ESOL Strategies to Support Speakers of English Dialects

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Abstract

Student members of minority groups who speak a dialect of English are at a linguistic disadvantage when it comes to academic achievement. Minorities in the United States are members of specific racial and ethnic groups, especially African-American, Hispanic, Alaskan Native, American-Indian, and Pacific Islanders. This study researched the perceptions that content-area teachers and administrators have of strategies used in teaching English as a second language, and the viability, feasibility and adaptability in the general education classroom to support academic language acquisition.

Keywords: ESOL, minorities, dialects, achievement gap, strategies, academic English

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The U.S Department of Education affirms that the United States education system follows a similar design to the one implemented by other nations worldwide. The first stage is early childhood education voluntary Pre-kindergarten, next comes elementary school, followed by middle and high school. After secondary education, an array of programs is offered that cover from non-degree programs to post-doctorate research programs. Furthermore, it states that "While there is no national curriculum in the United States, states, school districts and national associations do require or recommend that certain standards be used to guide school instruction" (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

America's schools do not reflect the nation's material prosperity. Schools are simultaneously an embrace and a refusal, revealing exactly who is included and who is not (Straus, 2018). The National Education Association (NEA) (2019) defines the term *achievement gap* as "the differences between the test scores of minority and low-income students and the test scores of their White and Asian peers. (para. 1). Multiple studies have shown that there are persistent gaps in student achievement in the U.S. This gap has been notably more evidenced in linguistic minorities. In 15 years, while average test scores have continuously increased, the gap between black-white and Hispanic-white has narrowed (Carnoy & Garcia, 2017).

The National Education Association (2019) stated factors that contribute to the achievement gap can be divided into two categories: those within the control of the schools and those a school has no control over. Some examples of factors within the school's control are inadequate curriculum, large class size, unsafe learning environments, culturally unamicable environments, uncertified and inexperienced teachers, and insensitivity to diverse cultures.

Factors outside the school's control include but are not limited to economic opportunity for students' families, adequate access to social and health services, access to organizations and institutions such as libraries that support learning, the families' socioeconomic status, and the students' satisfaction of dietary needs.

Not all students are equally affected by the achievement gap. Indicators of the achievement gap are attainment of a high-school diploma, a college degree, and employment opportunities, as well as performance on statewide tests or SATs. According to the United States Chapter of the Minority Rights Group International (2020), there are seven minority groups and indigenous grouping in the United States, including Latinos, African Americans, Asia Americans, Arab and other Middle Eastern Americans, Native Americans, Native Hawkins and other Pacific Islanders, and Alaska Natives.

The achievement gap affects students most significantly if they are English language learners, come from low-income families, have a disability, or are members of a racial and ethnic minority, especially African-American students, Hispanic students, Alaskan natives, American-Indian, and Pacific Islanders.

Background & Context

The importance of English fluency in the United States is irrefutable. When asked about the official language of the United States, many will quickly reply that English is the official language. They are surprised to learn that English is not technically the official language.

There is no legislation at the federal level nor in the United States constitution in regards to an official language according to Misachi (2018). He explains, "English is considered the official language in 32 states in what has been referred to as "English-only movement" (para.

2) This movement promotes and supports that legalization be passed, declaring English as the only language that can be used for government and business at federal, state, and local levels. Misachi (2018) stated, "English is the language for legislation, regulation, and court rulings. However, the law requires that some documents such as ballots be printed in multiple languages in areas with a large number of non-English speakers." (para. 3).

All the above mentioned shows the reach and impact the English language has on a day-to-day basis. English is the language of commerce, banking, marketing. It is the language of instruction in education at all levels in the United States.

Bushman (1989) stated that language-study ought to be an inherent part of the English curriculum. Further, he suggests that in order to accomplish the goal successfully, students must have opportunities to explore the nature and structure of language; this includes the usage conventions of "Standard English" in conjunction with other varieties of the language. Furthermore, students should explore language heritage, geographical and social dialects, semantics, and other relevant aspects of language.

Brown, Sibley, Washington, Rogers, Edwards, Macdonald, and Seidenberg (2015) inquired whether the difference in reading achievements of African Americans could be due to language background. Many African American children speak a dialect at home different from the standard language used to teach in schools. They examined the impact dialects have on the students' ability to decode, which is an essential component of early reading and marker of reading development. (p. 1). From the data, Brown et. al. (2015) concluded that the use of the alternative pronunciations of words in different dialects affects reading aloud in developing readers. Results additionally indicated that the achievement gap might be due in part to differences in task complexity. They concluded children whose home and school dialects differed

from academic language are at greater risk for reading difficulties because tasks such as learning to decode are more complex for them.

Often, students are given a book, a text or document and then asked to summarize, to answer comprehension questions, to read for general or specific information, to identify cause and effect, to make descriptions, to draw conclusions, to identify viewpoints, to make inferences. All activities are done from elementary to a college education. These and other reading comprehension activities are thought to emulate what happens in the workforce. When students can effectively decode, derive meaning, understand, and make effective use of information of written and oral texts, they grow and evolve both personally and academically.

The United States school system is Eurocentric. Eurocentric curriculum, like the one currently implemented, centers on its ideas and outcomes in Western culture, focusing on European thought and beliefs as well as the English-speaking world. This favors some students' culture more than others. Thibert (2014) stated that the achievement gap is due to, at least in part, Eurocentric curricula that promote the idea that Westerners are more intelligent, innovative, creative, and overall superior. In his opinion, the consequence is an imbalance towards non-European American students, which led them to believe they cannot perform as well or better than their peers.

Theoretical Framework

The Cultural-Ecological Theory of performance offers a plausible explanation for the existing discrepancies in education achievement between Whites and historically oppressed groups. The theory was developed by Ogbu and Simons (1998) and shows how minorities perform and are affected not only from the standpoint of language, culture, and education, but

also from the looking glass of anthropology. The theory states that a population is considered a minority if it occupies some form of subordinate power in relation to another community within the same country or society. Ogbu and Simons' theory further explains that groups can be separated into two categories. The first is voluntary immigrants. These are people who have willingly moved to the United States expecting better opportunities than the ones they had in their places of origin. Secondly, involuntary immigrants who have been conquered, colonized, or enslaved therefore forced to move to the United States.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of ESL / EFL teaching strategies to support student members of minority groups who speak a dialect of English. How can students be supported so they can meet the academic language demands needed to participate in general education and discipline-specific classes successfully? This study will examine and compare instructional strategies used in schools to find overlapping areas with ESL/EFL strategies or modify and adapt to the needs of the students depending on linguistic complexity and how cognitively demanding the discipline-specific classes.

Research Question

The nature of the academic language that students encounter in K-12 classrooms can be articulated in terms of four broad language domains: oral academic language exposure (listening and understanding the teacher), written academic language exposure (reading and understanding written text), oral production, and written academic language production (Bailey & Butler, 2007).

What ESL/EFL instructional strategies, if any, do teachers perceive useful to improve standard English proficiency in student members of minority groups? What instructional strategies support those who speak a specific dialect of English to allow them to better understand teacher instruction, print material, produce written content, and succeed in standardized testing?

Significance of the Study

This study investigates effective, recognized strategies used in ESL and EFL classrooms worldwide that could potentially be used or adapted to help address gaps in language that hinder the academic success of speakers of a dialect of English. Curriculum planners, teacher trainers, item writers, teachers, and teacher assistants, would become aware and sensitized in regard to strategies that could be incorporated in general education and in discipline-specific classes on the belief that they could only be used in ESL or EFL.

Nature of the Study

This study will investigate the perception that teachers have about the effectiveness that ESL / EFL strategies have to support student members of minority groups who speak a specific dialect of English and need to be successful in effectively understanding and using standard English. The data collection and analysis was qualitative, with interviews and surveys administered to content area teachers, and DELTA qualified, experienced ESOL teachers, as well as administrators, constituting the entirety of the research.

All interviews and the data collected in the surveys led to a qualitative analysis of those narrative results. By looking at responses from three different perspectives, commonalities and

discrepancies will be identified and analyzed. The content area teachers were currently certified and practicing teachers in the United States, DELTA qualified teachers were surveyed via the internet and are currently in England, Hong Kong, and Mexico, and the SEED Foundation currently staffs the administrators.

Definition of Terms

- **Academic language** is defined as the language needed to be successful within a school context (Grigorenko, 2015).

- **Academic language proficiency** refers not to any absolute notion of expertise in language but to the degree to which an individual has access to and expertise in understanding and using the specific kind of language that is employed in educational contexts (Cummins, 2000).

- **Achievement gap** "the differences between the test scores of minority and low-income students and the test scores of their White and Asian peers. (The National Education Association, 2019)

- **EFL & ESL:** EFL is regarded as English as a Foreign Language, and ESL is called English as a Second Language. EFL means learning English in non-English-speaking countries, while ESL means English as a Second Language, which has the same or even more important status as mother tongue (Peng, 2019).

- **Foreign language** means the language used outside the country where it is being learned, learning a foreign language is for tourism, communicating with native speakers, and reading foreign journals among others. However, the Second Language refers to the language that plays the same important role as mother tongue (Stern, 1983).

- **Teaching Strategy** is a generalized plan for a lesson which includes structure, functional objectives and an outline of planned tactics, necessary to implement the strategies. Furthermore, teaching strategies are behaviors that teachers manifest in class to give proper stimulus for timely responses, drilling what was taught and learnt, and increase among other increasing reinforce by receiving extra activities (Issac, 2010).

- **Minority Speakers.** The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) defines minority students as those who are Black, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native, and those of two or more races.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Introduction

There are endless characteristics that make minority groups unique and central to the development of the country. Culture and traditions are two of such traits that stand out; others are language and dialect. A dialect is far from the corruption of a standard language; dialects are valid variations (Bushman, 1989). Dialects are linguistic varieties that differ from the standard language in sound or pronunciation, syntax or grammar, lexicon, and spelling.

Differences in language background may be an important contributing factor to reading acquisition and school achievement. The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS) provides important data related to differences between languages but does not allow examination of the impact of linguistic differences within a language. However, a large body of research shows that characteristics of the language to which children are exposed have an enormous impact on what they learn (Hoff, 2013).

A study on the role and impact that dialect has on the academic experience of college students concluded that the dialects that college students speak represent a type of diversity. Besides, these dialects impact many aspects of the educational experience, including academic experience. The findings suggested that dialects influence aspects such as class participation, levels of comfort in classes, perception of academic challenges, and some even perceived as intelligent or scholarly based on their speech (Audrey & Jaege, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

According to Alger and Acevedo (2013), language is defined as "a system of conventional vocal signs by means of which human beings communicate" (page 2). In other words, language is the means humans have used for both verbal and written communication. Language is part of culture and influences all aspects of any individual or community regardless of size. Language is undoubtedly one major factor influencing who a person is, what they believe, their behavior, interaction patterns, and socialization skills. Learning a language or a variation of a language is far from an easy task. It not only implies learning vocabulary, grammar, and being able to construct sentences; in addition, it requires changes in culture, attitudes, and involves making physiological changes.

The Cultural-Ecological theory by Ogbu and Simons (1998) explained that symbolic response is part of the theory related to how minorities understand and interpret the differences between their culture and language and white American culture and language. Voluntary minorities come to the United States seeking better life opportunities. They come with an attitude geared towards learning the language and culture of the new society. Therefore, they are willing to learn to speak standard English and accept and assimilate to academic and social expectations. On the other hand, there are involuntary minorities who did not choose to become minorities, so they do not possess positive attitudes about learning how to behave and talk like white Americans. What both voluntary and involuntary immigrants have in common is that both know and believe that academic success and better jobs and to get good jobs are directly connected to proficiency of standard English and understanding white people's ways of behaving.

Speaking standard English can be seen by some to discredit or overpower a voluntary or involuntary immigrant. Ogbu and Simons' Cultural-Ecological Theory acknowledges the validity of the use of dialects of English in appropriate contexts and how dialects can help students acquire standard English without seeing it as a threat to their own language and ethnic identity, and cultural background. The theory supports that students can be taught that different ways of speaking are considered appropriate in different situations. Standard English is recognized and applauded in school and in formal environments, whilst at home and out of school, their own language is suitable. The premise is that rather than replacing students' dialects with standard English, schools, curriculum designers, and teachers should encourage the use of strategies that help students decide how different situations determine the language that needs to be used.

In the field of cross-cultural psychology according to John Berry (n.d.) there are four types of acculturation strategies. One of those such strategies is the integration strategy, which means that an individual maintains their own cultural identity and at the same time becomes and active participant of the host culture. Nguyen and Benet-Martinez (2013) conducted a study with immigrant youth and found that the ones pursuing the integration strategy reported better psychological and sociocultural adaptation. They analyzed 83 studies involving twenty thousand participants and concluded that integration is directly associated with better adaptation. Specifically, they found that biculturalism has positive and significant effects on life satisfaction, self-esteem, career success, and academic achievement.

Studying language and dialects allows for clarity and understanding of how people communicate. When analyzing dialects, an understanding and clearer view appears in regard to the choices made from a wide variety of lexical, oral, and syntactic options appropriate to the linguistic group of people (Bushman, 1989).

Language is related to culture and identity when considering factors that influence academic achievement, and this is especially true for 'speakers of stigmatized dialects' (Brett & Jaeger, 2015). In other words, stigmatized students speakers of a dialect could experience lower achievement score. When this is not comprehended by the school environment that surrounds these speakers, these students are put in disadvantage, to the extent that they have been labeled in cases as having a linguistic disorder. Canale (1984) explains that "Certain individuals (often members of language minority groups) have been misclassified as having a language disorder and 'linguistic deficits,' that is, as lacking in basic language proficiency."

Studies have shown that students fail to acquire academic language for multiple reasons. According to Scarcella (2013), three of the main reasons are:

1) Absence of exposure to appropriate books and to people who use academic language,

2) Absence of opportunities to learn and use academic language, and

3) Absence of systematic, explicit instruction which is sufficient and supportive.

4) The world population could be estimated at around 7.7 billion people, and some 6,500 different languages are spoken. When it comes to speakers of English, Crystal (2006) stated that approximately 400 million people speak English as a native language, some other 400 million speak English as a second language, and between 600 – 700 million speak English as a foreign language. This adds up to about 1.5 billion people, an impressive number, which in precise numbers, is about 20% of the world's population.

On the premise that around 1.1 billion people speak English as a second or foreign language and under the assumption that the language has been taught to them, it is worth exploring the successful, proven strategies that have been implemented. The goal is to draw

parallels to support native speakers of minority groups who need language reinforcement to achieve academic success.

Content area teachers are those whose main role is to teach content area matter, for example a science teacher teaching biology, chemistry, or physics. It has been generally believed that students ought to acquire literacy practices from their English language arts teachers, from reading tutors or specialized reading staff, and that in turn students must apply the knowledge and skills in subject area classes.

Teaching content area is by nature a complex process without the added component of including the teaching of literacy. With the exception of Reading and English language arts, content language teachers do not learn, are not trained, or are unequipped to teach reading or writing (Beach & Obrien, 2012). The issue is that content area teachers are not aware of the best strategies and methodologies to teach students the academic language needed in hopes of closing the achievement gap. In his study, Ahrendt (1977) stated, "Teachers should be shown that the teaching of reading skills can be incorporated into the ongoing process of presenting their content area to students" (p. 14).

Review of Literature

What is language?

Alger and Acevedo (2013) defined language as "a system of conventional vocal signs by means of which human beings communicate."(P.19) In other words, language is the means humans have used for both verbal and written communication.

Language is part of culture and influences all aspects of any individual or community regardless of size. There are different perspectives in regard to the origin of languages (Janson,

2012) stated that one perspective is that the origin of languages dates back to biblical times, where Adam was created. The Bible relates one of the tasks given to Adam was to name all of God's creations. This means he was able to communicate verbally from the moment of his creation. Furthermore, it is stated that God himself used language before creating Adam since it was him who said, " Let there be light."

From a more scientific standpoint, Janson (2012) also explained that language as a means of communication between humans goes back some two million years. However, as we know and use it, language with large banks of vocabulary and complex grammatical structures can be traced back by anthropologists some forty thousand years. Verbal and written communication are two reasons humanity has been able to evolve at a level beyond any other species. Some calculations estimate that there are between 6000 and 6500 different languages worldwide.

There are many theories to support the evolution of language. One such theory comes from Prieur, Barbu, Blois-Heulin, & Lemasson, (2019) who postulate at first people started by signing, using body language, and gesturing much like apes. Communication later evolved, perhaps because people needed to move away from using body movement, facial gestures, and sounds to free their bodies and so be able to perform multiple tasks and at the same time. Prieur's theory states that for survival, people scattered from Africa to other territories and adapted their language to geography, culture, and religion. The language was and is still used to let people into society. It may also be a way to keep people out, and a means to differentiate from one group from another.

There have been numerous studies and theories about how language is acquired. One of these theories is Universal Grammar, this theory was brought forward in the 1960s by linguist Chomsky. It proposes that humans have an innate ability to acquire language. The theory states

that grammar is hardwired to the brain; that is to say, children are born with an innate knowledge of grammar, which functions as the foundation for language acquisition.

English as a language originated firstly in Europe. According to British Linguist, Crystal (2008) the English language dates to the year 449, when Germanic tribes arrived in Britain, in this period 'Old English' developed. Then grammar evolved after the Norman Conquest started to develop new vocabulary and new characters; this is what is known as 'Middle English. Furthermore, Crystal (2008) explains that the printing press played an essential role in the expansion of the language, and in conjunction with the Renaissance Era, were the two starting points of what is known as 'Early Modern English.' Changes in language were so significant that a need existed to write dictionaries, note down grammar structures and uses and manuals of pronunciation led to the creation of a standardized language system. Having a set of rules of correct usage, led to the widespread utilization of English as the language of education, especially within the expanding British Empire.

Standard English versus Vernacular Language

Standard English can be defined as the variety of English that has gone through significant regularization and is regularly correlated with formal schooling, the language of testing and assessment, journalism, and official print publications (Nordquist, 2020). Standard English is just one of the many names; other terms used to reference this general concept are Mainstream English, Academic English, and Formal English.

On the other hand, the vernacular language is a speech variety used on a day-to-day basis by a population within a geographical or social territory. Vernacular language is customarily spoken informally and rarely written, and on occasion, seen as being inferior to formally codified

language. Also, vernacular language can have a distinct stylistic register, a regional dialect, a sociolect, or even an independent language. Vernacular language is central to social communication, and it has many varieties; such varieties depend on multiple factors such as age, race, culture, and ethnicity. Furthermore, there are three generally accepted vernacular varieties in the United States: a) Chicano English, b) African American English, and c) Southern English.

At this point, it would be possible to infer that English is or has always been the predominant language in the United States. At the time of independence, the thirteen American colonies severed ties from Great Britain; therefore, English was the dominant language. At the time, twenty-five percent of the population were European immigrants, many of them German. Included in the colonial population was American Indian and African languages, as well as other Portuguese, French, and Spanish immigrants. Fast forward to 1910, the census counted the population at 82 million reported speaking English, Irish, Scotch, or Welsh. About ten million immigrants reported speaking a variety of other languages such as Italian, Yiddish, Polish, and Swedish and Spanish, among others (Ryan, 2013).

The linguistic diversity diminished during World War I when immigration came to a standstill and consolidated English as the main language used. This tendency reverted again in the 1970s when immigration restarted. Language diversity in the United States refers to the number of languages, dialects, and variation, spoken within the country. There is a wide variety of languages spoken at home other than English. The reports that the most common languages spoken at homes in the United States apart from English are: Spanish in first place with 77.1 %, in second place Arabic at 2.4%, in third comes in Chinese at 2.1%, then Vietnamese at 1.7 %. English comes next, this refers to people who live in multilingual households at 1.7 %; at 0.7%,

each are Somali, Hmong, and Russian, and the last three are: Haitian Creole, Tagalog, and Korean at 0.6 % each (Ryan, 2013).

The language of nurture is the language variation learned at home, the language acquired from birth, that is, everyday language or social language (add citation). Schools, on the other hand, require students to test using standard English. Minority students, speakers of a dialect of English, need to understand, compare, process, and use academic language. Students do not acquire academic, standard language at home. They must be taught explicitly the language used in formal education, that is, structure, discourse, and rules of interaction. This explicit need to teach language is evidenced in the common core English Language and Arts and specifically the Language Progressive Skills, which are the guidelines for those critical aspects of grammar that need to be taught and reviewed per grade level.

Teaching Standard English

It is essential to have an open discussion about variations and differentiation of use, meaning, and form of language systems and skills. Everyone speaks their native language, and many people in the world are bilingual or even multilingual. In the United States, most people are monolingual and speak only English. On the other hand, they usually understand and use more than one dialect in everyday speech (Sigsbee, 2014).

Standardized reading testing and English Language Arts are of paramount importance, and it is deeply woven into the United States Eurocentric K – 12 education system. Standardized testing faces a series of concerns regarding validity and reliability due to their construction and how it disfavors students based on racial, socio-economic, and religious background, and native language, in a way the tests undermined or undervalue linguistics diversity (add citation). It

would be interesting to shift from the perspective that English Language and Arts are stand-alone classes where students read texts, find main and supporting ideas, identify protagonists and antagonists, or just read a variety of texts from different genres and eras (Harmon, 1994).

Just like there is more than one way to solve a problem or more than one strategy to win a game, there is more to teaching English Language and Arts and literacy in content areas. Students must understand that to become effective communicators, they need to understand grammar. Grammar provides the foundation for encoding and decoding meaning, discussing sentence and lexical correctness, the different types of sentences, word formation, phrases, clauses, and sentences (Grigorenko, 2015).

A census report by Beauman and Davis (2013) stated that the number of students enrolled in schools in the United States is eighty-three million students, aged three and over. This number was broken down as follows: 5 million children in nursery school, 4 million in kindergarten, 33 million in 1st through 8th grades, 17 million in 9th through 12th grades, this totals fifty-nine million from nursery school to 12th grade, and lastly 24 million at the college level.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) defines minority students as those who are Black, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native, and those of two or more races. The NCES (2020) estimates that in fall 2017, of the 50.7 million students enrolled in public K – 12 schools, 24.1 million were White, 7.7 million were Black, 13.6 million were Hispanic, 2.8 million were Asian/Pacific Islander, 2.6 million were Asian, and 185,000 were Pacific Islander, five hundred thousand were American Indian or Alaska Native, and 2 million were of two or more races. Approximately 31 percent of public elementary and secondary students attended public schools where the combined enrollment of minority students

was at least 75 percent of total enrollment. In these cases, the combination of minorities makes them the majority.

Approximately twenty percent of the world's population, or 1.5 billion people, are thought to speak English. However, most are not native English speakers, only about 360 million people speak English as their first language, that means that about 1140 million people have acquired it as a second language. This means that strategies, techniques, experience, knowledge, and expertise in teaching English as a second language are well recorded. English is the world's most widely studied second language, and currently dominates science, scholarship, and instruction (Maria, 2009). When second language learners take English language proficiency tests such as IELTS and Cambridge Advanced and Professional level certificates, they are tested in what is known as International English.

Variations in a language or dialects embody three general characteristics: vocabulary, grammatical construction, and sounds. All the factors mentioned may be considered when designing curricula that best cater to the nation's current and future realistic linguistic, academic, and labor needs.

Globalization is not foreign to the English language. English is the written and spoken language used in international trade, global mobility, the economy, science, and academia. Its growth as a worldwide language means networks operate in English. Students must be aware and prepared to code-switch and compare and contrast language usage in multiple environments. Knowingly teachers should prepare all students for a globalized world and give more support for versatility of language use for all student groups.

English Language Demands

English is spoken worldwide, and its impact as a global language on educational practices and policies is well documented (Nunan, 2012; Jia-Huey, 2007; Ogunsiji & Fakeye, 2009). Who is considered an English speaker? Speakers of any language can be broadly categorized into three distinct groups (add citation). 1) Native speakers of English are people who learn to speak a language from infancy in a place where the language is spoken and is the official language is English; for example, a person born in the United States, who learns English from birth is considered a native speaker. 2) Foreign language speakers are those who learn the language in a country where English is not official or spoken language; for example, a Spaniard learning to speak English in Madrid, Spain. 3) Speakers as a second language are those who have a native language other than English and learn the language in a country where English is the spoken and the official language; for example, a native Arab speaker learning English in Sydney, Australia.

The language demands of academic learning are broad for both native and non-native speakers of English in the United States. The more diverse, creative, and effective teaching the strategies employed in classrooms, the more likely students will experience success with the general education, disciple-specific classes, and will be better able to communicate with various registers. (Cole, 2008). The objective is not to classify or treat dialects as the first language of students and then academic language as a second language but understanding that second and third language learners need to develop the ability to transfer skills and are able to compare and contrast, analyze and understand, progress and internalize to later use those skills in specific social and academic situations.

Gaps in the Literature

As demonstrated in this review of the literature, there is ample research available on the importance and impact of the English Language, the responsibility of content area teachers to support the development of literacy skills, the achievement gap between minorities speakers of dialects and their white counterparts, as well as an array of strategies and methodologies to teach English as a foreign or second language. However, there is minimal research available on whether or not approach and methods for teaching ESOL could be used or adapted to bridge the gap between minority speakers of dialects of English and academic English to help reduce the achievement gap. This study will allow to better understand how experts in ESOL, content area teachers as well as administrators perceive effectiveness ESOL strategies that can be implemented to support the academic growth of minority students speakers of a dialect of English to understand, use, and internalized standard English for academic success.

Conclusion

The research suggests the achievement gap does exist and that it affects minority speakers of dialects of English. Standard English is the language used in academic contexts, which originates from the mostly Eurocentric curricula in place nationwide, which differs from the culture and traditions of minorities.

English language teachers play a significant role in ensuring that students understand, practice, internalize, and use language to succeed academically. However, the task of teaching language success does not exclusively lie with ELA teachers; it also lies in content area teachers who have to be aware of language teaching strategies needed to incorporate language learning and content learning to fuse them as one.

Research suggests overall, identity, culture, and dialect are obstacles that must be overcome, as being of less value. All stakeholders of education, at all levels, ought to move away from that system of beliefs and ensure that knowledgeable, qualified teachers are given the tools needed to bridge the achievement gap. If part of the gap is caused by the differences between dialects and academic language, then looking into successful strategies used in ESL / EFL and make adjustments that that caters to the needs of minorities is worth considering.

Chapter 3. Methodology Design

Introduction

This chapter on methodology design describes the research methodology used to answer the guiding research question for this study. To facilitate comprehension, it has been divided into the following ten sections: summary of the study, research methodology, research design, target population, data collection, data analysis, internal and external validity, assumptions and limitations, and ethical issues.

Summary of the Study

There have been numerous studies that have suggested a correlation between understanding and using standard English and academic success. In addition, the role of English language arts teachers, as well as content area teachers in the acquisition and internalization of standard English, has been widely recorded. However, there has been considerably less research conducted specifically on ESL/EFL strategies that could be used to bridge the gap between standard English and English dialects to facilitate academic success.

This qualitative research study was conducted in two different environments to gather distinct and potentially interrelated views. The first source of information included content-area professionals with experience working in the United States working with minority speakers of a dialect of English. A second source of qualitative data was brought from ESOL professionals with experience teaching English as a second, third, or foreign language.

This study purposed to explore teachers' perceptions of ESL / EFL strategies that could be used in the classroom. In addition, bringing forward pedagogical suggestions on the strategies and methodologies that could be adapted from ESL/EFL by content area teachers. Such adaptations could support students speakers of a dialect of English in the acquisition and understanding of standard English and by doing so, facilitating comprehension and success in discipline-specific classes.

Research Methodology

The qualitative research method is relevant when factual data is required to answer the research question posed. Qualitative research is ideal in a variety of circumstances, for example, when the information desired is based on opinions, attitudes, views, beliefs or preferences, or when variables can be isolated and defined; when variables can be linked to from hypotheses before data collection; and when the question or problem is known, clear and unambiguous (Hammarberg, et al., 2016).

Mostly qualitative research has been chosen for this study to meet the aim of understanding and exploring the perception of teachers in regard to ESL/EFL strategies, which would potentially aid in reducing the achievement gap in minority speakers of dialects of English. The qualitative methodology process caters to the intent to collect data, analyze, and then move on to find common or general themes to interpret the meaning of the data collected (Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research is an approach for examining the relationship between the variable and viewpoints and that this study will come from content area teachers and ESOL experts to analyze strategies and methodologies that could support the acquisition of standard English and facilitate the success in discipline-specific classes.

Surveys and interviews will be conducted, the questions will be open-ended and close ended. When collating this meant that data collection was qualitative and quantitative and were analyzed separately and in conjunction, that is to say the qualitative data was used to inform the analysis of the quantitative data making this portion of the methodology of mixed method.

Research Design

This study utilized a narrative research design as it roots in the humanities where the researcher enquirers about a people's perception, personal experience, or points of view (Creswell, 2018). In this case, how content-area teachers perceive the ESL/EFL strategies effectiveness. Then narratological tools allowed the selection, management and administration of the data to describe teachers' perceptions while considering different perspectives, analyzing and comparing the information provided by the data.

Target Population

The target population for this study were three different groups. The first teachers of discipline-specific classes currently working in the U.S. public school system, and the second were administrators currently working in the U.S public school system. The last group included ESOL specialists who are highly experienced as ESOL active teachers and teacher trainers who work outside the United States.

Data Collection

The data collected in this research was mostly qualitative in nature and was collected using data triangulation consisting of three methods: an entire qualitative survey designed for ESOL professionals to ascertain how ESL/EFL strategies could be adapted to cater to speakers of dialects of English, a survey designed for content-area teachers and K-12 school administrators focusing on what strategies they use to support academic language acquisition and to gauge their knowledge of ESL/EFL teaching strategies. Follow-up emails or interviews were sent to expand on or clarify responses if needed.

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Data Analysis

The data collected from the teachers and administrators was qualitative in nature and was intended to consist of survey data, follow-up emails, and clarification interviews. It was a four-step process for analyzing the data.

Narrative analysis

This involves the reformulation of the informative provided by respondents considering the context of each case and the different experiences of each respondent (Creswell, 2018).

Coding

All the collected data was broken up into segments, and codes were developed to organize and classify the data.

Development of themes

A narrative analysis was used to generate descriptions of themes and commonalities, including when applicable quotations (Creswell, 2018).

Presentation of themes

The themes and associated quotations and evidence were developed narratively and coherently (Creswell, 2018).

Internal and External Validity

Selecting certified and highly educated professionals from many international settings as the sample population certainly strengthened the study internal validity. The classroom teachers invited to participate in the study provide the viewpoints of practicing educational professionals in Florida public school. The main researcher has spent many years in ESOL teaching and academic study in international settings and is qualified to compose a survey instrument and the follow up interviews. Although the study only involved volunteers, they offer current viewpoints in ESOL.

Triangulation of data

Evidence was rooted from two different data sources, the surveys from content-area teachers and administrators in the U.S. and the surveys from ESOL experts outside the U.S, which allowed the construction of a coherent justification for themes (Creswell, 2018).

Member checking

Teachers and administrators were presented with a draft narrative and sought confirmation that the participants' experiences had been represented fairly and accurately (Creswell, 2018).

Detailed Descriptions

On the premise that the research is descriptive in nature, the intention is to paint readers a vivid image and description into teachers' perception and by doing so, increasing coherence and believability (Creswell, 2018).

Peer-debriefing

To increase meaningfulness an individual has been identified and approached to ask questions, review, and brainstorm. Being able to ask questions allowed for the qualitative study to be more meaningful with people other than the researcher (Creswell, 2018).

Qualitative reliability

This involved reviewing and checking the accuracy of the transcription of survey results against the original submission or follow-up emails to eliminate slips or mistakes and ensure there is no drift in codes (Creswell, 2018).

Assumptions and Limitations

The main limitation was the overarching impact of the pandemic. COVID-19 has to date kept schools in Florida closed since mid-March, and the number of people testing positive, and deaths is increasing daily. Miami-Dade County has currently moved from phase 2 of reopening back to phase 1, which means there are significant restrictions to the day-to-day of citizens, frontline workers are the priority, public spaces and public gathering are prohibited, and plans on whether to reopen schools or not still depends on factors beyond an individual's control.

The pandemic and its stressors likely interfered in the data collection process as connecting with the content area teachers would significantly depend on the beginning of the

school year and accessibility to administrators. The primary limitation of access to an array of

and multiple content-area teachers might mean that the study will be limited.

Ethical Issues

Prior approval and permission were requested to all teachers and administrators involved,

and all received informed consent. Anonymity was key. No teachers or administrator names

were used, and the names of the schools where participants work remained anonymous, and

opinions brought forward in surveys or follow-up emails were used for analysis purposes.

Chapter 4. Research Methodology and Data Analysis

Description of the Study, Setting, and Population

In this study, three ESOL professionals shared their knowledge and experience about second language acquisition strategies that, according to their professional experience, would support student speakers of a dialect of English to be successful in an academic context. The second group were four content-area teachers and two administrators. They provided their feedback on the applicability of the strategies provided by ESOL professionals in content-area classes from their perspectives.

This study centered on one central question. What instructional strategies are used by experienced ESOL teachers to increase minority student achievement?

Two surveys were composed. The first was directed at three ESOL professionals outside the United States of America. Survey responses included key demographic information and allowed for three open-ended questions for participants to complete.

The second survey targeted six K-12 content-area teachers and administrators from two Florida public school districts. The strategies provided by ESOL professionals were populated into the second survey. Content-area teachers and administrators were provided with strategies and sample tasks to evaluate in terms of familiarity, adaptability, and usage. The last question was designed to gauge participants' interest in learning about other ESOL strategies.

Description of Study Timeline

The data was gathered during a four-week period, beginning on the first week and ending in the last week of September 2020. The data was collected in two stages as the input from the ESOL participants was a requirement for the survey for content-area teachers and administrators.

During the first week of September 2020, the first survey was sent to ESOL professionals. After the answers were collected, the survey for content-area teachers and administrators was assembled and sent on the week of September 14, 2020. Data collection from the content-area teachers and administrators occurred and concluded on September 23, 2020.

Description of Data Gathered

Two surveys were sent via Google Survey. Both surveys included an eight-paragraph recruitment statement and the following statement. "I have read the recruitment statement and I believe I understand the purpose of the study, as well as the potential benefits and risks that are involved. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may withdraw at any time. I understand that all information will be submitted anonymously, and I will not be identifiable in this study". At this stage, participants could mark: a) Yes, I consent for my information to be used in the above described study, or b) No, I do not give my consent for my information to be used in the above described study.

The first survey sent out was a three-part survey for ESOL professionals. Part two enquired about demographics, specifically four questions about personal and professional background; the questions were as follows:

1. Are you male or female?

2. How many years of experience do you have in the ESL field?

3. What is your highest level of education? In what field?

4. Do you have a CELTA, DELTA, or other English language teaching certificates?

The final section contained an introductory statement. As well as one open-ended question prompt. The prompt read as follows: Please provide an example of an ESL / EFL strategy, methodology or activity that content-area teachers can put in place to support the development of academic language. Please explain why you think it is effective.

The second survey, aimed at K – 12 content-area teachers and administrators, was a four-part survey. The second section enquired about demographics. How many years of experience do you have in your field?

1. What is your highest level of education obtained? In what field?

2. What content-area class do you teach? Or what is your administrator role?

3. If a teacher, what grade(s) do you teach? If an administrator, what grade range does your school enroll?

Part three provided six different strategies, each strategy asked participants to answer the following three questions:

1. How familiar were you with this strategy / activity before reading about it now? Answers included 5 options.

   1 very unfamiliar, 2, 3, 4, 5 very familiar.

2. Have you ever used a strategy / activity like this one before? Three multiple choice answers were given: a) yes, I have used this activity; b) yes, a similar/adapted activity; and c) No, I have never used an activity like this one.

3. Do you think this strategy can be used as is or adapted to work in your (or any content-area) classroom? Why / Why not? Answers to this question were open-ended.

The last part of this survey asked subjects to answer:

1. How interested would you be about learning how other ESL strategies/activities that can support minorities speakers of English in content-area classes? Responses were marked in a linear scale were

   1 not interested 2, 3, 4, 5 very interested.

2. Are there any comments, observations, or experiences you would like to share that could support this study? Answers to this question were open-ended.

Data Summary of Demographics of ESOL Professionals

Three participants answered the ESOL professionals survey. Two thirds of the participants have 16 to 20 years of experience in the ESOL field. One participant has 11 to 15 years of experience. These ESOL professionals are currently working in their fields in Hong Kong, China; Victoria, Australia, and Leeds in the United Kingdom.

Table 1.1 Educational Background of ESOL Participants

	Postgraduate studies	CELTA	DELTA	Other
1	Master's in Education and International Development	Yes	Yes	-
2	Postgraduate in ESOL	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	Master's in TESOL	Yes	-	Certified translator

The Diploma for English Language Teaching for Adults, referenced to on table 1.1, is from The University of Cambridge. English Language teachers who have obtained their Cambridge CELTA (Certificate of English Language Teaching for Adults) and have post-CELTA teaching experience hold this certification. The Delta certificate allows more expertise in English Language teaching. Certificate holders are qualified for better teaching positions, educational management positions, teacher training and publishing positions.

Data Summary of Demographics of Content-Area Teachers and Administrators

Six participants answered the content-area teacher and administrators survey: four teachers and two administrators.

Table 1.2 Demographics of Content-area Teachers and Administrators

Participant	Years of experience in the field	Highest level of education	Content-area class taught or administrator role	Grades taught or grade range of the school
A	20 +	Masters in Management of Information Systems	Biology and Physics	9 - 12
B	11 - 15	Masters of Science in Education Leadership	High School administrator – Principal	9 - 12
C	20 +	Masters in Curriculum and Instruction	English, Media & Social Studies	9 - 12
D	5 years or less	Bachelors of Arts in Architecture	Technology	9 - 12
E	6 – 10	Masters in Education	Assistant Principal	9 – 12
F	16 – 20	Masters in Curriculum and Teaching	Visual Arts	6 – 8 & 9 – 12

Data Summary of the Research Questions of ESOL Professionals

The strategies, methodologies, and activities suggested by all ESOL participants were varied. Many answers provided ranged from general to significantly detailed. This survey was designed with three, non-required, open-ended responses. Even though answers were desired, all three participants chose to provide the maximum amount, a total of nine responses were submitted. The 3- question survey allowed for participants to add in original strategies. The prompt proved to be a rich source of information form the professionals.

Participant responses offered the following:

- Integrating learnings' cultural and linguistic resources

- Learning through personal discovery by using self-correction

- Showing sensitivity to context from different sources by using the same topic dealing with different purposes or audience

- Scaffolding to introduce content in a step-by-step manner

- The University of Nottingham's academic word list (AWL) to provide students with lexical practice opportunities

- Contextualizing to raise awareness of different communication strategies in different speech communities

- The genre approach which aims to identify a text's features and to imitate it,

- Code-switching

- Comparing genre-features, and

- Understanding the history of language.

Data Summary of the Research Questions of Content-area Teachers and Administrators

Participants read and evaluated six different survey strategies. Participants were first asked to rate their facility with specific instructional strategies. The second question related to prior experience and familiarity with the listed activity. The last question provided an extended answer space for participants to judge whether the activity could be used in some capacity in a K -12 content-area classroom.

The first strategy related to the genre approach. Specifically, had the teachers asked students to mirror a genre in their writing? Results varied. Five of the six participants responded to being very familiar with the technique. One participant was familiar, 33.3% have used the activity, and the remainder have used a similar or adapted activity.

When asked if the respondents could modify the strategy to: reach multiple types of learners, the way students are often cued, teachers mentioned consistency, modeling goals, lesson expectations, and exposure to the appropriate academic language.

Strategy two related to demonstrating the importance of sensitivity to context and audience. Self-reported familiarity levels indicate that only half of the participants were very familiar with the technique, 33.3% were somewhat unfamiliar, and one participant expressed familiarity. Utilizing the strategy had different responses. One participant had used the activity, three have used a similar or adapted activity, and two had never used it before. Pertaining to usefulness or adaptability, participants considered adapting it to different contexts and text types such as civics, social justice, and advertising. In addition, it was mentioned as a possible means of differentiating lessons.

Scaffolding was the third strategy presented. Reported familiarity levels with this strategy reminded high. Four out of the six participants expressed being very familiar with the strategy and the reminder two being moderately familiar. Sixty-six percent reported using a similar or adapted strategy, and 33.3% used the activity exactly as presented. When asked about adaptability, participants expressed scaffolding in as being a) crucial in any content area as being able to provide growth opportunities; b) scaffolding offers opportunities to explore layers in content-area classes, c) scaffolding can be used to personalize instruction, it allows students to build a mental representation of concepts, and d) the view that scaffolding meets students where they are.

The fourth strategy focused on contextualization. Half of the participants answered being very familiar and the other half very unfamiliar with it. Half of the participants responded having used a similar or adapted activity and the other half not having used the activity at all. Opinions also differed in classroom use and adaptability, one participant did not respond to this question and comments in this section were as follows:

- There is very little time for activities like this one,

- Being a tool to support students that let them navigate content and concepts, and

- a tool to be used to show the proper procedure in academic settings.

The use of an academic word list in the classroom was next. Results included the following: familiarity with the strategy was low; three participants expressed being very unfamiliar, one being slightly familiar, one moderately familiar, and one very familiar. Four participants expressed never using the academic word list. Two have used a similar or adapted activity. When evaluating use and adaptability, instruction time was a factor to consider. A

possible adaptation was relating art theory to various art periods or geographical location. Contextualization could be used as a tool to check for understanding in a technology-focused lesson to familiarize students with new or foreign terms and finding ways to expand vocabulary.

The last strategy presented described an open discussion with learners about the historical context of academic language. Four of the participants expressed being either being very unfamiliar or moderately familiar, the reminder two being familiar or very familiar. Even though levels of familiarity varied, only one of the six participants have used a similar activity. When referring to classroom use and adaptability, the suggestion are as follows:

- Having to be implemented at middle and elementary school level to be successful in grades 9 – 12,

- This strategy would be more useful for college or graduate studies and deemed it a noncritical skill for students at middle or high school level.

- The strategy would enable increased student expression when completing laboratory work.

- There was cautioned that the appropriate background information would be needed in more advanced classes.

Finally, two questions ended the survey. The first one asked how ESOL strategies can help content-area teachers support minority speakers. The second was an open-ended response for participants to volunteer further comments they would like to be considered in the study. When it came to interest in additional professional development, fifty percent expressed being very interested, and the other half said being moderately interested. Specifically, half of the

participants expressed being moderately interested and the other half very interested in further learning about ESOL strategies.

The last question encouraged participants to make comments, observations, or describe experiences that would enrich the study. Four participants comments mentioned: a) educators having to maximize opportunities and provide students with multiple opportunities for engagement, b) the impact differentiated instruction has on learning, c) teachers being allowed to teach in a more creative manner, d) incorporating the strategies presented in the classroom, and e) the importance of interdisciplinary learning and teaching. One respondent replied they had no further ideas to share.

Chapter 5. Conclusions

Introduction

This study explored a direct link between ESOL professionals (national and international) at the higher education level and k-9 classroom public school teachers in Florida. Although higher education institutions often provide the pre-service teacher preparation for ESOL certificates, not often do those same faculty share connection with classroom teachers once in-service. The study suggests there is space for collaborative, integrative exchanges to occur between content-area teachers and ESOL professionals. Such connections benefit K - 12 students in the development of language and greater academic success. K -12 content-area teachers and administrators demonstrated being familiar with some strategies rather than others.

Study Strength

Strong points of the study include the following.

- There were no changes in protocol or events during the study that would mitigate findings. The study methodology and time frame remained as originally planned.

- Participants volunteered to complete the questionnaire. ESOL participants work at postsecondary level, have ample experience in their respective fields and hold advanced degrees from well-recognized institutions

- Content-area teachers and administrations have advanced education, public school credentials, and are actively teaching in the Florida public school system.

- The response rate was high. ESOL responses were one hundred percent of the survey potential. Content-area teachers and administrators were 85.7 percent respondent rate of the survey potential.

- All survey responses were submitted and received in a timely manner. All survey responses were included in the data analysis.

- The subject pool accurately reflects the greater population for ESOL higher-ed and k-9 classroom professionals.

- Strategies selected for inclusion are well known in the greater discipline research and worthy of consideration and inclusion.

- Finally, participants were surveyed from national and international settings and faculty. This last variable truly was unique in the body of research and may have shed light on the greater discipline of teaching academic English to English speakers of a dialect of English aged 6-16.

Study Weakness

As in all education research, some variables are included that may have weakened the study results. The small sample size considered for this study certainly limited the possibility of generalizing the results to a broader group.

First, only one iteration of the survey was offered in each category. A second iteration of the survey may have strengthened it. Second, no individual follow-up was undertaken after surveys were returned. Another variable is that a very small percentage of the greater population was represented in the study. Study subjects' thoughts and opinions may or not reflect general

opinion the majority. No standardized or normed survey instruments were available from the research literature. As a result, an original instrument was designed by the main researcher. That instrument was not normed.

Validity

The study's internal validity was robust, owing in part to the selection of the sample population and the use of specially-designed surveys for the participants to complete. All participants involved in the study are experts in their respective fields, ESOL professionals involved in the study average slightly over sixteen years of experience and content-area teachers. School administrators included in the study average over fourteen years of experience. ESOL professionals all currently work at university level or at the British Council in the United Kingdom, Australia, and Hong Kong. Content-area teachers and administrations all work in Florida public schools. Demographics in those schools are composed of students who are mostly members of minorities and speak various dialects of English.

Surveys were distributed electronically. All surveys returned were analyzed within the allocated timeframe. All participants were volunteers, which may have skewed the results marginally. The external validity was strong since it would be possible to reproduce the surveys and collect results online from different groups of ESOL professionals, content-area teaches, and administrators to later be able to compare and contrast variations in responses. Survey responses still exist as raw data. Those could be re-evaluated by future researchers for further validation and analysis.

Reliability

The purpose of an opinion survey is to gather opinions. This survey did just that. The prompts offered both closed and open-ended questions for respondents. Additionally, respondents could offer original ideas to be considered during the data analysis. The use of this same survey with another population might generate different opinions. All input requested dealt only with ESOL classroom strategies to increase k-9 student achievement. Results of this study should only be considered in that parameter.

Setting Impact

The setting for this study took place entirely online. No face-to-face contact or exchanges occurred during this study for reasons such as the variety of physical locations of participants both within the United States and abroad, as well as the mobility restriction, the stay-at-home orders, and the sudden change to full-time online teaching due to COVID-19. The inclusion of national and international respondents certainly tend to broaden the applicability of the results.

This study was impacted directly and indirectly by the worldwide circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic. A recommendation for future research would be to replicate the study under a non-COVID-19 environment.

Recommendations

The focus of this study was interpretive and exploratory in nature. It offers multiple opportunities for future research to either refine or expand upon the findings. It is the researcher's recommendation to school administrators to implement professional development sessions focused on ESOL strategies that can be used by content-area teachers in classrooms where there

are students members of minority groups who speak a dialect of English. Further promoting interdisciplinary exchanges between individuals and departments is recommended.

None of the participants in this study work at the elementary school level and only one of the participants worked with both middle and high school students. It would be encouraged to replicate the study with teaching professionals at the elementary and middle school levels to gauge opinions and views at different grade levels. Including students with varying ranges of age and cognitive development levels may also add another dimension to the results.

The survey results suggest that content-area teachers and administrators have some familiarity with different ESOL strategies, methodologies, or activities and that participants have mostly used adapted versions of samples presented. Overall, study results reveal content-area teachers and administrators perceive ESOL strategies or adaptations feasible for the general education classroom to increase academic achievement of students members of minority groups who speak a dialect of English.

Some of the skills content teachers should develop are:

- Teaching students to formulate a purpose for reading assignments
- vocabulary development by means of introducing new vocabulary and becoming aware of meaning in the context in which it is found
- provide instruction in reading comprehension strategies that can help students make sense of content-area texts
- teachers should know how to design reading and writing assignments and should learn how to teach students to read and write in the ways that are distinct to their own content areas.

Coming from years of teaching in foreign countries, I have found myself learning how the education system works here in the United States. When I started working at my current post, I noticed how dialects allowed students to share their culture, likes and dislikes, and beliefs while hindering them from an academic standpoint. When I inquired with other staff members, they confirmed that it was not only the same in the sister schools in other states, but it was true for students outside the SEED School Foundation.

Personally, it is quite easy for me to relate to the students. In the United States, I am Hispanic and a member of a minority group. When asked what my native language is, I will proudly answer Spanish. However, I always feel the need to explain that, in truth, I am Venezuelan. Therefore, I speak a dialect of Spanish: Venezuelan Spanish. Academically, schools teach in standard Spanish, which rules are overseen by La Real Academia Española, and then we used our social and cultural language outside academia.

Firsthand, I understand how language and culture cannot exist without one another. As an ESOL teacher, my intent is not to change the way students and teachers use language, but to look into strategies and methodologies that could be used to bridge the achievement gap and allow students to understand, practice, internalize and use academic language in academic contexts.

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Appendix A

Transcript of answers provided by ESOL professionals to the inquiry of: Please provide an example of ESL / EFL strategy, methodology or activity that content area teachers can put in place to support the development of academic language? Please explain why you think it's effective.

Participant 1

1. Personalization - integrating the learners' cultural and linguistic resources with their curriculum and teaching sends the important message their backgrounds and dialects have value, that they are not 'substandard', 'inferior' to the dominant, English-speaking, Anglo-American culture in the USA.

2. Scaffolding - introducing learning content in a step-by-step way and providing a lot of guidance along the way. For example, relying more on children's dialect at the start and incrementally transitioning to more academic, 'standard' English as it progresses. As discussed above, using children's dialects ' to help them understand new, unfamiliar content. Also, starting off with a focus more on listening / speaking and moving gradually to more reading / writing.

3. Genre analysis - it aims to show learners that different kinds of texts (written and spoken) have different features. Showing the connection between content, context and language forms used may help the learners distinguish more easily between so-called 'standard English' and dialects, between academic and non-academic language.

Participant 2

      1. A prototypical activity to help learners develop their academic language skills is to show them a model, give them a template, and getting them to fill out that temple with new information. This is one of the many ways of implementing a 'genre approach', in which students look at the features of a text and then aim to imitate it. When teaching the sub-genre of academic presentations, for instance, learners should focus on the stages of such presentations, common functional language used, as well as typical extralinguistic features, such as gestures, that accompany text production.

      2. Get learners to find previously specified genre features in spoken texts, in academic texts produced by people that claim belonging to different minority groups. I believe this is a way of 1) embedding inclusion into the curriculum; 2) ensuring representation of minorities; 3) showing learners examples of academic texts as produced by people from their own communities.

      3. Contextualize lessons in ways that get learners to code-switch. I'm thinking of activity sequences that would get them roleplaying being at home, preparing for a presentation with some of their classmates (using language to reach agreements, express disagreements and make suggestions, for instance), in a more familiar, day-to-day , informal, vernacular register, and then roleplaying being at school, actually delivering the presentation. I think this type of activity sequence would give learners much more practice on the content of the presentation and raise the learners' awareness of different ways of communicating in different speech communities.

Participant 3

1. As a teacher with an ESL background working in English for Academic Purposes classes, I have frequently attempted to deal with this. Thinking of the tools a content area teacher has at her/his disposal, I would suggest the use (obviously with student permission) of previous writing samples dealing with the same topic. The teacher would give the learners three texts in which the quality of the academic language ranges from very poor to excellent and ask the learners to rate the quality of each and then justify their reasons. Once they have done this they will discuss their answers in small groups. This means that the learners will learn through personal discovery which is followed up with further tuition from the teacher who may identify further linguistic features they have missed.

2. I have demonstrated the importance of sensitivity to context and audience by showing students different texts dealing with the same topic, but aimed at different audiences and purposes. E.g. a text about global warming which is a pamphlet from Greenpeace is simplified and written to a general audience. Its purpose is to persuade and appeal to the individual, so words like "you" and "we" are appropriate. This contrasts greatly with an academic article on the same topic which aims to appear scientific and objective and clear connections and evidence with citations must be provided. Another text on the same topic aimed at children will use simple language and be very careful about assuming prior knowledge on the topic. The use of 'cool' language is likely to be used to appeal to the audience. In my activity, the learners are given the texts and are asked to match the texts to the target audiences. Once they have matched them, they are asked to justify their choices by identifying features of each text which led the learner to her/his conclusions. In this way, the learners discover for themselves the features of academic language and why it is considered important. I think this method is effective because learners

learn best by discovery; having to match the genres to audience and purpose and to identify the linguistic and other tools used to do that will be memorable and personal.

3. "I think that the Academic Word List and activities based around the AWL can be useful to learners. In particular any activity in which learners are asked to edit a text which uses a lot of informal language and make it more formal is likely to be useful. I believe that some of the activities on the University of Nottingham AWL page (https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/alzsh3/acvocab/index.htm) are useful. Any list of AWL words / academic phrases and matching words / phrases used in spoken English or informal writing are likely to be a useful toolbox for students to study and use while writing. Furthermore, I strongly believe the importance of open discussion with learners about the historical context of academic jargon and the way language is used to empower favoured elites and marginalise others. It is important that learners understand patterns in why words are considered academic or non-academic. For example, in English, Germanic based phrasal verbs tend to be considered informal where a single Latin based verb exists. This is a result of the hundreds of years post 1066 when Latin and French were the written languages of England and the languages of prestige and power. Understanding such patterns gives learners a means of extending one example of 'non-academic' language to other examples. I find the wording of these questions interesting ""content area teachers ."" One of the major issues in teaching academic English to learners is that English for Academic Purposes teachers usually have inadequate knowledge of the learners' discipline and of the rhetorical language conventions used in the discipline. In turn, the content teachers, who know the discipline content and rhetoric, are not familiar with teaching language. For progress to be made, EAP teachers need to be specialised in and familiar with the learner's discipline, and content teachers will need some training as language teachers."

Appendix B

Transcript of answers provided by content-area teachers and administrators to the question: Are there any comments, observations, or experiences you would like to share that could support this study?

Participant A - Not at this time.

Participant B - I think defining minority speakers of English would be a helpful introduction.

Participant C - There are a multitude of ways to reach ESOL students if teachers are allowed to instruct creatively

Participant D - Very interested in trying to incorporate strategies #2 and #4 more thoughtfully.

Participant E - [participant opted to not answer this question]

Participant F - In general, I appreciate the highlighting of each of the aforementioned strategies. There is always more that we can do as educators to help provide multiple opportunities for student learning to be both engaging and differentiated to meet the needs of all of our learners. This certainly leads well into interdisciplinary learning, which I try to make efforts to have happen as much as possible given the circumstances of that time. Thank you!

Appendix C

Survey to ESOL professionals

ESOL Professionals Survey

Please read the following information about my study.

* Required

RECRUITMENT STATEMENT
1. Yanella Marcano, currently working on fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Masters in Arts, in Curriculum and Instruction at Greenville University working in conjunction with Maryann Manos PhD as my Faculty Mentor invite you to participate in this research study.

2. The title of this study is Understanding how content-area teachers perceive ESOL strategies to support minority speakers of a dialect of English to improve their academic performance. This study hopes to provide critical information for the continued professional development efforts of content area teachers and other education stakeholders.

3. Your participation in this study will involve completing a survey that include closed-ended and open-ended questions, that also includes a demographic questionnaire. Participation will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes.

4. The potential risks associated with participation in this study are minimal and include loss of anonymity regarding study participation, however because you will not provide your name on any questionnaire, nor email or other contact information will be collected the risk for loss of anonymity is minimal. Loss of time and possible boredom with the questions might also be risks, nonetheless, efforts to alleviate these risks include making the survey as brief and interesting as possible.

5. The results may be published in scientific research journals and/or presented at professional research conferences. However, no personal information will be revealed and all responses will remain anonymous; there is no possibility of your responses being linked back to you.

6. Participation in this study will not directly benefit you. Your participation could potentially benefit others by contributing to knowledge of equity in education. This knowledge may help educators, educational administrators, and other stakeholders determine effective means of dealing with bridging the achievement gap.

7. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide not to participate, there will not be a penalty to you or loss of any benefit to which you are otherwise entitled. If you consent to participate now, you may still withdraw from this study at

any time. I understand that all information will be submitted anonymously, and I will not be identifiable in this study.

8. If you have any questions about this research study, you may call Yanella Marcano at +1 786 -420 8393 or Dr. Maryann Manos at +1 309-

1.Do you agree to participate in this survey? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes, I agree to participate.

No, I do not agree to participate.

Demographics Questions

2.Are you a male or a female? *

Mark only one oval.

Female

Male

Prefer not to say

3. How many years of experience do you have in the ESL field? *

Mark only one oval.

5 years or less

6 to 10 years

11 to 15 years

16 to 20 years

20 years or more

4. What is your highest level of education obtained? In what field? *

5. Do you have a CELTA, DELTA, or other English language teaching certificates? *

Check all that apply.

CELTA
DELTA
Other

Research Questions

Please read the statement below about the achievement gap in the United States. As you read bear in mind that the focus of this study is to understand how content area teachers perceive ESL strategies that can help improve standard English proficiency in students of minority groups who speak a dialect of English, and how implementing such strategies will allow students to better understand teacher instruction, print material, produce written content, and succeed in standardized testing.

Introductory Statement
It is generally accepted that standard English is recognized and applauded in school and formal environments in the United States, whilst at home and outside school environments, dialects are acceptable and culturally relevant. The premise for education stakeholders is that rather than replacing students' dialects with standard English, schools, curriculum designers, and teachers encourage using strategies that help students decide how different situations determine the language that needs to be used.

Things to bear in mind:
1.Students can be taught that different ways of speaking are considered appropriate in different situations.
2.There are multiple reasons why the achievement gap exists in the United States; one of those reasons is a Eurocentric curriculum that does not favor speakers of dialects of English.
3.Dialects are linguistic varieties that differ from the standard language in sound or pronunciation, syntax or grammar, lexicon, and spelling.
4.Differences in language background may be an essential contributing factor to reading acquisition and school achievement.
5. English Language Arts teachers use strategies such as rising awareness of language variations and code switching.

1. Please provide an example of ESL / EFL strategy, methodology or activity that content area teachers can put in place to support the development of academic language? Please explain why you think it's effective.

2. Please provide an example of ESL / EFL strategy, methodology or activity that content area teachers can put in place to support the development of academic language? Please explain why you think it's effective.

3. Please provide an example of ESL / EFL strategy, methodology or activity that content area teachers can put in place to support the development of academic language? Please explain why you think it's effective.

Survey to Content-area Teacher and Administrators

Content-area Teachers
Please read the information about this research project, then indicate if you agree to participate.
* Required

RESEARCH PROJECT - RECRUITMENT STATEMENT
1. Yanella Marcano, currently working on fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Masters in Arts, in Curriculum and Instruction at Greenville University working in conjunction with Maryann Manos, PhD as my Faculty Mentor invite you to participate in this research study.

2. The title of this study is Understanding how content-area teachers perceive ESOL strategies to support minority speakers of a dialect of English to improve their academic performance This study hopes to provide critical information for the continued professional development efforts of content area teachers and other education stakeholders.

3. Your participation in this study will involve completing a survey that include closed-ended and open-ended questions, that also includes a demographic questionnaire. Participation may take approximately 30 minutes.

4. The potential risks associated with participation in this study are minimal and include loss of anonymity regarding study participation, however because you will not provide your name on any questionnaire, nor email or other contact information will be collected the risk for loss of anonymity is minimal. Loss of time and possible boredom with the questions might also be risks, nonetheless, efforts to alleviate these risks include making the survey as brief and interesting as possible.

5. The results may be published in scientific research journals and/or presented at professional research conferences. However, no personal information will be revealed and all responses will remain anonymous; there is no possibility of your responses being linked back to you.

6. Participation in this study will not directly benefit you. Your participation could potentially benefit others by contributing to knowledge of equity in education. This knowledge may help educators, educational administrators, and other stakeholders determine effective means of dealing with bridging the achievement gap.

7. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide not to participate, there will not be a penalty to you or loss of any benefit to which you are otherwise entitled. If you consent to participate now, you may still withdraw from this study at any time.

8. If you have any questions about this research study, you may call Yanella Marcano at +1 786 -420 8393 or Dr. Maryann Manos at +1 309-

1. I have read the recruitment statement and I believe I understand the purpose of the study, as well as the potential benefits and risks that are involved. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may withdraw at any time. I understand that all information will be submitted anonymously and I will not be identifiable in this study. *

Mark only one oval.

Yes, I consent for my information to be used in the above described study.

No, I do not give my consent for my information to be used in the above described study.

Demographics Questions

1. How many years of experience do you have in your field?

Mark only one oval.

5 years or less

6 to 10 years

11 to 15 years

16 to 20 years

20 ears or more
2. What is your highest level of education obtained? In what field?

3. What content-area class do you teach? Or what is your administrator role?

4. If a teacher, What grade(s) do you teach? If an administrator, what grade range does your school work with?

Check all that apply.

K - 5
6 - 8
9 – 12

Research Questions
INSTRUCTIONS

Below are examples of strategies, methodologies, or activities that English as a Second Language professionals thought would be useful for content-area teachers to support minorities speakers of dialect of English to improve their academic English to better understand teacher instruction, print material, produce written content, and succeed in standardized testing.

Please read each carefully and answer the questions.

STRATEGY #1 - Genre approach

A prototypical activity to help learners develop their academic language skills is to show them a model, give them a template, and getting them to fill out that temple with new information. This is one of the many ways of implementing a 'genre approach', in which students look at the features of a text and then aim to imitate it. When teaching the sub-genre of academic presentations, for instance, learners should focus on the stages of such presentations, common functional language used, as well as typical extralinguistic features, such as gestures, that accompany text production.

Sample Genre-Approach Task.

Summary of the class: Students will graph and analyze data to determine why fish died in a pretend fish tank.

Goals & Objectives: Students will be able to graph data. Students will be able to write and support a claim with evidence and scientific reasoning by using the date provided in a graph.

Read the information below and fill in the blank with the information in the graph provided.

Model

The fish started dying because the fish ate all the plants. Plants normally absorb all of the nitrites in the water and once the plants were gone, there was nothing to absorb the nitrites. Ten days later, the nitrite levels increased to 5 and that is when the nitrites turned into nitrates.

Claim 1: The fish started dying because the fish tank _____ was too _____. Since the temperature was too hot, the fish were not able to _____. _____ and the fish died. Fish _____ themselves off by swimming and when the fish were _____, they were swimming around.

Claim 2: The fish started dying because of the _____ got too _____. Fish _____ is turned in to ammonia. That _____ is then turned into _____ and lastly _____. When the ammonia started _____ because of the _____ and those same plant _____ all of the nitrates in the water. Once the plants were gone on three days later, the nitrates increased in _____. When nitrate _____ levels became too _____, the fish started dying.

Claim 3: The fish started dying because _____ could not _____ a stable _____. Fresh water fish like to live in an _____ environment that has a neutral _____ of _____. The fish tank _____. _____ constantly and that caused _____ _____ _____ _____. Once the fish could not _____ _____, they started dying.

Claim 4: The fish started dying because _____.
Fish _____.
When _____.
_____ the fish started dying.

Claim 5: The fish started dying because
_____.
_____
_____

5. How familiar were you with this strategy / activity before reading about it now?

Mark only one oval.

VERY UNFAMILIAR

1

2

3

4

5

VERY FAMILIAR

7. Have you ever used a strategy / activity like this one before?

Mark only one oval.

Yes, I have used this activity.

Yes, a similar/adapted activity

No, I have never used an activity like this one

Other:

8. Do you think this strategy can be used as is or adapted to work in your (or any content-area) classroom? Why / Why not?

STRATEGY #2 Demonstrate the importance of sensitivity to context and audience. Showing students different texts dealing with the same topic, but aimed at different audiences and purposes. For example, a text about global warming which is a pamphlet from Greenpeace is simplified and written to a general audience. Its purpose is to persuade and appeal to the individual, so words like "you" and "we" are appropriate. This contrasts greatly with an academic article on the same topic which aims to appear scientific and objective and clear connections and evidence with citations must be provided. Another text on the same topic aimed at children will use simple language and be very careful about assuming prior knowledge on the topic. The use of 'cool' language is likely to be used to appeal to the audience. In my activity, the learners are given the texts and are asked to match the texts to the target audiences. Once they have matched them, they are asked to justify their choices by identifying features of each text which led the learner to her/his conclusions. In this way, the learners discover for themselves the features of academic language and why it is considered important. I think this method is effective because learners learn best by discovery; having to match the genres to audience and purpose and to identify the linguistic and other tools used to do that will be memorable and personal.

Sample Articles.

9. How familiar were you with this strategy / activity before reading about it now?

Mark only one oval.

VERY UNFAMILIAR

1

2

3

4

5

VERY FAMILIAR

10. Have you ever used a strategy / activity like this one before?

Mark only one oval.

Yes, I have used this activity.

Yes, a similar/adapted activity

No, I have never used an activity like this one

11. Do you think this strategy can be used as is or adapted to work in your (or any content-area) classroom? Why / Why not?

STRATEGY #3 - Scaffolding

Introducing learning content in a step-by-step way and providing a lot of guidance along the way. For example, relying more on children's dialect at the start and incrementally transitioning to more academic, 'standard' English as it progresses. As discussed above, using children's dialects to help them understand new, unfamiliar content. Also, starting off with a focus more on listening / speaking and moving gradually to more reading / writing.

Sample reading materials.

12. How familiar were you with this strategy / activity before reading about it now?

Mark only one oval.

VERY UNFAMILIAR

1

2

3

4

5

VERY FAMILIAR

13. Have you ever used a strategy / activity like this one before?

Mark only one oval.

Yes, I have used this activity.

Yes, a similar/adapted activity

No, I have never used an activity like this one

14. Do you think this strategy can be used as is or adapted to work in your (or any content-area) classroom? Why / Why not?

STRATEGY #4 Contextualization
Contextualize lessons in ways that get learners to code-switch. I'm thinking of activity sequences that would get them role-playing being at home, preparing for a presentation with some of their classmates (using language to reach agreements, express disagreements and make suggestions, for instance), in a more familiar, day-to-day , informal, vernacular register, and then role-playing being at school, actually delivering the presentation. I think this type of activity sequence would give learners much more practice on the content of the presentation and raise the learners' awareness of different ways of communicating in different speech communities.

Sample activity

Information Technology class on how to use a software, e.g. Photoshop.

The class is divided into groups of four, each group must prepare and present on how a specific feature of the system works. To incorporate language comparison and usage, each group will be split in two, the first pair will make the presentation directed to their friends and classmates, the second pair has to make exactly the same presentation where the audience would be a paying, corporate client.

15. How familiar were you with this strategy / activity before reading about it now?

Mark only one oval.

VERY UNFAMILIAR

1

2

3

4

5

VERY FAMILIAR

16. Have you ever used a strategy / activity like this one before?

Mark only one oval.

Yes, I have used this activity.

Yes, a similar/adapted activity

No, I have never used an activity like this one

17. Do you think this strategy can be used as is or adapted to work in your (or any content-area) classroom? Why / Why not?

STRATEGY #5 Academic Word List
I think that the Academic Word List and activities based around the AWL can be useful to learners. In particular any activity in which learners are asked to edit a text which uses a lot of informal language and make it more formal is likely to be useful. I believe that some of the activities on the University of Nottingham AWL page are useful. Any list of AWL words / academic phrases and matching words / phrases used in spoken English or informal writing are likely to be a useful toolbox for students to study and use while writing.

https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/alzsh3/acvocab/index.htm
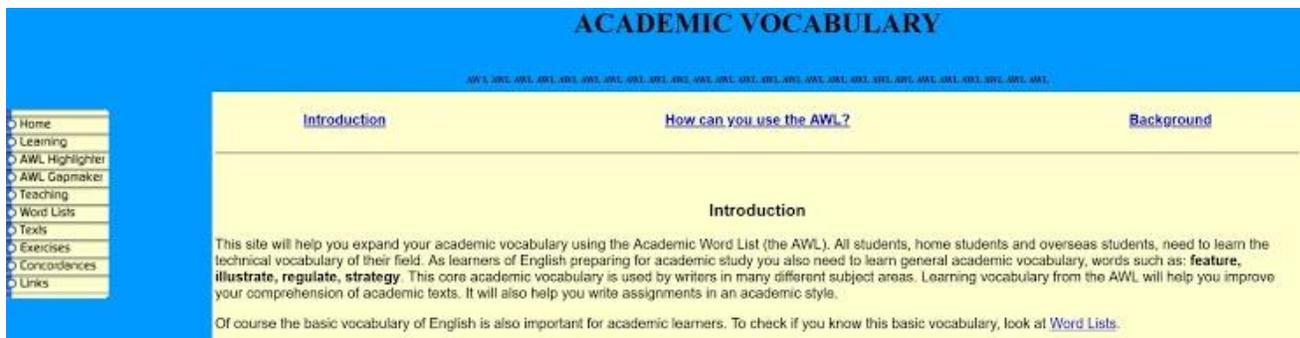
18. How familiar were you with this strategy / activity before reading about it now?

Mark only one oval.

VERY UNFAMILIAR

1

2

3

4

5

VERY FAMILIAR

19. Have you ever used a strategy / activity like this one before?

Mark only one oval.

Yes, I have used this activity.

Yes, a similar/adapted activity

No, I have never used an activity like this one

20. Do you think this strategy can be used as is or adapted to work in your (or any content-area) classroom? Why / Why not?

STRATEGY #6 Open Discussion
I strongly believe the importance of open discussion with learners about the historical context of academic jargon and the way language is used to empower favoured elites and marginalise others. It is important that learners understand patterns in why words are considered academic or non-academic. For example, in English, Germanic based phrasal verbs tend to be considered informal where a single Latin based verb exists. This is a result of the hundreds of years post 1066 when Latin and French were the written languages of England and the languages of prestige and power. Understanding such patterns gives learners a means of extending one example of 'non-academic' language to other examples.

Sample Paragraphs of Phrasal Verbs vs Verbs

Phrasal Verb

When I **set off** for work this morning, my car **broke down**, so I **ended up** taking the train. As soon as I **got off**, I **bumped into** an old classmate, James. While we were talking, he **brought up** something I had already **found out** from some mutual friends- that he had **come into** some money and had **set up** his own business. He told me that there was a lot to **sort out**, and offered to **take me on**, but I **turned** him **down** straight away.

Single Verb

When I **left** for work this morning, my car **malfunctioned**, so I **took** the train. As soon as I **disembarked**, I **met** an old classmate, James. While we were talking, he **told** something I had already **discovered** from some mutual friends- that he had **inherited** some money and had **started** his own business. He told me that there was a lot to **settle**, and offered to **hire** me, but I **refused** straight away.

21. How familiar were you with this strategy / activity before reading about it now?

Mark only one oval.

VERY UNFAMILIAR
1
2
3
4
5
VERY FAMILIAR

22. Have you ever used a strategy / activity like this one before?

Mark only one oval.

Yes, I have used this activity.

Yes, a similar/adapted activity

No, I have never used an activity like this one

23. Do you think this strategy can be used as is or adapted to work in your (or any content-area) classroom? Why / Why not?

Closing Questions

24. How interested would you be about learning how other ESL strategies/activities that can support minorities speakers of English in content-area classes?

Mark only one oval.

Not interested
1
2
3
4
5
Very interested

25. Are there any comments, observations, or experiences you would like to share that could support this study?