

Does it stick?

Some evidence from students'
free writing

BALEAP PIM Nottingham 2008



Issues to consider

- What do I/we mean by stick?
 - “improvement in productive linguistic resources” (Shaw and Liu p248)
- What do I mean by it?
 - What we teach
- Do we add to the students’ linguistic resource/s?
- Can we measure this?



Bit of a framework- Shaw and Liu

- Incorrect to correct?
- Simple to complex?
- Spoken to written?
- All three?
- None- does writing fail to develop? (Shaw and Liu p 228)



Incorrect to correct

- (increasing) accuracy in lexis (eg word classes)
- (increasing) accuracy in grammar (eg tenses, articles, preps)
- (better) spelling



Simple to complex

- Greater range of lexis, greater and more flexible use of grammar
- For example- greater competence in using passives, relative clauses, complex/ longer noun combinations
- Also increased lexical density- problem of errors- but still useful?



Spoken to written

- Nominalisations
- Fewer phrasal verbs
- Less like talk more like writing
- Any others?



Data (v limited so far!)

- 13 scripts matched
- 15 week time period
- Same length of time to answer (30 mins)
- Same question



What are the main differences between your country and the UK?

- What differences can we observe if we compare two pieces of writing with a 2/3 month interval between them?



Pre and post (1)

- Since I've been here just for 3 days, I don't really figure out the UK look like. But I'll point out the preversly the different of the environment
- There are several differences between the UK and Taiwan. Since the two different countries have their particular culture, ways of think and living style, it is obviously some important differences between these two country

(student # 2 first paragraph)



Pre and post (2)

- As I know there are many differences between them. Firstly Korean society is fast-paced society
- There are some differences between the UK and Korea that I have noticed while I was staying during the preessional course. First of all people in the street look liberal in many ways such as their customs and attitudes when they talk to each other

Student # 3 first two sentences



Pre and post (3)

- Main differences, think that people who live in UK and Japan. Today I just arrived at this university. On my way to university. I saw many things that about U.K
- The most important differences between Japan and the UK is attendance during the class. It mean we don't have to say anything during the class in Japan, on the other hand, we need to say something for show our participants to our teacher in UK

Student# 4



Pre and post (4)

- The differences between my country Indonesia and the UK is in the cultures, weather, and many more that I can't explain all of them, But I'll try
- As an Indonesian student who has been studying in the UK for over 15 years, there are several important differences which have been noticed between Indonesia and the United Kingdom
- Student#7



Post- what has stuck/not stuck?

- What would you expect to see in a piece of free writing like this (after 15 weeks)
- What has not stuck in this piece of writing?



Sample of an after

- The university environment is totally significant. The **stuff** here *are not only* care about *the* academic study but also they are trying to manage all other different areas which international students may need. For instant, they keep following all the student requires and needs through the representative meeting then they keenly find **solutions** to any *problem was* raised by representative students



(tentative) summary

- Sentence length is longer
- Lexical density is higher
- Passives appear to be used with greater frequency
- Relative pronouns seem to be more in evidence



Sentence length

- Average SL is longer- 15.94 before and 19.41 after
- SL range 11.5 – 29.45 (before)
- 15.06 – 30 (after)
- Significant?



Lexical density

- Percentage of content/lexical words
- Average increased from 33.5 to 42.1



Passives

- Not used very frequently- type of question limits the use?
- 4 passives used before
- 16 passives used after
- Average frequency increase of 0.8



Passive before

- In UK woman can drive a car but in my country is not allow
- In my country man can get more than wife up to four wife but in UK is not allowing
- In UK drinking alcohol is allowing but in my country is band



Passive (after)

- In the UK the women driving is allowed wherase in Saudi Arabia is band
- Alcohol drinking is allowed in the UK but it is band in Saudi Arabia



Relative pronouns/ clauses

- Some increase
- 22 before - 41 after
- 0.7% before – 1.4% after
- Crude stats but some indication?



Word class errors

- 17 before
- 17 after
- No real improvement pattern
- Are these errors symptomatic of increased confidence? Do they correlate with increasing linguistic resource?



tentative summary (2)

- “In China the aware of copyright is not so important”
- Conclusion only we could find everything in UK is different but I think it is a good opportunity to learn the different cultural
- I am living with international students, therefore I can get a lot of stimulants



Some interesting student comments

- In my opinion, British food is quite basic not sophisticated and lack surprising ingredients
- I was shocked by how I was treated in the supermarket counter, the way they put down the sandwich is different from the way they serve with white people
- The students who study in the UK do not feel they have been discriminated against
- In UK the system of transport is excellent



More student comments

- British people seldom use umbrellas when it's raining
- Every glance of the UK is a picture which I really like
- British people prefer to eat healthy foods
- SA (South African) English is better than spoken in Birmingham



A closing student comment

- There are 15 accents within the UK which is not only confusing and frustrating to foreign students like me but also makes me wonder why a country with a medium-sized population have this amount of accents. Most startling the standard pronunciation, received pronunciation is only spoke by a limit amount of people and BBC broadcaster. This is incredible and unbelievable ...

