First Time in CBI*

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This study aimed at sharing experience and insights concerning how to implement Content-Based Instruction (CBI) courses for college-level English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, in particular with graduate school students who did not have any experience with a CBI course before. Through examining what and how the first time CBI course takers perceived of the CBI course and evaluated their learning as a case study of action research employing the framework of formative assessment (FA), the study showed that, regardless of L2 proficiency level, the graduate school learners acknowledged the experience with the CBI course through which they could be confident enough to challenge themselves to acquire necessary language and academic skills. The study suggested that comprehension-first approach, clear sense of purpose of learning, induced participation supported by the expected sequence of the lesson flow, required motivation, and encouraging atmosphere of the classroom environment fostered by personal rapport with the instructor may be vital to successful implementation of CBI courses. It also discussed the role of L1 use: In what way it can benefit those who have to deal with the grade-appropriate level L2 language input even before reaching an advanced level of proficiency in the L2.

I. INTRODUCTION

This study investigated how the first time CBI course takers should be assisted to earn positive and productive experience in a CBI course so that they can continue to challenge themselves to seek out for authentic L2 language experience which should reflect their age and cognitive level, thus become professional language users taking advantage of their educational background. Ever since communicative language

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teaching (CLT) approach has been proposed in the late 1960s with CBI being subsumed as a major trend in curricular design in second and foreign language education and being considered very effective for both language and content learning (Wesche & Skehan, 2002, cited in Snow, 2005). Stoller (2002) takes the position that “the success of CBI depends on the details of its implementation” (Snow, 2005, p. 697). That is, while the “viability of CBI as an approach to second and foreign language teaching is generally unquestioned” (Snow, 2005, p. 694), “ensuring the necessary conditions to achieve this presents an ongoing challenge” (Wesche & Skehan, 2002, p. 220) implying that there are many issues to be solved out if CBI can be practiced producing a maximum learning effects with a particular group of L2 learners.

The current study attempted to make suggestions for effective implementation of CBI for educated adult EFL learners by taking a look at how graduate-school learners perceived of a CBI course and evaluated their learning experience with it. The motivation for the current study came from the observation that, in an EFL environment like Korea, most CBI research recruited primary and (or) secondary school, and undergraduate school-level learners and their CBI course to explore its (in)effectiveness not only in increasing L2-using abilities but also other related aspects of language learning such as psychological factors including anxiety and motivation (Jong-Bai Hwang, 2002), responsibility for and independence of their own learning (Jeong-ryol Kim, 2007). Eun-Ju Kim (2003) compared a CBI course with a Korean-medium one to see how the students of each class would differ in their motivation and interest as well as in their participation. Duk-Ki Kim (2001) investigated primary and secondary school teachers’ response to English-medium courses while Sung-Yeon Kim (2008) examined the different degree of anxiety displayed by primary and secondary school teachers in the English-medium classes. But there are few studies investigating graduate school-level learners' experience of taking CBI courses. This may be partly due to the fact that if the learners take CBI courses at a graduate school, then they are at a special program where the graduate school might be employing English-only policy for their instruction, to which only fluent English speakers can be admitted. Meanwhile, Jun-Eon Park argued for CBI for primary school students (1998) and college students (2004). But there are few studies investigating graduate school-level learners' experience of taking CBI courses.

However, considering the fact that no academic professional can be free from the demand of English in their school life and career after graduation, any graduate school should be able to respond to its students' needs to improve and upgrade their English language skills to meet social as well as respective academic community's expectation to function as the degree-holders of MA (or MS) or Ph.D. Compared with the English-only special programs of a specific purpose graduate school, it appears that the general
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graduate school is reluctant to offer CBI courses due to several reasons such as linguistic unreadiness of the students, fear for less amount of information covered, and possibly unrefined discussion, thus making their efforts unrequited for both instructor and students. But the graduate school learners are in a sense those whose need of mastery of English linguistic skills can be even more urgent than that of any school level learners since they are to start off a career soon enough for which they are normally required to show a high level of L2 proficiency. In this vein, the current study tried to look into the possibilities of a CBI course in assisting the adult learners to attain necessary language skills without sacrificing enhancement of content-knowledge. For this purpose, the study was guided by the following two research questions:

1. What and how the adult EFL learners would perceive of a CBI course and evaluate their learning when taking it for the first time?
2. What kind of consideration should be taken to effectively implement CBI courses especially for those who have less experience with CBI courses?

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. Content-Based Instruction (CBI)

Within the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach which claims that “language use is the driving force for language development” (Long, 1989; Prabhu, 1987, cited in Brandl, 2008, p. 7), CBI or a content-language integration approach that “ties language expression and curriculum content together via a set of underlying knowledge structure” (Leung, 2007, p. 252) produced “significantly higher achievement than conventional language instruction” (Skehan, 2007, p. 290). Concerning the benefits of CBI, Lightbown and Spada (2006) pointed out that it “increases the amount of time for learners to be exposed to the new language. It creates a genuine need to communicate, motivating students to acquire language in order to understand the content” (p. 159). Especially for adult-learners, “there is the advantage of content that is cognitively challenging and interesting in a way that is often missing in foreign language instruction” (ibid.).

Compared with the traditional teaching methods which “depend on declarative memory, audio-lingual method (ALM) on procedural memory, and many contemporary methods on episodic or semantic memory” (Leaver & Shekhtman, 2002, p. 9), CBI is supposed to provide language and cognitive experience in a more comprehensive and customized manner reflecting authentic communication circumstances in which a professional language user might be situated. In particular, for the L2 learners whose goal is not merely
attaining conversation skills for everyday life activities but trying to acquire what Cummins (1992, 2000) referred to as cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP) which was conceptualized as “manipulation of language in decontextualized academic situations” (Cummins, 1992, p. 17). CBI was often blended with English for academic purpose (EAP) within English for specific purpose (ESP) tradition.

With respect to the participants of the current study, the CBI course was employed as an EAP course for MA students majoring in English linguistics and applied linguistics reflecting the fact that CBI has been considered as “the most natural vehicle for academic language use” (Angelelli & Kagan, 2002, p. 201). Thus, they were supposed to acquire not only the academic contents of the specific course but also genre-specific writing conventions through such tasks as analysis paper based on the established researcher’s work and research proposal with their independent work for which they were also expected to develop L2-using abilities.

2. Input Hypothesis

Almost every applied linguist would agree with Cummins (2000) stating that “access to sufficient comprehensible input in the target language is a necessary condition for language acquisition” (p. 541). Earlier in 1984, Krashen asserted that “we acquire language only in one way: when we understand messages in that language, when we receive comprehensible input” (p. 61). In the context of academic learning, Krashen stressed the necessity of extensive reading (1993, 1999). For the adult learners to be able to function in their academic and professional communities, extensive reading with the books and curriculum materials should be an essential condition through which they can bridge the gap between themselves and other professionals including native speakers (Corson, 1995, 1997). It supports the argument that “comprehensible input, provided through the content materials leads to language acquisition” (Snow, 2005, p. 693). In this vein, CBI is supposed to provide “language- and literacy-rich environment” (Lesaux, Geva, Koda, Siegel, & Shanahan, 2008, p. 33) which may be an indispensible condition for educated adult learners to acquire a desired level of proficiency.

In the current study, along with the suggestions of the input hypothesis, it was a primary concern to help the participants to comprehend the input while providing as rich and authentic input as possible to fulfill CBI promises. The input hypothesis was criticized mainly based on the observation of the immersion programs in Canada where the French immersion students’ listening and reading comprehension abilities were measured similarly to those of francophone students of the same age, but the speaking and writing abilities were different in many ways from their francophone peers. Thus, it was inviting another explanation of language acquisition, output hypothesis (Swain, 1985, 2005).
However, it is hard to deny the critical contribution of comprehensible input especially in the beginning period of language acquisition.

III. METHOD

The current study employed a format of action research which is often a "localized and commonly small-scale" (Burns, 2007, p. 991) case study. According to Burns (2007), action research is "a reflective process aimed at changes and improvements in practice. Changes come from systematically and (self-) critically evaluating the evidence from the data" (ibid.). As Crookes (1993) argued, action research has primarily been motivated by the teacher as researcher concept. In an educational context, it takes "a more situational form of classroom research" (Brown & Rodgers, 2002, p. 99) mainly for the purposes of improving the teacher-researcher's way of instruction to effectively support the students' endeavor in fulfilling their learning goals.

In particular, the study employed the framework of formative assessment (FA) in delivering the evaluation of the participants' learning experience with the CBI course. Lantolf and Thorne (2006) argued that FA is “usually positioned in contrast to ‘summative assessment’ ” (p. 348) which “often occurs at the end of a course and is designed to determine what the learner can do with the language at that point” (Shrum & Glisan, 2000, p. 292). On the other hand, FA is designed to help form or shape the learners’ ongoing understanding or skills while the teacher and learners still have opportunities to interact for the purposes of repair and improvement within a given course of setting… Examples include quizzes (five to fifteen minutes, class interaction activities such as paired interviews, and chapter or unit tests.) (ibid.)

1. Context of the Study

In the study, a particular course of graduate school, Research Methodology in English Linguistics, a compulsory course for graduation requirement, was recruited as a scene of research in which participating students and their instructor experimented what they might experience and how they would grow as CBI course-taker and instructor especially when the participants were exposed to a CBI course for the first time. The fact that the class-size was small with only three students taking the course also encouraged the instructor to try CBI with the course since such a small class-size would allow more time for participation and feedback along with less threatening environment
for L2 use being created. Among the three prototype models for CBI, sheltered instruction (SI), adjunct programs, and theme-based instruction, the course mentioned in the study was practiced following SI approach. A typical SI course can be considered as “a content course taught by a ‘language sensitive’ content specialist to a segregated group of learners, thereby ‘sheltering’ the second language learners from native speaking students” (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001, p. 211) in American universities. In such SI courses, “content teachers will naturally make adjustments and simplifications in order to communicate more effectively with their second language audience” (ibid., p. 181). However, the instructors practicing SI do not attempt to make the contents comprehensible by reducing the readability demands of reading materials. They only adapt the texts and other resource materials to the point where the content concepts are left intact (Short, 1991). See Appendix A for the course syllabus.

2. Participants

Three 1st semester MA students at the department of English of the graduate school in a university, Seoul, Korea, participated in the study. They were referred to as participant A, B, and C, respectively: Participant A who, in her late of 30s, had run a language institute as well as taught English there decided to continue her study at the MA program to increase professional competitiveness as an instructor and CEO of the language institute. She declared herself strongly motivated not only to enhance academic knowledge but also to improve her language skills through the graduate study; Participant B, in her late 20s, currently worked for a company ever since her college graduation and found herself bored with the office work and wanted to change her career. Since she often had to communicate with overseas branches for the company, she observed herself quite comfortable for everyday-life conversation, but not used to academic way of using English; Participant C, in her middle of 20s, chose the MA program as a prerequisite for a Ph.D. in English education. She taught middle- and high-school students at a crammer as a part-time instructor using only Korean for her instruction. Meanwhile, the instructor, an English-education major, had taught CBI courses at the undergraduate and graduate-level programs for seven years by the moment of the data-collection for the study. She also had teaching experience as a graduate research assistant and teaching assistant for five years when she went to an MA and a Ph. D. program at universities in the USA.

Table 1 summarized the information of the participants concerning their English proficiency level, motivation for the study at the graduate school as well as for the course, and how they wanted to be assisted by the instructor. The information was induced from the discussion happening in the first session concerning how the course
would proceed, and the survey for which the participants were invited to answer four questions at the end of the first session. The four questions were: 1. What makes you take this course?; 2. What kind of expectation and concerns do you have with the course?; 3. How would you prepare for each session?; 4. How would you want your instructor to help you to effectively take the course? When answering Question 3, for example, they were to talk about whether they would form a study-group for previewing the chapters or prepare for the class by individually reading the textbook. For each question, the participants were encouraged to provide their answer using both languages, their native language, Korean, and the target language, English. But except for Participant A, the other two participants filled out the survey only in English. Participant A used both languages for the first question, but only Korean for the next three questions. Concerning the current study, each participant agreed that the researcher would use the information obtained from the participants including the results of the weekly comprehension-quizzes, individual conferences and other related behaviors in and outside the classroom with their understanding that their identities will remain confidential, and the information will be used for research only. A written consent-form was obtained from each of the participants.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1</th>
<th>Participants' Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoken level*</td>
<td>Intermediate-mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing skills*</td>
<td>Intermediate-low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation for G**</td>
<td>To support her career as an instructor and CEO of a language institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation &amp; Expectation for C***</td>
<td>To be familiar with the research conventions/to improve speaking skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns</td>
<td>Text looks difficulty for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to prepare</td>
<td>Reading each chapter several times by myself, and group study afterward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to be assisted</td>
<td>Major issues and concepts should be provided before each</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
chapter is discussed. helpful. concepts presented in the chapters should be offered/added.

* The participants’ spoken proficiency and writing skills of English were self-rated along with the instructor’s observation based on their classroom performance and their work within and outside classroom activities such as weekly comprehension-quizzes, analysis paper, and final term-paper (research-proposal); **Motivation for G stands for what made them continue to study at the MA program; *** Motivation for C indicates the reasons why they chose to take the course.

2. Sources of Data

1) Weekly Comprehension-Quizzes

As a primary concern of the CBI course was in ensuring comprehension of the academic contents, the comprehension-quizzes were conducted to appraise the participants’ level of understanding of content-knowledge in a form of FA as suggested by Shrum and Glisan (2000). It was practiced eight times from the 3rd week, March 20, throughout the 14th week, June 5, 2008. Since there were 10 chapters in the main textbook of the course, Second language research: Methodology and design by Mackey and Gass (2005), the participants took the quiz when completing each chapter. First two chapters and last two chapters were combined to the 1st and the 8th quiz, respectively. There were four terms or questions per quiz for which the participants were to answer either in Korean or in English.

They took the first 3 quizzes as an in-class activity, but the last 5 quizzes as a take-home since they were complaining about the burden of taking the quiz at the end of each session. Even though the instructor made it clear that the results of the quizzes had nothing to do with their final grade, it seemed that the participants took them seriously enough to be anxious about their performance on the quizzes. They expressed that “it was one thing to understand, but the other to show my understanding with a quiz. I feel like I am following you (the instructor) when listening to you (during the lecture and discussion), but hard to put down on the paper my answers to each quiz-item which will reveal my comprehension-level - translated” (Participant A, from the individual conference.)

Thus, the results of the first 3 quizzes were taken more directly to tell how much the participants were able to comprehend the academic contents they tackled on the particular day. Those of the rest 5 quizzes could be served as a tool for review of the lessons and their contribution to increasing their level of comprehension was discussed.

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1 The conference data were collected in Korean, and translated into English for the sake of data analysis. The quotations were indicated in italics.
in a more qualitative way in the individual conferences. Each quiz was rated with the possible full score of 10 points which was converted to 100 percent for the report of the results. See Appendix B for a quiz with the answers being provided. Meanwhile, a midterm-exam was done as a take-home with four questions as follows: 1. Compare and contrast the characteristics of quantitative and qualitative research; 2. Why do we need pilot testing? What can be a best way to take advantage of a pilot test to ensure validity and reliability of the main study?; 3. What kind of data and data collection methods should be used for such type of research as processing research, interaction-based research, strategies and cognitive process research, and sociolinguistic and pragmatics-based research, respectively?; You may want to justify why you would use certain type of data and data collection procedures in your discussion; 4. Take a look at the following research question and state all possible types of variables: Does length of residence in a target-language speaking country affect the acquisition of pronunciation skills? The participants produced 2-3 page-long answers for each question mainly in the L2, and performed well enough to earn A. Compared with the quizzes, the midterm questions were developed to help the participants to review what they discussed in a more critical and comprehensive way.

2) Individual Conferences

To tap into how the participants perceived of and evaluated their CBI experience as well as what kind of difficulties they might face, and how they wanted to be assisted to solve out those difficulties in order to maximize the effects of the CBI course, individual conferences were held in a form of semi-structured interview based on the suggestion of external incidental FA (Ellis, 2003) which focused on “teacher and student reflection on learner performance either during or following completion of an activity” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 349). Each participant was invited to the instructor's office and the conferences were tape-recorded for the later analysis. Two conferences were held on May 22, 2008, and the other on July 2, 2008, respectively. What they discussed throughout the conferences was also expected to provide understanding of the participants' psychological aspects toward the CBI course as the "beliefs and attitudes expressed by the interviewees are essential to researchers' interpretive processes" (Codo, 2008, p. 162), especially in the current study, of how the participants had transformed not only academically but also psychologically throughout the CBI course.
3) Instructor’s Reflection

As the study employed a qualitative way of description of what and how it was going on with the first-time CBI course takers throughout one-semester period of time, the instructor's reflection was added as a way of triangulation of data-gathering whose theoretical purpose was to “explore the issues from all feasible perspectives” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 368). Kabilan (2007) pointed out that “the practice of reflection is deeply rooted in critical thinking and is connected to external realities, enfolded with the practitioner’s inner feelings” (p. 683). This sounds echoed with Broudy (1967) and Sutherland (1985) stating that “educationists should know not only how to do their job, but should also be conditioned by reflection” (O’Donoghue, 2007, p. 181).

In particular, having employed the pedagogical assumptions supported by dynamic assessment (DA) which “does not separate instruction from assessment but instead considers them as two sides of the same coin” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 327), the instructor’s reflection focused on providing “modifiability and on producing suggestions for interventions that appear successful in facilitating improved learner performance” (Lidz, 1991, p. 6). While the course was organized according to an outcome-based activities and thus the grading criteria was rather traditional as indicated in the syllabus (Appendix A), the instructor’s reflection attempted to offer an additional but different interpretation of what and how the participants achieved with the course following DA in this study.

Along with the individual conferences, the instructor’s reflection was also practiced within the tradition of FA which can occur during a course of study to gather “information which will inform teachers and students about the degree of success of their respective efforts in the classroom. It allows teachers to diagnose students’ strengths and weaknesses in relation to specific curricular objectives” (d’Anglejan, Harley, & Sharpson, 1990, p. 107).

In the current study, the reflection was reported focusing on what kind of instructional means was more effective in increasing the participants' comprehension and participation. It was not restricted to what happened within the classroom, but inclusive of informal meetings in which the participants and the instructor talked about their personal motivation and attitude toward their study as well as apprehension they might have concerning whether they can meet the expectation of the academic community and the society as graduate-school students of English. As "a common problem for EFL teachers is dealing with a passive class, where students are unresponsive and avoid interaction with the teacher” (Snell, 2002, p. 29), such informal meetings might be helpful in reducing the possible anxiety that the participants would undergo in the CBI course by establishing personal rapport with the instructor, which can lead to a
constructive interaction not only with the instructor, but also among the participants themselves. Once a certain level of interaction will be secured, it may contribute to fostering a favorable classroom atmosphere. The reflection was written up right after the semester, which was motivating the researcher to produce this paper.

3. Method of Data Analysis

The data obtained from the individual conferences and instructor’s reflection were coded manually and analyzed in a form of content analysis for which what each participant and the instructor said and reflected employing the constant comparative method suggested by Merriam (1998), which was developed by “Glaser and Strauss (1967) as the means of developing grounded theory. A grounded theory consists of categories, properties, and hypothesis that are conceptual links between and among the categories and properties” (p. 159). While “it is naïve to think that there are no preconceived guiding theories going into a project” (Riggenbach, 1999, p. 39), content analysis suggested by the grounded theory can help qualitative studies present the data “in categories that allow us to compare what different people said, what themes were discussed, and how concepts were understood (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 228). In many qualitative studies, “the real interest is in how participants make sense of what has happened, and how this perspective inform their actions, rather than determine precisely what they did” (Maxwell, 1996, p. 58). In addition, the quantitative type of data of the weekly comprehension-quizzes was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Results of Comprehension-Quizzes

Since the participants took the quizzes as take-home activity from the 4th one, it should be considered that their level of comprehension was not directly reflected with the scores they earned as they confessed that they consulted the chapters and notes when answering some quiz-items. But the mean score of each participant was interestingly consistent with their self-evaluation of how much they understood each chapter and its in-class discussion: Participant A assessed that she roughly understood about 70% of the academic contents; for Participant B, it was between 70 and 80%; for Participant C, it was about 80%.

Another notable point was that the participants did not attribute their lack of comprehension to the fact that the academic information was delivered in the L2,
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English. Rather, they pointed out the lack of background knowledge of the academic contents as the possible cause of incomprehension since all the three participants were new to the course contents. Even though they majored or double majored in English when they went to undergraduate school programs, they did not have a chance to take a similar course so that it was the real first time to manage to catch on the contents. They looked back that they "struggled a lot to figure out what the chapters presented especially up until I spent for about one and a half months up. As the midterm-period has passed, it was getting clear and clearer what the terms and concepts represented - translated" (Participant B, from the individual conference). In addition, when they were asked whether they could have comprehended better if they had taken the course as an L1-medium course, no participant answered positively: "I don’t think that I could’ve understood better if I had been taking the course in my native language – translated (Participant C, from the individual conference). Table 2 showed each participant’s performance with the quizzes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quiz</th>
<th>Participant A (%)</th>
<th>Participant B (%)</th>
<th>Participant C (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>85</td>
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<td>2nd</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>75</td>
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<td>4th</td>
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<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>63.38</td>
<td>74.13</td>
<td>85.25</td>
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2. Participants’ Voice

From the content analysis of the individual conferences, three themes were emerged: 1. strengths of being an adult L2 learners; 2. confidence increased by the course-taking experience; 3. the contribution of required motivation.

1) Strengths of the Adult L2 Learners

First of all, the three participants showed that they had clear sense of purpose of their learning: Why they advanced to the graduate school; What kind of academic and professional abilities they have to acquire as MA students majoring in English. That is, they knew that they have to make themselves competent enough not only academically but also linguistically. Even though none of the three participants could be rated as an
advanced L2 user, they willingly agreed to the suggestion of the instructor that she offer the course as a CBI as indicated in the syllabus. As Brown (2001) suggested that adult-learners be given “as many opportunities as possible to make choices about what they will do in and out of the classroom. That way, they can more effectively make an investment in their own learning” (p. 91), CBI should be one of available options for EFL learners, where they can challenge themselves in an authentic way.

Second, the participants were in desperate need of opportunities of improving language skills, especially oral skills, for their current and future job: "Even though I want to improve my English language skills, especially oral skills, I don't have time devoted only to language itself due to my busy schedule at work. So, I am appreciating this course in which I cannot but use English so that I will make a more fluent speaker - translated" (Participant A); "As I have to communicate with the overseas offices, I am speaking English usually over the phone. But it is often a short conversation. I don't have a real chance to speak English professionally in an extensive manner so that this course would help me practice English in a rigorous way - translated" (Participant B); "Currently I don't have to speak English even though I am teaching English because I am only supposed to help my students earn better grade with paper-and-pencil tests. But after MA and Ph.D., I want a teaching career at a college so that I know I should be fluent enough to lecture in English - translated" (Participant C).

Along with the clear sense of purpose, their current and future need seemed to help make the participants determined to stay in the CBI course and showed positive attitude since they saw it as almost only opportunity to use English in a professional way in the EFL environment. Once the adult learners realize the goal and need, it was considered that they can make more efficient language learners taking fully advantage of cognitive maturity and previous educational experience earned in their L1 as “many foreign language educators recommend that application of students’ knowledge and the personalization of questions and other tasks, in order to take into account adults’ schemata, which are highly complex and sophisticated” (Leaver & Shekhtman, 2002, p. 17). In addition, they can be even more encouraged to endure the process of increasing L2-using abilities when they are informed of theoretical connotations and research findings supported by empirical studies presenting the strengths of adult learners.

2) Confidence Increased by the CBI Experience

Even though the participants decided to stay in the course, it took time to get used to such an intensive L2 use as they mentioned that it was quite a struggle to figure out for a time being, especially in the first month, March. But as time went on, "I found myself getting used to listening to you (instructor) and my classmates. In addition, the terms
were recurring throughout the subsequent chapters, whose concepts and meanings I couldn't clearly grasp at first - translated" (Participant B); "I used to look up the terms in bilingual dictionary. But even with the Korean equivalent, I couldn't understand very much. However, I became more and more familiar with the terms and concepts we dealt with since they were repeatedly talked about - translated" (Participant A); "By the time of midterm exam, I was feeling adjusted to the class assuring myself that I can survive in the CBI course and make it a good experience even though I am not fluent enough - translated" (Participant C).

Once exposed to the CBI course, the participants seemed to be supported by a language learning principle: learning by doing (using). That is, they should be able to use the language rather than wait until the moment when they are all knowledgeable of the language. Even with limited knowledge and skills of the target language, they need to keep using it as suggested by language acquisition studies both in first and in second language (Clark, 2003; Lightbown & Spada, 2006). All the three participants said that they would like to take more CBI courses: "As an English-major, I should not avoid this kind of chance of taking CBI courses. The experience I earned from taking the current CBI course made me confident in challenging myself - translated" (Participant C). If one of the necessary personality traits for progress in language learning is “risk-taking” (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 61), the participants’ experience with the CBI course appeared to help them overcome inhibition, thus making opportunity-seeking learners. That they became confident in seeking out opportunities for rigorous language use can be pointed out as a best reward of their experience with the CBI course.

3) Required Motivation

It is well-known observation that teachers can influence learners’ motivation “by making the classroom a supportive environment in which students are stimulated, engaged in activities that are appropriate to their age, interests, and cultural background, and most importantly, where students can experience success” (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 185). In addition to such a teacher influence, the participants mentioned that they wished to be pushed by “required motivation” (Chen, Warden, & Chang, 2005, p. 609). Chen et al. (2005) showed that “within the EFL context in the current Chinese cultural environment, integration may not be a significant factor in motivating language learning effort. … requirements apparently have an important role to play” (p. 622). The participant’s comment that they could have been better motivated if they had been required more strictly to use the L2 seemed consistent with the research findings of Chen et al. (2005):

*When presenting the final project before the class, you allowed us to use either*
Korean or English. Since I thought that I was not fluent enough in English, I could not dare to use English because my classmates might be wondering why I used English even though I was permitted to use Korean. But if you asked us to use English only, then I could have managed to use English anyway. Also, I would have prepared a lot practicing the presentation to meet the requirement and helped me make excuses of using English even with poor speaking skills - translated. (Participant C)

Within the three staged process-oriented model of motivation proposed by Dornyei (2001), such a requirement imposed by the instructor can help uphold ‘executive motivation’ at the second phase since the participants seemed strong enough to have ‘choice motivation’ at the first phase. The participants, in their retrospection on how they did with the course especially in terms of making efforts to improve their language skills, appeared strong in the third phase, ‘motivation retrospection’, as they wanted to take more CBI courses in the future in which they wished to be challenged not only by themselves but also by instructor. Since “motivation is not just an individual trait; the learners’ motivation is intertwined with the micro-social environment of the classroom and the macro-social environment of the broader society” (Cummins & Davison, 2007, p. 620), the participants, graduate-school EFL learners, can be considered to be better motivated by a different type of motive orientation such as ‘extrinsic motivation’, for instance, L2-only policy for certain tasks imposed by the instructor. While struggling to abide by the requirement, they can upgrade their language skills in a more efficient way. In the current study, the instructor’s policy to let them use L1 for a part of final project presentation was not appreciated.

3. Tips from the Instructor’s Reflection

Having followed the DA approach which was assumed to provide “an insight into the person’s future development” (Lantolf & Thorn, 2006, p. 328) and keeping in mind that “potential development varies independently of actual development, meaning that the latter, in and of itself, cannot be used to predict the former” (ibid.), the instructor’s reflection was supposed to discuss how the participants would grow into becoming competent CBI course-takers by not only showing their current capacities but also focusing on what they could do and achieve in the future. The theme of the reflection was specified with the three aspects: L1 assistance, induced participation, and personal intimacy with the instructor.
1) L1 Assistance

While the lecture and discussion were done in the L2 only, the participants were allowed to show their sign of comprehension by using L1 as a form of ‘code-switching’ especially when dealing with key words of each chapter. Since it was sometimes difficult for the participants to explain the concepts and theoretical background of the key words in English especially in an extensive manner, they indicated their understanding through L1 equivalents. Having taken advantage of the fact that the participants and the instructor shared the same L1, it was expected to facilitate discussion as well as comprehension of the contents to a certain degree. It seemed to be in line with one of the five factors most commonly leading to L1 use observed by Macaro (1997): “Translating and checking comprehension. Teachers felt these ‘speeded things up’” (Cook, 2001, p. 155) so that the comprehension and discussion can proceed in a more efficient way.

However, L1 use did not always seem to work in a positive way as a participant mentioned that “Having heard my classmate saying the L1 equivalent, I was still wondering what it exactly means. It was partly due to the fact that the L1 equivalent provided by a bilingual dictionary did not carry precise concept and meaning represented by the English term - translated” (Participant B). Since most of academic terms would require long-term exposure to and experience with the conventions of an academic field, it seemed hard to grasp unless they accumulated a certain level of background knowledge relevant to the current terms as Wei (2008) pointed out that “even when the same terms are used, the intended meanings and connotations may be misinterpreted due to lack of a common ground” (p. 16). In fact, only one participant often used L1 equivalents to show her comprehension, the other two rarely tried. Instead, for the most cases, the participants preferred the paraphrasing of the terms in English to mere L1 equivalents. Thus, it should not be misguided that the language learners would have easier time as far as they are given L1 translation especially when they are using the language in academic or professional contexts.

In particular, in an EFL context like Korea, the learners’ attitude toward L1 use can be differently understood compared with that of ESL learners. While it is nuanced that L1 use is more related with the respect for the learners’ culture, previous experience and identity as well as with instructional efficiency in an ESL environment (Cook, 2001), L1 use in an EFL situation might be interpreted to reduce the level of authenticity of L2 use. Having considered that EFL learners are often disadvantaged mainly due to the lack of authentic opportunities of L2 use, one of the pedagogical imperatives of EFL educators is to help their learners encounter as many authentic chances as possible.
There may be many factors by which an instructor can make a decision concerning when and how much L1 use can be effectively practiced, such as learners’ L2 proficiency level, the lesson and curriculum objectives, the format and contents of evaluation of teaching and learning outcome. At least in the current study in which EFL adult-learners were involved in a CBI course, the role of L1 assistance was restricted to showing off the participants’ comprehension in a minimal way. The contribution of L1 assistance was deemed less promising either in receptive mode of listening comprehension or in productive mode illustrated with the case of final project presentation in the section, 2-3) Required Motivation.

2) Induced Participation

As an effort to ensure participation to a maximum degree, the instructor set up expected sequence of the lesson flow since it is observed that “English learners benefit from structured opportunities to use the target language” (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2004, p. 99): At the beginning moment of the lesson was the question asking what the key words or major terms were in the chapter. Then, the participants contributed one or a few terms without having to make long sentences. They still felt that they were participating; By putting down those key terms on the blackboard, the participants got to know what they were to mainly discuss in the session; Discussing each term, the instructor provided its definition as well as assessing the participants’ current level of understanding of the term. In this process, the participants were to show their understanding using L1 equivalent. There was 10-minute break between the first and second part of each session; Before the 10 minute-intermission, each participant was invited to pick up at least one term out of the terms uncovered yet until they spent the first half of the session; After the break, they presented their understanding of the terms in turn, which they were supposed to prepare during the break. This kind of sequenced and rehearsed participation seemed to help avoid possible embarrassment accompanied by spontaneous participation since they can become aware of when and how they were to participate. Meanwhile, the instructor supported their participation by adding explanation to their presentation. For the terms that the participants did not pick up, the instructor offered full explanation. The instructor used English only throughout semester except for the meetings outside the classroom while the participants sometimes used L1 as described in section 3-1).

Each participant’s discussion induced by the instructor also played a role of “what Ohta (2001) calls ‘vicarious’ response. That is, when the teacher directed a question at someone else, the student remarked that she frequently answered the question privately in a low voice” (Lantolf & Thorn, 2006, p. 183). That the three participants were asked
to present their understanding of a chosen term in turn seemed to practice the benefits attached to vicarious experience since “it could be that the learners are indeed responding more often than it appears on the surface, but that they are doing so privately in the form of subvocal private speech” (Lantolf & Thorn, 2006, p. 206). Especially, this form of participation appeared to help the participants use the language in a productive mode regularly so that it became a most appreciated part of the course in terms of increasing L2-using abilities:

*We have to say something about a certain term, it was stressful for a time being. But soon enough I realized that I was speaking out in English, which made me feel good about myself and sensed the improvement of speaking skills. (Participant A)*

The participants’ self-perceived improvement of linguistic skills was also found in AeJin Kang’s (2007). While Kang’s (2007) CBI participants’ feeling of linguistic improvement was not supported by the proficiency tests measuring their speaking and writing skills between pre- and post-test, AeJin Kang (2005) showed CBI-taking participants’ improvement of writing skills along with their feeling of linguistic improvement.

3) Personal Intimacy with the Instructor

As an effort to lower the participants’ “school filter” (Dornyei, 2007, p. 722), the instructor set up a few informal meetings such as lunch after class in which they talked about their life and study in a freer conversation hoping to add “a fresh and real feel to their school relationship” (ibid.). Such a time outside the class seemed to serve as “a way of understanding where school fit into the rest of their lives, what they were trying to achieve by going there (especially since they had choices about where to go)” (Heller, 2008, p. 261). It appeared to increase personal intimacy between the instructor and the participants, and among the participants which might contribute to reducing the level of anxiety in the classroom. The participants said that they appreciated the time to get together informally at which they shared their feelings and opinions in a more personal mode concerning how to improve their language skills as well as make themselves more competent MA students especially through the CBI course.

Having been encouraged by the instructor telling them that she was not so different from them in many ways from the language skills to academic preparation, and to future concerns when she was an MA student, the participants reacted that “I got to have more positive attitude toward myself believing that I am able to achieve what I want to as far as I keep working – translated” (Participant A). The other two participants also expressed that they were stimulated by the fact that the instructor went through similar hardship as a
First Time in CBI

student. After the informal meetings, it appeared that they were not so much concerned with their own or classmates’ less than impressive performance in their participation. It seemed to foster risk-taking attitude and helped the participants to be more comfortable in trying to use the L2. In addition, Through such informal meetings, as Kirkness (2007) suggested, instructors’ “reflecting on and articulating their own learning processes may help them teach their skills to the next generation of students” (p. 22).

V. CONCLUSION

1. Answer to Research Question 1

Concerning the 1st research question, What and how the adult EFL learners would perceive of a CBI course and evaluate their learning when taking it for the first time? the research findings suggested that the participants considered the CBI course as a necessary challenge through which they can improve L2 proficiency as well as enhance academic knowledge. The participants seemed well aware of the fact that it is normally not easy for adult-learners to situate themselves in a linguistic situation where they can use the L2 authentically and professionally especially in an EFL environment like Korea where “the relatively limited access to the target language and culture in natural settings remains a challenge” (Hyunjung Shin, 2007, p. 78). The participants’ determination to take advantage of the CBI course seemed strongly supported by their clear sense of purpose of their study at the graduate school, and needs for current and future career. Despite less than advanced level of proficiency in the L2, they were able to sustain their efforts realising that they were adult learners who “with their more developed abstract thinking ability, are better able to understand a context-reduced segment of language” (Brown, 2001, p. 91).

The participants’ evaluation on their experience of taking a CBI course seemed future-oriented. As the results of weekly comprehension-quizzes suggested, their comprehension of the course contents was not perfect. But at least the quizzes contributed to enhancing their comprehension in an organized way to a higher extent by providing review opportunity with each chapter, which was the major expected role of the quizzes. In addition, the participants did not seem discouraged by the fact that their current L2 proficiency level did not support them either in comprehension or in production to a highest extent. Instead of blaming the L2 as the cause for incomprehension, they pointed out the lack of background knowledge and lack of experience with the academic community as a more direct reason of incomprehension and less active participation. Meanwhile, as the semester progressed, they found themselves more and more familiar with the course contents and confident in their abilities for survival and success with a
future CBI course. As DA principles suggested that “development cannot be limited to mastery of a single task or test, but must take account of the individual’s ability to transfer what has been internalized through assistance beyond the task, or post-test, to other circumstances” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 329), such confidence and positive feeling can be interpreted as the very reward of the participants’ efforts when evaluating their learning experience with the CBI course.

2. Answer to Research Question 2

With respect to the 2nd research question, What kind of consideration should be taken to effectively implement CBI courses especially for those who have less experience with CBI courses? the data analysis showed that required motivation and induced participation can play a greater role with adult learners especially in an EFL context while fostering encouraging classroom environment should be an essential part of the instructor’s efforts to assist the participants to achieve their learning goals. Before the participants turn into truly autonomous learners in the long run, they should be appropriately and effectively supported by others including the instructor as zone of proximal development (ZPD) proposed by Vygotsky would suggest. The ZPD represents “the distance between what the learner can do individually without assistance and what he or she can do with assistance” (Cummins & Davison, 2007, p. 619). In the current study, the instructor’s assistance was partly realized as a form of pushed participation with scaffolding being practiced through the faithfully observed lesson structure. Also, L1 use and one-word participation can be considered as a scaffolding device with which the participants were able to initiate speaking out as well as indicate their comprehension. It in turn led to sentence level utterances in their participation.

In addition, it seemed helpful to establish personal relationship with the instructor and their classmates through extra activities such as informal meetings and individual conferences in which they can share concerns and learning strategies, and reduce the level of anxiety they might have in the classroom. In particular, when the participants and the instructor share the same L1, the role model effects played by the instructor can be even greater as we assume that every teacher should be mindful of his or her influence not only in the current class but also in the future. As the goal of second/foreign language learning is not to replace L1 with L2, but to add L2 to the learner’s linguistic repertoire and become a multi-competent language user, a bilingual instructor rather than a monolingual native speaker instructor can present more relevant modeling effects (Cook, 2001; Leaver & Shekhtman, 2002), with whom the learners can identify themselves in a more realistic way.

In conclusion, the participants’ experience with the CBI course showed that even with less than advanced level proficiency, they can make language users rather than remain
language learners if supported and challenged appropriately and effectively. As the research findings of first language acquisition studies suggest that “children are real children, not imitation adults; each stage of their development of language forms a complete system” (Cook, 2002, p. 8) using current linguistic knowledge for real communication, the L2 learner should not be viewed as “a defective native speaker” (Cook, 2002, p. 20) but as “an independent speaker of language” (Cook, 2002, p.1). As the participants pointed out the participation opportunities as one of the most appreciated moments, it seemed possible for the adult-learners to use the language in a productive mode as well even before they become fluent enough, which suggested that EFL adult-learners should not be afraid of being challenged by rigorous authentic language experience such as CBI.

3. Suggestion for the Further Research

While the current study was able to avoid observation effect called “Hawthorn effect” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 114) making the study uncontaminated by experiment, a further research could provide diverse interpretations concerning what and how it would be going on in the CBI classroom if the classes were to be observed by different observers other than (or in addition to) the researcher (instructor). Along with the weekly comprehension quizzes, if the participants’ proficiency level would be measured and compared at the beginning and end point of the semester, it can indicate whether the participants’ increasing confidence in using the L2 should be supported by the possible linguistic development or such growing confidence can be achieved regardless of linguistic development. In addition, as one of the reviewers pointed out that the participants might not be able to freely discuss their difficulties they had faced in the course since the researcher was their professor with whom they should have to study for the rest of the program, the researcher should be more careful in letting them talk about real problems and tried to provide suggestions for how they could take advantage of CBI course-taking experience in a further study.

REFERENCES


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Lexington, MA: Heath.

APPENDIX A
Syllabus

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY IN ENGLISH LINGUISTICS
SPRING 2008

Course Description:
This course provides informed discussion on theories, research and practices on the studies
of English languages with multidisciplinary perspectives such as those of Second language
Acquisition (SLA), applied linguistics, sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics. The
course is also designed to help the students practice their own research with a
corresponding topic out of the issues it will deal with during the sessions.

Course Objectives:
Throughout the course, the students are supposed to
1. be familiar with the conventions and customaries of research methodology in the field
   of language acquisition, language education and applied linguistics,
2. be able to comprehend academic studies and conduct their own research.

Text:
    Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.
Additional materials will be announced or given whenever necessary to support each
session.

Evaluation:
Participation & attendance: 10%
Analysis report: 20% (written report: 10%; oral presentation: 10%)
Midterm exam: 30%
Research proposal: 40% (plan report: 5%; written report: 25%; oral presentation: 10%)
**Weekly Schedule**

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<th>Due</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings &amp; Assignments</th>
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<td>Introduction to the course and evaluation policy</td>
<td>M &amp; G 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2: 3/13</td>
<td>Research and research report</td>
<td>M &amp; G 2</td>
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<td>Week 3: 3/20</td>
<td>Issues related to data gathering</td>
<td>M &amp; G 3</td>
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<td>Week 4: 3/27</td>
<td>Data collection measure</td>
<td>M &amp; G 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5: 4/3</td>
<td>Data collection measure</td>
<td>M &amp; G 3</td>
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<td><strong>Analysis report due</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Presentation starts.</strong></td>
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<td>Week 6: 4/10</td>
<td>variables, validity, and reliability</td>
<td>M &amp; G 4</td>
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<td><strong>Plan report due</strong></td>
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<td>Week 7: 4/17</td>
<td>Designing a quantitative study</td>
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<td>Week 8: 4/24</td>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
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<td>Week 9: 5/1</td>
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<td>Week 11: 5/15</td>
<td>Coding</td>
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<td>Week 12: 5/22</td>
<td>Individual conferences</td>
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<td>Analyzing quantitative data</td>
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<td>Week 14: 6/5</td>
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<td>Week 15: 6/12</td>
<td>Proposal presentation and comprehensive discussion</td>
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APPENDIX B
Quiz

3/20/08

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY IN ENGLISH LINGUISTICS
SPRING 2008

Provide your understanding of the following terms:

1. quantitative research
   - Statistical data - basically numbered and amount
   - Objective - don't care of participants' individual properties / be group of them
   - outcome-oriented - provide certain products
   - "hard" data
   - obtrusive, involving uncontrolled measurement
   - stable reality

2. qualitative research
   - close to the data
   - subjective
   - process-oriented - care of each step during research
   - discovery-oriented
   - "soft" data
   - naturalistic
   - dynamic reality

3. Typical research paper format
   - introduction: background / research question / hypothesis
   - abstract / summary of topic
   - review / literature
   - method: what kind of data? materials / participants
   - how collect the data?
   - conclusion / result
   - references / appendix

4. consent form
   Researchers should guarantee participants' rights
   When researchers gather data, they investigate many things in wrong situation.
   They trust that participants' individual properties.
   And they should tell them benefit or harm of research.

2/5/08
Applicable levels: College and higher
Key words: Content-Based Instruction (CBI), English as a foreign language (EFL), college learner (adult learner)

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