

The Effect of Discourse Markers on Academic Listening Comprehension: An investigation of Sri Lankan University Students Listening to Lectures in the English-Medium

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ABSTRACT

Discourse markers are cohesive devices that act as connectives and explicitly signal the structure of a piece of discourse. They are used by the speaker to indicate how what is being said is related to what has already been said. They can be divided into micro markers (e.g. Now, Well, OK), and macro markers (e.g. That brings us to, To begin with) etc. This study is an attempt to explore the relationship between discourse markers and listening comprehension, in a situation where academic lectures are delivered by lecturers who are non-native speakers of English, to students who are also non-native speakers. It focuses on the effect of discourse markers on the academic listening comprehension of a group of undergraduates studying towards the Bachelors in Management Studies at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Open University of Sri Lanka. The study also examines the interaction between the effect of discourse markers on lecture comprehension, and the English language proficiency level of the subjects. Using a short audio-taped lecture on urbanization, and closed and open measures of evaluation to assess comprehension, the study investigates the effect of the presence or absence of two types of discourse markers on comprehension of an academic lecture. The main findings of this investigation suggest that a combination of micro and macro markers, used in a lecture, facilitates greater comprehension than the use of only micro markers, among students of both intermediate, and advanced proficiency levels. However, students with an intermediate level of proficiency seem to benefit more from the inclusion of both types of discourse markers. Further the inclusion of both types of markers facilitates better performance in the task of summarizing lecture information. Some recommendations are made for language teachers with regard to teaching English for Academic Purposes as well as for teacher-trainers.

INTRODUCTION

I think I'll learn more from listening. Anything I would say I already know.

(Anonymous student explaining why she did not wish to participate in a discussion, quoted in *Christian Science Monitor*)

The spread of English as the international language and *lingua franca* of the academic world has been followed by large numbers of people studying at university level through the medium of English as a foreign or a second language. This happens whether one is studying in one's own country or if one travels to a country where English is spoken as a first language. As Johns, (1981) Richards, (1983) and Benson (1989) point out, a major part of university study is based on the lecture. Therefore, listening to lectures in English is an experience that almost all university students the world over would face, at undergraduate or at post graduate level. Lecturing is a widely accepted practice in Sri Lankan institutions of higher learning, as well.

In Sri Lanka, although post-independence nationalism inspired a Sinhala-Only Act of Parliament in the late fifties, and Sinhalese and Tamil have been listed as official languages in the Sri Lankan Constitution since the early sixties, and have been the only media of instruction in schools, English has remained the *de facto* official language of the country, gaining importance in the business and academic sectors of the country. Therefore, English has been used as a medium of instruction at university level, especially in the Faculties of Science and Technology, Engineering, Medicine, and Management Studies. Not only do students have to sometimes listen to lectures in the English medium, but a large proportion of the text books and reference material found in university libraries too, are in English, as is information in scholarly journals and on the Internet. However, having learnt English only as a subject, often with a lack of motivation, this sudden transition to English as a major medium of instruction in their academic careers often turns out to be difficult and problematic.

Although most of these students' problems derive from linguistic discursal or cultural sources, at least part of the difficulty is the nature of the lecture format itself. As Bilbow (1989) points out, "unlike face to face communication [i.e. conversation] where the rate of delivery is governed by conversational rules which encourage comprehension, a lecture is unique in that it consists of a steady flow of information delivered at a rate which may be only marginally influenced by a sensitivity to the problems faced by the speaker's audience". He points out a further difficulty: "within the lecture's formal

context, no student feels at liberty to stop the speaker to ask for clarification" (1989:85). This would be especially relevant to the context of a typically Sri Lankan classroom, where teachers are accorded great "respect" and are not likely to be interrupted while speaking.

In order to reduce the effects of this problem, many service/support programmes and courses have been set up at all Sri Lankan universities. However, these programmes, popularly known as *English for Academic Purposes* (EAP) courses, currently being conducted in many of the universities in Sri Lanka, focus mainly on reading skills and writing skills; little attention has been given to the skills needed for listening to lectures in the English medium.

With greater numbers entering English medium institutions of higher education around the world, the provision of appropriate English language training as a preparation for academic study has become increasingly important. This growing demand for and existence of EAP courses has led to the need for research into the processes underlying academic performance in a second language context such as Sri Lanka. Such research could provide input to teacher training as well as to the development of appropriate curriculum and instructional materials. The literature on EAP related to listening comprehension, has concentrated on the analysis of the various strategies for listening and for note-taking considered to be needed by the non-native speaker who has to be able to follow lectures or seminars in English (Murphy and Candlin 1979, cited in Chaudron and Richards 1986; Chaudron, Loschky and Cook, 1994). Little research with regard to academic listening has been conducted in relation to English as a Second Language (ESL) learners in the Sri Lankan context, or in relation to learners whose first language is Sinhalese or Tamil.

Subject lecturers who deliver English-medium lectures to non-native speaker students often modify their lectures in order to facilitate comprehension. Flowerdew (1994), describes two ways to help non-native speakers understand lectures in a second language. One is to improve their knowledge and skills in the target language until the comprehension process is no longer a problem. The other is "somehow to modify the form of the lectures to vary the input so as to make them easier to comprehend" (1994:20). This is often done intuitively, and takes many forms: it is possible to deliver the lecture at a slower pace, to increase the number of pauses, to simplify the syntax or grammar, repeat certain words and phrases. It is also possible

to structure the information in a lecture in a particular way so that it will be made more comprehensible to the listener. This study investigates the effects of such structuring by means of signaling devices such as discourse markers. Discourse markers are words or phrases that "frame" segments of talk and give a pattern to discourse. For example, the word "OK", "Well" "next", "to begin with", "Finally", "to summarise", "In conclusion", "What we will now consider" etc. not only give direction to the lecture and also serve as fillers, giving students time to process what they have just heard.

Review of the Literature

In view of the didactic focus of lectures, the structuring and organisation of information within a lecture has been assumed to be an essential aspect of its comprehensibility (Chaudron and Richards, 1986); and now there is widespread recognition that ESL learners have potential problems in following the structure of academic lectures. (Powers, 1986, Tudor and Tuffs, 1991, Flowerdew and Miller, 1992). For example, Tudor and Tuffs' (1991) study shows that expectations and/or knowledge regarding the macro discourse organisation of a lecture will influence a second language (L2) listener's comprehension.

Yuan, (1982, cited in Bilbow, 1989) also found, through research carried out with Chinese students at the University of California in Los Angeles, that a lack of discourse awareness was highly detrimental to the lecture comprehension process: "in general, the subjects were rather weak at paying attention to the sequence of the lecture because of their neglect of the logical connectors of sequence and their lack of recognition of transition from one main idea to another."

The recognition of these problems has generated a growth in research on the comprehension of spoken connected discourse (Carroll, 1986).

Studies related to first language (L1) listeners:

According to existing research, the presence of more global discourse markers and phrases which signal a change in topic or point of emphasis appears to aid recall in lectures.

Kintsch and Yarbrough's (1982) experiments related to the role of rhetorical structure in text comprehension with native speaker (L1) readers¹

¹ Much of the research into reading comprehension is considered to be relevant to listening comprehension (e.g. Jensen and Hansen, 1995; Rost, 1990).

indicate that "good" structuring of a text better facilitates comprehension and recall. Subjects were better able to answer topic and main idea questions for texts that were clearly organised according to a familiar rhetorical structure than for texts with identical content but without such an organisation. Their findings further indicate that the rhetorical cues and canonical ordering that distinguished the "good" forms of the texts from the "bad" forms, facilitate the processing of general propositions (macro-processes) in comprehension. Research on the comprehension of spoken connected discourse by first language (L1) listeners indicates that listening comprehension depends less on the meanings of the individual sentences contained in the discourse than on their apparent interrelatedness and their arrangement (or structure). For example, Chaudron, Loschky and Cook, (1994) recognise that ultimately "learners' comprehension of lecture content however well it is processed by the learner and encoded in notes, will be influenced by the clarity of structure and presentation of the lecture" (1994:89). Allison and Tauroza (1995), investigated whether L1 English listeners experienced similar problems to those of L2 listeners when they encounter unanticipated discourse patterns, and concluded that the difficulties of the L2 subjects were also found among the L1 subjects. This indicates that a discourse organisation patterns have an effect on lecture comprehension, even in English as a Native Language (L1) contexts.

Studies Related to English as Second Language (L2) Listeners

In an investigation of how different categories of discourse markers affect the degree to which foreign students understand university lectures, Chaudron and Richards (1986) concentrated primarily on lectures in the reading style. They divided the markers into two types: macro-markers and micro-markers. Macro markers are "higher order discourse markers signalling major transitions and emphasis in lectures...[e.g.] *What I'm going to talk about today is something you probably know something about already, The problem here was that..., Another interesting development was... And that's all we'll talk about today*", while micro-markers are "lower order markers of segmentation and inter-sentential connections...[e.g.] markers signalling segmentation (*well, ok*), time (*at that time, after this*), cause (*so, then*), contrast (*but, on the other hand*)". Their experiment divided 71 subjects, university undergraduates, into four groups: One listened to the "baseline"² version of the lecture on the

² It did not include any special signals of discourse organisation or linking between sentences, other than what was absolutely necessary to convey the meaning of the lecture (Chaudron and Richards, 1986:117)

Expansion of the United States, another group listened to the "Micro version"³, another to a "macro version"⁴ and the fourth group listened to a version of the lecture which was a combination of the micro and macro versions. Chaudron and Richards (1986) found that although macro-markers on their own had a positive effect on recall when they were added to a text, there was no significant effect for micro markers. Further they found that the lecture version with both micro and macro discourse markers did not facilitate comprehension significantly, or as well as they had hypothesised. They suggest that the use of both micro and macro markers in a listening text may distract from understanding propositions.

DeCarrico and Nattinger (1988) built on the research by Chaudron and Richards, and investigated lectures in a variety of disciplines, delivered in different lecturing styles. They did not study the effects of discourse markers on comprehension, but instead examined the 'lexical phrases' – "chunks of language of varying length, phrases like *as it were, that goes without saying, on the other hand, as X would have us believe* and so on" - that occur in several academic lectures representing different disciplines. They bemoan the fact that the few ESL text writers who have recognised the extent of ESL learners' problems in comprehending academic lectures, only suggest "principally a preview of key words, main ideas and outline forms as a solution...or provide practice in recognising common discourse markers" (ibid.:91). They reiterate that L2 learner's problem "goes far beyond that" and propose a lexical phrase approach to solve it. They confined their study to what Chaudron and Richards (1986) called macro-markers.

Carrico and Nattinger (1998) preferred to call macro markers "macro organisers" because they wanted to stress "the angle of the listener's perception of lecture organisation and to stress their importance in helping students mentally organise the lecture as it goes along". While Chaudron and Richards' study only considered a lecture in the "reading style", DeCarrico and Nattinger (ibid.) recorded "natural lectures on a variety of topics" and set out to find out how many and what type of macro markers actually occur, and to categorise them. They recorded lectures in all three styles distinguished by Dudley-Evans and Johns (1981)⁵ and found that

³ Various markers of intersentential relations, framing of segments and pause fillers were inserted [to the baseline version] (Chaudron and Richards, ibid.).

⁴ containing signals or metastatements about the major propositions within the lecture, or the important transition points in the lecture (Chaudron and Richards, ibid.).

⁵ "Reading style", where speaker speaks as if from reading from notes, "conversational style" where speaker speaks informally with or without notes, and "rhetorical style", where speaker presents the lecture as if performing.

Since conventional style involved considerable interaction with the students, it [was] not surprising that the result was a more relaxed atmosphere in which highly informal phrases like *lemme start with...okay*, or *so there you've got...* tend to predominate (1981: 94)

Dunkel and Davis (1994), in a study which examined the differences between the lecture information recall of both L1 and L2 listeners relative to the presence or absence of rhetorical signalling cues, found that the presence of the rhetorical signalling cues (discourse markers), did not have a significant influence on the number of information units or the total number of words noted in the recall protocols that students submitted. They examined these differences by getting their subjects to listen to a lecture organised according to two major rhetorical patterns: narration and comparison-and-contrast. One form of the lecture contained explicit cues as to the rhetorical organisations used to convey lecture information. In the other form, these cues were omitted, but the content remained the same for both forms of the lecture. After the presentation, subjects were asked to write down all the information they could recall in their native language. Both the ENL and ESL subjects were permitted to use their notes when writing their protocols. For purposes of analysis, the ESL protocols were translated into English by native speakers of those languages (Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, Korean, Urdu, Japanese and Greek). The main-effect results indicated that the quantity of notes taken was greater for subjects who had listened to the lecture containing rhetorical cues, and ENL listeners' recall protocols contained a significantly larger amount of information than did ESL listeners recall protocols. However, the lecture with rhetorical signalling devices did not cause an increase in "the number of information units or the total number of words noted in the protocols" (1994: 56). On the other hand, Flowerdew and Tauroza (1995) find that the presence of lower level discourse markers⁶ aids comprehension. In a study that followed the research of Chaudron and Richards (1986) and Dunkel and Davis (1994) discussed above, Flowerdew and Tauroza (ibid.) measured the effect of the presence or absence of discourse markers ("words that speakers use to mark relationships between chunks of discourse such as *so, well, ok, and now*") on second language lecture comprehension.

Although Chaudron and Richards (1986) concluded that discourse micro markers do not aid comprehension, Flowerdew and Tauroza argue that

⁶ Discourse micro markers, in this study

they do. They designed their study so that a control group viewed a video recording of an extract of a naturally occurring lecture, whereas an experimental group viewed the same extract, but with discourse markers deleted. The results of their study,

clearly indicate that subjects comprehended the lecture better when discourse markers were included than when they were deleted. (1995:435)

They point out that this contrast in findings can be interpreted as being due to differences in experimental procedures.

The reason for the discrepancy between Dunkel and Davis' research and that of Chaudron and Richards may have been due to one or more of three differences between the studies: text type, comprehension measures, and the allowing/disallowing of note-taking by subjects. For example, in Dunkel and Davis' study, students were allowed to take notes, and to refer to their notes when writing their protocols. Chaudron and Richards did not allow note taking, and measured comprehension by multiple choice questions and cloze procedures. Further, Dunkel and Davis (1994) point out that their lecture text may have been organised in a clearer way than Chaudron and Richards' text, with clear structures of comparison and contrast (which perhaps made the signalling devices [or discourse markers] less important). Flowerdew (1994) reiterates, however, that the wider value of Dunkel and Davis' study is in "showing how the results of empirical studies can vary significantly when the variables are changed". He notes that these discrepancies between similar studies point to "a general need in the field of applied linguistics for more focussed research and numerous studies on particular issues before results are taken up in pedagogical application" (1994:32).

While Chaudron and Richards (1986), tested the effect of discourse markers only on ESL students' lecture comprehension, Dunkel and Davis (1994) tested the comparative effect of such markers on ESL and ENL students. However, no study has yet investigated how the inclusion or exclusion of English lecture discourse markers affects the comprehension of spoken academic discourse by ESL listeners, of different language proficiency levels, *who share a common L1*. Although Chaudron and Richards did include subjects of different proficiency levels, their subjects were "of mixed but

predominantly Asian and Pacific ethnic and linguistic backgrounds" (119), and subjects in Dunkel and Davis' (1994) study had a wide variety of languages as their L1. Further, Chaudron and Richards (ibid.) state that one of their proficiency groups had been living in the United States for a longer period than the other group and "comparisons between these two groups' proficiency are not possible due to different test dates and non-standardised forms" (1986:124).

Moreover, Chaudron and Richards' study used a lecture in the 'reading style' - "where the speaker reads or speaks as if reading from notes" (Dudley-Evans, 1994) as material for their experiment. In most lecture situations, however, the reading style is seldom used, and often the style of delivery would lie somewhere in the middle of a 'style continuum' from 'reading/formal' to 'very interactive, informal and conversational'.

They also used cloze as a test of comprehension, and this method of measuring listening comprehension can be limited because of the reading comprehension requirement involved in responding to a cloze test. As Jonz (1990) discovered, the cloze procedure "challenges universal processing mechanisms at all levels from word recognition through concept building; therefore, responding to cloze tests must necessarily involve a great deal of higher order language processing".

In a study that investigated the academic listening comprehension of 388 students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the USA, Chiang and Dunkel (1992), found that higher intermediate listening proficiency (HILP) students benefited from speech modification which entailed elaboration and provision of redundant information, but that lower intermediate listening proficiency (LILP) students did not. However, their speech modification "only involved repetition of the lecture information tested in the post-lecture comprehension test" (1992:361), and the lectures they used as material were adaptations of reading passages "from *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*" (ibid.:354). Therefore, although they conclude that "additional modifications of the input are needed to catalyse greater understanding of the lecture by the LILP students" and that "different proficiency levels need different types of modified or simplified speech", they also point out that additional research is needed to pinpoint the types of modifications and simplifications that aid the comprehension of extended discourse by different levels of EFL proficiency (1992:363).

Allison and Tauroza (1995) proceeding from the point of their previous year's study (Tauroza and Allison, 1994), of L2 listeners, investigated whether native speakers of English listening to lectures in L1, experienced similar problems to those experienced by L2 listeners when they encounter unanticipated discourse patterns. Their study replicated with English L1 tertiary students in England, a lecture comprehension task undertaken by ESL tertiary students in Hong Kong, "in order to compare the degree and kind of difficulties they experience in following a *situation-problem-solution-evaluation* discourse structure extracted from an Information Systems lecture" (1995:161). They found that the difficulties encountered by L2 subjects, were also experienced among the L1 subjects, thus concluding that "elaborations beyond the most basic problem-solution discourse pattern" present difficulties for undergraduates, whatever their language background.

Thus, it can be seen that while Flowerdew and Tauroza (1995) show that discourse micro-markers can have a significant impact on L2 learners' lecture comprehension, Chaudron and Richards (1986) and Dunkel and Davis (1994) found that they do not.

The different methodologies used in studies with similar research questions, and the discrepancies in the various outcomes, have caused researchers to call for further experimental studies in the area of L2 lecture comprehension and discourse signalling.

With a view to accomplishing this, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. Which academic lecture will ESL students comprehend better, the lecture with both discourse micro markers and macro markers included or the one with discourse micro markers alone?
2. What effect does language proficiency have on ESL students' comprehension of academic lectures with only discourse micro markers and those with both discourse micro and macro-markers?
3. What is the relationship between the inclusion or exclusion of discourse markers and post-listening task type?

Based on the results of the many studies discussed above, it was hypothesized that

1. Subjects will comprehend the lecture with both micro and macro markers better than the lecture with only micro markers
2. Subjects with a higher language proficiency will benefit more from the inclusion of discourse micro and macro markers than subjects with a lower language proficiency.

Research Design

To test the effect of discourse markers on the comprehension of L2 academic lectures, 70 university level students, undergraduates of the Open University of Sri Lanka, were asked to take part in the study. The students are all between the ages of 18 and 35, and studying Management for their *Bachelors in Management Studies* (BMS) degree. All subjects had completed the (pre-graduate) *Diploma in Management Studies* (DipMS) Programme⁷ as this was a prerequisite to enter the BMS programme. They are all non-native speakers of English, have the same L1, Sinhalese, and have completed their primary and secondary education in Sri Lanka. Forty of the subjects had a lower-intermediate proficiency level⁸ in English. All the students in this group of 40, had the same proficiency level, having scored between 20 and 49% in their (proficiency) grading test in English conducted by the University's Department of Language Studies. They were also the group that needed to follow the first part (Part I) of the in-sessional *Certificate in English for Academic Purposes - Management Studies* (CEAP) course conducted by the Department of Language Studies. Because the experiment/test was carried out on the first day of their English course, it is assumed that they had had no exposure to an English for Academic purposes course prior to the test in this study. The other 30 subjects too, were BMS students, but they had a higher (upper intermediate) proficiency level, scoring 50 –69% on the same grading test⁹. This group was required to follow Part II of the in-sessional EAP course.

Materials

The lecture on uncontrolled urbanization (Lynch, 1983) was selected as the lecture for the purpose of the experiment to test the effect of discourse markers on lecture comprehension. Because topic-familiarity, which has been

⁷ Also conducted by the Department of Management Studies, OUSL.

⁸ See 4.2.1 below for procedures on categorising students according to proficiency

⁹ Those who score above 70 on the test are exempted from following in-sessional EAP course as they are deemed to have the required level of competence to cope with the demands of their main program of study.

found to have a positive effect on lecture comprehension¹⁰, is a variable that might have confounded the results of this study if some subjects had prior knowledge of it (e.g. Long, 1989), an effort was made to ascertain the subjects' familiarity with the lecture topic. It was learnt that while the broad area of *economics* was a relatively familiar for them, this topic would be a novel (unfamiliar) one. Thus, the variable of topic familiarity was controlled in the chosen lecture. In addition, it was an "authentic" lecture of the desired length and difficulty level.

The syntactic complexity and comprehensibility of the lecture was measured with a readability index, the Flesch Reading Ease (FRE), since there is no equivalent test of comprehensibility for a listening text available as yet. The FRE score for this lecture was about 55%.¹¹

The lecture was about 6 - 7 minutes in duration. It was decided to choose a relatively short lecture for two reasons. First, it is a well-known fact that no listener can concentrate intensely on long stretches of talk, especially in the L2, and second, in most authentic lecture situations, lecturers give lectures in manageable chunks. The lecture was then transcribed and scrutinised for discourse micro markers and macro markers (See review of Chaudron and Richards (1986) study, for definitions). For the first version to be recorded, all macro markers were deleted. A few micro markers were added. For the second version to be recorded, these same micro markers were added, and the macro markers were retained. Just as micro markers were added to the first version, macro markers were added to the second version. These two versions were then recorded in a well-equipped studio by a lecturer at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, with the professional assistance of a technician at the studio's audio recording facility (See Appendices for transcripts of the two versions of the lecture). The two versions of the lecture were delivered at the same speed, i.e. the rate of delivery for both versions was 134 wpm¹², by the same lecturer. Thus, the material

¹⁰ Schmidt-Rinehart (1994) conducted a study which investigated the effect of topic familiarity on students' recall of monologic discourse, and found that familiarity with the topic positively influenced students' performance on post-listening "immediate recall" tasks.

¹¹ This rates the difficulty of the lecture as being "fairly difficult" (Source: Technical Report Three: Institute of Educational Technology, Open University, UK)

¹² Tauroza and Allison (1990) in a study of speech rates found that the mean rate for lectures in words per minute was 140. They note further that thirty three percent of their lecture data was slower than 130 wpm.

Griffiths (1990) found that lower - intermediate level students performed best in comprehension, at a speech rate of 127 wpm.

was controlled for the variables of speed (rate of delivery), intonation and accent (which have been found to affect lecture listening comprehension).

The lecturer is a non-native speaker of the language with near-native competence in English. She has had extensive exposure to the English language and has studied English at the post-graduate degree level. Her accent is a standard Sri Lankan English accent (Gunasekera, 1989), one that is familiar to the subjects.

The students in the intermediate-proficiency group were divided randomly into two groups of 20 each, and each group listened to one of the two versions of the audiotaped lecture on the topic of urbanisation. The same procedure was carried out on the higher-proficiency student group, randomly divided into two groups of fifteen each. For ease of reference, the two proficiency groups will be referred to henceforth as follows:

Intermediate (lower) proficiency = P1

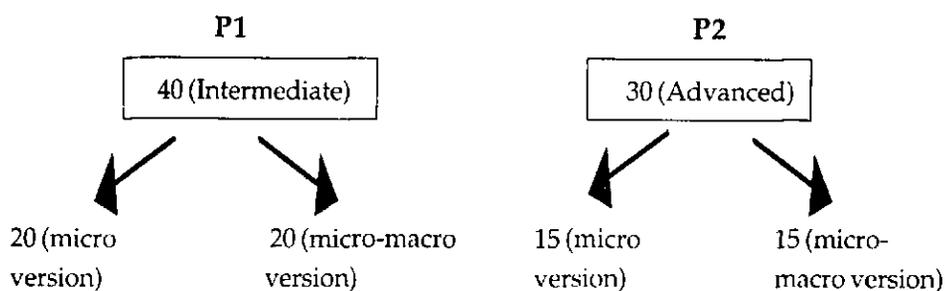
Advanced (higher) proficiency = P2

The two versions of the lecture were as follows:

- Version 1 – a version of the baseline (non-evident form)¹³ lecture on urbanisation, to which micro markers were added in appropriate places. This version will henceforth be referred to as the *Micro version* in this study
- Version 2 – a version of the lecture which includes both micro markers and macro markers. This version will be henceforth referred to as the *Micro-Macro version* in this study.

Because the two versions of the lecture had been recorded on two separate tapes, each group listened to a different version of the lecture, simultaneously. E.g. Sub Group 1 - Micro version, Sub Group 2 - Micro-Macro version (See diagram below).

¹³ The original lecture was transcribed, then all micro and macro markers deleted to create the baseline version. (Chaudron and Richards, 1986)



Administration of Test

After subjects in each proficiency group had been randomly divided into the sub-groups and before listening to the lecture, they were given the following instructions, in which they were prepared for the listening task:

You are going to listen to a short lecture on urbanisation. Please listen carefully to the information presented in the lecture. Take notes on the information as you listen to the lecture, just as you would in a normal classroom. After listening, you will be asked to answer true/false and multiple-choice questions and give a small summary of the information. But for now, just listen carefully and take notes.

This was done in order to set the scene for the communicative event, and to activate the necessary prior knowledge for subjects to listen effectively. Hansen and Jensen (1994) point out the importance of "providing context to enable listeners to activate the schemas they have available including situational, rhetorical, knowledge-based, experiential, and linguistic" (1994: 250). The subjects of this study were thereby told, face-to-face, by the teachers/research assistants/researcher, as well as on audio tape, that they were students attending a lecture, and what they would be listening to. As Hansen and Jensen stress, this allows the listeners "to set up expectations and to make predictions about the content and structure of the information they will hear based on their prior knowledge of the topic and experience with the structure of this type of discourse"(ibid. 250).

Subjects were allowed to take notes during the lecture. This is because the intention was to simulate an authentic situation as far as possible. After listening to the lecture, the subjects were tested for comprehension of content and organisation. Subjects were given quiz sheets, with 13 multiple choice

questions and 7 true/false items on the information in the lecture. After this they were asked to write a brief summary of the lecture in either English or their mother tongue. They were allocated 35 minutes to accomplish this task. Thus, both global and local aspects of subjects' listening comprehension were tested chiefly by means of objective tests and summary protocols¹⁴

Global comprehension calls for understanding the major themes and topics of the lecture, while local comprehension focuses on understanding specific items within the lecture, such as identifying key terms or extracting information from key clauses (Hansen and Jensen, 1994:248).

Both closed and open tests were administered in this study¹⁵ By this, it was also assumed that the limitations of each type of test would be minimized by the other's advantages. Three measures of the learners' comprehension of the lectures were pilot tested and revised before inclusion in the study.

- ① A thirteen-item multiple-choice test with three alternative responses.
- ① A seven-item true-false test. (These were to be filled in by the listeners following the completion of the lecture).
- ① Writing a summary of the lecture. (Subjects were informed that they had the option to write the summary in either English or their mother tongue. The summary task too, was piloted prior to administration of the test, with a group of five social sciences undergraduates)

Although summary tasks have the potential to confound the measurement of language input (listening comprehension) because of the requirement of language output (production) it is viewed as a reliable instrument of measuring comprehension (Rost 1990). As Ericsson and Simon (1984, cited in Flowerdew, 1994) point out, the summary protocol is a "more innovative and increasingly popular research tool"

Moreover, in this study, since subjects were given the choice of writing the summary report in their mother tongue, the possible distortion generated

¹⁴ Global comprehension calls for understanding the major themes and topics of the lecture, while local comprehension focuses on understanding specific items within the lecture, such as identifying key terms or extracting information from key clauses (Hansen and Jensen, 1994:248).

¹⁵ Recognition tasks, in which a listener must choose from alternatives presented by a test-writer (such as in the case of Multiple Choice Questions), are the prototype of a closed task, while summarizing tasks are more open tasks.

from the requirement of production ability in the L2 was eliminated. The validity of the open test was, thus, not compromised.

Moreover, the summary task, which requires subjects to recount what they thought was important in the lecture for a friend who had missed it, provided the test-takers with "situational authenticity" (Bachman, 1993)

Each of the 70 summaries was analysed for both content and style, interpreting the patterns and strategies the subjects used to write the summaries, taking into account Rost's (1994) features of expert summaries; reporting, framing and embedding. The summaries were thus evaluated for the reporting of four main points, eight sub-points and aspects of framing and embedding.

While the closed task was marked out of 20 (one each for a correct answer and zero for an incorrect answer), the open task was marked out of 20 as follows:

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Reporting		
Main/Sub point	Example	Score (/20)
Main	The problem of Urbanisation affects developing countries severely	1.5
Main	There are five consequences of urbanisation	1.5
Main	There are three policies to stem urbanisation	1.5
Main	No policy can eliminate problems of urbanisation completely, but they can be reduced.	1.5
Sub	(One consequence is) migration to the city	1 mark each total of 5
Sub	(The first policy is) a more equal land distribution	1 mark each, total of 3
Embedding		4
Framing:		2

Analysis of Data

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) approach was used to test differences between open and closed tasks as well as the differences between closed and open tasks in relation to version of lecture listened to and to language proficiency level. Independent sample t tests were carried out to compare the performance between the two versions of the lecture in relation to language proficiency. ANOVA 2-way interactions were used to compute the significance of difference between the two versions of the lecture and performance on tasks. It should be noted that differences are significant at the ($p < 0.05$) level.

Results

The first question asked which academic lecture subjects would comprehend better, the lecture with both discourse micro markers and macro markers included (the Micro-Macro version), or the one with discourse micro markers alone (the Micro version).

In other words, what is the effect of discourse micro markers and macro markers on students, academic listening comprehension?

Using the ANOVA analysis, the study found significant main effects for the version listened to, as shown in *Table 1* below:

Table 1: ANOVA results for all effects¹⁶

			ANOVA ^{a,b}				
			Unique Method				
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Total /20	Main Effects	(Combined)	1210.287	3	403.429	48.904	.000
		Proficiency	65.412	1	65.412	7.929	.006
		Version	828.107	1	828.107	100.384	.000
		indicator for closed/open	316.768	1	316.768	38.399	.000
	2-Way Interactions	(Combined)	105.054	3	35.018	4.245	.007
		Proficiency * Version	16.700	1	16.700	2.024	.157
		Proficiency * indicator for closed/open	29.204	1	29.204	3.540	.062
		Version * indicator for closed/open	59.150	1	59.150	7.170	.008
	Model		1402.502	6	233.750	28.335	.000
	Residual		1097.170	133	8.249		
	Total		2499.671	139	17.983		

a. Total /20 by Proficiency, Version, indicator for closed/open

b. All effects entered simultaneously

Table 1 reveals that there is a significant difference between the performance of subjects who listened to the two versions of the lecture ($p = 0.000$). In other words, subjects who listened to the micro-macro (version 2) of the lecture have performed significantly better than those who listened to

¹⁶ Significant at ($p < 0.05$)

the micro version (Version 1). This confirms *Hypothesis 1*, that *Subjects will comprehend the lecture with both micro and macro markers better than the lecture with only micro markers.*

The second question asked was, what effect language proficiency has on ESL students' comprehension of academic lectures with only discourse micro markers and those with both discourse micro and macro-markers. In other words, would the effect of listening to the two versions be affected by the language proficiency of the student?

It was first necessary to find out whether there is a significant difference between the overall performances of the two proficiency groups (P1 and P2).

ANOVA analysis in *Table 1* above indicates that there is a significant difference between the overall performances of Group P1 and P2 (p value = 0.006)

However, although there is a significant difference between overall performance between the two proficiency groups, the interaction effect is not significant, suggesting that there is no significant effect of proficiency level on the effect of version listened to. ($p = 0.157$), see *Figure 1* below:

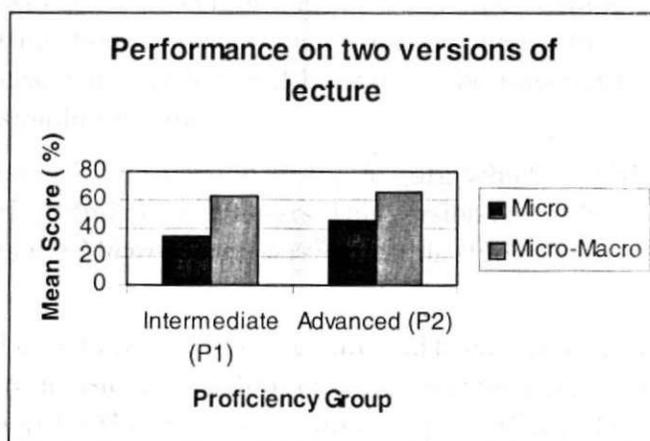


Figure 1: Performance of proficiency groups in relation to lecture version

Before concluding that there is no relationship between proficiency level and difference in performance between lecture versions, however, further analysis was necessary.

Because descriptive statistics demonstrated that the overall performance by students was better on the closed tasks (MCQs and True/False) than that on the open (summary protocol) task, it was important to find out whether this difference was significant. Further it was necessary to find out whether this difference was indicated in subjects' performance on both versions of the lecture and at both proficiency levels. This too, was tested using an analysis of variance approach, and these results, too are summarised in *Table 1* above.

Table 1 indicates that performance on closed tasks is significantly better than performance on the open task. Furthermore, this is equally valid for both proficiency groups.

In other words, there is no significant difference between performance on closed vs. open task for the intermediate and advanced proficiency groups ($p = 0.062$). See Figures 2a and 2b below:

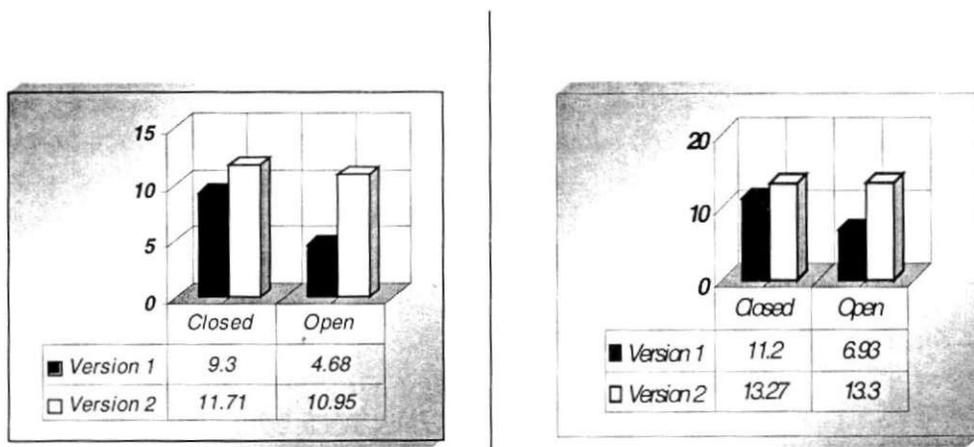


Figure 2a: Performance of P1 (Mean Score /20) Figure 2b: Performance of P2 (Mean Score /20)

Analysis of Closed Task

ANOVA tests on the closed tasks indicate that the difference in performance of subjects who listened to the two versions of the lecture is significantly different ($p = 0.000$). Thus the analysis of performance on the

closed task alone also confirms Hypothesis 1, that subjects would comprehend the micro-macro version of the lecture better than the micro version.

Unlike when closed and open tasks were analysed together, when closed tasks were analysed on their own, a significant interaction effect between version listened to and proficiency level was discovered. The analysis indicates that the difference between performances on the two versions is significantly different for the two proficiency groups ($p = 0.013$). Thus, considering only performance on closed tasks, Research Question 2 can be answered as follows: There is a significant effect of proficiency level, on performance on two versions of the lecture: the difference in performance between the two versions in the intermediate proficiency group is more than the difference in the advanced proficiency group. Thus, Hypothesis 2, that *Subjects with the higher language proficiency will benefit more from the inclusion of discourse micro and macro markers than subjects with the lower language proficiency* can be rejected in favour of the finding that subjects with the lower language proficiency have benefited more from the inclusion of both types of discourse markers, at least in the closed task scores.

(See also Figure 3 below).

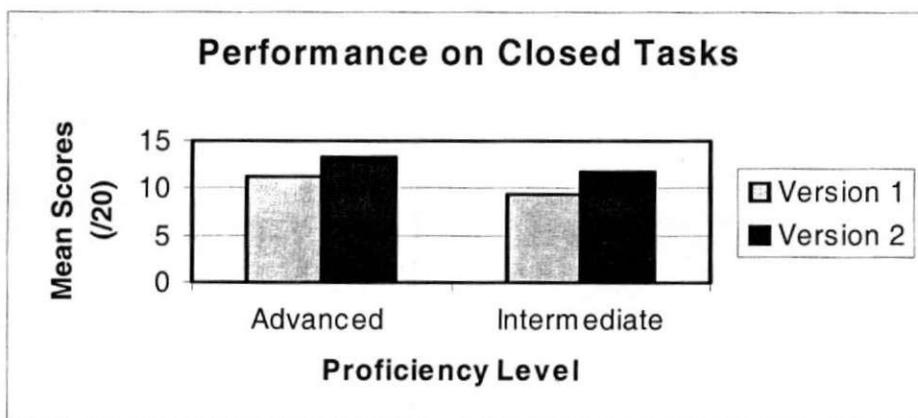


Figure 3: Performance on Closed Task in relation to lecture version and Proficiency level

Next, subjects' scores on the Open task were analysed separately.

Analysis of Open Task

ANOVA test results for the open task indicates that there is a significant difference between subjects' performance on the two versions of the lecture ($p = 0.000$). Thus, just as depicted in subjects' performance on the closed task, subjects listening to the micro-macro version of the lecture have performed significantly better than those listening to the micro version, on the open task as well. This performance on post-listening summary report writing, again confirms Hypothesis 1, that students comprehend a lecture better, with both micro and macro markers added than a lecture with only discourse micro markers.

The results also indicate that the performance between groups P1 and P2 on the open task is significantly different ($p=0.005$). This shows that P2 (the advanced proficiency level group) performed better on both versions of the lecture, suggesting that more proficient students are better able to demonstrate comprehension by means of a summary protocol.

However, there is no significant interaction for proficiency group and lecture version; the difference in the P1 group's performance between the two versions of the lecture and the difference between the P2 group's performance between the two versions, are not significantly different. ($p = 0.954$). This suggests that there is no difference in performance between the two proficiency groups in relation to lecture version. Thus, with regard to Research Question 2, which asks what effect proficiency has on the difference in subjects performance on a micro version and micro-macro version of a lecture, the findings (considering the Open Task only) show that there is no significant effect. In other words, both proficiency groups benefit equally from listening to the micro-macro version of the lecture (See *Figure 4* below).

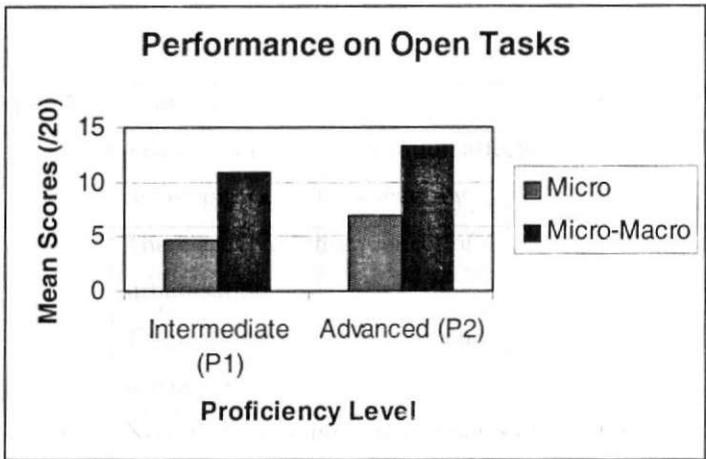


Figure 4: Performance on Open Task, in relation to lecture version and proficiency level

Lecture Versions and Types of Task

Research Question 3 was related to investigating whether there was a significant interaction between task type and lecture version. This too, was done by ANOVA analysis, and is reported in Table 1 above. Data in this table indicates that there is a significant 2-way interaction between task type and lecture version ($p=0.008$). In other words, the difference between “Micro-version” subjects’ performances on closed vs. open tasks was significantly wider than the difference between “Micro-Macro version” subjects’ performances on closed vs. open tasks.

The graph below (Figure 5) presents this clearly:

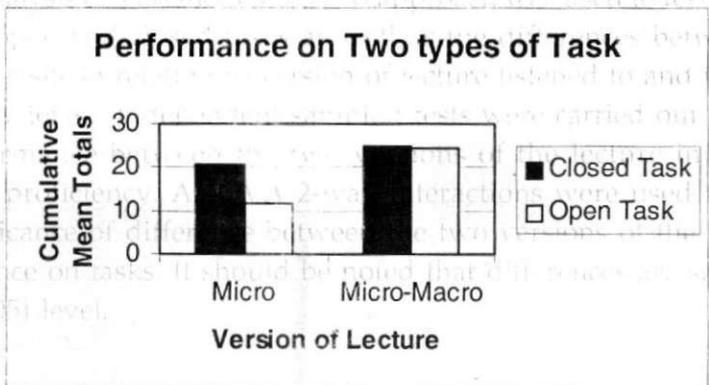


Figure 5: Effect of lecture version on task type (combined proficiency)

Figure 5 shows that there is a bigger difference in performance on the two task types among subjects who listened to the micro version, than there is in that of subjects who listened to the micro-macro version. Because these students who listened to the micro-macro version appear to have performed so much better on the open task, information in subjects' summary protocols were analysed next.

Additional Findings

Lecture Versions and Information in Summary Protocols

Listening to the micro-macro version of the lecture appears to have aided students to produce more main points and sub points than listening to the micro-version. Of the 35 subjects (in both language proficiency groups) who listened to the micro-macro version of the lecture, 28 had reported all 8 sub points and/or one or more of the four main points in the lecture. (80%) However, only 5 from the 35-subject group who listened to the micro version reported this information (14.29%). Further, only 10% of all the 70 subjects reported all 12 points (four main, eight sub) in their summary protocols, and all these were subjects who listened to the micro-macro version of the lecture. In other words, 20% of students who listened to the micro-macro version of the lecture reported all the main and sub points, while 0% reported them in the group that listened to the micro version. *Figure 6* below shows this in a graph:

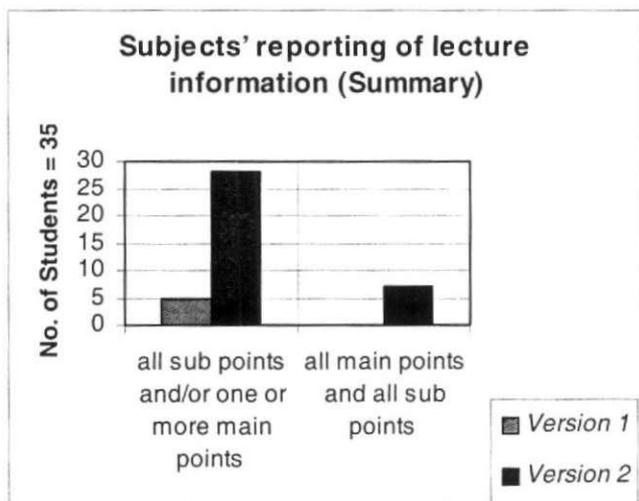


Figure 6: Effect of Lecture Version on information reported in Open Task

Lecture Versions and Proficiency

As noted above, the performance of subjects (in both P1 and P2) who listened to the micro-macro version of the lecture was found to be significantly better than the performance of subjects who listened to the micro-version. In order to investigate how this performance was demonstrated across the proficiency groups, the scores of all subjects who listened to the micro-macro version in the intermediate-proficiency group, were compared with the scores of all subjects who listened to the micro-version in the advanced- proficiency group. An independent sample t- test was used for this purpose.

The results of this clearly indicate that the performance of the lower proficiency group who listened to version 2 of the lecture, is significantly better than that of the high proficiency group who listened to version 1 ($p=0.001$). Combining this with the summary statistics presented in Table 8 below, it is possible to conclude that the performance of the subjects in the lower proficiency group who listened to the micro-macro version of the lecture, is significantly better than the performance of subjects in the higher proficiency group who listened to the micro-version of the lecture.

Table 8: Summary statistics for Intermediate-proficiency performance on Micro-macro version and Advanced-proficiency performance on Micro version

Group Statistics					
v1HPv2LP		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total /20	v2lowprof	20	14.25	2.10	.47
	v1highprof	15	11.20	2.81	.73

Discussion

The results above clearly indicate that the use of both discourse micro and macro markers have a positive effect on L2 students' comprehension of academic lectures, and facilitate better comprehension than the use of micro markers alone. Further, they aid better understanding of lectures among students at both lower and higher levels of language proficiency (intermediate and advanced), while having a greater impact on students with a lower level of language proficiency. The finding that *students who listened to the lecture which included both types of discourse markers performed*

significantly better in the summary task shows that discourse macro markers aid not only comprehension of information but help students understand the gist of an oral text and facilitate better retrieval of lecture information.

Findings also indicate that students with the lower level of language proficiency benefited more from listening to lectures with discourse micro and macro markers than students with a higher level of proficiency; in other words there was a significant difference between performances on the two lecture versions, between proficiency groups. This finding provided an answer to Research Question 2, but only in relation to the closed tests. The reason for this could have been the significant difference in overall performance between closed and open tasks (higher proficiency students and those who listened to the micro macro version of the lecture performed significantly better on the open task) or limitations in sample size. This finding contradicts Chiang and Dunkel (1992) who found that it is students with higher language proficiency that benefit more from speech modification. In this study, both higher level and lower level proficiency groups benefited equally from speech modification when performing the summary task, but not equally on the closed task. It therefore is possible to conclude that "different types of speech modification would benefit performance on different listening tasks".

The reason for the difference in findings between Chiang and Dunkel's (1992) study and this, however, could be due to different standards used to categorize students into proficiency groups, and the difference in the mother tongue variable between the two studies. Such differing variables between the two studies make it impossible to reach a definite conclusion.

This study also contradicts Dunkel and Davis' (1994) study, which concluded that their subjects' performance on summary protocols showed that the existence of rhetorical signaling devices did not significantly aid understanding of lecture information. However, the study conducted by Dunkel and Davis (*ibid.*) requested students to "write down everything they could remember from the lecture", whereas the subjects in this study were given a specific situation and asked to write what [they thought] was important to remember, a "summary" of what the lecture is about.

The main findings of this study, also contradict the findings of Chaudron and Richards (1986) and confirm the conclusions reached by Tauroza and

Allison (1994) and Allison and Tauroza (1995) who found a positive correlation between discourse organization and lecture comprehension.

Also important was the finding that *students with a lower language proficiency demonstrated greater understanding of the lecture information than students with a higher language proficiency, because of the presence of both types of discourse markers in the lecture*. While it needs to be acknowledged that limitations related to sample size and task characteristics may have had an effect on such an outcome, this finding remains an interesting and provocative one, worthy of further investigative research.

Another significant, though only marginally anticipated, finding was that students performed better on closed tasks than on the open task, in demonstrating comprehension of lecture information. There are several possible reasons for this: First, the open task may have been less familiar than the MCQ and True/False task for first year undergraduates. Second, the task of summarizing lecture information is more demanding than selecting correct answers from two or three alternatives, such as was demanded by the closed task. The fact that although they were given the choice of using their L1 to write the summaries, a vast majority of subjects opted to produce the protocols in English could have been another reason for the relatively poor performance. Only 5 of the 70 subjects (a little more than 7%) wrote their summary reports in their L1, and this could have led to students not being able to express themselves in spite of having understood the essential information in the lecture. With regard to reasons why students chose to write the summaries in the L2, it is possible that certain socio-cultural factors affected this choice. It could be speculated that it was perhaps perceived that inability to write in English was an admission of "defeat"¹⁷ However, it would be interesting to investigate the reason or reasons behind the students' choice to write in English.

However, the performance is weak on the open task only in comparison to the closed task, and when the two proficiency groups' scores are considered together; it was found that advanced-proficiency students performed remarkably better on the summary task than the intermediate level students. This suggests a relationship between proficiency and task type in comprehension of lecture information, which was beyond the purview of this study, but one that merits further investigation.

¹⁷ A noticeable phenomenon in Sri Lanka is the way L2 speakers with very low proficiency in the language, attempt to (produce) in English - a 'prestige' language here- even when they are not required to. Often when they are addressed in the L1, they respond in the L2.

Conclusion

The findings have implications for both EAP courses, and for improving the effectiveness of classroom lectures in the L2. The significant effect that the use of both types of discourse marker has on students' lecture comprehension demonstrates the importance of teaching students enrolled in EAP courses to recognise these discourse markers/lexical phrases. In addition, teaching students summarizing skills can be linked with the teaching of macro markers, in order to show them the relationship between such markers and the organisation of lecture information.

The findings imply that EAP courses should specifically focus attention on teaching summarising skills, and providing tasks and exercises in summary writing, to students at intermediate levels of language proficiency. In most EAP programmes in existence at present in Sri Lankan universities, summary writing tasks are only taught in relation to reading and writing skills. The results of this study indicate that it would benefit students to learn the skills of summarising aural material as well. It would be helpful if authentic lecture material (recorded authentic lectures) could be used to provide such practice in summary writing, at a range of proficiency levels. They also suggest that students in lower levels of language proficiency be given particular attention with the teaching of discourse markers in relation to lecture comprehension, since they appear to benefit more from inclusion of both types of markers. However, this study only looked at intermediate level students, and it may well be the case that students below a certain level of proficiency do not benefit from discourse markers. Therefore, more research is needed to find out the effects of discourse markers on the lecture comprehension of students whose levels of language proficiency are lower than intermediate level (i.e. lower- intermediate and elementary), before such markers are taught to students at very low levels of English language proficiency.

The findings also suggest that improving students' language proficiency alone, on EAP courses, will not suffice to overcome difficulties with L2 lecture comprehension. More attention may have to be paid to discourse organisation of oral texts and the devices that signal that organisation, such as discourse markers. Although one study alone cannot dictate instructional practice, it can provide direction.

The findings have some implications for teacher training programmes and annual and bi-annual staff development workshops often conducted in

Sri Lankan universities in general, and the Open University in particular. Most staff development training programmes include an English-language component: A training in how to use discourse organisers when lecturing in English, and a demonstration of how students benefit from them when listening to an academic lecture could be provided in this section of the programme.

At present, the in-sessional EAP courses available at the OUSL, focus mainly on the teaching of reading and writing skills. The findings of this study indicate the need for a listening component to be added to the curriculum. Discourse markers which were found to be useful for lecture comprehension in this study, thus have potential as input for EAP course design at Sri Lankan universities.

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Appendices

Transcript of Lecture (with both micro and macro markers)

(Forward Slash / indicates pause) NB: Micro markers are in underlined font, Macro markers are in bold font.

You are going to listen to a short lecture on urbanisation. Please listen carefully to the information presented in the lecture. Take notes on the information as you listen to the lecture, just as you would in a normal classroom. After listening, you will be asked to answer true/false and multiple-choice questions and give a small summary of the information. But for now, just listen carefully and take notes.

Hello, everybody/ Today I want to discuss/ the problems of urbanization./ In particular/ I want to talk about those problems /which are peculiar to developing economies./ **I shall also discuss three possible policies which could be used to control or to stem uncontrolled urbanisation in developing countries./**

Well, **to begin with I must tell you,** /certain urban problems, are common to both developed and developing countries./ OK, for example, / problems of poor housing unemployment/ and those problems connected with traffic/ for example /congestion pollution and so on./ However **I will attempt to show you that** there are problems which are very peculiar to developing economies./ And you will see that/ this is due to the fact that developing countries need to create a basic foundation/ which is necessary for industrialisation/ and consequently/ for economic growth./ In fact/ it is the provision of this infrastructure/ which constitutes the urbanisation process itself /and this infrastructure – or the provision of this infrastructure – may have undesired effects on the economy as a whole./ Right, it's these consequences or these effects which I'd like to deal with next. / **I'm going to talk about five main consequences of this uncontrolled urbanisation./** OK /**In first instance** /there's the problem of the migration of people from the country to the city. / **By the way/** people living in the country see the city as a more desirable place to live –whether they are living in developing or developed countries./ But/ **it's important to note that** /the problem is much more serious in a developing country because there are in fact often more people who wish to migrate to the city. Now/ the fact of people migrating to the city causes a certain depopulation of rural areas; **this is a second consequence if you like.**

And **I will show you that/** the result of this is a decrease in the production of food and in the supply of food to the country as a whole. This can in turn also lead to a rise in prices, because of the law of supply and demand. As a result of people moving to the city you get a high urban population growth rate. Now **/we shall see that/** this is due not only to the fact of more adults moving to the city but can also be due to traditions of

these people from the country. / Because, / **as you probably know**/, often people from rural areas have a tradition of large families and so on and so the population of the cities increases with these numerous children of the large families. Now /**this leads to a fourth consequence**./ Another effect is a dramatic pressure on the supply of social services in urban areas- in particular services related to health and education. In relation to health services /OK,/ **we can see that** there are endemic diseases which could be made worse by over crowding. People coming from the country to the city and for example in the stresses on the services in education. With more children there's a need for more schools and more teachers and so on. / Right,/ **a fifth area**/ which is affected by uncontrolled urbanisation is that of the labour supply and often uncontrolled urbanisation leads to an excess of labour supply in cities. OK /**I will illustrate how** / this can lead in turn to an informal kind of labour activities -if you like- what might be called low productivity activities. **For example**/ people selling things in the streets, or you often find for instance in large urban areas in developing countries children watching cars and so on and asking for tips from their owners when they come back. This is really a sort of undesirable type of labour. So **as I pointed out earlier**, those are in fact the main consequences of uncontrolled urbanisation.

Now / **I'd like to move on to three possible policies which could be developed to stem this kind of uncontrolled urbanisation in developing countries** OK / **the first one** would be to promote a more equal land distribution / So / **in this way** farmers would be more motivated to stay on the land. They would be able to work more land and thus be able to feed their families more adequately. Often/ the reasons why farmers wish to go the city is they cannot grow enough food to both feed their families and earn their living. So / **as you can see**/ a more equal land distribution is one such policy to prevent this kind of move to the city.

All right / **I would like to point out the second policy**/ The next policy would be to improve the supply of social services in the rural areas/ particularly in the field of health and education. Country people often move to the city/ because they feel that these services are better in the city areas and if they could compare the services and feel that there was perhaps not much difference between the two it would be another reason for not moving. OK / **let me go on to the third policy**/ another possible policy would be to give financial assistance to agriculture – especially to the small landowners. OK / obviously / **the point here is that** / the problem of uncontrolled urbanization and the unfavourable consequences/ is a difficult problem. There is no easy solution/ But **I would like to emphasize that**/ these three types of policies could help to reduce the problem which is felt in particular in developing countries.

Test Instrument

A Please place a tick (4) in the box next to the **most correct** answer

1. The speaker starts the lecture by saying that
 - (a) urbanisation creates problems for developing countries
 - (b) poor housing and unemployment create urbanisation problems
 - (c) certain urban problems are common to both developed and developing countries

2. The main topic of this lecture is
 - (a) the problems of developing countries and how to reduce them
 - (b) the problems caused by urbanisation and how to combat them
 - (c) the causes of urbanisation and how to reduce them

3. The order in which the lecturer organised her talk was roughly as follows:
 - (a) urban problems in general
developing countries' urban problems
ways to control urban problems
results of urbanisation

 - (b) developing countries' problems
urban problems in general
results of urbanisation
how to control urban problems

 - (c) urban problems in general
developing countries' urban problems
results of urbanisation
how to control urban problems

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4. The main points of this lecture are

- (a) urban problems, policies to stem them
- (b) consequences of urbanisation, policies to stem them
- (c) problems of developing countries, causes of urbanisation

5. The lecturer concludes that

- (a) the problem of uncontrolled urbanisation cannot really be solved.
- (b) the unfavourable consequences of urbanisation can be overcome (removed).
- (c) uncontrolled urbanisation and its consequences can be reduced.

6. People selling things in city streets is an example of

- (a) low-productivity activities
- (b) excess of labour supply in the cities
- (c) uncontrolled urbanisation

7. According to the lecturer there are _____ main consequences of uncontrolled urbanisation.

- (a) Three
- (b) Five
- (c) Four

8. Giving financial assistance to agriculture is suggested as a

- (a) policy to stem uncontrolled urbanisation
- (b) means of motivating farmers to stay on their lands
- (c) way of helping small landowners to produce more food.

9. The lecturer says that people living in the country think that the city is a better place to live in, both in developed and developing countries. She says this while talking of

- (a) the causes of urbanisation
- (b) the consequences of urbanisation
- (c) ways to control urbanisation

10. Which of the following is true?

- (a) Urban problems exist only in developing countries
- (b) Developed countries have certain urban problems which developing countries don't have.
- (c) There are certain urban problems which exist only in developing countries.

11. High urban population growth rates are caused by

- (a) more adults moving from rural areas to the city
- (b) more adults moving from rural areas to the city with large families
- (c) more adults moving to the city, and rural people tending to have large families.

12. A more equal land distribution is

- (a) a policy to prevent people from moving to the city
- (b) a way to motivate farmers to stay on their lands.
- (c) a policy to reduce malnutrition in rural areas

13. According to what you learnt in this lecture, which of the following cities would you think, has the urban problem of children watching cars and asking for tips from owners?

The Effect of Discourse Markers on Academic Listening Comprehension

- (a) Dhaka and Bangkok
- (b) New Delhi and Tokyo
- (c) Seoul and Colombo

B Are the following statements True or False? (Please tick the correct box)

- 1. Urban problems are present in both developed and developing countries T F
- 2. Some urban problems can be found only in developing countries T F
- 3. People all over the world who live in the countryside see the city as a better place to live in T F
- 4. Uncontrolled urbanisation leads to an excess of labour supply in rural areas T F
- 5. According to this speaker, people in rural areas often have many children T F
- 6. There is pressure on the supply of social services in rural areas due to migration T F
- 7. Promoting a more equal land distribution can easily solve the problem of uncontrolled urbanisation. T F

- C** Imagine that your best friend has missed this lecture. He/she asks you what was said in the lecture. Write a short summary of what you think is necessary to remember of the lecture. You can write the summary in English OR in your mother tongue. Use the space below.