

Effective Free-Talking Methods in a Korean University Setting*

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The current study explores the phenomenon of free-talking and seeks ways to improve students' speaking abilities through the free-talking program at a specific university in Korea. The participants of this study are 66 university students and 21 international professors (IPs). Data analysis is conducted through questionnaires, interviews, and free-talking sessions. While observing students during weekly, thirty-minute free-talking sessions this study examines ways to improve free-talking by using chunks and chunking, shadowing and windowing, three methods based on the Lexical Approach. Overall the results show that these methods have a positive effect on students' free-talking skills by giving them more confidence about using longer sentences. Intentionally practicing chunk-based conversation with an IP gradually helps students to improve their English-communication ability. Students' interview results demonstrate that free-talking through these three methods enables them to express themselves more effectively. Students, regardless of their level, benefit the most when IPs provide useful models of how to carry on a conversation and adjust the level according to students' abilities. IPs can tutor students more effectively by giving them appropriate feedback through research-based strategies, which requires them to be ready when students visit their offices. Finally a few practical applications are suggested in conjunction with the three lexical methods for activating free-talking.

[effective free-talking/collocation/chunks/chunking/practical methods/
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I. INTRODUCTION

In this era of international communication it is vital to emphasize productive skills such as speaking and writing. In moments of frustration, students have expressed that the reason they are not able to speak more confidently is because reading and listening, receptive skills, have been the focus. As a result, the idea came into being that what Korea needed was native English speakers who could not speak Korean and would ‘force’ students to speak in English. This has led to bringing such international professors (IPs)¹ to Korea to teach Korean students how to express themselves in English.

IPs sometimes express their perplexed feelings when they first come to Korea or after they have been in the country for a while and find it difficult to get students to open their mouths. Furthermore, it simply does not make sense to IPs as to why or how Koreans cannot or will not speak English more fluently after studying English for so many years. This phenomenon can be seen in free-talking where students say they want to practice speaking but have fear on their faces when they are asked to speak in English.

Although doing a Google search for resources on free-talking in Korea brings few results beyond advice to teachers on an individual basis, there are influential voices with plausible counsel on how to get Korean students to speak in English with more confidence and less shame. Some lexicologists (Lewis, 1997; McCarthy, 1990; Moon, 1997; Nation, 2001; Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992) put great emphasis on lexical chunks rather than on individual words. In Korea, the predominant method of learning English vocabulary has been through rote-memorization of atomic single words in a purely-paired translation-equivalent fashion. These lexicologists argue for applying lexis to teaching students the most useful expressions. This approach is fundamental in terms of demonstrating how to teach students key phrases rather than individual words more effectively. When it comes to verbal skills, lexis such as collocations and lexical chunks is required for listening and speaking. To enhance students’ speaking ability, Joe, Nation, and Newton (1996) recommend adapting speaking tasks by using a variety of lexical activities.

In general, IPs teach ‘English Conversation’ as a basic, required class. Up to this point in Korea, however, there seems to be little evidence of empirical research related to free-talking outside of the classroom. Given the fact that Koreans can encounter a number of IPs outside of the classroom, it seems necessary to find more effective methods of communicating with people from other countries to make the most of learning English through natural conversation. The purpose of this study is to find more effective methods

¹ Here when it comes to the term and the definition of the international professors, we follow Kim’s suggestion (Nahk-Bohk Kim, 2011, p. 120).

that professors of any nationality can use to get their students to try to speak in English. This study addresses the following three research questions:

- 1) Is free-talking more effective if the IP prepares for free-talking sessions in advance?
- 2) Does more structured free-talking enable students to speak out more frequently and effectively?
- 3) What types of methods are more effective in helping students overcome their difficulties in speaking English?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Definition and Practice of Free-Talking

One researcher argues that the idea of ‘Conversation English’ originated from the audiolingual method (Thornbury, 2006). In its origin, this method put emphasis on listening and repeating (Richards & Rodgers, 2001) and it also stressed the importance of the role of the native speaker or fluent instructor. The requirement of some students to find IPs to practice speaking English could be a reflection of this.

Free-talking² could be defined in a variety of ways: as a class, a tutoring session, a small study group, or small talk that leads into deeper discussion on various topics as well as discussion and debate. Free-talking could be considered a class if a student is doing it for credit or if it is a requirement in order for students to graduate. It could be a tutoring session if students are seeking help outside of the classroom to improve their English or if they want to do missionary service in another country. It could be a small study group if there is more than one student that is seeking to study English with other students under the supervision of an IP or anyone who is interested in teaching or guiding students. Free-talking could be considered small talk if the conversation starts with a student asking a professor to free-talk. They could start by talking about the weather and then eventually transition into deeper subjects. Free-talking could also be viewed as discussion and debate, where a specific issue is chosen, students are divided into two groups and students discuss whether they agree or disagree. This approach can be a little intimidating but if IPs follow Green, Christopher, and Lam (1997) they will find that the shadowing method improves students' discussion skills, just as these authors claim. IPs can have students

² The term ‘free-talking program’ used here refers to the overall structure of free-talking, involving all IPs and students.

discuss and debate issues students are involved or interested in so that students will be more motivated to improve their speaking skills.

In general, free-talking seems to be a concept of practicing English outside of the classroom with a native or fluent speaker. This could be modified to controlled practice where the IP provides the structure of what the student says. Such controlled practice could be followed up with fluency practice where the student focuses on communicating without having to worry about the IP stopping her every time she makes a mistake. Thornbury (2006) puts a spin on all of this by referring to 'controlled practice' as 'practiced control'. His definition of the instructor as a guide is crucial in the free-talking session because this stimulates the process of free-talking. In this way students can practice having open conversation with each other while the IP simply functions as a language resource.

IPs sometimes ask students to give a reason why they want to free-talk. This is a 'no-brainer' to students who supply the obvious answer: to speak English well. This underscores the familiarity of free-talking among Koreans, which leads one researcher to speak of free-talking as a proper noun in Korea (Nahk-Bohk Kim, 2011).

Nonetheless, there still seems to be a need to have a definition handy for those IPs coming to Korea to explain just what this well-known phenomenon among Koreans really is. Putting all of the above together, free-talking is: a small group of students having an open conversation with one another while the IP, a language resource, corrects students' mistakes and offers them feedback. Looking at free-talking in this way also keeps free-talking student-centered. By being a language resource, the IP is stepping in to help students think of what to say and how to say it. But the IP is not always needed to draw words out of the students' mouths. In those moments of students managing conversation on their own, the IP could be taking notes on what students say. Then when the free-talking session nearly comes to a close, the IP can show the students their mistakes and elicit them to correct the mistakes themselves accompanied by IP.

2. Some Practical Methods

The constant challenge is to find ways to get students to try to speak English with confidence. Three vital methods which proactively implement Lewis' Lexical Approach (1997, 2000), chunks and chunking, shadowing, and windowing, offer themselves as ways of empowering students to speak in English more effectively. These methods seem invaluable as a way of getting students to open their mouths more effectively because it puts the liability to speak on the students. Furthermore, if these methods are combined with collocations, the most essential part of the Lexical Approach, students will be able to first learn how to combine words, followed by practicing what they learn. Thus, they will be equipped with the tools necessary to ease the process of trying to say something in English.

Lewis (1997) defines collocations as “those combinations of words which occur naturally with greater than random frequency.” (p. 25). Collocational knowledge empowers L2 learners to speak more fluently and produce more native-like utterances (Fan, 2009; Kim, 2010; Nation, 2001).

This concept of the Lexical Approach is no foreign concept in Korea. In fact, Korean researchers (Nahk-Bohk Kim, 2008; Young-Mi Kim, 2010; Dongkwang Shin, 2007) themselves see value in this approach especially because it instructs Korean students in how to overcome the challenge of forming sentences in English. However, whereas Lewis seems to be more ideological about this approach Korean researchers are trying to find its practical implications though they also seem more theoretical than practical in what they have written about it. Among the more practical ways Koreans are seeking to implement it, Nahk-Bohk Kim (2009) argues that this very approach is even useful in the context of conversation. He adopts some useful collocations and chunks in US President Obama’s speech texts and suggests adapting those speech samples full of collocations to improve college students’ speaking ability. IPs can extend students’ collocational competence to free-talking.

An even more practical way of applying chunking to the challenge of getting students to speak would be to distribute a list of chunks or collocations to students when the free-talking session begins. Lewis (1997) is more conducive, however, in appropriating the chunk list by having students add the chunks to their lexical notebooks. This ensures that students are recycling the chunks they encounter. It is imperative that students apply these chunks in other contexts without simply repeating these chunks using rote memory.

The second approach, shadowing, is defined as the oral, imitated repetition of what is spoken immediately after the language spoken and is also valuable for improving one’s speaking and listening skills. Lambert (1990) suggests adaptating the method technically, saying that “shadowing is a paced, auditory tracking task which involves the immediate vocalization of auditorily presented stimuli in the same language, parrot-style, of a message’ (p. 17). While this method does seem relatively new in Korea, it also seems to be an adaptation of the Talk-Out-Loud method. The concept behind this theory is that if a student tries to reproduce what the students hears, then the student will be forced to listen more carefully. Woo (2005) defines shadowing as “...listening to recorded speech... [and] repeat[ing] exactly what you hear, immediately upon hearing it” (p. 1). This is simply one way of using shadowing. As the approach of shadowing evolves IPs are finding various ways to appropriate it practically. Some are using it to complement videos they show in the classroom. Therefore it does not seem outrageous to consider using the same approach during free-talking. Da-Un Chung (2010) reports that shadowing increased middle school students’ self-confidence in using English, their shadowing preferences, and their positive perception of shadowing in terms of improving their English speaking skills. The extended

advantage of this method is that it gives students the tools necessary to emphasize suprasegmentals such as accent, pitch and tone appropriately in order to speak rhythmically in a more fluent way. It also provides students with the basic ability to repeat a sentence accurately so that students can produce language accurately themselves.

However, not all who do research in shadowing find it to be an effective method in terms of comprehending the gist of the content. Beech and McKeating (1980) argue that shadowing is certainly beneficial in terms of repeating what they hear but that it does not ensure that students comprehend what they are saying. This is apparent in Korean classrooms where students are able to repeat what the IP says without necessarily understanding their own speech. To overcome this shortcoming we need to have students understand what they are saying. This happens by first having students try to communicate their thought and then asking students concept questions or by giving them a direct Korean translation.

A third way of helping students speak English using longer sentences is through windowing, in which students speak the chunks of a sentence as one would open windows one by one (Nahk-Bohk Kim, 2009). Through this method students can learn to speak in chunks, also known as a unit or a group of words, one by one. This method seems to be helpful in light of getting students to think about speaking in terms of chunks rather than complete sentences. Speaking in sentences seems overwhelming whereas using an approach like windows may be more realistic, particularly to students who seem to struggle to say more than one word. It accommodates students so they can speak more while also obliging the most independent action on their part.

Below are two examples of how to use the three methods, chunks and chunking, shadowing, and windowing, more communicatively during free-talking.

- 1) We are sharing our ideas/ about free-talking/ in an international workshop/ about English education/ with the theme/ of more effective free-talking methods/ and looking at ways/ to improve the current free-talking system/ at one university//.
- 2) We are free-talking/ on the fourth floor/ in an IP's office/ to improve our speaking abilities/ by combining the right words/ of a specific topic/ to try to make a full sentence//.

We can employ the above sentences in different ways by means of the three methods being emphasized throughout this study. The first is chunks and chunking. This method, fundamental to all three methods, is demonstrated above with a slash mark between chunks. The second is through shadowing, in which students immediately repeat what the IP says chunk by chunk. These sentences might be difficult for some students to use. But if they think of these expressions as 'windows', for example, they will be able to produce longer

sentences. Windowing was applied to free-talking by telling students that prepositions function as bridges between one expression and another by using preposition-plus-noun collocations. Students seemed to be illuminated because they knew they could speak short sentences and all they had to do was insert the appropriate prepositions between short phrases in order to make longer sentences.

III. METHOD

1. Participants

66 freshmen (16 males and 50 females) attending the same university in Chungcheongnam-do, majoring in Elementary Special Education or Secondary Special Education, participated in this study. As a requirement of 'Screen English' they were assigned free-talking homework. This means they had to free-talk in groups of five students or less for thirty minutes every week during the Spring semester of 2011. Students also responded to the survey and written interview questions. The IP involved in this study observed these students during free-talking. This consisted of a weekly evaluation of the students' speaking ability based on various characteristics listed in Appendix 1, to ascertain their improvement in the seven areas of their speaking skills over time.

IPs teaching at the same university also participated in this survey. 11 of the 21 IPs who responded to the questionnaire were selected to be interviewed through a conversation with the IP conducting this study. Most IPs teach Screen English classes unless they have a specialized major or are assigned to teach a major course. All IPs have at least a Master's degree, mostly in theology or a related field. Most IPs free-talk with a variety of levels of students, depending on the department they are assigned to, their course requirements and their popularity among students.

2. Instruments

All the instruments used were created exclusively for this study. No forms were used for documenting the students' English-communication ability prior to this study. Without any tools to measure the progress of students, it is difficult to evaluate the students' performance and the IPs' involvement with no objective measurements. These tools also seemed necessary in order to find out how students and IPs think of free-talking similarly and/or differently.

1) Questionnaire and Written/Spoken Interview

Questionnaires and interviews were used to gain insight into how students and IPs view free-talking as it is executed at the university where this study was conducted. The questionnaire consisted of 5-level Likert items (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3= neutral, 4=agree, and 5 = strongly agree) and open-ended questions. Questionnaires were distributed to students during class and the International Office e-mailed the surveys to all IPs at that university. 21 out of 35 IPs responded. For the interview students received the interview questions written on paper in Korean. The students were selected based on the fact that they were from two different majors who were all required to take a course with the IP involved in this study. The same IP selected a small group of IPs and interviewed them face to face. This selection was based on IPs' free-talking reputations, those who are known for conducting long hours of free-talking, those who loathed free-talking or those who only met with students at a certain speaking level. The main purpose of both the questionnaire and interview was to see how both students and IPs view free-talking in similar and in different ways. Thus, some questions were about both groups' expectations as well as what they found to be the most difficult aspects of free-talking (see Tables 5, 6).

2) Free-Talking observations

Observation forms were used to evaluate students who participated in this study during their weekly, thirty-minute free-talking sessions³. The same form was used while free-talking with each group of students participating in this study throughout the semester. Appendix 1 shows the evaluation criteria used for each category during their midterm exam, final exam and weekly observations and Appendix 2 shows the basic format of the free-talking form, consisting of ten columns. Then the results were used to verify whether or not weekly free-talking was beneficial to the students as evidenced by their performance on the midterm and final exams.

Free-talking sessions took place in the office of the IP involved in this research project. Students reported for free-talking at the time they chose on the first day of class. These sessions took place Monday through Thursday during times when the IP was not teaching formal classes.

In terms of evaluating students, the paradigm was not perfectionism but functionalism. The IP evaluating students' speaking skills was looking to see if students could be

³ 'Free-talking session' refers to a small group of students, five or less, practicing their English conversation skills in front of one IP.

understood in each of the categories. They were evaluated for their speaking skills in the following areas: pronunciation (intonation), accent (stress), speaking speed, vocabulary (chunks), speaking length and their effort/ attitude. Pronunciation (intonation) was only important in so far as the IP could understand what the students were trying to say. Accent (stress) was only important in terms of the IP being able to distinguish which words students were trying to emphasize. Speaking speed pertained to how fast or how slow students were speaking. For vocabulary (chunks), students were graded on how much conversation they could have by using chunks in the form of a simple sentence without using their dictionaries. Speaking length was evaluated in terms of how well students were able to complete their thoughts using appropriate expressions such as lexical chunks in the form of full sentences. Effort and Attitude simply related to whether or not a student tried to speak in English and whether each student tried to understand what other students or the IP were saying.

3. Procedures

Students were required to choose a free-talking time during the first class of the semester. The first free-talking session was an introductory session with students introducing themselves. Students were given a brief introduction about the free-talking session and how it related to the class they were taking. The main purpose of this was to see where students were in terms of their own ideas and experiences of free-talking before they were university students. In the third week of regular class, students had to write five subtopics they were interested in talking about during each free-talking session. After students in every class filled in this form, the IP sorted through these sheets and chose the most common subtopics for each main topic. Students were told they could miss up to two free-talking sessions and if they missed the third one they were no longer allowed to free-talk. They were told that if they missed a session they were not allowed to make it up and that it would affect their final grade. In the end, students were allowed to make up free-talking if they misunderstood the assignment or if their free-talking time fell on a holiday.

4. Data Collection and Analysis

Collecting data consisted of compiling the results of participants' three categories: the survey of students'/IPs' perceptions of free-talking via the questionnaire, observation of free-talking activities, and spoken/written interviews in terms of qualitative analysis. First, IPs' questionnaires were distributed by email through the International Office and were collected within three weeks from the time they were distributed. The students and IPs

responded to multiple choice and open-ended questions. Students were required to respond to the questionnaire in class. The collected data was analyzed in terms of a percentage.

Second, in terms of observed free-talking sessions, the rubric shown in Appendix 1 consisted of 7 items. The midterm exam was worth 10% and the final exam was worth 20% of the final grade. At the end of the semester the IP involved in this study added up the As, Bs and Cs of each category by tallying the marks on blank paper. The results were organized into Tables 4, 5, and 6 as shown below. The purpose of evaluating the observation sheets was to see whether students improved their English speaking skills by the end of the semester as a result of free-talking on a weekly basis.

Third, students responded to the seven written interview questions and a select group of IPs from within the group of the 21 IPs responded to the interview questions through a conversation with the IP participating in this study. The purpose of these interviews was to compare students' perceptions of free-talking with those of IPs and to find more appropriate methods for free-talking.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research explored how to get students to try to speak more freely during free-talking. The following three questions have been the basis of our research.

Q1: Is free-talking more effective if the IP prepares for free-talking sessions in advance?

The answer comes from a combination of factors including the questionnaire, interview, and the observations administered to students. The first factor to consider in answering this question is how to define free-talking both from the perspectives of students as well as IPs. Table 1 demonstrates the differences between the perceptions of students and IPs regarding the way they view free-talking. The numbers below show some significant similarities and differences between how students and IPs perceive of free-talking.

Table 1 shows many students and IPs alike indicated that they view free-talking as small talk. However, it is worth mentioning that there is more than a 10% gap between students and IPs, indicating that IPs consider free-talking to be small-talk more than students do. Another way to view free-talking is as a class. There was somewhat of a contrast between students and IPs in this category. The largest gap between students and IPs was in reference to a group study. Nearly 23% of students viewed free-talking as a group study whereas only 4.76% of IPs viewed free-talking in this way. Apart from discussion/debate, the category that showed the least preference from IPs and no preference from students

was tutoring. But the fact that a small minority of IPs view it this way could suggest the possibility of holding some free-talking sessions accordingly, especially if students have a particular purpose in mind for learning English. Also, given the fact that one student and three IPs identified more than one of these areas as being a plausible definition suggests that one method does not suffice to define what free-talking means for all students participating in free-talking.

Table 1

<i>Definition of Free-talking According to IPs and Students</i>			N(%)
Definition	Professors	Students	
Class	5(23.81)	8(12.12)	
Tutoring Session	0(0)	5(7.58)	
Group Study	1(4.76)	15(22.73)	
Small Talk	9(42.86)	36(54.55)	
Discussion/Debate	0(0)	0(0)	
Class & Tutoring Session	0(0)	1(1.51)	
Tutoring & Small Talk	1(4.76)	0(0)	
Tutoring, Group, Small Talk	2(9.52)	0(0)	
Group Study and Other	0(0)	1(1.51)	
All of the above	3(14.29)	0(0)	
Total	21(100)	66(100)	

All the above is a necessary prerequisite discussion before drawing a conclusion to Question 1. The way students and IPs view free-talking will in some way determine how students and IPs think about preparing for free-talking. Moving on to answer the question of preparation more directly, the results shown in Table 2 regarding IPs' perspectives of the necessity of preparation seem strikingly inconsistent. The majority of IPs disagree that preparing for free-talking negates the freedom of free-talking and that free-talking is more effective with some preparation. However, some IPs are either neutral (28.57%) or show preference (38.10%) towards unplanned free-talking.

Table 2

<i>Free-Talking Preparation</i>		N(%)=21(100)				
Survey Question	1	2	3	4	5	
Prepared free-talking not really free-talking.	2(9.52)	7(33.33)	6(28.57)	3(14.29)	3(14.29)	
Unplanned free-talking	5(23.81)	2(9.52)	6(28.57)	5(23.81)	3(14.29)	
Prepared free-talking more beneficial	0(0)	4(19.05)	5(23.81)	8(38.10)	4(19.05)	

Table 3 shows that many students are neutral on what seem to be two key issues related to preparing for free-talking. That is, two questions on the student questionnaire confronted this issue of preparation. One was that 53.03% of students recommended doing an activity in conjunction with free-talking. The other was that 39.39% of students found free-talking to be more effective if the IP participating in this study prepared for free-talking beforehand. This would seem to suggest that free-talking itself be treated as a class in that IPs are allotted time to prepare for free-talking just as they are allotted time to prepare for regular class.

Table 3

<i>Free-Talking Activities and Preparation</i>		N(%)=66(100)				
Survey Question	1	2	3	4	5	
Participation in and practice of free-talking connected with an activity	0(0)	5(7.58)	26(39.39)	20(30.30)	15(22.73)	
Prepared IPs make free-talking more effective	1(1.52)	10(15.15)	29(43.94)	20(30.30)	6(9.09)	

While Table 2 shows that some IPs are inconsistent between their ideas and practice of preparation, Table 3 suggests that this preparation include some type of an activity. If that is the case, IPs could make their objective of free-talking to engage students in conversation through an activity. In order to be ready to do an activity with students, free-talking would necessitate preparation on the part of the IP, and perhaps on the part of students as well. But that does not necessitate that IPs prepare for free-talking in the same way as they might prepare for a formal lesson. It may be that preparing for free-talking simply means that IPs have an idea of what they will have students do during free-talking.

Q2: Does more structured free-talking enable students to speak out more frequently and effectively?

For the second question, it would seem appropriate to first look at the observation sheet that was used for free-talking with the participants during this study. There are more results

than those shown in Table 4 below, but these figures should give the reader some idea of how effective free-talking can be in terms of improving students' English-communication skills. Comments will also be made below regarding the rest of the semester as it relates to the numbers shown in Table 4. The columns on the left shows the different categories of fluency. The two columns of numbers refer to the midterm (M) and final exams (F).

Students demonstrated that their greatest strength was pronunciation (intonation), especially of individual words. Their greatest weakness in terms of suprasegmentals was that of accent (stress) (M=18.18%; F=33.33%). The IP observing these students noticed they were able to accent individual words but that when they spoke whole sentences they spoke with a flat tone. However, comparing students with one another, some students demonstrated a stronger accent than others. In speaking English, knowing how to produce the correct sounds, stress patterns and intonation is a basic skill and a crucial factor. Ur (1984) stressed that repeating models of intonation and stress patterns is a useful exercise. That's why students tend to hear the sentences as they think they ought to be pronounced, and can benefit from having the accuracies in their own imitations pointed out and corrected (Da-Un Chung, 2010).

Table 4

The Results of Students' Mid-term and Final Exams N(%)=66(100)

	A		B		C	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Pronunciation (Intonation)	20 (30.30)	38 (57.58)	33 (50.00)	25 (37.88)	13 (19.70)	3 (4.55)
Accent (Stress)	12 (18.18)	22 (33.33)	21 (31.82)	31 (46.97)	33 (50.00)	13 (19.70)
Speed	21 (31.82)	25 (37.88)	19 (28.79)	36 (54.55)	26 (39.39)	5 (7.58)
Vocabulary (Chunks)	5 (7.58)	7 (10.61)	24 (36.36)	28 (41.42)	37 (56.06)	31 (46.97)
Length	15 (22.73)	28 (43.42)	23 (34.85)	19 (28.79)	28 (42.42)	19 (28.79)
Effort & Attitude	37 (56.06)	56 (84.85)	19 (28.79)	7 (10.61)	10 (15.15)	3 (4.55)

G: Grade M: Mid-term Exam, F: Final Exam

Students shadowed the IP during free-talking by intentionally repeating what the IP said. The IP's demonstration of suprasegmentals such as stress, pitch and intonation served as explicit models of how to speak. Remarkable increase in pronunciation (nearly double in the A range) between the mid-term (M=30.30%) and final exam (F=57.58%) indicates that many students were positively influenced by the IP's explicit modeling. Regarding lexis, according to Table 4, vocabulary was the lowest score

($M=7.58\%$; $F=10.61\%$). These results were different from those of Accent in that students showed a lack of vocabulary at the time of both the midterm and the final exams. Even though students often looked words up in their dictionaries, they didn't seem to transfer those words into their long-term memories. This was especially true for students in the 'A' range. All in all, students in the lower range seemed to show more improvement in terms of their vocabulary, speed and length. This suggests that students found a suitable method for comprehending more and more vocabulary which proves the beneficial use of chunks and chunking during free-talking. Chunks and chunking activities can be a valuable technique to improve students' vocabulary use and speaking ability with time (Nahk-Bohk Kim & Dirks, 2011).

According to Table 4, another difficult field for students to master, as mentioned before, was that of accent. However, students demonstrated definite improvement in this area over time. These results verify that free-talking operated at the bare minimum level helps students the most who are at a lower level and that the same could be done for students at a higher level in a free-talking program with more preparation and intentionality. There were also times when students seemed unable to express themselves using longer sentences. At those times, the IP used a whiteboard to point out to students how they could begin to express themselves using chunks and chunking without worrying about where the sentence was going to end. This seemed to be an appropriate use of windowing. Students also responded well to shadowing when they wanted to learn how to accent their sentences more accurately. This all seems comparable to Marks (1997) who stresses the importance of integrating the knowledge of language, lexis and pronunciation in ways which are mutually reinforcing. In order for students to continue to try speaking, the IP should continually be seeking to reel words and expressions out of students' mouths.

Q3: What types of methods are more effective in helping students overcome their difficulties in speaking English?

Tables 5 and 6, results of the interviews with students and IPs, show the most significant part of this research. IPs expressed a desire for more collaboration between professors and a resource, such as a book, for doing free-talking. Students also took advantage of the opportunity to express their own desires and frustrations regarding free-talking. Tables 5 and 6 show the most significant responses given during this process. The responses are grouped together based on which question they answer. This seemed more appropriate than grouping answers based on the response to show the diversity of responses and also because the responses were open-ended. Table 5 shows the students' typical responses. They expressed their responses to each interview question in written form.

In Table 5, questions 1, 2 and 3 suggest a link between students being afraid of speaking in English with an IP and a lack of useful expressions. Students mean they are uncomfortable with speaking in English because they do not know what to say. Utilizing chunks and chunking by providing students with suggestions of useful expressions or simply showing students what to say would prove to be a useful method to use in order to get students to express themselves through combinations of words at the proper time and place. The biggest difference students and IPs showed regarding their perceptions of appropriate free-talking was that students want IPs to guide them while IPs wait for students to speak.

Regarding question 1, two students responded as follows. These responses would seem to suggest that students can benefit from free-talking by learning how to apply chunks and chunking to everyday conversation.

Table 5
Students' Responses to Interview Questions

Items	Students' Predominant Responses
1. What do you think of the free-talking requirement for this course?	A good opportunity to have a conversation with someone from another country and to improve my English skills even though it is required, scary at first because of a lack of expressions
2. What do you think is the biggest challenge or difficulty during free-talking?	Fear of English, being 'plugged up', combinations of words, valley between thoughts and how to express themselves, difference in conversation style, appropriate vocabulary
3. What do you expect to gain this semester through free-talking?	To not be afraid of speaking English, natural English conversation, natural expressions and vocabulary words, overcome feelings about pronunciation/intonation, hear and understand what others are saying in English
4. What activities do you want to use in order to speak more during free-talking?	Don't ask each student the same question, students bring the subject, students participate when there is a game, free atmosphere, help students express their thoughts, correct students' mistakes, express opinions or ideas
5. What is your goal for improving your English-speaking ability this semester?	Become more comfortable with English, communicate easily, interact with a foreigner, improve intonation and use expressions in everyday life
6. How do you want the IP to elicit/guide you to open your mouth?	Give students hints, subject, model conversation and manage time, specific conversational methods, ask questions slowly, questioning, create a relaxed atmosphere, free conversation, no stiff class content, ample opportunity to talk, joint conversation with students' speaking taking priority
7. How/What do you prepare for free-talking in order to be more successful this semester?	Study conversation book, practice having conversation, useful expressions during free-talking, movies or dramas

I think combining vocabulary is difficult. I have only studied reading and listening. So I am worried about speaking and it is difficult for me to say various English vocabulary words and use a variety of expressions. (Interview 1, Student C, April 2011)

I did not usually make the effort or even attempt to try to say an English word. But during free-talking time I usually paid attention to how to express things when the IP spoke in English. Through free-talking I want to know many expressions or vocabulary words that can actually be used. (Interview 2, Student Y, April 2011)

As for question 2, Tables 5 and 6 show that there is a link in the mutual frustration of both students and IPs during free-talking. The fact that students feel uncomfortable speaking English and IPs feel the burden of carrying on the conversation may suggest a link to the way IPs responded to question 2 where they expressed a problem with adequate time management and resources. That would suggest that if both IPs and students prepare more specifically for free-talking students will be able to speak more and IPs will feel less pressure to do all the talking. But it will require students to prepare for each specific free-talking session, rather than in the general ways they indicated in response to question 7.

Table 6

Professors' Responses to Interview Questions

Items	IPs' Predominant Responses
1. How do you view free-talking in contrast to the regular courses you are required to teach?	Guide students, practicing concepts, more enjoyable, more freedom, a choice, less structured, individualistic
2. What do you think is the biggest challenge or difficulty during free-talking?	Low-level students, equal communication, lack of initiative, varied interest, dynamic conversation, planning time/resources
3. What do you expect your students to gain this semester by free-talking with you?	Confidence, motivation, accept mistakes, job tools, relationships, English websites, appropriate grammar, cultural awareness
4. What activities do you use during free-talking in order to enable your students to speak more during free-talking?	Peer-work, activity choice, current events, maps, crossword puzzles, online games/activities, question-answer, magazines, board games, storybooks, textbooks, calendars, vocabulary games, specialized conversation, open conversation, review course material, skits, 'Boggle', 'What if', journaling, artwork
5. What is your goal for improving your students' speaking ability this semester?	Better communication skills, the ability for students to have comfortable conversation with non-Koreans, understand basic English, use English properly, accurate pronunciation, extended conversation, actualized fluency goals, self-motivation, interest in free-talking

6. How do you encourage students to open their mouths during free-talking?	Wait for students to speak, students bring subjects, “Red Robin” style, stories, food, report problems to Department Chair, pop songs, come down to the students’ level, questions, use Korean, examples, repetition, changing the subject, exaggerating pronunciation, vocabulary games, more time
7. How/what do you prepare for free-talking in order for you to be more successful in helping your students improve their English-communication skills this semester?	Open-ended questions, take notes, students’ interests, music, art, read articles, information sheet, homework, course curriculum, accessible tools, mental preparation, preview, collaboration

Questions 3 and 4 of Tables 5 and 6 show that there are slightly different viewpoints regarding the purpose or means of learning English. Students seem to want to have general English-communication ability where they can use expressions and key vocabulary which will also give them confidence and rid them of their fear of English. On the other hand, IPs seem to view English as having a particular purpose in students’ lives beyond basic conversation.

One IP who is new to the university stated that free-talking is more difficult than teaching a regular class because free-talking is less structured. On the contrary, another professor who is also new to the university stated that free-talking is more comfortable than teaching a class for the very same reason that free-talking is less structured. Regarding the place of where to free-talk, the former IP referred to having a conversation with a student on the city bus as free-talking. Both of these professors seemed to view free-talking in less of an academic way, as a practical way to get students to communicate in English with IPs outside of the classroom. Both IPs spoke of students’ improvement and their need to be able to have extended conversation. They also agree that it is important to wait for students to speak and encourage them to use complete sentences. Beyond extra practice outside of the classroom, these professors were unclear on the objectives of free-talking.

Question 6 shows a striking difference which may offer an answer to the question of how to ease the tension during free-talking. IPs said they wait for students to answer while students expressed a desire in having the IPs guide them in what to say next. This would seem to affirm what has been said about shadowing in which students repeat what the IP says. This could also be expanded into windowing where students speak on their own.

Based on the free-talking session, students showed a lack of being able to respond to open-ended questions. One possibility may be due to a lack of familiarity with expressions students expressed in a variety of ways through the written interview. However, this is probably not the only reason. Some students expressed that they were still nervous about free-talking at the end of the semester because they were afraid they would not be able to understand what the IP was saying or that he would not be able to understand what they

were saying. This would seem to suggest that the environment played a significant role in how comfortable students were to speak. Perhaps the students mentioned above also felt like they had to be able to speak English perfectly in order to communicate. In line with this, activities congruous with the objectives of that free-talking session seem to be an appropriate way to get students to start having a conversation which utilizes chunks and chunking in plain English.

One time that students did talk was when they repeated after the IP. This would seem congruous with shadowing. Finally, when the IP wrote sentences on the whiteboard students seemed to be able to comprehend more. Perhaps all three of these points could be meshed together by first eliciting answers from students, second, by modeling sentences and third, by drilling students to say the sentences correctly. Based on the Lexical Approach, after doing all of this, students could see what they were saying by having the IP write what they said on the whiteboard after they have had a chance to repeat what they heard the IP say.

The above results show a variety of things, all of which affirm the notions argued by researchers in English education. Regarding preparation, we know that no system of education can be successful without both IPs and students preparing. Part of this preparation, on the part of IPs, involves discerning which format, small talk, a small group study, a class, tutoring or discussion and debate, is appropriate. It also involves being ready to supply students with the appropriate expressions to talk about the subject of that free-talking session. As the quote from an IP below states, structure is also important as long as it gives students the support they need while also ensuring that they are the center of the free-talking session.

When we came we were told to make the students come up with the topic. Backtrack...what did you do...? I haven't always required them to bring anything but those who bring something...I think it needs to be changed to 'English practice'. For it to be more beneficial there needs to be structure to it. Sample tests...using sentences or vocabulary words. I don't think there has been enough guidance...there's not a list of objectives to give to new professors. Free-talking needs to be more than once a week. (Interview 1, April 2011)

Students and IPs showed, through the questionnaires, interviews and observed free-talking that they view free-talking in different ways. Although students were neutral on the matter of them preparing for free-talking, there seems to be plausible reason to argue in the affirmative. But it also suggests that students need to be more involved in free-talking through more substantial ways of internalizing the many words and expressions they use. Shadowing will only be productive insofar as students are able to produce those

expressions on their own by expressing their thoughts through windowing. This could suggest that the key is to view chunks and chunking, shadowing, and windowing as one comprehensive tool rather than as three individual methods.

V. CONCLUSION

This study explored students and IPs' viewpoints on free-talking and sought more effective ways of doing free-talking, suggesting that both students and IPs will have a greater sense of accomplishment by employing chunks and chunking, shadowing, and windowing during free-talking sessions. Data has been collected from 66 freshmen university students and 21 IPs at the same university who responded to interview questions, questionnaires and participated in free-talking during the Spring semester of 2011. A summary of the results of the study is as follows:

First, students indicated on the questionnaire that free-talking would be more productive if IPs had a plan of what to accomplish during free-talking sessions. This is evidenced by the fact that some students also expressed interest in playing a game during free-talking. On the IPs' side, there was some discrepancy between their ideas of preparing for free-talking in general as it relates to the 'freeness' of free-talking and how much preparation they actually do. More IPs indicated that prepared free-talking does not necessitate less 'free'-talking, while more professors stated they do not prepare beforehand for free-talking. These responses do not articulate exactly what is meant by 'prepare'. However, they do indicate that students and IPs both agree that it is important for the IP to have a basic idea of what the IP wants to accomplish during free-talking before it actually starts.

Second, the observation sheets showed that students among the lower levels of English communication showed the most improvement in terms of the length of their sentences, accent and speed, as well as pronunciation. Students in the higher range seemed to benefit less in terms of improving their use of vocabulary (chunks). This seems to suggest that IPs need to adjust the structure of the free-talking session based on the students' English-communication level. The higher a student's English ability, the less structure the student needs. Likewise, the lower a student's level is the more structure the student needs. However, one weakness of the observation sheets is that they did not diagnose why students did or did not perform well during free-talking sessions. It could have been a matter of language level, fear, a lack of expressions or simply an uncomfortable environment. Furthermore, structure alone is not a guarantee that students will speak English more freely. It may be a matter of IPs making a constant effort to reel words and expressions out of students mouths to empower them to say what they are trying to communicate.

Finally, the interviews showed that students and IPs seem to think about free-talking differently. Students stated that rather than the IP waiting for them to respond, they wanted the IP to guide them when they did not know what to say next. This coincides well with the three methods of chunks and chunking, shadowing, and windowing, which empower students to speak freely by first following the IP and then speaking the words and expressions on their own.

These results show that one of these answers alone is not enough to improve free-talking but that all three parts are needed synchronistically. Without a free-talking plan, it will be difficult for the IP to lead students using chunks and chunking, shadowing, and windowing. Without structure, it will be impossible to make a plan, much less to know how to guide the students using chunks and chunking, shadowing and windowing. And without these three methods, it will be difficult to measure whether or not students walk away with any more knowledge of English communication than they came with. Furthermore, all of the above show that these methods are useful not only for IPs to use to get students to speak in their L2, but that the same goes for Korean professors as well.

The limitations of this paper are that the actual free-talking session was carried out by one university in Korea with only 66 students of two similar majors led by only one IPs on a weekly, thirty-minute basis for just one semester. Therefore it is limited in terms of generalizing the results of the paper. It goes without saying that further empirical research needs to be done to verify the effectiveness of free-talking as it relates to required versus voluntary practice as well as to see how free-talking programs compare at different universities and how they can be applied towards ESP (English for Specific Purposes).

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APPENDIX 1

TEST AND OBSERVATION RUBRIC

	A	B	C
Pronunciation (Intonation)	(Almost) Fully comprehensible	More than average comprehension	Less than average comprehension.
Accent (Stress)	Variation in tone to show emphasis	Less variation in tone but emphasis can still be detected.	Flat tone
Speed	Words follow one another at a rhythmic beat.	Student speaks at a slower speed, but is still rhythmic.	No rhythm
Vocabulary (Chunks)	Frequent use of appropriate words and combinations of words	Intermittent use of appropriate words and combinations of words	Individual word use
Length	Student completes her/his thoughts by using a variety of chunks..	Student uses incomplete sentences but tries using chunks.	Individual word use more common than chunks
Effort/Attitude	Student always pays attention and makes a constant effort.	Student gets more frustrated but never gives up.	Student speaks only when asked to speak and doesn't pay attention.

APPENDIX 2

OBSERVATION SHEET

W	N	S	P	A	SS	V	SL	E&A	Comments
A									
B									
1	C								
D									
E									

W=Week, N=Names, S=Subjects, P=Pronunciation (Intonation), A=Accent (Stress),
SS=Speaking Speed, V=Vocabulary (Chunks), SL=Speaking Length, E & A=Effort and
Attitude

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