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Suggested Reference

Zhang, L. J. (2012). Scope and Enhancement of Linguistic and Methodological Knowledge for Teachers: What Knowledge Base Do Teachers Need for Effective Classroom Teaching? In 46th Annual TESOL International Convention and English Language Expo. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

<http://s3.goeshow.com/tesol/annual/2012/programbook.cfm>

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What Knowledge Base Do Teachers Need for Effective Classroom Teaching?

TESOL 2012 Intersetion Section Presentation

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3. Pedagogic content knowledge

The specialized knowledge of how to represent content knowledge in diverse ways that students can understand; the knowledge of how students come to understand the subject matter, what difficulties they are likely to encounter when learning it, what misconceptions interfere with learning, and how to overcome these problems (how we teach ESL/EFL in general);

Teachers' Knowledge Base

Day and Conklin (1992) claim that the knowledge base of second language teacher education consists of four types of knowledge:

1. Content knowledge

Knowledge of the subject matter (what ESL/EFL teachers teach); e.g., English language (as represented by courses in syntax, semantics, phonology and pragmatics) and literary and cultural aspects of the English language

- or how we teach ESL/EFL reading or writing in particular, for example); e.g., teaching ESL/EFL skills (reading, writing), teaching English grammar, TESOL materials evaluation and development, EFL/ESL testing, TESOL program and curriculum evaluation and development, TESOL methods

2. Pedagogic knowledge

knowledge of generic teaching strategies, beliefs and practices, regardless of the focus of the subject matter (how we teach); e.g., classroom management, motivation, decision making

4. Support knowledge

the knowledge of the various disciplines that inform our approach to the teaching and learning of English; e.g., psycholinguistics, linguistics, second language acquisition, sociolinguistics, research methods (see also Johnson, 1998)

- Bill Johnston and Suzanne Iruj (2001) summarize that teachers' knowledge base comprises the following:
 - Content knowledge
 - general pedagogical knowledge (pedagogical issues that "transcend subject matter")
 - curriculum knowledge

- pedagogical content knowledge (the "special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers")
- knowledge of learners and their characteristics
- knowledge of educational contexts (at both micro- and macro-levels)
- knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values (adapted from Shulman, 1987, p. 8)

My focus...

- What kind of pedagogical/ theoretical background knowledge do teachers have that is relevant to their teaching of reading, writing, grammar and oral communication?
- How is this knowledge related to teachers' confidence in implementing the EL Syllabus?

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Our major findings (from primary and secondary teachers)

- Pedagogical content knowledge (Teachers' understanding of what is to be learnt and how it is to be taught)
 - Unevenness in reported teacher knowledge
 - Good knowledge about various aspects related to the teaching of reading, vocabulary, writing and grammar
 - Relative unfamiliarity with listening and speaking

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Table 2.1 Teachers' reported knowledge about teaching EL

		Never heard of it	Heard of it	Understand what it means (in percentages)	Incorporate it in teaching
Listening	Pri	28.5	22.2	28.2	21.1
	Sec	25.5	21.6	31.4	21.6
Speaking	Pri	27	18.6	27.6	26.9
	Sec	20.7	18	31.4	30
Reading & Vocabulary	Pri	10.4	10.4	23.5	55.6
	Sec	10.3	10.9	24.9	54
Writing	Pri	15.5	12.7	27.8	44
	Sec	11.5	12.2	26.9	49.4
Grammar	Pri	18.2	13.4	23.8	44.6
	Sec	15	14	29.5	41.4
General Language Learning	Pri	13.8	15.2	26.9	44
	Sec	9.8	16.5	30.8	42.9

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Table 2.2 Primary school teachers' knowledge about aspects of language teaching and learning

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Listening	1.00	4.00	2.4066	.78339
Speaking	1.00	4.00	2.5407	.86951
Reading & Vocabulary	1.20	4.00	3.2434	.48531
Writing	1.00	4.00	2.9994	.63009
Grammar	1.00	4.00	2.9477	.72187
General	1.00	4.00	3.0089	.67524

(N=1717)

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Table 2.3 Secondary school teachers' knowledge about aspects of language teaching and learning

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Listening	1.00	4.00	2.4858	.76550
Speaking	1.00	4.00	2.7045	.82068
Reading & Vocabulary	1.15	4.00	3.2267	.47678
Writing	1.00	4.00	3.1393	.66769
Grammar	1.00	4.00	2.9721	.67657
General	1.00	4.00	3.0690	.68086

(N=907)

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Primary and secondary school EL teachers' knowledge about L,S,R,W,G

- Both groups of teachers are
 - Relatively more familiar with vocabulary/reading, writing, grammar, and general knowledge
 - Relatively less familiar with listening and speaking

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Primary and secondary school EL teachers' knowledge about and confidence in teaching EL

- EL teachers' confidence to teach EL is correlated with their knowledge about all aspects of EL teaching
- There are slightly stronger correlations between teachers' confidence to teach EL and their knowledge about listening/speaking, grammar and general knowledge

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Brief Discussion

- This finding might suggest that although listening and speaking are important areas emphasised in the EL Syllabus, teachers were less familiar with the teaching of these two skills
- Part of the reason might also be that on the pre-service and in-service training programmes, reading, writing, vocabulary and grammar were emphasised; listening and speaking were less emphasised
- The fact the two skills were given less importance in the "O" level could also be a contributing factor for teachers' relative unfamiliarity with them

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Correlations of primary and secondary school teachers' knowledge about L, S, R, W, G with Confidence to teach EL

		Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Grammar	General
Confidence	Primary teachers	.263**	.238**	.217**	.220**	.287**	.285**
	Secondary teachers	.329**	.311**	.296**	.309**	.327**	.328**

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Implications

- The findings might suggest that EL teachers need to give more emphasis on teaching listening and speaking
- This emphasis will also align with the requirement of the newly released EL examination syllabus
- More need to be done to look at how these two skills can be given more emphasis on the teacher-training programme in the future

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Teachers' qualifications and their confidence to teach EL

- There were correlations between secondary school teachers' EL qualifications and confidence to teach EL for secondary school teachers; but there was no correlation between their general qualifications and confidence to teach EL
- Primary school teachers' confidence to teach EL was correlated to both their general qualifications and EL qualifications

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Secondary School English Language Teachers' Knowledge of Speaking

	never heard of it	heard of it	understand what it means	incorporate it in teaching	N
1) Talk as performance	12.9	16.0	31.6	39.5	899
2) Talk as process	12.8	15.2	27.1	44.8	899
3) Communicative competence	8.9	14.4	37.8	38.8	901
4) Planning process	14.9	17.8	39.6	27.8	895
5) Negotiation of meaning	30.0	20.0	28.8	21.2	900
6) Management of interaction	30.2	19.2	27.3	23.3	901
7) Discourse intonation	34.8	23.5	27.4	14.3	904

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Teaching experience and confidence to teach EL

- There was a correlation between years of experience in teaching EL and teachers' confidence to implement the new syllabus
- There was a correlation between the year when the teachers received their initial training and their years of experience in teaching EL, suggesting that the older teachers were more confident in teaching EL

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Secondary School English Language Teachers' Knowledge of Reading

	never heard of it	heard of it	understand what it means	incorporate it in teaching	N
1) Top-down and bottom-up processing	29.2	20.8	27.7	22.3	900
2) Interactive processes	19.8	23.8	28.9	27.5	899
3) Phonics	3.4	18.1	54.0	23.5	904
4) Phonological awareness	17.9	20.6	41.9	19.6	903
5) Shared book	30.2	19.6	35.8	14.4	903
6) DRTA	17.7	17.6	27.1	37.7	900
7) KWL	12.8	13.7	31.0	42.5	904
8) SQ3R	13.6	17.4	35.5	33.5	904
9) 3 level guide	36.3	13.3	22.9	27.5	901
10) Schema theory	10.4	11.5	20.6	57.4	911
11) Skimming for gist	0.8	3.6	13.6	82.1	915
12) Scanning for information	0.1	2.8	13.2	83.8	916
13) Looking for details	0.3	2.1	12.5	85.1	912
14) Predicting	0.8	2.7	16.1	80.4	913
15) Inferencing	0.4	2.2	11.5	85.9	915
16) Self-monitoring	5.3	7.2	31.3	56.2	913
17) Summarizing	0.3	1.9	10.0	87.8	913
18) Semantic mapping	6.0	9.3	30.6	54.1	912
19) Word association	1.0	5.9	22.4	70.7	915
20) Using contextual clues	0.4	3.1	11.8	84.7	915

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Secondary School English Teachers' Knowledge of English Language Teaching

Q1 Secondary School English Language Teachers' Knowledge of Listening

	never heard of it	heard of it	understand what it means	incorporate it in teaching	N
1) Interactive listening	24.9	26.2	26.2	22.8	905
2) Top-down and bottom-up processing	29.2	24.1	30.8	16.0	902
3) Self-monitoring	7.9	15.7	37.1	39.4	904
4) Appreciative listening	26.7	20.5	32.7	20.0	901
5) Critical listening	14.9	21.3	37.0	26.8	902
6) Discriminative listening	27.4	21.7	31.5	19.4	905
7) Therapeutic listening	45.0	23.3	26.1	5.5	908
8) One-way listening	26.4	21.1	33.1	19.4	902
9) Two-way listening	26.8	20.2	28.2	24.8	902

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Secondary School English Language Teachers' Knowledge of Writing

	never heard of it	heard of it	understand what it means	incorporate it in teaching	N
1) Cognitive process	17.6	24.0	33.9	24.5	901
2) Process writing	1.6	5.6	20.8	72.0	913
3) Shared writing	10.6	11.8	27.4	50.2	906
4) Product approach	24.3	13.7	31.6	30.5	906
5) Genre-based approach	3.6	6.2	20.8	69.4	909

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Secondary School English Language Teachers' Knowledge of Grammar



	never heard of it	heard of it	understand what it means	incorporate it in teaching	N
1) Inductive approach	21.5	20.6	27.1	30.9	909
2) Deductive approach	20.8	19.4	27.7	32.1	909
3) Consciousness-raising	28.1	17.3	26.3	28.3	906
4) Rule-based	5.7	7.9	27.6	58.7	909
5) Text-based	4.8	7.8	21.8	65.6	910
6) Contextualized grammar teaching	8.1	8.1	23.2	60.5	908
7) Grammar translation	38.3	21.0	28.4	12.3	905
8) Rote learning	4.2	15.6	52.4	27.8	914
9) Grammar through communication activities	4.0	8.7	30.9	56.5	910

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Primary School English Language Teachers' Knowledge of Speaking



	never heard of it	heard of it	understand what it means	incorporate it in teaching	N
1) Talk as performance	14.7	17.0	28.8	39.5	1738
2) Talk as process	16.5	15.2	25.3	43.1	1738
3) Communicative competence	16.8	17.8	34.1	31.3	1729
4) Planning process	19.3	22.1	33.5	25.1	1724
5) Negotiation of meaning	38.5	18.8	25.4	17.3	1731
6) Management of interaction	36.1	19.2	24.1	20.5	1733
7) Discourse intonation	47.1	19.8	21.7	11.4	1734

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Secondary School English Language Teachers' General Knowledge of Various Factors Relating to Language Teaching and Learning



	never heard of it	heard of it	understand what it means	incorporate it in teaching	N
1) Lang learning strategies	8.8	18.2	32.1	40.9	909
2) Communication strategies	7.2	18.4	30.5	43.9	906
3) Thematic approach	3.5	7.1	28.3	61.0	911
4) Pupil-centred learning	1.4	5.6	22.1	70.9	910
5) Metacognitive awareness	17.1	24.0	36.6	22.2	904
6) Metalinguistic knowledge	20.7	25.8	35.4	18.1	903

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Primary School English Language Teachers' Knowledge of Reading



	never heard of it	heard of it	understand what it means	incorporate it in teaching	N
1) Top-down and bottom-up processing	42.4	21.4	21.1	15.1	1728
2) Interactive processes	23.0	24.6	24.7	27.8	1723
3) Phonics	1.6	10.9	33.2	54.2	1736
4) Phonological awareness	17.3	17.4	32.9	32.4	1724
5) Shared book	0.7	6.0	30.1	63.2	1745
6) DRTA	5.9	6.6	22.7	64.7	1734
7) KWL	9.4	7.6	25.6	57.4	1732
8) SQ3R	26.6	18.6	31.6	23.2	1732
9) 3 level guide	53.4	16.4	17.0	13.2	1729
10) Schema theory	10.5	15.0	18.4	56.0	1738
11) Skimming for gist	2.3	7.5	20.9	69.2	1749
12) Scanning for information	1.2	6.4	19.6	72.8	1745
13) Looking for details	0.7	5.4	17.3	76.5	1745
14) Predicting	0.3	3.6	12.2	83.9	1745
15) Inferencing	0.4	4.1	12.7	82.7	1742
16) Self-monitoring	6.3	9.7	31.9	52.1	1737
17) Summarizing	0.5	5.2	29.3	65.1	1741
18) Semantic mapping	3.8	9.7	30.3	56.1	1744
19) Word association	1.5	8.2	23.9	66.5	1742
20) Using contextual clues	1.3	4.6	15.2	78.9	1742

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Primary School English Language Teachers' Knowledge of Listening



	never heard of it	heard of it	understand what it means	incorporate it in teaching	N
1) Interactive listening	22.4	26.9	23.4	27.2	1741
2) Top-down and bottom-up processing	43.6	22.8	22.1	11.4	1730
3) Self-monitoring	13.3	19.4	35.5	31.8	1745
4) Appreciative listening	26.0	21.3	30.2	22.4	1736
5) Critical listening	17.3	24.0	31.3	27.4	1739
6) Discriminative listening	28.7	23.0	29.6	18.7	1737
7) Therapeutic listening	50.0	21.8	22.8	5.4	1737
8) One-way listening	26.9	20.9	33.5	18.6	1729
9) Two-way listening	28.1	19.7	25.1	27.1	1738

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Primary School English Language Teachers' Knowledge of Writing



	never heard of it	heard of it	understand what it means	incorporate it in teaching	N
1) Cognitive process	23.1	22.2	32.6	22.1	1719
2) Process writing	0.6	5.6	24.2	69.6	1746
3) Shared writing	1.4	5.9	19.6	73.2	1743
4) Product approach	35.9	15.1	29.5	19.5	1725
5) Genre-based approach	16.7	15.0	33.4	34.8	1738

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Primary School English Language Teachers' Knowledge of Grammar

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	never heard of it	heard of it	understand what it means	incorporate it in teaching	N
1) Inductive approach	27.1	21.1	24.3	27.4	1726
2) Deductive approach	27.4	20.0	24.6	27.9	1727
3) Consciousness-raising	39.5	15.0	21.4	24.1	1711
4) Rule-based	8.4	9.5	18.0	64.1	1731
5) Text-based	6.9	9.8	20.3	63.0	1738
6) Contextualized grammar teaching	9.2	10.7	21.2	58.9	1725
7) Grammar translation	38.3	16.1	25.8	19.8	1713
8) Rote learning	4.0	11.3	39.5	45.2	1736
9) Grammar through communication activities	3.3	7.4	19.1	70.2	1740

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Correlations of secondary school teachers' knowledge about L, S, R, W, G with their Confidence to teach EL

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	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Grammar	General	Confidence
Listening	1.00						
Speaking	.717**	1.00					
Reading	.596**	.621**	1.00				
Writing	.554**	.600**	.675**	1.00			
Grammar	.543**	.592**	.679**	.696**	1.00		
General	.530**	.579**	.685**	.683**	.725**	1.00	
Confidence	.329**	.311**	.296**	.309**	.327**	.328**	1.00

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Primary School English Language Teachers' General Knowledge of Various Factors Relating to Language Teaching and Learning

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	never heard of it	heard of it	understand what it means	incorporate it in teaching	N
1) Lang learning strategies	11.0	16.3	29.2	43.6	1716
2) Communication strategies	9.4	16.0	28.7	45.8	1717
3) Thematic approach	2.3	7.6	19.7	70.4	1727
4) Pupil-centred learning	1.2	6.4	22.0	70.3	1720
5) Metacognitive awareness	24.6	22.7	33.0	19.7	1714
6) Metalinguistic knowledge	34.7	22.5	29.0	13.8	1707

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Some Brief Discussion

- Why Listening and Speaking are two areas that need more attention?

Correlations of primary school teachers' knowledge about L, S, R, W, G with their Confidence to teach EL

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	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Grammar	General	Confidence
Listening	1.00						
Speaking	.736**	1.00					
Reading	.576**	.590**	1.00				
Writing	.491**	.527**	.669**	1.00			
Grammar	.592**	.600**	.677**	.642**	1.00		
General	.553**	.584**	.697**	.640**	.703**	1.00	
Confidence	.263**	.238**	.217**	.220**	.287**	.285**	1.00

** Correlation is significant at $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed).

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Text type /genre	Main purpose/context	Audience
Narratives	To entertain and please readers/listeners	Anyone who chooses a story to read or listen to the story
Recounts (Personal and factual/historical)	Personal recounts	Close friends for personal recounts;
	Factual/historical recounts	Any interested reader or listener
Expositions	To persuade or convince people or to argue for or against a point	Voluntary readers or listeners
Explanations	To describe or explain how physical entities or phenomena objectively	People who need this knowledge
Information reports	To document and organize factual information such as news report or an announcement	People who need this information
Procedures	To direct readers or listeners to carry out a procedure correctly	People who need to know how to do something
Conversations and Short functional texts	To interact for socialization or academic discussion or to relay messages for transactional purposes	People interested in joining conversations on particular topics or for obtaining messages

