THE TESOLANZ JOURNAL

VOLUME 27 2019

ISSN 1172-9694

The TESOLANZ Journal is published once a year by TESOLANZ, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Aotearoa/New Zealand (Incorporated), Te Ropu Kaiwhakaako Reo Ingarihi ki Iwi Reo Ke. The journal is double blind peer reviewed. A subscription to the journal is included in the annual membership fee of the Association. Enquiries about membership and subscription to the journal should be addressed to:

TESOLANZ
Linguistics and Applied Language Studies
Victoria University of Wellington
PO Box 600
Tel: (04) 463 5600
Fax: (04) 463 5604

Those interested in submitting an article, report or book review should consult the Notes for Contributors printed at the back of this volume.

THE TESOLANZ JOURNAL

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

The articles in the 2019 issue of the *TESOLANZ Journal* bring together a range of areas of interest to the field of TESOL. These include English language textbooks (Whitty), pronunciation instruction (Nguyen), linking adverbials (Yin), and needs analysis as a basis for materials design (Edwards).

In *An Investigation of the Modal* can *in an English Language Coursebook Series*, Lauren Whitty investigates whether the modal *can* is represented in English language coursebooks similarly to the way that native speakers of English use *can.* Using data from the *British National Corpus* and *New Headway*, an English language learner coursebook series, Lauren compares frequencies and uses of *can* in these two sources. Lauren's research shows that while there are discrepancies between the two data sets when examining frequencies, usage frequencies are quite comparable; a significant finding is the difference in the amount of surrounding context required for analysis of each source.

Loc Tan Nguyen's study investigates EFL learners' pronunciation needs. While much prior research has investigated pronunciation teaching in instructional materials, in teaching practices in a range of settings, and in teacher cognition, less research has investigated learners' pronunciation instructional needs. Loc's study examines Vietnamese EFL learners' pronunciation needs through individual interviews with six EFL teachers and focus group interviews with 24 students at a Vietnamese university. The results show that both the teachers and students considered pronunciation to be an integral part of English learning and expressed the preference that pronunciation teaching should focus on genuine communication to facilitate learners' general communicative purposes.

In her article, Zihan Yin investigates the pragmatic meaning of *so*, a multifunctional linking adverbial. Drawing on data from the Wellington Corpora of Written and Spoken New Zealand English, Zihan considers the various meanings that *so* can carry in both written and spoken English. By comparing the frequency of these meanings in different registers and social settings, she found nine different meanings that *so* can carry in written and spoken New Zealand English. She also found significant differences between spoken and written registers in terms of the range and frequency of meanings of *so*. Her article suggests pedagogical implications for language and academic literacy educators.

English for Employment lessons for speakers of low-level English are common, but there is little material prepared for those with initial ambitions to be cleaners, which is a job commonly undertaken by students in *English for Employment* classes. Tim Edwards' needs analysis draws on a range of sources, including existing literature, Unit Standards Documentation and interviews with learners, a manager and an experienced *English for Employment* teacher. Tim builds on this needs analysis to design lessons for

the specific purpose of helping learners gain jobs as cleaners. His article reports a need for vocabulary and communication skills, a need for flexibility of content and a need for time to be allowed for the effect of low levels of English proficiency.

The five book reviews in this issue concern books relevant to TESOL which have been published since 2017. They include a review by Martin Andrew of *Teaching English to Second Language Learners in Academic Contexts* by Newton, Ferris, Goh, Grabe, Stoller and Vandergrift (2018). Kathryn Henderson reviews *Teaching and Developing Reading Skills* by Watkins (2017). Davis and McKay's (2018) *Guide to Useful Evaluation of Language Programs* is reviewed by Marylyn Lewis. Nick Marsden's review reports on Rivers and Zotzmann's (2017) *ISMS in Language Education*. Finally, *The Cambridge Guide to Learning English as a Second Language* (Burns & Richards, 2018) is reviewed by Judi Simpson.

My thanks to all contributors of manuscripts for the 2019 *TESOLANZ Journal*. My gratitude also goes to the members of the editorial board and all the reviewers of articles for their supportive reviews of the manuscripts submitted.

I encourage all readers of the *TESOLANZ Journal* to consider submitting an article next year—whether individually or collaboratively. You will find Notes for Contributors at the end of the journal, but please feel free to contact me via email (jean.parkinson@vuw.ac.nz) if you require any additional information. The closing date for receiving manuscripts is Monday, 3 August 2020.

Jean Parkinson

ARTICLES

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE MODAL *CAN* IN AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSEBOOK SERIES

Lauren Whitty
Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand

Abstract
In many English language classrooms, coursebooks tend to be one of the main resources for teaching modals. While coursebooks may be a good point from which to begin, how do instructors know that what coursebooks present is representative of language used by speakers of English? This study explores the uses of the central modal auxiliary CAN in the popular English language coursebook series New Headway (NH), in comparison to its use in the British National Corpus (BNC). First, usage categories identified from the examination of CAN in the BNC are introduced and described. Next, comparisons are made between the two sources, showing that discrepancies in overall frequencies become most apparent when examining the NH data by coursebook level, with frequencies for CAN in NH differing from the BNC at all levels. While usage category frequencies were quite comparable, a key factor identified is the difference in the amount of context required for analysis of each source, with occurrences of CAN in NH requiring much less context for interpretation. Findings are presented with a pedagogical focus, making practitioners aware of the frequencies and uses found in the BNC and NH, while providing recommendations for instruction.

Introduction

This study is corpus-based and draws on the *New Headway* (henceforth, NH) English language coursebook series and the *British National Corpus* (henceforth, BNC) (Davies 2004). Using a corpus-based approach allowed for an examination of how CAN is presented in the coursebooks compared to its use by native and native-like speakers of English. Examining the modal CAN was motivated by its high frequency (e.g. Collins 2009; Kennedy 2002; Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech & Svartvik 1985), as well as the discrepancies associated with its sense of 'ability'. As Perkins (1983, p. 30-31) notes from reviewing previous research, "CAN in its 'ability' sense has been regarded by various linguists within the space of a few years as a root modal, exclusively as an epistemic modal, and not a modal at all!". Throughout my investigation, recognition of the complexity of the meanings for CAN continued to grow, starting with the various views in the literature through to my corpus and coursebook investigations.

In this paper, I first present the usage categories for CAN found in the BNC. Next, I discuss the complexities of interpreting CAN in the coursebook series, as well as the role of context in the analysis of CAN in the two data sources. For this analysis, context refers to the amount of narrative that surrounds the occurrence of CAN under examination. Next, I present overall frequencies for CAN (the total number of occurrences of CAN) in the BNC and NH, with an examination of the coursebook series by level. Finally, I look at usage frequencies (the number of occurrences of CAN within

each usage category), which are based on the usage categories established in the BNC. Throughout the comparisons between the coursebook data and the BNC, I offer recommendations for instructors in the classroom with regard to CAN.

Previous Studies

Previous researchers have gained pedagogical insights from using this method of comparing learner coursebooks to general language corpora (e.g. Barnard & Scampton 2006; Hyland 1994; Klages & Römer 2002; Mukundan & Khojasteh 2011; Römer 2004a, 2004b; Vine 2013). Mukundan and Khojasteh (2011), Römer (2004a, 2004b) and Klages and Römer (2002) undertook studies investigating modals, including *can*, in learner coursebooks and general English corpora. Mukundan and Khojasteh conducted their study using Malaysian English coursebooks with comparisons to the spoken and written sections of the BNC. Klages and Römer (2002) and Römer (2004a, 2004b) used a German English coursebook series and compared it to the spoken part of the BNC. All four studies found that there were differences between central modal frequencies found in learner coursebooks compared to English language corpora.

Römer (2004a, p. 186) draws attention to the significance of these findings, "Frequencies can be very important as they show us which words or structures are central in a language. Thus, they can help with decisions about what to include in teaching materials and what not". Römer is not only concerned with the overall frequency of the grammatical items, but also their meanings, or "uses" as preferred in this study, and co-occurrences, which is paramount in researching the modal auxiliaries because each has multiple uses. Holmes (1988) also analysed ESL coursebooks, focusing mainly on epistemic modal auxiliaries, which included *can*. Comparing frequencies, she examined four different English learner coursebooks. Overall, she found there was a discrepancy between native speaker use and coursebook presentation.

In his investigation of coursebook materials, Harwood (2005, p. 154) specifically notes that previous corpus studies of modals, including Holmes' (1988) study, "all conclude that EAP textbooks and style guides are not only failing to teach the full repertoire of modal language, they are also failing to teach a number of items learners would find most useful". Harwood (2005, p. 156) also points out that, "learners are given inaccurate descriptions of both the qualitative functions of modality and the frequencies with which the modals occur". On the contrary, Harwood notes that many studies have found that coursebooks are not the only resources that instructors rely on, and therefore can be used as a guide, or starting point. Therefore, this study aims to address the overall frequencies and frequencies of use found in the NH coursebook series and highlight these findings in order to help inform instructors.

This Study

Römer (2004b, p. 151) notes the value in examining the input students receive in their English language lessons; examining English language coursebooks for this study

provided an avenue for investigating the language that learners are exposed to. Focusing on one aspect of input, this study uses the student coursebooks from the series *New Headway* to explore how CAN is represented.

According to Barnard and Scampton (2006, p. 2), the NH series is commonly used in international English language learning environments. NH is based on British English and the series consists of six student levels, Beginner to Advanced. This coursebook study utilised the student books and excluded instructor books. The reason for this is that the focus for this study was to look at the language the learners, not instructors, are exposed to. Furthermore, cross-referenced information from the instructor to the student book is accounted for in the student series. Using coursebook data to explore CAN's frequencies and usage frequencies helps to identify differences between what is presented in coursebooks to learners and how this modal auxiliary is used by speakers of English, as evidenced by the BNC corpus.

The BNC offers an insight into the language used by native and native-like speakers of English. Having access to such a vast corpus of spoken and written English helped to identify the overall frequencies of CAN, the uses associated with CAN, as well as its usage frequencies. Overall frequency counts were drawn from the entire BNC, and for usage frequencies, 100 examples of each form of CAN were selected for analysis (400 examples in total). Affirmative forms of *can* were included, as well as examples in which CAN co-occurs with 'not' (*cannot/can't*). The inclusion of all forms is represented by capitalised CAN.

This study recognises that CAN in the BNC is used in a variety of situational contexts, and thus fulfils discourse functions related to such contexts. Since coursebook language represents a different situational context, we would not expect the coursebook to cover everything found in the BNC. Vine (2013, p. 475) suggests, "Corpus frequency data should not necessarily be pedagogically prescriptive, but they should inform pedagogy", while Barnard and Scampton (2006, p. 5) believe frequency findings "should inform syllabus designers and course book writers when making decisions about grading and sequencing of both modal auxiliaries and lexical modality". Therefore, it is the aim of this paper to examine the contexts in the BNC, and compare these to those found in the coursebooks in order to help English language instructors make informed decisions when choosing materials in their classroom.

This study took place in three phases. First, the literature was used to develop preliminary categories of meaning. Second, the BNC was utilised to adjust these meaning categories. In the third phase, I determined overall frequencies and meaning frequencies for the NH coursebook series. This is a simplified explanation of the phases, as the development of the meaning categories, along with my analysis of meanings within the BNC, was quite iterative, at first heavily reliant on the literature for guidance, and later heavily reliant on CAN in use for confirming usage categories.

Usage Categories

In this section, I first provide an overview of the usage categories found in the investigation of CAN in the BNC. The usage categories presented first are those also found in traditional studies: 'ability', 'external possibility', 'permission' and 'epistemic possibility'. Following these are 'directive' and 'volition', which have been acknowledged in traditional studies, but for 'directive', have not been identified explicitly as a category, and 'volition' has not been previously used in relation to CAN. Finally, the category 'phrase' is presented, which has not been identified as a category in previous studies. Each usage category includes an example from the BNC, followed by the criteria used for classification (illustrated by the BNC example), and includes a linguistic substitution check. Furthermore, I have noted where a linguistic substitution check was motivated from previous research.

Though I did not use a statistical inter-rater reliability process for my usage analysis, informally a significant amount time during meetings with colleagues was dedicated to discussions around interpretation of uses of these, and all, examples in my data. Due to the subjectivity of modal auxiliaries and different reader interpretations, there was close to, but not always unanimous agreement. I also predict that due to the nature of modality, specifically for CAN, there will not be unanimous agreement from readers of this paper. However, I offer a consistent and transparent analysis whereby readers can see my reasoning for usage category assignments. For a detailed account of the criteria for each usage category see Whitty (2017).

Ability

> (1) … and the fish can immediately sense the change. It is as aware of objects behind it as in front of it, and when alarmed it **can** reverse backwards into its hole with a speed and accuracy that any motorist would envy.

In cases of 'ability', the criteria used are as follows: the subject ("fish") is animate; the possibility of the action is determined by the internal competence of the subject (at the moment of action); and the linguistic substitution check (Leech 2004; Quirk et al. 1985) is: *be capable of* (*…and when alarmed [the fish] is capable of reversing backwards*).

External Possibility

> (2) […] I should like to discuss one or two things with the managing director of the shipping company. " " You **can't** see Andrew Stavanger, because he's away at the moment.

The criteria used for cases of 'external possibility' are as follows: the 'possibility' of the action is dependent upon external circumstances (the impossibility of seeing Andrew Stavanger is dependent upon the external circumstances of him being away); and the linguistic substitution check (e.g. Collins 2009; Hermerén 1978; Leech 2004) is: *Due to external circumstances, it is possible for* x *to…* (*Due to him being away, it is not possible for you to see Andrew Stavanger….*).

Permission

(3) the rules will remain unchanged. Relief is now given on the first sale of BES holdings. Likewise, to reduce the amount of 'year end bunching', an individual who invests in a BES scheme during the first half of the year, **can** claim part of the relief against his/her previous year's income.

In cases of permission, the criteria used are: subject ("individual") is animate; *x* receives (or has) permission from human authority/rules and regulations to perform *y;* and the linguistic substitution check (Coates 1983; Hermerén 1978) is: *be + permitted* (*...an individual who invests in a BES scheme during the first half of the year is permitted to claim part of the relief...*).

Epistemic possibility

4 [A] Cos every time Jerry'd walk round that corner he'd give it all that. (laugh) He's […] got a terrible twitch, a real nervous twitch hasn't he? …
[B] It can be the sign of a nervous breakdown. (pause) Somebody s-- somebody does a (pause) er develops a nervous twitch and stuff.
[A] No, he's had it for a long time.
[B] Yeah . I'm not (pause) saying he hasn't, but you know (pause) that **can** be the sign.

In the present study, 'epistemic possibility' is the speaker's, or writer's, level of certainty towards a situation (the speaker is expressing his/her level of certainty that it is the sign of a nervous breakdown), with the linguistic substitution check (Coates 1983; Collins 2009; Hermerén 1978; Leech 2004; Palmer 1990; Sweetser 1982): *it is possible that* or *it is certain that* (*...but you know, it is possible that is the sign [of a nervous breakdown]*).

Directive

(5)[A] (sigh) Ca-- **can** we move on? […] Because w—we're actually stuck on one person.

Example (5) is a 'directive' in the form of a suggestion. Leech (2004: 74) identifies *can* as being used for future suggestions and speculates, "it is as though the speaker does not like to exert authority openly" so a suggestion "that a certain plan of action is POSSIBLE" is made. In the above example the speaker is politely saying "let's move on", followed by an explanation for this suggestion. The linguistic substitution check (Searle 1979) for a 'directive' is: *I want you to* (*I want us to move on*).

Volition

Though it is common for linguists to include a 'volition' category connected to modal uses, this category is usually associated with *will, would* and *shall,* not CAN as found in this study.

(6)[A] is anybody sort of falling over hungry, desperate for something to eat, and they **can't** wait till dinner?
[B] No, I can, I can wait.

The speaker in (6) uses "can't wait" to convey that he/she does not want to wait to eat until dinner. The linguistic substitution check used for classifying an occurrence of CAN as 'volition' is: *want (to)* (*Is anybody sort of falling over hungry…and they don't want to wait till dinner?*).

Phrase

(7) I think it's special to have the largest number of bells of all churches in Oxford. I **can't** wait to hear them.

In the present study, phrase, a term adopted from Sinclair (2006, p. xviii), is an occurrence in which the modal auxiliary and verb create a new meaning (e.g. "can't say" = *don't know*) and/or the verb meaning does not occur without the relevant modal (e.g. the meaning *don't think* from "can't see" is not conveyed with "see" only). In (7), the new meaning created by "can't wait" is something to the effect of *I am excited to*. This contrasts with a more modal use of "can't wait" as in, *But he can't wait much longer. If you don't accept by the end of the month, then he'll advertise* (BNC).

Findings and Discussion

Complexity of readings in New Headway

Before moving to a comparison between NH and the BNC, this section outlines a major complexity with readings in NH. When exploring the content of the coursebooks further, what I found is that the coursebooks' presentations and explanations of their intended uses may skew an interpretation for the reader. For example, occurrences of CAN that I would have analysed as 'external possibility' were introduced or explained as having an 'ability' use. In these cases, there was conflict between my own reading and the reading the coursebook steers readers towards.

The example below is located under the heading "Ability". Though the heading is "Ability", and 'ability' is indeed a possible interpretation, there are also other possible interpretations, depending on the context in which CAN occurs. Therefore, without context, the example is ambiguous.

Ability

1 Can expresses ability. The past is expressed by could.
I **can** speak three languages. (Upper-Intermediate level, Soars & Soars 2005a, p. 148)

In this example, "I can speak three languages", a context of conversation about learning languages would favour an 'ability' interpretation. However, a context such as *when I*

visit with my husband's family, would create an 'external possibility' reading with the external circumstance that the family speaks three languages.

These sectional headings and language descriptors put forth by the authors of the NH coursebooks have an effect on the current analysis; in cases such as the above, there is a pre-determination for what an example is 'supposed' to be, even though, with context, it could well be a different reading. Despite my acknowledgement of this impreciseness, I approached each example's analysis by taking into consideration the assigned usage, as learners would also look to their assigned labels. In other words, I adhered to the intention of the coursebook in cases such as in the 'ability' example above.

Expanded surrounding context, or lack thereof

Context played a substantial part in analysis and interpretation of examples of CAN, particularly when examining the BNC. Though my analysis of examples in the BNC began with 100 words of context, with the majority of examples, there was a need to expand the context around CAN even further.

An example of CAN that required an exploration of a very wide context is below. In (8), the italicised words were not included in the original search.

> (8)[A] *The next thing I'm not very happy about the supply of printed bags coming in from er the workshop. (pause) Talking to Eric yesterday, how many should she be able to do an hour, five hundred erm approximately. I said to Celia how many she thinks she can do a day, she thinks about two thousand, depending on what she's doing. And when she worked here, she had her daughter working with her and they were a team and they went like a bomb. Up there she's got no disrespect, somebody who's not quite as bright as they might be er and she's not working overtime as they would do here if they got behind, they're working half eight to half four is it Ray?*
> [B] *Yeah. (unclear)*
> [A] *And* in consequence you know, there's an accumulation. Erm (pause) Simon had a list Well we'd come and see him the thirty first of January, Tony came to me to work on it today, and that's not (unclear). All I'm saying is at the moment, she **can't** apparently cope with the demand on her for bags. According to Tony (-----) we're going out of at the end of the month. (BNC)

My first impression, without extended context, was that this example of CAN was an 'ability' reading; the utterance itself even includes contextual support of "at the moment". However, with expanded context, I found that this example is better analysed as an 'external possibility' reading. In an 'external possibility' reading, the impossibility of coping is due to not having the opportunity to work overtime hours, and not working with her daughter. Contextual support for an 'external possibility' reading comes from the speakers' discussion around "how many she should be able to do in an hour" and how this connects to her previously working with her daughter as a "team" and currently

"not working overtime" which both impact on the "accumulation" of bags and her not being given the opportunity to cope.

The expanded amount of context used in analysis in the BNC contrasts with the amount of context used in the coursebooks. In the coursebooks, there was a very limited amount of context around CAN, and the majority of the examples were analysed at sentence level, which may be due in part to the predetermined classification from the coursebook writers.

The examples below come from within the NH coursebook series (Soars & Soars 2003b, 2003a; Soars, Soars & Wheeldon 2007); each is followed by an explanation for its classification.

(9) He's been learning English for five years and he still **can't** speak a word. (NH, Pre-Intermediate: 115)

I analysed (9) as 'ability' as the impossibility of speaking a word of English is due to the subject's ("he") internal capabilities (at the moment) with the linguistic substitution check: *He's been learning English for five years and he still is not capable of speaking a word.*

(10) Quick! Give me your homework so I **can** copy it. (NH, Intermediate: 93)

I analysed (10) as 'external possibility', as the possibility of copying the homework is dependent upon the subject receiving the homework, and the linguistic substitution check is: Due to the giving of the homework, it is possible for me to copy it. Support for an 'external possibility' reading comes from the external circumstances of "give me your homework" as having the homework makes it possible for the speaker to copy it.

(11) They **can** only have known each other for a few weeks. (NH, Advanced: 153)

I analysed (11) as 'epistemic possibility' as the speaker is expressing his/her level of certainty, at a level of 'certain' (as opposed to 'possible') that they have known each other only (no more than) a few weeks. Support for this comes from Hoye (1997: 86), who states, "the CAN ONLY expression is almost on a par with MUST" and "has a very strong likelihood of being true". The linguistic substitution check is: It is certain that they have known each other for only a few weeks.

From the examples above, it is clear how much more context is required for analyses of the BNC, which is representative of native and native-like speakers, compared to the more manufactured examples in NH. I believe this is due to the nature of the coursebooks focusing more on an in-classroom environment and not requiring a broad amount of context for conveying and understanding messages, as well as the grammatical items, in this case CAN, intended to be understood at the sentence level. However, as Holmes (1982, p. 9) noted in regard to language used in the classroom, "Outside classrooms life is not so simple"; therefore, it would be beneficial to

incorporate a broader context into the English language classroom, where relevant and possible.

One suggestion to bridge the gap between the narrow context used in the coursebooks and the broader range of context used "outside classroom life" is to incorporate "outside" of the classroom readings to heighten awareness of potential complexity in context dependent messages. In my examination of graded readers (e.g. Penguin Readers, Cambridge Readers) I found there was a need for expanded context to understand the different uses of CAN.

One example comes from an e-graded reader, *Treasure Island* (Paluchowska, 2004), at an advanced level. The text reads, "And then Silver came up to us. 'What's the business with the map, doctor?' he asked. 'I **can't** tell you much,' said the doctor, 'But if I could, I would'" (p.68). In reading pages 1-67 of the text, it was not clear to me whether this was a 'permission' reading (e.g. the reason is a secret), 'volition' (e.g. I don't want to tell you), or even 'phrase' (e.g. I don't know). It was only after reaching the end of the story that I understood that it was a 'volition' reading. Ironically, the doctor added, "but if I could, I would", which readers later find is not the case because he does know and actually could tell him the truth, but chooses not to, which further demonstrates the complexity of modal auxiliaries.

There is value in emphasizing these examples to the students to show the complex role of context in understanding CAN, and other modal auxiliaries. At the very least, instructors can enhance and develop context during in-class discussions, which can be implemented even at lower levels. For example, in the NH Elementary text (Soars, Soars, & Wheeldon 2000, p. 129), the authors include a section titled, "What can you do?", where they include a series of questions/answers which are implied 'ability' readings, such as, 'Can she drive?' 'No, she can't'. Though I would argue that greater context leads to richer understanding, this may not be the case for lower level language learners. However, this does not mean the context needs to be so limited that no greater understanding can exist. Using the example above, an instructor could add, "What do you need to drive?" (eliciting licence for a 'permission' reading, or a car for an 'external possibility' reading). Lengthy expanded context does not need to be present in coursebooks to help make learners aware that 'ability' is not the most frequent way CAN is used. Expanding the context, even just a bit, can make a difference, especially, according to Sayer, Malabarba and Moore (2019, p. 271), when combined with ideas that help create a "connection between a predetermined curriculum and students' cultural and social backgrounds" which "is an essential part of effective and meaningful language education".

Overall Frequencies

This section examines the overall frequencies and frequencies per coursebook level for CAN, comparing NH to the BNC. Table 1 compares the frequencies of CAN in NH and BNC data sets.

Table 1:
Comparison of overall frequencies for CAN in NH and BNC

	New Headway		**BNC**		
	Spoken & Written (raw)	**Spoken & Written (per 10,000)**	**Spoken & Written (raw)**	**Spoken & Written (per 10,000)**	**Log-Likelihood (LL)**
CAN	2,188	50	255,641	27	LL=693.83, p<0.0001

NH (spoken and written) - 441,760
BNC (spoken and written) - 96,263,399

For CAN there is a statistically significant difference where CAN is used nearly twice as frequently in NH. The frequency differences for CAN compared to the BNC are more apparent when viewed at each coursebook level, presented in Table 2.

Table 2:
Frequency comparison of CAN in the BNC and New Headway, per coursebook level

NH level (tokens)	**Beginner (33,165)**		**Elementary (56,020)**		**Pre-Inter-mediate (77,882)**		**Inter-mediate (77,388)**		**Upper-Intermediate (101,872)**		**Advanced (95,433)**	
	Raw	Per 10,000	Raw	Per 10,000	Raw	Per 10,000	Raw	Per 10,000	Raw	Per 10,000	Raw	Per 10,000
CAN-NH	190	57	93	16	314	40	402	51	481	48	394	41
CAN-BNC							Raw Per 10,000		255,641 27			
Log-likeli-hood	88.27 p<0.0001		24.18 p<0.0001		47.80 p<0.0001		146.30 p<0.0001		132.51 p<0.0001		66.45 p<0.0001	

As we can see, when considering the individual coursebook levels based on frequency, CAN is not representative at any level. Though CAN is considered a high frequency modal, it is represented in coursebooks as being used nearly twice as much in the Beginner and Intermediate levels, and at a much higher frequency in the other levels. This information is valuable for instructors to be aware of when making decisions about what to include in the syllabus and what to leave out. For example, though highly represented in the majority of the levels, a teacher who chooses to "skip over" examples and exercises related to *can* in the Elementary level, where *can* is less frequent, may want to offer students more exposure to *can* in other materials.

Usage Frequencies

This section compares the usage percentage findings for CAN in the NH series to those found in the BNC. Table 3 is a comparison of the uses of CAN in NH and the BNC.

Table 3:
Usage frequency comparison of CAN in NH and BNC

		Source		**Fisher's exact (FE) p-value compared against p<0.0056 (Bonferroni correction applied)**
Category		**BNC^{w}**	**NH^{s}**	
external possibility	count	286	44	
	% within source	**71.4%**	**44.0%**	FE=0.000, p<0.0056
ability		47	21	
		11.8%	21.0%	FE=0.022, N.S.
permission		19	4	
		4.8%	4.0%	FE=1.000, N.S.
epistemic possibility		2	2	
		0.4%	2.0%	FE=0.180, N.S.
directive		18	10	
		4.5%	10.0%	FE=0.048, N.S.
phrase		13	9	
		3.3%	9.0%	FE=0.024, N.S.
volition		4	1	
		1.0%	1.0%	FE=1.000, N.S.
ambiguous*		4	1	
		1.1%	1.0%	FE=1.000, N.S.
indeterminate*		7	8	
		1.7%	8.0%	FE=0.004, N.S.
total		400	100	
		100%	100%	

BNC^{w} – weighted sample data set.
NH^{s} – sample data set
* Though 'ambiguous' and 'indeterminate' uses are not categories of use, per se, they are included in the assignment and count of the categories.

Though it is the most frequent use in both NH and the BNC, ‘external possibility’ was the only usage category to exhibit a statistically significant difference; ‘external possibility’ is much more frequent in the BNC than in NH. This may be due to the higher percentage of ‘ability’ examples in NH (21%) compared to the BNC (11.8%). One reason for a higher ‘ability’ use in the NH may be connected to the coursebook’s sectional headings and language descriptors as discussed above.

The frequency comparisons in Table 3 show that not only the more established categories of use, such as ‘ability’, ‘permission’, ‘epistemic possibility’ and ‘directive’ show no significant difference in use when compared to the BNC, but also the less established categories, such as ‘phrase’ and ‘volition’, are comparable with the BNC. Surprisingly, ‘phrase’ was not only incorporated in the coursebooks, but used at slightly higher frequency than in the BNC. When reviewing these examples, though the frequency may be higher, the range in lexical verbs is much lower than in the BNC, as four of the same verbs (*stand, say, beat* and *believe*) were used for the nine examples of ‘phrases’ found in the sample data set for CAN (e.g. *You **can** say that again,* NH, Advanced, p. 98). This may be useful as learners need to be exposed to a phrase more than once for it to have a good chance of being learnt. Furthermore, the inclusion of a ‘volitional’ example (e.g. *Please, please, please marry me. I **can't** live without you,' John said to Moira.* NH, Intermediate, p. 97) is representative of real English language use. The inclusion of examples from the categories ‘phrase’ and ‘volition’ may stem from the authors’ belief that “Everyday expressions, particularly of spoken English, also need a place in the syllabus. These can be functional, social, situational or idiomatic” (Oxford University Press 2018).

Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to investigate the frequencies and uses of CAN in an English language coursebook compared to the way native and native-like speakers of English use CAN. Looking at overall frequencies, CAN was used significantly more in the coursebooks than in the BNC and examination of the use of CAN at each coursebook level revealed that there was a significant difference for CAN in all of the levels. This high use of CAN is most likely contributed to the authors’ use of CAN in sectional headings, exercise instructions and model sentences. These sectional headings and language descriptors put forth by the authors of the NH coursebooks have an effect on the current analysis, for in these cases there is a pre-determination for what an example is ‘supposed’ to be, even though, with context, it could well be a different reading.

Regarding usage, for CAN, apart from the ‘external possibility’ use, all other usage categories were found to have no significant difference in frequency to the BNC. The findings show all of the usage categories found in the BNC for CAN were represented in the NH coursebooks, including ‘phrase’ and ‘volition’, which are not usually recognised as being associated with the uses for CAN.

A particularly interesting finding was the difference in the required context around examples of CAN between the two data sets. When analysing the BNC, there was a need to expand the context well beyond their concordance lines in order to interpret their uses. This differed from the coursebook data in which very few examples required expanded context for analysis. More genuine (e.g. corpus inspired) or enhanced explanations and examples may help learners uncover CAN, as well as other modal auxiliaries, and better grasp their various uses at an earlier level.

While the goal of this study is not to change the way coursebooks are written, this project does help make instructors aware of any inconsistencies that may exist in connection to CAN. By bringing this information to light, it informs instructors about changes within their own materials they can make, such as integrating outside sources and supplementing coursebooks with corpus materials that highlight the importance of context, to help ensure that what is presented in the classroom supports the broader range of the use of CAN by native and native-like speakers.

References

Barnard, R., & Scampton, D. (2006). Modality in an English language course book. In A. J. Scott (Ed.), *10th Community Languages and English for Speakers of Other Languages Conference* (pp. 1–26).

Coates, J. (1983). *The Semantics of the Modal Auxiliaries*. London: Croom Helm.

Collins, P. (2009). *Modals and Quasi-Modals in English*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Davies, M. (2004). *BYU-BNC. (Based on the British National Corpus from Oxford University Press)*. Retrieved from http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/

Harwood, N. (2005). What do we want EAP teaching materials for? *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *4*(2), 149–161.

Hermerén, L. (1978). *On modality in English: A study of the semantics of the modals*. Lund: GWK Gleerup.

Holmes, J. (1982). Expressing Doubt and Certainty in English. *RELC Journal*, *13*(2), 9–28.

Holmes, J. (1988). Doubt and Certainty in ESL Textbooks. *Applied Linguistics*, *9*(1), 21–44. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/9.1.21

Hoye, L. (1997). *Adverbs and modality in English*. Harlow: Longman.

Hyland, K. (1994). Hedging in Academic Writing and EAP textbooks. *English for Specific Purposes*, *13*(3), 239–256.

Kennedy, G. (2002). Variation in the Distribution of Modal Verbs in the British National Corpus. In R. Reppen, S. M. Fitzmaurice, & D. Biber (Eds.), *Using Corpora to Explore Linguistic Variation* (pp. 73–90). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Klages, M., & Römer, U. (2002). Translating Modal Meanings in the EFL Classroom. In S. Scholz, E. Hantson, M. Klages, & U. Römer (Eds.), *Language: Context and Cognition. Papers in Honour of Wolf-Dietrich Bald's 60th Birthday* (pp. 201–216). Munich: Langenscheidt-Longman.

Leech, G. (2004). *Meaning and the English Verb* (3rd ed.). Harlow: Pearson Longman.

Mukundan, J., & Khojasteh, L. (2011). Modal Auxiliary Verbs in Prescribed Malaysian English Textbooks. *English Language Teaching, 4*(1), 79–89.

Oxford University Press. (2018). New Headway. Retrieved June 18, 2018, from (https://elt.oup.com/catalogue/items/global/adult_courses/new_headway/?cc=global&selLanguage=en)

Palmer, F.R. (1990). *Modality and the English modals* (2nd ed.). London: Longman.

Paluchowska, A. (2004). *Robert Louis Stevenson Treasure Island*. Kraków: Czytamy W Oryginale.

Perkins, M. R. (1983). *Modal expressions in English*. Noorwood, NJ: Ablex.

Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. (1985). *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. New York: Longman.

Römer, U. (2004a). A corpus-driven approach to modal auxiliaries and their didactics. In J. Sinclair (Ed.), *How to use corpora in language teaching* (pp. 185–199). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Römer, U. (2004b). Comparing real and ideal language learner input: The use of an EFL textbook corpus in corpus linguistics and language teaching. In G. Aston, S. Bernardini, & D. Stewart (Eds.), *Corpora and language learners* (pp. 151–165). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Sayer, P., Malabarba, T., & Moore, L. C. (2019). Teaching English in Marginalized Contexts: Constructing Relevance in an EFL Classroom in Rural Southern Mexico. In H. thi Nguyen & T. Malabarba (Eds.), *Conversation Analytic Perspectives on English Language Learning, Teaching and Testing in Global Contexts* (pp. 268–294). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Searle, J. R. (1979). *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sinclair, J. (2006). *Collins Cobuild Advanced Learner's English Dictionary* (5th ed.). Glasgow: HarperCollins.

Soars, L., & Soars, J. (2003a). *New Headway Advanced Student's Book*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Soars, L., & Soars, J. (2003b). *New Headway Intermediate Student's Book* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Soars, L., & Soars, J. (2005). *New Headway Upper-Intermediate Student's Book* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Soars, L., Soars, J., & Wheeldon, S. (2000). *New Headway Elementary Student's Book*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Soars, L., Soars, J., & Wheeldon, S. (2007). *New Headway Pre-Intermediate Student's Book* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sweetser, E. (1982). Root and Epistemic Modals: Causality in Two Worlds. *Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*, 484–507.

Vine, E. W. (2013). Corpora and coursebooks compared: Category ambiguous words. In S. Granger, G. Gilquin, & M. Fanny (Eds.), *Twenty years of learner corpus research: Looking back, Moving ahead. Corpora and Language in Use—*

Proceedings 1 (pp. 463–478). Louvain-la-Neuve: Presses universitaires de Louvain.

Whitty, L. (2017). *Exploring the complexity of CAN, COULD and BE ABLE TO through corpus analysis and classroom- and coursebook- based investigation* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Victoria University of Wellington.

VIETNAMESE EFL LEARNERS' PRONUNCIATION NEEDS: A TEACHING AND LEARNING PERSPECTIVE

Loc Tan Nguyen,
University of Economics, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand

Abstract
As part of a larger scale research project, the study reported in this paper investigated Vietnamese EFL learners' pronunciation instructional needs from both teaching and learning perspectives. Data included individual interviews with six EFL teachers and focus group interviews with twenty-four students at a Vietnamese university. Interviews were transcribed and translated into English for content-based analysis. The results show that both the teachers and students valued the importance of pronunciation in English learning and suggested that pronunciation needs to be taught explicitly and systematically. The findings also show that teachers and students would prefer that pronunciation teaching focus on genuine communication using a communicative pronunciation teaching approach to facilitate learners' general communicative purposes.

Introduction

Pronunciation is an important component of successful oral communication (Jones, 2018; Rogerson-Revell, 2011). Historically, pronunciation goals in second language (L2) teaching have focused either on accent reduction or intelligibility. However, Moyer (2013) and Munro and Derwing (2011) have pointed out that it is very difficult for adult learners to obtain native-like pronunciation. In reality, the possibility, if any, is limited to very few individuals who are exceedingly motivated (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2010; Cunningham, 2009) and/or show special aptitude in language learning (Abrahamsson & Hyltenstam, 2008; Baker Smemoe & Haslam, 2013). Thus, the clear implication for pronunciation teaching is that L2 learners need support to improve their speech intelligibility rather than to spend time and effort on accent elimination. This reorientation of pronunciation teaching away from accent reduction and towards intelligibility fits in well with the principle of communicative language teaching, the underlying principle of which is that the primary purpose of language learning is for communication.

The past few decades have witnessed a growing interest in pronunciation research, with particular strands of this research focused on understanding the practice of pronunciation teaching as represented in instructional materials and teaching practices in a range of settings and in teacher cognition (e.g., Couper, 2017; Derwing, Diepenbroek, & Foote, 2012; Foote, Trofimovich, Collins, & Urzúa, 2016). Much less research has investigated learners' pronunciation needs. One such study by Derwing and Rossiter (2002) involved 100 adult learners in an ESL programme in Canada. The

participants were asked to respond to statements and questions about their pronunciation problems and the strategies they used to overcome communication breakdowns. The results showed that more than half of the respondents believed that their communication breakdowns were caused by their pronunciation difficulties, mainly involving segmental errors. When asked what they did if their interlocutors did not understand them, 56% of the students reported paraphrasing what they said, 28% said they used self-repetition, and 7% reported using writing/spelling strategy. Regarding their pronunciation needs, 90% of the learners stated that they would take a pronunciation course if it was available. Overall, the study found that the learners were well aware of their pronunciation difficulties and expressed a strong desire for pronunciation instruction.

As Levis (2005) argues, the importance of pronunciation teaching has often been based in ideology or on intuition rather than on empirical research evidence. To address this dearth of research evidence, the present study examines teachers' and students' stated beliefs about the importance of the role pronunciation plays in a particular setting of EFL education in Asia. Such beliefs are important, because, as Nation and Macalister (2010) have pointed out, student wants (what and how students would like to learn) are important, as well as necessities (what students need to know to be successful in using the target language) and lacks (what students were not taught or did not practice in their previous learning). In order to meet students' learning needs in designing a language curriculum, it is important to address all three of these domains. I am unaware of any previously published research that has examined learners' pronunciation needs within the EFL context of Asian countries, including Vietnam. Given that over 22 million teachers and learners are currently teaching and studying English in primary and secondary schools, and at universities in Vietnam, there is good reason to investigate how teachers and learners in this context perceive Vietnamese EFL learners' pronunciation instructional needs. Guided by Nation and Macalister's (2010) framework, the current study seeks to answer the following research question:

> How do (a) teachers and (b) students at a Vietnamese university perceive Vietnamese EFL learners' pronunciation needs?

Method

The research was carried out at a public university in Vietnam where pronunciation was largely absent from both curriculum documents and assessment (Nguyen, 2019). An invitation email was sent to all the Vietnamese EFL teachers at the university; 15 teachers replied and seven volunteered to participate in the research. One teacher later withdrew, resulting in a cohort of six teacher participants. They included both males and females, aged from 29 to 52, and were given the pseudonyms Quynh, Phuong, Nguyen, Diep, Khoa, and Na for the purpose of this report. All had an MA degree in TESOL or Applied Linguistics and had been teaching at the university from six to 23 years. Four students taught by each of the teachers were invited to participate in focus group (FG) interviews on a voluntary basis.

As mentioned above, the study is from a larger research project the data of which were collected through document analysis, classroom observations, and interviews with the teachers and students. However, the scope of this article only presents partial findings from the interview data regarding the teachers' and students' stated beliefs about Vietnamese EFL learners' pronunciation needs. During their individual semi-structured interviews, each of the teachers was prompted with questions that elicited their beliefs about different pronunciation teaching issues such as teaching techniques, time and materials used, their initial training in pronunciation pedagogy, and their confidence in teaching pronunciation, etc. In the last section of the interviews, each teacher was asked to discuss Vietnamese EFL learners' pronunciation instructional needs. Focus Group interviews with the students comprised two parts. The first part examined the students' perceptions of their teachers' pronunciation teaching practices. In the second part of the interview, the students were encouraged to provide individual responses about their own pronunciation instructional needs.

The study adopted a content-based approach to qualitative data analysis which involved an iterative, cyclical and inductive process of identifying and refining themes and categories in the data set (Duff, 2008). Through transcribing and then reading the transcripts, initial themes and categories emerged, and were refined through an iterative process of re-reading and refining the thematic categories. Findings will now be reported and discussed.

Findings

How do the teachers perceive Vietnamese EFL learners' pronunciation needs?

This section reports on the findings regarding the teachers' stated beliefs about the importance of pronunciation in EFL learning, the communicative practice stage in teaching pronunciation, and pronunciation problems commonly facing Vietnamese EFL learners. First, the teachers were asked to judge the importance of English pronunciation based on a rating scale of 1 to 5 (where 1=not important at all and 5= most important of all language skills). The data show that the teachers highly valued the importance of pronunciation in EFL learning since they all cited 'very important' as their choice. To some extent, this finding conflicts with Elliot's (1995) claim that "teachers tend to view pronunciation as the least useful of the basic language skills" (p. 531). According to the teachers, good pronunciation: (1) improves learners' listening and speaking skills; (2) promotes learners' confidence in communicating in English; (3) enhances learners' motivation in language learning; (4) creates a good impression on the listener; and (5) improves listening test scores. The data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1:
Teachers' beliefs about the role of pronunciation in EFL learning

The role of pronunciation in EFL learning	**Mentioned by**
1. Improve listening and speaking skills	All six teachers
2. Promote students' confidence in communicating	Quynh, Phuong, Nguyen, Khoa
3. Enhance students' motivation	Quynh, Phuong
4. Create a good impression on interlocutors	Diep
5. Improve listening test scores	Khoa

As seen from Table 1, all the teachers believed that good pronunciation results in improved listening and speaking skills. This may partly be because pronunciation, listening, and speaking are interdependent (Adams-Goertel, 2013; Seyedabadi, Fatemi, & Pishghadam, 2015). Four of the teachers further explained that if students face pronunciation problems that impede their listener's proper interpretation of an intended message in oral communication, they may become disheartened. This aligns with an argument that L2 learners who have pronunciation problems may lose confidence and willingness to speak (Gilakjani, 2012; Zielinski, 2012). However, the teachers believed when students realise that their interlocutors understand what they say, they will become more confident in using English for oral interaction. Quynh and Phuong also reasoned that this will lead to students' increased motivation in learning the language; thus, they will use English for oral practice more frequently. Accordingly, their listening and speaking skills will improve. Quynh said:

> Pronunciation (…) helps improve language learners' listening and speaking skills. When students fail in oral communication due to their pronunciation errors, they'll certainly be disheartened and so will be demotivated in learning the language. However, if they have more chances for pronunciation learning and practising and realise that other people such as teachers and their peers understand what they say, they will feel more confident in speaking English. Accordingly, their motivation in English learning will be promoted.

Given that "poor pronunciation degrades good language skills and condemns learners to less than their deserved social, academic and work advancement" (Varasarin, 2007, p. 45), Diep also stated that a good command of pronunciation could create a good impression on interlocutors in oral communication. She believed that if speakers' pronunciation skills are good, then the listener will consider them as proficient English users. As Diep noted:

> Pronunciation is a very important skill. First, it helps improve listening and speaking skills. Second, many pronunciation features such as sentence stress, intonation or linking play an essential role in oral communication. These features not only help speakers succeed in exchanging information but also give a good

> impression on interlocutors. They'll consider the speaker as being proficient in using English.

Khoa also took listening test scores into consideration when talking about how important pronunciation is in English learning. She believed that if learners are good at pronunciation and vocabulary, they will not only be successful in oral interaction but also achieve better listening test scores. This view finds support from Underhill (2012) who has pointed out that pronunciation is tested all the time in listening comprehension. Khoa added:

> Pronunciation is a very important skill in English learning because it helps improve learners' listening and speaking skills. So, I usually raise my students' awareness of this and encourage them to practice [pronunciation]. When teachers and other students in class understand what they say, they'll feel more confident in speaking English. Listening test scores can be improved too if students are good at pronunciation and vocabulary.

In brief, all the participating teachers valued the important role pronunciation plays in English learning. This finding is consistent with a consensus that pronunciation should never be ignored in ESL/EFL learning. Nation and Newton (2009), for example, assert that it is of great importance that "attention is given to pronunciation in the course so that learners can quickly develop a stable pronunciation, and become familiar with the patterns and rules that work within the second language" (p.76). In a similar vein, Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) and Rogerson-Revell (2011) have claimed that without correct pronunciation, oral interactions are more likely to be unsuccessful.

In response to the question about the communicative practice stage in teaching pronunciation, all the teachers stated that pronunciation instruction including communicative practice activities is more beneficial to student learning than isolated practice of pronunciation features alone. For example, Na said:

> I think it would be much better if we teach pronunciation explicitly including the communicative practice stage. Today, students are more demanding. They need theory and practice at the same time. They expect to get involved in real communication situations.

Like Na, the teachers all stated that the stage of communicative practice is what their students expect because they can apply what they have learned in real-life communication situations. As Carreira and Kagan (2011) hold, "it is critical for instructors to understand their students individually as well as collectively and apply this knowledge to differentiating instruction by learner needs" (p.62). In the present study, the teachers demonstrated their understanding of the students' instructional needs. They were aware that their students would like to apply what they are taught in communicative practice activities.

Finally, the teachers were asked to identify which pronunciation errors Vietnamese EFL learners commonly make based on their own teaching experience. Five types of errors, including both segmental and suprasegmental features, were reported: (1) consonants not existing in Vietnamese; (2) final sounds and linking; (3) intonation; (4) long and short vowels; and (5) sentence stress. Of these, the most common errors were consonants that do not exist in Vietnamese, final sounds and linking, and intonation as being reported by all the teachers. Problems related to long and short vowels and sentence stress were less frequent, being mentioned by three teachers each. This finding is, to some extent, consistent with the students' reports, which will be addressed in the following section about the students' perceptions of their own pronunciation instructional needs.

How do the students perceive their own pronunciation instructional needs?

This section reports on the results pertaining to the students' stated beliefs about how important pronunciation is in English learning, if they needed pronunciation instruction, how they would like to be taught pronunciation in class, and what pronunciation problems they commonly have.

When asked to rate the importance of pronunciation on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1= not important at all and 5=most important of all language skills), more than half of the student participants across the six groups cited very important (15/24), followed by the most important (7/24), and important (2/24). This indicates that all the students considered pronunciation to be important in English learning, which is consistent with the teachers' stated beliefs as presented above.

The students reasoned that pronunciation lays the foundation for other language skills to be developed, especially communication skills. According to the students, pronunciation contributes to their communicative success in oral interaction given that it promotes understandings between interlocutors, as illustrated in the following comment:

> Pronunciation is a very important skill. In my opinion, it lays the foundation for other language skills to develop, especially listening and speaking. I think good pronunciation helps the speaker and the listener understand each other more easily. Only when we understand what the speaker is talking about can we respond properly. (Student 4, FG6)

This finding aligns with the findings in Kang's (2010) and Simon and Taverniers' (2011) studies in which a majority of the student participants also agreed that pronunciation is an important feature in oral communication. Interestingly, Student 3 from FG4, who stated that pronunciation is the most important skill also acknowledged the communicative value of English intonation. This student believed that if learners are good at pronunciation, then they will be aware of how intonation functions in oral communication. She said:

> Pronunciation is the most important skill. I think it's the basis of other language skills, especially listening and speaking, because good pronunciation promotes mutual understandings between the speaker and the listener. Only when we understand the problem a speaker is talking about can we solve it. Besides, English has intonation. When we're good at pronunciation, we'll 'appreciate the beauty' of intonation and so we'll try our best to practice.

Elaborating on the role of pronunciation in English learning, the students stated that good pronunciation: (1) facilitates learners' listening and speaking skills (24/24); and (2) promotes confidence in oral communication and improves test scores (2/24). First, all the students believed that good pronunciation enhances their listening and speaking skills. This belief finds support from a general claim that listening comprehension and pronunciation are interconnected in oral interaction (Adams-Goertel, 2013; Baker, 2014; Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). In the current study, the students believed that good pronunciation promotes mutual understanding between the speaker and the listener, thus increasing the likelihood of successful oral communication. As such, they asserted that the better students are at pronunciation, the more they are involved in oral interaction, which in turn helps improve their listening and speaking skills. For example, Student 1 from FG1 said:

> I think pronunciation is very important. Good pronunciation helps improve listening and speaking skills. When I spoke English with native speakers, they seemed not to understand what I was saying although I'm sure I used correct grammar structures (…)

Second, two students also believed that good pronunciation enhances their confidence in oral interaction. As Student 1 from FG5 claimed:

> (…) Usually they [Vietnamese learners] try to speak grammatically correct sentences but don't know that if we pronounce some words incorrectly, the listener may interpret our message incorrectly. Moreover, good pronunciation also makes me feel more confident and helps me score better in tests.

These comments show that, in oral communication, the students considered pronunciation to be a more important feature than grammatical accuracy. They reasoned that a good command of pronunciation not only makes themselves precisely understood in oral interaction, but it also helps them understand their interlocutors more easily. Consequently, the students believed that good pronunciation skills help boost their confidence in speaking English and simultaneously score better in tests. This finding lends support to Gilakjani (2012) and Zielinski (2012), who argue that good pronunciation increases L2 learners' confidence and willingness to communicate. It is also consistent with the finding in Kang's (2010) survey, which involved 115 ESL learners in New Zealand and 123 in North America. In this study, Kang found that up to 93% of the participants reported that if their pronunciation is good, they will feel more confident in using English for oral communication.

In summary, the students, like the teachers, collectively held strong beliefs about the important role pronunciation plays in developing L2 learners' listening and speaking skills. They acknowledged that pronunciation contributes more substantially to their communicative success than grammatical accuracy. The students' responses revealed their understanding that communication breakdowns caused by pronunciation errors could demotivate learners in using English for oral interaction. Thus, they believed that good pronunciation skills increase their confidence and willingness to communicate.

In response to being asked if they wanted pronunciation instruction, all the students across the six groups reported a great interest in attending pronunciation lessons since they were not taught pronunciation at secondary school. They explained that secondary EFL teachers mainly focused on teaching grammar and vocabulary and almost ignored pronunciation in class. Reflecting on their learning experience, the students reported that teaching pronunciation through corrective feedback in the form of recasts and/or prompts is not effective to their learning (Nguyen & Newton, 2019). Thus, when asked how they would like to be taught pronunciation in class, the students all stated that they preferred teachers to teach it communicatively. Although the term 'communicative pronunciation teaching' was not explicitly used by the students, their responses showed that they would like teachers to provide them with communicative practice in teaching pronunciation so that they can improve not only pronunciation but also communication skills. It is likely that the widespread advertising by numerous English centres in Vietnam might have increased the students' awareness of a communicative approach to language teaching that helps develop their listening and speaking skills.

Elaborating on their preference with respect to the teaching of English pronunciation, the students further explained that if teachers teach pronunciation using communicative practice, they can: (1) improve learners' listening and speaking skills; (2) reduce classroom tension and increase learner motivation; (3) speed up learner comprehension of teacher instruction; and (4) promote interactions through error correction. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the students' articulated beliefs about how they think communicative practice will enhance pronunciation teaching.

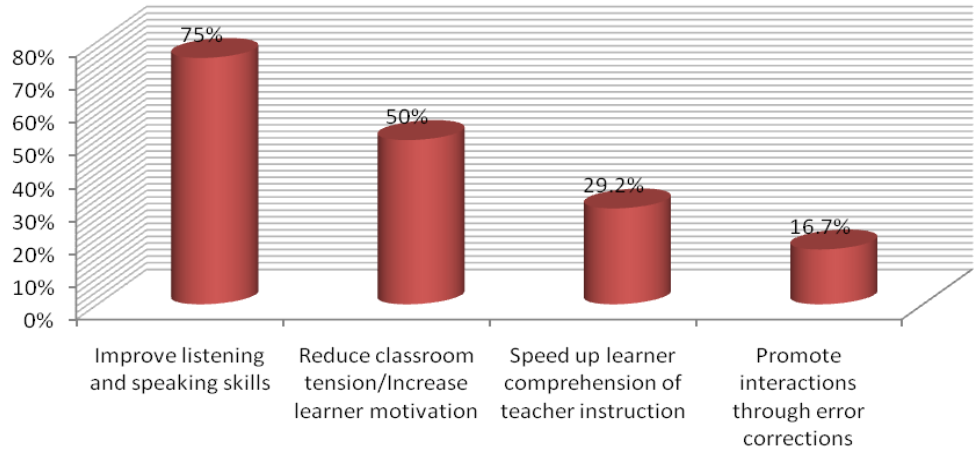

Figure 1:
Students' beliefs about communicative practice in pronunciation teaching

First, as seen in Figure 1, three fourths of the students (18/24) believed that if teachers teach pronunciation through communicative practice, they can improve not only pronunciation but also oral communication skills. According to the students, the use of communicative practice is desirable within the English classroom since learners are provided with more opportunities to apply what they have been taught in real-life communication situations. In other words, the students believed that by providing communicative practice activities in teaching pronunciation, teachers help improve learners' pronunciation, listening and speaking skills. For instance, Student 2 from FG6 said:

> (…) For a teaching approach, I don't know how to say but I would prefer that teachers taught it in ways that can help me improve both pronunciation and communication skills. If we can practice what we've learned in communication situations, then the outcomes will be much better. Our listening and speaking skills can be improved much more.

Second, half of the students stated that if teachers teach pronunciation communicatively, classroom tension will reduce and learner motivation will increase. As the students stressed, the use of communicative practice activities in teaching pronunciation engages learners more actively in classroom learning, creating a more interesting and welcoming classroom atmosphere. As such, it makes learners more motivated to attend classes. As Student 4 from FG2 noted:

> (…) If teachers give us communicative practice activities, then I think students will participate more actively in classroom learning. So, the classroom atmosphere will be more interesting, making students more motivated to come to class.

Generally, the students considered the classroom atmosphere as an important factor in characterising their preferred pronunciation teaching approach. They believed that a welcoming atmosphere increases learners' willingness to attend classes. According to

the students, it is communicative practice in pronunciation teaching that gives rise to enjoyment in the classroom. As they said, if they find their classes interesting, they will be more motivated and active in classroom learning, and thus will become more productive learners.

Third, seven students also believed that teachers addressing pronunciation using communicative practice speeds up learners' understanding of classroom instruction. They therefore believed that knowledge would be absorbed faster and the outcomes would be better, as illustrated in the following comment:

> (…) When teachers teach [pronunciation] this way [communicatively], students will receive detailed instruction about what they're learning and then apply it in communicative practice. So, the lessons will be more comprehensible and I can absorb the knowledge transferred by my teacher faster. And the results will be much better." (Student 1, FGI3)

Finally, four students said that teaching pronunciation through communicative practice promotes interactions through error correction between the teacher and students and amongst students themselves. As Student 2 from FG5 further commented:

> (...) Also, there will be more interactions between teachers and students through teacher correction of students' errors. We can also help each other correct ourselves. This helps students become more confident and so the results will be better.

As this and other extracts show, the students believed that pronunciation practice including communicative activities encourages interactions amongst learners and between the teacher and learners. In addition, the students were aware that they will face pronunciation problems in communicative practice, and this is when their errors could be addressed via peer correction. This belief finds support from Derwing and Munro (2015), who claim that peer correction helps raise learner awareness of their own pronunciation errors and thus should be encouraged in classroom learning. Moreover, the students also believed that their teacher as a facilitator will give corrective feedback in response to their pronunciation upon rehearsals and/or performance.

Overall, the students expressed strong beliefs in being taught pronunciation through communicative practice. Spada and Lightbown (2008) hold that communicative practice "may be best for helping learners develop the kind of fluency and automaticity that are needed for communication outside the class" (p. 181). In this EFL context, the students have little need to use English for oral interaction outside the classroom. However, given their belief that teachers correcting learners' pronunciation errors through recasts and/or prompts is not beneficial to their pronunciation learning (Nguyen & Newton, 2019), the students showed favourable attitudes towards communicative practice activities. They believed that communicative activities have the potential to improve their listening and speaking skills, make classroom learning more interesting and motivating, help learners understand teachers' instruction faster, and facilitate interaction through error

correction. The value that the students put on communicative practice in pronunciation teaching is consistent with the teachers' articulated beliefs about learners' expectations as presented above. It also aligns with the learners in an American ESL setting who reported that they needed more opportunities to practice those target phonological features in real-life communication situations (Vitanova & Miller, 2002).

The last question in the interview asked students in each group to recall their common pronunciation errors. The results show that the students reported having problems with both segmental and suprasegmental features, including intonation, final sounds, linking, sentence stress, consonants not existing in Vietnamese, and long and short vowels. Of these, the majority of the students across the six groups reported making intonation errors (21/24), followed by linking (18/24), dropping final sounds (16/24), and sentence stress (15/24). Only 11 of the students said they had problems pronouncing consonants that do not exist in Vietnamese. Problems regarding long and short vowels were mentioned by only five of the students across the six groups. The finding about the students' perceptions of their own pronunciation problems aligns with the teachers' reports. These pronunciation problems are also consistent with those documented in Smith and Swan (2001), Lane and Brown (2010), and Avery and Ehrlich (2013).

Discussion

The study has found that Vietnamese EFL learners faced several pronunciation problems including both segmental and suprasegmental features and that both the teacher and student participants held a strong belief in the importance of pronunciation as an integral part in English learning. This belief is supported by numerous scholars such as Derwing and Munro (2015), Jones (2018), and Rogerson-Revell (2011) who maintain that oral communication is less likely to be successful without intelligible pronunciation. In the current study, both the teachers and students believed that a good command of pronunciation helps develop learners' listening and speaking skills, foster their confidence and willingness to communicate, and improve test scores. The students also demonstrated an awareness that pronunciation contributes more significantly to their communicative success than grammatical accuracy. Yet, they reported that Vietnamese secondary EFL teachers mainly focused on teaching vocabulary and grammar in class and tended to ignore pronunciation. As such, they expressed a strong need for more explicit and systematic pronunciation lessons. This finding confirms previous research which has also shown that students expect more opportunities to learn and practice pronunciation in class (Derwing & Rossiter, 2002; Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011; Pardede, 2018). A number of researchers and practitioners have also called for more focused pronunciation within the ESL/EFL classroom (Couper, 2006; Derwing & Munro, 2014; Isaacs, 2009). In light of the study findings, it may be useful for teachers to place more emphasis on pronunciation teaching in their English classes if Vietnamese EFL learners' pronunciation, listening and speaking skills are to be more efficiently fostered. By doing this, the necessities and the lacks in Nation and Macalister's (2010) framework would be accommodated.

The study has also found that the students expressed a strong desire for a communicative approach to pronunciation teaching. This finding echoes the teachers' articulated beliefs about students expecting the communicative practice stage in pronunciation teaching. The teaching practice described by the student participants fits in well with a communicative approach to pronunciation teaching. Avery and Ehrlich (2013), Celce-Murcia et al. (2010), and Isaacs (2009) have argued that communicative pronunciation teaching allows L2 learners to use the targeted phonological features in communicative practice, which is more likely to improve their production. In the current study, the students believed that through the use of communicative practice, teachers can help learners improve not only pronunciation but also listening and speaking skills. They also believed that communicative activities in pronunciation teaching make the classroom atmosphere more relaxing and welcoming, promote interactions in class and thus increase students' motivation in classroom learning. To this end, it may be valuable that pronunciation instruction within the Vietnamese EFL context focuses on genuine communication rather than isolated practice of individual phonological units so that learners can make use of those opportunities to practice their pronunciation in real-life communication situations. Since "learners have their own views about what they think is useful for them" (Nation & Macalister, 2010, p. 29), it is necessary that the wants of learners' pronunciation instructional needs in this EFL context be addressed.

Concluding remarks

Taken together, both the teacher and student participants perceived that pronunciation is an important feature in EFL learning and that good pronunciation skills are essential for successful oral communication. Since the students expressed a strong desire for pronunciation teaching as an integral part in English learning, it is likely to be helpful if Vietnamese EFL teachers incorporate pronunciation within their language classroom at all levels. More importantly, given the students' articulated beliefs about the value of communicative practice to their pronunciation, listening, and speaking skills, the findings suggest that Vietnamese EFL teachers should usefully adopt a communicative approach to pronunciation teaching so as to meet the students' instructional needs.

Acknowledgements

The author thanks the teachers and students at the university where data were collected. This work was financially supported by University of Economics, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

References

Abrahamsson, N., & Hyltenstam, K. (2008). The robustness of aptitude effects in near-native second language acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 30*(4), 481-509.

Adams-Goertel, R. (2013). Prosodic elements to improve pronunciation in English language learners: A short report. *Applied Research on English Language, 2*(2), 117-128.

Avery, P., & Ehrlich, S. (2013). *Teaching American English Pronunciation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Baker, A. (2014). Exploring teachers' knowledge of second language pronunciation techniques: Teacher cognitions, observed classroom practices, and student perceptions. *Tesol Quarterly, 48*(1), 136-163.

Baker Smemoe, W., & Haslam, N. (2013). The effect of language learning aptitude, strategy use and learning context on L2 pronunciation learning. *Applied Linguistics, 34*(4), 435-456.

Carreira, M., & Kagan, O. (2011). The results of the National Heritage Language Survey: Implications for teaching, curriculum design, and professional development. *Foreign Language Annals, 44*(1), 40-64.

Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D. M., & Goodwin, J. M. (2010). *Teaching Pronunciation: A Course Book and Reference Guide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Couper, G. (2006). The short and long-term effects of pronunciation instruction. *Prospect, 21*(1), 46-66.

Couper, G. (2017). Teacher Cognition of Pronunciation Teaching: Teachers' Concerns and Issues. *Tesol Quarterly, 51*(4), 820-843.

Cunningham, U. (2009). Models and Targets for the Pronunciation of English in Vietnam and Sweden. *Research in Language, 7*, 113-128.

Derwing, T. M., Diepenbroek, L. G., & Foote, J. A. (2012). How Well do General-Skills ESL Textbooks Address Pronunciation? *TESL Canada Journal, 30*(1), 22-44.

Derwing, T. M., & Munro, M. J. (2014). Once you have been speaking a second language for years, it's too late to change your pronunciation. *Michigan ELT, 1*(Pronunciation Myths: Applying Second Language Research to Classroom Teaching), 34-55.

Derwing, T. M., & Munro, M. J. (2015). *Pronunciation Fundamentals: Evidence-based perspectives for L2 teaching and research* (Vol. 42). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Derwing, T. M., & Rossiter, M. J. (2002). ESL learners' perceptions of their pronunciation needs and strategies. *System, 30*(2), 155-166.

Duff, P. (2008). *Case study research in applied linguistics*. New York: Routledge.

Elliott, A. R. (1995). Foreign language phonology: Field independence, attitude, and the success of formal instruction in Spanish pronunciation. *The Modern Language Journal, 79*(4), 530-542.

Foote, J. A., Holtby, A. K., & Derwing, T. M. (2011). Survey of the teaching of pronunciation in adult ESL programs in Canada, 2010. *TESL Canada Journal, 9*(1*), 1-22*

Foote, J. A., Trofimovich, P., Collins, L., & Urzúa, F. S. (2016). Pronunciation teaching practices in communicative second language classes. *The Language Learning Journal, 44*(2), 181-196.

Gilakjani, A. P. (2012). A study of factors affecting EFL learners' English pronunciation learning and the strategies for instruction. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 2*(3), 119-128.

Isaacs, T. (2009). Integrating form and meaning in L2 pronunciation instruction. *TESL Canada Journal, 27*(1), 1-12.

Jones, T. (2018). Pronunciation with other areas of language. In O. Kang, R. I. Thomson, & J. M. Murphy (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary English Pronunciation* (pp. 370-384). London and New York: Routledge.

Kang, O. (2010). *ESL learners' attitudes toward pronunciation instruction and varieties of English.* Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 1st Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference. , Ames, IA: Iowa State University.

Lane, L., & Brown, H. D. (2010). *Tips for teaching pronunciation: A practical approach*. New York: Pearson Longman.

Levis, J. M. (2005). Changing contexts and shifting paradigms in pronunciation teaching. *Tesol Quarterly, 39*(3), 369-377.

Moyer, A. (2013). *Foreign accent: The phenomenon of non-native speech*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Munro, M. J., & Derwing, T. M. (2011). The foundations of accent and intelligibility in pronunciation research. *Language Teaching, 44*(3), 316-327.

Nation, I. S. P., & Macalister, J. (2010). *Language curriculum design*. New York: Routledge.

Nation, I. S. P., & Newton, J. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL listening and speaking*. New York and London: Routledge.

Nguyen, L. T. (2019). *Enhancing pronunciation teaching in the tertiary EFL classroom: A Vietnamese case study.* (PhD Unpublished), Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

Nguyen, L. T., & Newton, J. (2019). *Corrective feedback in pronunciation teaching: A Vietnamese perspective.* Paper presented at the 10th Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference September 2018, Ames, IA: Iowa State University.

Pardede, P. (2018). Improving EFL Students' English Pronunciation by Using the Explicit Teaching Approach. *JET (Journal of English Teaching), 4*(3), 143-155.

Rogerson-Revell, P. (2011). *English phonology and pronunciation teaching*. London and New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Seyedabadi, S., Fatemi, A. H., & Pishghadam, R. (2015). Towards better teaching of pronunciation: review of literature in the Area. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 6*(4), 76 - 81.

Simon, E., & Taverniers, M. (2011). Advanced EFL learners' beliefs about language learning and teaching: a comparison between grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. *English Studies, 92*(8), 896-922.

Smith, B., & Swan, M. (2001). *Learner English: A teacher's guide to interference and other problems.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Spada, N., & Lightbown, P. M. (2008). Form-Focused Instruction: Isolated or Integrated? *Tesol Quarterly, 42*(2), 181-207.

Underhill, A. (2012). *Make pronunciation physical, visible, audible*. Paper presented at the Macmilan Online Conference, Macmilan, retrieved from http://www.macmillanenglish.com/online-conference/2012.

Varasarin, P. (2007). *An action research study of pronunciation training, language learning strategies and speaking confidence.* (PhD Unpublished), Victoria University, Thailand.

Vitanova, G., & Miller, A. (2002). Reflective practice in pronunciation learning. *The Internet TESL Journal, 8*(1), retrieved from http://iteslj.org/Articles/Vitanova-Pronunciation.

Zielinski, B. (2012). *The social impact of pronunciation difficulties: Confidence and willingness to speak.* Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 3rd pronunciation in second language learning and teaching conference, Ames, IA.

Appendix 1 Guiding Questions for Teacher Interviews

1. On a rating scale of 1 to 5 (where 1=completely unimportant, 2=not very important, 3=important, 4=very important, and 5=most important of all language skills), how important do you think pronunciation is in English learning? Why do you think so?
2. What do you think about including communicative practice activities in your teaching pronunciation and why?
3. From your teaching experience, what pronunciation problems commonly face Vietnamese learners of English? Please give examples.

Appendix 2 Guiding Questions for Student Interviews

1. On a rating scale of 1 to 5 (where 1=*completely unimportant*, 2=*not very important*, 3=*important*, 4=*very important*, and 5=*most important of all language skills*), how important do you think pronunciation is in English learning? Can you elaborate your choice?
2. Would you like to be taught pronunciation like other language skills? Why?
- How would you like to be taught pronunciation in class and why?
3. From your English learning experience, what pronunciation problems do you usually have? Please elaborate on each of the problems you have.

SO? THE EFFECT OF REGISTER AND SOCIAL SETTINGS ON THE MEANINGS OF *SO* AND ITS PEDAGOGY

Zihan Yin
The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia

Abstract
So as a high-frequency multifunctional form has been widely researched in both linguistics and applied linguistic studies. However, there is a lack of research on the effect of register and social settings on the frequency of various pragmatic meanings of so in native corpora. In order to bridge this research gap, this paper uses data from Wellington Corpora of Written and Spoken New Zealand English to analyse the various pragmatic meanings so can carry in both written and spoken English and compares the frequency of the meanings in different registers and social settings. This paper concludes that so can carry up to nine different meanings in written and spoken registers and that patterns of use of meaning of so vary across registers and social settings. The more frequent or sole use of some of the meanings of so in a certain register/social setting to some extent reflects the distinctive features of that particular register/social setting. Based on the afore-mentioned findings, this paper discusses their implications for English language and academic literacy education.

Introduction

Word forms such as *well*, *and*, *like*, *okay* and *so* are known for being multifunctional in terms of their grammatical and pragmatic functions. Researchers have investigated them from different perspectives: experimental studies (e.g. Flowerdew & Tauroza, 1995; Fox Tree & Schrock, 1999) examine the effect of the absence or presence of these multifunctional forms on comprehension; corpus-based studies (e.g. Buysse, 2012; Fung & Carter, 2007; Müller, 2004) compare the use of them between native speakers and ESL/EFL learners; pragmatic studies (e.g. Cuenca, 2008; Erman, 2001; Fox Tree & Schrock, 2002; Gaines, 2011; Han, 2011; Haselow, 2011; Miller & Weinert, 1995; Norrick, 2001; Park, 2010) analyse their different pragmatic meanings in a certain text type or register or the influence of a certain variable (e.g. language proficiency, first language, age, gender, speaker role or peer interaction) on the use of these multifunctional forms (e.g. Escalera, 2009; Fuller, 2003; Kyratzis & Ervin-Tripp, 1999; Liu, 2013; Tagliamonte, 2005; Wei, 2011).

Following Van Dijk's (1979) and Schiffrin's (1987) ground-breaking research on discourse markers, studies on *so* as a discourse marker have increased over recent decades. Studies (e.g. Bolden, 2006, 2008, 2009; Buysse, 2012; Raymond, 2004; Tagliamonte, 2005) have considered *so* from the perspectives of its multifunctionality and high frequency in different spoken text types, especially in monologic academic spoken discourse (Rendle-Short, 2003). Although these discourse studies on *so* have

identified its pragmatic functions in individual spoken discourse (e.g. conversation or seminar talk), the picture of its multifunctionality is 'scattered' (Buysse, 2012, p. 1766).

Corpus-based pedagogical grammars (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad & Finegan, 1999; Liu, 2008), however, have examined the frequency of word forms across registers and found the frequency of *so* to be register-specific, where *so* is referred to as one type of linking adverbial, a cohesive device to explicitly mark conjunction relationships in both spoken and written English. But discussion on its multifunctionality in terms of pragmatic meanings is restricted in most large-scale corpus-based analysis. Yin (2016) analyses the pragmatic meanings of linking adverbials including multifunctional forms and proposes a register-specific meaning categorization, of which *so* is one type. However, the interaction between register, pragmatic meanings and frequency of *so* was not discussed in detail.

The present study therefore examines the interaction between these elements in both written and spoken New Zealand English. Two written registers, written academic prose and written news, and three spoken registers, academic lectures, broadcast news and conversation, are investigated.

Methodology

In order to investigate the effect of register and social setting on the frequency and pragmatic meanings of *so* in written and spoken New Zealand English, data were chosen from the Wellington Corpus of Written New Zealand English (WWC) and the Wellington Corpus of Spoken New Zealand English (WSC), compiled by the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, Victoria University of Wellington. Texts were chosen randomly from the relevant sections of the corpora. In total, 67 texts totalling over 100,000 words were manually analysed using QSR International's NVivo 9 software, as meaning in context requires careful human interpretation. This study is part of a larger project, which uses both quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine what linking adverbials are and how they are used in different written and spoken registers and social settings. A detailed description of the WWC and WSC, as well as my process of data selection, analysis process, and unit of analysis in written and spoken English can be found in Yin (2016).

In the data analysis process of this paper, *so* used as a linking adverbial has been distinguished from *so* used as a subordinator, and only the frequency and pragmatic functions of linking adverbial *so* has been counted (see Examples 1 and 2 below).

In Example 1, *so* is used as a subordinator in written news, connecting the main clause and its subordinating clause within a sentence. If *so* is deleted from the sentence, the sentence will lack a structural linkage and become ungrammatical.

> 1. The leading driver, seeing the flag, started to pull into Mr Lowden's driveway, *so* Mr Lowden frantically waved them on up the road. (WWCA23, written news)

Although *so* carries pragmatic meaning in this sentence, result in this context, its frequency was not included. However, in Example 2, *so* functions as a linking adverbial, and does not provide a structural link.

2. The average worker earned $11,000 in a six-month season plus $8000 from the dole and *so* a 40 per cent wage cut would reduce his income to $14,500, he said. (WWC A06, written news)

Given *so* is a linking adverbial in this context, its frequency was counted and its pragmatic function was coded.

It may well be argued that the distinction between subordinator *so* and linking adverbial *so* in spoken data may not be as straightforward as in written data where subordinator *so* is signalled by presence of comma and absence of the structural link. But interestingly spoken data shows a similar pattern. Most *so* occurs at the beginning of an intonation unit, as in Example 3 below. In Example 3, *so* occurs in the beginning of an intonation unit and the beginning of a conversation turn to mark the new turn in a conversation.

3. A: // *so* i/ er/ i thought/ oh well// and i told the teachers anyway//
   B: // yeah// (WSC DPC299, conversation)

Similar with sentence-initial *so* in written English as in Example 2, it functions as a linking adverbial, and thus its frequency was counted and its pragmatic function was coded.

However, *so* may also appear as a subordinator as in Example 4 below, where *so that* is a subordinator linking the current comma intonation unit to the previous one.

4. // there seems to be a displacement of/about one month in their cycles / *so* that they fall earlier // (WSCMUL011, academic lectures)

In this context, the frequency of *so* was not counted and its pragmatic function was not coded.

Thus, in both written and spoken data, all the instances of *so* were identified and carefully analysed manually. Only linking adverbial *so* was included and its pragmatic function was analysed accordingly.

In this study, raw frequencies of some linking adverbials identified in the 67 texts were very low. Log-likelihood was thus preferred to chi-squared statistics to test the statistical significance of research findings since 'chi-squared value becomes unreliable when the expected frequency is less than 5 and possibly overestimates with high frequency words and when comparing a relative small corpus to a much larger one' (Rayson and Garside, 2000, p. 2). The online log-likelihood calculator provided by Paul Rayson, Lancaster University (http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html) was used to do the statistical analyses, as it provided comparisons between two corpora, which suited the comparison needs of this study.

Result and Discussion

Overview of frequency of meanings of linking adverbial so

The raw frequency of the meanings of *so* in the five registers is presented in Table 1 below, which is ordered according to the overall raw frequency of the meanings in the five registers. In total, nine different meanings of *so* are found in the five analysed registers: *result, restatement, conclusion, summation, logical consequence, signal of returning back to the main thread, initiating a topic/a turn, signal of evidence*, and *listing*.

Table 1:
Meanings of so as a linking adverbial in the five registers

Meaning	**Academic lectures (22,049)**	**Conversation (21,279)**	**Written academic prose (20,128)**	**Written news (21,001)**	**Broadcast news (21,623)**	**Total (106,080)**
result	34	33	1	1	2	71
restatement	39	21	0	0	0	60
conclusion	31	15	1	1	0	48
summation	34	3	1	0	0	38
logical consequence	14	13	5	1	0	33
signal of returning back to the main thread	11	14	0	0	0	25
initiating a topic/a turn	1	20	0	0	0	21
signal of evidence	8	2	0	0	1	11
listing	3	0	0	0	0	3
Total	175	121	8	3	3	310

Academic lectures and conversation are the two registers which have the highest frequency of linking adverbial *so* to mark the various pragmatic meanings. This confirms Biber et al.'s (1999) and Liu's (2008) findings that spoken English in general has far more use of linking adverbial *so* than written English. Biber et al. (1999) found *so* most frequently used in conversation, and Liu (2008) found *so* most frequently used in speaking without explicitly pointing out which spoken registers were included. However, by analysing two more spoken registers, academic lectures and broadcast news, the current study finds that academic lectures use linking adverbial *so* far more frequently than conversation. This finding echoes Lam's (2009, p. 370) study that *so* occurred more frequently in 'monologic academic texts' than in 'multi-party talks'.

Among the nine different meanings, *result* is the most frequent meaning of *so* and it is the only meaning that occurs across all the five registers. This may explain why in previous grammar books, which base their taxonomies only on semantic meanings, *so* as a linking adverbial has always been put in the semantic category of *result*. This might also serve as evidence for some previous pragmatic studies (e.g. Van Dijk 1979) which have argued that *result* is the semantic meaning of *so* while other meanings are pragmatic.

Restatement is the second most frequent meaning of *so* and conclusion is the third. *Listing* is the least common meaning of *so* and it occurs only in academic lectures. The frequent occurrences of meaning of *so* as *restatement* and other meanings demonstrate that *so* can be frequently used as a marker of meanings other than *result*, the predominant meaning of *so* in grammar books, and thus that a suggested semantic-pragmatic meaning continuum for a taxonomy of linking adverbials is needed (Yin, 2014). In this study, including more spoken registers and adopting manual analysis has yielded new findings, i.e., beyond signalling *result, so* can be used to introduce a range of conjunction relationships in different contexts.

All the nine identified meanings occur more frequently in academic lectures and conversation, and three meanings appear only in these two registers: *restatement, signal of returning back to the main thread* and *initiating a topic/a turn*. The more frequent or sole use of some of the meanings of *so* in academic lectures and conversation to some extent has revealed some of the discourse features of these two registers. In other words, the patterns of appearance of a certain meaning in a certain register may be because of the distinctive features of that particular register. Broadcast news for example being more prepared than academic lectures and conversation may not need as much *restatement* and *signal of returning back to the main thread* after interruption. Some meanings not only occur solely in certain register(s) but also are marked by a particular marker. The meaning signal of *returning back to the main thread*, for example, only occurs in the two registers of academic lectures and conversation, and *so* is the only linking adverbial used to mark this meaning (Yin, 2016). This may be a distinguishing feature of the two registers.

However, the fact that some meanings of *so* are absent in written registers in Table 1 does not necessarily mean that such meanings do not occur in those registers. In written registers, those meanings may be signalled by other linking adverbials or other linguistic expressions (e.g. verbs). In written academic prose, the meaning *logical consequence* is of similar frequency (raw frequency: 15) as in academic lectures (raw frequency: 17) (Yin, 2016). But in academic lectures, logical consequence is signalled by *so* 14 times while in written academic prose, only a small proportion of *logical consequence* meanings are introduced by *so* (raw frequency: 5) and the others are signalled by other linking adverbials such as *therefore*, *hence*, *consequently*, and *thus*. By contrast, the meaning *conclusion* is not frequently signalled by linking adverbials in written

academic prose (raw frequency: 3) but it does occur and it is signalled in the data by other linguistic devices such as a verb phrase as in Example 5 below.

In Example 5, the meaning *conclusion* is expressed by the verb *conclude*, not by a linking adverbial.

> 5. Since most of the treaty negotiators were missionaries or, as in the case of Henry's son, Edward, closely associated with them, it seems reasonable to *conclude* that the general sense conveyed in explaining pre-emption was a protective one. (WWC J56, written academic prose)

Meanings of so in different registers

The above discussion has given an overview of the frequency of different meanings of *so* in the five registers. This section reports on the significant difference identified between registers. Broadcast news resembles written registers in this regard and it has a very limited use of linking adverbial *so*. Similarly, given the very small numbers of occurrences in the written data sets, no significant differences were found. Thus, in this section, only the significant difference between the two registers of academic lectures and conversation is reported.

As shown in Table 2 below, *summation, conclusion, restatement* and *listing* occur significantly more frequently in academic lectures than in conversation while *initiating a topic/a turn* is significantly more frequent in conversation than in academic lectures.

Table 2:
Meanings of so in two spoken registers

Meaning	**Academic lectures (22,049)**	**Conver-sation (21,279)**	**Log-Likelihood**	
restatement	39	21	4.86	$p<0.05$
summation	34	3	29.38	$p<0.0001$
conclusion	31	15	5.13	$p<0.05$
listing	3	0	4.05	$p<0.05$
initiating a topic/ a turn	1	20	21.75	$p<0.0001$
Total	175	121	8.08	$p<0.01$

Such differences may be explained by different discourse features and communication purposes inherent in the two registers of academic lectures and conversation. Biber (1988) argued that academic lectures are more planned than spontaneous casual conversation. In academic lectures, in order to communicate abstract ideas, explicit signals of summation, conclusion, restatement and listing may help the audience to comprehend the logical flow. Flowerdew and Tauroza (1995) for example have found discourse markers (e.g. *so*) have a positive effect on second language lecture

comprehension. Example 6 below illustrates the use of *so* as a linking adverbial to introduce the meaning of restatement in academic lectures.

6. // especially as they had to pay / er what they called an advance procuration fee // *so* a bit of money up front please // (WSCMUL005, academic lectures)

The intonation unit before *so* discusses 'an advance procuration fee'. The intonation unit after *so* repeats this, but in a slightly different way that 'a bit of money up front'. *So* can be substituted by *This can also be put this way: …* (See Yin, 2016), which to some extent makes the lecture content easier to process for the audience.

By contrast, in spoken discourse involving several parties, as in conversation, turn-taking happens frequently and thus the meaning *initiating a turn* is frequently used. As shown in Example 7 below, *so* is used at the very beginning of a conversation to mark the beginning of a turn started by Speaker A.

7. A: //*so* what did you do today// oh/y/ you/ you said/ you just mucked around//
   B: // pardon?// *(WSCDPC096, conversation)*

Meanings of so in different social settings

When comparing the difference of the meanings of *so* between social settings, significant difference is only found in the seven meaning categories as shown in Table 3.

Result, restatement, summation, conclusion, signal of returning back to the main thread, signal of evidence and *listing* are significantly more frequently expressed by the word *so* in academic lectures than in written academic prose. This usage demonstrates a great difference between academic writing and academic lectures. Although sometimes academic lectures are written to be spoken, the data here has shown strong evidence that academic lectures use far more cohesive devices of wider meanings than written academic prose to make the logical reasoning explicit, which may ease the online processing. The metafunctions here go beyond the textual. They are also interpersonal, i.e., explicit interaction between the lecturer and the audience (see also Lam, 2009).

Table 3:
Meanings of so in academic settings

Meaning	**Written academic prose (20,128)**	**Academic lectures (22,049)**	**Log-Likelihood**	
restatement	0	39	50.59	p<0.0001
result	1	34	36.50	p<0.0001
summation	1	34	36.50	p<0.0001
conclusion	1	31	32.79	p<0.0001
signal of returning back to the main thread	0	11	14.27	p<0.001
signal of evidence	0	8	10.38	p<0.01
listing	0	3	3.89	p<0.05
Total	8	175	173.12	p<0.0001

In Example 8 below, *so* is used to explicitly mark the meaning of summation in academic lectures. The intonation units before ***so*** introduce some facts about Mason and interaction between him and another poet. The intonation units after ***so*** summarize all the facts mentioned previously in a more concise and succinct way, and it may be replaced by in a nutshell.

> 8. // mason didn't run round you know / er with a cravat and long flowing hair saying / I'm a poet or any any of that sort of stuff // er but when he did find out that mason was a poet / he showed mason some of his own poems / and mason read them and gave him advice // *so* mason was a big figure to him/ and a helpful sort of mentor figure in his early years // (WSCMUL003, academic lectures)

However, *so* is only used once in written academic prose to introduce the meaning of *summation* and, as identified by Yin (2016), written academic prose also employs other linking adverbials such as *in short* and *thus* to mark the meaning of *summation*. This indicates that the difference between the two academic registers also lies in the fact that different markers are sometimes employed to signal the same conjunction relationship. Some of those meanings are not signalled by *so* but are expressed by other linking adverbials in written academic prose.

Implications for English language and academic literacy teaching

The findings presented above have implications for both English language and academic literacy education.

First, the identified high frequency of *so* as a linking adverbial in the two spoken registers of academic lectures and conversation, and its low frequency in one spoken register, broadcast news, and two written registers, written academic and written news, to some extent mean that different amounts of classroom time need to be allocated to

this word form when teaching English for different purposes (see also Kennedy, 1998; Yin, 2018). When teaching general conversational English and academic spoken language, students' awareness needs to be drawn to this high-frequency word form so that they can better understand this distinctive discourse feature of these two registers and the typical cohesive device used in these contexts.

Second, the wide range of meanings that *so* can convey in academic lectures and conversation implies that explicitly teaching the word form is not enough. Attention also needs to be paid to its various pragmatic meanings. Yin (2018) suggests that when teaching cohesive devices, all three aspects of word usage patterns, namely, form, meaning and position, need to be introduced.

Third, the significant difference between the various meanings of *so* in academic lectures and conversation indicates that when designing teaching materials different meaning categories need to be chosen if the purpose is different. That is, when teaching general conversational English, the focus could be on using *so* as an explicit marker of *initiating a topic/turn* while when teaching academic spoken English or presentations skills as part of an academic literacy course, students need to have the opportunity to practice using *so* to introduce abstract logical relationships such as *summation, conclusion, restatement* and *listing*. Yin (2015, 2018) introduced how data-driven learning could be applied in designing classroom activities and teaching materials to help raise the learners' awareness of register variations of the usage and pragmatic meanings of linking adverbials.

Fourth, the distinctive usage patterns of s*o* in written and spoken English within the academic settings suggest that while it is useful to teach the various pragmatic meanings of the word form s*o* in academic spoken language, it is equally important to introduce a wider range of word forms in academic written English which could perform similar cohesive functions. To better understand the nature of a spoken register, the discussion of the metafunction of cohesive devices in academic spoken language needs to go beyond the textual and involve the nature of interpersonal and online processing.

Conclusion

This study provides an account of *so* as an example of a linking adverbial which carries up to nine different meanings: *result, restatement, conclusion, summation, logical consequence, signal of returning back to the main thread, initiating a topic/a turn, signal of evidence,* and *listing*. The most frequent meaning of *so* across all five registers is *result* and it is the only meaning that occurs across all the five registers. The analysis shows that patterns of use of meaning of *so* vary across registers and social settings. Spoken registers present significant variation in terms of the range and frequency of meanings of *so*, while no significant difference is identified between the two written registers. The range and frequency of meanings of *so* differ significantly in academic settings while no such difference exists in news settings. The more frequent or sole use

of some of the meanings of *so* in a certain register to some extent has reflected the distinctive features of that particular register.

This study also gives a detailed account of meaning variations of *so* in academic lectures based on corpus data and confirms findings from previous studies that *so* occurs widely in monologic academic texts with various pragmatic meanings. It reveals that although broadcast news is also a spoken register, it has very limited use of the linking adverbial *so*, even less than a written register: written academic prose.

The analysis and comparisons presented here could be informative for English language and academic literacy course material design. They may help course material writers decide which aspects of *so* meanings should be focused on. They may also help language and literacy teachers decide which meanings of *so* should be deliberately taught and given priority in class time. In addition, they may give academic and professional English and literacy learners useful guidelines on various usages of *so* and how those meanings can be used appropriately in different registers and social settings.

This study has confirmed findings from previous studies and some of the findings can now to some extent be generalised into an additional English variety, New Zealand English. However, further research on the effect of register and social settings on use of multifunctional linking adverbials or discourse markers is still warranted to validate the findings from this study in a different English variety or other registers or social settings. With the increasing availability of spoken corpora containing various text types and registers from different English varieties, comparison between different registers, social settings and even English varieties will help us better understand the meanings of this high-frequency multifunctional form.

References

Biber, D. (1988). *Variation across speech and writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S. & Finegan, E. **(**1999) *Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. London: Longman.

Bolden, G. B. (2006). Little Words That Matter: Discourse Markers "So" and "Oh" and the Doing of Other-Attentiveness in Social Interaction. *Journal of Communication, 56*(4), 661-688. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00314.x

Bolden, G. B. (2008). 'So What's Up?': Using the Discourse Marker So to Launch Conversational Business. *Research on Language and Social Interaction, 41*(3), 302-337. doi:10.1080/08351810802237909

Bolden, G. B. (2009). Implementing incipient actions: The discourse marker 'so' in English conversation. *Journal of Pragmatics, 41*(5), 974-998. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2008.10.004

Buysse, L. (2012). So as a multifunctional discourse marker in native and learner speech. *Journal of Pragmatics, 44*(13), 1764-1782. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2012.08.012

Cuenca, M.-J. (2008). Pragmatic markers in contrast: The case of well. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *40*(8), 1373-1391. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2008.02.013

Erman, B. (2001). Pragmatic markers revisited with a focus on you know in adult and adolescent talk. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *33*(9), 1337-1359. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(00)00066-7

Escalera, E. A. (2009). Gender differences in children's use of discourse markers: Separate worlds or different contexts? *Journal of Pragmatics*, *41*(12), 2479-2495. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2006.08.013

Flowerdew, J., & Tauroza, S. (1995). The Effect of Discourse Markers on Second Language Lecture Comprehension. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *17*(4), 435-458. doi:10.1017/S0272263100014406

Fox Tree, J. E., & Schrock, J. C. (1999). Discourse Markers in Spontaneous Speech: Oh What a Difference an Oh Makes. *Journal of Memory and Language*, *40*(2), 280-295. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1006/jmla.1998.2613

Fox Tree, J. E., & Schrock, J. C. (2002). Basic meanings of you know and I mean. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *34*(6), 727-747. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(02)00027-9

Fuller, J. M. (2003). The influence of speaker roles on discourse marker use. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *35*(1), 23-45. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(02)00065-6

Fung, L., & Carter, R. (2007). Discourse Markers and Spoken English: Native and Learner Use in Pedagogic Settings. *Applied Linguistics*, *28*(3), 410-439. doi:10.1093/applin/amm030

Gaines, P. (2011). The Multifunctionality of Discourse Operator Okay: Evidence from a police interview. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *43*(14), 3291-3315. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2011.06.005

Han, D. (2011). Utterance production and interpretation: A discourse-pragmatic study on pragmatic markers in English public speeches. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *43*(11), 2776-2794. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2011.04.008

Haselow, A. (2011). Discourse marker and modal particle: The functions of utterance-final then in spoken English. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *43*(14), 3603-3623. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2011.09.002

Kennedy, G. (1998). *An Introduction to Corpus Linguistics*. London and New York: Longman.

Kyratzis, A., & Ervin-Tripp, S. (1999). The development of discourse markers in peer interaction. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *31*(10), 1321-1338. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(98)00107-6

Lam, P. W. Y. (2009). The effect of text type on the use of so as a discourse particle. *Discourse Studies*, *11*(3), 353-372. doi:10.1177/1461445609102448

Liu, B. (2013). Effect of first language on the use of English discourse markers by L1 Chinese speakers of English. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *45*(1), 149-172. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2012.11.002

Liu, D. L. (2008). Linking adverbials: An across-register corpus study and its implications. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, *13*(4), 491-518.

Miller, J., & Weinert, R. (1995). The function of LIKE in dialogue. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *23*(4), 365-393. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(94)00044-F

Müller, S. (2004). 'Well you know that type of person': functions of well in the speech of American and German students. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *36*(6), 1157-1182. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2004.01.008

Norrick, N. R. (2001). Discourse markers in oral narrative. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *33*(6), 849-878. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(01)80032-1

Park, I. (2010). Marking an impasse: The use of anyway as a sequence-closing device. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *42*(12), 3283-3299. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2010.06.002

Raymond, G. (2004). Prompting Action: The Stand-Alone "So" in Ordinary Conversation. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, *37*(2), 185-218. *doi:10.1207/s15327973rlsi3702_4*

Rayson, P. and Garside, R. (2000). Comparing corpora using frequency profiling. In *proceedings of the workshop on Comparing Corpora, held in conjunction with the 38th annual meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (ACL 2000).* 1- 8 October 2000, Hong Kong, pp. 1 - 6.

Rendle-Short, J. (2003). So what does this show us? Analysis of the discourse marker so in monologic talk. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, *26*(2), 46-62.

Schiffrin, D. (1987). *Discourse Markers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tagliamonte, S. (2005). So who? Like how? Just what? *Journal of Pragmatics*, *37*(11), 1896-1915. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2005.02.017

The Wellington Corpus of Written New Zealand English. (1993). Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand.

The Wellington Corpus of Spoken New Zealand English. (1998). Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand.

Wei, M. (2011). Investigating the oral proficiency of English learners in China: A comparative study of the use of pragmatic markers. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *43*(14), 3455-3472. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2011.07.014

Van Dijk, T. (1979). Pragmatic connectives. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *3*, 447-456.

Yin, Z. (2014). *Linking adverbials in English* (Unpublished PhD thesis), Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand.

Yin, Z. (2015). The Use of Cohesive Devices in News Language: Overuse, Underuse or Misuse? *RELC Journal*, *46*(3), 309-326.

Yin, Z. (2016). Register-specific meaning categorization of linking adverbials in English. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *22*, 1-18.

Yin, Z. (2018). Principles of Teaching Cohesion in the English Language Classroom. *RELC Journal*, *49*(3), 290-307.

ENGLISH FOR CLEANERS: DEVELOPING AND TRIALLING AN ESP LESSON FOR LEARNERS WITH LOW-LEVEL ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Tim Edwards
Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand

Abstract
This article describes the development and trialling of a short lesson to help adult learners of English with low-level language proficiency develop some language to help them work towards gaining jobs as cleaners. Classes specialising in various forms of English for Employment and targeted at migrant and refugee students exist in many countries. Literature around this topic and a needs analysis involving semi-structured interviews with cleaners, a manager, and an English for Employment teacher revealed a need for the development of verbal communication skills and vocabulary as key enablers for students to move into these work roles. Results of the Needs Analysis were used to develop a trial lesson involving picture sequences, gap fills and practice role plays. Reflections on its use include a need to allow time for unexpected vocabulary to be explained and for low literacy to impact vocabulary recording, and considerations about the relatability of the images used.

Background and context

Classes aimed at helping migrant and refugee residents with very low-level English find work have been common for some time both in New Zealand and internationally (Jakubiak & Harklau, 2010; Menard-Warwick, 2008; Internal Affairs, 2014). Most classes are community-based and while students have work rights they often lack the language or qualifications to gain employment. Past research has shown a correlation between finding employment and a person's English language ability and concern from employers regarding language levels of migrants and their workplace fit (Internal Affairs, 2014; Hunter & Cooke, 2014; Marra, 2013). This makes such courses vital for learners to gain meaningful employment and enable them to live productive lives. This article follows and reflects on the initial development of such a course.

Teachers of such classes worldwide have historically been found to sometimes make assumptions about the students' abilities and goals which means the students find themselves with limited opportunities or are seen as less capable than they see themselves (Menard-Warwick, 2008; Jakubiak & Harklau, 2010; Jasso-Aguilar, 1999). Sometimes this funnelling of students into marginal jobs that offer low prospects or expectations can be a result of public funding restrictions (Tollefson, 1991), pigeonholing based on race or position (e.g., refugee) in society (Crookes, 2013), or institutional imposition of low expectations without paying attention to students' own wishes or voice (Benesch, 2009; Haque, 2007). This can lead to students not seeing the courses as worthwhile or enjoyable as they see no meaningful outcome (Norton, 2013).

The teacher of the class in this study, an *English for Employment* class based at a migrant and refugee language school in New Zealand, takes an approach which views the learners as aiming for an initial job as a stepping-stone which does not define their lives or worth. The learners' immediate goal is simply to 'have a job', but for that to be one that is engaging and allows opportunity to progress. Students also seek jobs which allow available time and motivation to continue developing language and other skills to enable them to reach further professional or academic goals. The school which is the focus of this project has run specific courses training students for work in care homes or as cleaners, but for the purposes of enrolment numbers the courses are now called *English for Employment*.

Basturkmen (2010) discusses a scale running from *wide-angled* to *narrow-angled* language courses where the former serves students with more general needs (e.g., *Business English*) and the latter precisely fits the needs of students aiming to operate in a very specific context (e.g., a certain type of accountancy). While the latter can be effective, Basturkmen points out that students' needs and workplace roles vary and narrowed-angled courses can restrict future choices and understanding of the language. The school having moved in this case towards a less-narrow focus allows the class to be opened to a wider pool of students and increases its financial viability. The students this article focuses on are those in the class whose immediate aim is to gain a job as a cleaner.

In order to design a curriculum for these students, a Needs Analysis (NA) was conducted, the results of which were used to develop the curriculum and sample lesson described below. Information was collected from semi-structured interviews with an *English for Work* teacher and with a small group of cleaners at a New Zealand university, and from emailed questions to the managerial/training staff at a local cleaning company which employs cleaners from the demographic described. The use of information from subject-experts (people doing the roles and managing them), is most likely to reveal language needed for the roles (Long, 2005). In addition, the teachers of the students should have a good knowledge of their needs (Basturkmen, 2010), and existing research in comparable contexts can support the data.

Literature on English for similar roles

The literature recommends authentic samples of language, preferably collected ethnographically (Angouri, 2010), with examples including collecting written builders' diaries (Parkinson, Demecheleer & Mackay, 2017) and recordings on construction sites (Handford & Martous, 2015) and in a variety of other workplaces (Marra, 2013). An example of a study which did this in a context involving cleaners is Jasso-Aguilar (1999; 2005). This study acquired insider perspectives of the language needs of hotel maids using multiple data-gathering methods including as a participant-observer. It discovered that the situations in which the hotel maids used language were varied, and included such things as communicating with building users (often locked-out guests) and dealing with telephone messages. Maids also needed to read assignment sheets and know equipment and product names.

Other studies in the cleaning field exist. Kwan and Dunworth (2016), examining the work days of domestic helpers in Hong Kong, found that pragmatic efforts to check understanding were more important than actual language accuracy. Cumaranatunge (1988) used a variety of methods to find that much of the English used by 'domestic aids' in Arabic countries was in general life contexts (around illness, menus, airports, etc.), although the most important uses were in communicating with their employer and understanding duties (receptive skills). Sociocultural reasons were suggested for non-triangulation of Cumaranatunge's data where employers and agents had different opinions from the 'aids' regarding in which situations it would be necessary to use English. Jasso-Aguilar (1999; 2005) and Stapp (1998) both suggest that actual frontline employees have a better idea of their language needs than their employers or agents. These studies all suggest that pragmatic use of language is more important than accuracy in these roles. Therefore, materials and contexts examined in class are more effective if based on the experiences of actual practitioners and their peers (Angouri, 2010; Marra, 2013). Examples can be seen in the work of Cowling (2007) with Japanese company employees and Hunter and Cooke (2014) with migrant staff in New Zealand.

Needs Analysis (NA)

This project's next step beyond the literature review was to collect data from official documentation, cleaners, the *English for Employment* class teacher, and a cleaning manager. Use of text, context, and linguistic analysis of needs are complementary (Flowerdew & Wan, 2010), and this NA uses all three sources.

Time and resource constraints for this project prevented participant-research ethnographic data collection. The use of existing class students was impractical as the classes were closed for the summer break and also, as other studies (Long, 2005; Cowling, 2007) suggest, students may not know their true needs yet due to lack of practical experience of those needs or uncertainty about precise future roles. Participant verification (Flowerdew & Wan, 2010) was not feasible here as there was limited opportunity to check the resulting ideas with the trainer-mangers or cleaners. Lack of resources prevented observation/recording of actual authentic interactions (recommended by Flowerdew, 2013), but the interviews with cleaners and the manager provided an opportunity for examples of genuine language and context to be given.

Unit Standard documentation

Documentation describing eight cleaning Unit Standards (USs) was examined (NZQA, n.d.). Communicative skills that candidates for these standards needed to use included receptive skills, negotiating, respectful style, label reading and ability to explain cleaning processes and safety concepts. Vocabulary areas that they needed to be familiar with included common and official names, labels and use of cleaning equipment and products, surface types, furniture and whiteware terminology, and phrases such as, *top to bottom, 8 faces of the cloth, personal protective equipment (PPE),* and *awareness of others*.

Focus group interview with cleaners

A semi-structured interview with cleaners was carried out in their break room on campus in January 2018. Five cleaners, one each from Somalia, Syria, Eritrea, Samoa, and Kurdistan, participated in the interview as a group. They were aged between 25 and 55, and had been cleaners for one to five years. Four of them had been through classes at the school referred to above. The cleaners were in a small group to allow better interactive and peer-supported understanding of the questions and more complete answers as the interviewees assisted each other in providing information—their English remains at the elementary level so questionnaires would likely have been unintelligible (see problems found by Jasso-Aguilar, 2005).

The information provided was useful, but due to the cleaners' linguistic level this was limited in amount. The interview revealed that there is communication among themselves both on personal topics and professionally regarding the ordering and location of tasks. For these professional conversations cleaners need vocabulary such as *mop, scrubber, chemical, toilet, kitchen,* and *colours,* although some brand names were forgotten (the interviewer noted vocabulary on cleaning fluid bottles on a cleaner's cart included *Nature's Scrub, odour neutraliser*). The cleaners seemed well-drilled on safety terms such as *Health & Safety,* and *yellow sign*.

There was also evidence of frequent interactions with building users/visitors where people ask for directions or why places were temporarily inaccessible, and cleaners point out the warning signs. One cleaner did say she avoided this interaction due to low language competence/confidence.

Interview with the English for Employment teacher

This semi-structured interview was carried out with the teacher in her school in December 2017. The teacher discussed how the course that she taught included a mixture of General English (GE) and language and skills aimed at helping students find jobs in roles such as supermarket workers and cleaners. An example of couching GE in work contexts is when working on the past tense the teacher might ask students to "tell me about something you did at work last week".

In deciding which elements of English relevant to work roles, and cleaning, to teach, the teacher used several sources. These include the students themselves, who in class discussion and through work experience identified vocabulary and skills that they lacked. Other sources include learning packs for the USs which the school had acquired (while these resources are aimed at speakers of New Zealand English, the teacher adapted them for her students), and excerpts from *English for Work* textbooks, and materials on different roles available from the British Council website. The teacher also used authentic materials found online, such as job advertisements, to highlight language to be focused on. She said that she adapted language and materials online and in the US resource pack to make it accessible to the learners.

To illustrate how, with guidance, adapted material can be useful for students the teacher highlighted an example of a language gap around a Health and Safety (H&S) US: "It's got 6 different types of hazards like biological hazards, ergonomic hazards…even just these two words the students are like what does this mean?"

This example illustrates a need to focus on vocabulary to make the USs achievable and to enable the students to function in their target situations. The teacher acknowledged that she cannot be a subject matter expert in (m)any roles and that use of real-life experience (ethnography) and authentic materials is vital.

Email exchange with a manager-trainer

The data from a manager-trainer at a Wellington-based company which employs cleaners such as those described came in the form of emailed replies to questions. Regarding vocabulary, the manager commented that there was some need for cleaners to read labels and data sheets, but to reduce the need for vocabulary most equipment and products were colour-coded and cleaners often referred to colours rather than chemical names (which was noted as 'not ideal'). The manager also commented on H&S, and the need to answer questions and be trained in English. However, in an initial telephone conversation the manager mentioned that same-L1 experienced cleaners often help with training. A lot of visual H&S posters were utilised both for training and on the job.

Regarding communicative activity, the manager noted that cleaners were encouraged to speak English but had little need or opportunity for the same except occasional greetings. This was because they often worked in same-L1 pairs and much cleaning was done out of office hours. This data, however, was only partially supported by the researcher's casual observations of cleaners around the university.

Some of these comments align with findings from past literature. Jasso-Aguilar (2005) noted hotel maids' initial training and apprenticing is done with peers who speak the same language. Jasso-Aguilar also notes different perceptions on what is important. In the case of this NA, cleaners reported more interaction with the public and exhibited more mixed-L1 work pairings than reported by the manager. This element of the target situation suggests that social context more than linguistic forms are relevant to learning the language of a workplace (Jasso-Aguilar, 2005; Stapp, 1998; Kwan & Dunworth, 2016).

NA summary and discussion

The NA data collection covered a range of topics in order to elicit a spectrum of needs from which key areas could be selected for developing the ESP class *English for Cleaners*. It was clear that specific vocabulary and a small set of communicative skills were vital to being able to operate safely and independently as a cleaner in a small team. Other skills for cleaning are very practical and not necessarily language-based except for language needed to understand the cleaning skills training itself, although this

training is often conducted by a person speaking the same language as the trainees. Therefore, the goals and objectives developed below concentrate on specific vocabulary and communicative skills.

The NA found cleaners need to develop types of communicative activity and specific vocabulary. Vocabulary includes names for products, equipment and tasks, including *soft furnishings, urinal, kitchen, mop, scrubber, chemical, sign, microfiber, 'top to bottom',* and *Health & Safety.* A need was identified for cleaners to verbally interact with each other and building users regarding the use of products/equipment and regarding directions, instructions and warnings. Effective and safe communication is more important than accuracy.

There was a clear preference for framing the development of skills using realistic activities and interactions. At present, pictures, colour-coding and simple language are used by cleaning staff and management but there is a desire to improve levels of vocabulary and confidence/competence with verbal communication. The NA may look like a *target situation analysis*, an examination of what the learners will need to learn (Basturkmen, 2010). However, data from the manager-trainer and teacher, and comments from the cleaners (e.g., avoiding verbal interactions due to low linguistic level), add elements of *present situation analysis*, identifying current abilities/knowledge or lack thereof (Basturkmen, 2010). Learner preferences for practical learning with clear uses, and learners having low linguistic levels and varied educational backgrounds were also demonstrated by the NA and are observed, in the researcher's experience, with similar learners.

The NA used multiple sources of information and, as described above, this led to several key aspects of needs being supported by multiple sources. The low-level of English of the interviewed cleaners and lack of available time of the manager (and a second manager being unable to respond in time), means it is possible that additional useful information was missed but the information that was gleaned is both interesting and useful for the next stage.

Developing a short lesson

From the NA above it was possible to develop goals and objectives relating to vocabulary and communicative skills for an *English for Cleaners* course.

Goals

At the end of the course, students should:

- Know common cleaning equipment, products and hazards.
- Communicate effectively with peers regarding cleaning tasks
- Communicate effectively with building users regarding their (cleaners') activities and directions.

These goals can be focused into six learning objectives for the students. By the end of the course, the students will be able to:

- Identify the names and colour-coding of common cleaning equipment, products and hazards verbally and in writing, and understand the same through reading and listening to peers.
- Verbally explain and compare the uses of each product and piece of equipment.
- Communicate verbally with peers about the cleaning tasks of the shift and their priority.
- Name and provide direction to key locations within their workplace, using speech and maps.
- Respectfully indicate yellow 'no access – cleaning' or similar signs to building users, using spoken language.
- Respectfully verbally explain a reason for access to parts of a building being blocked for cleaning.

For the remainder of this article, an example lesson designed to pilot the course will be the focus. This lesson focused on using vocabulary in verbal communication among peers, and had the following goals and objectives:

Goals

At the end of the lesson, students should have:

- Developed their knowledge of the vocabulary related to common cleaning equipment, products and hazards.
- Developed confidence and competence with verbal communication with peers regarding cleaning tasks.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Verbally identify the names and uses of some common cleaning equipment, products and hazards.
- Communicate verbally with peers regarding the equipment and products needed for different cleaning tasks.
- Name and provide direction to some locations, using speech and maps.

Objective 1 measures Goal 1, observable by using a list of vocabulary and equipment/product uses. Objectives 1 to 3 reflect Goal 2.

Materials, lesson features and sequencing

Students in the NA expressed a desire to increase General English as well as language for specific jobs, a sentiment also noted by the teacher interviewed in the NA. This lesson elicited and scaffolded both general and cleaning vocabulary. In doing so, while also scaffolding and including socio-pragmatic skills such as pointing, body language,

use of *this/that*, and peer-assistance, the lesson focused on the learner needs and may be viewed as a form of content and language integrated learning (Airey, 2016).

Without permission/resources to use authentic recording it was necessary to create simulations of likely interactions in the daily life of a cleaner using stock images of cleaners with gap-fill speech bubbles (see Figure 1 for an example), sequenced to make short stories. These picture sequences were cut up for the students in pairs to re-order and attempt as a team to fill in the missing words. Short role-plays containing gaps for the students to fill with vocabulary of their choice were also written by the researcher. The aim was to also make the lesson and material varied, fun, engaging, and real-world-relevant. The teacher's experience with low-linguistic-level learners guided the level of language used, while the NA guided the choice of situations and vocabulary.

Figure 1:
A sketch of an example gap-fill image. A cleaning supervisor hands a mop to a young cleaner and gives instructions.

Following Harding (2007), the materials aim to use simulated situations from the target context, with authentic materials (images of authentic cleaning equipment, simulated cleaning tasks, and the classroom's kitchenette). The example picture-stories examined by the students are comparable to a simplified version of Gollin-Kies, Hall, and Moore's (2015) suggestion of using genuine videos and case studies and Cutting's (2012) work with airport ground staff. Jakubiak and Harklau's (2010) suggestions, that teachers frequently use images to show, sequence or describe behaviour and reactions and make use of real-life texts or interaction types which the students encounter, indicate that the methods used in this lesson are not unusual.

Aiming to represent an example work environment, this lesson focused on workplace speech events, activities, and language. It was designed to develop the student objectives of communicating verbally with peers using cleaning-specific vocabulary regarding locations, within the context of explaining/comparing. The pictures served as a vocabulary picture-dictionary. The lesson elicited discussions of different 'what could they say' options. Discussions covered different results of the options and led to role-plays by the students covering similar events using specific vocabulary. Events included asking about locations and use of products and equipment.

Four students aged 30 to 50, with low levels of English and interested in future cleaning roles volunteered for this lesson. They came from China, Colombia, Syria, and Eritrea, had been in the existing *English for Employment* class for three to four months learning general language skills and vocabulary/pragmatics related to the general employment context, and worked in pairs for this session.

The lesson was designed to take 30 minutes (as that was the time allowed for this initial trial by institutional factors), and to specifically elicit or develop students' knowledge of the terms *mop, toilets, chemical, yellow sign, floor, spray, furnishings, soft, furniture, label, product, storage, bucket, cloth, scrubber, clean, couch, stairs, corridor, left, right, excuse me, thank you.* The lesson also aimed to increase students' speaking practice and confidence/competence using language in the target context.

In the initial stage of the lesson the paired students suggest words to fill the gaps in the picture speech-bubbles and then order the pictures to make coherent stories. Teacher monitoring followed by whole-class communal suggestions and whiteboard vocabulary notes guided the process. The lesson then moved on to discussion of very short role-play scripts which also had gap-fills for the students to fill in using vocabulary from the picture-stories and the final planned stage was performance of those role-plays.

Reflecting on and evaluating the lesson: suggestions for future development and use

This evaluation is based on the teacher's observations of students in the latter stage of the lesson, whether the students appeared to like and learn from the course (Basturkmen, 2010), and a reflection on the researcher's own teaching.

Communally, the students were able to produce much of the vocabulary from the pictures, point in the room/building to things like *corridor*, when they saw it written and fill the role-play gaps with reasonable (explained), choices of vocabulary. This lesson also led to good team-building, interactive and collegial work and language practice in the specific context.

Before the lesson, four potential problems were anticipated:

- Low literacy making the picture-stories and role-plays difficult to read despite already using simplified (authentic) language. This was mitigated by using the

pictures to elicit vocabulary, provide contextual clues, and partly model dialogues, and by recycling the vocabulary in role-plays.
- Lack of speaking confidence may reduce productive language. This was mitigated by working in pairs to reduce shyness around larger groups.
- Difficulties understanding the pictures or recognising equipment, location and products.
- All the stock images used European-looking cleaners, possibly making them less relatable for the learners (but also suggesting that cleaning roles are not only expected to be performed by visible minorities often less included in society).

Only the first of these concerns manifested. The speed of students writing words, and the time/effort taken by students to help peers, slowed the lesson. Students having different linguistic levels is common in ESP classes (Harding, 2007), and this also applies to background/context-specific knowledge. The speed of the lesson meant that there was no time to perform the role-plays, only for the student pairs to fill the role-play gaps and for the class to discuss the suggestions.

The session took 35 minutes, extended from the planned 30 minutes to allow activities to be completed rather than cut mid-way. This lesson was conducted with an *ad hoc* class of volunteers with institutional considerations limiting the available time. Although it covered a limited range of language and tasks, 30 minutes barely allows teachers flexibility to respond or adapt to learner needs in the lesson. With more time available and greater teacher-student familiarity, the lesson could be better planned, timed and adapted to the students' ability and knowledge levels. This also applies to the next point regarding vocabulary.

Some unexpected changes to the lesson plan took place. In a role-play based on cleaning a floor there was discussion over the type of floor, necessitating extra vocabulary. In future it would be useful to add *carpet* and *vacuum cleaner* to the planned learning. *Furnishings, storage*, and *scrubber* were not used by the students and might be removed, although they may be utilised by future students. The whiteboard and mime were used to assist with vocabulary and more realia as props would be useful, but the fact that the classroom is borrowed from the local library for the lesson time makes this logistically difficult.

Although grammatical accuracy is not a focus in this type of lesson, there were problems with used of *slip/slippery*, and *safe/safety*. Materials could be re-written to model correct forms or remove prepositions/structures which render only one form acceptable.

Learner objectives were achieved. Students demonstrated relevant vocabulary knowledge and increased this by interacting with peers and the teacher. The conversations were spoken aloud and appropriate vocabulary, with discussion of its choice, was used in the conversation gaps. It is difficult to measure the extent of objective achievement as there was no time to practice the conversations or present

scenarios without role-play scripts to allow students to demonstrate confident, competent, and appropriate spoken interactions in context. Such an activity would be a reasonable assessment of objectives achieved, as it would mirror teaching that focused on language for the specific purpose used in authentic tasks which make use of the target workplace routines and practices and of the learners' background knowledge (Gollin-Kies et al., 2015; Douglas, 2013).

The lesson appears to have helped the learners take one small step towards an initial goal of gaining employment in a low-level job which can help them become productive members of society who are moving towards their personal goals. The Needs Analysis revealed a need for this type of lesson to be based in as realistic a context as possible and to focus on vocabulary and communication that enables learners to fulfil their roles effectively. With more resources, this could be developed into a series of lessons but the viability of this would need to be considered against factors such as enrolment numbers, demand and the cost of resources such as training rooms and teaching staff for a small class.

Conclusion

The process reported above led to an initial version of an engaging and useful lesson for students with a specific purpose and set of goals, to gain employment as cleaners as a first step towards fully engaging with their new society. The NA, while time-consuming, meant that the lesson was effectively targeted at the needs of students in a specific context as the teacher knows more about their abilities and limits (Basturkmen, 2010). That said, it is accepted that in practice the needs of individual students can become more apparent and should lead to the teacher adapting the lesson in real time and reflecting on how to change future lessons to better focus on the needs of their specific class and students.

By writing about this process the hope is that teachers in similar roles can find useful suggestions either for their own teaching or to investigate their own upcoming courses, conducting their own NAs and creating lessons which are truly suited to their students' needs. The biggest decision for all such courses is whether to plan a *narrow* or *wide-angled* course (Basturkmen, 2010) to, respectively, be quickly effective for their learners' immediate needs or allow for a greater spectrum of language learning and future opportunities.

References

Airey, J. (2016). *EAP, EMI or CLIL?* In K. Hyland and P. Shaw (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of English for academic purposes* (pp. 71-83). Oxford, UK: Routledge.

Angouri, J. (2010). Using textbook and real-life data to teach turn taking in business meetings. In N. Harwood (Ed.), *English language teaching materials: Theory and practice* (pp. 373-394). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Basturkmen, H. (2010). *Developing courses in English for specific purposes*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Benesch, S. (2009). Theorizing and practicing critical English for academic purposes. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 8*, 81-85.

Cowling, J. (2007). Needs analysis: Planning a syllabus for a series of intensive workplace courses at a leading Japanese company. *English for Specific Purposes, 26*, 426–442.

Crookes, G. V. (2013). *Critical ELT in action: Foundations, promises, praxis*. Oxford, UK: Routledge.

Cumaranatunge, L. K. (1988). An EOP case study: Domestic aids in West Asia. In D. Chamberlain & R. J. Baumgardner (Eds.), *ESP in the classroom: Practice and evaluation*, (pp.127-133). *ELT Document 128*. Oxford, UK: British Council in association with Modern English Publications.

Cutting, J. (2012). English for airport ground staff. *English for Specific Purposes 31*, 3–13. doi:10.1016/j.esp.2011.06.002

Douglas, D. (2013). ESP and assessment. In B. Paltridge and S. Starfield (Eds.), *The handbook of English for specific purposes* (pp. 367-379). Chichester, UK: Wiley

Flowerdew, J. (2013). Flowerdew 2013 Needs Analysis and Curriculum Development in ESP. In B. Paltridge and S. Starfield (Eds.), *The Handbook of English for Specific Purposes* (pp. 325-341). Chichester: Wiley.

Flowerdew, J., & Wan, A. (2010). The linguistic and the contextual in applied genre analysis: The case of the company audit report. *English for Specific Purposes, 29*, 78–93. doi:10.1016/j.esp.2009.07.001

Gollin-Kies, S., Hall, D. R., & Moore, S. H. (2015). *Language for specific purposes*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan.

Handford, M., & Matous, P. (2015). Problem-solving discourse on an international construction site: Patterns and practices. *English for Specific Purposes, 38*, 85–98. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2014.12.002

Haque, E. (2007). Critical pedagogy in English for academic purposes and the possibility for 'tactics' of resistance. Pedagogy, Culture & Society, 15(1), 83-106. doi: 10.1080/14681360601162311

Harding, K. (2007). *English for specific purposes.* Oxford, UK: OUP.

Hunter, J., & Cooke, D. (2014). Education for power: English language in the workplace. *Power and Education, 6*(3), 253-267. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/power.2014.6.3.253

Internal Affairs, NZ Government. (2014). *Language and integration in New Zealand*. Wellington: Internal Affairs. Retrieved from https://www.ethniccommunities.govt.nz/assets/Resources/7d40a0074e/LanguageandIntegrationinNZ.pdf

Jakubiak, C., & Harklau, L. (2010). Designing materials for community-based ESL programs. In N. Harwood (Ed.), *English language teaching materials: Theory and practice* (pp. 395-418). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Jasso-Aguilar, R. (1999). Sources, methods and triangulation in needs analysis: A critical perspective in a case study of Waikiki hotel maids. *English for Specific Purposes, 18*(1), 27–46.

Jasso-Aguilar, R. (2005). Sources, methods and triangulation in needs analysis: A critical perspective in a case study of Waikiki hotel maids. In M. Long (Ed.), *Second Language Needs Analysis* (pp. 147-158). Cambridge, UK: CUP.

Kwan, N., & Dunworth, K. (2016). English as a lingua franca communication between domestic helpers and employers in Hong Kong: A study of pragmatic strategies. *English for Specific Purposes, 43*, 13–24. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2016.02.001

Long, M. (2005). Methodological issues in learner needs analysis. In M. Long (Ed.), *Second Language Needs Analysis* (pp. 19-76). Cambridge, UK: CUP.

Marra, M. (2013). English in the workplace. In B. Paltridge and S. Starfield (Eds.), *The handbook of English for specific purposes* (pp. 176-192). Chichester, UK: Wiley.

Menard-Warwick, J. (2008). 'Because she made beds. Every day'. Social positioning, classroom discourse, and language learning. *Applied Linguistics 29*. 267-289.

Norton, B. (2013). *Identity and language learning: Extending the conversation* (2nd Ed.). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

NZQA (n.d.). *Domain – Cleaning skills.* Retrieved from http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/framework/explore/domain.do?frameworkId=75346#standards

Parkinson, J., Demecheleer, M., & Mackay, J. (2017). Writing like a builder: Acquiring a professional genre in a pedagogical setting. *English for Specific Purposes, 46*, 29–44. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2016.12.003

Stapp, Y. F. (1998). Instructor-Employer collaboration: A model for technical workplace English. *English for Specific Purposes, 17*(2), 169-182.

Tollefson, J. W. (1991). *Planning language, planning inequality.* London, UK: Longman.

REVIEWS

Newton, J., Ferris, D.R., Goh, C.C.M., Grabe, W., Stoller, F.L. & Vandergrift, L. (2018). *Teaching English to Second Language Learners in Academic Contexts*. London and New York: Routledge. ISBN 978-1-138-64760 (pbk.) 285 pp.

Reviewed by Martin Andrew, Otago Polytechnic, Dunedin, New Zealand & Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia

As the programme leader of an MTESOL programme taught in both domestic and transnational contexts, I was eager to scrutinise *Teaching English to Second Language Learners in Academic Contexts* by Jonathan Newton and his international team of stellar scholars. This was my long-term quest to find a practical and useable single volume text for practice teachers covering the teaching and learning of Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking while acknowledging the need to enter the metacognitive domains of study and information skills and literacies. By the time the volume I had long sought appeared, the programmes for which it was intended had collapsed under the weight of neoliberal ideology, along with an increasing number of MTESOL programmes throughout Australia.

The good news is that there are still contexts in the world where this well-considered volume will be put to good practical use. My primary thought was that this was a volume for use in English language teacher education. In addition to its use for practice teachers, it also works as a practical/praxical primer for practising teachers, uniting the worlds of research and theory to those of classroom action, curriculum development and renewal, and innovative assessment. I have used this book both for practice and with practising teachers, and their main comment on its appreciation of the teaching and learning of 'the four skills' boils down to the way it extracts core principles. William Grabe and Fredricka Stoller's chapter on building a reading curriculum (Chapter 3), for instance, essentialises in tabular form 'Principles that should permeate curricula committed to reading-skills development' (p.42). This is a volume that understands how busy teachers of English to second learners are in academic contexts today.

Teachers' feedback was that the take-away messages were easy to extract. Although the chapters, three for each core skill, are grounded in both experience and research, I caught the teachers heading for the summaries and tables. Christine Goh's section on Listening includes a sample outline for a lesson/learning unit on listening (p.173). Jonathan Newton's three chapters on Speaking include a table outlining types of learning opportunities important for ELT programmes (p.209). Dana Ferris's 'Writing in a second language' (Chapter 5) extracts implications for writing pedagogy from the foregoing discussion. There are six points of the 'teachers should…' variety. I caught one of my Vietnamese teachers with a photocopy of this list over her desk.

Accessibility is, then, a key strength of this volume. Though immersed in research and informed by both theory and practice, this emerges as a work for practitioners. It is the

collective work of leading international language educators and, despite some references to specific contexts like American community colleges, applies to all academic teaching and learning contexts where English language learners are present, from secondary to tertiary and beyond into community environments. I called the book a ‘primer’ because it is a go-to volume for teaching practitioners who want lists headed ‘how to’ more than meticulous researched studies where you need to burrow to find gems. This volume ticks both the rigour and the practical boxes. This is quite a feat.

The book examines the four skills over three well-scoped chapters, at first broadly in relation to comprehension (Reading, Listening) and practical action (Writing, Speaking); then in terms of curriculum design and management, and thirdly with an emphasis on assessment. The text uses many subheadings, employs a great deal of signposting and avoids lengthy tracts of dense text. It aims for instant impact, and it is easy to dip in and out of to find guidance and tips on the run. It is invaluable in invigorating anyone trapped on the Ixion’s wheel of teaching IELTS, with clear pointers on how to bring those formulaic examination materials to engaging pedagogical life. Grabe and Stoller’s Chapter 1 on Reading, ‘How Reading Comprehension Works’, for instance, guides us through a range of key questions anyone interested in improving teaching of Reading might bring to such a text, with 11 such questions as subheadings. Chapter 2 strips down to 12 principles including this one:

> Principle 1. Asking Students to read for Well-Defined Purposes, Rather than Simply Asking Students to Read (for No Purpose at All), Should Guide Reading and Pre-Reading Tasks.

Who would not engage with a chapter where that was one of the 12 key sub-headings? The authors have built the psychology of ‘Why read?’ into the text itself.

The book covers current trends, activities to bring technology into the classroom, innovative modes of assessment, careful Vygotskian information on sequencing and scaffolding and a great deal of strategic thinking. It is organised around four overarching assumptions: Promoting motivation, Structuring Lessons for Meaningful Language Use, Developing Language Knowledge and Skills, and Raising Metacognitive Awareness. For me, the latter organising principle differentiates the volume from others on the market most markedly. The emphasis on how skills are learned, and the critical and reflective processes informing them, brought this volume forward from default volumes by Jeremy Harmer, for instance, into a unique space where it a real contender.

This work moves beyond being a primer on how to teach to offering insightful practical/praxical strategic insights into how English is learned in academic contexts.

Watkins, P. (2017). *Teaching and Developing Reading Skills.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-1-316-64731-8 289 pp.

Reviewed by Kathryn Henderson, Pathways College, The University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand

Like a box of chocolates, this addition to the Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers series offers something rewarding, no matter where you dip in. Peter Watkins' express aim is 'to support teachers, and the successful teaching of reading, through providing practical classroom activities' (p. 10).

The body of Teaching and Developing Reading Skills is the 12 sections, each with 8 to 17 activities. The classroom activities are set out on one to two pages each, with a heading, brief outline, the level the activity is suitable for, the time it takes, the focus, and what the teacher needs to prepare. After that, are the numbered steps in the procedure, followed by 'notes' (sometimes, warnings), and finally, the rationale. The rationale briefly comments on how the activity employs aspects of good reading scholarship, for example, by applying strategies, using authentic texts, or, improving fluency. Sometimes, the classroom activities have photocopiable task sheets, questionnaires or diagrams, too.

The first group of activities are for 'preparing learners for reading' (p. 13). Of course, Watkins has 'predicting' and 'vocabulary' here, but he advocates predicting from text-type (1.9), and vocabulary through group discussion (1.2). While nothing is entirely new—e.g. engaging the learners' interest through the emotions—the activities may suggest a different emphasis for the teacher. Watkins talks of 'plugging the gaps' (p. 14) for the learners before they start a text. I applied his 'Simplified to authentic' activity (1.5) to present 10 excerpts off a BBC website regarding a report after a major fire (The Grenfell Tower fire, 2017). The report had, for example, the materials used in the cladding of the building. My simplification skipped the scientific names and avoided all reading challenges for my students, where possible. Then, we read the original text. I think the list of safety shortcomings in the case of the Grenfell Tower disaster was understood. As a teacher, I had simplified before, of course, but not purposely reduced a whole text to read as a pre-reading activity.

One of Watkins' aims is to move teachers 'from a testing model of reading to a more teaching-focused approach' (p. 9). He is referring here to the usual 'Yes/No/Not Given' types of comprehension questions. The second group of activities (pp. 33-55) suggest other responses to show comprehension, like 2.6, 'Preparing a multimedia text', where students say, for instance, which words would benefit from hyperlinks. 'Shallow to deep' (2.7) simply takes fact-based comprehension questions and adds a deeper element, like 'Why?' or 'What would you have done?' A fun activity for advanced students

(though Watkins believes 'Elementary and above' could do it!) is to write a summary in only 21 words (2.10). While the rationale is 'demonstrating the ability to identify key points' (p. 47), the quirky challenge is the strict word limit.

Section 3 (pp 57-75) deals with teaching reading strategies, in the hope that they become automatic for the reader, and, so, a skill (p. 57). Section 4 has games for reading fluency for beginners, activities where the learner identifies a made-up word, and timed activities, to help improve reading speed. To encourage re-reading Watkins proposes a quiz based on the coursebook (4.14). The questions can ask about, for example, vocabulary from a text (page number given) or, they can be personalized, recalling a particular student's reaction to a piece when it was first done in class.

In 'Exploiting Literary Texts', Section 5, Watkins encourages the use of text types not commonly used, like song lyrics or graphic novels. Several activities propose comparing text types, such as 5.1 which asks in a questionnaire if the book would make a good television series, and 5.12, where learners are tasked with designing a film trailer for a book. Teachers of native speakers would also find this section useful.

Technology in the classroom is encouraged with 15 activities in Section 6. 'Predicting from others' reactions' (6.6) has the readers look at comments under an online text first, predict the text from that, read the text, then add their own comments. Several skills are employed and strong comments should motivate the learners to see if they think the comments are fair (p.143).

Other sections look at grammar, assessment, teacher training and extensive reading, among other foci. The activities sections are followed by a text bank of seven texts, sampling text types, and referred to several times in different activities, to demonstrate possible uses. There is also an e-source code for the book's owner.

While the activities smack soundly of practical classroom experience, it is the introduction that sets the tone for the book. It has a reference list of 31 works. Watkins' ideas on teaching reading are firmly grounded in current reading theory. If he criticises what often occurs in our classrooms, he then immediately offers a remedy. Overall, I believe Watkins has succeeded in his aim 'to support teachers' and gives reading teachers great guidance and choice. *Teaching and Developing Reading Skills* could even be of use for parents, looking to hook their children on to reading.

Davis, J. M. & McKay, T. (Eds.) (2018). *A Guide to Useful Evaluation of Language Programs*. Washington DC: Washington University Press. ISBN 9781626165779 (pbk) x + 120 pp.

Reviewed by Marilyn Lewis, The University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

Everyone in the New Zealand education field has been involved in the evaluation process in some role and will therefore empathise with this title. Was the word "useful" intended to emphasise that many evaluations fulfill institutional requirements but lead to no changes?

Eight of the eleven chapters are written or co-written by the two editors, one an evaluation specialist and the other a PhD candidate. The other six contributors are PhD students at Georgetown University. Throughout the book run three scenarios: a community college language laboratory, a programme for adult immigrants and a United States-China telecollaboration between two high schools. Various examples from other contexts ensure that readers should find parallels with their own work.

Davis' introduction explains the book's organization, stressing that evaluation is "an inherently worthwhile mode of educational enquiry" (p. 1). Then Chapters 2 to 11 are organized chronologically according to the steps of an evaluation.

Chapter 2 suggests conditions which Davis recommends before the process starts, two being involving stakeholders and checking feasibility. A study from a university French department shows ongoing communication with stakeholders through such means as a public presentation and social media.

Chapter 3 on the planning process is co-written by Davis, from the U.S. Foreign Service Institution and McKay, formerly at the Institute of Bangladesh Studies. Reinforcing Chapter 2's message, there is a 13-point list of "feasible, concrete evaluation uses" (p. 21). In answer to the question "Useful to whom?", Table 3.1 spells out a long list, including parents and students.

The fourth chapter, by a teacher of English and Spanish, illustrates the distinction between data-collection tools and the indicators they lead to. Indicators answer the question "How will we know?" (p. 33). As one example, the teacher suggests eight possible answers to the question "How well is the language lab supporting language education at the college?"

How to choose methods and collect data is addressed in Chapter 5 by McKay and Davis. Again, there are cross-chapter links, in this case with the topic of indicators. A five-page table summarises data collection methods from the book's three main scenarios. I may

not be the only reader turning first to the closing pages of each chapter for the overview, before reading the rest of the chapter for details.
In Chapter 6, Bryfonski writes about focus groups. She speaks from experience through her work with the U.S. Foreign Service Institute, and is honest about the drawbacks of such groups, including possible bias when group members are volunteers and the effect of inter-group influence.

Chapter 7 has three authors, all interested in Spanish Applied Linguistics and in interviews for collecting data. When are interviews an appropriate tool? How should they be planned and carried out? Figure 7.1 summarises some steps, with an example from a Community College Spanish language programme.

Questionnaires are the focus of Chapter 8 by Kim and Davis. The types they discuss include the dichotomous (yes/no), the rating scale (strongly agree, etc) and multi-choice options. Others allow free answers or open questions indicating the specific information needed as in "What languages…?". Sometimes the respondent's words need amplifying: "Please provide comments that will help us understand your ratings." I would like to see examples of those answers. The three following pages offer tips to question writers, such as avoiding asking two questions in one, before ending with a sample questionnaire.

Chapters 9 and 10 are by Davis, 9 on the challenging task of differentiating analysis (organising and summarising) and interpreting (drawing conclusions that give the analysis meaning). Examples come from the Chinese telecommunication scenario. Having a mathematical bent would help interpret Figure 9.1 which shows response data to dichotomous items. Fortunately, an Excel programme is recommended for this stage. By contrast, extracts from the tapescript of focus groups make easier, if less objective reading. "When we had to speak English it got a little boring" (p. 99). By Chapter 10, we have a summary of the book's contents followed by McKay's sample evaluation plan in Chapter 11.

If nitpicking is allowed, the book has quite a small font size. Let us hope that does not put readers off, but my vote for the next edition would be to enlarge the size at the cost of adding to the 120 pages.

Does the book support Davis' point about the value of evaluation? Will participants in evaluations planned by its readers take part with a more positive attitude? Given all the work put into making that case I hope so. One step that readers of this journal could take is to draw the book's attention to colleagues teaching other languages, since the advice is not limited to English programmes.

Rivers, D. J., & Zotzmann, K. (Eds.) (2017). *ISMS in Language Education: Oppression, Intersectionality and Emancipation*. *Language and Social Life*, Vol. 11, De Gruyter. ISBN 978-1-5015-1082-3, 269 pp.

Reviewed by Nick Marsden, Unitec Institute of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand

Guilt hangs on this title. Nobody wants to be labelled with ISMS. ISMS have the power to stifle expression, foster hegemony and destroy culture. This thought-provoking volume may have you wondering about yourself, your institution, language teaching 'methodists' and policy-makers. The volume's twelve chapters constitute courageous conversations which will unsettle assumptions: are you behind pedagogies of emancipation or oppression? The effects of ISMS such as post-colonialism, neo-liberalism and heterosexism operate on a meta-level, but they are omnipresent in language teaching and you may be implicated just by using consumerist, ethno-centric materials.

Each chapter shines a light on ISM pachyderms in the room: contradictions and injustices that lurk behind shibboleths in language teaching methodology, or language policy, curricula and materials which themselves can cast shadows of oppression. Pitted against this is the ideal of emancipation, which most teachers would likely aspire to, but we may be missing by a pedagogical mile because systems, materials or curricula are loaded with ISMs compacted within ideologies, theories or socio-political norms.

What if you are a LGBTQI+ learner in a heterosexist class using hetero-normative materials and classmates make homophobic comments but the teacher ignores this and does not make a language opportunity out of it? Oppression by silence and denial? While we have gay marriage in many countries such as Australia and New Zealand, gayness is conspicuously absent from language teaching materials (David Rhodes, chapter eleven).

In chapter eight, Gregorio Hernandez-Zamora examines Mexican learners who are forced by language policy to study academic English when they hate it, and the process 'severely diminishes their confidence as thinkers, writers and learners,' (p.165). Welcome to academicism, on show at a classroom near you. Anyone who has marked endless academic essays will relate to this quote: "even those correctly written are often little persuasive" (p.172) and: "The academic language itself makes them feel uncomfortable and disempowered since it does not afford their expressive intentions" (p. 181). The agony of the 'academicist' approach is likened by one Mexican student to the giant LOTR spider Shelob, which 'kills from the inside,' giving a powerful metaphor for colonial oppression.

Then there is ethno-centrism. In chapter five, Rodrigo Joseph Rodriguez discusses the scenario for Mexican students where 'you have a mind in nothing' if you do not know English (page 98). Your native mother tongue is degraded because of the more powerful, dominant language. To avoid this pedagogy of oppression, Rodriguez advocates 'translanguaging', using a bilingual approach that does not afford first or second class status to one tongue over another, in a rejection of reductionism and imperialist thinking.

ESOL teachers in the USA might take sides in the growing sectarian tensions of native-speakerism versus non-native speakerism where a narrative of victim versus oppressor divides ESOL professionals. This internecine strife comes with a discourse about 'in-groups' (non-native speakers), and 'out-groups' (native speakers). Damian Rivers asserts: "The current situation in which the 'non-native speaker movement' seeks a dominant voice of authority and leadership while simultaneously claiming an identity based on ideologies of victimhood is untenable" (p. 93).

Should you doubt the impact of ISMS on language education, the story of Russian scholar Shcherba will help (Olga Campbell-Thomson, chapter six). It presents an eye-opening account of the evolution of the Grammar Translation Method in the 1920s. (Most people wince at the notion, relieved it rests in Pedagogical Jurassic Park.) Not so known is that Shcherba, (a contemporary of an ideologically marginalized Vygotsky), expressed high-level aims for his language-learning approach, namely to develop understanding of ways of thinking across language systems and cultures. But these deep-level cognitive goals were lost in translation. Shcherba's theories were edited, censored, and applied according to the dictates of communist ideology. Key tenets were swallowed by the capitalist/communist divide or because they did not align with dialectical materialism. Thus, morphed the Grammar Translation Method.

If by some miracle you remain ISM free, consider how wrong professional development for teachers can go when language-teaching methods become a tool built on a 'technical' interest rather than an emancipatory one. "If the teachers do not respond to the call of the 'methodists' (policy makers, professional developers…) they are labelled as resisters, as bad teachers. Their job may be in jeopardy" (Sardar M. Anwarrudin, p. 156). Could this be you?

Cynthia D. Nelson points us towards an '–isms-as-prisms methodology' which focuses on –isms both as, and in language. She reasons that "Everyone is simultaneously both oppressed and oppressor, albeit along different axes of oppression; thus potentially anyone is implicated in any given system of oppression, though this is experienced differently depending on one's position or vantage point" (Chapter one, p. 18).

Guilty or not, this volume will set you thinking.

Burns, A. & Richards, J. C. (Eds.). (2018). *The Cambridge Guide to Learning English as a Second Language*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-1-108-40841-7. 354 pp.

Reviewed by Judi Simpson, Unitec Institute of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand

This edited book is an extensive resource for ESOL practitioners and educators providing a more thorough review of current language learning perspectives than is normally encountered in a single text. As learning a second or other language cannot be accounted for by any single language learning theory, Anne Burns and Jack Richards have invited specialists from a wide range of domains to contribute. They explain that their overall purpose is "to move the study of English as a second language beyond its typical narrow focus and to provide a more comprehensive overview of English language learning" (p. 2).

The book covers four main language learning themes: learners, language, language development and learning contexts, and is further divided into nine sections, each with several chapters. These sections explore a range of perspectives: individual, social and affective dimensions; English for Academic Purposes; English for Specific Purposes and workplace English contexts; learning systems (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary); the four skills; communicative competence (genre, literacy, pragmatic and intercultural competence); approaches and methodologies (task and content-based learning; the role of translation and textbooks and corpus-informed approaches) and, in the final section, the role of technology.

Contributors were asked to address three main areas in their chapter: an overview of the key dimensions of their domain, the key learning issues and the implications for teaching and assessment, at the same time offering "their own theoretical frameworks and perspectives" (p. 5). At the end of their chapter, contributors provide reflective discussion questions and suggestions for further reading. For the purposes of this review, I have chosen to focus in more detail on chapters from 'the Systems of English', 'the Four Skills' and the 'Technology' sections.

Ee Ling Low's chapter, 'Learning Pronunciation', emphasises learner and contextual differences in selecting strategies for teaching pronunciation. Low discusses the importance of encouraging positive attitudes towards pronunciation accuracy; identifying specific language feature problems for particular language groups and focusing on suprasegmentals, including teaching lexical stress and weak forms. The connection between phonological sensitivity and memory and L2 listening comprehension and vocabulary learning ability is highlighted. Finally, she suggests that when selecting materials for testing ESL pronunciation proficiency, practitioners should consider the expanding varieties of spoken English.

Joseph Siegal's review of the literature on L2 listening skills firstly looks at the interaction between bottom-up (BU) and top-down (TD) processing. He notes that classroom practice tends to favour TD theories but points out that recent work in this field emphasises the importance of developing BU strategies such as recognising the beginnings and endings of words, intonation and stress patterns and chunks of meaning in the speech stream. Siegal goes on to discuss the metacognitive, cognitive and affective listening strategies commonly employed by listeners, and advises teachers to focus more on the processes involved in listening rather than the products or answers. Additionally, when selecting listening materials, a mix of both challenging and achievable texts is recommended.

In the chapter, 'Learning Grammar', Scott Thornbury challenges the 'centrality of grammar' (p. 183) to second language acquisition (SLA) in favour of more naturalistic or experiential approaches, such as task-based or content-based instruction. The discussion begins with an overview of the history of SLA theory before moving on to review the literature on more contentious issues. Regarding the 'focus on form' debate: timely pedagogical interventions with corrective feedback are seen as important, but only when engaged in communicative activities. Further, there is support for explicit grammar teaching, so long as it targets items for which learners are optimally ready and involves plentiful practice. For assessment, however, Thornbury refutes the 'grammar-centred mindset' (p. 189) and supports integrative and performance tests where grammatical accuracy is only measured in so far as it impacts on communicative effectiveness.

The final section of the book is devoted to the learning of English through technology. Key issues are examined by exploring the way technology creates affordances for language learning that have not only changed the way language is learnt but also how it is used. The opportunities for collaborative learning through the Internet and mobile technologies, including social media and online gaming are discussed. However, a review of the literature suggests Blended Learning is more effective and more favoured by learners than learning solely through online platforms. Although there are certainly exciting opportunities for communication and collaboration, the writers in this section emphasise that there are still large gaps in the literature on language teaching, learning and, particularly, assessment through technology.

This book certainly succeeds in providing readers with an authoritative, up-to-date and expansive range of perspectives on SLA as well as suggested readings for those who wish to research further into any of these domains. Despite their varied nature, a common theme that pervades many of these chapters is that of prioritizing and individualizing teaching and learning strategies based on the proficiency levels, needs and objectives of learners and the learning context. It is a valuable resource for both ESOL teachers and teacher educators, informing both theory and practice.

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

1. Contributions to *The TESOLANZ Journal* are welcomed from language educators and applied linguists within and outside Aotearoa/New Zealand, especially those working in Australia and countries in the South Pacific.

2. **Articles** should in general be no longer than 5000 words.

3. **Reports** on research or practice should be 2000-2500 words. No abstract is needed. Reports should a) describe the context and motivation for the study, b) highlight gaps or issues, c) describe the innovation, action or research, d) report on and discuss outcomes, and e) include a reflection and future steps.

4. Referencing conventions should follow that specified in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Edition). The reference list at the end of the article should be arranged in alphabetical order. The reference list should only include items specifically cited in the text.

5. As far as possible, comments and references should be incorporated into the text but, where necessary, endnotes may be placed after the main body of the article, before the list of references, under the heading Notes.

6. All graphics should be suitable for publication and need no change.

7. It is understood that manuscripts submitted have not been previously published and are not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

8. Enquiries and draft submissions should be sent by email to the editor, Victoria University of Wellington, Jean.Parkinson@vuw.ac.nz. The preferred format is WORD.

9. All submissions should be accompanied by a full mailing address, a telephone number and an email addresses and/or fax number.

10. Submissions will be considered by the Editor and members of the Editorial Board.

11. Those interested in submitting a book review should contact the Reviews Editor, Victoria University of Wellington, Katherine.Quigley@vuw.ac.nz

12. The closing date for the submission of manuscripts for 2020 is **Monday 3 August.**