Introduction

The purpose of language instruction is to develop autonomous language acquirers, who can continue to improve on their own (Krashen, 2004, 2006). According to Krashen (2006), the goal of language instruction should not be to develop fully proficient speakers of the foreign or second language (hereafter referred to as L2); but instead, to help learners understand how language is acquired as well as how to make input comprehensible enough for acquisition. Krashen (2004) highlights two prominent characteristics of these language acquirers: they normally have enough L2 proficiency to facilitate the comprehension of a certain level of authentic input enabling them to acquire more language and they are equipped with adequate strategies for making further input increasingly comprehensible. Also, Little (1991) notes that these learners can develop a capacity, a particular kind of psychological relation to their learning process and content. According to Krashen (2004) and Little (1991), it seems that these autonomous language acquirers are equipped with a high enough level of L2 proficiency and metacognitive strategies to facilitate autonomous learning. Specifically, these learners tend to improve their L2 without assistance from skilled experts, i.e., EFL teachers, once they leave the classroom. Over the course of a number of years preceding the present study, the researcher became interested in looking for adequate teaching methods or techniques that could help students enhance their L2 proficiency, possess adequate metacognitive strategies to keep improving their English on their own, and thereby become autonomous language acquirers.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has become a commonly accepted method for teaching English in the EFL classroom and its goal is to develop learners' "communicative competence", which involves both knowledge of the language and the ability to use it (Hymes, 1971). Also, CLT is associated with a focus on learners' communicative needs and autonomous learning (Savignon,

2000). In other words, this method is expected to enhance learners' L2 proficiency and develop their metacognitive strategies for learner autonomy. However, serious confusion exists within the CLT model as it fails to connect with the knowledge and skills of the learners' L1 (Swan, 1985a, 1985b). In addition, Swan (1985a, 1985b) argues that learners will fail to enhance their L2 properly if they do not keep making correspondences between their L1 and L2 items. Moreover, discussion in the relevant literature has placed an emphasis on how L1 is beneficial for L2 acquisition (Corder, 1981; Ellis, 1985; McLaughlin, 1978; Taylor, 1975). Accordingly, Swan and Walter (1984, as cited in Liao, 2005) propose perspectives for post-communicative teaching of which L2 pedagogies based on learners' L1 experiences and knowledge develop L2 proficiency and metacognitive strategies. Accordingly, the researcher has been looking for a teaching model with the use of L1 which not only enhances students' L2 proficiency, but also encourages their L2 metacognitive strategies.

More specifically, in the Taiwan context, Liao (2003a) notes that translation can be applied as a teaching strategy and even connected with CLT to enhance learners' L2 proficiency. Namely, the use of L1 while undertaking translation tasks is applicable in the pedagogical setting. Liao, therefore, proposes Communicative Translation Teaching (CTT), which applies translation as a teaching strategy and even covers perspectives from the communicative approach such as cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and learning platforms, to enhance learners' L2 proficiency. Additionally, learners develop a number of strategies for translation assignments and a habit of improving autonomously. Chen (2007, 2009, 2010a, 2010b) developed the Interpreting Method (IM) of language teaching, which involves interpreter-training tasks such as shadowing, sight translation, consecutive interpretation, summarizing, consecutive interpretation note taking, and simultaneous interpretation, to enhance EFL learners' L2 proficiency. Moreover, he recommends that EFL instructors can use this model as an alternative L2 teaching

method. However, Liao's CTT involves exclusively written materials for practice whereas Chen's IM requires students' four English skills to cope with these training tasks interpreting a number of sources such as news stories or reports done on a wide range of topics. It should be mentioned that Liao uses CTT in pedagogical settings in an undergraduate program at a college in northern Taiwan, while Chen has presented in two seminars to senior high school English instructors in 2009 and 2010 in Northern Taiwan on how to use IM for teaching high school students. In terms of learning background and L2 proficiency the English instructors participating in Chen's seminars were teaching students similar to the participants in the current study. The researcher, who teaches English-gifted students at a junior high school in Northern Taiwan, has embarked upon the present study as a result of having a high interest in the effect a teaching method containing an L1 application in the form of interpreter-training tasks produces in terms of encouraging learner autonomy by facilitating learner development in the areas of L2 proficiency and metacognitive language learning strategies.

Over the past thirty years several studies have contributed greatly to an understanding of the different interpreter-training tasks that benefit L2 learning (Levenston, 1985; Parnel, 1989; Yagi, 2002). However, these studies have tended to focus on one task only and have failed to offer a clear model with a series of interpreter-training tasks. Furthermore, most participants in these studies were undergraduate and graduate students and they tended to be greatly different than the researcher's students in terms of their age, L2 proficiency, and strategies for L2 learning. More specifically, in Taiwan many relevant studies have focused on interpretation courses in graduate and undergraduate programs to provide insight into effective interpretation teaching for instructors (Ho, 1999; Liu, 2002; Hu & Liao, 2009). Unfortunately, these studies fail to shed adequate light on the application of interpretation to EFL classes with even less attention being given to EFL classes at the junior high level. In response to the gap in the literature

regarding this area, the purpose of the present study is to investigate whether or not the tasks used for training interpreters can assist learners in facilitating L2 acquisition, developing metacognitive strategies for L2 learning, and enabling continuous independent L2 improvement. The three research questions that guided the current study, which were proposed by the researcher follow:

1. To what extent does this pedagogical model which includes the application of interpreter-training tasks lead to the development of L2 proficiency (if any)? Will this development lead to autonomous learning?

2. To what extent are these tasks responsible for the participants' development of metacognitive strategies (if any)?

3. How do the participants react to being engaged in this kind of pedagogical setting? What are the participants' opinions concerning these tasks? Do the participants show positive reactions in regard to becoming autonomous L2 learners after finishing the course?

With this application of interpreter-training tasks, the researcher attempts to query as to if the participants in the present study can concentrate more on performing these challenging tasks to, develop metacognitive strategies, promote L2 proficiency, and to improve L2 independently. If these phenomena are found to occur in the present study, the researcher will create a corresponding teaching model for English-gifted students at the junior high school where he works.

Concerning a wide impact on the vast scope of L2 instruction, the current study stops short of endeavoring to offer broad implications as it is limited in regard to its population sample, which is made up of ten English-gifted students from one school in northern Taiwan. However, the authors hope that the findings herein can be implemented as an experiment in pedagogical settings or in future research carried out by program administrators and instructors whose work is similar to that of the current researcher.

Methodology

The researcher attempted to measure the effect that this interpreter-training tasks based teaching model produced in relation to enhancing learners' L2 proficiency and developing their metacognitive strategies for L2 learning with the latter increasing the likelihood that the participants would become autonomous language acquirers. To provide a broader and more complete range of inquiries (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), the researcher adopted a mixed methods research model as a paradigm which involves both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitatively, the researcher administered a 2008 Intermediate-level GEPT reading and listening test as a pre-test, followed by a three-month-long course in which the interpreter training tasks were applied. Following the course, another 2008 GEPT Intermediate-level reading and listening test was administered as the post-test to examine the participants' L2 development. In addition, a questionnaire was distributed to the participants in an attempt at gauging any metacognitive strategy development that may have occurred on the part of the participants' as a result of partaking in this course. Qualitative data consisted of the researcher's observation notes and reflective journals, as well as student participants' reflective notes, interviews, audio recordings, and transcripts. Then the researcher applied Strauss and Corbin's (1990; 1998) grounded theory (GT) methodology, of which theoretical sampling has been designated as a feature (Webb 2003; Becker 1993) to systematically gather and analyze the data. Accordingly, the researcher attempted to ensure that the theory would emerge from the different sets of coding of the data determining the extent to which this teaching model encouraged the participants to become autonomous language acquirers.

Participants

The participants were from an eighth-grade English-gifted class consisting of ten students in total at a junior high school in Northern Taiwan. This class consisted

of four females and six males, and their mean age was 13. In 2010 before they enrolled in the eighth-grade English-gifted class, they had passed the 2009 Elementary-level GEPT, which, according to the LTTC website was mainly based on the vocabulary list and sentence structures suggested by the Ministry of Education for junior high school textbooks. The GEPT elementary level tests students on their ability to communicate in normal everyday situations with common expressions and basic vocabulary and grammar (LTTC, 2007). One of the participants had passed the first-phase of the 2009 Intermediate-level GEPT reading and listening test, but had failed to pass the second-phase, speaking and writing. Participants came from different normal classes in which they had received four 45-minute classes of English instruction weekly over the course of a year. During their second year in junior high school the participants received additional English instruction in an English-gifted class on Saturdays.

Pedagogical Setting

This interpreter-training tasks based course was designed for English-gifted students and began in September of 2010. The course lasted for one semester and consisted of 32 teaching hours in total. The student participants attended the class for four hours on eight Saturdays during the semester. The objective of this course was not only to endeavor to raise these students' L2 levels, but also to develop their metacognitive strategies and subsequently equip them with the ability to improve their L2 independently. In class, student participants were engaged in performing interpreter-training tasks including reading aloud, sight translation, repeating, consecutive interpretation, paraphrasing, and summarizing. The materials the participants used while performing the tasks consisted of articles focusing on such topics as making preparations for a self-guided trip, local transportation, and entertainment. As the course proceeded, participants were encouraged to carry out more and more challenging tasks. More specifically, they first read the text aloud

then the researcher asked questions relating to the main ideas. Meanwhile, the researcher wrote key words and also a number of words that the participants were not familiar with on the whiteboard. Before the students took part in the sight translation task, the teacher explained these unfamiliar words in simple English and checked to see if every student understood. Next, after the sight translation, the teacher played a CD based on the written text, paused, and randomly asked one of the participants to repeat what they had just heard without reading the written text. After they finished with their repetition, the teacher used Chinese to summarize the text and students took turns interpreting consecutively into English. Finally, the participants paraphrased the material summarizing in written or spoken English. While the student participants were performing these tasks whether they be reading or listening, their full attention was required in order to accomplish them.

It should be mentioned here, that as a part of the current study, another instructor, a native English speaker, was also teaching and employed the same teaching method in the class.

Instruments and Data Collection

The present study involved the collection of three forms of data: participants' pre-test and post-test scores, questionnaires for student participants' perceptions toward their development of metacognitive strategies, and qualitative data for coding based on grounded theory. These three kinds of data served as multiple resources to achieve methodological triangulation as the researcher hoped to exhaustively respond to the research questions by employing a mixed methods approach consisting of both quantitative and qualitative research methods (Risjord, Dunbar, & Moloney, 2004).

For the assessment of the participants' progress regarding L2 proficiency, the researcher administered a 2008 Intermediate-level GEPT listening and reading test as a pre-test and another 2008 GEPT listening and reading test as a post-test. These

tests had a reliability average of 0.80, with an indication of sufficient consistency and stability (LTTC, as cited in Chao & Hwu, 2010). Following the three month course the researcher gathered the participants' scores from these two tests for statistical analysis.

At the end of the semester when the course was finished, a questionnaire was administered for understanding student participants' perceptions toward the influence of interpreter-training tasks regarding their development of metacognitive strategies. While developing the questionnaire, the researcher reviewed the relevant literature concerning metacognitive strategies for learning L2. These strategies enable L2 learners to regulate their cognition processes by planning the appropriate learning strategies, monitoring the learning process, and self-evaluating the learning process and its product (Brown, 1980; O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Russo, & Kupper, 1985; Oxford, 1990). Additionally, during the development of the questionnaire for the present study, the researcher reviewed the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies (MARSI) (Mokhtary & Reichard, 2002) as well as the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) (Vandergrift, Goh, & Mareschal, 2006), and then revised them into twelve statements. Finally, the questionnaire used in the present study consisted of three sections: planning, monitoring, and evaluation with four statements for each with each statement calling for a response on a scale from one to five indicating different degrees of agreement with the number five representing "strongly agree" and the number one representing "strongly disagree". Examples of the questionnaire are shown below:

Planning
I have a goal in mind before the teacher asks me to perform these tasks. (item#1) 1 2 3 4 5
I think I can improve my English after performing these tasks. (item#3) 1 2 3 4 5
Monitoring
I focus harder on the text when I have trouble performing these tasks. (item#6) 1 2 3 4 5
I try to look for answers from the text while I was performing the task. (item#8) 1 2 3 4 5
Evaluation

I have improved my English by these tasks. (item#11)	1	2	3	4	5
I will use these tasks to improve my English later. (item#12)	1	2	3	4	5

After each class, the researcher made both reflective and observation notes while the student participants made reflective notes following each class which later was collected as part of the data gathering process. Upon the completion of the course, the researcher interviewed each participant using a semi-structured approach to elicit the student participants' perceptions toward this teaching model as well as attempting to gauge their development in relation to both L2 proficiency and metacognitive strategies. Examples of the interview questions follow:

Do these interpreter-training tasks improve your English?
While doing these tasks, which aspects of your English proficiency have progressed?
What learning strategies have you learned for effective English learning?
What problems do you have when you perform these tasks?
What did you do when you met these problems?
Would you like to continue using these tasks to improve your English on your own in the future?

At the same time, the researcher recorded all the interviews and the recordings were transcribed for coding according to the principles of grounded theory.

Data Analysis

With regard to the statistics, a paired t-test was adopted to compare the two means from both the pre-test and the post-test in an effort to examine the effects, or the lack thereof, that the interpreter-training tasks had on participants' L2 development over the course of the three months. Additionally, the participants' answers to each statement in the questionnaire were calculated in terms of frequencies and percentages by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Previous studies have suggested that researchers who are attempting to examine student participants' perceptions would receive more genuine results with interpretative research methods such as the grounded theory (GT) method (e.g.

Bogdan & Bilken, 1982; Ernest, 1994; Mynard, 2004). Accordingly, the researcher adopted GT to analyze the data, which consisted of the researcher's reflective and observation notes as well as student participants' reflective notes and interview transcripts. This method involves three phases of data analysis: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. During the first phase, the researcher transformed all information into transcripts then coded the material line-by-line and later developed the codes into categories in terms of their properties and dimensions (Bitsch, 2005). All the notes and transcripts were then segmented into smaller units of conceptual codes and this was followed by a process of comparison of these individual codes in terms of their similarities and differences. Finally, a core category was developed by integrating concepts and categories. In short, the GT coding for the present study consists of a set of categories—"L2 learner autonomy" as the core category, with sub-categories such as "L2 proficiency development", "L2 metacognition development", and "motivation of using these interpreter-training tasks for improving L2 on their own"—which explain the conditions that determine how this teaching model effects L2 learners' autonomy.

Results & Discussion

Improvement of L2 Proficiency

The t-test result showed $p < .05$ (See Table 1), indicating that the participants' L2 proficiency development was significantly related to the teaching model employed in the current study. The mean of the post-test was 78.3 suggesting that most participants could approximate 80. To be more precise, their L2 proficiency improvement, as a result of taking part in this course, might enable them to achieve the levels needed to pass the first phase of the Intermediate-level GEPT whereas they had passed only Elementary-level GEPT before this course.

Table 1

	Mean	SD	Number
Pre-test	75.9	6.45	10
Post-test	78.3	6.80	10

Table 2

	t	*p* (two-tailed)	df
pre-post	-2.571	.030*	9

In addition, the Intermediate-level GEPT was adopted to measure L2 learners' use of English to communicate properly when engaging topics in daily life (LTTC, as cited in Wu & Chin, 2006). The level criteria for listening and reading skills are as follows:

> Listening: An examinee who passes this level can understand general conversation in daily life situations and grasp the general meaning of public announcements, weather forecasts, and advertisements. At work, he/she can understand simple product introductions and operating instructions. He/she can catch the general meaning of native English speakers' conversations and inquiries.
> Speaking: An examinee who passes this level can read short essays, short stories, personal letters, advertisements, leaflets, brochures, and instruction manuals. At work, he/she can read job-related information, company notices and operation manuals, as well as routine documents, faxes, telegrams and e-mail messages.

In other words, the skills mentioned above are sufficient for making L2 input comprehensible enough to L2 learners that it equips them with the ability to function in authentic situations. More specifically, it appears that these student participants' L2 proficiency development, due to the methods used in this course, may have realized independent L2 learning.

Development of L2 Metacognitive Strategies

The participants' responses to each of the statements on the questionnaire were calculated by SPSS and descriptive statistics such as percentage, mean, median, mode, and standard deviation are presented in Table 3 and 4 to answer the

second question of the present study.

Table 3 *Frequencies: the development of metacognitive strategies while performing tasks*

Assessment of Metacognitive Strategies Development	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
Planning					
Item # 1	0	0	10	80	10
Item # 2	0	0	20	70	10
Item # 3	0	0	40	60	0
Item # 4	0	0	30	70	0
Monitoring					
Item # 5	0	0	20	50	30
Item # 6	0	0	0	40	60
Item # 7	0	0	20	60	20
Item # 8	0	0	0	60	40
Evaluation					
Item # 9	0	0	0	70	30
Item # 10	0	0	20	50	30
Item # 11	0	0	0	60	40
Item # 12	0	0	10	20	70

Table 4 *Descriptive statistics: the development of metacognitive strategies while performing tasks*

Assessment of Metacognitive Strategies Development	N (Total 10)	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
Planning					
Item # 1	10	4	4	4	0.45
Item # 2	10	3.9	4	4	1.28
Item # 3	10	3.6	4	4	1.55
Item # 4	10	3.7	4	4	0.79
Monitoring					
Item # 5	10	4.1	4	4	2.21
Item # 6	10	4.6	5	5	1.55
Item # 7	10	4	4	4	2
Item # 8	10	4.4	4	4	1.55
Evaluation					
Item # 9	10	4.3	4	4	1.45
Item # 10	10	4.1	4	4	1.19

Item # 11 Item # 12	10 10	4.4 4.5	4 5	4 5	1.55 2.1

According to Table 3, the participants tended to agree more strongly in the "monitoring" and "evaluation" sections and they reportedly adjusted their strategies while encountering a number of problems due to these challenging tasks. In addition, they were more likely to consider these tasks as benefits and were more willing to use them for L2 self-progress. Table 4 showed that the standard deviations of the "planning" section were less than the other two sections, indicating that the participants' responses for planning strategies tended to be more similarly positive. Nevertheless, most participants, according to the figures in Table 4, positively agreed to be aware of their development of metacognitive strategies including planning, monitoring, and evaluation while performing interpreter-training tasks. Therefore, these results suggest that the participants tended to pick a strategy for different L2 learning materials, adjust the strategy while encountering problems, and examine the proper strategy for similar L2 learning contexts.

Learner's awareness of their L2 development

First, the learners in the current study perceived their listening and speaking skills as outperforming their reading and writing skills. Accordingly, the majority of the participants showed awareness of their improvement regarding the former two skills. Because interpreters greatly rely on their listening and speaking skills, the training tasks were accordingly designed based on these. Second, the teaching model encouraged them to use L2 for authentic purposes as participants did not encounter fear when using L2 in front of their peers. This appears to have been the result of perceptions, on the part of the participants, that using L2 for authentic purposes was a much easier task than using L2 for specific purposes such as interpreting. In other words, they reportedly felt that they would have less pressure

and be more comfortable in regard to learning and using L2 upon leaving this pedagogical setting in which these challenging tasks required them to process large amounts of information between L1 and L2 in a limited time period. Lastly, the participants felt that they had achieved high levels of L2 proficiency, which involved not just common expressions, basic grammar, and limited vocabulary, but also the capacity to describe personal experiences, events, and opinions with complex lexical items and syntactic structures.

Learner's awareness of their L2 metacognition

Most participants thought that their L1 could assist their L2 learning, especially in settings in which interpreter-training tasks are applied. For example, most participants agreed that one of the tasks, sight translation, mainly engaged their cognitive processes especially when they read materials such as articles or long stories and this method, to a high degree, assisted their comprehension and facilitated their L2 acquisition.

While the participants were performing these six tasks, the majority of them felt that "summary" was the most challenging one. While engaging this task, they encountered problems regarding identifying key utterances, which involves summarizing main ideas, and consequently used the same utterances and syntax from the article in their summaries causing them to be too lengthy. However, for the most part, the participants felt that the task was less difficult when the teacher led them to identify the key utterances for the main theme of the text by writing them on the board. Even though it was the most challenging task, the participants perceived this task as greatly beneficial because they felt that it could help them develop a habit of correctly seeking out the main idea and key supporting ideas while reading any article in L2. These interpretations imply that the participants achieved progress in both their reading comprehension and writing skills. Thus, as a result of undertaking these in-class interpreter-training tasks, the participants

appear to have become equipped with important L2 metacognitive strategies.

Motivation of using these interpreter-training tasks for improving L2

The perception, on the part of these student participants was that this teaching model differed greatly from their normal EFL classes in terms of materials for practicing, opportunities for using L2, and the concentration required. A high number of the participants felt that this model could assist both their L2 development and their metacognitive strategies. Hence, they were highly motivated to use these interpreter-training tasks as L2 learning strategies for self-progress, especially once they were out of the EFL classroom. Finally, it was recommended on the part of all ten participants taking part in the current study that the researcher apply the same teaching model in the future to similar settings like English-gifted classes, inspiring more students to be motivated towards L2 learning independence.

Conclusion & Implications

With regard to the first research question, this model appeared to enhance not only the participants' L2 proficiency, but also the levels required for making different kinds of input comprehensible. Concerning the second research question, it was shown that the participants could choose the appropriate strategies for different materials, make adjustments while encountering problems, and evaluate the proper strategies for similar contexts. Accordingly, participants appeared to have developed metacognition regarding L2 learning. Based on the answers to the first two research questions, the researcher could infer that this teaching model might possibly facilitate the learners' development of L2 proficiency and metacognitive strategies. Specifically, participants tended to become equipped with a high enough level of L2 proficiency which could ensue in more acquisition and the further understanding of the process of L2 acquisition (Krashen, 2004). Therefore, it appears that the interpreter-training tasks the student participants

underwent over the course of this semester-length class enabled them to develop L2 proficiency and metacognitive strategies becoming autonomous language acquirers.

With regard to the third research question, it appears that participants became aware of their development regarding L2 proficiency and metacognitive strategies as a result of undergoing the interpreter-training tasks employed in the current study. Additionally, participants experienced positive effects not only in relation to developing L2 proficiency and metacognitive strategies, but also in regard to showing a strong willingness to apply these tasks to similar L2 learning contexts. Most importantly, it was found that participants were more likely to use these tasks for independent improvement of their L2 appearing to have developed the characteristics required for autonomous language acquirers to acquire more L2 without the assistance of EFL teachers, which is also a goal of EFL instruction.

Pedagogically, the results suggest that L1 may not interfere but can, indeed, assist L2 development when EFL teachers apply L1 appropriately such as the teaching model employed in the current study. Additionally, L2 learners could utilize these interpreter-training tasks as additional effective means for L2 learning, which also appears to facilitate self-awareness of the L2 learning processes. Accordingly, the researcher created a teaching model that appears to be adequate for English-gifted students at the junior high school where he works and it could be an applicable model for similar institutions. However, due to the limited samples from only ten English-gifted students, the findings of the current study may fail to provide valuable insight into how this teaching model could be employed across a wide spectrum of EFL classrooms. It is hoped that more EFL instructors or educators can conduct research of even higher relevance in this area and once the gap is bridged, we can achieve a greater understanding concerning the influence of interpreter-training tasks on normal L2 learners' proficiency and metacognitive strategies. Furthermore, with Communicative Language Teaching being currently

viewed as an irreplaceable teaching method in EFL instruction, the teaching model used in the current study could be implemented as an alternative and supplementary medium to promote L2 proficiency and encourage learner autonomy. Finally, the authors of the current study cannot claim that this model is undoubtedly superior to other teaching models employed for learners in L2 pedagogical settings. However, it is their hope that the application of this teaching model might bridge the gap in regard to how L1 facilitates L2 acquisition and what positive benefits L1 has on L2 learning.

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