.

This approach changes progress in English class from a race to a dance, with students taking two steps forward and one step back. It's a spiral progression rather than a linear one, and it's more effective for language learning. Not only will students better remember what they learn, but they'll be able to use the language more freely and creatively.

By helping students remember what they already know, by recycling familiar language with the new, by reinforcing meaning with context and pronunciation with rhythm, and by expanding language with new uses and new skills, we'll be teaching smarter. And our students will be learning more!

*Images and activities taken with permission from Let's Go 1 Fourth Edition, published by Oxford University Press.*

## Barbara Hoskins Sakamoto

has been an EFL teacher and teacher trainer since 1985. She earned her BA from Western Oregon University and her Masters in TESOL from Northern Arizona University. Barbara has conducted workshops throughout Asia, the U.S. and Latin America, and is co-author of the best-selling *Let's Go* series (OUP) and of the new English for Teachers online course for the International Teacher Development Institute ([tdinstitute.com](http://tdinstitute.com)). Her motto is "Always try new things," so these days, when she's not teaching, writing, or giving workshops, you'll often find Barbara online exploring the potential of social media for professional development.



# Advice Corner

## Three educators give suggestions to help English teachers around Korea

I just finished up my first semester at a public school and, for me, team teaching was quite a challenge. I had a lot of problems with my co-teachers (no communication, vastly different teaching styles, etc.) and I feel like our classes could have been a lot better. I just found out that for the fall semester I will have totally new co-teachers, so I want to try to turn things around and have a more positive team teaching experience. I was wondering what specific things I can do to help me accomplish this. Thanks in advance.

Tyreke, Gongju City



**Sun Yi**  
English Teacher  
Seoul Suseo  
Elementary School

### Sun Yi

Working with another person is always a stressful situation, especially in the classroom. I've been co-teaching for the last five years and for each of the five years I've had a new co-teacher. They all had different personalities and teaching methods. Some wanted to take the lead and others preferred that I take the leading role. I think I was able to adjust to each of the teaching styles because we had an understanding of what was expected in the classroom. Let me give you a few pointers from my personal experience.

First, get to know your partner inside and outside of the classroom. Instead of discussing your lesson plans in the office, you should take your co-teacher out to a nearby coffee shop. With the change in atmosphere you'll probably feel less tension and, hopefully, a bit more comfortable with your partner. Try to figure out what kind of teaching style your co-teacher has. Ask them what they envision a co-taught class to be like, and vice versa.

Second, develop an understanding of what roles the two of you have in the classroom. Usually, I start off the class with the greetings, while my co-teacher takes the lead when we go through the textbook and I take over again when we do speaking activities and games. It usually works out to a 50/50 split.

Third, know when to interrupt each other. Interrupting at the wrong time can make a situation awkward. Some Korean teachers like to translate everything that the foreign teacher says, while others don't translate at all. I prefer to have my co-teacher translate after I give specific instructions. At other times, I will simply ask my co-teacher to help out. However, there are some Korean teachers who don't interrupt or translate at all. It's probably because they don't want to be rude and, most likely, they're probably not sure when to cut in. For situations like this, having cue signs may be helpful.

Cue signs can be helpful because it's a signal between the two teachers. Sometimes a lesson may not go as planned and one of the teachers may need help. By using cue signs, the students have no idea that there is anything wrong. And most importantly, an interruption won't look like one and the lesson can move on more smoothly.

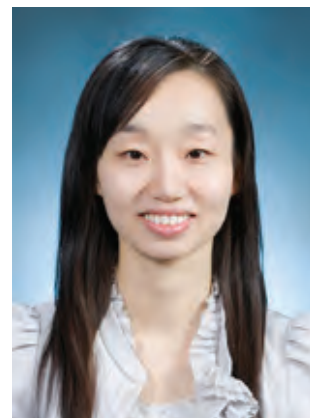
All in all, communication between you and your co-teacher is the first step to having a good co-taught class. There should be a give and take by the two of you. The difference in cultures makes team teaching a little difficult, but if you take a step back and try to understand where the other person is coming from, it can make things easier. And always remember, be clear of what your roles and expectations of each other are.

### Eun-Joo Lim

I've had experience co-teaching with four different foreign English teachers. It went really well three times, and not so well once. What made the difference? Sharing my experiences might help you create a better experience.

One difference is that the three teachers I worked well with tried to learn Korean. They showed that learning a second language is difficult for everyone and that making mistakes is natural. Through exchanging languages, we became teachers to each other and had a more balanced relationship. Another point is that though they didn't always understand what was going on, they joined almost all school events and gatherings where they could learn Korean culture and extend the relationships and memories that we shared. The experiences that they had in learning Korean and in those events created a lot of conversation and rapport that was essential for co-teaching.

Rapport can quickly break down when expectations are different in class. This is what happened with the one



**Eun-Joo Lim**  
English Teacher  
Taegu Foreign  
Language High School



co-teacher I had problems with. I personally like a class that goes as planned, while my co-teacher was very flexible and thought that small changes were okay without discussion. Her prompt changes surprised me and left me unprepared to respond.

In our school, we have an assistant that helps with photocopying worksheets, and he can't speak English. As time went by, making enough copies and distributing them became my responsibility. Once we prepared four different kinds of worksheets and she didn't help me when I gave them out. As I was struggling, she suggested that I should staple them. At first, I was quite upset at her response, but then I realized that the problem happened because we hadn't explicitly discussed who should do what (arranging seats, distributing worksheets, collecting assignments, etc.). Effective communication on roles and responsibilities could have made our co-teaching class more positive.

Two totally different people working together to achieve a common goal can be so difficult. But from my experiences, if you try to get close to your co-teacher by learning Korean and joining gatherings, and if you clearly discuss and decide on each of your roles and responsibilities, you can have a better co-teaching experience for sure.

### Philip Thompson

It's great that you now have the opportunity to work with new people. Here is your chance to turn things around. I would like to propose a holistic view to improving your school experience. You'll see I don't give any pedagogical advice because I think that depends on you and your co-teacher finding a solution that works for you and your students. I hope some of it is useful and that you have a great second semester.

1) Establish good relations - You can do this before you even teach together. Show them that you are enthusiastic and that you are really committed to making the experience work. Furthermore, make sure they know the respect you have for them as teachers and as individuals and this should help smooth the passage. Perhaps a dinner together would work well, even invite them to your place and cook your best spaghetti bolognese!

2) Set expectations and plan well ahead - As early as possible, assertively, yet politely, set up a meeting to discuss the next semester. Why not start by thrashing out some norms and roles with the teachers? Ask them what they expect from you, and in return, let them know what you want from them. In terms of classes, go prepared with a blank calendar for the full semester with the intention of roughly filling it in; it will look like much less work and they will be impressed with your initiative. I definitely think that the old adage 'prevention is better than cure' is true here.

3) Earn respect - As you progress through the semester, always maintain your politeness and positive outlook. I found that in Korean public schools your success is as much down to your persona as it is to your lesson plans. You can earn the respect of teachers in so many ways: interacting with kids wherever possible (in breaks, lunch, cleaning time etc.), arriving punctually with a big bow and loud greeting to the officials and your co-workers, learning a few words of Korean, and by giving the school lunch your best effort. More specifically, with your co-teachers, handle any problems quickly but politely.

4) Have empathy - Your co-teachers are most likely busy and under pressure from forces above them, so decide what to ask them for and what to just get on with doing yourself.

More than any job I've ever experienced, teaching in Korea is such a fine weave of knowledge, skills and attitudes. I strongly believe, Tyreke, you have the power to create a positive experience with your co-teachers, which will end up with your students being the real winners. All the best.



**Philip Thompson**  
SIT Licensed Trainer  
UCC Centre, Daegu

Advice Corner is an opportunity for readers to send in their questions and concerns about problems they encounter while teaching English in Korea.

The English Connection will find experienced educators to give advice for your unique level, problem, and teaching situation.

Send your questions or concerns to [tecfeedback@gmail.com](mailto:tecfeedback@gmail.com).

# From Kimchi to Camels

## Vanessa Buckley shares her experiences teaching on two peninsulas

In January 2010, after seven years of teaching English in Korea, my husband and I escaped the bitter Daegu winter and relocated to the rolling desert sand dunes and crystalline waters of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). From recent news coverage of Middle Eastern politics you would be forgiven for believing that the entire region was in turmoil, but I can assure you that all is well in the UAE. To other expatriate teachers in Korea who might be considering such a move, I am happy to recommend the experience and share some impressions formed in my first 15 months of teaching in the Arabian Gulf.

### The UAE

The UAE is a federation of seven politically distinct emirates which only came together as the country which exists today about 40 years ago. It has a population of approximately five million people of whom only about 20 percent are actually Emiratis. The country is a curious social experiment in terms of interaction between the various sub-cultures and nationalities of the expatriate workers and the Emiratis themselves who hold all the money and power and yet exist as a minority in their own state. The Government is making efforts to bring more Emirati nationals into the workplace through the policy of 'Emiratization', but they have a long way to go with vast numbers of foreign workers still required. Abu Dhabi is the capital city and also the most highly populated emirate, but the one foreigners are usually more familiar with is Dubai, home of the world's tallest building and shopping malls which make your head spin. My new home is the desert oasis city called Al Ain. More or less equi-distant from Dubai and Abu Dhabi city, Al Ain is located about an hour and 40 minutes from both.

### The Job

I am employed by the country's largest institution of higher learning, the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT), which has 17 campuses nation-wide with separate colleges for males and females. Aside from the English courses, subjects such as Business, IT, Education, Engineering, and Interior Design are also offered, all taught through the medium of English. For this reason, there are many jobs on offer, not only for English teachers, but for those qualified to teach

other subjects as well. For employment opportunities, see the HCT website: <http://recruit.hct.ac.ae>. I teach young Emirati women aged from about 18 to 25 in a Foundation English program which prepares them for study in the college's bachelor courses. The work week is from 8am to 5pm, Sunday to Thursday, with about 20 hours of classes per week. In my first semester, these hours were all spent teaching one class of about 20 students, but usually teachers work with two or three different classes.



### The Students

Having had almost no contact with Arab culture prior to moving here, I was nervous about meeting my new students. I imagined the girls would be fairly serious and shy, and I knew I'd have to clean-up a lot of the conversation activities I had used in Korea. No more 'find someone who... drank soju / ate *daeji galbi* / went to a nightclub on the weekend.' At first it can be a bit intimidating walking into a room of girls dressed in black with heads covered to varying degrees. They stay well covered if they have a male teacher (yes, men can work in the women's colleges), but with female teachers they usually loosen-up a lot once the door is shut and I soon released that under the *abaya* (Emirati national dress for women) most of my girls are quite fashion conscious. Some wear more traditional long skirts or dresses but plenty of them are wearing skinny-jeans, designer T-shirts, and death-defying stiletto heels that make my back hurt just

looking at them. Not dissimilar to my old Korean students really.

As for thinking they'd be quiet and subdued, I was off the mark there too. It's a very verbal culture, and in such huge extended families where having ten or more siblings is not unusual, children learn the necessity of speaking-up to get attention. Much like in Korea, there is a strong group mentality and an expectation that the individual should do all they can to help other members of the group (even if this means sharing homework answers). As in Korea, the problems of cheating and plagiarism are a challenge to overcome.

While age-based status is less of an issue in the classroom here, within the greater sense of collectivism there are tribal affiliations to consider when placing students in small groups. I'm yet to understand the significance of the different family names on my attendance sheet, but I've been told that names reflect the family's tribal origins and certain combinations can be problematic.

While grammatical accuracy leaves much to be desired, generally speaking, there appears to be a higher level of basic communicative competence here compared to what I experienced with my Korean students. Many Emirati children learn to communicate basic needs in English from a young age in order to interact with their nannies and housemaids. English is a lingua franca for communication between the various cultural groups who live here (as well as Hindi and Tagalog). Many people in the service industry here don't speak Arabic, so if Emiratis want to enquire about shoe sizes in the local mall, they'll probably need to do it in English.

### Challenges in the Classroom

As with the secondary school system in Korea, high schools in the UAE have a long way to go in terms of fostering independent, responsible, active learners. Their shortcomings are reflected by the need for so many 'foundation' English and math courses aiming to bridge the gap between secondary and tertiary education. Students



struggle not only with language difficulties, but also with the transition from a largely behaviorist, passive, teacher-dependent learning environment to the more social-constructivist, learner-centered teaching approach they experience when they enter western-styled higher learning institutions.

As previously mentioned, traditionally this is a predominantly oral culture. Although the students' speaking skills might give the impression of competence, ask them to read a book or put pen to paper and you'll probably be in for a shock. Unlike the high level of L1 literacy achieved in Korea, it's not unusual for my students to have parents who can barely read in Arabic. Most of my students tell me they don't like to read in Arabic, and without developed L1 reading skills, they find it very challenging to comprehend academic texts in English. This difficulty also extends to writing skills where teaching the concept of organizing ideas into a five-paragraph essay with topic sentences and supporting details leaves many teachers banging their head against the wall.

Emirati students don't face the same intense pressure to master English as their Korean counterparts do. Education is free for them and future prospects aren't decided by TOEIC scores. The level of wealth in many families means that a lot of students don't feel motivated to excel in their studies to secure a good job and attendance in classes can be a problem. For the girls, college is sometimes just seen as an opportunity to get out of the family home and socialize and there's a good chance that even those who do well in their studies will never use their skills to get a job. For males, it seems that with 'great wealth' comes 'little responsibility' and getting them to take their studies seriously can be a challenge, but for a humble teacher, the array of Porsches, Lamborghinis, and BMWs in the student car park is quite a sight to see.



## The Package

Teaching challenges aside, the package for expatriate teachers in higher education is still very attractive. Of course it varies from job to job, but a generous tax-free salary, housing, annual roundtrip airfares to your home country for you, your spouse and kids, as well as health care and education subsidies for children are all standard. The recent rise in housing costs has mostly made the golden years of mansion-like villas for expat teachers a thing of the past so inquire about accommodation details before you sign. However, the standard of housing is still pretty good, utility costs are reasonable, and it's quite common and affordable for expats with families to have a live-in or part-time housemaid. Unlike the standard Korean one-year contracts, teaching contracts are generally for three years here, but I've heard that recent changes to work visas may see this reduced to two.



## The Lifestyle

I won't lie. From May to November it is unpleasantly hot. Fortunately we have a long summer break of about nine weeks when everyone who can, leaves for cooler climates. Forget about walking anywhere. I've lived through my fair share of Daegu summers, but the UAE wins the heat competition hands down. As a woman, I was quite worried about restrictions on my personal freedom, but I haven't had many problems. Leave the miniskirts and plunging necklines at home, but short sleeves and knee-length skirts are fine. Wearing 'respectful' clothing and minimizing 'public displays of affection' is no great hardship, and compared to other countries in the region, the UAE is really quite tolerant. Although alcohol and pork products are



forbidden for Muslims, there are stores where these can be 'discreetly' purchased by non-Muslims and there's a very lively bar scene in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

It's a relatively safe country with one major exception: driving. Emiratis have a passion for luxury cars and gigantic four-wheel-drives and they love to push them to the limit. If you thought Korean taxi drivers were bad, just wait till you get on the road here, and to make things worse, the roads seem to be permanently under construction. Be warned.

To end on a positive note, this is a truly dynamic, ever-growing and changing country. If you're prepared to spend some money, the big cities provide an inexhaustible supply of restaurants, big-name concerts, and sporting events to experience. The desert dunes and gulf waters are strikingly beautiful, and in the cooler months, camping, dune-bashing, and water sports are popular. TESOL Arabia ([www.tesolarabia.org](http://www.tesolarabia.org)) is a great resource for further information and they have an excellent annual conference where you can sign-up for interviews at the job fair.

**Vanessa Buckley** teaches in the Higher Colleges of Technology's Foundations English Program in Al Ain. She has taught on the JET Program in Japan, and in two Korean universities. She has an MA in TESOL from Woosong University in Daejeon, South Korea.



# Pronunciation: What is the Ideal Goal?

## Nick Shepherd asks if pronunciation should be a priority in ELT

### Introduction

The other month, I was sitting at the back of a classroom in York, listening to six Russian women and a Turkish girl trying to get their tongues around the following:

“If we’d gone by train, it’d’ve been quicker.”

They and the teacher struggled and struggled, but they were making very little progress and I began to ask myself whether this was a useful exercise. Were they ever going to get it? Was there much point in their getting it? Was there any point in their getting it? The way they said it was perfectly clear, but they didn’t sound like native English speakers. They started off saying:

“If we had gone by train, it would have been quicker.”

If I were able to say that in German or Italian, or whatever language I happened to be learning, I’d be pleased. But sadly, those seven women ended up producing something which did not match either the authenticity of the teacher’s swiftly spoken, compressed native version or the (somewhat un-English) clarity of their own original. I wasn’t sure that it was an improvement on where they had started.

Pronunciation touches very deep chords in the mind. Big implications lie behind weak forms, stress, intonation, rhythm, elision, and so on: You can’t produce native-speaker-like forms unless you have surrendered in some way to the culture behind the language. You can get three quarters of the way there without much difficulty. For example, for an English person to say “*Bonjour, comment ça va?*” with French sounds, but an English intonation and stress, is easy. To say it as one French person would say it to another requires a degree of commitment which few language learners – if they understood what they were committing themselves to – would be prepared to make. It touches you deeply where your identity lies. To really sound like a French person you have to think like a French person; most of us are not willing to go that far, though a few of us are.

An easy way to demonstrate this is to note how few post-puberty language learners achieve really native-like pronunciation. They can achieve everything else – good grammar, good vocabulary, good communication, excellent writing, even quite good idiomatic expressions – but not the native sound of the language. For example, Joseph Conrad and Arthur Koestler, two magnificent novelists in English, both had strong foreign accents all their lives.

### English as a *Lingua Franca*

There is also the question of who the students will be communicating with. There was a time when the Anglo-Saxons believed that all anyone wanted to do was talk to them (us, I have to say). However, it is now clear that that assumption was just unthinking arrogance, and actually

English has become a global *lingua franca*, which is more widely used to enable Argentinians to talk to Koreans, or Russians to talk to Malaysians, than it is to enable anybody to talk to the Anglo-Saxons. In fact, this has been the case for many years: Questionnaires to advanced students of English from as long ago as the 1970s show that they are not primarily interested in English-speaking people and their ways, but rather in communicating globally on all the subjects that interest them: work, study, travel, interests. They wanted to talk to the whole world – but not particularly to the English.

What follows from this? The proponents of ELF (English as a *Lingua Franca*) are strongly and rightly aware of this, and have drawn a number of conclusions. They believe we should be teaching a lot less grammar, and taking a much less prescriptive approach to grammatical error where it does not impede communication. I am not sure about this, and think we should make every effort to help students get the grammar right. It’s not that difficult; advanced students regularly do get the grammar right, and are sometimes more meticulous than native speakers.

But where I do think the ELF proponents have a strong point is in pronunciation. It’s a frustrating business, and most post-puberty learners never achieve native speaker levels of pronunciation. But why would they want to? There is no generally accepted agreement on pronunciation, as there is with grammar and vocabulary. There are thousands of speech variations, depending on where you live, how old you are, what schools you went to, what you do for a living, who you mix with, and more. In fact, every single speaker has their own idiolect, or personal way of speaking. Think of a friend you haven’t seen for ten years. The phone rings one day, you answer, and within about five seconds you know who it is. That would never happen with a piece of writing. The way you speak is utterly distinctive, indeed unique. Your accent tells a lot about you, and it should never be seen as something to be ashamed of. Mine will say that I come from the south London suburbs, with a few overlays from other places where I have lived, studied and worked; another’s will say Scotland; another’s will say Mumbai. Greater and greater exposure will cause greater and greater adjustment, so that if a woman from Mumbai stays in the UK for five years doing post-graduate studies, her accent will keep moving over. The reason? Her mind is moving over. But even then, there will always be a flavour of Mumbai in her speech, and rather than question its value, this is something we should celebrate.

### Classroom Implications

Most teachers of English language around the world are not native speakers of English. These teachers may (and often do) have an excellent command of lexis and grammar, and in most cases will be working steadily to improve both. That is admirable, and is the main reason why, wherever one travels in the world, one meets people who have an entirely sufficient command of English.

These same teachers will all have accents which reveal their place of origin, and that accent is the one that they will pass on to their students. Those accents are likely to be entirely intelligible, which is all that is required, and teachers should work at the business of ensuring that their students achieve similar levels of intelligibility to themselves. Some students, especially, but not only, younger students, will achieve unexpectedly native-like production, which is fine. However the major issues must continue to be grammar and lexis: Are they saying worthwhile things in clear and comprehensible ways? Not all native speakers do that by any means!

There is another reason why non-native speakers have an advantage over native speakers: They have gone through the same learning process now being faced by their students. Native speakers have not. They may have learned another foreign language – and it is important that native speaker teachers go through this process – but they have never learned English as a foreign language. All non-native teachers have walked the same path as the learners, and should be well aware of the pitfalls which face them, and how to do battle with the particular pronunciation problems they come up against. Even more than grammar and lexis, pronunciation is directly related to the sounds which the students selected in childhood when they first learned their own language. And, in my view, it is the non-native speaker who is often in the best position to identify the problems which interfere with intelligibility, and help students to overcome these problems.

In summary, my view is that we should be helping our students to speak in the way that is most comfortable to them. That will involve speaking with a foreign accent in most cases, and why not? I do not believe in unaccented

English; everybody has an accent. The goal for our students, surely, must not be to sound like native speakers, but rather to communicate effectively on all the subjects they want to communicate about. If in that process they reveal that they are from Argentina, or Korea, or Scandinavia, that is as it should be, except for that tiny minority who really want to 'make the move' from one culture to another.

What is wrong with being yourself? We don't need cheap imitation native speakers; what we need are students who are confident in their use of language, able to communicate effectively, and happy that their speech will reveal their origins, just as it does when they speak their native tongue. What could be better?

**Nick Shepherd** is the language editor for *Modern English Teacher (MET)*, a quarterly journal for teachers of ESL/EFL which is circulated worldwide, and also sends out weekly "Grammar Bites" with lively tips on grammar and vocabulary.

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# ***TEC News***

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# The Compelling (Not Just Interesting) Input Hypothesis

Dr. Stephen Krashen, University of Southern California

It is by now well-established that input must be comprehensible to have an effect on language acquisition and literacy development. To make sure that language acquirers pay attention to the input, it should be interesting. But interest may be not enough for optimal language acquisition. It may be the case that input needs to be not just interesting but compelling.

'Compelling' means that the input is so interesting you forget that it is in another language. It means you are in a state of "flow" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). In flow, the concerns of everyday life and even our sense of self disappear – our sense of time is altered and nothing but the activity itself seems to matter. Flow occurs during reading when readers are "lost in the book" (Nell, 1988) or in the "reading zone" (Atwell, 2007).

Compelling input appears to eliminate the need for motivation, a conscious desire to improve. When you get compelling input, you acquire, whether you are interested in improving or not.

The evidence for the Compelling Input Hypothesis includes improvement as an unexpected result, the many cases of those who had no conscious intention of improving in another language or increasing their literacy, but simply got very interested in reading. In fact, they were sometimes surprised that they had improved.

I included several cases like this in *The Power of Reading* (Krashen, 2004, pp. 22-24). Both students and teachers were surprised by the students' startling improvement in English after they became avid readers in English.

More recently, Lao & Krashen (2008) described the case of Daniel, a twelve-year-old boy who came to the US at age 8 from China. Daniel's Mandarin proficiency was clearly declining, despite his parents' efforts: They sent Daniel to a Chinese heritage language school, but it was clear that Daniel was not interested in Mandarin. He was also not an enthusiastic participant in a summer heritage language program supervised by Dr. Lao, even though it included free reading.

Then Dr. Lao gave Daniel a few books written in Chinese to take home. One was an illustrated chapter book, *The Stories of A Fan Ti*. Daniel loved it. The book was a bit beyond his level, but thanks to the illustrations and his ability to understand some of the text, Daniel was very interested in the story, and begged his mother to read it to him. When Dr. Lao learned of this, she loaned Daniel more books from the *A Fan Ti* series, in comic book format. Daniel begged his mother to read more, from two to five stories every day. Daniel liked the books so much that he would do the dishes while his mother read to him. Both Daniel and his mother

were quite happy with this arrangement. Daniel's Mandarin was clearly improving, but he was not aware of it, nor was he particularly interested. He was only interested in the stories.

The Compelling Input Hypothesis also explains why self-selected reading is typically more effective than assigned reading (Lee, 2007).

An important conjecture is that listening to or reading compelling stories, watching compelling movies, and having conversations with truly fascinating people is not simply another route, another option. It is possible that compelling input is not just optimal: It may be the only way we truly acquire language.

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- Lee, S. Y. (2007). Revelations from three consecutive studies on Extensive Reading. *RELC Journal*, 38(2), 150-170.
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Dr. Krashen's Plenary Session "*Seeking a Justification for Direct Instruction*" will be on Saturday, October 15, 2011 from 11:30 to 12:15.

His second session "*Trends in Sustained Silent Reading*" will be on Sunday, October 16, 2011 from 3:00 to 3:45.

You can also hear him speak at the Extensive Reading (ER) Colloquium Session on the topic of "*Non-Engagement in Sustained Silent Reading: How Extensive Is It? What Can It Teach Us?*"

See the conference program for more details. All times are subject to change.

# The Important and Growing Role of Vocabulary in English Language Teaching

Dr. Keith Folse, University of Central Florida

In the more than 30 years that I have taught and developed materials for teaching English as a second and foreign language, I have seen many significant changes in our field. Some of these changes made sense to me, but others perplexed me. The bottom line is that our field has undergone many important changes that have helped make ELT what it is today.

For example, consider the role of grammar in our field. Grammar was important, then grammar was practically forbidden, and now grammar is back. In addition, classes used to be very teacher-centered, but now pairwork and groupwork are normal in many different kinds of language classes. Finally, when I started teaching, there were no computers for learning or teaching, but now textbooks routinely come with CDs or online activities.

While these three examples have certainly been important changes in ELT, I think the recent resurgence of interest in the role of vocabulary in language learning is a very promising development. Since the mid 1990s, a surge in practical research studies has benefited teachers and materials writers as well as English language learners. At conferences, I am amazed by the growing attendance at sessions dedicated to vocabulary teaching techniques.

**In addition, using these collocations in speaking and writing can help our learners sound more natural in their English production.**

New computer technology has allowed us to amass huge databases of actual English words so we can see how words are used in real language. An excellent example of one such lexical database is the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). With more than 425 million words, the COCA allows us to find out what the most common words are in spoken English and written English. Furthermore, we are then able to identify a word's collocations, that is, the words that most frequently co-occur with a given word. We now realize that language consists of many lexical bundles, and a corpus such as COCA is a very valuable free tool for researchers and teachers alike to work with collocations and bundles.

Using this technology and these multimillion-word databases, we are now able to make concrete connections between grammar and vocabulary. Obviously, we can produce useful word lists, such as the Academic Word List, based on actual word frequency in a specific corpus of words, but we are also able to connect this information to

traditional ELT grammar points.

For example, one grammar point covered in many ELT books is count and non-count nouns. We know that we use 'How many' to ask about count nouns and 'How much' to ask about non-count nouns. This grammar rule is accurate, but for some students, it is difficult to make the transition from a theoretical grammar rule to actual application with English vocabulary. Using the COCA to search for 'How many', we find that the top eight nouns are *people, times, years, hours, children, kids, women, days*. For 'How much', we find that the top eight nouns are *money, time, damage, trouble, water, pressure, work, information*.

The teaching application would be that students should learn the phrases 'how many people', 'how many times', 'how many years' and 'how much money', 'how much time', and 'how much damage' because these are the phrases they are most likely to hear or see in natural English. In addition, using these collocations in speaking and writing can help our learners sound more natural in their English production. By the way, did you notice that of the top eight nouns collocations for 'How many', four were people (people, children, kids, women) and four were time words (times, years, hours, days)?

The Academic Word List, another corpus product, has been with us for only about ten years, but look at the effect that it has quickly had on our teaching and our teaching materials. With the continuing interest in corpora and lexical research, I can only imagine the advances we will see in the next ten years with regard to the teaching and learning of vocabulary.



Dr. Folse's Plenary Session "*English Grammar Nightmares: The 3 P's*" will be on Sunday, October 16, 2011 from 1:00 to 1:45.

His second session "*Grammar Hot Seat Questions: What If You Don't Know the Answer?*" will be on Saturday, October 15, 2011 from 2:30 to 3:15.

See the conference program for more details. All times are subject to change.



# Q & A WITH GAVIN DUDENEY

## **Mr. Dudeney, can you tell us a little about yourself and your work?**

Absolutely! My name is Gavin and I've been in the ELT profession since 1989. Over that time, I've worked as a full-time teacher, manager of a self-access center, teacher trainer, manager of an Internet classroom, technical director of an online language school and, since 2003, co-director of an online training and development consultancy specializing in the application of technologies in teaching and training.

## **Will this be your first visit to Korea?**

No, I've been to Korea twice in the past four years, working on a large-scale project in Asia with the British Council. Access English works with local education authorities, teacher trainers, and teachers in ten countries to improve teaching content and approaches. I've thoroughly enjoyed my two visits to Korea, though sadly, I've only seen Seoul.

## **Tell us a little more about your current work.**

Sure. As I said, I co-run an educational consultancy with my colleague and co-author Nicky Hockly. We specialize in online training and learning in the field of technologies. Our primary work involves running online teacher development courses around the theme of technologies, but we also do research, writing projects, online and blended course design, and many other things.

## **What are you going to be doing at KOTESOL this year?**

Firstly, and most importantly, I'll be doing an Invited Speaker session on the theme of digital literacies. Digital literacies research involves pulling apart the complexities of modern media (audio, video, text speak, hypertext, etc.) to see what skills today's learner needs to acquire in an increasingly connected and mobile world. From that point, we can figure out how to work with teachers to ensure that they are addressing these literacies as part of their teaching practice. In my session, I plan to dissect these literacies and explore their potential impact in the classroom.

I'll also be doing a follow-up practical workshop based on the more theoretical aspects explored in the invited speaker session, in which participants will get a chance to experience some ideas and approaches that address these literacies. In addition, I'm looking forward to some of the social events and to doing a pecha kucha presentation, as well as meeting up with old friends and enjoying some of the amazing food I remember from my last visit. Oh, and the incredible internet speeds, too!

## **Technology in teaching seems to polarize the teaching profession. Why do you think that is?**

Yes, it's a very polemical issue for a variety of reasons, but I think primarily a lot of the resistance to technology boils down to a lack of training – since training in the use of

technologies still doesn't figure very prominently in either pre- or in-service teacher training. There are, of course, other reasons: in many parts of the world, teachers simply don't have access to the technologies, or they are extremely unreliable. There are also curricular constraints and a wide variety of other obstacles.



I think that we need to re-examine the training we give teachers, we need to give them the tools and the skills to react positively to the changes happening around us. As our world changes, as mobile technologies and net access become more ubiquitous, we need to be able to leverage these commonplace affordances in the service of our teaching. For me, it's a simple question of serving our 'clients' properly.

## **So, if any reader is interested in getting started, what would you recommend?**

The most important thing is to reach a comfort level with technologies that removes the anxiety that teachers feel. There are plenty of different ways of doing this – from informal teacher development to more formal courses which lead to professional qualifications. On the informal side, I would recommend that teachers follow some of the experts in the field:

- Nik Peachey - [nikpeachey.blogspot.com](http://nikpeachey.blogspot.com)  
Nik has a variety of sites which explore technology-related tools and their application.
- Russell Stannard - [www.teachertrainingvideos.com](http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com)  
Russell produces technology-related training videos for teachers.
- Nicky Hockly - [www.emoderationskills.com](http://www.emoderationskills.com)  
Nicky explores issues related to technology in teaching, as well as mobile learning.

They might also consider joining an online discussion group such as the Webheads (<http://webheadsinaction.org/>), the IATEFL Learning Technologies Special Interest Group (LTSIG - <http://ltsig.org.uk/>), or KOTESOL's very own Multimedia and CALL SIG (<http://www.koreatesol.org/?q=MCALL>). Getting together with like-minded individuals is a comfortable and supportive place to start.

If teachers are interested in taking this kind of learning further, then they might like to explore the more formal side of things. There are plenty of opportunities here, from the courses that Nicky and I run (<http://www.theconsultants-e.com>), to masters courses in ELT and technology, and beyond. Whichever way people go, the key is to reach that comfort level and to continue exploring, experimenting, and developing as these technologies evolve and become more fully embedded in our lives and the lives of our learners.

## **Thanks for talking to us. See you in Seoul in October!**

It's been a real pleasure. I'm really looking forward to the conference and to hearing some of the excellent speakers you have lined up. See you there!

# The Future of Learning . . . Again!

Dr. Ken Beatty, Anaheim University

TESOL professionals often gaze into crystal balls predicting what teaching and learning will be like in a few years, or even in the far-distant future. A 1910 French illustration, *À l'École* (at the school), imagined education in the year 2000: textbooks are fed into a hand-cranked grinder and transmitted through wires into headphones worn by mesmerized students. Of course, the year 2000 has come and gone without this—and many other fanciful innovations—becoming standardized in schools. However, note the now-common central ideas: turning print into electrical media, audio textbooks, and technology in the classroom.



À l'École

Innovation in language teaching has mostly been the result of what we continue to learn about second language acquisition and a range of affective, cognitive, and personality variables. Affective variables, such as motivation and attitude, relate to how learners' feelings about learning a language influence success. A century ago, schools assumed their purpose was to separate good students from those unworthy to advance or graduate; TESOL professionals now see our job as helping every student succeed.

Cognitive variables are concerned with language aptitudes, learning abilities, memory, and study habits. Intelligence is often discussed as a cognitive variable, but it is a contentious concept. A century ago, schools assumed intelligence was fixed and that only the retention of content mattered; TESOL professionals now recognize that cognitive skills can be fostered, and if students are failing to learn, it is as much the teacher's fault.

Personality variables are difficult to measure in a classroom. Some personality variables change throughout the day with students' emotional reactions. A century ago, a teacher would have expected robotic behavior and obedience in all students. Today, TESOL professionals understand that all learners—and their willingness to learn—are different and our teaching strategies need to reflect that.

For fifty years, new approaches and methodologies have addressed these and other variables by challenging almost every aspect of the second-language teaching and learning process, including the role of the teacher (e.g., The Silent Way), the role of students (e.g., Total Physical Response),

the role of the classroom environment (e.g., Suggestopedia), and the materials that are used (e.g., The Communicative Approach). Often, dissatisfaction with one innovation has spurred the development of newer ones; in other cases new societal demands have led to new methodologies.

One example of a new societal demand was the need of the American military, during and after World War II, to offer language training to large numbers of soldiers. The solution was to introduce new technologies into the classroom with a new associated methodology. The Audio-lingual Method, integrating the behaviorist ideas of B.F. Skinner, used repetitive recorded audio to teach everyday conversations. But although the Audio-lingual Method provided training in understanding and reproducing set phrases (suitable to military orders), it was unsuitable for teaching students to communicate in flexible ways and think in a second language. The shortcomings of the Audio-lingual Method led to the development of the Communicative Method.

Now, new computer-based technologies have changed—and continue to change—the nature of language teaching and learning. But these changes are, as has always been the case, unexpected. Instead of the 1910 example of a central machine delivering the same education to captive students in a traditional setting, the internet helps provide tailored educations to students pursuing independent learning in every setting imaginable. For example, I recently taught an online class from a ship off the coast of Alaska to TESOL graduate students listening, watching, and participating in homes, offices, and Internet cafes in ten countries.

Other unexpected innovations include the range of technologies available; the language lab is dead and students now learn languages on laptop computers, tablet computers, and mobile phones, while using computer-based dictionaries and translators. In many cases, established teaching and learning classroom metaphors have simply migrated to new technology platforms, such as YouTube ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)) videos that offer a vast menu of short but traditional language lessons. But a surprising paradigm shift has been in the crowd-sourcing of language teaching in online services such as LiveMocha ([www.livemocha.com](http://www.livemocha.com)), which offers one-on-one language conversation and consultations with native speakers in the target language. Some LiveMocha participants earn credits by helping others, while others pay. This innovation is among the developments that could not have been predicted without predicting the many intermediary steps that made it possible: the invention of the computer, email, the world-wide-web, and social networking.

We can look at the future of learning again—and again—but the only thing we can truly expect is that it will not be what we expected.



# Grow Your Own Corpora

Dr. Nicholas Groom, University of Birmingham

In recent decades, computerized corpora of authentic language data have had a profound impact on English language teaching and learning. Perhaps the most obvious indicator of this 'corpus revolution' can be seen in the recent history of learner dictionary publishing. When the first edition of the *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary* was published in 1987, it was derided by rival publishers as a gimmick. A dictionary based on a computer corpus analysis? It will never catch on! Today, all reputable learners' dictionaries are based on corpora, and if you were to pitch a new dictionary proposal to a commissioning editor at a major publishing house tomorrow, it is very likely that their first question would be: "What corpus are you going to base it on?"



The corpus effect in ELT publishing has also spread to grammar books, notable and well-loved examples in recent years being the *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (Biber et al., 1999), *Natural Grammar* (Thornbury, 2004), and the *Cambridge Grammar of English* (Carter & McCarthy, 2006). Even the highly conservative and risk-averse EFL coursebook publishing industry now seems to be succumbing to corpus fever, if the growing number of publications that claim to be based on corpus evidence of some kind or other is anything to go by.

Most exciting of all, perhaps, is the fact that computerized language corpora are now no longer the exclusive preserve of academics and professional materials writers. On the contrary, thanks to web-based corpus interfaces, such as the BNC sampler, WebCorp and Just the Word, and the amazing resource pages offered by academic researchers, such as Tom Cobb (<http://www.lex Tutor.ca/>) and Mark Davies (<http://davies-linguistics.byu.edu/personal/>), it is now possible for anyone with an Internet connection to access and investigate an ever-expanding range of multi-million word databases of authentic spoken and written English from anywhere in the world, for free.

## **I will show how teachers can build and exploit two kinds of home-grown corpora: pedagogic corpora and learner corpora.**

Astonishingly, though these new web-based corpus resources are widely available, it must be admitted that comparatively few teachers (and still fewer learners) are currently accessing them as a normal part of their working lives. Given the profound impact that corpora have had in other areas of EFL pedagogy over the last two decades, as discussed above, it is worth asking why this is the case.

Some commentators have suggested that the problem lies in the technical nature of the web interfaces themselves. Each one looks slightly different from the others, and some are perceived as having a somewhat steep initial learning curve. I must say that I am not entirely convinced by this

explanation, however. It may have been true in the past, but these days we are all getting more and more proficient at, and accustomed to, using the idea of using a very wide range of online interfaces in order to access various kinds of electronically stored information. Who nowadays does not know how to use (or could not quickly learn how to use) Facebook or Twitter, or Amazon's "Search Inside" tool, let alone Google's "Advanced Search" functions?

Rather, I believe that the problem lies less with the technology than with the nature of the data that the technology provides access to. Specifically, most web-based interfaces provide access to very large general reference corpora, such as the British National Corpus (BNC) or the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). These corpora have been designed to represent the English language (or a variant dialect of it) as a whole, and as such are comprised of spoken and written texts from a very wide range of sources. While this makes analyses based on these corpora highly authoritative, it can also make them difficult for teachers to use, since every concordance line is likely to contain a forbiddingly large number of words and cultural references that will be entirely unfamiliar to their learners.

Fortunately, I also believe that there is a solution to this problem. The solution that I propose to teachers is to rely less on general reference resources found on the internet and to grow their own corpora instead and access these home-grown resources with user-friendly software that can be freely downloaded to their own computers. In my Featured Speaker Workshop at the 2011 KOTESOL International Conference this October, I will show how teachers can build and exploit two kinds of home-grown corpora: pedagogic corpora and learner corpora. Pedagogic corpora are corpora that consist exclusively of the texts that learners will encounter in a particular course of study (Willis, 2003), while learner corpora are corpora consisting of texts that the students have produced themselves. I will provide advice on how to set up and develop pedagogic and learner corpus resources, and I will show how you can use these resources to diagnose students' learning needs and difficulties, to design relevant course materials, to evaluate current syllabus/curriculum content, and to investigate whether your teaching is actually having any effect on your students' spoken or written language production.

In the meantime, if you have never tried your hand at corpus analysis, here is a simple example (adapted from Groom & Littlemore, 2011) for you to try out. Imagine that one of your students has just asked you to explain the difference between the plural noun's factors and aspects. First of all, think of how you would answer this question on the spot, without checking in a dictionary or other resource. When you have done this, follow this procedure:

**Article continues on the next page.**

# 시작이 반이다 (The Beginning Is Half)

**Setsuko Toyama, Keiwa College**

“시작이 반이다” is the Korean proverb I like and appreciate the most. It reads as [*shijak-i ban-ida*] and means that the beginning is half of the work done (an English semi-equivalent is “well begun is half done”). What encouragement for language learners! When you start learning, you are half way to success!

My beginning as a teacher coincided with my first interest in Korean and Korea in 1988. With only a few books available for learning Korean, I taught myself the Hangeul letters and situational language. When I conducted a seminar on teaching children English in Seoul in 1992, I started the presentation with a one-minute self-introduction speech in Korean. Little did I know that I would return to Seoul ten years later as a co-author of English textbooks for Asian children. Yes, I was at the KOTESOL international conference in October 2002.

KOTESOL 2002 remains vividly in my memory as an outstanding conference. The enthusiasm of participants, efficiency of organization, borderless networking among teachers from various countries, and especially the rapid growth of interest in teaching children English impressed me. English had already been implemented in the elementary school curriculum and the publication of English teaching materials was growing in quantity and quality. I was amazed at how advanced Korea was in supporting the success of teaching English to elementary children.



After attending KOTESOL 2002, my field of work started to shift to working for elementary schools. I trained elementary teachers to teach English and team-taught large classes of 30 to 40 children. My experiences in the elementary classrooms taught me how important it is to understand and accept the differences children bring to the classroom. I realized that I had not understood the true meaning and implications of the theory of multiple intelligences until I worked with a large class of young learners, some of whom presented learning difficulties. I then sought out opportunities to teach special needs classes.

English was introduced into the curriculum of the fifth and sixth grades of Japanese elementary schools in April of this year. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) defines it as Foreign Language Activities (FLA) and the objective is to train children to communicate. MEXT assigns the homeroom teachers to conduct the FLA classes, but many hesitate because they don't have confidence in their English abilities. We have a spectrum of problems to overcome.

I am attending KOTESOL in the hope of sharing my experiences in elementary schools and of learning how KOTESOL teachers are supporting elementary education.

I think I can safely say we are halfway to a successful conference, as my favorite Korean proverb wisely assures us: 시작이 반이다!

## Groom continued.

1. Go to the webpage <http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/>
2. Near the top left of the page, choose “KWIC” from the list of “Display” options.
3. Immediately below that, under “Search String,” type the word “factors” into the text box labeled “WORD(S).” Then click the “SEARCH” button below. A concordance (based on data from the British National Corpus) will appear in the right-hand pane of the screen. What do you notice about the behavior of factors as represented by this concordance?
4. When you have finished looking at your results for factors, press the “Reset” button and repeat steps 2 and 3 above for the word “aspects”.

Finally, compare your corpus-based observations with your previous intuitive answer to our imaginary student's question. Can you now see anything obvious that you didn't think of before? How would you now explain the difference between factors and aspects to this student? I'll be providing my own answer to this question in my Featured Speaker Workshop at the Conference – I hope to see you there!

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# Invited Speaker Session Titles

## **Stephen Krashen**

- Plenary Session: *Seeking a Justification for Direct Instruction*
- Second Session: *Trends in Sustained Silent Reading*
- ER Colloquium Session: *Non-Engagement in Sustained Silent Reading: How Extensive Is It? What Can It Teach Us?*

## **B. Kumaravadivelu**

- Plenary Session: *Connecting Global Cultures and Local Identities in the English Language Classroom*
- Second Session: *Raising Global Cultural Consciousness in the English Language Classroom*

## **Keith Folse**

- Plenary Session: *English Grammar Nightmares: The 3 P's*
- Second Session: *Grammar Hot Seat Questions: What If You Don't Know the Answer?*

## **Thomas S. C. Farrell**

- Featured Workshop 1: *Reflective Practice: Looking at the Teacher*
- Featured Workshop 2: *Reflective Practice: Looking at the Classroom*

## **Gavin Dudeney**

- Featured Session: *New Literacies: Teachers & Learners*
- Second Session: *New Literacies: From Theory to Practice*

## **Nicholas Groom**

- Featured Session: *DYI Corpora for EFL Teachers*
- Second Session: *Using Learner Corpora to Connect with Students' Cultures*

## **Muna Morris-Adams**

- Featured Session: *It's Good to Talk: Understanding and (Mis)understanding in Intercultural Communication*
- Second Session: *Beauty Contests and Murder: Topics in Intercultural Conversations*

## **Ken Beatty**

- Featured Session: *From Printed Page to Immersive Experience: Making CALL Work in the Classroom*
- Second Session: *A University in Your Hand: The Online Learning Paradigm*

## **Setsuko Toyama**

- Featured Session: *Connecting Culture to Class: Problems, Pitfalls and Practical Approaches for Elementary Teachers*
- Second Session: *Stories, Songs and Smiles in the EFL Classroom of Young Learners*

## **Chuck Sandy**

- Featured Session: *Building A Community of Leaders in ELT*
- Second Session: *Critical Thinking 2.0: Thinking, Doing, Changing*

## **Robert J. Dickey**

- Featured Session: *Beyond Words: Reflecting on Classes and the State of Korean ELT*
- Second Session: *Training Teachers of English to Very Young Learners (TEVYL) 2-10*

# Reflecting on Reflections

Robert J. Dickey, JD, Keimyung University

Over the past decade, reflecting on teaching practice has become mainstream. Certain MA TESOL programs have become renowned for this approach in teacher development, various speakers have come through KOTESOL conferences espousing the concept, and dozens of books on reflective practice have been released through major international publishers.

Journal and diary writing and analysis are now common sources in scholarly publications, and video recordings of classroom teaching is no longer unusual. Yet, reflecting is another time demand on already overworked teachers: We don't get paid for it. It's no fun to critique ourselves and see our own flaws. Why bother?

As teachers, we can be so busy ensuring that our learners get the information they need, that we don't see ourselves. How communicative are the lessons we present? Teacher trainers can be the worst offenders (just as the cobbler's children have no shoes). One may violate the guidelines of communicative language teaching in myriad ways. Do we? Do we know if we do?

I propose that we gather our closest friends and colleagues and share our concerns, or, as it were, "show our warts." In a featured presentation at the KOTESOL International Conference I'll show

some video clips from my classrooms – moments in time that I'm not proud of. A return to "teaching practice" in TESOL certificate courses, so to speak. I'll invite the audience to analyze what they see: the good, the bad, and the ugly. We can also talk about whether we should interpret some global practices differently in local settings. The aim, beyond personal humiliation, is to encourage professional conversations, both within that conference session and in the weeks and months to follow, concerning what and why we "do." Not vague theories or "what ifs," but specific cases from our own classrooms.



Professionalism dictates that we continue to strive to improve ourselves. Attending conferences is one aspect of that, reading professional publications is another. Awareness of our own strengths and weaknesses, such that we can assist our peers through our assets, and overcome our deficits, is one more way.

For those bold enough to do so, I encourage you to load some short video clips onto your smartphone or digital device to share with a few others during that session. After all, a professional portfolio can include weak elements with self-assessment that show you recognize the problem (along with evidence that you have overcome it!).

## 2011 International Conference Two-Day Schedule

### Saturday, October 15, 2011

Time	Activity
08:00	Registration Opens
09:00 – 09:45	Concurrent Sessions
10:00 – 10:45	Concurrent Sessions
11:00 – 11:30	Opening Ceremonies
11:30 – 12:15	<b>Stephen Krashen Plenary</b>
12:15 – 13:30	Lunch (time for SIG and Chapter meetings)
13:30 – 14:15	Nicholas Groom and Concurrent Sessions
14:30 – 15:15	Keith Folse Chuck Sandy and Concurrent Sessions
15:30 – 16:15	<b>Featured Sessions:</b> <b>Thomas Farrell</b> <b>Muna Morris-Adams</b> <b>Gavin Dudeney</b> <b>Setsuko Toyama</b>
16:30 – 17:15	Ken Beatty Robert Dickey and Concurrent Sessions
17:30-18:15	<b>B. Kumaravadivelu Plenary</b>
18:20	Pechu Kucha Sessions

### Sunday, October 16, 2011

Time	Activity
08:00	Registration Opens
09:00 – 09:45	Concurrent Sessions
10:00 – 10:45	Muna Morris-Adams Gavin Dudeney and Concurrent Sessions
11:00 – 11:45	<b>Featured Sessions:</b> <b>Nicholas Groom</b> <b>Robert Dickey</b> <b>Ken Beatty</b> <b>Chuck Sandy</b> <b>Thomas Farrell</b>
12:00 – 12:45	Concurrent Sessions
13:00 – 13:45	<b>Keith Folse Plenary</b>
14:00 – 14:45	B. Kumaravadivelu Setsuko Toyama and Concurrent Sessions
15:00 – 15:45	Stephen Krashen and Concurrent sessions

(Subject to Change)

# Face-off: International Conference

TEC asked KOTESOL stalwarts Stephen-Peter Jinks and Tim Dalby what they thought were the best things about attending the International Conference in a variety of roles. Let's see if they agree or disagree in this special edition of Face-off.

## 1) What is the best part of the IC for an attendee?

Jinks: The first thing that springs to mind is 'value for money.' For around 40 bucks, attendees get to spend two whole days rubbing shoulders with 1500 other committed ESL/EFL professionals. It is a fantastic opportunity to meet new, like-minded people, as well as catch up with old friends and colleagues. Most attendees make a bee-line for the hugely popular publishers' concourse where the great and the good of ESL/EFL publishing set out their wares; it is a great place to browse the latest in language teaching and learning technologies and publications, it is also a great place to get free samples from publishers who want you to take their books etc. back to your school to try them out before buying them. Your 40 dollars also buys you the opportunity to attend as many conference presentations as you can cram in between visits to publishers' booths and coffee with friends old and new. It is also a fantastic opportunity to listen to, and perhaps to meet, some of the leading lights in ESL/EFL today. Oh – and one more thing, attending the KOTESOL International Conference on your weekend off can get you major brownie points back at work!

Tim: I think that the best part of the KOTESOL International Conference (KIC) is that it gives attendees the opportunity to meet the superstars of the ELT industry up close and personal. When I was learning my teaching craft, I read lots of books and was presented with several key theories about how to teach, what to teach, and how languages are learned. For me, being able to talk to these people about their ideas, as well as finding out about their latest research and how their ideas have been modified, is something I can only do at the KIC. Sure, there are other conferences in Korea, but none of them provide the same depth and breadth of well-known speakers as the KIC. Of course, as Jinks has said, seeing real, hardworking teachers presenting ideas that are relevant to my own teaching situation is also key. As is meeting new people, seeing new developments from publishers and enjoying the post-conference buffet. Thankfully, I can do all of these things at the KIC and all for around 40 dollars.

## 2) What is the best part of the IC for a presenter?

Jinks: Let's be honest, being selected to present at one of the largest international ESL/EFL conferences in Asia looks pretty darn good on a teacher's resume. Also, nothing is guaranteed to sharpen your focus on a particular topic than being selected to present your thoughts at one of the largest international ESL/EFL conferences in Asia. Presenting at conferences gives teachers a fantastic opportunity to really think about particular aspects of their craft and to distil their thoughts into a 45 minute presentation. Presenting, like teaching, is as much a learning experience as it is a pedagogical one. Presenting at KOTESOL's International Conference has the added bonus of low-to-no presenter fees; this is very unusual in the world of ESL/EFL conferences. Access to the presenters' lounge is another huge opportunity to catch up with fellow presenters, as well as meeting invited speakers who are giants in the field of English language teaching and learning; this year's crop (Krashen, Folse and Kumaradevilu) are as gigantic as they get!



Stephen-Peter Jinks

Tim: As a presenter, the best part of the KIC is the energy and enthusiasm that attendees bring with them to the conference. Many people choose to attend only one conference a year. There are also many first-time attendees at the KIC. With so many presentations and big names on offer, when you look up to see a roomful of eager and expectant faces waiting for you to start, it's a real buzz. I've always found the audiences at the KIC to be knowledgeable, willing to participate, polite, and ready to ask difficult questions. For me, this combination is gold; people are there because they are genuinely interested in what you have to say – not because you have offered them a free book. At the end of a session, there are usually a bunch of people who want more. I am lucky enough to still be in contact with many people who want to talk about how their classroom practice is going. I also agree with Jinks that being selected to present is a good resume builder and that the fees are cheap compared with other major conferences.



Tim Dalby

# Multiple Intelligences in Storytelling

## Christopher Jay describes storytelling's role in teaching young learners

Reading aloud has traditionally been the most popular method for using children's books with young learners. Storytelling is an attractive and practical supplement to reading aloud for accomplishing specific language and comprehension goals. It attracts children to books and has a power that reading stories does not. Storytelling can be challenging though, in particular for trainee teachers, who may lack confidence in their storytelling abilities. Do not worry: We are all much better at telling stories than we realise and we do it all the time. However, new teachers may choose the option of reading aloud over telling the story until they build up a repertoire of stories they can comfortably and passionately tell. Over time, the frequency, the length, the type of stories that teachers tell, and the times when they tell them, shape the norms for how students think and behave. Storytelling also influences students' views of knowledge and how they demonstrate achievement in the classroom.

Storytelling could be part of a syllabus or it could be an activity used to supplement a curriculum. At the syllabus level, it is worth considering using a graded reader's series of storybooks, which increase in difficulty as students progress through stages of a program. At the curriculum level, storybooks with themes, vocabulary, and structures that correspond to those in the course book are the most helpful.

### Traditional Storytelling

The traditional storytelling style involves no props, except maybe a storybook. Storytellers utilize vivid facial expressions, vocal tones and rhythms, and hand gestures. It is the oldest of all methods and the one we most regularly use in our daily lives. The most common ingredients are an inviting plot, some basic characters, an entertaining sequence of events that build to a climax, and a quick ending. Remembering a story exactly is not necessary as it can affect the natural flow of storytelling. As props are not used, new vocabulary needs explaining in context before or after telling the story. Popular activities involve asking students to retell the story using a different ending or with a revised sequence of events. Once a teacher is familiar and comfortable with this method, it is possible to transform the same story, using it alongside some of the methods described in the following paragraphs.

### Puppetry

A puppet can change the whole story experience for both the teacher and learner. A good place to start is probably with a simple finger puppet or a sock puppet. Both take little preparation for the teacher, and making them can provide a fun activity for your students. The most important feature of this method is the use of an expressive and definitive voice for the character or characters. You may choose to use the puppet behind the storybook as you tell the story. Even though students may realize that it is you who is controlling the puppet, it is nice to try and hide the fact that it is your arm or hand. As you become more comfortable, use two

puppets behind a small board. In the beginning, it is probably a good idea to choose a story with fewer main characters. Stories with more dialogue are more fun, so do not be afraid to add extra dialogue. Puppetry seems to work especially well with shy students.

### Felt Board

The felt board storytelling technique involves using a large, felt-covered board, usually around two feet wide and three feet long. Pieces of felt are cut resembling characters or features from a story and velcro attached to the back of these. The pieces can be used prior to storytelling for introducing vocabulary, or their introduction can be synchronised with the storytelling. It is important that the pieces have a reason for placement and removal. For example, reasons for removal might include the pieces (characters) disappearing, being eaten, running away, or hiding. There is no denying that this method requires a lot of preparation, but the materials can be used over and over again in a number of different ways. The felt board is useful for its multisensory approach. It suits the 2 to 7 age range best, due to its simple and concrete nature.

### Chant

The chant method involves the storyteller using a gesture that indicates that the audience is to join in on a particular expression or phrase. The gesture is pre-taught and practiced before the story begins. Using chant generally requires a storybook with a repetitive nature, so that the students can frequently be involved and help to tell the story. A good example is "What's the time Mr Wolf?" With some books, it may be necessary to edit the story to maintain frequent audience participation. Including the phrase additional times can be useful in ensuring sufficient student involvement. The gesture the teller uses can be anything from a thumbs up to a scratch of the chin. Chant can be useful when telling stories to children with shorter attention spans.

### Draw Talk

With draw talk, the storyteller draws pictures while telling the story. The drawings are synchronised with the words. Traditionally, this method has required at least five or six large sheets of white paper and an easel. However, it is also possible to divide up sections on a white board. Some artistic ability is useful but not essential. For teachers using the easel, it may be helpful to lightly pencil in the intended lines before the story starts. The best stories for draw talk are usually quite simple and include a few main easy-to-illustrate events. It is possible to give students smaller sheets of paper, with faint outlines of the draw talk, and crayons so that they follow the teacher in both the drawing and telling of the story. Alternatively, each student in a group could draw and tell one part of the story, forming a whole group production.



## Musical Storytelling

Musical storytelling can take many different forms. It could simply involve having some background music playing while telling the story. When reading multi-cultural stories, it is nice to find some music from that region to play. This could be done as a pre-storytelling activity, where the students are asked to close their eyes for one minute, and then brainstorm where they think the music is from. Another option could be to use singing in the same way that chant is used, or even to alternate between the two. Some teachers bring their own instruments to class and integrate them into the story. In the Zimbabwean folk tale "Strange Animal", the word 'drum' is used frequently: Every time students hear the storyteller say 'drum,' they are encouraged to drum on the gym floor or their desks, something they enjoy a great deal.

## Adapted Pantomime

For adapted pantomime, the teacher uses gestures and whole body movements to help convey the meaning of the words spoken. One of my personal favourites is using "We're Going on a Bear Hunt" for teaching prepositions. The text includes the following structure six times:

We can't go over it.  
We can't go under it.  
Oh no!  
We've got to go through it!

Body movements and hand gestures are used to show 'over, under and through,' the students are invited to join in with the teacher and encouraged to take over the gestures as the story progresses. A total physical response from students like this demonstrates understanding and can be a lot of

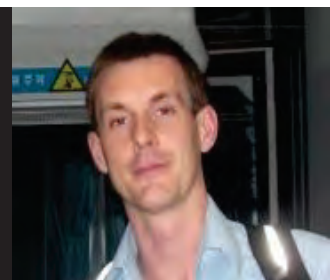
fun. In addition, the method can throw up some interesting cross cultural differences for movements and gestures used to express feelings, demonstrate actions, and represent things.

Storytelling offers young learners exclusive advantages not on offer from any other single source. Using methods like those described can allow children to develop emotionally, cognitively, expressively, and aesthetically. Storytelling activities are a great way to address multiple intelligences and help foster a lifelong passion for literature.

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**Christopher Jay** is a lecturer on the Young Learner Storytelling course at the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies TESOL Program. His research interests include the young learner multiple intelligences curriculum. Email: [cjay380@gmail.com](mailto:cjay380@gmail.com)



Daejeon-Chungcheon Chapter Mini-Conference

# Use MINE! My Interesting Neatest Expression of English

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Professional sharing of ideas

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KOREA NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION,  
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# Japan in the Korean EFL Classroom

## Alex Case makes a case for including Japanese culture in his classes

Before and just after I moved from Japan to South Korea in 2008, many teachers told me to avoid mentioning that country while I was in Korea. While this caution is understandable given their history and nationalistic stirrings on both sides, I decided that in my case it wasn't really possible to avoid answering the questions: "Where is your wife from?", "Where did you work before Korea?", and "What languages do you speak?". I also quickly found that in order to completely avoid the topic I'd have to stop some of my students honestly talking about the only foreign country they have visited, their favorite place in Asia, what music they like and even, in one case, their taste in men. Three of my students would even have been banned from saying what country they came from!

I could theoretically have gotten us all talking about "the country which must not be named" in Harry Potter style, I guess. In fact, a lesson on euphemistic phrases for Japan like "somewhere in East Asia" and "a country with a troubled relationship with Korea" might just have worked with my super-advanced class.

Luckily, it didn't prove necessary. I'll never know if my daughter being half-Japanese and every other holiday going back to Japan to see the in-laws caused some kind of negative reaction, and I only taught a small subsection of Korean society, but the things my students said and wrote about Japan were generally positive. In fact, I was often forced to speak more about Japan than I would have done by their own comments and questions. Eventually, I became so comfortable with the topic that I started to bring it into class as a useful counterweight to the Anglocentric and Eurocentric bias of the textbooks I was using, a counterweight that could prove to be very useful in a world in which my Korean students will use English much more to communicate with their fellow East Asians than they will with the French or Germans, let alone native English speakers.

Here are some uses of the topic of Japan that I found particularly useful:


- Discussing English-based Konglish expressions that are the same in Japanese, such as 'after service' and 'back mirror,' to deal with the topic in a non-judgmental way and to help students feel less self-conscious about it by being able to 'blame' at least some Konglish on the Japanese. This should also help Koreans communicating with Japanese, as well as those who are already perfectly happily using these expressions with Japanese (and long term residents of Korea), but will be in for a shock when they try to use them elsewhere.
- Using Japan in a 'guess the country by its cultural norms' activity ("They often bow" etc.), so that there are a good variety of similarities and differences to Korea for students to talk about afterwards and so they can use or easily adapt some of the statements to describe their own culture later.
- Talking about similarities and differences with Japan and China as a way of avoiding cultural training lessons that are

just pointing out how different foreigners are (something that can make successfully mixing with foreigners seem impossible).

- Using some Japanese examples to help explain Korean culture with sentences like "It's like Japanese *kimono/tempura/teppanyaki*, but...", and explaining that "Unfortunately, for now, Japanese culture is better known abroad than Korean culture is."
- Mentioning Japan as another country I know well that makes similar mistakes in English to avoid any idea that Koreans find English particularly difficult and to subtly introduce the complexity of the idea of accuracy in English as a *Lingua Franca*. This works best when people speaking completely unrelated languages make the same mistake (e.g., all nationalities have problems with English articles and prepositions), but is more common with typical Japanese errors like "It was disappeared" and "Although he liked it, but he didn't buy it".

Despite all I have said above, I did still find the need to be careful about some things. For example, some of my Korean students used talking about their positive experiences of visits to Tokyo as an excuse to moan about the traffic, taxi drivers, etc. in Seoul. As my students will know from the look on my face when they join in my complaints about British food, though, those are not the kinds of conversations that foreigners can join. As I was working on a blog post on things that are better in Seoul than Tokyo, I also had plenty of balanced things to say when asked to compare. Reducing comparison down to those two cities rather than making sweeping statements about whole countries also probably helped.

I'm cautious about drawing any wider conclusions from just two years in one school in Seoul, but this experience does reinforce my general impression that there are no topics which are truly impossible to use in the classroom: It just depends on how you approach them. Unfortunately, the same is true for topics that you confidently stride into class with because other teachers have told you that they can't fail – and that then fall flat!



**Alex Case** has worked as a teacher, ELT writer and occasional teacher trainer in five European and three Asian countries. The last seven years have been spent in Japan, South Korea and Japan again. He regularly writes articles, worksheets and reviews for TEFL.net, EnglishClub.com, UsingEnglish.com and Modern English Teacher magazine, and has a reasonably popular blog at [www.tefl.net/alexcase](http://www.tefl.net/alexcase).

# Popular Culture for Korean University Students

## Tim Hooker starts at the beginning in his course on culture

Despite the recent push toward globalization, the subject matter of Western “pop culture” remains a new area for many Korean university students. With so much related material unfamiliar to students, I’ve found it helpful to teach this subject in a way that encourages much reflection both inside and outside the classroom. To achieve this goal, I employ a chronological approach, beginning with the Greek era, to the weekly three-hour lectures. In addition, I supplement each week’s class time with related journal assignments.

For the class discussion on Roman culture, students are initially introduced to classical Roman money, monuments, and theater. During the remaining class time, clips from the epic film *Ben Hur* are shown. While doing so, students are familiarized with the roles of different characters. Students also become acquainted with the Roman approach toward such matters as economics, politics, entertainment, and religion. After playing a clip vital to the plot, such as the chariot race scene, I give students time to share their feelings about what they just witnessed (and how it may apply to current events and/or entertainment).

**Over time, I have found that journal topics that lead students into thinking more creatively (and therefore not engaging in plagiarism) have yielded the best responses.**

Several weeks later, students are introduced to the Renaissance era. For this, I utilize YouTube clips on matters ranging from Machiavelli’s *The Prince* to Columbus’ discovery of the New World. To give students a clear idea of what everyday life was like in Europe during the late Middle Ages, a period piece, such as *Shakespeare in Love*, proves helpful. We further discuss the revolutionary ideas, trends, and inventions from this period, and how they shaped the modern world.

Near the end of the course, I employ numerous clips from the past 30 years. I’ve found these especially helpful for students in better understanding the foundations of modern pop culture. The original *Superman*, Tom Hanks’ *Big, Mrs. Doubtfire*, and *Enchanted* are among the films referenced during this session. I further utilize music video clips, such as Tom Petty’s “Don’t Come Around Here No More,” Mariah Carey’s “I’ll Be There,” and Beyoncé’s “Single Ladies” to enhance students’ understanding of American music and video culture.


In addition to the in-class activities, journals play a vital role in this course. Most weeks, students are given a reading pertaining to the respective class’s subject matter. Students are expected to read the article, and subsequently respond in three to four paragraphs. Over time, I have found that journal topics that lead students into thinking more

creatively (and therefore not engaging in plagiarism) have yielded the best responses. One such journal prompt pertains to the Roman Empire. Students are asked to reflect on what they’d want to do and who they’d want to meet if given a chance to go back in time to the Roman era. Among the more popular responses include meeting the emperor and eliminating the then-prevalent slave society.

Another journal topic relates to Leonardo da Vinci. Students are asked what they would like him to make for them, should they be given the opportunity to meet the artist. Many have expressed a desire for a self-portrait or a time machine. With this journal, pupils further reflect on what they would like to discuss with the famous polymath. To discuss the accuracy of the *Da Vinci Code* film, to learn his evaluation of modern technology, and to discover the reasoning for Mona Lisa’s lack of eyelashes are some of the more insightful responses given to this writing prompt.

One journal topic that I started assigning this year relates to J.R.R. Tolkien. After watching a short video in class, I encourage students to imagine they are writing a letter to him. For this, a few expressed interest in knowing how he felt about the movie adaptations of his novels. One student was specifically interested in knowing why he placed so much emphasis on trees (rather than water, the earth, or flowers). Since Tolkien was born in South Africa, another wanted to know how African myths affected his thinking and life.

Teaching a ‘pop culture’ class has been one of the most rewarding experiences I’ve had in South Korea. From the weekly class sessions to students’ journals, there is so much that students, as well as a professor, can learn. Due to this, it’s my hope that such courses will become much more common in the years ahead.

<p><b>Tim Hooker</b> (MA Intercultural Studies and TESOL) currently teaches at Inha University in Incheon. He has worked in Korea for over six years. In addition to another Korean university, Tim has taught at a language institute in Thailand, an English academy in Japan, and two refugee resettlement organizations in the U.S. His professional interests include academic reading and reflection, intercultural conflict and understanding, and critical thinking skills.</p>	
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# Making Writing Communicative and Collaborative

## Michael Jones combines writing and speaking to achieve results

One of the biggest challenges I have faced as an English conversation teacher is how to turn a writing assignment into a collaborative, communicative task. Unlike a dedicated composition class for example, I felt that there should be more going on in a conversation class than a room full of learners silently working on a writing assignment. During my CELTA course I was shown an excellent way to set up a writing task so that it becomes a meaningful communicative task. I'd like to share that with you.

Essentially, the activity revolves around telling a story to your learners and then getting them to retell that story by writing it out. That seems straightforward enough, but there are several steps between the telling and the retelling that make this exercise such an effective communicative task. The lesson requires some preparation, but is not too arduous to set up. You will need fifteen thin strips of paper per learner. Each learner receives ten strips, and the rest are held back in case they are needed later. You'll also need some tape, board magnets, or yellow tack. Oh, you'll need a good story, too.

You begin the task by telling a story. It doesn't matter if the story is true or not, nor if it is funny or dramatic. The most important thing is that the story is interesting and that it will engage your learners. I prefer to tell personal anecdotes because I am less likely to forget important details, as might happen while telling a memorized story that I have no personal connection to. The learners can also tell when the instructor is engaged in the story and this in turn engages them. To involve the learners in the storytelling process, I leave "gaps" in the story and prompt the listeners to "fill in the blanks" by giving them hints such as contextual clues or mimed actions. This works to reinforce the lesson's vocabulary items as well.

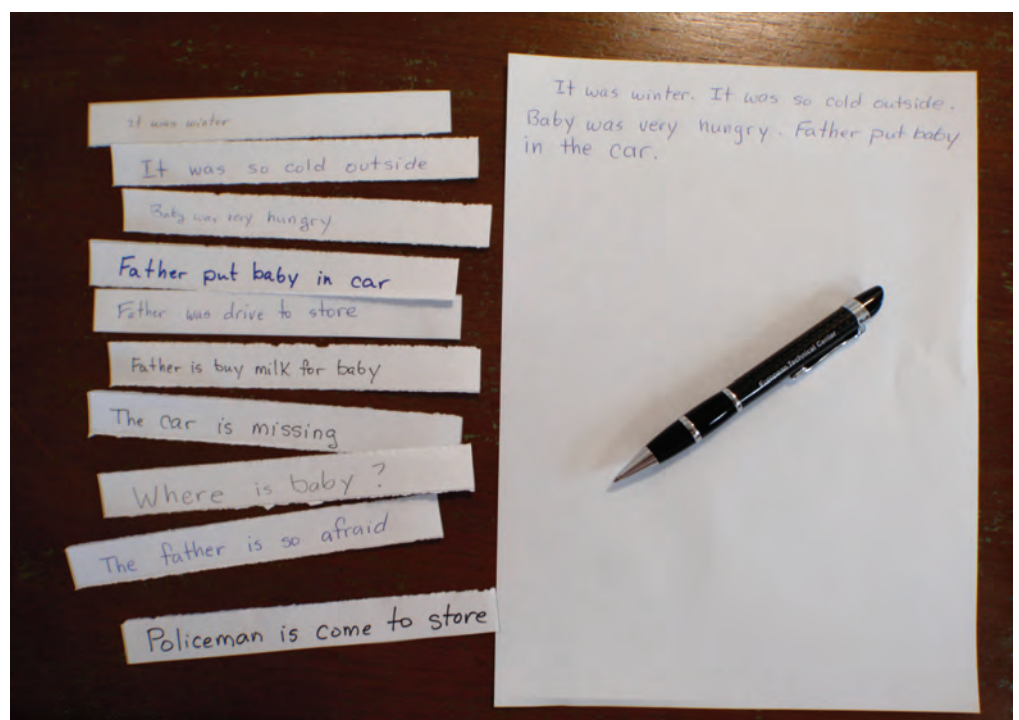
At the mid-point of the story I often take a short break and ask the learners what they think happens next. I put the learners into groups and allow them to discuss their ideas. At the end of the assigned time limit, I poll the class for their guesses and write them on the board. I often give a prize to a team if they have correctly predicted what comes next. I then continue the story (revealing what comes next) and tell it to its completion.

The storytelling doesn't take more than 5 minutes, 10 at the most. The length and complexity of the story depends largely on the learners' level. As the learners will have to retell the story, it is important not to overload them.

Once the story has been told, the students' task begins. Give ten strips of paper to each learner. Instruct the learners to write one word, idea, concept or sentence that they remember from the story on each strip of paper. There should only be one idea/concept per strip of paper. Teachers may choose to use more strips of paper depending on the learners' level and the length of the story. Make sure they have enough time to complete the task. While they are doing this, walk around the classroom and monitor their progress. Specifically, you should be looking to see that they understand the assigned task, that they are on track to complete the task in the assigned time, and whether they have any questions.

When they are done, put the learners into groups of three or four, depending on class size. Ideally, you should have between three to six groups. Instruct the groups to pool their paper strips and to arrange them in chronological order so that they are essentially reconstructing the story. Tell them to discard any duplicate strips. Once they are done, you can give each group several more blank strips of paper to use to fill in any missing ideas, concepts, or points from the story. Again, make sure they have enough time to complete the task. Ideally, they should be discussing the story (hopefully in English) as they negotiate the task.

To wrap up the exercise, instruct each group to appoint a 'secretary' to transcribe their reconstructed story from the paper strips onto a clean sheet of paper. Tell your learners that you are looking for the group that can most accurately retell your story. Once again, make sure you give them enough time to complete this. This stage also gives them a final chance to fill in any missing bits of information that they think should be in the story.



Once the groups have written out the 'stories' (or time has run out), post the stories on the wall around the classroom (this is where the tape and/or yellow tack comes in). If you have a lot of learners, don't post them too close together – spread them out so that there is enough room for a couple of people to read each story at the same time. Tell your learners that they are to go around the room and read each of the stories. Each learner is then to choose which of the stories they think most accurately matches the original story as told by the instructor. They can indicate their choice by using a pen or pencil to put a check mark on the actual assignment. The group that receives the most checks is the 'winner.' You may opt to give a prize to the winning team.

While the learners are reading the stories and choosing a 'winner,' you should also read each group's work. You are looking for any errors in the target language for the lesson and writing those errors down. Five or six examples should be sufficient.

Once the class has chosen a 'winner,' a feedback session is conducted. Write down the errors you collected on the board at the front of the class. You will use this learner-generated language to conduct the feedback session for the lesson.

Once the errors are on the board, instruct the groups to look at them and decide if they think the sentences are correct or not correct. Make sure that your examples on the board are numbered or lettered so that learners will be able to reference them in the discussion to follow. Hopefully, your learners will determine that the sentences you have provided contain errors. You then ask the groups to work on correcting the problems themselves or conduct the feedback as a whole class. I prefer to step back and let the groups work together to correct the sample sentences as this reinforces the student-centered communicative aspect of the task. The important thing is that the learners themselves correct the errors on the board. You may assist by remodeling the target language from the lesson as needed, but the learners should be able to correct the errors on their own.

Once the groups have discussed the errors and their corrections, you have the choice of discussing the corrections as a class and marking up the corrections on the board yourself or having your learners come to the board themselves to make the corrections. I prefer to keep the lesson learner-centered so, whenever logistics permit, I have the learners come to the board and mark up the corrections. You then go through and discuss the corrections as a class. You can wrap up the lesson here after one correction cycle by making any additional corrections that the learners may have missed or, if there are still uncorrected errors, take them through as many correction cycles as you can (time permitting) to let them do as many of the corrections as possible. You can give hints at this point to help the learners with these corrections. The fact that the learners themselves

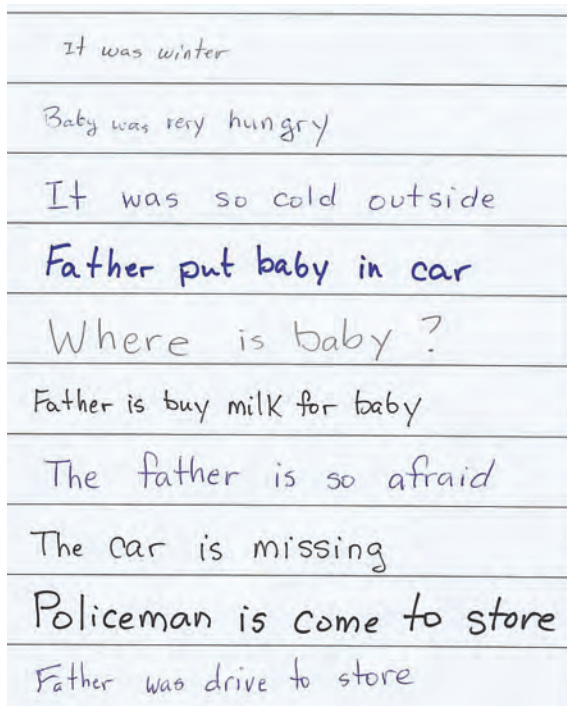
generate both the examples, and the relevant corrections, is what personalizes the lesson for them. This personalization is where the true value of the feedback session comes in. It is what helps them internalize what they have learned in the lesson and take it with them when they leave. Your focus should be on correcting errors in the lesson's target language. You can control this to some extent in the errors that you choose to highlight in the feedback session. Once that is complete, you can move on to other errors and pronunciation issues as necessary.

I have used this activity numerous times and I've been very happy with the results. The students get engaged from the start (if it's an interesting story) and the competitive aspect of the tasks keeps them motivated throughout each stage. The retelling aspect of the activity makes it particularly well suited to demonstrate use of the past tense, but you may use the activity as you see fit. In addition to illustrating a grammar point, the activity works just as well as a vocabulary building

exercise. I normally use the activity during the production phase of a PPP (present, practice, produce) structured lesson, but it could be used at the top of the class to introduce a grammar point before getting to the structure phase of the lesson. This flexibility makes the activity useful in a variety of classroom contexts.

#### Sample timings for the lesson:

1. Storytelling (1st half): 2.5 - 5 minutes
  2. Student discussion of what will happen next: 2 minutes
  3. Storytelling (2nd half): 2.5 - 5 minutes
  4. Task – individuals write down points from story: 5 minutes
  5. Task – groups collate their ideas and fill in blanks: 5 minutes
  6. Task – Transcribe story to single sheet of paper: 3 minutes
  7. Learners read stories and select a winner: 5 minutes
  8. Error Focus Feedback Cycle: 5-10 minutes
- Total time for task: 30-45 minutes



**Michael Jones** is a lecturer at Woosong University in Daejeon, South Korea. He is CELTA certified and is currently a Master's degree candidate in the Woosong University TESOL-MALL program. He has been living in South Korea for sixteen years and has taught in a variety of educational contexts.



# One for All? or One for One?

## Ki-Young Kim outlines a cultural approach to classroom management

As a non-native speaker of English, whenever I encounter new expressions in English, I try to study them carefully to find their hidden origins. The phrase ‘keep an eye on’ is one of them. Why only one eye when I have two? One of my coworkers explained it as to have one eye on something, and the other watching another thing. It sounds plausible, but it is not easy to see two different things separately at the same time. However, since learning the expression, I have noticed that it represents my actions in the classroom: answering one or two students’ questions while simultaneously trying to keep an eye on the other students.

At Gyeonggi English Village (GEV) where I am currently teaching, students come from all over Gyeonggi province and are in their second year of middle school. Students are separated into classes based on their ability. A lesson runs for 50 minutes and is taught only in English. There are 30 students for every 2 teachers: a native speaker and a bilingual Korean.

While co-teaching with foreign teachers over the past seven years, I learned something interesting by watching them. When they were asked a question by one or two students in class, they would try to answer precisely, to the best of their ability. Sometimes the dialogue would get longer and deeper and seem never-ending. The students involved in the conversation would become more excited and ask more questions. The students had a good time and increased their confidence after having a one-on-one conversation with the native English speaker, but there were many more students who were uninvolved. They would wait, silently, until the dialogue ended. Sometimes, they even talked amongst themselves in Korean, asking questions like “What are they doing? Is there only one student in this class?” I was also uncomfortable standing next to the other students, and tried to find the best time to move onto the next step.

One might think that these teachers were not professional or didn’t understand classroom management. However, even otherwise excellent teachers sometimes did the same thing. It led me to think about what the underlying reasons were. I’d like to talk about this issue from the viewpoint of some cultural differences between Koreans and Westerners.

I remember the moment when I visited an American bank for the first time. I was in line waiting for my turn and, as time passed, I got angry. The bank clerk seemed to spend too much time on the previous customer. He kept asking, checking, answering, asking, rechecking, and re-answering, until the customer was satisfied and left. This would not be acceptable in Korea. Even with the slogan ‘The Customer Is King,’ Korean staff can’t leave customers waiting too long in line. The teller would be regarded as a bad employee. But, when it was my turn to speak to him, he spent almost the same amount of time helping me. I gradually felt more comfortable and realized that he was focusing only on me and the service I needed, not on what services the other people waiting in line needed.

Here is another example: In Korea, I’m expected to see a doctor only for about three minutes because there are many patients the doctor should meet. For the same reason, I felt on edge when I met a doctor in the States. Before I came into her office, I saw some patients waiting their turn in the hallway. After five minutes passed, I felt uncomfortable and thought she had spent too much time on me. The doctor was concerned about my health, and tried her best to help me. I came out of her office 20 minutes later. It was another pleasant surprise. I didn’t need to worry about the people outside. When I later shared this experience with foreign teachers working here, they nodded and agreed that they’d grown up with that concept of service. It seems the Western norm is to pay attention to only the person in the front of the line, while the Korean norm is to be aware of how many other people are waiting for attention and allocate attention accordingly.

Let’s go back to the classroom setting again. When one or two students approach me with a question, I answer them kindly at first. When their questions continue, I become uncomfortable and want to stop the conversation because everyone else is looking at us and waiting for the next step. They are also my ‘customers,’ whose needs I should meet. On the other hand, many foreign teachers continue the conversation, regardless. Standing next to them, I want to ask them to stop and to talk to the students privately after class.

How can we keep an eye on one student and the other eye on the rest of the students at the same time? I asked Korean co-teachers whether they had had the same experience. Although there was a difference in how strongly each teacher felt about the situation, they agreed that foreign teachers seemed to spend more time answering the questioner in detail than Korean teachers. I think this is because Korean teachers are busy trying to focus on the questioner and ‘keep an eye on’ the rest of the students. Mr. Kim, one of my co-teachers, suggested that I bring the topic of ‘small talk’ to the class to make others participate in the dialogue. I liked the idea and I tried it by saying: “Hey, everyone, your friend Sun-Hee has an interesting question about ~. What do you think?” However, I ran into an unexpected situation. The student did not want to make the story open to others, although it was not private: She liked to talk about her movie star idols and wanted to know whether teachers had the same favorites. What she wanted was a real one-on-one conversation with the foreign teacher.

What would you do? We can try to give other students chances to talk by taking turns, if time allows. Or having smaller groups of students might be another solution. From trial and error with various approaches, the best solution that I have found on this issue so far is to talk with co-teachers prior to class about the possibility of this kind of situation, even though it might sound banal. Foreign teachers have come to understand my concern, and I am getting used to that kind of long talk with a small group within the boundary of not disturbing other students.

People are apt to take a familiar path. We teachers also have a tendency to meet students or other co-teachers from the perspective that we have formed from past experiences or cultural backgrounds. Sometimes we are startled at the differences with other teachers' pedagogy. I think it is not a matter of who is right and who is wrong, but a matter of acknowledging the differences between us. Some people might have a different view on this. I hope that mentioning this cultural difference here can help minimize conflict and provide an opportunity for mutual understanding when teachers have this kind of experience with their co-teachers.

**Ki-Young Kim** likes teaching middle school students and works at GEV (Gyeonggi English Village). He is interested in helping low-level students and writing task-based lessons for them. He completed a Master of Arts in Foreign Language and Literature at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee and took the TESOL certificate program at Ajou University.



## TEC Submission Guidelines

The English Connection (TEC) is KOTESOL's quarterly news magazine, featuring scholarly articles as well as teaching tips and articles on working and living in Korea. The English Connection is currently provided for free to KOTESOL members.

The English Connection welcomes unpublished articles in the following categories:

**Feature articles:** These should be 2000-3500 words on topics of interest to language teachers in Korea. Please send your photos or artwork as well.

**Guest columns:** Contributions should be around 800 or 1600 words and should be on practical subjects for language teachers in Korea. Art and photos are also strongly encouraged.

Topics of interest include but are not limited to: classroom experiences, cultural issues, CALL, language learning, professional development, or general teaching tips.

Manuscripts should be sent to **[tecsubmissions@gmail.com](mailto:tecsubmissions@gmail.com)**

News items should be sent to **[koreakotesolnews@gmail.com](mailto:koreakotesolnews@gmail.com)**

Please send your thoughts and suggestions for TEC to **[tecfeedback@gmail.com](mailto:tecfeedback@gmail.com)**

# Through a Student's Eyes

## Scott Broomfield shares classroom management from a student's view

**March 8th, 2011**

Dear Diary,

We had our first English class today. I was so nervous, but I soon felt better when the foreigner allowed us to sit next to our friends! He said "Good morning" to us, we replied "Good morning" to him, "Good morning" to each other, and then we had to say something nice to the person next to us. I said "something nice" to Jee-Su. It was kind of silly, but funny.

Next, the foreigner wrote the class rules on the whiteboard and we had to copy them down into our textbooks.

- A) Be on time.
- B) Always bring your textbook.
- C) Don't disturb each other.
- D) Do not use your cell phones.
- E) Please be kind to each other.

The foreigner didn't mention what would happen if we broke any of these rules. We just wrote them down. The English classroom is very different from our normal classroom. It's divided in half, with an aisle in the middle. We sat in eleven groups with four of us in each group. The desk immediately next to the aisle had a name taped to its top. That's the group name. The foreigner wrote all the group names on the white board. I wonder why? Anyhow, we are Rodin group. Finally, we wrote our group members' names on a piece of paper the foreigner gave us. I guess I'll be sitting next to Jee-Su this semester! YEAH!

**April 5th, 2011**

Dear Diary,

HORROR! We've been split up. The foreign teacher said, "Now I know who your friends are, it's time to divorce!" Allowing us to sit next to each other WAS A TRICK! I was moved to Chagall group at the front of the class, I HATE CHAGALL! But it gets worse! Not only do I have to sit with the 'problem' girls (Jee-Hee, Jee-Hae and Jee-Yoon), but I'm also the group captain! I've been told that I'm responsible for the group! DRAT!



*Chagall Team*

**April 12th, 2011**

Dear Diary,

Jee-Yoon forgot her English textbook today. She's STUPID! Jee-Yoon was sent to the back of the classroom. I thought this was funny, but the teacher said to me, "You're the group captain, and you're responsible for Jee-Yoon." So I had to go to the back of the class too! DRAT!

Luckily, we weren't there long. To my surprise, Jee-Hae (from our group) answered one of the review questions correctly, and instead of our group being awarded points (which are written next to our group names on the board), we were given the option of forgoing our points, and being allowed to sit down. We opted to sit down. But I wish we had taken the points!

At the end of every class, the group with the most points gets a stamp. The teacher said that if anyone gets ten stamps during the year, they will be given a beautiful gift from his home country (I wonder what it is?). We were only two points away from getting a stamp. Ah! Jee-Yoon!

**May 3rd, 2011**

Dear Diary,

Dali's captain was late for class today, so Scott teacher told them to stand at the back. We were told that ANY team can forgo their points and allow a team standing to sit down, but it took 15 minutes before another group would do this for Dali team. We didn't give up any points, and for the first time this semester, our group got a stamp. Only nine more to go!

**May 17th, 2011**

Dear Diary,

I'M SO FRUSTRATED! A member of Van Gogh was caught using her cell phone during class. Scott took her phone, as well as Van Gogh's captain's phone. We were shocked! Scott warned us that if a captain is caught using a cell phone ALL the phones would be taken from the group.

At the end of class, our team had the most points, so we were expecting the stamp. However, Scott said the phones could be returned to the Van Gogh team if we didn't accept the stamp! If we took the stamp, he would give Van Gogh's phones to our homeroom teacher. Our homeroom teacher would kill them, so we refused the stamp, and Scott returned the phones. I hate Van Gogh! But, I like our team now. I'm sure that by the end of the year, I will have a beautiful gift from Scott's home country.

**Scott Broomfield** first came to Korea in 1999 and has taught English to students from kindergarten to the university level. He has spent the last five years teaching high school students and uses the experience garnered over the last ten years to develop effective classroom management techniques.





# Supplementing the Elementary School Textbook

## Quinn Olbrich takes his class above and beyond the pages of his book

One of the great things about many elementary schools in Korea is that teachers have a national curriculum textbook, but still have the opportunity to incorporate their own material. This duality offers the best of both worlds - having a set structure while still being able to supplement it as you see fit. While this balance between textbook and teacher-created material is normally an advantage, it can also be a challenge.

Textbooks provide teachers with structure, and while sometimes mundane and often oversimplified, they can serve as a backbone for courses. Additionally, many elementary schools assign a certain textbook for each grade; this is meant to be the bread and butter of the class. Depending on the textbook, I find the accompanying CD ROM can be quite useful when it comes to videos, visual aids, songs and quizzing activities. Teachers can take advantage of this pre-made material.

What the textbook and CD ROM often lack is the application portion of learning, where students have an opportunity to apply the learned material to their lives. This is where I think teachers can use and incorporate their own activities and lesson plans to make the class interesting, relevant, and fun. After all, what good is it if students only learn how to listen and repeat, spitting out language that they have no ability to apply in a memorable and interactive way?

Typically, my classes will start with the textbook CD ROM. We will watch a video, and I will ask comprehension check questions about the video. I will follow with a role-play with props, and finally, I will switch over to an activity outside of the book. Certainly, there will be days where the textbook will take up most, and sometimes all, of the class, but usually I will include an activity not found in the book. These supplementary activities allow students to learn by doing more than just watching or regurgitating information.

One example of an activity I feel is more appropriate than the textbook comes from a lesson I taught about size. In the textbook, there was a quiz-like section that compared two animals. Students were asked to determine which animal was bigger based on the size of the picture. Although this can be a useful visual and quizzing aid, I thought the scope of the content (the same four animals were rotated for the eight questions) was quite limiting and the guidelines were a little confusing. Were they supposed to compare the real size of the animals, or the size of the pictures? Additionally, like other activities that use the A/B or yes/no format for answers, I found this activity didn't naturally lend itself to student interaction. I could anticipate strong students dominating and weaker students withdrawing, which is ultimately a result of ineffective teaching.

Although I decided to forgo the textbook activity, it was a good source of inspiration for developing a supplemental activity, one that involved having the students organize cards with different animals in order of their real-life sizes.

This got the students interacting with one another and related the idea of size to animals. I find that any activity that involves organizing or ordering works well with students, especially young kids, both because it forces them to think and because it gets a lot of students involved in the process.

I also enjoy organization and word idea games because they stress the application of learning, lend themselves to effective group work, and are generally entertaining. Of course, there are many more activities that facilitate interactive learning for a large group of students. Two useful websites I have come across are [www.onestopenglish.com](http://www.onestopenglish.com) and [www.eslhq.com](http://www.eslhq.com); both are helpful resources when planning lessons. These websites have ideas for lesson plans, games, handout formats, and flashcards, in addition to providing teaching tips and strategies. I also recommend the website [www.submarinechannel.com/moviemaker](http://www.submarinechannel.com/moviemaker), which allows you to make your own short videos/movies. This is an easy, fun way to make your own dialogues or prompt students to think about writing their own stories and producing the language themselves.

While the textbook is a great starting point for planning a curriculum, supplemental activities help enhance the content. Although I find that at the beginning of the semester I tend to use the textbook more, I have gradually begun to incorporate more of my own material. Finding the balance between the two depends on the judgment of each teacher.

**Quinn Olbrich** grew up in Boise, Idaho and received his bachelor's degree from Bard College in New York. He has lived in Korea for almost 2 years and has enjoyed teaching at private and public institutions alike. Outside of work, he likes to surround himself in a mixture of theater, tennis and writing.



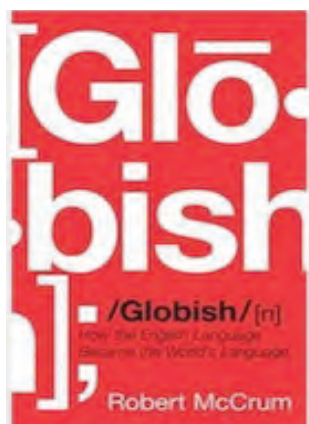
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# Book Review: Globish

## Matthew Watterson shares his thoughts on *Globish*

Book Review

*Globish: How the English Language Became the World's Language*



By Robert McCrum

New York: W.W. Norton, 2010.

Pages: 331. (ISBN - 978-0-393-06255-7)

Books that tell the story of how English developed into a world language are likely to be of more than passing interest to KOTESOL members. After all, if this story had gone differently, chances are most of us would be doing a different job, and for the expats among us, even living in a different country. Robert McCrum's *Globish* is a recent attempt at telling this story, and does so in a way that is both detailed and entertaining, but unsatisfying on some points.

McCrum gives a generally chronological account of the history of English under five main headings: 'Founders' covers the period from the Anglo-Saxon invasions to Shakespeare; 'Pioneers' focuses on the growth and evolution of English in North America from the 1600s to the early 20th Century; 'Popularisers' traces the development of English in the 1700s and 1800s, especially as a colonial language of the British Empire; 'Modernisers' takes the story into the twentieth century, discussing the development of English in response to the two world wars and their aftermath; and finally, 'Globalisers' brings the story up to our present age, with English now a global language, hence 'Globish.'

My main beef with *Globish* is not its content *per se*, which is generally interesting and well-researched, but rather some of the conclusions that McCrum appears to draw from his material. In particular, McCrum seems to subscribe to the fallacy that the rise of English to international dominance is somehow due to its intrinsic character, rather than simply the historical circumstances in which the language has found itself over the centuries. For example, he claims that even by the middle of the tenth century, Old English had become "the premier vernacular of the western world, the precociously advanced medium of an independent-minded society... Globish in embryo" (p. 38). To me, this sounded more than a little anachronistic.

Similarly, McCrum claims that in the eighteenth century, English had a special destiny *vis-à-vis* French, writing that "French might be the language of international relations, but its potential as a world language would remain circumscribed by custom, temperament and philosophical preference" (p.149). Yet, in the following pages, he describes how the relative spread of the two languages was actually decided by the outcomes of bitterly fought colonial wars in North America and India. In other words, "[w]arfare would be the making of the world's English" (p. 151). This continued to be the case through to the twentieth century, when the outcomes of the two world wars and the resultant rise of the United States were crucial to ensuring English became a world language.

McCrum even seems to suggest that the English language and English-speaking cultures are intrinsically more democratic, vigorous, and appealing than others. For example, he enthuses that "[b]y 1066 the DNA of self-expression had become encrypted into the Anglo-Saxon way of life" (p. 43) and that "part of the enduring appeal of the world's English [is] that its origins are associated with the history of the many not the few, and with the streets not the court or cloister." And yet, he then adds somewhat paradoxically: "At first this new mood [...] was confined to the upper echelons" (p. 56).

In our own time, McCrum asserts that Globish, namely English as a world language, "offers a way forward" (p. 279) to the millions of people around the world who are aspiring to democratic freedoms. This struck me as an affront to all those people who have relied on their own languages and cultural traditions in their struggles for freedom.

McCrum's thesis on Globish is perhaps at its muddiest in his Epilogue, when he writes about the reaction of a 25-year-old Iraqi soccer fan after his national team had just beaten the Saudi side. McCrum cryptically describes the man's jubilation as "a perfect Globish sentiment" (p. 287). As I closed the book, I was left wondering what on earth he meant.

Overall, *Globish* is worth a read for its detailed exploration of important trends and interesting anecdotes about the role of various key people - ranging from Geoffrey Chaucer through to Barack Obama - in the growth and development of the language. At the same time, McCrum's implied thesis about the natural suitability of English to become Globish should be taken with a grain of salt. Otherwise, we come away from the book with an image of English as not only a world language, but also a narcissistic one.

*Matthew Watterson is an English teacher at Hongik University, Seoul. He has been living and working in Seoul for about 12 years.*

# Expats Life

## ESL forums guru Ttompatz suggests where to head this winter break

Lately there has been a lot of chatter in the forums about getting away from Korea for a holiday and how to do it without breaking the bank. So, in this column I will touch on a few destinations for those of you who want to see more of Asia.

One of the biggest hurdles to taking a vacation elsewhere in Asia is the simple fact that South Korea is locked in and you need a boat or an airplane to go anywhere. That's why now is the time to start looking for seats to fly during the winter break.

For your get-aways there are lots of options in South East Asia. Popular destinations are the Philippines, Thailand, Hong Kong/Macau, and mainland China.

The Philippines, Thailand, HK and Macau do NOT require visas for people from countries that qualify for Korean E2 visas. Visas are required for China, and for our US readers, a Chinese visa can be expensive to obtain. They do need to be obtained through a travel agent. You cannot go to the Chinese embassy and do it yourself.

Typically, the cheapest way to get to the Philippines is on either Cebu Pacific Airline (<http://www.cebupacificair.com/index.html>) to gateways like Manila and Cebu or one of the other discount airlines like Busan Air or Zest Air, who offer regularly scheduled charter flights to popular places like Boracay or Palawan. Domestic travel from Manila or Cebu to the more popular beach destinations is cheap, frequent and easy.

The island destinations of Boracay or Alona Beach on Panglao/Bohol are the easiest to get to and have accommodations to suit all budgets. <http://www.boracay.com> or <http://www.bohol.ph> are good places to look for general information and general prices as well as lists of resorts and hotels.

If you are looking for a more exotic get-away, then Thailand may be up your alley. There are the usual island/beach destinations like Ko Samui, Phuket and others, as well as the big city lights and nightlife in Bangkok and the ever popular jungle trekking up north in places like Chang Mai.

If you are looking for something a bit more Thai and a little less touristy, then consider the lesser known places in the west like Kanchanaburi, Suphanburi, Ayutthaya, etc. There are no beaches, but there is still enough of interest to do to keep you busy if you want or you can simply have a quiet retreat from the bustle and touts of the city and a chance to see the real Thailand.

Getting to Thailand does have some deals to watch for. There are many airlines that fly the route ICN to BKK

(Incheon to Bangkok), so be sure to shop around and watch the airlines' websites and not just the travel agencies or on-line booking agencies. The latter are usually not your best option when in Asia.



Hong Kong SAR and Macau SAR, although under Chinese rule, are treated as separate countries and each has a flavor of its own. I love the architecture in the Old Portuguese parts of Macau, as well as the maritime museum, and shopping in the public market up by the border crossing into mainland China.

Getting to Hong Kong can be cheap or expensive. Look at Cathay Pacific ([http://www.cathaypacific.com/cpa/en\\_KR/homepage?CX\\_FC\\_N=CXHOMEo\\_Home](http://www.cathaypacific.com/cpa/en_KR/homepage?CX_FC_N=CXHOMEo_Home)) and their "Hong Kong Super City" promotions for some good deals. You can often get an air/transfers/hotel package for as little as 520,000 won per person, based on double occupancy. You can also get good deals going to HK on other Chinese airlines like Dragon Air.

Most people give Macau a quick 1-day trip to say they have been there or to pop into the casinos and see a show, but there is enough here to do to keep you busy for 3-5 days. Dinner at Lorchia is not to be missed if you get the chance. You can also catch a local bus and head over to the temples on Taipa and the beaches on Coloane for another day of adventure. Temperatures can be cool in the winter, so don't forget your sweater. You can fly into HK and take the ferry from the airport (2-4 sailings per day) or catch a bus to central in HK and catch a hydrofoil from there (hourly sailings most of the day).

There are some great opportunities for you to see a lot of East Asia during your stay in Korea. Korea is a great springboard, so look around and start planning now for an affordable trip to see more of Asia before you have to return to your home country and miss out on the chance of a lifetime.

**"Ttompatz"** has been in the ESL game for some 16 years, most of which were spent in Asia and almost a decade of which has been spent here in Korea. As well as working as a teacher he has also spent many years working as a volunteer at one of the foreigner help centers here in Korea as well as posting on the more common internet ESL forums. Contact him at [ttompatz@yahoo.com](mailto:ttompatz@yahoo.com).



# Report Cards from the Edge

Jason Burnett



Report Cards from the Edge is intended to be a fun and interactive comic strip. We encourage readers to submit caption ideas and use the comics in class.

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