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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper is a synthesis of seven studies which focus on interaction in multilingual university environments. These studies are synthesized to determine how power relations affect these interactions and what specific factors play a major role in influencing these power relations. Four codes were developed from previous literature on power and a review of the studies: identity, authority, control, and participation. In combining these four codes and analyzing the included studies, a cyclic model of influences on power relations in multilingual environments in higher education was identified. In creating this model, this paper attempts to provide a clear approach to viewing power in a multilingual setting, thereby informing students, teachers, administrators and researchers about how identity, authority, control, and participation influence interactions. A specific focus of this paper is on the importance of this model on foreign language teaching and foreign language teacher training.

**KEYWORDS:** multilingualism, power, control, identity, authority, participation

## **INTRODUCTION**

Academia is a complex environment, composed of complicated relationships between students, faculty and administrators functioning at differing authoritative positions, creating multiple identities, and employing different levels of control in different scenarios. In addition, academia has become increasingly multilingual, with students and faculty from different parts of the world collaborating, competing and interacting in a number of different ways. Within this complex system, different power relations are created between its members, thus creating a continually fluctuating state of power relations.

The negotiations that these different members undertake play an important role in creating the fabric of academic society. Critically investigating the interactions between members of the academic community is significant because a deeper understanding of the influences at work both inside and outside the classroom can shed light on the intricate network of power relations in which our students and fellow educators find themselves, whether they are aware of these forces or not. As a number of studies have already investigated student-student and student-teacher interactions in a university setting, this paper seeks to synthesize the results of qualitative studies which have catalogued and analyzed such interactions. In doing so, I will show that a few key interactional components, specifically authority, control, participation, and identity, are present in each of the studies incorporated in this synthesis, and I propose these components play a pivotal role in the substantiation and reformulation of power relationships between members of the multilingual academic community.

### ***Defining Power***

As this synthesis aims to investigate the negotiations of power in multilingual university environments, it is first essential to define what is meant by power, how that power is negotiated, and how those negotiations both impact and are impacted by the multilingual university environment. I begin here with power and define the remaining two items in the following sections.

Power has always been a contested term with varying definitions, but few notions of what power is and how it operates in society have had as stunning an impact as the ideas of Michel Foucault. Foucault operationalizes power not as something preexisting, but rather something that is constantly constructed and reconstructed within a social environment, and the changes within the relations of power come about from both participant internal and external factors (Foucault, 1982). One of the primary reasons for my adoption of this idea of power is its ability to encompass both the factors involved in the negotiation of power, as well as its inclusion of dynamicity. Dynamicity is important for this study, because it provides hope for those people in situations of low-power that their status is not static and changes can and should be made to improve their status.

Another key element in this definition of power that is critical to academia is the inseparable link Foucault makes between power and knowledge, which can be seen in the popularized term power/knowledge in Foucaultian terms. As Hall (2001) explains, “[Foucault’s Theory] saw knowledge as always inextricably enmeshed in relations of power because it was always being applied to the regulation of social conduct in practice,” (pp. 75). Because knowledge and power are “enmeshed” in this theoretical approach to power and because academia is focused on the search for knowledge and understanding, Foucault’s theory appropriately applies to the context under investigation. Knowledge is significant to the multilingual environment as well, because knowledge can be understood in both general terms, but also used to identify linguistic aptitude, ability and status as important aspects of knowledge.

### ***Negotiating Power***

While the operationalized definition of power selected for this synthesis can encompass what is investigated as power in the selected studies, it still lacks the idea of negotiation. Knowing that power relations are dynamic does not quite extend far enough to include what it means to negotiate power, and it is negotiation which can be seen in the interactions of participants, not the underlying power, which can only be theorized from an analysis of different social and individual aspects.

Negotiation then, is the actual real-world interaction (or lack of interaction, because not interacting is also an observable behavior) between individuals in which power is co-constructed. One important part of interaction is the right to interact, which is an idea clearly theorized by Pierre Bourdieu (1977). According to Bourdieu (1977),

*An adequate science of discourse must establish the laws which determine who (de facto and de jure) may speak, to whom, and how... Among the most radical, surest, and best hidden censorships are those which exclude certain individuals from communication (e.g. by not inviting them to places where people speak with authority, or by putting them in places without speech).*

It is clear that the right to speak is not something that everyone is always in possession of, according to Bourdieu, but rather something to be granted or taken away. By removing someone’s right to speak, you remove his or her right to interact, and thereby removing from him or her the capacity to negotiate their current status, or realization of power.

### ***Negotiations of Power and the Multilingual University Environment***

Finally, it is also important to contextualize the idea of negotiating power within the focal environment, namely multilingual university settings. As Foucault’s ideas on power have expanded, many researchers have investigated power in academic settings (Cummins, 2009; Grainger, 2011; Levine, 2008; MacIntyre, Noels & Moore, 2010; Norton, 1995; 2001; Norton & Toohey, 2001; Öhrn, Angervall, Gustafsson, Lundahl & Nyström, 2009; Ushioda, 2009; Vigoda-Gadot, Talmud & Peled, 2011). Rather than providing hypothetical accounts and simply a description of how power relations could be negotiated, I would like to introduce two studies from the above list which have investigated how Foucaultian notions of power relations and their negotiations by individuals do play out in academic scenarios. It is important to note that while not all of the studies above specifically cite Foucault, their ideas of power and how they are related are tightly correlated with those expressed by Foucault.

First, Cummins (2009) describes the relations of power by bilingual and bicultural deaf students in a Swedish and Danish context. In his investigation of these deaf children who were subjugated and put in positions of minimal power by authoritative figures, he found that the constraints on their abilities “are socially-imposed rather than representing any inherent limitation specific to Deaf students,” (267). Thus, it is not the fact that the children investigated here were deficient, but rather that they were seen as deficient and therefore barred from conversation by removing their right to speak.

A second example comes from Bonny Norton (2001), in which she describes the issues of non-participation and imagined communities by ESL students in a Canadian university classroom. From her investigation of diary excerpts from two participants, Norton concludes that their nonparticipation, which could be redefined here as their right to speak, removes personal investment in language learning and thus negatively impacts both the participants’ abilities to learn as well as their abilities to redefine their identity in the second language classroom. Overall, these two examples give a brief description of how power relations can and sometimes cannot be negotiated in academic contexts. While both examples given here, and most that I’ve found, center on the abuse of power and the negative impacts that arise from that abuse, it is important to remember the positive impact teachers and other authorities can have on their students by providing them the right to speak, participate, gain authority and redefine their identities in positive ways.

***The Student as Subject (or Object?)***

One final section I would like to add to this introduction is another topic from Foucault (1982), in which he discusses the idea of power and what he calls the “subject”. Specifically I would like to discuss the role of the student within the multilingual academic environment. Over the course of conducting this synthesis I came to the realization that one of the major factors in negotiating power relations was how the students and teachers viewed the role of the learner. While this discussion is more suited to parts of this paper which are post-synthesis, such as the discussion and pedagogical implication sections, I wanted to draw attention to the idea that power and viewing the student as the subject may be one of the most impactful ways for teachers to empower their students, instead of seeing themselves as the subject and their students as the object. By allowing students to be the subject, they have more control over their development of their own identity, rather than being forced into a preformed mold handed down from the academic institution.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The two research questions that came out of the initial review of power and which guided the final synthesis of the selected studies are:

1. How do negotiations of power play out in multilingual academic environments?
2. What factors play a major part within these negotiations of power?

As this is a qualitative synthesis, I first created more general research questions and developed them more fully over the course of data collection. Initial questions about power within the classroom were posed and refined as studies were found and appraised. The major part the initial search and appraisal played was to help me to narrow my topic to focus on adult learners, university/academic environments, multilingual participants, and student-student and student-teacher negotiations of power. In addition, the inclusion/exclusion criteria, which will be discussed in detail below, also helped to shape the final research questions. Specifically, after the application of the exclusion criteria, two studies discussed interactions and power relations between students and instructors, but not within a classroom setting. This expanded the research questions to include the entire academic environment, rather than limiting it only to the classroom. This was seen as important because student-teacher interactions outside of the classroom, such as one-on-one writing conferences, are also critical sites for the negotiation of power between students and teachers, and these out-of-class situations can have a significant impact on what happens inside the classroom as well.

**METHODOLOGY**

This section outlines the methodological approach and procedures taken to collect, appraise and analyze the studies used for this synthesis.

***Research Procedures***

The initial search for texts to include in this synthesis was conducted using two primary data sources, Google Scholar and the Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts (LLBA) database. LLBA was used in the initial search and Google Scholar provided supplementary material. The individual keywords used to collect the original sample were “classroom”, “power”, “negotiation”, “L2”, “multilingual”, “second language”, and “interaction”. These individual keywords were then combined into phrases and used as the search terms, for example, “second language classroom negotiations of power.” By recombining these search terms in multiple ways and selecting topic-appropriate articles from each search, 61 articles were chosen as possible candidates for synthesis.

***Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria***

Of the 61 articles, 7 were chosen for the final synthesis by applying the following inclusion/exclusion criteria:

1. The study must focus on student-student or student-teacher interactions.
2. The study must contain the original data, as both the original data and interpretations of that data will be drawn upon for this synthesis.
3. The study must focus on interactions within an academic context, whether inside or outside the classroom.
4. At least one of the participants in the interactions recorded in the study was multilingual.
5. The interactions took place between adults.

By applying these five requirements, the total number of studies was reduced from 61 to 7. All of the seven studies included in this synthesis focus on student-student or teacher-student interactions between multilingual adults in an academic context. The rationale for these criteria sprung from my own teaching experiences. As a current instructor at Carnegie Mellon University, my students are representatives of the population under investigation in this study. In conducting this study, I hope to provide fellow teachers, researchers and myself with a more comprehensive understanding of the negotiations of power in multilingual academic environments.

### *Final Sample/Evaluation of Sources*

While the object of a synthesis is to recombine previous findings in new ways, it is still important for a qualitative synthesis to provide appropriate contextualization of the individual studies. This contextualization will allow for a more transparent and salient application of my own analysis in the following section. I will first briefly introduce each article via the following table. Its purpose is to summarize the focus and types of interactions of each study included in this synthesis, after which a more complete contextualization will be provided for each. For complete citations of the included articles, please see the Reference section. Each article included in the synthesis is preceded by a \*.

The following chart also includes the appraisal score given to each article. The appraisal was based on three major criteria. First, the methodology presented in the study was clear and easily replicable. Second, a large amount of the original data was included by the researcher. This allowed for easier inclusion within this synthesis. Third, and finally, the study was judged on how logical and convincing the interpretations of the data proposed by the researcher were. Each study was given a score of 1, excellent, 2, fair, or 3, poor.

Author(s) Publication Year	Focus of Study	Types of interactions recorded	Appraisal Score
Achugar, M. (2009)	The creation of a professional identity in a bilingual creative writing graduate program	What: Student-student and teacher-student classroom interactions in a Spanish-English bilingual graduate student creative writing program at a Southwestern US university near the Mexico border How: videotaped classroom observations and formal interviews with the students	1
Gu, M. (2011)	Language choice and identity construction in peer interactions in a multilingual university environment	What: Students in a teacher training program views on intra- and inter-group interactions and language use on campus at a university in Hong Kong. How: Individual and focus group interviews.	2
Mayes, P. (2010)	The discursive construction of identity and power in the critical classroom	What: Two sections of an ESL composition course, with a focus on two teacher and five students at a US university in Wisconsin How: Class observations, videotaped student-teacher writing conferences, and student writing samples and course documents	1
Mohamed, H. & Banda, F. (2008)	Classroom discourse and discursive practices in higher education	What: Student-writer and lecturer-reader interactions at a university in Tanzania. How: Review of documents, student and lecturer interviews and five sessions of classroom observation.	1
Morita, N. (2004)	Negotiating participation and identity in second language academic communities	What: Open-ended in-class discussions either as a whole class or in small groups during graduate seminars over the course of one academic year at a Canadian university How: Weekly reports from students, formal interviews with the researcher, and classroom observations	1
Nelson, G. (2000)	Individualism-collectivism and power distance in second language classrooms	What: Classroom misunderstandings presented in a narrative fashion. How: unclear, however narrative suggests the retelling of anecdotal first-hand experience	3
Starfield, S. (2009)	Negotiating writer identity and authority in a first-year university course	What: Academic student writing in a first year sociology course at a South African university How: Classroom observations, interviews with some students and all teachers, and written documents	2

The seven studies listed in the chart above are each unique social environments with their own players, settings and interactions. Before a synthesis can be useful, each study must be fixed within its unique context. Beginning with Achugar (2009), the study is conducted at a US/Mexico border university and focuses on the development of the professional identities of aspiring writers in an English/Spanish bilingual graduate program. The location of this study, the US/Mexico border, plays an important role in defining the context in which this graduate program functions. As Achugar describes, "This academic community is unique since it is the only bilingual creative-writing program in the United States and also because it is located in an area characterized by continuous contact between native speakers of Spanish and English...resulting in a complex cultural and linguistic landscape," (pp. 68). In addition to the unique surroundings in which the recorded interactions take place, the program itself is unique in that it is the only one of its kind currently in existence within the US.

While the researcher conducted a qualitative longitudinal project to obtain her data, the focus of this study is on a specific classroom interaction between one of the program's professors and the rest of his class, specifically three students who dominate the interaction between each other and the professor. The class is a writing course and this specific interaction takes place during the critique of one student's paper. The topic of discussion focuses on the use of dreams in writing.

Similarly, Starfield (2002) also investigates the development of writer identity and authority, but the context is quite different from that in Achugar (2009). In her study, Starfield looks at this development in a sociology one course at a South African university. These participants, unlike the ones in Achugar (2009), are not graduate students, but rather beginning level university students, and therefore these students will have much different levels of authority in their academic setting. Even the manner of multilingualism is different. While the first study took place in a bilingual program, Starfield's study is located in an environment in which English is seen as the dominant language, which is not the native language of the participants in her study. Also, Starfield looks at two one-on-one interactions between an instructor and a student with the focal event being the discussion of the students' papers, which is much different from the classroom interaction investigated in Achugar (2009).

Like Starfield (2002), Mohamed and Banda (2008) locate their study in an African (in this case Tanzanian), English-dominant university setting, where they target the interactions of multilingual students. The bulk of the data from this study arises from faculty interviews and their feedback on students' writing, in which the authors foreground the role of the instructor as the dominant figure.

In another study which focuses on identity, Morita (2004) looked at identity in second language academic communities at a western-Canadian university. Like Achugar's study, these participants were graduate students, but were native Japanese speakers entering different graduate programs. Again, their position as graduate students, even in their first year, affords these participants a different identity and sense of authority than those undergraduate first semester students in Starfield (2009). Because of these students' involvement in different departments, e.g. language education, educational studies, and Asian studies, they were not located within a singular English-dominated context. Rather, each student in this study had multiple connections to different language communities. The interactions analyzed in this study were taken from in class whole-group and small-group discussions.

Another study centered on classroom interactions is that by Mayes (2010). This study is located at a university in Wisconsin whose five main participants are either from the Midwest US and consider themselves to be bilinguals (3) or international students (2). Mayes details their interactions with their instructors and fellow students in an ESL composition course.

Coming from a completely different part of the world, Gu (2011) describes the issues of language choice and identity construction in peer interactions. Gu's study is located at a multilingual university in Hong Kong and uses interviews with ten students to investigate her research questions.

Finally, Nelson's (2000) study is difficult to situate entirely due to a lack of contextualization, but she does provide some detail that the two interactions described in her study at a US university. The first interaction is with a 19-year-old Japanese student who is embarrassed by the printing of her name on her test by the ESL teacher. The second interaction is between an ESL teacher and her advisor, which is not included in the analysis of this study.



Each study is located in a unique context and those contexts range in their similarities and differences to the other studies included in this synthesis. Because of the breadth of contexts which this synthesis is taking into consideration, I believe that the conclusions drawn from the coding and findings present next are strengthened and the proposed model of power relations has the ability to encompass a variety of multilingual academic environments.

### *Coding*

The approach to coding and analysis for this synthesis was comprised of both predetermined categories as well as the inclusion of categories that arose from the data themselves. First, coming from the theoretical background of this paper which includes both Foucaultian ideas about the networks of power in which every social event takes place as well as the idea of the right to speak from Bourdieu, the initial two categories for coding were identity and authority. The idea of identity fits with Foucault's idea that each social event occurs as an interplay between members of differing levels of power. Identity could thus be said to be formed within these social events as a result of different personal and social aspects which convey or detract power from the members of a particular social event. Authority could also be seen as a co-creation by members in a social event, but in addition, authority can also be seen within Bourdieu's theory of the right to speak. Identity is important in social interaction, but it is the authority both given to oneself as well as given by others that provides a person with the right to speak in an interaction.

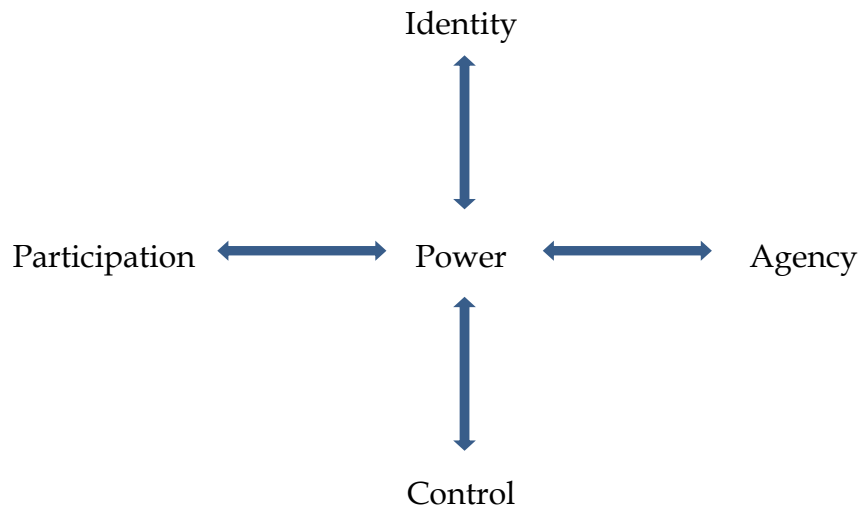
In addition to identity and authority, two other categories arose from the investigation of the selected articles, control and participation. Participation was identified in all of the texts, and it was catalogued in terms of the amount of verbal or physical involvement in a given interaction or situation. While participation is fairly straight-forward, control arose out of the need to create a category that was in between authority and participation. Authority on its own was not sufficient to encompass situations in which participants without authority were given the right to speak and participate in a particular situation. For example, Mayes (2010, p. 204) provides a transcription of an interaction between a student and a teacher in which the teacher, Becky, is trying to explain an assignment to the student:

Becky: I understand that you guys wanna take the assignments and try to figure out what I want from you  
but,  
..really what I want from you,  
is t- kinda try to take the assignment and, and,  
(1.1) do with  
(.7) do with it what you will

In this interaction, it is clear that the students, as well as the teacher, see the teacher as the person with authority, but the control over what to do with the assignment is delegated to the students, who lack authority in this situation. Because of these situations in which authority does not automatically result in power over a particular event or activity, the category of control was developed.

Each of the four categories (identity, authority, control, and participation) are located within the framework of power, that is, power has a dialogic relationship with each of these categories. For example, as a person is given more control, their power in a certain situation goes up and their ability to negotiate power relations with others in that situation changes. On the other hand, when a person's self-image is that of an outsider, their identity inhibits access to social power and they therefore lose some of their ability to negotiate power in a specific social situation. Thus power, as overarching negotiational resource, can be influenced by each of the four proposed categories, and they, in turn, can be influenced by power itself, as manifested within a social environment. Figure 1 below provides a graphic of this explanation.

Figure 1: Direct bidirectional influences on classroom power



For coding purposes, these four categories were divided into thematic and linguistic representations found in the text. Thematic representations were those in which the actual topic was being discussed, either in the original data or by the article's author, while linguistic representations were those that were seen as manifestations of a particular category in the actual linguistic aspects of the original data set. Linguistic categories were not identified in the interpretations or writing style of the authors.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Research Question One*

How do negotiations of power play out in multilingual academic environments?

In short, negotiations of power are always unique to their specific contexts and the ways in which those power relations play out in interactions cannot be predetermined because of the constant dynamic nature of the creation and recreation of power in social environments. For example, each of these studies were conducted in drastically different geographical environments with their own cultures. It would be impossible to guess how power relations in two sites, even if they were exactly the same, would play out due to the distinct situations in which those power relations are negotiated. The participants' in Achugar (2009) who were in a bilingual program on the US/Mexico border would have had a much different experience had they been more centrally located in the US, where there would possibly be less interaction between two groups of native speakers. That could have drastic effects on what those writers saw as important in creating a professional identity and change all of the interactions they had with their peers and professors. While this first synthesis questions has not be as fruitful as hoped, it has still provided evidence for one important claim, that power relations are dynamically constructed and reconstructed in every social context, and thus it may be more important to look at negotiations of power as something to be aware of and developed within a context, rather than something used to predict interactions in a decontextualized space.

In stating this, I do not mean to say that there are no patterns to be found within the multilingual settings analyzed in this synthesis. Once a situation has been properly contextualized, it is then possible to draw conclusions about the ways in which power is negotiated between participants. As an example, it is possible to identify similar roles between teachers as authority figures in both Mayes (2010) and Mohamed and Banda (2008). Mayes (2010) investigates classroom power in a multilingual, but English-dominated English composition course at a US university, while Mohamed & Banda (2008) investigate classroom interactions between lecturers and their students in an English course at a Tanzanian University. Despite the differing contexts in which these studies were conducted, both studies indicate that authority-role, as assumed by the teacher/lecturer, plays an important part in the actions undertaken by the students in these contexts. By assuming a position of authority over the students, the instructors



and teachers in these two studies demonstrate how the concept of authority is universally available, and that the context in which the instructor or teacher found him or herself allowed for that individual to assume that authority. It is the importance of context as the provider of social positions which I would like to emphasize here. Only within context can we establish power relations, and it is the decisions and actions of the individuals within that context that determine how power is negotiated from one point in time to the next.

### ***Research Question Two***

What factors play a major part within these negotiations of power?

To answer this question, this section will first analyze each code developed individually. The discussion section of this paper will then use these categories to show how each of the four factors interact with each other, creating a model of power relations which manifests itself in a multilingual higher-education environment.

#### *Power as identity*

Identity, as conceived in this paper, allows students to locate themselves within an interaction and is constantly changing due to both internal and external factors. This creation of identity was the focal point for many of the studies included in this synthesis (Achugar, 2009; Gu, 2011; Mayes, 2010; Morita, 2004; Starfield, 2002). Identity is important in interaction and the web of power relations, as can be seen in this excerpt from original data from Morita (2004): “I found that my self-image got really lowered after I came here . . . But I don’t feel comfortable calling myself a nonnative speaker,” (pp. 586). In this excerpt from the participant Lisa, one can see that self-image, or her identity, has a major impact on her feelings and how she thinks about herself. She does not identify herself as a nonnative speaker of the language, which is important to recreate her self-image in a more positive way, one transferring from her former low self-image upon arrival. By redefining her identity as something other than a “nonnative speaker” she recreates her identity in a more empowering way. Morita (2004) also analyzes this data as a change in identity, surmising that, “Her commitment to improvements . . . allowed her to employ various strategies, and as a result, she experienced some positive personal transformations,” (pp. 586). These “positive transformations” manifest themselves as a reinvented self-image which in turn changes Lisa’s identity within her multilingual context. Her change in identity can be seen as a way to provide herself with more power, thus identity itself is not only acted upon by power, e.g. Lisa’s initial identity problems as a newly-arrived person, but change in identity itself can enhance an individual’s power.

Identity is also an important part of writing, in that one’s identity inherently affects the way in which he writes, as well as providing a personalized voice which defines a person as a writer. Starfield (2002) represents this data in two ways, with the original data and with her interpretation of that data. Starfield puts forth evidence for the creation of writer identity by presenting the use of the first person plural “we” her participant Philip’s essay: “Most intriguingly, Philip uses the first person plural pronoun ‘we’ three times in his introduction: ‘we will look at,’ ‘we look at’ and ‘we need to look at.’ This use of ‘we’ directly inserts a writer into the text,” (pp. 129). By using “we” Phillip places his own identity in relation to the reader of his paper, who is his instructor. By providing this relational pronoun, Philip creates his identity as part of the readership and thus uses this to enhance the interaction between himself, the author, and his instructor, the reader. In presenting identity within an academic work, the author in this multilingual setting was able to promote positive interaction with his reader, which intern reflects his power as a writer.

#### *Power as authority*

In addition to identity, authority was also essential in interactions as a source of power in the synthesized studies. For example, Achugar (2009) provides evidence that authority is a major factor in the construction of a bilingual professional identity. As a writer, one needs to show that he or she has the authority to speak/write about a topic, which is significantly more than simply placing his or her identity within a text. The key term which relates to authority in Achugar’s study is “professional”. In attempting to create a professional identity, one is asserting that they have the authority to be authors, which is a pivotal area of struggle for many of her participants. Achugar provides linguistic data which shows significant hedging in student responses, which can be interpreted as underlying assumptions about each student’s right to speak, and how far that right extends. One example comes from the researcher’s transcription of an interaction between one of the participants, Martina, and her professor: “Martina/Professor: To me it takes on a surrealism - and I don’t know if that is good - or if that’s accurate-” By using terms such as “I don’t know” and questioning whether her idea is “good” or “accurate”, Martina shows that in the interaction between her and her professor, she is not the person with authority on the subject and defers the evaluation of the ‘correctness’ of her idea to the professor for approval. From this example, it is clear that authority plays a major role in the linguistic behavior of these individuals. Martina lacks authority in her current situation, or at least believes she does, and therefore gives up some of her power to her professor. With increased authority on the

subject matter, Martina could provide herself with more power in future interactions with both her peers and her professor.

Authority is also a very salient topic in Starfield (2002). Up to this point, I had assumed that greater authority results in greater power, and while this is still part of my interpretation of the impact of authority on power and vice versa, Starfield provides an example of a student who assumes too much authority, thereby failing to properly cite his ideas. The issue here is that the participant, Philip, is not given or does not possess the authority to write in the manner in which he does and thereby his assumption of more authority than he possess has a negative impact on his reader. Starfield asserts this over-assumption of power by stating that "Philip has presumed too much (author's emphasis) authority - that he does not need to provide evidence." The over-assumption of authority which does not exist has a negative effect on the interaction between this student and his reader, and what logically follows is that legitimate authority, which can be defined as the authority allowed a person within a given context by other individuals within the same context, would then have a positive impact on the interaction between writer and reader. Authority provides a person with power that can have a significant impact on interactions, and that authority can be highly useful in multilingual environments, especially for people who find themselves as second language speakers in an environment dominated by the person's second language.

#### *Power as control*

Control, which again is defined as the space between authority and participation in an environment is much more evident in student-teacher interactions because authority is clearly given to the teacher over the student and the dissemination of control to the student is a result of teacher choice. This is especially evident in the observations recorded by Mayes (2010) with teachers who were attempting to implement a more student-centered classroom. While these interactions could be interpreted as authority, the importance, to reiterate the explanation above in the coding section, is that the people with authority provide control over a situation to those who lack the authority. The teachers do not give up their authority, but rather only their control over a certain situation for a certain period of time. Control may be the most difficult part of power relations encountered in this synthesis because the ability to provide control falls mainly on the part of the instructor. Students seem to have little power to change the amount of control they have over situations in which they are interacting with a person of greater authority. This can be seen in the teachers from Mayes (2010), who have the goal to give students more control, but struggle with it so much. The following data from Mayes (2010) shows one teacher's struggle with relinquishing control in the classroom:

...(9)I mean right now I'm trying to approach it from the critical..pedagogy  
...(7) point of view.  
..but,  
..it's also difficult because I find myself=,  
kinda wanting to creep in and -  
and,  
and do this teacher-centered,  
..you know  
[curriculum]. (pp. 201)

The teacher has the goal of placing her own authority in the background in order to provide control to her students, but the actual process of doing so is a struggle. This struggle can be interpreted as the difficulty relinquishing one's own power to raise the amount of power of another. By relinquishing authoritative power, the teachers are attempting to enhance the students' power in the form of their own control over their situation, despite their lack of authority in that situation.

#### *Power as participation*

The final category created for coding was that of participation. While each of the four components are important, it is interesting that participation is the only one that is actually observable. By this I mean identity, authority and control need to be interpreted by people's actions or explained by them verbally. On the other hand, actual participation in a social event can be physically observed in the actions taken by the participants. Because this is the only observable action, it plays a key role in power relations. By simply including people and encouraging participation, we could empower those individuals, which would hopefully have an impact on the other three factors included in this model of power and interaction.

While participation can be observed and interpreted in each article, participation plays a particularly crucial role in the interactions discussed in Morita (2004). Morita provides interview data of one participant, Lisa, and Lisa's views on the importance of participation: "I always feel that I have to say something in class to contribute to the class. . . . A small thing is okay. . . . It's not just about my own participation, it's about cooperation. . . . I have to play some role in the classroom," (pp. 584). Here we can see that Lisa's participation is more than just part of some requirement, her participation is part of her self-empowerment in the classroom and as a member of the class. Additionally, Morita explains that participation, or lack thereof, can be the indication of a feeling of less power, displayed as anxiety: "The apparently passive participation of L2 learners, especially learners from certain Asian cultures, is often explained by language learning anxiety or cultural tendencies," (pp. 586). From the examples found in Morita (2004), participation is of vital importance to becoming part of a multilingual community and increasing one's power in that community.

Like Morita (2004), participation was also important in understanding the negotiations of power in Mohamed & Banda (2008). In this study, the researcher observes a number of interactions in which a lecturer is speaking to a class and attempting to interact with them. While Morita's (2004) study displayed an array of interactions, the formality of the Tanzanian lecture environment described in Mohamed & Banda (2008) shows the lack of participation available to the students in this environment. All of the excerpts taken from the classroom observations reveal only two types of interaction between the lecturer and the students, either the lecturer talking directly at the students or the lecturer asking the students whether they are comprehending the material. In the latter case, students only react in chorus by shouting "yes" or remaining silent, as can be seen in the following example from the study:

Lecturer: You only mention the item on which the action was what...  
was performed! Is that clear?

Students: (Silence)

Lecturer: Are we – are we working the same – bus all of us here?

Students: (Chorus) Yes!

Lecturer: Do you know what we are doing?

Students: (Chorus) Yes! (pg. 105)

In the scenarios depicted here, the students have limited opportunities to interact with the lecturer, and no opportunity whatsoever to interact with one another. In this situation, the lecturer stagnates any would-be attempts to negotiate power by restricting participation between himself and the class, as well as between members of the class. In this environment, the authority and control asserted by the lecturer dominate the power relations. Without the opportunity to diversify and expand their participation, at least insofar as feeling comfortable asking questions to clarify their apparent misunderstanding of the material, the students will never be able to negotiate for more power in this environment. In saying this, I understand that a lecture environment is not the same as an interactive classroom environment, nor do I think that every teaching situation calls for equal amounts of participation by students and the lecturer. A lecture environment calls for greater participation on the part of the lecturer and giving students too much time to participate could easily derail the goal of this type of course, but from the examples provided, it is obvious that more participation is needed on the part of the students, at least in terms of the chance to and a certain comfortability with asking questions of the lecturer for clarification. The ability to clarify understanding in a lecture format is a necessary part of the learning process and, in returning to Foucault, the ability to clarify one's understanding will lead to a greater understanding of the subject matter. With a greater knowledge of a topic comes greater power, which can later be translated to authority, which will be essential for the students in Mohamed & Banda's (2008) study as they graduate and seek jobs in which they are assumed to possess the necessary knowledge and skills. Via class participation, these students would gain the necessary knowledge to negotiate power and assume roles of authority outside the classroom, even if the role of lecturer/student remained very distant in terms of power within the classroom.

One final point to make about the importance of participation is the social expectations of people within a particular context about what appropriate participation is. In addition to the expectations of people in positions of authority, such as teachers and lecturers in a classroom environment, participation can also be influenced by the cultural and social norms of a given individual. In multilingual environments, the disparity between one individual's cultural expectations of participation may be quite distinct from those of the culture in which an individual finds him/herself. While none of the articles included in this synthesis defined culturally appropriate expectations of participation for their subjects and the examples of participation found in the sample texts do not define distinctions between the subjects' participation and target-culture norms, the idea that participation is also culturally constrained is integral in understanding how and why students participate, especially in multilingual and multicultural contexts. To emphasize the importance of this idea, I will cite an example from Philips (1972). In this study, Philips is investigating the participation structures and communicative competence of native-American children in community and classroom

settings. Over the course of her observations, she notes that participatory expectations from the community often overlap with students' amount of participation in the classroom. Philips (1972) describes the communicative competence in the community as being largely based on non-verbal, physical expression, which contrasts starkly to the expectations their teacher has of them within the classroom. As Philips explains,

*Indian children fail to participate verbally in classroom interaction because the social conditions for participation to which they have become accustomed in the Indian community are lacking. The absence of these appropriate social conditions for communicative performances affects the most common and everyday speech acts that occur in the classroom. If the Indian child fails to follow an order or answer a question, it may not be because he doesn't understand the linguistic structure of the imperative and the interrogative, but rather because he does not share the non-Indian's assumption in such contexts that use of these syntactic forms by definition implies an automatic and immediate response from the person to whom they were addressed. For these assumptions are sociolinguistic assumptions that are not shared by the Indians (pp. 341).*

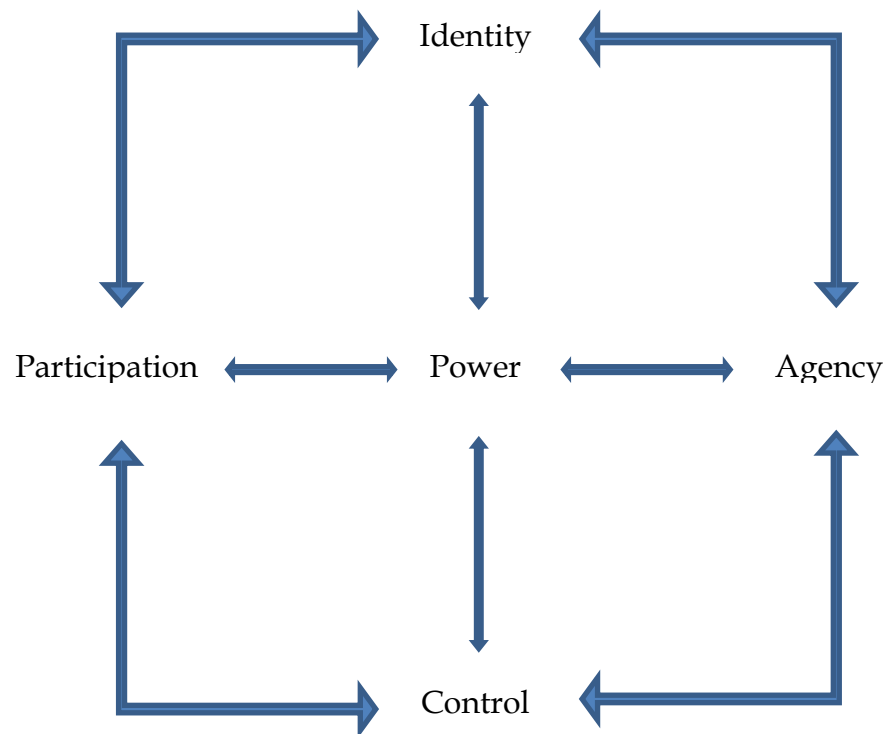
From this explanation of the importance of conflicting social expectations of participation, we can clearly see that not only does participation play an important role in the interactions between students and teachers, but it also complicates the idea of participation within the classroom. In addition to providing students the opportunity to participate, it is also necessary to define what participation is within a specific context, as well as identify conflicts between students' cultural expectations for participation and the expectations held by people in a position of authority in the classroom.

## **CONCLUSION**

### ***Summary of Findings and Discussion***

In sum, this synthesis has shown that identity, authority, control and participation each play a major role in interactions in a multilingual higher-education environment. Power, as defined in this study, both influences and is influenced by each of these four factors and that changes within those factors change the amount of power an individual has. These factors are context specific and a high amount of power in one scenario does not mean that an individual will have the same amount of power in another. For example, in the student-teacher interactions discussed in this synthesis, the teacher possessed more power within the interaction, but this power does not translate to situations in which that teacher interacts with a fellow teacher. The four factors of identity, authority, control, and participation change to suit the current environment. For this reason it is important to see power as relative, rather than associating power with a particular individual. It is not that an individual is powerful, it is that they have power within a given context. In addition to the bidirectional effects of power on each of the four factors investigated in this study, I also propose that these four factors operate in a cyclical manner, diagrammed below in figure 2.

Figure 2: Bidirectional cyclic interactions between influences on classroom power



As this is a cyclical model, there is no “beginning”, but in order to describe the relationship each factor has with the other I will begin with identity. The identity of an individual is made up of a number of factors which are both internally and externally generated, for example the title Doctor is an institutional part of a person’s identity. In an academic setting, the title of Doctor has a significant impact on how one sees him or herself, as well as how others see that person. In the creation of this identity within this specific context, that person is both granted and grants him- or herself a certain amount of authority. With significant authority, a person is then capable of providing others some amount of control. With insignificant authority, a person can be granted control, increasing his or her ability to participate. When people then participate in an interaction, they are then forced to express their identity within that interaction.

While this cycle sounds positive, it can also have negative effects. For example, if those with authority fail to allow others control over situations, they will deny those without authority the ability to participate. A lack of participation can force people to create an identity which is that of the “other”, the “outsider”, resulting in less authority and a lower self-image.

### ***Pedagogical Implications***

The implications from this model for interaction could have a significant impact on the multilingual academic context. First, and maybe most importantly, this model could help inform programs in teacher education about the importance of participation and student-centered models of instruction. This synthesis has shown that allowing students to control their own participation, they are positively impacted in terms of their reformation of identity and development of authority. Aspiring educators and new teachers may feel apprehensive about allowing students to take control for fear of losing control of the classroom, but in reality this may have a detrimental effect on the students’ ability to participate. By allotting students more control, teachers can help students reinvent their identities in a more positive way, help them gain authority and thereby become more independent, critically thinking, invested member of the classroom environment.

While this claim is generally applicable to all learning scenarios, I would like to also focus on the multicultural environment, especially those in which low-proficient speakers are forced into interactions with more proficient or native speakers. By informing these individuals that their participation is vital to establishing a positive identity, and in so doing more authority, I hope to inspire those individuals to take risks and continue to participate. For individuals who have the power, for example a teacher, emphasizing and encouraging participation will empower those with less authority and help integrate them into the multilingual classroom, where they can focus on the



acquisition of the target language, rather than on their identity as an outsider. Overall, this model can be used to make educators and students aware of the underlying factors affecting their interactions in a clear and concise way, as well as give them some direction as to how they can positively affect themselves and their students.

### **Future Research**

Future research in this area is needed to apply this model in different multilingual settings. While this model has been developed by synthesizing previous studies, and thus has some inherent validity in that it can be used to describe the studies included in the synthesis, there is a need to study whether this model can be applicable in describing other academic contexts. In addition, this model needs to be tested to discover whether it can also be applied to teacher-teacher, teacher-administrator, and student-administrator interactions.

Finally, research into the effects of making students and teachers aware of different power relations could show what kind of an impact, if any, the knowledge of power relations has on the interplay of those relations, and whether being aware of one's situation can foster positive growth and development.

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## **CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: BASICS AND METHODOLOGY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper endeavors to introduce the major thinkers in the field of Critical Discourse Analysis, with their models of analysis, fully described and explained. Among those thinkers are Fairclough, Van Dijk, Wodak, and others. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is practically oriented form of discourse analysis addressing social problem. "Critical" is used in the special sense of aiming to show up connections which may be hidden from people such as the connections between language, power, and ideology. It is a form of applied linguistics; linguistics applied to the remedying of imbalances of power and various forms of social injustice. In this view, since ideologies permeate society by disguising themselves as common sense, the way to resist them is to unmask them. CDA may be defined as being fundamentally concerned with analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. In other words, CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signaled, constituted, legitimized by language use or in discourse.

**KEY WORDS:** Critical discourse analysis, General methodology, Micro /Macroproposition, soci-cognitive model.

### **DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

Before describing the term of discourse analysis, we need to define and explain the term of discourse itself in order to comprehend the basic concepts of discourse analysis. As a branch of language study, discourse is a complete unit that has two forms: written and spoken. Discourse is a unit of language that is the most complete and higher than a sentence or a clause with high cohesion and coherence continuously, that have the beginning and ending, that is delivered both in oral and written. Cook (1989: 7ff.) stated that the term of discourse is the language in use for communication.

According to Widowson (2007: XV), discourse is an area of language study concerned with how people make meaning, and make out of meaning in texts and as social practice, whether simple or complex, all texts are the uses of language which are produced with the intention to refer to something for some purposes.

In sum, referring to some theorists (Trappes-Lomax, 2004: 136), discourse is a term used in linguistics to describe the rules and conventions underlying the use of language in expanded stretches of text both spoken and written. Discourse practically always relies on the speaker or the writer (what he is talking about or writing) and the hearer or reader (what he is listening or reading). In discourse analysis, each of linguistic analysts use different theories and techniques of a number of disciplines for the study of language in use. They tend to favour one or more of a variety of approaches to conducting their research that have developed from these various sources. There are four main headings related to the ways and means of discourse analysis: rules and principles, contexts and cultures, functions and structures, and power and politics:

1. Rules and principles
  - pragmatics (including speech act theory and politeness theory)
  - conversation analysis
2. Contexts and cultures
  - ethnography of communication
  - interactional sociolinguistics
3. Functions and structures
  - systemic-functional linguistics (SFL)



- Birmingham school discourse analysis
- text-linguistics
- 4. Power and politics
  - pragmatic and sociolinguistic approaches to power in language
  - critical discourse analysis

Discourse analysis approach of language includes critical discourse analysis which is not only doing the textual interrogation but also revealing the relationship of the interrogation product with the macro contextual behind the text. It is more specifically as a study on how the power misused or how the domination and the inequality put into the community (ibid.).

### CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is practically oriented form of discourse analysis addressing social problem. "Critical" is used in the special sense of aiming to show up connections which may be hidden from people such as the connections between language, power, and ideology (Fairclough, 1989: 5). It is a form of applied linguistics; linguistics applied to the remedying of imbalances of power and various forms of social injustice. In this view, since ideologies permeate society by disguising themselves as common sense, the way to resist them is to unmask them (Trappes-Lomax, 2004: 158). CDA may be defined as being fundamentally concerned with analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. In other words, CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signaled, constituted, legitimized by language use or in discourse (Wodak & Meyer, 2001: 1ff.).

According to Van Dijk, CDA is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context (Van Dijk, "18 Critical Discourse Analysis", 353 – 371) (<http://www.discourses.org/OldArticles/Critical%20discourse%20analysis.pdf>).

He added that CDA is a specific form and practice of discourse analysis obviously always needs to account for at least some of the detailed structures, strategies and functions of text and talks, including grammatical, pragmatic, interactional, stylistic, rhetorical, semiotic, narrative or similar forms of verbal and paraverbal organization of communicative events (Wodak & Meyer, 2001: 97). Referring to Van Dijk, Fairclough, and Wodak's opinions, one can provide the characteristics of Critical Discourse Analysis as follows:

**First**, action concerns that discourse is observed as the matter that has goals whether it is to influence, debate, persuade, react, etc.

**Second**, context confirms that discourse considers the context such as background, situation, event, condition and all of matters outside of the text and other factors which influence the meanings such as language participants, the situation when text is produced and aimed. Discourse should be interpreted in a certain situation and condition.

**Third**, history places discourse in a specific social context and cannot be understood without concerning the attached context.

**Fourth**, power elaborates that what discourse form whether spoken or written language is not neutral and natural but it represents a form of power fight.

**Fifth**, ideology focuses that text, conversation, and others are forms of ideological practice. More specifically, CDA focuses on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of power and dominance in society (Ibid.).

There are many types of critical discourse analysis. Hence, the theoretical and analytical use is also different. Critical discourse analysis of conversation is different from the critical discourse analysis of news reports in the press, lesson, and teaching at school. But, overall the common perspective of conceptual and theoretical framework is closely related. Most kinds of CDA ask questions about the way specific discourse structures are deployed in the reproduction of social dominance, whether they are part of a conversation or a news report or other genres and contexts. Thus, the typical vocabulary of many scholars in CDA will feature such notions as "power", "dominance", "hegemony", "ideology", "class", "gender", "race", "discrimination", "interests", "reproduction", "institutions", "social structure" and "social order" besides the more familiar discourse analytical notions (Van Dijk, 1993: 354).

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the study of critical discourse analysis deals with the relationship between discourse and social problems. CDA was developed to identify the hidden socio-political control which proponents of CDA believe actively constructs society on some levels. This may be one reason the highly politicized media has much influence on the society's view (Atkins, 2002: 2).

### **SOME MODELS OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

There are three major models of critical discourse analysis which are always associated with the researchers such as Norman Fairclough, Teun A. van Dijk and Ruth Wodak. They essentially have the same idea of critical discourse analysis, but they have distinctive models of analysis. Generally, they analyse how social and political inequalities are manifested in and reproduced through discourse. It is very clear among researchers that only Fairclough and van Dijk who have detailed models of critical discourse analysis.

#### ***Norman Fairclough's Dialectal-Relational Approach (DRA)***

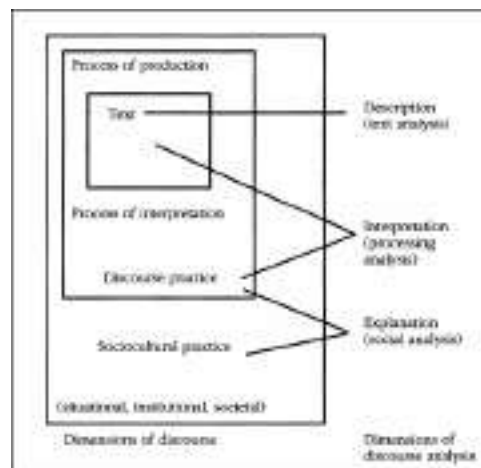
Norman Fairclough is one of the founders of critical discourse analysis that looks at "the influence of power relations on the content and structure of writings". Fairclough explains that CDA aims to "systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power" (Fairclough, 1995: 132). He provides us with a useful definition that summarizes most other definitions of CDA:

CDA is the study of often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power (ibid.:133).

Looking at language as discourse and social practice, someone cannot analyse the text only, not just analyse the process of production and interpretation, but also analyse the texts, processes, and their social conditions. Accordingly, Fairclough distinguishes three dimensions or stages of Critical Discourse Analysis (ibid.: 98):

- a.** Description is the stage which is concerned with formal properties of the text.
- b.** Interpretation is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction with seeing the text as the product of a process of production, and as sources in the process of interpretation. Notice that Fairclough uses the term interpretation for both the interactional process and a stage of analysis.
- c.** Explanation is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context with social determination of the process of production and interpretation, and their social effects.

The following figure is Norman Fairclough's Model of Critical Discourse Analysis



According to Meyer (2001), his method is, like Wodak's, pragmatic and problem oriented. First, he sets out to identify and describe the social problem to be analysed. Then, he goes on with the structural analysis of the context, then the interactional analysis focusing on linguistic features (such as agents, time, tense, modality and syntax), and finally, he conducts an analysis of interdiscursivity, which seeks to compare the dominant and resistant strands of discourse. Fairclough's analytical framework is represented schematically below:

1. Focus upon a specific social problem which has a semiotic aspect; go outside the text and describe the problem and identify its semiotic aspect.
  2. Identify the obstacles to it being tackled, through an analysis of:
    - a. The network of practices it is located within
    - b. The relationship of semios to other elements within the particular practice(s) concerned
    - c. The discourse (the semiosis itself)
      - structural analysis: the order of discourse
      - interactional analysis
      - interdiscursive analysis
      - linguistic and semiotic analysis
  3. Consider whether the social order (network of practices) in a sense 'needs' the problem.
  4. Identify possible ways past the obstacles.
  5. Reflect critically on the analysis.
- (Ibid: 28) and Fairclough (2001: 125-127)

#### ***Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach (SCA)***

Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Discourse Analysis is an approach characterised by the interaction between cognition, discourse and society. It began in formal text linguistics and subsequently incorporated elements of the standard psychological model of memory, together with the idea of *frame* taken from cognitive science. A large part of van Dijk's practical investigation deals with stereotypes, the reproduction of ethnic prejudice, and power abuse by elites and resistance by dominated groups.

Van Dijk also emphasizes the control of discourse dimensions as a means to gain access to power. A further element in his account of discourse production and comprehension is the *K-device*, which is shorthand for personal, interpersonal, group, institutional, national and cultural knowledge (Van Dijk, 2005: 75). Cognition, realised in collective mental models as a result of consensus, is the interface between societal and discourse structures (Van Dijk, 2009: 62-85). While societal structures influence discursive interaction, in the latter the former are said to be "enacted, instituted, legitimated, confirmed or challenged by text and talk" (Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 266). Van Dijk (2009:62-85) believes CDA needs a model of context such as Moscovici's (2000) social representation theory: One individual's cognition is informed by dynamic constructs known as *social representations*, that is, the concepts, values, norms and images shared in a social group, and activated and maintained in discourse.

**This approach therefore suggests concentrating the analysis upon linguistic markers as follows:**

- stress and intonation
- word order
- lexical style
- coherence
- local semantic moves such as disclaimers
- topic choice
- speech acts
- schematic organization
- rhetorical figures
- syntactic structures
- propositional structures
- turn-takings
- repairs
- hesitation.

It supposes that most of these are exemplary forms of interaction which are in principle susceptible to speaker control, but in practice mostly not consciously controlled. Other structures, such as the form of words and many structures of sentences, are grammatically obligatory and contextually invariant and hence usually not subject to speaker control and social power.

**SCA further suggests six steps of analysis:**

1. The analysis of *semantic macrostructures*: topics and macropropositions.
2. The analysis of *local meanings*, where the many forms of implicit or indirect meanings, such as implications, presuppositions, allusions, vagueness, omissions and polarizations are especially interesting.
3. The analysis of '*subtle*' *formal structures*: here, most of the linguistic markers mentioned are analysed.
4. The analysis of *global and local discourse forms* or formats.
5. The analysis of *specific linguistic realizations*, e.g. hyperbole, litotes.
6. The analysis of *context* (Meyer, 2001: 26).

***The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) (Wodak and colleagues)***

It attempts, *inter alia*, to describe those cases where language and other semiotic practices are used by those in power to maintain domination (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009: 87-121). Initially, it was concerned with prejudiced utterances in anti-Semitic discourse. Recent developments include the discursive construction of national sameness and the social exclusion of out-groups through the discourses of difference, and the reconstruction of the past through sanitised narratives. The general approach reflects sociolinguistics and ethnography; it also gives an important place to Habermas's notion of the public sphere and to strategic communicative action as opposed to ideal communication oriented to understanding. Its central tenet is the importance of bringing together the textual and contextual levels of analysis. **The model of context used in this approach invokes historical knowledge understood in terms of four layers:**

- (a) The linguistic co-text,
- (b) The intertextual and interdiscursive level,
- (c) The extralinguistic level, and
- (d) The socio-political and historical level (Wodak & Meyer, 2009: 1-33).

The interconnection between various texts and discourses leads directly to the notions of ***de-contextualisation*** and ***recontextualisation***, processes in which elements typical of a particular context can be taken out of it and inserted into a new context with which it has not been conventionally associated.

DHA has further produced a series of analytical and descriptive tools, drawing on linguistic models and argumentation theory. In particular, **DHA lists six strategies for identifying ideological positioning: *nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivisation, intensification* and *mitigation***, which are analysed as part of a larger process that includes also the characterisation of the contents of a discourse, linguistic means of expression and context-dependent linguistic realisations of stereotypes. One of the strengths of DHA is the emphasis on the combination of observation, theory and method, and the continuum between application and theoretical models. Its historical, political and sociological analyses are also an important part of its methodology, especially in relation to systems of genres, although the lack of a fully systematic procedure in this regard is one of its weaknesses.

The discourse-historical approach concentrates upon these six discursive strategies as follows (Wodak, 2001: 73):

- *Referential strategy or strategy of nomination*, where the linguistic devices of interest are membership categorization, metaphors and metonymies and synecdoches.
- *Strategies of predication* which appear in stereotypical, evaluative attributions of positive or negative traits and implicit or explicit predicates.
- *Strategies of argumentation* which are reflected in certain *topoi* used to justify political inclusion or exclusion.
- *Strategies of perspectivization, framing or discourse representation* use means of reporting, description, narration or quotation of events and utterances.
- *Strategies of intensification and mitigation* try to intensify or mitigate the illocutionary force of utterances.

## GENERAL METHODOLOGY

Methodology is one of the most complex issues within the field of CDA. Meyer, for instance, claims that there is no such thing as a common methodology or theoretical viewpoint in CDA:

CDA theoreticians draw on a number of theoretical levels in their analyses, from epistemology, grand theories or general social theories, middle-range theories, microsociological, socio-psychological theories, discourse theories to linguistic theories (see Meyer, 2001: 18-20 for a more thorough discussion).

CD analysts are both aware of this criticism and recognize it. Van Dijk states that CDA, like any good scholarship, should integrate the best work from all the relevant contributors and disciplines (Van Dijk, 2001: 95-96), whereas Wodak points out that CDA has never attempted to be or to provide one single or specific theory. Quite the contrary: 'studies in CDA are multifarious, derived from quite different theoretical background, oriented towards different data and methodologies. Researchers in CDA rely on a variety of grammatical approaches. The reason for this, according to Wodak (2001: 8), is that relationships between language and society are so complex and multifaceted that interdisciplinary research is necessary.

Furthermore, Meyer (2001) claims that in CDA there is an assumption that all discourses are historical and can therefore only be understood with reference to their context, making him conclude that CDA, thus, is open to the broadest range of factors that exert an influence on texts. Consequently, by applying extra-linguistic factors such as culture, society, and ideology, CDA scholars, by necessity, have to make use of an interdisciplinary procedure. Nevertheless, there are at least a few features that are common no matter which approach to CDA one chooses.

**Firstly**, they are all problem oriented and not focused on specific linguistic items (although linguistic expertise is obligatory for the selection of the items relevant to specific objectives).

**Secondly**, both theory and methodology are eclectic, i.e. both are integrated as far as it is helpful to understand the social problems under investigation (ibid: 29).

As for a single and applicable methodology, even Fairclough admits that it simply does not exist. CDA is not a technique, nor a tool from a toolbox; it is as much theory as method (Fairclough, 2001: 121). Van Dijk elaborates: 'In CDA, theory formation, description, problem formulation and applications are closely intertwined and mutually inspiring' (Van Dijk, 2001:96). However, the aim of CDA is clear: It can only make a significant and specific contribution if it is able to provide an account of the role of language, language use, discourse or communicative events in the (re) production of dominance and inequality (Van Dijk, 1993:279).

Nevertheless, the method of CDA is generally composed of four main steps: 1) Having a text or discourse to be analyzed. This text or discourse must be authentic from any social event. 2) Interpretation from a selection of information that may portray or reveal any structure of power, domination, and/or exploitation. The interpretation can be done from the phonetic, morphological, syntactic, or semantic analysis. 3) Launching theory from the interpretation and further examination of the assumptions of the information that contains the structures issued. 4) Operationalization which is the conceptualization of the selection of theoretical concepts, relations, and assumptions.

## ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (VAN DIJK, 2006:728-740)

Van Dijk uses some fragments from a debate in the British House of Commons on asylum seekers, held on March 5, 1997. Mrs Gorman, representative of Billericay for the Conservative Party, then still in power, had taken the initiative for this debate, which she opened with a critique of the alleged costs of asylum seekers, costs she claimed were being paid by poor old English ratepayers. Among those who opposed her was Jeremy Corbyn, of the Labour Party.

In order to enhance the usefulness of our analysis, he shall assign an analytical category to each example, and order the categories alphabetically. After the category name he shall add the domain of discourse analysis to which the category belongs (e.g., meaning, argumentation, etc.). The main point of the analysis is to show how various ideologies, especially those of racism and antiracism, are expressed in various kinds of structures. There are in principle hundreds of such categories, so a small selection is made.

### *Some Categories of Ideological Discourse Analysis*

#### *Actor description (meaning).*

The way actors are described in discourses also depends on our ideologies. Typically we tend to describe ingroup members in a neutral or positive way and outgroup members in a negative way. Similarly, we will mitigate negative

descriptions of members of our own group, and emphasize the attributed negative characteristics of Others. Here is how Mrs Gorman describes a Romania asylum seeker:

(1) In one case, a man from Romania, who came over here on a coach tour for a football match decided that he did not want to go back, declared himself an asylum seeker and is still here 4 years later. He has never done a stroke of work in his life (Gorman).

*Authority (argumentation).*

Many speakers in an argument, also in parliament, have recourse to the fallacy of mentioning authorities to support their case, usually organizations or people who are above the fray of party politics, or who are generally recognized experts or moral leaders. International organizations (such as the United Nations or Amnesty International), scholars, the media, the church or the courts often have that role. People of different ideologies typically cite different authorities. Thus, Mr. Corbyn ironically asks Mrs. Gorman whether she has not read the reports of Amnesty or Helsinki Watch.

*Burden (topos).*

Argumentation against immigration is often based on various standard arguments, or *topoi*, which represent premises that are taken for granted, as self-evident and as sufficient reasons to accept the conclusion. One of the *topoi* of antiimmigration discourse is that asylum seekers are a financial ‘burden’ for ‘us’:

(2) It is wrong that ratepayers in the London area should bear an undue proportion of the burden of expenditure that those people are causing (Gorman).

*Categorization (meaning).*

As we also know from social psychology, people tend to categorize people, and so do speakers in parliament, especially when Others (immigrants, refugees, etc.) are involved. Most typical in this debate is the (sub) categorization of asylum seekers into ‘genuine’ political refugees, and ‘bogus’ asylum seekers, a categorization formulated in the following ways:

(3) There are, of course, asylum seekers and asylum seekers (Gorman).

(4) . . . those people, many of whom could reasonably be called economic migrants and some of whom are just benefit seekers on holiday, to remain in Britain (Gorman).

*Comparison (meaning, argumentation).*

Different from rhetorical similes, comparisons as intended here typically occur in talk about refugees or minorities, namely when speakers compare ingroups and outgroups. In racist talk, outgroups are compared negatively, and ingroups positively. In antiracist talk, we may negatively compare our country or government with loathsome undemocratic regimes. In the following example, Mr. Corbyn uses an argumentative comparison with the Second World War to emphasize the plight of asylum seekers:

(5) Many soldiers who were tortured during the Second World War found it difficult to talk about their experiences for years. That is no different from the position of people who have been tortured in Iran, Iraq, West Africa, or anywhere else (Corbyn).

*Consensus (political strategy).*

To claim or insist on cross-party or national consensus is a well-known political strategy in situations where the country is threatened, for instance by outside attack. Immigration is often seen as such a threat. Thus, Mrs Gorman insists that the current immigration law is the fruit of consensus, and hence should not be tampered with:

(6) The Government, with cross-party backing, decided to do something about the matter (Gorman, C).

*Counterfactuals (meaning, argumentation).*

(see also Counterfactuals.) “What would happen, if . . .” the typical expression of a counterfactual, is often used in this debate by the Labour opposition in order to suggest that the conservatives try to imagine what it would be like to



be in the situation of asylumseekers, an persuasive argumentative move that is also is related to the move of asking for empathy:

(7) I suggest that he start to think more seriously about human rights issues. Suppose he had to flee this country because an oppressive regime had taken over. Where would he go? Presumably he would not want help from anyone else, because he does not believe that help should be given to anyone else (Corbyn).

(8) If that happened in another country under a regime of which we disapproved, the British Government would say that it was a terrible indictment on the human rights record of that regime that prisoners were forced to undertake a hunger strike to draw attention to their situation (Corbyn).

*Disclaimers (meaning).*

A well-known combination of the ideologically based strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation are the many types of disclaimers. Note that disclaimers in these debates are not usually an expression of attitudinal ambiguity, in which both positive and negative aspects of immigration are mentioned, or in which humanitarian values are endorsed on the one hand, but the 'burden' of refugees is beyond our means. Rather, disclaimers briefly save face by mentioning our positive characteristics, but then focus rather exclusively on Their negative attributes. Hence our qualification of the positive part of the disclaimer as Apparent, as in Apparent Denials, Concessions, Empathy, etc.:

(9) [Apparent Empathy] I understand that many people want to come to Britain to work, but there is a procedure whereby people can legitimately become part of our community (Gorman).

(10) [Apparent Denial] I did not say that every eastern European's application for asylum in this country was bogus. However. . . (Gorman).

*Euphemism (rhetoric; meaning).*

The well-known rhetorical figure of euphemism, a semantic move of mitigation, plays an important role in talk about immigrants. Within the broader framework of the strategy of positive self-presentation, and especially its correlate, the avoidance of negative impression formation, negative opinions about immigrants are often mitigated, especially in foreign talk. The same is true for the negative acts of the own group. Thus, racism or discrimination will typically be mitigated as resentment or unequal treatment, respectively. Similarly Ms Gorman in this debate uses the word 'discourage' ('to discourage the growing number of people from abroad. . .') in order to refer to the harsh immigration policies of the government, and thus mitigates the actions of the conservative government she supports. Similarly, the Labour (Corbyn) opposition finds the condemnation of oppressive regimes by the Government 'very muted' instead of using more critical terms. Obviously, such mitigation of the use of euphemisms may be explained both in ideological terms (ingroup protection) as well as in contextual terms, e.g., as part of politeness conditions or other interactional rules that are typical for parliamentary debates.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this approach described above, discourse is treated under three perspectives: as text endowed with linguistic form, as 'discursive practice' through which texts are produced, distributed, and consumed and as 'social practice' which has various ideological effects, including normativity and hegemony.

CDA emphasizes power, exploitation, inequality as the social conditions of language, tracing them through various contexts including political and economic discourse, racism, advertising and media, and institutional settings such as bureaucracies and education. Notice that, while these may be played out in individual speech events, the frame of reference is broader than, and logically prior to, any given event. Moreover, the focus on speakers' intentions as the source of meaning that is common to methodological individualist approaches is absent in all large-scale approaches.

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## INVESTIGATING COLLOCATION ERRORS OF PAKISTANI EFL LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to contribute literature in the field for the researchers to do empirical analyses. The research points out collocation problems that Pakistani English as a foreign language (EFL) learners come across. This study is of a qualitative nature. The researcher has studied a great deal of literature to find out actual problems being confronted by EFL learners. In collocation problems, first language transfer seems to be the most dominant problem. In addition to first language (L1) transfer, the learners also use synonymy and overgeneralization which contribute to collocation digression in the target language.

**KEYWORDS:** Collocation, EFL learners, First language transfer

### COLLOCATION ERRORS DUE TO FIRST LANGUAGE TRANSFER

Pakistani EFL learners commit collocation errors due to the transfer of first language into the target language. Learners' native language (L1) largely has an influence on their consequent learning of L2 collocations (Nesselhauf, 2003, 2005). Learners' dependence on their L1 collocation knowledge may lead them to assume that there exists a one-to-one correspondence between L1 and L2 collocation options. Fortunately where there is an exactly identical match between collocations in both languages, transfer from the learners' mother tongue could result in a positive, satisfying production (Ellis, 2008). However, such success based on native language transfer is not always the case (Nesselhauf, 2003, 2005). The difference between L1 and L2 collocations can also cause some problems for EFL learners. In other words, whenever collocations in the mother tongue and the target language do not match deviant and unusual collocation structures often arise. According to several past studies, native language impact is evident in EFL learners' collocations. By and large, there obviously exists negative transfer from L1.

Bisk-up (1992), explored Polish and German EFL learners' performance in English collocation use, reported that the learners, based on risk taking, did transfer their L1 collocation knowledge to their production of L2 collocations, thus clearly leading to the erroneous use of English collocations. For example, while the targetlike collocation in English is to set a record, the Polish learners tended to use to state a record, which indicates an L1 collocation pattern. L1 interference can be seen in Huang (2001) as well when Taiwanese EFL university students, when they were asked to do a sentence-completion test, created L2 combinations based on L1, such as a black horse rather than the target-like collocation a dark horse. Nesselhauf (2003) provided help for the previously mentioned studies in that L1 influence, in her study of collocations used by German EFL learners, is significant, resulting in L2 errors for many times. She also confirmed the importance of native language impact on L2 collocation learning and suggested that since L1-L2 collocation disharmony is a major cause of errors in learner language, English teachers should focus on such incongruent collocations in the two languages in order to avoid learners from committing such transfer errors.

It is also worth noticing that Koya (2003) reported that even high-proficiency students seem to heavily depend on their knowledge of L1 collocations, which surprised the researcher himself since he had predicted to see the least evidence of L1 transfer among high-proficiency students. On the other hand, low-proficiency learners were found to apply an avoidance strategy and astoundingly depended less on their first language. These supplies counter evidence against much past literature which indicated that L1 transfer is trait of low-proficiency learners (e.g. Ellis, 1987; Odlin, 1989). Moreover, Fan (2009), examined Hong Kong ESL learners' collocation production in writing, also discovered an adverse effect that L1 Chinese had on the learners' use of English collocations. In particular, the study found substandard L2 collocations that seem to result from word-for-word translation from Chinese, such as left/right face or left side face, which are not found in native speakers' corpora (Fan, 2009, p. 118).

Another study that is in line with the aforesaid ones as to L1 transfer is Ying (2009). In the study of English collocations produced by Chinese speakers, i.e. English majors and non-English majors, Ying discovered that collocations which have no translation equivalents in L1 are considered difficult, in comparison to those which are congruent with L1. In more details, the learners probably searched for L1 equivalents with no awareness of L1-L2 incongruity and then produced L2 erroneous combinations, which is in harmony with Nesselhauf (2003). Moreover, for both groups of learners, errors in lexical collocations clearly outnumber those in grammatical collocations. With reference to research on L2 acquisition of English collocations by Thai EFL learners, L1 transfer has also been

widespread. As discovered by Boonyasquan (2006), who investigated Thai learners' collocation errors in translating a Thai business article, into English, mother tongue, i.e. Thai, was one of the most common sources of errors. The learners seemed to directly translate some L1 collocations into non-target like English. An example given in this study is \*expensive price, which is assumed to be directly translated from raakhaa p 'high price', i.e. literally raakhaa 'price' and p 'expensive'. Another study the results of which are consistent with Boonyasquan (2006) in terms of first language influence on collocation use is Mongkolchai (2008), who explored English collocation competence of third-year English majors in a university in Bangkok, Thailand. The research instruments, viz. a sentence completion test and a multiple-choice test, seemed to elicit collocation data presenting evidence of the native language transfer.

A clear example of transfer-based errors is the use of the preposition "in" in place of "at" in the sentence \*I became skillful in drawing (Mongkolchai, 2008, p. 46). It is self-evident that interference from EFL learners' native language plays vital role in L2 collocation acquisition. As demonstrated in the above mentioned studies, the mother tongue seems to exert an adverse effect on their use of English collocations, which results in L2 erroneous combinations.

### **COLLOCATION ERRORS DUE TO USE OF SYNONYMS**

Apart from dependence on their native tongue, EFL learners in the process of learning collocations are sometimes seem to resort to an analogy strategy referred to as synonymy strategy. This is often used by learners whose L2 proficiency is limited. They may try substituting a synonym for a word in L2, and they are unaware of constituting a collocation violation. In reality, a very restricted number of synonyms in English can occur in the same grammatical pattern (Nation, 2001). In other words, words that are very close in meaning do not always share the same grammatical collocation. For instance, even though the verbs ask and plead are semantically similar, i.e. involving making a request (Cambridge advanced learners' dictionary, 2008, pp. 74-75 & 1085), the grammatical patterns in which the verbs are likely to occur are different. That is, the verb ask is used in the pattern ask someone + infinitive with to, whereas the verb plead requires the preposition with, as in plead with someone + infinitive with to. For this reason, a substitution of plead for ask in the grammatical pattern of the latter verb, i.e. without with, causes ungrammaticality in English (Phoocharoensil, 2010, p. 242).

According to many studies of L2 English collocation acquisition, synonymy has been a common learning strategy. In Farghal and Obiedat (1995), it was implied that Arabic EFL learners greatly relied on the open-choice principle for word choice, replacing a word with its synonym. Such a strategy often led them to deviant, ungrammatical collocations in English. In a similar fashion Howarth (1996, 1998) reported L2 learners seemed to draw an analogy between collocates of two synonyms, thus frequently resulting in errors in the target language. For example, they produced the erroneous combination \*adopt ways, which was presumably caused by analogy with the correct collocation adopt an approach (Howarth, 1998, p. 41). Like the above studies having been mentioned, Zughol and Abdul-Fattah (2001) discovered assumed synonymy in the use of English collocations by Arabic speakers. It was reported that as a result of the nature of the instructional /pedagogical input the learners received in class and the influence of bilingual dictionaries, the learners' collocation use was evidently based on a synonymy strategy, which violates the selection restrictions, i.e. semantic constraints, of the target language. For instance, the verb failed was incorrectly employed as opposed to defeated in the sentence \*The enemy failed in the battle (Zughol & Abdul-Fattah, 2001, p. 11).

With respect to some research studies on Thai learners' acquisition of English collocations, synonymy has also been discovered. Boonyasquan (2006), in her study of how Thai EFL learners translated a business news articles from Thai to English, reported on their collocation violations arising from an application of synonymy, which accounts for 8.62% of all the collocation errors. A clear example given in the study is \*a qualified hotel in lieu of a quality hotel, which may reflect the learners' confusion over the use of the synonyms qualified and quality (Boonyasquan, 2006, p. 83). Lending support to Boonyasquan (2006), Mongkolchai (2008) noticed collocation errors committed by English majors, who speak L1 Thai, through synonymy. For instance, they used \*a newspaper booth, which is a digression from the target like one a newspaper kiosk, commonly found in a native speaker corpus.

### COLLOCATION ERRORS DUE TO REPETITION AND OVERGENERALIZATION

Repetition and overgeneralization are also one of the factors because of which Pakistani learners get indulged in making collocation errors. Repetition is another strategy on which EFL collocation learners often rely. With repetition, learners resort to the repeated use of a limited number of familiar collocations. Moreover, repetition may occur as a consequence of learners' lack of confidence to create L2 collocations through analogy (Howarth, 1998). Put simply, they may not want to risk using L2 combinations with which they are not familiar. Research studies on L2 English collocation learning have pinpointed repetition as an origin of collocation problems. Among those studies, Granger (1998) shows that French learners of English tended to repeatedly employ the intensifier *very* in the combination of adverb + adjective. Furthermore, some other collocations, e.g. deeply-rooted, repeatedly occurred in their writing as well. Granger, Paquot & Rayson (2006) agreed with Granger (1998) in that EFL learners seem to overuse a limited group of collocations perhaps because they stick to familiar formulaic sequences which they feel safe to use. Similarly, Howarth (1998) also discovered a difference between individual writers' repetition of conventional collocations. Shih (2000) was investigated overused of collocations in a Taiwanese learner corpus of English, focusing on a set of synonyms *big*, *large*, and *great*. The findings from a comparative study of Taiwanese Learner Corpus of English and British National Corpus (BNC) showed that the collocations with *big* were importantly overused by Taiwanese learners. More precisely, the learners used *big* far more frequently than native speakers normally do when describing abstract concepts, whereas the use of *big* referring to concrete objects occurs with more frequency in the native speaker corpus. Shih reported that repetition is viewed as a simplification strategy or overgeneralization applied by Taiwanese learners when faced with L2 collocation problems. In other words, the word *big* is perhaps extended to abstract concepts, which is not a normal practice of native speakers'. According to Zughol & Abdul-Fattah (2001), overgeneralization, i.e. the extension of the use of a certain L2 feature to another, has been found as a source of incorrect use of L2 English collocations, and this strategy is seen as a feature of learner language. The subjects in this study confused the words *shame* and *ashamed*, thereby extending the use of *ashamed*, while the word *shame* was intended.

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## TOWARD AN ANALYSIS OF THE BOND BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SELF-EFFICACY AMONG EFL TEACHERS

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### ABSTRACT

This study explored the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and self-efficacy in 71 Iranian EFL teachers in private language institutes. The participants' EI and self-efficacy were rated through questionnaires. They were also administered a demographic sheet. The findings revealed that EFL teachers' EI was significantly and positively correlated with their self-efficacy, and it could also account for a considerable amount of variance in teachers' self-efficacy. Another line of the results showed significant differences in the teachers' EI and self-efficacy with respect to the demographics- marital status and years of teaching experience. Implications are discussed.

**KEY WORDS:** Emotional Intelligence, Self-efficacy, EFL Teachers

### INTRODUCTION

Recent research clearly indicates that teachers can highly affect students' educational outcomes (Anderson, 2004). Research also shows that schools make a difference in terms of student achievement, and the significant factor in that difference is that it can be attributed to teachers. Particularly, differential teacher effectiveness is a strong determinant of differences in student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Research also reveals that there is a strong positive correlation between teacher effectiveness and student learning. Successful teachers believe that they can make a difference in student learning outcomes and they teach accordingly (Gibbs, 2002). Teacher effectiveness is also in close connection with their self-efficacy levels i.e., the belief teachers have about their teaching skills and capacities (Gibbs, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy & Hoy, 1998). Bandura (1995) opined that people with high self-efficacy persisted with the task in the face of hardship and obtained better results with substantially lower levels of stress. In addition, self-efficacy beliefs can contribute to one's accomplishment and well-being in several ways (Pajares, 2002).

Dembo and Gibson (1985) argued that the issue of pinpointing antecedents of efficacy and the ways to augment teachers' sense of efficacy is of high importance and relevance. Sutton and Wheatley (2003) also opined that great amount of variation in teacher self-efficacy could be attributed to variance in teachers' emotions. This is specifically true with respect to careers such as teaching, with its affectively challenging disposition, high levels of emotional involvement, difficulty and continuous interaction. As such, research should investigate the relationship between teacher emotions and self-efficacy (Emmer & Hickman, 1991) to see whether and how they are related with each other. To this end, this study set out to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and teacher self-efficacy among foreign language teachers in private language institutes in Iran.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### *Teacher Self-Efficacy*

Research on teacher self-efficacy has been inspired by Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory. Bandura (1995) argued that self-efficacy can be referred to as people's beliefs about their potentiality to create expected levels of performance that exert influence on events that impact their lives, and that these beliefs indicate how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. People with a strong sense of self-efficacy set themselves more challenging goals and maintain stronger commitment to those goals than do people with lower levels of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1995).

Teacher self-efficacy refers to the extent to which teachers believe they can make change and impact on student behavior and learning outcomes (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Or as Tschannen-Moran et al (1998, p. 22) opined teacher self-efficacy is "the teacher's belief in his or her capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context". Teachers who have a high sense of self-efficacy about their teaching potentiality can enhance students' motivation and cognitive development (Bandura,



1995). The task of making environments suitable to learning depends on the talents and self-efficacy of teachers (Bandura, 1995).

Tschannen-Moran, et al, (1998) emphasized the importance of teacher self-efficacy and its connection with a broad range of teaching and learning outcomes. These outcomes embrace teachers' classroom behavior, effort and goal-setting, their openness to novel ideas and desire to try innovative methods, planning and organizational competence, perseverance, resilience, commitment and eagerness for teaching and longevity in their profession. Furthermore, teacher self-efficacy can influence student achievement, attitude and emotional growth and is related to the organization health, atmosphere in the school, classroom based decision-making and to student self-efficacy.

Atay (2007) also stated that teachers' self-efficacy can highly affect their instructional activities as well as student attitudes and achievements. Research findings also indicated that teacher efficacy affects teacher's control orientations and control behaviors; their use of classroom discussions and creative teaching practices; their feedback to learners; stress level and their satisfaction with the teaching profession (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). However, little research has been conducted which examines EFL teachers' self-efficacy.

### ***Emotional Intelligence***

EI has its root in the concept of "social intelligence" that was first identified by Thorndike (1920). Thorndike (1920, cited in Wong and Law, 2002, p. 245) defined social intelligence as "the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls –to act wisely in human relations".

Definitions of emotional intelligence widely vary. Some researchers see EI as an ability, which can be measured most precisely by a performance test (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). The skill sets which are included in this explanation of EI are using emotion to facilitate thinking, understanding emotion, managing emotion, and perceiving emotion. Other researchers view EI as a mixed model, including both ability and dispositional traits (Goleman, 1995). Still, other mixed models take into account the factors of mood, motivation, social skills and well-being to define emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 2007). Bar-On credits, Darwinism, Thorndike's theory of social intelligence, Wechsler's observation of non-cognitive factors, and Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, and others as major impacts on his famous model (Bar-On, 2007). Bar-On, Bar-On (1997) defined EI as "an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures" (p. 14).

For testing individuals' emotional intelligence, Bar-On developed a 133-item self-report Emotional Intelligence scale. The Bar-On EI test, called the emotional quotient inventory (EQ-I), is a self-report measure of emotionally and socially intelligent behavior that offers an estimate of emotional-social intelligence (Bar-On, 1997). This test covers 5 major scales and 15 subscales contributing to the emotional energy and self-motivation required to deal with daily environmental challenges and obstacles as follows (see also Bar-On, 2000):

- (1) Intrapersonal: managing oneself, the ability to know one's emotions.
  - (a) Emotional self-awareness (the ability to be aware of, recognize and understand one's emotions).
  - (b) Assertiveness (the ability to express one's feelings, beliefs, thoughts and to defend one's right).
  - (c) Self-regard (the ability to be aware of, understand, accept and respect oneself).
  - (d) Self-actualization (the ability to realize and reach one's potential).
  - (e) Independence (the ability to be self-directed and self-reliant in one's thinking and actions and to be free from emotional dependency).
- (2) Interpersonal: managing relationships with others.
  - (a) Empathy (the ability to understand and appreciate others' feelings).
  - (b) Interpersonal-relationship (the ability to establish and maintain mutually satisfying relationships that are characterized by emotional closeness and intimacy and by giving and receiving affection).
  - (c) Social responsibility (the ability to demonstrate oneself as a cooperative, contributing and constructive member of one's social group).
- (3) Adaptability: ability to adjust to change.
  - (a) Problem solving (the ability to effectively solve problems).

- (b) Reality testing (the ability to validate one's feelings and thoughts by assessing the correspondence between what is subjectively experienced and what objectively exists).
- (c) Flexibility (the ability to adjust one's feelings/thoughts to change).
- (4) Stress management: controlling stress
- (a) Stress tolerance (the ability to manage one's strong emotions, adverse events, and stressful conditions by positively coping with problems).
- (b) Impulse control (the ability to control one's emotions and resist an impulse to act).
- (5) General mood: the ability to be optimistic and positive as well as to enjoy life.
- (a) Happiness (the ability to feel satisfied with life and to have fun).
- (b) Optimism (the ability to look at the brighter side of life and maintain a positive attitude in the face of problems).

EI has been extensively under study both theoretical and experimental within the few last decades. It has been associated significantly and positively to enhanced adapted behavior such as: overall relationship satisfaction and stability (Gottman, et al., 2001), social life with higher quality social life (Lopes, et al., 2003), improved academic achievement (Nelson and Nelson, 2003; Parker et al., 2004), longer retention in the educational arena (Parker, et al, 2006), more satisfaction in one's life (Bastin, et al. , 2005) and the utilization of better adjusted coping strategies (Gohm & Clore, 2002; Matthews et al., 2006).

Moreover, teachers' EI, especially that of EFL teachers, has been under research scrutiny. Iordanoglou (2007), for instance, explored the relationship between EI, job commitment, leadership and satisfaction among Greek 332 primary education teachers. The findings revealed that EI could positively impact leadership effectiveness and is also closely related to teachers' satisfaction and commitment. The results insinuate that in addition to cognitive abilities, the selection criteria in education should also cover emotional competencies to ensure educators' acceptable performance.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

As noted earlier, much research has been done on EI (e.g., Brackett and Salovey, 2006; Schutte et al., 1998) and on self-efficacy (e.g., Ross, 1994; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998), but little (Chan, 2004) has been conducted on the relationship between these two constructs. As long as these two coping resources, EI and efficacy, are of current concern in all areas of education (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998) and since they contribute to teaching effectiveness (Mortiboys, 2005; Pajares, 1992), some research should be done in the EFL setting to investigate if and how they are related. Summarizing, the current study aims at exploring the bond between EFL teachers' EI and self-efficacy.

As such, the following two research questions were addressed in the study:

- 1) Is there any statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy among EFL teachers?
- 2) Is there any statistically significant difference in teachers' EI and perceived self-efficacy regarding demographics?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

Upon obtaining permissions from principals, 5 private language institutes were sampled based on accessibility criterion in Iran. Out of 103 recruited EFL teachers, 71 returned completed questionnaires (about 69 % return rate). Of the teachers who responded, 45 were male and 26 were female. Their ages ranged from 23 to 48 years old ( $M=34.36$ ,  $SD=9.36$ ) with a range of between 1 and 24 years of teaching experience ( $M=10.18$ ,  $SD=11.22$ ).

### *Instruments*

EI and self-efficacy measures were utilized along with a demographic form asking about the participants' age, gender, marital status and years of teaching experience.

### *Emotional Intelligence Scale*

To assess language teachers' EI, the researcher used Bar-On EI test (Bar-On, 1997). This test employs a 5-point response scale with responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. It consists of 5 major factors and 15 sub-factors or components. A Persian version of the EI scale with 90 items was used in this study (Appendix A). To analyze the norms of the Farsi version of the questionnaire, Samouei (2003) sampled 500 university students (with

age range of 18-40 years) in Iran. He found that the test has appropriate internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and constructs validity. With the adapted Farsi version, the Cornbach's alpha coefficient was found to be 0.93 and the reliability index gained through odd-even, split-half method was [0.88].

#### *Self-efficacy Scale*

In this study, the short form of the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) was utilized (Appendix B). The short version of this scale consists of 12 items. Participants responded to the items by indicating their degree of agreement with each of the 12 statements using a five-point likert-type scale ranging from 1 (nothing) to 5 (a great deal). The reliability for the original 12-item scale is 0.90 (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). In the current study, the reliability estimate (Cornbach's alpha coefficient) of the scale was  $\alpha = 0.86$ .

#### **Procedure**

To get reliable data and comply with research ethics, the researcher explained the objective of the research to the subjects and informed them about the estimated time required to fill in the scales (about 25 minutes). Furthermore, all participants were assured that their taking part in the study would be anonymous and optional. It was also added that the findings would include group data and that individual participants and language institutes would not be publicized or known. This information was offered in an informed permission sheet that was submitted with the survey folder. The completion of the survey suggested implied consent and therefore no signed consent form was returned. Teachers were encouraged to contact the investigator if any questions or concerns showed up as a result of their participation in the research. They took the questionnaires home, completed them and submitted to the researcher within 2 weeks.

Finally, in order to answer the research questions, the responses received from the scales were arranged in tables and analyzed.

#### **RESULTS**

In order to investigate the relationships between teachers' EI and self-efficacy, a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis was conducted. The findings showed that there was significant positive correlation between these two constructs ( $r = 0.71$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) (Table 1).

**Table 1: The results of correlation between teachers EI and self-efficacy**

	Self-Efficacy
EI	0.71**

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

To analyze the data further, Regression Analysis was conducted. The results indicated that teachers' total score of EI was a positive predictor of the dependent variable (teacher self-efficacy). In this part of the research  $R^2 = 0.50$  ( $\beta = 0.71$ ,  $t = 8.41$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $F(1, 71) = 70.76$ ), indicating that 50 % of the variance in self-efficacy is explained by the independent variable, EI (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Regression analysis summary for EI predicting self-efficacy**

Predictor	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F(1, 70)	B	SEM	Beta ( $\beta$ )	t
EI	.71	.50	70.76**	9.69	14.85	.71	8.41**

\*\* $p < .01$

Pearson product-moment correlation was used to investigate the role of teaching experience in teachers' EI and self-efficacy. The results showed that teachers' years of teaching experience was positively related with their overall EI ( $r = 0.42$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and self-efficacy ( $r = 0.62$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) (Table 3).



**Table 3: Correlations of teacher EI and self-efficacy and burnout with years of teaching experience (YTE)**

	YTE	
EI		0.42**
Self-Efficacy	0.62**	

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Finally, to explore whether there were significant emotional intelligence and self-efficacy differences among EFL teachers with respect to gender and marital status, two factorial ANOVA analyses were conducted for emotional intelligence and self-efficacy separately with independent variables of gender and marital status. In this way, individual and joint effects of the two independent variables on the dependent variable could be checked.

Since all the prerequisite ANOVA assumptions - Independence of observations, Normality, and Homoscedasticity - were met. First, a 2X2 ANOVA was run to explore the impact of gender and marital status on self-efficacy. The results revealed statistically significant main effect for marital status ( $F(1, 71) = 13.75, P = .001$ ), and the effect size was (eta squared = 0.17). It was shown that married teachers' self-efficacy ( $M = 144.35, SD = 21.51$ ) was noticeably higher than that of unmarried participants ( $M = 125.57, SD = 17.23$ ). However, the main effect for gender ( $F(1, 71) = 1.63, P = 0.26, \text{Eta Squared} = .02$ ), and the interaction effect (Gender \* Marital Status) ( $F(1, 71) = 1.29, P = 0.25, \text{Eta Squared} = .01$ ) did not reach statistical significance (Tables 4 and 5).

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics (Dependent Variable: Self-Efficacy)**

Gender	Marital Status	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Female	Married	137.33	19.75	12
	Single	125.14	15.33	14
	Total	130.76	18.23	26
Male	Married	148.78	21.90	19
	Single	125.80	18.46	26
	Total	135.51	22.84	45
Total	Married	144.35	21.51	31
	Single	125.57	17.23	40
	Total	133.77	21.26	71

**Table 5: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (Dependent Variable: Self-Efficacy)**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	7128.81 <sup>a</sup>	3	2376.27	6.495	.001	.22
Intercept	1173243.43	1	1173243.43	3206.94	.000	.98
Gender	597.58	1	597.58	1.63	.206	.02
Marital Status	5031.77	1	5031.77	13.75	.000	.17
Gender * Marital Status	473.66	1	473.66	1.29	.259	.01
Error	24511.57	67	334.45			
Total	1302232.00	71				
Corrected Total	31640.39	70				

a.  $R^2 = .25$  (Adjusted  $R^2 = .19$ )

To explore the impact of gender and marital status on Emotional intelligence among EFL teachers, another two-way between-group ANOVA was conducted. The results indicated a statistically significant main effect for marital status ( $F(1, 71) = 9.73, P = .003, \text{eta squared} = 0.12$ ) with married teachers' EI ( $M = 362.61, SD = 45.88$ ) significantly lower than that of single teachers ( $M = 331.02, SD = 33.25$ ). But no significant gender effect ( $F(1, 71) = 6.95, P = .032, \text{eta squared} = 0.01$ ) and interaction effect ( $F(1, 71) = .69, P = .40, \text{eta squared} = 0.00$ ) was noticed. In other words, the effect of one independent variable on the dependent variable did not depend on the level of the second independent variable (Tables 6 and 7).

**Table 6:** Descriptive Statistics (Dependent Variable: EI)

Gender	Marital Status	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Female	Married	353.41	30.62	12
	Single	328.214	27.97	14
	Total	339.84	31.36	26
Male	Married	368.42	53.32	19
	Single	332.53	36.21	26
	Total	347.68	47.21	45
Total	Married	362.61	45.88	31
	Single	331.02	33.25	40
	Total	344.81	42.03	71

**Table 7:** Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (Dependent Variable: EI)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	19252.25 <sup>a</sup>	3	6417.41	4.11	.010	.15
Intercept	7775136.66	1	777513.66	498.00	.000	.98
Gender	1519.56	1	1519.56	.97	.327	.01
Marital Status	15177.13	1	15177.13	9.735	.003	.12
Gender * Marital Status	463.96	1	463.96	.29	.58	.00
Error	104458.36	67	1559.08			
Total	8565518.00	71				
Corrected Total	123710.62	70				

a.  $R^2 = .15$  (Adjusted  $R^2 = .11$ )

## DISCUSSION

The current study explored the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy and the extent to which these two constructs are moderated by gender, teaching experience, and marital status in a sample of Iranian ELT teachers. The results revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between EI and teaching efficacy. In other words it was shown that the higher teacher EI, the higher their self-efficacy. Further, EFL teachers' EI proved to be a potent predictor of teacher self-efficacy. This is consistent with previous theoretical and empirical studies, though limited in TESOL context.

Bandura (1997) opined that somatic information caused by physiological and emotional states affected efficacy beliefs (p. 106). Also part of the variation in teacher efficacy is the result of variance in teachers' emotions (Sutton and Wheatley, 2003). Along the same line, Chan (2004) found that components of EI could significantly predict self-efficacy. The results of the present study corroborate those of Penrose et al. (2007) indicating that there is a moderate association between EI and teacher self-efficacy of primary and secondary school teachers. Therefore, it is interesting and useful to curriculum planners, teacher educators and language teachers that EI and self-efficacy are positively correlated, because each of them has the potentiality to be ameliorated, and each can positively affect the other. Put it another way, increasing EI during teacher education programs can help to the burgeoning of teachers' self-efficacy and vice versa.

The results also revealed a positive correlation between participants EI and years of teaching experience. In other words, teachers' emotional experiences are likely to increase with every year of teaching. This is in accordance with

previous research indicating that EI is acquired and enhanced through learning and continuous experience (Goleman, 1995). Bar-On (2000) also argued that EI can be ameliorated through training, programming and therapy.

As for the influence of gender, it was shown that there was no significant difference between EI and self-efficacy of male and female teachers. It shows that, disregarding experience, both male and female teachers can be triumphant in their career. These results corroborated those of Gencer and Cakiroglu (2007). These findings were also in line with the findings of Hopkins and Bilimoria (2008) while in discordance with those of Ciarrochi, Chan and Bajgar (2001) which showed that there were significant differences between females and males, with females reporting higher EI levels. This conflict may be connected to cultural and environmental issues. Another reason for this lack of gender difference is that female teachers might underrate their competence or men might overrate theirs or both. Whether there were no real gender differences, or the real gender differences could not be noticed by self-report scales in the current lines of results has to await further research.

Finally, the results revealed significant EI and self-efficacy differences with respect to marital status among EFL teachers, such that married teachers' EI and Self-efficacy were significantly higher than those of single teachers. One plausible explanation for these findings is that marriage could offer an emotionally fulfilling intimate association, meeting the need for social connection and involvement, which could have implications for both physical and mental health (House, Umberson & Landis, 1988). Research shows that marriage reduces depressive symptoms in both men and women (Simon, 2002). As such, married teachers can more efficiently avail themselves of their emotional resources in coping with stressful situations in EFL context. Moreover, the influence from the people in one's life, family, occupation or education, can estimate the level of self-efficacy in that person (Bandura, 1997). Likewise, married teachers' responsibilities on parenthood, marital life and occupational affairs yield a high self-efficacy.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

In essence, the findings of the present study suggest that ameliorating teachers' emotional intelligence might positively influence their self-efficacy. These findings may have implications for teachers' well-being, pro-social behavior, motivation and teaching effectiveness and accordingly students' achievement. As Bar-On (2000) argued, EI develops gradually and can be enhanced via educational programs and therapy. As such, the findings underline the importance of establishing and developing pre-service and in-service programs for teachers to focus on the skills related to emotional management and regulation. According to Moafian and Ghanizadeh (2009, p. 715), "these courses are expected to help teachers manipulate their emotions appropriately, shift undesirable emotional states to more productive ones, understand the link between emotions, thoughts and actions, attract and sustain rewarding interpersonal relationships in the classroom, and be sensitive to students' emotions."

In addition, based on the results of this research, it is not equitable to judge a teacher based on only one of his/her characteristics. Each teacher with certain kinds of demographics is unique and no over-general statements can be made about him/her. Thus, educational stakeholders can help teachers to surmount their problems better by knowing how different teachers are and how these differences lead to different performances, outcomes and perceptions in the school and classroom arenas.

In the current study, the participants were not diverse enough. Therefore, any generalization of the findings to other contexts should be done with caution. It is recommended that the present study be replicated with a larger and more representative and diverse sample of the EFL teacher population. Also Future research should utilize measures based on objective performance along with self-reporting measures to gain a more precise estimate of teacher EI and self-efficacy. Future research should also examine demographic variables such as academic subjects taught, grade level taught, and economic status. Last but not the least, in future research, different dimensions of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy should be taken into account. In the current study only overall measures of teacher self-efficacy and EI were considered.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The present study attempts to determine the theoretical basis of the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy in second language acquisition. Various studies have reported that the order of this hierarchy can be a valid predictor of the difficulty of relative clauses. However, it is unclear whether this difficulty should be attributed to the grammatical function of noun phrases (grammatical relation) or the configurational differences in the relative clause structure. A few articles have reported that learners of English would be more sensitive to configurational distinction than grammatical relation distinction in relative clause production, implying that the former determines the difficulty of relative clauses in comprehension and production. In order to clarify this issue, two experiments were conducted. The results indicated that Japanese learners of English have a tendency to be more sensitive to configurational distinction than to the difference in grammatical relation and the difference in thematic role in both comprehension and production. The implications of these findings and directions for future research are also discussed.

**KEYWORDS:** second language acquisition, relative clause, configuration, grammatical relation

## **INTRODUCTION**

Relative clause acquisition in second language acquisition (SLA) has been one of the most active areas in applied linguistics. Relative clauses have been considered to be a grammatical item that is acquired in the later stage of language acquisition in both first and second languages. This is because relative clause formation includes syntactically complex linguistic manipulation. In other words, the relative clause is a relatively more complex feature than other grammatical features. Since the 1970s, research on English relative clause acquisition and/or learning has been conducted among a variety of contexts using different approaches. There are a few strong hypotheses on the difficulty of relative clauses in comprehension and production. Among these hypotheses, the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy proposed by Keenan and Comrie (1977) has been validated by many researchers so far.

Keenan and Comrie (1977) proposed this hierarchy (subject > direct object > indirect object > object of preposition > genitives > object of comparative; where > means 'is more accessible than') based on the framework of relational grammar. The grammatical relation in relational grammar is assumed to be primitive and a derivative of the configurational structure<sup>(1)</sup>. This hierarchy originally suggested that if a language can relativize a given position in the hierarchy, then it will be able to relativize all the higher positions in that hierarchy (Ohba, 1995: 19). However, after Comrie (1981) argued that the hierarchy may be able to predict the learning order and the frequency of the appearance of relative clauses in written materials, SLA researchers began examining the validity of this order in the hierarchy in terms of a variety of contexts. Although Keenan and Comrie (1977) did not explicitly argue that the grammatical relation in relative clauses plays a crucial role in determining the difficulty of relative clauses in comprehension and production, SLA researchers absorbed in the markedness theory in the 1980s utilized the hypothesis to find some practical implications for language teaching (Gass, 1982; Eckman, Bell, and Nelson, 1988)<sup>(2)</sup>. This was done without testing whether the grammatical relation per se determines the difficulty of relative clauses. Eventually, the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy was adopted in SLA research where researchers believed, without much consideration, that the grammatical relation in the relative clause structure could account for the difficulty of relative clauses. The validity of a grammatical relation as a theoretical basis for determining the difficulty of relative clauses was never tested, but the language data collected from second language learners basically conformed to the order in this hierarchy. This fact has only made it easier for SLA researchers to conclude that the grammatical relation could account for the difficulty of relative clauses.



However, some SLA researchers have begun questioning the theoretical foundation of the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy in SLA due to the observation that the genitive relative clause (GEN) is sometimes produced more accurately by second language learners than the hierarchy initially predicts. The GEN is placed after the object of preposition (OPREP) in the hierarchy and should therefore be more difficult than a relative clause of a subject (SU), direct object (DO), indirect object (IO), and OPREP. Despite this, the GEN is often produced as accurately as or more accurately than a subject relative clause, which is predicted to be the easiest item in the hierarchy. Gass (1980) reported that in language production tasks such as sentence combining tasks, her subjects showed equally high accuracy in GEN test items and subject relative clauses. Her study also mentioned that GENs in English are constructed as units of [whose + noun phrase (NP)] and the role of the NP following the GEN marker *whose* may be able to determine the difficulty of GENs. This implies that if the role of the NP in the GEN is the subject, then the difficulty of the GEN may be equivalent to that of the subject relative clause. However, she did not clearly explain why the GEN could be produced as accurately as a subject relative clause.

The proposal<sup>(3)</sup> made by Hamilton (1994) is clearer and even more specific than Gass's explanation. Hamilton (1994) proposed another theoretical foundation for the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy based on Chomsky's Standard Theory. Chomsky's theory, the polar opposite of the relational grammar approach (Keenan & Comrie, 1977; Gass, 1982; Eckman, Bell, & Nelson, 1988), assumes that the configurational structure is primitive: the grammatical relation emerges from this structure in generative grammar. Hamilton (1994) argues that, based on the theoretical framework applied in Wolfe–Quintero (1992), the varying difficulty of the different relative clauses is due to the degree of phrasal discontinuity set up by the *wh*-extraction in each of the English relative clause types. He also argues that the high accuracy of second language learners in the GEN test items in Gass (1980) can be explained by the configurational approach using the following two points: (1) the *wh*-extraction site in GEN relativization changes according to the phrasal structure position of the possessed NP and (2) all the GEN sentences in Gass (1980) and the tasks prepared by other researchers that involved the possessed subject or direct object NPs (Hamilton, 1994, p. 150)<sup>(4)</sup>.

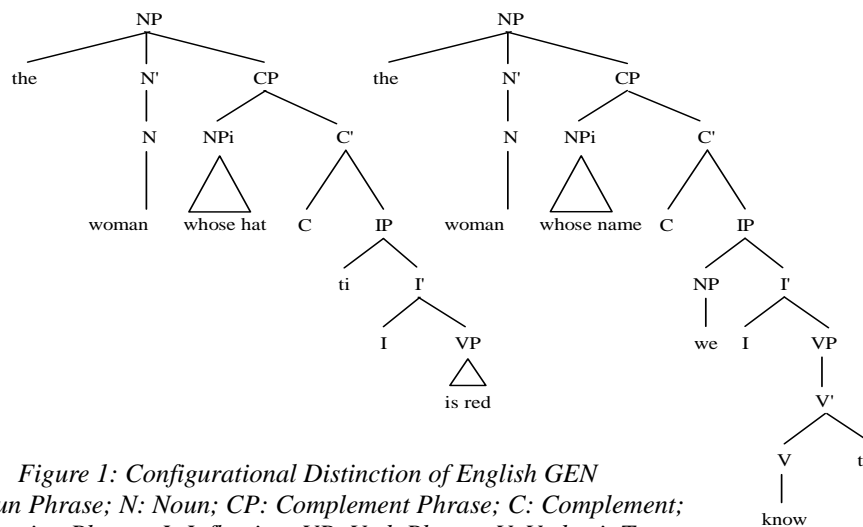


Figure 1: Configurational Distinction of English GEN

NP: Noun Phrase; N: Noun; CP: Complement Phrase; C: Complement;  
IP: Inflection Phrase; I: Inflection; VP: Verb Phrase; V: Verb; ti: Trace

The configurational distinction of English GEN according to the phrase structure position of the possessed NP is exemplified by the two tree-diagrams displayed above (see Figure 1). If we count the nodes intervening between the gap and the head of the relative clause, we can see that the structural distance between the gap and the head is greater in [whose + NP (DO)] than in [whose + NP (SU)]. This is because the number of nodes between the gap (trace) and the head (woman) is 3 (IP, C', and CP) in [whose + NP (SU)] and 6 (V', VP, I', IP, C', and CP) in [whose + NP (DO)]. Therefore, we can assume that the transformation distance in relativization is longer in the unit of [whose + NP (SU)] than in that of [whose + NP (DO)], which implies that in relativizing<sup>(5)</sup>, [whose + NP (SU)] may be more difficult for the participants than [whose + NP (DO)]. In an attempt to test the validity of this configurational account on the difference in the difficulty of [whose + NP], Ito (1995) carried out a research project in order to examine if there is another Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy in GENs, [whose + NP (SU)] > [whose + NP (DO)] > [whose + NP (IO)] > [whose + NP (OPREP)] > [whose + NP (OCOMP)]. The results indicated that there may be another hierarchy in GENs and the each GEN's difficulty level can be explained in terms of the role of the unit of [whose + NP]. In other words, although a certain relative clause is GEN, its difficulty may change according to the type of NP. However, Ito's study could not directly explain the supremacy of the configurational approach over the grammatical relation approach in interpreting the second language learners' data because he did not provide any evidence to prove

that the former approach is more useful than the latter one. In other words, he only provided indirect evidence to show that the difficulty of GENs changes in direct proportion to the order in the original Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy. As a consequence, Ito should consider that since different types of GENs differ in terms of their difficulty levels, their difficulty may be related to the difference in the location of the NP. Thus, his argument can be interpreted based on grammatical relation and not configurational account.

Thus far, there are two different interpretations of the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy. The question that arises is which of the two is better.

In the first attempt to clarify the effects of configurational distinction on English relativization, Hamilton (1995) measured second language learners' sensitivity in English relativization in terms of the configurational distinction associated with argument prepositional phrases (PPs) versus adjunct PPs and the difference in grammatical relation between the IO and the OPREP. If we attempt to find the configurations that are constant throughout but are clearly different in terms of the grammatical relation or vice versa, the similarity in terms of word order and distinction in terms of the configuration between the IO and the OPREP can be used in order to empirically examine the language sensitivity to configurational distinction or the grammatical relation.

In English, both the IO and the OPREP are PPs. In addition, the IO is always an argument PP, while the OPREP can be either an argument or adjunct PP. With regard to the phrase structure, the adjunct PP has a tendency to be placed higher than the argument PP (Radford, 1988: 237–239). Pinker (1989: 40–41) argues that the argument status of an NP is indicated by it being existentially entailed by the verb or being obligatory in the surface structure. Moreover, IOs are identified by their ability to undergo dative shift, which most OPREPs are unable to do.

In sentence combining tasks, in Hamilton (1995) investigated whether his participants performed differently on the same OPREPs if the configuration was different. His study indicated that second language learners showed sensitivity to configurational distinction in English relative clause production. Since a statistically significant level was not found, the results only showed that the configurational version may be more promising than the account based on the grammatical relation. It is thus reasonable to state that Hamilton's study has made a significant contribution in determining the theoretical basis of the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy in SLA research. However, there are several drawbacks in his research design. One of the most serious drawbacks was the sampling of participants. The investigation consisted of three comparisons of the participants' test performances in sentence combining tasks. In the first investigation, participants were sampled from the University of South Carolina to examine if there was any statistical difference in the participants' test scores in a pair of configurational differences: argument (OPREP) versus adjunct (OPREP). In the second investigation, participants were gathered from the University of Alabama and the University of North Carolina (Charlotte) to determine if there was any statistical difference in the participants' test scores in a pair of grammatical relation difference: argument (IO) versus argument (OPREP). Finally, in the third investigation, the participants were gathered from the three universities mentioned above to test the effects of thematic distinction on the difficulty of relative clauses: adjunct (OPREP, beneficiary goal) versus adjunct (OPREP, goal). The third investigation was conducted to ensure that the thematic value never affected the difficulty of relative clauses, which provided essential evidence for interpreting the results of the second investigation because Hamilton could not construct the test items with the same thematic values. Therefore, he attempted to conclude that grammatical relation does not affect their accuracy in English relativization if thematic distinction does not have any effect on the participants' accuracy in relativization. Since the purpose of Hamilton's study was basically to test the superiority of configuration to the grammatical relation, the author believes that the same participants should have been gathered if he intended to show that the same English learners were sensitive to configurational distinction but not to the distinction based on the grammatical relation. Therefore, at this point, his study should be replicated in a more controlled condition.

Moreover, in mainstream SLA research, the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy has been accepted as a valid predictor of the difficulty of relative clauses based on the grammatical relation because the order in the hierarchy has conformed to the linguistic data from second language learners not only in production but also in comprehension. Therefore, we should also examine whether or not second language learners show sensitivity to configurational distinction in either production or comprehension tasks.

Two experimental studies are reported in this paper. The first is the replication of Hamilton's study in a more controlled condition. By employing a grammaticality judgment test, the second study examines if the second language learners are more sensitive to configurational distinction than the distinction of the grammatical relation at the level of linguistic comprehension.

## EXPERIMENTS

### *The First Experiment*

#### *Purpose*

The purpose of the first Experiment was to replicate and expand the findings of Hamilton (1995). In this investigation, Japanese learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) in a formal instructional setting were sampled and their performance in (1) configurational distinction, (2) distinction of the grammatical relation, and (3) thematic distinction were examined in terms of their test scores in sentence combining tasks. The participants were expected to be more sensitive to configurational distinction in English relativization. Based on the discussion thus far, the following hypotheses, which are originally from Hamilton (1995), were developed for the present study.

#### *Hypotheses*

Hypothesis 1: The performance of Japanese EFL learners will be significantly different for the relativization of NPs in argument versus NPs in adjunct if other factors are constant.

Hypothesis 2: The performance of Japanese EFL learners will not be significantly different for the relativization of NPs in IO versus NPs in OPREP if other factors are constant.

Hypothesis 3: The performance of Japanese EFL learners will not be significantly different for the relativization of NPs in beneficiary goal versus NPs in goal object if other factors are constant.

#### *Analysis*

The three hypotheses were evaluated by performing a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with repeated measures in order to examine the overall difference of the test scores. Then, using Ryan's method, a multiple comparison test was conducted on three pairs of six testlets to clarify the location of the significant difference<sup>(6)</sup>.

#### *Participants*

The participants in this study ( $N = 116$ ) were freshmen enrolled in English reading comprehension classes at a private university, Japan. All of them were native speakers of Japanese. The average age was 18 years and 6 months. Their ages varied from 18 to 20 years. All had completed at least six years of formal English courses prior to this study. The male:female ratio was 2:1. In general, Japanese students are required to learn the usage of English relative clauses in junior high school and high school.

#### *Materials*

The 30-item sentence combining test in Hamilton (1995: 113–114) (Appendix I) was administered. This test consists of six parts (A, B, C, D, E, and F), and each part has 5 items. The values of the configuration, grammatical relation, and theme are as follows: [(A) argument/OPREP/location], [(B) adjunct/OPREP/location], [(C) argument/IO/beneficiary goal], [(D) argument/OPREP/goal], [(E) adjunct/OPREP/beneficiary goal], and [(F) adjunct/OPREP/goal]<sup>(7)</sup>. All the intended relative clause sentences are right-embedded because the difference in the placement of the relative clause in each sentence is one of the influential factors of the difficulty of relative clauses (Kawauchi, 1988).

#### *Test Item Classification*

Example: configurational distinction

Type A: argument/OPREP/location

We left the table. I placed the money on the table.

Type B: adjunct/OPREP/location

She drove the bus. I did my homework on the bus.

In order to clarify the configurational distinction between argument and adjunct, the author has added some explanations describing the test items in A and B. The tree diagrams displayed below (Figure 2) show that a

reanalysis, which should be carried out in V', can be conducted in the case of argument but not in the case of adjunct. The argument "on the table" is one of the components of V' but the adjunct "on the table" is attached to the VP. In other words, the adjunct "on the bus" is generated from the VP "did my homework." Therefore, the argument and adjunct can be said to differ in terms of configuration.

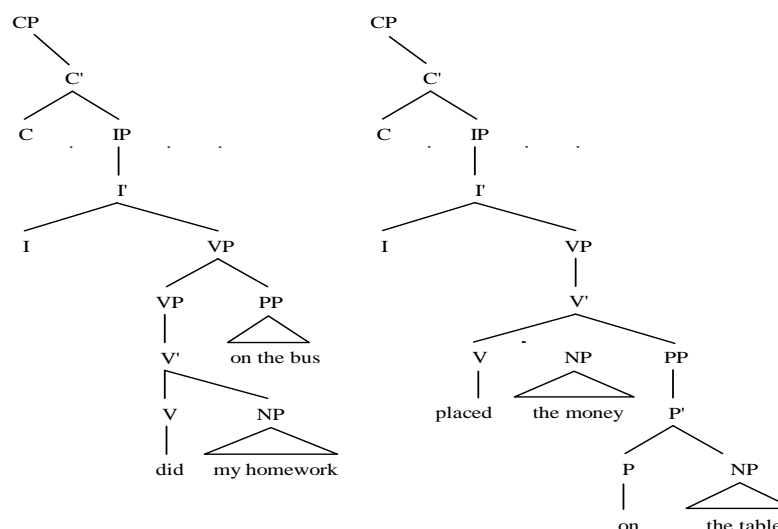


Figure 2: Configurational Structure  
 CP: Complement Phrase; C: Complement; IP: Inflection Phrase; I: Inflection;  
 VP: Verb Phrase; V: Verb; PP: Prepositional Phrase; P: Preposition;  
 NP: Noun Phrase

### Procedures <sup>(8)</sup>

The sentence combining test was administered to the participants in a warm-up period in the author's English reading comprehension classes. The participants were given oral and written instructions in Japanese, and they were given 30 minutes to complete the test. Although the participants were not informed of the purpose of the investigation, they were encouraged to answer as many questions as possible. The test papers were scored by the author. The scoring was based on whether the participants had used an appropriate relative pronoun in order to combine the two sentences based on the criterion established in Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983) and Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik (1985). The author ignored local errors such as spelling, agreement, articles, third-person singular present verb markers, plurality, and so forth as long as he could understand the meaning of the participants' answers.

### Reliability Estimation

The Spearman-Brown split-half method was performed in order to measure the reliability coefficient of the relative clause test. The split-half method can be used when each test item is considered to be independent and can also contribute to the total test score independently (Brown, 1996, pp. 194-196). Since each item is clearly independent in this relative clause test, this method is a permissible estimating procedure for the test. In this method, the author scored the odd and even numbered items separately and first, examined the Pearson's product-moment correlation ( $r$ ). Each value was then corrected for the reduction to half-test length using the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula ( $r_{xx'} = 2r/(1+r)$ ).

### Test Item Validation

In order to calculate the contribution of each item to the total test score, this correlation was estimated. Moreover, the calculated value of this correlation was first changed by the Fisher z transformation in order to average the mean score of the correlation coefficient of each item. Then, the estimated value was adjusted to its corresponding Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient value. The reason why the estimated values of point-biserial correlations were transformed by the Fisher z format is that, in this type of test, it is necessary to convert correlation coefficients from an ordinal scale to an interval one. The value of this mean score of the point-biserial correlation

( $r_{phi}$ ) will be used as an indicator of the validity of the relative clause test.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The reliability coefficient of the 30-item relative clause test by the *Spearman-Brown split-half method* was 0.84. In addition, the validity coefficient was 0.26. Since the reliability coefficient was high and the validity coefficient was acceptable (Brown, 1996), the test scores were used for statistical analyses without any modifications.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics ( $N=116$ )

Test section	Grammatical Relation	Configuration	Thematic Role	Mean	Full Score	SD
A	OPREP	argument	location	5.00	3.19	1.35
B	OPREP	adjunct	location	5.00	2.16	0.82
C	IO	argument	Beneficiary-Goal	5.00	3.58	0.98
D	OPREP	argument	Goal	5.00	3.37	1.13
E	OPREP	adjunct	Beneficiary-Goal	5.00	2.44	1.18
F	OPREP	adjunct	Goal	5.00	2.31	1.25

Table 1 shows the mean scores and standard deviations in each section of the sentence combining test. In order to examine the difference between the mean scores in each pair of the configurational distinction groups (A and B), grammatical relation distinction group (C and D), and thematic distinction group (E and F), one-way ANOVA with repeated measures was first performed.

Table 2 indicates an overall significant difference ( $F = 87.14$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Multiple comparison tests using Ryan's method were conducted on the three pairs of six testlets (A and B, C and D, and E and F) in order to address the three hypotheses. The results of the multiple comparison tests were discussed by examining each of the three hypotheses given below.

Table 2: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) ( $N=116$ )

Source	SS	df	MS	F-ratio	p level
Participant	449.13	115	3.91		
Distinction	331.16	5	66.23	87.14	<0.01
Error	438.67	575	0.76		
Total	1218.96	695			

GR: grammatical relation; TIC: test item characteristic

**Hypothesis 1: The performance of Japanese EFL learners will be significantly different for the relativization of NPs in argument versus NPs in adjunct if other factors are constant.**

The result of the multiple comparison tests on the mean scores in the configurational distinction group (A and B) revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores (A:  $M = 3.19$ ; B:  $M = 2.16$ ), which implied that the Japanese EFL learners performed significantly better in the argument condition than in the adjunct one ( $t = 8.86$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, the first hypothesis was supported. It can be concluded that the Japanese EFL learners were sensitive to the configurational distinction in English relativization.

**Hypothesis 2: The performance of Japanese EFL learners will not be significantly different on the relativization of NPs in IO versus those in OPREP if other factors are constant.**

Another multiple comparison test on the mean scores in the grammatical relation group (C:  $M = 3.58$ ; D:  $M = 3.37$ ) shows that there was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores. This implies that the Japanese EFL learners performed equally on the two pairs without being influenced by the difference in the grammatical relation ( $t = 1.80$ ,  $n.s.$ ). Therefore, the second hypothesis was supported.

**Hypothesis 3: The performance of Japanese EFL learners will not be significantly different for the relativization of NPs in beneficiary goal versus NPs in goal object if other factors are constant.**



Another multiple comparison test on the mean scores in the thematic distinction group (E:  $M = 2.44$ ; F:  $M = 2.31$ ) revealed that the performance of the Japanese EFL learners did not differ ( $t = 1.13$ , *n.s.*). This implied that the third hypothesis was also supported<sup>(9)</sup>.

The results may suggest that Japanese EFL learners are sensitive to configurational distinctions in various English relativizations. However, they are not sensitive to grammatical relation and thematic distinctions<sup>(10)</sup>. These results implied that the participants are sensitive “in the same way to hierarchically relevant distinctions in either grammatical relations or thematic roles” (Hamilton, 1995, p. 110). This also indicated that the data pertaining to second language learners’ data should be interpreted based on configuration rather than the grammatical relation and the thematic role. In other words, configurational distinction is more economical than the other two because the configurational approach elegantly illustrates the changes in the scores of relative clause production. Although many SLA researchers do not deny the effectiveness of the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy as a predictor of the difficulty of various types of relative clauses in both comprehension and production, we perhaps consider that the difficulty of relative clauses should be explained in terms of configurational differences rather than grammatical relations. However, the hierarchy is the hypothesis that was initially put forward as an implicational universal grammar. The results of this study should be interpreted as a counterargument not for the theoretical foundation of the hierarchy itself but for the attitudes of SLA researchers. These researchers simply hastened to use the implicational grammar hypothesis for interpreting SLA data and were easily convinced that grammatical relation is the main factor in determining the difficulty of English relative clauses without examining the suitability of the theoretical basis of the hierarchy in the SLA context.

### ***The Second Experiment***

#### ***Purpose***

The first purpose of this study was to evaluate the validity of the hypothesis proposed by Hamilton (1995) from a different perspective. In this investigation, Japanese EFL learners were sampled and their grammaticality judgments on the distinction of (1) grammatical relation and (2) configuration were examined. Since the validity of Hamilton’s hypothesis was ascertained in linguistic production tasks such as sentence combining tests in Experiment I, the participants were expected to be more sensitive to configurational distinction than to grammatical relation even in linguistic comprehension tasks such as grammaticality judgment tests. The present study employed the difference between (1) IO and OPREP as the distinction of grammatical relation and (2) argument and adjunct as that of configuration. The difference between pied-piping (PDPG) and preposition stranding (PPSG) is used in constructing the grammaticality judgment test. In “Government and Binding Theory,” as mentioned before, the reanalysis that should be carried out in V’ can be conducted in the case of argument but not in the case of the adjunct PP. Thus, PPSG is grammatically acceptable in the argument PP but not in the adjunct PP because reanalysis cannot be carried out in V’ in the case of adjunct. On the other hand, PDPG is grammatically acceptable in either argument or adjunct PP, which implies that the difference between PPSG and PDPG reflects the configurational difference between argument and adjunct (Mazurkewich, 1984; Bardovi-Harlig, 1987; White, 1987; Goodluck & Stojanovic, 1996; Park & Lee, 2001). Therefore, when other factors are constant, second language learners are expected to show different judgments in different configurational conditions but the same judgment in different grammatical relation conditions. In other words, this study will investigate whether second language learners show different grammaticality judgment on the acceptability of PPSG and PDPG if the configuration in the PP changes.

The author developed the following hypotheses based on the above discussion:

#### ***Hypotheses***

Hypothesis 1: The grammaticality judgment of Japanese EFL learners will not be sensitive to the distinction of grammatical relation. Thus, their performance will not be significantly different for the grammaticality judgment of IO versus that of OPREP.

Hypothesis 2: The grammaticality judgment of Japanese EFL learners will be sensitive to the configurational distinction. Thus, their performance will be significantly different for the grammaticality judgment of NPs in argument PPs than in adjunct PPs.

Hypothesis 3: Japanese EFL learners will show a higher grammatical acceptability of sentences with NPs in



argument PPs than in adjunct PPs.

Hypothesis 4: Japanese EFL learners will show a higher grammatical acceptability of sentences with NPs in PPSG in argument PPs than in adjunct PPs.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 are developed in order to investigate whether grammatical relations or configurational distinction determines the participants' performance in grammaticality judgment. Hypothesis 3 is proposed because in argument PP, both PPSG and PDPG are grammatically acceptable; it can therefore be expected that more sentences will be judged correct in argument condition than in the adjunct one where PPSG is not permissible. Hypothesis 4 is constructed to interpret the result of hypothesis 3. Since both PPSG and PDPG are grammatically acceptable to the same extent in the argument condition, it is predicted that the participants will show a higher grammatical acceptability to PPSG in the argument condition than in the adjunct one where PPSG is not grammatically acceptable. If hypothesis 3 is supported, then the author will examine whether or not hypothesis 4 can be confirmed.

### ***Analysis***

The four hypotheses were evaluated by performing two two-way ANOVAs with repeated measures in order to examine the overall difference of test scores. A multiple comparison test using Ryan's method was conducted to clarify the location of any significant differences. The details of factorial design will be described when discussing the results.

### ***Participants***

The participants in this study ( $N = 77$ ) were sophomores enrolled in English reading comprehension classes at a private university, Japan. All of them were native speakers of Japanese. The average age was 20 years and 3 months. Their ages varied from 19 to 24 years. All of them had completed at least 6 years of formal English prior to the present investigation. The male: female ratio was 1:1. The sample was homogeneous with regard to nationality and language. In general, Japanese students are required to learn the usage of relative clauses in junior high school and high school. Therefore, it was concluded that the participants may have basic skills in comprehension and production of English relative clauses.

### ***Materials***

The 16-item grammaticality judgment test was constructed using the sentences provided in the sentence combining task prepared by Hamilton (1995) (Appendix II). This grammaticality judgment test consists of three parts [(A) (4 items)], [(B) (4 items)], and [(C) (8 items)]. The values of their grammatical relation and configuration are as follows: [(A) OPREP/argument], [(B) IO/argument], and [(C) OPREP/adjunct]. The difference between (A) and (B) is the value of the grammatical relation. In part A, 2 items present PPSG and the remaining 2 items PDPG. In part B, 2 items present PDPG and the remaining 2, PDPG. In part C, 4 items present PPSG and the other 4, PDPG. All the relative clauses are right-embedded because the difference in the location of the relative clause in each sentence is one of the influencing factors in the difficulty of relative clauses in comprehension and production (Sadighi, 1994; Aarts & Schils, 1995).

### ***Native control***

The author administered the grammaticality judgment test to a group of native English speakers ( $N = 10$ ). All the participants were teaching English at tertiary schools in Japan. None of them accepted the sentences in PS in the adjunct condition.

### ***Procedures***

The grammaticality judgment test was administered to the participants in the author's English reading comprehension classes. They were given oral and written instructions in Japanese. They were asked to put an 'O' mark on all the sentences that they judged to be correct. Although the participants were not informed about the purpose of the test, they were encouraged to take the test seriously. The author scored the tests and only counted the test items that indicated each participant's acceptance in each section of the test. In addition, the reliability estimation and test item validation was carried out using the same procedures shown in Experiment I.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The reliability coefficient of the 16-item grammaticality judgment test obtained by using the Spearman-Brown split-half method was 0.75. In addition, the validity coefficient was 0.21. Since the reliability coefficient was moderate to

relatively high and the validity coefficient was acceptable, the test scores were used for statistical analyses without any corrections for attenuation. Table 3 presents the mean scores of and standard deviations in each test item characteristic (PPSG and PDPG) in tests A (argument OPREP) and B (argument IO). The distinction between tests A and B is based on the distinction of grammatical relation.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics ( $N=77$ )

	Grammatical Relation	Configuration	Test item Characteristic	Mean	Full Score	SD
Test A	IO	argument	PP	1.08	2.00	0.64
Test A	IO	argument	PS	0.97	2.00	0.70
Test B	OPREP	argument	PP	1.07	2.00	0.67
Test B	OPREP	argument	PS	1.08	2.00	0.73

TIC test item characteristic

In order to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores, a two-way ANOVA was performed. The present inquiry employed a  $2 \times 2$  factorial design, with the difference between grammatical relation (IO and OPREP) and test item characteristic (PPSG and PDPG).

**Hypothesis 1: The grammaticality judgment of Japanese EFL learners will not be sensitive to the distinction of grammatical relation. Thus, their performance will not be significantly different for the grammaticality judgment of IO versus that of OPREP.**

Table 4 describes the results of the two-way ANOVA investigating the effects of the two factors: (1) the difference between the grammatical relation (IO or OPREP) and (2) test item characteristic (PDPG or PPCG) on the participants' performances in the grammaticality judgment test.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) ( $N=77$ )

Source	SS	df	MS	F-ratio	p level
Participant	20.01	76	0.26		
A: GR	0.16	1	0.16	0.33	0.56
Error [AS]	36.49	76	0.48		
B: TIC	0.16	1	0.16	0.18	0.67
Error [BS]	67.59	76	0.89		
A×B	0.26	1	0.26	0.93	0.34
Error [ABS]	21.4	76	0.25		
Total	146.07	307			

GR: grammatical relation; TIC: test item characteristic

The results indicated that neither of the two factors is statistically significant (grammatical relation:  $F = 0.33$ ,  $p = 0.56$ ; test item characteristic:  $F = 0.18$ ,  $p = 0.67$ ), which implies that Japanese EFL learners were neither sensitive to the grammatical relation nor to the test item characteristic when they attempted to judge the grammaticality of the sentences. The interaction between the two factors is not significant ( $F = 0.93$ ,  $p = 0.34$ ). In order to confirm the fact that there was no statistically significant effect of each factor on the grammaticality judgment, multiple comparison tests were also conducted using Ryan's method. First, the multiple comparison test on the distinction of grammatical relation revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between IO ( $M = 1.03$ ) and OPREP ( $M = 1.08$ ) ( $t = 0.58$ ,  $p = 0.56$ ). In addition, another multiple comparison test on the test item characteristic also indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between PDPG ( $M = 1.08$ ) and PPCG ( $M = 1.03$ ) ( $t = 0.43$ ,  $p = 0.67$ ). The results confirmed that the distinction of the grammatical relation and that of the test item characteristic did not affect the participants' grammaticality judgment. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was supported.

**Hypothesis 2: The grammaticality judgment of Japanese EFL learners will be sensitive to configurational**

*distinction. Thus, their performance will be significantly different for the grammaticality judgment of NPs in argument PPs versus adjunct PPs.*

In the examination of hypothesis 1, the equivalency of tests A and B was ascertained because the distinction of the grammatical relation and the difference of the test item characteristics were shown not to affect the grammaticality judgment of Japanese EFL learners. Table 3 describes the mean scores of and standard deviation of each test item characteristic (PPSG and PDPG) in the combination of tests A (argument OPREP) and B (argument IO) and in test C (adjunct OPREP).

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics ( $N=77$ )

	Grammatical Relation	Configuration	Test item characteristic	Mean	Full Score	<i>SD</i>
Test A&B	OPREP & IO	argument	PP	2.15	4.00	1.04
			PS	2.05	4.00	1.17
Test C	OPREP	argument	PP	2.03	4.00	1.07
			PS	1.81	4.00	1.16

This study also employed a  $2 \times 2$  factorial design, with configurational distinction (argument and adjunct) and test item characteristic (PPSG and PDPG) as within subject factors. Table 4 shows the results of the two-way ANOVA examining the effects of (1) configurational distinction (argument or adjunct) and (2) test item characteristic (PPSG and PDPG) on the participants' performances in the grammaticality judgment test.

Table 6: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) ( $N=77$ )

Source	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i> -ratio	<i>p</i> level
Participant	40.75	76	0.54		
A: Configuration	2.37	1	2.37	6.41	<0.05
Error [AS]	28.38	76	0.37		
B: TIC	1.43	1	1.43	0.51	0.48
Error [BS]	213.32	76	2.81		
A×B	0.55	1	0.55	0.43	0.52
Error [ABS]	98.2	76	1.29		
Total	385.00	307			

TIC: test item characteristic

The results indicated that the effect of configuration was significant ( $F = 6.41$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) but the effect of test item characteristic was not significant ( $F = 0.51$ ,  $p = 0.48$ ), which implies that Japanese EFL learners are sensitive to the configurational distinction but not to the difference in the test items. In other words, the participants have a tendency to accept more sentences in the argument condition than in the adjunct one. The interaction between the two factors is not significant ( $F = 0.43$ ,  $p = 0.52$ ). At this point, we can argue that the participants are sensitive only to the configurational distinction. Therefore, hypothesis 2 was supported.

***Hypothesis 3: Japanese EFL learners will show a higher grammatical acceptability of sentences with NPs in argument PPs than those in adjunct PPs.***

In order to examine hypothesis 3, we conducted multiple comparison tests using Ryan's method on each of the two factors. The multiple comparison test on the configurational distinction revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between argument ( $M = 2.10$ ) and adjunct ( $M = 1.92$ ) ( $t = 2.52$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This result indicates that the participants showed significant grammatical acceptability in the argument condition than in the adjunct one. Therefore, hypothesis 3 was supported.

***Hypothesis 4: Japanese EFL learners will show a higher grammatical acceptability of sentences with NPs in PPSG in argument PPs than in adjunct PPs.***

In order to examine hypothesis 4, another multiple comparison test was conducted on the test item characteristic. The result showed that there is no statistically significant difference between PDPG ( $M = 2.08$ ) and PPSG ( $M = 1.94$ ) ( $t = 0.71$ ,  $p = 0.48$ ). The results indicated that Japanese EFL learners did not accept PPSG in the argument condition more than they did in the adjunct condition. There was also no statistically significant difference between their grammaticality acceptability in PDPG and PPSG. Therefore, hypothesis 4 was not supported.

In summary, although the participants accepted more sentences in the argument condition than in the adjunct one, they did not show a higher grammatical acceptability of sentences with NPs in PPSG in argument PPs than in adjunct PPs. Therefore, we cannot strongly claim that Japanese EFL learners are always sensitive to configurational distinction in grammaticality judgment.

## CONCLUSION

This paper determined the basis of the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy in SLA by conducting two experiments. Experiment I investigated the superiority of the configurational distinction to the distinction of the grammatical relation in accounting for the degree of difficulty of relative clauses in sentence combining among Japanese EFL learners. The participants consisted of 116 Japanese university students studying English as a foreign language. The research findings lead us to consider that second language learners of English are more sensitive to configurational distinction than to grammatical relation and thematic distinctions when they produce relative clauses in English. Experiment II investigated the effects of configurational distinction and grammatical relation with regard to Japanese EFL learners. The participants consisted of 77 Japanese university students who were studying English as a foreign language. The research findings revealed that the participants were affected by the configurational distinction when they judged the grammaticality of the presented sentences that had relative clauses but were not sensitive to the distinction of the grammatical relation. However, the participants did not accept PPSG in the argument condition more than in the adjunct one. Therefore, we cannot strongly claim that they were always affected by the configurational distinction in linguistic comprehension. However, it is justifiable to say that the difficulty of relative clauses should be attributed to the configurational difference rather than the difference of grammatical relation in the relative clause structure. Thus, the results of these two experiments indicate the supremacy of a configurational account over a grammatical relation one with regard to the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy in SLA.

It should be acknowledged that one of the limitations of this investigation is that it focused on the participants' language data. Thus, the results can be generalized only for Japanese students. However, many previous studies conducted on participants with various language backgrounds, ages, and educational backgrounds. As a result, findings have often been difficult to interpret because they can only be generalized to the single situation in which the data was collected. In addition, the results of this study may be influenced by certain internal and external factors:

1. The nature of the reliability of measures in general and
2. The restrictions on the range of abilities that were sampled in the investigation.

In general, tests are not simply reliable and valid but they can be reliable and valid for specific types of students and specific ranges of abilities. In this regard, this research should be replicated with a larger sample of participants from a considerably wider population.

The author is interested in learning about the participants' cognitive processes that are engaged in solving the types A and B in the sentence combining test. If we are able to determine the difference in the cognitive processes used in taking tests A and B, we can better understand the reason why the participants were able to provide more correct answers in the argument condition than in the adjunct one. This issue should be explored in future research.

## NOTES

*\* This article is a theoretical and experimental synthesis of the author's research projects from 2001 to 2009.*

*(1) Throughout this paper, 'configurational structure' refers to 'syntactic structure.'*

*(2) For a historical overview of the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy in the SLA context, see Ohba (1995). For a basic distinction between rational grammar and generative grammar in terms of the assumptions in research, see Matsunami, Ikegami, and Imai (1983).*

*(3) For the same type of account from the perspectives of maximal projections, see Berent (1994).*

*(4) Hamilton (1995) argues that Gass (1980) constitutes an appeal to the identity of configuration.*

*(5) On the other hand, in generative grammar, the degree of difficulty has not been treated as a main concern because the research focus is always on the possibility of transformation itself.*

- (6) Some statisticians and psychologists consider the use of Ryan's method as a multiple comparison procedure to be problematic. However, the author decided to employ Ryan's methods based on constructive comments from Dr. Fumiko Matsuda, Professor, Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Education, Hiroshima University, Japan.
- (7) The test items in E and F are used to investigate the effects of grammatical relation, which have different thematic values, on learners' interlanguage performance. For further discussion of thematic values, see Jakendoff (1994).
- (8) Since we do not have anything that resembles an external criterion relative clause test, we cannot investigate the concurrent validity of the relative clause test. Therefore, the author focused on the discrimination ability of the relative clause test and attempted to internally examine its validity. For further discussion on the relationship between the discrimination ability of test items and test validity, see Brown (1996).
- (9) The mean frequency of preposition omission for C versus D as well as for E versus F was not significantly different for paired *t* tests, which suggests that Japanese EFL learners approach these test sentences in the same way as far as factors related to preposition omission are concerned.
- (10) It is possible that the thematic relationship between the NP and the verb may have made the participants perform better in the argument condition than in the adjunct one. However, this issue was ignored in the present study. Further study should be conducted in this area.

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#### **APPENDIX A: The SENTENCE COMBINING TEST**

##### **Type A: [argument/OPREP/location]**

- (1) We left the table. I placed the money on the table.
- (2) My friend mailed the letter. I put a stamp on the letter.
- (3) The student wanted the paper. The teacher put a grade on the paper.
- (4) This is the desk. I laid my pen on the desk.
- (5) This is the chair. She set her coat on the chair.

##### **Type B: [adjunct/OPREP/location]**

- (6) She drove the bus. I did my homework on the bus.
- (7) My wife found the bug. I dropped a book on the bug.
- (8) We found the train. I lost my bag on the train.
- (9) This is the sofa. The boy took a nap on the sofa.
- (10) This is the highway. He drove his car on the highway.

##### **Type C: [argument/IO/beneficiary goal]**

- (11) Everyone likes the teacher. I gave a present to the teacher.
- (12) We watched the student. The teacher handed the paper to the student.
- (13) This is the boy. I passed the ball to the boy.
- (14) I know the woman. He offered the money to the woman.
- (15) This is the child. I told a story to the child.

##### **Type D: [argument/OPREP/goal]**

- (16) Everyone liked the store. They took me to the store.
- (17) She left the party. I took my friends to the party.
- (18) We found the beach. She sent the children to the beach.
- (19) This is the house. The girl brought her bags to the house.
- (20) This is the country. I mailed a postcard to the country.

##### **Type E: [adjunct/OPREP/beneficiary goal]**

- (21) You know the woman. I cooked a cake for the woman.
- (22) This is the man. I bought a book for the man.
- (23) She brought the child. He made a toy for the child.
- (24) This is the boy. The girl sang a song for the boy.
- (25) Everyone liked the teacher. She brought flowers for the teacher.

##### **Type F: [adjunct/OPREP/goal]**

- (26) I remember the trip. My son took a pillow for the trip.
- (27) I watched the game. She brought a camera for the game.
- (28) This is the party. I baked cookies for the party.
- (29) This is the meeting. He wrote a speech for the meeting.
- (30) No one liked the class. I read a book for the class.

#### **APPENDIX B: THE GRAMMATICALITY JUDGMENT TEST**

##### **Argument OPREP**

- (1) We left the table, which I placed the money on.
- (2) My friend mailed the letter on which I put a stamp.



- (3) The student wanted the paper, which the teacher put a grade on.
- (4) This is the desk on which I laid my pen.

***Argument IO***

- (5) Everyone likes the teacher whom I gave a present to.
- (6) We watched the student to whom the teacher handed the paper.
- (7) This is the boy whom I passed the ball to.
- (8) I know the woman to whom he offered the money.

***Adjunct OPREP***

- (9) She drove the bus which I did my homework on.
- (10) My wife found the bug on which I dropped a book.
- (11) You know the woman for whom I baked a cake.
- (12) She likes the boy whom I bought a car for.
- (13) This is the highway which he drove his car on.
- (14) This is the sofa on which the boy took a nap.
- (15) She brought the child for whom she made a toy.
- (16) This is the man whom I bought a book for.

**VERIFICATION OF TASK-INDUCED INVOLVEMENT HYPOTHESIS THROUGH  
LANGUAGE MODALITY IN INCIDENTAL VOCABULARY LEARNING  
(READING VS. LISTENING MODALITY)**

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**ABSTRACT**

Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) proposed “the Involvement Load Hypothesis for second language (L2) vocabulary learning, which was a motivational-cognitive construct of involvement, consisting of three basic components: *need*, *search*, and *evaluation*” (p.14). Tasks that induce a higher involvement load have proved more effective in terms of vocabulary retention as compared with tasks with a lower involvement load. However, it is not much clear whether task involvement load is a function of language modality; does it have different representation and load if modality platform changes from reading to listening? In a bid to address this question the present study aimed at investigating “The effect of task-induced involvement on incidental vocabulary learning through listening and reading modality-based activities among Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners.” 125 female English as a foreign language (EFL) students in the form of four experimental and one control groups formed the participants of this study, who were exposed to reading- and listening-oriented context of task presentation to compare the effects of six tasks with different involvement loads (tasks with high involvement load like writing, unscrambling, and text-reconstruction; tasks with low involvement load like fill in blanks, matching and multiple-choice) and to see which skill is more useful for vocabulary retention. The control group (N=25) received vocabulary instruction through conventional methods while the experimental groups (N=100, in every group 25 students) were taught using the target tasks through two different modes of presentation; reading and listening with different involvement loads. Based on a quasi-experimental design, respective statistical analyses including t-tests and ANOVA were run. All experimental groups outperformed the control; task-induced involvement instruction was more effective in improving learners’ vocabulary retention. However, the reading-based instruction with high involvement load tasks outperformed the listening-based one; an indication of the modality-dependent nature of both task presentation and involvement load hypothesis.

**KEY TERMS:** Incidental Vocabulary Learning, Task-induced involvement, and Gloss.

**INTRODUCTION**

English is becoming more and more important for international communicative purposes, such that in Iran, it has become such a necessity that has been one of the most important subjects in secondary and high schools as well as in institutions of higher education. Contrary to this prominence, most of us as both a language teacher and language learner can appreciate the feeling of frustration when conversation fails because we do not have enough words or when looking at a word and feeling that we have seen it many times before, but we cannot remember its meaning. To compensate for such an instructional failure, some of the teachers employ the audio-visual method, and others use the task oriented approach, etc, but it should be accepted that vocabulary learning cannot be confined to just classroom settings. Therefore, how to help students enlarge their vocabulary size and ensure better retention when they come across new words incidentally should be considered by language teachers and researchers. Although teachers know importance of vocabulary learning in English teaching, it is impossible for them to spend most of the class time on vocabulary learning alone. Moreover, students themselves are not interested in intentional vocabulary learning in which they are requested to do some exercises that focus on vocabulary itself. So, most EFL learners prefer incidental vocabulary learning in which their attention is focused on some other features. Based on this approach, they learn vocabulary through reading texts, working on reading comprehension tasks or doing other activities that are not directly related to vocabulary learning itself. Listening process, similar to reading, may be taken another platform for incidental vocabulary learning. A growing number of studies in recent years (Hulstijn, 1992, Rott & Williams, 2003; Rott, 2005) have examined the effectiveness of several techniques to promote incidental vocabulary learning through reading, such as glossing (i.e. providing the meaning of words in the margins of a text) since it is held that texts provide learners with a rich input where lexical items are highly contextualized.

The most common area for text-based instruction of vocabulary concerns that of incidental vocabulary. “Incidental vocabulary learning means learning without the intention to learn, or the learning of one thing (e.g., vocabulary) when the learner’s main concern is with something else (e.g., communication). In contrast, intentional vocabulary learning refers to the learning of vocabulary by deliberately committing lexical information to memory” (Laufer and Hulstijn, 2001, p. 27). Furthermore, empirical evidence for the effectiveness of incidental learning over the intentional mode is simply substantial. Shelton and Newhouse (1981), for example, observe that “learners who were exposed to the stimulus material in an incidental-learning situation significantly performed better in a subsequent recall test than subjects who were simply instructed to learn the same material” (pp. 36-38). Huckin and Coady (1999) argue that “texts in which learners are interested can be more conducive to incidental vocabulary acquisition” (pp. 181-193). Taylor and Beach (1984) claim “overall, empirical evidence shows that for most students, expository reading cause a greater challenge than narrative reading. Although many factors may contribute to run into difficulty with expository reading, the four most commonly cited are text structure, conceptual density and familiarity, vocabulary knowledge, and prior knowledge” (pp. 134-146).

“Empirical research on tasks and incidental acquisition points to a variety of factors conducive to successful retention of words. The presence of marginal glosses was found to enhance vocabulary retention, when compared to the absence of marginal glosses (Hulstijn, 1992; Hulstijn, Hollander & Greid anus, 1996; Jacobs, Dufon, & Fong, 1994; Watanabe, 1997). Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) present the Involvement Load Hypothesis in the incidental L2 vocabulary learning building on the levels of processing framework. Craik and Tulving (1975) suggested that “what is critical to retention is not simply the presence or absence of semantic encoding (depth of processing; a qualitative construct), but also the richness with which the material is encoded (spread or elaboration of encoding, a quantitative construct)” (pp. 268-294). Craik and Lockhart’s levels of processing theory was challenged by Bad Deley (1978), Eysenck (1979), and Nelson (1977). The main points of criticism were concerned with the following two questions: (1) What exactly constitutes a level of processing, and (2) How do we know that one level is deeper than another? In a response to these questions, Lockhart and Craik (1972) acknowledged that the terms depth and spread/elaboration lack operational definitions and independent indices, and thus that circularity is inherent in the levels of processing approach. They also acknowledged the importance of investigating the effect of encoding tasks and processes in conjunction with the effect of retrieval tasks and processes (pp. 671-684).

### THE INVOLVEMENT LOAD HYPOTHESIS

Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) advanced the Involvement Load Hypothesis for second language vocabulary learning, in which they proposed a motivational-cognitive construct of involvement, comprising three basic components: *need*, *search*, and *evaluation*. The *need* component refers to the motivational, non-cognitive dimension of involvement. *Search* and *evaluation*, as opposed to *need*, are conditional upon the allocation of attention to the form –meaning relationship (R. Schmidt, 1994, pp. 165-210, 2001, pp. 3-32). *Search* refers to “the attempt to find the meaning of an unknown L2 word or trying to find the L2 word form expressing a concept (e.g., trying to find the L2 translation of an L1 word) by consulting a dictionary or another authority like a teacher” (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001, p. 14). *Evaluation*, on the other hand, refers to “the assessment of an appropriate meaning or use of a given word as is prescribed by a specific context” (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001, p. 14). The component of *evaluation* implies “a comparison of a given word with other words, a specific meaning of a word with its other meanings, or combining the word with other words in order to assess whether a word does or does not fit its context”. These three factors have two degrees of prominence (ibid).

**The degrees of the components in the involvement load hypothesis (Mayumi Tsubaki, 2008, p. 178)**

Components	Degrees of involvement load	Explanations
<b>Need</b>	Index 0 (None)	The learner does not feel the need to learn the word.
	Index 1 (Moderate)	The learner is required to learn the word.
	Index 2 (strong)	The learner decides to learn the word.
<b>Search</b>	Index 0 (None)	They do not need to learn the meanings or forms of the word.
	Index 1(Moderate)	The meaning of word is found.
	Index 2(Strong)	The form of word is found.
<b>Evaluation</b>	Index 0 (None)	The word is not compared with other words.
	Index 1(Moderate)	The word is compared with other words in the provided context.
	Index 2(Strong)	The word is compared with other words in self-provided context.

According to Laufer and Hulstijn (2001, p. 14), it is not the case that all of the three involvement factors can be at work simultaneously during a reading or listening task. The combination of these factors with their degrees of prominence comprises involvement load. Hulstijn and Laufer (2001) proposed “the idea of an involvement index, in which the absence of a factor is marked as 0, a moderate presence of a factor equals 1, and a strong presence of a factor signifies 2” (p. 15).

#### **INVOLVEMENT LOAD HYPOTHESIS (ILH)**

Involvement Load Hypothesis has been the subject to various research studies. For example, Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) conduct the study reporting the importance of hypothesis. Among the three components, need was 1 because that learners were required to do the task as a class activity, and they had no search or evaluation index condition. The participants in one group did not look for the meaning because the meaning of the target words was glossed. They did not need to evaluate them against other words. But, their study can be held as an evidence for a partial support to the ILH. Then, they (2001) suggested some empirical support for the task factors need; search, and evaluation that are found in several studies. The findings are as follows:

- Word retention is higher when learners choose the meaning of target words in a text from several synonyms (moderate evaluation) compared to when word meaning is explained by a synonym (no evaluation) (Hulstijn, 1992).
- Using new words in original sentences during a read and retell task (strong evaluation) results in greater word knowledge compared to using the words in unoriginal sentences (no evaluation) (Joe, 1995, pp. 149-158, 1998, pp. 357-377).
- Support for task-induced involvement also comes from studies that compare reading-based tasks to word-focused tasks without reading. (pp. 1-26).

#### **GLOSSES AND TEXT ENHANCEMENT**

Glosses, by definition, are notes that are written in L1 or a simpler form in L2 to facilitate learners' reading. To attract learners' attention, glossed words or information can be boldface typed or underlined (Roby, 1999, pp.94-101). With the provided information next to unknown words, learners know their meanings immediately and proceed with minimum interruption of reading or listening process (Lomicka, 1998; Nagata, 1998). Glosses are viewed as a valuable tool that facilitates reading in a foreign language (Richgels & Hansen, 1984; Watanabe, 1997). They are largely used in materials that textbook writers include potential unknown words or words of low frequency to L2 learners (Davis, 1983, pp. 185-197).

Using glosses on reading and vocabulary learning has advantages. Boldfaced or underlined glosses can make unfamiliar words salient to the learners and lead them to pay more attention to the unknown words, which in turn enhance their vocabulary learning (Jacobs et al., 1994, Kost, Foss, & Lenzini, 1999; Nagata, 1998). The presence of gloss enables learners to look back and forth between the text and target words, which creates multiple encounters of the words to facilitate word retention (Watanabe, 1997, pp. 287-307). Hulstijn (1996) claimed that the effects of L1 or L2 marginal gloss were greater than the effects of dictionary, because learners tended to regard dictionary as the last resort as they didn't want to interrupt their reading or they couldn't find the correct meanings among so many entries in the dictionary. So, marginal glosses can solve the problems of learners' ignoring new words and wrong inference of word meanings (pp. 327-330).

Furthermore, various types of task have been experimented via reading modality of presentation. There are some evidences for the superiority of reading activity as it includes high involvement tasks over low involvement tasks. A research was carried out by Shehade, A (2005) to compare reading with sentence writing on incidental acquisition of ten unfamiliar words. Thereby, the 'sentence writing' group had significantly higher scores on the immediate test and on the delayed test (pp. 13-30). In another study reading was compared with sentence writing and with fill-in the blanks task. Participants were high school learners aged 16. One group read a text and looked up ten unknown words, the second group wrote sentences with the target words, and the third group filled in the target words in given sentences, one word in each sentence. To perform tasks 2 and 3, the groups received a list of the ten target words

with explanations of their meaning. Both on the immediate and the delayed tests, the reading group performed significantly worse than the other two groups. On both tests, the sentence writing condition yielded the highest score (Long, M. H., 1985, pp. 77-99).

### **INCIDENTAL VOCABULARY LEARNING THROUGH LISTENING**

Contrary to the commonality of reading-based vocabulary instruction on the experimentation of ILH, few studies have examined L2 vocabulary acquisition through listening. Brown, Waring and Donkaewbua (2008) examined the rate at which Japanese EFL students learned vocabulary from reading, reading-while-listening, and listening-only. They found the reading-while-listening mode produced the greatest gains (5 of 28 words), and the listening-only mode produced the smallest gains (1 of 28 words) (pp. 136-139). Little (2007) examined whether listening and generative tasks could enhance incidental L2 vocabulary acquisition and retention. The generative model assumes when learners actively generate or elaborate on target items read in a text, better retention occurs as new and known information is integrated (Wittrock, 1974, cited in Joe, 1998, pp. 357-377). Little found listening to and retelling twelve 3-5 minute stories helped high proficiency among Japanese EFL learners who managed to acquire 300 target words in two weeks and it aided in retention over four weeks. He constructed and recorded stories for this purpose because research showed it took less time to learn associated words in a story line of listening context and providing opportunities for recalling enhance acquisition and retention, suggesting the task's qualitative nature rather than intention to learn determines retention (Little, A & Kaoru Kobayashi, 2011, pp. 63-74)

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Participants***

One hundred twenty five EFL learners with age range of 18-23 enrolled in the intermediate level in an Iranian private language school were the participants who were identified as homogeneous group based on the Nelson proficiency test.

#### ***Materials***

##### ***Passages selected for the experiment***

Ten similar reading and listening comprehension passages were chosen from a reading textbook named "Active Skills for Reading" (Neil J. Anderson, 2008) as the course book with 10 target words in every passage. This book provided learners of English with high interest reading passages that included audio CD for listening groups, many of them adapted from authentic sources.

##### ***Tasks selected for the experiment***

Six tasks were used in this study that include:

Task 1: Reading/listening comprehension with marginal glosses

Task 2: Reading/listening comprehension plus fill -in -blanks

Task 3: Reading/listening comprehension with matching questions

Task 4: Reading/listening comprehension with text-reconstruction exercise

Task 5: Reading/listening comprehension with unscramble questions

Task 6: Reading/listening comprehension with composition

#### ***Instruments***

##### ***Nelson test***

A sample of Nelson as proficiency test with 35 items was used to determine the learners' level of proficiency for choosing nearly homogeneous groups.

##### ***Pre-test***

A 50-item multiple-choice vocabulary test was retrieved from [www.elc.thomson.com](http://www.elc.thomson.com). These 50 tested words were chosen quite randomly from 100 target words of treatment passages. Before starting the main study, it was piloted in order to make sure of its applicability and reliability index via KR\_21 formula. Then, it was administered as a pretest to both groups (control and experimental) to capture the initial differences between the groups. This pretest was conducted to ensure the novelty of the words to be learned by the subjects during the treatment period.

##### ***Post-test***

The same pre-test was administered as an achievement post-test after seven weeks of time interval to measure the amount of vocabulary learning by the experimental and control groups. The point should be underscored that the pre-test and post-test were equal in all respects except the arrangement of the target words.

#### *The Target Words*

One hundred target words were selected from ten reading texts, based on three criteria:

1. Assumed unfamiliarity to the participants.
2. Ease of incorporating the words into a narrative describing personal experiences, and
3. Ease of supplying a synonym or a definition in English.

The list of the target words was also submitted to some experienced English teachers for comments on the unfamiliarity to intermediate levels in the Institute.

#### *Procedure*

This study was basically quasi-experimental in design as schematically represented as follows:

G1 (experimental) T1 x T2

G2 (experimental) T1 x T2

G5 (control) T1 T2

T1= pretest

G3 (experimental) T1 xT2

G4 (experimental) T1 x T2

X= treatment

T2=posttest

To implement the design, first sampling was done. In order to select the participants of the study, the researcher administered a standardized Nelson test among 140 students enrolled at Zabansara, an English school in Bojnurd. 125 students could take part in the research, they were selected through stratified random sampling. It should also be noted that their participation was quite voluntary. The result of the Nelson test was used to assign the subjects into five homogenous groups on the basis of the dispersion of scores around the mean. So, the sample was randomly stratified into 25 subjects in each group. It was not plausible to assign the learners into 5 groups of intermediate language learners unless this Nelson test was administered. So, the NELSON test was administered to 140 cases. The mean (13.96) and standard deviation (3.05) for the NELSON test are displayed in Table 1. Based on the mean score plus one and half SD, 125 cases were selected to participate in the main study. They were divided into one group as a control group and four groups as experimental groups. Every group included 25 participants. Then, a 50-item test was retrieved from [www.elc.thomson.com](http://www.elc.thomson.com) to use it as a pretest for diagnostic purpose. The reliability of the test was estimated (0.70) through KR-21 formula.

In an interval of one week after the pretest administration, the treatment took place for ten sessions; two sessions a week, and each session was 60 minutes during which the participants in their respective groups were required either to read or listen to one of the passages. After one week following the treatment, the same pretest was used as posttest to measure the progress.

#### *Control group*

The group members were exposed to an alternatively rendered reading and listening materials thereby they were asked to answer reading/listening comprehension questions (true/false, multiple-choice ...). But the tasks induced no need; students did not feel the need to learn the target words because they could answer the questions without referring to the marginal glosses, and without searching. Because meaning of the target words were glossed for them, they did not search the meaning of new words by looking up the dictionary, and no assessment was run because they did not compare and decide on the meaning of the words in comparison with different words or different senses of the same word. Time for the tasks was 60 minutes. These tasks emphasized on whole understanding of the reading/listening text; therefore, they induced low involvement load for learning new vocabulary. So, the involvement index was 0.

#### *Experimental groups*



The experimental groups were exposed to low and high involvement tasks through reading and listening modalities based on two distinct frameworks displayed in tables 1 and 2 along with detailed explanation as follows:

**1. Experimental groups with low involvement tasks** (reading or listening group with same tasks):

- Two groups of students read and two groups of students listened to the text (for 10 minutes). They, then, were asked to answer true /false reading/listening comprehension questions. The instruction was accompanied by three tasks. As details are presented in table 1, the tasks were true/false, fill-in blanks and matching integrated with glossing, glossing listed with distracters, and glossing with time on task, respectively. The first one, as was experienced with the control group, was characterized by 0 index at all three levels including need, search and evaluation; then equally 0 involvement index.
- As to the second task they were asked to fill in the blanks with the words provided. Contrary to the first type, in this task the levels were characterized differently; need and evaluation each being moderated enjoyed 1 index value since the need to learn the target words was imposed by the task not by the students so involvement index was 1. But if the students felt the need to learn the target words by them not by task the need index would be stronger; index 2. Meanwhile, the task did not address the search level because all the target words were glossed for the students. They did not look for the meaning of new words. Moderate evaluation index is also justified on the ground that the words were compared with other words in context provided by teacher so involvement index was 1. But if the students were to compare the new words with other words in context provided by them, there would be a stronger evaluation index. Altogether, the involvement index was 2.
- The third matching-exercise task which asked the participants to match target words with their definitions, enjoyed moderate need because the need to learn the target words was imposed by the task; no search, because all the target words had been glossed for them, and also no evaluation was addressed since they were not required to compare and decide on the meaning of the words in comparison with different words or different senses of the same word.

*Table 1: The tasks given to the students inducing low involvement load*

Task		Learning Activities and time on task	Need	Search	Evaluation	Involvement Index
1. Reading comprehension questions		Glossed	0	0	0	0
2	1	0	1	Glossed, listed with distracters	2. Comprehension + Blank-filling	
1	0 Words not evaluated at all	0 The meanings of the target words were provided	1 Target words not needed	Glossed Time on task: 60 minutes	3. Matching	

*Note: Total Involvement Index was the result of the sums of the three indexes for each component.*

**2. Experimental groups with high involvement tasks** (reading or listening group with same tasks):

- Two groups of students read and two groups of students listened to the text for 10 minutes. Then, they were asked to answer true/false reading/listening comprehension questions. Similarly, the groups, as displayed in table 2, were exposed to three tasks including text-reconstruction, unscrambling, and composition which they were integrated with glossing, glossing and glossing time on task activities, respectively. ?
- As to the first task, the participants were encouraged to memorize reading/listening texts, and produce a summary using the target words. The task was characterized moderate in terms of need because the need to learn the target words was imposed by the task not by them; search level was absent since all the target words were glossed for the students, and they did not look for the meaning; however, a strong evaluation was required in that the learner had to use the new words in learner-generated contexts. So the task involvement index was equated to 3.

- The second task being concerned with rearranging unscrambled sentences and the third task addressing text composition were very much similar in the respective activities to the first task, and the indices of all three levels (i.e., need, search and evaluation) were 3.

*Table 2: The tasks given to the students inducing high involvement load and the involvement index was 3*

Task	Learning Activities and time on task	Need	Search	Evaluation	Involvement Index
3	2	0	1	Glossed	4.Text-reconstruction
3	2	0	1	Glossed	5.Unscramble
3	2 Words not evaluated at all	0 The meanings of the target words were provided	1 Target words not needed	Glossed Time on task: 60 minutes	6.Composition

## RESULTS

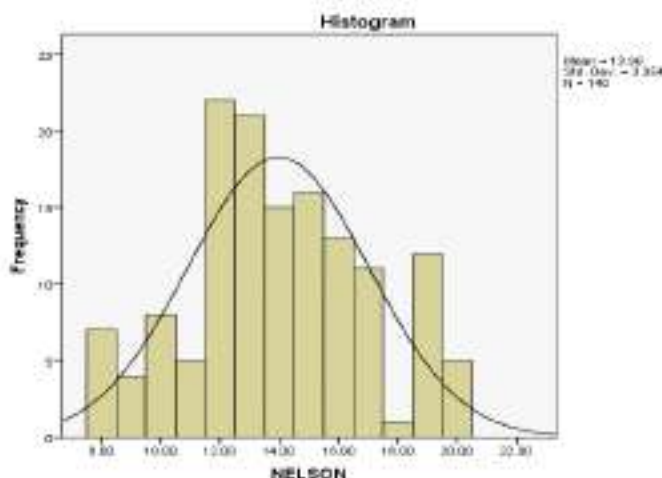
### *Homogenous subject selection*

As descriptively shown in table 3, sampling was statistically conducted out of 140 originally available learners out of which and based on their position on the normal probability curve, the participants whose scores lied between  $\pm$  SD mean score were selected (N=125) being homogenous groups on the basis of the dispersion of scores around the mean.

*Table 3:Nelson test used for homogeneity purpose*

N	Valid	140
	Missing	0
Mean		13.9643
Std. Deviation		3.05445
Variance		9.330

Based on the mean score plus one and half SD, 125 cases were selected to participate in the main study.



### *Testing statistical assumptions*

Four assumptions must be met for an appropriate parametric test, i.e. interval data, independence, normality and homogeneity of variances. The assumption of normality – as displayed in Table 4 – is probed based on the ratios of

skewness and kurtosis over their respective standard errors. If the ratios are within the ranges of  $\pm 1.96$  the data enjoy normal distribution as is the case for the present data. The assumption of homogeneity of variances is reported below when discussing one-way ANOVA results.

Table 4: Normality Test

GROUP		N	Skewness		Normality of Skewness	Kurtosis		Normality of Kurtosis
		Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error		Statistic	Std. Error	
1	PRETEST	25	-0.03	0.46	-0.06	-1.26	0.90	-1.40
	POSTTEST	25	0.03	0.46	0.06	-1.02	0.90	-1.14
2	PRETEST	25	-0.38	0.46	-0.83	-0.04	0.90	-0.05
	POSTTEST	25	-0.56	0.46	-1.21	-0.48	0.90	-0.53
3	PRETEST	25	-0.75	0.46	-1.62	0.38	0.90	0.42
	POSTTEST	25	-0.27	0.46	-0.58	-0.60	0.90	-0.67
4	PRETEST	25	0.04	0.46	0.09	-0.50	0.90	-0.55
	POSTTEST	25	0.44	0.46	0.96	0.39	0.90	0.43
5	PRETEST	25	-0.49	0.46	-1.05	-0.51	0.90	-0.57
	POSTTEST	25	0.28	0.46	0.60	-0.52	0.90	-0.58

#### The pretest statistics

The pretest was administrated to both groups (control and experimental groups). To ensure the participants' homogeneity in terms of vocabulary knowledge prior to the treatment, One-way ANOVA was run to compare the mean scores of the five groups on the pretest. As displayed in Table 5, the mean scores for the five groups are: control (M = 11.92), Reading with High Involvement Tasks (RWHIT) (M = 12.64), Reading with Low Involvement Tasks (RWLIT) (M = 12.56), Listening with Low Involvement Tasks (LWLIT) (M = 12.88) and Listening with High Involvement Tasks (LWHIT) (M = 11.88). Table 5, 6, and 7 show the results of the ANOVA.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics Pretest

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
CONTROL	25	11.9200	2.44813	.48963	10.9095	12.9305	8.00	16.00
RWHIT	25	12.6400	2.46441	.49288	11.6227	13.6573	7.00	17.00
RWLIT	25	12.5600	2.69382	.53876	11.4480	13.6720	6.00	16.00
LWLIT	25	12.8800	2.00666	.40133	12.0517	13.7083	9.00	17.00
LWHIT	25	11.8800	2.38607	.47721	10.8951	12.8649	7.00	15.00
Total	125	12.3760	2.40518	.21513	11.9502	12.8018	6.00	17.00

As displayed in Table 6 the assumption of homogeneity of variances is also met (Levene's  $F = .55$ ,  $P = .69 < .05$ ). Based on these results it can be concluded that the experimental and control groups were homogenous in terms of their ability on lexical component.

Table 6: Assumption of Homogeneity of Variances for Pretest

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.552	4	120	.698

The results of the one-way ANOVA indicate that there are not any significant differences between the mean scores of the five groups on the pretest ( $F = .87$  (4, 120),  $P = .482 > .05$ ). Since  $t$  critical value at 120 df equals 1.98 which is higher than  $F$  value of .87. Then, the groups were not significantly different from each other prior to the treatment.

Table 7: One-Way ANOVA Pretest by Groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	20.288	4	5.072	.873	.482
Within Groups	697.040	120	5.809		
Total	717.328	124			

Furthermore, the Levene Test for equality of means shows that significance value is .698 which is higher than .05. This means that there is no significant difference between the groups prior to the treatment. So the groups are homogenized. In quantitative research, if significant value is smaller than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. So, the probability value (p-value) is calculated:  $P\text{-value} = .698 > \alpha = 0.05 \rightarrow \text{Accept } H_0$

To compare the variances, if we had the same variances, we should use the ANOVA to compare the variances. So, we have:  $P\text{-value} = .482 > 0.05 \rightarrow \text{Accept } H_0$

It means that there is no significant difference in means of the groups in pretest. as indicated in Figure 2.

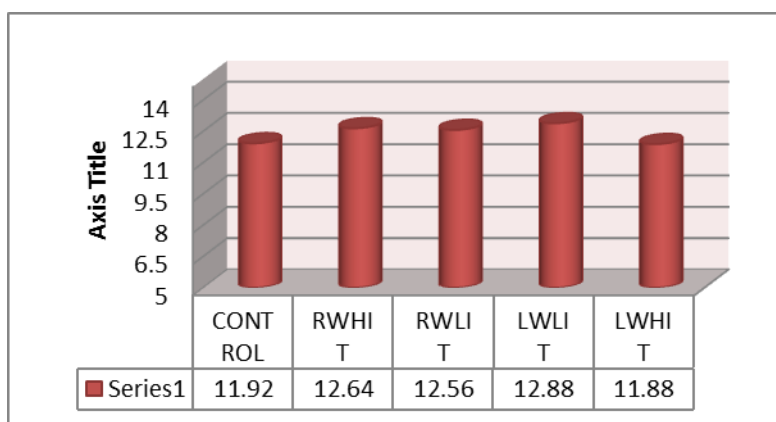


Figure 2: Mean Scores on Pretest

#### The posttest statistics

Similarly, a One-way ANOVA was run to compare the mean scores of the five groups on the posttest in order to probe the effect of low and high reading and listening involvement tasks on vocabulary retention. As displayed in Table 8, the mean scores for the five groups are; control (M = 13.92), Reading with High Involvement Tasks (RWHT) (M = 17.48), Reading with Low Involvement Tasks (RWLI) (M = 15.40), Listening with Low Involvement Tasks (LWLI) (M = 15.24) and Listening with High Involvement Tasks (LWHT) (M = 16.20).

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics Posttest

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
CONTROL	25	13.9200	2.13931	.42786	13.0369	14.8031	10.00	18.00
RWHT	25	17.4800	1.73494	.34699	16.7639	18.1961	14.00	20.00
RWLI	25	15.4000	2.30940	.46188	14.4467	16.3533	11.00	19.00
LWLI	25	15.2400	1.87705	.37541	14.4652	16.0148	12.00	20.00
LWHT	25	16.2000	1.80278	.36056	15.4559	16.9441	13.00	20.00
Total	125	15.6480	2.27984	.20392	15.2444	16.0516	10.00	20.00

As displayed in Table 9 the assumption of homogeneity of variances is also met (Levene's  $F = 1.01$ ,  $P = .40 < .05$ ).

Table 9: Assumption of Homogeneity of Variances for Posttest

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.013	4	120	.403

Table 9 shows the equality of variances in five groups by using Levene Test and the result is that variances in five groups are equal. According to this table significant value is higher than 0.05.

P-value= .403 >  $\alpha$ = 0.05 → Accept H<sub>0</sub>

The results of the one-way ANOVA also indicate that there are significant differences between the mean scores of the five groups on the posttest ( $F = 10.90$  (4, 120),  $P = .000 < .05$ ). This shows a positive result. Therefore, we conclude that the means between five groups are not equal and there is a significant difference between them. Thus the null-hypothesis as low and high reading and listening involvement tasks do not have any significant effect on the improvement on the EFL learners' reading and listening abilities **is rejected**.

Table 10: One-Way ANOVA Posttest by Groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	171.872	4	42.968	10.909	.000
Within Groups	472.640	120	3.939		
Total	644.512	124			

Although the F-value of 10.90 indicates significant differences between the mean scores of the five groups on the posttest, the post-hoc Scheffes tests must be run to compare the groups two by two.

Table 11: Post-Hoc Scheffe's Tests

(I) GROUP	(J) GROUP	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
CONTROL	RWHIT	-3.56000*	.56133	.000	-5.3163	-1.8037
	RWLIT	-1.48000	.56133	.146	-3.2363	.2763
	LWLIT	-1.32000	.56133	.244	-3.0763	.4363
	LWHIT	-2.28000*	.56133	.004	-4.0363	-.5237
RWHIT	RWLIT	2.08000*	.56133	.011	.3237	3.8363
	LWLIT	2.24000*	.56133	.005	.4837	3.9963
	LWHIT	1.28000	.56133	.274	-.4763	3.0363
RWLIT	LWLIT	.16000	.56133	.999	-1.5963	1.9163
	LWHIT	-.80000	.56133	.730	-2.5563	.9563
LWLIT	LWHIT	-.96000	.56133	.572	-2.7163	.7963

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Figure 3 shows the difference between means of groups in posttest.

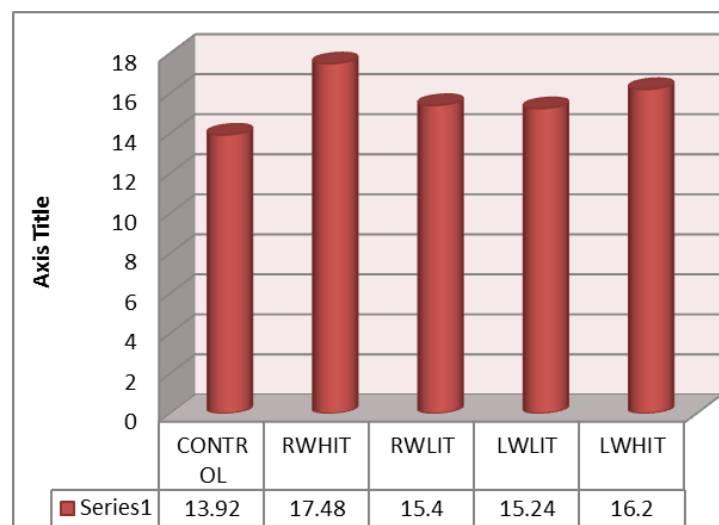


Figure 3: Mean Scores on Posttest

***Testing the first hypothesis***

Based on the results displayed in **Table 11** it can be concluded that:

A: There is a significant difference between the mean scores of the control group ( $M = 13.92$ ) and RWHIT ( $M = 17.48$ ). The reading high involvement tasks group outperformed the control group on the posttest.

B: There is not any significant difference between the mean scores of the control group ( $M = 13.92$ ) and RWLIT ( $M = 15.40$ ).

C: There is not any significant difference between the mean scores of the control group ( $M = 13.92$ ) and LWLIT ( $M = 15.24$ ).

D: There is a significant difference between the mean scores of the control group ( $M = 13.92$ ) and LWHIT ( $M = 16.20$ ). The listening high involvement tasks group outperformed the control group on the posttest.

E: There is a significant difference between the mean scores of the RWHIT group ( $M = 17.48$ ) and RWLIT ( $M = 15.40$ ). The reading high involvement tasks group outperformed the reading with low involvement tasks group on the posttest. Thus the second null-hypothesis as reading comprehension activity with higher involvement load tasks does not result in more vocabulary retention than tasks with lower involvement load **is rejected**.

Accordingly, we can have a result that this method (reading comprehension activity with higher involvement load tasks) caused to increase the vocabulary retention scores.

***Testing the second hypothesis***

F: There is a significant difference between the mean scores of the RWHIT group ( $M = 17.48$ ) and LWLIT ( $M = 15.24$ ). The listening high involvement tasks group outperformed the reading with low involvement tasks group on the posttest.

G: There is not any significant difference between the mean scores of the RWHIT group ( $M = 17.48$ ) and LWHIT ( $M = 16.20$ ).

H: There is not any significant difference between the mean scores of the RWLIT group ( $M = 15.40$ ) and LWLIT ( $M = 15.24$ ).

I: There is not any significant difference between the mean scores of the RWLIT group ( $M = 15.40$ ) and LWHIT ( $M = 16.20$ ).

J: There is not any significant difference between the mean scores of the LWLIT group ( $M = 15.24$ ) and LWHIT ( $M = 16.20$ ). Thus the first null-hypothesis as listening comprehension activity with higher involvement load tasks does not result in more vocabulary retention than tasks with lower involvement load **is supported**.

Accordingly, we can have a result that the effect of this method (listening comprehension activity with higher involvement Load tasks) does not have significant difference with other methods (reading with low involvement tasks and listening comprehension activity with lower involvement Load tasks).

As a result, task-induced involvement has significant effect on vocabulary retention scores as we had an increase in mean scores of the four experimental groups (the mean scores of experimental groups: Reading comprehension activity with higher involvement Load tasks, Listening comprehension activity with higher involvement Load tasks, Reading comprehension activity with low involvement tasks and Listening comprehension activity with lower involvement Load tasks are equal to 17.48, 16.20, 15.40, and 15.24, respectively which are higher than the mean score of control group's posttest that is equal to 13.92).



## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide strong support for the Involvement Load Hypothesis (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001), which claims that tasks with a higher involvement load are more effective for vocabulary retention than tasks with a lower involvement load. Drawing upon the criteria outlined in the hypothesis, the involvement index was 3 for writing, unscrambling, and text-reconstruction tasks, 2 for fill-in-blanks, 1 for matching and 0 for multiple-choice task. Thus, the following prediction was formulated:

*The retention scores of the ten target words will be highest in tasks with high involvement loads (writing, unscrambling, and text-reconstruction), and lower in tasks with low involvement loads (fill-in-blanks, matching, and multiple-choice tasks).*

The results of this study suggest that foreign language pedagogy would benefit from the inclusion of task-induced involvement Load. According to obtained results, tasks with higher involvement Load through reading activity is more effective than conventional methods of vocabulary instruction. Results also show that vocabulary retention in reading skill with high involvement tasks is more than listening skill with high involvement tasks. So, the results of this study are against Vidal (2003) results concerning the priority of listening skill to reading skill, she believed listening is more effective for vocabulary retention. But results of this study emphasize Marcella and Nation (2001) results about high effect of reading for vocabulary retention.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study are in accordance with what has already been achieved by Hustijn and Laufer (2001) in the experiment done among adult EFL learners in Israel and the Netherlands to investigate whether retention of incidental vocabulary acquisition is contingent on amount of task-induced involvement. Their experiments showed that the task of composition with incorporated target words produced best retention results, and the task of reading comprehension plus filling in target words produced better results than task of reading comprehension with marginal glossing for target words.

In conclusion, the Involvement Load Hypothesis is applicable to the incidental vocabulary acquisition, and the study demonstrates that in listening and reading practice, incidental acquisition does occur and task with higher involvement load does produce better retention. But according to the results, incidental acquisition is more in reading activity than listening activity. So, In light of the findings of the present study, we may find some useful implications for vocabulary teaching and learning.

- First, the results of this study suggest that teachers should design a variety of listening and reading-based tasks that can induce the need for the attention to target words to develop learners' vocabulary knowledge.
  - Secondly, teachers could design or select tasks varying in involvement load for different words depending on the type of reinforcement they want to provide.
  - Finally, the findings of this study also suggest that tasks with high involvement loads like writing with new words could serve as an efficient means to increase learners' vocabulary.

## LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Like any other study, some inevitable limitations, which may raise new questions for further researches in the field in the future, were imposed on this study. Several limitations are present in this study like short duration and failure to consider personal variables. All data in this study have been collected from selected intermediate English learners studying at Zaban Sara, one of the best English institutes in Bojnurd, north Khorasan, Iran, so the result obtained by studying this population may not be generalizable to others who differ significantly in terms of factors such as levels of general proficiency or vocabulary size. Since the population utilized for this study is solely limited to Iranian EFL learners, we can mention the most important restriction in this study can be related to the over generalizability factor. In sum, it should be mentioned that:

1. The participants of the study were all females; the result could not be generalized to other groups of language learners.

2. The participants were all non-English major speakers who were learning English as a foreign language in intermediate level, so the result might not be generalized to English major.
3. This project was limited to the study of the effect of reading and listening tasks on vocabulary retention. These tasks might comprise of different parts and integrate different skills.
4. This study only tested the effects of task-induced involvement on learners' passive (receptive) knowledge of words. It is not known how task-induced involvement affects active (productive) recall of new acquired words.
5. The current study investigated the short-term effect of tasks with different involvement loads on vocabulary learning.
6. In practice, it was too difficult to conduct the study empirically with two different language skills; reading-based and listening-based vocabulary tasks.

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### Appendix A

#### Nelson Proficiency Test

**Direction for questions 1-35. Read the following questions carefully. Then select the one item a, b, c, or d which is the best answer and mark your sheet.**

1. I'm going to spend a few days with some ..... of mine, who live in the north of Scotland.  
a. Relatives      b. families      c. neighbors      d. companies
2. The ..... outside the house said "No Parking".  
a. Advice      b. signal      c. label      d. notice
3. He has no ..... of winning.  
a. Occasion      b. luck      c. opportunity      d. chance
4. These people over there are speaking a language I don't understand. They must be .....  
a. Foreign      b. strange      c. rare      d. outlandish
5. I didn't write it. That is not my ..... on the cheque.  
a. Mark      b. letter      c. firm      d. signature
6. The actors have to ..... before they appear in front of the strong lights on television.  
a. Cover up      b. paint up      c. make up      d. do up
7. It's a difficult problem but we must find the answer .....  
a. By one way or other      c. somehow or other  
b. Anyhow or other      d. anyway or other
8. I want ..... immediately.  
a. That this work is made      c. this work made  
b. That this work is done      d. this work done
9. He's used to ..... in public.  
a. Be speaking      b. the speaking      c. speaking      d. speak
10. You can fly to London this evening ..... you don't mind changing planes in Paris.  
a. Provided      b. except      c. unless      d. so far as
11. It's ages ..... him.  
a. That I don't see      c. that I didn't see  
b. Ago I saw      d. since I saw
12. He made me .....  
a. Angry      b. be angry      c. to be angry      d. that I got angry

13. Do what you think is right, ..... they say.  
a. However      b. whatever      c. whichever      d. for all
14. He arrived late, ..... was annoying.  
a. What      b. that      c. which      d. the which
15. His job is ..... yours.  
a. The same that      b. as      c. alike      d. similar to
16. He needs a .....  
a. Few days` rest      c. few days rest  
b. Little days` rest      d. little days rest
17. Do you know ..... the repairs?  
a. To do      b. how to do      c. to make      d. how to make
18. We usually have fine weather..... summer.  
a. At      b. on      c. in      d. while
19. Your work has been .....so we`re going to give you a rise in salary.  
a. Regular      b. well      c. satisfactory      d. available
20. The weather ..... says it will rain tomorrow.  
a. Provision      b. forecast      c. advertisement      d. advice
21. There are a lot of mistakes in this exercise. I`ll have to .....it again with you.  
a. Come through      b. go over      c. repass      d. instruct
22. If there are no buses, we`ll have to take a taxi. We must get there .....  
a. Somehow or other      c. somewhere or other  
b. On one way or another      d. anyway or other
23. .... I read, the more I understand.  
a. The more      b. so much      c. how much      d. for how much
24. .... he does his work, I don`t mind what time he arrives at the office.  
a. So far as      b. so long as      c. in case      d. meanwhile
25. .... entering the hall, he found everyone waiting for him.  
a. At      b. while      c. on      d. in
26. It`s years .....a picture.  
a. That I don`t paint      c. that I didn`t paint  
b. Since I painted      d. ago I painted
27. I found the first question .....  
a. To be easy      b. the easy      c. that it was easy      d. easy
28. .... an empty seat at the back of the bus.  
a. She happened to find      c. she happened to meet  
b. It happened her that she found      d. it happened her that she met
29. It was raining, ..... was a pity.  
a. What      b. that      c. the which      d. which
30. Your car is ..... mine.  
a. The same that      b. as      c. similar to      d. alike
31. I`m going away for a .....  
a. Holiday of a week      c. week holiday  
b. Holiday week      d. week`s holiday
32. Why ..... ? it`s not very important.  
a. To worry      b. worry      c. you are worried      d. you worry
33. I don`t like ..... at me.  
a. Them shouting      b. them shout      c. their shout      d. that they shout
34. It often snows ..... January.  
a. On      b. in      c. for      d. at
35. That`s the best horse in the .....  
a. Career      b. run      c. rate      d. race

*Appendix B*

*Pre Test/ Post Test*

**Direction for questions 1-50. Read the following questions carefully. Then select the one item a, b, c, or d which is the best answer and mark your sheet.**

1. Martin and David disagree a lot, but they are very .....of each other's opinions.  
a. exhausting    b. variable    c. tolerant    d. unique
2. Susan has a great deal of .....for her grandfather and visits him at least once a week.  
a. client    b. affection    c. confidence    d. possession
3. I've been to many neighboring countries, but I've never traveled to any really.....places.  
a. critical    b. aggressive    c. far-off    d. permanent
4. That beach community has become a favorite .....for retired people to live in.  
a. locale    b. facility    c. insulting    d. credit
5. Clara's father has some very .....beliefs. For example, he thinks a woman shouldn't work after she gets married.  
a. sacred    b. conservative    c. decorated    d. enthusiastic
6. The doctor told me to take two pills if the pain .....  
a. modifies    b. intensifies    c. drops    d. digests
7. That island is a ..... for birds. They can live there undisturbed by people.  
a. brisk    b. off-beat    c. sanctuary    d. scene
8. Hotel rates are always significantly lower during the .....  
a. accommodation    b. endurance    c. off-season    d. infection
9. Before 1776, the United States was a .....of Great Britain.  
a. vehicle    b. organ    c. colony    d. genre
10. That top secret information is only .....to the president and his closest advisors.  
a. accessible    b. impossible    c. believable    d. universal
11. Thirty elephants were killed with machine guns in a wildlife sanctuary in a (n) .....incident of illegal hunting.  
a. helpless    b. appalling    c. vulnerable    d. resilient
12. When the ..... for a species of animal for pets is high, they can be sold at high price.  
a. command    b. knowledge    c. demand    d. chore
13. Unable to adapt to the new conditions of life, the dinosaurs became.....  
a. survival    b. significant    c. extinct    d. hectic
14. Because it was against their religion to have children, the believers were slowly .....  
a. disappeared    b. edited    c. organized    d. preserved
15. It is .....that the most endangered animals should be those most carefully protected by laws.  
a. wandering    b. fitting    c. regarding    d. simplistic
16. During the show ....., platform shoes and synthetic fabrics were trendy.  
a. demon    b. shift    c. era    d. vanity
17. In the wild, animals that are ..... are the more vulnerable to attack.  
a. frail    b. sanitary    c. final    d. skeptical
18. There are many ..... questions about cloning, and particularly about human cloning.  
a. ethical    b. scarce    c. careful    d. deficient
19. The American bison nearly went extinct due to unreasonable ..... of it for meat and leather.  
a. exploitation    b. reputation    c. introduction    d. determination
20. In Jurassic park, a scientist ..... dinosaurs from extinction with appalling consequences.  
a. fertilized    b. revived    c. expected    d. invaded
21. Can you use your computer to ..... how much my property in Arizona will be worth in 2015?  
a. calculate    b. scamper    c. relate    d. consume
22. This year I hope to realize my dream of ..... in the sky in a hang glider.  
a. soaring    b. fulfilling    c. figuring    d. reacting
23. Experts say that when a country's money supply is very high, that means that things start to get more expensive and .....is the result.  
a. property    b. inflation    c. flood    d. ritual
24. You should stop smoking! It decreases your ..... and increases your life expectancy.  
a. fear of living    b. cost of living    c. lack of living    d. aim of living
25. The population is so ..... here. An average of ten people lives in each apartment.

- a. graded    b. popular    c. dense    d. distinctive
26. White flowers are a symbol of .....  
a. awareness    b. advance    c. purity    d. logo
27. Because of her ..... Sara would never speak out during class discussions, even if she had good ideas.  
a. modesty    b. progress    c. salary    d. shortage
28. The jeweler .....the wrong name inside my wedding ring.  
a. encountered    b. engraved    c. saved    d. excluded
29. In the spring, flowers .....and show us their beautiful colors.  
a. bloom    b. blast    c. cover    d. exceed
30. Eileen loves to ..... her engagement ring to her jealous friend.  
a. blank    b. reserve    c. show off    d. expel
31. Many .....move their head offices to other countries to reduce the amount of tax they must pay.  
a. Appreciation    b. corporation    c. reduction    d. ingredient
32. For years scientists have tried to .....the meaning of whale songs.  
a. throw    b. increase    c. interpret    d. pressure
33. Our company ..... a cutting- edge computer system last week.  
a. adopted    b. blackmailed    c. committed    d. remained
34. The soaring cost of living is ..... with the rising price of oil.  
a. overdone    b. associated    c. banned    d. cultivated
35. The ..... broadcast two different versions of the new story, which confused the viewers.  
a. aisle    b. media    c. corridor    d. currency
36. It's important to say "thank you" to show that you are ..... for something.  
a. affluent    b. good-looking    c. grateful    d. wholesome
37. John searched ..... for his passport as his flight was getting ready to leave.  
a. intentionally    b. frantically    c. eventually    d. equivalently
38. One of my coworkers was promoted to .....this week.  
a. supervisor    b. extract    c. dependence    d. slogan
39. While some snakes are dangerous, the ones in my garden are completely .....  
a. bitty    b. innocuous    c. reckless    d. addicted
40. When my daughter asked my permission to go abroad, my ..... answer was no, but later I changed my mind.  
a. mild    b. initial    c. capital    d. lethargic
41. The key to healthy diet is to eat a ..... amount of food each day: not too much and not too little.  
a. veteran    b. moderate    c. alternate    d. concentration
42. Aspirin didn't help my headache, but that massage you gave me ..... I feel great now.  
a. did the trick    b. refined well    c. eliminated fast    d. put out soon
43. Cookies and candy have lots of .....that give you quick energy.  
a. fiber    b. carbohydrate    c. portion    d. crop
44. The hula hoop was a ..... in the 1950s and 60s. It was very popular for a time, but then it disappeared.  
a. fad    b. feature    c. medium    d. detail
45. I'm ..... the rising cost of living and the high prices of property in this city! I've decided to move to the country.  
a. satisfied with    b. fed up with    c. dealt with    d. interested in
46. When the ship hit a rock, its ..... of oil spilled into the sea.  
a. veracity    b. cargo    c. gravity    d. balance
47. If we could only ..... the energy of the sun, the world's energy problems would be solved.  
a. harness    b. channel    c. invest    d. commute
48. The stolen car was quickly ..... in the thieves' garage and the parts sold.  
a. ventilated    b. connected    c. dismantled    d. emigrated
49. Medical ..... has developed a cutting-edge method of treating tumors.  
a. pioneer    b. comparison    c. function    d. struggle



50. The criminal's story is supposedly true, but I doubt its .....  
a. attainment      b. concept      c. correctness      d. appealing

**“LIFE IS BETTER THAN DEATH”  
“LOVE IS BETTER THAN HATE”  
A STUDY OF THREE SURREALIST PLAYS BY TOM STOPPARD**

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**ABSTRACT**

Tom Stoppard is a leading figure in contemporary British drama. Since he began writing in the early 1960s, he makes use of various literary movements and trends that were dominant in the first half of twentieth century, both thematically and technically. Some of the plays he wrote in the 1970s; namely, *After Magritte*, *Jumpers* and *Artist Descending a Staircase*, show his deep admiration and diligent employment of the tenets of the surrealist movement. Of special importance to Stoppard was the movement's call for a revolt against all restraints on free creativity and its insistence on freeing man's mind before freeing him socially or politically. The expressed aims of this paper are first to shed light on the points of similarities between Stoppard and the surrealists; and second, to try to show to what extent Stoppard succeeds in employing the ideas advocated by the surrealists in his plays.

**KEY WORDS:** Stoppard, Surrealism, *After Magritte*, *Jumpers* and *Artist Descending a Staircase*,

After the theatrical and financial success of Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1967), he became vocal in the English theatre during the 1970s. Critics generally considered him "the new white hope of British theatre" (Taylor, 1971, p.99). He was in a favorite position at that time, and this may account for his preference to write for the stage rather than for television or radio. Actually he wrote nothing for television between 1968 and 1975. Meanwhile, he wrote only two plays for radio: *Where are They Now?* (1970), and *Artist Descending a Staircase* (1972).

The plays discussed in this paper reflect clearly Stoppard's "distrust for naturalistic drama...[his] constantly breaking the illusion and playing with the audience's expectations" (qtd. in Sheildley, 1994, p.105). Also the same preoccupations of his earlier plays are still manifest in these plays: his fascination with the eccentric and his presentation of various kinds of misleading images- visual or oral- which, according to Stoppard, must always have logical explanations to them. As a matter of fact, he repeatedly stresses the logic that undergirds the structure of his highly theatrical and imaginative plays: "I would think it a personal failure to write a play which is not consistent in every way...They've got to make absolutely logical sense to me" (qtd in Fleming, 1996, p.114). This is what happens in *After Magritte* (1970), *Artist Descending a Staircase* and *Jumpers* (1972). These plays revolve around the themes of the relativity of truth, man's apparent need to divert himself from painful realities, the inability of rational mind to explain man adequately to himself. A more important theme is man's consistent need for love, sympathy and mutual understanding. *Jumpers* and *Artist* are plays about love: love of a woman, of one's vocation, and of life itself. Moreover, these plays reflect Stoppard's exploitation of situations rather than plots: "I have enormous difficulty in working out plots, so actually to use Hamlet, or a classical whodunit...for a basic structure, takes a lot of pressure off me" (qtd in Jenkins, 1987, p. 50). This statement is important, in the sense that it informs us of Stoppard's intention to continue exploiting the plays-within-plays technique, and of his extensive borrowing from others, as in *Artist* and *Jumpers*.

Stoppard first came to know Surrealism in 1963, when he and Anthony C. H. Smith-his friend and would-be agent-were commissioned by John Boorman to write for a television series that would employ a new form of documentary. Stoppard was assigned Surrealism, and the excerpt suggests that the documentary functioned by illustrating Surrealism via examples rather than by talking about it. While this script was probably not filmed, in early 1964 Stoppard did assist Smith and Boorman in a pseudo-documentary series entitled *The New Comers*. The show featured the Smith family and was loosely based on the family's attempt to adapt to a life in a country town. In one of the episodes, Stoppard made a rare acting appearance, as he "played with a violin bow the cords [from which] that suspended a bookcase" (Fleming, 1996, p. 117). Similar surrealist visual jokes appear in *Jumpers* and *After Magritte*.

Although Stoppard persistently insists on the existence of a predetermined pattern and logic in our life, he sometimes gives pronouncements that befit a Neo-Surrealist. In an interview with Hayman (1974), he declares: "What's wrong with bad art is that the artist knows exactly what he's doing" (p.17). On another occasion, he states: "Each day is a sort of new beginning. I rarely sit down knowing what I want to do next. And I feel that it is something of a miracle to get to the end of a play" (Hardin, 1981, p. 157). This may account for the fact that his plays often begin with an image and move towards other images which may remain unresolved either for the characters or the spectators or for both of them, as in *Artist, Jumpers* and *After Magritte*. In other words, Stoppard's plays give the impression that he starts writing without knowing how the strands will eventually come together.

In fact, Stoppard shares with the surrealists many characteristics. He upholds Magritte as his favorite painter, imitating his method of confusing the viewers by presenting many contradictory and incongruous images at the same time. He shares their optimism, faith in life and their confidence in man's ability to participate in life actively.

*After Magritte* is a one-act play, written for the Ambience Theatre Club. As the title suggests, this play shows the impact of Surrealism on Stoppard, for the play's events supposedly occur after a visit to an exhibition by the Surrealist painter René Magritte. It represents an elaboration of the fact that truth changes with perspectives and of the assurance made by Harris, one of the characters in the play, that "There is obviously a perfectly logical explanation for everything" (Stoppard, 1971, p.32). (All subsequent quotations are from this edition.) In commenting on the play's theme, Stoppard points out that *After Magritte* "starts with total illusion," and that the whole play is "an explanation of how illusions came to take place" (Smith, 1977, p.5).

Stoppard uses in this play the idea of the conflict between appearance and reality. As a matter of fact, it is constructed out of the characters' various attempts to account for and interpret two visual puzzles: the bizarre visual puzzle which the play opens with, and the apparently unidentifiable hopping figure, who will prove the innocence of the Harris family from the non-existent crimes they are accused of.

The opening tableau of the play represents a visual puzzle for the audience, and it is more indicative of a modern painting than that of a situation likely to occur in real life. (Hayman, 1979, p.143) The room where the events take place is almost bare, for most of the furniture which includes a bench-type table, a settee, two chairs, a television set, a cupboard and a gramophone (p.9) is piled against the street door in a sort of barricade. The audiences see also an old woman in a bathing cap, lying face upon an ironing board with a white bath towel over her body and a black bowler hat over her stomach. Reginald Harris stands on a wooden chair in order to blow into the lampshade, which is on a pulley, counterweighted by a basket overflowing with different kinds of fruit. He wears his black evening dress trousers underneath his thigh-length green rubber fishing waders. Thelma, dressed in a ball gown, crawls about on all fours, "giving vent to an occasional sniff" (p.10). Through the window, at the back of the stage, the Police Constable PC. Holmes, who will report to Inspector Foot this bizarre spectacle, looks in. Hayman (1977) rightly describes the impact of the opening scene as "very much like that of a Surrealist painting," (p.82) in the sense that one can hardly discern any comprehensible meaning at the first view.

The audiences perceive the opening tableau of the play without attempting to connect cause and effect, just as a painting of Magritte rearranges ordinary objects, such as a rock, a train, a bowler hat in a way that divorces them from their expected roles. The difference between the play and Magritte's painting lies in the fact that the former does not let the visual puzzle go unexplained, whereas the latter admits no such intention. In Magritte's painting

The images must be seen *such as they are*...The mind loves the unknown. It loves images whose meaning is unknown, since the meaning of the mind itself is unknown. The mind doesn't understand its own *raison d'être*, and without understanding that... the problems it poses has no *raison d'être* either. (qtd in Jenkins, 1987, pp. 54-5)

This means the existence of a great gap between reality and appearance, and the relativity of truth and reality, since they are governed by our limited perception of the appearances one sees. Henceforth stem Magritte's continuous efforts to disorient and disturb the viewer by creating tension between two opposing kinds of visual reality. For instance, he paints a man with a bowler hat, whose face is obliterated by a dove. In other words, Magritte builds an atmosphere of tension and menace by explaining little or nothing in his paintings, whereas Stoppard creates a comic effect by offering multiple and opposing explanations for the same visual puzzle.

In the course of the action, the audiences are informed through the characters' actions and dialogues of the reason behind this bizarre spectacle. The furniture has been piled up to clear space for the Harrises who have been practicing for a professional dance competition. The Mother is resting on the ironing board because she has been given a massage by Thelma. Harris blows on the light bulb to cool and then remove it. He has been wearing waders

to replace a bulb in the bathroom while the bath was full. He is bare to the waist, because his dress shirt has to be ironed. Thelma was looking for her shoes, PC Holmes is there because Harris's car has been traced as having parked in a non-parking area in Ponsonby Place in the afternoon.

Stoppard manages to confront his audience with yet another puzzle, verbal this time, immediately after clarifying the first visual puzzle. The Harrises argue about a one-legged man who hobbled up to their car while driving out from the Tate Gallery back home.

Harris and his wife are preoccupied with a debate about the identity of that "bizarre and desperate figure," whom they saw at Ponsonby Place. Each one of the characters gives his opinion of what that figure might be by using language. Thelma thinks him a footballer, with shaving foam on his face and a football in his hand. Harris insists that he was not wearing football shirt but pajamas, had a white beard; was carrying a tortoise, and that he must have been blind, because he had a white stick. Instead of football or turtle, the Mother insists that the mysterious figure is a man who "was playing hopscotch on the corner,...He carried a handbag under one arm, and with the other he waved at me with a cricket bat" (pp.38-9).

Consequently, what the audiences see in *After Magritte*, is an attempt at deduction and the existence of conflicting explanations for everything. In their conversation with Inspector Foot, who arrives there to investigate the meaning of this bizarre spectacle, which he regards as suspicious, immediately after everything is restored to normal, each member of the Harris is adamant that he/she is only reporting what he/she has seen and insists that his/hers is the only right explanation.

What emerges here is that language may sometimes lead to the mounting of confusion and ambiguity rather than to clarification of the situation. Stoppard here shares both the Surrealists and the Absurdist's concept of the unreality of language and its inadequacy as a means of communication. Magritte, the painter, always confuses the viewer, by deliberately distorting the harmony between the visual and written images, and by using the objects in an unexpected Surrealist manner. For instance, he considers labeling the picture of a pipe as 'Pipe' an abuse of language, since no one can touch or smoke it; so, he writes "This Is Not a Pipe," or he inscribes a door under the picture of a horse. Magritte seems to say that reality is not what seems to us, and that language is no rescue in this respect. As far as Stoppard is concerned, the meaning of words depends on a "learned code which continually blinds us to its inherent unreliability" (Jenkins, 1987, p.57). The conversation between Harris and Thelma at the beginning of the play illustrates this well:

*(Harris blows into the lampshade)*

Thelma: It's electric, dear.

Harris: *(mildly)* I didn't think it was a flaming torch.

Thelma: There is no need to use language. That's what I always say. (p. 11)

During his investigation of the meaning of the suspicious spectacle in Harris's house, Inspector Foot accuses the Harrises of being accomplices in a 'non-existent' robbery that was supposed to have taken place in Ponsonby Place. Depending on a 'misleading' report by an old lady who deduces a robbery upon seeing a broken crutch and two metal coins on the pavement, Foot puts forward a hypothesis, explaining what happens. According to his hypothesis, the Harrises are charged with performing without an anesthetic an illegal surgery at Mafeking Villas on a bald-nigger minstrel, and of helping a one-legged man who uses his crutch as a weapon to steal money from the Post Office, for the robbery happened in the same place where Harris parked his car.

Foot's insistent search for evidence to substantiate his hypothesis about the supposed double crime committed by the Harrises has great ironical implication, for it turns out later that Foot himself is the bizarre figure who occasions much dissension between Harris and Thelma.

The end of the play reflects Stoppard's obsession with working events out to their logical conclusion, which would eventually pervade all his plays. Indeed, although Stoppard has eschewed linear cause-to-effect realism in his highly imaginative plays for theatre and radio, he has repeatedly stressed the logic that underlies them.

As we shall see, the same method will be repeated in *Artist* and *Jumpers*. As audience, we come to the conclusion that the apparent surrealistic absurdities of the play's action are not wholly arbitrary or accidental; in fact, they are confined to a prearranged pattern in spite of Stoppard's insistence that he does not know how his genius works. Commenting on Stoppard's tendency to construct his plays, however absurd and surrealistic their actions are, Billington (1987) points out:

What knocks the play on the head for me is that Stoppard never really rejoices in the absurdities of family life. Stoppard is more orderly, and consequently he misses some of the fun of the arbitrary, the accidental, the unforeseen, the irrelevant which gives life to drama. (p.90)

Inspector Foot deduces from the characters' apparently contradictory versions of what they have seen that it was he who hobbled up to Harris's car. During the blackout, as Harris extracts the bulb, Foot tells us that he left his car outside his house in Ponsonby Place one night and woke up late in the following morning. Upon seeing a car pulling away from the only parking space in the road, Foot stopped shaving, rushed into the street, seized his wife's bag and parasol which he failed to open, and, in his haste to put on his pyjamas, he put both feet into the same leg. In other words, the whole puzzle about the burglar was the result of the Old Lady's misleading report about the scattered coins on the pavement, because leaving unconsciously the handbag open, Foot scattered the money all his way back to his home. (pp. 45-6)

When the light comes on again, the audiences see the characters in yet, another bizarre spectacle, which is as grotesque as the earlier ones. Unable to interpret it, Holmes recoils in paralysis. The scene runs as follows: The Mother stands on one bare foot only on a wooden chair, playing the tuba; Foot is standing on one foot, wearing sunglasses, and eating a banana; Harris, blindfold, is standing on one leg and counting to test Foot's hypothesis that a blind man cannot stand on one foot; and Thelma is crawling around the table sniffing and searching for a needle to mend her evening dress.

Beyond this, Stoppard hardly provides information on the characters themselves. It is as if he reports to us a series of images he has seen in one of modern painting galleries. In other words, the characters lack psychological depth. For instance, we do not know anything about Thelma and Harris except their interest in attending parties, about Foot except his love of details and precision, about The Mother except her enthusiasm to play the tuba, one of the favorite objects in the paintings of Magritte. Hearing that tubas are figured in his exhibition in the Tate Gallery, the Harrises decide to take her there, thus initiating the whole chain of subsequent events in the play.

Accordingly, the play deals with what happens after the Harrises visit Magritte's exhibition. It further shows to what extent Stoppard has exploited Magritte's style of painting in the dramatic construction of the play.

It is not surprising to know that Magritte is one of Stoppard's favorite artists. In fact, what attracts Stoppard towards Magritte is an affinity with the painter's sense of humor, and an interest in his argumentative insistence that object and image are not identical, that similarity can never be considered a proof of identity, and that there is no logic of causality to map the relations between things, images and names. (Hayman, 1979, p.144) Accordingly, Stoppard, like the Belgian painter, questions the nature of perception and our ability to perceive clearly the images presented to us. To both of them, truth is relative and constantly distorted by our personal desires and prejudices. Commenting on Stoppard's application of Surrealism, Brassell (1985) points out:

Following Magritte's theory, Stoppard creates a pair of three dimensional, quasi-surrealistic canvases in which there is a minimum of movements...and the visual arrangement of setting takes absolute primacy. The description of the controversial figure in Ponsonby Place has a certain surrealistic quality too. (pp. 100-101)

Like most surrealistic painters, Stoppard rearranges the ordinary objects in the most unexpected way. In the visual as well as verbal puzzles he presents in *After Magritte*, he draws his audience's attention to daily life objects which lost their appeal and ceased to attract our attention. In this way, he asks them to rediscover things around them in order to view them in new and unexpected ways. Consequently Stoppard often creates a work of art which escapes the possibility of having any direct rational meaning. Hence, its appeal to the subconscious and imagination rather than to the perception and senses. This accurately befits the surrealist doctrine which considers the subconscious and imagination as the sources of the artist's inspiration.

Stoppard's next play after *After Magritte* is *Jumpers* (1972). As a play, *Jumpers* achieved what *After Magritte* failed to: to affirm Stoppard's dramatic genius and ensure him a wide literary fame as a first-rate modern dramatist of everlasting importance. *Jumpers* is basically a play about love, an assertion of man's need for love, humility and charity in a mechanistic world. In this respect, as Cahn puts it, the play represents a "positive step out of the disjointed world of the tradition of the absurdists" (Ibid.). Love, which is the central Surrealist theme, is presented in



variety of forms; love of man for woman, of man for his vocation, and of God for man. Also, there is the love of power over others, which is presented through Archie.

As a surrealist play, *Jumpers* celebrates the world of the irrational, of mystery, of the unexpected within man's life. Stoppard, in reminiscence of *After Magritte*, teases his audience's expectations with various perplexing visual puzzles, which are logically explained afterwards. In this respect, Jonathan (1975) points out that "*Jumpers* is a mildly surrealist farce which plays with confusions and cross purposes like Stoppard's *After Magritte*. [It] involves switches between reality and various kinds of illusion" (p. 5). The play opens with two visual tableaux, in which we see, in a pseudo-surrealist mode, a brilliant juxtaposition of various incongruous and disparate realities. Hayman (1979) makes a comparison between the metaphysical poets and Stoppard's dramatic style, in the sense that their literary output contains "the most heterogeneous ideas yoked by violence together" (p.141). Violence, as Hayman points out, was to become a policy for the Surrealist. André Breton says: "For me, the only real evidence is a result of the spontaneous extra-lucid and defiant relationship suddenly sensed between two things which common sense would never bring together" (Ibid). Stoppard's plays, as a matter of fact, are full of relationships, among other things, which common sense would never have brought together.

The first five pages of the play feature a series of puzzling tableaux. Archie, unseen, is a master of ceremonies at Dotty's party. He announces the reappearance of the much-missed and much-loved star of a musical comedy, Dorothy Moore. This is followed by a series of incoherent songs by Dotty, who describes herself as "unreliable and neurotic" (Stoppard, 1972, p.17). (All subsequent quotations are from this edition). After that, the audiences see a dazzling spectacle of the poker-faced secretary performing a striptease on a swing hanging from a chandelier. She moves like a pendulum in and out of the spotlight, and each time she appears, she takes off some clothing. Another character on the stage, Crouch, is bewildered by what is going on, because "*every time he turns downstage, the secretary is in view behind him, and every time he looks upstage, the gap is empty*" (Ibid, p.18).

The second tableau is a vivid theatrical spectacle. It begins with Archie announcing the appearance of the "INCREDIBLE-RADICAL!-LIBERAL!!-JUMPERS!!," (Ibid) four of which come from either side of the stage, jumping, tumbling, and somersaulting. What is important is that when we first hear of the word 'Jumpers,' it is coupled with the name of a political party and it soon acquires an overtone of expediency. 'Jumpers,' in fact, acquires multiple meanings as the play progresses. The jumpers form a human pyramid and stand on each other's shoulders in a 3-2-1 formation. Stoppard says that "the initial impetus for the play...is an entirely visual image. ...the image of a pyramid of gymnasts, occupying the stage, followed by a gunshot, followed by the image of one gymnast being shot out of the pyramid and the others imploding on the hole" (Hayman, 1977, p.5). Dotty looks down in surprise as the dying man pulls himself against her legs, shedding blood on her white dress.

These events force us to wonder what an extraordinary household George's is! This is done deliberately in order for the audience to prepare themselves for any theatrical eccentricities that may confront them. In fact, the play, as we shall see, ends just as it begins, with a seemingly dream-like and surreal sequence of events. Therefore, the audience must keep in mind that Dotty and George's world is not an ordinary one.

The ideas of the play revolve around issues concerned with moral philosophy, which Professor George, a deist in Archie's materialistic university which serves as a microcosm for the new British society, will be debating in a departmental symposium. Theatrically, the play is about a professor dictating a lecture to his secretary while, in the next room, his wife is trying to hide the corpse of the murdered jumper.

Ironically, while George is trying to bring order to his chaotic world through philosophy, the real world that surrounds him appears "crazily surreal in its bizarre and dream-like progress" (Morwood in Bareham, 1990, p.126). Moreover, as a character, George is sometimes comically presented. For example, he wears unmatched socks, tries to drink from a tumbler full of pencils, and answers the front door, in reminiscence of *After Magritte*, with "*a bow-and-arrow in one hand and a tortoise in the other, his face covered in shaving foam*" (p.43).

George explains that the acrobatic troupe contains "a mixture of the more philosophical members of the university gymnastics team and the more gymnastic members of the Philosophy School" (p.51). As a young man, Stoppard must have come across many cultural trends and philosophical movements in the seventies and the play's characters



testify to this. The members of the university are combination of “logical positivists...linguistic analyst...Benthamite, Utilitarians, Kantians...Empericists...[and] Behaviorists” (pp. 50-51).

The jumpers are led by Archie, a jack of all disciplines and the power behind the new Rad-Lib Government. He is a man of no convictions whose actions spring wholly from elastic pragmatism. Believing goodness and truth to be unknowable, he condones whatever is expedient. Duncan McFee opposes Archie’s epistemological relativism, believing that “good and bad aren’t actually *good* and *bad* in any absolute or metaphysical sense,” for he actually believes them to be “categories of our own making, social or psychological conventions which we have evolved in order to make living in groups a practical possibility” (p. 48).

Therefore, in Archie’s world, where good and bad do not exist, McFee’s conventions are very important, because they enable the gymnasts to jump to any number of philosophical, psychological and political positions.

However, in the second Act, Stoppard chooses to disclose the fact that the murdered jumper, who was shot out of the pyramid in the opening scene, was indeed McFee himself. At the end of the same act, the audiences are told by Crouch of McFee’s decision to leave the university, break off a clandestine affair with George’s secretary and to enter a monastery. This happens after McFee’s recognition of the possibility of altruism, the existence of good and evil and, in effect, of moral absolutes in our lives.

When Stoppard was asked if the play was a political one, and why he avoided discussing political issues explicitly, he insisted that all political questions hinge on more basic questions of morality: “*Jumpers* obviously is not a political play, nor is it a play about politics, [or] ideology...The play reflects my belief that political acts have a moral basis to them and are meaningless without them” (Stoppard, 1974, p. 12).

This means the crushing down of any position the jumpers leap to, since they remove the premise that moral absolutes do exist. In this way, Stoppard is siding with George against Archie who holds a materialistic view of life which is considered by Stoppard an insult to the human race. Stoppard asserts here man’s need for things other than materialism and rational thinking in his life.

In addition, George’s long speeches throughout the play reveal his certainty, not only of the existence of moral absolutes but of a realm of a spirit which transcends both the Darwinian view of man as animal and the Marxist view of man as a material.

Moreover, George does not dismiss humanity as valueless, nor does he offer a humanistic view that mankind is the measure of all values. Rather, George sees human imperfection and, in this way, reiterates Stoppard’s belief in the “perfectibility of society, and the concomitant of that belief is a recognition of its imperfection. That’s why I am not a revolutionary person, I don’t believe that the painful progress towards the perfect society happens in revolutionary spasms. I think it is a gradualist thing of growing enlightenment, I believe in the contagious values” (qtd in Roberts, 1978, p. 86).

This optimism which Stoppard advocated is what links him to the surrealists. He thinks hopefully of the future, of man’s ability to transform his life to something better. It is not necessary, for him, to wait for revolutions and political actions to free man. Freedom, to Stoppard, is man’s responsibility. Consequently, man is not a puppet in an absurd universe; he is an active participant, fully aware of his limited abilities as a fallen creature, yet capable of exploiting what is available in order to improve his living conditions.

George is a staunch believer in God and in moral absolutes which he finds embarrassing nowadays. His values cannot survive in the universe where quarrelsome jumpers can land on the moon, and churches are converted into gymnasiums. Stoppard also believes in the existence of an ultimate external reference for all our actions, that our view of good behavior must not be relativist and that it is wrong and unacceptable to rely on social conventions in our judgment of what is good and bad. This leads him to the conclusion that if “our behavior is open to absolute judgment, there must be an absolute judge” (qtd in Delaney, 1990, p.47). The play, then, seems to be a celebration of the spirit, of moral instinct and of a metaphysical realm within the modern world.

The other character, through which Stoppard presents his own concept of the world’s irrationality and love, is Dotty. Dotty’s role is sometimes wrongly dismissed as unimportant, especially if we regard the weighty philosophical arguments in the play. However, hers is a vital one, which helps to illuminate and emphasize the dilemma of modern man. She is the first character to appear on stage and has the last words in the play. Although, Dotty is mentally disturbed, as she cannot distinguish one moon song from the other, she occupies a unique position in the structure of the play for a number of reasons. First, she forms the centre of emotional interest for three male characters in the play; second, she plays a special role in the murder investigation; and finally, she is to become the medium through

which the impact of moon landing is illustrated. Throughout the play, Stoppard uses the idea of madness associated with the full moon in his portrayal of her disintegrating world.

Her work as a musical comedy performer affects her view of things: she is mindlessly optimistic and romantic. Her beliefs centre symbolically on “that old-fashioned, silvery harvest moon, occasionally blue, jumped over by cows and coupleted by Junes, invariably shining on the one I love” (p.41). For her, people are not good or bad, but eternally hopeful, full of limitless possibilities. George first thinks of her when she enters his class as the “hyacinth girl” (p.33), a symbol of hope and renewal in T. S. Eliot’s “The Waste Land.” (Morwood in Bareham, 1990, p. 127)

Presently, Dotty realizes the shallowness of her beliefs in this world of uncertainties and crises. Crump (1979) analyses Dotty’s plight penetratingly. He says that Dotty represents man’s nature, uncomplicated and unrefined by intellect, emotions or appetites. She is an entertainer and spends most of the time in her bedroom. She has been psychologically traumatized by the triumph of rational materialism in the modern world, represented by the activities of the Rad-Lib Party on the one hand, and by the technological achievements such as moonlanding on the other. (p.359) Actually, Stoppard wants to indicate, through the disastrous incident which takes place on the moon, the impact of technology on man’s spiritual values. Dotty’s suffering is deepened by what happens on the moon. The spaceship is so damaged that only one astronaut is capable of returning to earth. Captain Scott and Astronaut Oates struggle until Oates is knocked to the ground to be last seen by millions of television viewers as that “tiny receding figure waving forlornly from the featureless wastes of the lunar landscape” (p.22).

This incident destroys the planet’s aura of romance and poetry. The moon becomes a land of desolation and ugliness. Technology has defiled Dotty’s romantic ideals, and her metaphysical world is left in fragments. In a passionate speech, she laments the demise of moon in poetry, citing Keats, Shelly, and Milton (p.41), and, as a university graduate, she tearfully reflects that moon landing has made the world seem little and local and has undermined the absolutes men previously took on trust. She is appalled by this vision of the moral anarchy that she believes will be unleashed. (p.75)

Dotty’s realization of man’s evil and the inadequacy of her optimism should not be confused, Delaney (1990) affirms, with the existentialist despair that life is meaningless. Her collapse into insanity signifies the persistence of emotional and spiritual needs, which seem irrational when viewed from a sane and materialistic perspective. She longs for something incredible rather than credible. She wants to believe in God, the soul, or right and wrong, absolutes which the jumpers refuse to believe in. (p.51) Her blight thus corresponds partially to that of modern man, who is in constant search for means to function in a grim and chaotic world, from which the spiritual consolations of the past have been withdrawn.

The moments of the most intense feeling in the play are those in which she pleads for George’s emotional support that might make her life worth living. It is worth mentioning here that *Jumpers* is the first of Stoppard’s plays to explore human relationship in any depth. For example, Dotty and George make convincing, though unsuccessful, attempts to come at with each other. George, whose lecture tries to prove that man is good or bad but not indifferent, fails Dotty and remains inhumanely indifferent to her feelings and pains.

Moreover, Dotty’s involvement with George, Bones and Archie signifies three types of personal relations, from which one may find some emotional support and understanding. This also represents, as Crump (1979) suggests, “three stages in the historical development of the relationship between man and woman,” in the sense that George offers traditional married love, Bones offers idealistic and romantic love while Archie offers merely physical relationship of the modern type. (p. 360)

Dotty also forms, along with the other female character, the secretary, part of the puzzling reality the men try to interpret. Both women play scenes of physical exposure. Stoppard, as a surrealist artist, invests woman with an air of enigma, which like the world, defies man’s rational thinking and scientific approaches. She is part of the irrationality of the world, of its mystery. In this way, she is a true surrealist heroine.

The play ends with a Coda, which is dramatically important, for it recapitulates the themes of the play. As audience, we see in a bizarre dream form the departmental symposium, George’s failure to bring order to his chaotic world, to help Clegthrope in his ordeal, and also the murder of Clegthrope. The Coda carries out McFee’s prediction: “I have

seen the future...and it's yellow" (p.80), in clear reference to the Jumpers' yellow uniform. It is Archie's world, not George's; a world of meaninglessness and chaos. Billington (1987) rightly recognizes that *Jumpers* demonstrates that "a world that denies the metaphysical absolutes of good and evil, that sunders any tolerance of the irrational, that subverts moral sanctions...will fall into chaos" (p. 87).

Archie interrupts George's attempts to confirm the values he believes the world should hold, insisting:

Do not despair-many are happy...more eat than starve, more are healthy than sick...and one of the thieves was saved...vast areas are unpolluted; millions of children grow up without suffering deprivation...and millions, while deprived and cruelly treated, none the less grow up...Wham, bam, thank you Sam. (p. 87)

Archie's statement represents an acceptance of the status quo, a reconciliation with the state of absurdity that Beckett has dramatized. Nevertheless, Archie is not pessimistic about the future, as he urges us to see only the good in life, for there is little use in dwelling on the negative aspects. Archie's speech vindicates the most crucial theme of the play: that mankind is not simply a passive victim in the world, but can be an active participant. Our world is full of miseries and bad things, the play suggests, but man's task is not to submit or wait endlessly for someone to save him, he must create his own world.

Stoppard, through George, Clegthroe and McFee, is protesting against such a world vision. George's speeches represent a reaction against modern man's denial of all values and are affirmation of the belief that something within us makes us human, something which makes us believe in goodness and beauty. Clegthroe was killed because of his decision to shift from agnosticism and of his insistence on "find[ing] room for man's beliefs" (p.84). Archie orders Clegthroe's killing because he cannot tolerate the intrusion of spiritual values into his bleak world order. Those characters' actions assert that man is not a mechanical object in this world, without heart to feel and a soul to yearn. Man must move beyond materialism and must go in search for spiritual realms, for the irrational. As a matter of fact, irrationality stamps us as human. So, the play, as a whole, insists on the innate goodness in man, that he must be hopeful and active in this world, however bleak it may seem.

*Artist Descending a Staircase* (henceforth *Artist*) was broadcast in the same year as *Jumpers* (1972). This play is considered Stoppard's radio masterpiece, although he undervalues it, describing it as merely a "dry-run," (Hardin, 1981, p.156) for ideas that will appear in his stage play *Travesties* (1974). However, *Artist* turns out to be one of Stoppard's most highly praised works. As in all his other radio plays, Stoppard exploits the opportunities the radio, as a medium of dramatic action, offers, to the extent that much of the play's meaning resides in the radio performance, and cannot be captured on stage, on screen, or even in print; it depends heavily on sounds and our proper explanation as to what they mean.

The play addresses itself to many crucial issues in modern art which again reflects Stoppard as that relentless dramatist who never tires of moving endlessly from one point to another in his plays, hence his plays' everlasting importance. In *Artist*, Stoppard repeats the same methods used in *Jumpers* and *After Magritte*, that is of presenting a group of characters whose interpretations of the plays' puzzles, audible this time, are as different as their personalities and personal predilections. Stoppard, in this respect, always insists that his plays represent:

A series of conflicting statements made by conflicting characters, and they tend to play a sort of infinite leapfrog. You know an argument, a refutation, the rebuttal of the refutation, then a counter-rebuttal, so that there is never any point in this intellectual leapfrog of which I feel that is the speech to stop it on, that is the last word. (Stoppard, 1974, pp. 6-7)

The characters in *Artist* express different viewpoints regarding the problem of artist innovation, freedom, love, truth, all along with other crucial issues the play touches, such as the 'usefulness' of the artist to his society, the impact of literary works on society or whether the artist has the ability to change his society, and who is the artist. As Donner explains to Martello, looking back on their days in Paris of the World War I, all art, whether rational which celebrates reason, history and logic, or their own "anti-art of lost faith...[became] the same insult to a one-legged soldier and the one-legged, one-armed, one-eyed regiment of the maimed"(Stoppard, 1973, p. 27). (All subsequent quotations are from this edition.) This view clearly indicates the state of affairs after World War I: everything became meaningless and an object of ridicule including art itself when measured against the atrocities of the war.

In this sense, *Artist* is a serious play that makes a shift in Stoppard's artistic tendencies. After denying a direct involvement in the socio-political preoccupation of his time, Stoppard now admits that "there is no such thing as 'pure' art-art is a commentary on something else in life...I think that art ought to involve itself in contemporary

social and political history as much as anything else” (qtd in Roberts, 1978, p. 84). In this way, *Artist* is a commentary on the literary and artistic tendencies that dominated Europe in the period between 1914 and the time of writing the play, i.e., 1972.

In *Artist*, characters adopt various literary trends which range from realism to surrealism. Beauchamp, one of the three artists, who carries the central debate in the play, busies himself with tonal art, a surrealist tape-recording of apparently unrelated and frequently unidentifiable sounds. To Beauchamp, the mind is a tablet upon which has been inscribed the manifestoes of realism, and that man is capable of new experience if his means of expression are liberated. For him, “Art consists of constant surprise. Art should never conform. Art should break its promises. Art is nothing to do with expertise: doing something well is no excuse for doing the expected” (p. 42).

In this way, Beauchamp is a true Surrealist: he believes that man must liberate himself first, because only through this he will be able to rediscover things around him, as this liberation will provide him with new means of expression. His art will be a series of surprises for the viewer as well as the reader. In short, he must always look for the unexpected and the hidden.

Donner, the other artist in the trio, holds the opposite point of view. In his youth, he was attracted to Avant-gardism, the movement of experimentation and surprise, but he is now engaged with realism, with what the eyes see. He tells Beauchamp: “I have returned to traditional values, that is where the true history of art continues to lie, not in your small jokes” (p.22). Donner, then celebrates those literary forms we have labeled as Realistic. He will do the expected. He believes that, by conforming to the expectations of every man, he has rediscovered the criterion which decides the value of the work of art and also the link between art and life. Thus, his works become an imitation of life itself, i.e., nothing unexpected.

Martello criticizes both his friends’ opinions on art. For him

Painting...is a technique and can be learned, like playing the piano. But how can you teach someone to *think* in a certain way?-to paint an utterly simple shape in order to ambush the mind with something quite unexpected about that shape by hanging it in a frame and forcing you to see it, as it were, for the first time. (p.39)

This recalls the surrealists’ belief that anyone can be an artist once he is liberated. Paul Eluard says that anyone can be a poet, since imagination and the subconscious are characteristics we all share. This also reminds us of Duchamp’s “ready-mades,” and his assertion that any object can be an artistic object by the simple choice of the artist; that is to choose objects from our daily life, put them in a frame and force the viewer to look at them in a new way.

Through Martello, Stoppard uses once again the idea of ‘ambush’ to describe those moments of discovery and revelation in man’s life. Stoppard, as a surrealist, tends to arouse his audience’s expectations in a certain direction, then he surprises them from another. Significantly, he describes his own plays as advancing through a “series of small, large, and microscopic ambushes- which might consist of a body falling out of a cupboard, or simply an unexpected word in a sentence” (Stoppard, 1974, p.6). Martello is the most important character in the play. He often uses words and phrases unexpectedly. He once says: “...my brain is on a flying trapeze that outstrips all possibilities of action. Mental acrobatics, Beauchamp- I have achieved nothing but mental acrobatics-*nothing!*- whereas you, however wrongly and for whatever reason, came to grips with life at least this once, and killed Donner” (p.16). The fun that underlies these statements makes us, Sammelles (1988) suggests, take a second look at language. It means that Martello uses clichés to hang up language in a frame, forcing us to see it, as it were; for the first time. (p.30) In fact, the comic exchanges among the three artists help to show us that talk is inconclusive, evasive: it creates confusion, not clarity. The following passage, for example, entertains us by leading us astray:

Donner: I think, in a way, edible art is what we’ve all been looking for.

Martello: Who?

Donner: All of us!- Breton!-Ernest!-Marcel-Max-you-me remember how Pablo used to shout that the war had made art irrelevant?-Well-

Martelo: Which Pablo?

Donner: What do you mean which Pablo?- *Pablo!*

Martello: What, that one-armed waiter at the Café Suisse! (p. 26)

In this audible scene, as listeners, we tend to take Pablo for Pablo Picasso, because we depend in our understanding on hearing only. The play, as a whole, abounds in such audible illusions, especially if we take into consideration that most of the events in the play are the old men's memories. They usually cannot remember the exact names of places or persons.

The play, furthermore, shows Stoppard as being influenced by the surrealist artist, Marcel Duchamp, who was known in America long before the Europeans paid him any heed. He was discovered by the British towards the end of his life. The first major Duchamp exhibition in Europe was held at the Art Council in Britain, in 1966. During the exhibition, BBC Television showed a film about him entitled 'Rebel Ready-Made'; and the Art Council issued a catalog including nearly all his works. Guralnick (1990) suggests that Stoppard might have visited this exhibition, because this play reveals, among other things, his extensive knowledge of Duchamp, and that he developed "so preternatural affinity with [Duchamp] that even the play's least assuming details have demonstrable connections to the artist" (p.291).

The title of the play echoes Duchamp's "Nude Descending a Staircase," one of the most famous paintings in the twentieth century. This painting shows Duchamp's experimentation with motion while the Cubists and every other modern painter had abandoned the subject. Duchamp also sensed the contemporary fascination with machinery. For nearly all his life, he was so intensely modern that much of his work eluded and outraged even the avant-garde. Moreover, Stoppard's title implies that Duchamp is the "giant who casts in the shadow those pygmies Beauchamp, Martello, and Donner," who are nothing themselves if not "versions of Duchamp himself, cubistically fragmented" (Ibid). Indeed, the whole play is in essence a translation of Duchamp's famous painting. For, just as the painting is a portrait of a nude who emerges from the interplay of geometric shapes that attempt to evoke her, the play is a portrait of an artist, Duchamp, who emerges from the interplay of innumerable allusions to his life and work.

Beauchamp, in particular, resembles Duchamp. Like Beauchamp, Duchamp devoted himself for decades to eccentric projects, such as motorized optical experiments and miniaturized production of his major works. In addition, he turned his attention to chess, eventually publishing a book on the subject and competing in international tournaments. Painting, Duchamp contended, bored him: he was wary of art that appealed to the eye instead of the mind. He once said: "I am interested in ideas- not merely the visual products. I want painting once again to be in the service of the mind" (qtd in Roth, 1973, p. 463).

In this way, he is very much like Beauchamp, who defends his recordings saying: "I am trying to liberate the visual *image* from the limitation of visual *art*. The idea is to create images-pictures-which are purely *mental*...I think I'm the first artist to work in this field" (p.36).

Furthermore, Beauchamp's ludicrous tapes of ping-pong recall Duchamp's "musical work," which he produced with John Cage in Toronto in 1968. This work consists of a chess game played on a board that had been wired for sound. Even Beauchamp's recordings of silence evoke Cage and Duchamp, as it is evident from one of Duchamp's provoking pronouncements:

Happenings have produced into art an element no one had put there; boredom. To do a thing in order to bore people is something I never imagined! And that's too bad, because it's a beautiful idea. Fundamentally, it's the same idea as John Cage's silence in music, no one had thought of that. (qtd. in Guralnick, 1990, p. 292)

The correspondence among Duchamp, Martello, and Donner is also interesting. Martello's "mental acrobatics" remind us of Duchamp's insistence on not taking his artistic endeavors- though they often cause critical uproar-too seriously (Richter, 1965, p.87) Besides, Martello's attempt to create "a wooden man with a real leg"(p.32) mirrors Duchamp's proposal to create a number of projects that earned the name of art, purely by being impossible to create. (Ibid., pp. 89-90) More important, Martello's bust of Sophie, the only female character in the play-with its hair of ripe corn, teeth of pearls, feathers upon her swan-like neck- recalls Dali's 'Ruby Lips,' a work that "takes literally the romantic cliché of lips like rubies and teeth like pearls"(Guralnick, 1990, p. 293).

Donner's curious proposal to make art edible is by sculpting a Venus de Milo in sugar or a thinker in salt. (p.26) his sugar art alludes directly to Duchamp's wooden birdcage filled with sugar cubes sculpted from marble-a work that amazes us as unexpected. Finally, Donner's interest in "justify[ing] a work of art to a man with an empty belly," recalls Apollinaire's predication that "it will be the task of an artist as detached from aesthetic preoccupations, and as



intent on the energetic as Marcel Duchamp, to reconcile art and the people” (Guralnick, 1990, p. 293). Donner is also the only character in the play who refers to Duchamp directly, when he quotes him, saying: That was Marcel...I think he had talent under all those jokes. He said to me, ‘There are two ways of becoming an artist. The first way is to do the things by which is meant art. The second way is to make art mean the things you do.’ What a stroke of genius! It made everything possible and everything safe!- safe from criticism since our art admitted no standards outside itself; safe from comparison, since it had no history; safe from evaluation, since it referred to no system of values beyond the currency it had invented. (p. 24)

This is an exact summary of avant-gardism. It reflects modern times search for change and experimentation, for new criteria, methods, techniques that would be appropriate. It also reflects the surrealist doctrine of making everything possible and the surrealist’s constant search for new techniques to embody their ideas. One more similarity between Donner and Duchamp lies in their return to Realism after the Dadaism of their youth and after experimentation with almost every kind of abstract art.

What is significant here, is that Sophie is the cause behind Donner’s conversion. Her first meeting with the three artists took place just after World War I ended, in 1919, in their joint exhibition, ‘Frontiers in Art,’ which consisted of series of pictures of fences and barbed wire. She was attracted to the face of one of them, though she was not sure who was who, because her sight was failing when she visited the exhibition. In 1920, Sophie becomes totally blind. She visits the attic, where the three artists lived, and, from her description of the newspaper photograph, they realize that the one she fell in love with was actually Beauchamp who stays with Sophie for two years. Consequently, he decides to desert her, although she informs him of her constant need for him. She is utterly blind now and rejected by the man she loved. In doing this, Beauchamp shows an innate lack of feeling. Sophie’s situation, in fact, creates the first centre of pain in the play. The second centre is related to Donner, who is the most sensitive of the three artists. He was the first to recognize Sophie at the exhibition and he believed they exchanged a look. When Beauchamp deserts her, Donner expresses his desire to stay with her, but she tells him that she has lost her ability to fall in love:

Sophie: (*Cries out*) It’s not possible!...-What are you thinking of, Mouse?...We can’t live here like brother and sister. I know you won’t make demands of me, so how can I make demands of you? Am I to weave you endless tablemats and antimacassars in return for life?... (p. 49)

Sophie wants real love; she does not want to be the object of others’ pity. While she is speaking, her panic at the silence of the room is intensified by her sense of helplessness and exposure, which ultimately culminates in throwing herself through the window. In this way, she vindicates Martello’s description of her as a “nice girl due for a sad life” (p. 51).

Donner is sincere in his love; he remains constant to Sophie’s memory. This explains his anger and rejection of both Beauchamp’s criticism of his post-pop, Pre-Raphaelite portrait of her and of Martello’s metaphorical surrealist figure of her. He tells Martello: “What right have you to sneer at her memory?-I won’t allow it, damn you! My God, she had a sad enough life without having her beauty mocked in death by your contemptible artistic presumptions” (p. 28).

Just before the play ends, in the ninth flashback, Martello reveals to Donner his suspicion that it might have been Donner not Beauchamp whom Sophie loved. We do not know the real motive behind Martello’s decision to tell Donner. What is important is the impact of this revelation on the latter. Fired by his love, he decides to abandon avant-gardism to adopt a more realistic attitude towards art. So, just before his own death, he becomes a committed artist engaged in a realistic portrait of his beloved, Sophie. In short, he discovers himself as an artist, as soon as he discovers that Sophie might have loved him. Stoppard, through this dénouement, suggests that love, sympathy and openness are essential to the artist. Donner is finally redeemed by his ability to love and to feel.

In this play, Stoppard once again confirms man’s need for love and sympathy. Sophie says: “I will not want to be alone, I cannot live alone, I am afraid of the dark; not *my* dark, the real dark” (p.49). She refers, here, not only to her blindness, but to a life of loneliness, misery and solitude, if she does not find someone to love or communicate with.



Sophie, in her own way, tries to define love, that world's mystery, which is at the centre of man's existence, and one of the most important preoccupations of philosophers, thinkers, artists, and even scientists. For Donner, his unrequited love means, before Martello's revelation, that: "even when life was at its best there was a small part missing and I knew that I was going to die without ever feeling that my life was complete"(p.51). What was missing in Donner's life was a woman's love. But, once he knows that the one Sophie loved might have been him, he imagines, hopefully the happy life they might have led if they had lived together. Sophie's portrait brings her closer to him. His love and her memory endow his work with meaning.

Finally, in a typical surrealist manner, Stoppard tends to remove the situations presented in these plays from reality. *After Magritte* presents a situation more indicative of a modern surreal painting than one likely to happen in real life. Most of the events in *Jumpers* are presented in a dream-like form which are crazily surreal in their bizarre and strange atmosphere. Stoppard tries in these plays to convey bewilderment of modern man who is put under constant pressure from the outside world.

The plays discussed in this paper represent an invitation for man to enjoy and celebrate life. In spite of the bleak world and the total incomprehension the characters suffer from in *Jumpers*, George wonders that even the logical positivist believes that: "life is better than death, that love is better than hate, and that the light shining through the east window of their bloody gymnasium is more beautiful than a rotting corpse" (p.87).

Stoppard in *After Magritte* stresses the fact that irrationality is a part of our world, while *Artist Descending a Staircase* stresses man's creative abilities and at the same his need for love and sympathy. All these plays seem to stress the fact that there is more in life than we expect. This is clearly evident in George's belief that 'there is more in [him] than meets a microscope,' vindicating thus the inadequacy of modern man's scientific approaches to life.

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## THE IMPACT OF INCREASE IN TASK COGNITIVE COMPLEXITY ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' FLUENCY

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### ABSTRACT

Measuring the difficulty of the tasks and the cognitive loads they require have been always controversial. Besides, students themselves do not have a clear understanding of their fluency according to the level of task complexity. Assessing the oral production in terms of fluency based on subjective evaluation is one of the main results of the lack of empirical studies regarding task structure and its relation to fluency. This study was an attempt to bridge the gap in literature by exploring the effects of task complexity on the quality of learners' linguistic output, especially in fluency. Thirty Iranian EFL learners between the ages of 21 to 34 participated in this study. Some sets of picture narration tasks based on Robinson's resource-directing model were selected for the aim of the study. All the subjects were asked to perform the simple version as well as the complex version of the same picture narration task. The results of a parametric test of MANOVA revealed that increase in task cognitive complexity had no statistically significant effect on fluency. The outcome of this study might shed new light on designing tasks with appropriate level of cognitive complexity.

**KEY WORDS:** Fluency; Task; EFL Learners; Cognitive Complexity

### INTRODUCTION

It is assumed that among all the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), speaking is the most important one. People who know a language are referred to as a "speaker" of that language as if speaking covers all other skills. In addition, many language learners are eager to speak fluently. Proficient language speakers need to be capable of processing language in their own heads and put it in coherent way so that it is not only comprehensible but also can transfer the intended meaning. Rapid language processing is one of the main reasons for including speaking activities in language. This process includes the retrieval of words and phrases from memory into syntactically and propositionally proper sequence. Our aim is to process the information in the moment we get it. The longer it takes us to reply, the less effective and fluent language speakers we are in our communication (Ur, 1996).

To Segalowitz and Freed (2004) the term oral fluency refers to those aspects of oral performance associated with the smoothness of the language use. They consider fluency in terms of speed, hesitation-based measures, efficiency of (second language) L2-specific lexical access, and finally the attention control. It is believed that fluency could be associated with the cognitive demands that the task require. Assessing the students' oral proficiency based on the level of cognitive complexity has always been difficult for teachers; hence it is felt that we need some more studies in the field of task complexity.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Designing appropriate tasks with an acceptable level of complexity has been the main purpose of syllabus designers for many years. In addition, some applied linguists have been interested to find out the effects of different levels of task difficulty on language learning. As different studies prove, human beings possess a limited processing capacity and are not able to attend fully to all aspects of a task simultaneously. So, in order to achieve a success particularly in oral skills reasonable level of cognitive complexity is appreciated.

According to Harmer (2001), the major elements which are necessary for spoken language are 'connected speech'. He argues that proficient speakers of English need to be able not only to produce the individual phonemes of

English, but also to use fluent connected speech. It is assumed that this fluent speech cannot be separated from the characteristics in task and task's structure.

Iwashita, McNamara, and Elder (2001) tried to define oral ability based on the characteristics of the tasks because according to them oral ability is not well defined by differences in task difficulty. In their work, Iwashita *et al.* (2001) refer to Skehan's (1998) statement regarding task dimensions and performance conditions influencing task difficulty. Among the factors addressed by Skehan (1998), time pressure and degree of visual support are significant. Other aspects of performance conditions may affect task difficulty in a more complicated way (Iwashita *et al.*, 2001).

Skehan (2003) considers various categories that have impact on task complexity or fluency:

- Familiar information: Fluent performance is the result of familiar information.
- Structured tasks: The task with clear sequential structure, will elicit more fluent and accurate performance.
- Complex and numerous operations: Increasing the number of online operations and transformation of material will lead to more difficult task. This may result in greater complexity, but at the expense of accuracy and fluency.
- Complexity of knowledge base: More open knowledge, based on which a task draws, results in more complex language.
- Differentiated outcomes: If a task outcome requires more differentiated justification, the complexity of the language will increase.

Robinson (2001, 2005) divides task variables into two categories: resource-dispersing and resource-directing dimensions. In his categorization, resource-directing dimension is linked to three elements (reasoning demands, number of elements, and here-and-now vs. there-and-then-condition). Robinson also associates resource-dispersing dimension with planning, number of tasks, and prior knowledge. The theory of *Cognition Hypothesis* proposed by Robinson relates more cognitively complex tasks to more accuracy and linguistic complexity in the oral production of learners. However, based on the *Cognition Hypothesis*, more complex tasks lead to less fluent language. Robinson relates this decrease in fluency to the anxiety of the learners.

The insufficient amount of research related to the impact of task difficulty on fluency demands more studies in this area. In this study we try to depict the influence of task type on fluency through resource-directing dimension of Robinson's model. The following research question is proposed to pinpoint the relationship between task structure and fluency.

To what extent does increase in task cognitive complexity affect the fluency of Iranian EFL learners' oral production?

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study is based on the Robinson's resource-directing model with the aim of addressing the influence of different level of complexity on the fluency of Iranian EFL learners' picture narration task. To this end, a quasi-experimental design was used to examine the effect of increase in cognitive difficulty of a task on the fluency of learners.

### ***Participants***

The participants in this study included 30 female students at the intermediate level. Their age ranged from 21 to 34. The subjects were all native speakers of Persian, and on average they have been studying English for three years at Kish Institute in Tehran, Iran. A non-random sampling was used to select the subjects from two intact classes. The participants were divided into two experimental groups with 15 subjects in each. In order to check the homogeneity, a version of Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) was administrated.

### ***Instruments***

For the purpose of the present study, two tests were administered: a TOEFL IBT test for homogenizing the students' general English, and a post-test for comparing the fluency of the two groups. To check the homogeneity of the subjects, the researchers chose three speaking assignments, two independent and one integrated task, from the book *Official Guide to the New TOEFL* by McGraw (2006).

For the treatment plan as well as the post-test, some narrative tasks were selected from the book *English Result* by Hancock and McDonald (2012). The tasks in this book were designed for intermediate level and they were appropriate for the aim of the post-test (see Appendix A).

### **Procedure**

As mentioned earlier, the participants were divided into 2 experimental groups. The data were collected from 30 subjects attending the class five times a week for a period of two hours. The researchers chose some picture narration tasks for the treatment plan as well as for the post-test purpose.

First, for checking the homogeneity of the 2 groups, TOEFL IBT Speaking Rubric was chosen. The speaking tasks were rated from 0 to 4. For the operational definition in the present study, we decided to assign 0-1 to beginners, 1-3 to intermediate, and 3-4 to advanced level. The participants' scores ranged from 1 to 3, therefore the researcher could be assured that the subjects were all at intermediate level. Then the obtained scores from 0 to 4 were converted to a score scale of 0 to 30. The results of the independent *t-test* [ $t(28) = .843, P = .406 > .05$ ] indicated that the two groups were homogeneous in terms of their general language proficiency. The mean scores for the two groups were 17.66 and 17.31 respectively which proved the homogeneity of the two groups.

Second, before administrating the post-test, we planned 5 sessions for the treatment of the 2 experimental groups. During these sessions the subjects became familiar with the post-test tasks. They were asked to take note of their mistakes and pay attention to the feedbacks given by the teacher and the researcher. The first experimental group worked on more difficult tasks (see Appendix B). These tasks required more causal reasoning and justification for the replies. The practice plan for these subjects included all the aspects which were the purpose of the post-test such as +/- reasoning demands, +/- few elements, and here and now vs. there and then condition. For reasoning demands aspect of the task, two sets of pictures were selected, one with correct order and the other with scrambled pictures. For checking the impact of number of elements on learners' oral performance, the researcher asked the subjects to narrate the story once with 9 pictures and the other time with 6 pictures (with 3 pictures missing). Finally, for the last aspect of Robinson's (2001) resource-directing model, here and now vs. there and then condition, the participants were required to tell the story once with pictures in view and another time they had to turn the picture strips over before beginning their narration. For both narrations, the researchers gave the subjects prompts and instruction. The second experimental group, however, were exposed to simpler picture narration tasks with familiar topics (see Appendix C). In this case, a set of four pictures were selected.

Third, to elicit subjects' oral performance on the post-test, a monologic picture narration task was used. The tasks in this study were manipulated along Robinson's resource-directing dimension in terms of +/- few elements, +/- reasoning demand, and +/- here and now condition. In order to reach the goal of the study, all the subjects were required to accomplish the simple version as well as the complex version of the same narrative task. The less complex tasks were associated with low complexity conditions such as [+ few elements], [+ here and now], and [- reasoning demands] while the more complex tasks involved high complexity conditions including [- few element], [- here and now], and [+reasoning demands]. In all the steps in the post-test, to avoid practice effect counterbalancing was suggested by the researchers.

Fourth, according to Mackey and Gass (2005), a reliable test should cover rater reliability including inter-rater and intra-rater reliability. In this study, post-tests were scored by 2 raters; they were also scored at different times to assure intra-rater reliability. For assessing the reliability, Pearson Correlation was estimated for both inter-rater and intra-rater reliability. Based on the results, there was a significant agreement between the first and the second raters' ratings and also between the two sets of scores which were evaluated by one rater at different times. The Pearson R-value was .97 ( $P = .000 < .05$ ). Therefore, the probability associated with the R-value was much lower than the alpha level of .05. Thus it can be concluded that the two ratings enjoyed both inter-rater and intra-rater reliability.

Finally, for scoring the obtained data from the post-test, the Iwashita *et al.* (2001) rating scale was used (see Appendix D). In this scale, fluency aspect is associated with hesitation due to word-finding, false starts, and modification of attempted utterance. In the end, a parametric test of MANOVA was conducted to present the results.

## **RESULTS**

Based on the MANOVA analysis, the findings for assessing fluency are as follows:

Based on Table 1, the results indicate that the F-observed value for the effect of the difficulty level on the students' overall fluency in oral production was not statistically significant [ $F(3, 36) = 2.94, P = .051 > .05$ , Partial  $\eta^2 = .25$ ].



This data represents a large effect size. However, the results should be interpreted cautiously because the effect size value indicates that there is a genuine effect although it was not statistically detected.

Table 1: Multivariate Tests of Total Fluency by Groups

Effect	Value	F	df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.98	638.24	3	26	.00
	Wilks' Lambda	.01	638.24	3	26	.00
	Hotelling's Trace	73.64	638.24	3	26	.00
	Roy's Largest Root	73.64	638.24	3	26	.00
Group	Pillai's Trace	.25	2.94	3	26	.05
	Wilks' Lambda	.74	2.94	3	26	.05
	Hotelling's Trace	.34	2.94	3	26	.05
	Roy's Largest Root	.34	2.94	3	26	.05

As Table 1 represents, the F-value of 2.94 indicated non-significant difference between the overall means scores in the experimental groups on the fluency of oral production. Following the results displayed in Table 2 and Table 3, it could be concluded that on average, the experimental group 1 who performed more difficult tasks ( $M = 1.93$ ,  $SE = .13$ ) did not outperform the experimental group 2 who accomplished easier tasks ( $M = 2.20$ ,  $SE = .13$ ). The following information is obtained from Table 3:  $F(1, 28) = 2.03$ ,  $P = .165 > .05$ ,  $\text{Partial } \eta^2 = .068$ . The statistics confirm a moderate effect size, thus there was not any significant difference between the two groups' means scores on the fluency in the case of different reasoning demands.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Total Fluency by Groups

Dependent Variable	Group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Fluency of Reasoning Demands	Difficult Task	1.93	.13	1.66	2.20
	Easy Task	2.20	.13	1.92	2.47
Fluency of Number of Elements	Difficult Task	2.13	.08	1.97	2.29
	Easy Task	2.06	.08	1.90	2.23
Fluency of Here-and-Now Vs. There-and-Then	Difficult Task	2.26	.11	2.02	2.50
	Easy Task	1.93	.11	1.69	2.17

Considering the number of elements, the differences between the means' score on fluency in tasks with different number of elements was not statistically significant (see Table 2). Table 3 also reveals that  $F(1, 28) = .35$ ,  $P = .55 > .05$ , and  $\text{Partial } \eta^2 = .01$ . These results proves a weak effect size, hence there was not any significant difference between the two groups' means on the fluency while checking number of elements.

Table 3: Univariate Statistics for Accuracy in Tasks

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Group	Fluency of Reasoning of Elements	.53	1	.53	2.03	.16	.06
	Fluency of Number of Elements	.03	1	.03	.35	.55	.01
	Fluency of Here-and-Now Vs. There-and-Then	.83	1	.83	3.97	.05	.12
	Fluency of Reasoning of Elements	7.33	28	.26			
Error	Fluency of Number of Elements	2.66	28	.09			
	Fluency of Here-and-Now Vs. There-and-Then	5.86	28	.21			
	Fluency of Reasoning of Elements	136.00	30				
Total	Fluency of Number of Elements	135.00	30				
	Fluency of Here-and-Now Vs. There-and-Then	139.00	30				

Moreover, Table 2 reveals that the first group's performance ( $M = 2.26$ ,  $SE = .11$ ) was not significantly different from the second group scores ( $M = 1.93$ ,  $SE = .11$ ) on the fluency in here-and-now vs. there-and-then task. Table 3, also proves a non-significant difference between the two groups' means on the fluency in these tasks [ $F(1, 28) = 3.97$ ,  $P = .06 > .05$ , Partial  $\eta^2 = .12$ ].

Figure 1 depicts the results for all the three elements of Robinson's resource-directing model:

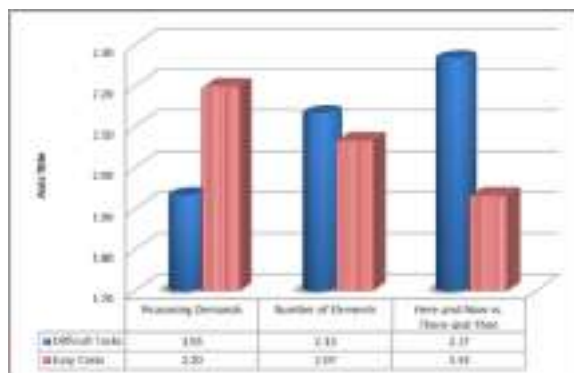


Figure 1: Means scores for fluency by groups

## DISCUSSION

This study sought to explore the effects of increase in task cognitive complexity on fluency of Iranian EFL learners' oral production in narrative tasks. Considering the findings, it can be inferred that increasing the cognitive complexity along reasoning demands had negatively affected the group who performed more complex task. The second group, exposed to scrambled pictures, needed more processing time to decide on a correct order in order to narrate the story. In addition, they were under more pressure to provide correct forms. The researchers also realized that this group were monitoring and self-correcting themselves extensively while narrating the story; therefore, they were more anxious and that led to slower speech with hesitation. Besides, the time limitation, the cognitive loads of the tasks, and the fear of evaluation by the teacher had negative impact on the fluency of the subjects when they were required for more justifications. This finding is in line with Robinson's statement about the negative impact of increasing the task complexity on fluency in oral production.

However, the investigation of the impact of increase in task cognitive complexity on fluency proved that the results were not significantly different in the case of number of elements and here-and-now vs. there-and-then condition, that is, there was not a glaring discrepancy between the two groups' means in fluency aspect of oral performance. Although, Iwashita *et al.*'s (2001) findings show that a complete set of pictures (- condition) leads to more fluency in narrative tasks, there is little justification in related literatures for the effect of task complexity on fluency.

The findings regarding here-and-now vs. there-and-then condition proved non-significant differences in fluency. However, more complex task (there-and-then condition) led to more fluent speech in the current study. This outcome does not bear out the claim of Iwashita *et al.*'s (2001) about remembering and coding the events in there-and-then condition which make learners' speech less fluent.

According to Robinson (2005, as cited in Kim, 2009), the theory of Cognition Hypothesis, shows that more complex tasks may result in more accurate but less fluent speech. Robinson relates this outcome to the anxiety of the learners. In the case of reasoning demands elements in this study, it is felt that the negative impact of complex task on fluency could be due to stressful conditions as well as individual factors in learners such as intelligence.

In general, considering the previous studies and the findings in this study it could be realized that there is not a clear cut statement about the influence of increase in task complexity on fluency; this demands some more studies in the related areas to realize the inconsistencies among different findings.

## CONCLUSION

All in all, one of the most crucial aims of the Iranian EFL learners is to speak L2 without pause and hesitation. To reach this goal some studies have been conducted to investigate the effect of different task types and task constructions on the fluency of the learners' speech. The findings of the current study proved that although there was

not a significant difference between the scores of the two groups in terms of fluency, the group exposed to more cognitively complex tasks got better scores considering the number of elements and here-and-now vs. there-and-then condition in Robinson's model. Furthermore, it could be realized that by reducing the stressful conditions we may achieve better results while checking reasoning demands element.

To broaden our understanding about the ties between the task structure and the results it can have on oral production, and to gain profound insights in this field some more studies are appreciated in the related area.

#### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Before generalizing the results of this study to other scope, some limitations should be taken into consideration:

First, due to the time constraints this study was only based on resource directing dimension of Robinson's model. Resource dispersing dimension, including +/- prior knowledge, +/- single task, and +/- planning time, could have revealed more justification for the hypothesis in this study.

Second, the scope of this study was designed based on cognitive factors; however, interactional factors such as peers correction and feedbacks as well as intra-learner factors including intelligence could have changed the findings.

Third, gender differences were not considered in this research, and the participants of this study were all females, hence the results may not be generalized for coeducational systems.

Finally, it is felt that the small sample size in this study could have influence on external validity.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

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**Appendix A**  
**Picture Narration Task for Post-test**



**Appendix B**  
**Picture Narration Task for Treatment (More Complex Task)**



**Appendix C**  
**Picture Narration Task for Treatment (Less Complex Task)**



Appendix D  
Iwashita *et al.* (2001) Rating Scale for Fluency

*Fluency*

- 5 Speaks without hesitation; speech is generally of a speed similar to a native speaker.
- 4 Speaks fairly fluently with only occasional hesitation, false starts and modification of attempted utterance. Speech is only slightly slower than that of a native speaker.
- 3 Speaks more slowly than a native speaker due to hesitations and word-finding delays.
- 2 A marked degree of hesitation due to word-finding delays or inability to phrase utterances easily.
- 1 Speech is quite disfluent due to frequent and lengthy hesitations or false starts.

**THE COMPARITIVE IMPACT OF RECAST AND PROMPT  
ON EFL LEARNERS' ENGLISH TENSE AWARENESS  
AND USE OF TENSES IN WRITING**

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**ABSTRACT**

Feedback plays a central role in writing development. One of the crucial roles in writing instruction is the role of paragraph writing in providing feedback to students' writing. This feedback attempts to aid students to reflect on their writing. The purpose of the current study was to compare the impact of recast and prompt on EFL learners' tense awareness and their use of tense in writing. To fulfill the purpose of this study, 60 elementary learners were chosen from among first-grade students at Mesbah-e-Noor high school who were homogenized by KET Oxford proficiency test. They were divided randomly into two experimental groups to receive the two treatments: prompt and recast feedbacks. After the instructional period, a test of tense awareness and a composition test were given to both groups as the posttests, and the participants' scores were analyzed through calculating two Man-Whitney U tests, the results of which led to the rejection of the null hypotheses implying that there was no significant difference between the effect of recast and prompt on EFL learners' tense awareness and their use of tense in writing.

**KEYWORDS:** Recast, Prompt, Tenses Awareness, Writing Skill.

**INTRODUCTION**

Learning a foreign language is a long and complex undertaking. One person is affected as he/she struggles to reach beyond the confines of his/her first language and into a new language, a new culture, a new way of thinking, feeling, and acting. Many factors are involved in the acquisition process. Brown (2007) asserts that, "Language learning is not a set of easy steps that can be programmed in a quick do-it-oneself kit. So much is at stake that courses in foreign languages are often inadequate training grounds for the successful learning of second language" (p.1).

With a view of language learning as a creative construction process comes the view that error is an inevitable and positive part of that process. There are conflicting views on the role of error correction in the classroom. According to Hedge (2000), "critics were quick to point out that adult learners can be encouraged to process error correction in useful ways, and the role of the teacher is to provide feedback which learners can work on in order to refine their understanding" (p.15).

Among the different kinds of feedback the role of recast can be useful in helping learners to recognize the corrective intent of the repetition and to attempt a more target-like reformulation. Recast also resembles explicit error correction because it includes full target-like reformulation of the initial error ;however, recasts are distinctive in that they are not introduced by phrases signaling its corrective feedback spectrum ( Lyster & Ranta,1997 pp.136-137).

Another alternative type of feedback which is very commonly used is prompts which have been usually compared with recasts in classroom settings (Lyster, 2007). Prompts provide signals that stimulate learners to self-repair rather than providing them with a correct reformulation of their non-target utterance, as do recasts. The following techniques build up the very core of prompts which include clarification requests, repetition of learner error, metalinguistic cues, and elicitation moves.

Furthermore, comparing the effectiveness of explicit and implicit feedbacks Lyster (2004) noted the advantages of prompts over their more implicit opponents-recast. Learners receiving prompts showed greater acquisition than those provided with recasts on both written and oral tasks. He interpreted this as, "the result of prompts' capability of enabling students to self-repair by using accurate forms. Recasts, despite of allowing learners to hear target forms repeatedly in input, rarely make them notice and correct their own mistakes" (pp.399-426 ).

One of the grammatical aspects that learners have to notice to correct their own mistakes is using precise form of tenses. English has three main tenses (present, past, future), though, these are made more complex by existence of simple, perfect, continuous and perfect continuous form. One of the approaches that scholars have been interested in



is determining participants' attitudes to learning tenses through the use of two types of feedback. Despite the strong theoretical claims regarding the acquisition of feedback such as recasts and prompts are more effective (Ellis & Sheen, 2006 p.597).

Teaching tenses could be done through two techniques of instruction. A deductive instruction grammar provides explicit explanations of grammar tenses for themselves and an inductive one provides implicit which explains rules of grammar through examples. For Brown (2007), "On one side of a long continuum are explicit, discrete-point metalinguistic explanations and discussions of rules and exceptions, or curricula governed and sequenced by grammatical or phonological categories. On the other end of the continuum are 1) implicit, incidental references to form; 2) noticing (Ellis,1997) 3) the incorporation of forms in to communicative tasks, or what Ellis,1997 called grammar consciousness raising"(p.276 ).

As William (1988) maintains, "an array of possible spontaneous focus on form, ranging from reactive, teacher-initiated feedback to preemptive comments made in anticipation of student error"(pp.139-151).

According to Doughty and Williams (1998a), communicative language instruction in general, as opposed to simple "exposure" to a studies have shown that rate of acquisition and level of ultimate attainment in a language are enhanced by instruction. Error treatment and focus on language forms appear to be most effective when incorporated into communicative, learner-centered curriculum, and least effective when error treatment is a dominant pedagogical feature-what "called Neanderthal practices" (pp.197-261).

This research also appears to confirm that, " a primary factor in determining the effectiveness of FFI is a learner's noticing of form and the relationship of form to recast and prompt feedback being given and a secondary but important factor has to do with the quality of the learner's uptake"(Brown,2007 p.279).

Often students face problems in developing their ability to think in more meaningful or creative ways. Many of them may often be inexperienced in how to form tenses upon receiving feedback and also construct a sentence then make a paragraph. Therefore, the teacher needs to develop her knowledge through experience and eclectic theoretical techniques for discovering what kind of corrective feedback is appropriate at the given moment and what form of uptake should be expected with focusing on awareness in tenses and using them in writing skill.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Tense***

In this study the focus is on "tense" which according to Swan (1988) is among those parts of grammar that have an important role in conveying a comprehensible message. Different linguists have proposed different definitions for tense.

Cormie (1992) brings about a definition which seems to be more comprehensive than the rest: " tense is a grammatical category referring to the location situations in time, it is the basic grammatical category which together with lexical and other indications of temporal ordering, enables the hearer to reconstruct the chronological relations among the situations described in a text and between them and speech situation" (p.458) .

An important factor in this definition is the way Cormie(1992) treats the notion morphologically, because traditional pays great attention to the "inflectional" structure of a tense.

In order to gain insight into how EFL learners acquire morphological tense, numerous studies have examined the order of morpheme acquisition (Alderson,1997; Bailey, Madden, & Krashen, 1974; Dulay and Burt,1974; Larsen freeman, 1997; Pienemann, John, & Brindley, 1988). In addition, a great deal of research has been devoted to ESL learner acquisition of tense and morpheme meaning (Alderson, 1983; Baily, 1974; Hatch, 1976). Whereas some specialists on language and tense acquisition believe that learners acquire tense meaning before their morphological forms, others hold the opposite view. EFL teachers and L2 researchers recognized that English tenses are difficult to acquire (De Carrico,1986; Richard, 1982).

Smith (1988) indicates that his Polish students had difficulty relating to the past progressive and its form. Richard (1982) discusses the complexity of introducing English progressive tenses and their explicit and implicit meanings. Dialect variations even within English speaking societies make for significant differences in tense usage and meanings.

### ***On the nature of writing ability***

Among the four major language skills, creating coherent and extended piece of writing has always been considered the most difficult task to do in a language. Writing is a skill that even most native speakers of a language can hardly master (Zamel, 1985 pp.79-102).

Foreign language learners, especially those who want to continue their education in academic environments, usually find writing a highly difficult and challenging task. Over the years, different approaches have been adopted for teaching and assessing writing (Raimes, 1991).

Traditionally, writing was viewed as transcribed speech. It was often assumed that the acquisition of spoken language was sufficient for, and had to take precedence over the learning of written language. Therefore, teachers mostly avoided introducing writing early in the process of language learning. Because they believed that the difference between pronunciation and spelling would interfere with the proper learning of speech (Silva & Matsuda, 2002).

The primary focus of this approach (transcribed approach) was on formal accuracy. Teachers were required to employ a controlled program of systematic habit formation in order for the learners to avoid errors. The learners' writing skill was assessed mainly through discrete-point tests of vocabulary, grammar, and sentence patterns, as well as through tests of controlled compositions. Therefore, the main focus of this approach was on the students' final written products.

Later, particularly after the mid 1970s, understanding the need of language learners for producing longer pieces of written language led scholars to realize that there was more to writing than constructing well-formed grammatical sentences. This realization led to the development of the paragraph-pattern approach in which Raimes (1991) emphasized the importance of organization at extra sentential levels. The major concern of this approach was the logical construction and arrangement of discourse forms, especially to create different forms of essays. This was also product-oriented approach in which learners were required to focus their attention on forms or final products (Silva & Matsuda, 2002). The assessment in this approach was based on how well learners would be able to create error-free final products. However, these product-oriented approaches were not consistent with the new emerging idea of discourse analysis after mid 1980s which emphasized the non-linear generation of thought and its expression in the process of communication. This reaction was mostly due to the prescriptivism and linearity inherited in product-oriented approaches.

Dissatisfaction with the product-oriented approaches paved the way for the emergence of process approach to writing. According to Silva and Matsuda (2002) process approach to writing is a recursive, explanatory, and generative process or the strategies involved in writing. In the classroom, the objective of the process approach is to help the learner develop practical strategies for getting started drafting, revising and editing.

From what was said so far, writing, which was once considered the major expertise of the privileged and well educated individuals, has become an essential skill for people at all levels of education in today's global community. Writing is usually used in many communicative activities, such as composing academic, essays, business reports, letters, reporting analysis of current events for newspapers, web pages, e-mails, and/or short off-line messages in widely used messenger program. Therefore, the ability to write expressively and effectively allows individuals from different cultures and backgrounds to communicate their thoughts and their needs.

### ***Recast***

According to Long's (1996) interaction hypothesis, "environmental contributions to acquisition are mediated by selective attention and the learner's developing L2 processing capacity" (p. 414). In other words, conversational interaction may facilitate L2 learning because it constitutes a context in which L2 learners' attention is directed toward some formal aspects of the language. In particular, Long argued that "Negative feedback obtained during negotiation work where may be facilitative of L2 development, at least for vocabulary, morphology, and language-specific syntax, and essential for learning certain specifiable L1-L2 contrasts" (p. 414).

Recasts are one such type of negative feedback. By utilizing a stimulated recall technique to elicit introspective data, the present experimental study addresses the issue of how L2 learners interpret recasts for the learning of

morphology, in particular, irregular past tense forms. According to Nicholas, Lightbown, and Spada (2001), recasts are “utterances that repeat a learner’s incorrect utterance, making only the changes necessary to produce a correct utterance, without changing the meaning” (pp. 732-733).

### ***Prompt***

An alternative type of feedback that has been compared with recasts in classroom settings is referred to as *prompts* (Lyster, 2004, 2007; Lyster & Mori, 2006, 2008; Ranta & Lyster, 2007), because they provide signals that prompt learners to self-repair rather than providing them with a correct reformulation of their non-target utterance, as do recasts. Prompts include clarification requests, repetition of learner error, metalinguistic clues, and elicitation moves. Several classroom studies have shown prompts to be more effective than recasts; for example, Havranek and Cesnik (2001) found repair following prompts to be the most effective feedback combination in a range of English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms.

In a classroom study of adult ESL learners, Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam (2006) compared the effects of recasts versus prompts on students’ use of the simple past tense in English. Operationalizing prompts as a repetition plus a metalinguistic clue (e.g., “you need the past tense”), they found significantly superior effects for prompts over recasts on delayed posttest measures. In a similar ESL context, Ellis (2007) compared the effects of recasts and prompts (again operationalized as a repetition plus a metalinguistic clue) on the acquisition of past tense *-ed* and comparative *-er* in English. He found that prompts were overall more effective than recasts but more so for the comparative than for past tense forms.

### ***Prompt versus Recast***

The relative effectiveness of different types of feedback continues to attract attention in the field of second language acquisition (SLA), equally so for researchers with theoretical interests in the cognitive processes triggered by feedback and for researchers and practitioners alike interested in how feedback can be effectively yet seamlessly integrated into classroom interaction in ways that drive second language (L2) development forward.

A considerable amount of recent research, both in and out of classrooms, has concerned *recasts*: implicit reformulations of learners’ non-target utterances (for helpful reviews of this literature, see Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Nicholas, Lightbown, & Spada, 2001).

Knowledge about the characteristics and effectiveness of recasts continues to expand, and it is now widely accepted that their effectiveness is constrained by a wide range of variables. Specifically in classroom settings, the extent to which teachers’ intentions and learners’ perceptions overlap is known to affect recast effectiveness (Mackey et al., 2007), as is the interactional context in which recasts are provided. For example, Oliver and Mackey (2003) found in child English as a second language (ESL) classrooms that learners produced significantly more modified output following recasts in explicit language-focused exchanges than in exchanges that were content based, management related or communicative in nature. In addition, recasts of phonological and lexical errors are more noticeable than recasts of errors in morphosyntax (Carpenter, Jeon, MacGregor, & Mackey, 2006; Han, 2008; Lyster, 2001; Mackey, Gass, & McDonough, 2000), as are recasts that are short and contain minimal changes (Egi, 2007; Philp, 2003; Sheen, 2006).

Recasts benefit developmentally ready learners more than unready learners (Mackey & Philp, 1998) and learners with high accuracy scores in their use of the target forms more than learners achieving low accuracy scores (Ammar & Spada, 2006). Trofimovich, Ammar, and Gatbonton (2007) found not only that higher proficiency learners benefit more than lower proficiency learners from recasts but also that, independent of L2 proficiency, other learner characteristics associated with accurate L2 production after hearing a recast include phonological memory, attention control, and analytic ability.

Ellis and Sheen (2006) argued that recasts have received an inordinate amount of attention in SLA research, owing in large part to their ubiquity and consequent availability for study. They continued: Despite the strong theoretical claims regarding the acquisition potential of recasts, there is no clear evidence that recasts work better for acquisition

than other aspects of interaction such as models, prompts, or explicit corrective strategies. Indeed, there is some evidence that the last two of these are more effective than recasts (p. 597).

Similarly, Lyster (1998, 2002, 2007) argued that, especially in classroom settings that are more meaning-oriented than form-oriented, other types of feedback might serve more effectively than recasts as negative evidence (i.e., information about the incorrectness of an utterance; see Gass, 2003). A growing number of studies have recently investigated the effects of different types of feedback on L2 development in both classroom and laboratory settings but with different outcomes across these different settings.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To meet the mentioned purpose the following research questions were raised:

- Is there any significant difference between recast and prompt in their effect on EFL learners' tense awareness?
- Is there any significant difference between recast and prompt in their effect on EFL learners' use of tense in writing?

## METHODOLOGY

In order to find appropriate answers to the posed questions, the researchers followed certain procedures and made use of certain instruments, which are reported in this section.

### *Participants*

The 60 participants were selected out of initial 90 participants based on the scores which they obtained in the proficiency test which included reading, writing and listening skills. This is the while, the pre-post tests included only writing was the focus of the study. My main concern is that the participants in each group might not have been at the same level of writing at the beginning of the study. They might have been selected because of the good scores which they could obtain in the listening and reading tests but not the writing component.

### *Instrumentation*

In order to obtain measurable data with which the results of the study could be statistically analyzed, the following instruments were utilized.

The English language proficiency test used in this study was a sample of the Key English Test (KET) adopted from KET practice tests by Capel and Ireland (2008).

The reliability and item facility of the test were checked in the piloting phase of the study and the test was thus determined to be reliable for the actual purpose of homogenization. KET is Cambridge ESOL's exam which recognizes the ability to deal with everyday written and spoken English at basic level. It has two pamphlets and in the present study, the first pamphlet comprising reading and writing was used. The participants had to understand simple written information such as signs, brochures, newspapers, and magazines. They also had to fill in the blanks and use some words in simple sentences and write a short paragraph of writing around 25 words. This section consisted of 55 questions and a writing passage and it took about 1 hour and 10 minutes.

The second pamphlet was listening, in which the participants had to show their ability to understand conversations and other spoken materials. This part had 25 questions and it took the participants 30 minutes to answer.

The mentioned proficiency test was selected based on the average level of proficiency of the participants. KET test was piloted on 60 participants with similar characteristics of the main participants of the study at the same high school.

In addition to KET proficiency test, students wrote a paragraph as a pre-test in order to check their use of tenses before treatments. The topic of the paragraph was based on the students' supplementary book. In addition to writing a paragraph, both groups took a 20-item multiple-choice test of tense in order to be homogenized with respect to their tense knowledge before the treatments.

### *Procedure*

To achieve the purpose of the study the following steps were taken:

At the very outset of the study, 90 female elementary students were selected through convenient-random sampling method. The test used in order to homogenize the participants was Key English Test (KET) since the researcher assumed it suitable for elementary level EFL learners.

The KET proficiency test was administered to 90 participants in two classes at first grade level in Mesbah-e-Noor high school. The mentioned test consisted of two pamphlets. The first part was reading and writing and the second one was listening.

The KET was first piloted on 60 participants with almost similar characteristics as the target group before the actual administration in order to make sure that test had appropriate item and test characteristics. The data were analyzed and 10 items showing poor item facility and malfunctioning indexes were discarded. The reliability was calculated to be 0.78, and the test was thus suitable for the screening of the target sample.

Next, the test was administered to the main participants of the study in order to homogenize them. Participants whose scores fell between the range of one standard deviation above and below the estimated sample mean were selected for the actual purpose of study. Then they were randomly divided to two groups to receive the two treatments. Both groups were checked for their homogeneity regarding their writing abilities and their tense knowledge. The study lasted for 28 sessions of 90 minutes twice a week.

Tenses investigated in this study (according to students' 1<sup>st</sup> grade English text book in high school) included: present, past, future (to be going to & will), present continues, and present perfect according to their main course book. The rationale for selecting these tenses was that they are the ones that are included in the syllabus to be taught to students at the first grade of high school.

The participants in one experimental group received recast on the use of tenses in writing and the other experimental group received prompt. In order to write in the recast or prompt group, the participants viewed a picture and used their understanding of the picture to make a story. For instance: the researcher made a picture about their friend's birthday party, then at the bottom of the picture asked them, what will you do?( practice on using future tense). In addition, they wrote their paragraphs according to the titles of Top Notch book. A paragraph lasted about 30 minutes and consisted of 50 words. On the other hand, to make the recast group write, the researcher taught a specific tense then gave them a topic to write about to provide the participants with practicing on the use of that tense in writing. For instance, the researcher asked them to write, "what are you going to do when you grow up?" They wrote the composition using future tense.

Recast and prompt were individualized through the researchers' written notes in different colors on the margins of the participants' writings. A recast, as Lightbown and Spada (2006) reformulated a student's incorrect utterance while maintaining the central meaning of utterance.

The following example was provided by the researcher in the recast group:

Participant's writing: When I was child, I don't clean my bed room. In line with what Tomlin and Villa (1994) propose for providing recast, the researcher underlined the wrongly used tense, then expected the participant to correct it by herself. Then the teacher checked her corrections in the following session (p.132).

According to Lyster (2004) an alternative type of feedback that has been compared with recast is referred to as prompt, because it provides signals that prompt learners to self repair rather than providing them with a correct reformulation of non-target utterance, as do recast.

As Lyster (2007) mentioned prompts appear in the form of certain set of body gestures that the teacher demonstrates immediately after students' misusing of the tenses. In the present study the students were asked to read aloud their writings slowly to the class and the researcher provided them with prompt in case they used the tense in question wrongly. For instance, if the participants failed to use simple past tense correctly the teacher moved her hand backward across her shoulder to indicate past tense. Or she moved both hands smoothly across the chest to mean

that progressive tense had to be used. The researcher used body gesture during the treatment while the participants read their writings orally.

The tenses were covered during 28 sessions of the course. Then every two or three sessions, the participants wrote a paragraph according to the lesson title and tense which was taught to them. The sum of scores of paragraph writings were calculated as the post-test scores. After the instructional period, the participants of the two groups were given the tense awareness test.

As for inferential statistics employed to verify the null hypotheses of this study two Mann-Whitney U tests were used in order to estimate the significance of the difference between the means of the two groups on the writing and tense awareness test.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study was aimed to compare the impact of recast and prompt on EFL learners' English tense awareness and use of tenses in writing. The design of this study is "A Experimental group design" which is a subset of Ex post facto design. In this study, the feedback types (recast and prompt) were the independent variables. Tense knowledge awareness and use of tenses in writing were dependent variables and the level of language proficiency (elementary level) and gender ( female) were control variables.

The data analysis in this study comprised two series of calculations: Descriptive and Inferential statistics.. In order to standardize the KET test and the post-test, the researcher calculated the test reliability, item facility and item discrimination of the tests in the pilot stage. After piloting the Key English Testing (KET), it was administered on the main participants to choose those who turn to be homogeneous.

As for inferential statistics employed to verify the null hypotheses of this study two Mann-Whitney U tests were used in order to estimate the significance of the difference between the means of the two groups on the writing and tense awareness tests. The process of data analysis began with the selection of the required sample of population (participants). At the very outset, the selected section of KET (Key English testing) was piloted among a group of participants with very similar characteristics to the target group. Item facility and discrimination were calculated along with basic descriptive statistics i.e. mean and standard deviation. Ten malfunctioning and non-functioning items were discarded, and the reliability was calculated to be .78. The test was thus determined to be suitable for actual homogenization of the target sample.

In the next step, the piloted test was administered to the main participants. Basic descriptive statistics were calculated and accordingly those participants whose scores fell between one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected, and then divided into two groups to receive two different treatments . The researcher-made tense awareness post-test was piloted before the actual administration. It was piloted on a sample of participants with very similar characteristics as to the target group. An item analysis was conducted, and then its reliability was calculated (as reported below), and it was determined to be suitable in order to be administered as the achievement post-test.

### *Homogenizing the participants at the outset*

The homogeneity of the two groups with respect to their writing abilities before the intervention had to be checked. The following table presents the descriptive statistics of the scores that the participants obtained from the KET writing test.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Ratios
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	
recast writing	30	.50	4.25	2.5583	1.09009	-.075	.427	.18
prompt writing	30	.75	4.25	2.5417	1.15423	-.132	.427	.31
Valid N (listwise)	30							

As the skewness ratios both fell within the normality range of  $\pm 1.96$ , it is concluded that both sets of scores were normally distributed. Therefore, the significance of the difference between the two means shown in the above table (2.55, and 2.54) can be tested through a t-test. The following table shows the result.



Table 2: Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
										95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
writing pretest	Equal variances assumed	.051	.822	.057	58	.954	.01667	.28986	-.56355	.59688
	Equal variances not assumed			.057	57.811	.954	.01667	.28986	-.56359	.59692

As illustrated in the above table, the difference between the means of the two groups on the writing pretest turned out to be insignificant ( $t=.057$ ,  $p=.954$ ) with the equality of the variances assumed ( $F=.051$ ,  $p=.822$ ). Therefore, the researcher was rest assured that the two groups were not significantly different regarding their writing abilities before the treatments.

Also, to make sure that the two groups were not significantly different with respect to their tense knowledge before the outset of the treatments, a t-test was conducted to compare their mean scores on the test. But prior to that, the normality of the distribution of both sets of scores was checked as an assumption for a t-test. The following descriptive statistics table shows the results:

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Ratios
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	
Recast	30	7.00	19.00	12.4333	2.87298	.485	.427	1.14
Prompt	30	7.00	18.00	12.9000	2.69546	.136	.427	.32
Valid N (listwise)	30							

As the above table demonstrates, both sets of scores were normally distributed as the skewness ratios fell within the normality range of  $\pm 1.96$ . Also, the table shows that the two groups obtained the mean scores 12.43 and 12.90. The following table depicts the results of the Levene's test, and the t-test:

Table 4: Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
tense knowledge	Equal variances assumed	.048	.827	-.649	58	.519	-.46667	.71925	-1.90640	.97307
	Equal variances not assumed			-.649	57.766	.519	-.46667	.71925	-1.90652	.97319

With the variances assumed to be equal ( $F=.048$ ,  $p=.827>.05$ ), the result of the t-test can be interpreted as showing a non-significant difference between the means of both groups ( $t=.649$ ,  $p=.519>.05$ ). Therefore, the researcher was rest assured that there was no significant difference between the tense knowledge of the two groups before the intervention.

#### Post Tests

An achievement post-test was administered among the participants of the two groups once the treatment was completed. Then other post-test which was the sum of writings paragraphs were given to students during the treatment. The results of the details of both descriptive and inferential statistics are presented hereunder:

To show the inter-rater reliability between the raters of the writing test, correlation between their scores had to be estimated. But before that, the assumptions of correlation had to be met: the first assumption is normality of distributions of the sets of scores. The following table shows the descriptive statistics of the scores the two raters gave to the writings of the recast group.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics, Recast group

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Ratio
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	
rater1	30	3.50	9.50	7.4167	1.50478	-.831	.427	1.94
rater2	30	3.00	9.50	7.2833	1.55188	-.780	.427	1.86
Valid (listwise)	N 30							

As depicted in the above table, both distributions were normal as the ratios (skewness statistic/std.error) did not exceed the normality range of  $\pm 1.96$ . The second assumption is linearity of relationship between the two variables.

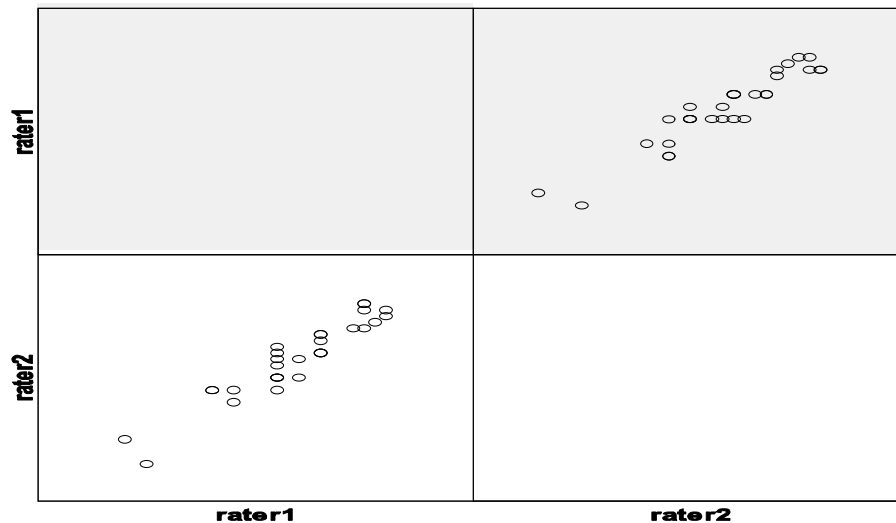


Figure 1: Scatter plot of the scores given by the two raters to the writings of the recast group.

As the graph shows the dots are clustered around a straight line and form a cigar shape, hence the linearity of the relationship.

As the assumptions were met, it was safe to calculate the correlation between the two sets of scores given by the two raters to the writings of the recast group. The following table shows the result:

Table 6: Correlations, Recast group

		rater1	rater2
rater1	Pearson Correlation	1	.945**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	30	30
rater2	Pearson Correlation	.945**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	30	30

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As shown above the correlation coefficient was as high as .945 and significant ( $p=.000<.05$ ). Therefore, the mean of each pair of scores was to be considered as the final score of each student.

The same assumptions were checked for the scores given by the two raters to the writings of the prompt group. The following table shows the descriptive statistics :

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics, Prompt group

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Ratios
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	
rater1	30	4.00	9.50	7.5250	1.40404	-.640	.427	1.41
rater2	30	3.50	9.00	7.3167	1.35655	-.733	.427	1.71
Valid N (listwise)	30							

As depicted in the above table, both distributions were normal as the ratios (skewness statistic/std.Error) did not exceed the normality range of  $\pm 1.96$ .

The following graph shows the linearity of the relationship to meet the second assumption.

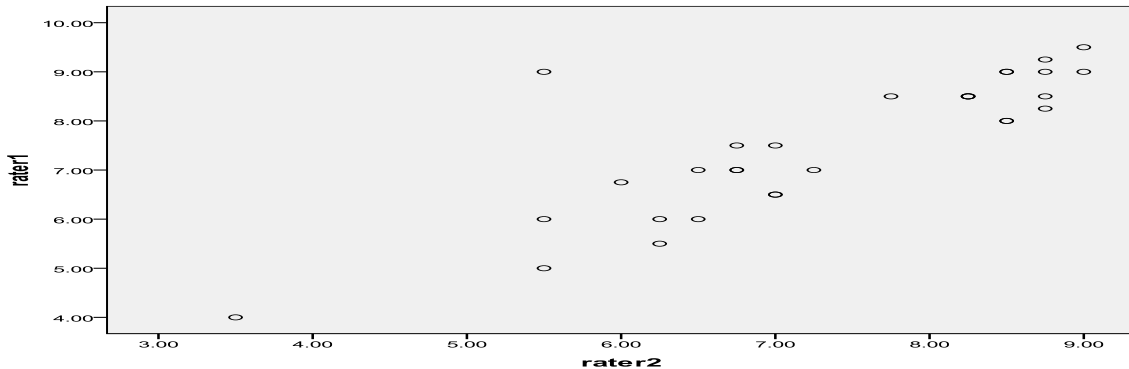


Figure 2: Scatter plot of the scores given by the two raters to the writings of the prompt group

As shown above, the clustered dots around the straight line demonstrate a cigar shape, hence the linearity of the correlation. The following table shows the result of the correlation analysis:

Table 8: Correlations

		rater1	rater2
rater1	Pearson Correlation	1	.842**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	30	30
rater2	Pearson Correlation	.842**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	30	30

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As the correlation turned out to be significant ( $r=.842$ ,  $p=.000<.05$ ), the mean of each pair of scores given by the two raters to the same student was considered as the final score.

To compare the effect of prompt and recast feedbacks on the tense recognition and writings of the students, a MANOVA had to be calculated. But first the assumptions had to be met. First, the normality of the distributions of each set of scores was checked. The following table shows the descriptive statistics:

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics of the scores obtained by both groups on posttests

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Rtaios
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	
rcstT	30	26.00	40.00	34.8667	3.83930	-.717	.427	1.67
prmpT	30	30.00	40.00	36.6000	2.79901	-1.054	.427	2.46
recast writing	30	3.50	9.37	7.3487	1.50657	-.805	.427	1.88
prompt writing	30	2.25	9.25	7.3687	1.48631	-1.399	.427	3.27
Valid N (listwise)	30							

The following graphs show how each set of scores is distributed.

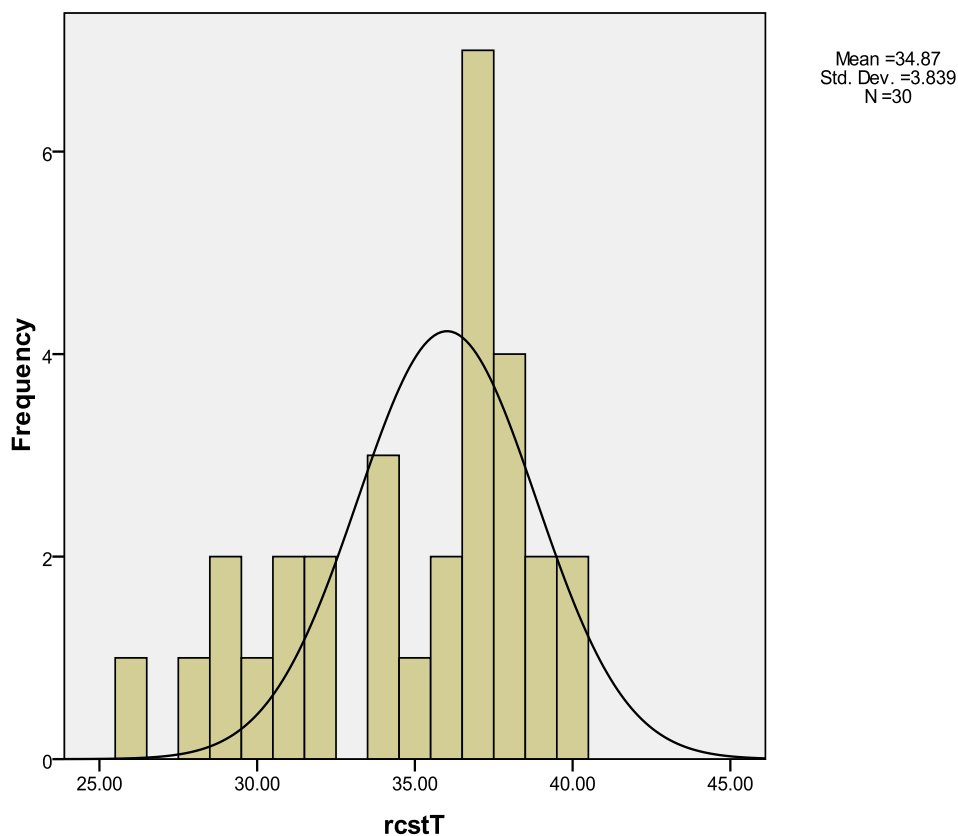


Figure 3: Histogram of the tense scores obtained by the recast group

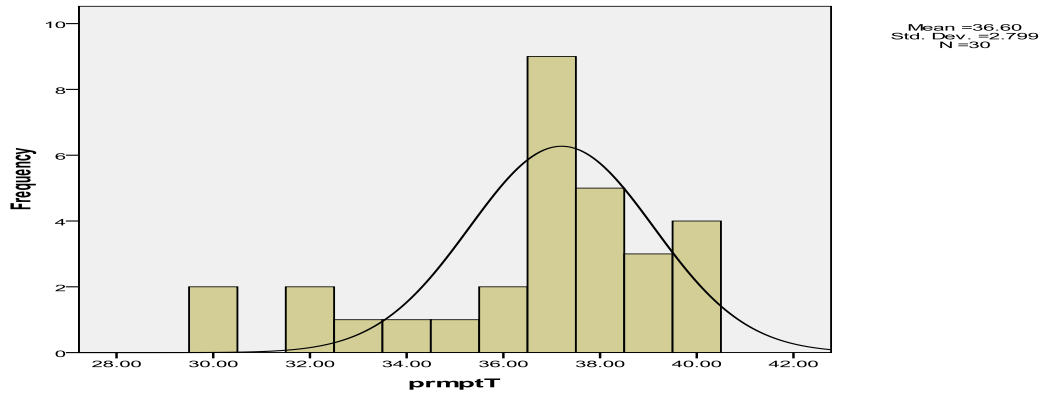


Figure 4: Histogram of the tense scores obtained by the prompt group

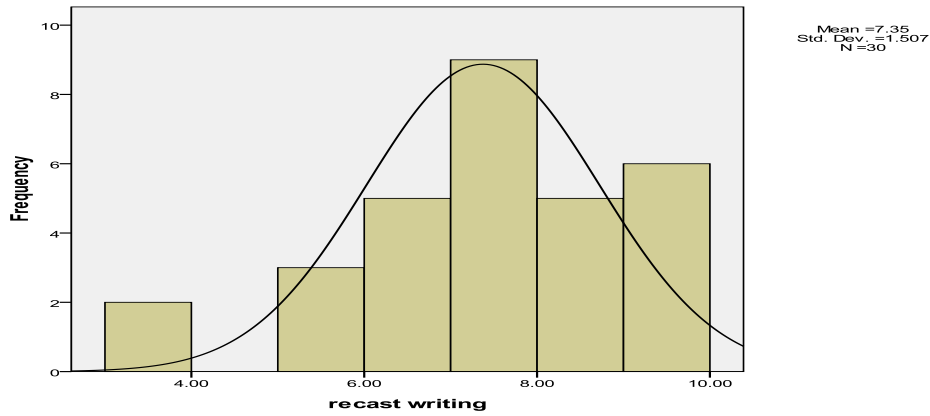


Figure 5: Histogram of the writing scores obtained by the recast group

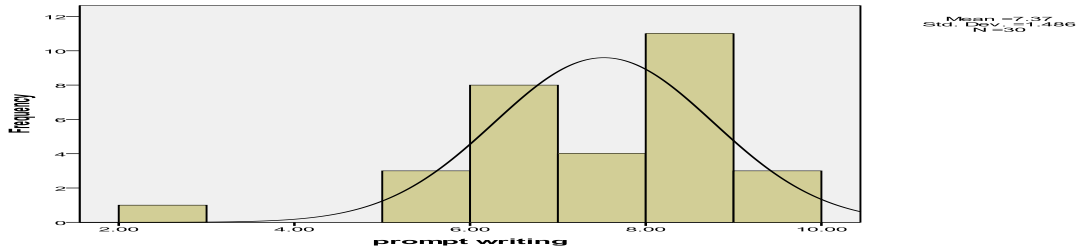


Figure 6: Histogram of the writing scores obtained by the prompt group

As displayed in table 9 above, the tense and writing scores of the prompt group did not show normality as the ratios exceed the range of  $\pm 1.96$ . But the rest were normal. Therefore, the researcher had to compare the tense scores and the writing scores of the two groups separately through t-tests. To compare the tense knowledge of the two groups and conduct a t-test, the normality of distribution of each set of scores was checked again. As shown already the scores obtained by the prompt group were not normally distributed. Therefore, a Mann-Whitney U test was conducted. The following table shows the result:



Table 10: Ranks

Grouping	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Tense Recast	30	26.55	796.50
Prompt	30	34.45	1033.50
Total	60		

Table 11: Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>

	tense
Mann-Whitney U	331.500
Wilcoxon W	796.500
Z	-1.774
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.076

a. Grouping Variable: grouping

As shown in table 10, the prompt group obtained a higher rank compared with the recast group in the tense knowledge test. However table 11 shows that the difference was not significant at .05 level of significant ( $M=331.5$ ,  $p=.07>.05$ ). Thus, the corresponding null hypothesis was confirmed.

To compare the posttest writings of the two groups also a t-test was needed, and again the assumption of normality of the two related sets of scores had to be checked. As shown in table 4.9 the distribution of the writing scores of the prompt group turned out to be not normal. Therefore, again, the nonparametric Mann-Whitney U test was run. The following tables show the result.

Table 12: Ranks

Grouping	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Writing Recast	30	30.53	916.00
Prompt	30	30.47	914.00
Total	60		

Table 13: Test Statistics<sup>a</sup> of the writing scores

	Writing
Mann-Whitney U	449.000
Wilcoxon W	914.000
Z	-.015
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.988

a. Grouping Variable: grouping

As shown in table 12, the recast and prompt groups approximately obtained the same ranks, and table 13 depicts that the minor difference between the ranks was not significant ( $M=449$ ,  $p=.988>.05$ ). Therefore the corresponding null hypothesis was confirmed.

The following figures show the bar graphs representing the mean scores obtained by the two groups on the two tests.



Figure 7: Bar graph representing the mean scores of the two groups on the tense knowledge test.

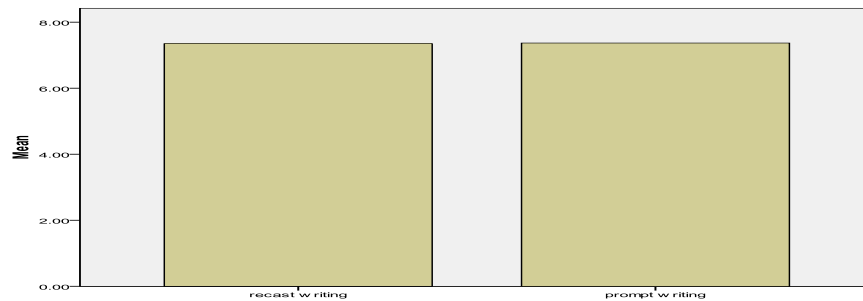


Figure 8: Bar graph representing the mean scores of the two groups on the writing test.

The researcher also opted for a comparison between the pretest-posttest scores of the two groups, to explore whether each group benefited significantly from the treatments or not. To this end, two-way repeated measures ANOVA was needed to be calculated once for the pre-test and posttest scores of the two groups on the tense awareness measure, and one more time for the pre-test and posttest scores of the two groups on the writing measure. But firstly, the assumption of normality of the distribution of the scores was checked for each set of scores. The following table shows the descriptive statistics of the scores.

Table 14: Descriptive Statistics of the pretest-posttest scores of the two groups on the two measures

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Ratios
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	
prompt tense pretest	30	7.00	18.00	12.9000	2.69546	.136	.427	.32
prompt tense posttest	30	30.00	40.00	36.6000	2.79901	-1.054	.427	2.47
prompt writing pretest	30	.75	4.25	2.5417	1.15423	-.132	.427	.31
prompt writing posttest	30	3.75	9.25	7.4727	1.34626	-.773	.427	1.81
recast tense pretest	30	7.00	19.00	12.4333	2.87298	.485	.427	1.14
recast tense posttest	30	26.00	40.00	34.8667	3.83930	-.717	.427	1.68
recast writing pretest	30	.50	4.25	2.5583	1.09009	-.075	.427	.18
recast writing posttest	30	3.50	9.38	7.3247	1.56541	-.783	.427	1.84
Valid N (listwise)	30							

As depicted in the above table all the skewness ratios fall within the normality range of  $\pm 1.96$  except for the scores on the tense awareness posttest obtained by the prompt group ( $2.47 > 1.96$ ). Therefore, a two-way RM ANOVA was run on the pretest-posttest scores of the two groups on the writing measure, and their scores on the tense awareness measure had to be compared separately as the assumption for the normality of the distribution of scores was not met for the post test scores of tense awareness belonging to the prompt group. Therefore, to compare the pretest-posttest

scores of the prompt group on the tense awareness measure, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank test, as the non-parametric equivalent for a repeated measures t-test was run. The following tables show the result.

*Table 15: Descriptive Statistics of the tense awareness pretest-posttest scores of the prompt group*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Percentiles		
						25th	50th (Median)	75th
prompt tense pretest	30	12.9000	2.69546	7.00	18.00	11.0000	12.0000	15.0000
prompt tense posttest	30	36.6000	2.79901	30.00	40.00	35.7500	37.0000	38.2500

As shown in table 15, the prompt group obtained a higher mean on the tense awareness posttest compared with that on the pretest. The following tables show whether the difference was significant.

*Table 16: Ranks*

	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
prompt tense posttest – Negative Ranks	0 <sup>a</sup>	.00	.00
prompt tense pretest Positive Ranks	30 <sup>b</sup>	15.50	465.00
Ties	0 <sup>c</sup>		
Total	30		

*Table 17: Test Statistics<sup>b</sup>*

	prompt tense posttest – prompt tense pretest
Z	-4.792 <sup>a</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

As displayed in the above table, the difference between the ranks of the two sets of scores turned out to be significant ( $Z=4.79$ ,  $p=.000<.05$ ). Therefore, it is concluded that the prompt group improved its tense awareness across time (before and after treatment). To compare the pretest-posttest scores of the two groups on the writing test, a two-way RM ANOVA (mixed between-within ANOVA) was conducted. The following tables show the results:

*Table 18: Descriptive Statistics of the pretest-posttest scores of the two groups on the writing measure*

	feedback type	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
writing pretest	Recast	2.5583	1.09009	30
	Prompt	2.5417	1.15423	30
	Total	2.5500	1.11310	60
writing posttest	Recast	7.3247	1.56541	30
	Prompt	7.4727	1.34626	30
	Total	7.3987	1.44945	60

Table 18 above depicts that both groups improved their use of tense in their writings across time, as their posttest means were higher than their pretest means (recast=2.55 vs. 7.32, and prompt= 2.54 vs. 7.47).

*Table 19: Box's Test of  
Equality of Covariance  
Matrices<sup>a</sup>*

Box's M	.831
F	.267
df1	3
df2	605520.000
Sig.	.850

Table 19 shows that the assumption of equality of covariance is not violated as the sig. value is not less than .001 (.85>.001).

*Table 20: Multivariate Tests<sup>b</sup>*

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Time	Pillai's Trace	.881	431.031 <sup>a</sup>	1.000	58.000	.000	.881
	Wilks' Lambda	.119	431.031 <sup>a</sup>	1.000	58.000	.000	.881
	Hotelling's Trace	7.432	431.031 <sup>a</sup>	1.000	58.000	.000	.881
	Roy's Largest Root	7.432	431.031 <sup>a</sup>	1.000	58.000	.000	.881
time * grouping	Pillai's Trace	.002	.124 <sup>a</sup>	1.000	58.000	.726	.002
	Wilks' Lambda	.998	.124 <sup>a</sup>	1.000	58.000	.726	.002
	Hotelling's Trace	.002	.124 <sup>a</sup>	1.000	58.000	.726	.002
	Roy's Largest Root	.002	.124 <sup>a</sup>	1.000	58.000	.726	.002

The above table reports that the interaction effect between time and grouping was not significant ( $p=.726>.05$ ). Hence, the main effects should be inspected separately. The value for Wilks' Lambda for time is .119 with a sig. value of .000 (less than .05). This suggests that there was a change in the writing performance of the participants across the two time periods, and the main effect for time was significant. Also the Partial Eta Squared value suggests a large effect size using the criteria proposed by Cohen (1988): .01=small effect, .06=moderate effect, .14= large effect. Afterwards, the researcher explored the between - subjects effects. The following table reports the result:

*Table 21: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	2969.279	1	2969.279	1691.460	.000	.967
grouping	.129	1	.129	.074	.787	.001
Error	101.816	58	1.755			

As shown in table 21, the main effect for grouping turned out to be insignificant ( $F=.074$ ,  $p=.787>.05$ ), implying that there was no significant difference between the two groups with respect to their pre test and post test scores on the writing measure.

Overall, the latter inferential statistics demonstrated that both groups developed their tense knowledge and their ability in using tense in writing, and that both treatments (recast and prompt) were significantly effective, though there was no significant difference between the two groups on the posttest scores, and that both groups developed their tense knowledge and use equally.

## **CONCLUSION**

The outcome of the post test analyses demonstrated that the corresponding null hypotheses which stated,

- There is no significant difference between the effect of recast and prompt on EFL learners' tense awareness.
- There is no significant difference between the effect of recast and prompt on EFL learners' use of tense in writing were confirmed.

As the two groups were checked to be homogeneous with regard to their tense knowledge and their ability in using tenses in their writings, the final absence of any significant difference between their mean scores on the achievement post tests could be contributed to the equivalence of the effects of the types of instruction they received. It implies that there is no significant difference between the effect of recast and prompt on EFL elementary learners' both tense knowledge and tense use in writing.

Based on the findings of the present study and the researcher's observations during the actual conduct of the study, a number of pedagogical implications can be drawn for EFL learners.

With respect to corrective feedback, the study contributes significantly to debates with both theoretical and practical relevance by confirming that recasts, when compared to other feedback options especially, "prompts" are not necessarily the most effective type of feedback in getting students familiar with tenses and their correct use in writing. In terms of pedagogical implications, one might not expect these findings to generalize to other instructional contexts, yet Ammar (2003) drew similar conclusions in the context of intensive ESL instruction, which entails communicative language teaching but not content-based instruction.

Moreover, immersion teachers can expect to continue their balancing act, varying their use of prompts and recasts according to context (Lyster, 2002 pp.381-397). But it is necessary to act more systematically in planned ways, taking in to account the cognitive dimensions of processing and representation associated with specific target features in L2 learners' developing interlanguage system. Recast and prompt feedbacks such as those suggested in this study, can be easily used in several classrooms once students understand recasts and prompts and have some experiences with them.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Like any other study, the researcher faced limitations which were beyond her control as follows:

- Due to the regulations of high schools, the researcher could not have access to male participants ;therefore, the result of the study may not be generalized to male population of EFL learners.
- The researcher conducted two briefing sessions, one at the beginning of the term and the other in the middle of the term to provide the students with two written guidelines and to direct them throughout the whole treatment procedure. Because of time limitations in high schools the researcher could not allocate more than two sessions of the course to the briefing explanations of written guidelines while more sessions seemed to be needed for the successful mastery of the issue by the students.
- The participants in each group might not had been at the same level of writing at the beginning of the study. They might had been selected because of the good scored which they could obtain in the listening and reading tests but not the writing component.

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EGO-IDEALS AND SUBLIME OBJECTS OF IDEOLOGY: A STUDY OF SYMBOLIC IDENTIFICATION IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S *THE HANDMAID'S TALE*

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**ABSTRACT**

Margaret Atwood's novel *The Handmaid's Tale* describes a futuristic society where all sexual affairs, except that for procreation, have been abandoned. This investigation tries to show that the acquisition of identity in the symbolic order portrayed by Atwood consists of a process of identification with figures of authority. Žižek's reworking on cultural notions introduces the concept of fantasy into the political field. In Žižekian view, the symbolic identity is achieved by the register and internalization of cultural norms through identification with figures of symbolic authority in the field of fantasy. In Žižek's Lacanese, the subject is decentered and a person's sense of identity is constructed by external Ego Ideals that center upon sublime objects of Ideology. They allocate the subjects different places in the socio-political totality and give them a social mandate, a definite role to play in worldly affairs. The Handmaids' fantasy is created into believing that the repression and lack of freedom, they experience, is the ideal condition for a human being. Virginity and pregnancy are two sublime objects of ideology that help the government to regulate the Handmaids' fantasy. This study uncovers the ways system refers to Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ, and a character called Janine to present Ego-Ideals for the Handmaids as the most important group in the novel.

**KEY WORDS:** Ego-Ideal, Sublime Object of Ideology, Symbolic Order, the Handmaids.

**INTRODUCTION**

Margaret Atwood occupies a central place in recent development of North American literature. Today she has published more than forty books of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry dealing with diverse themes as feminism, ecology, gothic tradition, political relationship between Canada and the United States, and power politics. The American Library Association (ALA) lists her masterpiece *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) as number 37 on the 100 Most Frequently Challenged Books of 1990–2000. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, published in 1985, Canadian writer Margaret Atwood paints her most vivid portrait of a futuristic state, named Gilead that deals with themes of identification and the various means by which it gains agency. Atwood also satirically comments upon the deeply flawed ideology of Gilead; society is constructed to maximize the possibility of reproduction. In such a theocratic society, identities are simplified into different roles, each serving only one role and all forming an efficient machine of household and procreation.

Many critics work on Atwood's masterpiece *The Handmaid's Tale*. Coral Ann Howells (1995) remarks the novel is "closer to the new feminist scholarship which has moved beyond exclusively female concerns to recognition of the complexities of social gender construction" (p. 128). J. Brooks Bouson (1993) announces that Atwood "lays bare the cultural and literary script that assigns women the passive self-effacing roles and encourages them to collude in their oppression as they consent to femininity" (p. 9). These critical notions are crucial but they ignore the point that in any symbolic order different discourses operate all together to identify subjects with the symbolic values. Therefore, the study of characters' identification with a methodology that covers psychological and political elements all at once is still essential. In order to fill the mentioned gap, this thesis refers to Slavoj Žižek.

Born in 1949, Slavoj Žižek is a Slovenian philosopher and cultural critic who participates in various disciplines such as political theory, film theory, and theoretical psychoanalysis. He has a gifted mind, with a surprising understanding of contemporary theory. Studying Žižek is a stimulating experience, "one is simultaneously informed, edified, and entertained" (Sciull, 2011, 296). Žižek's works draw on three main areas of influence, philosophy, politics, and psychoanalysis. In each of these areas, Žižek is influenced by the writings of a single individual, "Georg Hegel in

philosophy, Karl Marx in politics, and Jacques Lacan in psychoanalysis” (Myers, 2003, p. 14). He is influenced by Hegel’s account of totality as the product of a process that preserves all of its moments as elements in a structure (Sharpe & Baucher, 2010, pp. 38-9), Marx’s focus on the mechanics of society as one “to clarify how the workings of individuals should be regarded” (Myers, pp. 17-20), and Lacan’s psychoanalysis and philosophy as “the most controversial psycho-analyst since Freud” (Macey, 1994, p. xiv).

This investigation tries to show that the acquisition of identity in the symbolic order portrayed by Atwood consists of the process of identification with figures of authority. Different Ego-Ideals allocate the subjects different places in the socio- political totality and give the subjects a social mandate, a definite role to play in worldly affairs. The Handmaids’ fantasy is created into believing that the repression and lack of freedom, they experience, is the ideal condition for a human being. Virginity and pregnancy are two ideas that help the government to manipulate the Handmaids’ fantasy. This study uncovers the ways system refers to Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ, and a character called Janine to present Ego Ideals for the Handmaids as the most important group in the novel.

### **SUBJECTS POLITICAL IDENTIFICATION WITH EGO-IDEAL AND SUBLIME OBJECTS**

In our fantasy, we “form our sense of selves” or manage loss of enjoyment by our identifications with various symbolic entities, which may include job titles, leisure activities, religious affiliations, nationalities, and value systems. All of these symbols are “abstract ideas” in some respects, yet they have a power to register and establish subjects in order to insure the continuity of symbolic order (Ryan, 2010, p. 59).

The symbolic Other, as split, is argued in Žižek’s book *How to Read Lacan* (2007), where Žižek elucidates the central distinction between the Ideal Other of the symbolic order (the Ego-Ideal) and the superego of the Real:

The Ego-Ideal is the agency whose gaze I try to impress with my ego image, the big Other who watches over me and propels me to give my best, the ideal I try to follow and actualize; and the superego is this same agency in its revengeful, sadistic, punishing, aspect. The underlying structuring principle of these three terms is clearly Lacan’s triad Imaginary-Symbolic-Real: ideal ego is imaginary, what Lacan calls the “small other,” the idealized double-image of my ego; Ego-Ideal is symbolic, the point of my symbolic identification, the point in the big Other from which I observe (and judge) myself; superego is real, the cruel and insatiable agency which bombards me with impossible demands and which mocks my failed attempts to meet them, the agency in the eyes of which I am all the more guilty, the more I try to suppress my “sinful” strivings and meet its demands. (p. 80)

Žižek points out that a person’s sense of identity – her ego – is constructed of two components. On the one hand, there is a person’s ideal ego. It is the one who the person would like others to see her. It relates to the imaginary category of human experience. By this technical term, Lacan argues that this level of our identity is at first “modelled on loved others we perceive around us, whose behavior we strive to mirror in order to win their love, and stabilize our sense of who we are” (Sharpe & Baucher, p. 47). On the other hand, there is a person’s Ego-Ideal. This component of the ego involves symbolic identification. As it has declared, the register of language and culture is called the symbolic Order, therefore, symbolic identification refers to the internalization of cultural norms through identification with figures of symbolic authority. A person’s Ego-Ideal is the perspective from or in which the subject would like to be seen as the person one hopes to be. The key thing is that the Ego-Ideal, as its name suggests, involves the dimension of the symbolic order. A person’s Ego-Ideal is some idea rather than any specific person with which the process of identification is achieved (ibid, pp. 48-9).

The Ego-Ideal centers upon a master signifier or a sublime object of ideology; Žižek believes:

To grasp this fully, we have only to remember the above-mentioned example of ideological 'quilting': in the ideological space float signifiers like 'freedom', 'state', 'justice', 'peace' [...] and then their chain is supplemented with some master-signifier ('Communism') which retroactively determines their (Communist) meaning: 'freedom' is effective only through

surmounting bourgeois formal freedom, which is merely a form of slavery; the 'state' is the means by which the ruling class guarantees the conditions of its rule; market exchange cannot be 'just and equitable' because the very form of equivalent exchange between labor and capital implies exploitation; 'war' is inherent to class society as such; only the socialist revolution can bring about lasting 'peace', and so forth. (Žižek, 1995, p. 102)

Master signifier is a key word for symbolic identification that, in itself, is just a signifier, but one that, in the "psychic economy of the subject," plays a special role: it is a signifier without a signified. It "quilts the field" of a certain context; in other words, it prevents the chain of signifiers by setting itself as the master one (ibid, p. 104). Rousseau, and finally "the Rousseau family," is just a name, just a succession of some sounds. If it is grouped in an entire family heritage, it will be full of meaning – especially for the subject Jean- Jacques Rousseau. More precisely, the family name specifies, here for Rousseau, "a place in society as a place of admirable achievements and the prominent ideals." In other words, in the psychic economy of the subject the Ego-Ideal maintains the place of the symbolic Order. It holds the sociocultural totality by giving the subject a position in society, a symbolic position with authority (Sharpe & Baucher, p. 50). Žižek believes that successful political ideologies necessarily refer to and turn around sublime objects posited by political ideologies (1995, p. 96). These sublime objects are what political subjects take it that their regime's ideologies' central words mean or name extraordinary Things like God, the Father, the King, in whose name they will (if necessary) transgress ordinary moral laws and lay down their lives.

### SYMBOLIC IDENTIFICATION IN *THE HANDMAID'S TALE*

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, Margaret Atwood describes a future where all sexual affairs, except that between a man and wife or for procreation, have been abandoned. Romance, love, and sexual pleasure have no place in human endeavors. They have been summarized to a ceremonial act wherein a Handmaid, as a servant, is used by her commander specifically for breeding purposes. Such a suppressive symbolic order banned the mere hint of sexuality in any form; even the showing of an ankle by a woman is considered illegal base on religious doctrines. Atwood describes:

What's going on in this room, under Serena Joy's silvery canopy, is not exciting. It has nothing to do with passion or love or romance or any of those other notions we used to titillate ourselves with. It has nothing to do with sexual desire, at least for me, and certainly not for Serena. (Atwood, p. 105)

All sexual fantasies are repressed in every possible way. As Žižek announces the Handmaids' fantasy manages or domesticates the traumatic loss of the enjoyment, which "cannot be symbolized" (Žižek, 1997, p. 97). The Handmaids' fantasy is manipulated into believing that the repression and lack of freedom they experience now is the ideal condition for a subject. There are two important ideas for the Handmaids' ego in Gilead with which they identifies: virginity and pregnancy. They are the core of ideas and master signifiers that fill the split between the symbolic meaning of social ideals and the institutional ritual that holds these social ideals (ibid, p. 103).

The Handmaids identify with the figure of Virgin Mary as an Ego-Ideal for the concept of virginity. They must cover themselves in such a way that their skins be invisible just as Mary does not show her body and her beauty. The narrator depicts his journey to the nightclub as:

We glide together through the darkening streets. The Commander has hold of my right hand, as if we're teenagers at the movies. I clutch the sky-blue cape tightly about me, as a good Wife should. Through the tunnel made by the hood I can see the back of Nick's head. His hat is on straight, he's sitting up straight, his neck is straight, he is all very straight. His posture disapproves of me, or am I imagining it? Does he know what I've got on under this cloak, did he procure it? And if so, does this make him angry or lustful or envious or anything at all? We do have something in common: both of us are supposed to be invisible, both of us are functionaries. I wonder if he knows this. When he opened the door of the car for the Commander, and, by extension, for me, I tried to catch his eye, make him look at me, but he acted as if he didn't see me. Why not? It's a soft job for him, running little errands, doing little favors, and there's no way he'd want to jeopardize it. (Atwood, p. 232)

This cover prevents them from sexual temptations and fantasies. The Handmaids' bodies are expected to be hidden from views because they are women and "Paul wrote that women should keep their heads veiled because they were not, like men, made in the image of God" (Warner, 1976, p. 178). The red dress is always there to remind them of their destiny and their role in the symbolic order, as that of the Virgin Mary. Virgin Mary is here the Ego-Ideal or the

agency whose gaze the Handmaids “try to impress with their ego image, the big Other who watches over” them and propels them to give their best, “the ideal they try to follow and actualize” (Žižek, 2007, p. 80).

Their garment is the same as the Virgin Mary in most Christian pictures, where her long red dress that covers all of her body is prominent. In the Handmaids’ ideological fantasy, an ideal Handmaid is one that is perfect the same as the Virgin Mary who is the symbol of female perfection; she was a perfect daughter, wife, and mother without sexual desires. The image of perfection “is built on the equivalence between goodness, motherhood, purity, gentleness, and submission” (Heartney, 2003, p. 6). Offred gives a picture of Gileadian pregnancy as:

Arousal and orgasm are no longer thought necessary; they would be a symptom of frivolity merely, like jazz garters or beauty spots: superfluous distractions for the light-minded. Outdated. It seems odd that women once spent such time and energy reading about such things, thinking about them, worrying about them, writing about them. They are so obviously recreational. (Atwood, p. 105)

The Handmaids’ conception should be without having an orgasm or any other kind of pleasure, just like the Virgin Mary, who was conceived without having any sexual intercourse with a man, without feeling any pleasure. Again, Virgin Mary, as Žižek believes, is the concern of “symbolic, the point of symbolic identification, the point in the big Other” from which the Handmaids observe and judge themselves (Žižek, 2007: 80).

As a virgin, it is expected that the Handmaids free themselves from any desire. The denial of desire derives from the Fall of Adam and Eve, who after “having eaten the forbidden fruit covered their genitals, knowing that they were naked” (Warner, p. 54). Therefore, the passion and the desire of making love are considered as sin, not as the sexual act by the big Other. In this symbolic order, like the Fathers of the Church, also, for Commanders the sexual act should not aim at pleasure, but only at reproduction. The Handmaids are accepted by and in the symbolic order firstly as virgins, because, as Kristeva writes in *About Chinese Women* (1977), “Christianity does associate women with the symbolic community, provided they keep their virginity” (p. 145). Virgins are accepted by the symbolic order because their sexuality is controlled. The big Other expects the Handmaids to leave their bodily and sexual instincts behind and concentrate on the spirit that is the symbolic order’s most privilege. The idea of virginity, which derives from the Virgin Mary, is very important for Gilead as “the son of God chose to be born from a virgin mother because this was the only way a child could enter the world without sin” (Warner, p. 54). The Handmaids, as a part of symbolic order, looks at themselves in a “narcissistic satisfaction,” that as Žižek affirms, is provided by looking at themselves “through the other” or Ego-Ideal (Žižek, 1993, p. 16).

Although the Handmaids are not virgins in usual sense, but the regime treats them as such. The paradox here lies in the fact that the Gileadian signified for virginity is not connected to the sexuality of the body but to the virginity of the senses: to what the Handmaids eat, see, and hear. In chapter twelve Offred narrates:

I put the tray on the small white-painted table and draw the chair up to it. I take the cover off the tray. The thigh of a chicken, overcooked. It’s better than bloody, which is the other way she does it. Rita has ways of making her resentments felt. A baked potato, green beans, salad. Canned pears for dessert. It’s good enough food, though bland. Healthy food. You have to get your vitamins and minerals, said Aunt Lydia coyly. You must be a worthy vessel. No coffee or tea though, no alcohol. Studies have been done. There’s a paper napkin, as in cafeterias. (Atwood, p. 75)

They are always given the healthy food in order to make sure that they are virgin and safe to do their functions. The Handmaids’ ears are exposed to the extracts from the Bible in their everyday life through their commanders and in their communication with other Handmaids. In addition, as Offred notes, “Given our wings, our blinkers, it’s hard to look up, hard to get the full view, of the sky, of anything,” they see what the veil they are wearing allows them to see (ibid, p. 40).



The Handmaids must be kept virgin because the symbolic order values the virginity of body as a channel of communication with God; and it is God who will allow them to have a baby. Offred explains the Commander's reading from the Bible as:

The Commander, as if reluctantly, begins to read. He isn't very good at it. Maybe he's merely bored. It's the usual story, the usual stories. God to Adam, God to Noah. He fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. Then comes the moldy old Rachel and Leah stuff we had drummed into us at the Center. Give me children, or else I die. Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb? Behold my maid Bilhah. She shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her. And so on and so forth. We had it read to us every breakfast, as we sat in the high school cafeteria, eating porridge with cream and brown sugar. You're getting the best, you know, said Aunt Lydia. There's a war on, things are rationed. You are spoiled girls, she twinkled, as if rebuking a kitten. Naughty puss. (Atwood, p. 232)

Offred is allowed to go shopping, but she can do nothing else. When she returns home, she "takes a bath, goes into her room, where she waits for the food to be brought to her" (ibid, p. 43). To grasp this fully, we have to only remember that the idea of virginity is, in Žižekian term, an ideological quilt that in "the ideological space float signifiers like 'freedom', 'state', 'justice', 'peace' [...] and then their chain" is a master signifier "which retroactively determines their meaning" (Žižek, 1995, p. 102).

Gilead defined a Handmaid's position to "that of (grammatical) object and patient" (Staels, 1995, p. 459). Offred can do nothing more than just sit there, be served, and wait, keeping in mind that she is just a container and accepting her destiny, just like Virgin Mary, as Ego-Ideal, "who bowed her head and submitted uncomplainingly to her destiny" (Warner, p. 191). She puts this point in plain words:

So. More waiting. Lady in waiting: that's what they used to call those stores where you could buy maternity clothes. Woman in waiting sounds more like someone in a train station. Waiting is also a place: it is wherever you wait. For me it's this room. I am a blank, here, between parentheses. (Atwood, pp. 239-40)

Thus, the Handmaids' identities is made in a position of waiting; waiting to be fed, waiting to be impregnated, and waiting to be pregnant like their Ego-Ideal, Virgin Mary. Waiting is their "social and ideological function" that is constructed by "a superior and legitimate way" through their Ego-Ideal (Žižek, 1995, p. 123).

There are also no mirrors for the Handmaids because they want the Handmaids not to see and themselves as a whole subject. The house is characterized as:

As in a nunnery too, there are few mirrors.  
There remains a mirror, on the hall wall. If I turn my head so that the white wings framing my face direct my vision towards it, I can see it as I go down the stairs, round, convex, a pier glass, like the eye of a fish, and myself in it like a distorted shadow, a parody of something. (Atwood, p. 19)

Elsewhere she describes her bathroom as:

There's a blue bath mat, a blue fake-fur cover on the toilet seat; all this bathroom lacks from the time before is a doll whose skirt conceals the extra roll of toilet paper. Except that the mirror over the sink has been taken out and replaced by an oblong of tin, and the door has no lock, and there are no razors, of course. (Ibid, p. 62)

The only way they can see their body is on window glasses, where they see it in fragments; their body is present and absent at the same time. In the Household, "mirrors are practically absent, because freedom for self-reflection saves one from the traditional search for identity" (Staels, p. 457). In mirror, the Handmaids would see their hands, head, legs, and their body as a whole; but the symbolic order expects them to think of their body as a walking womb:

We are for breeding purposes: we aren't concubines, geisha girls, courtesans. On the contrary: everything possible has been done to remove us from that category. There is supposed to be nothing entertaining about us, no room is to be permitted for the flowering of secret lusts; no special favors are to be wheedled, by them or us, there are to



be no toeholds for love. We are two-legged wombs, that's all: sacred vessels, ambulatory chalices. (Atwood, p. 146)

This also goes back to the Virgin Mary, the mother who sacrifices her body and her desires in order to be accepted as a subject within the symbolic order. In order for the mother's body to be accepted as an ideal one, the Handmaids have to reject their sexuality. In such an ideological system, all people accept the Handmaids because of their dignified role as future mothers. It is clear in Offred's encounter with Guardians, "the two young Guardians salute us, raising three fingers to the rims of their berets. Such tokens are accorded to us. They are supposed to show respect because of the nature of our service" (Atwood, p. 31). It shows that a Handmaid's position in Gilead is considered as the one that Virgin Mary occupies in western cultures, an elevated one that every women wish to achieve. In Gilead, as "a kind of microcosm of the social structure, an image of society [...], as a stable totality with well-defined class distinctions," Virgin Mary is not as she "really was" but seen as "wanted to be seen in order to appear likeable, in brief the ego-ideal of society" (Žižek, 1995, p. 76).

Offred speaks also about Janine, a very important Handmaid in the novel, who represents the Handmaids' Ego-Ideal. Offred looks at her as:

Janine, was paraded out in front of her, her and the other Wives, so they could see her belly, feel it perhaps, and congratulate the Wife. A strong girl, good muscles. No Agent Orange in her family, we checked the records, you can never be too careful. And perhaps one of the kinder ones: Would you like a cookie, dear?  
Oh no, you'll spoil her, too much sugar is bad for them.  
Surely one won't hurt, just this once, Mildred.  
And sucky Janine: Oh yes, can I, ma'am, please? (Atwood, p. 115)

Janine, as an Ego-Ideal is "the perspective from or in which they would like to be seen as the person they hopes to be" (Sharpe & Baucher, p. 48). She is an idea with which the Handmaids deeply identify. Janine is the most powerful Handmaid in the novel. Although all the Handmaids could have power over the Wives, they do not, except Janine who is the only pregnant woman in *The Handmaid's Tale*. Before her pregnancy, in the Red Centre, she is described as a woman without a will of her own, whose existence is defined by serving others and is cast off the Handmaids' group. Offred believes "Janine was like a puppy that's been kicked too often, by too many people, at random: she'd roll over for everyone, she'd tell anything, just for a moment of approbation" (Atwood, p. 139).

In pregnancy, she is a woman who can control others. She is not like a puppet in the hands of whoever wants to control her; on the contrary, when she gets pregnant though, Janine gains the dignity she never had among the other Handmaids:

As we wait in our double line, the door opens and two more women come in, both in the red dresses and white wings of the Handmaids. One of them is vastly pregnant; her belly, under her loose garment, swells triumphantly. There is a shifting in the room, a murmur, an escape of breath; despite ourselves we turn our heads, blatantly, to see better; our fingers itch to touch her. She's a magic presence to us, an object of envy and desire, we covet her. She's a flag on a hilltop, showing us what can still be done: we too can be saved. (Ibid, pp. 36-7)

Janine has what all the Handmaids fantasize in the symbolic order, which is to be pregnant. Therefore, in symbolic identification Janine is a key figure for providing the Ego-Ideal for the Handmaids; Janine position is the very place from where they "are being observed," from where they look at themselves so that they appear to themselves "likeable, worthy of love" (Žižek, 1995, p. 116). Janine shows off, and this is true and at the same time expected, since it is her only chance to be on top of the other Handmaids; Offred says:

The women in the room are whispering, almost talking, so great is their excitement.  
"Who is it?" I hear behind me.  
"Ofwarren. No. Ofwarren."  
"Showoff," a voice hisses, and this is true. (Atwood, p. 26)

Therefore, whereas the symbolic order often devalues and trivializes women, “the pregnant woman can gain a certain sense of self-respect” (Young, 1998, p. 279).

Pregnancy is unique for every woman in Gilead because the woman is experiencing it by and for herself and everybody else is excluded. Although from the very beginning of her conception Janine knows that the baby she has in her belly shall not be hers, pregnancy gives her a desirable position among subjects in the symbolic order. In Žižek’s view, the ideology of Gilead, as a successful political ideology, necessarily refers to and turn around pregnancy as sublime objects posited by the political ideologies. This pregnancy is what political subjects take it that their regime’s ideologies’ central words mean or name extraordinary, in whose name they will (if necessary) transgress ordinary moral laws and lay down their lives (Žižek, 1995, p. 96).

Janine has the chance that other Handmaids do not have, to accomplish her mission in Gilead: giving birth to the baby. Atwood explains:

A woman that pregnant doesn't have to go out, doesn't have to go shopping. The daily walk is no longer prescribed, to keep her abdominal muscles in working order. She needs only the floor exercises, the breathing drill. She could stay at her house. And it's dangerous for her to be out, there must be a Guardian standing outside the door, waiting for her. Now that she's the carrier of life, she is closer to death, and needs special security. Jealousy could get her, it's happened before. All children are wanted now, but not by everyone. (Atwood, p. 26)

Since all of them are in menopause and cannot have a baby, Janine is the only example of the Handmaids’ power over the Wives. Because no other Handmaid is pregnant throughout the novel, she is an ideal among the subjects.

In addition to the sense of superiority, pregnancy allocates Janine the privacy that the other Handmaids do not have, but long for. Offred wishes to be like Janine as she imagines, “such a, so well behaved, not surly like some of them, do their job and that's that. More like a daughter to you, as you might say. One of the family. Comfortable matronly chuckles. That's all dear, you can go back to your room” (ibid, p. 115). During pregnancy, nobody can interfere in her relationship with the baby and her thoughts for it. Although the baby will be taken away at the moment of birth, nine months pregnancy gives her power. She is respected much more as a future mother because pregnancy and motherhood takes the reader back to the Virgin Mary, the absolute and perfect Mother of all, who in the Gileadian belief has the most valuable definitions. This situation of the woman changed in the face of the Virgin Mary “who gives birth to the redeemer” (Warner, p. 59) and becomes the “second Eve” (ibid), who brings in a new spiritual sense to all Christians instead of the sense of Fall.

These evidences gives credit to Žižek’s idea that fantasy operates in filling the split between the symbolic meaning of social ideals and the institutional ritual that holds these social ideals in political ideologies (Žižek, 1997, pp. 106-220). Being under these processes, a Handmaid’s fantasy is constructed in such a way as even starts to accept willingly the role of Handmaid that has been imposed upon her. The Handmaids have been manipulated into believing that this sinister symbolic order was designed for their own good, “Offred at first accepts assurance that the new order is for her protection” (Chauhan, Jul. 2011, p. 2). She even starts to measure her self-worth by the viability of her ovaries and this negatively affects her self-image. This is why Offred characterizes the deploring act of ceremony as “nor does rape cover it. Nothing was going on here that I haven’t signed up for. There wasn’t a lot of choice, but there was some and this is what I chose” (Atwood, p. 121). This statement is very strange. It shows to what extent a Handmaid’s identification with Ego-Ideal progresses that the deploring act is not considered so bad. It verifies that she is beginning to “embrace the system and justify the violations that are being committed against her” (Chauhan, Sep. 2011, p. 4).

The fantasy of the Handmaids, as “decentered subjects,” are constructed by external Ego-Ideals (Mary, Christ, and Janine) and external master signifiers (virginity and pregnancy) in such a way that they accept the values of symbolic order willingly (Žižek, 2007, p. 16). Broadly speaking, all people in general support Gilead’s existence by willingly participating in its rituals, serving as agents of the totalitarian state. A woman like Serena Joy, who has a trivial position in the symbolic order, works out authority within her own household delightfully. She jealously protects her little power and practices it eagerly. In a similar way, the women known as Aunts, especially Aunt Lydia, act as willing agents of the Gileadian state. They habituate other women into the ruling ideology, keeping a close eye out for rebellion. As Žižek resolves, the Ego-Ideals such as Virgin Mary and Janine become “externalized as the expectations of the social group to which the individual belongs.” The source of moral satisfaction is no longer the

feeling they are resisted, but rather “the feeling of loyalty to the group. The subject looks at himself through the eyes of the group, he strives to merit its love and esteem” (Žižek, 1991, p. 64).

## CONCLUSION

Explaining ideological symbolic orders is always Atwood’s subject in her novels and poetry. An in-depth analysis of her novel *The Handmaid’s Tale* offers that it is profoundly political; her novel represents the subjects’ conflict with power and its forms: dictatorship, tyranny, torture, and the reality of violence (Rigney, 1987, p. 104). For Atwood, literature is a political device to show the operation of ideology, the position of people in a society, and the behavior of that people in the symbolic order. In other words, Atwood’s portrayal of the order referred in *The Handmaid’s Tale* includes the investigation of political elements.

Contemplation on ideology introduces fantasy as a psychological implication into the political field. Therefore, the third part of the theoretical part of this thesis has taken into consideration theorists’ views on the notion of fantasy and its function in controlling thoughts and influencing the public. The concept of fantasy does not include what we would describe as daydreams. It is postulated to be the reservoir of innate, unconscious images and knowledge, which has been built up because of phylogenetic inheritance (Watt, Cockcroft & Duncan, 2010, p. 74). It is argued, “desire is always the desire of the Other” (Žižek, 1997, p. 9). Fantasy plays an important role in symbolic registration and identification.

This investigation has also shown that the symbolic order continues its career by identifying subjects with Ego-Ideals in the field of fantasy. As Žižek announces the Handmaids’ fantasy manages or domesticates the traumatic loss of the enjoyment, which cannot be symbolized (ibid, p. 97). Here, fantasy operates in filling the split between the symbolic meaning of social ideals and the institutional ritual that holds these social ideals in political ideologies. The symbolic order refers to Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ, and a character called Janine to present Ego-Ideals for the Handmaids. This referred figures are the concern of “symbolic, the point of symbolic identification, the point in the big Other” from which the Handmaids observe and judge themselves (Žižek, 2007, p. 80). Therefore, in symbolic identification Mary, Jesus, and Janine are key figures for providing the Ego-Ideal for the Handmaids; their position is the very place from where the Handmaids “are being observed,” from where they look at themselves so that they appear to themselves “likeable, worthy of love” (Žižek, 1995, p. 116). These Ego-Ideal are the agency whose gaze the Handmaids “try to impress with their ego image, the big Other who watches over” them and propels them to give their best, “the ideal they try to follow and actualize” (Žižek, 2007, p. 80).

The fantasy of the Handmaids, as “decentered subjects,” are constructed by external Ego-Ideals (Mary, Christ, and Janine) and external master signifiers (virginity and pregnancy) in such a way that they accept the values of symbolic order willingly (ibid, p. 16). It helps the overall regulation and integrity of the subjects and symbolic order. The Ego-Ideals, as the positions that the Handmaids long for and strive to achieve, center upon virginity and pregnancy as sublime objects of ideology. These sublime objects are master signifiers that determine the meaning of other signifiers. Virginity and pregnancy are what political subjects take as their regime’s ideologies’ central words or name extraordinary, in whose name they will (if necessary) transgress ordinary moral laws and lay down their lives (Žižek, 1995, p. 96). It is remarkable to note that these sublime objects are , in Žižekian term, an ideological quilt that is in “the ideological space float signifiers like ‘freedom’, ‘state’, ‘justice’, ‘peace’ [...] and then their chain”, a master signifier “which retroactively determines their meaning” (Žižek, 1995, p. 102). They quilt the chain of signifiers in symbolic identification and retroactively determines their meaning. Virginity and pregnancy are what the Handmaids take as the central word of Gilead’s ideology.

Kauffman (1996) proposes “*The Handmaid’s Tale* functions as an anatomy of ideology, exposing the process by which one constructs, psychologically and politically, subjects of the state and then enlists their cooperation in their own subjection” (pp. 233-34). The present study has been designed to provide concrete examples of these concepts within *The Handmaid’s Tale*. This thesis has uncovered Gilead’s use of different mechanisms to oppress its citizens and the reaction of characters to this oppression.

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**ON SITUATING THE STANCE OF PERENNIALISM IN THE HISTORY OF CURRICULUM  
DEVELOPMENT IN IRAN: A PHILOSOPHICAL LOOK**

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**ABSTRACT**

Investigating the philosophical foundations of education in Iran, the writers hold the philosophy behind curriculum in Iranian education system was earlier based on collecting facts whose reliability was determined by a group of elites. Accordingly, this philosophical trend was in line with Perennialism that follows more or less an idealist path. To the writers, it is a fallacy to claim that insights derived from traditional philosophies are in conflict with those of modern philosophies. Employing a descriptive method, the paper is in an attempt to elucidate the philosophical background of education in Iran and holds that although Iranian education system is perennialist per se, it has the potential to merit from the yardsticks of other branches of philosophies, particularly, progressivism and existentialism.

**KEY WORDS:** history, philosophy, curriculum, Perennialism, Sufism

**INTRODUCTION**

Long has been written about the history of curriculum development in Iran, but less has been paid attention to the issue whether the history of curriculum development inspired by a philosophical thought is in conflict with the newer philosophies or not. Certainly, we live in a time of change, and change affects the content of curriculum (Pring, 2004). As Riazi and Razmjou (2004) state, curriculum renewal is an ongoing process in educational planning. In this regard, Iranian education system is not an exception. Curriculum renewal provides educators and curriculum developers with the opportunity to incorporate new insights and expectations in academic programs. Thus, in failing to understand change, we may fall victim to criticism. Hanson (1962) claims, "history of science without philosophy of science is blind" (p. 580). Further, it is a fallacy to claim that traditional philosophies, e.g., perennialism, are in conflict with newer ones, e.g., progressivism. The importance of philosophy in the history of education is emphasized in Hopkin's (cited in Ediger & Rao, 2003). According to Hopkin, philosophy has penetrated into every important decision made about curriculum and teaching in the past and is the basis of every important decision in the future. It is a truism that rarely is there a moment when teachers are not faced with occasions where philosophy is of vital part of action.

Employing a descriptive method, the paper makes an attempt to assert that the history of curriculum is deeply rooted in the philosophy that feeds into it, and it is highly context-bound, but this boundary does not imply that the process of curriculum development is static and is strictly defined by fixed philosophical thoughts, intolerant of diverse perspectives.

**REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Philosophy and history of science are part and parcel of each other. Hanson (1962) in his aphorism asserts "philosophy of science without history of science is empty" (p. 580). History can be understood either as events separated by time and space or as the events interrelated with time and space. Analytic philosophers are compatible with the first perspective. In effect, this group of philosophers either ignores historical analysis because of the subjectivity inherent in the interconnectedness of contextual realities or objectifies and segments history in order to control reality. In this way, analytic philosophers, or positivists, make an endeavor to conform within the paradigm of modernity (Slattery, 2006). In a nutshell, whether the ignorance of the past or the attention given to the present raises a conflict between tradition and modernity is among one of the central issues that the paper is willing to



investigate. Postmodern curriculum scholars, in contrast, are compatible with the latter—events are interrelated with time and space. To postmodernists, the idea of objectification of reality in order to control it is challenged.

In reality, what makes postmodernists distinct from analytic philosophers, as Slattery (2006) maintains, is the fact that postmodernists celebrate the eclectic, innovative, revisionist, and subjective dimension of historical interpretations. What postmodernism is not compatible with is the *domination* of a group of minority, e.g., the elites, and the *unification* of historical view. Accordingly, Mohsenpour (2008) asserts that existential philosophers (e.g., Molla Sadra) claim that the purpose of Islamic education is proving unification through looking at God's creatures. In effect, the concept of unification is elucidated through using subject-centered programs. In other words, students, in Iran, are taught to reason through structured lessons and drills in order to discover the reality; furthermore, in order to achieve refined wisdom, lessons are content-oriented. In fact, what makes postmodernism in conflict with modernism, as well as with traditionalism, is the notion of unification (Slattery, 2006), which is part of highly center-oriented cultures, such as Iran.

On elaborating the notion of unification, Hashemi (2012) asserts that unification is deeply rooted in music, calligraphy, painting, typography, and discourse in Iranian education system. According to Hashemi, the homophonic nature of Iranian music, for instance, is mostly characterized by “a single melodic line which moves around a theme” (p. 142). In fact, Iranians' inclination towards the center and the main theme is influenced by the fact that the religious culture, in Iran, guides people to appreciate and worship only one source of power, Allah. Henceforth, this deeply rooted religious belief, directly and indirectly, has an influence on every aspect of the people's life, leading them to seek unification everywhere (Hashemi, 2012).

In addition, in Iranian Sufism, the concept of Sufi who is in the quest for truth is so close to the meaning of teacher. The teacher has a messianic role. The teacher as the possessor of knowledge stands at the center of attention in class and is believed to be able to solve the problems of the world. Even the seating arrangement of the students would show the superiority of the teacher as the source of knowledge and discipline (Hashemi, 2012). In reality, as Hashemi asserts, the hierarchy that imposes itself upon the curriculum and education in such a context certainly inclines towards the legitimacy of top-down pedagogy. Henceforth, curriculum development in Iranian education system is in favor of the glorification of the past in order to revitalize the present. In a sense, the system of education insists on the reliability of facts that must be transmitted to the next generation.

In addition, what postmodernists insist on, according to Slattery (2006), is that when the norm chosen by curriculum developer is not compatible with the tenets of postmodernism, it results in hegemony. Elaborating the notion of hegemony is not in the scope of this paper, but it suffices to say when class schedules, bulletin boards, announcements, and dress codes all revolve around one activity, football, for instance which is chosen by a group of elites, and school leaders do not provide alternate and equitable activities for those who do not participate in the football rituals, then hegemony is created. Henceforth, educators must be aware of the ways that hegemony is created.

Curriculum development in the postmodern era deconstructs hegemony by challenging the dominance of logical positivism (Slattery, 2006). Logical positivism is challenged as it considers curriculum as a set of facts that can be enumerated; in fact, to logical positivists, some facts are considered as correct and others as wrong. Moreover, the analytic philosophers prefer to set strict aims for learning situations rather provide language learners with different narratives or genres to support their growth. In other words, postmodern educators can no longer teach a subject in terms of facts, or a series of events to be memorized (Tella, 2004).

In line with post-modernity, Lyotard (1984) also asserts that the Enlightenment notion of *totality* must also be challenged. Totality which is reflected in rationalistic and centric paradigms ignores difference (Slattery, 2006), or, according to Kumaravadivelu (2006), *particularity*. The parameter of particularity, according to Kumaravadivelu, contributes to the context-sensitive elements and individuality of the people involved. In fact, postmodernism is not compatible with modernists' notion of totality which is in line with certainty. Modernists' strivings towards totality and certainty led to an increasing instrumentalization of reason. To modernists, the enlightenment itself should be enlightened and not posed as a “myth-free” view of the world (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1997).

However, it is not plausible to claim that the tenets of post-modernity are in conflict with those of traditions. In fact, that learning situation has not been separated or isolated from the total context is crystal clear (Reid, cited in Yan, 2006, p. 50), but what is not fair to assume is that the stability of a postmodern ideology should not be at expense of marginalizing traditional voices. In sum, the survival of any type of education necessitates to let students celebrate



differences in order to “think globally, act locally” (René Dubos, cited in Gough, 2003, p. 55). In effect, it is obvious that we live in an era of information and technology, the influence of which on education is undeniable. Henceforth, the traditional language classroom is constantly changing with the advances and increasing uses of technology (Fakhraee Faruji, 2011).

### **CURRICULUM AS FACTS VERSUS CURRICULUM AS PRACTICE**

In the history of language curriculum, we face two contrasting views: curriculum as facts and curriculum as practice (Young, 1998). Similar to these two contrasting views, two contrasting approaches are presented: the banking approach and the problem posing approach (Freire, 1970). In the first approach, learners are observed as depositors. In contrast, the second approach, the problem posing perspective, respects the human dignity and helps to emancipate the individual. Investigating the philosophical foundations of education in Iran, the writers hold that the philosophy behind curriculum in Iranian education system was earlier based on collecting facts determined by the elites. Accordingly, this philosophical trend was in line with Perennialism that reflects conservatism of ideas and looks to the past for subject matter in the curriculum (Ediger & Rao, 2003). Perennialists, as Noroozi (2010) puts forth, deals with a realist philosophical base. Its instructional objectives are to educate the rational person; its main focus is on preserving the past. And as Maftoon and Shakouri (2012) claim, knowledge is considered as property that should be transmitted to an individual from an authority. This trend of thought which is inspired by Aristotle’s naturalism and his doctrine of the uniformity of nature connotes that there are natural truths that do not change and that such truths should be made the fixed intellectual content of education (Ediger & Rao, 2003).

### **PERENNIALISM IN LINE WITH SUFISM**

Perennialists trace the foundation of their philosophy back to Plato and Aristotle. Perennialists cling to the belief that certain universal truths or ideas exist at all times and that the level of existence that man attains is determined by his attention or inattention to these eternal principles (Jent, 2003). In line with Perennialism, Iranian education system was earlier inspired by Sufism (Noroozi, 2010). According to Ghadamyari (2012), Sufism most probably originated in Iran in the fourth century H. G. However, Orientalists introduced the term Sufism to European languages at the end of eighteenth century.

On providing a brief history of Perennialism, Jent (2003) defines a perennialist as “one who believes that certain perennial truths in and about education have existed from the very beginning and continue to have existence and validity as ‘first principles’ which all right-thinking men will accept” (p. 4). Among the sufists who propagate Plato’s thoughts in Iran was Shahaboldin Sohrevardi (cited in Azodi & Askari Sarvestani, 2013) and the philosopher who spreads the tenets of Aristotle was Abu Nasr Farabi (cited in al-Talbi, 1993). Farabi, to several scholars (e.g., Vallat, 2011) is a faithful Aristotelian. Farabi, as a peripatetic philosopher, asserts that reality can be achieved by reasoning; in contrast, the primary goals of education, to Sohrevardi, are not limited to achieve the ability to reason but to illuminate wisdom. The founder of Illuminationist Philosophy—Sohrevardi—considers God as the origin of all feeling and thinking. Henceforth, for human beings to be illuminated, they are supposed to be in quest of finding out unknown factors (Kamali Zadeh, cited in Azodi & Askari Sarvestani, 2013). Azodi and Askari maintain that to Sohrevardi, it is not possible to find out any realities of the world through reasoning only. To him, the purification of wisdom is necessary for finding the reality. What Sohrevardi brings is the pedagogy of integration. In fact, he integrates and juxtaposes ancient Persian wisdom, Greek rationalism, and Islamic knowledge. Accordingly, Habibi (2011) contends that to Sohrevardi, there are several ways of obtaining knowledge; i.e., deduction, induction (experience) and intuition. In a sense, deduction is the ability to derive a conclusion from given information by using a set of formal mental operations. Induction, in contrast, implies expanding knowledge by transferring knowledge from previous experience to new situation, and intuition implies gaining knowledge by using one’s feelings rather than considering the facts.

Toussulis (2011) referring to the work of Sedgwick (2004) claims the perennialist perspective cannot be easily discarded because it is inherent in much of Sufism, as well in much of Iranian education system. Toussulis also declares that perennialist perspective protects sufists from being attacked from two sources: modern relativism which denies the vitality of revelation and fanatical fundamentalism which negates esotericism, the concept that metaphysical or spiritual knowledge preserved or intended for a limited group and not for society at large.

Sufism curriculum, as Noroozi (2010) claims, with its themes of love, wonder, and tolerance manifested itself throughout the textbooks of poetry and prose and remained to be popular despite the traditional philosophy of schooling. As Noroozi reports, “poetry seems the right venue to search for these recurring themes” (p. 29). Compatible with the employment of poetry as the path to find reality, several sufists, e.g., Imam Mohamad Ghazali, portray the inability of reason to comprehend the absolute (Noroozi, 2010). Along the same line, the emergence of avoiding rationalism, which is probably part of Iranian culture, is viewed in the light of Sufi thoughts (Ghadamyari, 2012). Henceforth, the relativist stance of sufists lends a claim to the employment of poetry and verse in curriculum.

Noroozi, also in outlining the tenets of Perennialism in line with Sufism, claims “rote learning and educating moral obedient students [are] virtuous” (p. 33). Moreover, the classes held in khanegha and mosques would follow the perennialist path of teaching. In a sense, the linchpin of Perennialism and of traditionalism is that change in curriculum is unnecessary since truths are stable as revealed through study, and reason is learned by teaching eternal truths. Nevertheless, whether this school of thought suffers from ideological perspectives or is susceptible to change raises a bone of contention among scholars.

Jahani Asl (2003) asserts that “one of the results of this ideological education in Iran is the creation of alienated students, teachers and administrators (from one another) in the educational environments” (p. 118). Accordingly, Jahani Asl likens an obedient teacher to a laborer who is separated from any decision over the curriculum. To him, “the tragedy of creation of the obedient administrator is totalitarian enforcement creating an oppressor. (p.118)

Whether Jahani Asl is in quest of an ideal education inspired by postmodernism or not is unknown, but the employment of new pedagogy, such as progressivism and constructivism, in an absolute sense, in a context whose education is highly centralized involves dehumanizing students from their culture and history. According to Kelman (1976), dehumanization involves denying a person “identity”—a perception of the person “as an individual, independent and distinguishable from others, capable of making choices” (p. 301)—and “community”—a perception of the other as “part of an interconnected network of individuals who care for each other” (p. 301). When people are divested of the agentic and communal aspects of humanness they are deindividuated, lose the capacity to evoke compassion and moral emotions, and may be treated as means toward vicious ends (Haslam, 2006).

Nevertheless, claiming that students are passive and passivity makes students alienated sounds inappropriate because passivity in Sufism is a sign of respect held for Pir, and nowadays for teachers. Also, the system of education employed by a country, either centralized or decentralized, depends on the policies ruled over a country, and the demand of society that is affected by such social factors as language, customs, habits, traditions, and beliefs of people (Farjad, cited in Salari Chine & Soltaninejad, 2012).

The nature of change in curriculum development is contingent rather than certainty (Daniels, Katz, & Sullivan, 2012). The contingency in the nature of curriculum indicates that elaborating on the history of education without giving attention to the hybrid nature of philosophy is empty. Thus, attempting to fix one’s position on the absolutist camp in order to consolidate whatever postmodernists claim to some extent must be compatible with the history, together with the philosophy, that the system of education originated. However, no one denies the fact that the tenets of postmodernism is in stark contrast with the philosophical base of curriculum development in Iranian education system. But claiming that Iranian education system has some distance with the globalized level of education is not plausible. In the same way, prioritizing one norm over the other might be at the expense of creating alienated learners. In this regard, as Hashemi (2012) claims “making any attempt in order to lead curriculum towards postmodernist pedagogy results in dehumanizing of the target group by isolating them from their history and culture” (p. 143).

## **TRADITION AND MODERNITY RECONCILIATION**

The change in a society per se is dynamic, whether it is traditional or modern. Thus, as Gusfield (1967) maintains, “it is fallacious to assume that a tradition society has always existed in its present form or that the recent past represents an unchanged situation” (p. 352). If we do not know where we came from, we will not know where we are going. In fact, the relations between tradition and modernity do not necessarily involve conflict. Gusfield continues “modernity does not necessarily weaken tradition. Both tradition and modernity form the bases of ideologies and movements in which the polar opposites are converted into aspirations, but traditional forms may supply for, as well as, against change” (p. 351).

In this regard, Iranian teachers, not Iranian education system, though are perennialist in teaching, have some inclinations towards progressive existentialism. Atai and Mazlum (2012), on investigating Iranian teachers' views towards the educational philosophies of Aristotle, Dewey, and Rousseau, concluded that teachers were more or less interested in some aspects of Dewey's and Rousseau's philosophies of education. Henceforth, it is a fallacy to claim old traditions are displaced by new changes (Gusfield, 1967). Accordingly, Gusfield continues that the old and new cultures and structures can coexist co-productively without conflict; in fact, the old is not necessarily replaced by the new since mutual adaptations is a frequent phenomenon of social change. In other words, as Gusfield maintains, "the acceptance of a new product ... does not necessarily lead to the disappearance of the older form [...] new forms may only increase the range of alternatives (p. 355).

Although the challenge between tradition and modernity has always been a heated debate among scholars, Kebede (2004) contends that there is no necessary conflict between tradition and modernity. Modernity is a transient term. Herf (1996) radically asserts "there is no such a term as modernity in general" (p. 1). In fact, the conflicts exist between different value-systems that generate new waves of social change. In addition, the change in a value system does not result from an accumulative process; it is not a mechanistic process. In fact, what causes a shift in one value system is the pressure of new evidence and Iranian education system is not an exception. Revision and transformation of Iranian education system is immutable reality of the country when it is subjected to change (Tamer, 2010). On the plausibility of dynamic nature of change in Iranian education system, it can be claimed that due to the dynamic nature of education in any context, it is legitimate to claim that the history of curriculum development, thought deeply embedded in its philosophy, is constantly changing. In other words, an idea not coupled with its philosophical root will never get bigger if the idea is not tolerant of diverse perspectives.

## CONCLUSION

The effectiveness in a system is tied to how well different parts of it—students, teachers, and programs—perform. Along the same line, Mohsenpour (1988) asserts that the philosophy of education in any society is deeply rooted in the student behavior, the teaching programs, the curricula and textbooks, and the major goals of the educational system of that society. Thus, it is undeniable that when educators pursue a stream of philosophy, they incorporate their beliefs into the system, and since such beliefs reflect a specific time and place, they might be in need of revision, and therefore as the nature of change, in any society is dynamic, Iranian educational system is not an exception.

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## LITERATURE INSTRUCTION THROUGH READER-RESPONSE APPROACH: DOES IT FOSTER READING COMPREHENSION?

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### ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension is one of the four components, which pre-service English teachers in Turkey must acquire at advanced level, and the literature and language teaching course currently imposed by the National Curriculum is aimed at encouraging these students to improve their reading skills alongside literature. This article discusses how reader response approach to teaching English novels could be applied in an effort to maximize these students' reading skills. A study using a quasi-experimental design was conducted among 91 pre-service English teachers from four 3<sup>rd</sup> year, intact classes. An intervention of eighteen reading lessons using reader response-based strategies was employed over a period of three months. Tools for the data collection were a pretest, a posttest and an interview conducted after the treatment. The findings from the independent t-test showed a significant difference, revealing the effectiveness of the strategies, and the respondents from the Experimental Group gave a positive feedback regarding the use and effects of these strategies. The results also revealed that writing reading logs exploited as part of reader response activities helped students to get more out of novels and to express themselves freely. The study concludes with implications for pedagogy and research.

**KEY WORDS:** literature instruction, reader response approach, reading comprehension

### INTRODUCTION

In Turkey, English is taught to equip pre-service English teachers with various academic challenges through the development of critical thinking and the competent use of language skills. Among these skills is the reading component that has supposedly a heavier weight (nearly 50%) in assessing students' overall performance. By the same token, it is perceived that pre-service English teachers at the university level are expected to read more than they write. However, reading skill critical for students is not without its problems. Based on our teaching experience and students' previous results on the English courses, some students have been found to lack both motivation to read in English and adequate reading comprehension skills. This has in turn underscored the need to develop alternative ways of tackling reading skill.

With these considerations in mind, a new course entitled 'Literature and Language Teaching' was introduced to pre-service English teachers by Turkish Higher Education (commonly known as YOK) in 2009. The course was intended to assist pre-service English teachers in improving reading skill as a result of their exposure to a wide range of literary texts. The content of the Literature and Language Teaching course entails 'example short stories and novels from British and American literature; identification of the distinctive features of short stories and novels; different approaches to using literature; examining ways the teaching of literature and language in these two genres; exploring theoretical and practical dimensions of this integration' (Literature and Language Teaching Syllabus, 2009). Apparently, this course content is not clear-cut and straightforward in the sense that it does not propose a sound approach to integrating literature into language with an emphasis on the development of reading component.

In order for the pre-service English teachers to enhance their reading proficiency at the advanced level, we propose here to use reader-based strategies for teaching English novel, which in essence places the reader at the very centre throughout the reading process. The study reported here examines the effectiveness of the reader response strategies coupled with the presentation of English novel as a literary genre on a group of pre-service English teachers' reading skills.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### *Reader Response Theory in Language Teaching*

Reader response theory is having a growing influence on English as a foreign language (EFL) literature theory in English language teaching (ELT) classes (Carlisle, 2000; Hirvela, 1996; Elliot, 1990). Based on the literary theory of Rosenblatt (1995), reader response theory emphasizes a reciprocal relationship between the reader and the text.



The reader with the creative role brings his or her own cultural background and socialization to the text. The meaning, therefore, that the reader creates from the text is synthesized with the text and the life context the reader brings to the text (Rosenblatt, 1991). In this case, meaning is determined as the result of this transaction. Thus, reading, in this approach, is a reflective and creative process and meaning is self-constructed. The meaning and structure of the text are not inherent in the print but are invited by the author and imputed to the text by the reader (Swaffer 1988, 124). In a sense, readers construct their own meaning without heavy dependence on either text or writer.

It follows that Rosenblatt emphasized not only the transaction theory between reader and text as a way to view the reading process, but how reader response theory influences the teaching of reading and literature (Many & Wiseman, 1992). Rosenblatt describes two stances toward reading: efferent and aesthetic (Rosenblatt, 1985). For the purposes of this paper this aspect of the theory needs to be expounded. Rosenblatt (1995) found that a reader takes an efferent stance when the goal of reading is to gain information from the text (e.g. textbooks, newspapers, etc.). When the reader's attention is focused on the experience of reading itself, an aesthetic stance is taken, which results in the personal, experiential aspects of meaning (Rosenblatt, 1995; Many & Wiseman, 1992). During and after an aesthetic transaction, the reader has a response to the event, which involves the organizing of his or her thoughts and feelings about the text (Rosenblatt 1985: 40).

Admittedly, the teaching of literature as an aesthetic experience frees teaching of literature from the narrow restrictions imposed by, what Carlisle calls, 'information-gathering exercises' (Carlisle, 2000). This particularly applies to Turkish EFL readers, whose reading experience is often equivalent to one long comprehension exercise. In these classes, a novel in one hand and a dictionary in the other, learners plough their way through the pages looking up the new vocabulary until they 'understand' the story. Their focus of attention is not on the experience they have while reading, but on what facts they can retain for use after reading is over. The story is not being read as literature but as a piece of information (Carlisle 2000, 13).

On the contrary, in the reader response theory, the act of reading is viewed as an active, dynamic process in which readers are in charge of the exploration and development of meaning. In such a context, a variety of personal interpretations and analyses, based on not only the textual elements but also the reader's personal views, experiences and feelings are welcomed (Padley, 2006; Tyson, 2006; Diyanni, 2000). Thus, students come to recognize that the main concern is not 'What they understand' but 'how they feel'. Rosenblatt contends that the teacher should accept 'multiple interpretations' to a text rather than just one 'correct interpretation', which allows for creative and critical thinking to take place in the class (Rosenblatt, 1995).

Several activities and techniques have been used to apply the response based theory in EFL literature teaching: Reading Logs (Benton & Fox, 1985, 1990; Carlisle, 2000); Response Journal (Sheridan, 1991); Critical Questioning and Writing (Probst, 1994; Hirvala, 1996); Self-questioning (Davis, 1989). The main task proposed in this paper is centred on student-written reading logs originally put forward by Benton and Fox (1985: 121). It is a simple and direct tool to encourage and tap into learners' individual responses to a novel. It differs from the other kinds of activities in that students do this task while in the act of reading. Carlisle, a leading proponent of this activity, contends that through keeping a log, the hope is that the learner's reading experience will go beyond literal understanding and move towards aesthetic appreciation of the text (Carlisle 2000: 14). Hence, the reading log encourages students to enter and explore their secondary worlds. According to Benton and Fox (1985: 2-18), a reader inside a secondary world is engaged in four separate processes: *Anticipating/retrospecting*: guesses about what is going to happen next, what events lead to current situation, and how the book is going to end; *picturing*: images that come into the mind's eye, such as a character's face or a scene described in the book; *interacting*: opinions on a character's personality and actions or feelings about events and situations; *evaluating*: comments on the skill of the writer. In line with these four key elements of response to literature, the guidelines below, which have been adapted from Benton (1992: 35), explain how to write a reading log (Figure 1).

While you are reading the book write down all the things that go on in your head in a "stream of consciousness" style. As you read, you will be making a record of images, associations, feelings, thoughts, judgments, etc. You will probably find that this record will contain:

*Questions* that you ask yourself about characters and events as you read. (Answer these yourself when you can.)

*Memories* from your own experience provoked by the reading.

*Guesses* about how you think the story will develop, and why.

*Reflections* on striking moments and ideas in the book.

*Comparisons* between how you behave and how the characters in the novel are behaving.

*Thoughts and feelings* about characters and events.

*Comments* on how the story being told. For example, any words or phrases or even whole passages that make an impression on you, or motifs which you notice the author keeps using.

*Connections* to other texts, ideas and courses.

*An outline* of the chapter, no longer than a paragraph.

Please date each entry, and note down the time and place, as well as the mood you are in while reading.

Please note down the page number you are reading when you make an entry.

Please take pleasure and pride in your log.

*Please do not try to rewrite the book.*

Figure (1): Reading logs.

### ***Rationale for the Use of Novel***

The benefits of using novel in EFL literature teaching have been highlighted by many ESL/EFL practitioners. Many scholars (Lazar, 1993; Collie & Slater, 1987, Fowler, 1977) have presented compelling arguments for teaching novels in EFL/ESL classes. They argue that we should teach novels because

1. They are enjoyable to read.
2. They are authentic.
3. They help students understand another culture.
4. They are a stimulus for language acquisition.
5. They develop students' interpretative abilities.
6. They expand students' language awareness.
7. They encourage students to talk about their opinions and feelings.
8. They foster personal involvement in the language learning process.

The benefits of using novels as textbooks are numerous. Novels can supplement textbooks and form the central focus of instruction (Gareis, Allard, & Saindon 2009: 136). Novels allow for extensive reading (i.e., the reading of a large quantity of text), which has been shown to facilitate general proficiency (Grabe, 1991) and build fluency (MacGowan-Gilhooly, 1991) as well as vocabulary (Horst, 2005; Krashen, 1989). Novels also increase motivation by providing narrative and plot (Cho & Krashen, 1994), a fact evidenced by the growing number of educational novels.

Unabridged novels are especially effective. They not only provide authentic exposure to the English language, but also offer the quantity of reading required to produce substantial improvement in reading skills (Gareis, Allard, & Saindon 2009: 137). Students can be immersed in a context and activities for more than one or two days and thus practice all language skills systematically (Gajdusek, 1988; Gareis, Allard, & Saindon, 1998). An added benefit is that many novels have been adapted for film and in conjunction with their visual counterpart, can be used to teach other literacy skills such as film literacy (Pally, 1997; Seger, 1992).

The previous studies by Benton and Fox (1985) and Carlisle (2000) were restricted to the practical applications of reader response theory in literature EFL teaching. They did not look into the statistical results based on these classroom applications, which is a gap in this area of research. Therefore, to explore the effects of reader response approach to teaching English novel on EFL students in terms of reading comprehension and perceptions, this study investigated the following two research questions:

RQ1. To what extent do students who received a reader-based reading intervention comprehend better than those who do not?

RQ2. To what extent do students who received the reader-based reading treatment perceive the intervention?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

The participants of the study were 91 pre-service EFL undergraduate students (73 females, 18 males) from two intact classes, with 48 and 43 students in each. The former served as the experimental group, the latter the control group. They studied English for at least six years in Turkish junior and senior high schools before coming to university. The students were prospective English teachers aged between 21 and 24 years ( $M=21.5$ ,  $SD=.96$ ) in their third year of study in the Department of English at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey. The mean Grade Point Average (GPA) for the groups was 2.99 ( $SD=.43$ ) on a scale of 4. The students were assumed to be of a homogeneous level of English proficiency and reading comprehension skill on the grounds that they all were non-native speakers of English and they had been admitted to the programme on the basis of their scores on the English language component of the university entrance exam. The participants were enrolled in a required core course titled Literature and Language Teaching, the purpose of which was to assist students in acquiring advanced reading skills by means of selected literary texts and accompanying literary activities.

The baseline of the two groups was that they took exactly the same courses with the same amount of credit hours. The classes met for one three-hour session per week, for a total of 39 hours over 13 weeks. The teaching content of the two groups focused on the integration of literature into language capitalizing on the selected English novels and literary activities except that the experimental group also spent a good deal of their session on the application of reader response theory.

### ***Instruments and Procedures***

To assess the effect of the program on students' reading proficiency, a reading comprehension test was administered as a pre-test and post-test to both experimental and control groups before (i.e., week1) and after (i.e., week 13) the experiment. The reading comprehension test adopted for the study was specifically developed as part of Ph.D. thesis on ELT by Razi (2009). The reliability of test was .84. Based on students' previous scores on reading and the researcher's teaching experience, the test was considered suitable for the participants. The content mainly involves three parts, each of which contains familiar reading passages adapted from, respectively, an original reading text, a short story and a magazine article. The participants were required to answer thirty-two questions in the reading test. The former text contained eight multiple choice (MC) questions, the latter nine, and the last part fifteen, with a total of 32 MC questions. Each question contained four options. The same reading test was repeated at the end of the course. When the students took the pretest, they were unaware that the same test with the same reading texts would be given again, and most importantly, none of the test papers were retained by the students.

After reviewing several collections of English novels, two novels were chosen by the researcher based on the interest of the students in order to be covered in both the experimental and control groups throughout the course. The novels, in the order of their presentation, were "*The Great Gatsby*" by F. Scott Fitzgerald, and "*The Heart of Darkness*" by Joseph Conrad. The two novels were selected as they were supposed to evoke a considerable amount of emotional response and were promising to promote students' versatile opinions and interpretations of the novels. The researcher also hoped that these novels with their plots, characterisation, suspense and ironies could spark the attention of the students and drive them into the free expression of their individual interpretations.

In the control group the traditional method of teaching literature was pursued, and the instructor had the central role in directing students to generate one "correct" interpretation of the novels. The researcher initiated the debate asking about the summary of the novels involved, followed by analysis of the main characters, central themes, setting and other literary aspects of the novels. The students were encouraged to express what they thought about the underlying themes, character development, and the "message" that the novels conveyed; however, it was the instructor who provided the final correct interpretation and explanation. Conversely, the students in this class are onlookers of the teacher's instructions without assuming a role in changing the path of instruction determined by the instructor.

On the other hand, in the experimental group, the reader response approach to reading novels was implemented. In addition, the activity of student-written logs was introduced as a practical application of reader response theory. Benton and Fox (1985: 21) recommend devoting class time to instructing students on how to write their reading logs until they come to terms with the practice. Carlisle (2000) suggests explaining the main ideas of reader response theory in the first lesson as outlined above, followed by pointed questions such as 'What is the difference between

reading literature and reading for information?’ and ‘What do you do when you are reading a story?’. Students were made aware of the contribution the reader brings to the text thereby valuing their own responses. For this purpose, students were set a page from a novel and were asked to make notes of their responses to the text in their logs using the guidelines (Figure 1) for assistance whereby a free exploration of ideas was encouraged. Following this phase of preparation, reading logs were assigned as individual homework.

Having read the assigned chapter and made entries in their reading logs, students came to class. At the outset, an outline of the chapter was read out by one or two students. This enabled the teacher to check students’ understanding of the chapter and set the context for group discussion in which students would actively engage. In groups of five, students shared their ideas and feelings, referring to their logs. One student from each group reported the emergent points of their discussion to the whole class. At the end, the teacher collected the reading logs to be evaluated and employed as part of the discussion in the next lesson.

Returning the logs, the teacher mentioned some of the more interesting entries made in students’ logs. Drawing on these entries, students were asked to speculate about the complex strands involving central themes, characterisation and plot cited in the relevant chapter. The teacher acted as a ‘facilitator’ in eliciting responses from students. Likewise, the teacher, whenever necessary, cleared up any remaining areas of confusion in the form of lectures which were delivered on some criticism of the text and cultural aspects likely to be unfamiliar to them.

By reference to the two novels involved, the following samples have been selected from the students’ reading logs in order to exemplify the range of elements of response to literature as cited in Figure 1.

#### *THE GREAT GATSBY*

All these descriptions give me the sense that some characters are doomed to misfortune or death.

I guess Gatsby is in fact a smuggler although this is never explicitly stated.

I think I can understand the feeling of Daisy. It is a sorrow that when a man must abandon his lover, and his lover falls in love with another man during this period.

The author describes ‘a valley of ashes’ as ‘a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into hills and grotesque gardens’ in a very active and pictorial way, so that the scene is really touching for me.

I find that Nick’s narration gives way to our emotions and feelings and the thought about Gatsby. The way he narrates the story leads us to love Gatsby’s personalities unconsciously although he does not intend to do so as mentioned in Chapter 1, ‘I’m inclined to reserve all judgements.’

#### *HEART OF DARKNESS*

The descriptions of the jungle give me the feeling of loneliness and misery.

The element of darkness is widely felt throughout the book. I think something terrible will happen sooner or later.

Would Captain Marlow and Mr. Kurtz be killed during the journey they made into, as mentioned in the book, ‘the heart of an immense darkness’? Particularly Marlow must survive as the sole witness who will be capable of depicting the events.

#### *Data analysis*

All the pretest and posttest scores pertaining to students’ proficiency in reading comprehension were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 15) software program. Prior to the intervention, to ensure that both the Control and Experimental Group were as equivalent as possible, an independent sample *t*-test (Levene’s Test) was used to determine whether the Control Group and the Experimental Group were homogeneous. Then, an independent sample *t*-test was used again to determine whether if there was any significant difference in the means between the Control Group and the Experimental Group in the posttest scores. In addition, the paired-sample *t*-test was used to find out whether there was any significant difference in the means of the Experimental Group between the pretest scores and posttest scores in order to supply statistical verification. Regarding the qualitative data, all responses to the semi-structured questions during the interview phase were summarized and analyzed.

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

RQ1. Did students who received a reader-based reading intervention comprehend better than those who did not?

#### *Quantitative Analysis on Pretest and Posttest Results*

The pretest scores of the two groups were compared using the independent *t*-test. From the data below (Table 1), the Levene’s Test for equality of variances shows  $F = 6.218$  and  $p = .014$ , proving that the variance of the groups was

equivalent. Moreover, the result also reveals  $t = 1.643$ ,  $df = 90$ , and  $p = .104$ , demonstrating that the two groups did not differ significantly, but were homogenous.

Table 1: Results of the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

	F	Sig	T	Df	Sig (2-tailed)	95% CI lower	upper
Equal variance assumed	6.218	.014	1.643	90	.104	-.25375	2.67799
Equal variance Not assumed			1.615	73.558	.111	-.28377	2.70801

Significant at a confidence level of  $p < 0.05$  (2-tailed)

Based on the results above, it can be assumed that the samples of both groups were equal in their reading proficiency levels prior to the intervention. To answer the first research question, the means of the pretest and posttest scores were compared. Afterwards, independent  $t$ -test was employed to provide statistical verification.

Table 2: Posttest Scores between the Experimental and Control Groups

	Group	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
Posttest	Experimental	48	25.45	1.934	.2791	6.619	90	.000
	Control	44	20.37	4.236	.6387			

Significant at a confidence level of  $p < 0.05$  (2-tailed)

These independent  $t$ -test results show that the mean for the posttest scores for the Control Group was 20.37, and the mean for the Experimental Group was 25.45, with a difference of 5.08 (Table 2). The result in Table 3 ( $t = -9.919$ ,  $df = 66$ , and  $p = .000$ ) shows that there was a significant difference in the mean for the posttest scores between the Control Group and the Experimental Group.

Table 3: Independent Sample Test Results on Posttest Scores

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means			
Post test	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig	95% CI lower	Upper
Equal variance assumed	13.221	.000	6.619	90	.000	3.1374	5.8284
Equal variance Not assumed			6.431	59.026	.000	3.0881	5.8779

Significant at a confidence level of  $p < 0.05$  (2-tailed)

To this effect, it can be concluded that with the help of the teaching strategies grounded in reader response theory, the Experimental group scored better than the Control Group. As gathered from both the results and the observations within the classroom, the students were experiencing a kind of 'the intensely personal nature of reading' (Carlisle, 2000) where they were gradually learning to recreate a story in their own style (Holland, 1975). As a group of students, they talked their way through selected literary texts to understand them. Notably, teacher led group work enabled students to share, as Holland says, their differing subjective viewpoints that make the conversation interesting (1975: 231). Working together assisted students in monitoring their understanding the various strands of the texts by stopping at regular intervals to direct pointed questions, summarize, interpret, predict and clarify.

RQ2. How did students who received the reader-based reading treatment perceive the intervention?

**Students' Perceptions**

The researcher instructed the participants in the experimental group to concentrate on three perspectives when they were engaged in their reports:

1. The benefits they obtained from the course which features the reader-response approach to teaching literature in ELT classroom.
2. The difficulties they encountered in practice.
3. The suggestions they wished to offer for future courses.

The frequencies for the most commonly mentioned items were tallied and are displayed in Table 4. Table 4 makes it evident that the students gave more positive comments than negative ones. As shown, 39 out of 48 students reported that they improved their reading skills, which they considered one advantage of employing reader-response approach. 32 students expressed that they made considerable gains in vocabulary growth, which in turn enhanced their confidence in reading literary texts because they could develop the very necessary skills for dealing with the unfamiliar vocabulary.

Other relevant benefits were that the majority of the students in the experimental group were enthusiastic about novel reading, and thus 42 out of 48 students reported that they would use the reader-response approach to the teaching of novel for their future English teaching. Likewise, another 37 students also mentioned that the progress that they made in this course would be of particular use to them in other university courses because, in Gajdusek's view (1988), students can practice all language skills systematically. The overwhelming majority of the students (92%) felt that the reader-response theory was better approach to acquiring English than formal instruction. This underscores the need to provide alternative innovative ways of teaching English which would satisfy students' varying language needs.

However, 16 students out of 48 reported that they were confronted with the unfamiliar vocabulary and the unusual use of language in reading particularly Conrad's masterpiece 'The Heart of Darkness' which in essence encapsulates the wealth of metaphors and similes. Only 7 students complained about the heavy workload whereby they were required to read the assigned chapter and prepare for the reading logs and then share their views in the classroom. In contrast, most of the participants did not agree with them, stating that it was worth this effort. They particularly reported that engaging in writing reading logs helped them to gain a clearer understanding of the novel. They remarked on how they enjoyed being given opportunity for expressing themselves freely alongside the reading logs.

*Table 4: Reported perceptions of reader-response activity by number and percentage of the participants*

Comments	Number of Students (n=48)
Improved reading skills	39 (81%)
Made gains in vocabulary growth	32 (67%)
Encouraged students to use novel for future English study	42 (88%)
Helped in other university courses	37 (77%)
Better approach to acquiring English than formal instruction	44 (92%)
Unusual use of language in some novels	16 (33%)
Heavy workload	7 (15%)

*Note.* The students were allowed to give as many comments as they want to make, so the total frequency is larger than the number of participants.

**CONCLUSION**

This study has yielded both quantitative and qualitative data in support of the use of reader response theory in ELT classroom, encouraging student teachers' reflection on their practices. The findings have considerable pedagogical implications for the ELT classroom in Turkey, as the results revealed that the application of reader response approach in ELT literary courses led to a noteworthy improvement in the reading comprehension of students. ELT teachers should be encouraged to model the strategies underlying reader response approach (Carlisle, 2000; Hirvela, 1996) in ELT classroom, providing an alternative to learning how to construct multiple meanings from the texts. In the process, reflective and creative skills can develop, producing an autonomous reader who is capable of expressing his or her own feelings in responding to the literary texts.



This study, which were restricted to a group of third year student teachers from ELT Department at a Turkish University, has potential for further research in that it would be worthwhile to expand this study to include students from different levels of schooling. As an alternative to teaching novel, texts from other genres can also be explored. For instance, short stories might be introduced as part of the reading component in the Turkish English syllabus for the lower or intermediate level. This in turn can provide more evidence as to determine the pedagogical effectiveness of the strategies underlying reader response approach in promoting and sustaining interest in teaching literary skills. Repeating the study in different contexts over a larger period and incorporating different techniques, such as response journal (Sheridan, 1991), writing prompts (Pritchard, 1993) and rewriting narratives from another characters' point of view (Oster, 1989), is recommended.

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**TESTIFYING EXPLICIT VS. IMPLICIT CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK ON THE IRANIANS' ACCURACY  
IN WRITING**

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**ABSTRACT**

This article was an attempt to investigate the nature of two corrective explicit vs. implicit feedback typologies: 'Recasting' as implicit and 'Meta-Linguistic Talk' as explicit feedback on the writing performance of a group of Iranian non-major English as a foreign language (EFL) learners. To this aim, data were collected from 55 female Iranian university students majoring at Nursing at Islamic Azad university of Sabzevar, Iran. Based on a standardized Nelson English Level Test, they were first randomly divided into three homogeneous groups; (2 Exp. and 1 Con.). Each experimental group received one of the two corrective feedback types 'Recasting' vs. 'Meta-linguist talk' while the control group didn't receive any focused corrective feedback. A writing post-test sample was given after the three-month treatment stage. The writing sample was rated by two English instructors in terms of word order and tense use only. Data from three target groups above were analyzed by One-Way ANOVA to compare the performance of the three groups at 0.05 sig. level. The results showed that feedback treatments significantly improved writing skills in the experimental groups; however, the subsequent post-test Scheffet results didn't indicate an exclusive superiority for any of the two feedback types over the other in the two experimental groups (1&2). (Sig.0.09> 0.05). Possible educational implications have been contrastively discussed for the two corrective feedback typologies esp. in Iranian contexts.

**KEYWORDS:** Corrective Feedback, Explicit vs. Implicit feedback, Recasting, Meta-linguistic Talk, Writing Performance

**INTRODUCTION**

Error production by Language learners is considered a normal status and of a revealing nature; however, of more crucial fact is deciding on how to approach the errors made by the learners. In EFL contexts, this issue is even of more paramount importance since the kind of input and subsequent feedback that the learners take is usually confined to the class time period by his/her instructor. Accordingly, providing proper feedback on the part of the teachers gets really pertinent. Giving the feedback at the right time and place has always been a challenging issue as there is still no conclusive consensus among L2 scholars as to the nature and propriety of error correction approaches. (Ferries, 2004; Sachs & Polio 2007; Kepner, 1991 & Chandler, 2003)

***Significance of the Study***

A language teacher must always be aware of possible other varied sources for errors in his/her classes and realize the need to take the right route towards providing the right corrective feedback. Errors presumably reflect the learners' level of competence; however, a teacher needs to draw a distinction between errors which are noticed and corrected by the speaker himself through being prompted to do so, and errors which the learners cannot correct themselves because of a lack of linguistic knowledge. Changing the direction towards eradicating the errors without knowing the

exact root of the problematic areas is thus a naïve decision for the probability of teachers' taking wrongful strategies for error correction.

In natural settings of language acquisition, a child has an enormous opportunity to draw the proper input without being reminded explicitly as to what input to select and which content to attend to however the child is soon able to be changed into a very complex and developed language user, whereas foreign language learners, rarely have resource to such various aids except their teacher. Thus taking the proper technique by the language teacher in approaching the errors is to a large extent crucial as it might save the necessary time and energy put to the tasks by both teachers and learners.

In fact, in an EFL situation, the pedagogically appropriate approaches towards developing writing skills have been paid lip service to. Writing in and of itself provides a rich opportunity for sharing ideas and communicating intents for language development. Not only can writing be an excellent experience through which the interlocutors in teachers-students or student-students interactions can exchange ideas and messages in L2 in a warm atmosphere, but it can also be best employed for its own pedagogical aims like developing linguistic knowledge and enhancing academic literacy skills in an efficient way (Tan & Miller 2008).

In this article, the nature of two corrective feedback typologies: 'Recasting' vs. 'Meta-Linguistic Talk' by the teacher intervention was empirically evaluated on the writing performance of a group of Iranian non-major EFL learners. In recasts, teachers provide the learner with a well-designed form of a native-like utterance either in written or oral modality. The intention is that the provided information gives clues to the learner in an implicit way so that s/he can incorporate the changes on his/her own and make progress whereas in Meta-linguistic corrective feedback, all linguistic knowledge is communicated in an explicit and direct feedback provision by the teacher; all the necessary info plus the correct newly-made structure is given explicitly to the learners.

## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

A quick search through the existing literature on the right corrective feedback; direct vs. indirect shows some rather controversies. Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam, (2006) worked on an experimental research in which the effects of recast and meta-linguistic corrective feedback was studied on the acquisition of past tense -ed in a normal classroom situation. The participants were 34 ESL learners and their proficiency level was lower intermediate. During the communicative tasks, the first group elicited more correct target forms compared with the second group. At the end, there was a significant difference between the two groups' pre-test versus the delayed test results. The results were clue for the outperformance of the first over the second group. On the other hand, in another study by Frantzen's (1995), some college students of intermediate Spanish were studied. In one group, the structurally mal-formed were supplemented and they received direct correction. In the other group, the learners' errors were just marked but not corrected. At the end of the semester, both groups improved in overall grammar usage on the post essay however, neither group showed significant improvement in written fluency over the semester. Still, in another study by Robb, Ross, and Shortreed (1986) salience of feedback on error and its effect on EFL writing quality was surveyed; in their study, all the students had improved in terms of accuracy which was proved it had been at the result of being exposed with different types of error feedback including explicit direct correction, notation of the type of error using a code, notation in the text of the location of error, and marginal feedback about the number of errors in the line.

In another research by Pishghadam, Hashemi, and Kermanshahi (2011), the researchers proposed that when learners themselves notice there is a mistake, they get involved in something which this in effect aids in more consolidated learning, better than the time they are just passively following the teachers' commands.

Overall, the perplexing existing literature urged the authors to investigate the two contrastive corrective feedback patterns, namely recasting vs. meta-linguistic talk as indirect vs. direct feedback typologies on the performance of a group of adult Iranian learners. The purpose was to investigate the role which proper corrective written feedback: **explicit vs. implicit** plays in engaging the L2 learners' cognitive processes in their writing performance. Thus, the question put forward for the current research was:

1. To what extent, do Iranian university students benefit from explicit vs. implicit corrective feedback types in their writing tasks?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

In order to find plausible explanations for the research question of the present survey, an empirical study was performed among 55 sophomore female Iranian university students majoring at Nursing who were taking their general English course (GE) at Islamic Azad university of Sabzevar, Iran. Their age range was 20-25.

### ***Data collection instruments***

The independent variables, namely two types of corrective feedback 'recasting' and 'meta-linguistic Talk' were systematically controlled during the data collection procedures. All three classes were directed with the same instructor. Number of proofread samples, time on task and the revising stage were tried to be averaged equally in all three classes. (Table 1)

After the treatment process, one post test of production type including a free-writing task was performed at the end of the experimentation stage. The three groups were asked to write a sample paragraph of approximately 100 words on a prescribed subject. Here, the topic was even controlled for any possible biasing on the part of the learners' interest. The chosen topic was "*Prevention is better than treatment*". The subjects weren't aware of the target analyzed grammatical forms in their writing samples.

The drawn samples were analyzed by two English instructors in terms of structural accuracy focusing only on tense use and word order in correct English usage. Inter-rater reliability was estimated for the two subsequent rates. Correlation Coefficient between the two rates showed an acceptable index. ( $r = 0.7$ )

### ***Procedures***

For initial screening of the population as to proficiency level, a standardized Nelson English Language Test battery at intermediate level was given to the students (Test 250 D). A typical test of this series entails 50 items comprising a 37-item grammar section along with 13 items on vocabulary knowledge. Through administering the test, the scores at two extreme poles (highest and the lowest 10 % scores) were removed from the experimental phases of the study to cater for the homogeneity of the subjects. Fifty-five homogenized subjects were chosen for the experimentation stage.

The whole subjects were randomly divided into three groups; Two experimental and one control group. Exp. Group 1 received recasting corrective feedback while Exp. group 2 was provided with a lengthy discussion in the guise of 'Meta-linguistic explications' glossed in their paragraph margins and finally the third group didn't receive any focused corrective feedback like the other two groups. All three classes were also directed with the same instructor.

In each session, after finishing the reading section of the main course, the students were asked to write a summary paragraph for the text in the post-reading phase of each lesson. Class periods were held three hours per week for each group. The average number of sample paragraphs which were commented by the instructor for each individual in three subsequent groups was approximately between 10-14 samples, since the researcher couldn't guarantee that all subjects be present in all sessions for the treatments. The written paragraphs were collected and analyzed in terms of the errors of tense and word order only in order to ensure the maximum control over the selected variables. The next session, the subjects were asked to revise their sample paragraphs which had been proofread by the instructor with the provided feedback. In the current study, no peer correction was allowed to be utilized in order to check the variability that recasting can bring about, since peer correction usually entails Meta-talk that could minimize the natural effect of recasting induced by the teacher.

The feedback type, average rate of proofread samples, and time allotment for the experimental and control groups has been illustrated in Table 1.

Table1: Treatment Characteristics for the experimental and control groups

Groups	Number of subjects	Feedback Typology	Number of proofread samples for the groups	Drafting Stage(Time on Task )	Revising Stage(Time on task)
<b>Experimental 1</b>	20	Recasting	217	20 min	10 min
<b>Experimental 2</b>	20	Meta-linguistic	210	20 min	10 min
<b>Control Group</b>	15	Non-focus	220	20 min	10 min

The whole process of data collection took one academic semester taking about three months.

### DATA ANALYSES AND FINDINGS

The research design in this study was experimental, with three different treatments for experimental and control groups, followed with a post-test. Several statistical analyses were conducted to answer the research question in this study.

In order to establish the purpose of the study, the following procedures were followed: At first, a validated proficiency test was administered catering for initial screening. In the second phase of the study, it was tried to examine and control the nature of two corrective feedback typologies, namely recasting and meta-linguistic **Talk** as the induced post-activity pointers by the teacher intervention. The procedures, as was illustrated in the previous sections, were followed for the three groups. In order to check the nature of input given to the three groups, a post-test production test consisting of a free-writing paragraph was assigned for the whole class at the end of the semester and analyzed in terms of tense use and word order only in order to ensure maximum reliability and control over the result.

The next step was checking the degree the means for the three groups were significant. Then, a repeated measure of one-way ANOVA (3\*3) analysis of variance followed with a post hoc Regression Scheffe was performed using SPSS statistical Package Database ver. 20. The results indicated a significant mean difference among the experimental and control groups at 0/05. (p value: 0/000< 0.05). A full-data set are then given below (Tables 2, 3 & 4).

Table 2: One-Way ANOVA for the two experiment and control groups

ANOVA					
scores					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8278.267	2	4139.133	16.838	.000
Within Groups	12782.533	52	245.818		
Total	21060.800	54			

A closer look at analysis of variance for both within group and between groups in Table 2 above shows a reasonable F. ration (F = 16.8) which is large enough to reject the null hypothesis. In Table 5 below, the result for multiple comparisons are depicted for Scheffe Post hot regression test to care for mean differences.



Table 3: Multiple Regression Comparison (Post-hoc) for the three groups

### Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: scores  
Scheffe

(I) feedback	(J) feedback	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
exp. 1	exp. 2 meta-linguistic	-6.80000	4.95800	.397	-19.2941	5.6941
recasting	control group	23.36667*	5.35526	.000	9.8715	36.8618
exp. 2	exp. 1 recasting	6.80000	4.95800	.397	-5.6941	19.2941
meta-linguistic	control group	30.16667*	5.35526	.000	16.6715	43.6618
control	exp. 1 recasting	-23.36667*	5.35526	.000	-36.8618	-9.8715
group	exp. 2 meta-linguistic	-30.16667*	5.35526	.000	-43.6618	-16.6715

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

As the data in Table 3 and the subsequent box plot figure 1 clearly shows, mean differences for the control and experimental in all three comparisons are significant. However, mean variability for the two experimental groups, though higher for meta-linguistic feedback type, isn't statistically significant.

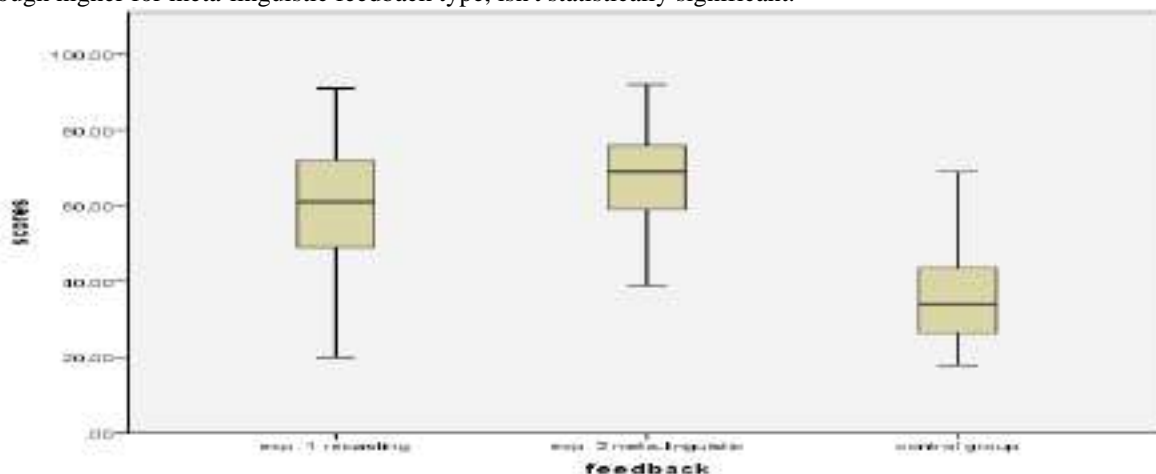


Figure 1: Box plot for ANOVA analyses as to the contrastive corrective feedback types: recasting vs. meta-talk

As Table 4 for the Scheffe post test also shows the two experimental groups have been sub-categorized in the same column (exp. 1  $\mu = 59.7$  / exp. 2  $\mu = 66.5$ ) thus indicative of their insignificant variability.

Table 4: Sub-set for post-hoc Scheffe multiple comparisons for the three groups  
scores

Feedback	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
control group	15	36.3333	
exp. 1 recasting	20		59.7000
exp. 2 meta-linguistic	20		66.5000
Sig.		1.000	.435

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

So, overall, based on the results gained through ANOVA analyses, the two corrective feedback typologies that entailed direct vs. indirect dichotomies were equally but not exclusively beneficent for the target group of the present study. Possible implications and concluding remarks are discussed in the next section.

## DISCUSSION

Overall, the present research which was a partial replication of Ellis et. al (2006) research, was aimed at surveying the nature of two induced corrective feedback namely recasting and meta-linguistic talk thought to be beneficent for a group of Iranian EFL university students. Going through various statistical analyses, it was found that providing both corrective feedback (recasting and meta-linguistic) as post-activity writing commentaries can equally but not exclusively improve the L2 learners' efficacy.

The main innovation in the present study was the inclusion of a non-focus control group which didn't receive any post commentaries in their performance. In Villalobos' work (2010) on the use of recast in EFL classrooms, the efficacy of recasting was investigated in pre-task and the preparation stage in order to prevent oral errors from happening during the main communicative stage among a group of university students attending an ESP chemistry class. However, he reported his findings working on two students through an action research. At the end, he was certain to claim that recasts in the pre-task and the preparation stage really prevented oral errors from happening during the task cycle. Although, in an action research, immediate application and not the development of theory on generalization of applications are habitually followed, the problem of non-randomization of population could at least be minimized by assigning a control group. Not using a control study in his study, he might be quite at stake to explain why and how the subjects benefited from this corrective strategy. In Rahimi & Dastjerdi's research (2012), a similar trend had been adopted; no control group was assigned. In their study, effective error correction method was investigated through immediate vs. delayed responding by the instructor in developing learners' complexity, fluency and accuracy in speech. The participants had been divided into two groups. For G1 errors were corrected immediately and for G2 with some delay, then it was finally reported that delayed error correction has had positive effect on fluency and accuracy but not on complexity. In effect, again, the true nature of the tasks used can't be verified if there is no control group.

In the present survey, the outperformance of the second experimental group that received meta-linguistic error correction, though not significant statistically ( $\mu = 66.5$ ) compared with the first experimental group receiving recasting as implicit corrective feedback ( $\mu = 59.7$ ), indicates, at least among other things, that it has been beneficial to some extent. Maybe, further research is still needed to be done for larger groups to verify the above data. Possible pedagogical implication could be inherent in Meta-Talk as a consciousness raising methodological practice in EFL vs. ESL situations. Recent communicative approaches which emphasize 'Focus on Form' (FonF) vs. over focus on meaning even in ESL settings are a case in point. As Ellis (1994) asserted, there are two ways to practice focus on form. The first can be accomplished through the activities that call for both communication and FonF, and the second through corrective or curative response which are given during the learners' performance in communication activities.

Now the crucial point is how of consolidating the right channel for the erroneous forms to get right. As it was already stated, in recasting, this guidance to the right channel isn't always done with ease, as some forms aren't noticed by the learners. A case in point, here, might be the effects that age and level bring to the learning circle. According to Lyster 1998 (cited in Schurt Rauber & Gil, 2004), *'young L2 learners may not easily take heed of the target vs. nontarget mismatches in the interactional input. In order to bring the learners' attention to such mismatches, teachers should provide some indicators in order to facilitate peer- and self-correction compared with just the repetition of a teacher's recast or explicit correction'*. Thus, different feedback types are claimed to bear various effects on learning and result in different degrees of attention.

## CONCLUSION

To recap, the main intention in the present study was to compare and contrast the effectiveness of two corrective feedback typologies current with the ongoing debate studies over error correction. The findings in this research were consistent with Schurt Rauber's (2004) & Ashwell's article (2000) in that teacher's correction true type feedback is highly appreciated and considered as an important asset for the development of EFL language skills in general and writing skill, in particular. Nevertheless, the findings in this research weren't consistent with Truscott's (2004) work. Truscott believed that due to inapplicability of providing corrective feedback in language classrooms and many inconclusive results in this regard, all corrective feedback must be abandoned. He argued that corrective feedback

can only be harmful in that it diverts time and energy away from more constructive activities like additional writing practices. Kepner (1991) also found no significant error counts between a group receiving error correction with the one getting message-related comments, though in this study since learners weren't asked to process the comments and didn't go for any self-correction, the results as to the nature of feedback type is still vague.

#### ***Limitations of the study***

**In the present survey**, the statistical analyses over mean variability though significantly showing the outperformance of the two experimental over control group, for the two experimental groups receiving the two dichotomous direct vs. indirect feedback typologies the results weren't significantly clue for the variability of the two feedback types at the significance level of 0.05 %. Two possible reasons might have been at work here; Time and Gender which can also be mentioned as the limitations of the present survey. Maybe further research projects can control these two factors to enlighten the findings in this regard.

Concerning time span, the current research was performed during an academic semester which due to subject variability, the researcher couldn't keep the subjects constant to demonstrate the nature of true feedback types in longer periods and get more assurance in the results. In a longitudinal study by Lalande (1982), students who had received indirect corrective feedback outperformed learners in the direct correction group. Further studies must maintain longer-term designs apart from academic settings which may let more time to focus on the nature of feedback typology efficacies. Still, another limitation of the present study was the matter of Gender. Since male candidates for Nursing weren't accessible for any investigation in this academic setting, the researcher used just female participants. Maybe further studies clarify the issue more clearly considering both males and females as to providing corrective feedback typologies. The debate still continues.

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GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE APPROPRIATENESS OF ADVICE-GIVING AMONG IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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**ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the differences in the perceptions of the appropriateness in advice giving in English between Iranian Persian English as a foreign language (EFL) male and female learners. Data were collected through an adopted version of a Multiple Choice Questionnaire (MCQ) by Hinkel (1997). The questionnaire involves a series of questions with regard to advice giving or opting out to a peer acquaintance (equal status) and an instructor (higher status). The result of the study illustrated that both groups perceived the social distance in the situations with peer acquaintance (equal status) and instructor (higher status) differently. The learners also differed in the types of advice they used as the appropriate choice. For Iranian Persian EFL male learners, in both situations (peer acquaintance and instructor) they preferred indirect advice rather than the other three options which are hedge advice, direct advice and opting out. On the other hand, for Iranian Persian EFL female learners, they selected hedge advice in both peer acquaintance and instructor situations as compared to the other three options (direct advice, indirect advice and opting out). The study concluded that Iranian Persian EFL learners should be provided with programs that improve the awareness on different appropriate conversational strategies in English language. The findings of this study are expected to be beneficial in cross-cultural and cross-gender comparison studies.

**KEYWORDS:** Speech act, Advice-giving, Gender

**INTRODUCTION**

In communications, the speakers' behaviour and selection of certain words are particular based on several factors such as social distance between the speaker and the hearer, social status between the speaker and the hearer, gender, and the complexity of situations. Many studies of pragmatic awareness have conducted on different speech acts such as apology (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; Eslami-Rasekh & Mardani, 2010), refusal (Beebe et al., 1990; Vaezi, 2011) and request (Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; Jalilifar, 2009). Those studies have contributed to revealing the differences between native speakers (NSs) and non-native speakers (NNSs) and to better understanding of the use of appropriate linguistic forms in different languages and cultures and further to avoiding communication breakdowns. Yet, not many studies were conducted on the speech act of advice (Hinkel, 1997; Matsumura, 2001; Bordería-García, 2006; Chun, 2009, Al-Shboul et al. 2012), and in Iranian context, to the researchers' best knowledge, there has been no investigation of giving advice conducted on Iranian Persian EFL learners. Consequently, it seems to be useful of examining how the speech act of giving advice is perceived in English by Iranian Persian EFL learners at University Kebangsaan Malaysia (henceforth, UKM) that would contribute in cross-cultural and cross-gender comparison studies. In other words, this study focuses on gender as the main focus to investigate the differences of the advice speech acts' realizations between Iranian Persian EFL male and female learners at UKM. The researchers aimed to reveal how gender can influence speakers' perception of advice giving. The reason for selecting English in the present study refers to the fact that English is the medium of instruction for Iranian Persian EFL learners in Malaysia and is also a language that is frequently needed in their everyday interaction. Hence, more attention should be paid to pragmatic competence of the Iranian Persian EFL learners rather than their grammatical competence.

### THE SPEECH ACT OF ADVICE

Unlike other speech acts such as refusals, apologies, and requests, the speech act of giving advices has not yet been explored adequately (Bordería-García, 2006; Chun, 2009). Accordingly, very few definitions of what advice giving entails are available. For example, Searle (1969) stated that advice giving is a type of speech act which the speaker believes will benefit the hearer. He added that by advice giving, the speaker is doing the hearer a favour because it is not clear to both of them that the hearer will do the act without the advice being given. Searle distinguished between advice and request as advising is more like telling on what is the best for his/her rather than what s/he should do. Another definition was given by Brown and Levinson (1987) who described advice giving as an “intrinsically face threatening act” (p. 65), where the speaker indicates that s/he does not mean to avoid obstructing the hearer’s freedom of action. Nevertheless, Brown and Levinson observe that the degree to which advice is a face-threatening act differs among cultures based on several factors such as social status and social distance between the interlocutors, gender, complexity of situations, and the politeness strategies considered appropriate in a particular culture. Once again, this study focuses on gender as the main focus to investigate the differences of the advice speech acts’ realizations between Iranian Persian EFL male and female learners at UKM.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

A large body of literature have illustrated that while speech acts are universal, the socio-pragmatic rules leading the appropriate enactment of any given speech act vary greatly among cultures and languages. There are some studies have been focused on advice giving in various contexts. For instance, Kuo (1996) investigated how gender emerges as a strong variable with respect to both the occurrence of advice giving as well as the form and style of this speech act. The findings of the study illustrated that female speakers were more likely to give advice to their same-sex interlocutors and they use various linguistic devices, sentence containing auxiliary models or hedge, and justifications with advice forms to convey advice. However, only 4 instances of advice are found in all-male conversations and, either seriously or jokingly, they are all in imperative form.

In another study, Hinkel (1997) conducted a study on cross-cultural differences of advice giving in terms of production collected by discourse completion test and perception collected by Multiple Choice Questionnaire (MCQ). The participants were 40 Chinese and 40 American native speakers. Hinkel split up the two groups in terms of males and females. The findings of the study revealed that one of the most significant differences between the Chinese with regard to collective self and Anglo-American individualism lies in the Confucian and Taoist precept of interdependence with others which is in contrast with cultural values emphasizing personal autonomy. Therefore, this study is significant since it compared the two different instruments which were a discourse completion test and multiple choice survey questionnaires to elicit participants’ perception in the framework of advice-giving studies.

Matsumura (2001) investigated a quantitative approach of second language socialization in terms of learning the rules for advice giving among Japanese and Canadian learners. The result of the study showed that the former group started lower in pragmatic performance than the latter but then suppressed them. Moreover, the study illuminated the variance of the perception of social status in both groups. This study is significant because it provides an important longitudinal analysis of how the pragmatic competence on advice giving developed over time. However, Matsumura did not specify what caused such important development of pragmatic competence with regard to cultural differences between Canadians and Japanese. In addition, Matsumura used only one method for the study of perception.

Bordería-García (2006) focused on cross-cultural differences in the productions and perceptions of advice giving. In the one hand, the result of the study illustrated that there is not any significant difference in the perceptions of appropriateness of non-conventionally indirect, conventionally indirect, and direct forms of advice by the native speakers of Spanish and the native English. On the other hand, the findings of the study revealed that these issues differed in the oral productions with the Spanish speakers showing a significant preference on giving direct advices. This study is significant for the reason that it is one of the speech act studies which looked at the concept of pragmatic transfer in the framework of advice.

Chun (2009) conducted a study on cross-cultural differences in the speech act of giving advice by Korean speakers and Canadian English speakers. The findings of the study indicated that there was a major difference between Canadian and Korean learners with regard to the social distance. The Canadian learners were less dependent on social distance compared to the Korean learners. The Canadian learners tended to give advice considerably less frequently to peers and superiors compared to the Korean learners. Therefore, this study is significant because it broadened the conventional framework of the existing two cultural types of individualism and collectivism in the Korean and Canadian contexts.



Recently, Al-Shboul et al. (2012) conducted a study focusing on the perceptions of the appropriateness in advice giving in English between American English native speakers and Jordanian EFL students. The findings of the study showed that two group of the respondents had the same perception of the social distance in the situations involving peer acquaintance and instructor. On the other hand, they were different in terms of the types of advice they showed as the appropriate choice. This study is significant since it is one of very small number of Arabic Advice studies that investigated the speech act of advice as recognized by Jordanian Arabic learners of English as a foreign language.

As it is mentioned above, the appropriateness of advice giving differs among various cultures, moreover, most of the studies have been done on advice giving so far, did not focus on gender as a main variable. Based on the literature no specific studies have been conducted on advice giving among Iranian Persians context. Thus, it would be beneficial to examine how the speech act of advice giving is perceived in English by Iranian Persian EFL learners at UKM that would contribute in cross-cultural and cross-gender comparisons.

## **THE STUDY**

This study aims to investigate gender differences in the perceptions of the appropriateness of advice giving in English between Iranian Persian EFL male and female learners. It also aims to give interpretations of these salient differences between the two groups. It is mainly based on the variable of gender and how it can influence speakers' perception of advice giving. The concept of gender is used to explain socially constructed categories in terms of sex. It has been argued that gender influences speakers' communication styles. Sukyadi and Ayu (2011) pointed out that language and gender focus on the language characteristics used by men and women: how gender stereotyping works in their preference of language styles. Wardhaugh (1992) also discussed gender as one of the characteristics that influenced people's communication. Results from these studies indicated that men and women normally use different linguistic styles. They describe women's speech as being different from that of men. According to Brend (1975) Women are found to employ certain patterns associated with surprise and politeness more frequently than men. Moreover, Lakoff (1975) stated that women may answer a question with a statement that employs the rising intonation pattern associated with making a firm statement. It is because they are less sure about themselves and their opinions than men are. In the present study, the researchers tried to reveal the differences of the appropriateness of advice giving in English between Iranian Persian EFL male and female learners. Thus, the related research question emerged from the literature is if there are any differences between Iranian Persian EFL male and female learners' perceptions of the speech act of advice giving.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

The sample included 40 postgraduate Iranian Persians EFL learners in UKM. The participants involved 20 females and 20 males who were in the 25-34 year old age bracket majoring in PhD degree. All the participants were Iranian Persians monolingual who were sharing the same cultural background. Based on the participants' scores in international English language testing system (IELTS) and test of English as a foreign language (TOEFL), the participants' level of proficiency in English was intermediate.

### ***Instrument and Procedure***

A multiple choice survey questionnaire (see Appendix) adopted version of Hinkle's (1997) was used for the purpose of this study. The questionnaire involves eight situations that required advice giving or opting out: four included statements addressed to the social superior and four to the peer acquaintance. Each situation was accompanied by three MC selections in random order: (1) direct advice involving the model "should," (2) hedged advice using "need to" or other softeners or hedging advices, lexical hedging ("may be, I think"), or questions, and (3) indirect comment including no advice or suggestions. The fourth selection was an explicit choice for opting out that remained constant for all selection. Examples of direct advice, hedge advice, and indirect comments are illustrated in (1) to (3), respectively:

1. You shouldn't order the hamburger. I had it here before, and it was really greasy.
2. May be it's not a good idea to order a hamburger. I had it here before, and it was really greasy.
3. I had a hamburger here before, and it was really greasy.

The questionnaires were distributed among the participants in UKM campus. They were given instructions on how to answer the questions and no time limitation for answering the questions was mentioned in order not to make the participants stressed or in a hurry so that they could answer the questions carefully and patiently. In addition, the researchers welcome any questions from the participants in case they would face any difficulties while answering the questions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The research question of the present study was formulated to find out if there are any differences in the perception of the speech act of advice giving between Iranian Persian EFL male and female learners. Hence, the results showed the existence of cross-gender differences between the two groups of participants. In general, Iranian Persian EFL male and female learners perceived the social distance in the situations with peer acquaintance (equal status) and instructor (higher status) differently. They also differed in the types of advice they utilized as the appropriate choice. For Iranian Persian EFL male learners, in both situations (peer acquaintance and instructor) they preferred indirect advice rather than the other three options which are hedge advice, direct advice and opting out. On the other hand, for Iranian Persian EFL female learners, they selected hedge advice in both peer acquaintance and instructor situations as compared to the other three options (direct advice, indirect advice and opting out). This is in accordance with findings from Kuo (1996) where female speakers were more likely to give advice to their same-sex interlocutors and they use various linguistic devices, sentence containing auxiliary models or hedge, and justifications with advice forms to convey advice. On the other hand, only 4 instances of advice are found in all-male conversations and, either seriously or jokingly, they are all in imperative form. In addition, Baca (2011) found that the interlocutor openly commented on his preference for more female-like advice, which he seemed to associate with greater care and concern for all parties involved. These comments could indicate that when giving advice, the interlocutor expected that females would differ from males in their interpersonal communication style.

Table 1: MCQ Data

Situation	Direct	Hedge	Indirect	Nothing
<b>Peer acquaintance</b>				
1. Unreliable car	M 11 (55) F 10 (50)	M 5 (25) F 7 (35)	M 4 (20) F 3 (15)	M 0 (0) F 0 (0)
2. Academic course	M 3 (15) F 1 (5)	M 5 (25) F 9 (45)	M 12 (60) F 9 (45)	M 0 (0) F 1 (5)
3. Repair shop	M 3 (15) F 5 (25)	M 5 (25) F 8 (40)	M 12 (60) F 7 (35)	M 0 (0) F 0 (0)
4. Library	M 4 (20) F 0 (0)	M 7 (35) F 17 (85)	M 7 (35) F 0 (0)	M 2 (10) F 3 (15)
<b>Instructor</b>				
1. Library	M 3 (15) F 0 (0)	M 3 (15) F 12 (60)	M 8 (40) F 4 (20)	M 6 (30) F 4 (20)
2. Illness	M 5 (25) F 8 (40)	M 8 (40) F 9 (45)	M 5 (25) F 3 (15)	M 2 (10) F 0 (0)
3. Bookstore	M 3 (15) F 5 (25)	M 8 (40) F 9 (45)	M 6 (30) F 4 (20)	M 3 (15) F 2 (10)
4. Restaurant	M 4 (20) F 10 (50)	M 4 (20) F 5 (25)	M 12 (60) F 5 (25)	M 0 (0) F 0 (0)

*Note: frequency count is listed in each cell, with percentages provided in brackets*

More specifically, Iranian Persian EFL male learners chose the options of direct advice more than females did in three out of four situations with peer acquaintance (see Table 1). In other words, they were more direct in the situations of *Unreliable Car*, *Academic Course*, and *Library*. However, Iranian Persian EFL female learners selected direct advice option more frequently than Iranian Persian EFL male learners did in the *Repair Shop* situation. Although their reflections were varied in the options of choosing direct advice between Iranian Persian EFL male and female learners, these differences seemed to be negligible. For instance, in the *Unreliable Car* situation, both Iranian Persian EFL male and female learners chose the option of direct advice in the mostly same frequency at 11 and 10 respectively. On the other hand, the differences between males and females seemed to be notable in the

*Library* situation as 4 out of 20 males used the option of direct advice while none of the females selected that option. This is in accordance with Kuo (1996) where male speakers use the form of imperative in all instances of advice conversation.

Iranian Persian EFL female learners selected the options of hedge advice more than males did in the all situations with peer acquaintance. For example, in the *Library* situation the differences between males and females were noticeable as 17 out of 20 females selected hedge options for the situation while only 7 out of 20 males chose the same option. These particular results agreed with those found in Kuo (1996) where female speakers were more likely to provide advice sentence containing auxiliary models or hedge, and justifications with advice forms to convey advice. However, Iranian Persian EFL male learners chose the options of indirect advice more than females did in the all situations with peer acquaintance. For instance, 7 out of 20 males selected indirect options in the *Library* situation while none of the females selected the option. This may be attributed to the fact that while giving advice may be considered as a face-threatening in conversations among male speakers, who either avoid doing it or choose to do it baldly, it is positively affective for women, who resort to a variety of stylistic and linguistic means to maintain equality and rapport.

Unlike peer acquaintance situations, Iranian Persian EFL male learners' frequency choices of direct advice were less than females in 3 out of 4 instructor's situations. In other words, Iranian Persian EFL male learners' frequency choice of direct advice was more than females merely in *Library* situation. As it is illustrated in Table 1, in the *Library* situation none of the females used the option of direct choice while 3 out of 20 males selected direct advice option. Therefore, Iranian Persian EFL female learners were more direct in the situations of *Illness*, *Book Store*, and *Restaurant*. According to Fishman (1978) formal features that characterize women's speech such as asking question aims to ensure reaction. In contrast, men's speech is marked by features (e.g. statement) than do little insure to further talk. In the present study, it would be seen that Iranian Persian EFL female learners viewed giving direct advice as a matter of friendliness, rapport-building, concern, sincere interest, and solidarity towards their instructor.

Iranian Persian EFL female learners chose the options of hedge advice more than males did in the all instructor's situations. Although their selections were different in the options of choosing hedge advice, these differences seemed to be unimportant in the situations of *Illness*, *Book Store*, and *Restaurant*. For example, in the *Illness* and *Book Store* situations, both Iranian Persian EFL male and female learners chose the option of hedge advice in the mostly same frequency at 8 (males) and 9 (females). However, the differences between males and females seemed to be significant in the *Library* situation as 3 out of 20 males used the option of hedge advice while 12 out of 20 females chose that option. As previously mentioned by Kuo (1996), female speakers are more likely to give advice to their same-sex interlocutors and they use various linguistic devices, sentence containing auxiliary models or hedge, and justifications with advice forms to convey advice. On the other hand, only 4 instances of advice are found in all-male conversations.

Finally, in the all instructor's situations (*Library*, *Illness*, *Bookstore* and *Restaurant*) Iranian Persian EFL male learners selected the indirect options more than females did. For example, with regard to the *Restaurant* situation 12 males out of 20 selected the option of indirect advice while 5 out of 20 females selected the same option. One could argue that the reason that males selected indirect advice more than females is evolutionary pressure has made status more important for males. Thus, since status matters relatively less for females, they can select direct advice more. This is in accordance with Juhana (2011) in her study of the use of apologizing speech acts realization by male and female students. She explained that a common reason as to why apologies are difficult is because an apology causes loss of status. She added one could argue that the reason women apologize more than men is due to evolutionary pressure has made status more important for men, because men need status to compete for mates. Therefore, as status matters comparatively less for women, they can apologize more.

According to the findings of this study, school curriculum should consider the differences between male and female learners in the area of speech act. For instance, providing examples of how male and female learners differ in terms of advice giving. The researchers would like to highlight that school curricula in EFL contexts should focus not only on structures and vocabulary but also on the sociopragmatic aspects of the language. Moreover, English teaching and learning in Iran have to give emphasis to not only linguistic competence but also pragmatic competence. Iranian Persian learners who aspire to study in an English speaking country should be careful about the language transfer

phenomena and they ought to be alert of the appropriateness of giving advices to the speakers of the target language, English, to avoid misinterpretation of intent and cultural understanding among the two groups of speakers.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of the study revealed how the speech act of advice giving is perceived in English among Iranian Persian EFL male and female learners. The present study illustrated that Iranian Persian EFL male and female learners differed in the perception of advice giving as well as the types of advice they used as the appropriate choice. Although this study answered the research question, further research on advice giving in the context of Iranian Persian EFL learners need to be conducted with regard to the production of advice giving and cross-cultural differences in advice giving. The findings of this study may be limited to the following considerations. More research is needed to support the current findings including a bigger number of participants with different social groups. Thus, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to other groups due to the small sample size. Moreover, the procedure of data collection is exclusive to merely using one instrument which is Multiple Choice Questionnaire to obtain the necessary data needed to answer the research question. Therefore, the data analysis is based on the nature of the data collection and the instrument used to conduct this study. Finally, and probably due to the fact that the questionnaire was not piloted with the participants of the present study, the researchers were not able to obtain estimates about the expected response rates, data quality, the validity and comprehensibility of the questionnaire. Hence, the questionnaire should be piloted with a similar group of people to the intended participants in order to make necessary adjustments to administrative aspects of the study such as the time needed to complete the questionnaire.

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#### Appendix

##### *An Adopted Version of Hinkle's (1997) Multiple Choice Questionnaires (MCQ)*

#### Instructions:

Eight situations are described in the items below. Following the description of a situation, you will find a multiple choice selection of three possible statements, A, B, and C. Choose the statement (or question) that you think would be the most appropriate to say in the situation. If you think it would be appropriate to say nothing, choose option D.

When you are responding to the questions, please keep in mind the following imaginary student: **N H** is a student in your department. You have similar interests in your majors. You have talked to **N H** several times in the department lounge.

Also, please keep in mind the following imaginary college instructor: There is an **instructor** in your department with whom you have similar professional interests. You have talked to this **instructor** several times in the department lounge.

#### Situations

1. You see the **instructor** working in the library very late in the evening. The instructor looks tired. What do you think would be appropriate to say in this situation?

- A. You should not work so hard. It's very late
- B. Why do you work so hard? It's very late
- C. I'm going home soon. It is very late
- D. Nothing

2. **N H's** car breaks down frequently. **N H** is planning on driving it to New York to see some relatives. What do you think would be appropriate to say in this situation?

- A. I think it may be risky for you to take such a long trip in this car
- B. Taking such a long trip in this car may be risky
- C. You should not take this car for such a long trip. It may be risky
- D. Nothing

3. **N H** is considering taking a course. You have heard that the course is really difficult. What do you think would be appropriate to say in this situation?

- A. I've heard that this course is really difficult
- B. It's better not to take this course. I've heard it's really difficult
- C. You shouldn't take this course. I've heard that it's really difficult
- D. Nothing

4. You and the **instructor** in a *Bookstore*. The instructor is considering buying an expensive book. However, you think that another store may sell the book at a lower price. What do you think would be appropriate to say in this situation?

- A. You should buy the book at the other store. This store has high prices
- B. This store has high prices
- C. May be, it's not a good idea to buy the book here. This store has high prices
- D. Nothing

5. **N H** is thinking of taking a car to a *Repair Shop* downtown. However, you know of a shop on the corner where you have taken your car. What do you think would be appropriate to say in this situation?

- A. I usually take my car to the shop on the corner. It's closer
- B. You should take your car to the shop on the corner. It's closer
- C. It's better to take your car to the shop on the corner. It's closer
- D. Nothing

6. You and the **instructor** are in a *Restaurant*. The **instructor** says something about ordering a hamburger. You ordered a hamburger in this *Restaurant* before and, in your opinion, it was really greasy. What do you think would be appropriate to say in this situation?

- A. You shouldn't order the hamburger. I had it here before, and it was really greasy
- B. May be it's not a good idea to order a hamburger. I had it here before, and it was really greasy
- C. I had a hamburger here before, and it was really greasy
- D. Nothing

7. You see **N H** working in the library very late in the evening. **N H** looks tired. What do you think would be appropriate to say in this situation?

- A. Why do you work so hard? It's very late
- B. You should not work so hard. It's very late
- C. I'm going home soon. It is very late
- D. Nothing

8. You see the **instructor** working in the department office. The **instructor** looks ill and clearly doesn't feel very well. What do you think would be appropriate to say in this situation?

- A. You look like you don't feel well
- B. You should go home. You look like you don't feel well
- C. May be, it's better to go home. You look like you don't feel well
- D. Nothing

**Thank you for your time and effort!**



THE ROLE OF LANDSCAPE ON PROTAGONIST'S SPIRITUAL JOURNEY IN *THE STONE ANGEL* BY  
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**ABSTRACT**

*The Stone Angel* is a story of Hagar's transformation and reconciliation. Hagar's inner quest is based upon reconciling and arriving to real self. Hagar tries to realize her inner landscape rather than external landscape. This paper examines the role of Manawaka landscape on Hagar's inner landscape.

**KEY WORDS:** Landscape, Manawaka, The Stone Angel, Manitoba, Internal and External Land

**INTRODUCTION**

The level of understanding of the protagonists of Margaret Laurence about geographical places is related to her experiences at this place. Laurence's awareness is developed through her life experiences. Northrop Frye in his essay "Conclusion to a Literary History of Canada" (1965), observes that Canadians have an identity crisis with a difference for they are less perplexed by the existential question "Who am I?" than by some riddle such as "Where is here?" (11)

*The Stone Angel*, shows Margaret Laurence's abilities in portraying the landscape of Manitoba and her ability to penetrate the mind of Hagar. Hagar, running away from her family, sits alone in the forest. Her mind is free from the boundaries; like the forest, she sees the forest as a free place, she reflects about the wind movement:

Now I perceive that the forest is not still at all, but crammed with creatures scurrying here and there on multitudinous and mysterious errands. A line of ants crosses the tree trunk where I'm sitting. Solemn and in single file they march towards some miniature battle or carrion feast. A giant slug oozes across my path, flowing with infinite slowness like a stagnant creek. My log is covered with moss—I pluck at it, and an enormous piece comes away in my hand. It's long and curly as hair, a green wig suitable for some judicial owl holding court over the thievish jays or scavenging beetles. (192)

**RECONCILING EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL LANDSCAPE**

Henry C. Phelps explains Hagar's connection to place and home: "her residence is always invested with an air of transience, waiting, and uneasy expectation – 'marking time' ([SA] 160), as she acutely characterizes it" (2000, 68). Hagar realizes that she would "never get out. The only escape from those places is feet first in a wooden box" (185). Her view of the Home is completely antithetical to the meaning of the word "home," as a secure place, where one's identity is grounded: "Those places have nothing to do with nursing or homes—the name's all wrong". (221)

Jason sees his family as an extension of himself. He dresses Hagar in a manner that will show others how prosperous he is. Hagar's life begins at the same time that her mother's life ends, leaving Hagar with her father and her brothers, Matt and Dan. She does not have any female role model. Hagar equates weakness with femaleness. She has a problem of communicating her feeling and thoughts from her father and society.

Hagar suffers from inner problems; Hagar is a victim of social circumstances. Some part of her problem relates to traditional society. When she travels to Manawaka, her attitude changes in a way reflected by the landscape. The novel shows the inner problem of Hagar and influence of outer landscape on her inner landscape.

Laurence brings the battle of oppositions in her novel; reconciliation of the external and internal world is the ultimate end of *The Stone Angel*. In Hagar's spiritual journey, the role of landscape and external world is clear.

Although her physical nature cannot help Hagar to overcome her problem and landscape of her inner world cause a lot of problems for her. One of her problem is her pride.

The first indication of her pride is in the second sentence of the novel. Hagar explains the stone angel on her mother's grave as "my mother's angel that my father brought in pride to mark her bones and proclaim his dynasty." (2) When Hagar encounters many problems on account of her pride, she seeks some place to hide.

In this situation forest brings peace for Hagar, when she senses her impending death and needs to find freedom to die. Her mind focuses on death when she feels her son and her daughter in law, Doris, are treating her like "a calf to be fatted" (35), and as though "she were not there" (32)

### PROTAGONIST'S INNER PROBLEM

Hagar's pride and inability to communicate were formed in her childhood and throughout her adult years and must be death with if she wants to complete her quest. Hagar has some fault in her way to find her real self. Pearson and Pop state that the hero's journey "complicated further by the human tendency not to understand completely all the ramifications of a single experience" (77). Hagar is talking about her pride as a wilderness; she compares her inner feeling with the wild nature of Canada.

Laurence suggests that this pride is as unnatural as civilizing the prairie bluffs with "portly peonies" (5). Silence is a prison for Hagar. This is another ambiguous nature of her inner landscape. Hagar uses language as a weapon against others. She lets the minister "flounder as she makes no reply to his conversation" (41). She likes her daughter-in-law's cooking but does not compliment her because she does not respect her (67). Due to her problem in communicating, she finds nature as a calm place. Nobody annoys her in the forest. She can think about her inner self.

Although she feels pride in being aligned with the town, yet she lives on the farm with her husband. Her world and her landscape have changed. Yet she is unable to talk about her feeling. When she understands that she cannot leave her father or her husband behind she decides to reconcile her past and present and shape her real self. In this struggle for identity, the role of her country and its wild nature is momentous.

In her old age she assumes Manawaka as a small place. W. H. New states "Hagar takes Manawaka into her son Marvin's suburban home and then into the multicultural; hospital in Vancouver". (New 2000, 69) Hagar's life is connected with the life of her country. Canadian history is between wars and prosperous times. Canada's previous security in its future is made insecure by the fact that over sixty thousand Canadians died defending unity, progress and the new national pride. This is the impact of her country in Hagar's life.

### TOWARD SELF-REALIZATION

Hagar's awareness happens on a trip into Manawaka, from farm to the city; Hagar goes to sell eggs with John, her second son. One of the houses she goes to sell eggs is the house of her childhood acquaintance, Lottie. Her daughter refers to Hagar as the "egg woman" (132). She realizes that she has lost herself and need to find herself in civilized environment. She looks at herself in a public space how a person could change so much and never see it. So gradually it happens. She sees herself in men's clothes with altered body and a face that does not change. During her life Hagar escapes from civilization to nature and goes from place to the garden. In urban area she feels dissatisfaction. In nature she feels led to unknown place. She learns to blend the inner world with outer world.

*The Stone Angel* can be read as a story of personal development from a position of weakness and alienation to a position of self-understanding and responsibility. The concerns with isolation and alienation are present themes in Canadian literature. Hagar also has a journey to inner part of her mind and she struggles with alienation and her environment.

For Hagar place may function as an element of connecting people in a community. The sense of community is explained by the train that is a symbol of leaving. When she hides in the forest, she sees in her imagination the train as a dragon:

The train stirred and shook itself like a drowsy dragon and began to move, regally slow, then faster until it was spinning down the shining tracks. We passed the shacks and shanties that clustered

around the station, and railway buildings and water tower painted their dried-blood red. Then we were away from Manawaka. It came as a shock to me, how small the town was, and how short a time it took to leave it, as we measure time....(142)

But at the same time she sees the water are the parts of wounded landscape. In this moment Hagar is ready to change; she finds herself in a womb-like place where she can be spiritually reborn. Guerin et al explains "water is the common symbol for the unconscious as is the blackness around Hagar" (150, 1). Water brings renewal for Hagar. She does not imagine herself as a stone again. Instead she plays like children on the beach. In this moment she feels as a free woman. In this beautiful place she does not fear again; instead she hears the "vapid chucking of the sea" (234)

## CONCLUSION

In Hagar's spiritual quest the role of landscape and nature is evident. Through the story, her physical nature cannot help her to overcome her problem, landscape of her inner world causes a lot of problems for her. Inner freedom for Hagar comes in forest, when finally finds her alliance with the community, the spiritually free protagonists depicted in Margaret Laurence's novel. Laurence has given opportunities to the heroine whose courage has allowed her to resist surrendering to the patriarchal society.

Laurence's protagonists penetrate and conquer nature and overcome the personals shortages. At the end of the novel, Hagar has returned to nature and her female self. Hagar has a glance to her past in the dark cannery. For the first time, she cries, she was unsatisfied on her own behavior. Hagar begins to value her female self. Hagar compares herself to the ancient mariner who gets rid of himself after he blesses the creatures of the sea. She finds the strength of older women who are rooted like old trees. Trees and nature bring strength for Hagar.

For Hagar, memories of the place help her to shape her real identity, this identity that brings her reaffirmation and reconciliation with her life. *The Stone Angel* is the story of the development of old Hagar's personal identities through her connection with nature.

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**"THE APPLICATION OF NIETZSCHE'S PHILOSOPHY TO DURRENMATT'S SELECTED PLAYS"**

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**ABSTRACT**

In Friedrich Nietzsche's world there are two important features which have a decisive role for explaining his philosophy, "Death of God" and "Superman (Übermensch)". This paper, first is going to discuss about these two complicated theories and then study the way that Friedrich Durrenmatt, as a dramatist, applies these two concepts and other Nietzsche's notions and this would be the framework of this paper, but what is more important than a new explanation of the two famous Nietzsche viewpoints, is the way of applying them by Durrenmatt in his works.

**KEY WORDS:** Nietzsche, Superman (Übermensch), Durrenmatt

**THE APPLICATION OF NIETZSCHE'S PHILOSOPHY TO DURRENMATT'S SELECTED PLAYS**

The important thing in the world of playwriting is conveying deep and universal humanistic concepts which can be performed anywhere in the world. Friedrich Durrenmatt is among those dramatists, whose plays are not belonging to a specific people, but they are written for all the people and his emphasis on human has made him much more important in world of drama. "What encouraged Durrenmatt to write is his emphasis on human predicament." (Rahnama, 1978:175)

The more important point in this research is the ways that philosophical concepts can be applied in playwriting. Philosophy is a way of truth searching and truth is that compulsory "becoming". In "Beyond Good and Evil" Friedrich Nietzsche proposed a question about truth:

"What really is this 'Will to Truth' In us?" (Nietzsche, 2008:13)

And Überlohe in "The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi" says:

"Truth, I will tell her the truth" (Durrenmatt, 1950:90)

Drama has been intertwined with philosophy from its birth and Durrenmatt is not an exception. Durrenmatt had some studies in philosophy and theology at University of Zurich, therefore, he wrote his plays under the influence of his academic learning, but what kind of philosophy? The question is that as a stylized dramatist, Durrenmatt benefited from which philosophy?

This research is an effort in finding out whether Nietzsche's philosophy formed the theoretic basis of Durrenmatt's playwriting or not?

Answer to this questing can be a great assist to playwriting in order to find out that how we can use philosophy, which is a complicated truth, in simple language and apply it in playwriting. Of course this is a very important and complicated issue which has been used by different people in different eras. For example, Seneca who was a Stoic philosopher and dramatist used his philosophy in his writings.

Seneca's life was a combination of many contrasts. His position in Nero's court was a obstacle for him to practicing the principles he believed in and Since he gained a quite considerable wealth in a short time, he was under this criticism that his life is in contrast with basic notions of Stoic philosophy (Kosari, 2007:13).

The Representative of Stoics in medieval period in first century was Seneca who is known for his numerous letters and essays on moral issue (Babaei, 2007:214). Also, Machiavelli who was a writer in 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Century created his works by using philosophy especially political philosophy .another example is Jean-Paul Sartre whose plays serve as a means of conveying his philosophy.

On the other hand Durrenmatt along with Bertolt Brecht and Max Frisch are among most influential and prominent German dramatists and we should also note that from early times until today Germany has always been rich in philosophy (Of course, if there is still any believe in the philosophy), therefore, understanding Durrenmatt's world, his philosophical ideas and his influences on drama can be very helpful to see how we can benefit from philosophy in our works. By applying philosophical concepts in dramatic texts we can have something to present to the whole world not only to a small region. According to Lacan's split subject, there is no need of local path for globalization. We do not need any antithesis for reaching globalization, rapidly from thesis we can reach to antithesis and the path to antithesis is to having a discourse for world. With a philosophical basis, Durrenmatt could have a new discourse for all; therefore we should understand and comprehend this discourse. His discourse, which can be traced and analyzed in a systematic structure starts with *Romulus the Great* (1959) and even until today we can still see the novelty in his works .investigating and finding this novelty is the aim of this research.

If the philosophical basis of Durrenmatt is Nietzsche, then the importance of this research would be solving one the complexity of playwriting which is Durrenmatt, himself and that's because of complex technique of Durrenmatt's wordsmanship, so by tracing his philosophical approaches we understand his complex works. In the middle of his plays, Durrenmatt reveal all the important information and until the end of plays he only elaborates on those information. Dramatic intrigues are a part of this information. For example in the middle of "The Visit" all the intrigues has been resolved. Claire Zachanassian says that I give you money if you kill Alfred Ill and all the townspeople of Gullen thinking about some ways to kill Ill and of course he will be killed, therefore from the middle of the play until the end it's the time for processing of this information which have two part; one aspect is the love of Ill and Claire and the other is the moral aspect (with Nietzsche's definition) of townspeople.

We are familiar with this technique and have been understand it, but it is the philosophical layer of the play which makes it more important. The question is that why Claire wants to kill Ill? They are both in love with each other. Claire has both money and power so what convinces her to kill Ill? At first glance "revenge" can be the answer but the more important question is that why she didn't forgive him?

By understanding the philosophical approaches of Durrenmatt's thinking, all these questions become evident. The hypothesis of this research is that Nietzsche and his philosophy have the answers to these questions so the following is an investigation to reach the answers.

## **THEORETICAL STRUCTURE**

The basis of this research is the philosophical concepts of Friedrich Nietzsche. He was born on 15 October 1844 in Röcken and died at the age of 55 on 25 August 1900 from severe pneumonia.

What make him more famous than the other philosophers is his theory on human's future in which he talked about "the death of God". By this theory he criticized the common ethics of humans both in his time and after. In general, Nietzsche was against four main traditions in West's civilization: ethics of Christianity ,Secular ethics ,morals and values of ordinary people and some of Socratic concepts which is remained in different societies. In Nietzsche's philosophy one of his main preoccupations is Christianity and human ,in his time and also in our time. Nietzsche became more and more obscure in Christian conversations. For him the main reason for "The death of God" is Christianity. One of His main problems is the absolute fact which is a basis in Kant's philosophy. In this regard J.P Stern said:

Nietzsche is always making special principles for special people. Unlike the absolute fact of Kant, he is completely against generalization of principles. Nietzsche's attack is not towards Jesus but Christianity (Magee, 2011:384). Nietzsche is not a fan of poor people and he attacked them severely in his philosophy. He believed that sympathy of a powerful person is alright but he hated the notion of supporting the poor from any possible source.

Thus he reproduces the contradiction as the pain of individuation but resolves them in a higher pleasure, by making us participate in the superabundance of unique being or universal willing (Deleuze, 2012.42).

Deleuze's idea about Nietzsche's philosophy is like saying yes to a which will be emerged inside of man, so after the death of God, man would say yes which is the basis for the theory of "superman". In this theory, Nietzsche tells us that

between ourselves and the other we should choose ourselves and instead we should use the other as jump ladder. Self and valuing one's existence is one of the factors of becoming a "Superman". This approach is a kind of self-analysis and Nietzsche is one the pioneers in this relation. The interesting point is that Nietzsche started this self-analysis from himself. About Nietzsche, Freud said:

No one never can know Nietzsche better than himself, not today not even tomorrow" (Magee ,2011:390). But what is the benefit of Superman in a world who's God has been died? From Nietzsche's point of view in a world without God, the man himself should become god and for reaching this he should value his own existence. Deleuze believed that "the death of God" is a formula which leads to the creation of "superman", for him this is not a theoretic proposition but it is a dramatic proposition:

It says at one and the same time: God existed and he is dead and he will rise from the dead, God has become Man and Man has become God. The phrase "God is dead" is not a speculative proposition but a dramatic proposition, the dramatic proposition par excellence (Deleuze, 2011:261). This dramatic basis with its focus on death becomes a pure mixed cognitive object. By transforming God to a mixed cognitive object, the existence or nonexistence of God won't be determined in an absolute way and death and life would have relative and partial determinations, so that's why Deleuze puts a dramatic basis for the death of god.

The dramatic proposition is synthetic, therefore essentially pluralist typological and differential. Who dies and who puts God to death? "When gods die, they always die many kinds of deaths" (Deleuze , 2011:261). This dramatic basis of Nietzsche's philosophy has attracted artists towards it. Nietzsche stated his ideas metaphorically and for an artist what is better than a free interpretation of ideas of a philosopher? Artistic and aesthetic issues are related with Nietzsche's thinking in different layers and in my opinion that's why he had a great influence of creative artists (Maggie, 2011:404).

#### ***Romulus, Claire, Alfro, Mississippi: Nietzsche's true children***

Karl Jaspers: "The only person who can understand the essence of Nietzsche's thought is the one who first has this essence in himself" (Jaspers.2004:41). Nietzsche believes that the thing that provides us with most interest is not that whether our interpretation from world is true or false because no one can know this by sure. The most important thing is that whether this interoperation can develop the will to power to strength and control the world or it expands anarchy and weakness? This theoretical basis which Nietzsche developed in "the will to power" is exactly the same action which Durrenmatt created in Great. In this play Romulus is deliberately helping the ruin of the Empire and for starting this he tried very hard to become the Emperor of Rome and then he became such a irresponsible Emperor and didn't take any action in response to the threats that led to the fall of Rome. In fact, Durrenmatt was trying to pursue Nietzsche's theory which he proposed in "the will to power". In his play Durrenmatt answers the question which Nietzsche asked in "the will to power". Romulus is the true image of the theory of superman. In the world which its God is dead, Romulus considers himself as the only person who can be God and rules in God's place.

"Now in a world without God, humans should have the courage to become Gods. The greatest need of today's civilization is to create a new kind of personality, Tough, powerful and brave superman who is intellectually and morally independent." (lavine,2005:413).

Based on the Nietzsche's theory of "the will to power", Romulus took the power and in relation to theory of "the death of God" he became a reason for the fall of Rome .Durrenmatt's answer to Nietzsche's question is that in a world without God "the will to power" would leads to anarchy which ultimately brings the freedom of body. In "Human, All Too Human" Nietzsche revealed a very important fact about his theory which is necessary for understanding Romulus, he says:

" Enough, I am still living; and life is, after all, not a product of morality: it wants deception, it lives on deception . . . but there you are, I am already off again, am I not, and doing what I have always done, old immoralist and bird-catcher that I am - speaking unmorally, extra morally, "beyond good and evil?" (Nietzsche, 1982:4). The above quotation is exactly the life of Romulus. He is awaiting death but suddenly Odoacer comes along and proposes him with a calmer throne. Odoacer is the first part of Nietzsche's viewpoint. Nietzsche has opened a new language for life and also Zarathustra had too much emphasis on language. Life should be with reason but rational because if we don't care for ourselves, nobody will care for us either. There is no other god who support us, so this is the strategy



of Romulus. He just cares about himself. Romulus words is Nietzsche's worlds too, he also wants to speak rationally. At first he pretends insanity but he finds out that nobody understands him, therefore, he is forced to tell the truth to his wife, Julia.

Romulus: I didn't do that because of severe ambition but because of need. What was the purpose for you, for me it was just a means? I became Emperor, just because of a political theory...

Julia: There's just something about you and that is Inaction.

Romulus: that's it .my political theory is to do nothing.

Julia: so for doing nothing you should become Emperor?

Romulus: only in this way, my inaction would have a meaning. The inaction of ordinary people cannot be effective.

Julia: this act will put the state endanger.

Romulus: that's the point!

Julia: what do you mean?

Romulus: you just got the reason of my inaction.

Julia: it's impossible to deny the necessity of reign

Romulus: I have no doubt about the existence of a state, I only doubt in the necessity of our reign which has become the World Empire. Before I became Emperor, this reign was a system which did Murder, pillage, oppression on behalf of other nations.

Julia: I'm surprised .if you have such an idea about the world governance of Rome, so why you became Emperor?

Romulus: the only reason that Rome has been alive from so many times ago until now is that it always had an Emperor. I had no choice but to become Emperor so I can ruin this empire.(Durrenmatt,2005:94-95)

What Durrenmatt pictures for us here is the same as the basis of Nietzsche's theory. Necessarily Nietzsche's superman must not have a mustache like Nietzsche. Nietzsche's superman is a person who can do anything on the way of reaching his purpose without having any fear from anybody else. In this theory, the action of superman would be remained. What Romulus wants to do -which he did very well too- is an ideal for Nietzsche's theory and only a superman can do that.

In "The Antichrist" Nietzsche stated that we should all put an end to your lives like Manis. We should enjoy life and Romulus did the same thing. He loves chicken so he prefers to stay at home breeding domesticated chickens. Now we can understand that "Romulus the Great" is not only a dramatic piece but it is a play which is exactly written based on two Nietzsche's theory of "the death of" and "happiness".

About happiness Nietzsche said:

"What is happiness? — the feeling that power increases — that a resistance is overcome" (Nietzsche, 2007:38)

Let's see what is the strategy of Romulus .he tells to Julia that:

Romulus: I married you so I can become Emperor and you married me because you wished to attain the status of Empress and I was the well-descended Romulus but you were born from the relation of Emperor with and a slave woman. I transformed you as a legitimate person and you gave me the Empire Crown. (Durrenmatt, 2005:91)

This the first part of Nietzsche's definition of "happiness" until "the power increases". In the second part Romulus's happiness is in a place where a resistance is overcome and without any doubt this resistance is the Rome's resistance which should be demolished . This the last dialogue of Romulus:

Romulus: now the rule of Rome Empire is ended (Durrenmatt, 2005:143).

Now it can be simply proved that theoretical basis and structure of “Romulus the Great” is Nietzsche’s theory of “happiness”. It is based on this theory that Romulus talks and provide others with speeches and ultimately he reaches to happiness .in the first place a happy person is the one who can be superman .

With another approach in this play and Nietzsche’s theory of “happiness” we can also mention the concept of “sympathy” in Nietzsche’s philosophy. For Durrenmatt, sympathy helped him in developing his text. For proving this we can compare one of Nietzsche’s sentences with a dialogue of Romulus.

“Not contentment, but more power; not peace at any price, but war; not virtue, but efficiency (virtue in the Renaissance sense, virtue, virtue free of moral acid). The weak and the botched shall perish: first principle of our charity. And one should help them to it. What is more harmful than any vice?--Practical sympathy for the botched and the weak--Christianity...” (Nietzsche, 2007:38).

Romulus: in all my life, my effort was to ruin Rome Empire. I gave myself the right to be the judge of Rome, because I had prepared myself for death. I asked my people to be victimized in a horrible way because I was also ready to become a victim .I let my people to be defenseless and I let them to be killed because I was also decided to be killed (Durrenmatt, 2005:134,135).

Romulus thought how he can be happy? How he can use his superman power? How he can reach to the thing that he is only worth of it? For this he has the help of Nietzsche. In the “Twilight of the Idols” he answered this question: war “All means are justified; every 'case' is a case of luck. Especially war. War has always been the most sensible measure for spirits who have become too inward looking and profound; even wounds have the power to heal. I have had a motto for a long time: The spirit soars, valour thrives by wounding.”(Nietzsche, 2005:155). Under the pretext of Nietzsche’s theory of war, Durrenmatt used a war scene for the manifestation of his protagonists: Minister: I just became the Prime Minister. Situation appears to be critical. Foreign governments are fully aware of everything. The market is tense. There are exaggerated rumors .but in fact the situation is perfect to take the run of everything (Durrenmatt 1956: 91).

In “The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi” the war situation put the power to minister and we can see the same situation in “Romulus the Great” in which he prefers a war. For starting this war, Romulus first tries to diminish Rome so the old rival, Germans, become tempted. When the Germanic army started the attack, the war started.

Like a superman, Romulus consider himself as the judge because like Nietzsche's Zarathustra he knows that the great judge, God has been dead and now he should do the judging because he has the power to do such. He has happiness now. He does his judging and at the end, in another part of the world he will live his life in a great peace, just like the Nietzsche's ideal. During the play he excessively said that he wants to be killed but his true fate would happen at the end of play.

Romulus: I appoint the German Prince Odoacer, to be the new king of Italy.

German: Viva King of Italy Odoacer : instead I will bestow Rome Emperor a pension of 6000 gold coins per year and a countryside villa. Romulus: now the hunger period of Emperor finished. Here this the glory crown and you can find the king's sword among gardening tools (Durrenmatt.2005:142).

The end of superman's life is stated in above and Durrenmatt tried to pass Nietzsche's theory through his artistic filter. Romulus would have a great life while embracing lots of coins every year. He would be happy for his beliefs and ideas led him to have a happy life. Romulus' life is the lesson of Durrenmatt's character from Nietzsche's concepts.

In "the visit", Durrenmatt has been close to this concept of Nietzsche. The town of Gullen once had a very advanced industry until Claire Zachanassian moved to Hamburg and became a prostitute .after marrying with Mr. Zachanassian, Claire became very rich. Since she had a big hatred from her hometown, she bought all the industrial sources of this city and made them all inactive. The play begins when Claire returns to Gullen. Here we see that she took everything out of the way in order to gain more power and this is her time to shows her power . Gullen is an example of recession in modernism which Nietzsche had been talked about it too. Claire announced that she will make a donation of one billion units of an unspecified currency, half for the town and half to be shared among the families. Her donation is conditional on someone's killing Alfred Ill who was the love of her youth. The town became developed by credit but even in the new situation nothing changed, as if everything is still calm and there is

no originality in the town such as humanity. Nietzsche has said the same thing .he said that development is a modern feature and it is a lie. This Nietzsche's point should be expressed by a superman who is Claire Zachanassian.

"True enough, it succeeds in isolated and individual cases in various Parts of the earth and under the most widely different cultures, and in these cases a higher type certainly manifests itself; something which, Compared to mankind in the mass, appears as a sort of superman." (Nietzsche, 2001: 2).

None of the characters in "the visit" have an evolution. And Durrenmatt wants them all just to be alive. They don't live. They are all alone.

"Nietzsche is the enemy of democracy, Socialism and Collectivism. he loves loneliness" (Ahmadi, 2005:155).

We can vividly see this love of loneliness in all of Durrenmatt's characters. Claire Zachanassian is an obvious example for this. She always tried to decrease her loneliness by marrying several times but still she prefers her privacy and her solitude. Nietzsche and Durrenmatt's characters have the same pain and joy which they both suffer from them and enjoy them. Mobius wants to be alone from all the people so he can be alone in a Luxurious mental hospital. Romulus empties the Imperial Palace so he can have more joy in his loneliness comparing to the time when he is with others. Alfro Traps travels alone with his car. Anastasia cannot be with anybody and she just gets rid of everybody who comes to her life. Überlohe prefers to be alone in a wood. A man, in the evening conversation has sat alone in his room waiting for the other to come. As if all the characters has become the "Steppenwolf" of Hermann Hesse. Solitude, the love of Nietzsche, but the difference between Nietzsche's solitude and Hesse's solitude is that the protagonist in Steppenwolf runs away from technology and industry to find solitude again but Nietzsche's superman became alone in order to gain power .in the following act of "The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi", the minister talks to powerful Anastasia:

Minister: you are an animal but I like animals. You don't have any plans .you are a day person.as you betrayed your husband, you will betrays me and others too .there is always a more powerful thing for you than what you already have .whatever comes in future will ruin today. No one can stop you. (Durrenmatt, 1950:74)

But Anastasia is always alone and this solitude is always in the search of power. A power which ultimately goes to a person who is lonelier than Anastasia: the Minister .this solitude has power inside it.

*"Truth" in ideas of Nietzsche and Durrenmatt*

"Which of us is the Oedipus here? Which the Sphinx?" (Nietzsche, 2008:13).

What is the relationship between truth and reality? Is every reality a truth? Does every truth become real? The answer is no. The relation between these two is in a way that some realities are truths and right. When a just, moral, social and economic system forms, it means that this system is both real and right. When you risk your life for the success of a movement, it means that your act is both real and right. You did a self-sacrifice which is an actual action. Some other realities are not real and right but they are false. When you violate a person's rights, it is a reality. You oppress him or her which is real thing but your oppression is not a truth and it is anti-truth and false. So we have two kinds of reality: the first kind are those realities which are true and right such as justice. When a justice is realized and achieved, it becomes a right truth. The second kind is those realities which are real but they are false and anti-right such as oppression and injustice. When you do an injustice, this reality is anti-truth and anti-right. This relation between reality and truth.

"Nietzsche said: reality needs to be criticized not worship and philosophy would release human from illusion no matter what it costs " (Jaspers, 2004.11).

In "Die panne " one thing become important which has not been addressed before the trial. There is a truth here but this truth is not a common and ordinary truth but it is a philosophical truth. In a trial that its judge has made it like a game, the truth would have another form. Alfredo Traps had a close relationship with his boss' wife sometimes ago and after some time from their relationship his boss died, but in trial this death is stated differently as if it was Traps who has killed his boss. This truth takes the exact definition that Nietzsche stated in his "The power to will".

"Truth" is therefore not something there, that might be found or discovered-but something that must be created and that gives a name to a process, or rather to a will to overcome that has in itself no end-introducing truth, as a processes in infinitum, an active determining-not a becoming conscious of something that is in itself firm and determined. It is a word for the "will to power." (Nietzsche, 1968:298).

And this truth has been created for the new game which has been planned by the judge, attorney and the lawyer. Christianity has explained that making a new truth for carrying out a goal is amoral but Nietzsche explicitly rejected morality.

"It is a painful and tragic spectacle that rises before me: I have drawn back the curtain from the rottenness of man. This word, in my mouth, is at least free from one suspicion: that it involves a moral accusation against humanity. It is used--and I wish to emphasize the fact again--without any moral significance..." (Nietzsch,2001:2)

Claire Zachanassian also creates a new truth :

Butler: do you know Mr. Ill ?

Koby and Loby: we are blind. We are blind

Butler: do you recognize him by his voice?

Koby and Loby : by his voice. By his voice.

Butler: in 1940 I was the Lord Chief Justice of Güllen. How did you two testify at that court?

Koby and Loby: we said that we had sex with her. We said that we had sex with her.

Butler: you testified this before me, the Court and God. Is it true?

Koby and Loby: it was a false testify. It was a false testify.

Butler: why did you lied?

Koby and Loby: Ill had bribed us. Ill had bribed us.

Butler: what did he gave you ?

Koby and Loby: one liter liquor. one liter liquor.

Claire Zachanassian: now Koby and Loby tell what did I do with you?

Koby and Loby : she ordered to find us. She ordered to find us.

Butler : that's right .she ordered to search for you two in all over the world. Koby, You went to Canada and Loby went to Australia but Claire Zachanassian found you both and what did she do with you?

Koby and Loby : she gave us to Toby and Roby. She gave us to Toby and Roby.

Butler: and what did Toby and Roby do with you?

Koby and Loby: they made us blind and they mutilated us. They made us blind and they mutilated us.

Butler: so this was the story. a judge.an accused. two false witnesses and an unjust verdict in 1910.so I am asking you Suer, is it right ?

(Claire Zachanassian stands)

Claire Zachanassian : yes

Ill : it was for a long long time ago.

Butler : what did happen to the child ?

Claire Zachanassian: (in a low voice) she only survived one year.

Butler : what did happen to you at that time ?

Claire Zachanassian : I became a prostitute

Butler : why ?

Claire Zachanassian : because of the court's verdict I became notorious....

Butler : and now you want justice , Claire Zachanassian ?

Claire Zachanassian: I have the power. Güllen can have one billion if someone's killing Alfred Ill (Durrenmatt.1963.34-35).

Claire can do whatever she wants but the first important thing for her is to create a truth and now by the help of that truth and her power, she can create the act of nature. We usually confront with a court scene in Durrenmatt's works, it can be public court like in "Die panne" and "The visit" or the court scene can be created by some answers and questions and interrogation in character's house or some other satiations like in "The Physicists", "abendstunde im spatherbst", "nachtliches gesprach mit einem verachteten menschen" and "The marriage of Mr. Mississippi". The reason of these trials is creating a new truth which is one of the basis of Nietzsche's philosophy. Durrenmatt just love to create new truths too. In the "Twilight of the Idols" Nietzsche made a new path for Truth:

"Twilight of the Idols - in plain language: the end of the old truth . . ." (Nietzsche,2005:137).

Sometimes for Durrenmatt this truth can have a root in the politics of his time and in some other time it is only a humanistic issue. The important thing for Durrenmatt is truth and creating that truth. In "The Marriage of Mr.

Mississippi " Durrenmatt had a great maneuver on the issue of truth in order to open a window to the idea of "creating the truth"

Mississippi : He betrayed you

Anastasia : who said such a thing ? (Durrenmatt.1950 , 24-25)

And now without mentioning anything about the betrayal of her husband, Mississippi circulates some rumors and continues his truth creation.

Mississippi: do you confess that you knew about your husband's betrayal (Durrenmatt:27)

And again only the truth is important for Durrenmatt.

Mississippi: (in a serious mode) in this very strange moments which we see the effect of truth in ourselves. the 25 years of being an attorney obligates me to warn you that for once ,both of us should confess before each other even if this confess costs our destruction. (Durrenmatt: 25)

And in the end of the play we again see the complexity of creating the truth .this time Mississippi, in the costume of insane, jump to the house from a window and interrogate his ex-wife .an interrogation for finding truth.

Mississippi: do you insist on the claim which says you weren't the mistress of Comte?

Anastasia : I cannot understand the reason of your suspicion .

Mississippi: its reason lays on the existence of good and evil in human's id .dear Anastasia, Comte Bodo confessed while he was drunk and drunk people always say the true things. (Durrenmatt :119,120)

Creating the truth is different from finding truth. In philosophy the simple definition of truth and real is that, real is what it is and truth is what it should be. In Nietzsche's definition of truth he assigned the "what it should be" to human so he creates what it should be and Durrenmatt also created truth in his works. The truths which does not exist because his characters always lie, from Anastasia in "The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi" to Alfro Traps in "Die panne".

About this issue Nietzsche said ironically:

"...is there any actual difference between a lie and a conviction?--All the world believes that there is; but what is not believed by all the world!...."( Nietzsche,2001:30)

### ***The Change of the world by Superman***

Thus affirms another world from the one of life, nature and history; and inasmuch as he affirms this "other world", must he not therefore deny its opposite, this world, our world, in doing so?( Nietzsche,2005,112). Nietzsche wanted to change the world. In his view, his true readers are not born yet and he said these both at the beginning of "Antichrist" and "Thus Spoke Zarathustra"

Thus Spoke Zarathustra : A Book for All and None (Nietzsche,2009:2).

Durrenmatt chose this view as the theme of "The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi" . In the first monologues of this play, Saint-Claude says:

Saint-Claude: the surprising fate of three men has been presented here. All three, same as each other, had this idea that with different ways they can change the world and save some parts, but they had bad-luck in their ways: they met a woman.

The theory of changing the world by Superman has exactly the above features. In this play, Durrenmatt tried to play with some of Nietzsche's thoughts. In fact Durrenmatt puts a woman as *Achilles' heel* of his protagonist and as we all know, when it came to women Nietzsche always had problem with them. In this play, Durrenmatt chooses the winner of his play a person who follows his thought better than any other superman . It should be noted that "The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi" is not a refusal to Nietzsche's thinking but it is like making a joke with Nietzsche. At the end Durrenmatt still performs what Nietzsche had been considered, the winner of the play is minister who rules and does not have any attention to others.

Minister: I don't have anything but greed for having more power and now I am embracing the world (Durrenmatt: 128).

Nietzsche said:

"Wherever the will to power begins to decline, in whatever form, there is always an accompanying declines physiologically, decadence." (Nietzsche, 2001:7)

And it would be this theoretical basis which Durrenmatt used to put minister as his power. Sometimes we may think that Durrenmatt wanted to make fun of these mortals, but the truth is that in Durrenmatt's time and in our time, mortals have still power and this power is the same power which Nietzsche had been talked about. In the next part we will analyze whether Durrenmatt was agreed with power or not?

### *Durrenmatt after Nietzsche*

If we make a route from what Nietzsche had been pictured for human and put "The death of God" in the beginning of the way and "Superhuman" at the end, we will find young Durrenmatt walking in mid-way.

"The only moral principle of Superman is the acceptance of life: to be powerful, creative, happy and free" (Lavine, 2005; 413).

In his wordsmanship, Durrenmatt had a certain path which can be traced by Nietzsche's philosophy. He wrote "Romulus the Great" in 1950 when he was 29 years old. He wrote this play to be a piece of Nietzsche's unquestioning thoughts. We can find all four features of superman in the character of Romulus. Since he is Emperor of Rome, he is powerful. He is smart and creative because he found a way to ruin the great Rome Empire happy which can conceived from his hobby of breeding chickens and his behavior. He is free because no one can stops him from doing anything.

Romulus: when an Emperor want to fire his country, he should ruin what he wants to break and trample what he wants to ruin. (Durrenmatt, 2005:83). But the path would not be stable for Durrenmatt, gradually his concerns passed Nietzsche and there is clear reason for this: Nietzsche did not see and experience the horrible and catastrophic war which Durrenmatt saw. Without any doubt, his path changed in 1956 when he wrote "the visit". Now Nietzschean superman has become a woman and she is not happy anymore. A woman as Superman who has muscular character. "When a woman has masculine virtues, you feel like running away; and when she doesn't have masculine virtues, she runs away herself." (Nietzsche, 2005:159). Without paying attention to above sentence, Durrenmatt Puts Claire in a virtue of superman. Claire only shows her femininity at the end of play. She does not cry. She does not escape from anything. Her kierkegaardian despair have more reflects than her Nietzschean happiness .now from four Nietzschean features we can only see three of them and the happiness has been gone . But the laws of nature are existed still and we can see this basis in characters of "The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi". Saint-Claude (to Mississippi): you have intelligence and I have power (Durrenmatt,?:64). Also Anastasia have the intelligence and minister have the power. In "The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi" all four characters of the play have power but their power has been broken between themselves.

In 1962 when Durrenmatt wrote "The Physicists" he takes away the power from his Superman who is Mobius. Now Nietzschean superman is in a mental institution and he cannot even move without having the permission of his nurse. He does not have any place to move. He does not have any purpose or intends and he even does not have the mood to sit besides other patients. from four features of Nietzschean superman, he only has one: creativity. At the end of this play you get this feeling that the last monologue of the play is like Durrenmatt's review of his path from Nietzsche to himself. He challenges Nietzschean superman and he claims that what can do a man who have only the creativity is to pretend to be a Psycho.

Mobius: I am Suleiman, the poor king Suleiman. Once I was very rich and god-believer. From my power all the other powerful people began to shudder. I was the Sultan of Freedom and justice. But my wisdom took off my fear of god and as I didn't fear from god anymore, my wisdom ruined my wealth. The lands which I was the king of them are ruined now. They are all vacant, like foggy desert ..... (Durrenmatt,19661:102).

Durrenmatt has vividly mentioned the "the death of God" theory and considers the "the death of God" as the reason of destruction of his character. I should also note that by "the death of God" Nietzsche didn't mean the death of transcendent God, he meant that the memory of God has been forgotten. As Lavine said:

"What Nietzsche meant by "the death of God" is the death of our memory of God. This is our belief in god which is dead now: at the end from the brutal attacks of Empiricists like David Hume and his followers, God was ruined" (Lavine, 2005:412).

Durrenmatt has the same idea of Lavine. His character whose once was like Romulus, Breeding chickens and had whatever he wants, is in despair now and as he knew his not crazy he should pretend that so he can have some peace away from people, the peace that Nietzsche hated it. People stay young only if their souls do not stretch out languidly and long for peace . . . Nothing is more foreign to us than that one-time desideratum of 'peacefulness of the soul', the



Christian desideratum; there is nothing we envy less than the moral cow and the fat happiness of good conscience. (Nietzsche, 2005:215).

Durrenmatt often used the Nietzschean concept of "Happiness" for the characters of his plays.

"Formula for my happiness: a yes, a no, a straight line, a goal . . ." (Nietzsche, 2005:161). In the Oxford Dictionary of Plays, under the title of "Dance of death" there is a statement by August Strindberg which says:

Edgar is a captain in the Swedish coast artillery. In all his life he is in constant hostility with his life, Alice. He has solid muscles and because of this illness he constantly goes to coma and come back to life again . . . . Durrenmatt used this play and creates a box game from it. A box game between Edgar and Alice. (Pettersson, 2002:100,101).

"Play Strindberg" is a play with all of Durrenmatt's thoughts which he has been dealing with from the start. These thoughts display not that much of Nietzsche's philosophy, as if "Play Strindberg" is the last paper of Durrenmatt's book. He makes a box game, a box game between those who have the claim of supermanity, those who always claim that they are the best but they are nothing. In somewhere in the play Alice wants to swagger him in this way:

Alice: If I did not marry you, I was still in theatre.

Edgar: what a lucky theatre!

Alice: I was a famous actress

Edgar: but critics didn't think that way

Alice: critics are all mean

Edgar: but they aren't fool (Durrenmatt, 2001:15)

In another part of the play, Edgar says:

Edgar: lean on me and you would never have any trouble, I rule in this island. The doctor is a fool obsequious person which will be shivers before me. In this island everybody have fear from me.

Alice: almost everyone (Durrenmatt, 2001:21)

The "almost everyone" here means no one. In this scene Edgar is talking proudly of himself, in front of Kurt, and Alice just humiliates him gradually. This is what Nietzschean superman does with each other. They just kill themselves.

Now Durrenmatt is somehow out of Nietzsche's path. Comparing to young Durrenmatt, the middle aged Durrenmatt does not have that much devotion to Nietzsche, to poet-philosopher.

"Nietzsche thought that there will be a crisis in which all the existed value systems with their loose bases and old judgments would collapse . . . . And after that there would be a re-birth" (Hollingdale, 2006: 217)

Durrenmatt still displays the world which is about to collapse and ruined, in cinema we can see this collapse in "Fight club" of David Fincher which is displayed in the last scene. It is the collapse of idea which we see in "Fight club" which is can be seen also in Durrenmatt way of thinking. As Nietzsche also said, after this collapse there would be another birth. Now Durrenmatt has independent ideas and thinking. His thinking follows Nietzsche's thinking but in different way: he routs Nietzsche's superman, he routs "happiness", he routs Nietzsche's "the death of God" just for one reason: the only thing that routs this Superman is nothing but himself.

Edgar: play something?

Alice: What?

Edgar: whatever you want.

Alice: Solveig Song

Edgar: Buyars migration

Alice: you don't have any interest to the songs which I like.

Edgar: you too.

Alice: so I won't play anything (Durrenmatt, 2001:9).

## CONCLUSION

What is completely clear is the great influence of Nietzsche on Durrenmatt's works and in this research I tried to show this impact. Durrenmatt criticized the human of his era by the help of Nietzsche's concepts on human. The human of his time is a man who has experienced war and needs help to stand up but there is nobody who can help him. By finding this approach in Nietzsche's philosophy, Durrenmatt creates a new world in his works which is no

longer under the influence of Nietzsche but himself. Durrenmatt became a superman and he ruled his own world. This world is not a Nietzschean's world, it belongs to no one but Durrenmatt himself.

As a great Swiss author who spoke German, German's world was very important to him. He has done such a great job in drama of the word which I believe doing research is necessarily needed to understand his world.

As a great philosopher, Nietzsche was a new theorist whose ideas have still great importance on certain schools of thought. The final result of this research is that although Durrenmatt was hugely under the influence of Nietzsche but at the end of his career he reached to an independent world of his own. For understanding this new word, extra researching is absolutely needed.

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MAINTAINING THE LOCAL DIVERGENCE IN THE GLOBAL CONVERGENCE IN SYLLABUS AND CURRICULUM DESIGN IN ELT

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## ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the reasons why curriculum and syllabus design processes are required to be *glocalized*, introducing “glocalization” as a means for curriculum developers in general and syllabus designers in particular to maintain the local divergence within the global convergence. The paper introduces some ways in which the traces of the globalization trends can be found in syllabus and curriculum design in English language teaching (ELT), discussing that slavishly following the methodologies in syllabus design as well as the models in curriculum development introduced as optimal by the West may turn to be counterproductive in many non-western countries. It is suggested that to have an efficient curriculum, curriculum designers should strive to change the direction of pure globalization to glocalization which connotes consideration and awareness of the local needs, values, socio-cultural norms, and learning styles of the learners in a specific country, race, and culture and localization on the basis of some principles. The implications of glocalization for syllabus design and curriculum development have also been mentioned in the form of ten principles functioning as a framework within which curriculum and syllabus designers can make their local decisions.

**KEY WORDS:** curriculum models, Curriculum development, Syllabus design, Globalization, Glocalization

## INTRODUCTION

“Globalization” which is one of the main characteristics of the modern society is predominantly a loan from the science of economics (Sifakis & Sougari, 2003). It has, however, found its way into other sciences to convey the way the western societies are culturally, politically, and ideologically inviting the other societies to convergence.

Posing the globalization versus localization dilemma, in this paper, we will argue that resisting globalization in all aspect is not productive. Believing that being a radical supporter of either localization or globalization will lead us to irresolution, and a never-ending struggle, we would like to discuss some ways of providing fair circumstances and efficient syllabus for English learners in non-western parts of the world; globalization should be interwoven with localization. Considering the fact that in many countries, the learners' expectations about what fine materials have to offer, their learning styles, and their socio-cultural norms are not in line with those of the people in Western countries, it appears that following globalization slavishly without striving to maintain local identities is unrewarding. The following discussions include some of the ways globalization is mirrored in syllabus and curriculum design. The paper also embeds why and how *glocalization*- thinking globally and acting locally- can be opted for and employed both to reconcile the conflict between those who defend globalization and those who criticize it, and to provide efficient curriculum for learners of English in various countries.

### *Globalization and English Language learning*

Viewing globalization as the process that promotes surpassing national boundaries and increasing the interconnectedness and instant global communication among nations, Gray (2002) has (“has” should be deleted) identified three main ways in which globalization has affected the use of, and consequently the demand for learning English language in the world. He viewed the rise of international and intercontinental corporations, the headquarters of which are mostly located in English speaking countries as the first impetus for the spread of English language in the world, since typically, English is used as a lingua franca and the language of legal documentation in ventures

between such corporations and companies in non-English-speaking countries. This, in turn, motivates a large number of people to learn English for business purposes.

Besides, the fact that English language is employed in academic international conferences, banking, law and human rights, information technology has also increased the demand for learning English. The fact that English language is the prevailing language in the Internet communication is yet another factor contributing to the increase in the demand for learning English (Gray, 2002).

However, the increase in demands for learning English is merely one aspect in which ELT has been affected by globalization, and the impact of globalization on ELT is multifaceted.

Globalization, as defined by Giddens (1990), is a bidirectional dynamic process that necessitates local happenings to shape, and to be shaped by events occurring many miles away. However, what is mostly seen in practice is a unidirectional flow of norms from the western countries to the non-Western countries – locals – that are expected to adopt the standards dictated by the Western global.

Defined as above, globalization in ELT can be viewed as the movement advocating teaching and learning methods, values, strategies, and materials, as well as syllabus and curriculum design approaches proposed, favored, and supported by the ELT scholars in English speaking countries which form the inner circle, as termed by Kachru (1985), in other parts of the globe forming the outer and the expanding circles (Kachru, *ibid*). Such perception of globalization also affects the views about what *the correct* pronunciation, and the *proper* accent are, and whether or not native speakers teachers should be preferred to non-native ones. However, since, defined in this way globalization in ELT has too broad a scope to be discussed in a single paper, it is the impact of globalization in EFL syllabus and curriculum design that has been the focal point of discussion in the present paper.

#### ***Globalization or Localization Dilemma: "Glocalization" to the Rescue***

In order to thrive within the mainstream of globalization, it is required to think globally, and act locally as the slogan of the globalization suggests (Marquis & Battilana, 2009). Adopting the either embrace or oppose globalization view does not appear to bear fruit, as the merits of thinking globally and benefiting the globally designed and well-tried principles cannot be totally ignored. Opting for one of these two mainstreams, those who share Wilk's (1999) opinion by believing in the deep chasm and irreconcilable contrast between globalism and localism, are likely to limit their scope; consequently, they are fated to be deprived of the advantages the other trend has to offer. In even worse cases, viewing these two processes as mutually exclusive, they will be left with no solution, only to find themselves in a never-ending struggle, the result of which is to benefit from and to have faith in neither of the processes.

Since permitting oneself to be slavishly ruled by the dominating globalization trend in its pure sense has been proved counterproductive (Kim, 2010), what should be done is to take into account the factors like national cultural values, local needs and resources, during the cross-continental, cross-national, and cross-cultural course of globalization. Awareness of the existence of such factors and considering them while employing the techniques that are accepted globally, and hence, taken for granted by many, can assist the theoreticians, as well as the practitioners to redirect the process into that of glocalization. Modeled on Japanese word *dochakuka*, meaning adapting farming technique to one's own local condition, the term glocalization denotes the need for global products and processes to be tailored to suit the local cultures (Khondker, 2004). Thus, glocalization not only encourages acknowledging the effects of local factors, but also makes many of the desirable local particularities salient (Marquis & Battilana, 2009). Preserving local divergence, in terms of values, needs, the means to accomplish those needs, as well as the available expertise is not an easy task to do when individuals on top of the societies and nations are day by day overshadowed by the seductive globalization. Nonetheless, given the fact that some actions and choices cannot be understood and justified outside the cultural and historical frameworks in which such choices and actions are embedded, the maintenance of such context-specific divergence seems vital to the survival and development of organizations and systems. Unless attempts are made to preserve those local aspects that are vital to the survival of systems, globalization is prone to have serious differentiating effect in the non-Western countries rather than the unifying ones, "dividing each national community from within by generation, by class, by political stance, and so forth" (Kim 2010, p. 7367). In other words, globalization and the convergence of cultures, methodologies, approaches, and ideologies bear a number of adverse consequences for individuals who do not reside in the Western part of the globe that comprises the norm providing "inner circle" as termed by Kachru (1985).

Syllabus design and curriculum development are not exceptions to this rule. Both curriculum developers and syllabus designers are required to show sensitivity to and awareness of the local needs, localized solutions, and the aforementioned merits of glocalization. In other words, failing to acknowledge the role of the dominant learning style and habits, cultural values, power relationship within classrooms shaped by societal factors, as well as the local

needs and resources while designing a curriculum and syllabus, either nation-wide or institute-wide, the designers are prone to gain less than desired results.

### **GLOBALIZATION AND GLOCALIZATION IN SYLLABUS DESIGN: SELECTION FROM THE GLOBAL OR DESIGNING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LOCAL?**

For the reasons mentioned above, glocalization, the localization of the global principles, has been considered desirable when preparing educational programs and designing syllabi. However, to realize how such glocalization is feasible in syllabus design process, we need first to define globalization in the context of designing syllabi, so that we can discuss how the globalization process can be directed towards glocalization.

When globalization is discussed with respect to syllabus design in English language teaching and learning, various interpretations of globalization and its impact on various aspects in language teaching and learning are conceivable. Such interpretations may range from a desired convergence in pronunciation, accent, and lexis to be incorporated in materials and to be prescribed to the end-users of English materials, to a wider scope including the preferred convergence in learning styles, approaches to, and theories of learning and teaching, and approaches to syllabus design recommend to syllabus designers in various parts of the world. In other words, some limit their scope by viewing globalization in syllabus design as a matter of advocating similar content to be found in the materials (e. g. Honey, 1997), while others regard it as a movement aiming at uniting the syllabus design policies and to diminishing the local diversities in the routes taken in the syllabus design process. Adopting the latter view and the broader scope, in this paper, we aim to investigate the process of globalization in syllabus design in ELT with respect to the fact that decision makers in the language programs are encouraged to choose from the existing approaches to syllabus design and types of syllabi rather than design a syllabus totally geared to their local, contextual needs. In other words, in this paper, globalization in syllabus design in ELT is viewed as a process in which syllabus designers in various parts of the globe adopt one of the existing approaches to syllabus design and choose from the types of syllabi identifiable in the literature (e.g. structural, topical, lexical, task-based...), rather than glocally design a syllabus totally geared to their local, contextual needs.

A trend that might be noticeable in the present-day syllabus design is a global invitation to and inclination towards task-based syllabus. The task-based syllabus, which puts the emphasis on “means or processes” rather than “ends or products”, has gained considerable popularity (Crookes & Gass, 1993; Long & Crookes, 1992, 1993; Nunan, 1989; Prabhu, 1987; White, 1988; Willis, 1996). It owes, largely, the augmentation in its popularity to Prabhu's (1987) and Breen's (1984) works. In fact, this type of approach to syllabus design has been so welcomed by the decision makers and language program planners that it has successfully imported the concept of “language task” as a vital element to the curriculum (Nunan 1993, P. 66), and a basic unit for language syllabus design (Williams & Burden 1997:168).

Such an approach to syllabus design has been claimed to be compatible with research findings on language learning (Hatch 1983; Ellis, 2003a, Larsen-Freeman & Long 1991). It has also been alleged that task-based syllabus strives to incorporate classroom research findings when designing materials and methodologies (Chaudron, 1988). Such claims should, however, be considered with caution since the research the findings of which have been used to render task-based syllabi legitimate, like the ones mentioned above, has mostly been conducted in the Western settings. Thus, questioning the value of such an approach to syllabus design in other settings seems plausible.

Despite the prevailing urge among the scholars to adopt *task* as the unit of syllabus analysis (Crookes & Gass, 1993; Long & Crookes, 1992, 1993; Nunan, 1989; Prabhu, 1987; White, 1988, 1993) stemming from the popular opinion that the selection of tasks as the unit of syllabus can lead to a coherent approach to program design (Long & Crookes, 1993), adequate evidence proving that such a syllabus is equally productive in all settings and for learners with different learning styles and from different cultures is still lacking. While we do not mean to question the potential of tasks in curriculums, we would like to argue that prior to accepting it as a solution to all contexts and problems, practitioners are needed to gather empirically backed evidence that drives from their own local context. This concern is echoed in the ideas of Ellis (2003b, p. 331) who viewed tasks as “an Anglo-American creation” and stated that there are hidden socio-political messages of task-based teaching which could result in hesitations in and resistance to the application of the task-based syllabus in non-Western contexts. Ellis (ibid) argued that both the content of the tasks available in language teaching materials and the classroom practices necessitated by such a



method of teaching, such as the imposition of the participant role on teachers, might not always be congruent with non-Anglo-American cultural norms.

Demonstrating awareness of the adverse consequences of pure globalization and believing that the process of globalization should be redirected to that of glocalization will take us merely half the way. What is still lacking is the knowledge of how to implement glocalization in syllabus design. One further question, yet, is whether mixed syllabi (Brown, 1995) can be the proper means to glocalizing syllabus design.

As it was discussed earlier, globalization and in this case choosing from the options offered by scholars whose theories and ideas are likely to come from their experiences in their own educational contexts does not appear to be the right thing to do. Given the diversity in learning styles of the learners across cultures (Oxford, 1996), and considering the fact that not all learners in various contexts have the same needs and learning objectives, it cannot be claimed that one type of syllabus in its full-fledged form can cater for the needs of a group of learners in a language program. Therefore, better ways are required to be sought to empower the curriculum developers and syllabus designers to maintain and appreciate the local diversities within the process of syllabus design.

Brown (1995) proposes the mixed syllabuses, in which two or more types of syllabuses are incorporated to form one syllabus. Brown (ibid) viewed syllabuses like situational-topical syllabuses as belonging to this category of syllabuses.

In practice, this can be done in two main ways: incorporating different types of syllabuses in each lesson/unit all throughout the course, or allocating each lesson/unit to one specific type of syllabus. Nonetheless, neither of the aforementioned techniques is seemingly prolific in all contexts. One may also argue that juxtaposition of the syllabi which are rooted in very different theories and have been designed to trigger different types of competences do not result in a coherent syllabus.

A third solution is, thus, required. We would like to argue that, in order to preserve the local identity and cater for the local needs of the learners in a language program, glocalization needs to be reflected in the new plan for the design of the syllabus. Such a plan can be informed by the existing syllabi. It, however, should be anchored on the findings of the research carried out in the local context. As the aim of glocalization is not to totally deny the value of global convergence but to garnish it with the preservation of the local divergence when considered necessary, such a plan can be led by both local needs analysis and global considerations. The key point here is to study the similar contexts closely to gain insights with the potentials of the possible solutions. Affinities in racial, cultural, and political background among various groups of learners can particularly assist and guide the designers in the process of forming a new type of syllabus specially tailored to the needs and goals of a certain cohort of learners. In such a process, the global principles of syllabus design can be investigated and then incorporated in the local. In what has been referred to as the "post method area" in ELT (Kumaravadivelu, 1994), principled eclecticism in all aspects of educational programming seems to be more productive than blindly following the dictated rules that mostly come in a package. To apply glocalization in curriculum and syllabus design, the globally well-grounded principles are required to be applied with a local touch informed by the local studies.

While to some, mostly American, scholars, syllabus design and curriculum development can be used interchangeably (Hall, 2011), in the British usage, syllabus design is not identical to curriculum development and is defined as a specification of the content of a course of instruction, listing what will be taught and tested (Richards, 2001), and providing a rationale for how the content should be selected and ordered (Brown, 1995). The latter group of scholars refers to curriculum development as the totality of content to be taught as well as the goals to be realized and achieved within one educational system (White, 1988). Adopting the latter view, in this paper, we consider curriculum development to have a broader scope and to entail syllabus design, viewing the syllabus as the part of a curriculum related to the decisions pertaining to the content of a program. The principles of curriculum design to be discussed below, therefore, will entail the principles pertaining to syllabus design. Those principles related to the selection and sequencing of the content can be regarded as those of syllabus design. The rest of this paper is dedicated to naming and briefly discussing the ten global principles that possess the potential of functioning as a framework within which curriculum and syllabus designers can make their local decisions in order to have a "glocal" model of curriculum development.



**GLOCALIZATION AS APPLIED WITH REFERENCE TO GLOBALLY ACCEPTED COMPONENTS IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

In the present paper, the globalization in the curriculum development has been investigated with respect to persuading the curriculum developers and practitioners to adopt one of the existing curriculum models available in the literature (e.g. the model proposed by Nation and Macalister (2010), or the one proposed by Graves (2000), to name only two). However, as with the process of syllabus design, some problems lie in such pure globalization in curriculum development. As far as the theoretical aspects are concerned, none of the available models seems to offer a complete picture of the process of curriculum design. Moreover, they impose the number and/or sequences of stages in curriculum development to the local designers. Nation and Macalister's (2010) model, for instance, which is one of the most recently designed ones, appears to rely heavily on the role of objectives and goals in curriculum development as it's designers have located the "Goals" in the center of the inner circle in their "Mercedes" symbol shaped model. This over-reliance may lead the developers to adopt an "objective" or "outcome-oriented" approach, as opposed to a "process" one (Littlewood, 2008). An out-come based approach to designing a curriculum is not devoid of drawbacks as practitioners and teachers are prone to be restricted by the objectives set at a superficial level or narrow specification (McKimm, 2009). This can, in turn result in the loss of valuable learning experiences and a plethora of learning opportunities otherwise available through allowing the natural course of interaction between learners and the teacher and among learners themselves. Moreover, the model by Nation and Macalister (2010) does not incorporate polity as defined by Rodgers (1989) as political concerns in a broad sense. Their model, in addition, appears to be based on a separationistic view of phenomena involved in curriculum development. In other words, it might be elicited that the dynamism, nonlinearity, and complexity of EFL curriculum development, stemming partly from the complexity of language learning (Larsen-Freeman, 1997) and partly from the complex nature of curriculum development (Doll, 2008), are not core issues.

Other models are not without their problems either. The models proposed by Murdoch (1989) and Graves (2000), as other instances, do not allow the practitioners to start the process of curriculum development with reference to the requirements of the circumstances. Moreover, Murdoch's (1989) model lacks some of the vital components of curriculum such as the assessment of the learners' performance and learning outcome, and the evaluation of the curriculum itself.

Therefore, as discussed earlier, what is required is localizing the global and opting for glocalization in the process of curriculum development. One way to achieve such glocalization is to apply the global principles, not the models themselves, and to build them into a glocal model designed based on the local expertise, resources, goals, and needs. In other words, to replace globalization by glocalization in curriculum development, we should no longer propose and prescribe models but encourage acting locally within frameworks drawing on global principles.

To do so, the first step would be to identify the global principles and to justify the reasons why they have been considered indispensable and valuable to the glocal model of curriculum. What is listed below as the curriculum development principles is merely a tentative list that can be added into as the result of a more thorough literature review and/or exploring the findings of locally conducted studies. The ten principles discussed below embed nine globally accepted components or sub-processes of curriculum development along with a suggestion of how their mutual interplay should be recognized by and reflected in glocally-designed models. Needless to say, a thorough and comprehensive discussion of the factors discussed within each principle does not fit into one paper. Thus, it has been tried to introduce the concepts and mention their significance in curriculum models briefly, so that the local designers can apply them according to the requirements of their specific context. The readers can refer to the cited sources to gain more information on the discussed concepts.

***Principle One: A Curriculum Based Theory***

The first principle is basing the curriculum on a sound theory of learning and teaching and, adequately stating the theoretical basis of the decisions made in various processes involved in curriculum design. Such a theory should be guided by research in second language teaching/learning (Nation & Macalister, 2010) and should inform the decisions made in various components of glocally designed curriculum models. Not only does making use of the research findings make the connection between the research and theory of language learning and the practice of designing in a curriculum (Nation & Macalister, *ibid*) but it also provides a defensible ground for decision makers in different stages throughout the process of designing an educational program. Nation and Macalister (2010) use the

term "stating the principles about content and sequencing, format and presentation, and monitoring and assessment", while, Graves (2000) calls it "articulating the beliefs about the language, the social context, language and learning, and teaching" to refer to this globally accepted component of a curriculum model.

***Principle Two: Comprehensive Needs Analysis***

"Needs Analysis" is another component which is critical for any curriculum to thrive as it not only can function as the basis for determining goals and objectives (Brown, 1995), but also can change the unidirectional mostly top down direction of curriculum design into a more egalitarian direction in which the learners' voice is heard, if done properly.

As defined by Brown (1995, p. 35), "in general terms, needs analysis refers to the activities involved in gathering information that will serve as the basis for developing a curriculum that will meet the learning needs of a particular group of students". The second principle can be stated as including an ongoing needs analysis into the process of curriculum development. In language learning curriculum development, by the analysis of needs, we mean a thorough investigation of both present (Richerich & Chancerel, 1977) and the target (Munby, 1978) situation of the learners which includes the investigation of what the learners need to use the language and function efficiently, what they lack, and what they wish to learn (Hutchitson & Waters, 1987). Such exploration of needs should also include both the "language" needs (Brown, 1995) of the learners and the linguistic behavior they need to acquire to communicate effectively in the target language (language needs) and the psychological affective "learning" needs (Brown, *ibid*). Such comprehensive assessment of needs should also embed the gathering data about the learners' felt needs – the needs the learners believe they have- as well as their perceived needs – what the teachers and other stakeholder consider as the learners' need (Berwick, 1989; Brindley, 1989) which are context sensitive. The strategies the learners should be equipped with to handle the process of learning, their learning needs (Hutchitson & Waters, 1987) should not be ignored either. An effective glocal curriculum model should also include the statement of the criteria and methods for evaluating the means used to analyze the various types of needs mentioned above.

***Principle Three: Realistically Defined Goals***

Thirdly, curriculums and educational programs are required to be directed towards sound, realistic, and well-grounded goals. Program goals are "general statements concerning desirable and attainable program purposes and aims" based on needs (Brown, 1995, p. 71). Although, in fact, he confines his definition of program goals to the ones derived from analysis of the perceived needs of the learners, we believe a well-carried out needs analysis which takes into account the subjective and felt needs of the learners as well as the perceived ones (Berwick, 1989; Brindley, 1989) can help the designer set more realistic goals. A comprehensive analysis can shed lights on the properness of the set goals with respect to the local milieu. In Iran, for instance, realistically viewed, language learning goals might be far from acquiring a native like oral proficiency, as the context necessitates mastery in written skills. Iranian English learners mostly require English to be to continue their studies; therefore, they need to be equipped with the skills to write papers and take part in international conferences.

The important fact that should not be ignored is the emergent nature of the goals, and thus, goal setting needs to be done dynamically in the process of designing a curriculum. Properly set goals can assist the designers to define and set objectives leading them towards the aim of the program.

***Principle Four: Attention to the Milieu of the Curriculum***

The forth principle pertains to incorporating a thorough analysis of the context in which the curriculum is to be applied. Such a comprehensive analysis should include not only consideration of the factors related to the situation in which the course will be used and determination of how the course should take account of them, but also consideration of factors associated with the participants (e.g. learners, and teachers) (Nation & Macalister, 2010). Crucial to the effectiveness of this stage, is the way learning situation is defined and the factors taken into consideration when analyzing the situation. Not only should the analysis go beyond the physical setting, but also it should include all the contextual factors affecting the decisions made in different stages of designing a program. Merely analyzing the resources offered or the limitations imposed by the context (such as the time and materials available, the teachers' skill and competence, the technological facilities available in classes, and the learners' motivation and interest) does not offer a complete picture to the curriculum designer. Other contextual factors such as the political and economical status of the participants, "polity" (Rodgers, 1989), and the role the society plays in shaping the participants' beliefs about teaching or learning certain subjects, and the philosophical values of the participants including their moral and religious ideas should also be considered while developing a curriculum. Such polity related factors play a crucial role in determining the content of the materials and course books, in particular. However, in real ELT practices, unfortunately, the local social milieu is ignored and the materials designed for other contexts, often quite with quite different socio-political values are applied in the curriculum. In Iran, for instance, the

New Interchange Series, by Richards et al. (1990), which have been originally written for English learners in Far East, has been among commonly used ELT course books in the past decades. This reflects the lack of, and the need for, a comprehensive analysis of the environment that embeds consideration of polity in present day Iran.

***Principle Five: Ongoing Evaluation in Coherent Curriculum***

The fifth principle, which actually makes the ongoing needs analysis and goal setting possible, is the inclusion of ongoing evaluation in the model. The output of such dynamic evaluation can feed into all the components of the model and function as a feedback loop. In a curriculum, both the process of curriculum design and the performance of the learners can be evaluated. Some scholars (e.g. Graves, 2000) do not differentiate between these two and use the term "evaluation" to refer to both. Nevertheless, some others (e.g. Nation & Macalister, 2010) use the term "assessment" to refer to the evaluation of the learning outcome and the term "evaluation" to talk about the evaluation of the program itself. Here, we would like to argue that both forms of evaluation carried out dynamically by both insiders (e.g. the instructors themselves) and outsiders (e.g. groups of educational inspectors) are essential for a program to flourish. In fact, what is desired is what Weir and Roberts (1994) have termed "a broad approach to evaluation" which encompasses both the accountability of the program, through monitoring the learners' improvement, and the development of the curriculum design process to improve the educational quality of the target program. Especially when it comes to globalization and EFL curriculum, the success of the curriculum might be evaluated with reference to the local milieu and the polity factors inherent in the educational system in general. Thus, a comprehensive local learners' needs analysis along with consideration of the socio-politico-economical factors in the local learning environment, which shape the stakeholders' expectation from, and definition of, a successful curriculum, can inform development of evaluation criteria.

***Principle Six: Dynamic Evaluation of Materials***

The sixth principle pertains to developing and evaluating materials to be employed in the program. In other words, for the curriculum to fulfill its aim to meet the expectations and the needs of its participants, careful development and dynamic evaluation of the materials is an imperative. Globalization advocates the export of the ELT materials, produced in the inner circle, to expanding circle countries. Even though intended for educational purposes, coursebooks are "highly wrought cultural constructs and carriers of cultural messages" (Gray, 2002, p.151). Therefore, in countries in the outer and the expanding circles (Kachru, 1985), prior to the adoption of ELT materials produced in, and mostly congruent with cultural norms and values of, inner circle countries (Kachru, *ibid*), careful evaluation is required. This reflects the needs for studies to provide empirically backed evidence on the appropriateness of such materials in the local milieu, and the decisions taken concerning the selection of the materials should be informed by such local studies.

Besides, local studies are needed to investigate whether the materials not designed locally can equip the learners with the knowledge necessitated by the local milieu. One of the very few studies carried out in Iran to address this issue is the one conducted by Soleimani and Dabbaghi (2012). According to the results of their study that was aimed at evaluating the efficiency of the New Interchange course books, by Richards et al. (1990), in terms of providing sufficient pragmatic input for a cohort of upper intermediate level Iranian English learners, the books could provide enough pragmatic input for language learners to deal with their basic communicative needs.

It is also worth noting that this principle does not totally exclude the possibility of adopting or adapting the existing course books or other materials. It, on the other hand, emphasizes the necessity and the importance of considering the potential role materials play in the success of a curriculum and the requirement of incorporating materials evaluation into the globally designed models of curriculum development.

***Principle Seven: Teacher Training Programs to Make Professional Curriculum***

Given that poor recruitment decisions and procedures can easily neutralize the possible desirable impact of a well-designed course and the huge role the teachers play in the success or failure of a program, we believe "dynamic Teacher Training Programs" should be included in any model. In other words, incorporating teacher-training programs is one of the global principles that can be integrated into global models. Teacher training has been considered a curriculum inside the curriculum (Johnson, 1989). Therefore, the seventh principle pertains to the incorporation of teacher training programs into curriculum development process. The teacher training programs can lead to the professional development of the teachers provided that they are motivated by the everyday challenges

EFL teachers in the local milieu are confronted with. If the training programs fail to interest the teachers and engage them mentally, they are unlikely to lead to any improvement. Thus, the content of such courses and programs needs to be decided with reference to a comprehensive analysis of the local teaching environment. Besides, the solutions proposed in these training sessions should also be congruent with the local realities, constraints, resources, and socio-cultural factors. Therefore, unless the decisions made in this stage are directed by the output of teaching and learning environment analysis stages, little change is expected to occur.

***Principle Eight: Glocally-Centered Content Selection***

In this paper, the proper selection and coherent sequencing of content is identified as the eighth principle in curriculum development. Viewing making reasonable, well-justified decisions about content as one of the crucial parts of curriculum design, Nation and Macalister (2010) have argued that poor content selection results in poor learning despite excellent teaching and learning effort. What is important, and global, with respect to the selection and sequencing of the content is the necessity of making sure that the decisions made at this stage are informed and in line with the output of other stages of design and can be defended and justified. The output of the needs analysis and environment analysis stages can provide the designers with valuable information based on which the glocal content can be selected. To be of use and motivating, content should be chosen with reference to the learners' socio-political, cultural, and ideological norms and values, and thus, the content promoting familial and social values incongruent with the religious and cultural norms in Iranian, for instance, would not be welcomed among Iranian English learners. Designers can maintain local diversities within this principle as long as the above-mentioned condition pertaining to the content selection is satisfied.

***Principle Nine: Proper Presentation of the Lessons***

The next, and the ninth, principle is deciding upon the proper format and presentation of the lessons. The format of the lessons should be commensurate with the locally shaped learning style and interest of the learners in a way that is attractive and encourages investment. To make globally informed decisions at this stage of curriculum design, the designers of the language programs can benefit from the ten principles proposed by Nation and Macalister (2010). To them, an optimal presentation of the lesson necessitates keeping the learners motivated, including an even balance of meaning-focused input, language-focused learning, and meaning focused output and fluency activities. It also requires providing interesting comprehensible input, providing activities aimed at increasing the learners' fluency. Nation and Macalister (ibid) have also argued that encouraging the learners to produce the language, including language focused learning activities, spending as much time as possible on the learning tasks, promoting the depth of processing, presenting the course in a way that the learners have the most favorable attitudes towards the language, language users, the teacher's skill in teaching the language, and their chance of success in learning the language positively affect the presentation of the lesson. Finally providing the opportunity for learners to work with the learning material in ways that most suits their individual learning style has also been known to lead to optimal presentation of the lesson (Nation & Macalister, 2010). By the same token, the principles of language teaching put forward by Ellis (2005) can provide guidelines for the curriculum developers at this stage.

***Principle Ten: The Interplay between the Components in the Glocal Model***

Finally, the tenth principle is the bi-directionality principle which can be gained through the recognizing the interplay between and the mutual effect of the components mentioned in the above principles when designing a glocal curriculum model. The glocal models of curriculum should be designed in such a way that all participants including syllabus designers, material designers, teachers, learners, and even other stakeholders like publishers, parents... can have the opportunity to be heard and taken into accounts. The glocal models should be designed in a way that they are not referred to as "top down" and unidirectional. This can be achieved through adding a feedback loop among all the components of the model, so that the output of each component can feed into and inform the decisions made in other stages or components of curriculum design. Another way to prevent a unidirectional decision making process in glocally-designed curriculums would be to avoid prescribing any pre-specified order in the selection and application of abovementioned stages.

Having named and briefly discussed the above principles, we should also note that the order of the presentation of principles in this paper by no means reflects their importance, and, as it was mentioned earlier, the above list can be added to as a result of further studies in educational program development.

**CONCLUSION**

In the present paper, it was argued that considering the diverse consequences of globalization in syllabus design process for people in different parts of the world (Schaeffer, 2003), striving for altering globalization process into the glocalization seems plausible in such countries.

Besides, such glocalization is required in the process of curriculum development and syllabus design. This can be achieved through a sort of principled eclecticism in the form of ten principles namely: basing the curriculum on a defensible theory of learning and teaching, incorporating needs analysis to the model, analyzing the socio-economic as well as the political context, setting goals and objectives, incorporating ongoing learner and program evaluation, including teacher training programs, dynamically developing and evaluating the materials, properly selecting and organizing the content, properly presenting of the lessons, and considering the interplay of various components of the model. The aforementioned principles can serve as a framework within which curriculum and syllabus designers can maintain the local divergence. It is argued that as long as the global principles are not violated, local diversities can be maintained in curriculum development so that the outcome would be a "glocally designed" model.

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Besides putting forward an account of the empirical facts of language, a theory that carves to illuminate language from a biolinguistic perspective should aspire to an elegant corporation of linguistic phenomena with other known cognitive capacities and about the essence of human brain architecture. That is, biolinguistics seeks to shed light on the specifically biological nature of human language focusing on five foundational questions: (1) what are the properties of the language phenotype? (2) How does language ability grow and mature in individuals? (3) How is language put to use? (4) How is language implemented in the brain? (5) What evolutionary processes led to the emergence of language? In an endeavor to address the above longstanding questions and touch upon the current issues in biolinguistics, the present study basically focuses on genetics, modern genomics, and minimalism, while raising challenges for future research.

**KEYWORDS:** Biolinguistics, language phenotype, genetics, genomics, minimalism.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Modern Biolinguistics aroused as a result of the marriage between biologists and linguists half a century ago. Amongst the distinguished scholars who contributed to the field one can mention initially Eric Lenneberg and Noam Chomsky, and later Salvador Luria exemplified in Lenneberg's *Biological Foundations of Language* (Lenneberg, 1967). In 1974, at an MIT international meeting, called "Biolinguistics", Piattelli-Palmarini launched this interdisciplinary field further. Nowadays, new books and papers scrutinizing the domain have loomed up (e.g. Jenkins 2000, 2004) and Givon (2002) who has pondered the domain from a new window. What is more, worldwide conferences in consonant with the launch of a topical journal, *Biolinguistics* and foundation of an international network on Biolinguistics.

Amongst the many questions brought up from the biological point of view one stands out. That is, the extent to which the declared principles of language are exceptional to this cognitive system. Besides, an even more foundational question in biolinguistics is how much of language can be given a principled explanation. The effort to

investigate such questions happened to be called the “**Minimalist Program**” recently. Answers to these questions can shed light on not only the nature and functioning of organisms but also on probing their growth and evolution.

As the co-founder of modern evolutionary theory, Alfred Russel Wallace, asserts, language faculty is one constituent of what he called “man” intellectual and moral nature”. In opposition to Darwin, the other founder of evolutionary theory, Wallace claims that human faculties cannot be illuminated just in terms of variation and natural selection, but desires other sources as well including gravitation, cohesion and others at the absence of which the material universe cannot abide.

It is an agreed upon fact that, putting the human intellectual capacity aside, the faculty of language is crucial to it. Based on the paleoanthropologist Ian Tattersall, the invention of language provokes the blossoming of human capacity in the evolutionary record. However, the question of language evolution should be dealt with through inspecting the organizations of disparate precursors into the faculty of language, conceivably arising from a modest genetic event that tended towards an essential innovation.

Salvador Luria in consonant with Francois Jacob were the compelling advocates of the view that uniqueness of language doesn’t lie in its role as a communicative system as it does in symbolizing and evoking cognitive images and mental construction of accomplishable worlds.

In the same vein, in biolinguistic domain, from the very outset the view of “**modular nature of learning**” was adopted. In the sense that in all animals, there exists a kind of instinct to learn in specific ways. However, this modular view doesn’t predetermine that the elements of the module are unprecedented to it.

According to Chomsky (2004), regarding the language faculty as a biological system, three factors interfere with the growth of language in the individual:

**Genetic Factors:** The identical principles across species, e.g. UG. The rationale behind children’s language acquisition uniformly at the same level of complexity.

**Experience:** The origin of variation within a narrow range.

**Principles** not unique to the faculty of language.

In line with the aforementioned statements I will elaborate on some related concepts in detail and introduce some new ones.

## **BIOLINGUISTIC REHABILITATION**

It is the nature of each novel science to enjoy a temporary period of popularity. The same proves to be true for biolinguistics. However, there are many a factors that contribute to the revival of this field in the world of science. What these two periods (before biolinguistic revival and after that) share is addressing some foundational questions:

- a. What accounts for linguistic competence in humans?
- b. How does this capability cultivate in the individual?
- c. How is this competence put to use?
- d. How is this qualification accomplished in brain structures?
- e. How did this competence evolve in human species?

Current biolinguistics is still involved with these questions. However, it advantages from recent improvements in different areas of linguistics and biology. Those breakthroughs are supposed to triumph over the old hindrances at the outset of biolinguistic appearance. Let us now delineate some of these ameliorations concisely.

Conceivably, the most fundamental progress in biolinguistics has been the exploration of the FOXP2 gene and subsequently, its interactome. Apparently, FOXP2 is not the language gene. Nonetheless, this gene in consonant with the ones with which it interacts, accommodate the concrete example of the genetic basis of language (Lenneberg 1967). It is where biolinguistics connects with the fervid genomic research in biology. FOXP2 experiments with other species yielded the result that in deed, there are many parallelisms between human speech and birdsong at various levels. Furthermore, the discovery of FOXP2 is apt to illuminate disparate linguistic deficits and disorders.

Comparably noticeable in the reappearance of biolinguistic concerns has been the outlook modification in comparative psychology. That is, based on Chomsky, Hauser, and Fitch (2002), investigation into the essence of human language may yield more rewarding outcomes if one differentiates between faculty of the language in the narrow sense (FLN), that which is unique to language and a faculty of language in the broad sense (FLB) that which is not.

In the same vein of utmost importance is an advanced synthesis in biology, the one that resonates strongly with the anti-behaviorist; innatist stance in Chomskyan linguistics.

A forth factor that expedited the reemergence of biolinguistics is the so-called problem of “**interdisciplinarity**” in the context of language, particularly in the context of neurolinguistics. To put it in other words, the two disciplines of linguistics and neuroscience are deprived of a common level of representation at which to esquire into processes and fundamental elements. This successively, averts the formulation of biologically grounded categorical descriptions of language processes in the brain.

The fifth factor that contributed to the renaissance of biolinguistics is the formulation of a “minimalist program” in theoretical linguistics.

In the words of Chomsky (2007):

At the time [pretty much throughout the history of generative grammar], it seemed that FL must be rich, highly structured, and substantially unique.  
[...] Throughout the modern history of generative grammar, the problem of determining the character of FL has been approached “from top down”:  
How much must be attributed to UG to account for language acquisition?  
The M[inimalist] P[rogram] seeks to approach the problem “from bottom up”: How little can be attributed to UG while still accounting for the variety of I-languages attained.

Minimalist ideas if cultivated firmly, can wind up the governing of isolationism in theoretical linguistics. It promises to reconcile linguistics with other branches of cognitive (and biological) sciences.

## **THE GENETICS AND EVOLUTION OF LANGUAGE: PROMISES AND PITFALLS OF MODERN GENOMICS**

Genetics and evolutionary analysis have benefited from comparative approach. In the sense that, through inspecting other species, parallel affinities and clashes have been instituted. Nevertheless, in the case of language this approach doesn't seem to bear any fruit as no other animal species appears to be endowed with language phenotype. As a result, what are the achievements of classical and modern genomics about language's genetic and evolutionary properties? This question has been addressed from two novel lines of research.

One approach seeks to investigate the systematic heritability of the subcomponents of language via twin studies, uncovering a closer coincidence between syntax and sound structure (phonological) abilities and fine motor control than syntax and the lexicon. Put it differently, for some very particular syntactic ability, they may be able to identify a candidate gene set correlated to this trait.

Another line of research has opted for a more explicit genetic and functional inspection of language. This was the discovery of FOXP2 gene by researchers as the one supposedly linked to language ((Hurst et al. 1990, Vargha-Khadem et al. 1995, Fisher et al. 1998, Lai et al. 2000, Lai et al. 2001, Vargha-Khadem et al. 2005). Initially, this exploration enjoyed a magnificent popularity as the one genetic window into human language development and evolution. It was hoped that, this gene could be implemented in animal studies beside human ones. In spite of this, such discovery didn't prove to be fruitful in the central computational aspects of human language. Based on Vernes et al (2006), a study on a family with language disorder revealed that FOXP2 affects the regions involved in general planning of fine motor output, sensorimotor integration, and multimodal sensory processing, as opposed to circuitry controlling mouth and lower face movements.

Furthermore, FOXP2 discovery is regarded as the starting point of modern evolutionary biolinguistics. There are two functional amino acid differences between FOXP2 and its variant in chimpanzees. Consequently, such accelerated evolutionary change led to human segregation from other species, and hence the emergence of language in homo sapiens.

The researchers' understanding of FOXP2 has also undergone a change. From a one phenotype picture, FOXP2 has turned into a molecular network (Fisher and Schorff in press). In addition, the relation between FOXP2 and procedural memory has been confirmed (Ullman and Pierport, 2005). But as researchers assert, such ever-increasing understandings of FOXP2 are just advances not departure. Since they serve as foundations for future genomics research about language. While there is a long path to pave for identifying the causal links of this gene to language impairment, its exploration provides an extremely worthwhile example of how to overcome the obstacles on the way of resolving the complicated human language phenotype.

### **MINIMALISM AND MODERN BIOLINGUISTICS**

Minimalism as proposed by Noam Chomsky lately endeavors to study the internal architecture of the mind in general and language in particular. In other words, it seeks to investigate how much of language can be given a principled explanation. Looking through the steps followed on the way to constituent structures creation, one finds out that it is where biolinguistics links to minimalist program. In the sense that, firstly, lexical items are merged externally; next due to internal merge, movement is generated and constituent structures are formulated. Making use of this mechanism, people are able to combine words into infinite strings. If all this are on the right track, then biolinguistics enquires to ascertain the principles underlying mental recursion.

According to the perspective of several linguists (Boeckx 2006, Hornstein 2009, among others), the minimalist program brings about an opportunity to address “granularity mismatch” proposed by Poeppel. That is, as mentioned previously, different levels of representations used in linguistics and neural science lead to vague metaphors linking brain structures to linguistic components. In addition, it is in line with the new themes in biology like optimization, specificity and laws of form based on Fodor and Piattelli-Palmarini (2010). It adopts a bottom-up approach to cognitive faculties like the new comparative psychology.

Moreover, nowadays, one central theme stands out in minimalism. In the sense that, there is a basic asymmetry between the way syntax subserves the sound and the meaning components it interfaces with (Chomsky 2007, 2008; Berwick and Chomsky 2011).

Based on Eric Reuland (2011), before the emergence of minimalist program, the linguistic principles were too language specific. They were considered as firmly modular in nature, hence, not welcoming the interaction between language, biology, and cognition until the advent of minimalism.

Summarizing, the minimalist program, framed within the circumferences of linguistic theory in line with other forces, resulted in the reemergence of biolinguistic concerns. In addition, as Jackendoff (2002) claims, minimalism guarantees to stop the “separation” of linguistics from other branches of cognitive (and biological) sciences.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The breakthroughs witnessed in theoretical linguistics, comparative ethology, genetics, and evolution of language adds to our knowledge of biological foundation of language and paves the ground to upcoming discoveries in biolinguistics. Needless to say, the recent achievements and theories will be modified in the light of ongoing research. The significance of this review lies in its representation of how the study of language can converge with other scientific disciplines like genetics and biology.

Put differently, linguists can contribute to biolinguistics a great deal: they can provide the elements that researchers from other fields must seek at the neural and genetic levels. However, it is only feasible if the linguists are willing to turn into genuine biolinguists.

Although minimalist program has proved to be illuminating in biolinguistics, further neurobiological experiments are necessary. Moreover, due to the promises and pitfalls of modern genomics, additional lines of research are required in order to discern the pathways from genes to linguistic phenomena. Addressing justified questions and creating

hypotheses that are testable on diverse populations would lead us to more thorough understanding of the biology of human language.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

As Dobzhansky (1973) puts forward, nothing in language makes sense except in the context of the biology of grammar. The renowned figures like Chomsky and Lenneberg have initiated the effort to institutionalize linguistics as a natural science and instantiate the biolinguistics enterprise as a title for disparate courses and workshops. Due to this, the researchers in the field hope that the term biolinguistics will make its way into institutional categories.

In spite of many problems of communication and misunderstandings arisen by the uniquely interdisciplinary essence of biolinguistics, there is a possibility of calling for a growing community of scientists of diverse backgrounds. For instance, linguists, evolutionary biologists, molecular biologists, neuroscientists, anthropologists, psychologists, computer scientists, (language or speech and hearing) pathologists, and so on. This way, through cooperation and mutual respect hurdles can be mastered and satisfactory outcomes will be achieved.

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**FROM THE WORDS TO THE WORLD: EFFECTS OF PARENTS' EDUCATION AND THEIR INCOME  
ON CHILDREN'S EARLY PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE AND SOCIALIZATION**

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**ABSTRACT**

Human beings are recognized as social beings, communicating with each other in order to fulfill their needs. To become social members with specific abilities, children acquire some pragmatic skills from early childhood; in other words, they become socialized first by direct and indirect helps of their caregivers and later on by learning from their environment. So caregivers who are mostly children's parents play an important role at the first stages of children's pragmatic development and their socialization. In this study, the pragmatic development of 26 children (4 to 5 years old boys and girls) was analyzed by means of a pragmatic profile especially prepared for every day communication skills of children by Dewart and Summers (1995). The information needed for the profile along with the family's educational and economical information was gathered through several interviews with each child's parent. The obtained results showed that parents' educational level and also the family's economical condition can be among the factors that affect the socialization process and the pragmatic competence.

**KEYWORDS:** Pragmatic skill; Socialization; Culture; First language acquisition

**INTRODUCTION**

Social life and social communication are among the features which distinguish human beings from other types of creatures. The key factor that enables humans to communicate is the ability to talk and to interact with each other. In fact all normal people learn at least one language and use that language to communicate with others in order to convey their intended meanings or to fulfill their needs. Using linguistic abilities for communicational purposes in social contexts is related to the field of pragmatics.

Yule (1996) defined pragmatics as the study of the relationships between linguistic forms and the users of those forms. In the Handbook of Pragmatics, Horn and Ward (2004) mentioned joint attention, common ground, convention and contrast, speech acts, speaker intentions, taking account of the addressee, taking turns and politeness as eight main aspects of pragmatic development. They claimed that by age six children have acquired considerable knowledge about how to use the language and they can also make inferences from what other people do or do not say. Mainly parents are those who guide children and help them to acquire these pragmatic skills. According to Verschueren (1999), pragmatics studies mainly focus on people's use of language which is either in form of behavior or in form of social action. He further described pragmatics as a general socio-cultural phenomenon. Therefore pragmatic development and socialization are two related factors and one cannot ignore one concept while considering the role of the other.

From the first moment that a child enters the first social group (i.e. the family) until s/he grows up and communicate with different people in different situations, s/he learns how to interact with other people; i.e. how to become socialized. So the process of pragmatic development and socialization start from early childhood. When children learn a language, not only do they learn the semantic or syntactic features of that language but also they learn how to use that language in different situations. As it is mentioned in Bavin (2009), pragmatic competence consists of more than one skill because the language is also used for more than one purpose. Considering this fact, Bavin continues to

say that although acquiring pragmatic competences is difficult, children learn them by helps of their caregivers whether in school or in the family. In Bavin's words: "it can be said that caregivers 'socialize' language" (p.348).

Blum Kulka (1997) defined pragmatic socialization as a way in which children are socialized to use language in context in an appropriate social and cultural way. When children start learning the basic pragmatic competence, they become able to participate in early social communication with their caregivers and little by little they expand their acquisition by means of some communication processes. According to Ochs (1990), these socialization processes are divided into explicit and implicit types. The former type is a process in which the social norms of the society are directly taught by the caregivers while in the latter process the children learn how to use the language by observing and interacting with other society members.

As Fletcher and Macwhinney (1995) cited from Ochs and Schieffelin, although cultural factors can be neglected in grammatical learning of a language, no one can deny the important role of culture in the process of socialization and in children pragmatic development. While according to Universal Grammar theory of language learning, all children have the capacity to learn a language, and they do so in similar stages regardless of their culture, the case is not the same for pragmatic development or for the process of socialization. Culture of each country is considered as a unique characteristic of that country and even within one society there are families with different sub-cultures. Therefore children are prepared in different family environments to acquire pragmatic skills and become ready to engage in social activities.

As Bavin (2009) mentioned, pragmatic skills play an important role in children's lives and since some aspects of preschoolers and young children pragmatic behavior are indicator of their future achievements, therefore the researchers hoped that the answers to the research questions of this study may shed light on the cases dealing with pragmatic developments in the process of first language acquisition.

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Based on Li's (2012) studies, most of the pragmatic socialization research has been on child's developmental pragmatics and the interactions between normal or abnormal children and their caregivers. The following are some of these studies along with their findings:

In a study by Vasques et al. (2013), four and six year old children were observed to discover whether they use their pragmatic competence to learn from others and produce valid labels for novel objects or not. They observed that four year olds used this pattern for quality maxims while six year olds follow the learning pattern for both quality and relation maxims. The researchers found that children use the pragmatic history of other people when they are faced with new information. This study reveals the important role of people who are training young children (i.e. caregivers, teachers, family, etc.) especially in the process of novel word learning.

Regarding pragmatic comprehension, a study was conducted by Loukusa et al. (2007) within a relevance theory framework. The results of the study showed that age of children had a direct relationship with their ability to use contextual information in comprehension which in turn supported the processing model which is suggested by relevance theory. As it is revealed from these studies, caregivers and age are among the effective factor that may result in different pragmatic competence outcomes. The above mentioned studies and many studies of these types observed the subjects, children or the caregivers, for a rather short period of time, since learning the pragmatic skills is an ongoing process, the findings of longitudinal studies are of great value. The following information is taken from the observation of two researchers who study the socio-cultural aspects of pragmatic development:

In 'Dinner Talk' by Blum Kulka (1997), a six year old longitudinal cross-cultural study was performed in which cultural patterns of socialization used by American vs. Israeli vs. American-Israeli family members at dinner time were observed and analysed. The observation revealed that during the dinner conversations, meta-pragmatic comments used by the parents had effective role in the process of children's language acquisition as well as their pragmatic development. Another fact revealed in the study was that the utilization of pragmatic aspects, such as turn taking, by family members was representative of the society they lived in and the dominant culture of that society. Finally by comparing the socialization process of the three groups of the study and also by considering other cultural and linguistic factors, the researcher made so many conclusions among which was the fact that parents listen more to their children while dinner talk compared to their listening to their own parents. This shows that almost in all cultures and countries, parents play an important role in children's socialization.

In another study by Ochs (1988) which is presented in a book entitled 'Culture and Language Development', children in Samoa were observed and interviewed very closely. Ochs believed that language acquisition and the socialization process occur along each other; therefore, she observed and examined both cognitive and socio-cultural features of language acquisition. Ochs found out that language could socialize children and also by living in a society child learn to use the language. Based on her results and findings, socialization and language acquisition were two related concepts and one could not hold to one while ignoring the other.

As it was shown in the available literature, parents play an important role in children's socialization and also their pragmatic competence process. In this study the family's educational and economical situation will be considered in details to see whether they can affect children's socialization or pragmatic competence process.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Considering the importance of caregivers' role in the process of children's socialization and pragmatic competence, this study takes economical situation and educational level as two from many cultural setting developers (Hood et al., 2005) and tries to answer the following research questions through a qualitative research method:

- What are the effects of parents' education on children's pragmatic competence and socialization?
- What are the effects of a family's economical conditions on children's pragmatic competence and socialization?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

There is some evidence from the studies of Dale (1991) and Camaioni et al. (1991), that parents have reliable and valid information about the process of the language development of their children. The participants of this study were the parents of 26 children (15 girls, 11 boys, who were 4 to 5 years old). To choose the participants of the study, first about 8 kindergartens in Shiraz were selected. From among these kindergartens, three of them accepted to take part in this research and allowed the researchers to interview with teachers and children's parents with the condition to remain anonymous. From the children attending these three kindergartens, only 29 parents accepted to take part in the research and 3 of them changed their mind at the time of the interview and considered the questions too personal to be answered. While parents' answers to interview questions were used to evaluate children's pragmatic competence and socialization level, teachers' interviews aimed on confirming the answers provided by children's parents.

### ***Instruments***

The instrument used in this study in order to gather data and then to analyze the data, was an interview taken from the revised edition manual of 'The Pragmatics Profile of Everyday Communication Skills in Children' prepared by Dewart and Summers (1995) (Appendix A). All of the questions of this interview were first asked from children's parents and then were asked from children's teachers to make sure that parents' answers were accurate. The questions were all translated into Persian by the researchers and to make sure that the translated version was as reliable as the original version, it was double-checked by two English teachers. In cases that there was a difference between researchers' translation and English teachers' translation, revisions were made.

The profile's questions focus on three major aspects of the development of pragmatics: development of communicative functions, child's response to communication and child's participation in interaction and conversation. The profile's information about the major developments of children between 4 to 5 years old in each of the above mentioned areas is presented at the end of the study (Appendix B).

Dewart and Summers (1995) also highlighted that the profile adopts a descriptive, qualitative approach. They added that reliability and validity of the profile are approached in terms of the use of the profile with an individual child (i.e. reliability is the consistency of an interviewee's responses and can be checked by asking a similar question again at a later time while validity can be obtained by obtaining information from additional sources, for example checking the answers with the child's teacher).

### ***Procedure of the study***

At the beginning of the study, 8 kindergartens were randomly selected for the study. Only the principals of three of them agreed to cooperate in this study. After getting permission from the principals, the researchers talked with the teachers of children between 4 to 5 years old and asked them to give the research participation request letters to children's parents. In the request letter, the aim and the process of the study and also the estimated time of the interview for parents were explained in detail and parents were assured that their personal information (e.g. name, phone number, number of children, etc.) would be kept confidential. 29 parents from the three kindergartens accepted to participate in the study. Then based on their free time, dates of interviews were specified and announced to them.

At the time of the interview, the pragmatic profile questions that were all translated to simple Persian along with some questions about the parents' educational level and their average income were asked from each child parent. The parents were provided with relevant examples to better understand the purpose of the questions. 3 parents refused to answer the interview questions at the time of the study and claimed that they prefer not to talk about their personal issues. Gathering the information from 26 parents took about four months due to kindergarten special programs on special occasions, the delayed arrival of parents and therefore shortage of time, bad weather and etc.; then the parents' answers to questions of interview were checked with the relevant teachers to avoid the probable inaccurate emotional answers of parents.

After gathering the necessary information, the pragmatic profile's milestones of the relevant age were used to determine the characteristics of each child's pragmatic competence. Then the children's profile results and answers to the 46 questions of the interview were grouped based on parents' educational level (with or without university degree) and parents' average monthly income (below 1 million tomans, above 1 million tomans), respectively. Then the findings of each group were presented in a qualitative form and were illustrated separately in different tables. The results of the obtained data are presented in the following.

## **RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS**

As it was mentioned earlier, the profile used in this study adopts a descriptive, qualitative approach. Regarding this fact, the parents' answers to interview questions were analyzed and then considering the milestone for the development of pragmatics for children of 4 to 5 years old (Appendix B), the following results were observed:

According to the data obtained from the interviews, in case of communicative functions almost all the children had shown an acceptable pragmatic competence in fifteen out of eighteen categories. The categories in which the pragmatic skills were not fully acquired were: rejecting, greeting on arrival and on departure and commenting. In case of rejecting, 19 (out of 26) of the children reject the undesirable situation or thing in a rather polite way while in 7 cases shouting and crying were reported. In case of greeting on arrival, 2 of the children had the habit of hiding and in case of greeting on departure, one of the children had the habit of crying. Regarding commenting on disappearance, 6 of the children were reported to start crying or nagging.

To compare children based on their parents' educational level, first an educational categorization was made (Table 1).

*Table 1: Categorization of children based on their parents' education*

	Total Number of children	Educated parents	Educated father	Educated mother
number of children	26	21 (80.76%)	2 (7.69%)	3 (11.53%)

This categorization consisted of 3 groups:

1. 21 Children with both parents educated in university
2. 2 children with their father educated and their mother with no university education
3. 3 children with their mother educated and their father with no university education

From among the 7 children who did not acquire 'rejecting' skill, 3 were from the first group, 2 from the second and finally 2 were from the third group (Table 2).

*Table 2: Frequency of children who do not acquire communicative functions*

			Total Number of children	Educated parents	Educated father	Educated mother
Children problem	with	rejecting	7 (26.92%)	3 (11.53%)	2 (7.69%)	2 (7.69%)
Children problem	with	greeting	On arrival	2 (7.69%)	1 (3.84%)	1 (3.84%)
			On departure	1 (3.84%)	1 (3.84%)	-
Children problem	with	commenting	6 (23.07%)	3 (11.53%)	2 (7.69%)	1(3.84%)

One of the children who did not acquire greeting on arrival was from the second group while the other one was from the first group. The only child who cried on departure was from the first group.

Both children of the second group, one of the third group and three children of the first group had difficulty with commenting on disappearance.

Considering the abilities in 'response to communication' category, all the abilities were acquired by the children except 'responding to no and negotiation'. 9 of the children did not have the proper pragmatic skill of their age to respond to no. It was reported that crying and repetition of the same word or phrase were used instead of the proper action. Both children of the second group along with 7 of the first group were those who need further instructions for responding to 'no' and for negotiation (Table 3).

*Table 3: Frequency of children who do not acquire response to communication*

	Total Number of children	Educated parents	Educated father	Educated mother
Children with responding to no and negotiation problem	9 (34.61%)	7 (26.92%)	2 (7.69%)	-

In case of interaction and conversation, it seemed that conversational breakdown was the only problematic category (Table 4).

*Table 4: Frequency of children who do not acquire interaction and conversation*

	Total Number of children	Educated parents	Educated father	Educated mother
Children with conversational breakdown problem	4 (15.38%)	1 (3.84%)	2 (7.69%)	1 (3.84%)

One child of the first group, both of the second group and one child of the third group were reported to have no concentration and therefore they were not able to fully understand the conversation.

Considering the contextual variation category, the differences aroused in pragmatic skills related to peer- interaction and books as a context for communication (Table 5).

*Table 5: Frequency of children who do not acquire contextual variation*

	Total Number of children	Educated parents	Educated father	Educated mother
Children with peer interaction problem	8 (30.76%)	6 (11.53%)	1 (3.84%)	1 (3.84%)
Children with problem of accepting books as a context for communication	2 (7.69%)	-	2 (7.69%)	-

The only children who did not show an interest in books were the two children of group two. In case of peer interaction, the data revealed that 5 of the children tried to be dominant (one from the second and 4 from the first group), two of them preferred to play alone (one from the first and one from the third group), 4 of them joined with enjoyment (one from second and 3 from the first group), 3 of them suggested an activity (from the first group), one of them clung to an adult (from the first group) and 11 of them play alongside others (2 from the third group and 9 from the first group)

To compare the children from an economical view point, the children were divided into three groups (Table 6):

*Table 6: Categorizing children based on their parents' income*

	Total Number of children	Average income of 1 million toman	Average income more than 1 million toman	Average income more than 2 million toman
Children with educated parents	21	16 (61.53%)	7 (26.92%)	1 (3.84%)
Children with educated father	2	-	-	2 (7.69%)
Children with educated mother	3	2 (7.69%)	-	-

- Living in a family with less than the monthly average income of 1 million toman (N=16).
- Living in a family with more than the monthly average income of 1 million toman (N= 7).
- Living in a family with more than the monthly average income of 2 million toman (N= 3).

It was revealed that both children of the former second group along with one of the first groups' child were placed in the economical group c. Children who were in group b, were all in the former first group. And finally group a consisted of two children of the former third group in addition to the rest of the first group's children.

## CONCLUSION

### *Discussion and conclusion*

Similar to the findings of Vasques et al. (2013) and Loukusa et al. (2007), the results of this study also indicated that children learn from their caregivers and people around them. In the present study, children with educated parents, especially with educated mothers, showed better results in pragmatic competence and also in becoming socialized. Therefore similar to Vasques et al. and Loukusa et al.'s findings, it was revealed that children are affected by their caregivers and people who are around them (i.e. their parents).

Along with the results of the study by Blum Kulka (1997), the results of the present study highlighted that the role of parents in children's socialization cannot be neglected. The present study also showed that factors such as education or economical situation of parents, as the most important caregivers, would affect children's early pragmatic competence and also their socialization.

An in depth analysis of the data gathered from this study showed that the two children who were in families with the most monthly income and who had an educated father and an uneducated mother, had less acquired the pragmatic competence and the socialization skills of their age. The common characteristic of these children was the use of crying in any undesirable condition.

Just one of the children who had an educated mother along with an uneducated father showed difficulties in more than two pragmatic skills. This child was placed in economical group a.

The pragmatic competence difficulties of the rest of the children were in case of just one or two pragmatic skills.

Considering the results of the study the following conclusions were made:

- Parents' education, especially mother's education, can affect children's socialization process and also children's pragmatic competence.
- Children who live in families with better economical conditions, learn the pragmatic skills related to tolerance of unwanted situations later than those children of their age who live in families with average economical conditions.

## LIMITATION OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The participants of this study were parents and teachers of 26 children of 4 to 5 years old in Shiraz, Iran. In this study only the effects educational level and economical situation of parents on the socialization process and pragmatic



competence of children were observed. It is recommended that the future studies consider the role of other parents' characteristics on children's pragmatic competence. It is also recommended that future studies analyze a greater number of subjects if possible.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A. A brief list of interview questions taken from the pragmatic competence profile

Questions of Communicative functions		
1		How does (child's name) usually get your attention? ( To Self)
2	Attention Directing	If you and (child's name) were going along the street or walking in a park and (he/she) saw something interesting, what would (child's name) be likely to do? (To Other things)
3		If you were in the kitchen and (child's name) saw something (he/she) wanted to eat that was out of reach, how would (he/she) let you know? (Request for Object)
4	Requesting	How does (child's name) let you know if (he/she) wants to be picked up? (Request for Action)
5		If (child's name) needs your help, for example, if (he/she) was on a toy on wheels and got stuck, or needed straps undone to get out of the buggy, what is (he/she) likely to do? (Request for Assistance)
6		If you were bouncing (child's name) up and down on your lap and (he/she) wanted you to do it again, how would (he/she) let you know? (Request for Recurrence)

7		If (child's name) notices something new at home, how does (he/she) ask about it? (Request for Information)
8	Rejecting	If (child's name) is at the table and you are giving (him/her) some food that (he/she) doesn't want, what is (he/she) likely to do?
9	Greeting	If a familiar person comes to your home, how does (child's name) usually react? (Greeting on Arrival)
10		What does (child's name) do when someone is going away? (Greeting on Departure)
11		If (child's name) is enjoying something, how does (he/she) show it? (Pleasure)
12	Self-Expression and Self-Assertion	If (child's name) is hurt or upset by something, how does (he/she) let you know? (Upset)
13		If you are trying to help (child's name) do something like get dressed and (he/she) wants to do it without help, how does (he/she) let you know? (Asserting Independence)
14	Naming	When (child's name) identifies something (he/she) recognizes, how does (he/she) give it a name?
15		If you are putting things away and (child's name) sees something (he/she) is interested in, what type of comment might (he/she) make? (Comment on Object)
16	Commenting	If (child's name) notices that something has gone from where (he/she) would usually expect it to be, what sort of comment would (he/she) make? (Comment on Disappearance)
17	Giving Information	If something happened while you weren't around (for example, something got broken, someone got hurt), how would (child's name) let you know about it?
<b>Questions of Response to communication</b>		
18	Gaining Child's Attention	If you want to get (child's name) attention, how do you do it?
19	Interest in Interaction	If you are sitting close to (child's name) and talking to (him/her) how does (he/she) generally respond?
20	Understanding of Gesture	If you point to something you want (child's name) to look at, what does (he/she) usually do?
21	Acknowledgement of Previous Utterance	When you are speaking to (child's name), how do you know that (he/she) realizes that you are speaking to (him/her)?
22		If you give (child's name) an instruction, such as 'Go and get your shoes', then how does (he/she) respond? (Response to Request for Action)
23	Understanding of Speaker's Intentions	If you ask (child's name) for information, for example, 'What have you been doing?' how is (he/she) likely to respond? (Response to Request for Information)
24	Anticipation	How does (child's name) react to something like 'Round and round the garden' or a favorite action-rhyme?
25	Responding with Amusement	What kind of things make (child's name) laugh?
26		a) If you have to say 'no' to (child's name) how does (he/she) usually respond?
27	Response to 'No' and Negotiation	b) If you say 'in a minute' how does (child's name) respond?
<b>Questions of Interaction and conversation</b>		
28	Participating in Interaction	When you and (child's name) are playing or interacting together, how does (he/she) take part?
29	Initiating Interaction	If (child's name) ever starts up a conversation or a little game with you, how does (he/she) do it?
30	Maintaining an Interaction or Conversation	When a conversation or game gets started, how does it keep going?

31	Conversational Breakdown	When a conversation between you and (child's name) gets into difficulties, what is the usual reason for it?
32	Conversational Repair	If (child's name) is trying to tell you something and you haven't understood, what does (he/she) do about it?
33	Request for Clarification	If (child's name) doesn't understand something that is said to (him/her), how does (he/she) show it?
34	Terminating an interaction	How does an interaction between you usually end?
35	Overhearing Conversation	How does (child's name) react to conversations that (he/she) overhears?
36	Joining a Conversation	If (child's name) ever tries to join in a conversation that other people are having, how does (he/she) go about it?
<b>Questions of Contextual Variation</b>		
37	Person	Are there people that (child's name) likes to be with or talk to more than others?
38	Situation	Are there situations in which (child's name) is more communicative?
39	Time	At what times of day is (child's name) most likely to be communicative?
40		a) What things does (child's name) like to talk about?
41	Topic	b) Are there times when (child's name) will ask questions about abstract ideas such as God, death, how the world began? What sort of things does he/she discuss?
42	Books as a Context for Communication	How does (child's name) respond to books?
43	Use of Language in Play	When (child's name) is playing, what kind of talking goes on or what kind of sounds is (he/she) making?
44	Peer Interaction	When (child's name) is with other children, how does (he/she) take part?
45	Compliance with Social Conventions	To what extent does (child's name) show an awareness of needing to be polite and fitting in with social conventions to do with talking?

Appendix B. The development of pragmatics for children of four to seven years.

Children characteristics	
Communicative functions	<p>Learns to express intentions in a variety of forms to fit the communicative needs of the listener and politeness constraints.</p> <p>Begins to use indirect requests.</p> <p>Uses language to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gain and hold adults' attention, for example 'know what?'</li> <li>• give information;</li> <li>• seek information from other people;</li> <li>• give instructions to peers;</li> <li>• state rules;</li> <li>• negotiate and bargain;</li> <li>• express a range of feelings/emotions;</li> <li>• state beliefs and opinions;</li> <li>• taunt and threaten.</li> </ul> <p>Begins to tell jokes (punch line often misses the point).</p> <p>Uses narrative to report experiences, complain about others' actions and to tell simple stories.</p>

Response communication	to	Understanding of indirect requests developing. Beginning to rely less on context for understanding, for example, in classroom. Requests clarification when hasn't understood. Takes instructions from peers and responds to their questions. Becomes able to treat language as an object of analysis and to use language to talk about language (metalinguistic awareness). Enjoys jokes but doesn't fully understand play on words/puns. Listens to extended stories from books and can read simple ones.
Interaction conversation	and	Can initiate conversation by verbal strategies, for example, vocative + comment or question. Becomes more able to communicate with strangers. With peers, talk may alternate between private talk to self and talk to partner. Can participate in pretend conversations and switch from one speech code to another when taking stereotypical roles in play. Will respond to things overheard in other people's conversations. Rapid change of conversational topics. When child is not understood, tends to repeat without modification.

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**A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF MOTIVATION AND ATTITUDE ON SPEAKING IN ACADEMIC  
CONTEXTS: A CASE OF IRANIAN EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aimed at investigating the interlaced relationship between attitude and motivation on the one hand, and speaking within the context of Iranian EFL university students on the other hand. The participants of the study consisted of 65 freshmen majoring in English Translation, English Literature, and Electrical Engineering at the University of Isfahan. Three instruments were used to gather the needed data: Oxford Placement Test (OPT) for homogenizing the students in terms of their English proficiency level, two subscales of AMTB (Attitudes and Motivation Test Battery) designed by Gardner (1985), to measure students' motivation and attitude toward learning English, a kind of indirect interview with the 65 chosen students in order to assess their speaking ability. Analysis of the results revealed that there were significant differences between the students with positive attitude and those with negative attitude regarding their speaking ability; namely, the students with positive attitude had higher speaking scores than the students with negative attitude. Further analyses showed that there was a significant difference between the speaking scores of integratively-motivated students and the instrumentally-motivated ones. That is, integratively-motivated students scored higher than instrumentally-motivated ones on speaking test. Moreover, gender did not make any differences amongst EFL learners as far as attitude, motivation, and speaking ability were concerned.

**KEY WORDS:** attitude, motivation, speaking ability

**INTRODUCTION**

It is taken for granted that English is important due to its international nature. This conclusion logically leads to the acceptance that English should be taught around the world. The universal nature of this trend can be seen in all industrial and developing countries. Asia is not an exception, as English is a required topic of study in high schools and is often used in university entrance exams. It is acknowledged in academic circles that English training is a prerequisite for a nation's industrial development. There are far more non-native English learners than native speakers-the underlying assumption that English has become an international language. In being an international language, the motivations for studying English may be quite different in the international context of a person joining a native English speaking culture.

If we take a look at the situation in Iran, English is taught as a foreign language from guidance school. That is, at least six years of compulsory EFL instruction for all students. With all the hard work we put into teaching English, many of the students will not be able to acquire the skills they need to communicate. Nakanishi (2002) believes that motivation and attitude to learn have something to do with this situation. He states that motivation and attitude determine the degree of effort one puts into foreign/second language learning. The more motivation one may have, the more efforts s/he tends to put into learning the language, and this could lead to success. Moreover, a learner with positive attitude would outperform the one with negative attitude as far as learning a foreign/second language is concerned.

Identifying factors that influence student learning in the classroom continues to be an important objective for teachers and administrators at all levels. Many researchers have investigated a multitude of instructional variables that impact students' motivation and attitude to learn. There is considerable interest today in the notions of

motivation and attitude to learn a foreign/second language, but it was not always this way. In 1956 when R.C. Gardner and Wallace Lambert began their research, it was generally agreed that learning another language involved intelligence and verbal ability. Concepts like attitude, motivation and anxiety were not considered to be important at all. Today, much of this has changed, and one sometimes gets the impression that affective variables are the only important factors involved in foreign/second language learning.

Most researchers and educators would agree that motivation and attitude are very important, if not the most important factors in language learning, without which even gifted individuals cannot accomplish long-term goals, whatever the curricula and whoever the teacher may be. Thus the concepts language learning motivation and attitude have been accepted by teachers and researchers as the two of the key factors influencing the rate and success of foreign/second language learning, often compensating for deficiencies in language aptitude and learning. It could be said that all other factors involved in L2 acquisition presuppose motivation and attitude to some extent.

In fact, motivational strategy for learning is an important aspect of students' academic performance in the classroom, especially for the college students. Despite much excellent research during the last two decades there is still a great deal we do not know about motivation and attitude. Many researchers consider motivation and attitude as the main elements that determine success in developing a foreign/second language, believing that these factors determine the extent of active, personal involvement in a foreign/second language learning.

For language learners, motivation and attitude are important factors for the vital reason that the more motivated learners will always surpass the unmotivated learners in performance and outcome. Furthermore, the learners with positive attitude will also outperform those with negative attitude regarding foreign/second language learning. People have an innate need to be competent and effective in their work, and motivation and attitude are key factors in helping them reach their goals. Moreover, learners who leave full-time language study motivated about their English communicative ability are more likely to continue acquiring the language, hence becoming lifelong learners.

The study of affect has thus become increasingly popular since 1980s and from then on it has been considered in the language teaching/testing domain. Affective variables related to second or foreign language learning include emotions, self-esteem, risk-taking, inhibition, anxiety, empathy, extroversion and introversion, motivation and attitude. However, in this study two of the affective variables; that is, motivation and attitude have been focused on and their relationship with speaking in a foreign language is investigated.

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Recent research has shown special interest in determining what distinguishes successful from unsuccessful language learners, particularly their use of modifiable second language (L2) variables, in the hope that such information can be passed onto less successful ones so as to improve their learning abilities. Prominent among these modifiable L2 variables are L2 motivation and attitude toward the second / foreign language. There has been a great deal of research on the role of attitudes and motivation in second language learning. The overall findings show that positive attitudes and motivation are related to success in second language learning (Gardner1985). Some would argue that in the relationship between attitude and second language acquisition, it cannot be definitely proved that one causes the other, but only that the sometime occur together (Skehan, 1989). Evidence does exist, however, that points to a casual relationship. After presenting evidence from Oller and other researchers who criticize Gardner's claims of an attitude/acquisition connection, Skehan (1989) goes on to argue that the weight of evidence seems to be on Gardner's side that attitude and motivation truly do appear to be casual factors of SLA based on empirical data. Gass and Slinker (2001) agree: "It makes sense that individuals who are motivated will learn another language faster and to a great degree. Furthermore, numerous studies have provided statistical evidence that indicates motivation is a predictor of language-learning success" (p. 349). They then proceed to validate attitude as one cause of motivation (Gass & Slinker, 2001). Gardner (1991) presents a logical argument as well- individually, the above-listed correlations of specific behaviors in language learning and attitude could probably be explained, but, taken as a whole, they constitute a formidable case for a causal relationship (p.251).

According to Noels (2001), it is generally accepted that motivation to learn an L2 is at least as important as language aptitude for successful acquisition of such language. An example is a study conducted by Kiss & Nikolov (2005) in which the researchers explored the relationship between the aptitude scores of 419 Hungarian primary-school children on English proficiency tests and a designated measure of their motivation. Based on multiple -regression analysis, the results showed that the variable of language aptitude was responsible for over 20% of the variation in English language performance, while motivation was also significant as it explained about 8% of the variation. As such, the researchers suggested that student's motivation can be raised by improving the quality of the teaching and



learning situation. Noels et al. (2001) explains that scholarly interest in L2 motivation can be traced back well over forty years. Since then, several models of second language motivation have been proposed; each extending our understanding of L2 motivation in its own way. In his influential definition of language learning motivation, Gardner (as cited by Noels et al., 2001) maintains that motivations basically the extent of the effort an individual is willing to exert to achieve the goal of learning a language because of a desire to do so and of favorable attitudes toward such language. Noels et al. (2000) states that several goals, or orientations, have been proposed, but two have received the most empirical attention. The first is *instrumental* orientation, which tackles reasons for language learning that emphasize the pragmatic consequences of L2 learning, such as job-hunting or improving one's education. The second is *integrative* orientation, which refers to reasons relating to interaction and communication with members of the second language community for social-emotional purposes.

According to Dörnyei (2005), the first important point to emphasize when exploring the field of second language motivation is that learning an L2 is different from learning other school subjects. The author points out that while an L2 is a "learnable" subject in that discrete elements of the communication code - grammatical rules and lexical items - can be taught explicitly, it is socially and culturally bound; making language learning a deeply social event that requires the incorporation of a wide range of elements of the L2 culture. For example, El-Dash & Busnardo (2001) presents the results of a study of stereotypical perceptions of 164 Brazilian university students studying diverse foreign languages. Socio-cultural stereotypes and motivation were investigated using "bipolar adjective" scales paired in a Likert-type format. The results showed that the students tended to have relatively positive stereotypes of the native speakers of the L2 and were, in most cases, motivated to learn it.

Yet another study which emphasizes the effect of the L2 culture on learner motivation and progress is that of Sasaki (2004). Using multiple quantitative and qualitative data sources, this study investigated possible changes in Japanese students' writing development. The results revealed that over the observation period, all of the students were able to improve their English proficiency, composition, and fluency; and that the experiences of the ESL overseas students were quite helpful in improving their writing strategy, motivating them to write better compositions. Masgoret & Gardner (2003), undertook a metaanalysis of investigating the relationship of L2 achievement to the socio-educational model. In addition, these relationships were examined using the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery and other motivational measures. According to the authors, the results showed that, "the correlations between achievement and motivation are uniformly higher than those between achievement and integrativeness, attitudes toward the learning situation, integrative orientation, or instrumental orientation.

In the same vein, Dörnyei (2005) mentions a recent extension of motivation research. Having a considerable theoretical and practical potential, this extension covers the study the L2 speakers' willingness to engage in the act of L2 communication. As MacIntyre et al. (2002) explain, all individuals display consistent tendencies in their predisposition toward, or away from, communicating, when one is given the choice. Because of its nature, the willingness to communicate (WTC) construct seems to lend itself to being used to examine specific learning contents. Yashima (2002) has used the WTC construct and Gardner's socio-educational model to investigate the relationship between L2 learning and L2 communication variables among Japanese learners of English. Using structural equation modeling analysis, the author reached the conclusion that motivation appears to affect self-confidence in L2 communication which, in turn, may lead to a willingness to communicate in the target L2.

Furthermore, Csizer and Dörnyei(2005) conclude attitude as an important factor in language learning in their study on the internal structure of language learning motivation and its relationship with language choice and learning effort, which was put forward previously as the Process Model of L2 Motivation (Dörnyei and Ottó 1999). There is a great amount of research on attitudes towards different languages (Marley 2004, Balcazar 2003, Villa 2002, Malallah 2000), towards different varieties of English and other languages (Karstadt 2002, Zhou 2002, Assaf 2001). Different aspects of language attitudes have also been studied such as the relation between attitudes and motivation (Donitsa-Schmidt et al.2004, Bernaus et al. 2004, Williams et al.2002), the relationship between attitudes and learning strategies (Gan 2004), the relationship between attitude and level of achievement (Graham 2004), beliefs and attitudes about target language use, first language use and anxiety (Levine 2003), attitudes to language and language learning at secondary and tertiary levels (Yang and Lau 2003), attitudes towards English- language usage among peers (White 2002), the relationship between negative attitudes towards non-native speakers and poor comprehension of those speakers (Lindemann 2002), attitudes towards debatable usages between teachers and their

students (Lee 2001a), attitudes of native speaker teachers and non-native speaker teachers towards disputable usages (Lee 2001b), the relationship between attitudes towards ideology, culture, people, language and factors affecting attitude (Flaitz1988).

Moreover, similar studies have been conducted in Iran. In an experiment (Sedaghat 2001) ,investigated the effects of attitude, motivation, and level of proficiency on the use of listening comprehension strategies by Iranian female EFL students. The subjects were 109 university students from both Shiraz Islamic Azad University and Shiraz University majoring n Teaching English and English Literature. The findings of the study revealed that students with positive attitude used metacognitive, memory, cognitive, compensation, and social strategies more than those having negative attitude. Regarding the affective strategies, none of the two groups showed any significant difference. In another study, (Sadighi & Zarafshan 2006), explored the effects of attitude, motivation, and years of study on the use of language learning strategies by Iranian EFL university students. The participants of the study consisted of 126 freshmen and seniors majoring in English Translation and Teaching English at Shiraz Islamic Azad University. After the analysis of the results, attitude proved to influence the use of language learning strategies (LLSs) significantly. That is, learners with positive attitude used LLSs more frequently than those with negative attitude. Regarding the factor of motivation, integratively-motivated students employed more strategies than instrumentally-oriented ones. Furthermore, seniors showed greater use of LLSs than freshmen. Still in another study, (Sadeghi 2004), investigated the motivation of Persian learners of English at Isfahan University. Based on the results, he concluded that the success or failure of the EFL program would depend on a variety of factors such as political, economic, cultural, educational, social, family, learner and the teacher, among which affective factors and in particular motivation and attitude play important roles. Taking these points into consideration, the present study aims to investigate the interlaced relationship between attitude, motivation and speaking within the context of Iranian EFL university students. Moreover, it seeks to find out which type of motivation (instrumental or integrative) is superior as far as second language acquisition and particularly face to face communication is concerned.

## PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study seeks to explore the relationship between attitude, motivation and, speaking within the context of EFL students in Iran. Furthermore, it aims to investigate the two types of motivation (integrative and instrumental) and their interlaced relationship to speaking in a foreign language. In other words the specific intent of this study is to determine whether there are any significant differences between integratively-motivated students and instrumentally-motivated students regarding their success in speaking a foreign language. Moreover, it intends to find out whether there are any differences between students with positive attitude and those with negative attitude concerning their speaking ability.

Considering the aforementioned problems, the present study was an attempt to provide plausible answers to the following research questions:

- 1) Are there any differences between students with positive and those with negative attitude regarding their speaking ability?
- 2) Are there any differences between integratively-motivated and instrumentally-motivated learners concerning their speaking ability?
- 3) Are there any differences between males and females' type of attitude when it comes to learning a foreign language?
- 4) Are there any differences between males and females' type of motivation concerning their foreign language learning?
- 5) Are there any differences between males and females regarding their speaking ability?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

The population for this study included 32 freshmen from both sexes (male and female) majoring in English Literature and English Translation and 50 freshmen majoring in electrical Engineering which were selected randomly amongst all the English freshmen at Isfahan University. The rationale behind choosing this latter group was just selecting students from majors other than English. Since most of the English students enjoyed positive attitude, for gathering a group with negative attitude, those engineering students were also selected. Finally, having administered the Oxford Placement Test, 65 students were chosen as the participants of the study.

### *Instrumentation*

For the purposes of the study the following instruments were used:

(1) Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was administered to guarantee the subjects homogeneity in terms of their English proficiency level. In fact, it was used to exclude from the study those students whose English proficiency level differed significantly from that of the others and to neutralize the subject selection effect.

(2) Two subscales of AMTB (Attitudes and Motivation Test Battery) designed by Gardner (1985) were used to measure students' attitudes toward learning English and their interest in foreign languages; with each subscale containing a number of likert- type items(see appendix B); that is, 16 items for integrative motivation, 12 items for instrumental motivation, 5 items for positive attitude and finally 5 items for negative attitude. Furthermore, this questionnaire was translated into Persian and piloted prior to the main study. An Alpha Cronbach method was applied to guarantee the reliability of the given questionnaire. The results indicated reliability index of 0.71 for the questionnaire. Therefore, it was acceptable for being used in the study.

The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery is a research instrument which has been developed to measure the major affective components shown to be involved in second / foreign language learning. Its development follows more than 20 years of research and its validity and reliability was estimated by Gardner and Smythe in 1975. Earlier research with this test battery by Gardner and Smythe has showed reliability estimate of .91 and its validity regarding the three types of validity (content validity, predictive validity and construct validity) proved to be high (1975a). In addition, the internal consistency estimate of reliability for the modified questionnaire was calculated, and Cronbach's Alpha was 0.7 in a study by ( Moiiinvaziri 2004) in Iran. In the same vein, the reliability of the questionnaire was estimated (in the pilot study) making use of an Alpha Cronbach method in the specific context of the study( $r=0.71$ ). All the items are measured using a Likert scale type.

As it was mentioned before, in this questionnaire there are two separate parts for integrative and instrumental motivation. That is, by considering the students' answers, it is possible to find out which student is mostly instrumentally-motivated and which one is mostly integratively-motivated. However, it cannot be said that instrumental orientation and integrative orientation are the two ends of a continuum. Therefore, it can be regarded as the limitation of this study. Furthermore, the parts related to negative attitude and positive attitude are also distinct; that is, separate parts are devoted to both positive and negative attitudes.

(3) A kind of indirect interview was used with the 65 chosen students in order to assess their speaking ability. (Speaking ability will be assessed based on some already established criteria mentioned in the book written by Farhadi , Birjandi and Jafarpour such as accent, structure, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension) and also Weir (1993). For ensuring reliability, two other raters (M.A students of Teaching English) assessed the recordings. (A sample of the questions which were asked from the students and the criteria for assessing speaking ability were presented in appendices C & D).

### ***Procedures***

After randomly choosing the students, Oxford Placement Test (Allen, 1992) was administered in order to decide on the proficiency level of the students. The test contained 100 items. To score the test, correct points were added up to a total sum and incorrect ones were ignored. There was no negative point for the wrong answers or for the items not answered at all (see appendix A for OPT). Having obtained the OPT results, the researcher decided to choose those participants whose score range fell one standard deviation above and below the mean. This being so, 65 students met this homogeneity criterion and were thus, selected to serve as the participants of this study. To decide on the type of the participants' motivation and attitude two subscales of AMTB (Attitudes and Motivation Test Battery) designed by Gardner (1985) were used. The questionnaire was translated into Persian and then given to the students (see appendix B). Before the administration of the questionnaire the participants received the necessary information about the purpose of the study and how to complete the questionnaire. The participants were free to ask questions or consult with each other while completing the questionnaire. In addition to the administration of the questionnaire, casual interviews were also held with the students whenever possible. The items of this questionnaire then were analyzed and tabulated. The last test was a kind of indirect interview which was administered by the researcher. Four questions about common topics in daily conversations were given to the students, e.g. talk about yourself. What would you like to do in future? (see appendix C). The questions were asked from the students one by one by the researcher. The participants spoke through the earphones after hearing each question within a time limit of three minutes while their voices were recorded. Totally, the speaking test took twenty minutes. First of all a friendly

atmosphere was created, then oral instruction was given in Persian. This method was used for the sake of ensuring its practicality. After that, the results were analyzed by two other M.A students who were experienced and fluent in English and then the average was calculated. Besides, inter-rater reliability was also estimated (0.8). Scoring was based on analytic speaking criteria introduced by Weir (1993) and Farhady, Jafarpoor, & Birjandi (1999)( see appendix D for the two of them). Each of those criteria was divided into six levels (from the weakest to the best) and a number from 1 to 6 was considered for each. Judges listened to the recorded cassettes and graded each student's performance according to the aforementioned scales. All the scores given by the judges were added up and the average for each student was tabulated. For all the above tests students were given the necessary instructions and the importance of those tests was explained to them.

## RESULTS

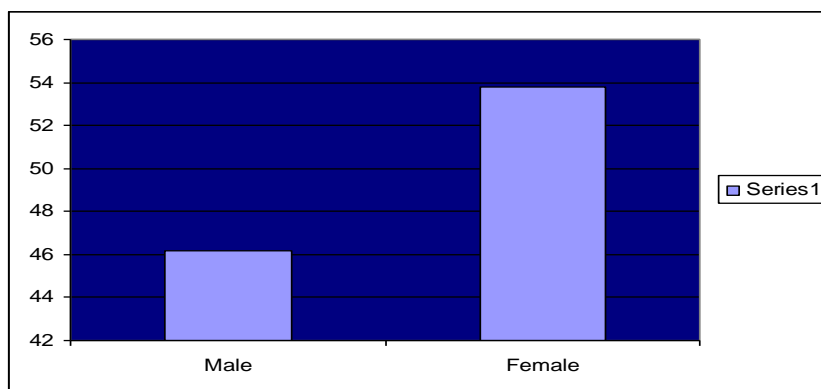
The findings of the research have been presented based on the stated research hypotheses. In order to analyze the data in addition to the statistical indexes like frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation, an inferential statistics method series of independent samples t-test- has also been used. The raw data obtained from AMTB questionnaire and speaking test were submitted to SPSS program and the subsequent computations were made.

### *Investigating the Descriptive Statistics of the Sample Group*

In this section the descriptive characteristics of the sample group based on gender variable have been investigated (table 1).

*Table 1: Frequency Distribution of the Sample Group Based on Gender*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	30	46.2	46.2	46.2
Female	35	53.8	53.8	100.0
Total	65	100.0	100.0	



*Figure 1: Percent Distribution of the Sample Group Based on Gender*

### *Results*

In order to investigate the aforementioned research questions, seven independent samples t-tests were conducted.

#### *Question 1*

- 1) Are there any differences between students with positive and those with negative attitude regarding their speaking ability?

*Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Types of Attitude*

Attitude	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Speaking Positive	46	4.6413	.7428	.1095
Ability Negative	19	3.7526	.8422	.1932

Table 3: Independent- Sample t- test for Types of Attitude

Table 8: Independent Sample t-Test for 2 types of Animals						
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Speaking Ability	Equal variances Assumed	.027	.870	4.218	63	.000
	Equal variance not assumed			4.001	30.180	.000

Based on the table, in the independent-samples t-test output box, the results of Levene's test for the equality of variances are presented (Table 3.). Levene's test shows whether the variance of scores for the two groups is the same. The Sig. value of Levene's test is .870, which is larger than .05, so in Table.3., the first line of the table which refers to Equal variances assumed should be used. Under the section labeled t-test for equality of means, the column labeled Sig. (2-tailed), shows the value of .000. It means that there were significant differences between the speaking scores of the students with positive attitude and those with negative attitude. Investigating the means of the two groups showed that the students with positive attitude had higher speaking scores than the ones with negative attitude. Therefore, the first research hypothesis was rejected.

## Question 2

- 2) Are there any differences between integratively-motivated and instrumentally-motivated learners concerning their speaking ability?

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Motivational Orientations

Motivation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Speaking Ability	49	4.5102	.7935	.1134
Integrative	16	3.9875	.9899	.2475
Instrumental				

Table 5: Independent Sample t-test for Motivational Orientations

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Speaking Ability	Equal variances assumed	2.195	.143	2.150	63	.035
	Equal variances not assumed			1.920	21.658	.068

Based on the results-shown in Table 5, the Sig. value of Leven's test is .143, which is larger than .05, so the first line of the table which refers to Equal variances assumed should be used. Under the column labeled t-test for equality of means, the column labeled Sig. (2-tailed) shows the value of .035. It means that there were significant differences between the speaking scores of the students with integrative motivation and those with instrumental motivation.

Investigating the means of the two groups showed this fact that the speaking scores of integratively-motivated students were higher than those of instrumentally-motivated students. In this way, the second hypothesis was also rejected.

### Question 3

- 3) Are there any differences between males and females' type of attitude when it comes to learning a foreign language?

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of Positive Attitude

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Positive Male	30	20.9667	3.5475	.6477
Attitude Female	35	21.3429	3.8649	.6533

Table 7: Independent Sample t-test for Males' and Females' Positive Attitude toward English

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Positive Attitude	Equal variances Assumed	.140	.710	-.406	63	.686
	Equal variances Not assumed			-.409	62.684	.684

As the results indicate, the observed Sig. value of Levene's test is .710, and Sig. (2-tailed), shows the value of .686. It means that there were no significant differences between the mean scores of males' and females' positive attitude. That is, the extent of males' and females' positive attitude was approximately the same.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics of Negative Attitude

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Negative Male	30	10.1667	5.9543	1.0871
Attitude Female	35	10.4000	6.7658	1.1436

Table 9: Independent Sample t-test for Males' and Females' Negative Attitude toward English

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Negative Attitude	Equal variances Assumed	<b>.499</b>	<b>.483</b>	<b>-.146</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>.884</b>
	Equal variances Not assumed			<b>-.148</b>	<b>62.948</b>	<b>.883</b>



Based on the results, the observed Sig. value of Levene's test is .483. The Sig. (2-tailed) shows the value of .884. That is, there were no significant differences between the mean scores of males' and females' negative attitude. That is, the extent of males' and females' negative attitude was almost the same. In this way, the third hypothesis was confirmed.

**Question 4**

- 4) Are there any differences between males and females' type of motivation concerning their foreign language learning?

*Table 10: Descriptive Statistics of Integrative Motivation*

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Integrative Male	30	53.5000	14.1951	2.5917
Motivation Female	35	55.9143	10.8367	1.8317

*Table 11: Independent Sample t-test for Males' and Females' Integrative Motivation*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Integrative Motivation	Equal variances assumed	7.384	.008	-.777	63	.440
	Equal variances Not assumed			-.761	53.766	.450

As it is shown in the table, the Sig. value of Levene's test is .008, and Sig. (2-tailed) shows the value of .440. It means that there were no significant differences between the mean scores of males' and females' integrative motivation. That is, the extent of males' and females' integrative motivation was almost the same.

*Table 12: Descriptive Statistics for Instrumental Motivation*

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Instrumental Male	30	43.1667	5.4903	1.0024
Motivation Female	35	43.4286	4.7914	.8099

*Table 13: Independent Sample t-test for Males' and Females' Instrl Motivation*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Instrumental Motivation	Equal variances assumed	.586	.447	-.205	63	.838
	Equal variances not assumed			-.203	58.102	.840

Based on the results, the Sig. value of Levene's test is .447, and the observed Sig. (2-tailed) depicts the value of .84. That is, there were no significant differences between the mean scores of males' and females' instrumental motivation. In other words, the extent of males' and females' instrumental motivation was almost the same. In this way, the forth hypothesis was also confirmed.

#### Question 5

5) Are there any differences between males and females regarding their speaking ability?

Table 14: Descriptive Statistics for Speaking Ability

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Speaking Ability Male	30	4.2700	.9315	.1701
Female	35	4.4771	.8110	.1371

Table 15: Independent Sample t-test for Males' and Females' Speaking Ability

#### Independent Samples Test

			Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for equality of means		
			F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Speaking assumed	Equal variances	Ability	1.694	.198	-.959	63	.341
Equal variances Not assumed					-.948	58.031	.347

As it is seen, the observed Sig. value of Levene' test is .198, and Sig. (2-tailed), shows the value of .341. It means that there were no significant differences between males' and females' speaking ability. In other words, the extent of males' and females' speaking ability was approximately the same. Therefore, the fifth hypothesis was also confirmed. Taking these points into consideration it was found that gender indeed, does not make any changes amongst EFL learners as far as attitude, motivation, and speaking ability are concerned.

## DISCUSSION

The first research question was whether there are any significant differences between students with positive attitude and those with negative attitude regarding their speaking ability. The means of the scores and the t-test revealed that at  $P < 0.05$  level, the t value shows a significant difference between the speaking scores of students with positive attitude and those with negative attitude. Having investigated the means of the two groups indicates that the Sig. value was 0.00. It means that students with positive attitude have got higher scores on speaking test than the ones with negative attitude.

In the same vein Munoz & Tragan (2001) obtained similar results in their study in which they analyzed the answers to a questionnaire in which learners of different age-groups and different proficiency levels were asked about their attitudes and types of motivation towards the L2 (EFL). First, motivation was seen to increase with school experience. Second, the younger learners showed more intrinsic types of motivation, while the older groups showed more extrinsic types and a preference for an instrumental type of motivation. That is, while the younger students did not, as a group, present higher motivation than the older students, they had a qualitatively different type of motivation. Third, significant statistical relations were shown between positive attitude towards language learning and achievement in some language tests, but not all. Significant relations were also found between achievement at the first measurement time and positive attitudes at the second in those students who were traced longitudinally, raising the issue of the directionality of the relation between motivation and second language achievement.

Still, recognizing the importance of student attitudes and motivation, several surveys have recently been conducted in Japan concerning this topic. Berwick and Ross' (1989) longitudinal study of Japanese college freshmen examined the correlation between learner positive attitude and motivation with proficiency in English. The results of the study showed that motivation to "learn English" peaked in the last year of high school and then dropped upon entering college. The authors attribute this drop to the college entrance exam system and to colleges themselves. They state that once the entrance exams are over, "there is very little to sustain this kind of motivation, so the student appears in freshmen classrooms as a kind of timid, exam-worn survivor with no apparent academic purpose at university" (p. 206). However, they also found that positive attitude and high motivation contributes to the task of second/foreign language acquisition to a great deal.

The obtained results of this study is also in line with the obtained findings of the study carried out by Sadighi and Zarafshan (2006) in which they explored the fact that learners with positive attitude used language learning strategies more frequently than those with negative attitude.

The discussion now turns to the second question; namely, whether there are any significant differences between integratively-motivated and instrumentally-motivated learners concerning their speaking ability. Based on the results, it was shown that at  $P < 0.05$  level, the Sig. value was 0.03, representing that there is a significant difference between the speaking scores of integratively-motivated learners and those of instrumentally-motivated ones. That is, integratively-motivated learners have higher scores on speaking test than the instrumentally-oriented ones. This result shows parallelism with the study of (Gass & Selinker, 2001; Lambert, 1952 & 1972). This study supports the findings in these studies, in that integrative motivation is superior to instrumental motivation for predicting the success of second/foreign language learning. In other words, success in a foreign/second language is likely to be lower if the underlying motivational orientation is instrumental rather than integrative.

In line with the aforementioned outcomes, Sadighi and Zarafshan (2006), found out that regarding the factor of motivation, integratively-motivated students employed more strategies than instrumentally-oriented ones.

The third research question was: Are there any differences between males and females as far as attitude, motivation, and speaking ability are concerned? Based on the results of this study it was found that there are no significant differences between males and females regarding the mentioned variables (attitude, motivation, and speaking ability).

The findings of this study are also in parallel with the ones obtained in a study carried out by Fazlul in 1989. In his study he investigated the interaction of attitudes, motivation and achievement in English as a foreign language in a new social and monolingual setting. More specifically, the study examined the relationship between Bangladeshi high school students' motivational orientation and their achievement in English as a foreign language. The study further investigated the possible effect of gender and academic major on students' attitudes and motivation and examined the influence of parents and teachers on students' attitudes and motivation to learn English.

The data for the investigation were gathered from 240 tenth grade students randomly selected from high schools in Dhaka City, Bangladesh using a modified version of the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery developed by Gardner (1985b) and an Achievement Test prepared by an English Language Teaching Task Force set up by the Government of Bangladesh in 1975.

Analysis of the data revealed that the students in the study were instrumentally oriented towards learning the English language and that an instrumental orientation was a better predictor of achievement than an integrative orientation. Achievement in English was facilitated by favorable attitudes towards and a strong motivation for learning the language. The results further showed that attainment in English was related significantly and positively to students' towards the learning situation. The sex of the learners was not found to have a significant effect on either attitudes/motivation or achievement. Although the academic major did not have any significant effect on students' attitudes and motivation, it affected their attainment significantly.

## CONCLUSIONS

The present study was carried out with the intention of investigating the interlaced relationship between attitude, motivation and speaking within the context of Iranian EFL university students. Moreover, it sought to find out which type of motivation (instrumental or integrative) is superior as far as face to face communication is concerned. The results of this study indicated that first, students with positive attitude have got higher scores on speaking test than the ones with negative attitude. Second, integratively-motivated learners have higher speaking scores than instrumentally motivated ones. Third, there are not any significant differences between males and females as far as attitude, motivation, and speaking ability are concerned.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The results of the present study have led to the following pedagogical implications:

- 1) Teachers should promote the students' positive attitude toward academic English learning. They should create a lively, challenging and non-threatening atmosphere in the classroom where the affective barriers are kept at minimum.
- 2) Teachers should increase the students' positive attitude to the English culture through any possible medium such as promoting students' interaction with the native speakers.
- 3) Language teachers have an important role in maintaining and enhancing the students' motivation and attitude.
- 4) Teachers should use the best of the students' high motivation in order to contribute to the success in language learning.
- 5) Since attitude and motivation are interwoven, any kind of boost in attitude will increase students' motivation in learning English.
- 6) It is essential to make the students sure that it is not just the place of study and cognitive factors but affective factors such as high motivation (especially integrative motivation) and positive attitude that play an important role in language learning and in particular acquiring a high command in speaking.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study faced some limitations throughout the accomplishment of different phases:

The first limitation of this study seems to be its limited number of participants. If more subjects had taken part in the study, the results would have been more reliable and closer to reality.

The second limitation that restricts the generalizability of the findings is that although the participants were supposed to answer the questions quite carefully and honestly, while answering the questions, they might not have taken the study seriously and they may have answered without thinking thoroughly, which may also have influenced the results.

The third limitation was the questionnaire used in this study. Different questionnaires might lead to different results. The Oxford Placement Test was not verified in terms of reliability for this particular context as it is widely used in many situations. Any how it can be regarded as another limitation.

The last point to be mentioned here is the difficulty of evaluation along with generalization of findings in human issues. One can hardly claim that all the variables have been controlled throughout the study, since some uncontrolled variables like fatigue, unwillingness to participate, and the affective mood may have affected the obtained results.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study aimed to answer a limited number of questions raised previously. This is while many other questions may be raised as the following in relation with the findings of this study:

- 1) This study investigated the impact of attitude and motivation on speaking in a foreign language. Other studies can focus on the impacts of motivation and attitude on other skills including listening, reading and writing.
- 2) The present study focused on the impact of attitude and motivation on speaking in a foreign language. Similar studies can be conducted to examine the impacts of other personality factors, namely, anxiety, self-esteem, inhibition, risk-taking, empathy, extroversion, introversion on speaking.
- 3) Further studies can investigate the impacts of the mentioned personality factors (anxiety, self-esteem, inhibition, risk-taking, empathy, extroversion, and introversion) on other skills such as listening, reading and writing.

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## Appendix A

### Oxford Placement Test (OPT)

#### Appendix A. Oxford Placement Test © Dave Allen 1992

**First Name** .....

**Surname** .....

**Score** .....

=====

**Look at these examples. The correct answer is underlined.**

a. In warm climates people (like, likes, are liking) sitting outside in the sun.

b. If it is very hot, they sit (at, in, under) the shade.

**Now the test will begin. Underline the correct answers.**

1. Water (be freezing, is freezing, freezes) at a temperature of >0°C.

2- In some countries (there is, is, it is) dark all the time in winter.

3- In hot countries people wear light clothes (for keeping, to keep, for to keep) cool.

4- In Madeira they have (the good, good, a good) weather almost all year.

5- Most Mediterranean countries are (more warm, the more warm, warmer) in October than in April.

6- Parts of Australia do not have (the, some, any) rain for long period.

7- In the Arctic and Antarctic (it is, there is, it has) a lot of snow.

8- Climate is very important in (most of, most, the most) people's lives.

9- Even now there is (little, few, less) we can do to control the weather.

10- In the future (we'll need, we are needing, we can need) to get a lot of power from the sun and the wind.

11- Pele is still perhaps (most, the most, the more) famous footballer in the world.

12- He (had been, is, was) born in 1940.

13- His mother (not want, wasn't wanting, did not want) him to be a footballer.

14- But he (used, ought, has used) to watch his father play.

15- His father (made him to, made him, would make him to) practice every day.

16- He learned to use (or his left foot or, and his left foot and, both his left foot and) his right.

17- He got the name Pele when he (had only ten years, was only ten, was only ten years).

18- By 1956 he (has joined, joined, had joined) Santos and had scored in his first game.

19- In 1957 he (has been picked, was picked, was picking) for the Brazilian national team.



- 20- The World Cup Finals were in 1958 and Pele was looking forward (to play, to playing, to be playing).  
21- But he hurt (this, the, his) knee in a game in Brazil.  
22- He thought he (is not going, couldn't, was not going to) be able to play in the finals in Sweden.  
23- If he (had not been, were not, would not be) so important to the team, he would have been left behind.  
24- But he was (a such, such a, a so) brilliant player, they took him anyway.  
25- And (even though, even so, in spite of) he was injured he helped Brazil to win the final.  
26- The history of the World Cup is (quite, a quite, quiet) short one.  
27- Football (has been, is being, was) played for  
28- (above, over, more than) a hundred years, but the first World Cup  
29- competition (did not be, was not, was not being) held until 30- 1930. Uruguay (could win, were winning, had won) the Olympic football  
31- Final in 1924 and 1928 and wanted (be, being, to be) World Champions for the third time.  
32- Four teams entered from Europe, but with ( a little, a few, little) success.  
33- It was the first time (which, that, when) professional teams  
34- (are playing, would play, had played) for a world title.  
35- It wasn't until four years (later, more, further) that a  
36- European team succeeded (to win, in winning, at winning)  
37- for (the, a, its) first time. The 1934 World Cup was  
38- again won by (a, the, one) home team  
39- (what, this, which) has been the case several times since  
40- then. The 1934 final was (among, between, against) two  
41- European teams, Czechoslovakia and Italy. Italy (which, that, who) won  
42- went on (to win, winning, to have won) the 1938 final . Winning  
43- successive finals is something that (is not, was not, has not been) achieved  
44- again until Brazil did (these, them, it) in 1958 and 1962. If Brazil  
45- (would have won, would win, had won) in 1966, then the  
46- authorities would have needed to (have, let, make) the original World Cup replaced.  
47- But England stopped the Brazilians (to get, getting, get) a third successive win. And England player  
48- Geoff Hurst, scored three goals in the final and won it almost (by his own, on himself, by himself).  
49- 1966 proved (being, as being, to be) the last year that England  
50- (would, will, did) even qualify for the final till 1982, though they got in as winners in 1970.

#### **Grammar Test Part 2**

- 51- Many (persons, people, peoples) nowadays believe that everyone should learn to use computers.  
52- The Majority of Children in the UK (have, has, are having) access to a microcomputer.  
53- There are more computers per head in England than (anywhere else, somewhere else, anywhere other) in the world.  
54- Learning a computer language is not the same (as, like, than) learning a real language.  
55- Most people start off 'basic', (who, what, which) is the easiest to learn.  
56- Children seem to find computers easy, but many adults aren't used to (work, the work, working) with micro technology.  
57- There are not (no, any, some) easy ways of learning to program a computer.  
58- The only way to become really proficient is to practice a lot (on your own, by your own, on yourself).  
59- You can pick up the basics quite quickly if you (want to, would, are willing to) make an effort.  
60- Most adults feel it would be easier if only they (would have started, would start, had started) computer studies earlier.  
61- Some people would just (rather, prefer, better) not have anything to do with computers at all.  
62- A lot have resigned themselves to never even (know, known, knowing) how a computer works.  
63- Micro technology is moving so fast that hardly (anybody, nobody, no one) can keep up with it at all.  
64- It's no use (in trying to, to try, trying) to learn about computers just by reading books.  
65- Everyone has (difficulty in learning, difficulties to learn, it difficult to learn) if they cannot get 'hands-on' experience.
- =====

Below is a letter written to the *advice* column of a newspaper. Underline the correct answer.

Dear Merge,

66- (I am writing, I will write, I should write) to you because I  
67- (am not knowing, don't know, know not) what to do. I am twenty-six and a teacher at  
68- a primary school in Norwich where (I'm working, I've worked, I work) for the last five years.  
69- When I (was, have been, had been) there for a couple of years, one of the older members of staff  
70- (would leave, left, have been leaving), and a new teacher  
71- (would be, become, was) appointed to work in the same department as me.  
72- We (worked, have worked, should work) together with the same classes during her first year  
73- and had the (opportunity for building, possibilities to build, chance to build) up a good professional  
74- relationship. Then, about eighteen months after (she had arrived, to have arrived, arriving)  
75- in Norwich, she decided to buy (her own, herself, her a) house.  
76- She was tired of (to live, living, live) in rented accommodation and wanted a place  
77- (by her own, of her own, of herself). At about the same time, I  
78- (was given, have been given, gave) notice by the landlord of the flat  
79- (what I was living, that I have lived, I was living) in  
80- and she asked me if I (liked, had liked, would like) to live  
81- with her. She (said, told, explained) me that by the time she  
82- (would pay, would have paid, had paid) the mortgage  
83- and the bills (it, there, they) wouldn't be  
84- (a lot, many, few) left to live on. She suggested  
85- (us to, we should, we may) share the house and share the costs.  
86- It seemed like a good idea, so after (we'd agreed, we could agree, we agreed with) all the details  
87- (what, that, who) needed to be sorted out, we moved into the new house together.  
88- At the end of this month, (we have lived, we have been living, we'll have been living)  
89- together for a year and a half. It's the first time (I live, I'm living, I've lived) with anybody before, but  
90- (I should guess, I might have guessed, I'd have guessed) what would happen. I've fallen in love with her and now  
she's been offered another job 200 miles away and is going to move. I don't know what to do. Please give me some  
advice.

=====

Look at the following examples of question tags in English. The correct form of the tag is underlined.

- A. He is getting the 9.15 train, (isn't he, hasn't he, wasn't he)?  
B. She works in a library, (isn't she, doesn't she, doesn't he)?  
C. Tom didn't tell you, (hasn't he, didn't he, did he)?  
D. Someone's forgotten to switch off the gas, (didn't one, didn't they, haven't they)?

Now underline the correct question tag in the following 10 items:

- 91- Steve's off to China, (has she, hasn't he, isn't he)?  
92- It'll be a year before we see him again, (won't it, won't we, shan't it)?  
93- I believe he has given up smoking, (isn't he, don't I, hasn't he)?  
94- I'm next on the list to go out there, (am not I, are I, aren't I)?  
95- No doubt you'd rather he didn't stay abroad too long, (shouldn't you, wouldn't you, hadn't you)?  
96- He's rarely been away for this long before, (is he, hasn't he, has he)?  
97- So you think he will be back before November, (shall he, will he, do you)?  
98- Nobody disagreed with the latest proposal, (did he, has he, have they)?  
99- We'd better not delay reading this any longer, (should we, did we, had we)?  
100- Now is hardly the time to tell me you did not need a test at all, (did you, is it, isn't it)?

## Appendix B

### AMTB (Attitude/Motivation Test Battery)

نام: \_\_\_\_\_ ميزات تحصیلات: \_\_\_\_\_  
سن: \_\_\_\_\_ جنس: مذکر / مؤنث

دانشجوی عزیز:

تقریباً ۵۰٪ از زبان‌آموزان ایرانی که در این آزمون شرکت می‌کنند، از «خیلی زیاد» (5) تا «خیلی کم» (1) در مورد موضوعات زیر پاسخ می‌دهند. سؤالات این قسمت از پاسخنامه دارای 5 گزینه به صورت عدد (1، 2، 3، 4، 5) بوده که از «خیلی زیاد» (5) شروع و به «خیلی کم» (1) ختم می‌شوند و شما باید دور عددی که بیان می‌کند که شما تا چه اندازه با سوال موافق و یا مخالف هستید را خط بکشید. در زیر یک مثال ذکر شده است.

با تشکر فراوان از همکاری شما

مثال:

(5) خیلی زیاد

(4) زیاد

(3) متوسط

(2) کم

(1) خیلی کم

تا چه حد .....

خیلی کم 1	کم 2	متوسط 3	زیاد 4	خیلی زیاد 5	سوال
					1 دوست دارید که معلم زبان انگلیسی شوید؟

تا چه حد .....

خیلی کم 1	کم 2	متوسط 3	زیاد 4	خیلی زیاد 5	سوالات
					1 یادگیری زبان انگلیسی به شما کمک می‌کند تا بهتر انگلیسی‌ها و شیوه زندگی آن‌ها را بفهمید؟
					2 یادگیری زبان انگلیسی به شما کمک می‌کند تا آسانتر بتوانید از میان انگلیسی زبان‌ها دوستان خوبی پیدا کنید؟
					3 یادگیری زبان انگلیسی شما را قادر می‌سازد تا مانند انگلیسی‌ها رفتار کنید و ببینید؟
					4 یادگیری زبان انگلیسی به شما کمک می‌کند تا با مردمان گوناگون و بیشتری ملاقات و گفتگو کنید؟
					5 یادگیری زبان انگلیسی به شما کمک می‌کند تا در حضور انگلیسی زبان‌ها احساس آرامش بیشتری کنید؟
					6 یادگیری زبان انگلیسی به شما کمک می‌کند تا هنر و ادبیات انگلیسی را بهتر درک کنید؟
					7 یادگیری زبان انگلیسی به شما کمک می‌کند تا بهتر در فعالیت‌های گروه‌های مختلف از فرهنگ‌های متفاوت شرکت کنید؟
					8 به شیوه زندگی انگلیسی زبان‌ها علاقمند هستید؟
					9 میل دارید که یک دوست انگلیسی داشته باشید که با او مکاتبه کنید؟
					10 دوست دارید که در یکی از کشورهای انگلیسی زبان زندگی کنید؟
					11 برایتان جالب است که با یک دختر و یا پسر انگلیسی زبان آشنا شوید؟
					12 از گفتگو و ملاقات با انگلیسی زبان‌ها لذت می‌برید؟
					13 دوست دارید که زبان انگلیسی زبان‌ها را یاد بگیرید تا بهتر انگلیسی‌ها را بشناسید؟
					14 دوست دارید که انگلیسی را در یک کشور انگلیسی زبان فراگیرید؟
					15 دوست دارید که ادبیات انگلیسی را به زبان انگلیسی مطالعه کنید تا به زبان فارسی؟
					16 از اینکه در دروسهای زبان راجع به زبان انگلیسی مطلب بیاموزید لذت می‌برید؟
					18 برای دست یابی به اعتبار اجتماعی شخص نیاز دارد که حداقل درباره یک زبان خارجی اطلاعات خوبی داشته باشد؟
					19 انگیزه شما از یادگیری زبان انگلیسی به این خاطر است که مردم برای شما احترام بیشتری قائل شوند؟
					20 با این عبارت موافقت کنید: «... او ...»
					21 برای فارغ التحصیل شدن از دانشگاه لازم است که زبان انگلیسی را یاد بگیرید؟
					22 شخص برای شغل‌های آینده‌اش به زبان انگلیسی نیاز دارد؟
					23 شخص در زندگی آینده می‌تواند بدون دانش انگلیسی خوب زندگی کند؟
					24 اعتقاد دارید که فراگیری انگلیسی برای ایرانیان سودمند است؟
					25 آن چه که شخص در درس‌های زبان فرا می‌گیرد برای زندگی آینده‌اش سودمند است؟
					26 اعتقاد دارید که زبان انگلیسی در خیلی از مسائل روزمره مفید است؟
					27 اعتقاد دارید که زبان انگلیسی نقش مفیدی را در تربیت و آموزش ایفا خواهد کرد؟
					28 مطالعه زبان انگلیسی به معلومات شما خواهد افزود و به شما کمک خواهد کرد تا یک فرد تحصیل کرده شوید؟
					29 اعتقاد دارید که زبان انگلیسی رشته خوب و جالبی است؟
					30 از یادگیری زبان انگلیسی لذت می‌برید؟
					31 اعتقاد دارید که زبان انگلیسی بخش مهمی از برنامه آموزشی دانشگاه به شمار می‌رود؟
					32 درس‌ها و واحدهای زبان را با اشتیاق و علاقه می‌گیرید؟

					33. تصمیم دارید تا آنجا که امکان دارد دانش زبان انگلیسی خود را افزایش دهید؟
					34. از زبان انگلیسی تنفر دارید؟
					35. ترجیح می دهید که وقتتان را صرف موضوعات دیگر کنید تا صرف زبان انگلیسی؟
					36. اعتقاد دارید که یادگیری زبان انگلیسی اتلاف وقت است؟
					37. اعتقاد دارید که یادگیری زبان انگلیسی يك کار كسل كننده است؟
					38. امکان دارد که پس از فراغت از تحصیل مطالعه و یادگیری زبان انگلیسی را به خاطر عدم علاقه کنار بگذارید؟

## Appendix C Interview Test

### Interview Test

1. Talk about yourself (your name, age, address). How many brothers and sisters do you have?
2. What would you like to do in future?
3. Talk about your university and professors. Are they good or not?
4. Which job is more important; being an engineer, a doctor, or a teacher?
- 5.

## 6. Appendix D Criteria for Assessing Speaking

### Analytic Speaking Criteria (Weir 1993)

#### Fluency

4. Generally natural delivery, only occasional halting when searching for appropriate words/expressions.
3. The student hesitates and repeats himself at times but can generally maintain a flow of speech, although s/he may need an occasional prompt.
2. Speech is slow and hesitant. Maintains speech in a passive manner and needs regular prompts.
1. The student speaks so little that no 'fluent' speech can be said to occur.

#### Pronunciation

4. Occasional errors of pronunciation a few inconsistencies of rhythm, intonation and pronunciation but comprehension is not impeded.
3. Rhythm, intonation and pronunciation require more careful listening; some errors of pronunciation which may occasionally lead to incomprehension.
2. Comprehension suffers due to frequent errors in rhythm, intonation and pronunciation.
1. Words are unintelligible.

#### Vocabulary

4. Effective use of vocabulary for the task with few inappropriacies.
3. For the most part, effective use of vocabulary for the task with some examples of inappropriacy.
2. Limited use of vocabulary with frequent inappropriacies.
1. Inappropriate and inadequate vocabulary.

#### Grammatical accuracy

4. Very few grammatical errors evident.
3. Some errors in use of sentence structures and grammatical forms but theses do not interfere with comprehension.
2. Speech is broken and distorted by frequent errors.
1. Unable to construct comprehensible sentences.

#### Interactional strategies

In this criterion, the term 'interactional strategies' means using strategies such as initiating the discussion, asking for clarification, expanding the topic, turn taking and concluding the discussion.

4. Interacts effectively and readily participates and follows the discussion.
3. Use of interactive strategies is generally adequate but at times experiences some difficulty in maintaining interaction consistently.
2. Interaction ineffective. Can seldom develop an interaction.
1. Understanding and interaction minimal.

Farhadi, Jafarpour, Birjandi (1994, p. 239) give guidelines for assessing rating speaking:

***Accent***

6. Phonetically acceptable pronunciation throughout
5. Few phonemic errors but never hindering comprehension
4. Occasional phonemic errors necessitate attentive listening
3. Frequent phonemic errors require frequent demand for repetition
2. Constant phonemic errors make comprehension very hard
1. Severe errors make understanding virtually impossible

***Structure***

6. Almost no error
5. Few insignificant errors only
4. Occasional petty errors but no problem with understanding
3. Frequent errors occasionally interfere with meaning
2. Constant errors interfere with understanding
1. Severe errors make understanding virtually impossible

***Vocabulary***

6. Appropriate and extensive use of words in any domain
5. Appropriate use of adequate vocabulary to discuss general topics and special interests
4. Occasional use of inappropriate words, which do not, however, affect the meaning
3. Frequent use of inappropriate words distort the message
2. Constant use of wrong words, limited vocabulary
1. Inadequate basic vocabulary

***Fluency***

6. Fluent and effortless speech like a native speaker
5. Natural and continuous speech with pauses at unnatural points
4. Fluent speech with occasional problems
3. Frequent problems hinder fluency and demand greater effort
2. Slow speech, hesitant, and sometimes silent
1. Virtually unable to make connected sentences

***Comprehension***

6. Comprehends everything
5. Comprehends everything except for every colloquial or rapid speech or low frequency items
4. Comprehends nearly everything but needs occasional rephrasing
3. Comprehends slower-than-normal speech
2. Comprehends only slow and simple speech
1. Comprehends very little of even simple and slow speech

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READING SHORT STORIES AND THE WRITING PROFICIENCY OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT

Despite the importance of writing in both academic and daily lives of people, most students suffer from difficulties of writing in a foreign language. What people write, represents their idea and their knowledge about a subject, so a poor writing can hide the actual viewpoint of a person or even can lead into misinterpretation of the message. Accordingly, there is a need to use a method that motivates the English as a foreign language (EFL)/English as a second language (ESL) students and helps them to improve their writing ability. This study examined two groups of students to find out the effects of short story reading on their writing ability. Within two months, the control group (N=23) was taught the school book, while the experimental group (N=24) was taught the school book and also was supposed to read three short stories. Relevant findings illustrated that the experimental group's writing had improved more than the control group's writing (gain score= 5.7 vs. 2.7; effect size= .31). Questionnaires were also given to the students who had read the stories and the teacher to evaluate the course design. The results showed that almost 79.17% of the students had found the course beneficial; furthermore, the teacher was also satisfied with the course program. Based on the obtained results, the study considered reading short story as an effective and beneficial tool for improving the EFL students' writing ability. The study has pedagogical implications for English writing classes aiming at educating EFL students.

**KEYWORDS:** writing proficiency; reading short story; schemata; reading strategies

### INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, EFL reading and writing have undergone dramatic changes. Reading has moved toward a complex psycholinguistic, interactive model consisting of both bottom-up and top-down processes (Goodman, 1970). Accordingly, reading theories have in turn affected other language skills, including writing. Thus, reading is now viewed as a means for improving communicational skills, in which readers seek meaning and try to reconstruct writers' messages. One of the language skills is writing, an important skill that helps learners acquire language, content, culture and literacy in a second language.

L2 writing research has indicated that lack of competence in composing, rather than lack of linguistic competence, is the main source of difficulty (Jones, 1982; Jacobs, 1982). Studies have also identified difficulties in relation to the lack of composing competence. For example, L2 composing is more constrained, more difficult, and less effective. The process is more laborious, less fluent, and less productive. More revisions are needed and more difficulties are experienced in revising. Additionally, L2 text is less fluent, less accurate, less effective and with simpler structure (Silva, 1993).

In recent years, narrative and stories have been the focus of increasing attention. Researchers (Fitzgerald and Teasley, 1986; Cassell, 2004; and Collins 2010) who have talked about the use of short stories in the EFL classes have mentioned various benefits of short stories such as motivational, literary and cultural benefits. According to Murdoch (2002) if the instructor selects the short story appropriately, it can provide quality text content which will greatly enhance ELT courses, especially at the intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency. If instructors choose the correct story book, it will correspond to the comprehensible input that ESL theorists emphasize in the communicative classrooms. One of the main advantages of short stories is their proper length. They are neither like novels nor like small notes. Instructors are usually faced with lack of time for teaching the materials and therefore the length of short story permits them to bring literature into the classroom's syllabus. Students will not get bored of reading short stories because these stories are not too long.



Short stories motivate students to read, think and get involved. According to Celce-Murcia (1988), among many texts, story is in such an appealing position that everyone, including EFL students, loves it. Short stories can be used both for providing students with a proper input and for making the language learning process more interesting. Short stories, as a general and natural teaching tool, can provide the basis for effective communicative activities in an EFL class.

No one can neglect the role and importance of writing proficiency in daily, academic and business lives of all people. Nowadays there are many methods for improving writing proficiency of EFL students, among which we can mention computer task based strategies (Ortega, 1997), using online writing systems (Miyazoe and Anderson, 2010), etc. Most of these methods require special and expensive instruments and therefore they can be used just in special learning environments with the required equipment. Since learning English as a second language and therefore writing in English does not belong to a certain group of people, in this study the researchers try to introduce a more available tool: short stories.

## **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

### ***Literature and language learning***

Literature is a tool that can be used in different areas of language learning, and help students with a better comprehension of the points being taught. Erkaya (2009) believed that it is important for EFL instructors to be familiarized with the effectiveness of using literature in language instruction. She mentioned that while some instructors may still believe that teaching EFL encompasses focusing on linguistic benefits only, their students eventually will communicate in the target language, others who have integrated literature in the curricula have realized that literature adds a new dimension to the teaching of EFL. The researcher concluded that in addition to the four skills, short stories help instructors to teach literary, cultural and higher-order thinking aspects. Furthermore, she claimed that integrating short stories into the curriculum will help EFL students to become well-rounded professionals and human beings since short stories teach more than the skills necessary for survival in the target language.

In another study by Hajimaibodi (2008), learning English through short stories has been explored. The findings of her study revealed that to enhance the reading comprehension skill, the learner must have the ability to understand the meaning of individual words and phrases on a local or word-to-word and sentence-to-sentence level and on a global level or constructing meaning from the text as a whole. She concluded that this interacted with the prior knowledge, interest and motivation that the learner brings to the task of reading. Since in general people forget the actual language but remember the message, they would like something that is not only informative but also entertaining, like short stories.

Hismanoglu (2005) aimed at emphasizing the use of literature as a popular technique for teaching both basic language skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking) and language areas. The results of the study suggested that literature played an important role in the English programs of many non-English speaking countries. However, there were some problems encountered by language teachers within the area of teaching English through literature.

Considering the new technologies, Cassell (2004) carried out a piece of research on story listening systems and effects of that on young children's writing. The findings revealed that systems were desirable, the researcher further concluded that the kinds of learning environments enabled by the systems, provided opportunities for children to bridge informal and formal contexts and hence help their learning.

### ***The importance of writing***

Writing ability in either first or second language is important. According to Tan (2011), students who are poor with written expression are often at serious risks of failure in an academic study program. Close or distant communication with different people is possible through writing. Unlike other language skills, writing is permanent and according to Brown (2001), the process of writing requires specialized skills, skills that not all speakers develop naturally. Brown (2001) maintains that writing is a learned behavior. It means that we learn to write if we are members of a literate society and if someone teaches us. Trupe (2001) maintained that L2 writing is a unique part of language learning.

Learners must attend to both the writing and thinking processes as well as the written product. That is, they must not only consider what they think, but also how best to communicate what they think to readers.

Kobayashi and Rinnert (2002) presented findings from a research on students' perceptions of first language literacy instruction and effects of that on second language writing. The researchers suggested that one way to utilize students' L1 background is to turn the writing class into a place where students research their own literacy and develop critical awareness about what they need to learn about L2 academic writing. The researchers also mentioned that in addition to the influence of L1 literacy, the kind of practice and experience students receive in L2 reading and writing could also affect the development of their L2 writing.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there any significant relationship between reading short stories and writing?
2. Do students and teachers find reading short story a beneficial tool for improving writing proficiency?

It is hoped that the answers to the research questions of this study be useful for both teachers and learners. The answers may also help material developers in terms of choosing the best materials for learners. It is hoped that the results of the study will shed light on the related aspects of language learning.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

The participants of this study were 47 female students whose average age was 17. These students were selected from two classes at a pre-university school in Shiraz, Iran. The total population of the classes was 60. To choose a homogeneous group of students, the researchers obtained the scores of the writing section of the students' 3<sup>rd</sup> grade English exam. The high school 3<sup>rd</sup> grade exam is a standard exam that is given and corrected in a standard method and is uniform all over the country.

After calculating the mean and standard deviation of the students' scores of the writing section, those whose scores were within one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected (n=47). Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of the participants.

*Table 1: Descriptive statistics on final scores of the 3rd grade*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
score	60	16.1458	2.88380	8.316
Valid N (listwise)	60			

After choosing the total group of students, each student was given a number and then based on the systematic random sampling (i.e. odd and even numbers), they were randomly divided into two groups. The mean score of each group was calculated and as Table 2 represents, the mean scores were in the same range:

*Table 2: Mean scores of control group and experimental group*

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
scores	Experimental	24	16.7500	1.58629	.32380
	Control	23	16.5000	1.61667	.33710

Therefore, it was assumed that both groups were at the same level. However, to make sure that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups, an independent samples t-test was run. The scores of the writing section of the students' 3<sup>rd</sup> grade English exam were used in this calculation. The p-value was greater than .05; therefore the null hypothesis (i.e. there was no difference between the groups) was retained. The results are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Independent samples t-test of control group and experimental group

Table 11. Independent Samples t-test of control group and experimental group										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
3 <sup>rd</sup> grade scores	Equal variances assumed	.316	.577	.535	45	.595	.25000	.46723	-.69105	1.19105
	Equal variances not assumed			.535	44.825	.595	.25000	.46742	-.69154	1.19154

One of these groups served as the control group and the other one as the experimental group. The students of both groups had the same teacher. During the time of the study, both groups used the school book as the main input material. The students who were in the experimental group also read three short story books

In order to check the effects of the treatment (i.e. reading short stories), pre-tests and post-tests were given to all participants. A paired-sample t-test was used to find out if the treatment had any effect. Then, the results obtained from the experimental group were compared with the results obtained from the control group. The procedures and the objectives of the study were explained to the students by the researchers. And all the students declared their willingness to participate in the process of the study. The school Principal had also agreed with conducting this study at the school.

### Instruments

The instruments utilized in this study were as follows:

1. Tests of writing. At the very beginning of the study, a writing test (see Appendix A) was given to the students of both control and experimental groups. This writing test was the pre-test consisting of two parts. The first part was the free writing part. In the free writing part, two topics were given to the students. These topics were related to the topics of their school book. The students were asked to choose one of the topics and write three or four paragraphs on it. The instructions were printed in their exam paper and further explanations were provided by the teacher. The second part of the test was the controlled writing. This part was divided into two sections. In the first, the first two lines of a text were given to the students and then they were asked to continue the writing and add at least three sentences of their own. In the second part of the controlled writing, students were asked to write a paragraph using the given words. The paragraph had to have no more than ten lines. The instructions for the second part of the test were available in the hard copies that the students had and further explanations were provided by the teacher. Having given the test, the teacher evaluated the writings based on Jacobs et al.'s (1981) scoring profile (see Appendix B). Based on this profile a score was assigned to each testee. Since in this research two tests were needed, this test was repeated after about two months as the post-test. As for the reliability of the writing test scores, inter-rater reliability was used on the pre-test and post-test scores. All the writing tests were corrected by the teacher and her colleague. In cases where the ratings were different, the mean of the rating scores were used. To check the reliability of the tests, Pearson correlation was obtained between the ratings of teacher 1 and those of teacher 2. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Correlation between two ratings

			teacher2
Pre-test	Teacher1	Pearson Correlation	.978**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	47
Post-test	Teacher1	Pearson Correlation	.988**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	47

\*\*, Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results of the correlation showed that the writing test was reliable. The reliabilities of the pre-test and post-test were  $r=.978$  and  $r=.988$  respectively. In the next step, to check the stability of the scores, the correlation values were checked by the inter-rater reliability formula. The results are presented in equation 3.1.

$$\text{Inter-rater reliability} = \frac{2r}{1+r}$$

$$\text{Post-test inter-rater reliability} = \frac{2 \times .988}{1 + .988} = .989$$

$$\text{Pre-test inter-rater reliability} = \frac{2 \times .978}{1 + .978} = .984$$

Based on the results of the inter-rater reliability formula, the scores had stability, and therefore the tests and the scores were reliable.

The writing test was constructed by the researchers and was checked by two other English teachers to make sure that it was assessing the writing production ability of the students based on the instructions and the writing exercises of the pre-university English book.

2. Short story book. Three short stories were used in this research. One week after dividing the students into two groups, the students in the experimental groups were given the first short story. The first short story was *The Gift of the Magi* by O.Henry. All the copies of the short story were online printable versions and were prepared by the researchers. Students had two weeks to read the first short story, and they could ask any question they had concerning the story. Then they had one week without any short story reading. The second short story was given to them at the beginning of the fourth week. The second short story was *The Necklace* by Guy de Maupassant. The same procedures were repeated for the second and third short stories. The third short story was *The Lottery Ticket* by Anton Chekhov.

3. Course evaluation questionnaire. After the post-test, the students in the experimental group were given a course evaluation questionnaire. The teacher also answered a course evaluation questionnaire. The aim of the students' questionnaire was to find out whether the students of the experimental group thought that reading short stories had any effect on their writing ability or not. The aim of the teacher's questionnaire was to look for teacher's opinion about the program and the process of the language learning. The course evaluation questionnaires were two distinct evaluation questionnaires for both teachers and students that were provided by ministry of education and were given to schools. These questionnaires were used for class evaluation at the end of the school year. In the student questionnaire, the students were asked to evaluate the course and to highlight the strong and the weak points of the materials used in classrooms and also the teachers' methodology. The teachers' questionnaires gathered information on the materials used in classrooms, the class progress, and the students' total accomplishment. Both students and teachers were asked to give their further suggestions.

### ***Procedure of the study***

At the beginning of the study, the researchers asked permission of the school Principal in order to conduct the study in the school. Then to choose a homogeneous group of students, the researchers obtained the students' scores of the previous year final exam. After that the researchers calculated the mean and standard deviation of the students' scores and those whose scores were within one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected ( $n=47$ ). In the next stage each student was given a number and then based on the systematic random sampling (i.e. odd and even numbers), they were randomly divided into two groups. One group just received the teaching of school book (control group), while the students of the other group were reading three short stories in addition to their school book (experimental group). It took two months to conduct the study.

## RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

### Paired-samples t-test

After dividing the students into two groups, one group was treated as the experimental group and the other group as the control group. The students of the experimental group were given three short stories during the time of the study. These students also received the pre-university English book as the main teaching material of the course. Since the students who were in the control group received the pre-university English book as well, the short story books were considered as the treatment materials of the study. The treatment of the study was reading short stories during the time of the study, and the aim was to check the effects of the treatment. Two writing tests (a pre-test and a post-test) were given to all the students. A paired-sample t-test was run to observe the effects of the treatment. Mean and gain scores were calculated to check the effects of the treatment. The descriptive statistics of the scores obtained from the writing pre-test and post-test of both groups showed that while the mean scores of experimental group's pre-test and post-test were 65.58 and 71.29, respectively, the control group's mean scores were in turn 70.13 and 72.91. These scores are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics on the writing scores of control and experimental groups

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	Pre-test	65.58	24	10.958	2.237
	Post-test	71.29	24	10.889	2.223
Control	Pre-test	70.13	23	10.563	2.202
	Post-test	72.91	23	9.876	2.059

A comparison of the pre-test and post-test of the groups showed that the students' scores had improved in both groups. To analyze the improvement and to check the effects of the treatment, a t-test was run and the results are presented in Table 6. Based on the information in Table 6, the significance of the tests of both groups was .000 and since it was smaller than .05, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, the writing proficiency of both groups had improved.

Table 6: Paired samples t-test of the scores of control and experimental groups

Paired differences									
				95% Confidence Interval of the Differences		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Effect size
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Experimental	Pretest-Posttest	-5.708	2.422	.494	-6.731	-4.685	-11.545	23	.000
Control	Pretest-Posttest	-2.783	1.906	.397	-3.607	-1.958	-7.002	22	.000

### Gain score

Based on the results of the paired-samples t-test, the writing proficiency of both groups had improved. The next step was to calculate the gain scores of each group and to run an independent samples t-test. The independent samples t-test would show us the effectiveness of the treatment. To calculate the gain score, the pre-test scores of the students

of each group were subtracted from their post-test scores. Table 7 shows the descriptive statistics of the gain scores of both groups.

*Table 7: Descriptive statistics on the gain scores of control and experimental groups*

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Gain score	experimental	24	5.71	2.422	.494
	control	23	2.78	1.906	.397

The mean of the experimental group's gain score was 5.71, while the control group had a mean gain score of 2.78. In Table 8, the gain scores are compared, and results are presented.

*Table 8: Independent samples t-test of the gain scores of control and experimental groups*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Gain score	Equal variances assumed	2.025	.162	4.589	45	.000	2.926	.638	1.641	4.210
	Equal variances not assumed			4.612	43.385	.000	2.926	.634	1.647	4.205

The null hypothesis of this test was that the improvement of both groups would be the same and the treatment would have no effects on the improvement of the experimental group. Based on the information in Table 8, the significance value of the test was .000; therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and it was concluded that the improvement of the experimental group was not by chance, and in fact it was the result of the given treatment. Since the treatment was considered effective, the effect size of the groups was calculated in order to observe the effectiveness of the treatment. Equation 5.1 was used to calculate the effect size.

$$(5.1). \text{Etsquared} = \frac{t^2}{t^2 + df}$$

$$\text{Etsquared} = \frac{(4.589)^2}{(4.589)^2 + 45} = 0.318$$

The effect size was large (.31).

### **Course evaluation**

At the end of the study, two questionnaires were used to find out about the opinions of the students who were in the experimental group and their teacher about the program and teaching materials that were used in the process of the study. The course evaluation questionnaire of the students consisted of twenty eight items. The answers of the students to these items were obtained and their total scores were calculated. According to the interpretation's guideline of the questionnaire, the scores could be in the range of 28-140. Based on the guidelines of the interpretation, those who scored between the ranges of 20-65, believed that the course was not an effective course; those who scored between the ranges of 65-113 believed that the course was an ordinary course and the students who scored between the ranges of 113-140 believed that the course programs were effective (Figure 1).



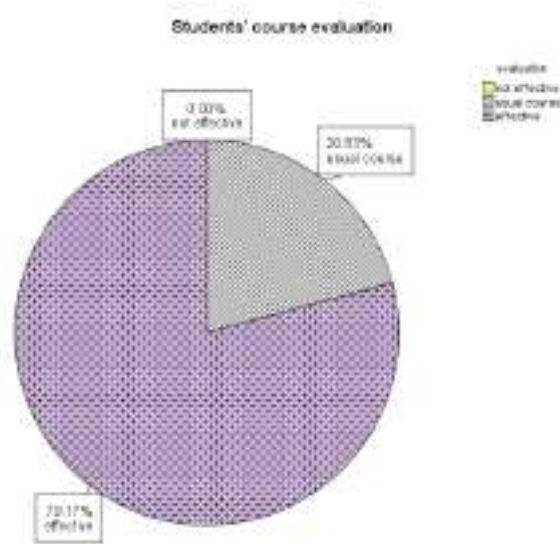


Figure 1: The pie graph of the course evaluation of the students

Figure 1 shows that 79.17% of the students of the experimental group had found the program and the teaching materials of the study, as effective. None of the students of the experimental group were unsatisfied with the program or the teaching materials and 20.83% of the students believed that the course was like the other English courses. A comparison of the results of this questionnaire showed that most of the students were satisfied with the integration of short stories in the process of English learning program.

The course evaluation questionnaire that was given to the teacher had 16 items. Based on the interpretation guidelines of the questionnaire, a score in the range of 64-80, indicated that the program of the course was excellent; 48-63 indicated that the program of the course was good; 32-47 indicated that the program of the course was fair and 16-31 indicated that the program of the course was poor. As it is shown in Table 9, the score of the teacher was 72 and therefore the teacher considered the program of the course as an excellent one.

Table 9: Course evaluation of the teacher

Evaluation ranges		Teacher's evaluation score
16-31	poor	-
32-47	fair	-
48-63	good	-
64-80	excellent	72 (excellent)

## CONCLUSION

### Discussion and interpretation of the findings of the research

The answer to the first and second questions of the study was that: there is a positive relationship between reading short stories and writing proficiency and both the students and the teacher consider short story as a beneficial tool in the process of language learning. In fact reading short stories helped the students with their writing skill. Erkaya (2009) had also emphasized the importance of integrating short stories into the curriculum. Furthermore, Hajimaibodi (2009) considered short stories as a tool that could enhance the reading comprehension skill. The

findings of a research by Hismanoglu (2005) were in line with the finding of this research. The result of the study was also in line with the findings of Cassell (2004); although the participants of his research were children, the findings were similar.

The findings of the study revealed that reading short story would have positive effects on the writing proficiency of English learners. The findings also showed that the students were satisfied with reading short stories; moreover the students believed that reading short stories would help them in the process of improving their writing skill. Based on these findings, the following conclusions were made:

- It was concluded that reading short story could enhance the writing proficiency of learners and thus it should be used as a teaching material of the ESL/EFL classes.
- It was concluded that since integration of short story was interesting and desirable for both students and teachers; therefore, it should be part of the teaching materials of all ESL/EFL classes.

The conclusions that were drawn about the integration of short story in the ESL/EFL classes, lead to the opinion that students, who received short stories as a reading material in addition to the main book, found it interesting. Thus it was suggested that the teachers should be careful about selecting the proper and interesting materials that could attract the students' attention.

#### ***Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research***

In this study all the participants were female students. Thus it would be beneficial to conduct further research with both male and female participants and to consider the gender difference effects. Also the population of the participants of this study was 47. Therefore, it would be beneficial to replicate this study with a larger number of participants and compare the results.

The short stories of this research were all classical short stories. Thus a further study, in which different genres of short story (for example fiction story or detective story) are used would be more desirable. Such study may help both students and teachers with the information about the effectiveness of selecting the stories according to the students' interests.

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### *Appendices*

#### Appendix A. Writing test

Dear participant, the aim of this test is to evaluate your writing ability. In part A of the test, you are asked to choose one of the topics and write 3-4 paragraphs about it. In part B, two questions are asked. For the question number one, read the given sentences carefully and continue the text with 2-3 sentences of your own. For the last question, use the given words and write a paragraph.

Name .....

A. Free writing:

A1. Choose one of the following topics and write three to four paragraphs about it.

- Child labor problems in Iran
- Poverty

B. Controlled writing:

B1. Complete the following sentences with 2 or 3 sentences of your own.

- You have certainly seen and used a computer. A computer is a programmable machine that accepts data and processes them into information we can use. Its purpose is to.....

B2. Use the given words and write a paragraph.

Mother Teresa/ nun/ suffering/ poverty/ devote/ voluntary/ financial/ charity

#### Appendix B. Jacobs et al.'s (1981) scoring profile (cited from Hughes, 2002, p.104)

##### ESL COMPOSITION PROFILE

Content	<b>30-27.</b> Excellent to very good: knowledgeable, substantive, thorough development of text, relevant to assigned topic
	<b>26-22.</b> Good to average: some knowledge of subject, adequate range, limited development of the text, mostly relevant to topic but lacks detail
	<b>21-17.</b> Fair to poor: limited knowledge of subject, little substance, inadequate development of topic
	<b>16-13.</b> Very poor: does not show knowledge of subject, non-substantive, not pertinent, not enough to evaluate
Organization	<b>20-18.</b> Excellent to very good: fluent expression, ideas clearly stated/supported, succinct, well-organized, logical sequencing, cohesive
	<b>17-14.</b> Good to average: somewhat choppy, loosely organized but main ideas stand out, limited support, logical but incomplete sequencing
	<b>13-10.</b> Fair to poor: non-fluent, ideas confused or disconnected, lacks logical sequencing and development
Vocabulary	<b>9-7.</b> Very poor: does not communicate, no organization, not enough to evaluate
	<b>20-18.</b> Excellent to very good: sophisticated range, effective word/idiom choice and usage, word form mastery, appropriate register
	<b>17-14.</b> Good to average: adequate range, occasional errors of word/idiom form, choice or usage but meaning not obscured
	<b>13-10.</b> Fair to poor: limited range, frequent errors of word/idiom form, choice or usage, meaning confused or obscured
	<b>9-7.</b> Very poor: essentially translation, little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms or

	word form, not enough to evaluate
	<b>25-22.</b> Excellent to very good: effective complex construction, few errors of agreement/tense/number/word order/word function/articles/pronouns/proposition
	<b>21-18.</b> Good to average: effective but simple construction, minor problem in complex construction, several errors of agreement/tense/number/word order/word function/articles/pronouns/proposition but meaning seldom obscured
Language use	<b>17-11.</b> Fair to poor: major problems in simple/complex construction, frequent errors of negation/agreement/tense/number/word order/word function/articles/pronouns/proposition or fragments/run-ons/deletions, meaning confused or obscured
	<b>10-5.</b> Very poor: virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules, dominated by errors, does not communicate, not enough to evaluate

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## **ABSTRACT**

Numerous studies have focused on L2 written errors and corrective strategies to improve learners' writing accuracy, but choosing the best method or strategy to correct written errors has always been a topic of controversy, and still there is no solution that scholars can agree on.

The purpose of the current review was to study written errors, their causes, sources, types, and the types of error treatment methods. For treatment of written errors, it is suggested that teachers should pay attention to the error types, purpose and context of language learning, and affective factors influencing the process of learning. It is also discussed that the disagreement in the findings of the previous studies on the treatment of written errors are due to the methodologies used.

**KEY WORDS:** error, feedback, error correction, L2 writing

## **INTRODUCTION**

Making errors is an inevitable part of life, and language learning, as a unique characteristic of human beings, is not an exception (Maicusi, Panayota, & López, 2000). Writing, like other language skills, has been a matter of concern in error correction studies. Error, error correction and the efficacy of written error treatment in L2 have always been a challenge in language teaching. There are various kinds of errors in L2 writings, and different strategies have been suggested for correcting these errors.

## **ERRORS**

To find out about the best error treatment method, it is necessary to define error first. Different authors tried to define error and its type. Generally speaking, error means mistake, but in linguistic terms, the concept of error seems to be more complicated and different from error. McDonogh (2000) distinguished two situations to define error. In the first situation, learners may know a correct generalization or rule about the target language, but forget to apply it due to the stress or factors other than language factors. In the second situation, learners may have an incorrect rule in their mind, from whatever source. McDonogh (2000) calls the errors of the first situation 'mistake' or 'lapse' and errors of second situation as 'error'. Corder (1967) distinguished errors as 'errors of competence' and 'errors of performance'. He calls errors of competence 'error'; and errors of performance 'mistake'. According to Corder (1967), discrimination between error and mistake is highly important; if learner can recognize that the form produced was incorrect, then it is a 'mistake' or 'laps', if not, that would be an 'error'. Self correction is another test to distinguish error from mistake. Learners are able to self correct mistakes, but errors would appear repeatedly in learners' language. Lee (1990) discussed that definition of error in English language teaching is different from linguistics, and psycholinguistics definition. In ELT, error refers to the "pedagogical notion" of error and incorrect forms belong to competence and performance of L2 learners, but in the linguistic term error refer to the incorrect forms in the performance of native speakers (Lee, 1990).

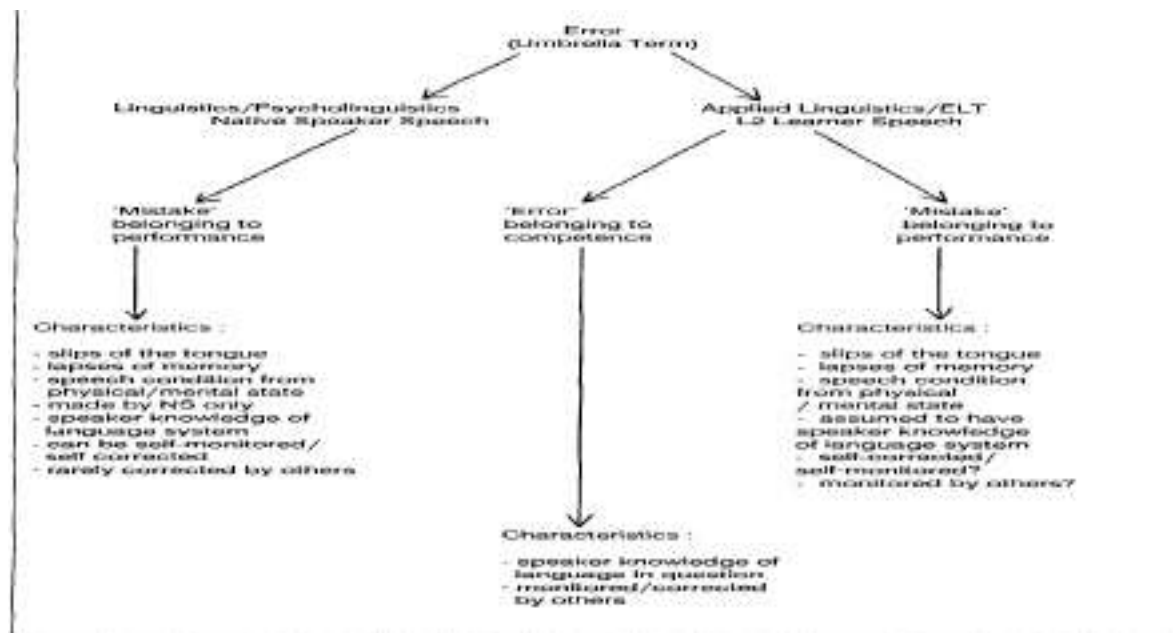


Figure 1: Lee's (1990) definition of error from linguistics and applied linguistic perspective

## ERROR CORRECTION AND FEEDBACK

Mistakes in spoken language may be allowed without being corrected because the message can normally be understood with the help of non-verbal cues and signals, but errors should be treated more carefully in written language, because unlike speaking they cannot be corrected after they are produced, or errors may hinder communication because the only means of conveying the message is the language (Lee, 1990).

There have been different views on the existence of the errors in learners' language. Corder (1967) believed that errors occur because of the inefficiencies in language teaching methods. So, for correcting learners' errors, the inefficiencies in teaching methods should be studied and treated.

Teachers play at least 4 roles when correcting L2 writings; they are a "respondent", a "writing guide", a "grammarian", and a "judge" (Keh, 1990). In the respondent role, teachers show their position toward the content of the writing. As a guide, teachers have their respondent role and they also guide learners through some parts of the writing and may ask them to clarify or revise some parts, but do not correct the errors. As a respondent, teachers help learners to find the correct form themselves but help them to find the right forms. In the grammarian role, teachers present grammar rules and mistakes, and comment on the part that needs revision. And finally as a judge, teachers grade writings and evaluate the final product.

Zourou(2008) believed that the type of feedback provided to learners should depend on the learners' purpose of studying and writing. The feedback, according to her, should be in harmony with the context that the learner is situated in, and the provided feedback has to be in accordance with what learners expect to learn and their needs.

Hendrickson (1984) believed that to choose the right error treatment method, teachers should have 4 factors in perspective:

- (1) Learners' level of proficiency in the target language
- (2) Learners' purposes of target language learning
- (3) Types of errors
- (4) Individual learners' attitudes toward error correction

Enginarlar (1993) used a questionnaire to find out about the feedbacks that language learners found more effective. The result of the study showed that in students' opinion "attention to linguistic errors, guidance on compositional skills, and overall evaluative comments on content and quality of writing" were the most beneficial feedbacks.



***Direct, indirect, and metalinguistic correction***

Teachers' reaction to the learners' errors is generally referred to error correction. Lee (1997) classified correction of written errors in terms of 'direct' and 'indirect correction'. Direct correction is when the teacher tells learner that the form used is incorrect and tells the correct structure, and indirect correction is when the teacher show learners that the form in their writing is incorrect and guide them to revise that. Lee (1997) also argued that indirect correction is not correcting the errors, but the "error feedback". Error feedback differs from overt correction; feedback is a technique that enables learners to find out about their problematic structure, while correction is providing learners with the exact correct form. He also claimed that error feedback may help learners more in their writings.

Ellis (2009) classified corrective feedbacks provided by teachers in 3 groups: direct, indirect and metalinguistic. In direct method the teachers mentions the errors and provides the correct forms, but in indirect correction, the teacher locates the errors and guides the learners to revise the errors themselves and does not mention the right forms. In metalinguistic correction, the teacher provides description of the error and learners should read and correct their errors. Description of errors can be in the form of error code, or by giving numbers to the errors and providing the grammatical description at the bottom of the text.

Beuningen et al. (2012) studied the effectiveness of direct and indirect corrective feedbacks and found that both direct and indirect corrective feedbacks helped writers to improve their accuracy. The outcome of their study showed that direct and indirect corrective feedback had short-time effect on accuracy of L2 writings, but only indirect feedbacks had long-term effect on learners' writings.

Erel and Bulut (2007) in their study tried to find out which of two different error-feedback strategies, direct vs. indirect coded, would be more effective for learners with regard to the number of errors they committed in their writing activities. They found out that both students who received indirect coded feedback strategy and direct correction decreased their errors and there was no significance difference between them, but the average number of errors showed that indirect way was more successful in eliminating errors and learners committed fewer errors in feedback correction than in error correction

***Explicit and implicit error correction***

Hashimoto (2004) presented another categorization for error treatment. He classified errors into explicit and implicit error correction; explicit correction was defined as a treatment in which the teacher directly mentions the incorrect form and provides the exact correct form, and on the contrary, implicit correction referred to a type of correction in which the teacher indirectly mentions the error and help learners to correct it on their own or by the help of other learners.

***Focused versus unfocused corrective feedback***

Ellis (2009) distinguished two types of error feedbacks according to the aspect of writing errors that teachers address; focused and unfocused feedback. In unfocused feedback, the teacher corrects all the possible errors while in focused feedback only certain types of errors are corrected. Providing correction for all errors could be time consuming and will put too much burden on teachers and language learners (Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, & Takashima, 2008), and according to Bitchener and Knoch (2009) correcting various linguistic categories can cause "cognitive overload" for learners.

In focused corrective feedback, the teacher selects only specific types of errors to correct (Ellis et al., 2008). Focused corrective feedback may be highly focused, which is limited to correcting a certain type of errors, or they may be less focused, which corrects more than one type of errors but still ignores some errors (Ellis et al., 2008). Ellis et al. (2008) believed that focused corrective feedback could be more advantageous than unfocused corrective feedback for it can help learners to concentrate on certain limited type of errors, and can learn more and better about that type of error and how correct or avoid that.

Several studies on the effectiveness of focused corrective feedbacks (like Sheen, 2007; Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch; 2009, Sheen et al.; 2009) showed that the writing accuracy of students who received written focused corrective feedback was improved more than the writing of students who received unfocused feedback or no feedback. On the other hand, Ellis et al. (2008) found both focused and unfocused feedbacks were equally effective

### ***Electronic corrective feedback***

By development of science and technology, new ways of correcting learners' errors have emerged. Electronic feedback, new electronic means for error correction, provides learners corrective feedback by computers (Ellis, 2009).

Yeh and Lo (2009) and Nagata (1997) found slightly better improvement in writing and correcting errors of L2 learners by online feedback than the conventional paper-based feedback.

One short coming of electronic feedback is that learners have to have access to the computer and they have to be able to use that, a necessary condition which some learners may not meet.

### ***Reformulation***

In this approach, a native speaker reads the learners' writing and rewrites the whole text to correct the errors and modify the text to the extent that it sounds native like, without changing the tone and content of the L2 learner. In reformulation, the native speaker's writing is a model for L2 students to use the proper forms and expressions, and to find about their own errors (Ellis, 2008).

In a study conducted by Sachs and Polio (2007) on the effectiveness of reformulation, it was found that traditional direct error-correction approach was more effective in improving L2 learners writing accuracy.

One problem associated with reformulation is that reading the whole text to rewrite all the parts is time consuming for teacher, and it may not be possible to have native teachers in some L2 learning contexts.

## **LEARNERS' RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK**

Error correction in EFL writing classes can be used as a consciousness-raising activity (Naeini, 2008). She believed that feedback on errors and form-focused instruction would draw learners' attention to the form, and not only the meaning, of the language they are using for communication. Lightbown (1998) believed that focusing on form in the class can help second language acquisition. He suggested teachers that explicit explanation about the form of the language can be facilitative in L2 learning.

So, a successful corrective feedback can help learners to uptake and correct their uptake (El Tatawy, 1998).

## **EFFICACY OF WRITTEN ERROR TREATMENT**

There have always been debates on the efficacy of written error correction. Valero et al. (2008) believed that errors should be corrected because if they are left uncorrected they become "fossilized", and Antos et al. (2010) found positive effects of corrective feedbacks on learners' noticing and feedback. On the other hand, Krashen (1982) believed that continuous correction can make affective filters which prevent L2 students to practice writing.

Grammar correction is an inevitable part writing correction for many teachers, but Truscott (1996) argued that correcting grammatical errors could be disadvantageous in improving learners' writings. He then discussed that students whose errors are not corrected will develop more positive attitudes toward writing, and are willing to write more in comparison with students that every little grammatical errors of their writing have been corrected. This positive attitude encourages students to write more, and in long term they would make better writers than students who are corrected continuously and write less. Time is another important factor for language learners and teachers, so to save time Truscott (1996) believed that grammar should not be corrected in writing; learners whose grammatical errors are constantly corrected spend more time to think and correct their mistakes and will have less time to spend on "productive learning objectives", and teachers who spend too much time correcting grammatical errors can use this time to focus more on "productive processes". So, he suggested extensive reading and writing to practice grammar and to develop accuracy of L2 writers rather than grammar correction.

On the contrary, Ferris (1999) believed that error correction effectively improves learners' writing accuracy, and what Truscott (1996) claimed to be harmful or ineffective is poor error correction, not the effective one.

Truscott (1999) in support of his previous findings claimed that no positive impacts of the error correction that previous studies suggested can help learners to overcome the negative effects of correction. Beuningen et al. (2012) studied the impact of error treatment on L2 learners' writing and found that "comprehensive correction" can help students to improve their writing accuracy.

Hashimoto (2004) discussed that not all errors should be corrected. He believed that the focus of error treatment should be on frequent errors, the errors related to the topics that learners have already studied them in the L2, and the errors that correcting them would prevent communication failure. By frequent errors, he meant those errors that are repeated many times when learners are learning a new language, and emphasized that correcting repeated errors and allocating more time to these types would be more beneficial than correcting all errors. Errors which learners have already studied about should also be corrected by teachers. Hashimoto (2004) mentioned that students will be confused if teachers do not correct the errors learners have learnt their structure in their lessons. For the last factor in error correction, error gravity, he classifies errors to two categories of "local errors" and "global errors". Local errors are the structures which seem correct according to the L2 rules, but not used by native speakers. And global errors are those structures that prevent successful communication and may cause misunderstanding. Then, it can be concluded that global errors should be prioritized to be corrected.

Studying the controversies in the outcome of different studies, Guénette (2007) argued that the conflicts in the findings can be due to the different methodology and the effects of the uncontrolled variables.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

In this review error, different systems of classifying them, errors of writing, and their treatments were studied. As different kinds of errors are committed in L2 writings, different ways are also available for correcting or treating these errors. Error correction should pay attention to learners' affective factors, their purpose of writing in L2 and the context in which they are learning the language.

The impact of error treatment on students' writing has been widely studied in the literature. Results of numerous studies ((Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener et al., 2005; Ellis et al., 2008, Chandler (2003) and Ferris (1999) showed that error treatment had positive effects on learners' writing accuracy, and also helped noticing and uptake. There have also been studies (Truscott, 1999, 2004, 2007; Truscott, & Hsu, 2008) that argued against error treatment and believed that error correction can cause affective filters which is harmful for the process of learning to write.

It is also discussed that the disagreement on the outcome of the research may be due to the different research designs of the previous studies (Guénette, 2007).

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## THE ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER, THE THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE OF TRANSLATORS AND THEIR PRACTICAL TRANSLATION SKILLS

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### ABSTRACT

The present study, attempted to examine the relationship between gender and theoretical knowledge of translation and practical skills on translation in Iranian translators. For this purpose, 35 Master of Art students both males and females studying English translation were selected from Mashhad Ferdowsi University in Iran. In order to collect data two tests were applied: one made up of questions selected from the Ph.D and M.A entrance exams together with a test of actual translation from Persian to English and the reverse. Data analysis and statistical calculations through T-TEST, one way ANOVA and Pearson Correlation revealed that Gender was an important factor on theoretical scores, while it was not an important factor on practical translation (English to Persian and Persian to English translation).

**KEYWORDS:** Translation, theory, theoretical knowledge, translation Studies, gender

### INTRODUCTION

Science and technology are developing rapidly and cultural, economic and political growths make some difficulties for human adjustment on information. The language barriers and assimilation of terms in different languages are some of these difficulties we can mention to. Overcoming these barriers is vital and translation can play this role. Entering globalization in modern world we can say that translation is a fundamental issue. In the process of exchange and cross communication translators are central. As Levy (1963) said translation studies have emerged as a new international and academic field. In the fifties and the seventies centuries translation studies shaped the basic part of applied and general linguistics which were seen as the only source of translation studies. Holmes (1988) was the first to offer a framework for this regulation. He divided translation into two principle area: translation theory and applied translation studies dealing with activities such as the training of translators and the condition of translation aids for translators as well as translation policy. The need for systematic study of translation comes directly from the problems happening during the actual translation process and it is essential for those working in the field to bring their practical experience to theoretical discussion.

Many scholars attempt to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Today, the dominating view is that theory and practice should be integrated (Leinhardt et al,1995). According to Hill (2002) several models of professional education on the continuing cycle of interaction between theory, practice and reflection as the way to create changes in students' thoughts and practices. Another effective new model of professional education is the 'realistic approach' that directs the theory towards the largest challenges of practice (Korthagen & Kessel, 1999; Korthagen, 2001). The increasing awareness of the new approaches in translation education has made us interested in the notion of relationship between theory and practice in translation. The study of translation and the training of professional translators is an important aim of scholars. The need to the process of teaching and learning is obviously felt in translator and interpreter training programs around the world.

This study will investigate on one hand, how academic theories and beliefs are reflected in the work place and in a translated texts, on the other hand, it investigates the effect of gender on translation of English to Persian and Persian to English. This study will help the students of translation to get familiar with the possible challenges like including theory into practice and the effect of theoretical knowledge on translation. The study is useful for the students



majoring in English translation and those who are interested in translation studies. This study tries to help translators and students of translation to include theory and practice in their translations and show some ways to fill the gap between theory and practice. It also aims at outlining new, realistic ways for the courses of translation at Universities and exploring the current relevance of the theory to the practice of translation,

### ***Statement of the problems***

Problems encountered during the actual translation process show the necessity of systematic study of translation. It is essential for those working in the field to bring their practical experience to theoretical discussion. Separation of theory from practice is a problem for translation. Baker (1992, p.248) mentioned that as a discipline, translation studies has reached a stage in its development where it was both ready for and needed the techniques and methodology of corpus linguistics in order to make a major jump from prescriptive statements, from methodologies to theorizing, and from individual and fragmented pieces of research to powerful generalizations. In that case the distinction between the theoretical and applied branches of the discipline will be apparent and believable.

The realization that translations are never produced in a vacuum, regardless of time and culture, and the desire to explain the time and culture bound criteria which are at play, result in a shift away from a normative and prescriptive methodology towards a descriptive methodology for a study of the subject (Hermans, 1985).

The situation for the realization of equivalence differs from one language culture to another. A valid strategy for translation in the past is not acceptable. Varieties of linguistics continue to govern the field in the 1990s. Students spend hours taking course but when they confront with direct situations, they are unable to use their learning in practice. "There is no balanced curriculum for translation theory and practice to provide a solid grounding in a professional setting. If a particular kind of source text couldn't be interpreted accurately by a translator, the target text does not achieve its particular function. The gap between theory and practice is the main problem. There is no acceptable curriculum program to bridge this gap. There are big gaps between the needs of translation training and the points offered by theory. From one aspect, students are disappointed at being troubled with theoretical reflections (translation theory and general linguistics) which they feel have nothing to do with the activity of translating, and from another aspect, scholars talk irreverently of translators who are unwilling to investigate the theoretical basis of their work, therefore reducing it to a simple practical skill" (Snell-Hornby, 2006).

Toury (1995, p. 69) claims that achievements of actual studies can themselves supply us with clues as to necessary and possible methodological improvements' and that if we hold up research until the most systematic methods have been found, we might never get any research done, the basic methodological problem is still unresolved. In general, translating needs to unite theory and practice in order to be successful.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Translation is a complex activity which requires both great patience and impeccable mastery. It can be a process or a kind of product. These two aspects of translation are interdependent and interrelated. Invisibility" is the term Venuti (1995, p.1) used to describe the translation and translator's situation. According to him a translated text, whether prose or poetry, fiction or nonfiction, is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers and readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic specialty makes it seems obvious giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer's personality or intention or the essential meaning of the text (Venuti 1995, p. 1). According to Venuti (1998, p. 135) translation is powerful and it can represent foreign cultures. The selection of foreign texts and development of translation strategies can make domestic traditions for foreign literatures, therefore show access, exclusions and peripheries that deviate current in the foreign language.

The first efforts at theory can be traced back over 2000 years to Cicero and Horace. To the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this discussion continued when more systematic analyses were undertaken by western European theoreticians. These systematic analyses, which raised translation studies from its role of being a language learning activity, centered on theories of translation in new linguistic, literally, cultural and philosophical contexts (Munday 2001, p.162).

In the 1970s, changes took place that translation theory and translation science transformed into "Translation Studies". This term was coined by Holmes in 1972, the use of a label that had proved productive in the field of

humanities (Holmes, 1988, p.70). Some scholars, (Hermans, 1999, preface), for the first time looked at translation in a descriptive term, so translated texts were noticed as texts in their own right (Even-Zohar 1978).

According to Benjamin (2008) there are many reasons to say that developing the pragmatic aspects of a linguistic theory of translation is important. First, pragmatic had been ignored by the linguistics who tried to create a general theory in the 1950s and the 1960s. Second,

A pragmatic theory can be used more than any other theories like semantic, syntactic or phonetic, because they are considered as a micro-linguistic theory and a micro-linguistic theory of translation is impossible, while micro-linguistic practice is best left to itself or to translator trainers and teachers. A pragmatic theory of translation must be illustrated, and illustration involves the micro-linguistic aspect. The terms of theory and practice are used frequently by scholars and translators. Some translation scholars maintain that they are working together while in the sight of some others there is a difference between theory and practice. Many studies suggest that there is a gap between what is taught by university and the action of translation. An interesting discussion of the theory and practice is given by de Beaugrande (2000, p.27). He declares that the relation between theory and practice should be dialectical by the nature, where the two sides interact and guide each other as they co-evolve in strategic contact. Several models of professional education focus on the continuing cycle of interaction between theory, practice and reflection as the way to create changes in students' attitudes and practices (Hill, 2000, p. 54). According to Vreugdenhil (2000) the theory-practice problem is a 'theory-student' 'teacher-practice' problem. To deal with it he developed a schedule, including three components:

- The objective theories or, more in general, the information available;
- The subjective theories of student teachers;
- The everyday practice as experienced in schools. According to his assumption, two inter-linked process of adaptation between the three components will bridge the gap between theory and practice. The first process consists of student teachers restructuring the theories that are instructed to them. Consequently, student teachers have to formulate for themselves meaningful knowledge they can apply in the classroom. They have to be trained to act in the class in accordance with their renewed knowledge. They can develop their subjective theories about teaching. The second process is matching their subjective theories to the particular situation. After investigating they can formulate a set of rules to act adequately. To bridge the gap between theory and practice we have to take into account what is already in the mind of the student teachers about the teaching (Vreugdenhil, 2000, p. 3).

Kiraly (2000), points out there is sufficient room for the more consistent accomplishment of social practical approaches in translator training, with large parts of the program still conquered by teacher-centered methods. He calls for a 'much-needed' shift in translator education (2000, p.27). According to him the goal of translator education must be to help students develop their own self-concept and to help 'in the mutual production of individually adapted tools that will allow every student to role within the language negotiation community leading graduation' (Kiraly, 2003, p.49).

Kiraly believes that learning should take place as a mutual social procedure in all translation relations, not just in special work assignments. In that environment, the trainer's role is like a facilitator and should support students to find solutions. In translation teaching focus has been on the translation theory and translation practice. It means that Students became familiar with theories and then operated within a special theoretical approach for example functionalist approach. Translators produced a target text according to the source text and the culture and tradition in a country. Kiraly (2000) distinguishes between translation competence and translator competence. According to him translation competence signify all the specific skills need to produce a right target text, while translator competence means 'knowing how to work within the various overlapping communities of translators and subject matter expert for completing work mutually, to proper knowledge, norms and conventions; and to affect to the growing conversation that represents those communities' (Kiraly, 2000, p.13).

In Hong Kong and Taiwan, especially in Hong Kong, the teaching of translation as a university major began at an earlier time. The first translation program in Hong Kong started in Chinese university of Hong Kong (CUHK) in 1972. Li Defeng in Hong Long carried out interesting and critical examination of the curriculum design and teaching methodology of specialized translation courses (including courses on commercial translation, government document translation, science and technology translation, mass media translation, and legal translation). He made valuable suggestion on how to improve the course content and teaching methodologies along with educational curricular theories and thoughts on translation teaching (Li Defeng, 2000;2002;2003;2005). According to Sylvia Bernardini (2004, p.19-22), people do not fully understand the important distinction between translator training and translator education. A vast expansion in specialized translating and interpreting programs has soared at both undergraduate and graduate level. These programs, which attract thousands of students, are mainly oriented towards training future professional commercial translators and interpreters in UK.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions are posed for the purpose of this study:

1. Is there any relationship between gender and theoretical knowledge?
2. Is there any relationship between gender and practical skill on translation?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

Participants selected for this study were chosen from M.A students of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. A total of 35 students including: 7 males and 28 females. The students who participated in this study were enrolled in the third semester so they had already passed two courses on translation. All the participants were Iranian and factors such as age and sex were assumed to be randomly distributed. Both males and females were given the same questions. Nearly 30 minutes was given for theoretical test. The questioner at the end included some questions showed participant's interest in translation, their experience on translating and the years they have been translating. Participants were in different ages from 23 to 40.

### ***Instruments***

The results of this study have been drawn from two tests, theoretical and practical. The theoretical test, a collocation composed of 30 multiple-choice items adopted from M.A and PhD entrance exam, held in the years 2011, 2012, public and Azad University course in Iran. This test was chosen from M.A and PhD entrance exams, because they are made by the most qualified test makers and scholars of the country and altogether the test could be considered as valid. Selected questions were those only concerning translation theories and not linguistic or general proficiency. Students answered 30 questions related to theories of translation. The time given was 30 minutes for 30 questions. With this sample test just their knowledge on translation theories was examined.

A variety of texts on the scope of human science were selected to check the participants' translation proficiency. Selected texts were about 40 lines including two parts, English to Persian and Persian to English translation. This practical exam was their term paper, so they answered carefully. Some parts of these texts were unseen and some others were seen because their proficiency on vocabulary was not important for this test and just the students' proficiency in practical translation was the main point. They were free to use dictionary. Translation test was administered to all subjects at the end of the term. Their practical exam was written and scored by their professor considering the meaning and grammatical rules and instructions.

### ***Procedure***

In this study the performance of students in university course on theoretical and practical aspects was compared to assess the correlation between their theoretical knowledge and their practical skill in gender groups. Prior to the practical experiment on translation, the subjects were given a theoretical test as it was mentioned, a multiple choice test with 30 questions related to translation theories to evaluate students proficiency on theories, then at translation second stage at the end of the term they passed a practical exam to compare their dexterity on practice and theory.

A Practical test including Persian to English and English to Persian was employed to check their proficiency on both kind of translation. It consisted of 40 lines of a human science text to check just their ability on techniques of translation, not their vocabulary. The practical test was assigned by their professor considering grammatical points and meaning. Before the treatment of the participants (students), their professor and the researcher held a meeting and the researcher gave an overview of whatever needed to be done in the study helping them understand its core principle. The data were collected through these two tests. The purpose of this study was to help translators and students in translating field, using theory and practice at the same time specially theories which are more practical and functional. Munday (2001, p. 79) mentions that Skopos theory focuses on the purpose of the translation which establish the translation methods and strategies that are to be employed to produce a functionally adequate result. Therefore, in this theory we should know why a source text should be translated and why the function of the target text will be important for the translators. Munday writes that an important advantage of skopos theory is that it makes possible for a translator to translate the same text in different ways according to the purpose of the target text (ibid, p. 80). Functional approaches in translation studies can help translators to view the text as a kind of

communicative unit and awareness of functional theories of translation make better the quality of students' translation.

## RESULTS

To verify the scores of theoretical test and practical translation from English to Persian, a one-way ANOVA test was calculated.

*Table 1: distribution of frequency and percentage of the sample scores according to translation from English to Persian and Persian to English*

Translation scores	Eng. to Per.	Per. to Eng
0 - 24.9	5(14.3%)*	5(14.3%)
25 - 49.9	9(25.7%)	10(28.6%)
50 - 74.9	13(37.1%)	12(34.3%)
75 - 100	8(22.9%)	8(22.9%)
Total	35(100%)	35(100%)

*\*Number(percent)*

The score is expressed in percentage to make all scores comparable. So the raw score is not important, only the percentage.

*Table 2: English to Persian. \* Persian to English. Cross tabulation*

			Per. to Eng.				Total
			0 - 24.9	25 - 49.9	50 - 74.9	75 - 100	
Eng. to Per.	0 - 24.9	Count	2	2	1	0	5
		Percent	5.7%	5.7%	2.9%	0%	14.3%
	25 - 49.9	Count	3	3	1	2	9
		Percent	8.6%	8.6%	2.9%	5.7%	25.7%
	50 - 74.9	Count	0	2	6	5	13
		Percent	0%	5.7%	17.1%	14.3%	37.1%
	75 - 100	Count	0	3	4	1	8
		Percent	0%	8.6%	11.4%	2.9%	22.9%
Total	Count	5	10	12	8	35	
	Percent	14.3%	28.6%	34.3%	22.9%	100%	

### *Kappa Coefficient agreement and statistical result*

		Kappa coefficient	P-value
Measure of Agreement	Kappa	.096	.343

Measure of agreement in Kappa in this study is (Kappa=0.096). In other words, the agreement between two variables is low so it is not significant (according to table 2).

*Table 3: distribution of mean scores for theory in gender groups examined.*

Theory	Sex	Mean	SE
	Female	18.60	1.29
	Male	25.70	3.70

*Table 4: the result of statistical exam, comparing theoretical scores in two groups by T-Test*

			T-Test Result
t	Df	P-value	Mean Difference
-2.251	33	.031	-7.10143

Mean difference in gender groups (Male and Female) is compared. It is obvious from the table that mean difference of theoretical scores in females is  $18.6 \pm 1.29$  and mean difference for male is  $25.7 \pm 3.7$ . Mean difference of theoretical scores in male and female is 7.101. According to the table there is a significant difference in theoretical scores between male and female, ( $p=0.031$ ).

***Mean score of translation in gender groups***

Mean score of translation (from Persian to English and English to Persian) in males and females is presented in above table.

Tables 5 and 6 show the scores in two groups are very similar. Mean score of practical translation in females is  $50.32 \pm 4.00$ , while this score in male is  $50.30 \pm 6.39$ .

*Table 5: distribution of mean scores for practical translation in gender groups examined*

	Sex	Mean	SE
Practical translation	female	<b>50.32</b>	<b>4.00</b>
	male	<b>50.30</b>	<b>6.39</b>

*Table 6: the result of statistical exam, comparing Practical translation scores in two groups by T-Test*

T-Test Result			
t	Df	P value	Mean Difference
<b>.002</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>.999</b>	<b>.01571</b>

The result of these score makes clear that there is no significant difference in two groups. ( $p=0.999$ ).

***Mean scores of English to Persian translation in gender groups***

As table 9 displays Mean scores of English to Persian translation in females are compared to the Mean scores of English to Persian in males.

*Table 7: distribution of mean scores of English to Persian translation in gender groups examined*

	Sex	Mean	SE
Eng. to Per.	Female	<b>50.47</b>	<b>4.43</b>
	Male	<b>50.59</b>	<b>8.97</b>

*Table 8: the result of statistical exam, comparing English.to Persian scores in two groups by T-Test*

T-Test Result			
t	Df	P-value	Mean Difference
<b>-.012</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>.990</b>	<b>-.11929</b>

There is no significant difference in both groups. Mean score in females is  $50.47 \pm 4.43$ , while this score in male is  $50.59 \pm 8.97$ . Statistical test shows no significant difference in these groups. ( $p=0.99$ ) p value is greater than 0.05.

*Mean scores of Persian to English**Table 9: distribution of mean scores for Persian. to English translation in gender groups examined*

	Sex	Mean	SE
Per. to Eng.	Female	<b>50.16</b>	<b>4.77</b>
	Male	<b>50.01</b>	<b>6.78</b>

*Table 10: the result of statistical exam, comparing Persian to English scores in two groups by T-Test*

T-Test Result			
t	Df	P-value	Mean Difference
<b>.015</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>.988</b>	<b>.15071</b>

In this table we can see that Mean scores of Persian to English translation in both gender groups are similar to their scores in translation of Persian to English, nearly 50. As it is shown in the table, comparison of translation scores in males and females, Mean scores of translation in females is equal to  $50.16 \pm 4.77$ , while this scores in males is equal to  $50.01 \pm 6.78$ . P-value of observed T-Testis ( $p=0.988$ ), greater than .015, as a result there is no significant differences between two mentioned groups' scores. According to the scores of practical translation (English to Persian and Persian to English) in both genders and T-Test was resulted that:  $H_0$  is accepted, because T observed is smaller than critical.

**DISCUSSION**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between gender, theoretical knowledge of translators and their practical translation skills (English to Persian and Persian to English). Consequently, a group of M.A students majoring in translation were selected. The finding of this study shows that students' practical skill in translation was better than their theoretical knowledge. The result of students' scores in practical translation was compared to their scores in theoretical exam in two gender groups in order to investigate, whether gender had any significant effect on students' translation skill and their theoretical knowledge. This study shows that there was not any relationship between gender and translation capability, but there was a direct relationship between gender and theoretical knowledge.

**CONCLUSION**

This study attempts to undertake an approach seeking to know the difference between the translators' theoretical knowledge and their practical skill in gender group, on translating field at the university level, undergraduate students. The finding of this study shows that students' practical skill in translation both male and female was better than their theoretical knowledge, but male's theoretical scores were better than females.

Based on the findings of the present study, we can conclude, that gender is an important factor on theoretical scores.

**LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Like any other research, some unavoidable limitations, which may raise new questions for further researches in the same field in the future, will be imposed on this research. In addition to the small sample size and its short duration, some limitations are present in this study. Variables such as age and personal variables are not taken into account due to the limited number of the available participants. Another important restriction in this study can be related to the reliability of the theoretical test, due to lack of any other sources.



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## THE EFFECT OF USING WEBLOGS ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS WRITING SKILL

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### ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to investigate the effect of weblogs on the improvement of Iranian EFL learners' writing skill. To achieve this goal, the researchers designed a weblog, which was shared by the treatment group of the study; the study had 50 EFL students divided into two groups of treatment and control. Mainly two steps were taken during the study, a pre-test and a post-test. The pre-test administration was due to check the proficiency of the participants and the post to measure the impact of the study process. The data obtained from tests and questionnaires throughout the academic year 2012, and from comments made on the blog, revealed that the students responded positively to the use of the blogs inside a class. It was found that the blog helped them to improve their writing through the collaborative learning environment that was established and through the process of writing that was adopted. There was consensus that writing for an audience and peer review contributed to the development of the collaborative learning environment and this was conducive to developing writing skills.

**KEYWORDS:** Weblog, CMC (Computer Mediated Communication), Blogger, Webopedia, Blog

### INTRODUCTION

The increasing use of the Internet over the past few years and its expansion to educational contexts has provided language learners with new opportunities for interaction outside classroom setting. Vygotsky (1978) confirmed this interaction as a key factor in enhancing language skills from a socio-cultural view of learning. Today, almost everyone has the experience of communicating with a peer via computer in one form of online communication or another, and in recent years, the use of such online communication has become very common in educational settings in general, and language learning in particular (Gorbanpoor, 2013). In language learning, online communication increases learners' access to comprehensible input, and provides them with opportunities to practice producing the language (Warschauer, 1996). This is especially helpful in contexts where the foreign language is not widely used and learners do not have much exposure to language outside classroom setting. In addition to the mere provision of the learners with new opportunities to interact with others, online communication is said to have other advantages as well, which might make it more efficient in some aspects than the face-to-face communication taking place in the classroom.

Research by Bolke (2003) suggests that in online communication, participation on the part of learners is increased and involvement is more equalized among learners, unlike traditional classroom settings in which usually a small group of students tended to dominate the whole class interactions. The teacher's role is not anymore one of the authorities disseminating knowledge, rather it changes to a moderator of discussions, thus increasing learners' participation (Heift, 2007).

With the advent of computer-based technology, and its applications to teaching and learning, many students practice their writing skills synchronously as in chatting, instant messaging, and live discussion boards (Smith, 2006) or asynchronously as in emailing and blogging. Therefore, EFL teachers use these Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) platforms to develop and improve students' English learning and collaborative skills in the cyberspace. The internet has provided a chance for writers to express their feelings and voice their ideas in a variety of ways such as

personal blogging, Face-book, Twitter, and other similar social networks. Bloch (2002) maintains that ELT research has tapped into the pedagogical implications of blogs for learning and teaching writing in English. Kim (2008), who has laid the theoretical foundations of blog use in educational contexts, has also underlined the significance of blogging.

Halik (2010) has considered blogs as an effective replacement for all CMC applications to English learning, taking into account socio-technical systems theory. In this concern, he has adeptly noted that the popularity of blogs among young people has made them interesting to educators seeking to integrate CMC tools at the university level. He has also asserted that these kinds of tools are seen as having the potential for enhancing student engagement and providing an environment for collaboration and creation of knowledge. Indeed, the emergence of these technologies encourages teachers to re-examine and redefine their goals for the classroom as king and demonstrating how established teaching practices can be expanded with the introduction of new technological practices. The interactive feature of blogging nominates it not only as a textually social environment, but also as a practice inducing a writing orientation embedded in a social network orientation. Based on the above-mentioned premises, the present paper aims to investigate the effect of using weblogs on Iranian EFL learners' writing skill and their attitudes towards English learning.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This study is designed to find out if the implementation of blog-based assignments as an extra and modern form of out-of-class activity would have any significant effect on learners' writing ability. To achieve this goal, the researchers designed and launched a weblog for EFL learners participating in the study. The present study, thus, was an endeavor to explore how Iranian EFL learners responded to the use of blogs as a tool to improve their writing skill.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This is a quasi-experimental study to examine the effects of blogging (blog-based writing activities) on the writing skills of the Iranian EFL learners. To accomplish the goals of this study, the researchers followed a number of steps. At first, in order to check the homogeneity of the participants, a standard proficiency test was administered to make sure the participants were homogeneous in terms of their proficiency level. Once the preliminary test was administered and the group members were selected out, the researchers designed a weblog called "Research.blog.com" which was launched in the Blogfa.com, a powerful service provider to design and manage personal weblogs. The main objective of this weblog was to compare the members of treatment group, as the main users of this weblog, with the members of the control group who received writing instruction through the traditional classroom-based method.

#### ***Participants***

The participants of this study were 60 students (23 males & 37 females), all of the subjects majored in English Translation at Islamic Azad University (Islamshahr branch). In order to have the subjects fully accompany through the research, I tried to give a general explanation of what will be going on through the research at the beginning of the study. The participant's age ranged from 20 to 27. The subjects were randomly divided into two groups of 30. The decision as to which of the two groups being experimental and which one as control was also made randomly; thus, the first group treated as experimental and the second one as control.

To make sure that the students placed in the experimental group would have no problem with blog-based activities, they were asked to check if they all had email accounts and access to the Internet at the beginning of the course. They, rather, all had the basic knowledge about using the Internet, and since signing up and checking email and blog do not require much techno-literacy on the part of users, they did not need any special instruction in this regard. In regard with the control group, they were supposed to do their writing activities as scheduled and submit their jobs to their teacher weekly. Simply put, the distinctive feature between the first and the second group was the setting of writing where the control group used the traditional paper-based writing methods while the experimental group employed the computer-based writing techniques.

### ***Instrumentation***

*Pre-Test:* An essay-type test was administered to check the general proficiency of the participants. As the test proved that the majority of participants were homogeneous, they were divided into two equal groups in terms of their scores on the test. All the way through the research, the students in the experimental group involved were in an active methodology in dealing with the writing course syllabus and participating in blogs to practice writing skills and the control group followed the traditional class-based instruction methods, such as using paper-based dictionaries etc. In sum, the purpose of pretesting students' was to establish both groups' equivalence on English proficiency before the experiment, and to use the pretesting information for later comparisons with the post test. The test was administered in 50 minutes.

*Class blog:* The blog created in this website was accessible to the participants, but as for posting new topics and even for commenting on the posts, the blog provided a feature which let the administrator customize the people who were allowed to contribute to the content by posting new topics or comments. In other words, the administrator could choose to allow everyone to post on the blog, or else, he or she could moderate the privacy of the blog and let only the invited people who were members of the blog to submit new posts.

The main posts of the blog started by the administrator (i.e. one of the researchers), stating the topics about which the participants were supposed to write. They were required to write and submit their writing activities in the comment bar of the blog. The participants were also asked to check their classmates' activities and send their comments as well. The editing window of the blog comment section included a spell-checker feature, which prevented the participants from doing probable spelling errors by underlining the misspelled word. However, it did not have the more complex features included in word processor programmers such as Microsoft Office Word, which provides users with more advanced writing features like grammar checker, thesaurus, etc.

Since the research was already programmed for eight weeks, eight topics were uploaded on the weblog screen by the researchers. Before choosing the topics, there was a consultation between the researchers and the participants, because the motivation of the participants was important to the researchers, as a result of our consultation, the topics were mostly dominated by social topics. The given topics were as bellow:

- . Write about your last trip
- . Write about your city
- . How can we make good friends?
- . Regarding genders, which one is adept at language learning, males or females?
- . Write about your social troubles.
- . Where do you wish to spend your next vacation?
- . What is the dress code in your country? (Clothing do's and don'ts)
- . Is staying in shape important to you?
- . What do you usually do to keep fit?

The mentioned topics were presented to the experimental group within eight weeks. At the beginning of each week, the researcher started a topic in a new post and students were to contribute it by writing their own posts. They needed to submit at least three posts for each topic, either replying to the teacher's original post at the beginning of the thread, or commenting on their other friends' postings.

Since the blog featured threaded (nested) comments, students were able to choose to write in response to the original post by the teacher at the top of the thread, or else to write a comment in response to other classmates' posts (comments and sub-comments). This way they were encouraged to read all the posts by other members, which was a very effective strategy to make reading and writing connections. It should be mentioned that the treatment group was not limited only to a certain number of topics. They were also asked to surf the Internet and share the interesting materials they found with the whole group. This method proved to be very useful, since the participants in treatment group were engaged in different techno-based activities, like emailing, commenting, chatting and so on.

*Post-Test:* At the end of the course, learners in the two groups took a writing test around the topics and grammar points covered during the treatment. The purpose was to check if there was any significant difference between the average scores of the two groups' performance on writing test, and if the treatment had any effect on the writing proficiency of the learners in experimental group. This test also was designed to find out the extent of advance in the

control group who had been receiving the traditional classroom-based writing instruction. The post-test required the participants to write a paragraph of at least eight sentences long. The whole test-time was about 50 minutes.

During the study, the participants in both groups were to write on the same topics that the researchers uploaded for the experimental group through the weblog and the control group through the class sessions respectively. But, the differentiating border between the two groups was in the process of writing and the sources that they could refer to.

As part of the post-assessment, the researchers also tracked the quantity of group posts and comments, considered the quality of writing and effort and assigned grades accordingly. All the posts and comments were later analyzed in class for linguistic accuracy. Together with the experimental group instructor, the researchers also organized in-class discussion encouraging participation reflecting on the content of the flow of messages exchanged what they had learned through specific entries and the impact of the entry on its readers. To raise the reliability of the results, essay writings were judged by two instructors.

### **Procedure**

The researchers conducted the proficiency test on the same day for both groups. The T-test was carried out to investigate the difference in performances of both groups, which indicated almost similar performances for the two groups. To remove any contingent test ambiguities, the participants were asked to raise their questions before test administration. The research was conducted during the second semester of Iranian Academic year of 1391 coinciding with the second half of 2012 and it took a period of eight weeks as I presented a topic for a week.

At the start, the participants in the experimental group were told they would be participating in a Weblog-based writing research activity, consisting of some topics presented by the researchers on the weblog, which was shared between the researchers and the treatment group. The participants in treatment group were to log on the Internet and check for the topics to do their writing activity using their EFL knowledge. Since the main goal of the study was to investigate the development of writing skill for the treatment group, therefore they were told to get their best to use computer software's like "Word spell checker" and Internet as well. Besides, the control group was given the same topics to write about without using computer and Internet and they were asked to write just using their own knowledge and paper-based dictionaries.

In order to keep the research atmosphere as real as possible and to motivate the participants, we allocated 10% of their final writing score for this study. To make the participants familiar with the whole procedure of the study, the instruction was orally given in both English and Farsi. For the sake of eliminating any sort of probable misunderstandings, illustrative examples were given prior to the study.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### ***How did Iranian EFL students respond to the use of blogs as a tool to improve their writing skill?***

*Pre-Test of Writing:* An independent t-test was run to compare the treatment and control groups' mean scores on pretest of writing in order to prove that the two groups enjoyed the same level of writing ability prior to the main study. As displayed in Table 2, the mean scores for treatment and control groups on pretest of writing were 68.40 and 68.20 respectively.

*Table 1: Descriptive Statistics Pretest of Writing by Groups*

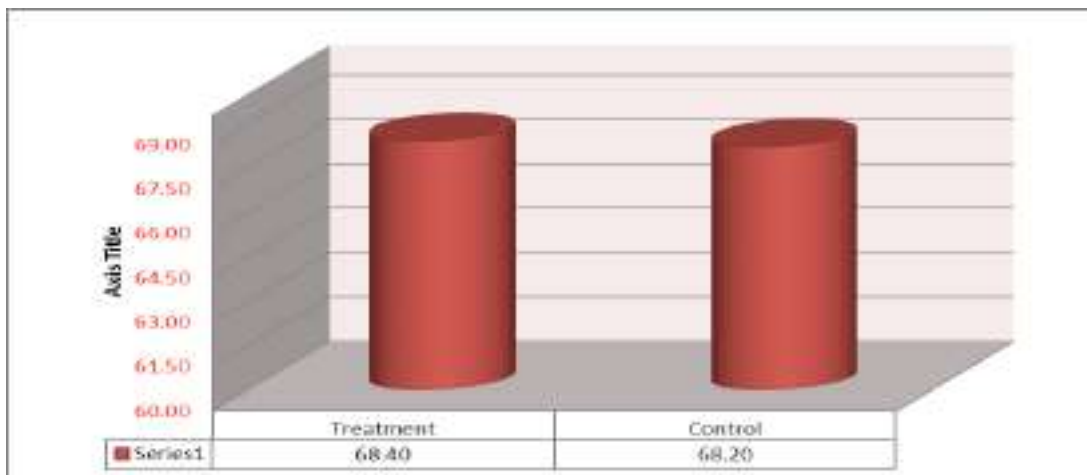
Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Treatment	25	68.40	15.028	3.006
Control	25	68.20	15.177	3.035

The results of the independent t-test ( $t_{48} = .047$ ,  $P = .96 > .05$ ,  $r = .007$ ) indicated that there was not any significant difference between treatment and control groups' mean scores on the pretest. Thus, it can be concluded that the two groups enjoyed the same level of writing ability prior to the main study. The details for the independent t-test pretest mentioned on Table 2 and Graph 1 below.

Table 2: Independent t-test Pretest of Writing by Groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.007	.935	.047	48	.963	.200	4.272	-8.389	8.789
Equal variances not assumed			.047	47.995	.963	.200	4.272	-8.389	8.789

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met (Levene's  $F = .007$ ,  $P = .935 > .05$ ). That is why the first row of Table 2, i.e. "Equal variances assumed" was reported.



Graph 1: Pretest of Writing by Groups

*Post-test of writing:* An independent t-test was run to compare the treatment and control groups' mean scores on posttest of writing in order to probe the effect of using blogs on the improvement of their writing skill. As displayed in Table 3 the mean scores for treatment and control groups on posttest of writing were 75.12 and 64.76 respectively.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics Posttest of Writing by Groups

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Treatment	25	75.12	13.752	2.750
Control	25	64.76	14.051	2.810

The results of the independent t-test ( $t_{(48)} = 2.63$ ,  $P = .011 < .05$ ,  $r = .35$  it represents a moderate to large effect size) indicated that there was a significant difference between treatment and control groups' mean scores on the posttest of

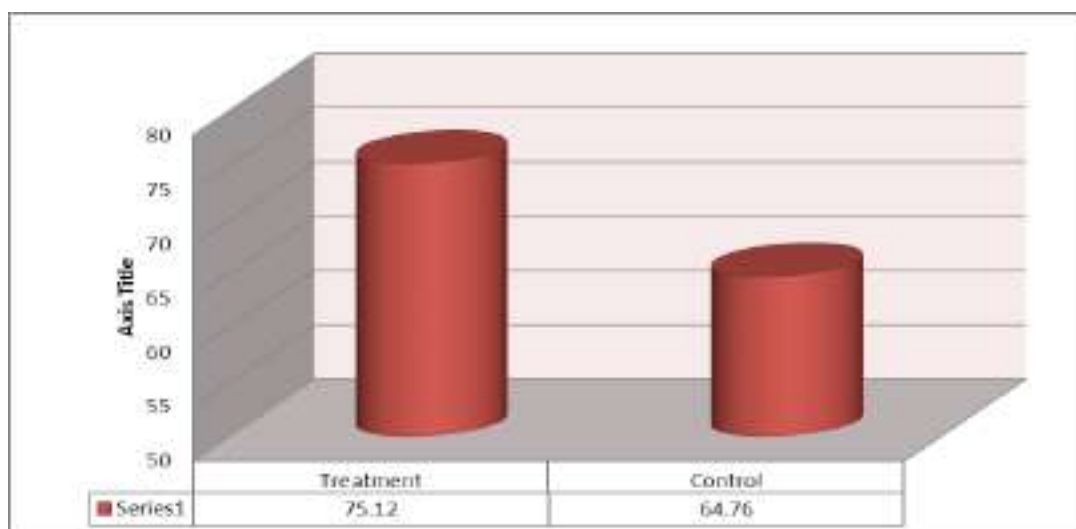


writing. Thus the first null-hypothesis as using blogs does not have any significant effect on the improvement of the writing skill of the students was rejected. The treatment group following blogs writing outperformed the control group on the posttest of writing. The details for the independent t-test posttest elaborated on Table 4 and Graph 2.

*Table 4: Independent t-test Posttest of Writing by Groups*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.010	.922	2.635	48	.011	10.360	3.932	2.454	18.266
Equal variances not assumed			2.635	47.978	.011	10.360	3.932	2.454	18.266

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met (Levene's  $F = .01$ ,  $P = .922 > .05$ ). That is why the first row of Table 4, i.e. "Equal variances assumed" was reported.



*Graph 2: Post-test of Writing by Groups*

#### *Reliability Indices*

Table 5 indicates the reliability of the test based on K-R21 reliability indices.

*Table5: reliability indices*

	N of Items	Mean	Variance	K-R21
Pretest	100	68.30	223.439	.91
Posttest	100	69.94	216.711	.91

## DISCUSSION

The feedback that the researchers received through having interviews with the participants indicated that web-blog was an appropriate media to use to improve the students' motivation in writing. It was because the web-blog can challenge students to write texts and its use was not complicated for the students. This statement is in line with Carreira (2006) who points out that the challenging materials that suit the learners' capability are important for motivating students.

There was also a set of facilitating factors that played an important role in mediating the motivation of the student teachers. First, the prior experience and habit of individual students regarding blogging determined their readiness for blogging. Those who already had the habit of sharing their daily life and thoughts in personal blogs seemed likely to embrace blogging. Second, the social and environmental conditions could also affect the level of engagement in class blogging. Since the students were already well acquainted with each other, there was a strong sense of community and social relationships among classmates, which served as an effective channel for doing blog-activities to share and communicate with one another. In this respect, this study supports the idea that the pre-existing social relationship can provide an impetus for online engagement (Kavanaugh, Carroll, Rosson, Zin & Reese, 2005). At the same time, the social resources available in one's immediate physical environment can encourage the adoption of academic blogging. For those students who were not familiar with blogging, a fellow student who was able and willing to provide help and support could be a valuable resource. On the other hand, lack of social support in one's physical context could serve as a strong impetus for using blogging as an alternative outlet for emotional release and reaching out for support. In this respect, our findings are in line with previous studies that show that inadequate social support available in real life engenders increased motivation and engagement with online groups (Turner, Grube & Meyers, 2001).

## CONCLUSION

In this study, the use of the blog encouraged the development of improved teaching and learning strategies to approach the skill of L2 writing and it is apparent that the benefits outweighed the drawbacks and challenges in the TEFL L2 classroom. The blog created an innovative, more engaging and more authentic experience for the students. Despite the issues surrounding confidence and trust, it was proved a user-friendly communication tool that was useful in the development of students' critical thinking skills through analysis of comments made from other students. The collaborative learning environment established allowed students to learn through modeling and through exposure to other students' opinions, ideas and perspectives. Furthermore, writing for an audience and the process approach to writing incorporating peer review, self-editing and revising undoubtedly affected the students writing quality.

The study confirmed the benefits of blogging in the language classroom mentioned by Arena (2008) regarding the students' choice of more appropriate language and the motivational aspect of realizing that one's voice echoes in distant parts of the globe. Writing for a purpose, i.e. self-expression and self-reflection in blogs for professional development has encouraged them to produce language more fluently. Although the purpose of the activity aimed at improving writing skills, readings skills are likely to have also improved. As Thorne and Pyane (2005) suggest, creative guidance from the instructor and collaboratively chosen activities are needed to integrate online writing in the university syllabus. This new learning environment and the meaningful context have raised high motivation in the students and will help them become life-long and more efficient learners.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The current study had the following limitations:

**Lack of blogging skills among Iranian learners.** While almost all of the Iranian students are familiar with the basics of computer and the internet skills, not everyone may be familiar with blogging. Therefore, this may introduce some problems during the program implementation.

**Log on difficulties in Iran.** There is always log on difficulties here in Iran, connecting to Internet is not feasible wherever and whenever the users wish. This may potentially hamper the implementation of this piece of blog-based research.

**Time limit of the study.** Due to educational limitations, the time limit of the study could affect the written production of the students. If the study time had been longer, the results might have been different.

**Gender imbalance.** The number of female and male students in language classes was not balance i.e. females outnumbered males.

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## EFFECTS OF A BLENDED LEARNING MODULE ON EFL STUDENTS' ATTITUDES IN AN INTRODUCTORY READING COURSE IN AL-QUDS OPEN UNIVERSITY SETTING

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of using blended learning (BL) in teaching/learning a reading comprehension course on English as a foreign language (EFL) students' attitudes and motivation. Twenty-seven students taking Reading I class at Al-Quds Open University (QOU) participated in the study. The class received instruction through a blended learning module (i.e. a mix of both conventional and computer-assisted methods). Participants were required to complete pre-and post-questionnaires to track their attitudes and motivation before and after employing computer-based activities. After the implementation of the intervention, comparison of the students' mean scores of the pre-and post-questionnaires showed a statistically significant improvement in the students' attitudes and motivation toward learning English and employing computer-based activities.

**KEYWORDS:** blended learning; e-learning, attitude, motivation, computer-assisted language learning.

### INTRODUCTION

The delivery of higher education nowadays is mired with challenges, foremost that of the need to teach more learners more efficiently, more cheaply, and with less staff. This has driven many institutions toward new technology, which – with its different forms of discussion boards, weblogs, synchronous chat environment, e-mail, instant messaging, online learning environments as well as social media Internet – has opened up new horizons in the world of education in general and language education in particular (Connell, 2006; Farmer, 2004; Fichter, 2005; Richardson, 2008). This has also offered learners a wide range of learning options and allowed them to easily exchange information and ideas, which is consistent with the growing interest not only with what people learn but also with how they learn. While some prefer to study on their own, others choose to study with peers. Some people favor using print materials; others prefer multimedia, which involve all the senses. That is, different learners enjoy different ways of learning which are widely known as “learning styles” or “learning preferences” (for more see Celce-Murcia, 2001).

In the same vein, Bates (1993: 221) stresses the need to choose the medium which best suits the given mode of presentation and the central composition of the subject matter. Learners may not always get equal benefits as some media may suit one group of learners but not suit another group, depending on their educational, social backgrounds, experiences, wants, needs, and cultural orientations. Despite their widely acknowledged advantages, for socioeconomic, pedagogical, psychological, or technical considerations, neither conventional face-to-face learning per se nor e-learning per se can be an exclusive path for effective learning. Al-Shaer (2011) recommended Al-Quds Open University (QOU) combine new technologies with the conventional mode of teaching and learning on the assumption that using such a blend can give the students the freedom to choose their preferred media.

Accordingly, all courses offered by QOU are taught using optional modern electronic learning tools as a supplement to the conventional methods of teaching through the academic portal, instructional materials, the Moodle system of administering learning, the system of virtual classes - Blackboard, and videostreaming. The university academic portal provides all electronic services and tools of communication for the electronic parts of the university courses via the synchronous and asynchronous forums of each course in addition to e-mail, file management, and announcements services which enable faculty members and students to communicate together on the one hand, and the faculty members and students with the university administration, colleges, and educational and technological centers. On the other hand, these conventional courses, which have an optional electronic component implemented through the electronic portal, are still evaluated in the traditional way in which students have paper assignments and exams.

More recently, QOU has adopted blended learning, a combination of e-learning and conventional face-to-face learning, to accomplish feasibility and maintain flexibility in time and place of learning. It is meant to establish an interactive multimedia environment in addition to the face-to-face meetings that suit learners' different wants, needs, and expectations. Therefore, QOU has introduced a new mode of electronic courses that embraces video streaming

courses; electronic template courses; and blended courses (electronic activities). The video streaming courses incorporate both conventional and electronic teaching. The conventional part has face-to-face classes while the electronic part has classes transmitted via videostreaming technology either directly or through recorded videos. They follow a timetable prepared at the beginning of each semester and are available for the students on the academic portal. The videostreaming courses have paper assignments; some courses, such as History of Jerusalem, are designed in the form of interactive electronic courses.

The electronic template courses are designed electronically using Moodle technology to administer the learning process. The course is completely designed by using various technologies such as video, audio, PowerPoint and templates.

The blended learning courses follow the units specified in the textbooks, which have been developed to facilitate interaction. The ease and clarity of these courses make the content absorbable. The course includes course management, study units, first and second activities, forums, and self-assessment questions. Some study units are electronically designed to be interactive by using tools to compile the content and the multi-media instruction. Due to the significance of reading in the learning process, program designers give the most attention to claims that blended learning offers supplementary and/or alternative options to develop EFL students' reading skills.

The system of virtual classes enables students to attend lectures synchronously and record them. Students can access these recordings later through Moodle. The electronic activity English courses offered in the current semester (1121) are reading (1); writing (1); ELT (1); and the Twentieth Century American Literature. To clarify the characteristics of this mode of courses, take for example Reading I which is offered for first year English major students who, despite studying English for at least eight years at school, still have problems with certain basic tasks such as finding the main idea of paragraphs, discovering the relationship between paragraphs in a text, providing a summary of a passage, or guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words. The new students' poor reading skills are among the concerns of administrators and tutors at QOU. It goes without saying that reading skills are very important in the context of language teaching and use. It is widely known that, as Durukan (2011: 102) suggests, "In the learning process there is a high correlation between reading comprehension and academic achievement."

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

QOU has recently opted for combining conventional learning with e-learning in various modes (e.g. virtual teaching/learning, video streaming, etc.) in certain English language courses offered for English major students. As stated above, this mode of learning is defined as 'blended learning'. The attitudes and motivation of EFL students who were used to conventional EFL learning at school need to be taken into account. As Tselios et al (2011) put it, "Little is known about students' perceptions in a blended learning setting", and as far as I know, no studies have been conducted in Palestine to investigate EFL students' attitudes toward blended learning. Therefore, this study will examine the impact of combining e-learning with face-to-face meetings in a reading comprehension course on those EFL students' attitudes and motivation.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND/ LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Blended Learning***

Blended learning is generally defined as a mix of e-learning and conventional face-to-face learning (Young, 2002; Usta, 2007). Thorne (2003) views blended learning as a means of facing the challenges of modeling learning to suit the needs of learners by combining the best benefits derived from technological developments with the best advantages of interaction and participation obtained from conventional learning. In the same vein, Bersin (2004) takes blended learning as a way of supporting conventional education with electronic learning. It is meant to employ computer-assisted activities embedded in a conventional learning environment in order to help learners do the work to the best of their abilities. Bodie et al. (2006) describe blended learning as a method of teaching that makes the most of two or more complementary means to instruct the same content. In their view, the tutor is "experimenting

with blended learning” through mixing traditional classroom meetings with activities, discussions, and/or web-based modules.

Using blended learning in EFL has been the subject of much research, which has not produced consistent results. Some studies present a positive image of blended learning. For example, Burgon and Williams (2003) claim that blended learning helps boost students’ satisfaction with and interest in learning. In a comparative study of an accounting principles course, Vamosi et al. (2004) concluded that students’ satisfaction with online courses increased as the course proceeded as a result of getting more acquainted with the e-learning scheme, and their reactions toward the online courses were positive in the post course assessment. Similarly, in comparing a group of 251 students’ learning performance and satisfaction in a blended learning general health course with traditional face-to-face classroom instruction, Melton et al. (2009) found that students following a blended learning scheme significantly outperformed those following traditional instruction and expressed higher satisfaction levels.

In a similar study intended to investigate Greek university students’ attitudes toward blended learning, by using the Moodle learning content management system, in the context of a university course offered using a blended learning approach, Tselios et al (2011) found that both ease of use and perceived usefulness have positive effects on students’ attitudes toward use. In an investigation of students’ views on a blended learning environment, Akkoyunlu and Soylu (2006) found that students’ achievement and positive attitudes toward blended learning increase as a result of enjoying participation in the online discussion forums. The study also concludes that both face-to-face meetings and online activities enrich the learning process. Cottrell and Robinson (2003) examined the students’ attitudes toward the application of blended learning in an accounting course and concluded that students opted for the blended learning approach. In a study conducted by Humbert and Vignare (2005) investigating students’ perceptions toward introducing blended learning into their courses, students showed inclinations toward the blended learning approach. Similarly, in an investigation of the students’ satisfaction with a blended course, Chen and Jones (2007) found that students showed more interest in registering for a blended course than a traditional one. Brown (2003), Osguthorpe and Graham (2003) and Graham (2005) have all agreed that blended learning has a potential to enrich pedagogy, boost cost-effectiveness, accessibility, flexibility and reconsideration.

Other studies on blended learning give a more tentative stance regarding blended learning. For example, Pereira et al. (2007) found that learners expressed equal satisfaction with conventional and blended learning models. Jones and Chen (2008) concluded that the students on a blended course preferred traditional classroom meetings because they offered better contact with their teacher. The students also expressed their concern that one or two students had to take on the burden while doing group work online. In the same vein, Parkinson et al. (2003) concluded that the students in the traditional classes expressed satisfaction with the class atmosphere and criticized the blended learning contexts for lacking class community.

As far as the EFL context of this study is concerned, following Dziuban et al. (2004) blended learning will be used as a pedagogical approach that synthesizes the merits of effectiveness and socialization derived from the actual classroom with the technologically developed learning prospects of an electronic environment.

QOU, as a pioneer in open learning in the Middle East, is bound to select a combined set of media that suit a large number of learners taking into consideration their experiences, backgrounds, ages, and accessibility to selected media. With combined media the learner should be at ease in using at least one of them, which works in harmony with the essence of open education. As Rowntree (1992: 9) suggests, if various media are put together then there may be an additional possibility that all will find at least one of their favorite mediums.

Although the bulk of given a rather encouraging indication of the merits of e-learning (Murray, 2001; Nicol and Anderson, 2000), much still remains to be done to investigate students’ attitudes toward blended learning which integrates e-learning with traditional learning. Consequently, employing blended learning with these students should be carefully scrutinized. Cohen (2003) stressed the significance of assessing factors associated with the students and the learning process. When it comes to blended learning, Miller et al. (2003) and Freddolino and Knaggs (2005) also observed the importance of taking into account the students’ motivation and their needs for guidance and technical backing.

#### ***Attitudes and motivation***

It has been widely acknowledged that a student's attitude and motivation play the most important role in success within computer-assisted language learning settings (Warschauer, 1996a, 1996b; Gilbert, 2001; Brandl, 2002; Desmarais, 2002; Murday & Ushida, 2002).



Eagly and Chaiken (1998) describe an attitude as “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor.” Dornyei and Otto (1998:65) define language learning motivation as “the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritized, operationalized and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out.” According to Crookes and Schmidt (1991), motivation involves interest, relevance, expectancy of success or failure, belief in forthcoming rewards, decision to be involved, persistence, and high activity level.

Drawing upon social psychology, Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) argue that motives for learning a given language split into two types. The first are the “instrumental” motives which represent the tangible gains derived from the mastery of that language, and the second are the “integrative” motives which subsume the learners’ positive attitude toward the native speakers of that language and their interest in their culture. These correspond to the two types of motives proposed in the self-determination theory, namely, intrinsic and extrinsic. While an intrinsically motivated activity stems from the inner self and is featured by the pleasure and satisfaction of engaging in an activity, an extrinsic motivation hinges upon realizing an instrumental outcome, such as gaining a reward as a result of engaging in an activity. This boils down to saying that an intrinsically motivated learner would most likely persist on learning a language even without external incentives, and an extrinsically motivated learner would most likely give up language learning as soon as the sought-after goal is realized.

In an investigation of 79 Iranian undergraduate students’ integrative and instrumental motivation toward learning English as a foreign language, Vaezi (2008) points out that the two types of motivation affect the learners’ focus regarding what aspects of a second language (L2) to study. She argues that learners motivated by an integrative approach are more interested in knowing about the culture and community of the foreign language (FL). However, instrumentally motivated students have different considerations and purposes; they learn L2 to help them find a job or make a living. Vaezi (2008: 54) notes, “For a long time, integrative motivation was regarded as superior to instrumental motivation for predicting the success of second language learning”, but then she refers to Dornyei (1996) as opposing this “by claiming that instrumental motivation and the learner’s need for achievement are more important than the integrative motivation”. Although Vaezi’s study reveals that integrative motivation on the part of the Iranian students was high, she concludes that the Iranian students were more instrumentally oriented. This result is in line with the opinions of many researchers who believe that in an EFL situation students are instrumentally oriented.

Ardito et al (2006:271) maintain that the degree of the student’s motivation and attitude is a key predictor of the success of any medium. If an inadequately designed medium leaves students feeling baffled or lost, it will inhibit efficient learning. Similarly, Spencer and Jago (1951) and Gardner and Lambert (1959) view motivation as an important factor in language learning. MacIntyre et al. (2009: 44) go further to describe it as “the engine that drives the system”. Noels (2001) and Ryan and Deci (2000) stress the need for identifying the students’ motivational orientations in order to set the language learning goals, and check the classroom environment as a prelude to defining the degree of dependence or independence needed for educating autonomous, self-regulated learners. Brown (2005: 467) argues that the time spent by students on using e-learning can be predicted by the students’ motivation.

Hwang and Arbaugh (2006) conducted a study of students’ feedback on a blended management course and concluded that those students who responded positively toward the blended learning material participated more in the discussion forums. In contrast, those whose responses were negative were not active in the online activities. That is why Mantyla and Woods (2001: 330) stress the idea that e-learning courses need self-motivated and independent learners.

Following Newcomb (1950), the ‘motive’ in this study will be taken as an element of the concept of attitude which will be seen as a state of readiness that stimulates the motive. More specifically, the terms ‘attitude’ and ‘motivation’ will be used in the following senses. The term ‘attitude’ will be used to describe QOU EFL students’ beliefs about English and its general impact on them, as well as their views about the reading module course they attended as part of this study. Following Noels et al. (2000:59-60), the term ‘motivation’ will be used to describe the incentives – whether integrative or instrumental, including the reward value of developing their skill in the target language.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS

This study is meant to examine the extent to which using blended learning as an EFL learning/teaching method can affect students' attitudes and motivation. More specifically, this study attempts to investigate whether teaching reading skills through computer-assisted activities embedded in a conventional mode of learning affects students' attitudes and motivation. In other words, the study attempts to answer the question: Is there a statistically significant difference in attitudes toward learning English language between EFL students before and after receiving instruction through blended learning?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

The population of the study included 27 students enrolled in Reading I (5150) at the Bethlehem branch of QOU. Twenty students were female and seven students were male. The participants were all Palestinians and were all native speakers of Arabic. Their median age was 22 years, and the range was 18-30. They all had eight years of EFL instruction in grades 4-12 prior to their admission to QOU. Most students were concurrently taking listening I (1 hour weekly), structure I (one hour and a half biweekly), writing I (1 hour weekly) courses as part of their English language program at QOU.

### *Questionnaire*

The selection of the dimensions to be included in the questionnaire (see Appendix I) was inspired by the original 7-point Likert Scale format of Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (Gardner, 1985). For the purposes of the current study, additional dimensions were included on the basis of a thorough review of theoretical literature pertaining to blended learning and EFL as well as on the researcher's personal experience as a tutor and an administrator dealing with issues related to the implementation of blended learning at QOU. Statements in the questionnaire were categorized into seven main domains. The first eight items identify the students' attitudes toward learning English (ALE), and the second eight items identify the students' attitudes toward computer use (ACU). The items (17-21) address the students' confidence in computer-based English class (CCOMC). The items (22-27) address the students' confidence in conventional English class (CCONC). The items (28-40) address the students' attitudes toward using computers in learning English (ACLE). The items (41-49) deal with the students' attitudes toward ease of using electronic assignments (ELCASS). The rest of the items (50-55) are related to the domain of students' attitudes toward handwritten assignments (HWASS). The scoring for the questionnaire was established as follows: A seven-Likert scale was used: (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree; 4 = neutral; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree).

The motivation scale was presented to a panel of experts to eliminate any threats to its validity. To make sure that the questionnaire is valid, expert opinions were taken into consideration. With regard to the reliability of the questionnaire, the overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.913, as shown in Table (1) below.

*Table 1: Reliability of Motivation Scale.*

	Cronbach's alpha	No. of participants	No. of items
ALE	0.895	27	8
ACU	0.865	27	8
CCOMC	0.874	27	5
CCONC	0.812	27	6
ACLE	0.825	27	13
ELCASS	0.843	27	9
HWASS	0.876	27	6
Overall Motivation	0.913	27	55

For the purpose of measuring the participants' attitudes and motivation, before the students received any instruction, they all completed the researcher-made motivation scale. In order to guarantee that students understand the items, Arabic translation was provided beside each item. Before starting to fill out the questionnaire, the English teacher explained to the class the procedure, and stayed in the classroom to answer any queries the student might have.

***Data Collection Procedure***

The students were asked to register in the online part of the course in addition to the face-to-face meetings. That is, they received instruction through computer-assisted activities embedded in a conventional EFL learning. One student who declared that she could not participate in the computer-based activities on a regular basis due to work commitments was exempted from participating in the study. Another student who signed up for joining the study missed three sessions. His account was automatically disabled and he was restricted from participating in the whole process; therefore, the total number of the students who actually participated in the study was twenty-five.

***Intervention (blended learning)***

The Reading I course is a basic one tailored to develop students' reading comprehension skills, vocabulary recognition, retention and use, as well as developing critical thinking through discussion and evaluation exercises. The book contains seven chapters. Each chapter consists of three interrelated reading passages, and each reading passage comprises three subsections on reading comprehension, vocabulary, discussion and evaluation. The three subsections of the unit consist of integrated exercises, self-assessment questions, activities and puzzlers.

Reading I, as a blended course (or electronic activity-based course) was offered to the class in a manner incorporating both conventional and electronic style. In accordance with the system of virtual classes, students were required to attend lectures synchronously and record them. The Reading I course, which was taught in Fall 2012 for sixteen weeks, needed sixteen classes per semester, eight classes of which were virtual and eight were face-to-face. That is, 50 percent of the meetings were face-to-face, and the remaining 50 percent were virtual classes using Blackboard system. It was easy to use. The students were free to use their own PC's and the Internet either from home or on campus. The students were given the class key and they enrolled themselves. Prior to online instruction, the students' computer literacy skills were assessed by a questionnaire. A tutorial was given to them for reference. The components of the online reading course were described and instructions on how to use certain course components were also posted in the conferencing area. Online instruction was initiated by posting a welcome note and by starting a discussion topic. Throughout the semester, a lab technician provided technical support on using the different components of the online course, and responded to individual students' needs, comments and requests for certain sites. For the purpose of this study, the researcher made use of the virtual classes using Blackboard system, which was scheduled by the university. In addition to face-to-face meetings, the researcher kept in touch with students through e-mail and other electronic tools. The researcher also used the discussion forums in the Moodle learning system and uploaded different reading tasks in accordance with the course objectives. Such tasks were taken from the students' textbook and the students had to read and answer short questions on condition that they use two or more of the vocabulary items used in such passages or from the related articles they were required to read from the textbook in relation to the topic in question. Some tasks were optional, and there were online quizzes about the reading passages they should have read. The teacher served as a facilitator and sent public and private messages to encourage the students to interact and communicate. He searched for relevant websites and posted them in the "link sharing" area. He also posted questions and discussion topics, wrote model responses, and advised students to correct each other's mistakes.

The students were expected to start chatting on the forum by exchanging ideas based on the passages of their textbook. It is also worth mentioning that the students could upload and download exercises, sample tests, and related information such as dates of exams. They could also stay in touch with the teacher and, at the same time, comment on their classmates' answers. The main aim behind using such tasks was to help the students to employ the integrative approach to learning in which they could read, listen, and comment orally or in writing at the same time in line with the course intended learning outcomes. In this course, there were asynchronous chatting sessions, which had no marks. This course, which was divided into study units, had many resources to enrich learning, and the virtual classes were central and accessible by all students enrolled in the course. As for evaluation, instead of paper assignments, the course contained electronic activities for which 10 percent of the total grade was allocated. The activities, including reading comprehension questions and answer sheets, were attached to the e-mail. In the body text, the students were asked to read the assigned material and then individually write down two or three paragraphs as summaries and send them back through e-mail. All the interactions with the teacher were done electronically. The teacher corrected the answer sheets, scored them, and sent them back through e-mail to each student. The same procedure was followed for other lessons. The mid-term exam covered 35 percent and the final 55 percent. The total mark was 100 percent.

## DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For the purpose of conducting statistical analyses, the statistical package of social sciences (SPSS) was employed. In addition to the descriptive statistical analyses of the data (means and standard deviations), a paired samples t-test was performed to compare the students' mean scores of the pre- and post-questionnaires.

In order to measure each aspect, several parameters were devised. The overall mean or "grand mean" for the whole dataset of each aspect was calculated by taking the mean of the means of the individual parameters. The third column of Table (2) below presents the overall means (degrees out of 7) with respect to a (1-7) point Likert scale.

### *Students' Attitudes (before intervention vs. after intervention)*

As shown in Table (2) below, a paired samples t-test performed on the mean scores of the students' attitudes before and after the trial showed statistically significant difference at the level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The p-value is 0.000, which gives overwhelming evidence that the students' attitudes significantly changed as a result of employing computer-assisted learning in their reading comprehension classes with the exception of their attitudes toward two aspects of conventional classes and handwritten assignments, for which the p-values obtained were (0.232) and (0.194) respectively.

*Table 2: Paired samples t-test to compare means for the class before and after.*

		Mean difference		std	t	f	D	Sig.
ALE	after	5.87	1.54	2.20	-3.529	4	2	.001
	before	4.33						
ACU	after	4.91	0.85	1.17	-3.429	4	2	.001
	before	4.06						
CCOMC	after	4.34	1.08	1.89	-2.963	4	2	.005
	before	3.26						
CCONC	after	4.62	0.59	2.41	-1.210	4	2	.232
	before	4.03						
ACLE	after	4.43	1.20	1.26	-4.417	4	2	.000
	before	3.23						
ELCASS	after	4.66	0.99	1.50	-3.780	4	2	.000
	before	3.67						
HWASS	after	4.83	0.46	1.37	-1.318	4	2	.194
	before	4.37						
Overall Motivation	after	4.80	1.00	0.94	-5.030	4	2	.000
	before	3.80						

That is, these two exceptional results show that the students' attitudes toward conventional learning and toward using paper assignment did not change. Having experienced computer-assisted learning, students gained a more positive attitude toward using computers but they retained their confidence in and positive attitudes toward conventional learning. This suggests that EFL students at QOU have a tendency to get a mix of both e-learning and conventional learning in their English language classes.

As shown in Table (2), a paired t-test performed on before and after results of the students' attitudes gives overwhelming evidence that there is a highly significant difference at the level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  between their attitudes toward language learning; computer use in general; learning English; electronic assignments; and their confidence in computer class (p-value = 0.005). Nevertheless, the t-tests performed indicated that the difference was nonsignificant (p-value = 0.232) with regard to the students' attitudes toward handwritten assignments and their confidence in conventional class (p-value = 0.194). Interestingly, the p-value here represents the highest non-significant value obtained for all results.

The mean score of the students' attitudes increased from pre-questionnaire to post-questionnaire. This suggests that students' experience in computer-assisted learning positively affects their attitudes toward computer-based education but does not negatively change their attitudes toward conventional education.

## **DISCUSSION**

According to the results in Table(2) above, after the trial, no statistically significant difference was observed in the students' confidence and ease in conventional English class (CCONC) and attitudes toward handwritten assignments (HWASS). It can be easily understood that nothing noteworthy changed regarding these two issues.

However, after experiencing blended learning, the students expressed more positive attitudes toward learning English (ALE) in the post-questionnaire. This suggests that computer-based classes embedded in a blended learning module succeeded in offering a dynamic and interesting learning/teaching style, which made students show better attitudes.

Moreover, as shown in Table (2), the students demonstrated more positive attitudes toward computer use in general (ACU) after trial. This may be attributed to their realization of the potential benefits and applications of the computer in their English language learning. Similarly, when asked about their attitudes toward learning English in general, they gained, after experiencing computer-based learning, more confidence and ease in the computer-based English classes as shown in Table (2) above. Further, the students' attitudes toward electronic assignments increased positively.

These positive attitudes and improved confidence can be attributed to paying attention to the participants' technical concerns lest they inhibit them from engagement in the different online options. As mentioned earlier, throughout the semester a lab technician provided technical support on using the different components of the online course. As Purvis et.al. (2011: 98) put it:

"Online discussion in groups of any size is dependent upon the confidence of the learners to post messages and share information with fellow learners.... Many of the issues were confidence related and focused on the students' perceived ability to comment on their peers work.... Giving students the support, guidance and confidence to contribute effectively to online discussion should be of most importance to the online facilitator using this type of learning and assessment model."

Undoubtedly, lack of comfort and anxiety could deter the students from successfully performing the required language tasks, which stresses the need to provide a comfortable blended learning experience. This shows that blended learning, if properly and carefully implemented, produces a positive impact, or at least does not yield any negative effects on the students' attitudes. Although the students had to work hard to adjust to the new learning experience, they yielded more positive attitudes toward blended learning. Despite these positive attitudes, the levels of confidence in conventional class and handwritten assignments remained the same.

The results presented above have shown that when students go through a credible, dynamic, and effective learning experience, their attitudes do change positively. The benefits of blended learning seem to extend beyond an improvement in students' attitudes to other important gains. Undoubtedly, students who are not used to e-learning might find some aspects of blended learning challenging, but a positive change in their attitudes as a result of a successful experience in a blended course of reading could be the first step toward more active, responsible, and self-dependent language learners. This is consistent with Doob's (1947) conclusion that 'learning' can account for the largest part of people's attitudes, which, unlike personality, are expected to transform as a function of persuasion and experience.

The effectiveness of blended learning largely hinges upon the extent to which the participants academically and emotionally get involved in their learning project. This involvement requires devoted and capable tutors. During the implementation of this study, participants who volunteered to help their peers gained the experience of being a student tutor. They clearly built up knowledge by developing not only skills related to reading ability, but also skills vital for EFL learning/teaching practices. This might have contributed to increasing their motivation to work harder to become effective tutors.

Since the main objective of the English language program at QOU is to train English language teachers, the activities involved in blended learning could help students to understand more intentionally practical issues they might encounter in their following EFL courses. As a tutor of the course, I observed that some student teachers took



responsibility and felt empowered by the experience of teaching their peers. By the same token, many students reported that they benefited a lot from their peers during the on-line sessions (or virtual classes) and the discussion forums taking place at different times. They valued employing an integrative approach to learning in which they had the chance to read, listen, and comment orally or in writing at the same time.

From a pedagogical point of view, this study concludes that the more varied the teaching/learning styles, the stronger the attitudes of the learners and thus the better the learning outcome. This study has shown that blended learning, which combines e-learning and conventional classroom meetings, is rewarding as a means of increasing students' attitudes and motivation, which in turn gives a better learning outcome. This indicates that a difference in the learning/teaching method spells a difference in the learning outcome.

More importantly, these results should be rightly interpreted that without the tremendous efforts paid by the tutor and the lab technician to give the participants the needed technical and emotional support to contribute effectively to online discussions this scheme would not have succeeded. Admittedly, there is much more to a blended learning endeavor than simply having computers or, as Galloway (2008: 6) suggests, knowing how to merely perform discrete mechanical operations in a program. Perkins (1986) argues that knowledge is not something teachable in the traditional sense, but is a process of design that entails taking decisions on the part of the learner as to which part of the information is to be transformed, highlighted, internalized, and represented.

### CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

This research represents an attempt to measure students' attitudes toward a blended course module. After having experienced a blended course module, the EFL students registered statistically significant progress in their attitudes toward English language learning and computer-based activities from the pre-questionnaire to the post-questionnaire. But their attitudes toward handwritten assignments and their confidence in conventional class remained almost the same.

The EFL students, whose attitudes positively changed regarding all aspects of blended learning, comfortably accepted making the switch to blended learning. This could be attributed to the circumstance whereby they had to play a more active role in the classroom, which gave more weight to dialogues and interactive activities on their part. This is in keeping with Colesca et al.'s (2009) assertion that an important function of blended learning is to transform students from inactive note-takers to dynamic learners capable of gaining more from their learning.

These results show that blended learning with its two components (i.e. conventional classroom meetings and e-learning activities), when properly implemented, represents an effective avenue for helping EFL students develop more positive attitudes toward their learning. Clearly, technology, which is at the heart of blended learning research (Ayala 2009), plays a key part in the prospects of blended learning. To investigate the implications of our findings for practice and policy, to explore the immediate and long-term impact of using blended learning, and to examine its effectiveness and popularity for the purpose of facilitating the creation of the most effective course module for EFL education, future follow-up studies need to be conducted.

The fact that the present study relies on data collected only from a special group of EFL students at QOU in a given semester places restrictions on the kind of conclusions that have been drawn. It is not clear how these conclusions can be extended as to how other EFL students' attitudes in other contexts can change under the given trial. It would be unlikely that what applies to the EFL students at QOU in this particular reading course also applies to other EFL students in other contexts. Thus, it appears that it is worth conducting similar studies on the basis of data collected from other contexts.

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### **Appendix I** **Survey Questionnaire (English-learning Motivation Scale)**

#### **INSTRUCTIONS**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine your attitudes towards learning English via face-to-face meetings and computer-assisted activities. Below are a number of statements with which some people agree and others disagree. We would like you to indicate your opinion about each statement by ticking the boxes below which best indicates the extent to which you disagree or agree with that statement. We would urge you to be as accurate as possible since the success of this investigation depends upon it.

There are no right or wrong answers. We want you to indicate your own ideas and impressions. If you have any questions, please ask them now. In answering this part of the questionnaire, work quickly and don't stop to think about each scale. It is your immediate impressions in which we are interested.

Gender:.....

Age:.....

1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Somewhat Disagree; 4 = Neutral; 5 = somewhat Agree; 6 = Agree; 7 = Strongly Agree

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>1. Attitudes toward Learning English</b>							
Studying English is an enjoyable experience.							
English is an important part of the university program.							
Knowing English is really an important goal in my life.							
I feel very much at ease when I have to use English.							
If it were up to me, I would spend all of my time learning English							
I love learning English.							
If there were an English Club in my university, I would be most interested in joining.							
Using English anywhere makes me feel happy.							
<b>2. Attitudes toward Computer use</b>							
Computers are important for communication.							
Computers are important for acquiring knowledge							

I keep up to date with computer by working on it almost every day.							
Computer use is an important part of the university program.							
Using computers is important because I will need it for my career.							
I feel very much at ease when I use computers.							
I love working on computers.							
Using computers allows me to meet and converse with native speakers of English.							
<b>3. Confidence and Ease in Computer-based English Class</b>							
I enjoy the computerized activities of our English class much more than the conventional classes.							
Computer-based classes offer a more dynamic and interesting teaching style than conventional classes.							
I feel more secure when I do English activities via the computer than in face-to-face classes.							
I feel more confident when asked to participate in computer-based classes than in my conventional English class.							
I never get embarrassed when I have to answer a question in a computer-based English class.							
<b>4. Confidence and Ease in Conventional English Class</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
I would rather spend more time in my conventional English class and less on computer-based classes.							
I feel more active in the conventional English classes than in computer-based English classes.							
When I have a problem understanding something we are learning in English class, I immediately ask the teacher for help.							
I feel more confident when asked to participate in my conventional English class than in computer-based classes.							
I never get nervous when I am doing language activities in my conventional English class.							
I think my conventional English class offers a more dynamic and enjoyable experience.							
<b>5. Attitudes toward using computers in learning English</b>							
Using computers to learn English is useful.							
Learning English through computers is an enjoyable experience.							
I feel happy when I am using the computer to learn English.							
Using computers allows me to interact with native speakers of English.							
Studying English via computers enables me to become teacher-independent.							
Using computers can be important for me because other people will respect me more if I have a knowledge of new technology.							
Virtual English classes are useful for developing my language skills.							
I prefer to use a mix of face-to-face learning and computer-based learning in my EFL classes.							
If it were up to me, I'd rather have more computer-assisted learning in my English class.							
Computer-based activities increase my English class participation.							
In Internet-based learning, I can save time of traveling to campuses and also save transportation costs.							
I feel more confident to participate in the computer-assisted learning than in face-to-face classes.							
I accept computer-based learning as an alternative to face-to-face meetings.							
<b>6. Homework and Assignments: Electronic assignments</b>							
I prefer to hand in my assignments via the computer rather than in person.							
When I have a problem understanding something outside my English class, I immediately resort to my computer.							
I find computer-based English assignments more useful than paper assignments.							
If my teacher wanted someone to do an extra computerized English assignment, I							

would definitely volunteer.							
Electronic English assignments allow me to work faster and more carefully than written assignments.							
During the English language course, I prefer to get feedback from my teacher via electronic media.							
Computerized assignments are more enjoyable to deal with than written ones.							
When I have a problem understanding something in my English hand-written assignments, I prefer to send an email message to my teacher.							
What I like about electronic assignments is the immediate feedback I get from my tutor.							
<b>7. Homework and Assignments: Hand-written assignments</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
When I have a problem understanding something in my English assignments, I prefer to see my teacher in office.							
With paper assignments, I can sit anywhere, change reading positions, and move easily from place to place.							
Paper assignments are easier to deal with than computerized ones.							
I prefer paper assignments as a medium for learning because they are more familiar, more practical and cheaper.							
I prefer to print out the content of electronic assignments because I get tired reading onscreen.							
My problem with print-based assignments is the delay in getting the tutor's feedback.							

## THE EFFECTS OF TRANSLATION ACTIVITIES ON READING COMPREHENSION OF IRANIAN EFL STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

There have already been different perspectives on the use of translation in the second language classrooms. Almost all procedures and approaches in teaching and learning a language have their opponents and proponents, and this approach is not an exception. When it comes to using translation in the language 2 reading classrooms, some scholars and teachers like Avand (1993) concentrated on it as a facilitative tool in the process of comprehending a text. This is while other scholars like Cook (1995) gave the prescription to totally ban the use of translation in an language 2 classrooms, no matter if it is a speaking, listening, writing or reading class. Therefore, the present study was carried out to investigate the relationship between the use of translation and EFL learners reading comprehension, i.e. to determine whether or not making use of translation has any effect on the EFL learner's reading comprehension.

**KEY WORDS:** Translation, reading comprehension, teaching technique,

### INTRODUCTION

Reading is probably the most important skill for second language learners in the academic contexts. In other words, in the academic settings, reading is supposed to be the central means for acquiring new knowledge and gaining new access to alternative explanations and interpretations (Grab & Stoller, 1997, cited in Celce-Murcia, 2001). If a student cannot read and comprehend a written language, they cannot be expected to be good in other content areas which will indispensably require some reading ability (Decker, 2007). As Rivers (1981) asserted, among the four second language skills, reading is the most stable and durable one. There has been a great deal of research about the different aspects of reading comprehension (Ediger, 1993, cited in Celce-Murcia, 2001), (Kasmer, 1999); however, little has ever been done on the effect of translation on more efficient reading comprehension. Translation has been used by many language learners to facilitate language learning for centuries but, under different language teaching methods, it has played different roles. The teaching of foreign languages in general, and the teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL) has undergone many changes over the past decades. From the end of the 19th century until the beginning of the 20th century the Grammar Translation Method of teaching a foreign language was the widespread method (Titone & Danesi, 1985). Very little attention was paid to the content of texts or to communication skills. This lack of attention resulted in the unpopularity of the Grammar Translation Method, paving the way to new methods of foreign language teaching. However, translation is regaining its respectability in the language-learning classroom (Malmkjær, 1998), not essentially as an end, but as an additional aids towards language learning.

Teaching reading skills to nonnative speakers of English includes unique problems and challenges at all conceivable levels of instruction (Celce-Murcia, ibid). It is certain that every teacher has their own way of teaching reading comprehension. The fact is that the methods for teaching reading have subjected to substantial changes over time.

### BACKGROUND

#### *Translation*



The term translation itself has different meanings: It can be referred to as the general subject field, the product (the text has been translated) or the process (the act of producing translation, known as translating). The translation between two separate languages includes the translator rendering an original written text (the source text or ST) in the original verbal language (the source language or SL) into a written text (the target text or TT) in a different verbal language (the target language or TL) (Munday, 2001).

We can view translation as a pragmatic-integrative language activity that integrates different skills; it requires competence in both the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). Translation is the process in which a word, segment or text is conveyed from one language into another, going beyond sheer words; it includes interlingual relationships, cultural differences - and when spoken, gesture - in order to ultimately transfer the source text's message in the target language (Sewell, 1996).

One of the most important aspects of translation, requiring careful and skillful handling, is that translation is "not just transferring of information between languages, but a transfer from one culture to another" (Hervey et al., 1995, p.20). It necessarily involves the treatment of cultural issues. Although the relative importance will vary depending on text as well as on the reader and functions of translated text, among other considerations.

Miremadi (1991) held that "translation is a two way process from one culture to the other, and from one culture into one's own culture". Generally speaking, a give and take procedure involved (Miremadi, 1991, p.23). The main purpose of translation is to use it as a cross-cultural bilingual communication vehicle amongst people. In the past decades, this procedure has promoted because of the rise in international trade, increased immigration, globalization and the expansion of technological and scientific knowledge.

In a recent survey in Birbeck College in England Sewell (1996) searched to determine what transferable skills and knowledge could be improved in a translation studies class, presented as one of the eleven courses needed to complete a BA. It was concluded that translation could be taught as a means of developing students' linguistic ability, as it involved the following transferable skills: The ability to read correctly, perform efficiently on a socio-linguistic level, i.e. awareness of register, text-type, comprehend theory of communication, use contextual knowledge efficiently, work to a brief, perform instructions, see when further research is required, prioritize, do in a steady way, post-edit one's own work, figure out what makes the two languages work, produce unspoken assumptions. Students indicated that they were gaining insight in both their mother tongue (English), and their second language (French), into which they translated. They also found that translation is a "good intellectual training." The prominent courses in the foreign language were reading comprehension and textual analysis during the first two years of this foreign language course, so the students were expected to become competent in these two skills - skills which shaped the foundation of the translation course. They were required to consider metalinguistic dimensions, e.g. reading correctly, socio-linguistic awareness, register, and text-type, contextual knowledge, editing, and producing unspoken assumptions.

#### *Translation and formulaic language*

Collocations, fixed expressions, lexical metaphors and idioms can all be considered as examples of formulaic language (Howarth, 1998; Wray, 1999), in which word strings occurring together tend to convey holistic meanings that are either more than the sum of the separate parts, or else depart substantially from a literal, or word for word meaning and perform as a single semantic meaning (Gairns and Redman, 1986, p.35). The nature of formulaic language makes resistant to literal translation; the target language may not use lexical formulas that are directly equivalent to those used by the source language to express the same meanings, or at least not with the same frequency. Thus a literal translation of formulaic language may at best sound unusual or marked in the TL, or else fail to convey one or more of the intended dimensions of meaning.

#### *Translation in the foreign language classroom in the past*

##### *The Grammar Translation Method*

The Grammar Translation Method was implemented in the latter part of the nineteenth century as a method of teaching a foreign language (Howatt, 1984) for students that interested in learning classical languages, such as Greek and Latin (Brown, 2000). Its purpose was to teach students a foreign language using intense grammatical analysis and to familiarize them with the grammar of their native and the foreign language, and introducing lists of

vocabulary items in order to teach them to read and write classical materials in a foreign language and to pass standardized exams (Zimmerman, 1997). It was also believed that this comparative method of languages might have an impact on the students' comprehension of their native language. Students were given either literary or religious texts and with the help of a dictionary were required to translate the texts according to the grammar structures they had acquired. Sometimes they were given isolated texts that had little purpose other than the task at hand – which was to compare grammatical structures and improve vocabulary. The Grammar Translation Method was viewed as a scientific approach, in which the students acquired grammar and vocabulary explicitly, they couldn't discuss about possible alternatives. Teachers elicited the "correct" answers from students and there was little or no discussion of alternatives among the students. The most of these students usually had a high level of analytical proficiency and could easily perform these tasks, therefore this method was not regarded suitable for the less motivated or gifted student.

#### *The use of translation in the language teaching and EFL*

Despite the wide spread popular assumption that translation should play a major role in the field of foreign language, the recent theories of language teaching and learning have at best disregarded the role of translation, and at worst repressed it. From the beginning of twentieth century onwards, almost all famous theoretical works on language teaching have assumed without argument that a new language (L2) should be taught without reference to the student's first language (L1).

Needless to mention that most modern and so-called innovative methods have their roots in the former traditional or old-fashioned methodologies; however, these new approaches have often resulted in throwing out well-established procedures instead of rethinking of them. It may be some comfort for the experienced teacher to be aware that yesterday's 'old-fashioned' method has come back, albeit in a slightly different form.

Farrand-Rogers (1996) reported that the practice of using translation in English classes of university in Tolca-Mexico, proved to have been very successful. He has concluded that translation as a teaching technique is enjoying a return as an "innovation". Based on Pieneman's teachability hypothesis (1989), there are two sequential dimensions of language learning relevant when teaching translation as a tool to enhance language ability and not for the sheer purpose of teaching a separate skill (Azizinezhad, 2007):

1. Progressive sequence takes place regardless of the learner or the method of teaching and is controlled by the inherent nature of each learner's language acquisition scheme, which is ordinary to all language learners.
2. Variational sequence explains the language-learning process using different methods in which language learners acquire language skills, according to the relationship between them and their individual situations, i.e. level of intelligence, ability to acquire a foreign language and socio-economic status.

#### ***Reading comprehension***

##### *The importance of reading comprehension:*

The importance of reading comprehension in a foreign language was stated by Alderson (1984) which the foreign language in many parts of the world's knowledge is often important to academic education, professional success and personal improvement. This is potentially true that so much technical, professional and scientific literature is written in English today. In fact, it is common that English reading comprehension ability is required of students by their subject departments often evaluated by a test of reading comprehension. A reading ability is often all that is needed by learners of English as a foreign language. Reading probably is the most generally needed skill in learning a second or foreign language (Robinson, 1991).

#### ***Teaching translation to develop skills in L2 reading comprehension***

Bassnett (1998) believed that "translation offers a crucial lesson in how to read, since it is a critical way into the text." She saw it as an effective means of forcing students to read texts thoughtfully and to concentrate on the lexical, grammatical and textual levels, and improving general knowledge, while "unveiling students' problems in comprehending (English) texts" (Brini, 2000). Teachers can stimulate the development of students' awareness by paying attention to terminology, register, slang, expression and idioms that may characterize an individual text (Petrocchi, 2006). Translation can be a useful tool to analyze comprehension pitfalls, which may lead to problems in discourse processing (Abdrabou, 2003). Reading comprehension exams are demanding to assess because they do not allow the instructor to find out how students have gotten their answers, and they don't take into account students' comprehension or interpretation of the comprehension questions themselves (Mahmoud, 1998). In the English matriculation exam in Israel (Garb, 1997), tests that were once designed to have students read the texts in English at first, and then answer the comprehension questions in their L1 were put an end on the grounds that experts believed

that these kinds of the tests did not provide the tester with enough evidence to assess the students' level of language production.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### ***Sample selection***

The initial population for the study was 90 students. To get more homogeneity, the subjects were selected from those who were studying in second year of university in EFL major. They were male and female students. They were all from Azad university of Hamedan. They were majoring in EFL and the range of age was 19-21. At first, a standard proficiency test (TOEFL) (60 questions, Reading comprehension test, and multiple questions) was administrated to 90 students. Some of them quitted to collaborate with the researcher. So, the number of participants decreased and out of them 60 was selected on the basis of the mean score as the sample of the study. The rest were excluded. Then, they were randomly assigned to two groups of thirty. The following is matching of the students in these two groups.

*Table 1: Subjects characteristics*

Group	Number	Gender	Age
Experimental	30	Male and female	19-21
Control	30	Male and female	19-21

### ***Instrumentation***

In the current study, a TOFEL reading comprehension tests were selected to be given to the participants to measure their level of proficiency in the form of a pretest. Five reading comprehension texts were selected from the TOFEL (Reading comprehension test, 2005) reading to be administrated to the participants during the course of study. The rationale behind selecting the passages rested upon the fact that the level of the difficulty and the content validity of the passages were suitable for the participating students, so it was possible to apply them for the participants. At the end, the same type of text in a controlled way was administrated to participants to see how they would perform on the posttest.

### ***Data collection***

Since the participants were assigned in different groups by the faculty, a standard proficiency test (TOFEL) (15 questions, Reading comprehension test) was administrated to the participants to make sure that the two groups were at the same level of proficiency. The allotted time for the participants to answer the TOFEL test was 70 minutes. The mean score of the two groups and the T-test showed that the two groups were nearly at the same level of proficiency. The experimental group received the treatment-instruction through native (Persian) language translation as a medium of instruction whereas; the control group went through regular instruction without translation. The course went on for five sessions of instruction. Each session took about 90 minutes. In each session 10 minutes of the class was allotted to asking and answering about the words and expression of the previous text. In the first session, the researcher handed out one of the reading comprehension texts to the both groups. The process was introduced to them. The participants in the control group were told to read the text and comprehend it just through the second language. They were not allowed to make use of any bilingual dictionary. What could be of help to them was just monolingual dictionary, of course, in the case of necessity. On the other hand, the experimental group received the same text but they were supposed to read and comprehend it through their first language. Where necessary, they were allowed to use bilingual as well as monolingual dictionaries. During the course of instruction, the instructor asked participants some questions related to the vocabulary part. The control group was supposed to give the definition of the words in English or through some examples while the experimental group was supposed to give equivalents of words just in Persian.

The second proficiency test or the posttest was given to the participants at the end of the course of instruction to compare the two groups' grades and to see the effect of using translation on their learning and comprehension process.

**Data analysis**

In order to statistically analyze the results of the two proficiency tests, the software statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was of great help in this research. The first step was to conduct two independent T-tests to compare the results of the pretest for two groups so as to make sure that there was no significant difference between the groups before they underwent the experiment. In the end, two independent T-tests were administered to compare the results of the control group with those of the experimental group of posttest.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION*****Pretest of Reading Comprehension***

An independent t-test was run to compare the experimental and control groups' mean scores on pretest of reading comprehension in order to prove that the two groups enjoyed the same level of reading comprehension ability prior to the main study. As displayed in Table 3 the mean scores for experimental and control groups on pretest of reading comprehension are 30.43 and 29.73 respectively.

*Table 2: Normality Tests*

Group		N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
		Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Experimental	Pretest	30	.092	.427	-.798	.833
	Posttest	30	-.011	.427	-.151	.833
Control	Pretest	30	.074	.427	-.801	.833
	Posttest	30	.366	.427	-.155	.833

The assumption of homogeneity of variances will be discussed when reporting the results of the independent t-test although in case the group sizes are equal there is no need to test this assumption (Bachman 2005).

*Table 3: Descriptive Statistics Pretest of Reading Comprehension by Groups*

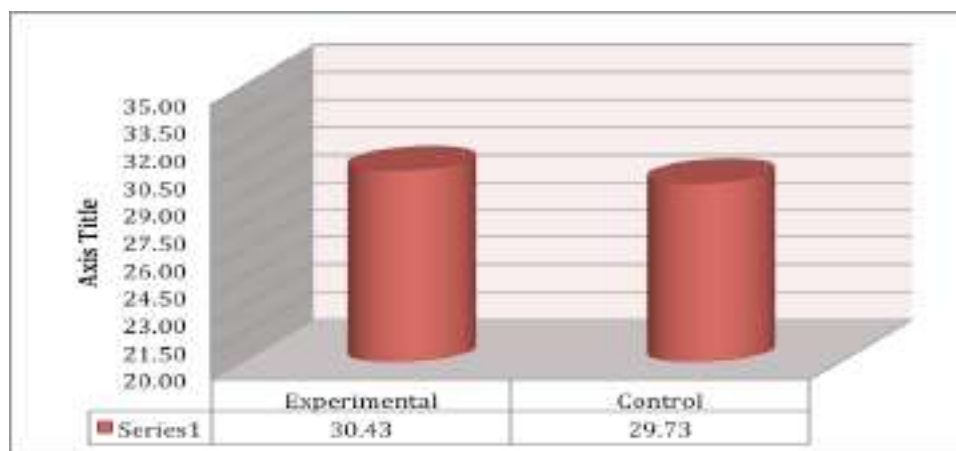
Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	30	30.433	4.4465	.8118
Control	30	29.733	3.9735	.7255

The results of the independent t-test ( $t(58) = .64$ ,  $P = .52 > .05$ ,  $R = .08$  it represents a weak effect size) indicated that there was not any significant difference between experimental and control groups' mean scores on the pretest of reading comprehension. Thus it can be concluded that the two groups enjoyed the same level of reading comprehension ability prior to the main study.

*Table 4: Independent t-test Pretest of Reading Comprehension by Groups*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.441	.509	.643	58	.523	.7000	1.0887	-1.4793	2.8793
Equal variances not assumed			.643	57.281	.523	.7000	1.0887	-1.4799	2.8799

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is met (Levene's  $F = .441$ ,  $P = .509 > .05$ ). That is why the first row of Table 3, i.e. "Equal variances assumed" is reported.



Graph 1: Pretest of Reading Comprehension by Groups

### Research Question

Does using translation as an ELT technique have a significant effect on reading comprehension of Iranian EFL?

An independent t-test was run to compare the experimental and control groups' mean scores on posttest of reading comprehension in order to probe the effect of using translation as an ELT technique on the improvement of the Iranian EFL learners reading comprehension ability. As displayed in Table 5 the mean scores for experimental and control groups on posttest of reading comprehension are 32.70 and 30.30 respectively.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics Posttest of Reading Comprehension by Groups

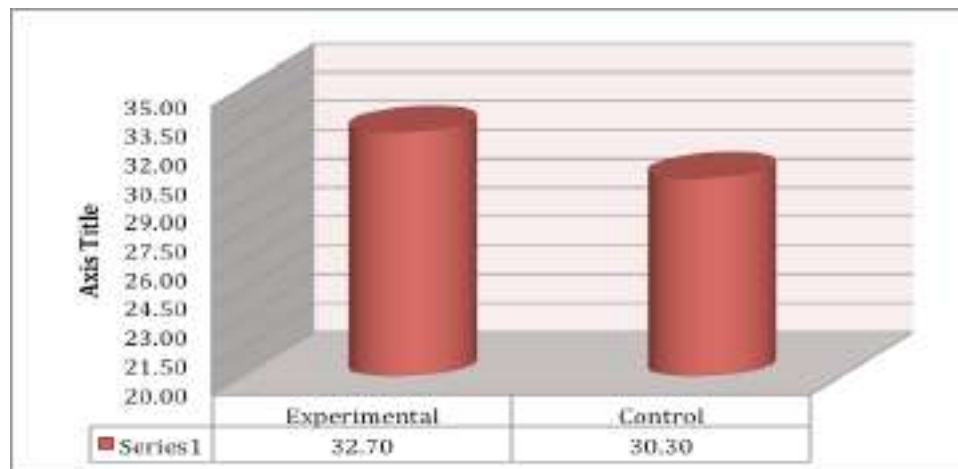
Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	30	32.700	3.7060	.6766
Control	30	30.300	4.0527	.7399

The results of the independent t-test ( $t(58) = 2.394$ ,  $P = .02 < .05$ ,  $R = .30$  it represents a moderate effect size) indicate that there was significant difference between experimental and control groups' mean scores on the posttest of reading comprehension. Thus it can be concluded the null-hypothesis as using translation as an ELT technique does not have any significant effect on reading comprehension of Iranian EFL **is rejected**. The experimental group – after receiving translation techniques – outperformed the control group on the posttest of reading comprehension.

Table 6: Independent t-test Posttest of Reading Comprehension by Groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.293	.591	2.394	58	.020	2.4000	1.0026	.3930	4.4070
Equal variances not assumed			2.394	57.542	.020	2.4000	1.0026	.3927	4.4073

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is met (Levene's  $F = .293$ ,  $P = .591 > .05$ ). That is why the first row of Table 5, i.e. "Equal variances assumed" is reported.



Graph 2:

*Posttest of Reading Comprehension by Groups*

### Discussion

As it can be derived from the above-mentioned data, the experimental group which was being taught through using translation has performed better. Thus, it can be concluded that the treatment (taught through translation) was more effective. Due to the fact that the control group also underwent a course of instruction, it makes sense that at the end of the course, they have made some progress. But the point is that the control group has made little progress compared to the experimental group which is certain proof of effectiveness of treatment. The finding of the study answered the research question by rejecting the null hypothesis. All the details related to the results of pretest and posttest proved the effectiveness using translation in teaching and learning reading comprehension since the mean difference of the two groups 2.4, it can be concluded that the experimental group has made a significant progress compared to the control group, and then the null hypothesis for the research question is rejected.

### CONCLUSION

As mentioned earlier, the present study was supposed to answer a question regarding the effect of translation on the reading comprehension. Before the outset of the study, a null hypothesis was developed. It was hypothesized that making use of translation has no significant effect on the students reading comprehension. Surprisingly, the result of the study revealed that making using of translation as a channel of instruction had a significant facilitative role in students reading comprehension; thus, rejecting the null hypothesis. In this study, the mean scores of the two groups were compared and the mean difference 2.4 was observed. The P value was .02 which is less than 0.05. All in all, because of the observed mean difference and because the P value less than 0.05, it is concluded that translation seems to be effective and can play an important facilitative role in Iranian EFL students' reading comprehension process. Although the results of this study indicated the efficacy of translation in the reading comprehension classes, this study may have suffered from some pitfalls. First, conducting the research in five sessions of 90 minutes might not be a reliable estimate of the effectiveness of the experiment. Second, there is no guarantee that the experimental group might not have consulted with each other in Persian in the class. Third and most importantly, the students in the experimental group might have used bilingual dictionaries out of the classroom. It is true that reading comprehension is the goal; still, the integration of all four skills in any class activities is an undeniable fact.

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## E-ASSESSMENT: A REQUIREMENT FOR POSTMODERNIST DIGITAL AGE

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### ABSTRACT

During the last decade, much attempt has been made to integrate computers, electronic devices, and Internet technologies into educational settings to provide a new, rich and integrated environment with a variety of systems and contents that help learners learn and assess their learning simultaneously. Test, measurement and evaluation were concepts, already been well defined and employed for estimating learners' achievement in traditional teaching and learning settings. Postmodern era with the dominance of constructivism learning approach and increasing use of information technology has offered new concepts to instruction such as teacher-facilitator, learner-centered, knowledge-centered and learner autonomy scales. Shifting from teacher centered instruction to learner centered setting necessitates the learners take the responsibility of assessment as well. Consequently, the concept of assessment needs to change to meet the requirements of new instructional setting. Whereas traditional testing can be formative or summative, postmodernist assessment tends to be spontaneous. To materialize recent concept of assessment in e-learning instruction-based setting (E-assessment-based instruction), the present study has focused on two surveys: Primary data elicitation was an oral interview with five language testing researchers via video conferencing. They expressed their expertise opinion on the spontaneous assessment and the extent to which it is in line with instruction and provides supportive feedback for instruction. They significantly believed that the e-assessment models introduced are unprecedented successes in postmodernist digital age. But the study seems to suffer from shortcomings in the instrumentation. The secondary data elicitation from IT-literate teachers, learners and administrators favored to pave the path to that end.

**KEY WORDS:** E-assessment, E-learning, Digital age, Web 2.0, Assessment2.0

### INTRODUCTION

The external environment has transformed during the last 30 years, but teaching has resisted change. ICT is more than a tool, but fundamentally alters what and how we teach. Therefore, both teaching and assessment need to be modernized. There is no e-pedagogy, but we need one, and we need a new approach to assessment.

The recent advances in technology have necessitated both new approaches and new methodologies in the field of foreign language learning and thoroughly teaching. Internet and the virtual learning environments have diversified the opportunities for school teachers, instructional developers as well as learners by varying and broadening the alternatives for learning and teaching of languages. Implementing tools and applications, instead of classroom and course books, in the learning of foreign languages necessitate reconsidering the pedagogy, approach, applications, instructor roles, interaction forms, and teaching setting itself.

Learning and assessment are closely related to each other. Learners learn more in classes in which assessment is a central part of education than in those where it lacks. Brief assessment, which offers regular and enlightening feedback about learning advancement, is more effective than long, infrequent ones with judgmental feedback, like once-a-term tests.

Different types and approaches to assessment are described with numerous terms. Though somewhat subjective, it is useful to these various terms as demonstrating dichotomous poles (McAlpine, 2002).

Formative <-----> Summative

Informal <-----> Formal

Continuous <-----> Final

Process <-----> Product

One of the constructivist principle of assessment in their classroom is not to isolate evaluation as a single exercise. learning is perceived as a cyclical process in Constructivists setting. Since the form of a circle has no beginning and no end, therefore the point of where to assess could become blurry. Constructivists do not perceive assessment as an ending activity, but rather an continuing process that helps the learner continue to teach themselves how to learn (Holt & Willard-Holt, 2000).

Therefore, assessment on constructivist learning environment has different assumptions and forms from traditional instructivists' approaches. Since constructivists believe that individual learners construct their own learning, they are interested in assessing their learning process rather than explicit knowledge and skills we can easily see (Jonassen, 1992; Choi & Hannafin, 1995) indicate that traditional tests and testing methods fail to measure important educational outcomes because they emphasize homogenized recall of memorized factual knowledge and procedures rather than unique, and highly differentiated reflections. Based on this notion, they propose student-centered assessment, emphasizing the ability to diagnose and manage students' cognitive growth rather than evaluating student achievement.

Shepard (2000) claims that we need new frameworks and theories for assessments. In constructivist paradigm, we are sharing principles of curriculum ideas, psychological philosophies and assessment concepts affected by constructivist's epistemology and need to emphasis on improving students' actual learning instead of judging and ranking their achievement.

Jonassen (1992) shows us several criteria to evaluate students' meaningful learning and knowledge construction in constructivist learning environments - goal-free evaluation, authentic tasks, knowledge construction, experiential constructions (process versus product), context-driven evaluation, context-dependent evaluation, multiple perspectives, multimodal, and socially constructed meaning.

## **E-ASSESSMENT**

The use of computer technology in educational assessment has decades-long history. Computers were firstly used for assessment in the 1970s to reduce human raters' scoring load. Since that time, assessment has progressed in relation with technological developments. Computer-based assessment has become extended in large-scale assessments, for instance language testing and college entrance examinations, because of its convenience and accuracy. The terms "computer-adaptive testing" and "web-based assessment" are used interchangeably with "computer-based assessment", however they are actually two distinct cases of computer-based assessment. Specifically, computer-adaptive testing has a stronger stress on nonlinear item selection by quickly estimating the examinee's ability based on his/her preceding replies. Web-based assessment denotes to computer-based assessment that is normally distributed through online learning management systems.

Though improvements in computer-based assessment offer the technological basis for e-assessment, the present focus in e-assessment is in exploring the opportunities of the progressively widespread amusing digital media, such as web 2.0 tools and video games. Also, mobile and tablet devices are offering new occasions for e-assessment. For instance, the personal response systems (also known as clickers) have significantly simplified formative assessment in large classroom environments. We should be cautious that the main emphasis on e-assessment is not developing new assessment tools but refining learning by means of new assessment technologies. Consequently, educational benefits and drawbacks of e-assessment technologies need to be cautiously considered. An extensively dispersed report by the Joint Information Systems Committee [JISC] (2007) also highlights that "e-assessment, in fact, is much more than just an alternative way of doing what we already did... Assessment is perhaps the best way of identifying the support needs of learners and can instill a desire to progress further if linked to appropriate resources, good quality, timely feedback, and to challenging but stimulating ways of demonstrating understanding and skills."

Traditionally, e-assessment makes use of computer and information technology for the purpose of making the assessment process more effective by computerizing functions that would otherwise need human evaluators. These functions consist of item creation and selection, assessment distribution, item analysis, interpretation, scoring, and score presentation (Baker & O'Neil, 1995). Currently, though, e-assessment refers to present efforts within the

educational community to take benefit of technological developments. These efforts are promoted by the need to go further than “fill-in the bubble” tests and move toward authentic assessments of complex skills and knowledge (Pellegrino, Chudowsky, & Glaser, 2001).

## **STRATEGIES AND RESOURCES FOR ONLINE ASSESSMENT AND LEARNING**

### ***(E-) assessment for learning***

Plenty of attention has been paid in the last decades to various forms of outcomes-based assessment, or assessment of learning. However, there has been a simultaneous increase of research on process-based assessment, or assessment for learning, which can be defined as 'any assessment for which the first priority is to serve the purpose of promoting students' learning' (Black et al, 2003). Assessment for Learning (henceforth AfL) therefore refers to 'a set of practices and methodologies that might be used by both teachers and students to understand what students know and are able to do so that instruction and learning can be regulated more effectively' (Bennett, 2010).

### ***Student-involved assessment***

That is, an assessment, which provides learners “with a clear insight of the learning target from the beginning of the learning, along with samples of strong and weak Work.

### ***Effective feedback***

In E-learning environment, providing clear and informative (rather than judgmental) feedback, which can be used to revise learning goals (Stiggins, 2005). Feedback on assessments is an integral feature of effective and efficient teaching and learning, and can be one of the most influential methods to improve and strengthen student learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Feedback enables learning by providing information that can be used to improve and enhance future performance. This paper explores current literature around the appropriate use of technology in the production and delivery of feedback. It was anticipated that the literature would support the hypothesis, based on which technology has the potential to enhance student engagement with feedback.

### ***(Self-) assessment skills***

By engaging the learners in self-assessment, “they can watch themselves successfully negotiating the road to competence. [and ultimately] learn to generate their own descriptive feedback and to set goals for what comes next in their learning” (Stiggins, 2005).

Self-monitoring, a skill necessary for effective self-assessment, involves focused attention on some aspects of behavior or thinking (Schunk, 2004). Self-monitoring students pay thoughtful attention to what they are performing, often related to external standards. Thus, self-monitoring concerns awareness of thinking and progress as it occurs, and as such, it identifies part of what students do when they self-assess.

A second component of self-assessment, self-judgment, involves identifying progress toward targeted performance. Made in relation to established standards and criteria, these judgments give students a meaningful idea of what they know and what they still need to learn (Bruce 2001).

The third essential step is that students choose subsequent learning goals and activities to improve partially correct answers, to correct misunderstandings, and to extend learning. Because students at this stage need skills in determining learning targets and further instruction that will enhance their learning, they should be aware of options for further goals and instruction. Once the appropriate "instructional correctives," as they are referred to, are complete, students resume self-monitoring.

The growing literature on formative assessment has implications for self-assessment. Formative assessment can be defined as employing appropriate activities to provide feedback to enhance student motivation and achievement during instruction- as students learn. Providing helpful information as learning occurs contrasts with providing feedback solely after instruction. There is substantial evidence that appropriate formative assessment activities relate positively to student motivation and achievement (Black and William 1998). In addition, self-assessment is a valuable skill in effective formative assessment. Both Sadler (1989) and Black and William (1998) contend that self-assessment is essential to using feedback appropriately.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Traditional assessment (Assessment 1.0)***

‘Assessment 1.0’, also known as traditional assessment is the form of assessment applied from 618 AD to today. It is recognized with the following characteristics:

- Mostly paper-based
- Mostly classroom-based
- Very formalized (in terms of administration)
- Highly synchronized (in terms of time and place)
- Highly individualized
- Highly controlled (in terms of contents and marking).

#### ***Computer based assessment (Assessment 1.5)***

Computer based assessment (CBA) or computer based test (CBT) is a more up-to-date form of assessment, which has appeared in the last ten years, replicates the traditional assessment, using computers and modern technology in the assessment process.

‘E-testing’ (a form of on-screen testing of knowledge) and ‘e-portfolios’ (a digital repository of assessment evidence normally used to assess practical skills) are examples of CBA. Learning management systems (LMS) and virtual learning environments (VLE) are templates, which provide conditions for implementing these forms of assessment.

#### ***Problems with assessment 1.0 and 1.5***

In spite of that traditional tests need a lot of time and energy to be spend for their preparation, carrying out, and marking, learners fail to gain the skills like problem solving, innovation, collaboration and creativity needed in the modern external environment.

Proponents of computer-based testing systems boast about assimilation of paper-based assessment in the virtual environment, While E-testing is not more than imitating traditional assessment and a limited number of question types (almost always selected response questions) and, at best, simple reproductions of traditional tasks are supported by computer-based testing systems. Similarly, most current e-portfolio systems assimilate the existing approach to assessment, which is highly focused on content rather than student and process. Consequently, it is also nothing more than online storage for students’ work.

Students’ feelings are not encouraging both paper-based and computer-based assessments, because they perceive them as something external to them; something over which they have no control; something that is “done” to them. In addition they consider the assessment instrument something unnatural and artificial, just a barrier to be leaped over, not as a part of their learning. Or, worse, they perceived it as the only purpose of their learning, which they should focus all their efforts and attention on, to pass the test instead of the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.

Traditional and computer-based assessments are highly individualistic; i.e. assessment activities should be done individually; as a result, competition is encouraged and collaboration (or cheating in the lexicon of traditional assessment) is forbidden. Virtual learning environments (VLEs) also tend to assimilate the traditional classroom, lecture hall, instructor’s office and the pupil common room. While some teachers with the familiarity of VLEs tried to implement them, it has been proposed that the use of VLEs can reduce innovations in the classroom because the classroom time is wasted in practicing into traditional (classroom-based) and new approach, (VLE-based), instead of implementing and exploring the full potential of e-learning.

The use of current e-assessment systems also inhibits progress in assessment by similarly replicating practice to traditional (paper-based) assessment with the limited form of computer-based assessment, made possible by these systems.

Pellegrino (1999) rightly believes that “in 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environments, decontextualized drop-inform-the-sky assessments consisting of isolated tasks and performances will have zero validity as indices of educational attainment.” Based on the foresaid concepts, the present study intends to shed some lights on certain research questions such as: Which e-assessment templates better satisfies the following ideals in real life situation.

#### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Both the ministry of education and higher education of Iran have shown some symptoms of understanding the emergent implementation of e-assessment in education and emitted several circulations to this end, but in action, What is done is nothing more than assimilation of traditional form of testing in virtual environment, which unveils some misunderstanding of the issue. This article tries to highlight the new concepts of e-assessment to help teachers and administrators take the right direction to the end.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

How familiar are teachers and learners with the E-assessment concepts?  
How much workable is the scheme?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Survey*

Survey was supposed to be the usual and desirable method, based on the literature, to elicit data from the following participants. TAP was also favored by some teachers to talk about their own personal understanding of the agenda, but they are not significant enough based on certain limitations, which come later.

### *Participants*

Candidates,  $28 \pm 1$  in each stratum, were selected based on stratified sampling model among high IT literate university and school teachers, key administrators and university students, from a variety of disciplines in Fars province universities & educational organizations. According to Kothari (2004), stratified sampling involves dividing the population into homogeneous groups containing subjects with similar characteristics. Gender was out of control for academicians and administrators but equal sizes of male/female learners took part in the data elicitation procedure.

### *Instruments*

To this end, a synchronous Likert 5 items online/offline questionnaire- ranging from perfectly agree(5), agree (4), perfectly disagree (3), disagree (2), no idea (1)- charged with interview- web-based / in-person- was used. Eight items were selected based on Richards (1995) four related maxims: the Maxim of Accuracy, the Maxim of Efficiency, the Maxim of Conformity, and the Maxim of Empowerment. Twenty other items were taken from related texts in the literature, based on Kothari's (2004) stratified Sampling Model. Hence, probability sampling was avoided to minimize the risk of chance. These twenty eight items were calculated in split-half format to test their validity, reliability and viability.

### *Materials*

For practicality purposes and to test the viability of the hypotheses, the sample template was driven from a general English book, entitled: ESAP, whose materials were to be covered for university candidates, but for high school students, their centralized textbook, developed by the ministry was the basis for the purpose.

### *Procedures*

The learners, from the university/school students stratum discussed above, were asked to work out the task for a four-month period of time or one semester and other candidates (teachers and administrators) followed the URL, designed for the purpose. They were supposed to be familiar with the practicality aspects of e-assessment concepts.

At the end of the one semester period, candidates were invited to complete the questionnaire, (mostly, supporting the rationale behind the e-learning and e-assessment concepts) while receiving descriptions and instructions, without which almost all were unable to respond.

Data elicited were put into Effects Matrices in order to be statistically analyzed and be interpreted. A t-test was favored to compare our two means, calculated based on two halves of items in the questionnaire and a chi-square test, based on the same split-half procedure to compare variances. That technique is reported to be effective in identifying Brown and Richard's (1997) triangulation model in which reliability- internal / external; validity- internal / external; transferability; credibility; dependability- internal / external; objectivity; conformability and viability are parts and parcels.

## RESULTS

Items were analyzed in a split/half procedure to measure their reliability. Reliability indices are analytically measured. Results derived from the survey are as follows:



Table 1: Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q1	74.03	102.240	.769	.863
Q2	74.00	103.586	.704	.865
Q3	73.60	96.938	.872	.858
Q4	73.30	103.459	.445	.870
Q5	73.23	101.978	.620	.865
Q6	73.90	102.162	.762	.863
Q7	73.60	101.903	.635	.865
Q8	72.97	103.964	.256	.879
Q9	73.90	102.162	.762	.863
Q10	73.67	99.747	.733	.862
Q11	73.40	100.386	.657	.864
Q12	72.17	112.282	.000	.877
Q13	73.57	98.461	.546	.867
Q14	73.93	101.857	.805	.863
Q15	73.93	102.409	.759	.864
Q16	73.83	99.868	.743	.862
Q17	73.20	108.303	.127	.881
Q18	72.63	120.723	-.522	.892
Q19	72.53	114.602	-.184	.883
Q20	72.53	121.016	-.546	.892
Q21	73.37	102.585	.563	.867
Q22	73.03	104.930	.551	.868
Q23	73.63	108.102	.230	.875
Q24	73.30	103.321	.338	.874
Q25	73.97	102.102	.806	.863
Q26	74.13	110.947	.374	.874
Q27	73.37	108.102	.219	.875
Q28	73.77	102.392	.701	.864

Table 2: Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Cases valid	30	100.0
Excluded	0	.0
Total	30	100.0

List wise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 3: Statistic

<b>N</b>	<b>Valid</b>	<b>30</b>
	<b>Missing</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Mean</b>		<b>76.1667</b>
<b>Median</b>		<b>72.5000</b>
<b>Mode</b>		<b>68.00</b>
<b>Std. Deviation</b>		<b>10.60281</b>
<b>Variance</b>		<b>112.420</b>
<b>Sum</b>		<b>2285.00</b>
<b>Percentiles</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>115.0000</b>

Table4: Reliability Statistics

<b>N of Items</b>	<b>Cranach's Alpha</b>
28	.874

It can be inferred from that level of Cranach's Alpha scale of reliability statistics, the split-half procedure in the design of the item is reliable enough to be generalizable. Hence, one can simply rely on the elicited data via that type of instrument.

Table 5: One-sample Statistic

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error Mean</b>
mean	30	2.7202	.37867	.06914

Table 6: One Sample Test

	Test Value = 2.5					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
mean	3.186	29	.003	.22024	.0788	.3616

Table 7: Sum

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Valid</b>				
67.00	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
68.00	8	26.7	26.7	30.0
69.00	2	6.7	6.7	36.7
72.00	4	13.3	13.3	50.0
73.00	1	3.3	3.3	53.3
74.00	1	3.3	3.3	56.7
75.00	1	3.3	3.3	60.0
76.00	1	3.3	3.3	63.3
77.00	1	3.3	3.3	66.7
78.00	2	6.7	6.7	73.3
79.00	1	3.3	3.3	76.7
82.00	1	3.3	3.3	80.0
83.00	1	3.3	3.3	83.3
84.00	2	6.7	6.7	90.0
92.00	1	3.3	3.3	93.3
98.00	1	3.3	3.3	96.7
115.00	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

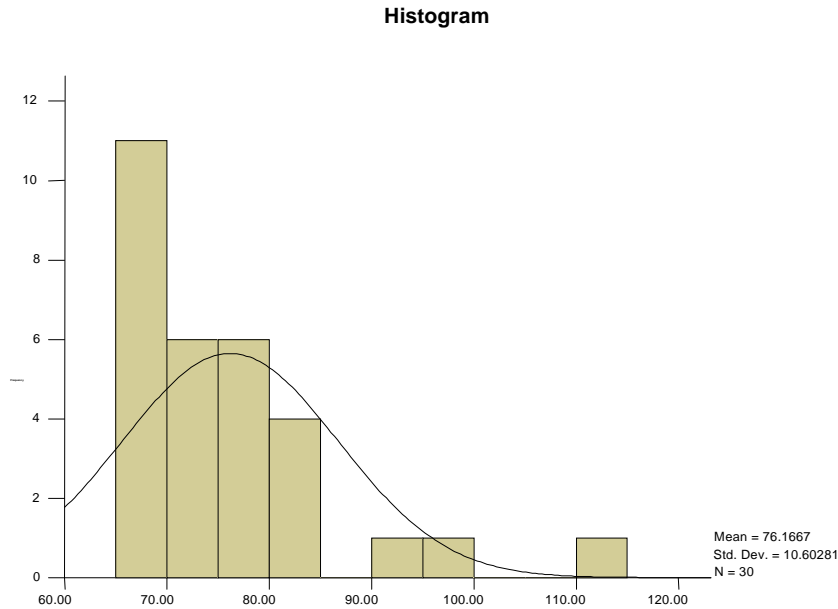


Figure 1: Histogram for the responses to items

## DISCUSSION

To materialize the new concepts of e-assessment, a primary study focused on a survey using oral/online interview with five testing experts. Although, they all proposed that e-assessment as a requirement not a need for digital age theoretically, they also acknowledged that it should be researched in action.

To this end, the present study focused on administrators, teachers and learners who were regarded the stakeholders of education.

Although results, derived from the questionnaire statistically seem to lend support to the hypothesis one and show that participants have high relevant literacy but it should be noted that participants answered the questionnaires while receiving instructions and explanations. More problematic questions were those related to personalization, collaboration and goal free concepts of e-assessments.

### *Core concepts of Assessment 2.0 (E-assessment)*

#### *Web 2.0*

Current state of web development is called web 2.0. It is believed that there are the following six big ideas behind web 2.0

1. user-generated content
2. the power of the crowd
3. data on an epic scale
4. architecture of participation
5. network effects
6. openness.

For the e-assessment purpose four of them are relevant.

1. **User-generated content** refers to the easiness of producing content. MySpace, Blogger and YouTube are the examples of Web services, which have made it possible to create content without a need for much effort.
2. **The power of the crowd** refers to the shared intelligence that can be connected to large collections of people. The basic idea is that, a large group of well-informed (but non-expert) users can make better decisions than any individual expert. Web services like Digg and Wikipedia are instances of this collective intelligence.

3. **Architecture of participation** is founded on the undistinguishable philosophies that Web services must be easy to use (in this manner promoting participation) and must be organized in such a way that the more they are used the better they will improve. Google Search is a good case since it is very easy to use and its search algorithms improve, based on the results of previous searches.
4. **Openness** refers to both the use of open source software for many Web 2.0 services and the idea of the free sharing of information and resources among users, which make it possible to access and share information or resources easily, like embedding a YouTube video in a blog.

### *Digital natives*

Today's students are living and learning in an era called digital age. Prensky (2003) claimed that there is a major dissimilarity between today's learners and those of the past regarding "the arrival and rapid spreading of digital technology... a phenomenon, which alters things so fundamentally that there is totally no going back". He called these new learners "digital natives" and contrasted them with "digital immigrants". He claimed that: "The single biggest problem facing education today is that our digital immigrant instructors, who speak an outdated language (that of the pre-digital age), are struggling to teach a population that speaks an entirely new language".

Digital natives are characterized with the following common set of learning styles as follows:

- skilled use of tools
- active learning rather than passive receiving of knowledge
- authentic learning experiences rather than contrived tasks
- construction rather than instruction
- task-based (not product oriented one)
- just in time learning
- searching not memorizing
- utilizing social networks
- not knowing the answer but knowing where to find it
- Google not libraries
- Collaborating not competing.

When a digital native learner faces a problem, at the first step he/she is likely to explore the Google for appropriate information, look up wikis or send an email to a friend for help. Finally, he/she will organize the consequential information into a comprehensible document by means of a range of web-based and desktop applications.

### *Assessment 2.0*

Assessment 2.0 is an alternative form of assessment 1.0, which embraces the modern technology including internet and more specifically, web 2.0, as illustrated above, with the four big ideas related to assessment. Assessment 2.0 is in fact seeking the way to bring the 21<sup>st</sup> century's technology into examination room and therefore speak in a language that is known to digital natives, assign them the tasks that they are familiar with in their real life and provide them activities adapted with their ability and digital age learning styles.

The type of assessment activity best suited to the digital native would exhibit some or all of the following characteristics. (Elliott, 2007)

- **Authentic:** involving real-world knowledge and skills.
- **Personalized:** tailored to the knowledge, skills and interests of each student.
- **Negotiated:** agreed between the learner and the teacher.
- **Problem oriented:** original tasks requiring genuine problem solving skills.
- **Socially constructed:** using the student's social networks.
- **Collaboratively produced:** produced in partnership with fellow students.
- **Recognize existing skills:** willing to recognize the student's existing work.

And the types of evidence that best fits this form of assessment would be (Elliott, 2007):

- **occurring naturally:** already in existence or generated out of personal interest
- **offering multimedia:** existing in text, audio and video format
- **using modern technology:** such as e-mail, instant message logs, blog posts, wiki contributions, audio and video recordings
- **distributing via different channels:** may be distributed across various sources (such as web sites, blogs, inbox, iPod).

**Assessment 1.0 and Assessment 2.0**

Comparing these two alternative forms of assessment will illuminate the new concepts of assessment more. It can be summarized in the following table:

*Table 1: comparison assessment 1.0 & 2.0*

<b>Assessment 1.0</b>	<b>Assessment 2.0</b>
Given	Negotiated
Done alone	Done collaboratively
Descriptive	Researched/Deep
Text	Text/audio/video
Closed book	Open web
Done in class	Done anywhere
Teacher assessed	Self- and peer-assessed
individualized work	Collaborative work
Highly controlled	no control
Artificial /unnatural	Authentic /Natural
Industrialized	Personalized
Memory based	Problem-based

Consequently, results derived from the survey via oral interview performed in chat format or in-person one seems to be supportive to the speculation of Illium, et al (2010). According to them, when candidates are not perfectly familiar with core rationales behind the items or they have low literacy to certain concepts, the driving force for their responses will be the researchers' descriptions. Hence, one easily witnesses a discrepancy between what goes on in their mind as universe and their responses to items in reality. Consequently, surveys are not mutually exclusive enough and they should be avoided in such social contexts.

## **CONCLUSION**

Assessment, test and measurement are the terms which are used for years in educational settings with clear concepts for all. They are also separated from teaching and learning process. Postmodern digital age with its new approaches to learning, posed new concepts to the previous existing terms. It has also integrated teaching, learning and assessment arousing some resistance due to accepting previous terms with their new concepts. As, new concepts are accepted and learned more easily with their own new terms, generating new terminology for digital age educational concepts seems vital.

On the other hand, administrators and teachers are needed to equip themselves with new educational concepts knowledge as soon as possible, since they are far away from learners who are just now using and learning via web 2.0 tools in variety of disciplines which shows emergent embrace of relevant and enlightening workshops for teachers and administrators to this end.

Due to the methodology, the concluding word is that based on Illium's, et al (2010) speculation, survey is workable when there is no discrepancy between what goes on in the mind of the researcher – cognition- and what goes on in the mind of the respondent- simple mind, which is packaged, not open to criticism and in short based on Low literacy. Hence, in such contexts, survey does not work and exploratory or descriptive scheme seems to work.

## LIMITATIONS & DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- 1- The subjects participating in this study were selected from learners, teachers and administrators from schools and universities of Shiraz, Fars, Iran, because they were the only available sources for the researcher. Therefore, the findings are limited to them and it might ruin the generalizability power. Because of IT literacy problems, the researcher seems to have been biased in his sample selection as well as treatment manipulation.
- 2- Low IT literacy of teachers and administrators was a problem, but misunderstanding of E-assessment by those supposedly IT literate was a hindrance, which couldn't be removed easily by the explanation of e-assessment concepts, since there was a discrepancy between what they had in their mind and what went on in researcher's cognition.

The same research is required to be replicated on different sample sizes in a variety of environments to add to its consistency.

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## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN L2 GRAMMATICAL KNOWLEDGE AND PHONOLOGICAL MEMORY IN ADULT MALE EFL LEARNERS AT DIFFERENT LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVELS

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### ABSTRACT

Evidence is accumulating that phonological memory (PM), a sub-component of working memory (WM), is closely related to different facets of second language (L2) learning. Moreover, little research has specifically delved into the relationship between the PM capacity and grammar among adult learners at different L2 proficiency levels. Therefore, it seems necessary to verify to what extent PM capacity might be related to grammatical knowledge in English as a foreign language (EFL) learners with different proficiency levels. To achieve this objective, the present study investigated the relationship between PM and L2 grammatical knowledge among native Persian-speaking male adults undergoing a 6-week intensive English course. The number of participants was 180 and their age ranged from 20 to 30. The participants were assigned to three different language proficiency levels (beginner, lower intermediate, advanced), 60 each, by using the Quick Placement Test (2001). PM capacity (as referenced by nonword repetition and nonword recognition tasks) and L2 grammatical knowledge were assessed in the first week of their course. After ensuring the normality of the data through SPSS 21, Pearson correlations and multiple regression analyses were conducted. The findings showed that L2 grammatical knowledge and PM tasks as assessed with English nonword repetition and recognition tests were moderately correlated among adult EFL learners in different levels of language proficiency. However, the correlation coefficients for the advanced group were lower than the other groups. Thus, the findings may imply that grammatical knowledge can be more closely related to PM capacity for beginners and lower intermediate learners than for advanced learners.

**KEYWORDS:** phonological memory; grammatical knowledge; language proficiency; L2 learning; adult EFL learners

### INTRODUCTION

According to Skehan (1998), “memory is important all along, goes hand in hand with success in language learning until an advanced level is reached, and then becomes even more important” (p. 218). One of the popular issues in contemporary cognitive psychology as well as the area of individual differences is working memory (hereafter WM). As Baddeley (2003) puts it, WM refers to the “temporary storage and manipulation of information that is assumed to be necessary for a wide range of complex cognitive activities” (p.189). WM has been investigated extensively in the field of SLA during the last 20 years and some scholars even believe that “WM capacity help predict learning rate and ultimate levels of attainment in the L2” (Ortega, 2009, p. 90).

One of the most influential WM models is that of Baddeley’s model (Baddeley, 1986, 2000; Baddeley & Hitch, 1974) which views WM as incorporating several components (Figure1): (a) a central executive, an attention control system responsible for integrating information from different WM subsystems and long-term memory and supervising basic WM operations; (b) the phonological loop, The phonological loop, which deals with the storage of verbal, speech-based material.; (c) the visuo-spatial sketchpad, which handles visual images and spatial information; and (d) an episodic buffer, involved in the binding of information from subsidiary systems and long-term memory into a unitary episodic representation (Hummel & French, 2010).

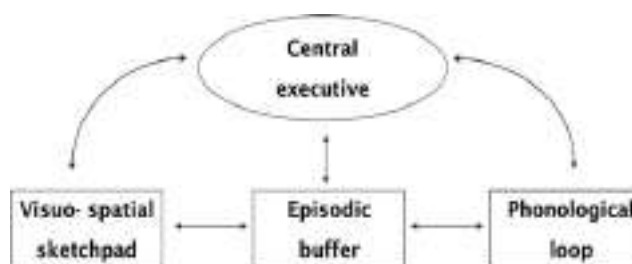


Figure 1: Multi-Component Working Memory Model (Adapted from Baddeley, 2000)

Most studies on WM, in effect, have used verbal information which is claimed to depend on the operation of the phonological loop (Baddeley, 1986, 2000; Baddeley & Hitch, 1974). The phonological loop consists of two parts: a phonological store and an articulatory rehearsal process. Figure 2 pictures the structure of the phonological loop. As Figure 2 displays, speech input has access to the phonological store directly but nonspeech input has to enter through the articulatory rehearsal process. Another function of the rehearsal process deals with the maintenance of information. Unless a stored phonological code is kept fresh through the rehearsal, it fades gradually in the phonological store process (Baddeley 1986; Gathercole & Baddeley 1993).

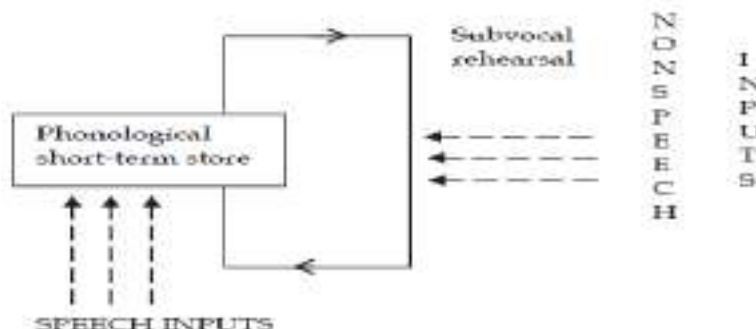


Figure 2: The Phonological Loop Model (Gathercole and Baddeley, 1993, p. 8)

In the literature, phonological loop has been interchangeably referred to as phonological memory (hereafter PM) (Hummel & French, 2010). Some scholars have highlighted PM as an important source of individual differences in L1 acquisition (e.g. Baddeley, 1986; Baddeley, 1996; Gathercole & Baddeley, 1993) and in L2 learning (Gathercole & Thorn, 1998; Harrington & Sawyer, 1992; Papagno, Valentine, & Baddeley, 1991). Ellis (1996) claims that significant portion of language learning involves sequence learning, and even abstract grammatical knowledge is a product of the analysis of sequential information. According to Kormos and Sáfár (2008, p.263), “as PM is responsible for remembering sequential information, its role in language learning is far greater than previously supposed.” Furthermore, some studies carried out in SLA found that the role of PM in both L1 grammar acquisition and L2 grammar learning can be influential. However, their results have been controversial. The literature pertinent to this issue is reviewed below.

Gathercole and Adams (1996) conducted a study on children of 4 and 5 years old. The participants were required to tell a story which they had previously listened to. Results showed that the ability to recite the story was closely related to the ability to repeat nonwords. Further analysis showed that children who were more accurate at nonword repetition had richer lexicons and produced longer utterances than those with lower repetition accuracy. In other words, children who were better at PM stimuli were also grammatically more proficient. In another study, Willis and Gathercole (2001) found that 4-year-old children with better PM capacity were more accurate at repeating complex sentences in their L1 than children with weaker PM capacity.

As in L1, PM has also been revealed to be related to L2 grammatical ability. Service (1992) tested young Finnish children and found that PM did not correlate significantly with simple English grammar tasks. However, learners’ performance on other language tasks, such as reproduction of structures and written production (to reflect learners’ syntactic ability) revealed a slight association with nonword repetition. Ellis and Sinclair (1996), later, tested adults’ ability to learn Welsh as a foreign language and they concluded that the more often foreign language structures are rehearsed in PM, the easier it is to learn them and to generalize rules from them. O’Brien et al. (2006) examined the role of PM in L2 speech production by English-speaking adults learning Spanish (33 females, 10 males; M= 21.84 years old). They found that PM correlated with vocabulary scores, narrative abilities, and use of free grammatical morphemes and subordinate clauses, both at the beginning and at the end of a semester of Spanish learning ( $r$ s between .30 and .41). In another study, French and O’Brien (2008) conducted a study on Francophone children learning English as a part of a 5-month intensive program in Quebec’s Saguenay region. French and O’Brien (2008) found that nonword repetition at the beginning of language program (Time 1) predicted L2 grammar scores at the end of the language program (Time 2) ( $r$ s between .79 and .82). PM explained almost 30% of the variance in grammar scores at Time 2, even after controlling for vocabulary knowledge. In a more recent study, Martin & Ellis (2012), examined PM and WM and their relationship with vocabulary and grammar learning. The memory measures used were nonword repetition, nonword recognition, and listening span. The participants were tested on their ability to induce the grammatical forms and to generalize the forms to novel utterances. Individual differences in final abilities in vocabulary and grammar correlated between 0.44 and 0.76, depending on the measure. The results, also, showed significant independent effects of PM and WM on L2 vocabulary learning and on L2 grammar learning.

It appears, from the literature reviewed here, that PM may be related to the development of grammatical skill. However, studies in this area have not reached conclusive results and further studies are needed to shed light on this issue, and in particular, among adults learning an L2. Moreover, there have been a number of studies which have dealt with the PM influence at different levels of language proficiency.

French (2003) found PM to predict L2 learning in low but not in high proficiency learners. Later, O’Brien et al. (2006) found connections in both low and high ability groups, but the aspects of L2 knowledge involved differed. Kormos and Sáfár (2008) conducted a study on teenage Hungarian native speakers participating in an intensive language program in English (L2). The participants were divided into two proficiency groups, beginner and pre-intermediate. Kormos and Sáfár (2008) found no significant relationship between the nonword span score and success on the L2 exam for beginners, whereas the nonword score of the pre-intermediate participants correlated moderately with their scores on writing, use of English and total points, and the fluency and range of vocabulary scores of the oral exam. The backward digit span test, however, was found to correlate with all the components of the L2 exam except the writing one. Furthermore, the digit span and nonword scores were not correlated. Kormos and Sáfár (2008) concluded that WM (assessed by the backward digit span task) and phonological loop (measured by the nonword task) likely separate constructs and influence language learning in various ways.

Some other studies investigating adults failed to find significant correlations between PM and L2 proficiency. Mizera (2006) used nonword repetition tasks designed for children with the adult participants and found no significant correlation between the PM task and the participants’ proficiency. Hummel (2009), in a recent study of young adults, found that the relationship between PM (measured by non-word repetition) and L2 proficiency remained significant in non-novice learners but disappeared at the most advanced proficiency level. “this finding provides further empirical evidence that the role of PM in L2 learning appears to diminish as a function of language proficiency level and not necessarily of age” (Hummel & French, 2010, p. 377). To summarize, the research conducted on adult L2 learners in various L2 contexts suggests that while some research has failed to find significant correlations between PM tasks (e.g., digit-span, word-span, and non-word repetition) and L2 proficiency (e.g., Hummel, 2002; Mizera, 2006), other research studies have reported significant relationships between PM and aspects of L2 proficiency in adults (e.g., Hummel, 2009; Martin & Ellis, 2012; O’Brien et al., 2006).

Evidence from the previous research shows that PM is closely associated with different aspects of L2 learning and it seems to be an essential memory component throughout much of L2 development.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the literature reviewed above, the present study attempted to investigate the extent to which the L2 grammatical knowledge and PM tasks, i.e. nonword repetition task and nonword recognition, associate in three proficiency groups (beginner, lower intermediate and advanced). Hence, the following questions were investigated in this study:

1. To what extent do nonword repetition task (as a measure of phonological memory) and L2 grammatical knowledge correlate in the beginner, lower intermediate, and advanced groups of adult male EFL learners?
2. To what extent do nonword recognition task (as a measure of phonological memory) and L2 grammatical knowledge correlate in the beginner, lower intermediate, and advanced groups of adult male EFL learners?

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

Among L2 studies dealing with WM and PM few have examined adult L2 learners (e.g., O'Brien et al., 2006). Therefore, the present study assessed EFL adult learners. This allowed the researchers to find out whether the adults' reliance on PM is similar to that of the children in the previous studies. 180 male EFL learners were involved in the study (60 beginners, 60 lower intermediate and 60 advanced learners of English). The participants' age ranged from 20 to 30. In order to control the participants' language proficiency level and their homogeneity in each proficiency group, a Quick Placement Test v.1 (QPT) and a demographic questionnaire were administered. QPT v.1 (2001) is an objectively-scored 60-item multiple-choice test and the participants were given 30 minutes to answer them. Based on the obtained results, the participants were assigned to three proficiency groups, i.e. beginner, lower intermediate, and advanced.

### Instruments

#### Questionnaire

In order to gain specific information about the type and amount of exposure to English outside the program, a demographic questionnaire in the participants' L1 (Persian) was administered.

#### Nonword Repetition Task

In order to assess PM, both nonword recognition (henceforth NWRC) task and the nonword repetition (hereafter NWRP) task were applied. The merit of the present research is in that it employed two different PM tasks, i.e. NWRC and NWRP. One of the most widely used tests of PM capacity is the NWRP, where participants have to repeat nonwords of different lengths that do not exist in the given language but conform to its phonotactic rules. Gathercole and Baddeley (1993) proposed two advantages of using a NWRP test over other assessment methods to measure PM capacity. First, NWRP test may be more sensitive than other measures because this test prevents long-term memory knowledge influencing the assessment of PM, although the effects of prior language knowledge cannot be completely eliminated by nonwords. The second advantage of NWRP tests is that the NWRP test is viewed simple and somewhat more natural compared to others measures because both children and adult language learners hear and repeat new vocabulary items during their learning process. The participants in the current study heard a list of 1-syllable nonwords and were asked to repeat them. Following the study carried out by Martin & Ellis (2012, p.385), "there were four lists at each of four lengths: three, four, five, and six words." Example stimuli used for the NWRP task are displayed in Table 1. The nonwords were taken from a stimulus pool of nonwords provided by Gathercole et al. (2001). All participants heard the lists, beginning with the shortest lists and continuing with lists of increasing length. The participants' responses for all items throughout the study were recorded. The researchers did the scoring offline on a phoneme-by-phoneme basis. The maximum number of phonemes recalled on any one repetition set was calculated for each participant. The highest possible score for this task was 22 correct phonemes. Two raters scored the participants' responses to the NWRP to ensure the homogeneity of the calculated scores. The inter-rater reliability of the two sets of scores was  $r = .94$  ( $p < .01$ ).

Table 1: Example Stimuli for NWRP Task

3-word stimuli	barch	kig	norb			
4-word stimuli	chad	dorl	teck	parn		
5-word stimuli	cherl	goot	jarm	tidge	bup	
6-word stimuli	jert	coom	lorc	ged	nerch	darch

#### Nonword Recognition Task

NWRC task was used as an additional measure of PM. This task is highly correlated with performance on similar NWRP tasks but is less affected by unfamiliar phonotactics and pronunciation difficulties (Gathercole et al., 2001). The participants listened to two presentations of a list of nonwords and decided whether they were the same or different. The participants received 1 point for each correct same or different judgment. Eight lists were used at each of four lengths: four, five, six and seven items. The maximum possible score for this task was 16 correct recognitions. The stimuli were taken from Gathercole et al. (2001). Table 2 illustrates example stimuli applied for the NWRC task. Stimuli were tape-recorded by an English native speaker. Two sequences of items were presented on each trial, with an inter-stimulus interval of 1.5 s separating the last item in the first presentation and the first item of the second presentation.

Table 2: Example Stimuli for NWRC Task

Examples of nonword recognition stimuli	Correct responses
List 1 : chad pook <b>mun jick</b> terdge	different
List 2 : chad pook <b>jick mun</b> terdg	
List 1 : turg deet peb chim nam ked	Same
List 2 : turg deet peb chim nam ked	



#### *Grammar Test*

The grammar test used in this study was selected from the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) designed and developed by Allen (2004). The grammar section of the OPT consists of 100 items. Fifty minutes were allotted for completion. Test-takers were asked to read the stem with a blank and to choose one of the three options for the blank.

#### *Quick Placement Test*

As Granpayeh (2003, p. 8) put it, "QPT is a test of English language proficiency developed by Oxford University Press and Cambridge ESOL to give teachers a reliable and time-saving method of finding a students' level of English." This test is available in both paper-and-pencil and computer-based versions. It is designed to calculate accurately English language learners' level of proficiency, from the beginner to the advanced level. QPT, which includes 60 items, takes 30 minutes to complete. According to Granpayeh (2003), the SEM of the test is around 4 and its reliability is close to 0.9.

#### *Procedures*

First, all the participants were given the QPT v.1 (2001) and a demographic questionnaire in order to assess their level of proficiency. Based on the obtained scores on the QPT, the participants were assigned to one of the three proficiency groups, i.e. beginner, lower intermediate, and advanced. In QPT, the band scores for the beginners, lower intermediate, and advanced levels are 0 to 15, 24 to 30, and 48 to 60 respectively. The participants' classes were held four sessions a week, twenty four sessions on aggregate. Each session lasted for two hours. The setting of the data collection was Estahban, a city located in Fars province, Iran. The NWRC and NWRP tasks, and the grammar test were measured during the first week of the English course. The allocated time for the NWRC and NWRP tasks were 15 and 5 minutes respectively. The NWRC as well as the NWRP tasks were administered in language laboratories since headphones were needed to allow the participants to listen to sequences of the tape-recorded nonwords. For the grammar test, the participants answered the grammar section of the OPT in 50 minutes.

#### *Data Analysis*

In order to answer the research questions, data from the NWRP task, NWRC task, and the grammar test were entered into SPSS 21 (2012). First, Shapiro-Wilk test was used in order to make sure that the distribution was normal. Shapiro-Wilk test is the most powerful normality test (Keskin, 2006; Mendes & Pala, 2003; Razali & Wah, 2011). After ensuring the normality of the data, Pearson product-moment correlations followed by multiple regression were investigated for the PM tasks and the grammar test scores. Significance level was set at  $p < 0.05$ .

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

As mentioned before, the participants of the study were selected out of 180 Adult male students of English. Shapiro-Wilk test was used in order to make sure that the distribution was normal. In all proficiency groups, the significance value shows that there is normal distribution since the p-value is more than 0.05 (see Table 3).

*Table 3: Test of Normality for All Groups*

	<b>Shapiro-Wilk Test</b>								
	Beginner			Lower Intermediate			Advanced		
	statistic	df	Sig.	statistic	df	Sig.	statistic	df	Sig.
Scores on the Grammar	.97	60	.77	.96	60	.85	.96	60	.29
Scores on the NWRP	.96	60	.22	.94	60	.18	.95	60	.10
Score on the NWRC	.95	60	.19	.94	60	.14	.92	60	.11

Table 4 shows the mean (Ms), standard deviations (SDs), and ranges of the scores of the grammar test, NWRP and NWRC tasks for the beginner group.

*Table 4: Descriptive Statistics (Each Group No.= 60)*

Variables	Beginner Group				Lower intermediate Group				Advanced Group			
	M	SD	Max	Min	M	SD	Max	Min	M	SD	Max	Min
Grammar Test	17.42	4.34	26	8	36.05	4.83	46	24	66.53	6.82	79	55
NWRP Task	14.77	2	19	11	14.3	1.69	19	11	<b>15.7</b>	1.97	<b>20</b>	12
NWRC Task	9.28	1.83	13	6	9.65	1.51	<b>14</b>	6	<b>11.05</b>	1.5	<b>14</b>	8

As Table 4 depicts, the advanced group had the highest mean score on both NWRP task ( $M= 15.7$ ,  $SD=1.97$ ) and NWRC task ( $M= 11.05$ ,  $SD=1.5$ ). The maximum score on the NWRP task was obtained by the advanced group ( $Max= 20$ ). Both the lower intermediate and advanced groups gained the highest score in the NWRC task ( $Max= 14$ ). Table 5 displays the correlation coefficients between NWRP, NWRC, and grammar scores in the beginner, lower intermediate, and advanced groups.

Table 5: Pearson Correlations between PM Tasks and Grammar Test in the Beginner, Lower Intermediate, and Advanced Groups

	Beginner Group			Lower Intermediate Group			Advanced Group		
Variable	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1. Grammar	—	<b>.49**</b>	<b>.53**</b>	—	<b>.41**</b>	<b>.48**</b>	—	<b>.36**</b>	<b>.47**</b>
2. NWRP	<b>.49**</b>	—	<b>.52**</b>	<b>.41**</b>	—	<b>.40**</b>	<b>.36**</b>	—	<b>.50**</b>
3. NWRC	<b>.53**</b>	<b>.52**</b>	—	<b>.48**</b>	<b>.40**</b>	—	<b>.47**</b>	<b>.50**</b>	—

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ 

Table 5 shows that NWRP task was significantly correlated with the grammar scores for beginners ( $r = .49, p < .01$ ), intermediate students ( $r = .41, p < .01$ ), and advanced students ( $r = .36, p < .01$ ). Moreover, NWRC task was significantly correlated with the grammar scores at all proficiency levels (beginners:  $r = .53, p < .01$ ; intermediate students,  $r = .48, p < .01$ ; and advanced students,  $r = .47, p < .01$ ). The correlation coefficients show a moderate relationship for the three tests. The highest correlation between grammar test scores and NWRP task was that of beginners,  $r = .49, p < .01$ . Further, the beginners' scores on grammar test enjoyed the highest correlation with NWRC task,  $r = .53, p < .01$ . Then multiple regression between independent variables (NWRP and NWRC tasks as measures of PM) and dependent variable (grammar test scores) was computed so as to figure out the level of relationship between the variables, and to find out which variable could be a better predictor of L2 grammatical knowledge (Tables 6 and 7).

Table 6: Model Summary in Multiple Regression

Proficiency Level	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Beginner	.59 <sup>a</sup>	<b>.35</b>	.32	3.57
Lower Intermediate	.54 <sup>a</sup>	.29	.268	4.14
Advanced	.47 <sup>a</sup>	.22	.198	6.12

a. Predictors: (Constant), Nonword Recognition Task, Nonword Repetition Task

Table 7: Coefficients in Regression Analysis <sup>a</sup>

Proficiency Level		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	Sig.
		B	Std. Error		
Beginner	(Constant)	-.279	3.523	—	.94
	Nonword Repetition Task	.622	.272	<b>.287</b>	<b>.026</b>
	Nonword Recognition Task	.916	.297	<b>.386</b>	<b>.00</b>
Lower Intermediate	(Constant)	14.057	4.864	—	.00
	Nonword Repetition Task	.763	.348	<b>.266</b>	<b>.03</b>
	Nonword Recognition Task	1.199	.389	<b>.375</b>	<b>.00</b>
Advanced	(Constant)	38.865	7.080	—	.00
	Nonword Repetition Task	.623	.468	.180	.19
	Nonword Recognition Task	1.618	.616	<b>.356</b>	<b>.01</b>

a. Dependent Variable: Grammar Test Scores

As Table 6 depicts,  $R^2$  for beginner, lower intermediate, and advanced groups are .35, .29, and .22 respectively. In other words, the results tell us that for beginner, lower intermediate, and advanced groups, the PM tasks accounted for 35%, 29%, and 22% of the variance respectively. Therefore, in the beginner group the PM tasks accounts for 35% of the variance in scores of the grammar test. Table 7 displays the coefficients in the regression analysis and it shows that between the measures of PM, NWRP task had the higher Beta values than NWRP task across different groups of language proficiency (B= .386 for the beginner group; B= .375 for the lower intermediate group; B= .356 for the advanced group) ( $p < .05$ ). Moreover, except for the Beta value of the NWRP task for the advanced group (B= .18,  $P = .19$ ), the Beta values for both NWRP and NWRC tasks were statistically significant across different levels of language proficiency.

The results are in line with those of French and O'Brien (2008) and Martin and Ellis (2012). Yet the results are in contrast with those of Kormos and Sáfár (2008) and Mizera (2006) because the findings of the present study revealed that the correlation between the PM tasks and the grammar knowledge was significant and moderate for beginners and lower intermediate participants. In the present study the PM tasks and grammar test in the advanced group showed a moderate correlation and this finding is inconsistent with that of Hummel (2009). Moreover, the correlations found for the beginners were higher than those of the lower intermediate students, and the correlations obtained for the lower intermediate group were higher than those obtained by the advanced group. Thus, it can be inferred that grammatical knowledge was more closely related to PM capacity for beginners than for lower intermediate and advanced learners. In fact, it could be concluded that the grammar items involved in the grammar test (multiple choice task) were generally unfamiliar to the beginner learners because they have presumably lower proficiency levels in the L2. It indicates that beginners would have highly relied upon PM capacity in order to achieve long-term learning of these items. On the other hand, advanced learners were more likely to know the grammatical items because they were more familiar with the L2 and it may result in making the contributions from PM less important. Further, NWRC task enjoying a higher Beta value was found to be a better predictor of the participants' L2 grammatical knowledge.

## CONCLUSION

The present research was an attempt to investigate the relationship between PM capacity, measured by NWRP and NWRC tasks, and the L2 grammatical knowledge at different levels of language proficiency. The findings suggest the possibility of a causal link between PM capacity and L2 grammatical knowledge. A significant finding in the present study is that PM and L2 grammar were moderately correlated during the six-week intensive English course in all levels of language proficiency. Findings therefore confirm results in previous studies that PM is actively involved in initial L2 learning and also contributes to subsequent L2 development. NWRC task was also found to be a better predictor of the participants' L2 grammatical knowledge than NWRP. In addition to the evidence reported in the present study, more

extensive research is needed to provide answers to the remaining questions germane to the relationships between PM capacity and various aspects of L2 learning in other EFL classroom contexts. Moreover, teachers can help students expand their PM capacity by applying various strategies and techniques and see the effects of this expansion on the students' L2 learning. In addition, as it seems that there are strong associations between PM and L2 knowledge, the first step should be to provide aid for those with poor PM capacity. The current understanding is that little can be done to expand poor PM but that there are ways to remove this obstacle in L2 learning as much as possible. This goal can be achieved by the teacher favoring strategies and techniques that do not require learners to rely heavily on their PM. Besides, learners themselves can choose learning strategies that lighten the processing load on PM. Therefore, more research is needed to confirm whether specific training and techniques intended for enhancing PM capacity and efficiency can be successfully taught to L2 learners (Hummel & French, 2010). Moreover, future research should study the relationship between the L2 grammatical knowledge and phonological memory between both male and female learners of a second language. Finally, it is important to remember that the design of the present study was correlational. In showing existing relationships among factors, the causal mechanisms should be uncovered and this requires further investigation.

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## THE EFFECT OF METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES INSTRUCTION ON LISTENING COMPREHENSION OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS: FOCUSING ON GENDER

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the effect of metacognitive strategy instruction on listening comprehension of Iranian English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners at Iran Language Institutes (ILI) in Parsabad, Iran. To do so, 72 EFL learners were selected among 102 learners based on the 1 standard deviation (SD) above and below the mean score of a listening comprehension test. They were divided into two groups, one experimental and one control group. Then, Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) was administered to identify their metacognitive strategy awareness. The experimental group underwent a treatment based on Chamot and O'Malley (1994) model and regular instructional plan of ILI, while control group did not receive any strategy-based treatment. A post-test from "Expanding Tactics for Listening" (Richards, 2011), was given to both groups after 6-session instruction. The findings revealed that (a) instruction of metacognitive strategy had positive effect on listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners and (b) instruction of metacognitive strategy had no differential effect on listening comprehension of female and male learners.

**KEYWORDS:** listening comprehension, metacognitive strategies, strategy instruction.

### INTRODUCTION

"Listening is an important skill through which language learners internalize linguistic information without which they cannot produce language" and it is the first step in the process of language communication (Brown, 2001, p.248). Listening comprehension is an active and conscious process, in which listeners focus their own attentions on taking the important information from the aural input, comprehend the meaning of the input, and combine them with the contextual information and background knowledge to produce output (O'Malley, Chamot & Küpper, 1989). Based on the above mentioned statements, listening comprehension is a cognitive skill. It may develop through acquisition of learning strategies. Explicit instruction of listening strategies is necessary and useful for EFL learners.

Anderson (1991) considered metacognitive strategies as the most important strategy to develop learners' skills and it was proposed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) that learners without them have no ability to monitor and regulate their development, performance, and future learning. On the other hand, learners who use metacognitive strategies are more proficient learners (Hauck, 2005). Chamot, Bernhardt, El-Dinary and Robbins (1999) mentioned four metacognitive strategies: planning for learning, thinking about the learning process, monitoring production or comprehension, and evaluating learning processes.

Metacognitive strategies differentiate proficient and less proficient listeners from each other. Yang (2009) affirms the opinion that increasing metacognitive awareness assists listeners to accomplish listening tasks more effectively. Goh (2008) states some of the positive effects of metacognitive strategy instruction on listening comprehension of EFL learners. She expresses that teaching metacognitive strategies enhances learners' confidence and reduces learners anxious during the listening to oral input and also less skilled listeners benefit much from the strategies instruction.

Instruction of strategies explicitly enhances the listeners' metacognitive knowledge and makes better their listening comprehension (McDonough, 1999). Chamot and Rubin (1994) express the importance of finding and the strategies that students use for accomplishing specific learning assignments, presenting new strategies explicitly, describing when and where metacognitive strategies can be used and supplying more practice. Different models were proposed to increase listening comprehension of learners at EFL and ESL contexts (Anderson's model (2002), Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) and Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire MALQ). In this study, CALLA model was used to increase metacognitive strategy awareness and use during listening comprehension. It will be described in the following part of the present study in detail.

### Statement of the Problem

Educational System of Iran put aside listening skill and foreign language learners do not have any opportunities for aural input, therefore it regarded as a passive skill. One of the conditions in which Iranian FLLs can be learning listening is Language institutes. Thus, finding most efficient way of making learners aware of their metacognitive strategy awareness and enhancing use of these strategies might assist EFL learners to improve their listening comprehension ability. It has been remarked that most researchers try to improve students' listening comprehension in Iran. Many studies have aimed at finding solutions to deal with advanced students' weaknesses in accomplishing listening comprehension assignments through strategy training. Some of the researches are focused on metacognitive strategies awareness through questionnaire (e.g., Akbari, 2003; Salehi & Farzad, 2003; Zarei & Sarmadi, 2004; Pishghadam, 2009; Salarifar & Pakdaman, 2010) and other investigated the effect of metacognitive strategies instruction explicitly (e.g., Maleki, 2005; Meshkat & Nasirifiruz, 2009). But few studies (e.g., Tavakoli, Hashemi and Rezazade 2012) have been conducted to uses a mixed method design. The present study aims to investigate the Iranian EFL learners' metacognitive strategy awareness and the effect of metacognitive strategy instruction based on Chamot and O'Malley (1994) on listening comprehension of Iranian EFL male and female learners.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Listening is a receptive skill in which listeners passively incorporate the message presented to them by speaker (Morley, 1991). It had been assumed that a learner's ability to comprehend spoken language would develop entirely on its own through repetition and imitation (Jinhong, 2011). According to above mentioned definitions, listening is a passive process but many other researchers pointed out that listening comprehension is an *active process* (Jinhong, 2011; O'Malley, Chamot & Küpper, 1989; Rost, 2002). Based on their definitions, listening

comprehension is not a passive activity in which listener receive information and then comprehend it but is a process-oriented activity which process the represented aural input step by step and combine background knowledge to information in the listening text.

### Metacognition

In cognitive psychology, metacognition is defined as an executive control which includes monitoring and self-regulation. Biehler and Snowman (1993), in relation to cognition, define metacognition as:

The term cognition is used to describe the ways in which information is processed –i.e. the ways it is attended to, recognized, encoded, stored in memory for various lengths of time, retrieved from storage and used for one purpose or another. Metacognition refers to our knowledge about these operations and how they might best be used to achieve a learning goal. (p. 390)

Based on the above mentioned characteristics of metacognition, a successful language learner is a person who has metacognitive knowledge about the self, task and using appropriate strategies to achieve cognitive aims (Devine, 1993).

According to Flavell (1979), components of metacognition are knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition: *Knowledge of cognition* comprises declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge. Declarative knowledge refers to learners' knowledge about themselves and learning strategies such as note-taking, planning, self-questioning. Procedural knowledge is about learners thinking processes. It refers to knowledge about actual use of listening strategies during listening and conditional knowledge refers to knowledge about selecting and using specific listening strategies appropriately in different contexts and evaluating the benefit of using learning strategies. Learners in order to have conditional knowledge need to clarify when and where use declarative and procedural knowledge.

And *Regulation of cognition* is about planning before accomplishing different tasks (e.g., listening), self-monitoring learning process and problem-solving during the doing tasks, and evaluating the effectiveness of learners' approach after accomplishing tasks.

Livingston (1977) identified metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation as the two dimensions of the metacognition. He stated that metacognitive knowledge comprises three types of knowledge. 1) *Knowledge of person variables* refers to how learners process information. 2) *Knowledge of task variables* refers to having knowledge about the nature of the task. 3) *Knowledge of strategy variables* refers to having conditional knowledge and knowledge about cognitive and metacognitive strategies, i.e., when and where it is appropriate to use these strategies.

### Listening Strategies

Research into facilitating language learning through strategy instruction started from the past quarter of a century (Rubin, 1975; Wenden & Rubin, 1978; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Learning strategies are procedure undertaken by the learner, in order to make their own language learning as effective as possible.

In the view of O'Malley and Chamot:

Learning strategies are complex procedures that individuals apply to tasks; consequently, they may be represented as procedural knowledge which may be acquired through cognitive, associative, and autonomous stages of learning. As with other procedural skills at the different stages of learning, the strategies may be conscious in early stages of learning and later be performed without the person's awareness (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990).

Mendelsohn (1994) proposed 'strategy-based approach' to instruct listening comprehension based on researches about strategy instruction. People are commonly not aware about how they listen in their first language. Therefore, EFL learners require to use strategies consciously which they use unconsciously in the first language (Schmitt, 2002).

Learning strategies are generally divided into metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective. Proficient listeners use all of them altogether, the pattern of strategy use change according to the different situations. Dornyei (2005) proposed four types of strategies: Cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective strategies. According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990), metacognitive strategies are "higher order executive skills that may entail planning for, monitoring or evaluating the success of learning activity". Cohen (1998) said that "metacognitive strategies deal with pre assessment and pre-planning, on-line planning and evaluation, and post evaluation of language learning activities". Metacognitive are defined as thoughts or behaviors consciously employed by the learner to think about the learning task, plan for the task, monitor the task, and evaluate how well he/she has completed the task (Wendy, 2010).

Chamot, Bernhardt, El-Dinary and Robbins (1999) proposed four types of metacognitive strategies, planning, monitoring, problem-solving and evaluating. *Planning* is making a comprehensive plan for comprehending the aural input. It arouses learners' interest, expectations, and promotes their motivation to find out what will happen during the listening and it also clarifies the purposes for listening and to activate different kinds of schemata (Sequero, 1998). *Monitoring* –or comprehension monitoring- is listener's self-regulation of his or her own comprehension during listening (Glazer, 1992). Monitoring strategy assists listeners to compensate lost comprehension and to use listening strategies to enhance comprehension (Schunk, 1997). *Self-assessment* "has its foundations in metacognition and self-regulated learning and is seen as having the potential to provide teachers and students with opportunities to understand and enhance the ways students monitor and adjust strategic thinking in literacy learning" (Shoemaker, 1998, p. 410).

A number of researchers have attempted to investigate the effect of strategy instruction on listeners' comprehension performances. Their aim is to identify the effect of different contexts and variables on metacognitive strategy instruction. In New Taipei City, a study was conducted to probe the effects of metacognitive listening instruction on EFL learners. The results showed that there was no significant difference between Young Learner English (YLE) scores of the experimental and the control group in the post-test. However, the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in directed attention and person knowledge (Lin, 2011). Jinhong (2011) explored the students' metacognitive strategy use, the relationship between metacognitive strategy use and their performance in a listening comprehension TEM-4 test. The finding revealed that there is a positive relationship between metacognitive strategy use and performance in the listening comprehension test. Then an interview was conducted among the students whose scores showed a negative relation between strategy use



and listening performance to find the reasons. The results revealed that learners have different problems in using metacognitive strategies for doing listening comprehension tasks.

In a study at Allameh Tabataba'i and Shahid Beheshti, Baleghizadeh and Rahimi (2011) explored the relationship among metacognitive strategy use, motivation and listening performance of EFL students. In this study MALQ, AMS (Academic Motivation Scale), and the listening section of the TOEFL were used as instrument. After administering the pretest, students completed MALQ and AMS. The results showed significant correlation between metacognitive strategy use and listening performance, listening performance and intrinsic motivation, as well as metacognitive strategy use and intrinsic, extrinsic motivation. Bozorgian (2012) in a small scale study looked into the impact of metacognitive instruction on listening comprehension of Iranian high-intermediate EFL listeners in a "strategy-based" approach of advance organization, directed attention, selective attention, and self-management in IELTS listening texts. The results showed that the less-skilled listeners improved more than more-skilled listeners in the IELTS listening tests.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was motivated by the following research questions:

RQ.1. Does metacognitive strategy instruction has any effect on listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners?

RQ.2. Does metacognitive strategy instruction has any differential effect on listening comprehension of Iranian female and male EFL learners?

This study is guided by the following null hypotheses:

Ho.1. Instruction of metacognitive strategies had no effect on listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners.

Ho.2. Instruction of metacognitive strategies had no differential effect on listening comprehension of Iranian female and male EFL learners.

The purpose of this study is examining the effect of metacognitive strategy instruction based on Chamot and O'Malley model's (1994) on listening comprehension of Iranian female and male EFL learners. This model provided repeated exposure and practice with learning strategies to enhance learners' use of strategies.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

In this study, the researcher selected participants non-randomly and divided them into experimental and control groups. Experimental group received the treatment and the other group, control group, did not receive any treatment. Both groups received a test before (pretest) and after (post-test) treatment. These steps constitute the principles of the quasi-experimental research. Therefore, the design of this study is quasi-experimental. The independent variable in this study is the metacognitive strategy and the dependent variable is the listening performance of the experimental and the control groups. And in this study the gender is the moderate variable.

### Participants

A total number of 102 female and male learners who were studying English as a foreign language at Iran Language Institute (ILI) in Parsabad, Iran participated in this study. Learners at ILI are homogenous; because before entering to the ILI classes they were participated in a placement test. But in order to confirm their homogeneity in listening comprehension a listening comprehension test based on Richards's "Expanding Tactics for Listening" (2011) as a pretest, including four texts with 24 multiple-choice items, was administered to determine their homogeneity in listening comprehension. The learners' scores were 1 SD ( $SD=2.84$ ) above and below the mean score ( $M=14.5$ ) were selected. Thirty-six male ( $N=36$ ) and thirty-six female ( $N=36$ ) learners, between 16 to 21 years old, were participated in this study.

### Instruments

Four research instruments were used for the purpose of this study: A *listening comprehension test* (pretest) was used in order to determine the homogeneity of participants' in listening comprehension; *Metacognition Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ)* was used to identify Iranian males and females metacognitive strategy awareness; a post-test, *listening comprehension test*, was used in order to determine effect of metacognitive strategy instruction on listening comprehension (the pre and post-test were selected from "Expanding Tactics for Listening" (Richards, 2011) and their reliabilities which were estimated based on Cronbach's Alpha Level were, respectively, .74 and .71), and an *Interview* was used to asking some questions about how learners evaluate their own use of the metacognitive strategy and how the strategy is working for them and whether they applied these strategies in other context or not? It included six questions about the effect of using metacognitive strategies (Appendix A), based on the findings of Barbosa (2012).

### Procedure

102 male ( $N=48$ ) and female ( $N=54$ ) EFL learners at four classes at ILI in Parsabad participated in the present study. All of them were homogenous because before entering to these classes they participated in a placement test and in order to confirm their homogeneity in listening comprehension, a pretest from Richards's "Expanding Tactics for Listening" (2011), was administered to 102 learners (the learners of all classes were asked to complete a pretest in one 50-minute class period). The learners whose score were 1 SD ( $SD=2.84$ ) above and below of the mean score ( $M=14.5$ ) were selected. Seventy-two male ( $N=36$ ) and female ( $N=36$ ) learners, homogenous in listening comprehension, among four classes at ILI, were selected as participants in the present study (two of four classes were randomly considered as experimental and other as control group). After identifying the homogeneity of learners in listening comprehension, a Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) was administered to determine learners' metacognitive strategy awareness before treatment. After an introduction on the purpose of the study and on the directions about what they requires to do for the following 8 sessions, the learners in experimental group participated in the MSI project. Then Chamot and O'Malley's model (1994) of strategy instruction (five stages) were applied. 1. *Preparation*: Instructor prepares learners for strategy instruction by identifying their background knowledge about the metacognitive strategies. 2. *Presentation*: The instructor demonstrates the new strategies and explains how and when to use them. 3. *Practice*: In this stage learners practice presented metacognitive strategies in processing represented input. 4-5. *Evaluation and Extension*: The instructor asks the learners evaluate their own comprehension and how they used strategies and so on. After 6-session metacognitive strategy instruction, a post-test (listening comprehension test) was given to both experimental and control groups. The scores of learners in post-test were compared in order to determine the effect of metacognitive strategy instruction on listening comprehension of Iranian male and female EFL learners. Finally at end of the study, through an interview, the instructor asks some questions about the strategies that learners (12 out of the 36 learners were randomly selected) were used during listening comprehension test and some questions about their experiences in learning the new strategies.



# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## Results

In order to answer the research questions, two research hypotheses were mentioned. To test first and second research hypotheses independent samples *t*-test was proposed.

### Testing the Metacognitive Awareness

After determining the learners' homogeneity in listening comprehension through one-way ANOVA, a Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) was used to identify learners' metacognitive strategy awareness. At first, through independent samples *t*-test, the researcher investigated wheatear there is any difference between Iranian EFL listeners in metacognitive strategy use or not (planning-evaluation, person knowledge, problem-solving, direct attention and mental translation)? Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the learners' awareness that categorized based on the experimental and control groups.

Table 1: Experimental and Control Groups Descriptive Statistics for MALQ

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	36	114.71	15.790	3.446
Control	36	120.00	22.669	4.947

The findings of descriptive statistics (Table 1) revealed that there isn't significant difference between mean scores of experimental (M=114.71) and control (M=120.0) groups in metacognitive strategy use. The estimated p-value for MALQ (Sig.= .386) is more than the level of significance ( $p = .05$ ). Therefore, there is no significant difference between experimental and control groups in metacognitive strategy use. Table 2 displays the results of the independent samples *t*-test for the experimental and control groups.

Table 2: Independent Sample *t*-test for the Experimental and Control Groups (MALQ)

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Equal variances assumed	.104	.765	.877-	40	.386
Equal variances not assumed			.877-	35.708	.386

After identifying the homogeneity of experimental and control groups in MALQ, an independent sample *t*-test was performed to identify females and males (experimental groups) metacognitive strategy use.

Table 3: Experimental and Control Groups Descriptive Statistics for MALQ

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	18	250.40	146.257	65.408
Control	18	232.60	122.693	54.870

According to Table 4 the estimated p-value ( $p = .840$ ) is higher than the level of significance, .05. Therefore, there is no significant difference between Iranian female and male learners in terms of their reported use of metacognitive strategies. Table 4 displays the results of the independent-samples *t*-test for the female and male learners.

Table 4: Independent-samples *t*-test for MALQ

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Equal variances assumed	.144	.714	.208	8	.840
Equal variances not assumed			.208	7.765	.840

Although the results of the independent-samples *t*-test showed that there was no significant difference between Iranian females and males in terms of their reported use of metacognitive strategies, in order to verifying the strategies that females and males were different, in detail, independent-samples *t*-test was conducted for each strategy independently. Table 5 displays the results of descriptive statistics for five strategies that were included in MALQ.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for MALQ by Gender

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1	Male	18	53.000	21.33073	9.53939
	Female	18	51.6000	22.86482	10.22546
2	Male	18	63.8000	26.08064	11.66362
	Female	18	60.8000	28.27897	12.64674
3	Male	18	49.4000	34.56588	15.458333
	Female	18	49.6000	37.20618	16.63911
4	Male	18	43.2000	40.80686	18.24938
	Female	18	35.4000	21.32604	9.53730
5	Male	18	38.6000	32.05932	14.33736
	Female	18	35.2000	21.93627	9.81020

1)Planning-evaluation 2) Person knowledge 3) Problem-solving 4) Direct attention 5) Mental translation

Based on the results of the independent-samples *t*-test (Table 4), in total, there is no significant difference between Iranian females and males in metacognitive strategy use. In detail, the independent-samples *t*-test for the each strategy (Table 6) shows that the estimated *p*-values for planning and evaluation, person knowledge, problem solving, direct attention, mental translation are .923, .866, .993, .715 and .850, respectively, higher than the level of significance .05. Therefore, there are not significant differences between males and female in each metacognitive strategy. Table 6 displays the results of independent-samples *t*-test for five strategies that were included in MALQ.

Table 6: Independent Samples *t*-test for Metacognitive Strategy Use

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Planning Evaluation	Equal variances assumed	.012	.915	.100	8	.923
	Equal variance not assumed			.100	7.962	.923
Problem Solving	Equal variances assumed	.048	.833	.174	8	.866
	Equal variances not assumed			.174	7.948	.866
Direct Attention	Equal variances assumed	.059	.815	-.009	8	.993
	Equal variances not assumed			-.009	7.957	.933
Mental Translation	Equal variances assumed	7.336	.027	.379	8	.715
	Equal variances not assumed			.379	6.033	.718
Person Knowledge	Equal variances assumed	2.243	.173	.196	8	.850
	Equal variances not assumed			.196	7.072	.850

#### Testing the Research Hypotheses

In the first research question, the researcher intended to investigate the effect of metacognitive strategy instruction on the listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners. To test this question, the researcher proposed the first null hypothesis:

Ho.1 Metacognitive strategy instruction had no effect on listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners.

In order to investigate the difference between control and experimental groups, the gathered listening comprehension scores subjected to statistical analysis of independent samples *t*-test. The results of this analysis show that there is significant difference between performance of the participants in the control and experimental groups. Table 7 displays the descriptive statistic for the experimental and control groups.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics for the Experimental and Control Groups

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Control	36	16.08	1.131	.188
Experimental	36	18.23	1.477	.205

Table 8: Independent Samples *t*-test for the Experimental and Control Groups Post-test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Equal variances assumed	4.388	.040	-6.884	69	.000
Equal variances not assumed			-6.858	63.696	.000

To test this research hypothesis, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted. The results of this analysis are represented in Table 8. According to the results of this table, there is significant difference between performances of experimental and control groups. The observed

p-value (Sig.= .04) is less than the level of significance (.05). Therefore the research hypothesis that claimed metacognitive strategy instruction had no effect on listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners was rejected.

Finally to test second research hypothesis, the independent samples *t*-test was conducted. The results of this analysis are represented in Table 10. As the results in Table 4.10 shows, there is no significant difference between females and males in the listening comprehension test (post-test). The observed p-value (Sig.= .640) estimated for H0.2 is more than the level of significance (.05). Therefore the research hypothesis that claimed metacognitive strategy instruction had no differential effect on listening comprehension of Iranian female and male EFL learners was supported. Table 4.10 displays the results of the independent samples *t*-test for the female and male experimental groups.

*Table 9: Group Statistics of Females and Males Post-test Scores*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Female	18	17.56	1.247	.294
Male	18	18.94	1.391	.337

*Table 10: Independent Samples t-test for the female and Male in the Experimental Group*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Equal variances assumed	.223	.640	-3.107	33	.004
Equal variances not assumed			-3.097	32.105	.004

### **Discussion**

With two main research questions, this study examines (a) the listeners' metacognitive awareness (b) the effect of metacognitive instruction and (c) the differential effect of metacognitive strategy instruction on listening comprehension of female and male EFL learners who are studied English at ILI in Parsabad, Iran.

#### *The Results of the MALQ and Interview*

In this study, at first, data from the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) were collected from 72 Iranian EFL learners in experimental and control groups. Analysis of the data through independent samples *t*-test revealed that there was no difference between experimental and control groups. And then, through independent samples *t*-test, the difference of females (N=18) and males (N=18) experimental group was examined. Analysis of the data also showed that there was no significant difference between females and males in metacognitive strategy use. This questionnaire has 21 items which measure five metacognitive strategies, planning, problem-solving, direct attention, mental translation and person knowledge, (Vandergift, Goh, Mareschel & Tafaghodtari, 2006).

#### *Planning and Evaluation Strategy*

Planning describes the purposes for learning, activate different previous information, and it is a comprehensive plan to accomplish the listening tasks (Dutta, 1995; Sequero, 1998). Analysis of the questionnaire responses showed learners did not fully use planning and evaluation strategies to assist them to accomplish their listening comprehension tasks (M=52.30). According to the table 5, only 51.6 % of female and 53.0 % of male learners planned how they listened to oral input. The estimated p-value for the planning and evaluation strategies (Sig.= .915) was more than the level of significance (p= .05). Therefore there was no significant difference between female and male EFL learners in planning and evaluation strategies. And at the end of study, learners responses to interview questions showed that their using planning and evaluation strategies were improved through comment such as "it is helpful for me because I can guess what the text is going to talk about and it's easier for me if I know what the listening parts are going to talk" and "before I start to listen, I have a plan in my head for how I am going to listen".

#### *Problem Solving Strategy*

Problem solving strategies assist listeners to compensate lost comprehension and to use different listening strategies to enhance comprehension (Schunk, 1997). Analysis of the questionnaire responses revealed that (Table 5), prior to the treatment, the learners did not use more problem-solving strategies to overcome comprehension difficulties as they listened to aural input (M= 37.7). According to the table 4.5, only 39.2 % of female and 36.2 % of male learners could inference and monitor those inferences. Based on the independent samples *t*-test, the observed p-value for the problem solving strategies (Sig.= .833) was more than the level of significance (p= .05). Therefore there was no significant difference between female and male EFL learners in terms of using problem solving strategies.

And at the end of study, learners' responses to interview questions revealed that learners using problem solving strategies were improved through comment such as "I use the words I understand to guess the meaning of the words I don't understand" and " I compare what I understand with what I know about the topic".

#### *Direct Attention Strategy*

Directed attention refers to how listeners concentrate, stay on task, and focus on their listening efforts (Vandergift, 2004). The collected data from the questionnaire showed (Table 5) that learners did not use more directed attention strategies in overcoming comprehension difficulties as they listened to listening comprehension (M= 49.50). According to the table 4.5, only 49.6 % of female and 49.4 % of male learners could inference on what is not understood and monitor those inferences. Males and females focus harder on the text when they have trouble understanding and try to get back on track when they lose concentration, respectively (M=49.40; M=49.60). Based on the independent samples *t*-test, the estimated p-value for the direct attention strategies (Sig.= .815) was more than the level of significance (p= .05). Therefore there was no difference between female and male EFL learners in terms of using direct attention strategies.

And learners' responses to interview questions showed that learners using direct attention strategies were improved through comment such as "I try to get back on track when I lose concentration" and "I focus harder on the text when I have trouble understanding".

#### *Mental Translation Strategy*

The collected data from statements 4, 11 and 18 revealed that most learners translated key words, translated word by word to comprehend the content and they like to translate words or sentences into Farsi in order to understand ( $M=39.3$ ). The data showed (Table 5) that the use of mental translation (is defined as taking a bottom-up processing to listening comprehension) of female ( $M=35.40$ ) is less than male learners ( $M=43.20$ ). Based on the independent samples  $t$ -test, the estimated  $p$ -value for the mental translation strategies ( $\text{Sig.}=.027$ ) was less than the level of significance ( $p=.05$ ). Therefore there was difference between female and male EFL learners in terms of using mental translation strategies.

Learners' responses to interview questions revealed that females and males using of these strategies were decreased through comment such as "after MSI, I use less word by word translation as I listen".

#### *Person Knowledge Strategy*

According to Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari's (2010) definition, person knowledge refers to learners belief about how they learn best, the difficulty presented by L2 listening, and their self-efficacy in L2 listening. The data revealed that learners found listening in English more difficult than reading, speaking, or writing and it was challenging for them ( $M=36.90$ ). All the learners feel nervous when they listen to English (female= 35.2; male=38.6). Based on the independent samples  $t$ -test, the observed  $p$ -value for the person knowledge strategies ( $\text{Sig.}=.173$ ) was less than the level of significance ( $p=.05$ ). Therefore there was difference between female and male EFL learners in terms of using person knowledge strategies. The gathered data from interview questions revealed that some individuals' self-efficacy beliefs were improved, through comments such as "prediction and activating related schemata can increase confidence," and "if I used these strategies all the time I think my listening skill will be the easiest for me."

In brief, the above findings revealed that there were differences between females and males in person knowledge, and mental translation but females and males approximately are the same in terms of planning-evaluation, directed attention and problem solving strategies. But the observed  $p$ -value for overall use of metacognitive strategies ( $\text{Sig.}=.714$ ) was more than the level of significance ( $p=.05$ ). Therefore, there was no difference between Iranian females and males in terms of their reported use of metacognitive strategies.

#### *First and Second Research Hypotheses*

The data from the listening comprehension test were collected from 72 females and males in four experimental and control groups. The groups were homogenous in terms of their listening skill at the beginning of the instruction. Then, the instructor presented metacognitive strategy instruction to the experimental groups based on Chamot and O'Malley's model (1994), the control groups didn't receive any metacognitive based instruction. In order to compare the experimental and control groups' listening performance at the end of the 8-sessions instruction, both the experimental and control groups were administered a post-test (listening comprehension test) at the end of the study. The independent samples  $t$ -test analysis of the post-test showed that the mean scores of the experimental groups ( $M= 18.23$ ) were significantly different from the control groups ( $M= 16.08$ ) (see Table 4.13).

To answer first research question, based on the results of the independent samples  $t$ -test, the observed  $p$ -value ( $p=.40$ ) was less than the level of significance ( $.05$ ). Therefore the research hypothesis that claimed instruction of metacognitive strategies had no effect on listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners was rejected. This result is in accordance with the previous studies (Baleghizadeh & Rahimi, 2011; Bozorgian, 2012; Lin, 2011; Selamat & Sidhu, 2011; Yang, 2009). And finally in order to answer second research question, based on the results of the independent samples  $t$ -test, the observed  $p$ -value for RQ.2 ( $p=.640$ ) was more than the level of significance ( $p=.05$ ). The collected data showed that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the female experimental group ( $M= 18.94$ ) and male experimental group ( $M = 17.56$ ). In brief, these results supported the second research hypothesis (instruction of metacognitive strategies has no differential effect on listening comprehension of Iranian female and male EFL learners).

### **CONCLUSION**

According to many researchers (e.g., Jinhong, 2011; O'Malley, Chamot & Küpper, 1989; Rost, 2002; Thompson, 2003; Vandergrift, 1999) listening comprehension is an active and conscious process in which the listeners actively receive and process the aural input, compound the information and then interpret it. Previous studies indicated the important role of metacognition on improving listening comprehension (e.g., Akbari, 2003; Cross, 2009; Jinhong, 2011; Lin, 2011; Pishghadam, 2009; Salarifar & Pakdaman, 2010; Salehi & Farzad, 2003; Yang, 2009; Zarei & Sarmadi, 2004).

Based on the findings of this study, both the experimental and control groups developed their listening comprehension. However, the development of the experimental group was significantly more than the development of the control groups. The fact that the control groups development may be attributed to ILI programs. On the other hand, the significantly higher development of the experimental groups can be attributed to the 6-sessions metacognitive strategy instruction. At the end of instructional period, the female and male experimental groups' development was approximately the same.

In the beginning of this study, data analysis showed that learners in experimental and control groups had same metacognitive strategy awareness. And independent samples  $t$ -test also revealed that there was no difference, in overall, between females and males. Moreover, in a sporadic investigation, the data analysis revealed that female and male listeners used different metacognitive strategies. The metacognitive strategies that were explored in this study include planning, monitoring, problem-solving, and evaluating. The data showed that there were differences between female and male learners in person knowledge, and mental translation strategies but they approximately were the same in terms of planning-evaluation, directed attention and problem solving strategies.

#### *Pedagogical Implications*

The findings of the present study will give teachers some guidelines as to improve EFL learners' listening comprehension. Since language learning is a slow and long-term process, it is suggested that explicit strategy training needs to be integrated in to listening instruction curriculum in language institutes. Another implication of this study goes to teacher-training programs. The aim of such programs should be familiarizing teachers with beneficial effects of explicit strategies instruction on learners' progress. The administrators, curriculum designers, material developers, and teachers, can use the findings of the present study to shape/design curricula, create syllabi, develop materials, and conduct classes accordingly.

#### *Suggestions for Further Studies*

For future studies, the period of instruction and sample size can be extended in order to reach more generalizable findings. This study investigated all metacognitive strategies, planning, monitoring, problem-solving and evaluating, but for future research, the segments of metacognitive strategies can be investigated. The metacognitive strategy instruction in a repeated manner through Chamot and O'Malley's model (1994) can be applied to studies focused on other skills. In upcoming studies, researchers can examine the effect of teaching other

learning strategies, cognitive and socioaffective, through Chamot and O'Malley's model. The questionnaire was used for this study is MALQ which includes (planning, problem-solving, direct attention, mental translation and person knowledge). For further study, the questionnaire could be modified to include new findings of specific behaviors of listening comprehension in order to have a more complete list of listening strategies.

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#### APPENDIX A

##### Interview

Based on the research questions and objectives, the following questions led in the interview.

1. What was the effect of the MSI in your listening comprehension?
2. Do you consider that the use of metacognitive strategies helped you to improve your listening comprehension? Why?
3. Did the way in which your listened change into a disciplined and conscious process? Why?
4. With the use of the metacognitive strategies were you able to plan, monitor, solve problems, and evaluate your own progress?
5. Which of the strategies do you consider most useful for you? Why?
6. How did you feel during the whole process?



## A CRITICAL LOOK AT THE VARIATIONIST APPROACH TO STUDYING LANGUAGE

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### ABSTRACT

One of the approaches to language acquisition and language use is the variationist approach pioneered by William Labov in the 1960's. Contrary to many theories in linguistics which seek for categorical rules to explain the underlying principles in language, the variationist approach claims that language varies systematically in accordance with social characteristics of the speakers. The very basic question which arises here is that if language use varies from a situation to another, how can it be described, and more importantly explained as a systematic apparatus. Labov's theory of linguistic variation seem to be central to the issue since it starts with real phonological sample analysis and takes into consideration the sociolinguistic factors behind such variation. However, when it is compared with more systematic schools in linguistics and language acquisition research, one finds out that although both Labovian and categorical approaches to language studies seem to be right in their system of enquiry, there is a sharp gap between the two models in providing a cogent explanation of the mechanisms and processes involved in language production, use and also acquisition. The present paper tries to deal with these gaps and suggest a solution for dealing with such mismatches in theory of language variation as a central issue in language studies including language acquisition.

**KEYWORDS:** Variation; Variationist rules; Categorical rules; Optimality theory

### INTRODUCTION

Variation in language is among the very basic obvious features of this highly complex phenomenon in human societies. Language is schematic for its instances, and speaking a language implies speaking a given variety of that language. Among the very first scientists who commented on language variation is the splendid biologist Charles Darwin (1859) who pointed out that the messiness of linguistic variation is in some ways comparable to the messiness of variation among species of horses, and that there is an important relationship between variation and evolution in both languages and living things. Darwin also observed variability in language use noting that "we see variability in every tongue, and new words are continually cropping up" (quoted in Labov, 2001, p. 8). In expounding language variation based on a biological theory of evolution, Darwin argued that language change results from a kind of natural selection similar to that of races for species.

However, since language is a social contract flowing and integrating within human societies, it is more common and even sounder and wiser to provide a social account of a natural fact like variation in language. Accents, for instance, are socially diagnostic, and in many disciplines including sociolinguistics, it has been assumed that speech forms can trigger social meaning. Other disciplines, in turn, have consistently denied that the lectal variety-society link should have any kind of bearing on the systematic configuration of linguistic codes (Coupland, 2007).

In theoretical linguistics, there has been a widespread tendency to equate standard variety to the acceptable language. A very clear example is Chomskyan linguistics which has always been seeking for a homogeneous speech community systematically eradicating social variation. Such a model and understanding of language is even known as homogeneous competence. However, according to Coupland (2007), the impression that we are working at the level of "langue" when standard varieties form the basis of our analysis, but at the level of *parole* when the object of study is a nonstandard variety, is obviously misleading, if both of them are considered varieties of the same language. An aspect of linguistic variation is that within a speech community, speakers who belong to different age groups, social classes, ethnic groups, and genders show systematic differences in the way they talk.

According to Adamson (2009), by proposing an alternative model for language description, Halliday (1978) tried to solve the problem of mismatch between linguistic competence and variational fluctuations in language through dividing language into "language as system" (language as a system analyzable in terms of levels of linguistic structure) and "language as institution" (language as constituted by independently formed varieties). According to Halliday, stylistic variation and registers belong to "language as system" and regional and social varieties (regiolects, sociolects, accents) to "language as institution".

Although Halliday's division conveniently includes styles and registers within the study of language as system, it excludes dialectal variation. In fact, both models ultimately turn out to be reductionist, as none of them focuses on language as it is globally and actually used in real situations by multilectal speakers.

Later research on linguistic variation revealed the fact that the frequency at which a speaker uses variable forms depends not only on the speaker's demographic characteristics, but also on the linguistic environment in which the form occurs. For example, according to Labov (1969), all speakers sometimes delete final /t,d/ when the following word starts with a consonant. Final /t,d/ deletion is also less likely in native speaker speech if the final /t,d/ does not serve as a past tense morpheme.

All these issues necessitate the emergence of a new trend in sociolinguistics known as Variationist approach which began during the 1960s, when Labov and Weinreich, developed a theory of language change which mostly adopted an ethnographic dialectological, probabilistic approach to the study of linguistic variation (Weinreich et al., 1968). As was mentioned above, Labov began his work at a time when the ruling linguistic paradigm was Chomsky's (1965) Standard Theory, and Labov considered his own work to be an extension and refinement of that theory. However, as shall be mentioned in the present paper later, that attempt was later argued by some linguists to be a category error since generative grammar is not concerned with the probabilities at which linguistic forms are used, but only with whether the forms are grammatical and part of a native speaker's linguistic competence. So, acceptability judgment was considered the norm for any recognition of language rules in generative thought.

Another introductory recognition which needs to be stated at this point of our analysis is that prior to Labov's research paradigm, two approaches in variationist tradition could be recognized: the system-oriented approach which started by linguistic form and their



distribution, and the behavior-oriented approach which started by examining speaker's behavior. Labov adopted a system-oriented approach which shows a marked departure from psychological approach to the study of language both by behaviorists and cognitivists in the two structural and transformational traditions in language studies. In fact, Labov's contribution was a practical step into inserting data-driven social and ethnographic approach into linguistics. According to Labov (1969), Morphosyntactic variation is not confined to competition between dialect and standard forms. Variation occurs in all spoken varieties, even in those which can be considered to be fairly standard.

Labov's endeavors to systematize the methodology of analyzing language variation and change later developed the field from an approach into a method known as "variation theory". In this theory, variation is an inherent part of language which can be observed and studied both synchronically and diachronically, in that it shows variation and change in its historical development and also denotes that language varies across different dialects within linguistic communities and socio-geographical distribution. Such variations which can even be traced in everyday vernacular of a language are at the same time rule-governed as is true for all natural languages. In other words, it is established in sociolinguistic research that language variation is not a haphazard phenomenon, but happens rather systematically (Togliamonte, 2012).

A starting point for variationist linguistics was the research with semantic equivalence as differences in pronunciation corresponded with the same meaning (Labov, 1969). However in his later studies in the field, Labov (2001) contained relevant discussion of some possible sociolinguistic principles which relate language change to social perceptions of language. In other words, Labov's approach moves gradually from a purely linguistic study on variation into a more sociolinguistic account of variation seeking to find a socio-ethnic explanation on linguistic variation. According to Togliamonte (2012), one example of such a principle of social perception is Labov's Golden Age Principle which states that at some time in the past, language was in a state of perfection (Labov, 2001). This principle is intended to explain, among other things, why older generations do not typically adopt speech norms of younger generations. Although such a sociolinguistic attitude apparently seems not to belong to anything like a universal grammar, it has clear implications for both synchrony and diachrony and would, therefore, appear to be an externally oriented account of a cross-linguistic grammatical generalization.

The relationship between meaning and form based on variationist sociolinguistics is defined by attributing meanings to varieties based on patterns of variation itself. Labov (1972) introduces the concept of salience noting that if a speech feature is used more frequently by one group rather than another group, or in one speaking situation than another, it is common practice to claim that the feature has group-salient or situation-salient meaning. Labov further formalizes this pattern of interpretation in his use of the terms marker, indicator and stereotype (Labov, 1972). By definition, markers are sociolinguistic variables that show variation in both social and stylistic dimensions. Indicators show stable, social variation. They distinguish social classes but show no variation across speaking situations. Stereotypes are variables that are highly salient to speakers and are subject to overt comment and control. The concept of marking is addressed to specify the social and stylistic circumstances of variational distribution.

#### **VARIATIONIST METHODOLOGY**

A preliminary consideration with regard to variationist approach to sociolinguistics is that variation analysis requires a large number of tokens of the variable being studied for providing sufficient data for further analysis. The task of identifying and analyzing variable forms is greatly aided by full transcription of the interview data. Except for the case of the study on phonological variations which requires a more detailed and meticulous recording of data, a fine balance between level of detail and accessibility is the norm in variationist data collection (Llamas, 2007). As far as syntactic variations are concerned, all pertinent grammatical variations should be preserved, whether they conform to standard rules or not. Frequency of occurrence is the criterion for determining the status of a form. However, morphosyntactic variables tend to be much less recurrent than phonetic variables, which can be a problem for quantitative analysis (Labov, 1966).

An example of Labovian sociolinguistic analysis is that Labov (1966) found the frequency at which a variable feature is used depends on the circumstances of speaking. /r/ deletion in New York City is a clear example of the case where New Yorkers can delete it after a vowel. Labov found that this deletion correlated not only with the linguistic environment and the speaker's social class but also with the speaking task. According to Labov, speakers tended to delete /r/ more often when they are telling stories than when they were providing demographic information. Labov suggested that the speakers tended to delete /r/ more in the casual style because they paid less attention to how they sounded, concentrating instead on telling the story. However, in formal style the speakers monitored their speech, trying to avoid stigmatized forms like deleted /r/.

To understand how Labov analyzed sociolinguistic variation as for the case above, we should note that a primary stage in the initial phase of variable selection is functional equivalence (Lavandera, 1978), where the differing variants are recognized as alternative ways of saying the same thing. The next step is circumscription of the variable context or the envelope of variation which is a major part of the analysis. Then in the analysis, we have extraction of all contexts where a variant can potentially appear in line with the 'Principle of Accountability' (Labov, 1972). In other words, where a particular variant does not appear is just as important as where it does.

According to Llamas (2007), the first stage in the phase of statistical analysis is to count the number of tokens overall, and the proportion of different variants within different instances of use. At this point, decisions and judgments are made on how many occurrences of the use of the variable under study are in the data and also on the different numbers of variants that make up these occurrences. These initial figures are known as the "overall distributions" and are normally the first set of results reported. While overall distributions of forms indicate how common particular variants are, they shed little light on the processes underlying the choice of mechanism. To validate data collection, it is also necessary to examine closely the forms that a linguistic variable takes, and note what features of the context co-occur with these forms (Bayley, 2002). These include both surrounding linguistic environment as well as social features. Using the multivariate analysis, which can deal with these competing influences, it permits us to model the combined contribution of all the contextual factors simultaneously. According to Llamas (2007), the outcome of such analysis is: (1) which factor groups have a statistically significant effect on the choice of the particular variant (factor groups which are not significant are often shown in brackets), (2) which factor group has the strongest effect (shown by the largest range) and (3) which factors within the different factor groups favor.

Related to Labovian approach to the study of language variation is work on the relationship between culture and linguistic patterns (Evans, 2003). Much of the work in this area tries to show that the presence of a particular cultural trait in a community may explain the presence of some fairly specific grammatical patterns in that community's language. However, some apparent grammatical universals may actually be the result of cultural universals.

In spite of all relevant works and studies on the issue of variation ranging from formalistic approaches to cultural accounts of the issue, Labov's approach is still the most quoted and at the same time, the most cogent study done on the issue which has contributed a lot not only to the field of variation studies in particular, but also to the expansion of sociolinguistics as an independently developed branch of interdisciplinary studies in general, with some by-product approaches, techniques and theories, ranging from linguistic ethnography to optimality theory. However, researchers who wished to write a grammar that described probabilistic patterns in speech production, such as those found by Labov, faced a basic problem. How could frequency information be included in a Standard Theory grammar? The solution that Labov and his colleagues proposed was to modify the transformational rules of the Standard Theory so that they specified the linguistic factors that affected rule application. At first, this change appeared to be minor. Generative grammar already contained optional rules, like the rule for particle movement mentioned previously, which generated alternative forms. Labov's (1969) answer was to propose the "variable rule", which specifies the environmental features (constraints) that favor rule application.

According to Labov (1969), there are two central facts with regard to variation in language. On one hand, since it is a rule governed phenomenon, it is even prone to quantificational analysis as is the case with Labov's own research findings. On the other hand, a key factor in variation is the context in which this phenomenon occurs which can be dealt with at two levels. One is at the level of description which is a function of relatively more stable features of language like language universals. However, when it comes to the stage of interpretation, the outcome would vary in accordance with which context a special variation happens.

#### VARIATIONIST POSITION AND THE REALM OF PSYCHOLOGY

From a psychological point of view, what in everyday terminology is referred to as *language, accent, dialect, style* and *social group* constitute concepts; categorizations and schemas on different levels of abstractions that relate to one another in the sense that they form part of a larger frame (Kristiansen, 2008). Not only the speech style, but also the non-linguistic social meaning seems to form part of such frames. Accordingly, when human beings categorize other humans into a series of social categories and subcategories, simplified images representing what such groups are like develop as social stereotypes. However, the role of cognitive sciences in interpreting the linguistic processes, mechanisms and mental representations and also in providing an understanding of language variation is assigned to pure linguists who have their own understanding of variation phenomenon. In order to understand the position of variationist theory in linguistics, it is essential to make a distinction between E-language (Externalized language) and I-language (Internalized language) linguistics. According to Chomsky (1986), E-language linguistics focuses on sentences understood independently of the properties of the mind. However, I-language linguistics is concerned with the speakers' knowledge of the language and the origin of such knowledge in human mind. Therefore, it can be inferred that E-language approach treats language as a social phenomenon. Considering this distinction, variation in linguistics can be recognized as an E-language approach to the study of language while optimality perspective, though not apparently a mentalist approach to the study of language, is more prone to be categorized in the I-language linguistic studies. Some scholars believe that optimality theory was a revisionary concept to reconsider variation which is a probabilistic program dealing with widespread structured variation and specifically aims to know how mental program (I-language) is organized, so that variations arise (Adger & Smith, 2005).

Elsewhere, Milroy and Gordon (2003) provide a relatively inclusive picture of the basic reasons why variationists and generativists cannot reconcile, namely that:

- A) generativists have moved towards more and more abstraction (universalities),
- B) distinction between competence and performance is very basic in generative theories,
- C) generativists treat language as asocial,
- D) for variationist sociolinguists, language flows in social context and is subject to variation and change interpersonally and intrapersonally, and speech participants are considered social actors.

#### PROBLEMS WITH LABOVIAN APPROACH

Labov's adoption of descriptive structural method focused on contrasts in comparing instances of variation. However, there was the problem of mismatches between judgment and independent observations. Moreover, in many cases grammatical rejections emanated from pragmatic considerations. Also, as Labov was under the influence of methods in traditional dialectology which focused on geographical accounts of linguistic differences, there was lack of attention to the social group where the informant came from and the way he might have been influenced by special exposures to language. In addition, for many cases, there was lack of representativeness which was a negative point for the validity of the whole.

Labov (1972) mentioned linguistic variation as "orderly heterogeneity" denoting that alternating variants occur in regular patterns, not in a random distribution. These patterns exhibit two facts, the social regularities and the linguistic regularities. As far as social regularities is concerned, higher status speakers use more of the socially valued variants. For the fact of linguistic regularities, certain linguistic contexts favor the occurrence of particular variants such as phonological reduction process.

However, the concept of variable rules proposed by Labov was debated from the very outset. By some scholars (e.g. Bickerton, 1971) on the ground that they considered variable rules as being unnecessary since mental grammars with different rules or different constraints on the same rules could produce the same results. Others argued that variable rules would require a "variable rule speech community" where the same variable rules would be in the minds of each speaker (Fasold, 1990). The casting of an aggregated set of "variable rules" for the speech community would appear to be unavoidable as they allow no individual grammars which are not informed from the community grammar (Sankoff, 1980).

#### CRITICISM FROM CRITICAL APPROACHES TO VARIATIONISM

The scope of variation today is not limited to formal aspect of language and can even extend to the scope of discourse. Coupland (2007) alludes to a number of serious criticisms to variationist sociolinguistics and especially the pure variation-oriented approach from the discourse and critical perspective. Among these critical standpoints, Sankoff's (1988) position is historically the first documented argument from a critical doctrine casted on variationism, stating that language variables are alternative options within the same grammar system which have the same referential value meaning in running discourse. Therefore, nuances of variations in a language form which may even lead to nuances of meaning would lead researchers to categorize a special variation as belonging to the same structure. In other words, little variation in meaning resulting from variation in form does not prevent linguists from recognizing the variation as being categorized under the same structure.

However, from the 1990s onwards, the critical approach to variationism receives more official disciplinary treatment by the emergence of critical discourse analysis and critical applied linguistics requesting for more ideologically-grounded approaches to the study of linguistic variation. For instance, Trudgill (1974) proposes that it is not so much linguistic, but political and cultural factors which determine whether a variety should be categorized as part of this or that language. He applies the notions *heteronomous* and *autonomous* in order to describe the relative dependency of non-standard varieties on a given standard variety. The sum of an autonomous variety (the standardized one) and a series of heteronomous varieties (non-standard varieties dependent on the standard) together constitute a language. As Trudgill argues, the nonstandard dialects of Germany, Austria and German-speaking Switzerland are heteronomous with respect to standard German because speakers of these dialects look to German as their standard language; they read, write and listen to German in their everyday use of language. Speakers of dialects on the Dutch side of the border, in the same way, will read and write in Dutch, and standardizing changes in their dialects will take place in the direction of standard Dutch, not standard German.

Elsewhere, by addressing the conventional sociolinguistic concepts such as “speech repertoire”, Ronald Wardhaugh (2002) stated that we can talk about a speech repertoire when an individual controls a number of varieties of a language or of two or more varieties. So the concept of speech repertoire confirms Labov’s principle that ‘there are no single-style speakers’ (Labov, 1972) and throws the definition of an idiolect (a single person’s distinctive way of speaking) into confusion.

Pierre Bourdieu’s sociological research on linguistics has also been influential in his critical account on sociolinguistic variation. According to Bourdieu (1984) the symbolic and cultural value of language varieties are the significant aspects of the social use of language. For instance, prestigious varieties of English have cultural capital which often translates into real, material advantages for speakers. Bourdieu also tries to theorize style directly noting that any form of cultural practice is a system of social distinctiveness that is ideologically structured through socialization (Bourdieu, 1991). Although Bourdieu criticizes the purely form-based variationist linguistics, he stresses acknowledges variationists’ traditional claim that language variation is socially structured in communities.

Also, in spite of the fact that Bourdieu regularly cites Labov, Labovian theory and agenda is hardly politically-laden. However, it has become increasingly obvious that the sociolinguistic structures that matter for speakers in their social lives are not simply the describable statistical patterns of speech co-varying with class and situation. They are the ideological structures that imbue language variation with social meaning, and often with social disadvantage.

Elsewhere, Lesley Milroy defines language ideologies as ‘thoroughly naturalized sets of beliefs about language intersubjectively held by members of speech communities’ (Milroy 2004).

In another strand of critical analysis of language use, Norman Fairclough (1995) challenges the idea of contextual ‘appropriateness’ in language use. He argues that the orderliness of language variation perhaps carries the implication that speakers know which ways of speaking are ‘appropriate’ to which social contexts, such as how to speak in formal settings. According to him, appropriateness models in sociolinguistics should therefore be seen as ideologies projecting imaginary representations of sociolinguistic reality which correspond to the perspective and partisan interests of one section of society.

Elsewhere, David Lee (1992) asks whether the differences between linguistic dialect varieties – specifically between standard and non-standard varieties – are simply a matter of superficial formal contrasts, or whether there are more important differences having to do with the kinds of meanings expressible in different varieties’.

These political points make it necessary to revisit a taken-for-granted assumption in variationist sociolinguistics – the idea that sociolinguistic variants are semantically equivalent, or different ways of saying the same thing. Another criticism is based on that ground that variations viewpoint does not match social actors’ own perceptions of meaningful speech differences. But even if we set that issue aside, there are still reasons to doubt the validity of the device of inferring social meaning from speech-form distribution.

### **OPTIMALITY THEORY**

Criticisms against variationist position in linguistics and its shortcomings to deal with a number of significant facts in language motivated the emergence of a new trend in the study of language variation known as Optimality Theory. To provide a background to the necessity for this theory, it should be noted that variationist position was attacked from the camp of pure linguistics from two fronts. On one hand, Kay (1975) objected to the uniform constraints assumption, noting that numerous studies had, in fact, found that the linguistic constraints on a variable rule were not similarly ordered for all of the demographic groups within a speech community, so a single variable rule could not describe the speech community as a whole. Romaine (1982) raised a similar objection to the uniform constraints assumption. She pointed out that within larger speech communities, there exist separate social networks whose speech patterns may differ.

On the other hand, Milroy (2004) stated that speech in British cities is more varied than speech in American cities. He characterized the regular variation observed by American sociolinguists as the “tip of the iceberg” and said that British sociolinguists, looking beneath the waterline in cities like Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Belfast, have observed a lot more irregularity. A different kind of objection to variable rules was raised by Derek Bickerton (1971), the eminent creolist. He claimed that linguistic variations were unlearnable: If we accept the variable-rule principle, we must also accept that the mind possesses not only the apparatus necessary for framing two quite different types of rules (standard grammatical rules and variable rules), but also some kind of recognition device to tell the speaker whether to interpret a particular set of data as rule-plus-exceptions or as area-of-variability.

Elsewhere in the applied linguistics enquiry, Gregg, a second language acquisition (SLA) scholar from the generative camp, and Rod Ellis (1990) and Elaine Tarone (1990), SLA scholars from the variationist camp pronounced criticism against Labov. Gregg reiterates that variation theory does not include a theory of acquisition; that is, that variation theory has no explanation for how speakers can learn the probabilities embedded in variable rules.

Yet, another strand of criticism from the pure linguistic point of view was exerted to Labov’s variationist linguistics on the ground that, contrary to what is claimed by Labov and his disciples, the model lacks to account for the generative aspect of linguistic systems. Kay and McDaniel (1979) & Gregg (1990) stated that generative grammar had two major goals: (1) to construct an algorithm for generating all and only the grammatical sentences of a language, and (2) to discover principles of Universal Grammar that explained how speakers can learn the grammar described by (1). Generative linguists believed that both of these goals could be accomplished by a competence grammar, and a

competence grammar did not address questions of how often or under what linguistic and social circumstances a particular rule would be used, as we have seen. Generative research involved the study of *types* of structures (what are the possibilities for pronouncing the *-ing* morpheme?). Variation research involved the tabulation of *tokens* of a structure. This question was considered to be a matter of performance. Labov was committing a category error by introducing probabilistic description into a generative grammar. What caused the most controversy between variationist theory and generative linguistics was that probabilistic grammars had a different logical status from categorical grammars, and variable rules were rules of production.

Optimality theory and variationist position in linguistics, though highly related to each other in the main objective they follow which is to deal with language variation, can be considered two poles with respect to their approach in studying linguistic variation as a natural phenomenon in language. We should not forget that for variationists, competing outputs and constraint ranking show great promise for handling not only cross-linguistic variation, but also language-internal variation. As one of the goals of sociolinguistics is to understand the correlation between social factors and linguistic variation and ordering of linguistic constraints with respect to variability of rules, linguists and sociolinguists who were aware of the reality of linguistic variability and mostly belonged to the non-categorical camp of linguistic studies began to devise a system of language description which provided systematic description of linguistic variations which could also be compatible with universal rules of language. This was an effort to put variability into a systematic frame so that the field of sociolinguistics was not blamed anymore for lack of systematicity and haphazardness. By definition, optimality theory is a framework that evaluates the interaction between violable constraints in a language (Blutner & Zeevat, 2004). Initially developed by Prince and Smolensky (1993) as a new phonological framework, Optimality Theory is a framework for the development of grammars that generate variable outputs. This theory was extended beyond the realm of phonology to areas of morphology, syntax and even pragmatics. As opposed to variationist linguistics, optimality theory aims at exploring relatively stable characteristics of variation common to all of world languages. The aim for doing so is to minimize the level of variation which is usually observed between competence and performance (Blutner & Zeevat, 2004).

Optimality theory is viewed as particularly well-suited for developing linguistic analyses that account for both categorical and variable outputs. It seeks for establishment in the rules and patterns operating within languages with the assumption that the more we study the established characteristics of a language, the more we can get close to the neuro-psychological basis of the languages in general. Therefore, one may conclude that optimality theory is a way of interpreting constraints even through adopting a typological approach (Blutner & Zeevat, 2004). In generative approaches to linguistics, constraints are interpreted in a binary all-or-nothing fashion. However, according to Prince and Smolensky (1993), in optimality theory, constraints are ranked with respect to each other, such that lower-ranking constraints may be violated in order for higher-ranking ones to be respected. In fact, it is a core concept in optimality theory that it rejects the inviolability of constraints which is a characteristic of Universal Grammar and to consider a set of violable constraints. It is at this point that optimality theory, though being considered a sister theory to Universal Grammar and Linguistic typological approaches, departs from those perspectives to provide a new system of explanation which presents new possibilities on marrying variationist and categorical features of language.

A more clear account of optimality theory and its comparison with Universal Grammar is given by Tesar and Smolensky (2000), where they reiterate that Universal Grammar is assumed to be determined by a generative part *Gen* and a system of violable constraints *Con* (UG\_*Gen\_Con*). The language-specific part of Grammar relates to a particular ranking of the constraints in *Con* which is the only learnable part of the grammar. The implication for learning the language is that inferring the ranking of the constraints in *Con* is what should be mostly mastered by a language learner.

Elsewhere, Gregory R. Guy (2007) addresses optimality theory as a constraint-based approach in which general universal principles are summarized in a ranked list of constraints each of which will prevail unless in a given case, it would cause a variation of a higher-ranked constraint. According to optimality theory, the alternatives of a single grammar form are evaluated based upon the type and the severity of constraint violation which that special form incurs. It is at this point that the possibility of a dialogue between optimality theory and variationist linguistics can be reviewed. The extreme version of optimality theory asserts that there is only one optimal candidate for any set of circumstance-conditioned options, with a special form resulting from the optimal choice of language according to the hierarchy of constraints. This reading of optimality theory is highly categorical and reflects a typological view of language and grammar. As a matter of fact, such an understanding of optimality theory cannot explain the real sociolinguistic variations that happen in everyday language use. Although there are categorical rules and constraints in the formal grammar of any languages, this does not mean that the sentences and words both in their sequence of occurrence and in their phonological manifestation do not deviate from their defined categories and constraint-ranking when they occur in the social context by the language users. The crucial fact about sociolinguistic phenomena is that in contrast to pure language phenomena which are mostly conceptually-driven and fledge out of a general model of language, the sociolinguistic phenomena are highly data-driven, realistic and subject to variation as a function of social variation. Human-being is not a machine to be planned by language rules and to be expected to copy sentences limited to the same rules and disciplined by the categorical constraints defined for these rules. Although the same degree of computational planning is now believed to be at work with language acquisition, the system will certainly be subject to live variations in different social contexts and for different sociolinguistic groups in human communities.

However, the more moderate version of optimality theory can be more compatible with variationist theory. One option for doing so is the proposition of variable or partial constraint ranking by Anttila and Fong (2000) and also Boersma and Hayes (2001). Their model is a competition model which relies on the different selections made by different rankings to predict the frequencies of occurrence of competing forms. According to this approach, the actual frequency of occurrence of phonological variables in differing contexts is the criteria for constraints to be considered valid and at priority in a language. Such an understanding of the concept of constraints and language optimality brings factors such as frequency of occurrence and actual situation into account. In fact, this understanding of optimality theory is compatible with the natural use of language in its sociolinguistic context.

As the most valid device to understand and formalize variability is to observe the types of variation, their frequency of occurrence and the language context in which they occur. It is exactly at this point that optimality theory and variationist linguistics meet each other since their philosophy of enquiry reaches the maximum shared ground. However, what yet remains for more scrutiny is to find formulations for variation in language. In fact, one problem with variationist linguistics is that many discussions in the field remain at the level of simple description of the variationist phenomena without any contribution to general formulations. At this point, a moderate and well-adapted version of optimality theory can come into play to more soundly institutionalize variations as a sociolinguistic phenomenon. In other words, the field of sociolinguistics can utilize theorizations of optimality theory to provide well-established universal generalizations which are necessary for every field of enquiry.



Using the descriptive mechanism of optimality theory, sociolinguists can raise the validity of the conclusions they make about a construct as versatile and as complex as sociolinguistic variation of constrained-based approaches: general, universal principles accounts for phonological generalizations. In Optimality theory (originally deterministic and categorical), these principles are summarized in a list of constraints. The point of focus in optimality theory can be recognized as how linguistic variation is minutely conditioned by linguistic structure and how it is, in many instances, intrinsically connected to various aspects of social structure.

Although optimality theory seems to be very promising to provide a more systematic account of variational phenomena in language, there is criticism against it from many linguists who argue that this framework does not, in the normal case, generate variable outputs. This position is illustrated by the following quote from Tesar (1995:3): "The idea is that by examining the marks assigned by the universal constraints to all the candidate outputs for a given input, there is one which is least marked, or optimal: this is the one and only well-formed description that may be assigned to the input by the grammar."

#### CONCLUSION: PROSPECTS FOR A MORE REALISTIC VIEW ON VARIATIONISM AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Without trying to negate any facts found via research and theoretical enquiry in variation and optimality, it is necessary to have a more realistic look at how language users use language in real context and what really is the function of variation in language. I prefer to think of language as an apparatus of availability and requirement. When an individual wants to start speaking, there is a variety of factors which may be at work for language production to happen. In other words, there is at least some motive, whether internal or external, for any language production to happen. The motivating bank and the feature of the credit through which language production should happen is subconsciously very decisive on the choice of form. So, in mathematical terms, the speaker chooses alternative X or X' from a domain of alternatives which can vary from the topic, addressee, register, geography age of addressee or age of speaker and so forth.

However, the job is not over at this point, but the speaker takes the motive of talk to his/her apparatus system. This apparatus is in fact what the speaker finds available to himself from knowledge of how to use language (communicative competence).

We can use the mathematical metaphor to better understand the issue. If we consider the relation:

$F(x) = y$  the terminal form "y" is in fact the form of language which is actually produced and heard or read in its physical shape.

As we are dealing with human beings which are under the influence of affective factors and also under emotional impact from both inside and outside (e.g. a tendency to copy a person to whom a speaker feels kinship or in whom he has detected some prestige, we cannot expect the equation  $F(x) = y$  to be always true as a mathematical function (as the definition of function in mathematics calls for:

If  $F(x) = y$  and  $F(x) = y'$ , hence  $y = y'$

In other words, we may have  $F(x) = y$  and  $F(x) = y'$  in different situations even by a single individual in a similar context, which will be in sharp contradiction with mathematical functions. Therefore, any consideration of language as working like mathematical processes is a myth. Although some basic algorithms in language follow some categorical patterns at a very general level, it is by no means to consider that the same thing should be true for the whole corpus of language. Therefore, instead of optimality theory which is trying to provide a systematic account of language variation, we need to develop a more realistic model of language use which takes into consideration both psychological and social influences of human mind on the outcome of language.

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the effect of Focus on Form (FonF) method of instruction on Iranian learners. It particularly focuses on teaching simple past tense (PT) and definite and indefinite articles (ARTs) as the linguistic targets to Iranian EFL learners. Studies on the effect of FonF instruction in L2 were extensively conducted and the results have shown positive empirical evidence for FonF instruction (N. Ellis, 1995; Spada, 1997; Norris and Ortega, 2000; and R. Ellis, 2002). To this end, 56 female EFL learners whose age ranged from 18 to 24 participated in this project and formed the experimental and control groups. The experimental group received the FonF instruction as the treatment. The tests used in this study were a diagnostic test, a pretest, a posttest, and an open-ended questionnaire. The data were subject to ANOVAs and the results indicated that the experimental group did significantly differently from the control group in the posttest. The conclusion drawn is that this approach was positively effective to teach English simple past tense and definite and indefinite articles to the learners of English as a foreign language.

**KEYWORDS:** Focus on Form instruction, Simple past tense, Definite and indefinite articles

## INTRODUCTION

Second language acquisition (SLA) may take place in natural environments, in educational settings, or in mixed contexts (R. Ellis, 2008; Pica, 1983). Some learners may simply be exposed to a target language environment and learn the language; some may acquire a target language through instruction in a classroom, and some may acquire a second language in both natural and educational settings. However, for a majority, instructed second language learning in the classroom plays a crucial role in SLA both in the learner's native environment and in a target language context (R. Ellis, 2005). Historically, for a successful second language acquisition, language practitioners and researchers have been seeking effective instructional methodology (Richards & Rodgers, 2001) for fruitful outcomes.

Brown (2007) sketched the development of language pedagogy in the past several decades from the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), the Series Method, the Direct Method, Cognitive Code Learning, the "designer" methods, to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Some methods emphasized formal language aspects (e.g., GTM); others forbade the formal instruction of language forms (e.g., the Natural Approach); and still others stressed meaning negotiation for communication (e.g., CLT). Under the umbrella of CLT, some proponents insisted on paying no attention to linguistic forms, whereas others advocated embedding form-focused instruction into communicative language teaching. From about twenty years ago, the focus of the majority of language teaching has shifted to form-focused instruction and only a few SLA researchers insisted on no focus on form. Thus, the importance of focus on form embedded in communication in L2 teaching appears to be currently agreed upon (Brown, 2007). SLA researchers, such as Long (1991) and Doughty and Williams (1998) have proposed Focus on Form in L2 instruction. They claimed that based on meaning or communication, students' attention needs to be occasionally shifted to linguistic features when communication difficulties such as problems with comprehension and production are encountered due to non-target-like language used. In response to the proposed FonF approach, studies on the effects of FonF instruction in L2 were extensively conducted and indicated mixed results.

The results have shown positive empirical evidence for FonF instruction, as those reviewed in N. Ellis (1995), R. Ellis (2002), Norris and Ortega (2000), and Spada (1997). On the other hand, some research on the effects of Focus on Form has revealed no positive effects (Stein, 1998), and the arguments as to the effect of focus on form have been existent (R. Ellis, 2005; R. Sheen, 2005, 2007). In addition, FonF instruction has been criticized by Sheen (2005, 2007), who claimed that there was no sufficient empirical evidence to support the effectiveness of this approach. However, R. Ellis (2008) has pointed out that "He is clearly wrong" (p. 833). Thus, it appears that there is a gap among the various pedagogical perspectives in the SLA field that needs more empirical evidence to bridge.

In addition to the issues in ESL settings, EFL contexts have also faced pedagogical problems. English teaching in compulsory education in Iran, for example, has not satisfactorily met the demands of higher level English proficiency. Being an EFL context, Iran is a globalization-oriented country, where international communication has been in high demand for both academic and non-academic purposes. Owing to the previously and currently non-FonF approaches that have been little fruitful in the Iranian context, it appears that there is a need to seek alternative teaching approaches to improve the English education in Iran. To this end, FonF, as a current "hot topic" in the instructed SLA field (H. D. Brown, 2010), is taken into consideration when exploring a more effective alternative to teach simple past tense as well as definite and indefinite articles in the Iranian EFL context.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Concerning what appeared above, the following research questions are formed?

- 1) Is Focus on Form instruction a more effective approach in terms of accurate production of the simple past tense than the non-FonF method being used in Iranian EFL context?
- 2) Is Focus on Form instruction a more effective approach in terms of accurate production of the definite and indefinite English articles than is the non-FonF method being used in Iranian EFL context?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

The participants of this study were 70 female students learning English at elementary level in Safir English Language Institute in Esfahan, Iran. The learners' age ranged from 18 to 24. Some of them had graduated from different universities in Iran at BA level, some of them had completed 12 years of schooling, and some were following their education at high school. Furthermore, all participants were Iranian and their mother tongue was Persian.

### *Instruments*

The instruments used for collecting the quantitative and qualitative data consisted of a diagnostic test, a pretest, a posttest, and a questionnaire.

### *The Diagnostic Test*

The diagnostic test consisting of 35 questions was compiled by the institute itself for placement purposes. The test which was a mixture of multiple choice sentence completion, cloze test, and reading comprehension multiple choice questions was compiled by the institute itself for placement purposes. Hence, its reliability had already been verified by the institute's test developers. It was administered at the very beginning of the data collection procedure to verify whether the general English proficiency level of the two groups was comparable from the outset of the study. Ideally, the comparison of the proficiency level between the two groups should be similar statistically so that the effects of the treatment in the experimental group and no treatment in the control group can be compared.

### *The Pretest*

It was used to ensure participants' readiness for the two target structures, PT and ARTs. They showed their readiness by reaching approximately 50 % accuracy of the TOTAL scores (average of the Grammar Judgment Test (GJT) and Free Writing (FW)) for each of the two linguistic targets in the two measures, GJT and FW. The two measures are described as follow.

*The Grammaticality Judgment Test:* The test was composed of 60 items in sentence level. Of the 60 items, 20 focused on the PT (10 grammatically correct and 10 ungrammatical), another 20 on the ARTs (10 grammatically correct and 10 ungrammatical), and the other 20 other than the two targets as distracters (10 grammatically correct and 10 ungrammatical). To compile this test, the book "*Grammar Practice in Context*" was used. The reliability of the items was already verified by the authors.

*The Free Writing:* In order to create a context for the participants to produce the target structures, the FW was prompted using:

*About a year (#years) ago, I took the Entrance Examination...*

This prompt was used based on the fact that almost every learner has to take the high school entrance exam in order to select the high school that s/he is interested in, and the university entrance exam to be admitted to a college or university s/he desires. The participants were advised to write as much as they could in the time limit, but they were not allowed to consult any dictionaries or their classmates. The FW production was to elicit the participants' use of the PT and the ARTs, along with the GJT, as an indicator of the participants' readiness for the target structures, and also as the pretest baseline data to compare with those from the posttest.

### *The Posttest*

Similar to the pretest, the posttest also consisted of two measures, a different GJT and FW. The contents of the GJT, based on the instructional materials taught during the instructional treatments, differed from the pretest; but they were similar in terms of the level of complexity and proficiency. In a similar vein, the topic of the FW sample on the posttest was also based on the instructional contents, but it differed from the pretest, too.

*The Grammaticality Judgment Test:* A second GJT, similar to the pretest in format but different in content and also consisted of 60 sentence items, was used. Of the 60 items, 20 focused on the PT (10 grammatically correct and 10 ungrammatical), 20 on the ARTs (10 grammatically correct and 10 ungrammatical), and 20 other than the two targets as distracters (10 grammatically correct and 10 ungrammatical). It was administered to collect data for comparison with those of the pretest to examine whether there was any significant difference in gains within the groups and between groups after the instructional treatments.

Similar to the pretest, the book "*Grammar Practice in Context*" was employed to compile this test. The reliability of the items was already verified by the authors.

*The Free Writing:* After the GJT described above, the participants composed another FW

Titled *My Last Visit to the Zoo*, which was related to the teaching materials used, *A Postcard from Rio* and *Two Fables* by Aesop. It was assumed that all participants had been to a zoo and therefore held the appropriate schema to be able to write on this topic. Further, in the instruction of the writing test, the learners were directed to pretend they had been to the zoo if there was anyone who had not. To establish a context for the participants to produce the targets, the FW posttest was prompted:

*In my last visit to the zoo, I...*

The participants were again advised to write as much as possible, but they could not use any dictionaries or discuss any questions with their classmates during this activity. The FW production and the GJT on the posttest were intended to elicit the linguistic targets to evaluate and compare the effects of the treatments within group and between groups.

### *The Questionnaire*

A questionnaire consisting of a series of 8 open-ended questions was also used to evaluate the participants' experience of instruction. The questions were prepared by the researchers considering the type of instruction which the experimental group received during the treatment. They were based on the types of activities, typographic input enhancement, pair/group work, as well as peer/teacher feedback. The reliability of the questions included in the questionnaire was not verified. As it was based on the treatment, it was not conceivable to run a pilot study and thus verify the reliability.

**Procedures**

*Participants Selection Procedures*

In selecting the sample, the researchers employed two intact classes as the control and experimental groups. Although the 70 participants selected for this study were studying English at the same level determined by the institute, the level of their language proficiency was determined by the diagnostic test which consisted of 35 questions and was compiled by the institute itself for placement purposes. The test was a mixture of multiple choice sentence completion, cloze test, and reading comprehension multiple choice questions. The students took the test, then, based on the normal probability curve, those students who were placed between one standard deviation above the mean and one standard deviation below the mean were selected as the main participants. It is worth pointing out that some of the participants were dropped from the study due to their absence in some treatment sessions, resulting in 56 participants. 30 participants formed the experimental group and the rest 26 formed the control group of this study.

*Data Collection Procedures*

Quantitative data were gathered by the pretest, and posttest, using grammaticality judgment test (GJT) and free writing production (FW). Also, some open-ended questions concerning the participants' experience of the instruction (treatment) were collected for qualitative analyses.

In order to collect the data required for the fulfillment of the objectives, a lengthy procedure was taken. At the beginning, the participating teacher was informed about the study and the types of focus on form instruction to be used in her related classes. At the very beginning of the experiment, a diagnostic test was first administered to verify whether the two groups of the participants were comparable in terms of treatment of the two respective groups or not. Finally, the results of those participants placed between +1SD and -1SD were considered for data analysis.

The participants, then, took a pretest consisting of GJT and FW to measure their knowledge of the two targets, PT and ARTs. The pretest was utilized to verify their developmental readiness for the treatment of the two linguistic targets, and also as the baseline data to compare those of the posttest. The PT was operationalized as simple rules and the ART, complex rules in terms of form and/or function. The two grammar points were instructed for eight hours; each for four hours, respectively. For the treatment, the two groups were taught by the same instructor who was familiar with both the non-FonF teaching methods the institute was currently using (e.g., GTM, CLT) and the Focus on Form approach. The control group received non-FonF treatment, whereas the experimental group was instructed with the FonF procedures and techniques such as dictogloss, input enhancement, input flood, contextualized activities, pair/group work for interaction and output activities, peer/teacher corrective feedback, and implicit and explicit teaching of the two linguistic targets.

Finally, after the treatment, both groups took the posttest on the GJT and FW regarding the linguistic targets taught. They also answered the open-ended questions about the instruction experience.

*Data Analysis Procedures*

Data collected from the GJT and FW on the pretest and posttest were compared using SPSS 15.0 to carry out ANOVAs, One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Tests, and Gain Scores. Both the GJT and FW results were scored. The results were analyzed to examine whether there were gains that were significantly different at a  $< .05$  level (confidence interval 95%) between tests within groups and between groups after eight-hour instruction for the effects of the FonF approach; furthermore, the data were subject to the ANOVAs and One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Tests.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Two distinct linguistic features, past tense (PT) and definite and indefinite articles (ART), were examined in order to investigate the effects of FonF instruction on two types of rules, simple vs. complex rules. Each linguistic feature was measured by means of Grammatical Judgment Test (GJT). For comparisons of the PT scores on the GJT between the control and the experimental groups at the two test time points (the pretest, and the posttest), one-way ANOVA were carried out using SPSS 15.0 to compare the scores and triangulate the results for the GJT on the two tests.

In order to see whether we are able to use ANOVAs, first we should check whether the data have been normally distributed or not. If the level of significance is more than 0.05, it indicates the normality of data distribution.

*Table 1: One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for experimental and control groups*

		Pretestcontrol	Pretestexperimental
N		26	30
Normal Parameters(a,b)	Mean	17.88	17.80
	Std. Deviation	3.374	3.643
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.096	.096
	Positive	.096	.091
	Negative	-.096	-.096
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.491	.524
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.969	.946

As it is clear from Table 1, the result of the normality test shows that p values of the two groups (.969, and .946) are more than the significance level (0.05). Therefore, we can accept the assumption of normality and we can use parametric test such as ANOVA for comparing the results of the pretest and posttest in the control and experimental groups. In order to answer the first research question, first the gain scores from pretest to posttest in PT experimental group and control group were

computed and then ANOVA was used to see whether there was any significant difference among the two groups in pretest and posttest stage. The following tables show the results:

Table 2. Mean pre- and posttest of past tense scores for experimental and control groups

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
Control	26	1.42	1.922	.377	-5	4
Experimental	30	3.67	1.749	.319	0	7
Total	56	2.63	2.137	.286	-5	7

The results of data analysis (ANOVA) in Table 3 below indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups in the results of PT pretest and posttest because the obtained F value of 20.916 was found to be significant at .001 level ( $P=.000$ ). In fact, the learners had a better performance in learning the past tense when they were taught through Focus-on-form instruction than when they were taught by non-FonF method.

Table 3: ANOVA analysis for mean pretest scores of past tense scores for experimental and control groups

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	70.112	1	70.112	20.916	.000
Within Groups	181.013	54	3.352		
Total	251.125	55			

Figure 1 below indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups in the results of PT pretest and posttest.

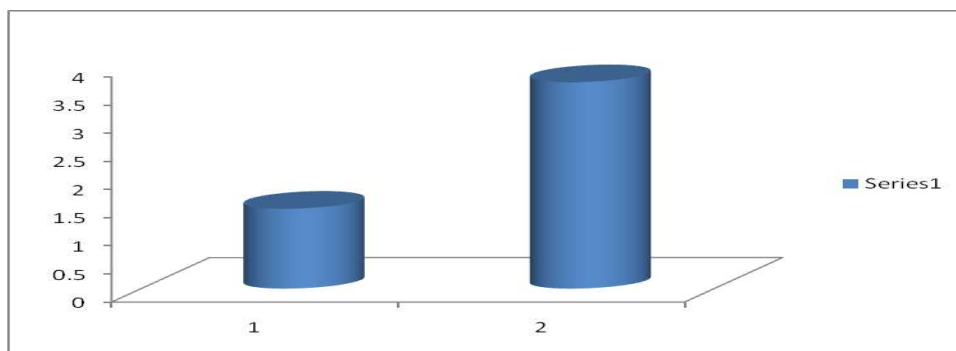


Figure 1: Pre- and posttest of Past Tense (PT) scores for experimental and control groups

Regarding the effects of FonF instruction on the acquisition of the PT, there are three aspects of the results to be discussed. First, in comparison of the test results of the control and the FonF group, there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups on the GJT. These results are incongruent with those of Stein's (1998) study, in which no significant difference was found between groups with or without FonF treatments, although the factors that may have contributed to the results of the two studies vary. Overall, these results demonstrate an advantage of the FonF group over the control group. In other words, the benefits of FonF instruction on the acquisition of the PT became evident as time passed. Thus, FonF instruction appears more effective than non-FonF instruction in terms of the acquisition of the PT. The treatment effects of this target structure in the current study are contrary to Mackey (2006) and Takashima and Ellis (1999), in which they found little treatment effect of the past tense. In contrast, these results lend support to other studies (R. Ellis, 2006), in which their results showed also positive effects. In a similar vein, the findings support another study (S.-Y. Chen, 2007) that was conducted in the same context as the current study, also indicating the positive effects of FonF instruction.

Finally, the positive effect of FonF instruction on the PT in the current study may be partly due to the simplicity of the target structure. It may also be, as Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam (2009) have pointed out, that the target structure is a structure that the participants have begun to acquire, and thus helps to result in positive treatment effects. This assumption may be theoretically grounded in Pienemann's (1989) Teachability/Learnability Hypothesis and Wilson's (2011) Learnability Principle. In their study of the effects of FonF, Wilson (2007) also found similar results that learner's developmental readiness for a form facilitated the acquisition of the linguistic structure (participial adjectives in their study), which demonstrated the effects of FonF instruction.

In order to answer the second research question, first the gain scores from pretest to posttest in ARTs experimental group and control group were computed and then ANOVA was used to see whether there was any significant difference between the two groups in pretest and posttest stage. The following tables show the results:

Table 4: Mean pre- and posttest of definite and indefinite articles scores for experimental and control groups

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
Control	26	1.04	1.732	.340	-3	4
Experimental	30	3.97	1.671	.305	0	7
Total	56	2.61	2.238	.299	-3	7

The results of data analysis (ANOVA) in Table 5 below shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the learners' performance in experimental ART group and control group in the results of pretest and posttest because the obtained F value of 41.360 was found to be significant at .001 level ( $P=.000$ ). In fact, regarding the instruction of definite and indefinite article, the participants in the experimental group had a better performance when they were taught through Focus on Form instruction than those in control group when non-FonF method of instruction was used for teaching definite and indefinite article.

Table 5: ANOVA analysis for mean pretest scores of definite and indefinite articles scores for experimental and control groups

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	119.429	1	119.429	41.360	.000
Within Groups	155.928	54	2.888		
Total	275.357	55			

Figure 2 below shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the learners' performance in experimental ART group and control group in the results of pretest and posttest.

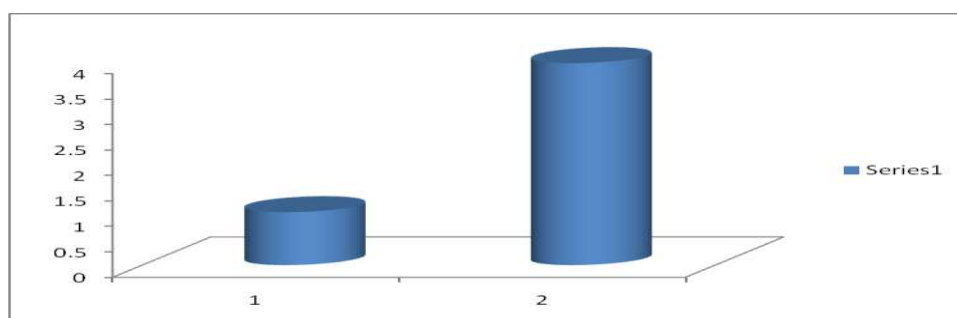


Figure 2: Mean pre- and posttest of definite and indefinite articles scores for experimental and control groups

Concerning the effects of FonF instruction on the acquisition of the ART, Prior to the instructional period, the control and experimental groups showed no significant difference on the GJT. However, In consideration of the gain scores for each individual group, the control group obtained no significant gains on the GJT on the posttest. By contrast, the FonF group has improved significantly on the GJT, and TOTAL scores on the posttest.

Thus, the effects of FonF instruction are evident in the immediate improvements in the acquisition of the ARTs and the instructional effects were sustained over time. These results are in part contrary to Pica's results (1983), which revealed no instructional effects on the acquisition of the indefinite article. Nevertheless, this study is generally consistent with previous studies, such as Bitchener (2008), which has shown both immediate and delayed effects on the acquisition of the ART.

Unlike the results of the PT in the current study, the results of the acquisition of the ART indicate immediate effects. This may suggest that the instructional period was not long enough for the participants' practicing and internalizing this target because articles are complex and multi-functional in use, and thus a longer treatment time may be needed for acquisition of the ART to be fully complete. That is, a sufficient instruction time appears needed for the learners to proceduralize the declarative knowledge of the target, and then, with repeated production, to lead to automaticity, according to the Comprehensive Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985, 1995) and the Output Principle (Wilson, 2008).

In sum, FonF instruction in the current study, compared to non-FonF instruction, points to effectiveness with positive effects on the acquisition of the PT. As Ellis (2008) has pointed out, some instructional effects do not become evident immediately until later. This is a case in point as the results of the acquisition of the PT have indicated. Furthermore, FonF instruction has a tendency toward being more effective than non-FonF instruction, with immediate effects on the acquisition of the ART. It may be, as some scholars have pointed out, that English articles are difficult for non-native speakers to acquire due to its complexity in use and function and absence from many other languages (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Master, 2002; Wilson, 2008), including the participants' mother tongue in this study.

On the basis of all the quantitative analyses, focus-on-form instruction provides an efficient way for learners to expand their knowledge of using past tense and definite and indefinite articles. Taking into account the findings of both PT and ARTs acquisition, the overall results

show that the control and experimental groups started with almost the same pretest scores on the GJT and FW. However, the GJT and FW scores increased moderately on the posttest, an indication that non-FonF instruction had little or no impact on the acquisition of the two targets.

With respect to the qualitative data obtained from the participants by asking 8 open-ended questions, the participants' answers were quoted question by question in the following discussion. These quotations were for most part translated from the participants' mother tongue.

For the first question "Which activity in this class do you like most? Why?" thirteen participants answered, "Group work." The reasons were because we can discuss questions asked and resolve problems together, share ideas, and learn from one another in the group." Five participants answered "Fables." "It's fun", "It's interesting", "I like to read stories", were the reasons participants provided. Still seven



participants answered “None”; three did not answer or answered “No idea”; and three answered “All” or “Nothing particular”. There were various individual answers provided by only one participant, such as “Writing, because I can know what I haven’t learned about grammar during the process”; “Listening Cloze test”; and “After-test class discussion”. Most of the participants’ answers were general responses to the class activities instead of specific FonF techniques used in the study.

Questions 3 to 5 were related to typographic input enhancement such as color-code, font size, and boldface used in the reading text. Almost all the participants like these typographical enhancement devices. Regarding color-coding, participants stated that the device “gets my attention, shows the key points, is easily distinguishable,” etc. With respect to different font sizes, participants wrote that they “help to read, stand out, are distinguishable,” and so on. With regard to boldfaced targets, participants expressed that they “show importance, indicate key points, attract attention and notice, are distinguishable,” and so forth. These answers substantiate the results from the closed-ended questions.

Question 6 pertained to pair/group work. As reflected in their responses to Question 1, many participants, 34 out of 43, answered that they liked it with reasons such as “sharing ideas, exchanging opinions, discussing questions, helping one another (cooperation), spirit of team work, learning from one another, and more interaction between classmates.” On the other hand, 4 answered that they did not like it, because they had to move the tables and chairs around. There was only one participant who answered “I don’t like it. It didn’t work.”

Questions 7 and 8 were concerned with peer and teacher feedback. More than 30 participants expressed that they liked peer and/or teacher feedback. From peer feedback, they can learn “What their shortcomings are”, “What needs to be improved”, and also “to learn more”. From teacher feedback, they can learn “what mistakes to correct”, “to improve” their English, and “to learn more”.

The results of open-ended questions appear to be consistent. The results point to the fact that participants perceive pair/group work, typographic input enhancement, and peer/teacher feedback to be advantageous to contributing to student learning outcomes. These results may also contribute partly to the positive effects of FonF instruction that the quantitative data have shown in the previous sections.

Regarding the qualitative data obtained from eight open-ended questions, there are various reasons that participants express in their responses to the open-ended questions why they like the input enhancement, such as personal preferences, “I like it because it helps me to read”; attention catching, “I like it because it gets my attention”; prominence, “I like it because it shows key points”, “it stands out”, “it shows importance”, “it is distinguishable”, etc. On the other hand, the font size was rated almost the lowest. The reason this device was rated one of the lowest may be due to the fact that the target structure was already either color-coded or in bold that the font size made little prominence in the combination of typographic enhancement. Another reason may be that the size was not large enough (the enlarged size was 16, while the regular in the text is 12) to catch the participants’ attention. The participants’ opinions about the input enhancement may contribute in part to the positive results of FonF instruction, which is apparently different from White (1998), which found no significant difference between input flood with and without typographic input enhancement.

In addition to the typographic input enhancement, the participants also expressed their approval of group work, and (explicit) peer and teacher feedback. As the participants mentioned, they liked discussing the questions asked, working out problems together, sharing ideas, and learning from each other in the group. Working in groups contrasts with the typical individual work in this institution, in which classroom seating is always arranged in rows (the teacher even received a complaint email forwarded from the department chair, stating that this class left the classroom setting in group instead of restoring it to the column-by-column seating).

The participants’ positive experience with the FonF treatment (e.g., visual input enhancement and corrective feedback) may have contributed to the learning outcomes of both target structures. Also, the complexity of a structure may have affected the acquisition of the targets impacted by FonF instruction in terms of effectiveness. The structural complexity may have resulted in the varied instructional effects of the two targets, in general, with positive effects on simple structure (PT) and complex structure (ART).

Pair/group work appears one of the participants’ favorite activities in this study. It can be utilized with other FonF techniques or activities together to benefit the learners for optimal learning consequences. One example is to employ the dictogloss procedure in group. Dictogloss (VanPatten, 1990) in small group work can be used with immediate or higher level non-native language classes as utilized in this study. In carrying out this activity, participants need to pay attention not only to meaning as they are listening to language input and taking notes, then sharing notes in group during meaning negotiation, but they also must pay attention to form as they are producing and refining their version as a language output for a group production.

Furthermore, corrective feedback, as researchers have pointed out, plays a crucial part in FonF instruction that provides learners with an opportunity to notice form relative to their intended meaning during communication (Loewen & Nabei, 2007). It is also necessary to provide learners with negative evidence of the target language in order to notice the gap between received input and intended output, and be able to acquire native-like proficiency in the language process. Various types of corrective feedback (R. Ellis, 2006; Loewen & Nabei, 2007) can be used in different activities and with different groups of learners. In communication-oriented activities with intermediate or higher level learners, implicit corrective feedback such as confirmation check and recast can be incorporated into the activities to enhance both fluency and accuracy. In accuracy-oriented writing practice with higher beginners or adult learners, explicit corrective feedback, such as metalinguistic corrective feedback and explicit correction, may be utilized to improve the accurate use of their intended meaning and form.

## CONCLUSION

The main purpose of the study was to explore the effectiveness of the FonF instruction on learning simple past tense as well as definite and indefinite articles among Iranian EFL learners. From both quantitative and qualitative perspectives, and taking both the PT and the ART into account, FonF instruction appears evident in acquisition of these two targets with varied effects. The overall conclusion which is drawn is that FonF instruction is more effective than non-FonF instruction on the acquisition of the two targets in the current study showing significant positive effects on the acquisition of the PT and ART.

As suggestions for further research, other aspects of FonF instruction, such as fluency, other levels or types of learners, different treatment timing and other linguistic features may be further investigated. To measure proficiency, both accuracy and fluency need to be taken into account. When evaluating effectiveness of a second/foreign language approach, aspects of accuracy and fluency should be explored to a proficiency level at least as standardized tests claimed to measure. Thus, investigation of fluency, in addition to the accuracy examined in the current study, for other individual linguistic features might be conducted in the future for a thorough examination of the effects of FonF instruction. Also, different groups of learners with different levels of proficiency should be considered for assessing the full scope the effects



of FonF instruction. Additionally, a longer treatment period (e.g. for a whole semester or two) and various timing for FonF techniques can be taken into account for optimal instructional effects, in particular in an EFL context, because some linguistic features may need more treatment than others, and some structures may be more positively impacted by FonF instruction than others. Thus, other linguistic code features, such as other simple and/or complex rules than the target items in the current study, reception and production of other linguistic features, and explicit and implicit learning and knowledge of specific grammatical structures, can be further explored for closer scrutiny of the FonF approach and its further pedagogical implications for the TESOL Field.

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## AN EVALUATION OF TOP NOTCH SERIES

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### ABSTRACT

The role of textbooks cannot be overlooked in the triangular net of elements in language learning which includes the learner, teacher, and textbook. Thus, it goes without saying that so much attention should be paid to the way the textbooks are evaluated to fulfill both the learners' and teachers' needs. Textbook evaluation can potentially be a particularly worthwhile means of conducting research as well as a form of professional improvement. Nowadays, the Top Notch series have become one of the most frequently used series in almost all of the institutes and also most of the tutoring for English teaching and learning especially in Iran. Thus, this study aimed to evaluate the series based on Littlejohn's (1998) framework. To evaluate the series, 30 Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers were recruited from different language institutes. To collect and interpret the data, both qualitative and quantitative statistics were used. The findings indicated that the series fulfill the intended objectives and enjoy benefits for language learners through encouraging the L2 learners to communicate successfully by offering opportunities for interaction. However, one shortcoming of the series is the lack of activities or discussions for presenting new words that require EFL teachers' consideration. The results of this study have some pedagogical implications for teachers and materials developers in EFL contexts. The results of the study help L2 teachers know the detailed points of the series and detect areas of weakness and strength. Moreover, novice English teachers profit from this study because they have an idea about the nature of the textbook they want to teach.

**KEYWORDS:** *Littlejohn's (1998) framework; the Top Notch series; textbook; textbook evaluation; checklist.*

### INTRODUCTION

Millions of people attempt to learn English throughout the world and the number of speakers who learn it as first or second language and its range of uses and adaptability to general and specific tasks are increasing everyday (Long, 2005). There are many factors that affect the process of L2 learning. Among them, the role of textbooks in the process of learning is of cardinal significance. Textbooks are really crucial in today's realm of language teaching and learning because the textbooks are generally considered to be essential component of teaching and will therefore have a great impact on a teacher's methods of instruction (Long, 2005). Although there might be some disagreements over using textbooks in English teaching classes, most people dealing with language education, teaching, and learning prove the importance of textbooks in L2 classes. According to Tom (2004), advocates of textbooks argue that they are the most effective way of presenting materials, help learners achieve a sense of system, cohesion, and progress, and also help teachers to be prepared. In some contexts, teachers are untrammelled to choose their own textbooks. The vast majority of teachers, however, have textbooks suggested, prescribed, or assigned (Tomlinson, 2001). According to Riazi and Mosalanejad (2010, p. 3), "textbooks play a very crucial role in the realm of language teaching and learning and are considered the next important factor in the L2 classroom after the teacher."

Textbooks are tools in the hands of the teacher and s/he must know not only how to use it, but also how useful it can be. The wealth of published materials for English language teaching (ELT) available in the market makes selecting the right textbook a challenging task. Moreover, the selection of a particular core textbook signals an executive educational decision in which there is considerable professional, financial, and even political investment (Sheldon, 1988). As Richards (2010) asserted, textbooks are key elements in most language programs. In some situations, textbooks serve the basis for much of the language input learners receive and the language practices that occur in the classroom. They may lay the foundations for the content of lessons, the balance of skills taught, and the kinds of language tasks students actively use. In other situations, textbooks may primarily serve to supplement the teachers' instruction. For L2 learners, textbooks may provide a major source of contact they have with the target language, excluding the input provided by the teacher. In the case of novice teachers, textbooks may also be utilized as a form of teacher training, that is, they provide ideas on how to plan and teach lessons as well as formats that teachers can use (Richards, 2010).

To choose fruitful materials for a course whether by a teacher or by an administrator, evaluation is done in the realm of language teaching and learning. To this end, many different schemes and checklists have been offered by prominent scholars and evaluators. Although the number of checklists is numerous, all of these checklists have a lot of similarities. Despite some commonalities among different checklists, every well-designed checklist is certainly driven from a framework which specifies and develops checklist. In this vein, this paper will concentrate on carrying out an evaluation on the Top Notch series of ELT materials based on Littlejohn's (1998) framework. This framework seeks to evaluate the selected textbook irrespective of how it is used in the classroom. Littlejohn (1998, p. 54) mentioned it "as analyzing the materials as it is, a set of materials can be used quite differently in different contexts based on the knowledge, abilities, and preferences of different teachers." This framework, thus, was claimed to be devoid of impressionistic criteria about what is desirable in a set of materials. By analyzing the individual activities/tasks in detail and by studying important features of the book, this framework was claimed to be in-depth and objective rather than subjective.

### Statement of the Problem

There are too many factors that affect the process of learning a language. Based on the aforementioned facts, materials especially textbooks have always been a mind-boggling concern of L2 teachers and learners. First, they are important because it is impossible to learn a language without them. Saphier and Gower (1997) (cited in Haldeman, 2008) have stated that "many things are important for good schools: curriculum ... parent involvement ... a clean, safe building ..., but of all the things that are important ... nothing is as important as the textbook and materials" (p. 15). During the last few decades, researchers have begun to recognize that textbooks, apart from the methods and teachers, are central to improving English teaching (Freeman, 2001; Richards & Nunan, 1990 cited in Bedir, 2010). Moreover, language teachers have become aware that learning is a process, and that the role of textbooks is to facilitate this process (Bedir, 2010).

Second, since there are many different ELT textbooks on the market, there is a necessity for the evaluation of textbooks in order to recognize the advantages of one over the others which, in turn, will lead to the adoption of the textbook. This would assist teachers with making optimum use of a book's strengths and with recognizing the shortcomings of certain exercises, tasks, and entire texts. Hence, the results of this evaluation may be beneficial to English teachers and materials developers who are going to use the mentioned series in their classes and institutes and might give them insight into the course book they use and help them to consider how to exploit it.

Last but not least, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, none of the studies conducted so far has investigated the Top Notch series based on Littlejohn's (1998) framework and its impact on different aspects of L2 learning. So, there has been no empirical or theoretical evidence on it. Consequently, the central goal of the research is to investigate and to evaluate the Top Notch series to know what explicit features and pedagogic values they have. In this respect, Littlejohn's (1998) framework is applied which comprises comprehensive checklists and questionnaires. By using these checklists, the researchers will be able to examine selected textbooks in first (what is there) level and second (what is required of users) level of Littlejohn's (1998) framework to arrive at the third level of evaluation (what is implied).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

There is a vast body of literature on textbook selection and evaluation in an EFL setting. These studies mainly revolve around the exploitation of textbook evaluation checklists. There is a host of evaluation checklists based on different criteria that can be employed by teachers and researchers. For example, in evaluation study of two textbook packages, namely, opportunities and New English File incorporating 134 teachers' survey results, Kayapinar (2009) pointed out that there is not an overall positive view of the aforementioned course book packages among teachers and the course books must be adapted in a way to meet learners' needs and interest at nationwide scope. He suggested that the materials used in any teaching process should be evaluated on a regular basis to be kept renewed.

In another study by Dominguez (2003), the representation of gender in examples, dialogues, and job positions in both texts and examples of the New Interchange Intro was examined. She found that there is an upsurge in ESL system of Canada to adopt the series due to its perceived uniqueness. Hence, the study aimed at establishing the appropriateness of the New Interchange Intro for diverse multinational dwellers of Canadian cities. She concluded that the New Interchange Intro was a worthwhile source for the teachers as it takes into account both multicultural and multiracial settings. Also, she highlighted the soundness of the textbooks for considering learners' settlement and integration needs especially in beginner levels and offering a balance in portraying the two genders.

Applying Cunningsworth's (1984) four guidelines, Ranalli (2002), also, evaluated New Headway Upper-Intermediate instructed at the Foreign Language Institute of Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea. He found that the textbook follows a present-practice-produce (PPP) approach to learning as units of the book offer a semiauthentic context for examples and the target language patterns ending with controlled and semifree exercises. He also maintained that the methodology of the textbook is too preoccupied with the knowing of grammatical rules and developing analytic knowledge which hinders further learners' preparation for unplanned discourse and predictable achievements in language ability.

Besides, Darali (2007) studied the important features of new English textbooks such as the Spectrum series to see how cultural pragmatic knowledge of the language is included in the lessons. The results of the study showed that the series provided a variety of language functions, but the most frequent ones in daily speech were not focused as much as other functions.

Azizifar, Koosha, and Lotfi (2010) examined an evaluation of two series of ELT textbooks used for teaching English in Iranian high schools from 1965 to the present. To do so, Tucker's (1975) textbook evaluation model was employed and the findings suggested that one of the main factors for the students' achievement in English is the ELT textbooks. They suggested that in the textbooks, there should be enough opportunity for the learners to practice the language they are learning communicatively.

Additionally, Jahangard (2007) evaluated four EFL textbooks used in Iranian high schools by the Ministry of Education. He discussed their merits and demerits with reference to 13 common criteria extracted from different materials evaluation checklists. The results of the study indicated that book four had better features in comparison with the three other textbooks.

Moreover, Sahragard, Rahimi, and Zaremoayyedi (2008) evaluated Interchange (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.) according to Littlejohn's (1998) framework. The study was set to find out the values of the newest version of Interchange in particular, the correspondence between the newly developed and widely used Interchange textbooks (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.) and their stipulated objectives, and the strengths and weaknesses of the series. The findings of the study indicated that the Interchange series (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.) own several pedagogical values, nonetheless, they suffer from certain drawbacks. The tasks of the series can be considered productive with regard to promotion of communicative competence and are promoting in that they give learners the opportunity to personalize the newly learned pieces of language through production.

And in accordance with Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of learning objectives, Riazi and Mosallanejad (2010) investigated the types of learning objectives represented in Iranian senior high school and pre-university English textbooks. To codify the learning objectives, three high school textbooks and one pre-university textbook were included in the analysis, and a coding scheme was developed based on Bloom's (1956) taxonomy. The results of the study indicated that in all grades the lower-order cognitive skills were more prevalent than the higher-order ones. Furthermore, the difference between the senior high school and the pre-university textbooks in terms of the level of the taxonomy were significant insofar as the pre-university textbook used some degrees of higher-order learning objectives.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

With regard to the role of textbooks in all aspects of L2 learning and based on what was suggested above and in line with recent approaches to the study of this phenomenon, the present study seeks to find answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent is Top Notch series able to fulfill the objectives claimed to be set for them?
2. What features do Top Notch series have?
3. What pedagogic values do Top Notch series have?

4. What are the strengths and weaknesses

of the series examined in this study?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Research Design*

The purposive, convenient sampling procedure was used in this study; purposive in the sense that only English teachers were recruited, and convenient in the sense that the participants were easily accessible ones which were intended to be representative of the whole population as diverse as possible. It should be mentioned that ethical issues such as confidentiality, originality of research, and morality were observed. The participants were made assure that their personal information would be kept confidential, and only treated data without referring to their names would be published. Also, they were informed of the fact that they were selected to take part in this research, and the obtained data would be used merely for the sake of research. The participation was voluntary, that is, there was no penalty for refusing to participate, and that the subjects may withdraw at any time without penalty.

They were given a clear statement of the purpose of the researchers' study or the basic outline of what the researchers would like to explore, making it clear that this research is dynamic activity that may shift in focus as it proceeds. The procedure in the research project and the types of information that the researchers are collecting for their study were explained. Moreover, the participants were given sufficient contact information so that they could reach the researchers for answers to questions regarding the research. Besides, any foreseeable risks and discomforts as well as direct benefits involved in agreeing to cooperate were described in detail. And, a signed consent form had been obtained from each subject that sets out the terms of the researchers' agreement with the participants.

### *Participants*

The participants of this study consisted of 30 EFL teachers teaching at language institutes in Esfahan, Iran. Each of these teachers had the experience of teaching the textbooks under investigation. The rationale behind the selection of these participants was that they had already been familiar with the textbooks under investigation, and they had the required experience to work with them. Therefore, it was assumed that these participants were in a better position to help the researchers to carry out the study. It should also be noted that the Top Notch series has been recently introduced to Iranian EFL institutions.

### *Materials*

The first source of material in the present study is the Top Notch series (Ascher & Saslow, 2011), a six-level communicative English course with two beginning entry levels namely fundamentals A and fundamentals B for adults and young adults. Generally, the Top Notch series consist of 12 textbooks on the whole, written by Joan Saslow and Allen Ascher in 2006 and published in the United States of America by Pearson Longman Incorporation. A sample of these books which contains about 15% of the total materials was chosen – Littlejohn (1998) argued that it is useful to analyze about 10% to 15% of the total material. This sample included some units, each of which is composed of three lessons plus one page of reading and one page of writing activities. The sample contained a number of tasks. Each task was labeled by a number that was applied in task analysis sheets (TAS). Additionally, the Checklist for explicit nature of a set of materials, TAS, and Design Questionnaire with reasonable measures of validity and reliability, were used to fulfill the research. It should be mentioned that the validity and reliability of the aforementioned questionnaires and sheets had already been examined via experts' views and Cronbach's Alpha.

### *Procedure*

As far as the study was theoretically based on Littlejohn's (1998) framework, about 15 percent of the Top Notch series was selected as a sample material. Since the Top Notch series are 6 textbooks, 50 tasks were randomly selected from each of the books. Hence, the total number of selected tasks was three hundred. Due to the wide range of tasks, it was impossible to expect each participant to analyze all 300 tasks alone. Therefore, the tasks were divided into three categories, each category involving 100 tasks, which was given to 30 teachers. Each participant was provided with a sample of 100 tasks and checklists to work with. Then, by the use of the three checklists offered in the framework, the sample was evaluated by the participants. As Littlejohn (1998) claimed, the framework tries to be in-depth and objective rather than subjective by analyzing the individual activities in detail and based on important features.

### *Data Analysis*

For the first checklist, Checklist for explicit nature of a set of materials, a report on explicit features of the Top Notch series is provided by the researchers. For the TAS checklist, after the required data were collected, the researchers applied the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze the data. Then, frequency counts and percentage indexes were reported for individual features listed in TASs to provide a basis for interpreting the research results. For the third checklist, Design Questionnaire, an analysis was performed to find an accepted view on each of the sections mentioned in Littlejohn's (1998) framework. By the use of statistical procedure, a general percentage index was also reported for subcategories of this checklist.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Results*

#### *What is the Learner Expected to Do?*

In the Top Notch series, more than half of the tasks (60.06%) demand L2 learners to respond (see Table 1). Also, 29.36% demand L2 learners to initiate and 10.56% are the tasks that do not require learners to initiate or respond. These results showed that the Top Notch series encourage L2 learners to use the language and more importantly require them to express themselves rather than being a listener. In sum, the Top Notch series care for learners' participation in the classroom activities.

*Table 1: frequency and percentage for "Turn Take"*

Turn take	Frequency	%
Initiate	2643	29.36
Respond	5406	60.06
Not required	951	10.56
Total	9000	100

As shown in Table 2, 55.47% of the total tasks concentrate on meaning, 28.52% on form as well as meaning, and 16.00% on language system. This can be judged that meaning is more significant than form, thus, the series enhance comprehension of learners.

*Table 2: frequency and percentage for "Focus on"*

Focus on	Frequency	%
Language system (rules/form)	1440	16.00
Meaning	4993	55.47
Meaning/system relationship	2567	28.52
Total	9000	100

Based on the data in Table 3, "apply language rule" (18.00%) is more than the other operations, "decode semantic meaning" is 17.00%, "retrieve from long term memory" is 15.00% of the total portion. Activities that demand "draw on prior knowledge" are 11.00%, "select information" is 5.00% of the whole. Activities that refer to "build text" are equal to the tasks by which learners need to "deduce language rule", that is, (10.00%). Tasks which ask students to "compare" the information are 8.00% of the whole. Finally, "relating sound to objects" and "repeat with expansion" are the two next mental operations with 4.00% and 2.00%, respectively, which are less than the others. It can be concluded that the Top Notch series provide L2 learners with activities by giving them the opportunity to infer the meaning of the texts that accompany applying language rule, recalling previous learning, and using prior linguistic knowledge. These features aid L2 learners to improve and enhance their communicative and linguistic competence as much as possible and also contribute learners to associate the new information to the old information in their mind. "Repetition" is the least among the rest that reveals L2 learners are not required to learn English through a lot of repetition.

*Table 3: frequency and percentage for "Mental Operation"*

Mental operation	Frequency	%
Retrieve from LT memory	1350	15
Built text	900	10
Draw on prior knowledge	990	11
Relate sounds to objects	360	4
Compare	720	8
Decode semantic meaning	1530	17
Select information	450	5
Repeat with expansion	180	2
Deduce language rule	900	10
Apply language rule	1680	18
Total	9000	100

#### *Who with?*

As can be seen in the Table 4, activities which involve interaction of "learners in pairs or groups" compose 45.83%, tasks that involve "learner to class" are 38.88%, and 15.27% demand task completion by "learner individually simultaneously". It can be concluded that group activities in the process of learning are more emphasized than individual ones.

*Table 4: frequency and percentage of "Who with"*

Who with	Frequency	%
Learner to class	3500	38.88
Learner individually simultaneously	1375	15.27
Learner in pairs/groups	4125	45.83
Total	9000	100

#### *Input to the Learners*

As shown in Table 5, the input may be in the form of "graphic" like pictures, illustrations, and diagrams; "oral words/phrases"; "written words/phrases"; and "sound/music". In the Top Notch series, written words/phrases have dominant source of input (40.80%). Oral words/phrases are the next main source of input which is 28.00%. Sound/music with 15.10%, and finally graphic with 16.10% covers the whole portion of input to the learners. The results clearly showed that writing is utilized as a major source of input to learners, that is, the series have concentrated on writing as an input. In contrast, oral words/phrases are fewer. The next sources of input in tasks belong to graphic which has a satisfactory amount of input.

*Table 5: frequency and percentage for "Input to Learners"*

Input to learners	Frequency	%
Graphic	1444	16.10
Oral word/phrases	2520	28.00
Written word/phrases	3672	40.80
Sound/music	1359	15.10
Total	9000	100

#### *Expected Output from Learners*

The expected output from learners in tasks can be either written or oral, with either the form of word or phrase length or the form of extended length. In Littlejohn's (1998) framework, discourse which is more than 50 words is considered as extended form. The frequency and percentage of the expected output from learners for oral words/phrases are 2770 and 30.77% respectively, and written word/phrases have the proportion of 31.23% with the frequency of 2810 (see Table 6). As a result, there is a balance between written and oral forms of expected output from learners in tasks of the series and the attention was paid equally to both the oral and written form.



Table 6: frequency and percentage for "Expected Output from Learners"

Expected output from learners	Frequency	%
Oral word/phrases	2770	30.77
Oral extended discourse	1791	19.90
Written word/phrases	2810	31.23
Written extended discourse	1539	17.10
Total	9000	100

*Source*

The Top Notch series provide a great amount of materials and contents for lessons itself (70.10%). The next sources of content are teachers with 21.00% and learners with 8.90%. The noticeable point here is that the textbook provides more shares of tasks and activities. It seems the series demand teachers to be abided by their teachers' book and other components.

Table 7: frequency and percentage for "Source"

Source	Frequency	%
Materials	6309	70.10
Teacher	1890	21.00
Learner	801	8.90
Total	9000	100%

*Results of Design*

The second section in Littlejohn's (1998) framework, Design, relates to the thought underlying materials. This part involves consideration of areas such as the explicit purposes of the materials and how the tasks, language, and content in the materials are selected and sequenced. The results of the study of Design can assist teachers to know to what extent materials developers have been successful in achieving their intended goals. The results depicted that the series obtained up to 80.00% of the optimum score (120 out of 150) for aims and objectives part (see Figure 1). The next part regarding the selection of the tasks in the series acquired the average of 74.75%. Regarding the sequence of tasks in the books received 77.00%. Also, the form, source, and nature of the contents in the series obtained 81.75% which seem to be rather high. Types of teaching and learning activities obtained 63.33%. The participation received 46.50%. The classroom roles of teachers and learners, and the learner roles in learning obtained 55.33% and 67.00% respectively. Finally, the role of materials as a whole received 68.66% of the total.

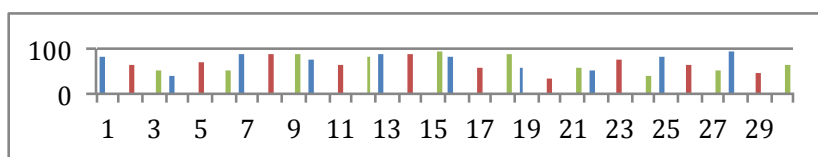


Figure 1: Design

*Discussion*

After analyzing the data, the results demonstrated that that regarding turn-taking L2 learners are more likely to respond than to initiate. Also, the textbook encourages L2 learners to use language and requires them to express themselves rather than being a listener. This indicates that the Top Notch series care for learners' participation in the classroom activities.

Moreover, meaning is more significant than form in the Top Notch series. This can be judged that the series enhance comprehension of learners. Because one of the objectives of the book is to develop a communicative competence which is achieved by enhancing comprehension of the language, and comprehending the language needs giving attention to meaning. So, the results can be seen as one sign of success for this textbook. Regarding the mental operation, it was revealed that a variety of mental operations exist in tasks with the highest portion of 18.00% for apply language rule and the least one focusing on repeat with expansion (2.00%).

Regarding the type of interaction, it was revealed that tasks in the Top Notch series mostly require learners to act in pairs and groups (45.83%), thus, group activities in the process of learning are more emphasized than individual ones (only 15.27%). The study also showed that written words and phrases are dominant forms of input (40.80%) while sound or music is almost 16.10%. This means that that writing is utilized as a major source of input to learners. In other words, the series have more emphasis on writing as an input. In contrast, oral words/phrases are less. The next sources of input in tasks belong to graphic which has a satisfactory amount of input (16.10%).

In case of expected output from learners, it was proved that there is a balance between written and oral forms of expected output from learners in tasks and attention was paid equally to both the oral and written form (31.23% and 30.77%, respectively). In addition, it was shown that the main source for the tasks in the Top Notch series is the textbook itself (70.10%) and learners provide the least amount of materials (8.90%). The noticeable point here is the fact that the textbook provides more shares of tasks and activities.

Regarding the nature of tasks, fact is more frequent than others, about 40.00%. Personal information and personal opinion are almost equal (18.30% and 19.40%, respectively). And, fiction has the least frequency (2.30%). This could be interpreted as a sign of variety in the text. In fact, the Top Notch series expose students to authentic contexts using their own information. The aforementioned points are all pedagogic values of the Top Notch series based on the TAS.

**CONCLUSION**

The authors claimed that the Top Notch series prepare students to interact successfully and confidently. According to the results of TAS and Design Evaluation, it can be concluded that the Top Notch series are almost successful in fulfilling the claimed objectives. Moreover, as Design Evaluation results showed, the evaluators believe that the course book is appropriate and successful in with regard to design.



As to answer the second question “What features the Top Notch series have?”, it should be mentioned that the Top Notch series are a corpus-informed course backed by the extensive database of the Longman Corpus Network, and it uses both the Longman Spoken Corpus and the Learners’ Corpus of Common Learner Errors. The Top Notch series are also based on use of a broader, more informal corpus of spoken and written language including authentic interviews, real conversations, and authentic texts to ensure that conversation strategies are well understood and applied. In addition, the title and topic of the units found in the Top Notch series are tangible and worldly, for instance names and occupations, directions and transportation. The context of the course book is not suitable for any English for specific purposes, but suits a general course on English. The themes and topics of the units throughout the book clearly indicate this fact. The book was also designed to raise learner “grammar awareness”. Hence, L2 learners are able to perform self-correct more readily.

The material in the course book is all core rather than supplementary. Moreover, in the Top Notch series, there is an alphabetical word list for the whole book at the end of the book, which is very convenient because of alphabetically ordered presentation. In addition, there is a section named “Vocabulary Booster” which presents additional vocabulary. It seems as though the list provided in the Top Notch series is convenient.

There are also lively, colorful, and authentic photographs and pictures in the Top Notch series. Moreover, the series were printed in glossy paper and was not culturally biased in anyway. A variety of information from different cultures and nationalities were used in the series. In the course book, there is some review sections, assessing the previous aspects worked on in the preceding sections. This type of assessment is not a test per se but it is more like a class activity. So, it can be useful for the learners to see what they have accomplished and what problems they still have.

Usually in other English course books, the material presented in different sections of a unit varies from one unit to the next, so, learners don’t have an idea of the amount of material presented under each heading before going through the unit, but in the Top Notch series as mentioned earlier, each unit is made up of 2-page lessons. On every 2-page lesson, there are conversation and vocabulary sections. So, to some extent the organization of the material is predictable. As a whole, the Top Notch series seem to be systematic, presenting the material in an easy to difficult order.

Another advantage of the series under investigation is that, as the findings of TAS evaluation revealed, they introduce tasks that mainly demand learners to participate in pairs and groups activities (45.83%). As it is known today, working in pairs and groups let learners learn from each other. Furthermore, working in groups reduces learner’s anxiety which is one major problem when an individual learner is responsible for doing the task and answering individually.

Finally, the tasks of the series can be considered productive with regard to promotion of communicative competence and are promoting in that they give learners the opportunity to personalize the newly learnt pieces of language through production. The series, in addition, focus mainly on pair works and meaning. They also encourage students to use the language and more importantly they more often require them to express themselves than to be a listener.

However, with regard to the checklists, the series suffer from other shortcomings that require EFL teachers’ consideration. One of the drawbacks is the lack of activities or discussions that present new words or vocabularies. There is a need to improve textbooks in terms of providing more activities or discussions in order to present new words. The second shortcoming, as the results of TAS evaluation showed, is that writing is utilized as a major source of input to learners. In other words, the series have more emphasis on writing as an input. In contrast, oral words and phrases are fewer. It is believed that there should be a balance between written and oral form as an input. The third drawback of the series is that they do not use learners or even the teachers as a source for its content. Suprasentential level is ignored for both the expected output and input of the learners. More importantly, in most cases these are not the learners who initiate the tasks but the teachers. Moreover, the majority of tasks in the Top Notch series require learners to respond, and a much smaller proportion require them to initiate using the language. This is not desirable if we want to have an active class. According to the in-depth examination of the Top Notch series, the researchers concluded that the series met most of the criteria. In general, they are considered to be an appropriate material of education despite shortcomings and negative points, mainly because the turning points have triumph over the demerits.

As stated earlier, although questionnaires and checklists used in the study have undeniable advantages, namely the Checklist for explicit nature of a set of materials, Task Analysis Sheet, and Design Questionnaire, it cannot provide as rich as investigation of the other factors of a textbook. There are different kinds of frameworks for textbook evaluation and each of these frameworks examines the selected textbook based on a number of theories and assumptions. Thus, the results may have been different if it had used other frameworks as data elicitation method. There is also a limitation in the fact that the number of participants in the research, namely L2 teachers, was 30. It is beyond denial that studies with larger numbers of participants will produce more reliable results. There is also a limitation in the fact that collecting data do not have time constraints and participants can change their answers. As a result the answers may differ from what participants really think. As mentioned earlier, the participants of the present study were L2 teachers. A major limitation would go to selecting teachers with the same years of teaching experiences. L2 teachers with different experience may have different ideas about a specific course book so they evaluate it differently.

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THE EFFECT OF TEACHING SYSTEMIC-ORIENTED SUMMARIZATION STRATEGIES ON THE READING  
COMPREHENSION OF ADVANCED IRANIAN  
EFL LEARNERS

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#### ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension is central to language and reading is often referred to as the most important of the four language skills for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. One of the problems, however, that EFL learners complain about is how they can summarize the text and comprehend the text immediately. In this regard summarizing strategies through expansion (de-expanding) is an approach which helps learners. Therefore, this study is an attempt to study the effects of systemic-oriented summarization strategies on the reading comprehension of advanced Iranian EFL learners. To do so, out of a pool of 100 learners, 68 advanced-level EFL learners were randomly selected based on the results obtained from the Preliminary English Test (PET). They were divided into two groups, one experimental group ( $n=34$ ) and one control group ( $n=34$ ). In order to get assurance as to the homogeneity of the learners they were pre-tested. The same test was repeated as a post-test after 9 weeks. The experimental group was taught three expansions' sub-classes (such as elaborating, extending, and enhancement) while the control group did not receive any strategies. The results based on the *t*-test indicated that teaching systemic-oriented summarization strategies had no effect on the reading comprehension of advanced-level Iranian EFL learners. Moreover, it was found that systemic-oriented summarization strategy instruction made no statistically significant difference in reading comprehension of male and female EFL learners.

**KEYWORDS:** Reading comprehension, Learning strategies, Cognitive Reading Strategies, Meta-cognitive Strategies, Summarization, Expansion, SFL(Systemic Functional Linguistics), Clause Complex, Tactic

#### INTRODUCTION

The English language is an international language and people in different areas of expertise need to be proficient in this language. For this reason, learning four skills of it is necessary; but reading is a highly valued skill by teachers and learners because it helps learners to read for different purposes, particularly for academic purposes. People all over the world in non-English speaking countries use English as a foreign language. Learning to read in English is a great challenge for EFL learners, especially when it is for academic purposes. Students' academic success depends on well-developed reading comprehension ability. People in non-English countries, have English only in the classroom, for this reason learners need to have both good language proficiency and strong cognitive skills in strategic thinking and learning. Reading is not only understanding of printed words, but also it is the kind of process in which learners need to comprehend its implied ideas. "Learning to read is not only learning to recognize words; it is also learning to make sense of texts" (Tierney, 2005; p. 51). Reading comprehension is a thinking process. Comprehension takes the readers to a new level of active understanding and insight. Comprehension increases language knowledge.

According to Chamot (1987, P.P.71-84), "learning strategies are techniques, approaches, or deliberate action that students take in order to facilitate the learning". Teaching strategies can help students comprehend text more efficiently (Palinscar, Brown, & Trathen, 1996, Brown, Pressley, Van Meter & Schuder, 1996). Readers must use different types of comprehension strategies in order to be proficient readers. Pressley (2002) asserted that good readers know how to use specific strategies. In contrast, poor readers are weak at making

inference. Reading comprehension consists of metacognitive and cognitive strategies. One important type of these strategies is summarizing a text (Armbruster, Anderson, & Ostertage, 1987). According to (Armbruster, Anderson & Ostertage, 1987, Doctrow, Wittrock & Marks, 1978; Wittrock & Alesandirini, 1990) including students to write summaries of text have been shown to improve reading comprehension.

#### Statement of the problem

Reading is often known as the most important of the four language skills for EFL learners. As it enables students to obtain presentation to the target language and receive valuable linguistic input to build up language proficiency. It is a fluent and energetic process which involves the reader and reading material in making meaning (Anderson, 1988).

Reading comprehension is a complex skill, it which students are asked to find main idea and details and make a distinction between the two. On the other hand, learning strategies play a decisive role in second or foreign language learning. Learning strategies also help learners to gather new information and then assimilate this information into their available knowledge. According to some studies that revealed when strategies are taught explicitly, this knowledge helps ESL/EFL students become more strategic in reading process (Anderson, 1999; Block, 1992; Brown et al., 1994; Carrell, 2001; Casanave, 1988; EL-Hindi, 1997; Krapels, 1990; McGee & Richgels, 1990; Paris et al., Colomb, 1993).

Summarizing is conceived of as a challenge for learners, especially for those in EFL and ESL setting, because they do not know what to include and what to leave out in their summaries (Friend, 2002). In investigating the previous studies in using summarization strategies there is nothing on the qualities of summary which students stray from main subject of the text and wrote disconnected summaries with theme. Although, students must use their own sentences, but digression from the theme and main ideas of the text is not a correct way. Although, writing short summaries is the rule, but heart of the matter should be offered. All of this indicates that teaching summarizing strategies is inadequate. Readers at first must have a better reading comprehension in the use of summarizing strategies.

According to some studies that have been observed, most EFL teachers tried to improve students' reading comprehension. Many studies (e.g., Ahmadi, 2001; Poorahmai, 2009; Ebadi, 2002; Khalaji & Vafaeeseresht, 2012; Ghabel, 2004; Kazemi & Khalili, 2012) have aimed at finding solutions to deal with students' weaknesses in accomplishing reading comprehension

assignments. Some of the proposed solutions are focusing on cognitive and metacognitive strategies or using translation as a supplementary reading technique. But few studies have been conducted to investigate the effect of systemic-oriented summarization (e.g., Hallidays'1985 clause complex and expansion) strategies, on reading comprehension of female and male EFL students in Iran. This reason motivated the present study. Today EFL/ESL reading instruction is shifted from teaching texts to teaching readers (Hass & Flower, 1988). Reading strategies and skills are now taught learners for understanding such elements as textual features, rhetorical elements, content and cultural background. One of these strategies is summarization. Summarization is an effective reading strategy that can help students to make a summary of important proposition from text and summarization help students to comprehend knowledge, transferring it to long-term memory because it leads students to reading to understand, to recognize important ideas and to express the information by using their own words (Senemoglu, 2001: 569).

Some teachers still use traditional approaches to teach reading comprehension. This study investigated the effect of teaching systemic-oriented summarization strategies on the reading comprehension of advanced Iranian EFL learners. To put in simple terms, it finds out whether the systemic-oriented summarization strategies can help to solve the problem of EFL readers in reading and enhance their reading comprehension ability. This study attempted to search for ways to effectively enhance students' reading comprehension. English teachers do not know how to use reading strategies effectively. So, this study attempted to introduce more effective strategies to EFL learners (especially Iranian EFL learners) through Hallidays'(1985) clause complex Expansion. Finally, this study investigated how systemic-oriented summarization strategies can be useful for students' comprehension of text.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Most of the research which has been done on teaching summarization is based on the model of the text comprehension developed by Brown and Day (1983), and another model developed by Kintsch and Van Dijk (1978). Three kinds of operations which take place during the reading process are taken into account by these models including:

- 1) The elements of meaning are integrated into a coherent whole;
- 2) The whole meaning of the text is compressed into its main ideas;
- 3) The gist is used to modify those elements which have previously been constructed and to have an effect on those yet to be constructed.

Regarding Kintsch and Van Dijk's (1978) models of text comprehension a lot of researchers based teaching summarization as a applicable model (e.g., Brown & Day, 1983; Hare & Borchardt, 1984). According to this model, the students are taught "How and Why" to summarize and to understand that the component skills are essential comprehension operations (Brown, 1978; Brown, Day & Jones, 1983). As mentioned, know-how of teaching summarization strategy, there are at least two major approaches:

First, rule-governed approaches which rely heavily on Kintsch and Van Dijk's (1978) theoretical model of text comprehension emphasizing macrostructure propositions and Brown and Day's (1983) two sets of macro-rules for producing summaries emphasizing, especially written summaries. These rules consisted of six rules including:

1. Delete unnecessary information;
2. Delete redundant information;
3. Compose a word to replace a list of items;
4. Compose a word to replace the individual parts of an action;
5. Select a topic sentence;
6. Invent a topic sentence if one is not available.

Wittrock and his colleagues suggested that, the process of generating summaries help readers build relation among concepts contained in a text as well as link these concepts to prior knowledge. There are considerable research evidence regarding the validity and reliability of summaries as a measure of reading comprehension (Head, Readence, & Buss 1969, Taylor, 1984). In recent years, the importance of the reading comprehension strategies has been understood better; therefore, work on the summarizing strategy training increased. Some of them are as follows: With his study which includes the summarizing strategies Hamman (1995), researched the effect of the strategy training on students' achievement. Palinscar and Brown's (1984) reciprocal teaching method was used in these strategy training. The other study done by SusarKirmizi (2006) used cooperative learning method based on the Multiple Intellect Theory in the training for summarizing strategy. Comprehension Strategies: These are strategies that occur before, while and after reading. Comprehension failure may happen at the three phase of reading. Good readers of all ages engage in conscious, active comprehension strategies before, during and after reading (Pressley & Wharton – MC Donald, 1997). At college, reading activities are made to comprehend the academic materials and to learn how learners can read conceptually. Unlike traditional material, reading comprehension strategies help learners to be an effective reader. Reading comprehension strategies can help readers remember the points, distinguish the necessary and unnecessary information, think about the main idea and comment on the subject matter. Good readers use lots of strategies before and after reading (Dogan, 2002). Haller (2000, P. 21-24) modeled a number of school-based post-reading activities, which enhance learning comprehension through the use of matching exercises, cut-up sentence, and comprehension questions. To achieve comprehension in reading, an effective reader should be able to successfully implement such practices as relating the text with his/her own background knowledge, summarizing information, drawing conclusions, and posing questions at the text (McNamara, 2007; Block, Rodgers & Johnson, 2006; Keer & Verhaeghe, 2005; Allen, 2003). Language teachers help the reader to be an effective and proficient reader through possible procedures pre, while and after the reading activity.

### *Before Reading*

Before reading a text some readers use different types of strategies. For instance, they overview the text, make plan for how to read the text and often readers clarify their purpose and some of them before reading consider what they know about a topic and about the structure of a text. Before reading activities are called as enabling activities, because these activities provide a reader with necessary background knowledge to organize activity and help reader to comprehend the text (Ringler & Weber). This kind of activity motivates students to want to read. Activities that are mentioned are as "devices for building the gap between the text's content and the reader's schemata". Some scholars believed that pre-reading activities are called as planning activities. In planning activities, readers use it before reading, they activate their own background knowledge to get prepared for reading. It can be an example of planning strategies (Almasi, 2003; Israel, 2007). Also previewing a title, picture illustration, heading or subheading can help readers grasp the overview of the text. Readers may also preview the general information in the text and its structure (Almasi, 2003; Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991).

***While and Post Reading Activities***

Students must be aware of what is their level of comprehension. Many students read but they are not aware of what is happening and they do not comprehend the text. When expert readers, read a complex text, they use controlled strategies (Pressley, 2000). Proficient readers for example while and after reading, ask questions of the text and relate information in the text to their previous understanding of the topic; and re-read, summarize, and make notes, to monitor their comprehension and clarify their understanding. Research has shown that students' comprehension of complex texts can be improved by teaching them a number of strategies to use while they are reading and after they finish the reading text (Pressley & Wharton-McDonald, 1997; Schuder, 1993). List of prompts intended to facilitate student strategic thinking during and after reading:

1. Attending to text structure (e.g. How is the text organized?)
2. Summarizing the text
3. Checking understanding (e.g. readers ask themselves Can I answer who, what, When and Where and Why questions about the text?).
4. Using fix-up strategies (e.g. monitoring comprehension, seeking clarification).

As mentioned before, there are some strategies that readers use during and after reading. They are named as Monitoring strategies (those occur during reading), and another one that readers use it when they finish their reading activity is called as Evaluating strategies. Monitoring strategies take place during reading and some examples of them are as follow (Israel, 2007; Pressley, 2002):

- 1- Comprehension of vocabulary,
- 2- Self-questioning
- 3- Summarizing and,
- 4- Inferring the main idea of each paragraph

Evaluating strategies are strategies in which readers use them after reading process. For example, after reading a text, a learner may think about how to use what they have read to other situation. They may identify with the author, a narrative or main character, and may have a better perspective of the situation in the book than they did at first.

***A. What is Summarization?***

To achieve reading comprehension, an effective reader should be able to successfully use such practices: Summarizing information, drawing conclusions, posing questions, etc. Summary writing is an activity which contains both reading and writing. Summarizing is a strategy to help to understand what is being read and is an activity that requires students to comprehend, analyze and synthesize ideas. It is an important skill for readers of all levels, even those in college and beyond. A summary therefore, is a shortened version of an original text, stating the main ideas. Garner (1982), defined efficient summarizers as a person who can "integrate important pieces of information". He believed that, the summaries in this study became like new texts for the reader i.e. their mental representations of the original texts. Then he conclude that effective summarizers probably "streamline" the information they have read so successfully and comprehend them, that the summary product becomes the text which is stored and retrieved. One of the most important priorities for summarizing is comprehensive reading of the text. To learn summarizing, students must take these steps: 1) Setting main and second ideas of each paragraph within the text. 2) Setting the most important paragraph within the text. 3) For writing a good summary, in general, discovering and setting of the main idea of the text. 4) Referring the concepts and the ideas of the text, and paraphrasing, that is, using his/her own words (Wormeli, 2004; Garcia & Michaelis, 2001). Summarizing is semantic processing in which it occurs during reading process and it also is cognition process. It is an effective learning strategy that can help students to construct and retain a succinct summary of important propositions from text. So, summarization as comprehension strategies is important to teach. Summarization is an intervention for teachers and has been demonstrated to improve reading comprehension (Anderson & Armbruster, 1984; Pearson & Fielding, 1991; Rinehart, Stahl & Erickson, 1986).

***B. What is Systemic-Functional linguistics (SFL)***

The last five decades have been marked by an interest in functional approaches to language, such as Systemic Functional linguistics (SFL), Functional Discourse Grammar, Role and Reference Grammar, Emergent Grammar and Word Grammar, etc. It involves the notion that language consists of a set of systems which offers the writer/speaker choices in expressing meaning. The view of language within Systemic Functional Linguistics is both rich and complex. It is a modeling of language that sees discourse as text-in-context. It is concerned with how people use language and how language is structured for use. Systemic Functional Linguistics views meaning as social meaning impact on linguistic forms. Systemic Functional Linguistics is that a meaning-making system. Systemic Functional Linguistics, established by M.A.K. Halliday, is the most influential. As a functional theory of language rather than just a theory of grammar, SFL seeks to be applicable and 'applicable' describing, explaining, and evaluating why and how people communicate with each other by use of language (cf. Halliday & Mathiessen, 2004). Systemic functional theorizing is all about exploring the function of language as enabling humans to make meaning in the world. To that end, it models language as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, as language in context (Halliday, 1978; Mathiessen, 2007). Second, it develops comprehensive description of language that brings out the uniqueness of particular language as meaning-making resources.

**A clause complex:** is a constituent of grammar. When a number of clauses are linked together grammatically we will use the term clause complex. It is serial structure, where the same element is repeated again and again by iteration. Clause complex, when one or more clause s linked by tactic and logico-semantic relations. Clause complexes are formed either by combining two Independent clause through linking words known as Coordinators, or by combining an Independent clause with Dependent one through the binding words known as Subordinators.

***What is Expansion?***

the secondary clause expands the primary clause. Expansion is subdivided into elaboration, extension, and enhancement. Theoretical framework of this study is Halliday's (1985a) description of clause complex relation. SFL is an approach to linguistics developed by Halliday. He sees language in a social context. The theory behind this approach is functional rather than formal, that is, it considers language as a resource used for communication and not as a set of rules. Language based on the SFL, consists of discourse-semantic and lexico-grammar levels. Discourse-semantics describes language from discoursal and semantic perspectives. From discoursal point of view, cohesion and coherence are of focal attention at the text level; and from semantic point of views three layers of meaning such as ideational, interpersonal and textual (are as internal organization of a clause) are investigated at the clause level. According to Halliday and Hassan (1976), the interpretation of some parts of a text depends on the understanding of some other parts of mentioned earlier or later in the body of the text or out of the text in the surrounding environment. There is "scale of rank" in the grammar of every language, but for English it is



as clause, phrase/group, word and morpheme. Units of every rank form complexes. External organization of a clause consists of Expansion and Projection. Above the clause named as clause complex. There are two systemic dimensions when interpreting clause complexity:

1. *Interdependency (or tactic) system: Parataxis, Hypotaxis*
2. *Logico-semantic system: Expansion: Elaboration, Extension, Enhancement*

Clause complexes or above the clause: The notion of "clause complex" enables us to account in full for the functional organization of sentences. A sentence will be defined, in fact as a clause complex. The clause complex will be the only grammatical unit which we shall recognize above the clause. Hence, there will be no need to bring in the term 'sentence' as a distinct grammatical category. It simply can be refer to the orthographic unit that is contained between full stops. This will be avoiding ambiguity: A sentence is a constituent of writing while, A clause complex is a constituent of grammar. When a number of clauses are linked together grammatically we will use the term clause complex. Clause complexes are formed either by combining two independent clauses through the linking words known as Coordinators, or by combining an independent clause with dependent one through the binding words known as Subordinators.

*Example of clause complex:*

/// Rita enters, // close the door, // goes to the desk, // and dumps her bag on it. /// (1, 2)

*What is Paratactic?*

in parataxis, elements are equal status. Each element could stand as a functioning whole. The relation can be logically (in general) symmetrical (salt and pepper, pepper and salt) or transitive (salt and pepper, pepper and mustard, salt and mustard). Paratactic structures will be represent by a numerical notation 1, 2, 3 with nesting indicated in the usual way.

11 [2 2 3] 3 2 means 1(1 2)2 3 (1 2)

*What is Hypotactic?*

Hypotactic relationships are elements of unequal status. The dominant element (primary) is free; the dependent (secondary) of course is not. The relations are in general logically non-symmetrical (I breathe when I sleep is in contrast with I sleep when I breathe) or non-transitive (I fret when I have to drive slowly + I have to drive slowly when it's been raining is in contrast with I fret when it's been raining).

*Example of hypotactic relation:*

When she graduated from high school, she undertook a trip through the country (Hypo-taxis  $\alpha=\beta$ ).

As mentioned above, there are two systemic dimensions when interpreting clause complexity. One is the system of interdependency, or 'tactic' system, Parataxis and Hypo-taxis, which is general to all complexes- word, group, phrase and clause alike. The other is thelogico-semantic system of expansion and projection, which is specific to clause combining. Parataxis and Hypo-taxis illustrated:

2 and then (she) undertook a trip through the Country (Parataxis).

$\beta$  When she graduated from high school,

$\alpha$  she undertook a trip through the country (Hypo taxis).

#### *A. Elaboration*

One clause expands another by elaborating on it, restating it in other words, specifying it in greater details, commenting or exemplifying it. In elaborating, nothing new is added to the message in the primary clause. In every clause complex, the secondary clause has an elaborating, extending or enhancing relation to the primary clause (Halliday, Mathiessen, 2004). Example of clause connectors of elaborated paratactic clauses: (And, in other words, that is to say, for instance, i.e.,for example, to be precise, in particular, in fact, actually, indeed, at least).

*Example of clause connectors of elaborated hypotactic clauses:* Which, When, Where

#### *B. Extension*

One clause expands another by extending beyond it, adding some new element, giving an exception to it, or offering an alternative. Example of clause connectors of extended, paratactic clauses: (Both...) and, Not only...but also,(Neither...)nor, (And) yet, But, But not, Not...but only, except, (Either...) or (else)

///Jim entered the class and took a seat next to me. /// (1 +2)

*Example of clause connectors of extended, hypotactic clauses:* Whereas, while, except that, as well as, without, instead of

///Whereas the director gave no votes, his deputy said aye. ///

#### *C. Enhancement*

One clause expands another by embellishing around it, qualifying it with some circumstantial feature of time, place, cause or condition. Examples of clause connectors of enhanced, paratactic clauses: (Then, so, for, but, yet, however, still, meanwhile, at that time, in that way, therefore, nevertheless).

Examples of clause connectors of enhanced, hypotactic clauses: (As, in case, while, before, since, after, provided that, because of).



Table 1: Logico-semantic relationship in a clause complex along with notations (Pandian&Assadi, 2010)

Logico-semantic relationship		Paratactic	Hypotactic
E X P A N S I O N	Elaboration (=)	Apposition (1 = 2)	Non-defining relative clause ( $\alpha = \beta$ )
	Extension (+)	Coordination (1 + 2)	While, whereas clause Apart from/as well as/except for non-finite clause ( $\alpha + \beta$ )
	Enhancement ( $\times$ )	Otherwise/and then/for/thus/so/but clause (1 $\times$ 2)	Subordination ( $\alpha \times \beta$ )

#### De-expansion

A clause complex is formed by combining two or more clauses. The clause complex are formed either two independent clause (Paratactic) or by combining one In-dependent clause with a dependent clause (Hypotactic).

#### Examples of clause complex:

/// Rita enters, // close the door, // goes to the desk, // and dumps her bag on it. ///

In Hallidayan expansion there are three sub-types such as elaborating, extension and enhancement. In elaborating one clause expands another by elaborating on it, restating in other words, or commenting it. In this type of expansion nothing new is added to the message in the primary clause. For example:/// she is green; she is envious of everything.///

According to this example the secondary clause is restating the primary clause in other words.so, the readers must notice to it and write only primary clause and de-expand it, because nothing new is added to the message in the primary clause. Finally, the above example can be de-expanding in this way: //She is green.//

The second kind of the Hallidayan expansion is extension. In this type, one clause expands another by extending beyond it, adding some new element, giving an exception to it, offering an alternative. In extending, the secondary clause adds further information to the primary clause. According to below example the secondary clause adds further information about the primary clause

///My favorite season is spring, but my mother hates it///.

The above example can be de-expanding in this way: //My favorite season is spring//.

Enhancement is another type of Hallidayan expansion. In this type one clause expands another by embellishing around it, qualifying it with some circumstantial features of time, place, cause and condition. Here, the secondary clause provides background information for the message in the primary clause. See below example:

///We didn't have the rehearsal on Monday because it was a public holiday///.

In this example the secondary clause give reason for the message in the primary clause and it can be de-expanding in this way:

//We didn't have the rehearsal on Monday//. (De-expand)

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The questions that can be addressed in this study are:

1- To what extent does teaching systemic-oriented summarization strategies affect reading comprehension of advanced Iranian EFL learners?

2- Is there any difference between the effect of teaching systemic-oriented summarization strategies on the reading comprehension of male and female advanced Iranian EFL learners?

H<sub>1</sub>:The teaching of systemic-oriented summarization strategies has an effect on the reading comprehension of advanced Iranian EFL Learners.

H<sub>2</sub>: The teaching of systemic-oriented summarization strategies has a differential effect on male and female advanced Iranian EFL Learners.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

In this study the learners were selected and they were divided into experimental and control groups. Then a pre-test and post test were administered to them. Only the experimental group received treatment and control group did not receive any treatment. These are principles of quasi-experimental study. therefore, this study is type of quasi-experimental research design. The independent variable in this study is the systemic-oriented summarization strategies and the dependent variable is the reading performance of the experimental and the control groups. And in this study the gender is moderate variable.

### Participants

The participants in this study were 68 male and female EFL learners (their L1 was Turkish). Their age range was between 22-28. They were at advanced level. The study was conducted at Payame Noor University in MeshkinShahr, Iran. Sixty eight learners were chosen through administration of PET test (Preliminary English Test). Learners whose score were 1 SD (SD=7.9) above and below of the mean score (M=33.83) were selected. All learners participated in this were advanced level and only the advanced level learners whose score were one standard deviation above and below of the mean score were selected as participants of the present study. In order to get assurance as to the homogeneity of the learners they were pre-tested on their level of proficiency in reading comprehension. Then, these 68 male and female English learners were divided into two groups experimental and control groups. The aim of this study is to train students to learn strategies

### **Instruments**

*Proficiency Level Test (PET)*, PET (Preliminary English Test) was used in order to determine the proficiency level of participants' in reading, writing, speaking and listening. To select the participants, all 100 students took part in PET English Language Test.

*Reading Comprehension Test from TOEFL Test (pre-test and post-test)*, this test was selected from "TOEFL Actual Tests" administered by ETS 7full-length test. The test-retest reliability estimated for these tests indicated that the all instruments were reliable ( $\alpha = 0.75$ ).

### *Treatment (Lesson Plan)*

Different research materials were used for the purpose of this study:

Hallidays' (1985a) clause complex techniques were selected materials for this study. These material (Sample of Lesson Plan for Experimental Group, See Appendix A), were chosen from "The ABC's of Functional Grammar (Pandian, &Assadi, 2010), Chapter 5, The Clause Complex.

Another material of this study was selected from "ENGLISH REXT", system and structure by J.R. Martin, University of Sydney. John Benjamins Publishing Company Philadelphia/Amsterdam 1992 (See Appendix A). Chapter 4, Conjunction and Continuity the logic of English text.

Some materials of the present study used for the lesson plans were selected from "An Introduction to Functional Grammar" by M.A.K. Halliday and Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen (2004), Chapter7; above the Clause: the clause complex (See Appendix A).

Another material was taken from Functional Grammar in the ESL Classroom by Rondey H. Jones and Graham Lock (2011), Chapter 6 Elaborating (See Appendix A).

During this study, the participants in Experimental group received Hallidays'(1985) clause complex expansion in order to learn the de-expansion' rules and summarize text. On the other hand, the participants in control group did not receive any techniques. This technique was introduced to the experimental group then, they received some examples about de-elaboration, de-extension and de-enhancement. In order to, use these techniques for summarizing the given reading passage.

### *De-expansion:*

A clause complex is formed by combining two or more clauses. The clause complex are formed either two independent clause (Paratactic) or by combining one In-dependent clause with a dependent clause (Hypotactic).

### *Examples of clause complex:*

/// Rita enters, // close the door, // goes to the desk, // and dumps her bag on it. ///

In Hallidayian expansion there are three sub-types such as elaborating, extension and enhancement. In elaborating one clause expands another by elaborating on it, restating in other words, or commenting it. In this type of expansion nothing new is added to the message in the primary clause. For example: /// she is green; she is envious of everything.///

According to this example the secondary clause is restating the primary clause in other words. So, the readers must notice to it and write only primary clause and de-expand it, because nothing new is added to the message in the primary clause. Finally, the above example can be de-elaborating in this way: //She is green.//

The second kind of the Hallidayian expansion is extension. In this type, one clause expands another by extending beyond it, adding some new element, giving an exception to it, offering an alternative. In extending, the secondary clause adds further information to the primary clause. According to below example the secondary clause adds further information about the primary clause

///My favorite season is spring, but my mother hates it. ///

The above example can be de-expanding (de-extension) in this way: //My favorite season is spring.//

Note: notation for clause complex is (///) while a clause notation is (/).

Enhancement is another type of Hallidayian (1985a) expansion. In this type one clause expands another by embellishing around it, qualifying it with some circumstantial features of time, place, cause and condition. Here, the secondary clause provides background information for the message in the primary clause. See below example:

///We didn't have the rehearsal on Monday because it was a public holiday.///

In this example the secondary clause give reason for the message in the primary clause and it can be de-expanding in this way:

///We didn't have the rehearsal on Monday///. (De-enhancement)

### **Procedure**

One hundred male and female EFL learners were selected as participants in this studyand the entire study took 10 weeks. Male (N=50) and female (N=50) EFL learners at four classes at Payame Noor University in MeshkinShahr, Iran participated in the present study. They were at advanced level and the PET (Preliminary English Test) was administered to establish participants' proficiency level. The learners of all classes were asked to complete a PET test in two hour and thirty minute. The learners whose score were 1 SD (SD=7.9) above and below of the mean score (M=33.83) were selected. Sixty eight English learners (males and females) were chosen. Reading comprehension test from TOEFL test administered to the students in order to homogenize them. Then, two groups (n=68) were selected and assigned into experimental and control groups. The students in control group were instructed in reading comprehension through regular instructional plan of Iran University. They didn't receive any systemic-oriented summarization strategies based instruction. They only were given the PET and pretest (reading comprehension test), and a post-test (reading comprehension test) the same as experimental groups. Their scores were compared with learners in experimental groups in order to determine the effect of systemic-oriented summarization strategies instruction on reading comprehension. On the other hand, the experimental group received treatment. The experimental group was instructed through using Hallidays'(1985) clause complex expansion. In the treatment session of the third week, the experimental group received their treatment

while, the control group did not receive any treatment (Table 3.1). The pre-test was administered before the treatment sessions while post-test show the effect of treatment. All of the 68 EFL learners were asked to complete a post-test after the treatment sessions. The same test was repeated as post-test seventh weeks after the pre-test.

Experimental Groups		Control Groups	
-	Pre-test (Reading Comprehension)	-	Pre-test (Reading Comprehension)
-	Treatment (7 sessions), Instructional Plan of Iran University	-	Treatment (7 sessions).Regular Hallidays'(1985a) expansion
-	Post- test (Reading Comprehension)	-	Post-test(Reading Comprehension)

## DATA ANALYSIS

### Findings Regarding Pre-test Homogeneity (Descriptive & Inferential Statistics)

A number of descriptive analyses such as minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation have been conducted on the data collected from students' pre-test homogeneity in control and experimental group. The descriptive statistics of the participants' pre-test in control and experimental group are presented in the table 2. Regarding the experimental and control groups' homogeneity, it has been found that students' mean score in experimental group was 22.02 with the standard deviation of 6.16. Pre-test scores in control group revealed a mean score of 22.91 with the standard deviation of 6.39

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Pre-test Scores

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Experimental	34	22.029	6.1668	1.0576
Control	34	22.911	6.3930	1.0963
Total	68	22.470	6.2497	.7578

According to Table 3, ( $F= 0.33$  and  $Sig., 0.56$ ), there was no difference between the experimental and the control group in their pre-test scores. However, both groups are homogenous.

Table 3: Test of Homogeneity of Pre-test Between and Within Groups (one way ANOVA)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	13.235	1	13.235	.335	.564
Within Groups	2603.706	66	39.450		
Total	2616.941	67			

Table 4 presented the descriptive statistics results for pre-test homogeneity of male and female EFL learners in the study. Regarding the male and female learners' homogeneity, it has been found that students' mean score for the male learners was 22.38 with the standard deviation of 6.90 and students' mean score for the female learners was 22.55 with the standard deviation of 5.62.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Pre-test Scores

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Male	34	22.382	6.9063	1.1844
Female	34	22.558	5.6202	.96387
Total	68	22.470	.75789	.75789

According to Table 5, ( $Sig. = .908$ ), there was no difference between male and female learners(experimental and control group) in their pre-test scores. So, both groups are homogenous.

Table 5: Test of Homogeneity of Pre-test Between and Within Groups (One Way ANOVA)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.529	1	.529	.013	.908
Within Groups	2616.412	66	39.643		
Total	2616.941	67			

## Hypothesis Testing

Research Question One: Does teaching systemic-oriented summarization strategies affect reading comprehension of advanced Iranian EFL learners?

Descriptive analyses such as mean and standard deviation have been conducted on the data collected from students' posttest in control and experimental group. The descriptive statistics of the participants' posttest in control and experimental group are presented in the table 6. Regarding the effect of teaching systemic-oriented summarization strategies in the experimental and control group, it has been found that students' mean score in experimental group was 25.35 with the standard deviation of 5.89. Post test scores in control group revealed a mean score of 23.38 with the standard deviation of 6.22

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics

Group		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post mark	Experimental	34	25.352	5.8923	1.0105
	Control	34	23.382	6.2232	1.0672

As it is shown in Table 7, the P-value is equal to 0.18 which is higher than 0.05, so with regard to the first hypothesis of the study, that is, the teaching of systemic-oriented summarization strategies has an effect on the reading comprehension of advanced Iranian

EFL learners, an Independent samples t-test was conducted and it showed that teaching systemic-oriented summarization strategies had no effect on the learners' reading performance. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Independent Samples Test for the Experimental and Control Groups

		Levene's Test for Equality Of Variance		T-test equality of Mean		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
Post mark	Equal variances assumed	.893	.348	1.341	66	.185
	Equal variances not assumed			1.341	65.804	.185

The Results Regarding the Second Research Hypothesis. (The teaching of systemic-oriented summarization strategies has a differential effect on the reading comprehension of male and female advanced Iranian EFL learners).

Research Question Two: Is there any difference between the effect of teaching systemic-oriented summarization strategies on the reading comprehension of male and female advanced Iranian EFL learners'?

Descriptive analyses such as mean and standard deviation have been conducted on the data collected. The descriptive statistics of the male and female participants' posttest in the control and the experimental group are presented in the table 8. Regarding the effect of teaching systemic-oriented summarization strategies on the reading comprehension of male and female advanced Iranian EFL learners in the experimental and control group, it has been found that male students' mean score was 24.41 with the standard deviation of 6.85. Post test scores of the female learners revealed a mean score of 24.32 with the standard deviation of (5.33).

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics (Gender)

Group		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post mark	male	34	24.411	6.8539	1.1754
	female	34	24.323	5.3355	.91504

As it is shown in Table 9, the P-value is equal to 0.95 which is higher than the level of significance 0.05, so with regard to the second alternative hypothesis of the study, that is, the teaching of systemic-oriented summarization strategies has a differential effect on male and female advanced Iranian EFL learners, an analysis of an independent sample t-test was conducted. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 9. According to the results available, there is not a significant difference in the male and female students' performance in post-test. In other words, the second alternative hypothesis of the study is not accepted. It means that there is not any significant difference between the reading performance of Iranian male and female EFL learners in two groups.

Table 9: Inferential Statistics Independent Sample Test

		Levene's Test for Equality Of Variance		T-test equality of Mean		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
Post mark	Equal variances assumed	4.125	.039	.059	66	.953
	Equal variances not assumed			.059	62.253	.953

## DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

In this study, at first, data from the pre-test were collected from 68 Iranian EFL learners in experimental and control groups. Analysis of the data through independent samples t-test revealed that there was no difference between experimental and control groups. The observed p-value estimated for the first question of the study which is as follow:

Does teaching systemic-oriented summarization strategy affect reading comprehension of advanced Iranian EFL learners? P-value observed that (Table 4.7) Sig=.18 is more than the level of significance ( $p=0.05$ ). The research hypothesis that claimed there is an effect of teaching systemic-oriented summarization strategies on the reading comprehension of advanced Iranian EFL learners was not supported. The findings of the present study proved that there is no significant difference between score of participants of experimental and control group. Then results reject the related alternative hypothesis of the study. However, it can be said that systemic-oriented summarization strategies has no effect on Iranian EFL learners reading comprehension. The results of the study revealed that learners' post test scores in experimental group and control group have not had significant differences.

Although the result of this study proved that teaching systemic-oriented summarization strategies have no effect on Iranian EFL learners' Reading comprehension, but teaching strategies have significant effect in increasing EFL learners' reading knowledge. Oxford (1990) defined LLS (Language Learning Strategies), as conscious manipulation and movement toward a goal. All three types of LLS are important to the language learning process. Meta-cognitive strategies help students monitor and evaluate their learning after an activity is completed

while cognitive strategies are more limited to specific learning task and involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself. It includes using previous knowledge to help to solve new problems. Another strategy is socio-affective strategies include asking a classmate to work together on a particular language problem. These strategies help the learners control their own learning (OMalley et al, 1987; & Fedderholt, 1997). Reading comprehension has a multi-dimensional aspect so; mastering all of these dimensions takes time and need large number of participants.

Summarization is in the category of cognitive strategies and it is reading-writing connection activity. Summarization is a strategy that learners use to comprehend knowledge and recognize important ideas and express information by using their own words. For years and more recently, summarizing have been called as an important tool in reading comprehension by the National Reading Panel (2000) and a lot of researchers (Brown et al., Duke & Pearson 2002; Graham & Harris, 2005; Pressley & Block 2002; Taylor, 1986).

Summarization is important as tool for improving comprehension (Pressley, 2000). Some other studies indicated that summarization have significant impact on the reading comprehension (Armbruster, Anderson, & Ostertage, 1987; Doctrow, Wittrock & Alensandrini, 1990). Cordero – Ponce (2000) in their study randomly selected 64 intermediate college level learners of French as a foreign language. They divided their participants to experimental and control groups. The result revealed that summarization training was effective for L2 readers. All above views show the importance of summarizing strategies on the reading comprehension. While, the results of the present study revealed that there is no effect of teaching systemic-oriented summarization strategies on the reading comprehension of advanced Iranian EFL learners.

It is worth mentioning that student's prior knowledge (experimental and control group) may have effects on their production. They may have seen the TOEFL test in other situations. The students' prior knowledge in control group regarding Hallidays' (1985) expansion strategies may have been taught previously in other classes. These two points should be affecting the results of this study.

As mentioned before LLS are used to refer to all strategies language learners apply in learning the target language and summarization strategies are one type of language learning strategies. Different factors affect language learning strategies. Rees-Miller (1993) concludes "attempt to translate the theory behind learner-training is far more complex owing to the different factors that interact to influence the teaching and learning strategies: culture, situation, age, personal learning style. Pressley, et al. (1983), proposed that students need to be able to practice the learning strategy over a long period of time. Further research in this area will be necessary to determine the features of summary skill and the length of time will help students use the summarization skills.

This study was conducted among advanced level subjects. Main point in this study is about the different results gained by experimental group. The result of this study revealed that teaching systemic-oriented summarization strategies had no effect on the learners' reading comprehension. Also answering to this question that why the result of experimental group is different maybe depend on different factors. One of the main points in this study is maybe because of little schedule time. Learners should have the opportunity of practicing the learning strategies. They should ask to make conscious effort to use Hallidays' (1985a) expansion strategies. The learners should become aware of systemic-oriented summarization strategies. However, students practice should be increased along with re-explanation which can continue as long as necessary for the students to acquire the strategic procedure (Palinscar, 1986; Palinscar & Brown, 1984). And another point as mentioned above is students' prior knowledge. So, further investigation is required with regard to using systemic-oriented summarization strategies within EFL contexts.

#### ***The Results of the Effect of Teaching Systemic-oriented Summarization Strategies on the male and females' Reading Comprehension***

As the result of the study indicated, there was no significant difference among scores of participants (males and females) in control group with scores of participants in experimental group. Thus, results rejected an alternative hypothesis with respect to the related research question. However, according to the results it can be concluded that there is no any difference between the effect of teaching systemic-oriented summarization strategies on the reading comprehension of male and female advance Iranian EFL learners. The second hypothesis (The teaching of systemic-oriented summarization strategies has a differential effect on the reading comprehension of male and female advanced Iranian EFL learners.) was not confirmed because there were no any differentiates between the performance of the male and female advance Iranian EFL learners. According to the results the p-value estimated for the second research question of this study is (Sig=.95) and it is more than the level of significance ( $p=.05$ ). So, male and female learners to English report no significance difference in their using of systemic-oriented summarization strategies.

Language learning strategies help learners become more autonomous. They also enhance self-efficacy, and individuals' perception that can help learners to successfully complete a task or series of tasks (Carter & Nunan, 2001). According to Oxford, et al. (1990), language learning strategy use is influenced by many factors. One of these factors is gender. Research in second language showed that female and male learners to English report differences in their use of language learning strategies. The another core interest in this investigation, thus, was to identify the gender differences in EFL context in terms of using systemic-oriented summarization strategies by boys and girls in Iranian University. Research in second language teaching shows that female and male learners of English report differences in their use of language learning strategies while, the result of this study revealed that there was no any significance difference between Iranian EFL learners in using systemic-oriented summarization strategies. Therefore the research hypothesis that claimed the teaching of systemic-oriented summarization strategies has a differential effect on male and female advanced Iranian EFL learners was not confirmed.

#### **CONCLUSION**

According to many researchers (e.g., Armbruster, Anderson & Ostertage, 1987; Bean & Steenwyk, 1984; Berkowitz, 1986; Doctrow, Wittrock & Marks, 1978; Wittrock & Alesandrini, 1990) instructing students to generate summaries of text has been shown to improve comprehension. Previous studies indicated that summarization can help readers to focus on gist information and therefore improve comprehension (e.g., Anderson & Armbruster, 1984; Pearson & Fielding, 1996). Based on the findings of this study, the experimental and control groups developed their reading comprehension. However, the development of the experimental group was not significantly than the development of the control group. The fact that control groups' development may be attributed to their previous knowledge. It may have effects on their production. The learners in control group may have seen the TOEFL test in other situations. The students' prior knowledge regarding Hallidays' (1985) expansion strategies may have been taught previously in other classes.



At the end of instructional period, the female and male experimental groups' development was approximately the same.

In the beginning of this study, data analysis showed that learners in experimental and control groups had same reading comprehension strategy awareness while, independent samples t-test also revealed that there was no difference among them in their post test scores. The obtained data showed that there was no any difference between female and male learners in using systemic-oriented summarization strategies. The present study was also carried out to investigate the degree of probable difference between post-test scores of male and female EFL students. The researcher draws some conclusion based on the comparison made between the performance of the male and female EFL learners in posttest.

The findings of the study revealed that explicit teaching of systemic-oriented summarization strategies was not effective in the improvement of the EFL learners' reading performance. It is also indicated that there is not a significant difference between males and females reading performance after taking the treatment. Based on the findings of the study, it became clear that systemic-oriented summarization strategies did not affect Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension and according to the findings of the present study the participants in the experimental groups did not outperform the subjects in the control group significantly. In conclusion, the arguments raised in this paper indicate that learning strategies in this study depend on different factors such as learners' prior knowledge.

#### ***Pedagogical Implications***

This study was an attempt to investigate one of the most important issues in EFL situations, i.e., learning to read through using Hallidays' (1985) expansion. The findings of this study suggest that teaching reading through using Hallidays' (1985) expansion did not improve the students' performance in the process of reading. Although the results did not carry an important effect for EFL learners of this study, teacher must not easily neglect the influence of teaching systemic-oriented summarization strategies on the reading comprehension of EFL learners. This study is expected to be helpful for those teachers who feel disappointed in attempting a creative approach to the teaching of the reading process. It is already known that in academic setting reading is the most important skill for students to be independent readers. However, how to teach students in order to be proficient readers is important issue. Syllabus designers, teachers, curriculum developers can use these strategies but they should consider the following suggestions. They should pay attention to students' prior knowledge and their awareness of these strategies and they may need to modify the design of the study was used in the present research because the important point in further research which should be taken into account is learner's schedule time.

#### ***Suggestion for further research***

In this study different levels of proficiency were not taken into account. To examine the effects of the strategies used, different levels of proficiency can be included in the further studies. The number of participants was rather small in this research, and the results may not be generalized to a larger population of the learners. Thus, this study could be conducted with a large sample size. Important point in further research which should be taken into account is learner's schedule time. Another important point is the student's prior knowledge (experimental and control group). It may have effects on their production. The group that we were working on may have seen the TOEFL test in other situations.

The students' prior knowledge regarding Hallidays' (1985) expansion strategies may have been taught previously in other classes. These two points should be taken into account in further research.

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## ABSTRACT

The current study aims to investigate Iranian learners' beliefs about learning English and the stability of these beliefs over time. 50 learners, males and females, studying English as a foreign language in different English institutes in Isfahan were selected. Horwitz (1987) Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), a 34-item survey instrument, was used to collect data twice with the interval of three months. After data analysis was done, the results indicated that generally, learners recognized the existence of foreign language aptitude and placed strong emphasis on excellent pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition, and the benefits of practice. Most of them reported of being highly motivated and interested to learn English. The findings also revealed that with the exception of slight change to two items on language learning difficulty, two items on nature of language learning, and five items on learning and communication strategies, most of their beliefs were stable over time.

**KEYWORDS:** Learner's Belief, Language Learning, Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), Communication Strategy.

## INTRODUCTION

Recently, research on learner beliefs has evolved out of a growing interest in the role of affect in language learning. Beliefs are defined as "psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are felt to be true" (Richardson, 1996, p. 103) and are said to act as strong filters of reality (Arnold, 1999). "Beliefs are predispositions to action" (Rokeach, 1968); they influence what and how students learn. It has been shown (Schoenfeld, 1983) that one's belief systems, social cognitions and metacognitions are important force for intellectual performance, including learning and acquisition of foreign languages. According to Horwitz (1987), learners' beliefs or notions about language learning can influence both their experiences and actions as language learners. Educational psychologists believe that learners' self-beliefs are a defining factor of their learning behavior (Bandura, 1986; Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990). Learners with high self-efficacy are likely to expend more effort at a learning task and persevere even in the face of failures. Conversely, learners who doubt their ability to continue a learning task will put in less effort and give up easily in the face of challenges. According to Bernat and Gvozdenko (2005), beliefs have the potential to influence the learners' attitude to language learning, their motivation to learn, and also shape their experiences and actions in the classroom. It has been noted that successful learners develop insightful beliefs about language learning processes, their own abilities, and the use of effective and efficient learning strategies, which have intensified their competence and performance in language acquisition. On the other hand, learners can also have misconceptions, uninformed or negative beliefs about language learning, resulting in their reliance on less effective strategies and negative attitude and perspective towards learning and autonomy (Victori & Lockhart, 1995), classroom anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986), and poor performance (Reid & Hresko, 1981). Victori and Lockhart (1995: 225) discussed differences between insightful beliefs that successful learners hold, and the negative or limited beliefs that poor learners hold, and stated that:

if students develop or maintain misconceptions about their own learning, if they attribute undue importance to factors that are external to their own action, they are not likely to adopt a responsible and active attitude in their approach to learning and may never become autonomous.

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For instance, a learner who assumes that one shouldn't say anything in English until one can say it accurately and fluently will not make an effort to practice speaking in English while a learner who believes that it is important to repeat and practice a lot will benefit from applying that strategy. Similarly, learners who believe that they do not possess any special aptitude necessary for acquisition of English will start off with a relatively negative expectation of ultimate success compared to someone who believes otherwise.

## Literature Review

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Since beliefs about language learning have been found to significantly affect language learning and outcomes, one of the areas of research interest in recent years is the factors that affect beliefs, such as individual learner differences and contextual diversity (Bernat & Lloyd, 2007). Interdisciplinary research suggests that learner beliefs are intertwined with factors such as self-percepts (e.g. self-concept, self-efficacy), personality traits, and other individual differences (Bernat, 2007; Langston & Sykes, 1997; Siebert, 2003). Recent studies have examined learners' beliefs about language learning for their relationship to factors such as strategy use (Yang, 1999); anxiety (Kunt, 1998; Tsai, 2004); learner autonomy (Cotterall, 1995; Wendley, 1991); gender (Bacon & Finnemann, 1992; Siebert, 2003), personality traits (Bernat, 2006); and language proficiency (Mantle-Bromley, 1995; Peacock, 1998, 1999; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003). Among other things, these studies have found that learners who held unrealistic beliefs or misconceptions about language learning were more anxious and intolerant than those who held more positive and realistic beliefs. Moreover, these beliefs have direct links to proficiency in that the more proficient learners were the more realistic and/or positive were their beliefs. Learner beliefs about language learning have also been found to be dynamic and context-specific (Alexander & Dochy, 1994; Chawhan & Oliver, 2000; Cotterall, 1995; Ellis, 2008; Horwitz, 1999; Riley, 2009). Learner beliefs have been revealed to change over time to new experiences and learning as well as change of attitude. The results also indicated that there were significant differences between groups of diverse language background students, for example students studying in Australia (Chawhan & Oliver, 2000) and New Zealand (Cotterall, 1995). However, studies conducted using the BALLI did not have consistent findings (Kern, 1995; Peacock, 2001). Kern (1995) conducted a survey involving university students studying French, reported that 35% to 59% of the responses changed over a period of 15 weeks. A significant change was observed in the response to the statement: "If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on", with 37% of the students reporting greater agreement and 15% lesser agreement. This suggests that many students were becoming increasingly conscious of their mistakes and were having difficulty in avoiding them, although they tried to correct them. Another change was in responses to the statement: "Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules", with 32% showing greater agreement and 20% lesser agreement. Meanwhile, Peacock (2001) reported a longitudinal study that investigated changes in beliefs about L2 learning of trainee ESL students in a three-year program at the City University of Hong Kong. His findings revealed that there were no significant changes in learner beliefs at the end of the program. Since the research findings regarding change in learner beliefs so far are not comprehensive and thorough, Bernat and Gvozdenko (2005) suggested that there is need for further investigations on the stability of beliefs and effects of instructional

interventions based on students' beliefs about language learning. The present study aimed to explore this phenomenon among Iranian learners belief.

Wong (2010) did a research to explore learners' beliefs about learning English and the stability of these beliefs over time by using the Horwitz' BALLI in Malaysia. The findings revealed that learners recognized the existence of foreign language aptitude and placed strong emphasis on excellent pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition, the benefits of practice, and an immersion approach to language learning. Most of them reported of being highly motivated to learn English and were positive about their ability to master the language. The findings also revealed that with the exception of slight change (ranging from 4% to 20%) to two items on language learning difficulty and six items on nature of language learning, most of their beliefs were stable over time.

As it was mentioned, research on learner beliefs in teacher education research has gotten significant attentions in recent years, particularly in investigating teacher beliefs and the connection between their beliefs and educational practices (Brown & McGannon, 1998; Calderhead, 1996; Peacock, 2001), since their beliefs play an important role in their learning. Brown and McGannon (1998) and Breen (1991) studied teacher beliefs and concluded that teachers had many incorrect beliefs about how foreign languages are learned and that this influenced their teaching practices later. Kennedy (1996) argued that real and effective change in teachers' practices could only occur through a change in their beliefs.

In Iran, a place where English is being learnt as a foreign language, no studies have been reported investigating learners' or pre- service teachers' beliefs about language learning over time, particularly studies involving English learners who are learning English in institutes for different purposes to teach English. Documenting language learners' beliefs is indispensable, so that efforts can be made to bring about awareness and changes in beliefs while they are still undergoing training to learn English. Discernment into learners' language learning beliefs would prove practical to teacher educators in incorporating appropriate and pertinent instruction on language learning during English lessons. The present study aimed to fill a gap in research on language learning beliefs.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In line with what was stated above, this study aimed to gain insights into the following research questions:

1. What are the main Iranian EFL learners' beliefs about language learning?
2. To what extent are Iranian learners' beliefs stable over time?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

Participants were fifty English students, male and female, who were learning the language in different English institutes at least for six months. The age range of learners was from 18 to 30 years.

### *Instrument*

The survey instrument used to collect data consisted of 34 items from the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) designed by Horwitz (1987). This instrument has been widely used (Bernat, 2006; Bernat & Lloyd, 2007; Horwitz, 1989; Siebert, 2003; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003; Yang, 1999) to assess learners and teachers' beliefs in relation to second or foreign language learning. Nikitina and Furuoka (2006) showed that the BALLI is a valid and suitable tool for research on language learning beliefs in different context. The BALLI measures learners' beliefs about five language learning categories: (1) foreign language aptitude, (2) the difficult of learning language, (3) the nature of language learning, (4) learning and communication strategies, and (5) motivation and expectations. Participants were required to respond to the items on a 5-point rating scale, with 34 items ranging from agree (1), neutral (2), and disagree (5). The reliability of the inventory was estimated at 0.92 in this study.

### *Procedure*

The BALLI was administered on the English learners in this study. The learners were not informed that they were involved in a study to investigate their beliefs about learning English but they were asked to check their ideas. They were told that there were no right or wrong answers. What was important was that they answered according to their beliefs about learning English. Most of the learners completed the inventory in 20 minutes and all the instruments were collected back for analysis. Three months later, the same instrument was administered again on the same group of learners. In both sessions they did not have any difficulties in understanding any of the statements in the BALLI. They were asked to write their names but they did not know that they would be asked to answer to the BALLI in three month again.

### *Data Analysis*

Descriptive analysis was used to calculate the frequency of responses for each item. Additionally, the BALLI is a multidimensional instrument where each item assesses a specific belief about language learning. Therefore, the scores for the items were not added together or averaged. For ease of viewing, the BALLI item ratings were collapsed into three categories namely agree (for strongly agree and agree), neutral and disagree (for disagree and strongly disagree). Changes in beliefs were investigated through comparing learners' responses to each item in the five language learning areas over the interval.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study have revealed some interesting insights into learners' beliefs about language learning and the variability of learner beliefs over time. The frequency of learners' responses for the items in the BALLI and the relevant discussion are presented according to the five language areas of the instrument (outlined in the method section) in Tables 1 to 5. This is then followed by results on the stability of beliefs of the learners over time in tables 6 to 8.

### *Learners Beliefs about Learning English*

#### *Foreign Language Aptitude*

The items in this language area refer to various aspects of the individual's potential to be successful in language learning. The findings show that majority of the English learners (40 of them) agreed with the commonly held belief that it is easier for children than adults to learn a second language (table1). Their beliefs were consistent with research findings that show a positive effect of young age on aspects of

language learning such as phonological development (Patkowski, 1990) and fluency (Donato, Antonek & Tucker, 1996). Similarly, English learners in the present study agreed that some people have special abilities for learning a foreign language. Their ideas about items 10: It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one were mostly neutral (21 out of 50), seventeen of them agreed and the twelve left disagreed. Examining item 11 just one participant believed that people who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning foreign languages and most of them (31) disagreed. This response suggests that the majority of the learners do not make a distinction between an aptitude for the sciences versus an aptitude for the humanities-type subjects — a distinction put forward by Gardner (1983) in his Multiple Intelligence theory distinguishing linguistic intelligence from logical/mathematical intelligence.

For Item 16, twenty three learners agreed that they had this special ability while some of them (15 out of 50) believed that they did not have this special ability although the majority of them (45 out of 50) agreed that everyone can learn to speak a foreign language (Item 33). Learners' response to Item 33 is very encouraging as it shows a positive attitude towards learning a foreign language among EFL learners. The effect of culture and gender were addressed by Items 6 and 19. Here, 25 of them agreed that people in Iran are very good at learning second languages while six of them were neutral about this and the remaining nine disagreed with the statement. In terms of gender ability in language learning, the learners had interesting beliefs. Half of them agreed with the statement while 10 were neutral as to whether women are better than men are at learning languages and 15 of them disagreed that Women are better than men are at learning foreign languages.

Regarding the effect of intelligence on language learning aptitude (Item 30), the learners believed differently. Twenty two of the learners agreed with this belief while 17 were neutral and eleven disagreed that People who speak more than one language are very intelligent. According to Lightbrown and Spada (1999), intelligence is a strong factor in language learning when it comes to language analysis and rule deducting but it has less effect on language learning in the classroom where instruction focuses more on communication and interaction.

*Table 1: Foreign Language Aptitude*

Items		Frequency		
		A	N	D
1	It is easier for children than adults to learn a second language.	40	5	14
2	Some people have a special ability for learning a second language.	31	10	9
6	People in my country are very good at learning second languages.	25	16	9
10	It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.	17	21	12
11	People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning foreign languages.	1	18	31
16	I have a special ability for learning foreign languages.	23	12	15
19	Women are better than men are at learning foreign languages.	25	10	15
30	People who speak more than one language are very intelligent.	22	17	11
33	Everyone can learn to speak a second language.	55	2	3

Note: A = Agree and Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree and Strongly Disagree

#### *Difficulty of Language Learning*

Items 3, 4, 15, 25 and 34 were on difficulty of language learning. Nearly all of the learners (46 out of 25) agreed that some languages are easier than others (Item 3) while three of them were neutral and the remaining one disagreed with the statement. Regarding difficulty of the English language, 17 of them rated the English language as a language of medium difficulty while 25 in the group rated it as very easy or easy and the remaining 8 agreed that English is very difficult.

Meanwhile, a few (19 out of 45) of the learners agreed that it would take 3 to 5 years to learn a foreign language well if one spent an hour a day learning the language, although 25 of them believe that it would take 5 to 10 years to learn a language well if one spent an hour a day learning the language. As it is obvious in the table .2 nobody answered that people can learn English less than 1 year if they spent one hour a day learning a language. Items 25 and 34 assessed the relative difficulty of language skills (speaking, reading, and writing). Learners appeared to be divided on this issue. Three of the learners agreed with the statement while nineteen were neutral on this and a larger number (28 persons) disagreed with the statement. For Item 34, there were more learners agreeing that it is easier to read than to write a foreign language; forty of them and seven of the learners were neutral and the remaining three disagreed. It is important to mention that items 15 and 34 had different answers in the interval which will be completely explained in table 6.

*Table 2: Difficulty of Language Learning*

Items		Frequency		
		A	N	D
3	Some languages are easier than others are.	46	3	1
4	The English language is*	8	17	25
15	If someone spent one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take them to speak it very well?			
	Less than 1 year	-	-	-
	1 to 2 years	8		
	3 to 5 years	19		
	5 to 10 years	10		
	You can't learn a language in 1 hour a day	13		
25	It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.	3	19	28
34	It is easier to read than to write a foreign language.	40	7	3

Note: A = Agree and Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree and Strongly Disagree \* A = A very difficult or difficult language; N = language of medium difficulty; D = A very easy or easy language

#### *Nature of Language Learning*

Items 8, 12, 17, 23, 27 and 28 are related to the nature of the language learning process. Items 8 and 12 investigated learners' opinion regarding the role of cultural contact in language learning. More than half of the learners (36) agreed that it is necessary to learn about the culture of the foreign language under study in order to speak the language while the 10 of them were neutral and the remaining 4 disagreed about this view. A larger number of learners (42), however, supported the immersion-type setting in language learning, judging from their

response to Item 12, that it is best to learn English in an English-speaking country. In such a setting, there would be greater exposure to the foreign language, its culture, and its people. A majority of the learners (38 out of 25) agreed that the most important part of learning a foreign language is learning new words (Item 17). Two persons however, did not agree that vocabulary acquisition was that important while ten neither agreed nor disagreed. For Item 23, learners were asked to rate the importance of learning grammar, and the remaining eight disagreed this view. Half of the learners agreed with the statement but seven of the learners were neutral. Mentioning that participants' beliefs were changed about this item over time is important. Item 27 surveyed learners' views regarding learning English as different from other types of learning. Thirty out of fifty learners agreed with the statement and just three of them disagreed this statement. Meanwhile, quite a large number of learners (30 out of 50) agreed with the belief that translating from one's mother tongue is a highly valued learning strategy in language learning (Item 28). Therefore their belief does not support the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, where the target language is used during authentic, functional, communicative activities, and students' native language has no particular role in the classroom. The best way for learners to achieve native-like control of the target language is to think in that language rather than to translate or reprocess the target language into their mother tongue. However, five of the learners, agreed that translation is not important in language learning while the rest were neutral on the matter. The answers to this item were changed over time.

Table 3: Nature of Language Learning

Items		Frequency		
		A	N	D
8	It is necessary to learn about English-speaking cultures to speak English.	36	10	4
12	It is best to learn English in an English-speaking country.	42	3	5
17	The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning new words.	38	10	2
23	The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning grammar.	25	17	8
27	Learning a foreign language is different than learning other academic subjects.	30	13	3
28	The most important part of learning English is learning to translate from my own language.	30	9	5

Note: A = Agree and Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree and Strongly Disagree

#### Learning and Communication Strategies

BALLI items 7, 9, 13, 14, 18, 21, 22 and 26 investigate the use of learning and communication strategies in language learning practices. most of the learners (40 out of 50) believed that it is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation (Item 7), but the majority of them (43 out of 50) did not believe that one should only say something when one can say it correctly (Item 9). This finding revealed that while they support the idea of achieving excellent pronunciation, they also believed that it is all right to make mistakes, as is reflected in their responses to two Items 13 and 14. It is elating to note that many of these learners believe in the benefits of practicing speaking in English without waiting to be perfect and accurate before attempting to use the language. In fact, as seen in their responses to these two items, most of them enjoy practicing speaking in English with people who speak English well and felt that it is okay to guess when they don't know a word. Griffiths (2003) said that instead of literally translating, painstakingly, and meticulously looking up every new word, good language learners guess and keep going. Guessing the meaning of new words instead of relying too much on mono or bilingual dictionaries is a useful skill. Nearly all of the learners also believe that it is important to repeat and practice a lot when trying to master the language (Item 18). If this belief is put into practice more often, it would help them to improve their proficiency in English, as this English proverb says practice makes perfect. Meanwhile, superiority of the learners appeared to agree over whether it is important to practice using tapes and CD-ROMs and nobody disagrees with this item (Item 26). Learners' responses to Item 21 are encouraging in that half of them did not feel shy about conversing in English. Ten of them indicated that they felt shy speaking in English with other people and fifteen of them had neutral ideas in this view. Finally, for Item 22, greater of the learners did not agree that if mistakes are not corrected immediately, it is difficult to 'unlearn' them. Few (3) of them agreed with this while the rest (9) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

Table4: Learning and Communication Strategies

Items		Frequency		
		A	N	D
7	It is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation.	40	6	1
9	You shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly.	3	4	43
13	I enjoy practicing English with people who speak English as a native language/speak English very fluently.	45	4	1
14	It's OK to guess if you don't know a word in English.	43	5	2
18	It is important to repeat and practice a lot.	44	4	2
21	I feel shy speaking English with other people.	10	15	25
22	If beginning students are allowed to make mistakes in English it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on.	3	9	38
26	It is important to practice with cassettes/tapes or CD ROMs.	46	4	-

Note: A = Agree and Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree and Strongly Disagree

#### Motivation and Expectations

The items in this language category concern the desires and opportunities learners associate with learning English. The responses of the majority of the learners indicates that they were positive about their ability to speak well in English (Item 5), have a strong desire to do well in English (Item 31), and they would like to improve in English through getting to know native speakers of English (Item 32). Learners' responses to items 29 and specially 24 suggest that they have strong motivation to learn English. A majority of the learners indicated that they would like to learn English because of its utility value, that is, it enables them to understand native speakers of English better (Item 24) and to have better job opportunities (Item 29). For the item 20 most of the learners (38 out of 55) believed that people in Iran feel like that it is important to speak English. as the table shows the majority of learners had a positive attitude and motivation toward learning English. There was no change in their beliefs in the motivation and expectations area.



*Table 5: Motivation and Expectations*

Items		Frequency		
		A	N	D
5	I believe I will learn to speak English very well.	42	8	-
20	People in my country feel that it is important to speak English.	38	9	3
24	I would like to learn English so that I can better understand people who speak English as a native language.	40	7	3
29	If I learn to speak English very well, I will have better job opportunities.	29	13	8
31	I want to speak English very well.	46	4	-
32	I would like to get to know people who speak English as a native language.	30	14	6

Note: A = Agree and Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree and Strongly Disagree

*Table 6: Change in Beliefs about Difficulty of Language Learning*

Items		Frequency		
		A	N	D
15	If someone spent one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take them to speak it very well?			
	i. less than 1 year	-	-	-
	ii. 1 to 2 years	(8)5		
	iii. 3 to 5 years	(19)15		
	iv. 5 to 10 years	(10)25		
	v. You can't learn a language in 1 hour a day	(13)10		
34	It is easier to read than to write a foreign language.	(40)35	(7)9	(3)6

Note: the numbers in the parenthesis show the results of the first survey

#### *The Stability of Beliefs over Time*

The results of the BALLI administered learners after three months showed that there was no change in two of the five language learning areas, namely foreign language aptitude, and motivation and expectations. There were, however, slight changes ranging from .5% to 9% in the responses to two of the items on difficulty of language learning, five of the learning and communication strategies and two items on nature of language learning, as presented in Tables 6 and 7 and 8. As is evident in Table 6, there seems to be a change in learners' beliefs regarding the issue of the length of time it would take to learn a foreign language well. While there were still 19 learners who indicated that it would take 3 to 5 years the rest of the learners seemed to be in favor of a shorter length of time compared to previously. There was an increase of 1.5% of those who believed that it would take less than a year, decrease of 2% for those who believed it would take between 1 to 2 years, and an increase of 7.5% for those who thought it would take 5 to 10 years to master the language and finally an increase of 1.5% in the last statement: You can't learn a language in 1 hour a day.

It could be that the experience and knowledge acquired over the past three months have shown them that it does not really take that much time to master the language. Another change in belief is seen in Item 34, regarding whether it is easier to read than to write a foreign language. The number of learners who were neutral on this seems to have increased by 1% while those who agreed with the statement decreased by 2.5% and those disagreed increased by 1.5%.

*Table 7: Nature of Language Learning*

Items		Frequency		
		A	N	D
23	The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning grammar.	25(27)	(6)7	(8)10
28	The most important part of learning English is learning to translate from my own language.	(30)36	(9)4	5(10)

The results about the nature of language learning were different in two items 23 and 28. In 23, there was an increase of 1% in learners' beliefs regarding the most important part of learning a foreign language is learning grammar, a decrease of 2% who were neutral and an increase of 1% who disagreed this view. Regarding item 28 there was an increase of 2.5% who agreed that the most important part of learning English is learning to translate from my own language, the number of learners who were neutral have decreased by 2.5% by which those who disagreed with the statement increased by 3%.

Meanwhile, the bulk of the change in beliefs seems to be concerning the learning and communication strategies. As shown in table 8 there was an increase 9% in the number of learners who agreed that it is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation while there was an increase of 1.5% in those who were neutral and an increase of .5% who disagreed the statement (item 7). The next strategy was that you shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly (item 9), the results show that the learners who agreed this view had a decrease of 5% , there was an increase of 1.5% in those who had a neutral idea and finally a decrease of 1% in those who disagreed this statement. With the respect to the matter of whether it is Ok to guess if you don't know a word in English, there appears to be an increase of 2% in those who agreed this statement and a decrease of about 1% in those who were neutral and disagreed this view. As for the attitude to feel shy speaking English with other people (item 21) learners seemed to have changed their beliefs on this, judging by the drop of 3.5% in those who agreed with the statement , decrease of 3% in those who were neutral and an increase of 6% who disagreed this view. The last statement which revealed the learners change in strategy was item 22 which states if beginning students are allowed to make mistakes in English it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on; there was a decline of 5% in those who agreed and a drop of 1.5% in those who were neutral, and a rise of 1% in those who disagreed this statement. Although the percentage change in beliefs is small, learners appear to be more divided on the issues put forward in the statements on learning and communication strategies. Generally, the findings concur with those of previous researchers (Alexander and Dochy, 1994; Chawhan and Oliver, 2000; Cotterall, 1995; Ellis, 2008; Horwitz, 1999) in that learner beliefs can change with time due to new experiences and learning as well as change of attitude.



Table 8: Learning and Communication Strategies

Items		Frequency		
		A	N	D
7	It is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation.	(40)46	(6)4	(1) 0
9	You shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly.	(3)2	(4)7	(43)41
14	It's OK to guess if you don't know a word in English.	(43)47	(5)3	(2) 0
21	I feel shy speaking English with other people.	(10)3	(15)9	(25)38
22	If beginning students are allowed to make mistakes in English it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on.	(3)4	(9)6	(38)40

## CONCLUSION

In summary, the analyses of findings in this study provide some interesting insights into EFL learners' beliefs about the five language areas covered in the BALLI. Learners' responses to nine of the items changed slightly ranging from 0.5% to 9% after three months when they were asked to report on their beliefs again, supporting the view that learner beliefs are situational and dynamic in nature. In terms of pedagogical implications, the findings presented here will be useful to teacher educators in planning activities, to learners and administrators that could increase awareness and even adjustment of learners' beliefs about language learning. However, it is important to pay attention that the beliefs about language learning held by the respondents in this study are only those specified in the BALLI instrument. As Bernat (2006) noted, for such a cognitively and affectively rich construct such as one's belief system, it is difficult to capture the complete picture merely through responses to a set of normative statements. Future researchers might want to employ a contextual approach and use a variety of qualitative data collection methods such as semi-structured or unstructured interviews, observations, and questionnaires to gain more insights into learners' and even teachers' beliefs and any change in their beliefs over time.

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## HEDGE AS MITIGATION DEVICES IN THE NOVEL “KETIKA CINTA BERTASBIH”

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### ABSTRACT

This paper will analyze one of mitigation device type in the novel “*Ketika Cinta Bertasbih*”. It focuses on hedge, how it works as mitigation device. Hedge in this paper is to show how the speaker can save his or her utterance because of uncertain utterance. It will be divided into two classes according to Fraser (2010), propositional hedging and speech act hedging. These classes will help the speaker utters something and will achieve speaker’s goal easier. Finally, the aims of this paper are to find the function, the perlocutionary act of hedge and to find hedge as a mitigation devices in conversation to achieve speaker’s goal easier and to save his or her utterance because of uncertain utterance.

**KEYWORDS:** Hedge, Mitigation Devices, Indonesian Novel.

### INTRODUCTION

When two or three people open a conversation, they or one of them will do some impolite utterance. The interlocutor will ignore the speaker’s utterance or some will feel offended of the utterance. In order to avoid the interlocutor’s negative response, mitigation device is needed. The function of mitigation is to soften the speaker’s utterance. As Caffi (1999), mitigation is “the attenuation of unwelcome effects on the hearer”. Many type of mitigation devices; shield, bushes, opener, softener, filler, preparator, grounder, disarmer, expander, promise of reward. One of the types is Hedge. Hedge occurs if someone utters something inaccurately, something uncertainty. Hedge usually involves adjective, adverbs, predicate adjectives, predicate nominal and declarative sentence such as *actually, extremely, anyway, I guess*, etc. In bahasa, the word or phrase or even sentence which is involved to hedge is the same as in English. But the attunation may be different. Hedge can be affected by the speaker’s speech act. One of the uses of hedge also will affect the perlocutionary act where the interlocutor will do the speaker’s utterance as the function of mitigation device; the interlocutor will achieve the speaker’s goal easier. In this case if the speaker uses hedge in their utterances the achievement will be occurred. But what if the result is unequal from the theory?. As the background above, the authors will analyze beside the function of hedge as mitigation. The authors analyze the perlocutionary act and to analyze whether hedge as mitigation is same as the theory. Here, the authors use *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih* as data.

### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Hedge is introduced famously by Lakoff (1972) as fuzziness. “For me, some of the most interesting questions are raised by the study of words whose meaning implicitly involves fuzziness – words whose job it is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy (195)”. As Hyland (1998) wrote the function of hedge is either a lack of complete commitment to the truth value of an accompanying proposition or a desire not to express that commitment categorically. Another hand, the function of hedge is to express inaccurate the speaker utterance. Here, hedge as a device or known as mitigation device is to make easier the speaker conveys his or her meaning or to attenuate the strength of utterance. As Zuck and Zuck (1986) mentioned that “Hedge is the process whereby the authors reduce the strength of a statement.” Hedge in this paper will be divided into two classes; propositional hedging and speech act hedging. Propositional hedging involves predicate adjectives, predicate nominal, and declarative sentence. It where the truth value of the proposition is affected (Prince *et al*, 1982). Another class of hedge is speech act hedging where hedge is depended on the speech act. It is not a semantic point of view anymore but it is a pragmatic point of view and it focuses on illocutionary force of speech act. As Brown and Levinson (1987) said that

*“A hedge is a particle, word, or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or noun phrase in a set; it says of that membership that it is partial, or true only in certain respect; or that it is more true and complete than perhaps might be expected.” (145)*

Here hedge re-divided into two classes according to Prince *et al*, Fraser and Brown and Levinson that are approximators and shields. Approximators is another term of propositional hedging which work on the propositional content. For example: *sort of, kind of, somewhat, some, a little bit*, etc. Second type is Shields or speech act hedging. It is to changing the relationship between propositional content and the speaker’s uncertain utterance. For example: *I think, probably, as far as I can tell, right now, I have to believe, I don’t see that, etc*. Here, Hedge will be related to speech act. Speech act divided into three; locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act. According to Yule (1996) locutionary act is act which has no a meaningful power. Illocutionary act is act which has a meaningful power and perlocutionary act is the effect of locutionary act and illocutionary act. Those are the theories of hedge are bringing the authors to analyze; my focus is on hedge as mitigation device in Indonesian novel which is in Indonesian sentences.

### DATA AND METHODS

The data in this research are from Indonesian Novel titled *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih part I. Ketika Cinta Bertasbih* written by Habiburrahman El Shirazy. He was a student who graduated from Al Azhar Cairo University, founder and main owner of Basmala Islamic boarding school. The novel is ...these were best selling novel in 2002 and had many awards such as the most favorite book in 2005. Because of its popularity, these novels were made as movie and became one of favorite movie in that time. The story was about finding their soul mate. The method of this research is the writer sorts and finds hedge in the novel. and the data are analyze by the type and the function as mitigation devices. The data are literally and followed by the analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This research focuses on hedge as mitigation devices in novel “*Ketika Cinta Bertasbih*”. It would examine the function, the perlocutionary act of hedge as mitigation devices. Based on the data, the authors found most of the uses of hedge in the novel are; *kayaknya*, *jika* or *kalau*, *mungkin* and *ngomong-ngomong*. The authors took some data which contain the hedges.

- (1) Pak Ali : “Kalau boleh tahu berapa umur mu Mas Khairul?”  
*If may know how age you, Mas Khairul?*  
“May I know how old are you, Mas Khairul?”  
Khairul : “Dua puluh delapan Pak.”  
*Twenty Eight Sir.*  
“Twenty Eight years old, sir.”  
Pak Ali : “Kalau aku perhatikan, gurat wajah mu lebih tua sedikit dari umur mu.  
*if I notice line face you more old little from age you.*  
**Kayaknya** kamu memikul sebuah beban yang lumayan berat.  
*Like you carry a burden which quite heavy.*  
Aku perhatikan kau lebih banyak bekerja daripada belajar di  
*I notice you more many work then study in*  
Mesir ini. Boleh aku tahu tentang hal ini?.”  
*Egypt this. May I know about thing this?*  
“I see your face is quite older than your age. As if you carry a heavy burden. I notice you like working than studying in Egypt. May I know what is happened?”  
Khairul : “Ah Pak Ali terlalu perhatian pada saya. Saya memang harus bekerja keras Pak.  
*ah Mr. Ali too care to I. I indeed have to work hard Sir.*  
Bagi saya ini bukan beban. Saya tidak merasakannya sebagai beban.  
*For I this not burden. I not feel as burden.*  
Meskipun orang lain mungkin melihatnya sebagai beban.  
*Even though people other maybe see as burden.*  
Saya memang harus bekerja untuk menghidupi adik-adik saya di Indonesia.  
*I indeed have to work for live sister sister I in Indonesia.*  
“You too care about me. I indeed must work hard sir. For me it is not a burden and I don’t feel as a burden. Even though other people see as it. I must work for supporting my sisters’ finance in Indonesia.”

In the data (1) *kayaknya* is hedge because *kayaknya* shows the speaker hesitation. In English *kayaknya* is translated to *as if*. *Kalau aku perhatikan, gurat wajah mu lebih tua sedikit dari umur mu. Kayaknya kamu memikul sebuah beban yang lumayan berat.* The sentence is uttered by Pak Ali to Khairul. Here, the speaker uses hedge; speech act hedging which affect the speech act of the speaker’s uncertain utterance. The function in the data is the speaker does not sure whether his utterance is right or wrong. *As if* can represent the function of hedge to cover the speaker’s inaccurate utterance. The perlocutionary act of hedge for interlocutor is when the speaker utters *kayaknya*, the interlocutor covers his condition from the speaker, but in the end he tells his condition. Here, hedge *kayaknya* as mitigation device works because the interlocutor follow the speaker’s goal to achieve easier the goal.

- (2) Khairul : “Apa tidak ada topic lain Pak, selain Eliana?”  
*what not there topic another Sir, beside Eliana?*  
Pagi- pagi gini sudah membahas Eliana. Eliana lagi.”  
*Morning morning already discuss Eliana. Eliana more.*  
“Is not another topic beside Eliana’s topic, sir? In the morning, we have already talked about her.”  
Pak Ali : “Aku ingin menceritakan hal penting pada mu. Untuk kebaikan mu.”  
*I want tell thing important to you. For goodness you.*  
“I want to tell an important thing to you. It is for your goodness.”  
Khairul : “Tentang Eliana?”  
*about Eliana?*  
“about Eliana?”  
Pak Ali : “bisa dikatakan tentang Eliana bisa juga dikatakan tidak.”  
*can say about Eliana can also say not.*  
“It can be said about Eliana and it can be not.”  
Khairul : “mendengar nama Eliana saja saya sudah bosan Pak.”  
*Hear name Eliana just I already bored Sir.*  
“hearing Eliana’s name, I have been already bored, sir.”  
Pak Ali : “Ah yang benar?”  
*ah which right?*  
“are you serious?”  
Khairul : “Benar Pak, sungguh,”  
*right Sir, really.*  
“Yes, I am sir.”  
Pak Ali : “Mas, bapak ini sudah makan asam garam lebih dari mu.  
*Bro, father this already eat sour salt more from you.*  
Bapak tidak bisa kau bohongi.  
*Father not can you lie.*  
Jujur saja, bapak sungguh memperhatikan mu empat hari ini. Dan bapak  
*Honest just father*  
*really notice you four day this. And father*  
Melihat kamu ini sesungguhnya sangat mengagumi Putri Pak Dubes itu.  
*See you this really very admire princess Sir ambassador that*  
Bahkan bapak berani menyimpulkan kamu itu sebenarnya suka sama dia.”  
*Even father brave conclude you that actually like to she.*  
“hey, I have experienced the bittersweet of life than you. I can not be lied by you. Just be honest, I have been noticing you for four days. And I noticed that you admire the ambassador’s

daughter. Even I dare to say that you really like her.”

In the data (2) *bisa dikatakan tentang Eliana bisa juga dikatakan tidak* is hedge because *bisa dikatakan tentang Eliana bisa juga dikatakan tidak* shows the speaker hesitation. In English that sentence is translated to *It can be said about Eliana and it can be not. bisa dikatakan tentang Eliana bisa juga dikatakan tidak*. The sentence is uttered by Pak Ali to Khairul. Here, the speaker uses hedge; speech act hedging which affect the speech act of the speaker's uncertain utterance. The function in the data is the speaker does not sure whether his utterance will be heard by the interlocutor. *It can be said about Eliana and it can be not* can represent the function of hedge to cover the speaker's inaccurate utterance. The perlocutionary act of hedge for interlocutor is when the speaker utters *bisa dikatakan tentang Eliana bisa juga dikatakan tidak*, the interlocutor seems lazy to hear the speaker's utterance, so the conversation did not go well. Here, hedge *bisa dikatakan tentang Eliana bisa juga dikatakan tidak* as mitigation device does not work because the interlocutor does not follow the speaker's goal.

- (3) Eliana : "Tapi tadi malam dia berkata kasar di telpon pada saya Pak.  
*but ago night he say rude in phone to I Sir.*  
 Dia juga memutus pembicaraan seenaknya saja!  
*He too decide conversation arbitrarily just!*  
 Apa itu tidak penghinaan Pak Ali?"  
*What that not insult Sir Ali?*  
 "but last night he said rudely to me on the phone. He also stopped the conversation. Was that an insult, sir?"
- Pak Ali : "Mungkin saat itu Mas Khairul sedang capek. Letih.  
*maybe moment that bro Khairul average tired. Exhausted.*  
 Orang kalau letih itu pikirannya bisa tidak jernih.  
*People if exhausted that thinking can not clear.*  
 Cobalah ingat, kemarin itu ia kerja sejak pagi sampai malam."  
*Try remember, yesterday that he work since morning until night.*  
 "Semestinya Mbak Eliana harus berterima kasih pada Mas Khairul.  
*Should sister Eliana have to thank you to brother Khairul.*  
 Enam hari ini tenaga dan waktunya ia curahkan untuk membantu Mbak  
*Six day this energy and time he lav ished to help sister*  
 Bahkan dalam kondisi sangat letih, dia masih mau membakarkan ikan *Even in condition*  
*really exhausted. He still want burn fish*  
 untuk membantu Mbak Eliana. Dan pagi ini,  
*to help Sister Eliana. And morning this,*  
 dia mengirim sesuatu yang sangat Mbak suka.  
*he send something which very sister like.*  
 Semestinya Mbak berterima kasih sama dia. Saya dengar orang Barat yang  
*Should sister thank you to he. I listen people west which*  
 terdidik itu mudah mengucapkan terima kasih pada orang yang  
*educate that easy say thank you to people which*  
 membantunya."  
*help.*  
 "Maybe last night, Khairul was being tired. Exhausted. If People are being exhausted, their thinking is not clear. Try to remember. He had been working since in the morning until in the night. You should say thank you to him. He had already spent his energy and his time to help you. Even, in exhausted condition. He still wanted to grill the fish. And in the morning, he sent something that you like. I hear that educated foreigner is easy to say thank you."
- Eliana : "Baik Pak. Saya akan meneleponnya untuk meminta maaf. Terima kasih ya Pak.  
*Fine Sir. I will call for ask sorry. Thank you yes Sir.*  
 "Oke. I am going to call him to ask apologize. Thank you Sir."
- (4) Sara : "Saya mengundang Tuan nanti malam jam 19.30 di Abu Sakr Restaurant  
*I invite Mr. later night clock 19.30 in Abu Sakr Restaurant*  
 di Qashr Aini Street, tepat di depan Qashr El Aini Hospital.  
*in Qashr Aini Street exactly in front Qashr El Aini Hospital.*  
 Setelah berkenalan dengan Tuan di perpustakaan itu,  
*After introduce with Mr. in library that.*  
 saya lalu mencari data lebih jauh tentang Tuan di bagian kemahasiswaan.  
*I then search data more far about Mr. in part student*  
 Saya jadi mengetahui banyak hal tentang Tuan. Saya juga sering melihat  
*I become know more thing about Mr.. I too often see*  
 Tuan melintas di gerbang kampus, tapi Tuan pasti tidak tahu.  
*Mr. pass in gate campus. But Mr. exactly not know.*  
 Saya harap Tuan bisa memenuhi undangan saya malam ini"  
*I hope Mr. can fill invitation I night this.*  
 "I invite you tonight 7.30 PM at Abu Sakr Restaurant in Qashr Aini Street, in front of Qashr El Aini Hospital. After I knew you in the library. Then, I looked for more about you. I often see you passing the campus gate. But you do not know. I hope you can fill my invitation tonight."
- Furqan : "Maaf, mungkin saya tidak bisa Nona. Ada yang harus saya kerjakan."  
*sorry, maybe I not can miss. There which have to I do.*  
 "I am sorry miss, maybe I can not fill your invitation. There is something that I have to do."
- Sara : "Tidak harus Tuan jawab sekarang. Lihat saja nanti malam,  
*not have to Mr. answer now. Look just later night,*  
 jika ada waktu silakan datang. Jika tidak, tidak apa.  
*if there time please come. If not, not what,*  
 Namun saya sangat senang jika Tuan bisa datang. Ini saja Tuan,  
*but I very happy if Mr. can come. This just Mr.*  
 maaf mengganggu. Sampai bertemu nanti malam. Syukran."



*sorry disturb. Until meet later night. Syukran (thank you)*  
"you do not answer now. We will see tonight. If you have time, please come. If not, it is alright. But I am very happy if you can come. That is all, sorry to disturb you. See you later. Thank you."  
Furqan : *"Afwan."*  
*sorry.*  
"I am sorry"

In the data (3) and (4) there two statements which contain hedge  *mungkin*. It shows the speaker hesitation. In English  *mungkin* is translated to  *maybe*.  *Mungkin saat itu Mas Khairul sedang capek. Letih and Maaf, mungkin saya tidak bisa Nona*. Here, the speakers use hedge; Propositional hedging which contains adverb is  *maybe*. The functions of hedge in the data are to express the speaker's doubt. In data (3) beside express the speaker's doubt,  *maybe* here has another function; to save Khairul's face. While in data (4) beside express the speaker's doubt,  *maybe* here has another function; to reject the Sara's invitation. In data (3) the perlocutionary act of hedge to interlocutor is when the speaker utters  *maybe*, the interlocutor realizes that her attitude was bad to Khairul and she felt guilty. Here, hedge as mitigation device works because the interlocutor follows the speaker's goal. In data (4) the perlocutionary act of hedge for interlocutor is when the speaker utters  *maybe*, the interlocutor does not want to understand about the speaker utterance. Here, hedge as mitigation device does not work because the interlocutor does not follow the speaker's goal to achieve easier the goal.

- (5) Furqan : "Ya siapa ini?"  
*Yes who this?*  
"Yes, who is this?"  
Sara : "Ini Sara, Tuan Furqan. Mengingatkan aja. Anda tidak lupa dengan undangan  
*This Sara, Mr. Furqan. Remember just. You not forget with invitation*  
*saya bukan? Pukul 19.30 di Abu Sakr Restaurant."*  
*I not? Clock 19.30 in Abu Sakr Restaurant.*  
"I am Sara, Furqan. To remind about my invitation, you do not forget, do you? At 07.30 PM at Abu Sakr Restaurant."  
Furqan : "Saya tidak lupa. Tapi saya kelihatannya tidak bisa datang"  
*I not forget. But I look not can come.*  
"I do not forget. But I think I can not come."  
Sara : "Saya sangat berharap Tuan datang."  
*I very hope Mr. come.*  
"I wish you came."  
Furqan : "**Kalau** tidak datang semoga Nona tidak kecewa."  
*if not come, hope miss not disappointed.*  
"If I can not come, I hope you will not be disappointed."  
Sara : "Justru saya kuatir, jika Anda tidak datang, Anda menyesal."  
*exactly I worry, if you not come. You regret.*  
Undangan ini mungkin hanya sekali Anda dapatkan dalam hidup Anda"  
*Invitation this maybe only once you get in life you.*  
"I am exactly worried. If you can not come. You will regret it. Maybe this is the invitation that you get once in your life."  
Furqan : "Terima kasih, saya merasa tersanjung."  
*thank you. I feel flattered.*  
"Thank you. I feel to be honored."  
Sara : "Saya merasa lebih tersanjung jika Anda berkenan datang."  
*I feel more flattered if you can come.*  
"I will feel more to be honored, if you can come."  
(6) Erna : "Mbak kita jadi ke Palace?"  
*sister we become to Palace?*  
"Anna, are we going to Palace?"  
Anna: "Sekarang, sudah jam tujuh lebih lima, tapi Wan Aina dan Sholihati belum pulang."  
*now, already clock seven more five, but Wan Aina and Sholihati not yet return home.*  
Apa tidak terlalu malam jika kita keluar setelah mereka pulang?"  
*What not too night if we out after they return home?*  
"already seven past five now, but Wan Aina and Sholihati have not come back home yet. will not be too late we go out if we wait them come back home?"  
Zahraza: "Iya, terlalu malam. Nanti dilihat orang tidak baik."  
*yes, too night. Later see people not good.*  
"yes it is too late. It will be a gossip"  
Erna : "Atau tidak usah ke Palace saja Mbak. Nanti kalau mereka pulang  
*Or not have to to Palace just sister. Later if they return home*  
kontak Babay saja. Pesan makanan minta diantar ke sini."  
*contact Babay just. Order food ask deliver to here.*  
"Or we do not have to go to Palace. If they come home just call Babay. Order some foods, ask him to deliver it"  
Anna : "Yah, nanti **kalau** mereka pulang kita musyawarah. Enaknya bagaimana."  
*Yes. Later if they return home we discuss. Taste how.*  
Yang jelas malam ini insya Allah tetap syukuran  
*Which clear night this insya Allah still expression of gratitude*  
Seperti yang saya janjikan."  
*like which I promise.*  
"oke. If they come back. We will discuss it. For tonight, I hope the thanksgiving party is held like I promise."  
Erna : "Oke"  
*Oke*  
"Oke"



In the data (5) and (6) there two statements which contain hedge *Jika* shows the speaker's expectation. In English, *Jika* is translated to *If*. *Kalau tidak datang semoga Nona Nona tidak kecewa and nanti kalau mereka pulang*. Here, the speakers use hedge; Propositional hedging which contains noun is *if* and adverb is *exactly*. The functions of hedge in the data are to express the speaker's expectation. In data (5) the perlocutionary act of hedge for interlocutor is when the speaker utters *if*, the interlocutor felt worry her invitation was rejected by the speaker and in her utterance contains *justru = exactly* which she has a big expectation and she tends to threaten the speaker. Here, hedge as mitigation device does not work because the interlocutor does not follow the speaker's goal. In data (6) the perlocutionary act of hedge for interlocutor is when the speaker utters *if*, the interlocutor follows the speaker utterance. Here, hedge as mitigation device work because the interlocutor follows the speaker's goal.

- (7) Pak Ali : "Eh **ngomong-ngomong** Mbak Eliana sudah makan pagi?"  
*talk talk sister Eliana already eat morning?*  
 "ehm. By the way, have you already had breakfast?"  
 Eliana : "Belum Pak. Lagi tidak nafsu. Apalagi menu hotel. Sudah bosan sekali rasanya."  
*yet Sir. More not appetite. Moreover menu hotel. Already bored really taste.*  
 "not yet sir. I do not have an appetite to eat. Moreover, I do not have an appetite of the taste of hotel's food"  
 Pak Ali : "Kalau *habasy takanat mau?*"  
*If habasy takanat want?*  
 "what is about *habasy takanat*, do you want?"  
 Eliana: "Wah itu boleh Pak. Sebenarnya saya lapar. Yuk kita keluar cari *habasy*"  
*that can Sir. Actually I hungry. Let's we out search habasy*  
*takanat Pak Ali yuk?"*  
*takanat Sir Ali let's?*  
 "wow, I love it. Actually, I am hungry. Let's go to find *habasy takanat* sir?"  
 Pak Ali : "Tak usah keluar. Ini saya sudah bawa. Tadi saya baru saja makan"  
*not have to out. This I already bring. Ago I already eat*  
*tha'miyah bil baidh. Ini saya bawa untuk Mbak Eliana."*  
*tha'miyah bil baidh. This I bring to sister Eliana.*  
 "do not have to go out. Here I bring it. I have already eaten *tha'miyah bil baidh*. Here, I bring *Habasy takanat* for you."
- (8) Khairul : "**Ngomong-ngomong** Nasir kemana kok belum pulang?"  
*talk talk Nasir where not yet return home.*  
 "by the way, where is Nasir?"  
 Nasir : "Nasir tadi pamit tidak pulang. Dia ada urusan ke Tanta"  
*Nasir ago permit not return home. He there business to Tanta*  
 "Nasir asked not to go home. He has a business to Tanta."  
 Khairul : "O ya sudah kalau begitu."  
*o yes already if that.*  
 "oh, ok"

In the data (7) and (8) there statement is *ngomong-ngomong*. In English, *ngomong-ngomong* is translated to *by the way*. Here, the speaker uses hedge; speech act hedging which affect the speech act of the speaker's uncertain utterance. The function of hedge in the data is not to express the speakers' uncertain utterance but to change the topic conversation. The speakers want to know another thing so they change the topic. The perlocutionary act of hedge for interlocutor is when the speakers utter *by the way*, the interlocutors follow the speakers utterance to answer the different topic. Here, hedge as mitigation device work because the interlocutor follows the speaker's goal.

## CONCLUSION

The data in this paper revealed that there are 30 data which contain different result. But the data contain hedge;  *mungkin, jika* and *ngomong-ngomong*. So, the authors took some data which the hedges. The data involve eight data. From the eight data, the type of hedge is propositional hedging and speech act hedging. The propositional hedging is represented by  *mungkin, jika* and *justru*. While the speech act hedging is represented by *Kayaknya, bisa dikatakan..bisa dikatakan tidak* and *ngomong-ngomong*. In the data, the function of hedge beside to show the speaker's uncertain utterance, the authors find out that there are three functions of hedge are to save the third person's face, to reject something in hedge  *mungkin* and to change the topic conversation in hedge *ngomong-ngomong*. In this paper, hedge as mitigation device is equal and there some is contradicted as the theory that mitigation device is to attenuate the strength of the speaker's utterance to achieve the speaker's goal. Hedge as mitigation device affects the perlocutionary act. The perlocutionary act which occurs in this paper is different from the theory whereas the interlocutor follows the speaker's utterance. He/she helps achieving the speaker's goal easier. In this paper, authors find out that in perlocutionary act, the interlocutor deny the speaker's utterance. He/she does not help achieving the speaker's goal.

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THE EFFECT OF DIGITAL STORIES ON READING COMPREHENSION: AN  
INTERNET-BASED INSTRUCTION FOR IRANIAN EFL YOUNG LEARNERS

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to measure up the impact of digital stories on reading comprehension among Iranian young learners through an internet-based instruction. The design of the study was based on experimental method through pre and post test procedure. Thus, 90 students ranging from 11 to 16 years old were selected to take a placement test based on their English course book "Family and Friends 3" and the young learners whose scores were one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean were chosen. Finally 60 subjects (18 boys and 42 girl, mean age = 12.7 years) were randomly divided in to three groups, two experimental and one control group. They took a pre-test of reading comprehension based on 10 digital stories based on three different groups' instructions: 1) Internet-based with pre and post reading tasks, 2) Paper-based with the same pre and post reading tasks, 3) Conventional instruction group without any pre or post reading tasks. For the first group, 10 digital stories available at the site [WWW.learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org](http://WWW.learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org) were worked on in 10 sections, together with pre-reading and post-reading tasks. For the two other instructions the hard copy of the same 10 digital stories were used. Finally, an immediate post-test was conducted to measure the effect of instructions on reading comprehension immediately after the final section. Immediate post-test measured the learners' reading comprehension in the short-term recall. After two weeks, a delayed post-test was administered to assess the retention of the learners. Based on the results there was significant difference between the means of the three groups. Findings showed that the internet-based instruction of digital stories had the most effect on young EFL learners' reading comprehension. Moreover, it was found out that using pre and post work activities can also help to improve learners' reading comprehension.

**KEYWORDS:** Digital stories, reading comprehension, Internet-based instruction, EFL

**INTRODUCTION**

Technological advances, such as more powerful personal computers and internet, directly affect the way people live and people's literacy world in this information century (Mishan, 2005, p. 242). People, nowadays, tend to rely more on computer-based resources (such as writing emails, sending free e-cards, watching online video, reading online news, transmitting instant messages and photos by Yahoo or MSN messengers, exchanging information in online chat room or discussion area) than paper-based resources (such as writing letters, sending cards and postcards, reading newspapers, magazines, novels, and sending pictures by regular mails). Other affected areas by the advance of technology, particularly, include the education system (Gulek & Demirtas, 2005, p. 1).

Recent advances in computer technology and Internet have led to opportunities to teach and learn English through practical ways and authentic materials. Today, computer technology is integrated into almost every aspect of learning in higher education: virtual classes are hold, textbooks arrive with CD-ROMs; homework is delivered and graded on the World Wide Web (WWW); audio ESL (English as a Second Language) files are available on the net; assignments are designed to be completed collaboratively through electronic mail. There are also numerous websites (e.g., ESLPOD, My English Club, Ebaby) available for independent self study especially for young learners and beginners. These websites if appropriately selected and organized can be very useful to improve all skills and proficiency level in a joyful and interesting way. Today's students must be involved in both text and multimedia which can help them gain four skills ( i.e., listening, reading, writing and speaking), through understanding and creating by using their multisensory abilities. Many studies (e.g., Cope & Kalantzis, 2000) suggest that integration of technology can improve student's performance, enhance motivation, and promote learning. Digital sources, such as internet-based digital stories, allow young learners to develop creative presentations and participate in a playful context. In such contexts authentic language, its culture, linguistic and paralinguistic features such as body language, prosody, and gestures can be introduced in to the classroom.

The aim of this study is to improve Iranian young learners reading skill. In this regard, one of the crucial techniques of enhancing this is to use digital stories in an internet-based instruction which is associated with meaningful and playful context for young learners. Here we have three instructions of Internet-based, paper-based, and conventional to determine which instruction is more effective to teach reading.

**Computer-assisted Language Learning (CALL)**

CALL is very well-known and applicable nowadays and can be defined as learning language in formal or informal contexts through computer technology. In CALL, learners and teachers can be involved in different activities from communicating or writing in distance courses to carry out task or leaning structure and reading. It is comprised of the combination of learners, language, and context such as physical and temporal environment or other external influences, tools, and pedagogical activities or tasks. Peers, teachers, or other practitioners can influence this process. All these factors are important and crucial in conducting research on CALL. The number of researches and studies conducted on CALL has been increased due to the increase of computer use and availability nowadays, which leads to the lack of agreed-upon standards for CALL research. Thus, in CALL research, some factors and criteria should be called upon to reduce the faults affecting research outcomes, factors such as a good theoretical support, limitation on CALL such as having a valid design, describing both the benefits and limitations of computer use. The concept of environment or context in CALL can be quickly connected to the concept of authenticity. Lived and real life (RL) environments are something undeniable in cyber and internet-based instruction (IBI) learning in that these are good infinite resources of authentic materials (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000).

Teaching of reading has been a principle focus for many years. Based on Chastain (1988) the reading goal is to read for meaning or to recreate the writers' meaning, it involves comprehension which require a productive fashion

so as to determine meaning even when some of the words, endings, and patterns are not immediately meaningful. The students should control the speed at which they read, they should not be forced to receive and process language at a rate controlled by someone else (Chastain, 1988).

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### *Theoretical Background*

Using computer technology and Internet-based syllabus may be of great help in teaching young learners. Hayati (2005, p. 75-81) states in his article "Computer and Language Teaching", the benefits of using computers in language learning, for instance, improving intonation, grammar, structure, giving learners confidence and freedom, testing learners' knowledge, self-evaluation, more contact with language in different situations, problem solving activities toward authenticity and automaticity, etc.

Computer technology and Internet can be used by teachers and authorities as a practical and useful tools to improve learning, Chen, Belkade and Okamoto (2004, p. 47) in their article "How a Web-based Course Facilitates Acquisition of English for Academic Purposes", argue that technological innovations foster changes in SLA, facilitate computer-base learning activities, and encourage student autonomy, they are ultimately tools in the hands of course authors who must use them creatively to maximize the students' language learning experience and to increase their language acquisition for communicative purposes.

There are many literatures based on the potential of technology and using computer for language teaching and learning. Dunkel (1990), for example, mentioned the possibilities of computer technology as a tool include increasing language learners' (1) self esteem, (2) vocational preparedness, (3) language proficiency and (4) overall academic skills. Armstrong & Yetter-Vassot (1994) and many others explored the benefits of multimedia, the Internet, and various forms of distance education. Ehsani and Knodt (1998) emphasized the role of CALL programs, especially speech technology and voice-interactive CALL for improving learners' speaking skills. Computer technology in combination with a conferencing system was an effective tool for organizing a goal-directed writing and reading instructions.

Computer assisted language learning (CALL) in language education, which relates to the use of technology and specially computers in language teaching, is maturing and showing that can be a perfect and efficient tool in the hands of experienced teachers. CALL can offer solutions to the teaching and learning processes through different interactions. Learning would be fun and effortless and it can relatively alleviate the burden on the teachers' shoulders.

### *Internet-Based Instructions Vs Traditional Instructions*

Nowadays, many internet-based and online instructions and courses are in process and the number of students interested in such instructions is growing (Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2007). Even distance education has grown fast in recent years. Until now the benefits of using internet and online instruction was not known. On one hand, Clark (1985) maintained that media do not influence learning in any condition. On the other hand, Liu (2005, p. 61) debated that educational technologies influence learning by interacting with an individual's cognitive and social processes in constructing knowledge.

With online instruction, the student is separated from the teacher and connected through the use of a computer and the Internet. More and more institutions are offering online courses and/or programs to their students in order to meet various learners' needs. Online learning and instruction, as an integral part of the teaching and learning process in higher education, is growing as fast as the technology itself. On the other hand, conventional classroom instruction is face-to-face instruction, typically conducted in a classroom setting in a lecture/discussion/note taking mode.

Kearsley (1995) found that some benefits of online courses include increased student satisfaction, better examination scores, and a higher level of critical thinking. Other cited benefits of internet-based instruction are user-friendliness, self-paced learning and 24-hour access. With regard to information retention, Barth (1990) found that interactive multimedia computer lessons resulted in an 80 per cent retention rate, while lecture and associated visuals resulted in a mere 20 per cent retention rate in a sample of students. Other studies have found that computer-assisted instruction allows teachers to deliver the same material in a shorter period of time (Jain & Getis, 2003, p. 2)

The advancement of the Internet has created new ways of learning and teaching English as a second/foreign Language (ESL/EFL). For instance, the Internet can be considered as an ideal learning and teaching tool because it offers authentic learning resources available.

### *Reading Comprehension*

Chastain (1988, p. 216) in his book developing second language skills illustrated that reading is a receptive skill because the reader receives a message from the writer. Various writers also referred to reading as a decoding skill which considers language as a code which should be deciphered to arrive at the meaning of a message. Learners of the second language can probably learn to read more easily in compare with any other skill and also can use reading materials as a fundamental source of comprehensible input.

Chastain (1988, p. 217) inserts that the goal of reading is to read for meaning or to recreate the writer's meaning. By this definitions, reading for grammatical forms, study vocabulary or improve pronunciation is not reading at all, because reading involves comprehension. The process of the type that students may look up too many words in a laborious and painful effort to decipher the text should not be the type of reading in the mind of the teacher or students. Instead they have to learn to interact with the reading in a productive way so that be able to determine the meaning even when some of the words and patterns are not clear to them, and will be able to understand the writers' general meaning and use reading for enjoyment.

Two of the psychological, emotional, and cognitive benefits of reading skill are that students can control the speed at which they read and can also read in privacy which is an advantage for those students who are apprehensive about reading in front of their classmates. Chastain (1988, p. 218) also emphasized the importance of the relationship between reading and other skills. The teacher should not underestimate the relationship between sound and its written symbols. Without this knowledge students will not meet the objectives of a reading class with comprehensible input.

### *Experimental Background*

There are several empirical researches conducted on using stories in language teaching and learning. Ghasemi and Hajizadeh (2011, p.72) investigated teaching L2 reading comprehension through short stories, they concluded that the exposure of the students to literature as ESL material can ensure that they enjoy, understand and appreciate a life-like material while they are improving their linguistic proficiency.

Thus, it will be to the overall benefit of the ESL learners if the instructors promote the use of stories as a tool to introduce, accompany, and supplement tried and basal teaching techniques. The power and emotional impact found in a short story can offer the learners deeper meaning about the acquisition of language skills. Finally, short stories invite students to engage in a more active and informed discussion of their involvement with the text and their own personal experiences relevant to the world of the text.

Stories also can have a great effect on vocabulary learning. In a study conducted by Collins (2005), the effect of storybook reading on 70 ESL pre-school kids' vocabulary acquisition was investigated. The results showed that the treatment (i.e., explanation of new vocabulary) effected significant gains in ESL preschoolers' new vocabulary acquisition from storybook reading.

Žigárdyová (2006), in his thesis investigated the role of stories in English learning. He argues that Texts in pupils' textbooks are quite difficult to read. Pupils do not feel confident when reading some texts and exercises. Some of them can read fluently but the rest of the class needs practice. Story brings many interesting opportunities for reading and in addition it is a good way to improve the pupils' interest.

In another study by Yoon (2012) on sixty two Korean elementary students, he explored the effects of an e-book reading on the following aspects: 1) vocabulary increase over the experiment period, and 2) the changes of affective factors on learning English through an e-book. The results showed that with an e-book reading, vocabulary knowledge, motivation, and interest on reading and English learning have been remarkably increased. In addition to four skills, Digital stories through their multisensory effects can bridge the gap between two cultures and may have higher thinking benefits. The combination of animation pictures, sound, music, rhyme, and narration can help learners to understand the meaning in a faster way.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The main questions to be investigated in this study are:

- (1) Do Internet-based instructions of digital stories improve Iranian young EFL learners' reading comprehension?
- (2) Is there any difference between students' reading comprehension proficiency in conventional, paper-based, and internet-based instructions?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

The study is conducted at Pooyandegan institute in Abadan. 90 students ranging from the age 11 to 16 took a placement test based on their course book "Family and Friends 3" written by Tamzin Thompson and Naomi Simmons (2010). This test contained 60 questions including multiple choice, short answer, and true-faults. The learners whose scores were one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean were chosen as the participants of the study. The reliability coefficient of the proficiency-test in this research was calculated by Kuder-Richardson formula (KR-21). The reliability coefficient for the test was 0.76. Finally, 60 subjects (14 boys and 48 girls, mean age= 12.7 years) were divided randomly into three groups for participating in three different groups of conventional, paper-based, and internet-based-based instruction to be taught reading through digital stories.

### ***Instrumentation***

#### ***Proficiency Test***

90 students ranging from the age 11 to 16 took a placement test based on their course book "Family and Friends 3" written by Tamzin Thompson and Naomi Simmons (2010). This test contained 60 questions including multiple choice, short answer, and true- faults. The reliability coefficient for the proficiency test was 0.76.

#### ***Pre-test***

The next instrument was a pre-test of reading comprehension including 10 digital stories to measure the participants' reading comprehension skill before the instructions (Appendix C). The pre-test contained 50 items and was organized around three types of items: true and false, multiple choice, and short answer questions (Heaton, 1990). The reliability coefficient of the pre-test calculated by Kuder-Richardson formula (KR-21) was 0.78.

#### ***Post-test***

Finally, an immediate post-test was used to determine the effects of treatment period and the result of the two other instructions. The immediate post-test also contained 50 items based on 10 digital stories. The reliability coefficients of the test calculated through KR-21 formula was 0.77.

### ***Procedure***

To make a homogenous group, the learners took a placement test of their course book "Family and Friends 3". The test took 30 minutes, then the scores were obtained and average mean of the scores were calculated. The subjects whose scores were one standard above and one standard below the mean were divided into three groups for three different conventional, paper-based, and internet-based instructions. The number of subjects in each group was 20. The whole research project took place in 12 weeks. The reading classes were carried out once a week in one and half hour classes. It is worth to mention that the instructor for all three instructions was the same to prevent any interference of different teaching methods, pronunciation, accent, motivation, etc.

The participants in the internet-based instruction group met with the researcher in the first week at a computer lab, where in the first session, each was asked few questions about their background knowledge of synchronous CALL program and working with internet. The purpose of the interview was to provide data concerning participants' use of computer for the purpose of language learning.

At the beginning of each section in the computer site, the instructor started the class with some pre-reading activities, such as simple questions related to the topic of the story and new vocabularies, and tried to elicit some words from the students and write them on the board. After that the name of the story was announced and the students were asked to find it at the site and listen to it as much as they want in the time limit of 35 minutes. The students were supposed to write down each and every word that they understand clearly or have problems to find the meaning. After all the students finished their listening, the instructor asked some related questions about the story and check students' comprehension of the new vocabulary, story, and also answered their questions, if any. Then the printed form of the story

was given to the students and they started to read the story voluntarily to check their pronunciation. Finally, after all the students finished reading the story aloud, a printed paper of the activity worksheet presented at the site was given to students for checking their comprehension and also their writing skill.

In the paper-based instruction class, the same pre and post reading tasks such as question and answer or volunteering reading were applied but there was no computer and internet access, instead the students were given just the printed form of the same digital story and activity worksheet and the same pre and post reading activities were applied.

In the conventional reading class which is the control group, the students were given the printed text of the same 10 digital stories. There were no pre and post work and the teacher's role is to read and translate the story and answer students' questions. Finally the students had to read the story aloud. The time of the two instructions was the same, one and half an hour, and also volunteering reading was applied. Finally, each group was given a post test based on 10 digital stories. The post-test contained different reading comprehension questions such as questions with short yes/no answers, true and false, and multiple-choice. Then obtained scores were compared to see which group had more progress in reading comprehension. In order to determine whether or not the three groups differed, One way- ANOVA was conducted. Because the F value was significant a post-hoc analysis was used. Two weeks later after the end of the course and without prior knowledge of the students, the instructor administers the delayed post-test. The sudden, without notice presence of the instructor in the class was to test the reading comprehension to see the real effect of the treatment and also retention. Obviously as far as long-term retention is concerned in this study, we adopted the definition provided by Laufer (2007). She asserts that "some people administer a test a week or two later, some a month or even three months, some people repeat measurement several times to check how much learners retain in different points of time" (p.30). The only difference of this delayed test from the immediate post-test was that the items were changed to wipe out the probable recall of immediate test answers.

## RESULTS

### *Results of Three Groups' Pre-test*

At the beginning of the study, three groups were given a pre-test which their statistical data is presented in Table 1.

*Table 1: Groups' Descriptive Statistics in Pre-test Scores*

95% Confidence Interval for Mean								
Groups	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std.Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
1. Control	20	9.0000	4.58838	1.02598	6.8526	11.1474	3.00	20.00
2. Paper-based	20	8.9000	4.58717	1.02572	6.7531	11.0469	3.00	20.00
3. Internet-based	20	8.6500	4.15838	.92984	6.7038	10.5962	3.00	21.00
Total	60	8.8500	4.37568	.56490	7.7196	9.9804	3.00	21.00

As can be seen in Table 1, the number of the students in three groups is 20. Initially, each student's pre-test score on the proficiency test was obtained. Then descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation of each groups, were calculated. Results indicated that the average means for every three groups was 8.8500 and the difference among the three groups' was not significant. Regarding the standard deviation (SD), it was found out that the SD of conventional instruction in control group was 4.588, a bit higher than other two groups, and SD of the internet-based instruction group was 4.158 as the lowest comparing to the other two groups.

In order to find out whether the difference among the performances of the three groups was statistically significant, One- way ANOVA for the three groups was applied, and the results of the test were interpreted from two points: Level of significance and F-ratio. Table 4.2., displays the results of the statistical operations.

*Table 2: One-way ANOVA (Pre-test)*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	1.300	2	.650	.033	.968
Within Groups	1128.350	57	19.796		
Total	1129.650	59			

Table 2, indicates the statistical analysis of One-way ANOVA on the three groups' pre-test scores. Results of the pre-test on the subject's scores did not reject the null hypothesis at ( $p < .968$ ) level of significance which indicated that the difference among the means was not significant, because of the fact that the probability level chosen for rejecting the null hypothesis of no difference was  $\alpha = .05$ , so that the null hypothesis was not rejected if the amount of signification was lower than 0.05. By dividing the between-group variance by the within-group variance and finding the ratio between them, we found the probability that the ratio we obtained would recur if the experiment were repeated an infinite number of times with three sample groups on the same participants or any other experimental groups under the same conditions (Hatch & Farhady, 1981, p. 132). The critical F was (19.47) while the observed F was (0.033); therefore, the observed ratio was not large enough to convince the researcher that the mean difference was significant. On the other hand, in Table 2, the amount of observed F (0.033) for the three groups was lower than Critical F (19.47) suggesting that the difference between three group's mean was not significant. This showed that the groups were homogenous before the research period at the pre-test level.



### Results of the Three Groups' Post-test

The descriptive statistics for the three groups on the post-test are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 3: Groups' Descriptive Statistics in Immediate Post-test

Groups	N	Mean	95% Confidence Interval for Mean				Minimum	Maximum
			Std.Deviation	Std.Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Conventional	20	32.9000	5.24053	1.17182	30.4474	35.3526	25.00	42.00
Paper-based	20	37.3000	6.05327	1.35355	34.4670	40.1330	25.00	48.00
Internet-based	20	46.4000	3.06766	.68595	44.9643	47.8357	39.00	50.00
Total	60	38.8667	47.47077	.96447	36.9368	40.7966	25.00	50.00

It can be seen in Table 3, that the mean in the internet-based group differs significantly from two other groups, and also the mean for paper-based instruction group shows difference to some degree from conventional group. The mean for internet-based, paper-based, and conventional instruction groups were 46.4, 37.3, and 32.9 respectively. To describe the statistical significance of the three groups' mean, One-way ANOVA was applied, and the results of the test were interpreted from two points: Level of significance and F-ratio. The results of the statistical operations are analyzed in Table 4.

Table 4: One-way ANOVA (Immediate Post-test)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1896.133	2	948.067	38.688	.000
Within Groups	1396.800	57	24.505		
Total	3292.933	59			

Based on Table 3, the results of the immediate post-test on the subject's scores rejected the null hypothesis at ( $p < .000$ ) level of significance which shows that the differences among the means were significant. The amount of observed F (38.688) for the three groups was higher than Critical F (19.47) suggesting that the difference between the three group's mean was significant. Since the probability level for rejecting the null hypothesis was smaller than  $\alpha = 0.05$ , therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. To clarify which group outperformed other groups in the post-test, the Post-hoc Scheffe test was conducted to compare the specific mean effectiveness among the three groups. Data are illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5: Post-Hoc Scheffe Tests, Multiple Comparisons (Immediate Post-test)

(I) Groups	(J) Groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	95% Confidence Interval			
			Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Conventional	Paper-based	-4.40000 *	1.56542	.025	-8.3347	-.4653
	Internet-based	-13.50000 *	1.56542	.000	-17.4347	-9.5653
Paper-based	Conventional	4.40000 *	1.56542	.025	.4653	8.3347
	Internet-based	-9.10000 *	1.56542	.000	-13.0347	-5.1653
Internet-based	Conventional	13.50000 *	1.56542	.000	9.5653	17.4347
	Paper-based	9.10000 *	1.56542	.000	5.1653	13.0347

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

It can be inferred from Table 5, that conventional instruction group is significantly different from paper-based instruction group ( $p < 0.025$ ) and internet-based instruction ( $p < 0.000$ ). Also the Paper-based instruction group shows difference in compare to two other conventional and internet-based instruction groups with significance of 0.025 and 0.00 respectively. Also in the third row internet-based instruction group shows great difference from conventional and paper-based groups with the significance level of 0.000. The differences among the three groups were significant but it cannot be understood from the table that which groups gained more significant difference toward others. The results of post hoc Scheffe are shown in three columns showed with numbers one to three. It can be inferred that three groups of conventional, paper-based, and internet-based instructions show great difference in compare to each other. But internet-based instruction group shows the greatest difference (46.4000) in compare to two other groups and it shows that the internet-based instruction had the most influence on the results of reading comprehension post-test and learners' scores.

### Discussion

Results of pre-test and post-test stages showed an improvement in overall learners' reading comprehension skill through instructions and strategies used during this study. However, the most important issue is the usefulness of both internet-based instruction and pre and post reading activities in order to obtain better results. Thus, the results will be discussed concerned with the two research questions.

#### 1. Does Internet-based instruction of digital stories improve Iranian young EFL learners' reading comprehension?

After analyzing data, the results showed that there was not a significance difference among students' performance in pre-test, but in contrast there was a significant difference among the performances of the three groups in post-test (see Table 4, 6). Also it could be observed that students who received the internet-based instruction got better marks and their performance was better than the group who received paper-based or conventional instruction. By looking at the groups' means in Table 4.8, the result of post-hoc Scheffe test revealed that internet-based instruction group had the greatest improvement in their reading comprehension post test. Based on the post test results and data, the scores obtained from internet-based instruction group were also much better in compare to other groups. It can be understood that the learners of the internet-based group after two weeks outperformed the two other groups. Therefore, the first research null hypothesis is rejected ( $p < 0.05$ ). The reasons behind this result could be discussed in terms of the effectiveness of digital stories in developing learners' reading comprehension.



Pre-reading and post-reading tasks also may be of great help in the internet-based instruction and learners' improvement in reading comprehension. Chatwrote (2003 cited in Thangyon & Chiramanee, 2011) suggested that the teachers could provide reading promoting activities, such as the activities that interest the learners. The activities should contain the reading objectives that suit the learners and teacher's interest. The teachers should provide the learners with various pre-reading activities that help them have certain amount of background knowledge about the reading text because the schema would help the reader get better comprehension (Graves, Watts & Graves, 1994).

The results of this study are compatible and in line with previous studies conducted by Busch (2003), Verdugo and Belmonte (2007), and Ghasemi and Hajizadeh (2011). Regarding the results of the delayed post-test, which showed that the digital stories may have better effect on memory and retention, the present study is compatible with the study conducted by Barth (1990) who found that interactive multimedia computer lessons resulted in an 80 percent retention rate.

## *2. Is there any difference between students' reading comprehension proficiency in conventional, paper-based, and internet-based instructions?*

Based on the result section, there are significant differences between the three groups. The results of immediate and delayed post test may show the difference between the three groups in case of recall and retention. The group of paper-based instruction outperformed the group of conventional instruction. It shows that the application of pre and post reading tasks might be of great help in approving the learners' reading comprehension. By comparing the delayed pos-test scores of the two groups of paper-based and conventional instructions it can be inferred that the difference may be due to the pre-reading and post-reading tasks applied by the teacher in the reading classes. These activities may cause better retention in case of reading comprehension. The lower scores of the conventional instruction group may be due to the teacher-centeredness of the instruction that may make the students bore. Also there is a great difference between paper-based instruction and internet-based instruction which shows the positive effect of digital stories on the learners' reading comprehension. The results of the descriptive statistics show that, after the post-test, the mean for internet-based, paper-based, and conventional instruction groups were different. These results might show at the application of the both pre and post reading tasks may impact and improve the learners' reading comprehension in the two instructions of digital story and paper-based in which pre-reading and post-reading activities was used. These findings are compatible and in line with the study conducted by Thongyon and Chiramanee (2011) which showed the positive effect of pre-reading tasks such as introducing new vocabulary, pre –reading questioning, or volunteering reading on the reading comprehension. It is also in line with Grave's (1983) study in which he compared the score of students who received previews in reading with those who had not any reading previews. The results showed that the first group's scores were 13 to 120 percent higher than the second group's score.

Therefore, based on the results of One-way ANOVA and the answer to the second research question above, the second null hypothesis was also rejected. There was not a significant difference between conventional, paper-based, and internet-based instructions concerned with improving reading comprehension.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study began with the assumption that applying digital story instruction could enhance the young EFL learners' reading comprehension. The three groups were taught reading comprehension through three methods of instruction .The participants had a course of English by the book "*Family & Friends 3*" simultaneously. The instructor explored to see if the application of digital stories and pre-reading and post-reading tasks have any effect on the Iranian young EFL learners or to investigate the effect of each approach.

Having administered the posttest and analyzing the data through specific statistical analysis of One way ANOVA, the results indicated that the instruction of using digital stories did affect the learners' reading comprehension the most. The results also showed that applying the pre and post reading tasks may improve the learners reading comprehension. On the basis of the results of the present study, the following conclusions may be made:

- a. CALL generally and synchronous digital stories specifically may influence EFL learners' reading comprehension skill.
- b. Exposure to language materials through synchronous approach is an influential factor for EFL learners.
- c. The online instruction of digital stories does have more significant impact on the learners' reading comprehension skill than conventional or paper-based instruction.
- d. In the internet-based instruction of digital stories, the learners listen and analyze the story independently and freely and thus comprehend it better.
- e. In digital stories instruction, pre-reading activities such as new vocabulary explanation, questioning can influence learners' reading comprehension ability.
- f. In digital stories instruction, post-reading tasks such as questioning and volunteering reading improve reading comprehension.
- g. Paper-based instructions, associated with pre and post reading tasks, in compare to conventional instructions have more positive impact on learners reading comprehension.
- h. conventional instruction which was based on reading and translating can also affect reading comprehension but its effect is much less than paper-based or internet-based instructions.

The following suggestions are drawn based on the limitations of the study. They may be applied in future researches. They are as follow:

1. As the study was only conducted at an institute, more research is needed in similar situations to support the findings and to find more about the effect of internet-based instruction of digital stories on Iranian young EFL students. It can also be applied at the schools or university for different range of ages.
2. This study was conducted to measure the improvement of reading comprehension ability. Future researches can be done regarding the effect of digital stories on other skills such as writing, listening or speaking.
3. The internet-based instruction in this study as associated with some limited pre and post reading activities. In future researches, other useful reading strategies and tasks such as note taking, or skimming and scanning can be examined.
4. In the present study, just the synchronous way of instruction in case of digital stories was used. Future research can cover asynchronous way of applying stories as the material of reading.
5. There are different websites containing effective digital story resources. Regarding learners' age and level of proficiency, other websites can be used instead of the "British Council" website used in this study.
6. Instead of using digital stories other kinds of literature such as songs, poem and novels or other kind of podcasts, videos, clips, or mp3 files can be used in future researches.

7. This study was an attempt to compare internet-based instruction to two other instructions (paper-based and conventional); other different kind of instructions can be compared to digital stories in future researches.

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## THE INFLUENCE OF BREADTH OF VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE AS AN INTERNAL FACTOR ON EFL READING COMPREHENSION TEST PERFORMANCE

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### ABSTRACT

Many factors (internal and external) are claimed to influence students' reading comprehension test performance. Among such factors one can refer to breadth of vocabulary knowledge which is classified as an internal reader variable. In addition to the limited literature, the existence of contradictory results highlights the necessity to conduct a survey with different participants and at a different setting. As a result, this research targets at finding the extent to which this factor influences English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' reading comprehension (RC) test performance. A total of 207 students (102 males and 105 females) participated in this study. They took an RC test from TOEFL: test of English as a foreign language and a vocabulary size test. The analysis of the gathered data was then conducted through running simple linear regressions. The results revealed that breadth of vocabulary knowledge is an influential factor in RC test performance and can be used to predict EFL learners' reading ability. These findings have implications for language instructors, EFL students, and curriculum organizers.

**KEYWORDS:** breadth of vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension, influence

### INTRODUCTION

Reading is a composite of many abilities. It is an interactive process between the reader and the text resulting in comprehension which is its principal point (Carmine et al., 1997). The reader needs to be armed with a wide range of abilities in order to comprehend the reading material and to solve the possible ambiguities. Among the factors affecting reading comprehension one can refer to breadth of vocabulary knowledge. Although vocabulary knowledge can be divided into a good deal of aspects in knowing a word, some lexical researchers (Grave, 1986; Lessard-Clouston, 2006; Qian, 1999, 2002; Read, 2004) divided it into two main dimensions: breadth and depth. Breadth of vocabulary knowledge is the longitudinal dimension of vocabulary knowledge, which refers to "the size of vocabulary or the number of words the meaning of which one has at least some superficial knowledge" (Qian, 2002, p. 515). It is a dimension defined by how many words have meaning for the individual (Anderson & Freebody, 1981). On the other hand, depth of vocabulary knowledge is viewed as the latitudinal dimension which includes all word characteristics such as phonemic, graphemic, morphemic, syntactic, semantic, and collocation properties and refers to the richness of knowledge that the individual possesses about the words that are known.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Nowadays, many reading teachers concede that when their students encounter an unfamiliar text in the foreign language, the first challenge seems to be its vocabulary (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Lack of sufficient word understanding has been frequently stated as one of the major barriers to content comprehension in ESL/EFL reading. Indeed, Bernhardt (2005), Grabe and Stoller (2002), Nassaji (2003), and Segalowitz et al. (1991) claimed that the main difference between skilled and less skilled readers lies in slower and inefficient lexical access and semantic processing. Nassaji (2004) believes that one type of knowledge source that is intensively related to the learner's ability to read texts is vocabulary knowledge. Students with high levels of vocabulary knowledge will be able to decode and understand the reading passage better than students with low levels of vocabulary (Nation, Clarke, Marshall, & Durand, 2004). Zhang and Annual (2008) maintained that comprehension decreases whenever a text contains words that are beyond the learners' level of understanding, no matter how much the text is cohesive or how much background knowledge the students have. The more vocabulary students know, the better they can decode and understand what they read (Qian, 2002). This implies that having vocabulary knowledge could increase the overall performance of a reading comprehension test.

Anderson and Freebody (1981) have three hypotheses which interpret the relationship between the vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. These three hypotheses are: instrumental, general aptitude, and general knowledge hypothesis. The instrumental hypothesis suggests that vocabulary is the critical factor for text comprehension and that there exists a cause-effect relationship between them. The more word meanings the reader knows, the more easily he/she understands the text. General aptitude hypothesis states that vocabulary knowledge is the orientation of the general language ability, and the general language ability is the decisive factor on reading comprehension. Last but not least, General knowledge hypothesis confirms that vocabulary knowledge is one of the sources of the general knowledge which is fundamental for comprehension.

Obviously, researchers tend to agree that vocabulary knowledge is a major prerequisite and causal factor in comprehension and that there is a relationship between vocabulary size and reading comprehension. Some studies have used vocabulary size as a predictor variable for reading comprehension (Hu & Nation, 2000; Laufer 1992, 1997; Liu & Nation, 1985). Moreover, research on the role of decoding and vocabulary skills, as predictors of reading comprehension in young L1 and L2 language learners, proved that vocabulary is a critical predictor of the development of reading comprehension skills in both L1 and L2 learners (Lervåg & Aukrust, 2010). Empirical studies on the relationship between vocabulary size and L2 reading comprehension have consistently shown a strong correlation between them ranging from 0.50 to 0.85 (Laufer, 1992; Stæhr, 2008).

To understand text meaning, one must be able to decode the printed message (Adams, 2004; Alderson, 2000; Day & Bamford, 1998); however, the presence of high density of unknown words in a text may seriously hinder comprehension (Curtis, 1987; Nation, 2001). Laufer (1998) and Qian (1999, 2002, 2004) revealed that lexical issues prevent successful comprehension and that vocabulary familiarity correlates strongly with other linguistic skills in the target language. To estimate how many words the learners know in their L2 vocabulary, breadth/size tests have been developed and researchers have found that breadth test of vocabulary knowledge can very well predict success in reading, writing, general proficiency, and academic achievement (Laufer & Goldstein, 2004; Nation & Meara, 2002). A number of studies (e.g., Al-Nujaid, 2003, as cited in Alsamadani, 2011; Koda, 1989; Laufer, 1992, 1996; Qian, 1999) have used scores on vocabulary size to predict levels of academic reading comprehension. Al-Nujaid (2003 as cited in Alsamadani, 2011), for example, found that there is a strong and significant relationship between vocabulary size and comprehension level. In fact, the relation of breadth of vocabulary knowledge with reading comprehension is recently paid much attention and viewed as a striking point by numerous ESL/EFL lexical and reading researchers who believe that the more words the EFL/ESL readers know, the better their reading (e.g. Huang, 2001, 2004; Hu & Nation, 2000).

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY AND THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Taking a look at the studies available in the literature, one can come to the conclusion that the area of reading comprehension still requires further research, especially in EFL contexts. The main objective of the present study is to examine the effect of breadth of vocabulary knowledge as an internal or according to Samuels (1983) "inside- the-head" factor on reading comprehension test performance of Iranian EFL learners. The present research also endeavors to discover the difference between male and female Iranian EFL learners regarding the extent to which their RC test performance is influenced by the selected internal factor. Therefore, the present study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent does breadth of vocabulary knowledge influence students' RC test performance?
2. Is there any significant difference between Iranian male and female EFL learners regarding the extent to which their RC test performance is influenced by the selected internal factor? (Does any gender influence exist?)

#### METHODOLOGY

##### *Participants*

A total of 207 students (102 males and 105 females) participated in this study. They were Iranian EFL learners comprising students of an upper intermediate level at a private language institute (Navid English Institute, Shiraz branch). All students were native speakers of Persian, with the average age of 20 who had been studying English for almost 10 semesters.

##### *Instruments*

Two instruments were utilized in this study. The first one was the revised version of nation's 3000 vocabulary Level Test (VLT) (Schmitt, Schmitt, & Clapham, 2001), which was used to assess breath of vocabulary knowledge of the students. The vocabulary size test (VST), called the Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT), was originally designed by Nation (1983, 1990) and used to measure learner's size of vocabulary knowledge. Nation (2001) referred to the revised version as a major improvement on the original test made by Schmitt *et al.* (2001). Each level of the test includes 30 word-definition matching items and a total of 60 target words are used for testing; ten groups of six words on the left and three definitions on the right make up the test. Test-takers are required to match the words to the definitions.

The following example illustrates the test format of a noun cluster (Schmitt *et al.* 2001, p. 82):

1. business \_\_\_\_\_
2. clock \_\_\_\_\_ part of a house
3. horse \_\_\_\_\_ animal with four legs
4. pencil \_\_\_\_\_ something used for writing
5. shoe \_\_\_\_\_
6. wall \_\_\_\_\_

The second instrument was a reading comprehension test drawn from the TOEFL Actual Tests (2005, pp. 25-35) employed to assess the students' reading comprehension test performance. It was a standardized reading comprehension test composed of five passages. Regarding the validity and reliability of the test, as an established standardized language test, all of the official TOEFL tests have been carefully pretested for validity and reliability before being put into actual use.

##### *Procedure*

To neutralize the influence of the RC test, all students first took the vocabulary test and then the reading comprehension test. The tests took 20 and 55 minutes respectively. To carry out the statistical analysis, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 21.0 was used. Scores gathered through selected instruments were calculated and arranged in different columns. Along with showing students' gender and age in the first two columns there were columns for each student showing his/her score in reading comprehension and breadth of vocabulary knowledge. The analysis of the data was then carried out through running simple linear regressions.

#### DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

##### *Breadth of Vocabulary Knowledge vs. RC Test Performance*

The first aim of this study was to investigate the extent to which the students' breadth of vocabulary knowledge influences their RC test performance. To this end, a simple linear regression analysis was carried out. The hypotheses under investigation in this phase of research were as follows:

- $H_0: \beta_1 = 0$  (The independent variable does not affect the dependent one.)  
 $H_1: \beta_1 \neq 0$  (The independent variable affects the dependent one.)

Before conducting the analyses, the outliers were checked through Cook's and Leverage values and they were deleted from the data. Then normal distribution of the dependent variable (RC score) was assured through one-sample kolmogorov-smirnov test (Table 1, sig. = .09 >  $\alpha$  = .05).

Table 1: kolmogorov-smirnov test

		RC score
N		207
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	25.77
	Std. Deviation	7.250
	Absolute	.086
Most Extreme Differences	Positive	.086
	Negative	-.048
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.241
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.092

The regression analysis was then run and the results (Table 2) show that regression line and the independent variable account for 33 percent of the variance in RC test scores ( $R^2=.33$ ).

Table 2: Model Summary<sup>b</sup> of regression analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.579 <sup>a</sup>	.335	.332	5.925

a. Predictors: (Constant), vlt

b. Dependent Variable: RC score

Table 3 provides evidence for the significance of the results ( $\text{sig.} = .00 < \alpha = .05$ )

Table 3: ANOVA<sup>a</sup> (Significance of the regression results)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3629.948	1	3629.948	103.397	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	7196.922	205	35.107		
	Total	10826.870	206			

a. Dependent Variable: RC score

b. Predictors: (Constant), vlt

The results indicated that the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative one (The independent variable affects the dependent one) was confirmed. Moreover, the following linear equation was proved to help predict the value of the dependent variable, RC test performance (Table 4, Figure 1)

RC test performance =  $3.82 + .92 * \text{vlt grade}$

Table 4: Coefficient<sup>a</sup> of the selected internal factor

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.822	2.197		1.739	.083
	Vlt grade	.919	.090	.579	10.168	.000

a. Dependent Variable: RC score

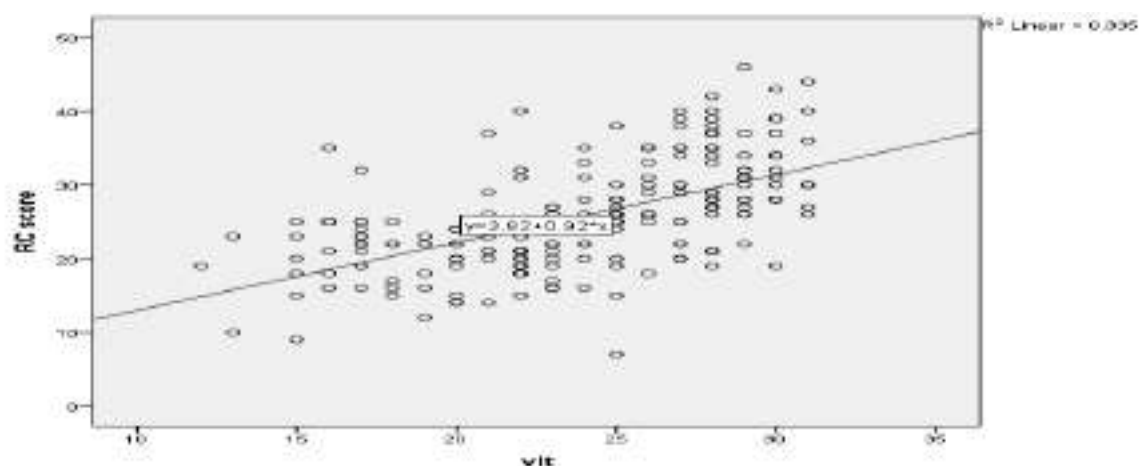


Figure 1: regression line and linear equation

#### Breadth of Vocabulary Knowledge and RC Test Performance in males vs. females

To investigate the relative influence of the selected internal factor on RC test performance of males versus females, the SPSS file was first split based on the participants' gender and then a simple linear regression was carried out.

According to the results of the regression analysis (Table 5), regression line and the independent variable accounted for 37 percent ( $R^2=.37$ ) of the variance in RC test scores in the male group, and 30 percent ( $R^2=.299$ ) of the variance in RC test scores in the female group.

Table 5: Model Summary of regression analysis

gender	Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
male	1	.613 <sup>a</sup>	.376	.369	5.246
female	1	.547 <sup>a</sup>	.299	.292	6.563

a. Predictors: (Constant), vlt

Table 6 provides evidence for the significance of the results ( $\text{sig.} = .00 < \alpha = .05$ ).

Table 6: ANOVA<sup>a</sup> (Significance of the regression results for males and females)

gender	Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
male	1	Regression	1655.115	1	1655.115	60.142	.000 <sup>b</sup>
		Residual	2752.032	100	27.520		
		Total	4407.147	101			
female	1	Regression	1892.336	1	1892.336	43.935	.000 <sup>b</sup>
		Residual	4436.293	103	43.071		
		Total	6328.629	104			

a. Dependent Variable: RC score

b. Predictors: (Constant), vlt

As Table 7 indicates, the following linear equation can help predict the value of the dependent variable, RC test performance, in each group:

Males: RC test performance= 2.62+ .96\* vlt score

Females: RC test performance= 4.46+ .9\* vlt score

Table 7: Coefficients<sup>a</sup> of the selected internal factor for males and females

Model			Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
			B	Std. Error	Beta		
male	1	(Constant)	2.617	3.116		.840	.403
		vlt	.962	.124	.613	7.755	.000
female	1	(Constant)	4.458	3.181		1.401	.164
		vlt	.897	.135	.547	6.628	.000

a. Dependent Variable: RC score

Overall, the results of the linear regression (Table 5) indicate that there is difference between Iranian male and female EFL learners regarding the extent to which their RC test performance is influenced by their breadth of vocabulary knowledge (Figures 2 & 3).

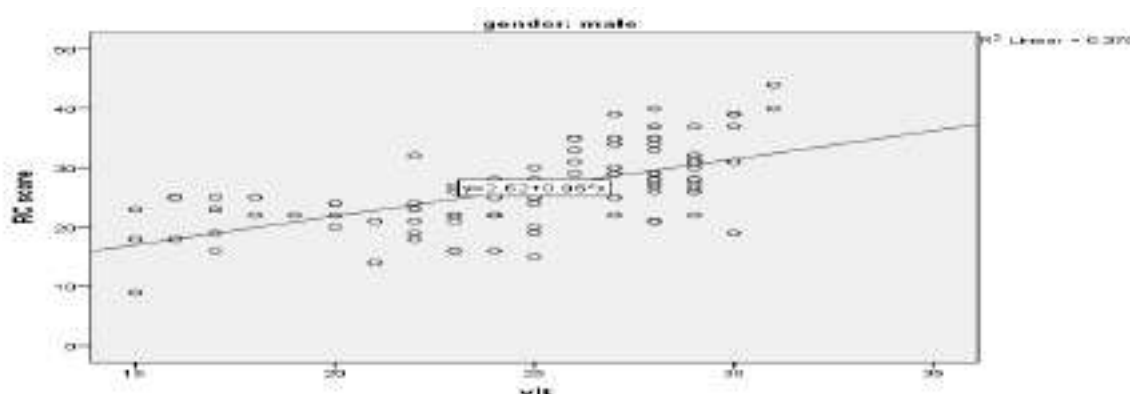


Figure 2: regression line and linear equation for males



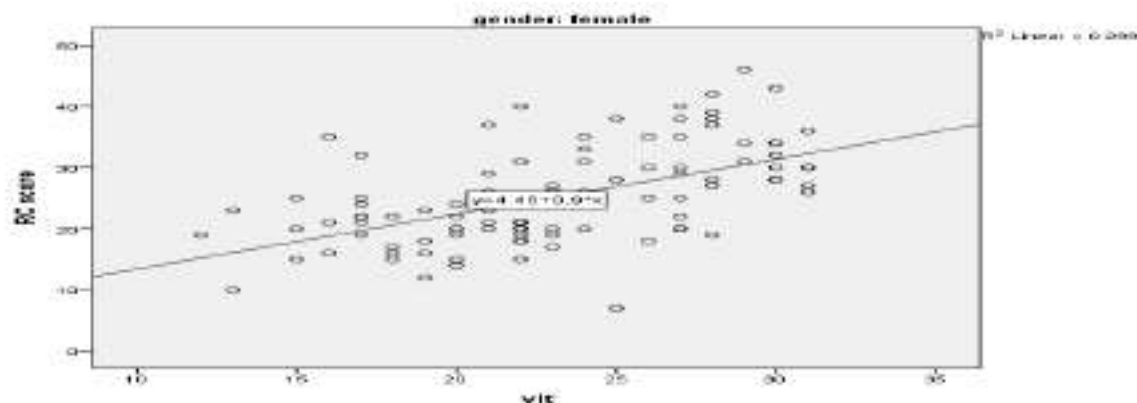


Figure 3: regression line and linear equation for females

### Discussion

The results of the present study lend support to many researchers. Alderson (2000), Qian (2004), and Read (2000), for instance, underscored the prominent role of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension. Bernhardt (2005), Fukkink *et al.* (2005), Koda (2005), and Zhang (2000, 2002a, 2002b) have also consistently indicated the importance of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension. Moreover, Read (2000), and Nation (2001) argued for the claim of significant function of breadth/size of vocabulary in reading comprehension.

In addition, the findings seem to be in compliance with Anderson and Freebody's (1981) general knowledge hypothesis according to which vocabulary knowledge is one of the sources of the general knowledge which is fundamental for comprehension. In this regard, Nation, Clarke, Marshall, and Durand (2004) also stated that students with high levels of vocabulary knowledge will be able to decode and understand the reading passages better than students with low levels of vocabulary. The findings are also in line with that of Joshi and Aaron (2000) who found that vocabulary knowledge is a predictor of reading ability. It is also supported by Hu and Nation (2000), Laufer (1992, 1997), and Liu and Nation (1985), who found that vocabulary size is a predictor variable for reading comprehension.

### CONCLUSIONS

The present study aimed at examining the effect of breadth of vocabulary knowledge as an internal factor on reading comprehension test performance of Iranian EFL learners. The results of linear regression analysis revealed that EFL learners' breadth of vocabulary knowledge influences their reading comprehension test performance to a considerable extent. Moreover, a linear equation was proved to help predict their RC test performance on the basis of their vocabulary test grade. It was also confirmed that the influence of breadth of vocabulary knowledge on RC test performance is more significant in males compared with females. These results will inform language instructors, EFL students, and curriculum organizers of the significance of vocabulary breadth in reading comprehension. Many EFL students approach reading passively, relying heavily on the bilingual dictionaries and spending long hours laboring over sentence-by-sentence translations. In spite of all the efforts they see no improvement in their reading comprehension. Moreover, according to several experimental studies (Alexander, 1998; Kaivanpanah & Alavi, 2008a; Nassaji, 2003), in reality, inferring word meanings from context is not reliable for EFL students, since the success rate of this strategy is not as high as we anticipate and the word meanings the EFL/ESL learners infer are often incorrect, misinterpreting or too general. Therefore, students' vocabulary assessment and instruction should be a focus of every English course. Vocabulary teaching should be regarded as a priority in the curriculum. In addition, although vocabulary instruction is very common in foreign language classrooms in Iran, most textbooks in English only provide explicit instruction of relatively basic English vocabularies. It is necessary for teachers to find ways to increase the student's vocabulary knowledge. For example, the teacher can encourage students to do extensive reading beyond the classroom requirements. When students do extensive readings, they will be able to build new vocabulary. However, vocabulary knowledge is just one of the factors that should be emphasized. Investigating all different factors in a single study is not feasible. As a result, this study focused on the role that one of many internal factors plays in reading comprehension. More research is needed to examine how other factors influence RC test performance of Iranians as well as other EFL learners.

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**THE EFFECT OF COMPUTER ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING (CALL) AND CONTEXT-BASED INSTRUCTION OF LEXICAL ITEMS ON THE RECALL AND RETENTION OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL**

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**ABSTRACT**

This research was done at a non-profit school in Masjed-e-Soleyman (MIS) city in Iran. The aim of this research was to find the effect of using computer-assisted language learning (CALL) approach on the learners' recall and retention at the elementary level. In order to have homogeneous participants, the researcher used Nelson proficiency test (Fowler & Coe, 1976). 50 participants whose scores fell one standard deviation below the mean were chosen to take part in the research. The null hypotheses were proposed: CALL would not improve learners' recall and retention and there would be no significant difference between the mean scores of the students who were instructed traditionally and those who were instructed based on CALL regarding the recall and retention of vocabulary learning. The chosen participants were divided randomly into two groups of 25 students, one control, and one experimental group. Three sets of tests were designed by the researcher as the pre-test, immediate, and delayed post-test. Learners were taught ten units of Picture Dictionary (Nakata, Frazier & Hoskins, 2011) during ten sessions of treatment. Two groups took a post-test immediately after the treatment and a delayed post-test after a two-week interval. Paired samples t-test and independent samples t-test were used to compare the groups' means. The findings revealed that control group was good only at the recall of vocabulary items and the experimental group was good not only at recall but also at retention of vocabulary items.

**KEYWORDS:** Computer assisted language learning (CALL), context-based instruction Lexical Items

**INTRODUCTION**

The importance of learning English as a foreign language (EFL) cannot be overlooked. While many people have engaged in teaching and learning English and used different methods and instruments, they have needed to optimize the use of available resources to help the learners to become more proficient and fluent in using English. One of them is Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) which has, in particular, been used in pedagogy more frequently since 1960s (Levy, 1997). It has rapidly been spread through the world and used in all aspects of teaching. Nowadays, there are a lot of software and programs in teaching a foreign language. Some focus on one aspect of language learning such as Babylon dictionary that focus only on vocabulary, while others are more comprehensive like Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (5<sup>th</sup> ed.), helps learners to develop not only their vocabularies but also their pronunciation. It provides some examples of vocabulary use, the origin of the vocabulary and its family. Nowadays, Language teachers have been taking advantages of CALL to teach a foreign language totally or its components such as teaching grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary individually.

Learners used CALL to remember the vocabularies easier and faster. In a recent research, Jones (2004) examined the performance of the experimental group that was provided written forms and pictures when they heard the words with a group not provided these. She wanted to know whether there was any significant difference in their performance after the course of instruction or not. She concluded that the group who received pictures, spelling, and sounds through CALL simultaneously was better to remember the words.

Using English as a foreign language (EFL) has been spreading throughout the world. Therefore, everybody who is engaged in teaching English such as teachers, syllabus designers, and educational specialist should help them-no matter that they have different reasons. Due to the significant role of vocabulary learning, it has been regarded as an important research topic for investigation in the context of foreign language learning and teaching.

Students and generally people cannot speak if they do not know vocabulary. Research has shown that due to the lack of vocabulary knowledge, most Iranian students as (EFL) learners are either not interested to communicate, or if they initiate a communication, they would abandon it rapidly because introduced vocabulary items are not practiced in the exercises efficiently and effectively (Abdollahi-Guilani, SubakirMohdyasin & Hua, 2011). Therefore, it seems vital for teachers to find more effective methods to contribute to teaching and learning vocabulary.

Unfortunately, in Iran, textbook writers and syllabus designers have paid less attention to the role played by the CALL in the classroom. Teaching is not supplemented with modern technologies, specially CALL in teaching English. Students are forced to follow the teacher. The classes are teacher-centered and teachers do not want to give students autonomy and independence to decline their authority. Therefore, they use traditional ways (Abdollahi-Guilani, SubakirMohdyasin & Hua, 2011).

This study is crucial because it provides helpful evidence on the use of two approaches of CALL or context-based and non-CALL instruction. It will be necessary for teachers to equip themselves with up-to-date techniques if significant differences are found. The researcher hopes that the results of this study help teachers to teach vocabulary effectively and learners to recall and retain them easily and for a longer period. Also it is hoped that syllabus designers, textbook writers and the like take the advantages of it.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

***The Importance of Vocabulary Learning***

Cobb, Spada and Zahar (2001) claim one of most important aspects of language learning is vocabulary development. They believe that as a new and interesting subdivision of applied linguistics and producing a lot of books and papers, there are a number of remarkable

unanswered questions about Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition (SLVA). Knowing a lot of words can help learners not only to communicate well but also to have control over their academic progress (Gorjian, 2008). After the decline of Audio-lingual Method, vocabulary has become dominant and it has taken the most important role in language learning (Nunan, 1999). He (1999) also found that the more we know vocabularies, the better we pull out the meaning from spoken and written texts. Although knowing grammatical points are important, it is impossible to communicate without vocabulary (Harmer, 1991). According to Celce-Murcia (2001), learning a foreign or second language involves the acquisition of two thousands of words. Meara (1995) maintained that, due to the importance of vocabulary in language learning, the students should not only try to learn vocabularies but also to focus on the more frequently occurred words in a language.

#### ***The Role of Computer in Language Teaching and Learning***

According to Holland and Fisher (2007), computer as tutor has been used to provide materials such as grammatical points and vocabulary items and language practices such as exercises in pronunciation, writing, listening, or reading for learners. It has also been useful for the teachers to analyze the learners' performance and test their knowledge. This has deeply rooted in behaviorist psychology which has focused on, as the key element in second language acquisition, extensive drill and practice (Meng & Hong, 2007).

Paying attention to the individual learner capabilities, cognitive goals and needs, has been the second role of computer in language teaching (Philips, 1987). Computer (via the Internet) has provided the opportunities for learners to access radio, television broad cast, Internet Websites, blogs, and advertisements and Consequently represented a wide range of written, audio, and visual materials. These materials have been used to provide "insight into the real-world contexts in which words and collocations occur across genres, registers, and language varieties" (Simpson, 2011, p. 201). Computer as the medium has been the broadest use of computer in language learning. It has given opportunity to the learners to introduce themselves to others and making interactions with other people (Danet & Herring, 2007).

Researchers have done a lot of researches related to these prominent roles of computers in language learning and especially in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) contexts. Some articles by researchers such as Kulik and Kulik (1987), McNeil and Nelson (1991) showed the positive effect of CALL on instruction. Providing the teachers with some training courses regarding to CALL not only improve the efficiency of computer in the classroom but also decrease the teachers' stress.

It can be said that there are two different views on the role of the teacher and CALL. According to the traditional view, the presence of the teacher is considered as an indispensable element in the classroom. Levy (1997) believes that albeit helping students in teachers' absence outside the classroom, computers do not replace the teachers permanently or for a long time. With regards to the role of CALL in language learning, Alatis (1986) and Secan (1990) pointed out that computers would not replace the teachers in the classroom. They (1990) focused on the unchangeable role of the teacher.

According to Fatemi Jahromi and Salimi (2013), both teachers' and students' attitudes towards CALL and their computer competence have a relationship with the use of CALL in Iran. They (2013) found that teachers have moderate computer competence with regard to CALL and more positive attitudes in the comparison with their students' in Iran and maintained that positive attitudes toward CALL, easy access to the computers at school and adequate training will be developing CALL factors in language education in Iran.

Kang (1995) carried out a research on the effect of a context-embedded approach to second language vocabulary learning at an elementary school in Seoul, Korea. This research was taken for six sessions. The learners were instructed five sessions successively and the long-term treatment effect was checked in the last session. Selecting four groups, the researcher chose four instructional approaches as follow: 1. a human instructor thought the paper and pencil group traditionally; 2. computer-based word-for-word which was incorporated the same approach used in the first group. In this group, the researcher replaced the teacher with a computer; 3. a computer and pictures were used to instruct the participants in the third group; 4. a computer-based context was provided for the learners.

The researcher used three types of tests to measure the learners' recall and retention include definition recall, listening comprehension, and knowledge transfer. Although the computer-based context group represented a slight improvement in recall phase, it showed higher performance than other three groups.

The researcher concluded that the context-embedded approach was most effective than other three approaches used for vocabulary learning. It was also added that vocabularies that were processed in an enriched context through images, associations, or meaningful elaboration can be retained for a longer period.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

According to the above literature review, the researchers aims to investigate two main questions in this study. They are mentioned below.

1. Do CALL based instructions develop Iranian EFL learners' recall and retention of lexical items?
2. Is there any difference between non CALL and CALL-based instruction in developing Iranian EFL learners' recall and retention of lexical items?

#### **METHODOLOGY**

##### ***Participants***

This research was administered to participants attending a non-profit school in Masjed Soleyman (MIS) city in Iran. The researcher administered a proficiency test adopted from Nelson proficiency test (Fowler & Coe, 1976) not only to assess the students' level of proficiency but also to feel sure about the homogeneity of the participants. In order to generalize the research findings to a wider population, all participants at this school took this proficiency test and 50 participants whose scores fell less than one standard deviation below the sample mean were selected in terms of their performances on this proficiency test. Then the selected participants were randomly divided into two groups: the experimental and the control groups. All participants were females with their age range of 12 to 14.

##### ***Instrumentation***

##### ***Nelson Proficiency Test***

To homogenize the participants, the researcher administered Nelson proficiency test (Fowler & Coe, 1976). Being one of the most proficiency tests available in Iran and covering different English language elements such as vocabulary, grammar (phrases, clauses) were the most important factors in selecting that test. It is available in. This test included 50 multiple-choice



items. It was taken an hour to answer the questions. Each true response to the items was scored 1. The students did not get negative points for false answers. 50 students were considered the elementary level. The reliability of the test based on KR-21 formula was 0.73.

### *Three Tests Assessing Students' Progress*

The students faced three sets of multiple-choice questions included 30 test items. That was done in order to reduce test-retest effect. The content was kept consistent but the forms were different. The items were based on Picture Dictionary (Nakata, Frazier & Hoskins, 2011). Each set of items was piloted with a group of 20 homogeneous learners who did not take part in the research. The students did not get negative points for incorrect responses. The items standardization was considered in terms of item difficulty item, discrimination, and item distribution. Pre-test was done in order to show the students' initial proficiency and to help the researcher to make more precise conclusion at the end of the research. The reliability coefficient of pre-test based on KR-21 formula was 0.95.

In order to check students' progress, after ten sessions, the researcher tested students on vocabulary at the end of the course. It was done with the aim of measuring the students' recall of the vocabulary in two groups. The reliability coefficient of the immediate post-test was 0.90 through KR-21 formula.

The researcher administered a delayed post-test after two weeks. There was not any instruction in that period. It was done to measure the effectiveness of the use of CLL in students' retention. The reliability coefficient of the delayed post-test was 0.94 through KR-21 formula.

Also, there were a computer for the teacher and some computers for students, each for a couple of students, and some CDs. The CDs were prepared by the researcher. Students could play the CDs and see the pictures and spellings and listen to the pronunciation of the vocabularies successively. They did not need to click on every vocabulary. It was tried to design the CD which was utilized as easy as possible. There was a projector, too.

### *Procedure*

In this study, the materials were similar and at the same level of difficulty for experimental and control groups. The participants attended class twice a week in both groups. There was a question-and-answer session for both groups separately. In order to assess how much students knew about CALL especially in the experimental group, the teacher asked some questions and answered students' questions. The students were asked to maintain their attitudes to the training sessions during or after the treatment.

The participants in experimental and control groups were exposed to 10 units out of 55 extracted randomly from Picture Dictionary (Nakata, Frazier & Hoskins, 2011). This book is specialized for elementary level. Moreover, it covers everyday topics, high-frequency words, question-and-answer patterns, giving the students the opportunity to listen to native voices, providing contexts, and beautiful pictures. The extracted units were about parts of the body, feelings, kitchen, toys, fruits, vegetables, birthday party, descriptions, clothes, and school supplies. The number of vocabularies ranged from 16-20 in each unit. The teacher taught one unit in each session. Students attended the class twice a week. Each session lasted for an hour.

In the experimental group, the teacher used a computer, a projector, and a board. When the teacher played the CD, the students could listen to the pronunciation of the vocabularies that were pronounced by native speakers. At the same time they saw their pictures and spellings for three times. Vocabularies were pronounced in American. After doing that, the students were given a few minutes to take a look at the vocabularies while they had simultaneous access to the computers. Since then the teacher asked some questions. When students had some problem with pronunciation of vocabularies, the teacher stopped them and played the track for them again. When they had some difficulties remembering the meanings the teacher asked their classmates to help. Each student received a copy of CD, so they had the opportunity to practice over and over at home. In the control group, the students were given neither the opportunity to use CALL in the classroom nor the chance to play the CD at home.

The course was made up of ten one-hour sessions. One unit was taught every session. Carrying out an immediate post-test right after the end of the course, the teacher tested how well students could recall vocabularies in both groups. There were forty items in the post-test. Students did not have any instruction in a period of two weeks. Then she performed the delayed post-test to measure the students' retention in both groups. The items of the tests were covered the lessons that were taught during the treatment.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### *Descriptive Statistics*

Based on the Table 1 and 2, the significant value, .747 is greater than .050. The result does not show any significant difference between the two groups at the pre-test. That is, both groups are homogenous.

*Table 1: Results of the Pre-test*

Test	Groups	df	Std. Error Difference	t	Level of Significant (P)
Pre-test	Control Experimental	48	.738	-.325	.747

*Table 2: Results of Control Groups' Tests*

Control Group	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	25	8.00	18.00	11.84	2.687
Immediate Post-test	25	10.00	29.00	16.20	5.759
Delayed Post-test	25	9.00	28.00	15.72	5.784

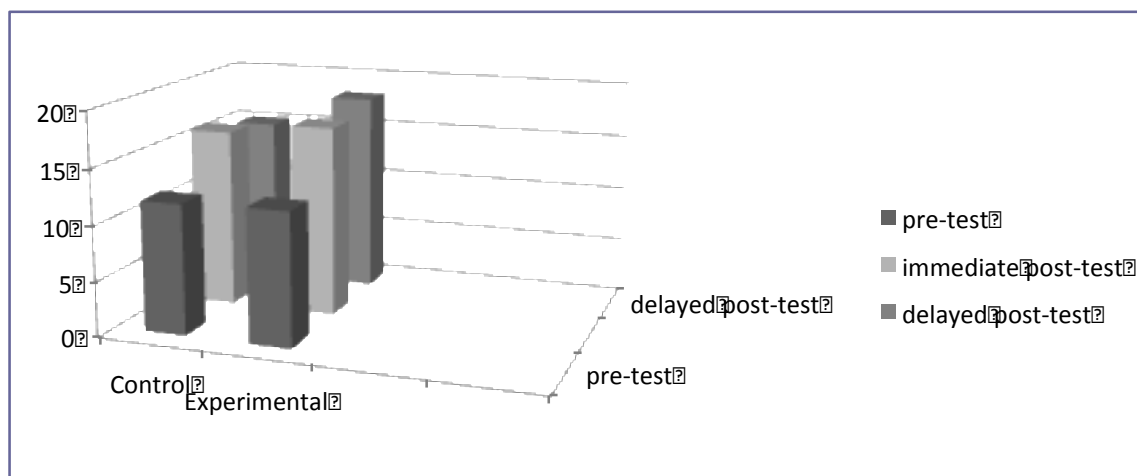
According to Table 2, the mean of pre-test is 11.84 and the standard deviation is 2.68. The minimum score is 8 and the maximum one is 18. After the end of the training course, the participants were immediately tested on vocabulary recall. It was done to measure how well participants recall the meaning of the vocabulary items that they learnt during the treatment. The mean of the immediate post-test is 16.20

and the standard deviation is 5.75. The students' scores range from 10 to 29. After giving participants a two-week break, the teacher gave the participants a delayed post-test. The mean is 15.72 and the standard deviation is 5.78. The minimum and the maximum scores are 9 and 28.

*Table 3: Results of Experimental Groups' Tests*

Experimental Group	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Per-test	25	6.00	18.00	12.08	2.531
Immediate Post-test	25	8.00	30.00	17.24	5.746
Delayed Post-test	25	11.00	29.00	18.20	5.338

The experimental group's performances are presented in Table 3. The minimum score is 6 and maximum score is 30 in pre-test. The calculated mean is 12.08 and the standard deviation is 2.531. The students' scores range from 8 to 30 in immediate post-test and from 11 to 29. The mean and standard deviation are 17.24 and 5.746 in immediate post-test. The mean is 18.20 and the standard deviation is 5.33854 in delayed post-test. It should be mentioned that the mean values of two groups are also shown by Figure 1.



*Figure 1: Sample Means for Three Tests of Two Groups*

The Tables 2, 3 and Figure 1 show that two groups had an improved performance in mean scores from pre-test to immediate post-test, from 11.84 to 16.20 in the control group and from 12.08 to 17.24 in the experimental group. They also show an increase from immediate post-test to delay post-test in experimental group from 17.24 to 18.20, but this increase is not observed in control group. In this group, the mean score decreased to 15.72.

As the descriptive statistics does not provide the researcher with sufficient information to sustain or reject the null hypotheses, the researcher cannot interpret the results meticulously; she went further and used the inferential statistics too.

*Table 4: Paired Samples t-test of Control Group (pre-test vs. immediate post-tests)*

Paired differences								
Pre-test & Immediate post-test	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		<i>t</i>	df	Sig (2- tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
	-4.160	3.300	.660	-5.522	-2.797	-6.303	24	.000

Table 4 shows that the observed *t* (6.303) is greater than the critical *t* (2.64). The results of paired samples t-test shows that is a significant difference between pre-test and immediate post-test of control at the significant level ( $p < .05$ ).



Table 5: Paired Sample t-test of Control Group (immediate vs. delayed post-tests)

Paired differences								
Immediate post-test & Delayed post-test	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		<i>t</i>		
				Lower	Upper		df	Sig (2-tailed)
	.480	1.294	.2589	-.054	1.014	1.853	24	.76

As the observed *t* (1.853) is less than the critical *t*, it can be conclude that there was no significant difference between the performance of learners in immediate post-test and delayed post-test of control group at the significant level ( $p < .05$ ). The mean is .480 and SD is 1.29.

Table 6: Paired Samples t-test of Experimental Group (pre-test vs. immediate post-tests)

Paired differences								
Pre-test & Immediate post-test	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		<i>t</i>		
				Lower	Upper		df	Sig (2- tailed)
	-7.240	3.031	.606	-8.491	-5.988	-11.941	24	.000

Table 6 shows that the observed *t* (11.941) is greater than the critical *t* (2.64). The results of paired samples t-test show that there is a significant difference between pre-test and immediate post-test of the experimental group at the significant level ( $p < .05$ ). The mean is 7.24 and the SD is 3.031.

Table 7: Paired Samples t-test of Experimental Group (immediate vs. delayed post-tests)

Paired differences								
Immediate post-test & Delayed post-test	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		<i>t</i>		
				Lower	Upper		df	Sig (2- tailed)
	-.960	1.540	.308	-1.595	-.3240	-3.11	24	.005

Table 7 shows that CALL instruction had an effect on learners' retention because the observed *t* (3.11) is greater than the critical *t* (2.06).

Table 8: Independent Samples t-test of the Groups (immediate vs. delayed post-tests)

Test	Groups	df	Std. Error Difference	<i>t</i>	Level of Significant (P)
Immediate post-test	Control	48	1.62714	-.639	.526
	Experimental				
Delayed post-test	Control	48	1.57429	-1.575	.122
	Experimental				

Based on the Table 8, with regards to the immediate post-test, the significant value, .52 was more than .05. The results did not show any significant difference between two groups at the immediate post-test. That is, both groups almost gave similar performance. In relation to the delayed post-test, the significant value, .12 was more than .05. That is, the difference between the two groups was not significant. Also, the observed *t* is less than the critical *t* in both immediate and delayed post-test, 0.63 and 1.57 less than 2.64, showed no significant difference between two groups at delayed post-test.

#### ***Discussion***

Generally speaking, the instruction in both groups was effective. That is to say, there was an increase in recall of vocabulary items not only in control group who were instructed traditionally but also in the experimental group who were instructed based on CALL. It can be concluded that both, traditional instruction and instruction based on CALL, were good at recalling vocabulary items. The results also showed the mean of the experimental group increased more than that of the control group.

On the other hand, the experimental group performed well in delayed post-test contrasting with the poor performance of the control group. It can be concluded that CALL could help learners to develop the learners' retention of vocabulary items or their long-term memory, therefore the first null hypothesis is rejected. That is to say, although both groups carried out the same in immediate post-test, CALL helped learners to retain vocabulary items or develop the learners' long-term memory. This development was not observed in the delayed post-test of the control group.

The reason for the better performance of the experimental group in recall and retention of vocabularies might be due to the advantages of using CALL over the traditional instruction that help learners to improve not only the recall but also the retention of vocabularies. The students in the experimental group expressed that the combination of pictures, sounds, and spelling helped them to learn and remember the vocabularies easier and better. Some of them maintained that CALL-based instruction was more interesting than the traditional one and they were more willing to play the CDs and learn the vocabularies rather than open their books and memorized the vocabularies, what they did before. The better results in the experimental group may be due to the fact that paying attention to the learners' individualized characteristics, computer provides the learners the opportunity to play the CDs repeatedly when and where they liked repeatedly. The students also mentioned that if they did not take part in the classroom for some sessions, they would not have some serious problems with the pronunciation and the meaning of the vocabularies.

The results of the study were confirmed by Duquette and Painchaud (1996). They believe that CALL, providing both video and audio clues, facilitates vocabulary learning. Akbulut (2007) arrived at the same results concerned with the objectives of this research. They noted that vocabulary learning was enhanced through using CALL (definitions, pictures, and short video clips) rather than those students instructed by definition only.

Two independent-samples *t*-tests were run by the researcher to show whether there is any significant difference between two groups performance in immediate and delayed post-test. The results showed although the mean score of the experimental group improved slightly from immediate to delayed post-test, there was not significance difference between students' performance in delayed post-test in both groups. The results showed that students which received CALL-based instruction were not significantly different than the group which received traditional instruction in delayed post-test. Based on the results, the second null hypothesis is sustained.

Now, a question can be raised of two groups' performance: why the group instructed based on CALL performed similarly comparing to the group who were instructed traditionally. It may be due to the fact that the students did not know how to use computer facilities concerned with both hard ware and soft ware issues. In case of hard ware facilities, we may name using key board, mouse, monitor, printer, and speakers. Soft ware facilities could be referred to the use of spelling and grammar checkers, Word soft ware, using various Web-sites, etc. Some of the students expressed that they did not have access to the computer at home. Therefore, many of the students rely on their teachers, especially at the primary levels for learning any topic in a face to face mode of instruction. Conditions were got worse due to the syllabus designers and teachers' performances. Most of the teachers had a habit of teaching traditionally. They were not eager to change their teaching styles. Furthermore, teachers are afraid that they may lose their authority. Additionally, they did not were proficient at using computers and both teachers confirmed these facts. It is obvious that an ignorant teacher about computer will not provide the students with more inputs such as pictures, sounds, and spelling. The principle also maintains that she did not have preference to allocate the limited budget for the purchase and maintaining the computers.

The findings of the research were matched with Atai and Dashtestani (2013) and Nepomuceno (2011). They believe that the students have not much knowledge of computer and internet and assert that it is essential for the students to take some training courses in Internet. The results of the study are in the line with Zou (2013) who focus on the teachers' difficulty in using the computer that comes from the teachers' insufficient computer competence.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The results of the immediate and delayed post-test showed that both groups were good at the recall of vocabulary learning and the means of the two groups increased after the treatment. The results of the delayed post-test also showed that there was no significant difference between the performance of the group who received CALL-based instruction and the group who received traditional instruction in spite of the fact that the experimental group's mean had an increase. Considering these results of data analyses, the researchers may conclude that CALL-based instruction has positive effect on the EFL learners' vocabulary recall and retention while traditional instruction has only positive effect on the EFL learners' vocabulary recall.

This section deals with the implications that the present study may bring out for material designers, language teachers, and language learners. Language studies in the domain of language learning and the use of CALL specifically in vocabulary learning are well advised to take the implications presented in this study. This study could be a striking inception of extensive investigations to be launched into discovering the advantages of using CALL over traditional instructions. The vocabulary learning and the use of CALL in promoting the recall and retention of vocabularies should be investigated by teachers as researchers for launching them for effective teaching of language and vocabulary specifically.

One the other hand, the EFL teachers may overlook the fact that the language learners have some difficulties at remembering these discrete vocabularies in their minds. In fact, they should keep in their mind that providing additional inputs help the students to remember the

vocabularies better and for a longer time. In language classrooms, it is suggested that language teachers also familiarize their language learners with applying computers to improve their vocabularies learning and retention. For the case of this study, language teachers are suggested to supply their students with interesting visual images, native language voices, and spelling introducing the most frequent English vocabularies. The teachers should realize knowing another language is not sufficient. The teachers should know how they can teach effectively to the students. One of the tools that help teachers to achieve this aim is the use of computers in the classrooms.

It is suggested that EFL learners who are intending to promote their recall and retention of vocabularies, use computer in which the vocabularies are presented with multidimensionality. Students are recommended to use computers because computers can be adjusted to the learners' needs and speed. Additionally, it is fruitful in helping students who are more instruction or the students that do not access to the teachers regularly.

The following suggestions may be carried out in the future research. They are: (1) this study was focused only female learners. Their ages were ranging from 12-14. This study can be replicated to male and female or male only. (2) in this study only elementary students. This study can be replicated to language learners at different proficiency levels to check what the findings will be. (3) this study investigated only the effect computers on EFL learners' recall and retention of high frequency vocabularies and does not consider the other techniques and strategies on EFL learners' recall and retention. (e.g., mnemonic devices).

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## **ABSTRACT**

Teachers are regarded as the basic tools in education and curriculum implementations. So, teachers play a key role in changing schools and classrooms. This paper seeks to examine the relationships between teachers' beliefs about teaching with their educational background and gender. It also seeks to examine the relationships between teachers' beliefs about learning with their educational background and gender. Teachers' beliefs about teaching and Teachers' beliefs about learning questionnaires were administered. The study involved one hundred and twenty five teachers made up of sixty males that 30 of them were Bachelor of Arts and 30 were Master of Arts Sixty five females, that 30 of them were Bachelor of arts(B.A.) and 35 were Master of arts (M.A.). Two questionnaires were used to collect data for the study. The first questionnaire is the "Teachers' Beliefs Questionnaire about Teaching", and the second questionnaire is the "Teachers' Beliefs Questionnaire about Learning". The result indicated that there exists a significant relationship between teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning with their educational background. The result also indicated that there exists no significant relationship between teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning with their gender.

**KEYWORD:** Teachers' beliefs, teaching, learning

## **INTRODUCTION**

Teaching is a complex process which can be conceptualized in a number of different ways. Traditionally, language teaching has been described in terms of what teachers do: that is, in terms of the actions and behaviors which teachers carry out in the classroom and the effects of these on learners (Richards & Lockhart, 1996, p.34).

Teachers' beliefs, a term usually used to refer to teachers' pedagogic beliefs, or those beliefs of relevance to an individual's teaching. The areas most commonly explored are teachers' beliefs about teaching, learning, and learners; subject matter (i.e. EFL or language); self as a teacher, or the role of a teacher (Calderhead, 1996, p.716). Teachers' theoretical beliefs are thought to make up an important part of the prior knowledge through which teachers perceive, process, and act upon information in the classroom (Clark & Peterson, 1986, p.68). Johnson (1994) predicted that "research on teachers' beliefs would ultimately become one of the most valuable psychological constructs for teaching and teacher education" (p. 439).

Teachers' beliefs have impacts on their development and if it changes, it influences their beliefs. So, we should know whether to change our teaching plans or stay the same. Some researchers think that it is difficult to change the pre-service teachers' well-formed beliefs as they tend to teach the way they have been taught and implementing innovative approaches is a risk-taking act to them (Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992). Other researchers affirm that teacher beliefs tend to be static and resistant to change because they exist in one's personal understandings, premises or propositions about the world which are felt to be true (Richardson, 1996, p.116). ESL/EFL teachers' beliefs exert significant influence on how they teach, how they learn to teach, and how they perceive educational reforms (Borg, 2003, p.102). Beliefs are the best indicators of the decisions individuals make throughout their lives, or more specifically, teachers' beliefs affect their planning, decision-making, and subsequent classroom behavior (Pajares, 1993, p.48).

The different beliefs that teachers and students hold toward the process of language teaching can negatively influence the effectiveness of language program (Kern, 1995). According to Pajares (1999), beliefs of the teacher influence the way that they teach, the roles they assign to themselves and students, the way they perceive learning / teaching and their attitudes towards their students. The term here refers to teachers' pedagogic beliefs, which are related to convictions about language and the teaching and learning of it. These beliefs are manifested in teachers' teaching approaches, selection of materials, activities, judgments, and behaviours in the classroom (Zacharias, 2005, p.116).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

One difficulty in exploring the literature on pre-service teachers' beliefs lies in the multitude of definitions of beliefs (Pajares, 1992). In order to understand, it is important to clearly define and understand what is meant by belief. Researchers have defined the term, beliefs, in different ways. For example, Pajares (1992), in his literature review, defined belief as an "individual's judgment of truth or falsity of a proposition, a judgment that can only be inferred from a collective understanding of what human beings say, intend, and do" (p.316).

Unfortunately, there is a lot of confusion in the literature regarding both the labels and definitions used to describe teacher beliefs. Pajares, in his 1992 review, labeled teacher beliefs a "messy construct," noting that "the difficulty in studying teachers' beliefs has been caused by definitional problems, poor conceptualizations, and differing understandings of beliefs and belief structures" (p. 307). According to Calderhead (1996), teacher beliefs, as well as teacher knowledge and teacher thinking, comprise the broader concept of teacher cognition. Yet, Kagan (1990) noted that the term teacher cognition "is somewhat ambiguous, because researchers invoke the term to refer to different products, including teachers' interactive thoughts during instruction; thoughts during lesson planning; implicit beliefs about students, classrooms, and learning; and reflections about their own teaching performance " (p. 42). Upon entering teacher education, most pre-service teachers would have already possessed a well-developed set of beliefs (Joram & Gabriele, 1998). These beliefs and attitudes are constructed based on cultural and personal beliefs, some of which may be long standing (Reynolds, 1992), stable, deeply entrenched and resistant or difficult to change (Joram & Gabriele, 1998). Kagan (1992) confirmed that pre-service teachers enter teacher education programs with personal beliefs about images of good teachers, images of themselves as teachers, and memories of themselves as students.

Richards and Lockhart (1996, p.32-40) have mentioned different kinds of beliefs: 1) Beliefs about English 2) beliefs about learning 3) beliefs about teaching 4) beliefs about the program and the curriculum 5) beliefs about language teaching as a profession

Williams and Burden (1997) argued that teachers are highly influenced by their beliefs, which in turn are closely linked to their values, to their views of the world and to their conceptions of their place within it. They also suggest that teachers' beliefs may be divided roughly into three major groups: 1) beliefs about learners, 2) beliefs about learning, 3) beliefs about themselves. Research on teaching and teacher education and research on teacher change emphasize the importance of beliefs, thoughts, judgements, knowledge, attitudes and theories of teachers for teaching practice (Pajares, 1992). As researchers hope to find ways to adjust and refine learners' beliefs, studies about teachers' beliefs have become another interest of researchers in the field and are the focus of several studies. These studies are based on the assumptions that learners develop their beliefs about language learning from their learning experiences (Horwitz, 1987) and that teacher beliefs influence their classroom practices which, in turn, can affect their students' learning (Johnson, 1992, p.13). Teachers are viewed as important agents of change in the reform effort currently under way in education and thus are expected to play a key role in changing schools and classrooms. Paradoxically, however, teachers are also viewed as major obstacles to change because of their adherence to outmoded forms of instruction that emphasize factual and procedural knowledge at the expense of deeper levels of understanding. New constructivist approaches to teaching and learning, which many reformers advocate, are inconsistent with much of what teachers believe--a problem that may be overcome if teachers are willing to rethink their views on a number of issues. (Prawat, 1992, p.354). It has been long understood that some beliefs are more important than others to individuals, and the more important the belief is, the more difficult it is to change (Rokeach, 1968, p. 3). Bruner (1986) cited that the prior beliefs of teacher candidates can hinder learning about teaching. As found in Horwitz (1985), pre-service second language teachers enter teacher education programs with preexisting ideas about language and language learning, just like second language learners. Some ideas that the pre-service teachers possess may inhibit their learning of new approaches and techniques in the teacher education programs, which can limit their choices of instructional practices. Therefore, it is hoped that pre-service teachers, while they are in teacher education programs, refine their beliefs about language learning to enhance their own learning and development.

Goldhaber and Brewer (2000) reported that students taught by teachers with bachelor's degrees in science had significantly higher science achievement scores than teachers with a bachelor's degree in a non-science subject. Beliefs are often confused with other related concepts such as attitudes, values, judgments, concepts, and dispositions. Pajares (1992) explained that clusters of beliefs around a particular situation form attitudes, and attitudes become action agendas that guide decisions and behavior. In other words, people act upon what they believe. The connections among clusters of beliefs create an individual's values that guide one's life and ultimately determine behavior (Ajzen, 1996). Obviously, science teachers possess beliefs regarding professional practice. Since beliefs may affect actions, teachers' beliefs play a critical role in restructuring science education. (Tobin, Tippins, & Gallard, 1994, p.64). In general, stronger beliefs are those that are more central to an individual's identity (Rokeach, 1968), quite possibly because they were established during earlier experiences and thus, were used in the processing of subsequent experiences (Pajares, 1992). Teachers' belief systems are founded on the goals, values, and beliefs teachers hold in relation to the content and process of teaching, and their understanding of the systems in which they work and their roles within it. These beliefs and values serve as the background to much of the teachers' decision making and action, and hence constitute what has been termed the "culture of teaching." (Richards & Lockhart, 1996, p. 30). Pre-existing beliefs are so influential that attempts to change teaching styles are ineffective, unless these beliefs are directly questioned (Johnson, 1988). The earlier a belief is incorporated into the belief structure, the more difficult it is to alter (Pajares, 1992). Richardson (1996) highlighted three major sources of teacher beliefs: personal experience, experience with schooling and instruction, and experience with formal knowledge --both school subjects and pedagogical knowledge. Convincing research suggests that beliefs are the best predictors of individual behavior, and, in particular, that teachers' beliefs influence teachers' perceptions and judgments, which, in turn, affect classroom performance. Moreover, we know that beliefs are hardy and highly resistant to change, and we suspect that teacher education programs have a little impact on the entering perspectives of teacher candidates. If this is so, understanding the nature and role of the beliefs will bring to teacher education is essential to understanding not only the choices and decisions she will make as a pre-service teacher, but her future effectiveness as a professional in her own classroom (Pajares, 1993, p.45).

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

The present study focuses on the following research questions:

- 1) Is there any relationship between teachers' beliefs about teaching and their educational background?
- 2) Is there any relationship between teachers' beliefs about teaching and their gender?
- 3) Is there any relationship between teachers' beliefs about learning and their educational background?
- 4) Is there any relationship between teachers' beliefs about learning and their gender?

H01: There is no relationship between teachers' beliefs about teaching and their educational background.

H02: There is no relationship between teachers' beliefs about teaching and their gender.

H01: There is no relationship between teachers' beliefs about learning and their educational background.

H01: There is no relationship between teachers' beliefs about learning and their gender.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

The participants of this study were 125 teachers teaching English at different institutes in Neishabour and Mashad (two north-eastern cities in Iran). Majority (N= 65) of the teachers were female, with teaching experience of 5 to 10 years. 65 of the subjects were female and 60 were male. All of the teachers taught English at different levels. The majority held either a BA (male=32, female=33) as their highest degree, or an MA degree (male=30, female=30). The age of the participants ranged from 25 to 40, but the age of the participants were not considered in this study. They are all experienced teachers, who were graduated from different universities with different majors, including: English translation, English teaching, and English literature. All of them taught in different institutes.

### *Instrument*

#### *Teachers' Beliefs Questionnaire about Teaching*

The teachers' beliefs questionnaire about teaching was used in order to find out if there is any relationship between teachers' beliefs about teaching and their gender or their educational background. It is believed that these kinds of questionnaires can measure the teachers' beliefs about teaching. This questionnaire was made up of 15 items. The Belief Questionnaire about Teaching (Leu & Kinzer, 1991), contained 15 statements, five of which represented each of the methodological approaches toward second-language teaching. Each statement on the Beliefs Inventory was validated by the same two expert raters. Thirteen out of the 15 statements received 100% agreement by both raters and were incorporated into the Beliefs Inventory. Two statements were reworded slightly, recoded, and later incorporated into the Beliefs Inventory (Johnson, 1992, p.89). Teachers were asked to read all 15 statements and select 5 out of the 15 statements which most closely



reflected their own beliefs about second-language teaching. Teachers were assigned a percentage score based on the number of skill-based, rule-based, and function-based statements they selected. Skill-based (4, 6, 10, 12, 14), Rule-based (1, 3, 5, 8, 11), Function-based (2, 7, 9, 13, 15).

#### ***Teachers' Beliefs Questionnaire about Learning***

The teachers' beliefs questionnaire about learning was used in order to find out if there is any relationship between teachers' beliefs about learning and their gender or their educational background. It is believed that these kinds of questionnaires can measure the teachers' beliefs about learning. This questionnaire was made up 23 items. They are beliefs that some people have about learning foreign languages. The old version of BALLI (Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory) has 34 items, by Horwitz, 1987. This is a new version of BALLI which was used by Richards and Lockhart, 1996. The BALLI, a 23-item inventory on beliefs about language learning was used to collect data from the teachers. It is a 5-point likert-type scale, which teachers should read each statement and then decide if they: (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree, (5) strongly disagree. There are no right or wrong answers. Questions 22 & 23 are slightly different and they should mark them as indicated. There are no clear cut right and wrong answers to the BALLI questions (Horwitz, 1987, p.119). The items on the BALLI assessed teachers' beliefs in four areas: 1) the difficulty of language learning (6 items), 2) foreign language aptitude (8 items), 3) the nature of language learning (5 items), 4) learning and communication strategies (4 items).

#### ***Procedure and Data Analysis***

We administered two questionnaires to 125 teachers who are selected from different institutes. We want to know if teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning have any impacts on their gender or educational background. The two questionnaires were given to teachers to do with 10-15 minutes, respectively. After the collected data was categorized and codified, the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.5 and the Minitab-15 were utilized for data analysis. Data derived from the questionnaire were analyzed by using descriptive statistical methods. Frequencies and percentages for all items of the questionnaires were obtained. Moreover, the techniques of Chi-square-test were performed. Means and standard deviations of each question were provided along with the descriptive statistics of rule-based, function-based and skill-based statements determined by Johnson (1992).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Investigation of Research Question One***

To answer the first research question of this study which asked if teachers' beliefs about teaching have any relationship with their educational background, the responses of B.A. and M.A. participants were analyzed. The results are set forth in the following table and figure. The review of Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 reveal that BA teachers chose different statements about teaching in comparison with MA teachers.

*Table 1:*  
*Descriptive Statistics of BA Teachers about Teaching*

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Statement 5	65	1	0	1	31	.48	.503
Statement 4	65	1	0	1	30	.46	.502
Statement 10	65	1	0	1	28	.43	.499
Statement 7	65	1	0	1	28	.43	.499
Statement 14	65	1	0	1	26	.40	.494
Statement 11	65	1	0	1	25	.38	.490
Statement 9	65	1	0	1	23	.35	.482
Statement 8	65	1	0	1	22	.34	.477
Statement 3	65	1	0	1	21	.32	.471
Statement 2	65	1	0	1	21	.32	.471
Statement 12	65	1	0	1	18	.28	.451
Statement 15	65	1	0	1	17	.26	.443
Statement 13	65	1	0	1	14	.22	.414
Statement 6	65	1	0	1	13	.20	.403
Statement 1	65	1	0	1	8	.12	.331

*Table 2:*



*Descriptive Statistics of BA Teachers about Teaching*

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Skill-based	65	4.00	.00	4.00	115.00	1.7692	.87979
Rule-based	65	3.00	.00	3.00	107.00	1.6462	.92586
Function-based	65	4.00	.00	4.00	103.00	1.5846	.93361

Table 3:  
*Descriptive Statistics of MA Teachers about Teaching*

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Statement 7	60	1	0	1	36	.60	.494
Statement 4	60	1	0	1	26	.43	.500
Statement 10	60	1	0	1	25	.42	.497
Statement 8	60	1	0	1	25	.42	.497
Statement 5	60	1	0	1	24	.40	.494
Statement 14	60	1	0	1	22	.37	.486
Statement 2	60	1	0	1	22	.37	.486
Statement 13	60	1	0	1	21	.35	.481
Statement 11	60	1	0	1	20	.33	.475
Statement 12	60	1	0	1	18	.30	.462
Statement 3	60	1	0	1	16	.27	.446
Statement 9	60	1	0	1	15	.25	.437
Statement 6	60	1	0	1	13	.22	.415
Statement 15	60	1	0	1	10	.17	.376
Statement 1	60	1	0	1	7	.12	.324

Table 4:  
*Descriptive Statistics of MA Teachers about Teaching*

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Function-based	60	4.00	.00	4.00	104.00	1.7333	1.05552
Skill-based	60	4.00	.00	4.00	104.00	1.7333	1.02290
Rule-based MA	60	4.00	.00	4.00	92.00	1.5333	1.15666

Since teachers holding MA and BA selected different statements and order of preferences (statements number 5, 4, 10, 7, and 14 by BA teachers, but 7, 4, 10, 8, and 5 by MA teachers in order of preferences) the first null hypothesis which predicted that there is no significant relationship between teachers' beliefs about teaching and their educational background was rejected. So, it can be asserted that there is a significant relationship between teachers' beliefs about teaching and their educational background.

#### ***Investigation of Research Question Two***

To answer the second research question of this study which asked if teachers' beliefs about teaching have any relationship with their gender, the responses of males or females participants were analyzed. The results are set forth in the following table and figure. The review of Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8 reveal that male teachers chose the same statements about teaching in comparison with female teachers.

Table 5:  
*Descriptive Statistics of Male Teachers about Teaching*

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Statement 7	62	1	0	1	31	.50	.504
Statement 4	62	1	0	1	27	.44	.500
Statement 11	62	1	0	1	27	.44	.500
Statement 5	62	1	0	1	26	.42	.497
Statement 10	62	1	0	1	26	.42	.497
Statement 8	62	1	0	1	23	.37	.487
Statement 13	62	1	0	1	21	.34	.477
Statement 14	62	1	0	1	20	.32	.471
Statement 12	62	1	0	1	20	.32	.471
Statement 2	62	1	0	1	19	.31	.465
Statement 3	62	1	0	1	19	.31	.465
Statement 9	62	1	0	1	18	.29	.458
Statement 6	62	1	0	1	13	.21	.410
Statement 1	62	1	0	1	10	.16	.371
Statement 15	62	1	0	1	10	.16	.371

Table 6:  
*Descriptive Statistics of Male Teachers about Teaching*

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Skill-based	62	4.00	.00	4.00	106.00	1.7097	.89419
Rule-based	62	3.00	.00	3.00	105.00	1.6935	1.06492
Function-based	62	4.00	.00	4.00	99.00	1.5968	1.07825

Table 7:  
*Descriptive Statistics of Female Teachers about Teaching*

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Statement 7	63	1	0	1	33	.52	.503
Statement 5	63	1	0	1	29	.46	.502
Statement 4	63	1	0	1	29	.46	.502
Statement 14	63	1	0	1	28	.44	.501
Statement 10	63	1	0	1	27	.43	.499
Statement 2	63	1	0	1	24	.38	.490
Statement 8	63	1	0	1	24	.38	.490
Statement 9	63	1	0	1	20	.32	.469
Statement 11	63	1	0	1	18	.29	.455
Statement 3	63	1	0	1	18	.29	.455
Statement 15	63	1	0	1	17	.27	.447
Statement 12	63	1	0	1	16	.25	.439
Statement 13	63	1	0	1	14	.22	.419
Statement 6	63	1	0	1	13	.21	.408
Statement 1	63	1	0	1	5	.08	.272

Table 8:  
*Descriptive Statistics of Female Teachers about Teaching*

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Skill-based	63	4.00	.00	4.00	113.00	1.7937	1.00256
Function-based	63	4.00	.00	4.00	108.00	1.7143	.90569
Rule-based	63	4.00	.00	4.00	94.00	1.4921	1.01398

Since male and female teachers selected almost the same statements and in order of preferences, 4 out of 5 (statements number 7, 4, 11, 5, and 10 by male teachers, and 7, 5, 4, 14, and 10 in order of preference), the first null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between teachers' beliefs about teaching and their gender was not rejected. So, it can be asserted that there is no significant relationship between teachers' beliefs about teaching and their gender.

#### *Investigation of Research Question Three*

To answer the third research question of this study which asked if teachers' beliefs about learning have any relationship with their educational background, the responses of BA and MA participants were analyzed. The results are set forth in the following table and figure. The review of Table 9 reveals that BA teachers chose different statements about learning in comparison with MA teachers.

Table 9:  
Group Cross Tabulation of BA and MA Teachers about Learning

			Group		
			0-2	2-2.5	2.5-3
Educational background	BA	Count	3	25	36
		% within Educational background	4.6%	38.5%	55.4%
	MA	Count	1	12	37
		% within Educational background	1.7%	20.0%	61.7%
Total	Count		4	37	73
	% within Educational background		3.2%	29.6%	58.4%

The results of Cross tabulation for testing the significant relationship between teachers' beliefs about learning and educational background showed a statistically significant *Sig.* for Pearson Chi-Square based on items number 1, 5, 7, 9, 16, 19, and 20 ( $p < .05$ ), however did not find a statistically significant *Sig.* for Pearson Chi-Square based on items number 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 21, 22, and 23 ( $p > .05$ ). As a result, it can be stated that there is a significant relationship between teachers' beliefs about learning and their educational background according to items number 1, 5, 7, 9, 16, 19, and 20, but no there is no significant relationship between teachers' beliefs about learning and their educational background based on other 16 items (see appendix C and D for more details).

Table 10:  
Chi-Square Tests of BA and MA Teachers about Learning

	Value	df	Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.765	3	.005
Likelihood Ratio	14.074	3	.003
Linear-by-Linear Association	11.018	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	125		

The results of chi-square for teachers' beliefs about learning showed that at 95 per cent confidence level, .05 alpha level, and the output above gave a Pearson Chi-Square value of 12.76, and  $p$ -value of .005, which is less than 0.05; accordingly, the third null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between teachers' beliefs about learning and their educational background was rejected (See Table 10). So it can be stated that there is a significant relationship between teachers' beliefs about learning and their educational background.

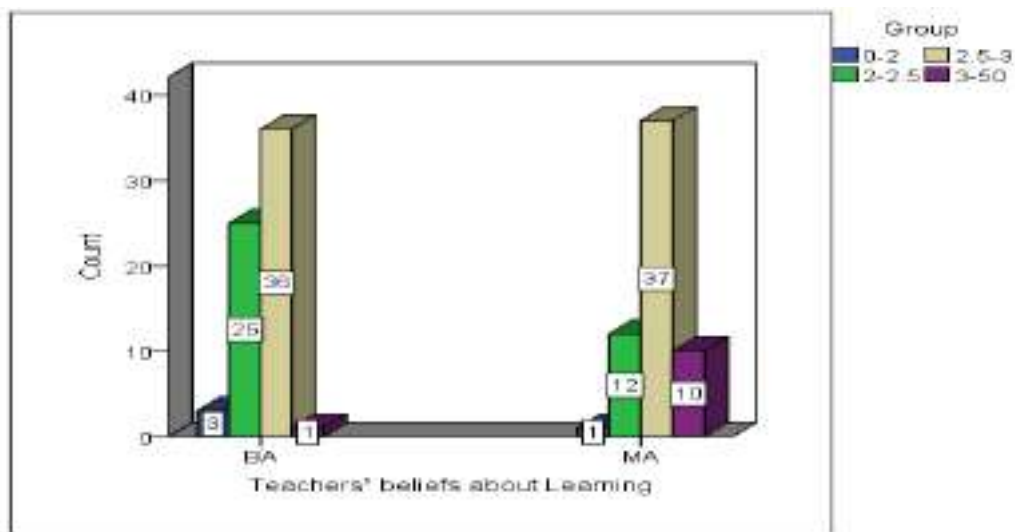


Figure 1:  
Descriptive Statistics of BA and MA Teachers about Learning

#### Investigation of Research Question Four

To answer the fourth research question of this study which asked if teachers' beliefs about learning have any relationship with their gender, the responses of males and females participants were analyzed. The results are set forth in the following table and figure. The review of Table 11 reveals that male teachers chose the same statements about learning in comparison with female teachers.

Table 11:  
Group Cross Tabulation of Male and Female Teachers about Learning

			Group				Total
			0-2	2-2.5	2.5-3	3-50	
Gender	Male	Count	2	13	40	7	62
		% within Gender	3.2%	21.0%	64.5%	11.3%	100.0%
	Female	Count	2	24	33	4	63
		% within Gender	3.2%	38.1%	52.4%	6.3%	100.0%
Total	Count		4	37	73	11	125
	% within Gender		3.2%	29.6%	58.4%	8.8%	100.0%

The results of Cross tabulation for testing the significant relationship between teachers' beliefs about learning and gender did not show a statistically significant *Sig.* for Pearson Chi-Square based on all items ( $p > .05$ ), except for item number 23 ( $p = .04$ ,  $p < .05$ ); accordingly it can be claimed that there is no significant relationship between teachers' beliefs about learning and their gender according to the majority of items ( $N = 22$  items), and there is a significant relationship between teachers' beliefs about learning and their gender according to just item number 23 (see appendix C and D for more details).

Table 12:  
Chi-Square Tests Male and Female Teachers about Learning

	Value	df	Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.752	3	.191
Likelihood Ratio	4.813	3	.186
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.415	1	.065
N of Valid Cases	125		

The results of chi-square for teachers' beliefs about learning showed that at 95 per cent confidence level, .05 alpha level, and the output above gave a Pearson Chi-Square value of 4.75, and  $p$ -value of .19, which is greater than 0.05; accordingly, the fourth null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between teachers' beliefs about learning and their gender, was not rejected (See Table 12). So it can be claimed that there is no significant relationship between teachers' beliefs about learning and their gender.

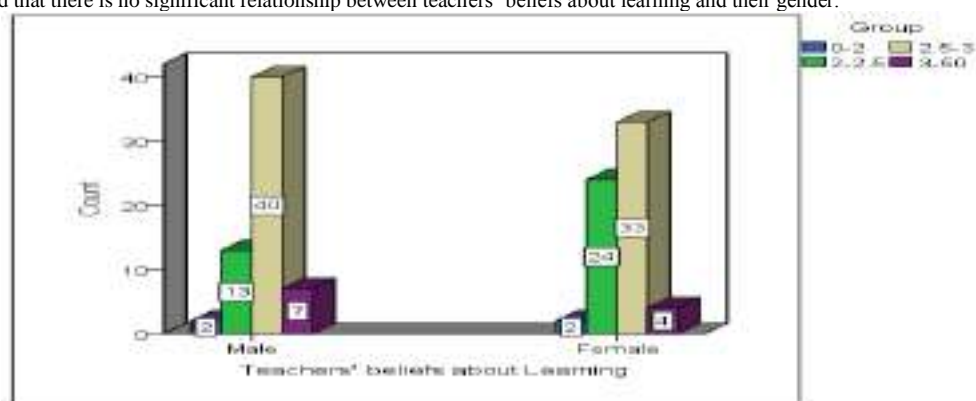


Figure 2:  
Descriptive Statistics of Male and Female Teachers about Learning

## CONCLUSION

Teachers are viewed as important agents of change in the reform effort currently under way in education and thus are expected to play a key role in changing schools and classrooms. Paradoxically, however, teachers are also viewed as major obstacles to change because of their adherence to outmoded forms of instruction that emphasize factual and procedural knowledge at the expense of deeper levels of understanding (Prawat, 1992, p.354). Novice teachers' prior learning experiences were influential in shaping their initial beliefs. However, the majority of the teachers' beliefs were re-structured and strengthened, suggesting that beliefs are dynamic (Pajares, 1993, p.46). Teachers' beliefs also strongly influence their teaching behavior, methods, and learners' development. Determination of learners' and teachers' beliefs in language teaching/learning process will be helpful in forming effective learning/teaching methods (Buyukyazi, 2010, p.183). Labeled a "messy construct" by Pajares (1992), beliefs are still considered the "best indicators of the decisions individuals make

throughout their lives" (p. 307). Kagan (1992, p.76) cited significant evidence supporting the relationship between teacher beliefs and their decisions about classroom practice. The main concern of this study was to investigate this assumption whether or not teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning have any significant relationship with their gender and educational background. To assure and determine any significant relationship, the results of performance of each MA and BA including male and female teacher was analyzed through applying two questionnaires. In addition, the null-hypothesis 2 and 4 proposed in this study is supported; So, there is no relationships between teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning with their gender. But, the null hypothesis 1 and 3 proposed in this study is rejected. So, there is a relationship between teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning with their educational background. According to the result of chi-square which is used to determine the statistical significance of the difference between the means on two sets of answers, it could be concluded that there is no relationships between teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning with their gender. But there is a relationship between teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning with their educational background in both questionnaires. This research studied the relationships between teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning with their gender and educational background. It proved that teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning have relationships with their educational background, although teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning don't have any relationships with their gender. It is hoped that the results of this research would be beneficial for syllabus designer who are trying to design a syllabus in which teachers' beliefs is emphasized. English language teachers, and language learners, and pave the way for their investigation.

#### **Limitation/ Delimitation of the Study**

The present study, like any other studies, suffers from some limitations and delimitation. Limitations are those conditions beyond the control of the researcher that may place restrictions on the conclusion of the study. In this study, the researcher faced with some limitations and delimitation. Here the most important one is brought to light.

1. This research is exclusively done on Iranian language teachers, and the participants are confined to English institute teachers.
2. Teachers experiences are not considered
3. Teachers are graduated from different universities
4. Teachers' beliefs have various types and all of these varieties can't be covered thoroughly in this study.
5. This study was conducted only in Neishabour and Mashad and no other cities.
6. Teachers just teach in different institutes, not any other places.
7. Teachers teach in different levels.
8. Teachers ages are not considered.
9. We considered just BA and MA teachers (not PHD).
10. They are graduated in different majors: English translation, English literature, and English teaching.

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#### ABSTRACT

One of the most important skills for language learners, especially in academic settings, is the oral presentation skill. The current study, which is unique in its own, tried to shed light on the interrelationship of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' self-regulation, willingness to communicate (WTC), and their oral presentation performance. To achieve such a purpose, 90 advanced-level EFL learners were selected on the basis of random sampling procedure and were given a questionnaire on WTC and one on self-regulation. They were also required to give an oral presentation about their favorite topic. Having gathered the data and analyzing them through correlation, independent t-test, and descriptive statistics, the study revealed that first; there is a significant relationship between the self-regulation degree of language learners and their oral performance. Second, there is a strong, positive relationship between the WTC degree of learners and their oral presentation performance. And finally, the study showed a significant difference in the oral performance of language learners showing that females are better oral presenters than males. The findings of the paper may significantly contribute to the better understanding of the conditions leading to learners' more telling oral performance in different higher education setting including conferences.

**KEYWORDS:** Willingness to communicate (WTC); Self-regulation; Oral presentation; EFL

learners.

#### INTRODUCTION

People use language to communicate and also to get something done. For instance, they may intend to carry out some important functions in classroom such as having a good rapport with each other, or conveying their meaning by different ways like having a lecture, or having a small conversation or even having an oral presentation. Making a good oral presentation is an art that involves attention to the needs of your audience, careful planning, and attention to delivery. Clearly, the most obvious manifestation of learning a foreign or second language (L2) is the ability of learners to speak the language accurately and fluently in different contexts and also to be able to communicate their ideas clearly to other individuals who speak the same language. Therefore, in many situations knowing a language is equated with speaking that language impeccably. In addition, especially at advanced levels, oral presentation is one of the most fundamental prerequisites for many language courses or subject matters that are presented via the medium of L2. Consequently, many studies in the arena of teaching and learning L2 have focused on the oral performance of students in foreign or second language classrooms (Yu, 2003; Volle, 2005) and the factors affecting oral presentations (for example, Consolo, 2006).

Now a question that comes into mind is that what exactly an oral presentation is. A presentation can normally be identified by three main elements: (1) it is almost always prepared in outline form and spoken from aids or notes; (2) it normally involves visual aids or graphics; and (3) it usually is given to a participating audience, asking questions and engaging in dialog as in most classrooms. Oral presentations are a common requirement in many courses. They may be short or long, include slides or other visual aids, and be done individually or in a group which can be done by other people (Jing, 2009). Since in oral presentations, the aim is usually to convey information to audience, they can provide a real life context for communication in the second of foreign language and increase learners' interaction in the classroom.

Furthermore, it is axiomatic that English is an international language used by scads of people as a first, second, or foreign language for communication purposes (Strevens, 1992). The purpose of teaching English, as a result, has shifted from structure learning to the ability to use the language for communicative purposes. In other words, in the past, the aim of teaching English was the mastery of the structure of the language. However, in this age of communication, English seems to be playing a major role, and the purpose of teaching the language has shifted from the mastery of structure to the ability to use the language for communicative purposes. Thus, the communication aspect of teaching English has gained importance. Moreover, the ultimate goal of language learning is "authentic communication between persons of different languages and cultural backgrounds" (McIntyre, Clement, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998, p. 559). Consequently, the issues of whether learners would communicate in English when they had the chance and what would affect their willingness to communicate gain importance. Recently, a "Willingness to Communicate" (WTC) model was developed by McIntyre et al. (1998) to explain and predict second language communication.

The concept of "Willingness to Communicate" (WTC) was first coined by McCroskey and his colleagues in relation to communication in the native language (McCroskey, 1992; McCroskey & Richmond, 1990; Zakahi & McCroskey, 1989). McCroskey and Richmond (1990) consider WTC as a personality feature and define it as "variability in talking behavior". WTC was originally introduced with reference to L1 communication, and it was considered to be a fixed personality trait that is fixed across situations, but when WTC was also stretched to L2 communication situations, it was propounded that it is not necessary to be playing a major role, since the use of an L2 suggests the potential for important situational differences based on wide variations in competence and inter-group relations (Macintyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998). They claim that even though situational variables might have an impact on one's willingness to communicate, individuals exhibit similar WTC tendencies in different situations. Moreover, they identified introversion, self-esteem, communication competence, communication apprehension and cultural diversity as factors that lead to differences in WTC. Willingness to communicate (WTC) is also defined as "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons using a L2" (McIntyre, Clement, Dörnyei & Noels, 1998, p. 547). WTC can also be understood as the probability of involving in communication when free to select to do so (McCroskey & Baer, 1985). As such, WTC shows a psychological readiness to speak a second or foreign language, and is based on much more than objective linguistic competence.

Besides, Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) has emerged as an important new construct in education. As the general picture of school to date is not a satisfactory one, the concept has been accepted by policy makers, teachers, educators and parents. With the emergence of this new construct, lots of debate about school reform appeared world-wide. Policy makers nowadays approve and support the basic principles of self-regulated learning and consider school reform as one of their main goals intending to change the status of the schools. In other words, educational psychologists and policy makers seek self-regulated learners. Self-regulated learning can also be described as an active process whereby learners construct goals for learning, monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation, and behavior (Paris & Paris, 2001). They are guided and constrained by their own goals and the individual characteristics of a particular learning environment. Self-regulatory



activities affect individual students, their level of achievement, and the learning context. It is important for students to learn how to learn and take control of their efforts (Wolters, Pintrich, & Karabenick, 2005).

In addition, language learners learn a language because they want to acquire and use it to communicate with those who speak the language. They may also want to get to know the native speakers' culture and learn about the country where the language is spoken. However, what happens if a university requires students to learn a second or foreign language that the students do not wish to learn? It is obvious that students who do not want to learn the language will not be able to do well in class. Researchers believe motivation to learn is an effective factor in language learning.

Taking into account issues like the present one contribute significantly in the better and more telling teaching and promoting of a language. That is, by knowing whether there is any relationship among the above-cited variables, teachers can take the most suitable strategies to encourage learners to use the language for communicative purposes and to regulate their own learning process more effectively and without causing any negative feeling. Moreover, although several studies have been conducted in recent years on self-regulation, very few, if any, have specifically focused on exploring the relationship between Self-Regulation, WTC, and oral presentation. Besides, this study is significant in that it can provide valuable data to those who serve on the front line of education. The research results may serve as a guide for foreign language teachers in terms of helping them to increase their understanding of language learning from the learner's perspective and give them more insight into the advantage of self-Regulation in communication and thereby assist them in enhancing students' ability to communicate better English. Finally, no previous study has exclusively dealt with the interrelationship among these three issues; consequently, making the present study more important than before.

### BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Oral presentation is a practical device that if implemented carefully can provide many opportunities for language learners. Godev (2007), enumerating various benefits of oral presentations, believes that the oral presentation can give learners an awareness of new rhetorical devices that are specific to the rhetorical situation. It also provides the students with the opportunity to experience a creative process that is very similar to the writing process. In particular, Godev (2007) suggests that the oral presentation with an appropriate topic provides an enriched ground for students to use their oral skills and at the same time incorporating morpho-syntactic and discourse structures that are needed for intermediate and advanced proficiency levels. Furthermore, considering the increasing demands for a move from teacher-centered activities toward student-centered instruction (Wenden, 2002; Lee & VanPatten, 1995) It seems that oral presentation is extremely suitable for applying this principle since students have some freedom to choose a topic of their own interest, and they play the primary role during the oral performance while the teacher's role becomes secondary during the presentation.

However, to be more effective, oral presentations should follow an appropriate procedure. Godev (2007) suggests the procedure for delivering successful oral presentations should consist of: "(1) defining the topic, (2) providing information sources, (3) assisting the audience, (4) keeping track of the preparation process, (5) organizing the talk, (6) delivering the talk, and (7) obtaining the desired grade" (p. 2). In this line, the topic of presentation must be consistent with and covered in the syllabus. Teachers also should make accessible sources of information to the students in order to minimize research time. Furthermore, students must be instructed on how to interact with the audience and in order to monitor the process of preparation for oral presentations, students may be required to keep track of the preparation process in the form of various portfolios or self reports. In addition to the way students organize their talk and the way they deliver it to the audience, a grading criterion is needed to show the clarity, quality, organization of the ideas, etc. in oral presentations (Godev, 2007).

There have been many attempts to realize willingness to communicate (WTC) to expound a person's degree of readiness to take part in discourse in a second or foreign language (MacIntyre, Clement, Dornyei & Noels, 1998). Some researchers have discussed that a basic goal of second language education should be the construction of WTC in the language learning process (MacIntyre et al., 2002). It is proposed that higher WTC among learners translates into increased opportunity for practice in an L2 (Second Language) and authentic L2 usage (MacIntyre et al., 2001).

MacIntyre, Baker, Clément & Donovan (2002) in their studies investigated the role of gender regarding affective variables. Their findings espouse those of preceding studies (e.g., Gardner, 1985) which uncovered more desirable attitudes and motivation among female language learners. In the MacIntyre et al (2002) study, results revealed an increase in WTC and a decrease in anxiety among girls as they mature whereas boys remained constant throughout their middle school years (i.e., Grades 7-9; ages 11-13). Baker and MacIntyre (2000) reported that girls had greater levels of WTC inside the classroom whereas boys were more willing to use their L2 outside the school context. Another factor which may affect WTC is the channel of communication. In the past, research in computer-mediated communication (CMC) has implied that the computer might change a student's willingness to communicate. Freiermuth (1998, 2001), as an example, found out that when groups of language learners using CMC were presented with a task to solve, they seemed more willing to communicate than groups using spoken language. On the basis of Freiermuth, the discrepancies could be related to use of the computer rather than other variables. In other words, online chat gave students an opportunity to express themselves without being prevented by the teacher, other students or a surfeit of other elements that might reduce the effect of the experience.

Schunk and Zimmerman (1998) have pointed out that self-regulated learners are generally characterized as active participants who efficiently control their learning experiences in many different ways, including organizing and rehearsing information to be learned, and holding positive beliefs about their capabilities, the value of learning and factors that influence learning. SRL is also the ability to control and influence one's learning processes positively. The learners take personal initiative and apply powerful strategies to attain individually valued learning goals and monitor their understanding in order to detect and eliminate possible comprehension problems (Paris & Paris, 2001).

Self-regulated learning can also be described as an active process whereby learners construct goals for learning, monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation, and behavior (Paris & Paris, 2001). They are guided and constrained by their own goals and the individual characteristics of a particular learning environment. Self-regulatory activities affect individual students, their level of achievement, and the learning context. It is important for students to learn how to learn and take control of their efforts (Wolters, Pintrich, & Karabenick, 2005).

Graham and Harris (1994) assert that self-regulated learning skills are indispensable at almost all levels of education. They then add that self-regulation assumes a prominent position in contemporary models of teaching and learning and is a major focus in the New Learning Environments (NLEs) approach. Working from a social cognitive perspective, Schunk and Zimmerman (1994) define self-regulation as a

process students use in order to activate and sustain cognitions, behaviors, and affects which are systematically oriented toward attainment of their goals" (p.309). Students who are self-regulated actively participate in their own learning, rather than relying solely on teachers, parents, or other external change agents to import knowledge (Alexander, 1997).

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In line with the above statements, the present study is an attempt to provide answers to the following question:

- 1) Is there any interrelationship between the self-regulation of EFL learners and their oral presentation performance?
- 2) Is there any interrelationship between the WTC of EFL learners and their oral presentation performance?
- 3) Which of the independent variables of the study is a better predictor of learners' oral presentation?
- 4) Does the gender of learners affect significantly their oral performance?

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

All in all, 90 Iranian language learners, based on random sampling procedure, attending an English language institute in Shahrekord, Iran took part in the study. The participants, who were taking advanced-level courses, were 45 male and 45 female and aged between 21 and 38 years old. The reason for selecting advanced-level language learners was that in this level of proficiency much more communication is needed in classes than what is in elementary and intermediate levels.

### Materials and Data Collection

The first material employed in the present paper was a questionnaire on willingness to communicate. It was used to measure the participants' willingness to communicate. It comprised twelve items (Cronbach alpha = .83) from McCroskey (1992). The respondents chose the percentage of the time ranging from 0% to 100% that they would be willing to communicate in different contexts and with different addresses. As with the reliability of the questionnaire, the questionnaire was distributed among 25 learners, exclusive of the main participants. Calculating the Cronbach alpha formula, it turned out to be .81. Besides, the content and face validity of this instrument was examined by some professional experts of Shahrekord and Shiraz universities and was confirmed by them to be valid for the present paper purpose. Furthermore, to gain data regarding the self-regulation variable of learners, Language-Learners' Self-Regulating Questionnaire (LLSQ) were utilized. It consists of 12 subscales with a total of 36 items. Besides, for ensuring about the reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted on 25 advanced-level language learners who were not included in the study sample. The reported reliability was about .78. Finally, as to the validity of the questionnaire, it was looked into by the above-mentioned professors and was approved by them to be valid for the study purpose. Finally, the language learners were also supposed to give an oral presentation on a topic favorite to them. The main reason for allowing them to choose their own topics was to diminish the negative effects of stress and other affective factors as much as possible. For evaluating their performance, a scheme was developed by the author (with the consultation of some seasoned professors and also reviewing a set of related books). The scheme consisted of a set of subsections, each assessing different aspects of learners' oral performance including their stress, fluency, structure accuracy, appropriate vocabulary, etc.

### Data Analysis

The gathered data was subjected to statistical analysis to explore the existence of any relationship between self-regulation of the language learners and their WTC and their oral performance. To be more exact, SPSS version 16 in general and two correlation analyses, along with a regression, and one independent t-test in particular were run to ascertain data regarding the above-mentioned questions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To present the results of the study, the research questions of the study mentioned in the initial sections of the study are individually brought in and then by considering the related obtained findings of the study are answered. The first research question was:

- 1) Is there any interrelationship between the self-regulation of EFL learners and their oral presentation performance?

Regarding the first question in this research, it wanted to see if there is any relationship between the self-regulation of learners and their oral presentation performance. To gain knowledge on this point, correlation statistical analysis was run. Table 1 represents the results of the test.

*Table 1: Self-Regulation and Oral Presentation Correlation*

		Self-regulation	Oral presentation
Self-regulation	Pearson Correlation	1	.947
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.00
	N	90	90
Oral presentation	Pearson Correlation	.947	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	
	N	90	90

A set of interpretations can be made by considering this table. First, the table shows that there is a high correlation between the two factors of the study that is, self-regulation and oral presentation (Pearson Correlation = .94). Second, because the Pearson value is a positive value, it may be inferred that there is a positive correlation between the two variables. Finally, the coefficient of determination can also be obtained from the table. It is resulted by squaring the r value and converting the obtained value into percentage of variance (by multiplying it by 100).

The  $r$  value showed in the table is almost .94. Therefore, coefficient of determination will be approximately 88 percent; meaning that the two variables share a considerable amount of variance. Finally, a significant difference is observed between the variables ( $p = .00 < .05$ ).

- 2) Is there any interrelationship between the WTC of EFL learners and their oral presentation performance?

Having ascertained that there is a high, positive relationship between the self-regulation of the language learners and their oral performance, now in the second research question the interrelationship of WTC and oral presentation is addressed. Table 2 represents the pertaining results.

Table 2: WTC and Oral Presentation Correlation

		WTC	Oral presentation
WTC	Pearson Correlation	1	.87
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.00
	N	90	90
Oral presentation	Pearson Correlation	.87	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	
	N	90	90

The table shows that, like the previous case, there is a high correlation between the two variables (Pearson Correlation = .87). Second, because the Pearson value is a positive value, it may be inferred that there is a positive correlation between the two variables. Finally, the coefficient of determination will be approximately 75 percent; meaning that the two variables share a considerable amount of variance. Finally, a significant difference is observed between the variables ( $p = .00 < .05$ ).

- 3) Which of the independent variables of the study is a better predictor of learners' oral presentation?

Having proved the existence of a strong positive correlation between each of the two independent variables of the study (self-regulation and WTC), now the results of regression analysis is brought in to see which of the independent variables is a better predictor of learners' oral presentation performance. Table 3 presents the model summary findings of regression.

Table 3: Model Summary of the Variables

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.915	.71	-.70	1.72

As the table reveals, 71 percent of the variance in the learners' oral performance is explained by the combination of the two independent variables namely self-regulation and WTC ( $R^2 = .71$ ). Besides, to see whether the coefficient of the regression demonstrated by  $R^2$  is significant or not, Table 4 is brought.

Table 4: ANOVA Results of Self-regulation and WTC Related to Oral performance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	97.0	2	48.5	.513	.001
	Residual	7191.5	76	94.6		
	Total	7288.5	78			

The tables demonstrates that the coefficient reported by  $R^2$  is significant (Sig. = .001). Now to pinpoint which independent variable is a better predictor of writing performance, Table 5 needs to be examined.

Table 5: Coefficients of self-regulation and WTC

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	74.566	8.207		9.085	.000
	WTC	.053	.136	.47	.390	.02
	self-regulation	.103	.102	.21	-1.010	.04

The table indicates that of the two independent variables, it is WTC that is a better predictor of learners' oral presentation performance. In other words, by examining the Beta value reported in the same table it can be inferred that with regard to WTC, one standard deviation unit change in the score for motivation leads to .47 unit of change in the oral presentation performance. And as to the self-regulation variable, this unit of change would be .21. Therefore, WTC can better predict the writing performance of language learners.

- 4) Does the gender of learners affect significantly their oral performance?

Finally, to ascertain whether there is any significant difference in the performance of language learners in terms of their gender, the independent t-test findings in the form of Table 6 are revealed.

**Table 6: Independent T-Test of Gender and Oral Presentation**

	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Oral presentation	14.44	60	.00	.30	.46	1.36	.70

The table shows that the difference between the two variables is significant ( $t=14.44$ ,  $p=0.00$ ). Therefore, it can be inferred that the gender of language learners has a noticeable effect on the learners' oral performance. Now to see whether girls or boys outperform as far as oral presentation is concerned, Table 7, representing the descriptive statistics, is discussed.

**Table 7: Descriptive statistics of the Gender and oral performance**

	code	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Oral performance	Male	45	11.47	2.13	.36
	Female	45	25.23	3.44	.48

This table clearly indicates that the mean of females ( $M=25.23$ ) is remarkably higher than the mean of males ( $M=11.47$ ). It means that females are better oral presenters than males. Amid assorted studies about gender differences on different aspects of language, though no specific study has specifically dealt with the effect of gender on oral presentation, however, it has been several times asserted that educational research in the last several decades has proven that the gender differences manifestly influence students' academic interests, needs, and achievements (Halpern, 1986; Collins, Kenway & McLeod, 2000). A number of studies conducted in various contexts have confirmed the presence of gender-related differences in verbal ability and language use (Thorne *et al.*, 1983; Tannen, 1990). The consensus seems to be that females are superior to males in general verbal ability (Denno, 1982), but there is disagreement about which types of verbal ability shows gender differences. Moreover, MacIntyre, *et al.* (2002) in their studies investigated the role of gender regarding affective variables. They reported that girls had greater levels of WTC inside the classroom whereas boys were more willing to use their L2 outside the school context. From these findings it can be also concluded that females are more willing to have oral performance inside classrooms than males. One probable reason for this superiority can be, as Rua (2006) rightly states, girls' achievement in foreign language learning is enhanced by the interaction of neurological, cognitive, affective, social and educational factors.

## CONCLUSIONS

The present study was, in fact, an attempt to shed light on the point that if there is any interrelationship between the two independent variables of self-regulation and WTC of language learners and their oral presentation performance. If yes, the study also tried to ascertain which of the above-mentioned variables could account for the oral performance of learners. In addition, the examination of the effect of the gender of learners on their performance was also another purpose of the current study.

As it was afore-mentioned, the analysis of the gathered data led to the following conclusions: First, there is a strong, positive relationship between the self-regulation of language learners and their oral presentation performance. Second, there is also a strong, positive relationship between the WTC degree of language learners and their oral performance. Third, of the two intended independent variables, WTC is a better predictor of the learners' oral performance. And finally, the gender of language learners doesn't significantly affect the learners' oral presentation.

The study also enjoys three major implications. First of all, self-regulation plays a salient role in the oral performance quality of language learners; therefore, language teachers continually need to reflect upon their teaching strategies and activities in order to help language learners manage, control, and enhance their self-regulation abilities. Second, teachers should also consider the point that the more self-regulated the learners, the more is the likelihood that the learners achieve higher acceptable functions they are assigned. Finally, as a general implication, individual differences of learners (like WTC) play a crucial role in the effectiveness of teaching and learning process. Therefore, those who are involved in these processes (especially teachers) should be alert to the learners' individual differences.

Lastly, the study may suffer from a set of limitations. First and foremost, the number of the participants is not large so that the findings need to be approached cautiously. Likewise, since the study is unique in its nature and purpose, more studies are encouraged to be done so that more accurate and reliable findings and conclusions might be drawn. Furthermore, other researchers are called for doing the same topic with regard to other variables including self-esteem, motivation, and also for other skills such as listening, reading, and even writing performances.

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## ABSTRACT

Critical Pedagogy (CP) is an approach in teaching methodology that basically derives from critical theory. This approach of teaching aims at empowering the students with abilities to think critically about their educational situation and allows them to recognize connections between their individual problems and experiences and the social contexts in which they are embedded. In this paper, the main building blocks and the opposing crumbling blocks of CP including the basic concepts of schooling vs. education, control vs. democracy, authoritarianism vs. authority, individualism vs. individuality, deskilling vs. reskilling, and traditional literacy vs. critical literacy are discussed. The aim of this paper is providing an in-depth analysis of CP tenets and clarifying its rubrics as means of consciousness raising among English as a foreign language (EFL) practitioners and students.

**KEYWORDS:** Critical pedagogy; education; democracy; authority; individuality; reskilling; critical literacy.

## INTRODUCTION

### *What does CP endorse?*

Critical pedagogy's tenets aim at equipping the students with necessary critical awareness needed to question and challenge domination, and the beliefs and practices that dominate. In other words, it is a theory and practice of helping students achieve critical consciousness. The application of some building blocks of CP in various educational systems means establishing a closer relationship between teaching and learning (Giroux, 1983). It is a continuous and active process of consciousness raising, learning, reflection, evaluation and the impact that these actions have on all the students in general, and the students who have been disenfranchised by traditional schooling in particular.

Different critical pedagogues have defined CP in quite various ways, stressing different aspects of this approach (Shor, 1992; McLaren, 1997; Freire, 1970, 1974). The main endorsements of CP provided by some pioneers critical pedagogues are presented below.

Giroux (1994), being an influential figure and one of the main contributors in the field of CP maintains that "[Critical] pedagogy signals how questions of audience, voice, power, and evaluation actively work to construct particular relations between teachers and students, institutions and society, and classrooms and communities. Pedagogy in the critical sense illuminates the relationship among knowledge, authority, and power" (30). Popkewitz (1991) is of the opinion that the primary preoccupation of critical pedagogy is with social injustice and how to transform inequitable, undemocratic, or oppressive institutions and social relations.

Douglas (2000) contends that CP considers the way education can equip the individuals with the tools to better themselves and strengthen democracy, to create a more egalitarian and just society, and thus to deploy education in a process of progressive social change. According to Burbules (1995) "a fundamental assumption of a critical pedagogy is that it is a broad educational venture which self-consciously challenges and seeks to transform the dominant values of our culture."

Likewise, Shor (1992) believe that CP is basically concerned with the kinds of educational theories and practices that motivate both students and teachers to consciously recognize the interwoven relationship among ideology, power, and culture which challenges us to recognize, engage, critique and finally take transformative action against any existing undemocratic social practices and institutional structures that produce and contribute to inequalities and oppressive social identities and relations.

McLaren (2000) maintain that transformative pedagogy focuses on social realities which are critically analyzed by students through a process of collaborative dialogue. Using the cultural capital of the students, classrooms become a forum in which students are able to voice opinions which have been silenced in traditional pedagogy's practices. This process can be both validating and empowering as students come to learn that their actions can enable change either at the micro- and/or macro-level.

## THE BUILDING BLOCKS VS. THE CRUMBLING BLOCKS

For any teacher to be able to act as a genuine critical pedagogue, it seems essential to know the distinctions between some basic keys and concepts in the field under discussion. These definitions provide an overview of how critical pedagogy is being compared and contrasted with the traditional schooling system. Detecting the points of departure between the two systems, creates awareness on the part of practitioners, and provides an insight on how to act in favor of a more democratic system of education for the aim of developing a more egalitarian educational system (Giroux, 1988). These include the differences between the categories of Schooling vs. Education, Control vs. Democracy, Authoritarianism vs. Authority, Individualism vs. Individuality, Deskilling vs. Reskilling, and Traditional Literacy vs. Critical Literacy (Freire, 1974). These concepts are discussed below.

### *Schooling vs. Education*

Critical pedagogy roots itself in the belief that every citizen deserves an education. The distinction between schooling and education is important here. Schools structure is a socially efficient system of management and control in which a rigid rule structure, standardized curriculum, and the like are dominated. Schools often ignore the role of an educated person and rely more on what is called schooling methods to secure a future for students. Schooling has some inherent features. The basic logic for schooling relies on preparing students for a market economy (Giroux & McLaren, 1994). This logic is also intensified both in and out of schools - parents signifying to their children that what is needed for a better job is an education, tracking systems in school that in hidden ways prepare students for differentiated social class divisions, and excessive competition to prepare students for the economy (standardized high-stakes tests). This rubric of market logic bases the students need to learn (Giroux, 1988).

Education, on the other hand, presupposes that the student is intrinsically motivated to learn and the teacher intrinsically motivated to teach. While grades and the like are an important element to school structures, the reason for teaching and learning are not fuelled by numbers, but by a sheer desire to attain knowledge for its own sake. In other words, education involves passion for one's subject matter, the ability to get



student to think critically, being creative about subject matter content, creating a classroom of an active community revolved around the learning of material, and the strong desire to teach and to learn. Moreover, education involves the teacher understanding the schooling structure that wouldn't allow education to develop. Thus, the ability to create an education involves the understanding of schooling mechanisms. Challenging presuppositions of schooling concepts requires both teachers as well as students becoming transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1988). On the one hand, creating transformative intellectuals means being critical of all forms of schooling. On the other hand, it puts the teacher into a moral confusion. What kind of education can I give my students so that they can be critical citizens, so I can generate democracy in my classrooms, so I can open up options for them, given the pervasiveness and need for schooling to survive in this society?

It seems that the reason teachers want to become teachers is because they desire to educate their students. But, as they enter into the system, they are led to "school" their students, much like they were schooled both in their public school history as well as their teacher education departments.

#### ***Control vs. Democracy***

Under the rubrics of schooling, schools become control mechanisms which challenge the message of democracy. Purpel (1989) contends that schools have been captured by the concept of accountability, which means that schools need to be responsive and responsible to community concerns to one in which numbers are used to demonstrate that schools have enhanced the requirements. This induces a reductionist viewpoint in which priority is given to the need to control than to understand educational considerations. The need to control produces control mechanisms, such as standardized high-stakes tests, which are quality control mechanism. The curriculum, teachers and staff are all somehow controlled by this control mechanism.

Purpel further suggests that the concern of control is demonstrated when schools control the way the students act, feel and think. Control of ideas, values and stereotypes including race, class and gender, are usually manifested and practiced in schools.

Democracy, on the other hand, is manifested in the guise of education. Control mechanisms are challenged, negotiated and confronted. CP holds that democratic principles must become a way of life in all subject areas and all extra-curricular contents. Examples would encompass teachers and students in all subject areas creating limits for behavior control by writing class rules co-operatively, and teachers and students negotiating forms of testing, rather than taking the regular standardized type only.

Burbules (1995) contends that democratic education also involves fostering a challenge to all forms of individualism and negative competition. He further asserts that more co-operative learning, less stress on the value of success as the major reason for coming to school, and more individual student participation in different educational projects will pave the way for the possibility of student voices to be heard.

#### ***Authoritarianism vs. Authority***

Freire (1985) believes that within a schooling outlook, control mechanisms, a standardized curriculum, a rigid rule structure, and top-down hierarchy direct the authoritarian nature of schools. Authoritarianism is rooted in bureaucratic system. In such an authoritarian structure, clearly defined structural leaders and their subordinates form a hierarchical ladder of control and division of labor (teacher tasks, various male or female related student tasks, division of principal and vice-principal tasks, etc.). Based on Freire's standpoint, this notion of authoritarianism is implanted in what schools know as authority. It is usually defined and practiced rigidly and solidly.

A critical pedagogue will hunt for education by recognizing that authority has multiple meanings and can be democratically negotiated. First, the teacher educator is an authority over his/her subject matter. Second, the teacher educator is not the only authority in the classroom. Teachers and students share each other's knowledge. Learning this way becomes reciprocal and dialogical. That is, teachers learn as well - in particular about student cultures. In other words, students become authorities over their own cultures.

Under the rubric of authority and education, teachers will explore multiple ways through which authority can be redefined by establishing social relationships that are democratic.

#### ***Individualism vs. Individuality***

The progressive "educator," just like the transformative intellectual, has the ability to "see" through various oppressive school structures. For instance, the critical pedagogue obviously visualizes how schools promote the value of individualism over individuality. Individualism demonstrates the hunt for human domination, excessive and sometimes negative forms of competition, self and instant fulfillment, and egotism. Here, the belief is that the individual is the center of life. Standardized tests and the division of social class, the set-up of a reward system that merely promotes negative competition between peers, stereotypes based on one's personal achievement, gender bias, basing one's worth on achievement, gifted programs, university entrance exams, school cheating systems and merit systems that promote individual antagonism, and many other examples, becomes a part of this school structure. Schooling is a part of individualism but can be challenged where necessary.

The educated and critical teacher recognizes individual accomplishments, bases one's value on who he or she is rather than what he or she achieves, and listens to and empathizes with a student voice by understanding the student. The educated teacher, the one inclined to oppose individualism, will search for multiple ways of authentic assessment, various types of discipline, alternate rule making, and different forms of classroom management. This critical teacher will try to develop an understanding of what is being done via school is often negative ethic of competition. This is not to say that critical pedagogues should challenge every policy, but that the right times and issues must be chosen to seek the ethical responses to forms of the alienation, subordination and oppression that individualism raises.

As critical educators, it is crucial that we develop an understanding of other individuals who do not share the same ideological standpoint. To refute voices of ideological opposition contradicts the very premise of individuality. Besides, the nature of democracy is the promotion of the individuality that is so often suppressed by school structures. If we want to work within the structures of oppression, we also have to work with those people who promote those structures! And that becomes the essence of a struggle that critical pedagogues find themselves both in and out of the classroom.

#### ***De-skilling vs. Re-skilling***

The "schooled" teachers lack control over their own work. For instance, a schooled teacher doesn't make curricular decisions. Deskillling deals with teachers executing someone else's goals and plans. Teachers are taught the skills to teach at schools, for example to execute tasks, manage the classroom, develop discipline procedures, create assignments, make tests, evaluate tests, disseminate curriculum, build unit

plans, and vary teaching methodologies. These works all aim at deskilling teachers. This happens when the skills teachers are taught in teacher education are unusable in practice.

Deskilling is manifested when teachers lack autonomy over teaching and decision making processes. By making teachers accountable for pre-specified curriculum and by promoting competency-based education, system management, and employing rigid and dehumanizing forms of evaluation along with numerical rating scales, teachers are controlled and deskilled.

An educated teacher and a critical pedagogue understand and feels this deskilling process. The notion of reskilling refers to teachers being aware and critical of the multiple forms of deskilling. Reskilling occurs when teachers challenge stereotyping, find ways to go through alternative teaching methodologies, build curriculum with open and critical viewpoints, and form common understandings over issues of value.

In short, reskilling happens when teachers are able to move around forms of schooling, and ultimately find ways to educate. Acts of reflection on subject matter, on goals of educational transformation as well as searching for those values that challenge forms of personal and institutional oppression will serve the educated and critical teacher. On the practical side, this means that if social studies teachers are to teach about the tenets of democracy, democratic practice must occur in the classroom. Practically, teachers would have to get students to get beyond stereotypes and begin to create exercises that promote empathy. In other words, educator and critical pedagogue becomes a reskilled practitioner who is committed to justice particularly within the boundaries of the schooling structure. This makes the critical educator more literate.

#### ***Traditional Literacy vs. Critical Literacy***

Under the schooling rubric, traditional literacy holds schools morally accountable to provide a technical mastery of skills for students; to be functional in the basics of reading, math, and writing. More than that, schooling or traditional literacy also means teaching these functions on multiple levels, but with little creativity, no sense of purpose other than passing to the next grade, and little moral vision or insight as to a larger picture revolving around education (Freire & Macedo, 1987).

Critical literacy under the guise of education distinguishes itself from the traditional literacy in that it asks teachers to teach for analytical purposes, for multiple interpretations, and for moral reasoning. Under critical literacy, the educated teacher, as well as student, takes issues such as gender, class and race seriously both in classroom management as well as curriculum content. Critical literacy allows the teacher to connect curriculum to texts as well as to student experience, thus making knowledge more relevant and introspective for both teacher and student.

In short, the critical literate teacher with an educated attitude, while schooling her/his students in the technical sense (getting facts straight, partaking in standardized tests, etc.), adds a necessary skills to their teaching material, which is a committed and visionary understanding that critical pedagogy is a form of education that must be strived for as necessary acts of resistance to oppressive schooling structures.

#### **THE FINAL WORD: FROM DESPAIR TO HOPE (FREIRE, 1970)**

In Freire's (1970) words "to remain a teacher who relies on schooling is the despair that we all can fall into. School structures such as time, bureaucracy, hierarchy, curriculum, etc., have a way of deskilling the teacher and robbing her/him of the enthusiasm to proceed with their job creatively". Freire (1970) maintained that being critical means being reflective on how one is personally schooling themselves and their students, as well as theoretically and practically trying to move out of the schooling mentality.

Freire further asserted that the hope lies in educating our students by deciding when and where it is appropriate to resist schooling structures. In Freire's (1974) words "Hope lies in asking and answering this following question, and then, subsequently, taking action. To what end do I teach?" Providing answer to this question requires the critical pedagogue to understand that teaching is more than about transmitting the basics of schooling. It is about the importance and prominence of educating for democracy. Bringing about positive changes in the educational systems, and in the society at large, requires a lot of work to be done by teachers.

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**ERRORS OR MISTAKES?  
INCORRECTNESS IN STUDENTS' ANSWERS  
IN A SUBJECT-MATTER EXAMINATION**

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**ABSTRACT**

Second Language Acquisition has included only error analysis. To date practically in the classroom, it is difficult to distinguish between errors and mistakes. Because Ellis (1997) states that a clear cut of errors from mistakes may not be possible, this paper discusses any incorrectness, be it an error or a mistake, students made in one of subject-matter examinations and attempts to categorize and seek causes of the incorrectness. The answers in a subject matter examination of seven students were selected to determine types of errors and mistakes they made in the examination. From the analysis it can be concluded that the errors and mistakes include omission, overgeneralization, and L1 transfer. Global incorrectness in terms of literally translated sentences from Indonesian language into English has resulted in hardly comprehensible sentences.

**KEYWORDS:** error, global error, local error, mistake, subject-matter examination

**INTRODUCTION**

The study of Second Language Acquisition has placed the importance of learners' errors in developing proficiency in L2. Learners' errors have been perceived to enhance the developmental stages in language learning. A research conducted by Abbot (1981) has revealed that error analysis is equally unreliable as contrastive analysis. He concludes that error analysis complements contrastive analysis. Due to this view, I argue that it is therefore, important to carefully investigate any incorrectness learners make in the classroom regardless of the term used academically. A study on exploiting learners' errors in Malaysia by Haded (1998) has revealed that interlingual errors and intralingual errors were made due to reliance on mother tongue. Error awareness in advanced students of EFL of Malaysian students has proved to yield insignificant results after a four-month instruction (Tahririan, 1986). As for advanced university students at the academic level in genre-based writing, Henry and Roseberry (2008) have concluded that raising student's awareness of usage types and patterns is far more crucial than instruction in grammar.

**ERRORS AND MISTAKES**

It is general to distinguish between errors and mistakes. Mistakes are caused by the learners not putting into practice something they have learned while errors are caused by the learner trying out something completely new and getting it wrong (Bartram and Walton 1991, p. 25). Ellis (1997) says that errors reflect gaps in a learner's knowledge; they occur because the learner does not know what is correct. Mistakes, on the other hand, reflect occasional lapses in performance because the learner is unable to perform what she knows. According to Ellis, to distinguish errors from mistakes is through consistency of learners' performance. In the classroom, however, the teacher cannot immediately identify if the learner makes an error or a mistake. In practice, what the teacher knows is that the learner make, in the end Ellis (1997) himself admits that "a clear distinction between an error and a mistake may not be possible".

Errors can have different sources, some of which can be universal which reflects learners' attempts to make learning L2 simpler. Universal errors include errors of omission and overgeneralization, irrespective of the learners' L1 (Ellis 1997, p. 19). Another error is called transfer, which denotes an attempt to make use of the learner's L1 knowledge.

Bartram and Walton (1991) state that mistake is wrong language which a native speaker would not usually produce, that is, something that only learners of the language produce (p. 21). This definition still raises a question from the teacher, "How does the teacher know that certain correctness is only produced by a learner and not a native speaker?" One basis to define a mistake may be based on our intuition of our mother tongue. In our mother tongue, it is unlikely that we misspell words; it is, therefore, a misspelled word is a mistake. But again, with reference to what Ellis has stated, in practice it is difficult to distinguish between an error and a mistake.

**CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS AND ERROR ANALYSIS**

Prior to error analysis as studied in Second Language Acquisition, contrastive analysis (CA) was emphasized to denote similarities and differences in L1 and L2 and through the approach, teachers could predict problems faced by learners. The aim was more on effective teaching and testing. Language acquisition was sequenced along the process of stimulus-response-reinforcement. One assumption in the approach is that there will be transfer in learning from L1 to L2. The transfer is called positive (or facilitating) when the same structure is appropriate in both languages. However, the transfer is called negative (or interference) when the structure of L1 is inappropriately used in L2 (Saville-Troike, 2006 p. 45).

Error analysis as the first influential work was an article by Corder in 1967, which states that errors are not bad habits to be eliminated by learners. Instead, he says that learners' errors can provide insights into the learning process. Errors, then, can be perceived as a way toward improvement in the learning process. A good saying says that practice makes perfect and experience in the best teacher. It is expected that through errors learners make, they can better themselves in achieving a native-like proficiency. Saville-Troike (2006) states that error analysis "focuses on learners' creative ability to construct language". Her definition includes the phrase creative ability, which means that learners are self-motivated to create a structure that (s)he has not mastered. She further explains that error analysis is based on the description and analysis of actual learners' errors in L2.

A study conducted by Ney (1986) has stated that error analysis has the characteristics of structuralism, in which:

1. Error analysis is taxonomic in nature.
2. Error analysis creates theories by induction.
3. Error analysis relies on the corpus for its data.

He further explains that both theory of structuralism by Saussure and transformational by Chomsky study writing as a form of language. Transformational theory rejects the significance of corpus as data in error analysis. Chomsky (in Ney, 1986) argues that a learner can produce an unlimited number of sentences and errors made in a corpus do not reflect learners' ability to produce language. This claim is affirmative as a study by Schacter in 1974. She worked on relative clauses written by learners from Chinese, Japanese, Arabic and Persian whose English was not the native language. She concludes that Chinese and Japanese learners made fewer errors in relative clauses than the Arabic and Persian ones. This is simply the Chinese and Japanese learners avoided writing relative clauses because this clause does not exist in their native language. What can be exploited from her study is that learners simply avoid structures that does not exist in their native language and teachers should know what their learners avoid doing in learning a language. Her conclusion is contentious since languages differ structurally and learners should learn (or acquire) as many structures as possible to achieve native-like proficiency.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The questions that are discussed in the study are:

1. What errors and mistakes were made by the students in the examination?
2. What are the causes of the errors and mistakes?

## METHODOLOGY

Qualitative method was employed in the study because the aim was to identify kinds of errors or mistakes students made during exam. The exam results of seven Indonesian students sitting on the course of Sociolinguistics academic year 2012/2013 were randomly selected based on the errors and mistakes identified in their answers. I adopted personal approach for the study to result in-depth analysis of errors or mistakes each student made and the analysis was conducted accordingly. Sub-classification of the data is based on modified types of errors put forward by Ellis (1997), in which he states local and global errors. Local errors affect only a single constituent in the sentence while global errors violate the overall structure of a sentence and it is difficult to process. In this article, I modified the sub-classifications from Ellis and the terms used are local incorrectness and global incorrectness.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Student 1

#### Local Incorrectness

(1) For example: when we works in different community automatically we should understanding what people say.

Some incorrectness can be identified from this sentence: (1) the clause we works and (2) we should understanding. The first incorrectness contains the inappropriate verb works after the subject we. When we works is grammatically incorrect. The inappropriate use of the additional suffix -s may refer to the case of overgeneralization. She tended to add suffix -s after a verb, and the subject tended to be ignored.

Another incorrectness she made is the verb understanding after the modal verb should. This was made because she did not know that the modal verb should is followed by verb in the bare-infinitive form. Whether this is an error or a mistake remains vague as (in)consistency cannot be traced.

If we are to contrast the third clause (3) what people say with the other two clauses, we can see that the third clause was correctly written. She correctly aligned the subject-verb agreement; she used the verb say for the subject people.

From the analysis of the incorrectness she made, the conclusion is that she still lacked the competence of subject-verb agreement comprehension.

(2) Speech convergence is when people try to talks in differently and each community can understand what they say.

The data reveals that the writer made some incorrectness in the clause people try to talks in differently. According to English grammar, infinitive to is followed by verb-1 without any addition of suffix -s or -es. In this sentence, however, the student seemed to overgeneralize and add suffix -s after the verb try. This may happen due to her confusion of the subject being speech convergence.

Another incorrectness she made is the prepositional phrase in differently. One possible cause is that she realized that differently was used to modify the verb talk. However, she might have overlooked the preposition in, which can be omitted.

With regard to subject-verb agreement, data (1) shows that the student wrote correct subject-verb agreement when the subject is people as is the case in data (2). In another clause, each community can understand what they say, she correctly agreed the verbs with the subjects. For this reason, the incorrectness in subject-verb agreement in the sentences the student made is categorized as a mistake.

#### Global Incorrectness

(3) In Indonesian language if we wants to getting someone to sit down sometimes if doing for our parents.

Some complications occur in data (3). The first, and the fundamentally basic, is that it is a sentence fragment, which requires a main clause to attach to. Subordinator if is used twice and this apparently distracted her attention to finish her sentence. She literally translated her native language into English and this is called as L1 transfer. The second error is again the subject-verb agreement in the clause if we wants. As what has been identified in data (1), this particular student always added suffix-s after the verb although the subject is we. What can be drawn from the three data about subject-verb agreement, she overgeneralized that subject we is followed by verb plus suffix-s as is ruled for third person singular. However, it is not the case as data (4) shows.

(4) The context is we knowing who people talks and relationship is our family.

This data reveals the incorrect use of the verb knowing in we knowing and the verb talks in people talks. In the data, she put the verb into –ing form after the subject we, which is in contrast to the subject we in data (1) and (2). One possible reason why she wrote this is that there is the verb is and she might have thought that the verb is followed by –ing form. Thus, there is inconsistency in the subject-verb agreement. The verb talks in people talks exhibits subject-verb disagreement as she added suffix –s after the verb, which results in incorrect agreement. She tended to overgeneralize that verbs were added suffix-s regardless of the subject. As is shown in data (2), this learner did not add suffix-s for the verb; however suffix-s was added after the to-infinitive verb.

Data (3) and (4) signal that the incorrectness is inconsistent and, therefore, is categorized as mistakes.

Logic is apparently missing in the sentence she wrote. It can be identified from the whole sentence which does not reflect the proper semantic connection, particularly in the clause and relationship is our family. The illogical sentence is a result of L1 transfer because she literally translated Indonesian sentence into English. What she wanted to express is that the people we talk to is our family. Hence, an alternative of the sentence can be as follows:

The context is we know people whom we talk to and they are our family.

(5) The same way we use language to her is formal but relax not too serious.

Data (5) reveals literal translation from an Indonesian sentence into English. In this sentence, she correctly put the verb in the clause we use. An inappropriate word choice in relax attests that she did not know that relax is a verb. In Indonesian language, relax is translated into *rileks*, which is categorized as an adjective. It is emphasized through the phrase not too serious which is the English equivalent of *rileks*. Because she did a literal translation, she used the relax instead of relaxed. Besides that, this sentence is hardly comprehensible as what she wanted to express is unclear. The idea that rises a question is in we use language to her is formal but relax not too serious. The word phrase formal but relax not too serious does not clearly denote what her idea was. As this is L1 transfer and she literally translated this from Indonesian language, the revision that can be proposed is: In the same way we use language to her in a formal but relaxed situation.

From the five sentences this students wrote, two errors in sentences (1) and (2) are categorized as local incorrectness while sentences (3), (4), and (5) contain global incorrectness. These three sentences are hardly comprehensible and difficult to process.

#### Student 2

(6) Women use more standard forms than men points to the way society tends to expect better behavior from women than from men.

(6) In this sentence, the student put her focus on the verb points and might have forgotten about the initial verb she wrote. The initial verb is use, which exhibits subject-verb agreement, but she wrote another verb, points, which does not clearly show direct agreement with a subject. One likely possibility is she thought that the subject is the whole clause women use more standard forms than men and therefore the verb is added by the suffix –s. In this case, she should have a noun clause as the subject and come up with That women use more standard forms than men. It is unclear if this is an error or mistake since (in)consistency cannot be traced. Other sentences she wrote were grammatically correct. This student proved to possess good grammatical competence.

Omission is the type of incorrectness identified in the sentence. This student developed a local incorrectness due to the comprehensible sentence that does not impede communication.

#### Student 3

##### Local Incorrectness

(7) Speech convergence is one of the form of accommodation theory which occur when the speaker want to accommodate her/his listeners.

One of the form in this data is incorrect. She did not change the noun form into plural although noun is preceded by determiner one of. The determiner one of must be followed by a plural noun. Therefore, she should have put the noun form into forms.

Another error she made is the verb want in the clause when the speaker want to accommodate her/his listener. Due to the subject of the clause is the speaker, being a third singular person, the verb want requires suffix –s. She evidently lacked this subject-verb agreement understanding.

Consistency in subject-verb disagreement that the student made is demonstrated in the following sentence.

(8) When he talk to local tourist they promote Pangandaran using Indonesian, but when he face international tourist from everywhere, he used English.

In (8) she did not agree the verbs talk and face with the subject he. Thus, this is an error. The initial clause, when he talk to local tourist, lacked the determiner to quantify the noun tourist. As tourist requires a right determiner, the revision proposed can be either a local tourist or local tourists. In this sentence omission occurs. Yet, the context sets that there may be more than one tourist, and the best alternative is local tourists. Similar revision is applicable for international tourist in the clause when he face international tourist.

The final clause, however, signal a different tense. It is hardly comprehensible why she used a different tense in the final clause. It is a gap in her understanding of tenses with previous clauses she wrote. Because the first two clauses are in the present simple, there is no need to change the last clause into the past simple tense. The co-text of the question requires an example of any situation, which is most likely in the present simple tense.



The consistency in subject-verb disagreement is exhibited in the following sentence.

(9) He even greeting tourist with the tourist language that he know.

Sentence (9) indicates the student's error in subject-verb agreement. Contrasted to the final clause, that he know, the initial clause contains the verb in -ing form, which may due to the insertion of the adverb even before the verb greet.

Other inappropriate use of word can be identified in the noun tourist, which requires a determiner, and the tourist language, which needs a possessive adjective. Hence, an alternative to correct this is: He even greets a tourist in the tourist's language he knows.

From the four sentences the student wrote, all of them contain local incorrectness which still result in comprehensible sentences and are categorized as errors due to the consistency of the incorrectness. Omission is the type of incorrectness identified in the sentences.

#### Student 4

##### Local Incorrectness

(10) In this case, I try to match my language with people who allowed to talk to, so that it can called a situation that contain speech convergence.

In this sentence, the clause who allowed to talk to, signals that she formerly wished to make a passive voice, as is the case in the third clause, it can called. These two clauses require the verb be to create a passive voice. Thus, the revision is who are allowed to talk to and it can be called. Again, as what previous sentences have exhibited, subject-verb agreement is still a problem for this student. She did not put the verb into the correct form that might have been a result of ignorance of the subject being a situation and she made it in a relative clause.

(11) At this point, women usually speech with using words to express if they see something extraordinary.

The incorrectness in sentence (11) is the word speech. She did not adjust the verb to fill in the function of a verb in the sentence. The word speech seemed to be readily accessible to her so she used the word speech instead of speak.

Other incorrectness is the phrase with using words. With in Indonesian language is *dengan*, which can be followed by a verb, while in English, the preposition with can only be followed by an instrument or a circumstance. It can be concluded that the use of the preposition with is a matter of L1 transfer.

With regard to what have been analyzed, the two sentences this student wrote are categorized as local incorrectness and can be categorized as mistakes since consistency cannot be traced. However, they are comprehensible and messages are conveyed to the reader.

#### Student 5

##### Local Incorrectness

(12) Speech convergence is situation when the speakers converge they style of speak to the people they addressed.

The incorrectness in the sentence are (1) they style and (2) they addressed. In (1), the student used the pronoun they before a noun style. She could not recognize that the word style in (1) is a noun. In Indonesian language, there is no difference in subject pronoun or possessive pronoun, so she used the subject pronoun that was readily accessible to her. In (2), they addressed, contains the verb addressed, which is in the past simple tense. The use of past simple tense in this clause is incorrect since the introductory clause is in the present simple. To make the clauses parallel, the verb in the last clause has to be in the present simple as well.

She also missed a determiner before a noun situation. This may due to the absence of determiner in Indonesian language, so it is a matter of L1 transfer.

What needs revision is the incorrect use of the verb speak to follow the preposition of. She apparently had no idea that the preposition of is followed by a noun or a gerund. An alternative to correct this is either their style of speech or their speech style.

(13) "Sit down." It tend to use in general situation like when we ask to our friend to sit down.

The first clause in the second sentence begins with it tend to use to supposedly signal passive meaning. The verb tend should be followed by to be used to signal passive meaning. She could not denote passive meaning through passive construction, which requires verb be and verb past participle. Other incorrectness she made is the lack of indefinite article a, which has to precede the noun situation. The revised noun phrases are in a general situation. However, in the last clause, when we ask, she correctly agreed the verb with the subject. The word to follows the verb ask, which is considered incorrect. She literally translated the phrase from Indonesian language into English. For this reason, it is called L1 transfer.

(14) The participant of this utterance is possible come from a teacher to the students.

Some incorrectness can be identified from this data; the first is the participant of this utterance, and the second one is the verb phrase is possible come. At the beginning of the sentence, she used the word participant, which is incorrect since an utterance is not an event in which someone can take a part. The participant of this utterance is redundant; the phrase the participant of can be just deleted because what matters is the utterance. Other incorrectness is the verb is which precedes the main verb come and should be omitted. The last incorrectness is the incorrect use of the adjective possible that precedes the verb come. She might have focused on the phrase is possible and forgotten that the



following verb is a main verb that does require be (is). She may have overgeneralized the verb as the adjective possible is preceded by the verb is and it is correct if the verb come is omitted. From the analysis, the revision is This utterance possibly comes from a teacher to the students.

(15) For example, in the waiting room, the receptionist ask the guest who keep standing and walking that disturb or annoyed another guests.

In this sentence, the student did not pay attention to the tense of the sentence. If the sentence is to be written in the present simple, she should have added the suffix -s for the verb ask and keep. Another error she made is the clause that disturb or annoyed guests. This clause does not clearly refer to a specific antecedent, and the relative pronoun that should be omitted and replaced by a conjunction and followed by it as a pronoun reference to refer to keep standing and walking. The suffix -s, therefore, should follow the verb disturb. It seems that the student writing this sentence could access more immediately the word annoyed as an adjective compared to its verb, annoy. In Indonesian language, to state an annoying situation is *menjengkelkan*, and it is an adjective. Hence, it can be concluded that in that particular co-text, she translated the word *menjengkelkan* into annoyed.

The incorrectness in subject-verb agreement in the sentences signals inconsistency, and for this reason, they are categorized as mistakes. Local incorrectness is found in all four sentences the student wrote. Omission, overgeneralization, and L1 transfer are the types of incorrectness identified.

#### Student 6

##### Local Incorrectness

(16) Speech convergence included to a polite speech strategy because the speech speak to another person.

In this data, the verb included is in the past simple tense, which is inappropriate because there is no time signal to denote a finished action or a fact in the past. Therefore, the preposition to after the verb include in unnecessary. Another inappropriateness that can be identified is in the clause because the speech speak to another person. It is hardly comprehensible to write that the speech speak to since speech is a thing that cannot perform an action to speak. In this co-text if the word speech refers to speech convergence, the clause of reason is not logically related to the initial clause as the clause of effect. For this reason, the last clause is unnecessary.

(17) For example a relation between doctor and pasien.

This sentence contains the Indonesian word *pasien*, whose equivalent in English is patient. The student was unaware of the English word and used the Indonesian word instead. This is called a mistake because a native speaker of s English will be very unlikely to misspell the word patient. However, what she wrote is a sentence fragment that still requires a predicate. In Indonesian language, it is possible to write a fragment after for example. It indicates there is L1 transfer into what she wrote. Other incorrectness is the missing of articles before the nouns doctor and patient. She put an indefinite article a before the noun relation, but the article is missing in the other nouns. This indicates that this is inconsistent, and it can be categorized as a mistake.

(18) Women's speech use the form politeness than men, because women's is a group of subordinate until they can't offend men.

The words requiring revisions are the verb use, the noun phrase form politeness, and the conjunction until. The subject of the sentence is speech and, thus, requires suffix-s after the verb use. She mistakenly thought of the subject as women and not speech. The noun phrase, the form politeness, requires a correct head, which is form and not politeness. She focused her attention in Indonesian language in which the head precedes the modifier. Hence, she came up with the form politeness instead of the politeness form. It is L1 transfer.

She incorrectly used the conjunction until to actually signal a purpose. Instead of using the conjunction so (or so that) she chose to use until which semantically signals time. The second clause of the sentence, because women's is a group of subordinate, contains possessive form in apostrophe 's after the noun women, which is incorrect. From the analysis, one alternative to revise the sentence is Women use polite speech because women are a group of subordinate so that they cannot offend men.

##### Global Incorrectness

(19) As usual, doctor use the language of terminology it didn't known from the pasien.

Again, in this sentence, the student used the word *pasien*, which she also wrote in the previous sentence. The lack of determiner before the noun doctor signals that her competence in creating a noun phrase is low. The word it in the second clause, it didn't known from the pasien, does not clearly signal any reference. What she wrote in the literal translation of an Indonesian sentence into English. Hence, it is quite hard to revise the sentence because her mindset was in Indonesian language, and this is L1 transfer. One possibility is that the terminology is used by a doctor and the patient does not know it, and the revision may read like this: As usual, a doctor uses a terminology that is not known by a patient.

Four sentences this student wrote contain local and global incorrectness. The global incorrectness is identified in the fourth sentence, and it is difficult to comprehend due to the incorrect pronoun whose reference is not known. Omission and L1 transfer are types of incorrectness in these sentences. L1 transfer indicates that the student made errors and the misspelled word denotes a mistake.

#### Student 7

##### Local Incorrectness

(20) In some countries which has multilingual language with many varieties language people may accommodate to others by selecting the code that is most comfortable for their addresses.

The sentence in (20) lacks the subject-verb agreement at the initial clause. Has as the verb does not agree to the subject, some countries. The student did not focus on the subject when coming to the verb. Another incorrectness can be identified when she wrote the noun phrase many varieties language. In this noun phrase, the word varieties cannot modify the noun language, hence, the revision is varieties of languages. She also misspelled the word addresses, which should be substituted with addressees. By and large, we can comprehend the idea she tried to convey due to relatively logical word order in this sentence. In subject-verb agreement, she made a mistake because in other clauses she wrote the subjects and verbs agree correctly.

#### *Global Incorrectness*

(21) The different ways of getting someone to sit down in English and Indonesia occurs because of many factor tend to with who someone talk about, the social class factors, the social distance.

The initial clause contains the word Indonesia that is incorrectly used as she compared English as a language and Indonesia as a country. The word Indonesian language has to be used instead of Indonesia. In contrast with (20), sentence (21) is hard to understand because it is not clear what idea she wanted to communicate, particularly in the second clause, because of many factor tend to with who someone talk about. Besides the incorrect noun, factor, after the determiner many, the phrase of many factor tend to with who someone talk about is hardly comprehensible. She might want to say many factors that affect differences in getting someone to sit down in English and Indonesian language, and she literally translated her sentence in Indonesian language into English. For this reason, it is L1 transfer and the entire clause needs revising to clearly communicate the idea. One alternative is because of many factors such as who the addressee is, the social class, and the social distance.

Two sentences this student wrote contain a mistake in (20) and an error in (21). Student (7) wrote sentences containing both local and global incorrectness. Global incorrectness in the last sentence she wrote impede communication because the idea she wanted to convey is not expressed clearly in the sentence.

#### **CONCLUSION**

From the analysis and discussion of the data, the errors and mistakes in the exam papers include local and global incorrectness; however, most incorrectness is under local incorrectness as the sentences are comprehensible and the ideas are conveyed to the reader. The types of incorrectness include omission, overgeneralization, and L1 transfer. These three types of incorrectness are equally identified in the data. Regarding L1 transfer in the data, it denotes literally translated sentences from Indonesian language into English. L1 transfer, being categorized as global incorrectness results in hardly comprehensible sentences. It is, therefore, important to always check learners' competence in acquiring English all the way through many subjects, particularly in when dealing with subject matter. One assumption on the errors and mistakes students made may be due to the time constraint during the examination, thus, resulting in the students' focusing more on the content than structure.

The limited number of students involved as well as the sentences produced certainly do not generate a general conclusion on the competence of other students excluded from the research. A longitudinal research should be carried out to better map learners' competence in acquiring a second language, particularly in grammatical competence.

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## EXPLORING EFFECTS OF EXPLICIT VS. IMPLICIT TEACHING OF COLLOCATIONS ON THE WRITING PERFORMANCE OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT

The methods and the strategies employed in classrooms by English as foreign language teachers (EFL) to enhance EFL learners' skills in L2 process is a disputable and controversial issue all over the world. In fact, it seems vital to employ a method which is simultaneously functional and effective in teaching and learning process. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of two different methods of teaching collocations, namely explicit and implicit, on the Iranian EFL learners' performance in using these collocations in paragraph writing. In order to conduct this study, 36 pre-university students were randomly selected, divided into two separate groups (namely explicit and implicit). In this study, the class following explicit method was called experimental group and the other group following implicit method was called control one. Both groups took a pre-test to evaluate their writing ability at the beginning of the term and after the class room treatment, the entire participants were given the same topics as post-test to write about them. This post-test was assumed as a summative evaluation. The participants' performance in pre-test had almost the equal mean score, while the performances of the both groups in post-test were significantly different. The result of the study indicated that the group receiving explicit method of teaching collocations (experimental group) outperformed in using collocations in paragraph writing.

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**KEYWORDS:** Explicit, implicit, collocations, writing skill.

### INTRODUCTION

An important aspect in EFL learning is the collocational competence which involves knowing which words usually come together to convey a meaning structurally and lexically. Before 1960s, the writing classes were following traditional product view of writing in which only the final product of writing was taken into account and the cognitive processes through which the writers construct their ideas and their texts were totally neglected. In the late 1960s and the early 1970s, however, L1 writing researchers came to this understanding that composing is a non-linear process of meaning. According to Zamel (as cited in Fahandezh Sadi & Othman, 2012) writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to get meaning. To discover meaning, the writers employ different processes of planning, drafting and reviewing each other. The writers were found to use planning, for instance, from the beginning to end of writing. Natural languages are full of collocations; common forms of combinations of words that co-occur in individuals' utterances make the basic frame of collocations in a language. Recent work in lexicography indicates that collocations are pervasive in English. They are very general issue in various mode of writing involving the technical genres along with the nontechnical ones. Accordingly, a couple of new approaches have been suggested for retrieving different kinds of collocations by benefiting from the analysis of relatively high amount samples of data in textual mode. These techniques automatically produce large numbers of collocations intended to reflect the relevance of the associations. In fact association, combination and co-occurrence are the most significant features in collocations. However, most of the EFL learners fail to follow this association or co-occurrence correctly.

#### *What is collocation?*

As Martynska,(2004) mentions the term "collocation" was first introduced by Firth (1986) to define a combination of words associated with each other, for example, to take a photo. The term 'collocation' has its origin in the Latin verb "collocare" which means to set in order/to arrange'. Moreover, Skorupka (as cited in Martynska, 2004) defines collocation as a combination of words which does not convey the meaning individually. He points out that co-occurrence of some words can be determined and in some cases restricted by their meaning. In other words, replacing one or two elements of collocation with a limited number of words is possible while combining these elements with some others is not grammatically or lexically appropriate. In another definition, based on Oxford Collocations Dictionary (2009) collocation is the way words combine in a language in order to make a natural-sounding speech and writing. For instance, in English we say "strong wind", but "heavy rain". It is somehow strange to say heavy wind instead of strong rain. And as a result all aforementioned words can be noticed in the speaking of learner from pre-intermediate to even elementary level. As a matter of fact, it necessitates a far higher level of language competence to use these collocations correctly. For Yarmohammadi (2002, P.43) collocation is "habitual co-occurrence of individual vocabulary items." Woolard (2005) defines collocation as the grammar of words –how words go together with other words. In other words, collocation tells us which words can come before or after words." Tajalli (2007, P.30) has defined collocations as "fixed, nonidiomatic constructions which reflect the meanings of their components." Therefore, collocations are different from idioms whose meanings are not the combination of the meanings of the individual words in them."

#### *Why collocation is important?*

According to Oxford Collocations Dictionary (2009), collocation exists in nearly all domains of English. Relatively no one can speak or write naturally without benefiting from collocation. With regard to students selecting the appropriate collocation can enormously aid them to speech and writing way more naturally, and sound more native-like speaker and writer, even without considering their intelligibility degree. An EFL learner talking about strong rain may make him/herself understood, but it requires more effort on the part of the listener and ultimately creates a barrier to communication. Poor collocation in exams is also likely to lead to lower marks (But what is more significant than former issue is that, language which is replete with collocation can also be more precise. This is due to the fact that mostly using single words in the appropriate context in English - particularly those very usual ones- can have drastic influence in communication .The pinpoint meaning of a word can be identified by the words that surrounded and combined with the core word-by collocation. A student choosing the best collocations will express him/herself much more clearly and be able to convey not just a general meaning, but something more precise point in detail (Oxford Collocations Dictionary, 2009).

#### *Explicit vs. Implicit Method*

Nearly in every language of the world teacher would agree upon the different influence of explicit and implicit teaching has been an issue to be settled for decades. A group of researchers are in favor of explicit teaching method and advocate its benefits for learners, whereas some others ascertain that implicit teaching method is more fruitful for learners, some others claim that some aspects of both method should be used for optimal learning. To consider these issues more clearly, it incumbent upon researcher to denote and cast some lights upon these two methods in details; Explicit learning is defined as "conscious awareness and intention to learn" (Brown, 2000, p.217). Moreover, explicit learning includes "input processing to find out whether the input information contains regularities, and if so, to work out the concepts and rules with which these regularities can be captured" (Brown, 2007, p.291). In other words, explicit learning is an active process where EFL learners seek out the structure of information that is presented to them. By the same token, explicit learning is "a conscious awareness and

intention" (Brown, 2007, p.291). Stern et al (1992) make a distinction between explicit learning and implicit one. Also, he distinguishes different dimensions in language teaching which can be an additional aid for learner to clearly find out the division of implicit versus explicit learning, so here is his encapsulation:

Explicit; rational/formal/intellectual, conscious, monitoring, problem-solving, analysis, abstract, metacognitive, inferencing, and systemic study. (Stern et al as cited in Dash, 2003, p.5)

Implicit; intuitive, automatic, subconscious acquisition, unreflective, behaviorism, mimicry and memory, exposure to language in use. (Stern et al as cited in Dash, 2003, p.5).

#### ***The Significance of the study***

The history of L2 teaching and learning has alternated between two single-minded approaches. Those that focused on analyzing the language, i.e., language usage (focus on forms) and those that focused on using the use (focus on meaning). Though the second stance was considered to be more fruitful, and the researchers (Afshari & Oroujlou, 2012) noted that as a result of an exclusive concern with meaning-based activities, teaching method makes available to L2 learners input that lacks in quality. They proposed that learners need to do more than simply to engage in communicative language use; they also need to attend to form and focus on form would work better in which these forms follow a naturally combined forms and have a restricted framework. In other words they try to emphasize on integrated rather than segregated approaches. Based on the researcher's observations and experience in the field of English language teaching and learning, it seems that the little attention attached to writing a paragraph containing collocations in EFL composition classes in Iranian schools. Moreover, the researcher analyzed a random sample of pre-university students' composition papers and the results showed that most students were not able to come up with using correct, coherent and meaningful forms of collocations. In addition, the studies which were conducted in TEFL field called for creating a situation and using suitable technique to develop learners' language skills including collocational writing, are really few and it shows a sort of paucity in this subject. It can be claimed that this research and its result can cover some facets of this paucity and its results will be fruitful pedagogical implications in L2 teaching and learning process. This study was in attempt to apply two different methods of teaching vocabulary (in this case, collocation) in EFL namely implicit and explicit method. So in this survey the instructor aimed to teach collocational features of the words used in the texts through these two methods. So, to both methods of teaching in the classrooms, observe the participants' performance and improvement in writing and collect sufficient data.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Teachers should experience various aspects of teaching by effectively influencing the learning process. As cited in Rahimi (2011, 11) Korthagen, Loughran, and Russell, claim that "...the learning of student teachers is only meaningful and powerful when it is embedded in the experience of learning to teach". Teacher training process should provide enough room for teacher to boost knowledge by engaging in teaching experiences and actively leading the learning process rather than remaining passive recipients. A group of researchers in the experimental studies in classroom settings have investigated how the learning of collocations may benefit EFL students if they follow a suitable and functional method. As cited in Myers and Chang (2009), Hsu studied the direct emphasis on lexical collocations and discovered that explicit collocation teaching helped the Taiwanese college EFL students to learn new collocations and in learning them there was a positive connection between the students' use of lexical collocations and their proficiency. He concluded that direct collocation instruction helps EFL learners acquire new collocations in written and spoken discourses that in turn enhance their proficiency of language learners in all four skills. As it can be seen this study magnifies the role of the employed method in teaching collocations directly and comes to the EFL learners' background knowledge (proficiency). In another experimental study in Australia by Xudong, Cheng, Varaprasad, and Leng (2009) investigate that how time of teaching /learning and duration of practicing in the class or even out of the classroom significantly affect the EFL learning process. In other words, this study investigated what aspects of academic writing improved at the completion of one semester of studying an EAP course that was specifically designed for postgraduate students in Melbourne University. In their study, they examined texts written by 69 students at two separate times: in week 1 and in week 10 (as pre-tests and post-tests). The texts were subjected to analysis for language use and text structure. This study found that while no improvements were shown in terms of fluency for students' writing, the use of academic vocabulary showed great improvements over time. Moreover, the grammatical accuracy of students also boosted over time.

This study concluded that duration of practicing has improved the learners' proficiency and their performance in writing and grammatical collocations. Furthermore, from Deveci's perspective (2004) the context in which a collocation is used is important. Certain collocations or expressions are appropriate for certain contexts. Factors such as a difference in status or a social distance between the speaker and the hearer can affect the choice of collocational phrases. For example, we would not greet our boss by saying "How's it going?" however, it is all right to greet a friend that way. This example suggests that knowledge of connotation and formality is important in deciding which collocation to use. Collocations are of grave importance for language learners. Whenever learners benefit from collocations, the possibility of being understood would be enhanced. Mostly, Native speakers unconsciously reckon what is going to be said based upon the use of phrases. If a non-native speaker uses frequently-used patterns (collocations), it would be way easier for most native speakers to predict what the non-native speaker is saying and may help compensate for other language issues, such as pronunciation. When learners write and speak, if they use collocations central to their topic, their readers are more likely to understand their message. Fahandezh Sadi and Othman (2012) believed that one of the fundamental factors affecting Iranian EFL the learners' performance is the method employed by instructors in the class rooms and the drills and the evaluation that follow in teaching process while nobody can ignore the system of education. They conclude in their study that due to teacher-centered policy and educational system in Iran, the writers of this study were found to heavily rely on their teachers as their only reference. This is especially true for the poor writers who appeared to use certain rules and chunks in their writing which they had previously memorized in their classes. Their conception of writing was narrowed to the producing a set of error-free sentences arranged one after another on a piece of paper. This limited knowledge about composition besides lack of practice affects students' writing improvement since they would not learn the main purpose of writing which is its communicative purpose. These researchers add another point to the result and believe that due to employing a traditional method in the class lacking any creativity, productivities there is no interaction between teacher and learners.

The other problem is the use of L1 while writing in English. Native language is an effective element of writing in another language and can help writers in decision making and idea generations. However, as the study mentions, L1 use would be helpful only when the writer concentrates on the meaning and not the single word. Theoretical Perspectives on instructors are then suggested to teach the writers how to use this helpful way of using L1 strategy. We can say that in which the researchers mention the entire meaning not the single word in fact attempt to highlight the value of communicative method of teaching and learning. The study by Xu, Mao, and Liu (2012) makes clear

another point about collocations and the way of teaching and learning them as chunk forms. Their findings present that how awareness and psychological factors have an influential role on the EFL learners' vocabulary achievement and their performance at the productive level (writing). After employing lexical approach in the class, they have discovered that there is a positive effect of lexical chunks in their English learning. This study states that few learners were aware of learning collocations and expressions and there was no possibility for them to apply systematic lexis as learning strategies. Nonetheless, by the rehearsing of chunk identification and usage, students become more confident in English learning. The observation during the teaching practice was really considerable. The researchers in this study claim that how a method which can increase the learners' awareness and their confidence is able to improve the learners' competence and collocational knowledge meaningfully.

### ***Collocational Competence***

Mounya (2010) expounds that it is far better to teach vocabulary separately in order that learners can find enough opportunity to be exposed to as many words as possible. In this way, they can develop their lexical competence namely, both individual words as well as Multi-Word Units. Accordingly, foreign language learners would become more able to decode the meaning of word-combinations like collocations, idioms, phrasal verbs...etc. which still cause a major problem for them. Teaching collocations would help learners of Second/Foreign languages face the problem of mixing. They could at least reduce miscollocations in writing. This would direct learners towards proficiency in the Second/Foreign Language generally and Writing or speaking specially. According to various studies, in learning and teaching collocations gaining or having acceptable level of competence plays a crucial role. Among these competence elements using correct propositions before or after the stems are really disputable for EFL/ESL learners. Hill states (As cited in Koosha & Jafarpour, 2006) that lack of collocational competence can be a cause of EFL students' problems in learning English collocations. It may also be suggested that one reason for the EFL students' problems in learning English prepositions is that they usually try to learn the meaning and use of prepositions individually without paying sufficient attention to their collocational properties. Overly teaching collocations and their use seems imperative, as research suggests it cannot be taken for granted that foreign language learners, after years of English learning, will naturally develop an awareness of collocations. Some Similar investigations have been conducted by Lapkin and Biskup (as cited in Oskuee, Pustchi, & Salehpour, 2012) adds that raising learners' awareness of collocations by leading them through the whole pre-writing, in-writing and post-writing process helps them "learn to write" and "write to learn". In other words, there is a dichotomous feature in this process. They "learn to write" better when they understand that writing is a recursive process and they can make use of the collocation resources to prepare for writing, achieve better writing sophistication and to edit and revise their mistakes in collocation use. More importantly, they "write to learn" when the writing process drives them to actively search for suitable collocations. For instance, in the primary phase, pre-writing, learners frequently are participated in brainstorming, looking for information, and finding the outline (planning content). The use of the collocation awareness process encouraged learners to explore in language, looking for useful phrases for the particular genre and theme of the writing at hand. The collocations students noticed and recorded offered them more language learning input as well as adequate resources to aid in expressing their ideas.

As cited in Oskuee, Pustchi, and Salehpour (2012) Swain and Lapkin's output hypothesis, learners can promote their productive skill when forced to use what does not exist in their current repertoire. The results suggest that the process raises learners' collocation awareness throughout and after the writing process and the quality of student work increases with the use of collocation. Further, the process helped the learners "learn to write" and "write to learn," nurturing them reflectively, independently, and autonomously prepared for future learning. While the main aim of the course is to enhance students' academic writing skills, students seem to have also gained some 'added values' from the course. The most frequently mentioned 'by-product' is the improvement of their proficiency or their general English skills namely, speaking, listening, writing and reading. In addition to the benefits of improving students' general English language competence, students have also mentioned some other 'by-products' of the course, especially the social interactional function of the course.

To make clear the EFL/ESL learners' performance in writing ability, in an experimental study by Fahandezh Sadi, & Othman (2012) they attempted to divide the participants in two categories; good writers and poor writers. This categorization has been occurred based on the participants' performance in writing activity. The differences were found to be in using certain strategies including L1 use, rehearsing, rereading and repetition. As the result shows, poor writers restored to their mother language 150 times and good writers employed their first language for 180 times. Nevertheless there were several noticeable differences between these two groups of writers in the way they used their first languages. Given the fact almost all the ideas they produced were firstly rehearsed in Farsi, they had to translate them into English while composing. The first difference between the groups in the way they use L1 was found to be in the fact that, due to concentrating on only single words, low-leveled writers had numerous problems for translating their Farsi notions into English written discourse while good writers were found constantly juggle between English and Farsi. Good writers were found to focus on the idea they intended to get across while the poor writers limited their attention to the abstract Farsi words and by the time they intended to covert these Farsi words into English ones. They performed a direct translation which resulted in producing some unacceptable English. Moreover there were some sizable differences between the writers' performances in using rehearsal, rereading and repetition strategy.

### ***The importance of authentic materials***

As Chastain (1988) asserts, unlike most of their ESL peers, many EFL language learners do not have any access to native speakers for communicating authentically, speaking or writing. As soon as they leave the classroom, they delve into a world which is full of native speaker of their first language, leaving them with little opportunity to use what they've learned. Different approaches have done their best to deal with this problem, EFL practitioners have designed and implemented pedagogic strategies and internet based communicative activities. One aspect of a text which can present it as a native-like or authentic one is the discourse markers or the passage pattern used in a passage. If an EFL writer attempts to write an authentic text it is essential to observe the discourse markers fact. A study by Rahimi (2011) talks about frequency and the type of the discourse markers used in argumentative and expository writings of Iranian EFL learners and the differences that these two text types writing have among the learners. The results of the study displayed that a new hierarchy for the use of discourse and its markers are constructed in essay types along with elaborative markers (mainly "and") the most prevalent connectors benefited from in aforementioned essay types. Then contrastive along with inferential markers such as exemplifier, reason, and conclusive markers, which orderly were the least prevalent used connectors. The results, also, uncovered that, generally, the discourse marker benefited from in argumentative essays was far higher than discourse markers in expository essays in terms of mean. In terms of discourse marker and its categories, both contrastive and conclusive markers were benefited from more prevalently in argumentative essays than in expository ones. The results indicated that the use of discourse markers cannot be a significant predictor of the writing quality in argumentative and expository compositions of Iranian undergraduate EFL students. Moreover, the extensive use of elaborative markers may also be due to the fact that both expository and argumentative writing in general require explanation of ideas, which relies on a wide range of using those elaborative markers in order to establish a kind of parallel relationships between different sections of the written discourse. The results might also imply that Iranian students tend to include a large number of ideas while writing about a topic rather than elaborating on and discussing certain ideas. Werlich (as cited in Rahimi, 2011) states that different text genre require different relationships between the ideas and



elaborates that a description text in an authentic way entails cognitive properties of interrelation and differentiation of perceptions in space, whereas a narrative text requires relationship in time; or, exposition involves comprehension of general concepts through differentiation by analysis or synthesis, while argument needs evaluation of the concepts through extraction of similarities, contrasts, or transformations. If a writer is not able to consider these points in their his/her performance or does not regard these linguistic features, he/she normally goes astray and the text will lose its authenticity. This means that different text types do not necessarily cohere in the same way and require different textual links given the type of macrostructure they have (i.e. whether they are expository or argumentative in nature). So, we can expect to find different proportions of use of such markers in different texts as we found in this study.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. Does explicit teaching of English collocations improve the writing ability of Iranian EFL learners?
2. Does implicit teaching of English collocations improve the writing ability of Iranian EFL learners?
3. Is there any statistically significant difference between implicit and explicit collocation teaching?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

The participants of this research were a population of 36 high school Iranian EFL learners divided into two groups. One of them was explicit group and the other one was the implicit group. There were eighteen students in each group. The participants were randomly selected and divided into two groups in this research: All members of the groups were pre-university students that were almost at the same educational background (pre-intermediate level), and at the same age group 18 to 19. Eighteen of them, in one class, were considered as experimental group and the second half were considered as the controlled group. It was assumed at the beginning that all of the participants were at the same level abilities on writing. It was the point that the pre-test was at the very beginning of the semester, after (classroom treatment) it and at the end of the term, they were given equal topics as post-test to investigate and make clear the effect of explicit and implicit teachings of collocations on the experimental group and the controlled group's performance in using collocations (lexical and grammatical ones) in their writing ability.

### ***Instruments***

The main instruments used in this study included piloting test, the pre-test and post-test. The piloting test was given to a sample group which was similar to these two groups (experimental and controlled). The participants took the pre-test at the very beginning of the study, while the post-test was given at the end of the semester.

### ***Materials***

The basic material for this study was the "English for Pre-University students" (By: Birjandi, Enanisarab, & Samimi, 2011)— which contained eight units and each unit contained a long text talking about an everyday life subject (authentic text). The texts of this book as the main pedagogical syllabus included some common lexical and grammatical collocations and the researcher expected the EFL learners to learn and somehow memorize them contextually and integratedly and use them in writing some communicative paragraphs. So the units of the book were covered during an educational semester separately in two different classrooms. Through teaching these texts two methods (explicit and implicit) were employed to decipher the effect of these two methods on the EFL learners' learning and using these lexical and structural collocations in paragraph writing. It was the point that this book which has been designed as the main pedagogical syllabus for Iranian EFL learners at pre-university level included different types of collocations (lexical & grammatical), different text types (descriptive, narrative, expository,...) and different discourse markers (passage patterns).

### ***Data Collection Procedures***

The process of data collection in this research included the following procedures and administration; In the pre-test step, the participants were asked to fill in the gaps of some paragraphs by writing some particular phrases or words that were namely lexical or grammatical collocations. It was a sort of controlled-productivity model of writing (as a cloze-passage) while in the post-test the participants were asked to write about three major topics which directly related to the syllabus contents. To evaluate the participants' performance and give a quantitative mark, the numbers of the collocations that have been used correctly and relevantly were counted. The final scores of both groups were compared and analyzed to investigate any effect of implicit and explicit teaching of collocations during a semester on the EFL learners' performance in writing skill so as to confirm or disconfirm the research hypotheses. (implicit and explicit teaching) and scoring procedures which included pre-test and post-test. Pre-test was as a test taken at the beginning of the semester, whereas the post-test was taken as summative evaluation to attain almost a complete data to get the precise effect of these two methods on Iranian EFL learners performance on using collocations in paragraph writing ability. To elaborate this procedure in detail we can state that the process of data collection was comprised of three steps, however it is essential to mention that at the very beginning as piloting process before selecting and categorizing the participants into two groups there were some sample participants asked to answer the tests that had been designed based on the appropriate methods. These participants had almost the same background knowledge in comparing with the participants in pre-tests process. More over some sample participants were asked to write some paragraphs about the topics that were related to the main source (the source mentioned previously). These three steps were as:

#### ***Pre-tests process***

At the beginning of the semester when the participants were selected and they were located in two groups namely controlled and experimental groups at this stage all the participants took an equal test (pre-tests) to evaluate their ability in writing collocational paragraph or using collocations in their writing. Of course we did not expect the participants to perform entirely or the researcher's expectation was not a perfect performance, but the result and collected data was exactly useful and meaningful.

#### ***Classroom treatment***

Employing and applying two educational methods (explicit & implicit) of teaching vocabulary in texts was the major target. In this study implicit method of teaching collocations was employed in the classroom called controlled group while the explicit method was employed in the classroom called experimental group.

#### ***Post-tests process***

These two different classroom treatments were employed in two classes separately during a semester. Based on the school time-table all the participants attended the class twice a week and after the last session, all the participants at the same time were given the same topics related to the texts which



had been covered during the term. The collected data through this step was as summative evaluation and the major data to evaluate and measure the participants' performance in using lexical and grammatical collocations in writing paragraphs. This collected data not only presented level of the participants' performance in writing paragraphs in both groups, but also it presented the effect of the methods of teaching collocations (explicit and implicit) on the participants' performance and advantages or disadvantages of these two methods in teaching and learning in EFL or ESL.

#### Data Analysis

So as to analyze the data collected, SPSS software (T-Test) was employed to gain the statistical result and the research conclusion. The result and performance of each group was collected and analyzed separately, and of course there were correlations between the both groups (explicit and implicit) to figure out the various relationships and effects of these two methods of teaching collocations in this research.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Descriptive Statistics on the Pre-test

Thirty six students (implicit and explicit groups) who participated in the study were given a pre-test in the first week of the semester. The primary purpose of giving the pre-test was to measure these EFL learners' writing ability. After correcting and scoring the students' answer sheets in pre-tests step, the obtained data was subjected to T-Test. As it can be seen, Table 1 presents the obtained scores of the implicit group in pre-test step. This table contains N= number of students, Mean= mean score of the EFL learners in implicit group, Std. Deviation= Standard Deviation of implicit group and Std. Error = Standard Error of this group's performance in pre-test.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Pre-test of implicit group

Pretest:	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Implicit group	18	6.0556	2.23534	.52687

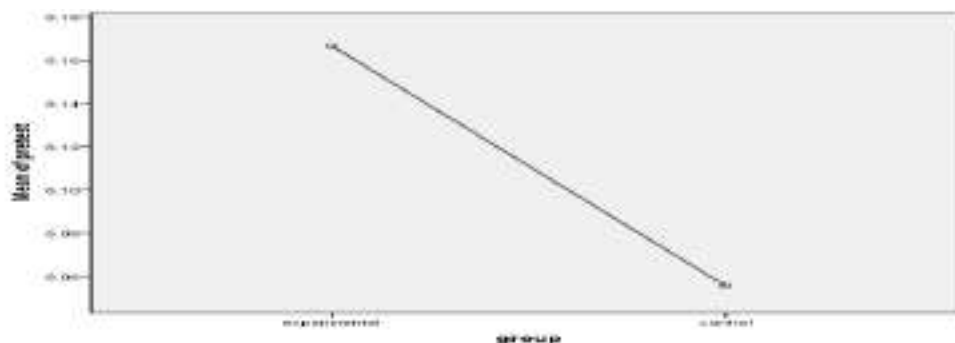


Figure 1. Graph of mean score of implicit group in pre-test

As it can be seen, Figure 1 presents the mean score of implicit group in pre-test. Mean= 6.0556.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Pre-test of explicit group

Pre-test:	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Explicit group	18	6.1667	2.50294	.58995

Table 2 presents the basic descriptive statistics scores of the explicit group on paragraph writing in pre-test. As we can see, Table 2 presents the number of the participants in this group (N=18), mean score of their performance in pre-test (Mean=6.1667), the Std. Deviation and Std. Error of the explicit group in pre-test step. Moreover, the following Figure (2) displays the explicit group's performance in pre-test.

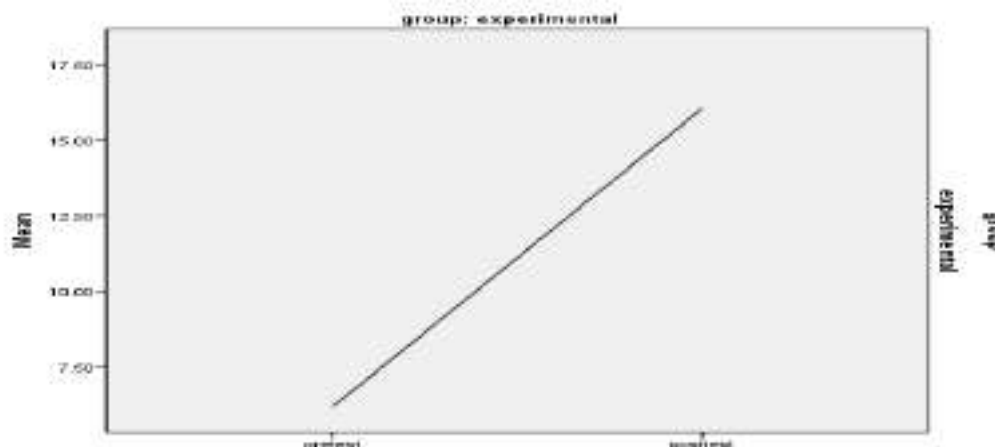


Figure 2. Graph of mean score of explicit group in pre-test

### Descriptive Statistics on the post-test

This part of the study has attempted to present and describe the participants' performance in post-tests. The results that have been inserted into SPSS software have been divided in two separate groups, namely implicit and explicit groups. The participants of implicit group were

the students who attended the English class through a semester (twice a week) while they were following an implicit method in learning collocations. Consequently, they were given some relevant topics to write about them in a paragraph (available in appendix part). The following Table (3) and Figure 3 present their performance statistically:

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for the implicit group on post-test

Post-test	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Implicit group	14.1667	18	6.20484	1.46249

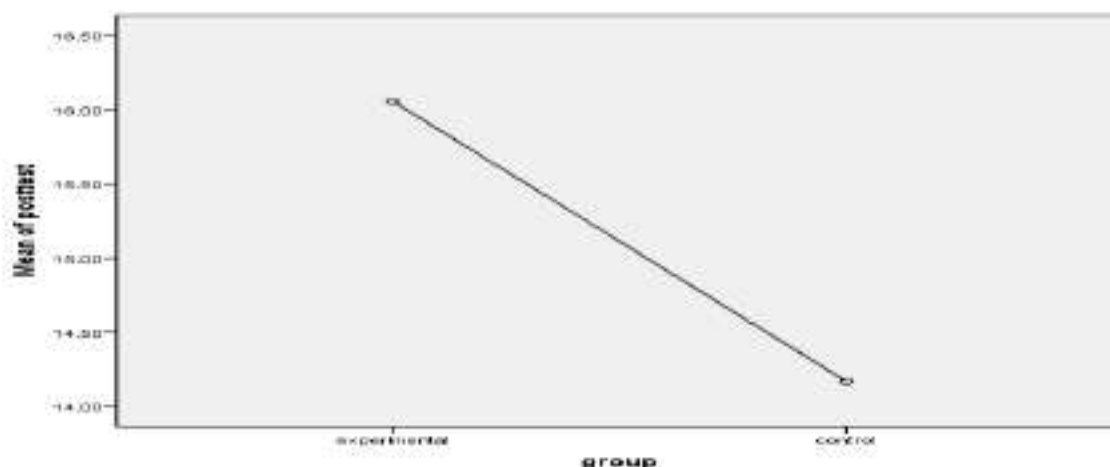


Figure 3: Mean of implicit group on post-tests

The second group given the post-test was called the explicit group. This group as the previous group (implicit group) twice a week attended

Table 4: Paired Sample t-test for implicit group

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair1 pretest-posttest	-8.11111	5.57187	1.31330	-10.88194	-5.34028	-6.176	17	.000

Table 5: Paired St-test for the explicit group

Post-test	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error mean
Explicit group	18	16.0556	4.30420	1.01451

the English class, while the participants of this group were the students learning lexical and grammatical collocations explicitly. In other words, they got aware about the forms and features of English collocations. End of the semester, as the implicit group, the participants of the explicit group were given the same test (post-test) that the statistical results of their performance have been in the following Table (4).

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for the explicit group on post-test

Post-test	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error mean
Explicit group	18	16.0556	4.30420	1.01451

With comparing the Tables 4 and 5 , we can see that both groups' performance have been promoted, but the effect of explicit method as the classroom treatment on the EFL learners' performance in using collocations (lexical and grammatical) in writing ability is remarkable. In other words, these two tables show that the participants in explicit group have outperformed in the post-test, because their mean score in post-test is M=16.0556, while the mean score of the implicit group is M=14.1667.

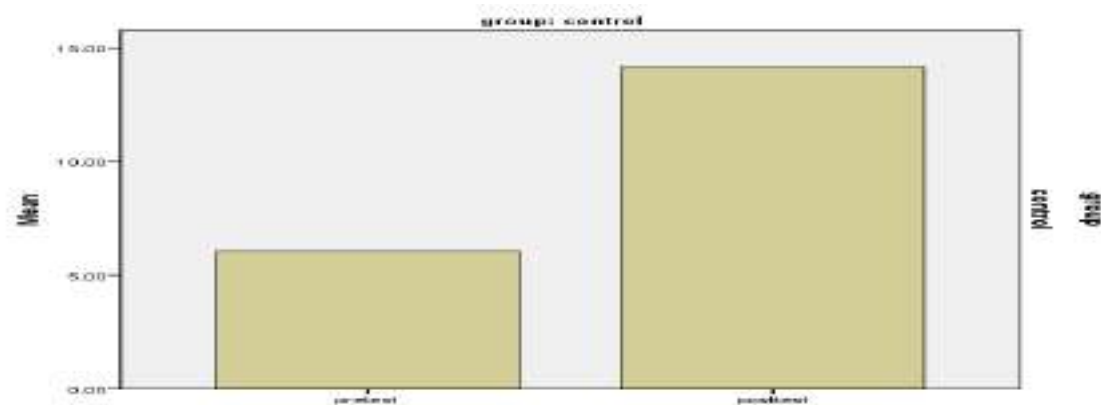


Figure 4: Bar graph of the implicit group's performance in pre-tests and post-tests.

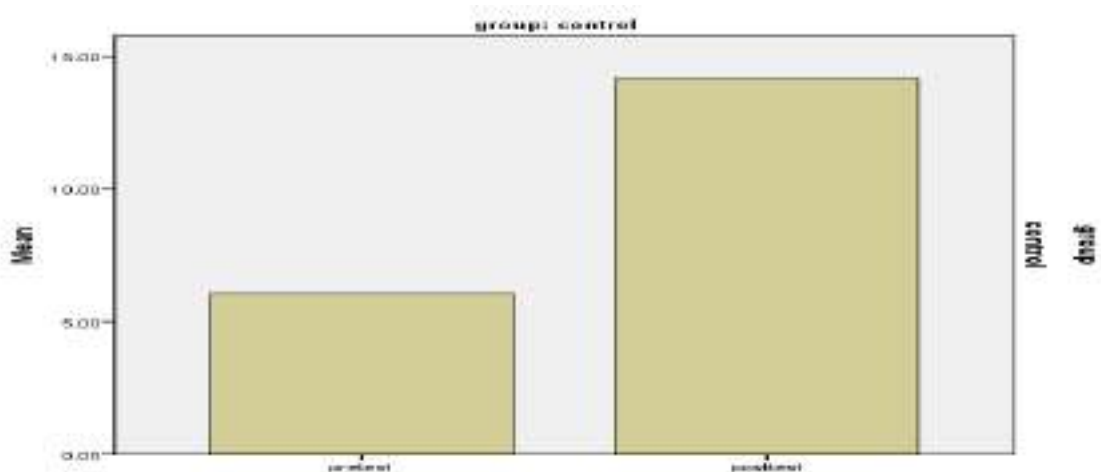


Figure 5: Bar graph of the experimental group's performance in pre-tests and post-tests

The first Table (4) shows the fact that the differences between pretest and posttest in experimental group are significant due to the fact that the 2-tailed significance value is less than .05, and the second Table (5) displays that the difference between pretest and posttest in control group is significant due to the fact that the 2-tailed significance value is less than .05.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
pretest	Explicit	18	6.1667	2.50294	.58995
	Implicit	18	6.0556	2.23534	.52687
posttest	Explicit	18	16.0556	4.30420	1.01451
	Implicit	18	14.1667	6.20484	1.46249

According to the above tables we can conclude that although there is a differences in the value of mean in both pre-test and post-test but this value and the differences between the mean score pretests and posttest are not significant. Because the significance of Levene's Test for Equality of Variances in the above table in both pretest and posttest is more than .05 we resort to equal variance assumed. In other words, as the Table 7 shows, the differences between two groups (controlled & experimental) performance is trivial, but, so as to get the level of significance of the participants' performance.

*Table 8: Independent Sample Test*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
pretest	Equal variances assumed	.841	.366	.140	34	.889	.11111	.79097	-1.49634	1.71856
	Equal variances not assumed			.140	33.574	.889	.11111	.79097	-1.49709	1.71931
Posttest	Equal variances assumed	1.907	.176	1.061	34	.296	1.88889	1.77992	-1.72835	5.50612
	Equal variances not assumed			1.061	30.285	.297	1.88889	1.77992	-1.74476	5.52254

Test for Equality of Variances in the above table in both pretest and posttest is more than .05 we resort to equal variance assumed . As it is clear the t-tailed significance of Levene's Test for Equality of Variances in the above table in both pretest and posttest is more than .05 which shows that the differences between mean of pretest and more importantly posttest is not that significant.

### **Discussion**

As the results of the study reveal, the participants in the both groups (implicit and explicit) performed similarly in pre-tests. In other words, no significant difference was found between the performance of the first group and second group at the beginning of the study. But after classroom treatment and employing two different methods (explicit and implicit) during a semester, the results show that the participants' performances in two groups were significantly different and the subjects of the explicit group outperformed in writing paragraph, because the mean score of the implicit group in post-test was 14.1667, while the mean score of the explicit group was 16.0556. So, according to the participants' performance in the both groups, the first and the second null hypotheses of the study: "Ho.1 Explicit instruction of English collocations does not affect Iranian EFL learner's writing ability and Ho.2 Implicit instruction of English collocations does not affect Iranian EFL learner's writing ability" were disconfirmed, whereas the third hypothesis was retained. As mentioned previously, the third hypothesis of this study: "Ho.3 Is there any statistically significant difference between implicit and explicit collocation teaching?" was confirmed. So we can claim that this study and its results coming from the participants' performance confirm the third hypothesis. This findings present that teaching collocations explicitly improves and promotes the Iranian EFL learners in using collocations in paragraph writing effectively versus the implicit method of teaching collocations.

The descriptive statistics presented earlier revealed that the mean and the maximum score of the explicit group that received explicit method of teaching collocations were a little bit higher than the other group (implicit group). This result was the matter that the following studies emphasized, too: The study by Myers and Chang, (2009) and Xu ,Mao, and Liu, (2012) had made clear this point about collocations and the way of teaching and learning them as chunk forms. In another words, these studies emphasized that the explicit method of teaching, direct emphasis on the lexical facets of the collocations in teaching and learning and awareness of the EFL learners in learning collocational types of English vocabularies are facilitative and play an effective role in teaching and learning process. In fact, their findings presented that how awareness has an influential role on the EFL learners' vocabulary learning and their performance at the productive level (In this case writing ability).

### **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

The results show that most of Iranian EFL learners have lack of collocational knowledge and they have many problems in productive level of language (in this case using collocations in paragraph writing), due to insufficient language competence. Furthermore, these EFL learners have different

achievement and reaction based on the employed methods in teaching collocations. So according to the findings, The EFL learners' problems can be concluded under the following headings:

- a- Lack of collocational knowledge
- b- Insufficient language competence
- c- Inability in productive level of language

The present study refers to the needs of collocations for the students of Iran and finds out that students are weak in using collocation in their writing ability. Their productive level of language in written form is very poor. At the same time the study has also proved that the teachers and teaching methods are mostly responsible for the students' poor proficiency in collocations. The problems of the students regarding the study are multifaceted and the study has tried to identify these problems and examine the nature of them in some detail. The study helps us develop insights in the modern approaches to teaching vocabulary (collocations). It is important for language teachers to enhance the learners' consciousness and awareness about the importance of collocations in EFL/ESL teaching process. A direct and simple way to do so is to teach them explicitly, as suggested by Nesselhauf (2005) the conscious-raising activities about the word combinations as chunks, collocations, or idioms is crucial in EFL process. In teaching collocations, language teachers may need to determine which elements of collocations deserve particular attention. Moreover, collocations are best taught to learners when they learn new words as learners need to know how to use the new vocabulary with other words in context, not in isolations. Teachers may introduce some common collocations associated with the new vocabulary to the learners. We can claim that collocations should be taught systematically and according to the degree of difficulty, from the most to the least difficult. Learners should be trained to use their existing lexicon to generate more collocations as learners who are "collocationally competent ... will also be far more communicatively competent" (Hill, 2000: 62).

The findings imply that pedagogical approaches to teaching collocations in Iran need special attention. Since this area of teaching English is very important in EFL/ESL process. Any change in writing activity in the class requires the EFL learners' engagement. Instead of teaching

vocabulary separately and out of texts, it is better to employ and follow a contextualized and explicit method in teaching collocations. Teachers can increase the students' awareness about the collocations and their structures through explicit method. It must be kept in mind that writing skill is a productive ability and requires a great level of language competence. Through this language competence and the employed method in the classroom, the EFL learners are able to get autonomous and come to the productive level.

To sum up the following points can be mentioned as the final result of this experimental study;

- 1- Teaching collocations is the major endeavor to reach proficiency in writing.
- 2- Teaching individual words come in the second position, and it is useful only if these words are taught in context.
- 3- Compared to vocabulary, grammar has a minor role in raising writing proficiency. As a result, it is ranked in a second position because too much grammatical rules could hinder communication.
- 4- Since communication is the main aim behind writing, the underlying meaning is more important than the surface structure. Consequently, lexical structures are not much emphasized except word combinations especially collocations that have an influence on the meaning. Thus, learners are encouraged to use collocations even if they write them incorrectly provided that this does not change its meaning.
- 5- In vocabulary, lexical collocations represent the most important part. Then, we have grammatical collocations.
- 6- Collocations should be taught explicitly through highlighting, noticing, consciousness-raising.
- 7- Collocation is included in the criteria of evaluating compositions.
- 8- Activities that enhance students' knowledge and use of collocations are required.
- 9- Textbooks and other materials (adapted, adopted or designed) of collocations must be used by both the teacher and the learner whenever needed.
- 10- A Lexical Notebook is very useful to store collocations that are recalled later.
- 11- Testing Collocations in composition implies testing language generally and writing specially.

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of Task repetition on accuracy of Iranian EFL learners' speaking ability. In order to achieve this purpose, a null hypothesis was developed: There is no statistically significant difference between accuracy speaking ability in Iranian EFL learners by use of task repetition. It also seeks to examine the effect of task type on the accuracy gain through task repetition. The subjects consisted of 60 male and female students who were selected from among 88 intermediate EFL learners by applying the proficiency test, and 60 participants that received 73-84 out of 100 were selected. To examine the effect of task repetition and task type on accuracy, the researcher assigned 60 students to 3 groups; the narrative task performers, personal task performers and decision-making task performers. The first production of the subjects was measured for accuracy. Then after a week all the subjects did the same task again, and their second production was also measured for accuracy. The t-test results and the analysis of variance indicated that task repetition, and task type, as well as the interaction between these variables resulted in significant differences in subjects' speaking ability in term of accuracy. The findings of this research supported Bygate's (1996, 2001) claim that task repetition may help develop the process of integration of speech capacities. It is argued that integrating processing capacities must be important for language development, and that this can be promoted through the use of task repetition. ANOVA found statistically significant effect for task repetition.

**KEYWORDS:** Task; repetition; task repetition; speaking; accuracy

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years a number of researchers, syllabus designers and educational innovators have called for a move in language teaching toward task-based approaches to instruction (Prabhu, 1987; Nunan, 1989; Long & Crooks, 1991; Ellis, 2003). The rise of task-based language teaching has led to a variety of different interpretations of what exactly constitutes a task.

A number of studies have been made as to how some attention may be focused on form. It can be done through task design (Fotos & Ellis, 1991), pre-task and post-task activities (Doughty, 1991) and consciousness-raising activities (Willis, 1996).

In this research, it is approached the issue of attention from a different but related perspective. This study focuses on the ability learners have to utilize their L2 knowledge in production. It is investigated if there is evidence of target like production when the need to focus on meaning has been minimized through task repetition, thereby freeing learners to attend to form, not from input, but from their own internal system. For example, "we might expect performance to be more fluent in terms of pausing and speed of words per minute. This is because all things being equal we would expect that doing the task a second time would involve less planning work. Also it is likely to have a different form: because the task has already been formulated previously, we can expect fewer false starts and self corrections (Bygate, 1996, p. 138).

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Task-based language teaching refers to an approach based on the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching. It is a logical development of communicative language teaching, since it draws on several principles that formed part of the communicative language teaching movement from 1980 for example;

- Activities that involve real communication are essential for language learning.
- Activities in which language is used for caring out meaningful task promote learning.
- Language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process (Richard & Rodgers, 2002, p. 223).

Task-based language teaching is the use of task that serve to facilitate meaningful communication and interaction lies at the heart of various proposals for "task-based instruction" which is an attempt to apply principles from second language acquisition research to language teaching (Richard. & Renandye, 2002, P. 93).

Task repetition involves asking language learners to repeat the same or slightly altered tasks at intervals of for example, one or two weeks (Bygate and Samuda, 2005:43). In task repetition, the first performance of the task is regarded as preparation for (or a pre-task activity before), further performances (Ellis, 2005).

At first glance, this might seem reminiscent of behaviorist drills that are based on the assumption that language learning occurs via a process of habit information through repetition (for instance Paulston and Bruder, 1976:12) identified different types of repetition drills and defined them as "plain repetition of the cue". It involves repetition of familiar form and content (Bygate, 2006).

By repeating the same or similar tasks, therefore, learners might be able to build upon what they have already done in order to "buy time" not only to do mental work on what they are about to communicate but also to access and reformulate words and grammatical structures more efficiently, and accurately.

It has recently been proposed that task repetition is easier than task alternation because the appropriate task settings are already present in working memory, whereas during task alternation task settings must be retrieved from long-term memory (Mayr & Kliegl, 2000). This study tested whether the phonological loop is involved in keeping the relevant task settings active in working memory. It may then be expected that concurrent articulatory suppression would diminish the facilitation associated with task



repetition because the phonological loop could no longer maintain the appropriate task settings active in working memory. Both during task repetition and task alternation the relevant task settings should then be retrieved from long-term memory. Content repetition refers to carrying out several tasks that require different procedures to accomplish the communicative goal, but require the same content knowledge. Task repetition refers to carrying out the same task repeatedly, using the same procedure to accomplish the communicative goal and requiring the same content knowledge. Global accuracy is the ability to avoid error in performance, possibly reflecting higher levels of control in the language, as well as conservative orientation, that is, avoidance of challenging structures that might provoke errors (Skehan, 1996).

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

Question 1: what extent does task repetition lead to more accurate speaking ability?

Question 2: what extent task type have impact on the accuracy gain through task repetition?

In order to cope with the answers of the preceding questions, the following null hypothesis was proposed.

HO1. There is no statistically significant difference between accuracy speaking ability in Iranian EFL learners by use of task repetition.

Ho 2. Task type does not have any impact on the accuracy gain through task repetition.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

This study was conducted with 60 EFL students (boys and girls) selected among 88 students, who are majoring in English language teaching at Arad institute. They were 18-20 years old and at intermediate level. For homogeneity of the subjects, prior to research a proficiency test (PET) was given to 88 students and among them 60 participants who had received 73-84 were selected. These 60 students were divided into three groups randomly. Each group worked on a special task type and their performances on the first attempt and second attempt of the same task were recorded and scored. These learners were not aware of the research purpose. Their performances were recorded in language lab and later on the recordings were transcribed and scored according to some established criteria.

### *Instruments*

#### *Tasks*

This research included a range of tasks to explore whether different task types would have an impact on performance. Three task types were used in this study following Skehan and Foster (1999):

*Personal tasks:* (based on information that was well known to participants and that was therefore assumed to reduce the cognitive load of the task involved). *Narratives:* (which were supported by visual material, but which required some degree of organization of material to tell a story effectively). *And decision-making tasks:* (Which required the capacity to relate a set of reasons to a set of decisions that had to be made). These three types of tasks were chosen for a number of reasons.

First similar tasks have been used in other studies of task types (e.g. Foster & Skehan, 1996; Skehan & Foster, 1997; Skehan & Foster, 1999; Foster, 2000 cited in Foster, 2001) and thus comparison with the results of these studies would be easier.

Second, all of these tasks are monologue rather than dialogic, they afford a basis for deriving measures of learner performance that are not influenced by interactional variables.

Finally, we wished to insure that the task was reasonably demanding on the participants and previous researches indicate that this can be achieved by these types of tasks.

As a personal task the following topic was used:

Sending somebody back to turn off the oven (Foster & Skehan 1996). It is the afternoon, you are at the university, and you have an important examination in fifteen minutes. You suddenly think that you haven't turned off the oven after cooking your lunch. There is no time for you to go home. Explain to a friend who wants to help

### *Procedure and Data analysis*

The subjects involved in this study were randomly divided into three groups. Each group was assigned to perform a specific task. The implementation procedures were carefully designed, so that conditions for each task type were as close as possible to being identical for all of the participants, and on each occasion. The recordings took place in the language lab by the researcher and another language teacher.

Before performing the task, the participants in all three groups were instructed about the specific task and were told what they were supposed to do. Students were asked to think about the task they had to do. The material was not part of class work, and subjects had no exposure to the task types before. Each subject, after introducing himself or herself, started to perform the task and it was recorded on a cassette. When all of the participants finished their first performance, the second phase of the study began. Students hadn't been informed in advance about the repetition of the task in order to diminish the practice effect. After one week students were required to do the same task again. Their second performances were also recorded on separate cassettes. After collecting the data the most difficult phase of the study began. We had to transcribe the speeches in order to measure them. The transcripts were coded and evaluated by three raters individually.

## Results and discussion

To ensure the homogeneity of the two groups, the PET was administered among 88 EFL learners. Those students (N = 60) whose scores fell within the range of one standard deviation above and below the mean (score between 73 and 84) were chosen as homogeneous participants for this study.

Task repetition was considered as within-subject variable and task type (narration, personal, decision-making) was regarded between-subject variable. To obtain the goal, the researcher tested the null hypotheses stated on the basis of the research questions.

ANOVA found statistically significant effect for task repetition, which is the within-subject factor, ( $F(1, 57) = 158.72$ ;  $p = .000$ ,  $p < \alpha$ ) in which F ratio of 158.72 was greater than the F critical of 4/02, and p value was less than .05 level of significance. Consequently, the first null hypothesis of this study which predicted that task repetition does not lead to more accurate language use was rejected (Table 1).

Table 1: Repeated-Measure ANOVA for the Effect of Task Repetition for Accuracy (Appendix B)

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta
Task repetition	.264	158.772	1.000	57.000	.000	.736	
Task repetition * Task type	.508	27.614	2.000	57.000	.000	.492	

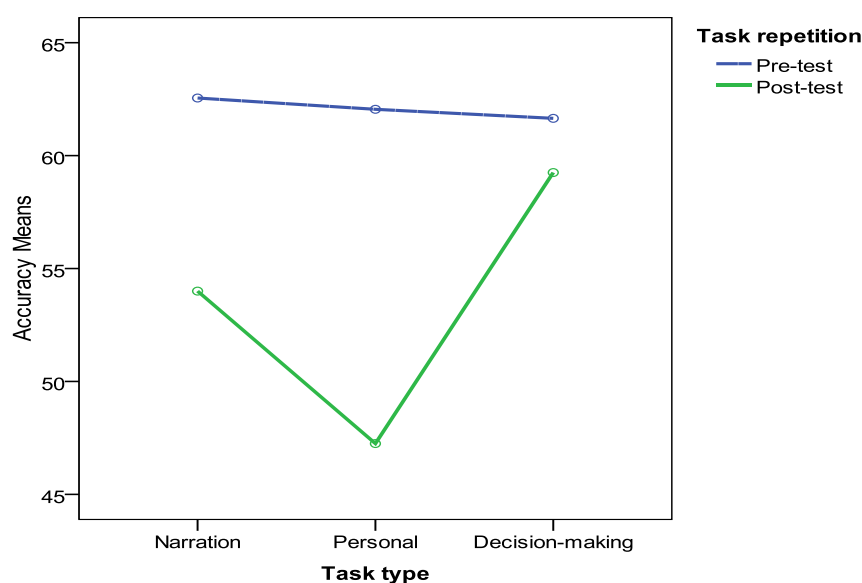


Figure 1: Below displays the graphical presentation of the results

We also need to evaluate the effect size of this result. The value we are interested in is Partial Eta squared. Based on result in Table 2, the value obtained in this study is .73, which is relatively high. Additionally, the interaction effect within-subject and between-subject factors, i.e. task repetition \* task type was also significant ( $F(2, 57) = 27.61$ ;  $p = .000$ ,  $p < .05$ , Effect size = .49).

Table 2: Repeated-Measure ANOVA: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	400785.208	1	400785.208	13110.522	.000	.996
Task type	686.817	2	343.408	11.234	.000	.283
Error	1742.475	57	30.570			

ANOVA detected a statistically significant effect for task type as the between-subject variable ( $F = 11.23$ ;  $p = .000$ ,  $p < .05$ ) in which F ratio of 11.23 was more than the F critical of 4.02, and p value was less than .05 level of significance; therefore, the second null hypothesis of this study which stated that task type does not have any impact on the accuracy gain through task repetition was rejected.

Because we have gained a statistically significant result from the preceding analysis, this implies that there is a difference somewhere among the three task types. It does not tell us which type of tasks or set of scores differ from each other. As a result, Post-hoc Pair wise Comparisons was applied.

Post-hoc Pair wise Comparisons showed that the difference between personal task was statistically different from narration ( $p = .01$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and also was statistically different from decision-making ( $p = .01$ ,  $p < .000$ ). Narration was not statistically different from decision-making ( $p = .25$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

This study is part of a research project designed to help our understanding of the instructional choices when language learning tasks are used. The present study has focused on the impact of task repetition and then on three task types.

Using a range of measures, in this research, it was found some evidence that task repetition resulted in improvement in learners' speaking ability. The findings were supported by information processing theory that human beings possess limited capacity (Anderson, 2000) which did not allow the speaker to attend to all aspects of the language at the time of task performance. Second language learners with low level of proficiency do not have ready-made plans in their possession to facilitate language production under real time pressure (Farch & Kasper, 1986).

When first carrying out the task, the learners would be initially more concerned with planning the content of the message; on the other hand, having done the substantial conceptual work, the learners would be more concerned with paying attention to the formulation aspect of the task. It can be concluded that this can be an effect of highly contextualized cognitive rehearsal, releasing spare capacity on the part of the speaker to increase accuracy. The results of the present study are in line with findings of the previous studies (e.g., Bygate, 2001). So generally speaking, the results suggest that previous experience of a task is available for speakers to build on in the subsequent performance.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this research supported Bygate's (1996, 2001) claim that task repetition may help develop the process of integration of speech capacities. It is argued that integrating processing capacities must be important for language development, and that this can be promoted through the use of task repetition. It is suggested that learners can help through repeated experience of the same tasks, and teachers may be able to use task familiarity to help learners' language to develop.

The account emerging from the results of this research, also suggests that repeated encounter with a task may make it possible for various processes to occur: information can be improved, reorganized, and consolidated; attention can be paid to different aspects of the language. Repeated encounters do not involve the learners in doing the 'same' thing, but rather in working differently on the same material. Repetition provides the students with inbuilt planning; it also provides a context for students and teachers to plan their subsequent language work.

### The limitations of the study

This study has following limitations:

- 1-The age of subjects is between 18-20 years and at intermediate level.
- 2- For homogeneity of the subjects, prior to research a proficiency test (PET) was given.

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## THE ROLE OF POST-TASK CALL APPROACH IN TEACHING WRITING ACCURACY AMONG ADVANCED EFL LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of post-task Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) approach on advanced Iranian learners' writing accuracy. Fifty-five MA students in Khouzestan Islamic Azad University, Ahvaz, Iran were randomly selected and divided into experimental and control groups. Before instruction, both groups were given a pre-test of writing an essay. Then, the control group was taught through using a traditional method of in-class writing instruction, while the experimental group was taught through using CALL approach. The experimental group also received some writing post-tasks via email correspondences. Four different types of tasks including description, explanation, cause, and effect, and opinion paragraph tasks were used. The experiment lasted for eight weeks comprising of ten sessions. At the end of the experiment, both groups took a post-test of writing an essay. An Independent Sample *t*-test was run to find if there was any significant difference between the two groups in the post-tests. Results showed that there was not a significant difference between the two groups' pre-tests. However, there was a significant difference between the two groups' post-tests in terms of gaining scores on writing accuracy. Results revealed that post-task CALL techniques did enhance English as foreign language (EFL) learners' writing accuracy. The CALL group achieved a higher degree of writing accuracy compared to the Non-CALL group ( $p < .05$ ). This significant difference between the two groups favoring CALL users was as an indication of the positive effect of post-task CALL approach on improving students' writing accuracy. Teachers may use the CALL approach to facilitate teaching writing accuracy in composing the essays. This study may provide useful hints for further research on using the CALL approaches in developing other language skills.

**KEYWORDS:** CALL, Task, Post-task phase, writing accuracy

### INTRODUCTION

Writing in a foreign language is one of the most challenging and complex tasks for language learners. It is a difficult skill that requires considerable effort and practice on the learners' part to reach an acceptable level of writing. Due to the complexity of this skill, many students find it very difficult to master all the mechanics of writing and to produce an adequate piece of writing; therefore they do not produce acceptable compositions. What makes writing a very troublesome task for EFL learners is the fact that it requires some criteria of acceptability relative to different aspects of writing which include content, organization, vocabulary, language use, spelling, punctuation and accurate capitalization and paragraphing (Hamadouche, 2010, p. 2). In writing, grammatical accuracy is essential to ensure the writer's intended meaning and to avoid communicative misunderstanding (Lush, 2002; Larsen-Freeman, 2003). According to Starkey (2004), an effective piece of writing is the one that is organized, clear, and coherent, with accurate language and effective word choice. In terms of skills, producing a coherent, fluent, extended piece of writing is probably the most difficult thing there is to do in language.

For many learners studying English as a foreign language, writing is considered boring. Learners find it hard to engage in writing activities. In order to eradicate the problem, CALL systems often use computer to engage learners more in the learning process. CALL as a multidimensional computer tool has been practiced by language teachers to facilitate learning and teaching processes (Cummins, 2008). Given the breadth of what may go on in CALL, a definition of CALL that accommodates its changing nature is any process in which a learner uses a computer and, as a result, improves his or her language (Beatty, 2003, p. 7).

In recent years, the rapid evolution of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has made great changes in societies and education. The Internet, particularly, has become a useful tool for communication, a venue for experiencing different cultures and a mediator in diverse political, social, and economical situations. Along with the impact of the Internet worldwide, the extensive use of computers at schools has had a critical influence on educational environments (Park & Son, 2009, pp. 80-101). According to Garcia and Arias (2000), using CALL in a classroom has the following advantages: Increased motivation of the students, individualization of learning process, immediate feedback, non-linear access to the information, and the introduction of new exercise types in the classroom.

Lee (2000) further mentioned numerous reasons why computer technology should be used in second language instruction. CALL can (a) provide students with experiential learning practice, (b) motivate students to learn, (c) potentially increase student academic achievement, (d) increase available authentic materials, (d) encourage interaction between instructors and students and students and peers, (f) place emphasis on individual goals, (g) allow students to use multiple sources for information, and (h) create a sense of global understanding (Lee, 2000).

Teaching EFL writing accuracy is a headache for many teachers; they spend considerable time correcting their students' compositions only to find their corrections and comments ignored. Despite teachers' hard work, many students' written English remains non-idiomatic, poorly organized, insufficiently developed, grammatically awkward, devoid of sentence structure variety, and weak in vocabulary usage. One important reason for all this is that learners have not been helped to become motivated, involved in their own learning, or self-sufficient. The fact is that the students will not devote their efforts to learning a foreign language if they do not have a need or desire to learn it. However, when students are duly motivated, they will become involved in learning a foreign language and will learn it autonomously (Wang, 2004, p. 24).

One way to motivate learners, according to Ellis (1994, p. 516), is to design challenging tasks that present students with opportunities for communication and self-direction. Richards and Rodgers (2001) assert that "task-based language teaching refers to an approach based on the



use of tasks as the core units of planning and instruction in language teaching" (p. 223). Although the designs of task-based lesson have been proposed variously, they all include three common phases (Willis, 1996):

1) Pre-task: it concerns the various activities that teacher and students can undertake before they start the task; 2) Task: it centers on the task itself and various instructional options; 3) Post-task: it involves procedures for following up on the task performance.

The post-task phase has three major pedagogic goals: (1) to provide an opportunity for a repeat performance of the task; (2) to encourage reflection on how the task was performed; and (3) to encourage attention to form, in particular to those forms that proved problematic to the learners when they performed the task (Ellis, 2002, pp. 93-95). A number of efforts have been made to develop the students' writing skill, among others is by applying different approaches to the teaching of writing. In English classes we usually use pen and paper based procedures for teaching writing. In recent years, the advance in technology has made it easy to take advantage of modern facilities and it made great changes in societies and education. But in our classes we do not pay much attention to using this technology. Also, the role of post-task which provides an opportunity for repeating and following up on the task performance is neglected in writing instruction most of the time. Thus, shedding more light on the effectiveness of post-task CALL approach on EFL learners' writing development in Iranian EFL classrooms context at the advanced level seems to be necessary in developing MA students' writing accuracy.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many studies have attempted to assess the impact of CALL on learning. These studies focus either on the achievement of linguistic skills such as speaking, listening, writing and reading (Garrett, 1998) or on motivation (Skinner & Austin, 1999; Garcia & Arias, 2000). Concerning grammar teaching, while some studies find a significant advantage of these techniques, others find no significant difference between CALL and other teaching methods.

For instance, a positive impact of CALL has been found by Nutta (1998) investigating the effect of computer-based versus teacher-directed instruction on the acquisition of English as a second language. Nutta's study consisted of 53 students enrolled in an intensive academic ESL institute at a major university in Florida. It compared the method of grammar instruction, teacher-directed or computer-based. In this study, computer-based students reached better scores than teacher-directed students, leading the author to conclude that computer-based instruction can be an effective method of teaching L2 grammar. The results showed that computer-based students scored significantly higher on open-ended tests than the teacher-directed students. No significant differences were found between the computer-based and teacher-directed students' scores on multiple choice or fill-in-the-blank tests.

Other studies are less optimistic. Chen (2005) observed the impact of traditional class instruction with or without computer aid on the acquisition of parts of speech (nouns, articles, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, coordination, and subordination) by two groups of Taiwanese EFL learners. After a 16-hour instruction, both groups were asked to produce a written narrative. The dependent variable under consideration was the number of errors produced in each group and for each category of errors. Overall, there was no statistical difference between the control and the experimental groups. However, the experimental group performed better in the error categories of nouns and prepositions whereas the control group outperformed the experimental group for the error categories of lexicon and subject omission. The author fails to provide literature supporting those findings.

Finkbeiner (2001) administered a questionnaire to 100 undergraduate EFL learners and collected data from 82 learners to learn about learners' attitude and interest in CALL and cooperative learning. He showed that ESL undergraduate learners had positive attitudes towards CALL and suggested that a successful implementation of CALL required it to be put into everyday study life. Almekhlafi (2006) investigated the effect of CALL on elementary school students' achievement and their attitudes towards learning English in the United Arab Emirates. 83 elementary students in Al-Tamayoz Elementary school were selected and divided into experimental and control groups (43 and 40 participants respectively). The findings revealed that the students in the experimental group had a positive attitude towards CALL. The findings also showed that CALL affected students' achievement positively.

CALL approach through word processor offers grammar and spelling checker, both of which provide suggestions which can be accepted or rejected. This feedback may facilitate not only the correction process but also the potential to promote cultural awareness concerned with British and American spelling. It should be noted, however, as using computers to provide feedback in correcting written essays and assignments may not be as reliable as the feedback which comes from teachers, meaning that teacher supervision is both necessary and beneficial in providing grammatical and cultural feedback correction (Gorjian, 2008). According to the meta-analysis of 176 studies from 1990 to 1995 studied by Coley (1997), indicated that writing with the application of technology, especially word processor, makes editing easier and faster than writing with pen-paper and it also improve the quality of writing. Using technology for writing provides the opportunity for the students to share their accomplishments with other students through network.

Frizzler (1995) explored the potential impact of one application of computer-mediated communication on university level English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) composition students and instructors. The participants were non-native speakers of English from non-English-speaking countries (Japan, Croatia, Finland, Republic of Korea, Brazil, Egypt, Russia, and Indonesia). They studied an online course at Frizzy University. This was a free, non-credit university-level course over an eight-week period during the summer of 1995. It was conducted online, via the Internet, through email. The students interacted with each other via email discussing essays and exchanging essays for peer review. The findings showed that the interactivity among students was the key to the successful online writing class. Using the Internet to teach ESOL requires changes in teachers' roles, approaches, and attitudes toward teaching. The Internet functions can be used not only as a means of classroom facilities but also as language learning tools. Frizzler concluded that the Internet technology should be integrated into the ESL classroom.

Braine (1997) investigated the effects of networked computers on ESL student writing at Brock University in Ontario, Canada. The researcher compared ESL students in first-year English classes writing in two contexts: a networked computer class and a traditional lecture-style class. The purpose was to determine which setting promoted writing, had more improvement in writing, and had more peer and teacher feedback. The first and final drafts of students' papers were scored, and the number of interactions during peer-review sessions was analyzed. The networked setting was shown to promote better writing and more peer and teacher feedback. The traditional setting was shown to promote more improvement in writing.

Yasin (2002) investigated the effects of computer-assisted instruction on the second graders learning English in the District of Bani



Kinanah. The participants in the study were fifty female second grade pupils randomly chosen from Hatem Basic School for Girls. The sample was divided into two groups, experimental and control. The experimental group was taught via computer, whereas the control group was taught with the traditional method. The software used was Action Pack 1. The findings of the study indicated that using CALL is very efficient in helping second graders learn English.

Abu-Seileek (2004) designed a CALL program and tested its effect on Jordanian students' writing ability in English. The study attempted to find any statistical differences between the mean scores on the writing task of the experimental and control groups. The participants of the study were first grade secondary students. The instrument of this study was a computer-based program Win Word 2002, whose main function was to check and correct spelling, style, and grammar errors. The study revealed that students who used the computer to learn writing skills achieved higher scores than those who studied by the traditional method.

In one study conducted by Gorjian (2009), the role of computer in instructing writing skills in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) was investigated. To discover the significant difference between learners' acquiring writing proficiency with or without using personal computers, he collected one experimental and one control group of 40 intermediate L2 learners and asked them to write 480 one-paragraph essays in 12 sessions. After analyzing the results, he found out that experimental group which received teacher feedback via e-mailing outperformed control group which was given instruction through pen and paper procedures.

Bani-Hani (2009) investigated the effectiveness of a computerized instructional program for teaching English as a foreign language in Jordanian basic stage schools. The study also investigated the teachers' and students' opinions about CALL. The sample of the study consisted of 73 sixth grade students in two sections and 100 basic school teachers. The researcher used an achievement test for both the experimental and control groups. He also used a questionnaire for both teachers and students in the experimental group to investigate their opinions towards using computers in teaching and learning English. The results of the study revealed statistically significant differences in the students' achievement in favor of the experimental group. The results also revealed that teachers and students had the inclination to use computers in teaching and learning English as a foreign language.

Most of these studies show that computer-assisted writing programs can positively affect language learning. In short, these studies stress the positive effects of using the computers on EFL students' writing achievements. It can be concluded that the use of the computer may produce higher achievement in writing accuracy of students than the current technique. It may result in positive students' attitudes towards technology and school.

#### ***Studies on Task-Based Instruction (TBI)***

The concept of TBI was developed in the 1980s by Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers and teachers who were discontented with teacher-centered, form-oriented language teaching practice. The rationale behind TBI is that key language learning processes take place in holistic rather than analytic language activities, and tasks are invaluable in achieving this (Samuda & Bygate, 2008). The primary unit for both designing a language programme and individual lessons should be a task because it creates opportunities for communication and noticing form/meaning/function relationships, which are the conditions essential for the development of communicative competence in an L2 (Willis & Willis, 2007).

Doughty and Pica (1986) reported the findings of the latest series of studies to determine the effects of task type and participation pattern on language classroom interaction. The results of this study were compared to those of an earlier investigation in regard to optional and required information exchange tasks across teacher-directed, small-group, and dyad interactional patterns. The participants in both the earlier and the present studies were adult students and teachers from six intermediate EFL classes (three classes in each of the two studies). The classes were selected according to the proficiency level. The students who participated in group- and dyadic-activities were chosen randomly with a variety of L1 backgrounds. The teachers were native speakers of English with several years of teaching experience. The findings showed that group and dyad interaction patterns produced more modification than did the teacher-fronted situation, which suggested that the participation pattern as well as the task type have an effect on the conversational modification of interaction (Doughty & Pica, 1986, pp. 305-325).

Post-task activities have also proved interesting. Examples of such activities are informing learners before they do a task that some of them will be required to re-do the task subsequently on front of the entire class. The rationale here is that the threat of a future public performance will induce learners, while doing the task, to concentrate on error avoidance, since they will more clearly see the connection between the task and how well they will later do, when more pedagogic norms will prevail. In addition, the future task will not compromise the naturalness and communicativeness of the actual task, since the teacher will not be present at that stage. An alternative post-task condition would be to record learner performance during a task (which is done anyway during research studies), and then give the tape to learners so that they have to transcribe some of their own performance. Once again, the intention is to focus learners' attention on form, since they will be drawn in working in detail with what they themselves have said. Skehan and Foster (1997) made the prediction that accuracy, selectively, would be advantaged in a post-task condition. In two studies, Skehan and Foster (1997) predicted that a post-task effect upon writing accuracy was confirmed, but only for interactive tasks. There was a higher level of accuracy with personal information exchange and narrative tasks, but this did not reach statistical significance. In addition, there was a significant practice effect: as time went on in the study, over 2 to 3 weeks, the effect on accuracy grew in strength.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

RQ1) Do post-task CALL techniques affect EFL learners' writing accuracy?

RQ2) Do post-task CALL techniques make a difference among CALL and Non-CALL groups learning writing accuracy?

#### **METHODOLOGY**

##### ***Participants***

Fifty-five MA students ranging in age from 22 to 40 years-old among EFL learners in Khouzestan Islamic Azad University were randomly distributed across a control and an experimental group. Then they were divided randomly into two groups, one group was considered as the experimental group with 25 participants which received feedback via computer and another group as the control group with 30 students which received feedback face-to-face. The control group was exposed to the traditional in-class writing instruction that depended on the paper-based procedures only, whereas the experimental group was exposed to the computer-based writing instruction. In the pre-test and

post-test, the participants were required to write about four topics chosen for them by the researcher. Their essays were scored according to their writing accuracy.

#### Instrumentation

In the present survey two tests were used: (1) a pre-test to determine the learners' level of writing knowledge at the beginning of research period, (2) a post-test to determine the effect of treatment of post-task CALL approach on writing accuracy of EFL learners.

The instruments for this study are the writing topics and post-tasks which were chosen for students by the teacher. These topics and tasks were sent to the experimental group via email. Four writing topics were selected for the pre-test and four for the post-test besides four tasks for treatment sessions. Needless to say, the types of the topics and the time allocated for each one were the same for two groups. The time allocated for the pre-test and post-test was forty minutes, ten minutes for each writing topic. In order to assess the writings of the pre-test and post-test, the researcher and a rater were employed. The correction focus was the accuracy of the written products based on the checklist. The components of the writing program and the evaluation criteria were the following categories:

- A. Layout/Organization: (between 4 and 12 points)
- B. Development/Support: (between 3 and 9 points)
- C. Style: (between 2 and 6 points)
- D. Grammar/Mechanics: (between 3 and 9 points)

Scores for both the pre and post-tests were collected through estimating of the rates in the checklist. A correct answer was rated 1 for poor, 2 for good, and 3 for excellent. During the treatment in each session, a writing topic was presented to the students and they were required to write a one-paragraph essay about it in ten minutes, then their essays were corrected by the researcher. Later, the texts produced by the participants were scored by another rater and the inter-rater reliability was computed through the correlation coefficient between the set of scores the two raters marked for the writings. The recordings were evaluated through inter-rater correlation to arrive at the reliability value. The tests reliability coefficients are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Inter-rater Reliability

Tests	N	Reliability Indexes
Pre-test (control group)	30	.903
Pre-test (experimental group)	25	.961
Post-test (control group)	30	.825
Post-test (experimental group)	25	.909

#### Materials

In the present study, the course book *College Writing* (Zemach & Rumisek, 2003) was used. The aim of the book was to develop the students' ability to write a cohesive paragraph that has a topic sentence and supporting details with minimal grammatical, spelling, punctuation, and indentation errors. Every time, we checked students' work, in addition to scoring, we wrote some points of this book in their essays and asked them to follow those writing rules in their next compositions. The first and the last composition written by the participants regarded as pre-test and post-test. That is, the learners of both control and experimental group first were required to write one-paragraph essays during the first session considered as a pre-test. The last essay, the topic of which again assigned by the instructors, was treated as a post-test.

#### Procedure

Before instruction, the experimental and control groups were pre-tested face to face in the classroom. They took the same pre-test that consisted of four essays. We asked them to write one-paragraph essays about topics given to them. The minimum and maximum essay lengths were specified (6 to 8 lines, about 100 words). We asked the control group to write their names, but we asked the experimental group to write their e-mails instead of their names. The first and the last composition written by the participants regarded as pre-test and post-test. The test consisted of four essays.

The procedure for the control group was followed a pre-test which is writing four one-paragraph essays, scoring their essays and marking their errors and turning them back to the students considered as feedback, and post-test administration which was writing essays with the same topics as written in pre-test. They were not provided with the correct forms, but a general content comment based on course book used was presented to them in the point of their errors at the end of their essays, and they were asked to look at content comments at home. So, the control group did not receive any special instruction. They just wrote four one-paragraph essays both for pre-test and post-test based on the topics given to them. The procedure for the experimental group was as follows. First they were given a pre-test in the classroom. After the pre-test, there was no face to face contact between instructor and learners in the experimental group. They were just connected via email. The experimental group wrote four one-paragraph essays during instruction. They received feedback via email. In addition, they did post-task activities after each writing task. Tasks were in the form of question and answer. Four different types of tasks were used which were description, explanation, cause and effect, and opinion paragraph tasks. The duration of treatment in the experimental group was 10 sessions. So, each session was allocated to one topic or task and the first and the last session for pre-test and post-test. In a separate session at the end of the course, the same post-test was administered for experimental group to measure the effect of post-task instruction via CALL in their writing accuracy. The post-test for the experimental group consisted of four essays that the students practiced in the online course. So, the essay topic was familiar and the students had enough background knowledge.

Grammar feedback was provided on the presence and location of errors, but no correct forms were provided to encourage self-editing. We marked their errors by using different colors. Red color used for omission, blue color for addition, and green color for correction. Other errors represented to them in the form of some points based on course book used as material. We wrote these points at the end of their essays. For assessment, students in both groups were tested every session. Essays were always graded, returned to the students with comments on strengths and weaknesses. The components of the writing program and the evaluation criteria were the following issues:

The pre-test and post-test essays of both groups were holistically graded based on a general impression of layout/organization, development/support, style, and grammar/mechanics. All essays were read once and a quality rating of excellent, good, poor was given to each paper. Essays were then read by the second rater and each was assigned a grade. The pre-test and post-test essays were double-scored by a colleague of ours who holds a master degree in English. He followed the same scoring checklist. Finally, inter-rater reliability index was calculated to be sure about the reliability of scoring. Data were analyzed through Independent Samples *t*-test to show the difference between the groups' means.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 17. In order to determine whether using post-task CALL approach has any impact on Iranian advanced EFL learners' writing accuracy, once the scores of the pre-test and post-test were obtained, the mean and standard deviation of the scores of 55 participants were calculated. In this study, the data were analyzed by *t*-test to see if there was any significant difference between the control and experimental groups regarding their writing accuracy.

### Results of Descriptive Statistics of the Groups

As shown in Table 2, the mean score for the control group was (16.4667) in pre-test and (17.6333) in post-test. Their scores ranged from 13 to 25 out of 36. The mean score for experimental group was (17.8000) in pre-test and (22.9200) in post-test. Their scores ranged from 15 to 29 out of 36. There were close means between the two tests in the control group, so you can see the difference between the two means is not significant. But in the experimental group, the mean of post-test was about 5 points greater than pre-test. So there were considerable individual differences in writing accuracy before and after the post-task CALL approach used in the experimental group.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the Groups

Groups	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Control (pre-test)	30	13.00	23.00	16.4667	2.48
Control (post-test)	30	13.00	25.00	17.6333	2.98
Experimental (Pre-test)	25	15.00	28.00	17.8000	3.20
Experimental (Post-test)	25	18.00	29.00	22.9200	3.10

The results indicated partially equal performance on the two tests among control group but different performance on the two tests among experimental group, as they are presented in Table 2. Since descriptive statistics could not offer the researcher valid information to reject or sustain the null hypothesis, an Independent Samples *t*-test was run to see whether the observed difference between the groups was significant or not.

### Results of Groups' Pre-tests

This section includes mean statistics followed by *t*-test analysis to compare the pre-test of two groups of control and experimental. At the beginning of the study both control and experimental groups were given the pre-test of writing. Group statistics in the pre-test is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Groups' Mean Statistics (Pre-test)

Groups	Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Control (pre-test)	1.00	30	16.46	2.487	.454
Experimental (Pre-test)	2.00	25	17.80	3.201	.640

As can be seen in Table 3, the number of the students in the control group is 30, and in the experimental group 25. The standard deviation in the control group is (2.487) while in the experimental group is (3.201). The standard error of means in the control group is (.454) while in the experimental group is (.640). Finally, the means of the control group is (16.46) while the mean of the experimental group is (17.80). Thus, there were close means between two groups in the pre-test. The difference between the two means is not significant. Table 4.3 shows the results of the independent *t*-test comparing the control and experimental groups at the outset of the research. The level of significance was set at .05 ( $p < .05$  was significant). The results are as follows:

Table 4: Independent Samples *t*-test (Pre-test)

Groups	Variables	N	<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control (pre-test) vs. Experimental (Pre-test)	1.00	30	-1.73	53	.088
	2.00	25			

As Table 4 shows the degree of freedom, the level of significance and the  $t$ -value of these tests are 53, .05 and -1.73 respectively. More importantly, the  $t$ -value did not exceed the  $t$ -critical. In other words, the observed  $t$  (-1.73) is less than the critical  $t$  (2.066). Consequently, the  $p$  is .088 which is more than the .05 level of significance. Therefore, it came to be known that the two groups were homogeneous. In other words,  $t$ -test analysis indicated that there was no significant difference between the scores of the writing skill of the two groups at the outset of the research.

#### Results of Groups' Post-tests

This section includes mean statistics followed by  $t$ -test analysis to compare the post-test of two groups of control and experimental. The following statistical procedure was carried out at the end of the course in order to figure out and compare the means, the standard deviation, and the standard error of means of the two groups. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Groups' Mean Statistics (Post-test)

Groups	Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Control (post-test)	1.00	30	17.63	2.98	.545
Experimental (Post-test)	2.00	25	22.92	3.10	.621

As can be seen, the number of the students in the control group is 30 and in the experimental group 25. The standard deviation and standard error of means in the control and experimental group were respectively 2.98, 3.10; .545, .621. Unlike the pre-test, there was a significant difference between the means of the two groups in post-test. In other words, in the control group the mean was (17.63) whereas in the experimental group the mean was (22.92). So you can see the difference between the two means is significant. Table 6 shows the result of the independent  $t$ -test comparing the post-test of the two groups, which was carried out at the end of the research. Again the level of significance was set at .05.

Table 6: Independent Samples  $t$ -test (Post-test)

Groups	Variables	N	$t$	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control (post-test) vs. Experimental (post -test)	1.00	30	-6.415	53	.000
	2.00	25			

As Table 6 shows the degree of freedom, the level of significance and the  $t$ -value of these tests are 53, .05, and -6.415 respectively. As can be seen, unlike the  $t$ -value of the pre-tests in which the  $t$ -observed did not exceed the  $t$ -critical, in the post-test the  $t$ -value exceeded the  $t$ -critical. In other words, the observed  $t$  (-6.415) is more than the critical  $t$  (2.066). Accordingly, the  $p$  is .000 which is less than the .05 level of significance. Therefore,  $t$ -test analysis revealed that there was a significant difference between the scores of the writing skill of the two groups at the end of the research.

#### Results of Comparison of Writing Components

Four different types of writing components used in this study: layout/organization, development/support, style, and grammar/mechanics. Figure 1 shows the results of comparison of these categories in the control and experimental group.

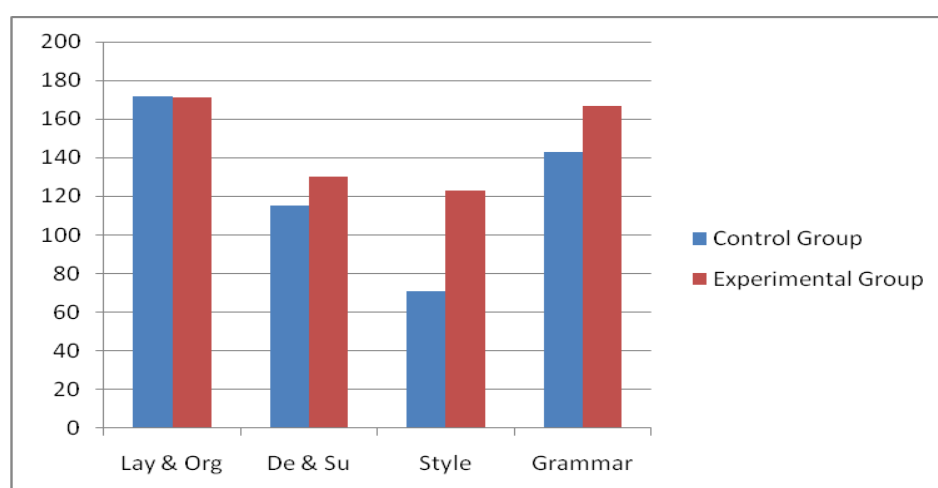


Figure 1: Writing Accuracy Components

Note: Lay & Org= Lay out & Organization; De & Su= Development & Support

As can be seen in Figure 1, the experimental group had a better performance than the control group in all categories except in the first one which is layout and organization. Although in this category they almost had the same performance and their differences were not significant. So it can be concluded that the experimental group outperformed the control group in writing accuracy components.

### **Discussion**

To answer research questions, on which the present study has concentrated, the tests results of each group will be statistically and separately discussed in the following sections.

#### **RQ1) Do post-task CALL techniques affect EFL learners' writing accuracy?**

In general, the writing of CALL group improved. It indicated that the above mentioned strategy is effective in improving EFL writing of MA students at the advanced level of English. After analyzing our data, we observed significance difference between CALL groups' performance in two tests. This result can be more approved by this evidence that there was significance difference between the means of pre-test and post-test among CALL group. The mean of the post-test was higher than pre-test. The results showed that using post-task CALL techniques have more significant effect on students' writing accuracy. One reason for the better performance of experimental group in using post-task CALL techniques might be due to the fact that it is motivating for teachers and learners.

A task-based approach provides learners with interesting challenges and is clearly related to their language needs. Post-task phase provides a chance for students to repeat performance of the task. Post-task activities have also proved interesting. By using it students' writing accuracy will improve in a number of ways specially by focusing their attention to the main task again. Skehan and Foster (1997a) support the research results that accuracy, selectively, would be advantaged in a post-task condition. In their studies, they predicted that a post-task effect upon writing accuracy was confirmed.

Computers are helpful to motivate students. Garcia and Arias (2000) support our idea that using CALL in a classroom has the following advantages: Increased motivation of the students, individualization of learning process, immediate feedback, non-linear access to the information, and the introduction of new exercise types in the classroom. One of the main advantages of CALL programs is that they create the opportunity for autonomous learning. Students are able to learn when and how they want, as well as control the speed at which they are learning (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2003). Findings of this study also supported the ideas of Lasagabaster and Sierra (2003). CALL programs could offer second language learners more independence from classrooms. Students can study more independently. Language learners do not need to go to a class at a fixed time and in a fixed classroom. They can even study at home. Computer technology can provide a lot of funny activities and reduce the learning stresses and anxieties. Thus, students do not get bored easily and they may become more active. Those abilities will promote second language learners' learning motivation (Skehan & Foster, 1999).

Another reason for the better performance of the experimental group in using post-task CALL techniques might be due to the fact that computer provides immediate feedback in some of students' writing mistakes. Learners receive maximum benefit from feedback only when it is supplied immediately. Classroom feedback is often delayed and at times denied. But computer has the advantage to provide immediate feedback in certain types of students' errors. A computer can thus analyze the specific mistakes the student has made. This leads to increasing students' interest and receptivity and understanding.

A word-processor in the computer can be very effective in teaching writing activities. Because word-processing program allows a wide range of formatting possibilities and make editing and revising much easier, they are of obvious use in teaching writing. Word-processors give writers the freedom to experiment with a text without making a mess. It means that one can make either major or minor changes in the text without retyping or rewriting the entire text (Brookes & Grundy, 2000). As one writes a word-processor will automatically format text; may enable one to check spelling, syntax, and grammar; may provide advice on the choice of words and on the use of words.

#### **RQ2) Do post-task CALL techniques make a difference among CALL and Non-CALL groups learning writing accuracy?**

The results of t-tests indicated a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups on writing achievement post-tests. The results of the present study revealed that though two groups had progress in writing, the students in the CALL group yielded a better performance. Results showed that there was not any significance difference among students' performance in pre-test, but in contrast there was a significant difference among the performance of the two groups in post-test. The results showed that CALL group who received feedback via computer and did some activities considered as post-task got better marks and their performance was better than Non-CALL group who did not receive such an approach. This result might be due to the fact that in Non-CALL group students might not have any motivation, while in CALL group they are more motivated as they have more time to think without any pressure or stress and they also can profit from some CALL programs such as Grammar Checker and Spelling Checker.

Computers can help writers in editing and setting layout and checking word such as spell checking and thesaurus. They can provide specialist tools such as grammar and reliability checkers (Seely, 1998). Typing a text word by word may help students to remember words or syntactic structures, spelling may improve and, it is probably more fun than copying a text using pen and paper (Sergeant, 2001). Coley (1997) supports our idea that writing with the application of technology, especially word processor, makes editing easier and faster than writing with pen-paper and it also improves the quality of writing.

The results of this study do not agree with Chen (2005). He observed the impact of traditional class instruction with or without computer aid on the acquisition of parts of speech by the two groups of Taiwanese EFL learners. After a 16-hour instruction, both groups were asked to produce a written narrative. Overall, there was no statistical difference between the control and the experimental groups (Foster & Skehan, 1996). Also, the findings of this study are against with those of Braine (1997) indicating that the traditional setting promotes more improvement in writing than using the networked computers. So, both Braine (1997) and Chen (2005) disagreed with our research results.

Many studies have attempted to assess the impact of computer on learning. Concerning writing, while some studies find a significant advantage of these techniques, others find no significant difference between CALL and other teaching methods. In spite of some disagreement mentioned above, all of the following studies support our research results.

The results of this study are in line with Gorjian (2009) who found that the experimental group taught via computer had a better performance than the control group taught in the traditional method. He investigated the role of computer in instructing writing skills in L2 acquisition. After analyzing the result he found out that the experimental group which received teacher feedback via e-mailing outperformed control group which was given instruction through pen and paper procedures.

This study indicates that the use of the computer may support the process of teaching and learning the writing skill. Moreover, it may enhance the students' writing level. The results of the study confirmed that writing accuracy could be improved through using post-task



CALL approach. It indicate that instruction of applying post-task CALL approach for advanced EFL learners was pedagogically effective as CALL group in this study performed almost better than the Non-CALL group on the post-test, regarding writing accuracy.

## CONCLUSION

Writing is an aspect that needs special attention and instruction. In order to provide effective instruction, it is necessary for teachers of EFL to carefully examine the factors, conditions, and components that underlie writing effectiveness. One of these factors is using specific strategies and using different kinds of tasks to increase students' motivation. By using computer and tasks students' interest and motivation will increase. It was pointed out that in spite of some limitations on using computers and tasks such as financial barriers which are the main outstanding problems, CALL-based writing lead to improvements, even in Iranian classrooms which were mostly rely on paper-based writing. Also, post-task provides a chance for students to repeat performance of the task. By using it students' writing accuracy will improve in a number of ways by focusing their attention to the main task again.

A task-based approach is motivating for teachers and learners. It provides learners with interesting challenges and is clearly related to their language needs. It is obvious to the learners that their classroom work will help them to operate effectively in English. The primary unit for both designing a language program and individual lessons should be a task because it creates opportunities for communication and noticing form/meaning/function relationships, which are the conditions essential for the development of communicative competence in an L2 (Willis & Willis, 2007).

It became clear that foreign language learners are different in language learning, their learning style, motivation, attitude, etc. Teachers should provide opportunities for students to raise their level of motivation and effort to do their best in writing skill. To help instructors in this field, this study used post-task CALL as an approach which will motivate learners. We observed that teacher feedback had an effect on students' ability in writing, but the effect of this feedback via CALL and by using post-tasks was most influential as CALL group outperformed and improved more than Non-CALL group in writing skill.

It is worth mentioning that applying this approach is fruitful for both teachers and learners. With this program students' learning history is recorded and their development is easily checked. Also, even less proficient students can find something interesting in it. Computer could help shy students to participate through sending messages via email to teachers. The computer could be a useful tool in EFL in teaching the writing skill. This also saves instructors' time and energy, because the only thing which remains for the instructors to do is to guide individuals from time to time and provide feedback for them without getting bored. Gruba (2004) refers to the teacher as a "mediator" between the computer and students throughout the learning process, serving the role of "keeping things running smoothly" (p. 637). One of the main reasons why EFL teachers use CALL is that computers can do some of the work of the teacher and provide great assistance to the learner even without the presence of the teacher (Pennington, 1989).

The results of this study can lead the future researchers to investigate other related areas. In this study only one skill investigated (writing accuracy) and other language skills (reading, speaking, and listening) did not consider, so we can compare two different skills and the effect of post-task CALL on them. By considering the subjects that take part in this study, we can conclude that most of them were girls and participants' gender was not the focus of the researchers, but we can compare the effect of post-task CALL approach between two different sexes, boys, and girls. Research on various proficiency levels is also strongly encouraged.

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to identify the lexical and syntactic interferences which students make in translating newspaper headlines. Thirty male and female MA students who were studying teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) at the Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch in Iran took part in the present research. They were given a test which included thirty Persian and thirty English headlines and were asked to translate them into Persian language. They were not allowed to use any dictionaries because their vocabulary knowledge was one of the exam criteria. All the students' translations were analyzed in order to investigate possible cross linguistic problems in translating headlines. Keshavarz' (1993) checklist was used to analyze data. Results showed that the participants faced grammatical and lexical interferences coming from their first language (L1). Then the interferences of L1 were classified in terms of morphological and syntactic taxonomy to give some implications for translation trainers and the students of translation in rendering English headlines into Persian language.

**KEYWORDS:** Interferences, error analysis, headline, translation, syntax, morphology

## INTRODUCTION

Many students of English find that newspaper headlines are especially difficult to understand. Obviously, it is not just a matter of vocabulary; even the style of writing is different from any other text they have met in their studies. The language of headlines is special and has its own characteristics on the lexical, syntactic, and rhetorical levels for its brevity, attractiveness, and clarity (Reah, 1998). These language features pose a great challenge to foreign learners of English when they begin to read English newspapers. This is hardly surprising for, as Waterhouse (as cited in Sanderson, 1999, p. 29) points out, "this genre is not one that people actually use in normal, everyday speech."

Conventionally, the headline serves several purposes: summarizing the whole story, attracting the reader in reading the story and beautifying the newspaper page. The headline is the single most important element of every print advertisement. It is more than a title or label for the message. It is the salesperson's opening line, the foot in the door and the first and most lasting impression. A headline wields the power to attract, repel or slip by readers unnoticed (Khodabandeh, 2004, p.45). Taking these notions in mind, this study attempts to identify the interferences which students make in translating newspaper headlines at syntactic and lexical level.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Faghih's (1997) study is noticeable in terms of language transfer interferences. Focusing on Iranian students' difficulty in learning the English definite article 'the', Contrastive Analysis (CA) shows that in Persian, there is no single word corresponding exactly to the English definite article. The other study investigating interferences in writing is that of Olsen (1999), who used error analysis as a research tool to detect the number and nature of language problems encountered by Norwegian students in writing English.

In the field of syntax, recent studies are those of Noor (1996) and Kim (1998). While Kim presents a rationale for analyzing interferences and syntactic maturity to better understand strategies employed by students when writing in a second language, Noor's study is a review of the most common syntactic interferences made by native speakers of Arabic learning English as a second language. Reima's (2000) study is very much related to the present research as it tries to understand learners' transfer competence, the difficulties they face in first or second language (L1/L2) translation. Reima's study focuses on interferences in the system of grammatical agreement. The results of her study show that 62% of the interferences of grammatical agreement are interlingual and 38% intralingual.

Khodabandeh (2004) did a research on students' interferences in headlines. The participants' chief difficulties in translating English headlines into Persian sentences were grammatical followed by discursual and lexical types. As a whole, the finding from the participants' translations analysis is in line with the idea that native language interference is surely the most immediately noticeable source of error (Brown, 1994) from the translation of native language to the target one. Montazeri (2007, p.62) mention her goal, method of data collection and then results showed differences between English, Persian, and Persian-English advertisements were in the frequency of some rhetorical figures. These differences revealed that each language prefers specific devices; in other words, some rhetorical figures had a higher frequency in one corpus but not in the other. This preference might be due to various causes such as cultural/ personal differences/ so the averter should be aware of these differences on order to avoid possible problems.

## Error Analysis

Error Analysis, tries to account for learner performance in terms of the cognitive processes learners make use of in reorganizing the input they receive from the target language. A primary focus of error analysis is on the evidence that learners' interferences provide to an understanding of the underlying processes of second-language acquisition. It is now widely believed that language learning, like acquiring virtually any other human learning involves the making of interferences. The learner profits from his interferences by using them to obtain feedback from the environment and in turn use that feedback to test and modify his hypotheses about the target language. Error Analysis thus provides a check on the predictions of bilingual comparisons, and inasmuch as it does this, it is an important additional source of information for the selection of items to be incorporated into the syllabus.

### Sources of Interferences

Corder (in Allen & Corder, 1974, p. 130) identified three sources of interferences: Language Transfer, Overgeneralization or analogy, and Methods or Materials used in the Teaching (teaching-induced error). Interlingual interferences: result from the transfer of phonological, morphological, grammatical, lexico-semantic, and stylistic elements of the learner's mother tongue to the learning of the target language.

Intralingual and developmental interferences: are caused by the mutual interference of items in the target language, i.e. the influence of one target language item upon another. For instance, a learner may produce \***He is comes**, based on a blend of the English structures: **He is coming**, and **He comes**. Such interferences reflect the learner's competence at a particular stage of second language development and illustrate some of the general characteristics of language learning, i.e. they result from the learner's attempt to build up concepts and hypotheses about the target language from his limited experience with it.

Transfer of Training: Transfer of training or teacher-induced interferences are those which result from pedagogical procedures contained in a text or employed by the teacher. In other words, these interferences come about as a result of course design or teaching techniques.

### Significance of Second Language Learners' Interferences

Many scholars in the field of error analysis have stressed the significance of second language learners' interferences. Richards (1971), for example, remarks that interferences are significant and of interest to:

- 1) Linguists, because as Chomsky suggests the study of human language is the most fruitful way of discovering what constitutes human intelligence.
- 2) Psycholinguists, because by looking at children's speech and comparing it with adult speech, they have been able to examine the nature of the mental processes that seem to be involved in language.
- 3) Teachers, because by analyzing learner's interferences, they would be able to discover their difficulties and devise a method for comparing them.

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

Thirty male and female MA students, who were studying English as a foreign language (TEFL) at the Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch in Iran, took part in the present research. The reason for selecting MA students is the assumption that they have already acquired general knowledge about media language. Also they were chosen on the basis of availability. Their age was ranging from 25 to 35.

### Materials

To carry out the comparison between the headlines, a sample of thirty English and thirty Persian headlines were randomly selected from among a larger corpus from two leading newspapers- for the sake of practicality-one English (NY daily news) and one Persian newspaper (Hamshahri). The headlines were about different topics such as politic, sport, education, health, crime, and music. They were hard copies and by referring to their front page we came to know that they enjoy a great circulation. The rationale for the selection of these materials was the availability and easy access to them. In order to avoid the variable of time affecting data collection, those English and Persian headlines that issued during a two-week period from November 30 to December 12, 2009 were selected.

### Procedure

For the analysis of the interferences extracted from the translated Persian headlines, the linguistic taxonomy of interferences provided by Keshavarz (1993) was taken into consideration and for the analysis of students' interferences drawn from the translated English and Persian headlines, the lexical and syntactic features of headlines were applied (Reah, 1998, Mardh, 1980, Khodabande, 2004).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Analysis of the Translated Persian Headlines

Different kinds of syntactic and morphological interferences extracted from the participants' translations of the Persian headlines into the English are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Observed Frequency of the Interferences (Frequency and Percentage of Wrong and Correct Answers)

Items	Variables	Freq. WA	Freq. CA	% WA	% CA
1	Omission of preposition	79	195	7.48	5.91
2	Redundant use of preposition	28	122	2.65	3.7
3	Wrong use of preposition	22	105	2.08	3.18
4	Redundant use of articles	103	212	9.76	6.42
5	Lack of concord within a verb group	20	98	1.89	2.97
6	Wrong use of the plural morpheme	10	20	0.94	0.60
7	Wrong use of quantifiers and intensifiers	12	48	1.13	1.45
8	Wrong use of part of speech	40	138	3.79	4.19
9	Use of typical Persian constructions in English	37	156	3.58	4.73
10	Omission of verbs	16	56	1.52	1.69

11 Redundant use of noun possessive's	58	187	5.49	5.70
12 Cross-Association	22	48	2.08	1.45
13 Language switch	8	52	0.75	1.60
14 Wrong translation of vocabulary	360	870	34.12	26.38
15 Skipping vocabulary	240	990	22.74	30.02
Total	1055	3297	100	100

Different types of syntactic and morphological interferences are given in the following section along with examples for each error type. It should be noted that the majority of the sentences may include types of interferences other than those in question.

### **Types of Interferences**

#### **A) Prepositions**

- a) Omission of preposition
  - \*importing illegal fuel  $\theta$  1388
  - \*Youtos-bayren, 90 minutes  $\theta$  stay
- b) Redundant use of preposition
  - \*Ordughan rejected *to* Obama
  - \*Coin reached *to* 2800000 Riallz
- c) Wrong use of preposition
  - \*Iranian vollybalists lose to Japanese *by* dignity
  - \*Uventus-Bayern; 90' *to* survival

#### **B) Redundant use of articles**

- \*The America: we stay in Afghanistan
- \* Yuventus-Bayern: A/ 90 minutes for survival

#### **C) Interferences due to lack of concord**

- \*disabled people is citizens not seen
- \* The historical places of Isfahan needs credit.

#### **D) Wrong use of the plural morpheme**

- \*Iranians volleyball team lost to Japan
- \*Iranians people experience backache, sore knee sooner

#### **E) Wrong use of quantifiers and intensifiers**

- \*Hen and egg the largest high in costs
- \*Old people should not exercise more than lot

#### **F) Wrong use of part of speech**

- \*Ahmadinezhad's four travel to Karakes
- \*Isfahan's history places want credit

#### **G) Use of typical Persian constructions in English**

- \*Rejection of Ordughan to Obama
- \*USA: Our decision on remaining in Afghanistan

#### **H) Omission of verbs**

- \* The nuclear issue,  $\theta$  selling of stocks
- \* The capital of Hakhamaneshiyan  $\theta$ , forget the army

#### **I) Redundant use of noun possessive's**

- \*Countries' schools trembles
- \*Isfahan's historical places want credit

#### **J) Lexico-semantic interferences**

The participants' translations were analyzed based on the interferences of the lexico-semantic subcategories.

#### **K) Cross-association interferences**

It includes the cases of error in which the choice of the lexical item is an equivalent for the Persian word.

- \*Iranians experience backache and *knee pain* early
- \* Chicken and egg received *biggest rises in price*

#### **L) Language switch interferences**

- \* *Irania* experience backache and sore knee soon
- \*Iranian *vollyballers* defeated by Japanese

#### **M) Wrong translation of vocabulary**

- \**Upper* under snow
- \**Authority* dialogue in Obama's foreign policy

#### **N) Skipping vocabulary**

- \*Fatemeh Bodaghi became Ahmadinejad's  $\theta$
- \*  $\theta$  under snow

In the third phase of the study, the chi-square test was utilized in order to find whether substantial differences existed between the ratio of the wrong English and Persian translations. Accordingly, the observed chi-square was higher than the critical value at the significance level of  $p < 0.05$ , indicating significant differences between the wrong English and Persian translations.

Table 2: Chi-square of Wrong Translation of Persian and English headlines  
 $X^2$                       df                      sig

Pearson Chi-square	6.671	1	.010
p<.05	Critical value=3.84		

Chi-square test determined the adequate p-value to Pearson Chi-square equals .01. As a result, the test is meaningful at .05 level and the ratio of wrong answer in the two languages is not the same. So, it can be claimed that the ratio of wrong answers in Persian translated headlines is more than the wrong answers in English translated headlines.

#### Discussion

Analyzing the participants' translations, lead to following results:

1. Generally, participants committed more errors in the translation of the English headline comparing to Persian ones.
2. The most errors which participants committed in English translation headline were related to grammatical and lexical interferences respectively. The research result shows that their grammatical interferences resulted from the translation of tense forms, i.e. wrong translation of the tense forms was the major problem which participants committed in their translations.
3. The analysis of the translated Persian headlines shows that the participants' chief difficulties were due to inadequate knowledge of the English vocabulary. The study also reveals that the participants translated the Persian headline into simple sentences by using the articles, noun possessive's and preposition, instead of omitting them.

The analysis of students' interferences either coming from their first language (i.e., L1 interferences) or second language (i.e., L2 interferences) known as intra and inter-lingual interferences can affect the learners' translation tasks. The results of this study show that the main problem is related to the translation from Farsi to English rather than English to Farsi. This may be due to two issues. First, Iranian learners are competent in Farsi rather than English since they have problems in full acquisition of English grammar and lexicon. Second, they have do not have enough exposure and exercises on translating from Farsi to English because the bulk of knowledge in their domain is coming from English sources rather than Farsi data. Thus they may master the translation of English to Farsi more easily than Farsi to English. In this case, teachers should pay more attention to translation activities from Farsi to English media headlines.

#### CONCLUSION

Students' interferences have always been of interest and significance to teachers and syllabus designers. Teachers can benefit from the findings of error analysis in different ways. Interferences provide feedback and they tell the teacher something about the effectiveness of his teaching materials and his teaching techniques and show him what parts of the syllabus he has been following have been inadequately learned or taught and need further attention. They enable him to decide whether he can move on to the next item in the syllabus or whether he must devote more time to the item he has been working on. An error-based analysis can give reliable results upon which remedial materials can be constructed. In other words, analysis of second-language learners' interferences can help identify learners' linguistic difficulties and needs at a particular stage of language learning. This can serve as a basis for remedial courses and programs in translation training and writing courses in English language.

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the role of pedagogical films in developing Iranian pre-intermediate students' speaking skill among English as foreign language (EFL) learners. It also dealt with the role of pedagogical films on learners' motivation to participate in speaking activities interactively. Speaking skill is one of the challenges in Iranian classroom since teachers in EFL classes focused mostly on written cues rather than spoken tasks. Thus this research hypothesized that using interesting and short films may affect their speaking skill and also motivation. This issue has been somehow rarely explored in Iranian universities. The reason for this may have been the poor performance of pre-intermediate students in speaking EFL. To achieve this purpose, a proficiency test was administered to 120 university students. Then 54 pre-intermediate language learners who were homogeneous in terms of their rank scores were selected and randomly divided in two equal groups in size, i.e., as experimental and control groups. To assess their speaking proficiency at the beginning of the treatment period, both groups participated in a pre-test interview and scored based on a speaking checklist (Hughes, 2003) and filled in a motivation questionnaire (Dornyei, 2003; Dornyei, Csize & Nemeth, 2006; among others). Experimental group watched the pedagogical films and the participants in control group listened to the audio CDs of those films. After 10 sessions of treatment, both groups were interviewed on the similar topics covered in the pre-test and filled in the same questionnaire. The effect of pedagogical films on the groups' speaking achievement was evaluated through Independent Samples *t*-test analysis. Moreover, the learners' motivation on the post-questionnaire was assessed through Mann-Whitney U test. Results showed that experimental group outperformed control group since pedagogical films had a positive effect on developing speaking skill among pre-intermediate EFL learners ( $p < 0.05$ ) in the experimental group. EFL teachers may use pedagogical films to raise the learners' motivation which reciprocally affects their participation in classroom speaking activities.

**KEYWORDS:** Pedagogical films, EFL Learners, speaking skill, motivation

## INTRODUCTION

Speaking is an important skill in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). Since learners need it for communication (Nunan, 2001). According to Nakagawa (2011), there are different opinions about what successful speaking is. Bailey and Savage (1994, pp. 6-7) believed that "Speaking in a second/foreign language has often viewed as the most demanding of the four skills." Perhaps the most difficult aspect of spoken English is that it is almost always performed via interaction with at least one other speaker. This means that a variety of demands are in place simultaneously: monitoring and understanding the other speakers, thinking about one's own role, producing that contribution, monitoring its effects, and so on. This is one reason why many of second/foreign speakers are shocked and disappointed when they use second/foreign language for the first time in real interaction. In other words, they are not prepared for spontaneous communication and cannot cope with all of its simultaneous demands (Celce-Murcia, 2001, p.103). Most foreign language learners in Iran face difficulty in speaking in English (Dolati & Mikaili, 2011).

English is a foreign language in Iran. Iranian students, after studying English even at advanced levels face problems to express themselves. One reason may be that English is taught formally as a foreign language and only grammar and translation have been focused upon at schools. Therefore, many people have been complaining that Iranian students cannot speak English in spite of studying English for six years or more (Ohato, 2005). Since, "speaking in a second or foreign language has been viewed as the most demanding of the four skills" (Bailey & Savage 1994, P. 7). It is important for most of the instructors to equip themselves with up-to-date techniques and methods of teaching this skill. Most teachers are constantly looking for new ways to encourage students to practice their oral English and speak spontaneously (Essberger, 1998). When students attend English classes they seek for something more interesting, they want fun, a way for showing themselves and talk. They may be motivated through watching films to fill this gap. One of these ways is using pedagogical films related to the curriculum.

Nowadays, using pedagogical films, as audio-visual (A/V) aids, has taken into consideration in teaching EFL. This research seeks to do a comparative study to see the effects of pedagogical films on speaking. This goal can be achieved through the usage of pedagogical films in classrooms. Study in this area is essential for both teachers and students because it will indicate the values of films in EFL classrooms (Writers, 2012). The results of this study will give teachers good insights about using pedagogical films in classrooms. The results will be further significant for language learners to use the strategy. Furthermore, students' feelings towards this strategy will be discovered.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ellis (1994) states that a strategy contains a mental or behavioral activity associated with some specific stage in the overall process of language acquisition or language use. Also, leaning strategies are particular actions that performed by the learner to make learning faster, easier, more effective, more enjoyable, more self-directed, and more transferable to new situations (Oxford, 1990). On the whole, learning strategies consist of learning instruments for self-regulated learning (Oxford, 2002; Dornyei, 2005). Cohen (1990) believes that the learner is aware of the strategies, even if his full attention is not being given to them. Moreover, in second language learning, strategies are conscious moves made by second-language speakers intended to be useful in either learning or using the second language. According to Cohen, the learning strategies are different from one task to another, from one instance to another instance within the same task or even by different learners dealing with the same task. Effectiveness of strategy depends on the characteristics of the given learner, the given language structures, the given context, or the interaction of these (Cohen, 1998).



### ***Language Learning with Multimedia***

Educational researchers always attempt to find the ways to facilitate learning for the students. Recently they have attended to employ the multimedia materials as a source of activating the oral skill. Video technology plays a role as a major motivator for language development and help students in acquiring language skills. Accessing to friendly learning environment and espousing to a large amount of comprehensible speech are the other two major advantages of technology especially for EFL learners (Butler-Pascoe & Wiburg, 2003 p. 84). Dikilitas and Duvençi (2009) state using computers in classrooms helps teachers to add multisensory elements like picture, text, sound, video, and animation. Butler-Pascoe and Wiburg (2003) described video or picture as the three dimensional text. Stempleski (1990) believes that videos should be linguistically sound, ordered and clean rather than humorous skits where the focus is on the story instead of language so full length movies are out of question and they are not structurally driven, they are certainly not clean and there is no apparent linguistic order to the dialogue.

### ***Using Films in the Classroom***

Bahrani and Soltani (2011) studied the effects of listening to different TV programs on improving different components of speaking proficiency. The participants were 20 females and males language learners of English. A sample of speaking from International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test was used as a pre-test. During the study, the researcher provided the participants with different TV programs to work on in the classroom. Moreover, during the experiment and for each interval between every two sessions, the participants were asked to watch and listen to at least four hours TV programs outside the classroom and write down the summary of whatever was heard which was viewed and discussed later inside the classroom. After 3 months of exposure (four hours a week), all the participants took the same sample of speaking proficiency test from IELTS as a post-test to check if there was any change in different components of speaking proficiency. In order to score the interviews and have a better quantitative data for the components of speaking proficiency checklist was used. The checklist included six scales including fluency, comprehension, communication, vocabulary, accuracy, and accent. Each scale incorporates five levels (5 points). According to the results of the post-test compared with the pre-test, the participants improved the vocabulary and communication components more than the other components during the period of the study. Fluency was the other component which improved to some extent. However, accuracy, comprehension, and accent are the three components of speaking proficiency which remained steady with no improvement. On the contrary, accuracy improves less than the other components. Additionally, participants of the study showed great interest in watching different programs from TV during the study. The participants attended the class with low anxiety which led to the high motivation. Accordingly, it was showed that the use of various TV programs in general could facilitate vocabulary acquisition to a significant extent.

According to Mekheimer's (2011) research, it indicated that exposure to supplementary video material can be beneficial to whole language development. This study was set to measure improvement gains in aural/oral, reading, and writing skills using data from an experiment that was conducted over a period of one academic year. Following an intensive, concentrated exposure to authentic video material accompanying a language skills development remedial program and extensive videos of some selected dramatized famous literary works, participants in an experimental group (n=33) demonstrated statistically significant gains scores over their peers in the control group (n=31) across all skills. The research discovered that authentic video, inducing satisfactory viewing comprehension as well as presented in an integrated language skills instruction, is a valuable approach to whole language teaching.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This thesis specifically attempts to reflect on the following research questions: (1) To what extent do pedagogical films affect Iranian EFL learners' development of speaking skill at the pre-intermediate level? (2) To what extent do pedagogical films affect the motivation of Iranian EFL learners in learning speaking skill at the pre-intermediate level?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

The present study was conducted with the help of 54 students who were selected out of 120 EFL students. All of them were majoring in English Translation including males and females from Islamic Azad University of Abadan in Iran. Through their performance on proficiency test designed by Richards, Lesley, Hansen, Sandy, and Zukowski (2008) those participants whose scores fell between one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean were selected as the participants of the study. Then, they were randomly divided into two of experimental and control groups based on the scores of the proficiency test. Both groups took a pre-test of speaking through interviewing on some specific topics extracted from their textbook (i.e., Top notch fundamentals). Experimental group was taught via pedagogical films (Top notch fundamentals) and the control group was taught based on the audio CDs of those films. Each group included 27 participants. Also, participants in experimental groups were 27. They were ranged from 18 to 29 with a mean of 22.

### ***Instrumentation***

Three testing instruments were utilized in the process of the development of the present research. Initially, a proficiency test (Richards, Lesley, Hansen, Sandy & Zukowski, 2008) was taken to determine the students' proficiency level which divided the sample population into two experimental and control groups. The test contained 50 multiple-choice items and the students answered them in 60 minutes. The reliability of this proficiency test was computed through KR-21 formula as ( $r = .801$ ). Then a motivation questionnaire, before and after the treatment, was given to measure the students' motivation level in learning English as foreign language. The questionnaire consisted of 37- Likert scale items. The students were supposed to answer them in 30 minutes. The motivation questionnaire extracted from Dornyei (2003), Dornyei, Csizs and Nemeth (2006), Clement and Baker (2001), Dornyei (2001), Gardner (1985), Noels, Pelletier, Clement, and Vallerand (2000). Also, the reliability of motivation questionnaire was computed through KR-21 formula as ( $\alpha = .743$ ). For analyzing the participants' results in motivation questionnaire the researcher used the Likert scale which measured the extent to which a person agreed or disagreed with each item. The highest mark in each item is 165 and each multiple choice includes five possible answers from strongly disagree to strongly agree. In the motivation questionnaire, the researcher coded the responses accordingly: Strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, no answer = 3, agree = 4, strongly agree = 5. Additionally, some questions about the films were asked to measure the students' level of speaking at the beginning of research period. It was a face-to-face conversation according to the level of the person being tested. All oral interviews were recorded for future verification.

Finally, a post-test was done to determine the effects of using pedagogical films on speaking skill. Moreover, post-test includes the same question in pre-test. The reliability values of pre and post-test were calculated through Kuder-Richardson 21 formula too. The reliability values of pre and post tests were ( $r = 0.97$ ) and ( $r = .80$ ) respectively. Furthermore, a checklist (Hughes, 2003) was used in both pre and post

tests to measure communicative abilities of students. Also, during the treatment, four types of techniques were used in both groups to found out the levels of students' speaking. They included note taking, question and answer, discussion, and description.

#### Materials

Considering 10 sessions for classes at the university, the teacher was able to select 8 episodes of topnotch film fundamentals. Every episode was about two minutes. Time of each class was 45 minutes. In every session, the teacher used one episode for each class. The selected films had to meet some criteria. The first criterion was vocabulary frequency and unfamiliarity. Existence of the variety in film's topics was the second criterion to select them. Thirdly, in selecting a pedagogic film we had to take into account the participant's social and religious norms and values as well as the relatedness of the film to the students' daily life in order to communicate well with them. Therefore, the researcher decided to select top notch films which more appropriate and fun to the students. These films have both pedagogical and fun criteria so they are suitable for using in classes to discover the effect of them on speaking skill. Films are selected based on the participants' proficiency levels. Moreover, other instructors assigned which level of top notch films is appropriate for teaching students based on the scores of their pre-test. As a result, Top Notch Fundamentals was selected as teaching materials of research.

#### Procedure

This study was conducted at Islamic Azad university of Abadan. The first step was to make sure of the students' homogeneity. To do so, a week before the instruction, the researcher administered a sample proficiency test to 120 participants in order to select 55 participants. Those with the highest scores were selected and randomly divided into two groups in two different classes. Control group includes 27 participants. Also, participants in experimental groups are 28. Before starting instruction, the groups were participating in a motivation questionnaire with 36-Likert scale items. It means that students answered to 36 items in 30 minutes. A pre-test was administered to discover the students' levels of speaking at the beginning of research period. It was a face-to-face interview. Each oral interview was scored according to the checklist (Hughes, 2003) for the sake of reliability. After selecting and dividing the participants on random judgment sampling, the instruction phase started. One class was required to watch a pedagogical films while the other one audio CDs of those films.

The treatment lasted ten sessions, 45 minutes a session, once a week. During the treatment, in each session, the researcher devoted times to watching the movie, practicing new words, and talking about that part of the movie. Each movie was presented to the students for 15 minutes in every session. Then, the teacher worked on that part of the movie. As mentioned before, during each session, four types of techniques including note taking, question and answer, discussion, and description were used to work on the pedagogical film. Most of the students took notes while they watched the film for reviewing it. After watching the film some questions were asked to discover students' comprehension of it and then they described it. In addition, the students discussed the movie and gave their opinion about the plot of the film. Also control group was conducted the same activities which were done in experimental group. The only difference between both groups related to using audio CDs of the pedagogical films instead of pedagogical films in control group. It means other activities between two groups are the same. For example, students in control group took notes while they listened to the audio CDs. Finally, after the treatment period, a post-test of speaking achievement covered all the materials were administered to two groups. Finally, the results of the tests were compared to each other to know the importance of movies

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Independent Samples *t*-test was run in order to find out whether the differences between the two groups are statistically significant or not. Moreover, a Mann-U Whitney-Wilcoxon analysis was used to discover the effect of pedagogical films on Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learner's motivation before and after research period in both experimental and control groups. First, the data obtained through students' performance on a proficiency test designed by Richards et al (2008) was analyzed statistically. The first step used in analyzing data was determining the proficiency of the groups regarding their levels of second language proficiency. Thus, the students' overall scores on the test were collected from their records.

#### Results for the First Research Question

To test the first research hypothesis, the researcher dealt with comparing two groups based on the role of watching pedagogical films in speaking skill. To do so, students' speaking exam was conducted at the first and the end of the semester as the pretest and post-test of speaking. Two oral interviews were performed and participants' interviews were recorded for analyzing in both pre and post tests. It should be noted that oral performance test focused on the proficiency level of the students' oral interviews conducted face-to-face interaction.

The analysis went further to find out whether it affects on students' performance in speaking skill; two *t*-test analyses were applied in this section, for two groups' performances on speaking. Then an Independent Samples *t*-test was also performed to determine the rate of mean differences, if any, between two groups and this last *t*-test was used to show the role of watching pedagogical films on speaking skill. It is important to note that the researcher employed all the formulas with the level of significance set at 0.05 in all their applications. All the tests which were conducted separately were combined and considered as one single test, that is, the mean for the two tests scores of each student was calculated, and then the Independent Samples *t*-test was applied.

Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics of students' speaking pre-tests in terms of the number of participants (N), means, standard deviations (SD), and standard errors of mean.

Table 1: Group Statistics (Pre-tests of Speaking, Experimental vs. Control groups)

Pre-test of Speaking	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Control	27	13.62	4.53	.87
Experimental	27	13.76	3.64	.69

According to the Table 1, the mean scores of pre-test for control group and experimental group were 13.62 and 13.76 respectively. Descriptive statistics of students' speaking post-tests are summarized in the Table 2.

Table 2: Group Statistics (Post-tests of Speaking, Experimental vs. Control groups)

Post-test of Speaking	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Control	27	17.48	4.08	.78
Experimental	27	21.26	2.63	.51

The mean score of pre-test were 17.48 for control group and 21.26 for experimental group. Table 3 provides descriptive statistics of both pre and post tests of students' speaking.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics (Pre and Post-tests of Speaking)

Groups	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Audio pre-test speaking	27	7.00	22.50	13.62	4.53
Audio post-test speaking	27	10.00	26.50	17.48	4.08
A/V pre-test speaking	27	7.00	21.00	13.76	3.64
A/V post-test speaking	27	14.5	27.50	21.26	2.63
Valid N (listwise)	27				

The results showed that the pre-test speaking scores ranged from 7 to 22.5 out of 30 in control group and 7 to 21 out of 30 in experimental group. Also, the scores of post-test speaking ranged from 10 to 26.5 in control group and 14.5 to 27.5 in experimental group. According to Table 3, The mean scores of the experimental group ( $M = 13.76$ ,  $SD = 3.64$ ) were approximately similar to those of the control group ( $M = 13.62$ ,  $SD = 4.53$ ) in pre-test but the above table shows that the mean scores of the experimental group in post-test ( $M = 21.26$ ,  $SD = 2.63$ ) were significantly different from those of control group ( $M = 17.48$ ,  $SD = 4.08$ ). The result of the  $t$ -test of pre-test in both groups is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Independent Samples  $t$ -test (Pre-tests of Speaking, Experimental vs. Control groups)

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances										
Pre-test Speaking	<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means									
	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference									
	Equal variances assumed							Std. Error	Lower	Upper
	Equal variances not assumed	F	Sig.	<i>T</i>	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Difference		
		1.87	.17	-.17	51	.86	-.19	1.12	-2.45	2.05

According to pre-tests of Independent Samples  $t$ -Test (Table 4), observed  $t$  (-0.17) was less than critical  $t$  (2.066) with df 51 in control group and also observed  $t$  (-0.17) was less than  $t$ -critical (2.066) in experimental group. Furthermore,  $t$ -test analysis shows significance value as 0.86 which is much greater than 0.05. This means that there is no statistical significance between mean performances of the two sets of scores in experimental and control groups in the pre-test. Moreover, the above table shows that the amounts of observed  $t$  are statistically not significant ( $t = -0.17$ ,  $p = 0.86$ ); therefore, it can be claimed that two groups were homogeneous at the beginning of the experiment regarding their prior knowledge. Table 5 shows the results of the  $t$ -test of the post-test in both groups.

Table 5: Independent Samples  $t$ -test (Post-Tests of Speaking, Experimental vs. Control groups)

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances										
<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means										
Post-test of Speaking									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
	Equal variances assumed	4.02	.050	-4.09	51	.00	-3.88	.94	-5.78	-1.98
	Equal variances not assumed									

As presented in Table 5, the observed  $t$  (-4.09) in control group was greater than critical  $t$  (2.066) with df 51, and observed  $t$  (-4.13) in experimental group was greater than the same critical  $t$ . Also, computed significance equals .00 which is smaller than the significance level set for the study (0.05). Based on the results obtained, this strategy improved students' speaking skill. Hence, the first null hypothesis was rejected due to the greater value of means and higher amount of observed  $t$  than critical  $t$ . Thus the equality of mean of these groups was

rejected. This substantiated the fact that there was a statistically significant difference between the experimental and the control groups confirming the effect of pedagogical films on the EFL learners' speaking skill. As shown in the Tables 4 and 5, there were considerable individual differences in speaking before and after the treatment. In other words, the experimental group outperformed the control group on the post-test and this means that the null hypothesis was rejected. It proves that the treatment has increased speaking skill scores. In other words, pedagogical films have significant effects on speaking scores.

#### **Results for the Second Research Question**

A non- parametric statistics was used to analyse the results of the small sample size. Mann-U Whitney-Wilcoxon, which is a non-parametric test for comparing the performance of two independent groups, was utilized to see whether there was any statistically significant difference in the variables under study. It was used to find out if the differences in students' motivation between two groups were statistically significant. It is important to note that the researcher employed all the formulas with the level of significance set at 0.05 in all their applications. Table 6 shows the mean of groups in pre-motivation questionnaire.

*Table 6: Pre-Motivation Questionnaire (Experimental vs. Control groups)*

	Groups	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Pre-Motivation Questionnaire	Control	27	29.00	783.00
	Experimental	27	27.04	757.00
	Total	54		

Table 6 shows that 27 participants in the control groups and also the 28 participants in the experimental group took part in this research. Based on the table, sum of ranks of pre-test of motivation in control and experimental groups were 783, 00 and 757, 00 respectively. The results of Ranks of post- motivation questionnaire are shown in the Table 7.

*Table 7: Ranks of Post- Motivation Questionnaire (Experimental vs. Control groups)*

	Groups	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Post-Motivation Questionnaire	Control	27	20.87	563.50
	Experimental	27	34.88	976.50
	Total	54		

Based on the Table 7, post-test of motivation questionnaire shows that sum of ranks of control and experimental groups were 563.50 and 976.50 respectively. Table 8 provides the descriptive statistics of motivation questionnaire for two groups in terms of the number of participants (N), minimum scores, maximum scores, means, and standard deviations (SD). The results in both groups are summarized in Table 8.

*Table 8: Descriptive Statistics (Pre and Post Motivation Questionnaire)*

Groups Motivation Questionnaire	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Audio pre-test question	27	117.00	156.00	139.963	8.41
Audio post-test question	27	125.00	161.00	141.25	7.56
A/V pre-test question	27	128.00	163.00	139.96	8.12
A/V post-test question	27	125.00	165.00	148.42	9.27

As Table 8 indicates, the students' scores in the motivation pre-test in audio group ranged from 117 to156 out of 165 and the mean score was 139.96. Also, the students' scores in the motivation pre-test in A/V group ranged from 128 to163 out of 165 and the mean score was 139.96. Also, the students' scores in the motivation post-test ranged from 125 to 161in control group and 125 to165 in experimental group. The Table 8 shows the mean score of control group in pre-test was 139.96 and mean score of experimental group was 139.96. It shows the mean scores in control and experimental groups were approximately similar in pre-test. Moreover, the mean scores of post-test motivation for audio group were 141.25 and 148.42 for A/V group. The mean for both groups increased from the pre-test to the post-test, although the experimental group showed a larger increase. The result showed that the mean score of the experimental group (M = 148.42, SD = 9.27) was significantly different from the control group (M = 141.25, SD = 7.56). Table 9 shows that the results of pre-test of motivation questionnaire.

*Table 9: Mann- U Whitney Test (Pre-test Motivation Questionnaire)  
(Experimental vs. Control groups)*

	Pre-test
Mann-Whitney U	351.00
Wilcoxon W	757.00
Z	-.455
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.649

According to the Table 9, the two-tailed significance score was greater than the alpha value of 0.05. This indicated that the control and experimental groups were not significantly different from each other relative to the hypothesized values ( $Z = -.455$ ,  $p = .649$ ). The results of post motivation questionnaire are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10: Mann-U Whitney (Post-test Motivation Questionnaire  
(Experimental vs. Control groups)

	Post-test
Mann-Whitney U	185.500
Wilcoxon W	563.500
Z	-3.245
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.001

According to the Table 10, the two-tailed significance score of .001 is less than the significant value of .05. There were significant differences between the EFL learners' motivation in two groups. This leads to a rejection of the second null hypothesis and provides support for the research hypothesis. Table 10 displays the results of the analysis of the effects of pedagogical films on EFL learners' motivation in learning English.

### Discussion

As shown in Independent Samples *t*-test, the speaking of two groups improved but there was a significant difference between them. As a whole, the study showed that the pedagogical films are effective in improving EFL learners' development of speaking skill at the pre-intermediate level of English. This result can be more approved by this evidence that there were significance differences between the means of pre-tests and post-tests. The means of the post-tests were higher than pre-tests. Also, *t* values were much greater than *t*-critical. That is to say, the learners who watched the pedagogical films may outperform the learners who listened to the audio CDs of those films. This is very much compatible with the results of the research conducted by Bahrani and Soltani (2011). They discovered that films improved speaking ability of the learners. Also, it showed that vocabulary and communication components of speaking enhance more than other components of speaking. Also, the results of this study are in line with the study that Mekheimer (2011) did. It was designed to indicate whether that exposure to supplementary video material is beneficial to whole language development. The study found that authentic video, is a valuable approach to whole language teaching.

The findings of this study are against with those of Dikilitas and Duvenci (2009). According to their research auditory/textual materials are more effective than films in terms of their effects on EFL learners' speaking skill. They reported that length of utterance and mean length of utterance are higher in students how use auditory/textual materials.

One possible explanation of such result is that correct use of pedagogical films in classrooms may help students to enhance their learning and speaking. This explanation is supported by Katchen (2003) who discovered that DVD films can be used as the major course material in a university level listening and speaking course for English majors. It also showed that students benefited from using DVD films. Combination of sounds and images in films may be one of the reasons that improve speaking. King (2002) in the same way stated that the great value of films lies in its combination of sounds, images, and sometimes text.

Based on the finding, creating a meaningful environment by use of pedagogical films may encourage students to speak. According to Canning-Wilson (2000), use of visuals, films, cartoons, and some other things help learners to clarify the messages and enhance understanding. Progoosh (1996) believed visual imaging systems have widespread among people and is an inseparable part of people's lives.

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of pedagogical on learners' motivation in improving speaking language. Based on the results of the Man- U Whitney Test in chapter 4, the results of the study confirmed that learners' motivation in learning and speaking English could be increased through watching pedagogical films. It showed that pedagogical films might provide strong motivation for students to learn English. This is compatible with Ardriyati (2010) that found that using films in teaching could be motivated and attractive. According to him (2010) films can make students become more motivated to learn and communicate in the language. The finding of the study conducted by Istanto (2009) support the use of films in classes and thus is consistent with the outcome of current study. According to Istanto, films provide strong motivation for learners to learn the target language and culture because they can learn in more interesting ways compared to traditional class activities. Moreover, it's in the same line with Jahangard (2007) who discovered that visual materials increase language learning in classrooms. Also, it is consistent with the finding of Ardriyati (2010) who stated that motivation plays an essential element when teacher use films in classrooms as a teaching material.

Based on the results, pedagogical films may arouse learners' curiosity and it can motivate learners to follow the films. It's consistent with the finding of Offner (1997) who states that students may be motivated through watching film to fill this gap. Also in the experimental groups, students showed that they want to speak more about the films may be due to the fact that films can affect students' attitude positively in learning process? Furthermore, EFL learners in this research had positive attitude toward improving speaking through watching films. One of the learners said "*It was fun and learning at the same time*". This outcome is similar to the Adiyaman (2002) who found that technological equipment like watching films effect on students' attitude so much.

There were less stress and tension in the class and it seemed that the learners were able to cope with the difficulties of speaking through various activities and putting them into use and finally activating them. The learners feel more comfort and this class was fun for them. One student mentioned "*I can't wait for the next session to watch the other episodes of the film*". Another learner stated that "*I feel more comfortable in this class than any other classes and it is fun for me*". The findings of this study also are in the same line with the findings of Bahrani and Soltani (2002) who concluded that learners show great interest in watching films and different program from TV during the study. The participants attended the class with low anxiety which led to the high motivation.

### CONCLUSION

Teachers, methodologists, and applied linguists are responsible to help teachers comprehend the value of A/V materials because it can create the motivation and enjoyment in learning speaking. Instructors should provide opportunities for students in classroom to enhance their level



of motivation and effort to participate in the classroom discussion. First, teachers should introduce the importance of using A/V materials in speaking to language learners. Then, they must raise their students' knowledge of them, as well as recommending them and give them some instructions on how and when to utilize pedagogical films for enhancing speaking. Moreover, the teachers should employ the suitable levels of pedagogical films in classrooms. In language classrooms, it is suggested that language teachers familiarize their pre-intermediate language learners with advantages of pedagogical films to improve their speaking ability. Since this survey demonstrated that using pedagogical films in classrooms were useful for pre-intermediate learners of English. It is recommended that language teachers explicitly instruct their pre-intermediate language learners in the use of them.

The study can bear implications for materials developers and compilers of instructional books. By taking insights from the present study, compilers and materials designers might include tasks following short pedagogical films. Also, they should consider that pedagogical films should be presented in a right time and at suitable levels that confirms to the learners' actual potential in learning, in order for them to speak better. Material designers are advised to acquaint pre-intermediate EFL learners with the substance and advantages of using pedagogical films in language classrooms so that language learners with pre-intermediate language ability may draw upon them. As revealed in the present study, material designers had better notify these learners of the value and significance which pedagogical films have.

The results of this research can lead the future researchers to investigate other related areas. This study attempted to find out the effects of pedagogical films on EFL learners' speaking skill and their motivation and did not take the other skills or factors into consideration. Since other skills such as listening comprehension or writing skills and even vocabulary or idiom learning and also other emotions and feeling like anxiety could be influenced by the use of pedagogical films in the classroom situations, researcher is recommended to pay attention to them. Both male and females took part in this study but the researcher can compare them or study the effects of pedagogical films on the same sex. Since the study has evaluated on pedagogical films, replication of the study with different kinds of films and movies in other genres for example documentary, comedy, and also animation or authentic films would also be advisable. Learners who studied English as a foreign language took part in this study. Also, the same study can be replicated in other situations such as ESL situations and even in native speakers' contexts. Furthermore, this research was conducted with pre-intermediate EFL learners at Islamic Azad university of Abadan. Other levels of language proficiency in different cities can also be the participants of further studies if researchers wish to make generalizations about language learners at different proficiency levels. Eventually, the study lasted for two months. Succeeding studies can allocate more time to the instruction of pedagogical films on EFL learners' speaking skill and motivation.

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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the role of reformulation tasks including comparison, paraphrasing, and copying activities concerned with developing writing accuracy in composing one paragraph essays in English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' writing accuracy. To achieve this purpose, a placement test was used to make sure of the homogeneity of participants. Accordingly, 100 participants were selected out of the student majoring in English translation at Abadan Azad University. Then they were assigned to three experimental and one control groups, each comprised of 25 participants based on systematic random sampling. The experimental groups received reformulation tasks, whereas the control group was taught traditionally. In other words, the control group received usual practice in writing essays with no explicit focus on the nominated tasks covered by the experimental groups. Group A received comparison task, group B received paraphrasing task and group C received copying task. The study continued for one semester. The participants took a pretest of writing one-paragraph essay, evaluating their proficiency in writing accuracy. After the treatment sessions, the four groups sat for the post-test of writing a one-paragraph essay. The topics for both the pre-test and post-test were the same. A standard checklist developed by Yang and Zhang (2010) was used to score the essays. For calculating the results, One-way ANOVA was used to measure the differences among the groups. Then a Post-hoc Scheffe test was used to determine the most effective task. The results showed that reformulation tasks such as comparison and copying were beneficial for improving accuracy among EFL learners. They are comparison and copying tasks which improved learners' writing accuracy. Thus this study may suggest that these two tasks could develop writing accuracy more effectively than the other tasks.

**KEYWORDS:** Reformulation tasks, EFL learners, writing accuracy

## INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the four language skills and it could be very challengeable for EFL or English as second language (ESL) learners who need it as an instrument for employment and promotion (Graham & Perin, 2007). As Ting (2003) believes, writing in English has always been a demanding task for EFL/ESL learners. He states that this is because English writing, compared with English speaking, is the more formal mode of English production and therefore requires learners to be aware of the properties of English text. Harklau (2002) accepted the role of writing as a tool for communication and explained its key role in understanding how second language acquisition take place in elementary and secondary level classroom where literacy use for communication and transmission; it means writing is a way to understand how students learn a second language.

Celce-Murcia (2001) believes the ability to express one's ideas in writing in a second or foreign language with reasonable coherence and accuracy is a major achievement that even many native speakers of English never master. Writing is a complex activity, a social act which reflects the writer's communicative skills which is difficult to develop and learn, especially in an EFL context (Fallahzadeh & Shokrpour, 2008).

According to the benefit of reformulation, Yang and Zhang (2010) examined the effectiveness of reformulation and model text in a three-stage writing task (composing-comparison-revising) in an EFL writing class in a Beijing university; their findings showed that the students made more effort in finding the proper language to express their ideas at composing stage and were able to notice most differences between their original text and the reformulated one at comparison stage and their appreciation of having access to a native model text for a broad range of language input.

Various types of tasks are used as exercises for writing composition training at schools. Sometimes verbal materials are used for older children and series of pictures for developing transformational or representational knowledge that can be stored as information in memory for improvement in written composition used for lower learners (Pavio, 1990; Sølvsberg & Valås, 1995). But when learners finish school, they still cannot write in an appropriate way. This gap in writing research could be somewhat filled by task-based research. In the present study, the researchers use different reformulation tasks (comparison, copying, paraphrasing) to find role of these tasks in learners accuracy. Learners' exposure to native models and the opportunity of using them in writing make learners familiar by accuracy rules.

This study aims to find out the role of different reformulation tasks (comparison, paraphrasing, and copying) among Iranian students' writing accuracy who study at Abadan Islamic Azad University. Although several works have been done about different strategies and tasks to improve writing accuracy, to best of my knowledge, very few studies have been oriented to investigate the role of reformulation tasks in Iranian students writing accuracy. Promoting writing in general and writing accuracy in particular should be the main concern of not only Iranian learners but also those who want to learn English and improve their writing in and outside the academic settings.

Writing is one of the four language skills. It is necessary for language learners to obtain this skill for their goals and purposes. Accuracy and obtaining rules and grammar of English is one way to improve this skill. Reformulation is one way to improve this ability. Reformulation tasks including comparison, paraphrasing, copying are beneficial tasks for improving writing accuracy. By this study, we want to know how different reformulation tasks effect writing accuracy and compare and contrast tasks to know which one is beneficial for which part of grammar.

This study is important especially for Iranian English as foreign language (EFL) learners who want it for communication and pursuing the English for academic purposes (EAP). They do not use English extensively outside the classroom in educational setting to meet their needs. So, authentic texts for model texts, revision parts, and exposure to accurate texts during the term help students to have confidence and write like a native one.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Writing is needed for higher degree of education, for writing research and be a member of scholarship. It is used to show one's thoughts and ideas (Diekelmann & Ironside, 1998). For these purposes and more than these, students required to learn this skill. They can practice different tasks. In writing courses, students are asked to complete writing assignments such as essays, summaries, reports, term papers, note taking, etc. Although they are hard activities, they are not always leads to learning without cognitive and metacognitive strategies (Hubner, Nuckles, & Renkl, 2010). Kormos (2011) argues that teachers can obtain information about how different task features work with the linguistic characteristics of foreign language written texts before choosing tasks.

Panofsky, Pacheco, Smith, Santos, Fogelman, Harrington, and Kenney (2005) believe the writing process and strategy includes four categories. First, students required to use process tasks. For example, outlining, composing, revising, editing and final writing. Second, argumentative writing which provides important information to support an idea. Third, students asked to arrange, criticize, evaluate, compare, and contrast opinions and information. Fourth, students take part in peer-editing activities.

### *Reformulation*

The first definition of reformulation was proposed by Levenston (1987). In this definition, learner's composition revised by native speaker. In this revision, original draft's ambiguity, awkwardness, lexical inadequacy, stylistic problems, syntactic and spelling mistakes, and grammatical errors are revised.

Cohen (1983, p.4) explains reformulation as "having a native writer of the target language rewrite the learner's essay, preserving all the learner's ideas, making it sound as native like as possible". He continued that Native speaker can change text to make it as native one; this change can occur in lexical, syntactic or style (Allwright, Woodley & Allwright, 1988). Some studies consider reformulation as a feedback tool which have often use by output and noticing in the context of L2 writing. The technique of reformulation has potential to affect some disadvantages of traditional feedback methods, which often target non-target like forms (Hanaoka & Izumi, 2012).

Reformulation is a useful technique for providing input in writing skill. In writing and speaking, sometimes learners cannot reach to their communicative goals as a result of lack of L2 knowledge. But in writing, learners have a chance to resolve their problems by different ways like: using model, reference sources, and asking teachers. By using reformulation technique, learners also can compare their text with new version of it and rewrite their text. So reformulation as an immediate input can help learners to solve their difficulties (Williams, 2012).

### *Paraphrasing and copying*

Sometimes copying in writing skill consider as plagiarism. Copying from source text considered necessary for academic writers to develop their writing. It can be a step before paraphrasing (Chandrasoma, Thompson & Pennycook, 2004; Hyland, 2001). Keck (2006) states that textual borrowing is not necessarily an ill-intention illustration of plagiarism since it can be a learning or developmental process. Researchers say there are differences among plagiarism, novice writers' citation, high level proficiency writers, and summaries (Wette, 2010).

Paraphrasing can be used as a strategy for avoiding plagiarism (Yamada, 2003). For avoiding plagiarism, students can use substantial paraphrases which are defined by Keck (2006) as including only main words that repeated in the text and related to the topic. Also they can use superficial paraphrasing in their writing. Keck (2010) said for using this strategy, L2 writers can add new words, delete words, or substitute with synonyms words. Abbasi and Akbari (2008) argued that many L2 students use superficial paraphrasing to avoid using their own words and this can be due to lack of confidence. Substantial paraphrase by using only main words doesn't guarantee good paraphrasing (Shi, 2012). Yamada (2003) believed on inferential thinking (deductive and analogical) for good paraphrasing.

Fathman and Whalley (1990) works on students' writing against four different feedback conditions: no feedback other than the grade awarded; grammar feedback consisting of underlining all grammatical errors; content feedback in which short, general comments were made about the text; and a combination of grammar feedback and content feedback, argue that only the grammar feedback and the grammar plus content feedback groups made development in grammatical accuracy at a statistically significant level.

Chandler (2003) conducted a study to find the role of error correction in improving accuracy in students writing. Author chose participant among students at an American conservatory. Students were asked to write about 25 pages of autobiographical writing and a book review over the semester. They divided to two groups but they were taught by the same teacher with the same method and both groups received error feedback. The difference between experimental and control groups was in treatment and receiving feedback. Students in the experimental group should revise each assignment and correcting all the errors underlined by the teacher before doing the next exercises. Nonetheless, the control group did corrections of their underlined errors after the first drafts of all five homework assignments had been written toward the end of the semester. The results demonstrate that the control group, which did no error correction between assignments, did not increase in accuracy while the experimental group showed a significant increase which was not accompanied by a decline in fluency. Yang and Zhang (2010) conducted a study to investigate the effect of exposing participants to both a reformulation and a model text in a three-stage writing task. Chinese EFL students participated in this study and narrative writing used for the purpose of this study. Researchers found that participants noticed to the differences between their composed text and reformulated text in comparison stage while they also use models as a good sample of native writing. So, researchers believed on using both reformulation and a model text to improve students' writing. They said by using reformulated text, students can be aware of their problems and learn native version of expressing their ideas; while by using model text which is free from constraints of the original writing, learners have a example of native at all levels consist of vocabulary, sentence structures, and discourse.

Shi (2012) conducted a study to find the role of rewriting and paraphrasing source texts in second language writing. Also this study tries to find how students and professors look at paraphrased, summarized, and translated texts. 48 students and 27 instructors in a North American university volunteered to participate in this study. This study contained 3 questions: 1. How do participating students and faculty across disciplines view the examples of paraphrasing in relation to the amount of copying and the use of one's own inferential thinking? 2. How do participating students and faculty across disciplines view the example of the summarized text in terms of how it should be acknowledged?

3. How do participating students and faculty across disciplines view the example of the translated text in terms of how it should be acknowledged?

Moore (1997) conducted a study at an Australia university in order to find how ESL student relied on copying in their summary writing. Findings showed that ESL students with an Asian background copied when writing summaries without citing. The researchers believed this kind of copying is related to cultural variation, not plagiarism because ESL students look at original text as a source of information so they copy. On the other hand native English speakers attribute the summarized positions to the original author because source text is an individual point of view for them. Johns and Mayes (1990) also examined summaries written by 80 ESL undergraduates, they reported that low levels proficiency students copied directly from the original text more than high levels of English proficiency.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The current study aims to answers the following questions: (1) To what extent do comparison, paraphrasing, and copying tasks affect EFL learners' writing accuracy at the intermediate level? (2) Is there any difference among comparison, paraphrasing, and copying in developing accuracy in writing?

### METHODOLOGY

#### *Participants*

The participants for this study were students of Islamic Azad university of Abadan, majoring in English Translation. They were selected out of those students who had recently passed the course of simple writing at the university. To ensure the students' linguistic homogeneity, the researchers administered a proficiency test (Richards, Lesley, Hansen, Sandy & Zukowski, 2008) to 122 students. After the scores of proficiency test were obtained, 100 students whose scores were within one SD below and one SD above the mean were selected as the participants who gained the level of intermediate level. Then they were non-randomly divided into four groups of 25. They comprised of three experimental groups i.e., comparison group (A), paraphrasing group (B), copying group (C), and a control group (D).

#### *Instrumentation*

The following instruments were implemented in the study: (1) A proficiency test of English languages (Richards et al, 2008) which included 50 multiple choice items to assess learners' general knowledge of English grammar and reading comprehension at the intermediate level. Its reliability coefficient was computed through Cronbach Alpha formula as ( $\alpha=0.865$ ). (2) A pre-test and a post-test were designed based on IELTS topics for writing to measure the students' writing achievement before and after the treatment period. Each writing test included three topics and the participants should select one out of the three to write a one paragraph descriptive essay included 15 words. (3) A check list was extracted from Yang and Zhang (2010) which included 20 items on the accuracy of the students' writing such as mechanics of writing, style, grammar, spelling, etc.

#### *Materials*

Original model texts which were chosen from "Active skills for reading: Book 2", developed by Anderson (2007) were used for revision. This book includes 12 units and each unit contains 2 chapters. There are reading parts in each chapter which were used for our purpose as a model of native one. The book "Paragraph Development" by Arnaudet and Barrett (1990) was used for control group.

#### *Procedure*

In this study, participants were given an English placement test and then they were divided to four groups of 25. Groups were as follows: comparison group (A), paraphrasing group (B), copying group (C), and control group (D). All groups except control group were assigned the same materials but were expected to do different tasks. The reading parts of "Active skills for reading: Book 2" developed by Anderson (2007), was used for all the groups but control group was given the book "Paragraph development" by Arnaudet and Barrett (1990) as a course material. This study was conducted during one semester and each session took 30 minutes. For the pre-test, students were given three topics to write a paragraph of 150 words. Then the researcher explained to each group what they should do during the semester and elaborated more on their tasks. In comparison group (A), students should do what other participants do for reformulation task (composing, contrasting, and revising), they had topic to write about it. It was a kind of free writing and they could use which style that they knew and composed a text. After composing, they had a text about the topic which they had written recently. This text was prepared for them from the book and they could use it as a model text. This text was a kind of native one and acceptable one in accuracy. Students had their written text and model text about one topic. They contrasted their texts with the model in the structure and grammar, and then they wrote another text again or changed their written text. In paraphrasing group (B), students at first had a model text from the selected book by the researchers which was the same for all groups in each session. They read one or two paragraphs and then they composed a text by paraphrasing those parts. In copying group (C), student like previous group at first encountered by a text and then they composed and used copying for write a text. In Control group (D), students had a course book "paragraph development" and they were taught in a conventional way without the use of these tasks.

At the last session, to determine the effectiveness of applying reformulation tasks on EFL learners' writing accuracy, the four groups were given the similar post-test in which the topics were the same topics in pre-test and they should write about those topics. The pre-test and post-test were scored by using checklist and two scorers. Two scorers were used to make sure of subjectivity. According to checklist for each error except sentence structure, student lost 0.25 of total score of 20 and for sentence structure error 0.05. The obtained scores by the four groups were compared with the pre-test scores to see which group had more progress in writing accuracy. They were compared to know the differences in each group and among groups.

In order to determine if comparison, paraphrasing and copying had any impact on intermediate EFL learners developing writing accuracy, the collected data were analyzed by using One-way ANOVA to show the mean differences between the groups. Then a post-hoc Scheffe test was used to show the significant effect of the variables in developing writing accuracy of Iranian English foreign language learners.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Calculating the data which obtained from the pre-test was the next step in analyzing the data. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the participants' performance in different groups on pre-test.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics (Pre-test)

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Contrasting	24	17.9375	.82175	.16774	17.5905	18.2845	16.50	20.00
Paraphrasing	23	17.0870	1.52556	.31810	16.4273	17.7467	14.00	20.00
Copying	21	17.3214	1.19672	.26115	16.7767	17.8662	14.00	19.00
Control	20	17.3000	1.05319	.23550	16.8071	17.7929	15.50	18.50
Total	88	17.4233	1.20306	.12825	17.1684	17.6782	14.00	20.00

According to Table 1, mean and standard deviation of four groups are to some extent the same. Mean and standard deviation showed that the participants of four groups were performed similarly in pre-test. In order to find out the difference among the groups in the pre-test, One-way ANOVA was performed on the test scores of the four groups' writing essays. Table 2 shows the results.

Table 2: One-way ANOVA (Pre-test)

Variables	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9.470	3	3.157	2.277	.086
Within Groups	116.450	84	1.386		
Total	125.920	87			

\*Significant at  $p < 0.05$

Based on Table 2 given above, since Critical  $F$  (4.04) is greater than observed  $F$  (2.277) with  $df=3/84$ , the difference between the groups is not significant at ( $p < 0.05$ ). Also based on obtained significant of 0.086 which was greater than 0.05, we could state that there was no difference between the groups in the pre-test. Therefore, all the groups were homogeneous at the beginning of the research. The next step in analyzing the results of the study was the calculation of the scores of students' performance after treatment period on the post-test. Like the pre-test, descriptive and inferential statistics were used for this purpose. The descriptive statistics of participants' scores on post-test are given in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics (Post-test)

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Contrasting	24	18.3854	.85332	.17418	18.0251	18.7457	16.00	20.00
Paraphrasing	23	17.8152	1.30606	.27233	17.2504	18.3800	15.50	20.00
Copying	21	18.2024	.75257	.16423	17.8598	18.5449	17.00	19.50
Control	20	17.0875	1.25204	.27996	16.5015	17.6735	14.50	19.25
Total	88	17.8977	1.15634	.12327	17.6527	18.1427	14.50	20.00

By comparing the mean and standard deviation of each group in Table 3 with the mean and standard deviation of the pre-test in Table 1, differences among the groups' means were appeared. As it is displayed in Table 3, participants' performances in all groups were changed into high scores. To see whether the differences in the results of the pre-test and the post-test are significant, One-way ANOVA was used. Table 4 shows the results of this calculation.

Table 4: One-way ANOVA (Post-test)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	20.943	3	6.981	6.148	.001
Within Groups	95.386	84	1.136		
Total	116.330	87			

\*Significant at  $p < 0.05$

According to Table 4, Since Critical  $F$  (4.04) is less than observed  $F$  (6.148) with  $df= 3/84$ , the difference between the groups is significant at ( $p < 0.05$ ). The obtained significant (0.001) is less than significance level set for the study (0.05), so there is a difference between groups and they are not homogeneous on the post-test. Based on descriptive and inferential statistics participants performed better on the post-test. To find out where the difference exactly exist and compare the groups with each other a Post-hoc Scheffe Test was used. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Post-hoc Scheffe Test of Multiple Comparisons

(I) Groups	(J) Groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Contrasting	Paraphrasing	.57020	.31094	.345	-.3169	1.4573
	Copying	.18304	.31842	.954	-.7254	1.0915
	Control	1.29792*	.32263	.002	.3774	2.2184
Paraphrasing	Contrasting	-.57020	.31094	.345	-1.4573	.3169
	Copying	-.38716	.32163	.695	-1.3048	.5305
	Control	.72772	.32581	.181	-.2018	1.6572
Copying	Contrasting	-.18304	.31842	.954	-1.0915	.7254
	Paraphrasing	.38716	.32163	.695	-.5305	1.3048
	Control	1.11488*	.33294	.014	.1650	2.0648
Control	Contrasting	-1.29792*	.32263	.002	-2.2184	-.3774
	Paraphrasing	-.72772	.32581	.181	-1.6572	.2018
	Copying	-1.11488*	.33294	.014	-2.0648	-.1650

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5 shows that the groups performed differently in gaining the writing accuracy scores. The multiple comparisons of the results showed that there was not a significant difference among comparison group, paraphrasing and copying groups, but there was a significant difference between comparison and control group. By comparing paraphrasing with other groups, no significant difference was observable. Comparing the copying group with comparison, paraphrasing and control groups, the results showed that there was a significant difference between copying and control groups; however, there was not a significant difference between the control group with comparison and paraphrasing groups.

Since the significance level was set at 0.05, it can be seen that there was a significant difference between comparison and control groups (sig=0.002). Thus it showed that the participants in comparison group performed better in the post-test. The same deduction was obtained for copying group compared with control group. Copying group performed better on the post-test (sig= 0.014); however, there was not a significant difference between this group compared with other groups.

Based on obtained results, we can see the first null hypothesis: "comparison tasks do not affect EFL learners' writing accuracy at the intermediate level" was rejected. Comparison task in this study was effective for increasing writing accuracy of the learners. The second null hypothesis: "paraphrasing tasks do not affect EFL learners' writing accuracy at the intermediate level", was not rejected. As it was hypothesized paraphrasing task which was one of the reformulation task, did not affect learners' writing accuracy. The third null hypothesis: "Copying tasks do not affect EFL learners' writing accuracy at the intermediate level", was rejected. It means copying task affect EFL learners' writing accuracy. The last hypothesis: "There is not any difference among comparison, paraphrasing, and copying tasks in developing accuracy in writing", was also rejected. Thus just two of three tasks (i.e., comparison and copying) were beneficial in developing writing accuracy. The numbers of errors were calculated based on the checklist and illustrated through a bar graph. Figure 1 shows the results.

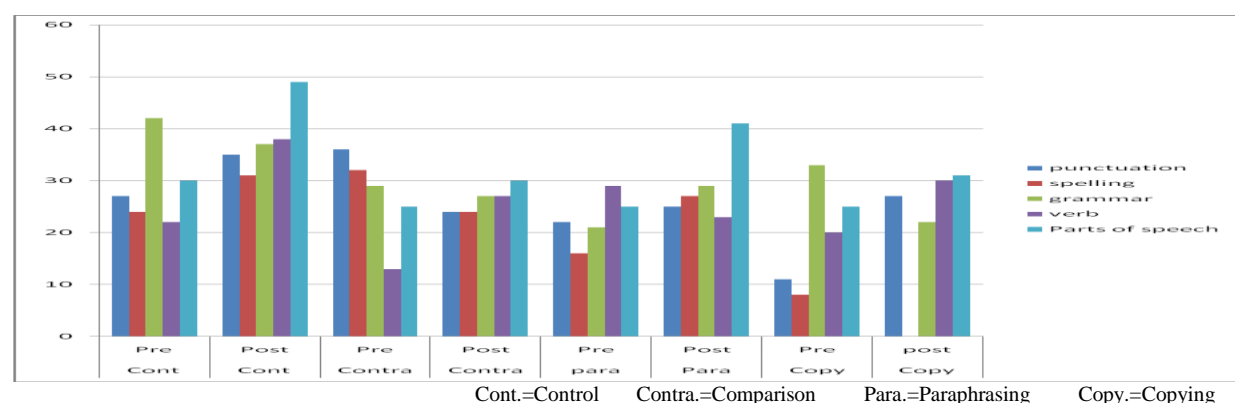


Figure 1: Numbers of Errors in Writing Essays Made by Students in Each Group

Errors of students' performance recognized based on the checklist which is used for scoring participants written text on the pre-test and the post-test. Then items of the checklist comprised of five categories of punctuation, spelling, grammar, verb, and parts of speech. These items



included frequency of errors made by each group on the pre-test and post-test.

As Figure 1 shows, participants in each group performed differently regarding the errors made by them on the pre-test and post-test. In the control group, errors of punctuation, spelling, verb, and parts of speech were increased during the treatment period but participants' errors of grammar were decreased on the post-test. In comparison group, numbers of errors, made by the participants, were decreased in punctuation, spelling, and grammar after the treatment sessions; however, the errors of verb and parts of speech were increased. In paraphrasing group, errors of all items except verbs increased. In copying group, the improvement in punctuation, verb and parts of speech are visible; but the errors in spelling and grammar were decreased.

### Discussion

As One-way ANOVA of post-test in Table 4 showed, after treatment groups were not homogeneous any more. Results showed that the treatment for experimental groups were beneficial ( $\text{sig}=0.001$ ). By comparing comparison group with two others experimental groups and especially with control group, we can determine whether it was significant or not. Table 5, Post-hoc Scheffe test shows the results of comparing comparison group with other groups. Based on the results of the study, the difference between comparison group and control group was significant. Therefore, the difference is significant. It means that the participants in the comparison group performed better on the post-test. Comparison tasks did not affect EFL learners' writing accuracy at the intermediate level. So the first null hypothesis is rejected. Comparison task in this study was effective for increasing writing accuracy of the learners. In most of the studies about reformulation tasks, comparison strategy was used. It is named three stages task. Hanaoka (2007) used contrasting strategy to investigate what Japanese EFL learners spontaneously noticed in a multistage picture-description task. Results of this study showed that learners noticed to their linguistic problems and found solution to more than 90% of their problems based on model text on revision stage. The result is the same with what obtained in this study. Results showed that in the third stage (revision stage) when learners revise their text based on stage two (contrasting stage), less than half of their problems were solved. On the other hand Swain and Lapkin (2004) found that reformulation of learner's writing is an effective technique for stimulating noticing and providing tasks to engage learners.

The errors of spelling also increased in this group. By learning new text and rules of writing, learners should write more than what they wrote before. They should use new words which they used rarely before. This problem also can be the cause why errors of parts of speech and verb increased in this group. But this problem can be solved by using dictionaries or treatment of the teacher. The only error that decreased after treatment on post-test in this group is grammar. Participants of this group made 42 errors on pre-test and 37 errors on post-test. Following patterns of the book can be the cause of this change. Grammar was the only error in this group which showed positive change after treatment even if it is not significant change. The four other errors increased. We can conclude based on the results of this figure and this study that the traditional teaching was useful only for grammar.

Number of grammar errors decreased in all groups on post-test except in paraphrasing group. Other three treatments were beneficial for improving grammar but paraphrasing was not. In paraphrasing tasks students allowed to change the structure of words and use synonyms of words. Sometimes by changing structure, students cannot follow English rules of sentences or phrases, so it makes them to do errors. As a result of this change after paraphrasing task, that's better teachers don't use paraphrasing tasks for improving grammar of learners' writing.

Parts of speech errors include errors of preposition, adverb, noun, and adjective in this study. By looking at them separately, we can see some of them decreased after treatment period. But as it is observable at Figure 1, parts of speech errors increased in all four groups with different intervals. Control group had the most growth of parts of speech errors compared with other three experimental groups. It was 30 errors on pre-test and 49 errors on post-test in this group.

In summary, comparison tasks were beneficial for punctuation, spelling, and grammar errors. Paraphrasing tasks were helpful for verb errors. Copying tasks were useful for spelling and grammar errors. Traditional teaching was useful for reducing grammar errors. Comparison and copying tasks play somehow the same for lessening errors of the same type. Both of them share reducing spelling and grammar errors. As it was discussed in section four, comparison and copying group showed change after treatment and their change were significant. That obtained results can be due to their role of reducing the same type of errors.

### CONCLUSION

Writing is one of the four language skills which EFL learners need to obtain. To write acceptable text, learners should follow English rules. Accuracy is one of the important parts for writing appropriate and acceptable texts. This study investigated the role of reformulation tasks in EFL learners' writing accuracy. For achieving this purpose, three types of reformulation tasks were used in this study. Four groups of participants were considered in this study. Groups were: Comparison group (A), paraphrasing group (B), copying group (C), and control group (D). Participants in group D did not receive reformulation tasks. Finally, results of the post-test showed that two types of reformulation tasks are beneficial for improving writing accuracy. Based on the obtained results from the pre-test and post-test, participants in comparison group and copying group showed significant change on the post-test. In this study, students' errors on the pre-test and post-test were checked by a checklist (Yang & Zhang, 2010). The results obtained from this checklist presented in Figure 4.1 to show which tasks were helpful for which errors. Based on the research findings, this study gives the following implications and suggests some ideas to EFL learners and teachers and material designers to help EFL learners become proficient in foreign language.

Lack of focusing on a determined method or task in writing in a traditional way may be ineffective because learners cannot write in an appropriate way even after finishing English courses. Most of the times, students use translation for writing text. They think in their native language and translate it to target one. This use of Farsi translation makes many problems for students because rules of writing of each language are different from others. Checking student errors in their written text is not enough for improving writing skill. Teachers can help their students by using reformulation tasks, especially comparison and copying tasks. Results of this study showed that some types of reformulation tasks are beneficial for improving accuracy of learners' writing. So teachers can use these tasks in their classes. By using these tasks in writing classes, students may gain exposure to native model texts which are appropriate ones and by comparing their essays with the model text, students notice more on their problems.

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## THE ROLE OF ENCODING AND REHEARSAL STRATEGIES IN DEVELOPING EFL LEARNERS' VOCABULARY RECALL AND RETENTION

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### ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the effects of encoding and rehearsal strategies on the vocabulary development of Iranian English as foreign language (EFL) learners' recall and retention. The design of the research was based on pre-test and post-test experimental inquiry. To achieve this aim, Richards, Lesley, Hansen, Sandy and Zukowski (2008) proficiency test was administered to 120 male and female learners who enrolled in Islamic Azad University of Ramhormoz, Iran. They were non-English majors and selected English for General Purposes (EGP). The learners' scores in proficiency test were analyzed and 60 learners were selected as research sample of the study. They were 45 females and 15 males who were ranging in age from 19 to 30 years old. Then they were non-randomly divided into three groups of 20 participants (i.e., 15 females and 5 males). There were two experimental groups (i.e., encoding and rehearsal) who dealt with two strategies in learning vocabulary. They took a vocabulary pre-test at the beginning of treatment to measure their vocabulary knowledge. During treatment period, encoding group received treatment on learning vocabulary through learners should encoded new materials meaningfully and be able to retrieve them whenever needed while rehearsal group received tasks on rote repetition of items as the main part of their activity. Control group was taught vocabulary through conventional method of teaching such as translation, definition, etc. Finally, all the participants took vocabulary immediate and delayed post-tests and data were put into descriptive and inferential statistics. One-way ANOVA showed that both experimental groups outperformed the control group in recall and retention. However, there was not a significant difference between males and females' recall and retention in learning vocabulary. Findings of the present study for English teachers may suggest that using encoding and rehearsal strategies could be more beneficial than using conventional activities in teaching vocabulary recall and retention.

**KEYWORDS:** Encoding, rehearsal, EFL Learners, vocabulary, recall, retention

### INTRODUCTION

In the most of EFL context, second language learners feel successful EFL learner are those who know more number of words. So, for these groups of learners knowing great number of words is the first and the most important factor in learning another language. Learning vocabulary is considered as a crucial component of language learning process. As Wilkins (1972) states that "without grammar very little can be conveyed, {but} without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (p, 11). Wilkins statement proved the necessity of vocabulary knowledge as the first and most important component of language. As during second or foreign language learning, most of learner's errors are due to the lexical errors. For example understanding of non-grammatical sentence like: "My teacher taught me that talk" is possible; however it would not be comprehensible without enough vocabulary knowledge. Thus this language component is essential for English as second or foreign language learning. Hayati and Shahriari (2010) state "Vocabulary learning by far plays an important role in learning language, be it a first language, second language or a foreign language, It is, therefore, conceivable that the words are the building blocks upon which the second language learning is built" (p. 27). Due to the important of vocabulary knowledge, it is suggested learning a second or foreign language involves the acquisition of thousands of words (Celce-Murcia, 2001).

Vocabulary cannot separate from the language skills. As well as listening, speaking, writing also the clear relationship is between vocabulary and reading comprehension. Matsuoka and Hirsh (2010) state "there is a strong link between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension" (p. 56). This relationship is mutual that is not only having high word storage makes someone good reader, but only having high-level reading comprehension is effective to gain more vocabularies and retain them better. Through reading learner can benefit from this rich context to acquisition more new words. It is a way to enhance word knowledge. Tassana-ngam (2004) state "vocabulary directly affects reading skill; it may impede especially second language learners' comprehension of a written text if the learners have less vocabulary knowledge or below the threshold minimum of approximately 3,000 words" (p.48).

However, learning is not enough but retrieving of words is important. Another important issue in learning vocabulary is remembering Most the learners often have difficulty in remembering those words previously learned. There are so many reasons for this problem, but the ways learners choose for acquiring word is one of the their most problems. Learning happened just when a learner can be able to recall words. Thornbury (2002) said "the learner need not only learn a lot of words but also to remember them, In fact learning is remembering" (p. 23). Here, the question is: how learners can enhance their vocabulary ability? Is there a method or strategy lead to retention and recalling vocabulary? Using of the variety of strategies and techniques for vocabulary development should include into learning process. One possible answer to learners difficulties of learning vocabulary is using different ways to help learners in better maintaining words. Vocabulary learning strategy is one of the important ways by providing different methods in developing vocabulary knowledge to guide learners in selecting best methods for their learning. Nation (2001) asserted that VLS is a subcategory of language learning strategy, which in turn is a subcategory of general learning strategy. Schmitt (1997) defined VLSs as learning is "the process by which information is obtained, stored, retrieved and used... therefore vocabulary learning strategies could be any which affect this broadly defined process" (p.203).

In the present study, it is assume the subcategories of rehearsal and encoding strategies (word list and word structure) can be influenced in developing EFL learners' vocabulary. Learning second language included all language components; but Because of the importance effect of vocabulary on learning another language, it's known as the first things the learners need to develop the most important thing that help them to get the meaning, having more number of words knowledge. Since vocabulary is central to language learning and EFL learners (Lotfi,

2007), most of them do the best in learning vocabulary but actually do not get more. The question is that why students mostly cannot remember those vocabularies? They are not aware of suitable vocabulary learning strategies to increasing their own vocabulary knowledge, in this situation it's a the teacher duty to help language learners to come up with this problem by providing different strategies to place them in better position in teaching and learning vocabulary situation.

The strategy learners use in own learning vocabulary is one factor that may influence the extent of acquiring vocabulary. It is a great of significant that it not only helps learners developing their vocabulary abilities but also it can solve the problem of retrieving and remembering vocabulary. Learners spend times during the learning process and do everything to recall the words but in spite of devoting more times to learn new words, the result is awful because the learning would not happen and they could not remember and recall vocabulary when they need them. When the Learner fail to learn it make the disappointed and may giving the learning up. The present study used of two vocabulary strategies, encoding and rehearsal strategies to see how much may be applicable in promoting the retention and recall of vocabulary. Using word lists and word structure were two techniques of above strategies which used in this research project.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### ***Theoretical Background***

Vocabulary is one of the important parts of language learning which has been neglected for several decades (Meara, 1980). Coady and Huckin (1997) claimed that after a long period of neglect "second language vocabulary acquisition has recently become an increasingly topic of discussion for researchers, teachers, curriculum designers, theorists, and others involved in second/ foreign language learning" (P. 1). As the result of the increasing demands of vocabulary, it has changed to one of the important parts of language which shifted to the first stages of language learning. Generally speaking, vocabulary plays undeniable role in the development of all language skills. Schmitt (2008) indicate "One thing that students, teachers, materials writers, and researchers can all agree upon is that learning vocabulary is an essential part of mastering a second language (p. 329)". Several studies and many books have been done on the great significant role of vocabulary on language learning development (Nemati, 2009).

As well as the importance of vocabulary in productive skills (writing and speaking), it is also important in comprehending of receptive skill (reading and listening). In the absence of grammar; knowledge of a passage of reading, a track of listening, a piece speaking or writing a latter is possible, unless it won't be comprehensible in the lack of enough vocabulary knowledge. As previously said, the knowledge of vocabulary directly related to all language skills.

Reading is one skill which interrelated to the knowledge of vocabulary and vice versa. Researchers have been agreed clear relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading skill. According to Hassanvand, Gorjian and Hayati (2012) "Reading comprehension is an important skill and in fact one of the platforms in which a learner can show his ability in a foreign language" (p. 351). This skill is good source for vocabulary acquisition. A learner, who has more number of words storage, understands text better and might be a good reader. So in FLL classrooms, vocabulary plays most important roles and working on this component of language should come at the beginning of pedagogical process. However reading is a rich source for vocabulary development and the amount of vocabulary growth increase during reading classes but dealing with large number of unfamiliar vocabulary and difficulty in remembering or recalling of these hosts of words is main problem. There are so many reasons for this difficulty as affective factors (anxiety), pedagogical factors (methods of teaching) or individual differences (learner's level). According to Takac (2008), several factors that effect on the vocabulary learning are: linguistic factors of items, complexity of learning vocabulary itself, the role of L1 or other language as well as role of memory on the retrieving or forgetting items.

### ***Vocabulary Learning Strategies***

Generally speaking, Vocabulary is of great significance in language learning process. Since and most of learners errors come to vocabulary level It is the first and the most important step in learning another language. Meara (1980) indicates: "...Learners themselves readily admit that they experience considerable difficulty with vocabulary." (p. 221). According to Oxford and Scarcella (1994) vocabulary acquisition is a major challenge for beginner language learners since they have to store a large number of new words in their long-term memory in a short period of time. Since learning vocabulary is a challenge to foreign language learners through providing different VLSs, learners probably can help to becoming independent learners and make them to use most suitable strategies suited to their purposes (Lotfi, 2007). Because of the prominent role of vocabulary in developing knowledge of EFL learners, different approaches are proposed by researchers.

In the teaching and learning processes, providing some suitable strategies can help learners to better organization and memorization of new words into their mind. For example: word association can help learners to relate between what words they already know and what words should they learn, use of some contextual clues is also benefit to understand meaning of word. Word structure technique is another suitable way to comprehend the text and developing words knowledge through analyzing word parts. All of these techniques are known as a title of VLSs which is a component of language learning strategies which in turn are a component of general learning strategies.

### ***Studies Concerning Vocabulary Learning Strategies***

In 1996, Lawson and Hogben investigated the role of using a think-aloud procedure in learning 12 Italian new words among 15 Australian learners. They concluded that the learners who recalled more of the learned words later had used a greater range of learning strategies, and used them more often, than their poorer performing counterparts. However, the learners in this study tended to favor simple repetition strategies over more complex elaboration strategies, despite the fact that the latter are associated with higher recall. They concluded that if students are not aware of the advantages of these procedures for some vocabulary acquisition situations, there is a need to press this point more directly during language teaching.

Karami and Barkat (2012) conducted a study to determine the role of level of learner's proficiency on the use of vocabulary learning strategies. 36 Iranian EFL learners divided into three proficiency level of elementary, intermediate, and advanced. The results of analyzed data revealed that there was an association between proficiency level and strategy use. Advance learners were higher use learners of VLS than immediate or elementary learners. Among of social, memory, affective, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies; the cognitive strategies were the most preferred on among students (Make list of new words, take note or highlight).

It is also believed that learners' sex effect on the selection of appropriate VLS. Catalan (2003) found there was significant relationship between sex and selection/number of appropriate VLS. 581 Spanish -speaking students (male and female) were administered a questionnaire. The results revealed that females used great total number of strategies than male. It also found that female preferred to use of



formal rule strategies, input elicitation strategies, rehearsal strategies and planning strategies and male preferred to use image vocabulary learning strategies.

#### ***Experimental Studies on Rehearsal Strategy***

Among many available vocabulary learning strategies, rehearsal strategies are commonly used by teachers and learners as well. Banikowski (1999) explained rehearsal as Retain the information in working memory by repeating it again and again. He also said information would be transferred to long term memory through rehearsal. Based on this explanation it is clear that rehearsal related to short term memory ,that is through the rehearsal activates every information can transferred into long term memory, in another words retrieving of information is the action of short term memory and long term memory. According to Banikowski (1999), two types of rehearsal proposed as maintenance rehearsal and elaborative rehearsal. Maintenance rehearsal is just repeating information through rote rehearsing. In fact, retaining of information is depended to several rehearsing those items. In contrast to maintenance rehearsal, elaborative rehearsal provided a connection between new information and some existing information. This kind of rehearsal resulted into storing information into long term memory (Banikowski, 1999).

Some studies confirmed rehearsal strategies are important tools to develop learners' vocabulary knowledge. In one study, Fallahchai (2012) conducted a study to determine EFL learners' vocabulary learning through learning strategies training. 558 primary students divided into 4 groups which instructed by 4 different approaches of: (1) vocal rehearsal+ phonological awareness training : (2) sub -vocal rehearsal+ phonological awareness training : (3) vocal and sub-vocal rehearsal+ phonological awareness training : (4) no rehearsal+ phonological awareness training. One-way ANOVA analysis of pre-test and post-test revealed that the group which instructed by the third approach, developed vocabulary learning highly better than other groups. There were not significant differences between groups which instructed through the first and second approaches.

According to the results of above studies, word list as a subcategory of rehearsal strategy is not able to develop the retention of learners' vocabulary knowledge. One reason of rejecting word list as a good VLS is the absence of context. It is argued context is a means to help learners in developing and better understanding unknown words, so the existence of context is necessary and may lead to better retention of words (Hayati & Shahriari, 2010).

#### ***Experimental Studies on Encoding Strategy***

Encoding plays important roles on the retrieving items by shifting new information from short term memory to long term memory. It is known as a process of relating in new information to background information; this kind of relationship help to learned new items meaningfully. Vocabulary retention has been defined as "the ability to recall or remember things after an interval of time. In language teaching, retention of what has been taught (e.g. grammar rules and vocabulary) may depend on the quality of teaching, the interest of the learners, or the meaningfulness of the materials (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 457).

Considering the role of VLSs on learning vocabulary, Tavakoli and Gerami (2012) compared two methods of keyword and pictorial on Vocabulary Learning and Retention among 60 adult female elementary students. Homogeneity test, immediate post-test and delayed post-test were used as the instruments of their study. At the end of the treatment period, immediate test administered to measure learners' short-term memory recall .After Two weeks intervals a delayed post-test was used to measure learners' long term memory retention of vocabularies. The results of One-way ANOVA analysis reveal that keywords method had significant effect on the vocabulary learning and retention as well. The learners who used keyword could restore and retrain vocabulary in the long-term memory better than those who used pictorial methods.

In a study reported by Sarcoban and Basibek (2012) investigated the role of mnemonic technique and Context method on vocabulary retention among 84 learners at upper intermediate level. The pretest, immediate recall test, and delayed retention test were the instruments of this study. The finding of data revealed that mnemonic group was better performed than context group in immediate and delayed posttest.

In another study by Nemati (2009), she investigated two memory strategies on the vocabulary retention of short and long term memory. The results show that teaching vocabularies through giving synonyms and mini-contexts positively effect on the long term and short term retention of learners vocabulary. She concluded that giving strategy awareness can positively improve the learning of the new vocabulary and learners are able to retrieve new information. In contrast to rote rehearsing strategy to vocabulary learning, Eshagi Sardroud (2013) conducted a study to explore the effect of deep strategies like contextual guessing, keyword, metacognitive strategy and semantic mapping on vocabulary retention. 32 post intermediate learners divided into two groups of experimental and control. After the treatment period, the analyzed data of teacher made vocabulary post-test revealed that experimental group achieved higher vocabulary retention; moreover it also revealed that female were more receptive for vocabulary training than male learners. Bowers and Kirby (2010) conducted a study on the morphological word structure on learner's vocabulary knowledge. Experimental used of morphological word structure as a vocabulary learning strategy and another one did not use. Results indicated that the experimental group made better use of vocabulary knowledge in learning new vocabulary through morphological word structure technique. All of the above studies had been proved the effects of VLS on the vocabulary acquisition. As well as learning, retention and recall of learnt items is important. In order to learn and better retention of words learners as well as teacher should use of VLS that can help learners to better comprehending a text as well as better memorizing new vocabularies and lead to retrieving learnt items.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The present study aims to answers the following questions: (1) To what extent do encoding and rehearsal strategies influence EFL learners' vocabulary recall among pre-intermediate EFL learners? (2) To what extent do encoding and rehearsal strategies influence EFL learners' vocabulary retention among pre-intermediate EFL learners?

In the present study researchers will use encoding and rehearsal strategies which are subcategories of memory strategies, to help learner developing EFL vocabulary and lead to better retention and recall into their memories.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Participants***

A total of 60 pre-intermediated EFL students (15 males and 45 females) from Islamic Azad University of Ramhormoz, Khuzestan enrolled in the course of general English participated in this research project. They were selected among 120 EFL university students (mostly senior)

based on their availability and willingness. To determined participants' homogeneity, a sample of proficiency test (Richards et al, 2008) was administered. Those participants whose scores fell between one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean were selected as the participants of the study. Based on the result of the homogeneity test sixty students (male, n=15 & female, n=45) who met the necessary condition were chosen for this study. The students non-randomly divided into 3 groups of 20 (two experimental groups and one control group) (male, n=5 & female, n=15). The ages of participants range from 19 to 30. They were selected on the basis of their availability and they had been studying English at least for five years up to the time of the study. They were in the second semester of their study. Through their performance on proficiency test those learners whose scores are one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean were selected as a homogeneous group. A Pre-test and two post tests were given to the participants before and after instruction. The reliability of all tests was calculated through KR-21 formula.

#### **Instrumentation**

In this study, the data were generally collected through a number of instruments which are as follows: proficiency test, teacher made pre-test and two post-test. First of all, a sample of proficiency test (Richards et al, 2008) including fifty items in form of multiple-choice was administered to 120 participants to identify their homogeneity. During a month of treatment, the participants practiced eight passages of the textbook "Active Skills for Reading 1" developed by Anderson (2007). Finally, the post-test was administered immediately after the treatment period which took eight sessions to assess the participants' recall effects. Two weeks later, they were participated again in that post-test as a retention test. The time for recall and retention post-tests was about forty minutes. Their reliability indexes were met through Kuder-Richardson 21 formula as (0.759, 0.814, & 0.790) for homogeneity test, Pre-test, Post-tests respectively).

#### **Materials**

The materials in this study that presented to all participants consisted of eight reading text selected from unit one to eight of the textbook "Active Skills for Reading 2 developed by Anderson (2007). This textbook was used among the students at the pre-intermediate level. Before the beginning of the treatment, 40 vocabularies were selected from the first eight units of this book. The main criteria for vocabulary selection were based on the key words used in the exercises of each unit.

#### **Procedure**

In this study, 120 (male and female) at pre intermediate level of non-English majors' students that studied in the second semester of Islamic Azad University, in Ramhormoz, Iran- participated in this research. Participant's selection was based on their availability and willingness. In order to estimate their proficiency level, they took a proficiency test. A according to their performance on proficiency test, 60 participants (F=45, M=15) who their scores were one standard deviation above or below the mean with the same or near homogeneity were choose for study. Then they non-randomly divided into three groups, two experimental groups and one control group, each group consisted of five male and fifteen female. These three groups were equal in term of number and material. The instruction for this study lasted eight sessions, twenty minutes a session, twice a week, in a period of about one month. All three groups took 8 texts selected from the first eight units from Active Skills for Reading: Book 1 (pre-Intermediate level) developed by Anderson (2007). The total number of 40 words (five words per session) were selected and presented to learners of all three groups during the instruction period. The experimental and control groups were assigned the same materials, time of instruction and number. However, the techniques of teaching vocabulary were different. The first group was instructed through of rehearsal strategies that word list worked as a technique in the classroom, the second group was instructed through encoding strategy that word structure worked and the third group was not instructed by any strategies as rehearsal or encoding.

Before instruction, the researchers explained that it was part of a research project and participating to the end of month as well as use of specific strategy which worked in their groups were necessary for the final results. In order to determine participant's vocabulary knowledge all of them were took teacher-made test as a pre-test consisted of thirty five questions in the form of multiple choices about forty minutes. At the beginning of each session, all the participants were presented just five words because the focus of this study was on the effectiveness of two VLS on the learner's achievement not size or number of presenting new words. It also might motivated learners to leaning and decreased their problems came from facing host of unknown words.

In the first group, participants taught through rehearsal strategy. Word list as a subcategory of rehearsal strategies used as a technique in this group. A list of five new words in L2 and L1 equivalents as well as word pronunciation, and synonyms presented at the beginning of each session.

#### **Using Word Lists as a Part of Rehearsal Strategy**

- New words were thought through rote memorization, and repetition
- There was not the necessity use of context (reading passage) and direct instruction for this group
- Learners' drill were reading, repeating, reviewing, and using new words in sentence (make new sentence)
- L1 equivalents were used to better comprehending

For example: teacher asked learner to read words on the board L2 vocabulary: Competition L1 equivalent رقابت (translation)

Synonyms: (contestantion)

Use of new vocabulary in a sentence (Use in context) Speaking is a way of communication.

*Table 1: Example of using word list*

New word	phonetic	Part of speech	L1 equivalent	synonym	Use in sentence
producer	' prədju:sər	noun	تهیه کننده	maker	He is a producer
competition	Kam.pə'tlʃh.n	noun	رقابت	contestantion	My brother has a football competition
careful	keə.fl	adjective	بادقت	aware	Ali is a careful driver.



In Second group of participants taught through encoding strategy. Using word structure as a component of encoding strategy was used as an instruction technique in this group. The aims of this strategy was on analyzing word parts ,to identifying root and affixes which can attach to the base form of the word and change its meaning and increased the extent of vocabulary. In this group, direct instruction was needed as learners should determine the kind of vocabulary as a noun, verb, adjective, or adverb. Teacher did not present words in isolation learning new vocabulary was through reading passage so context is necessary. At first, teacher talked about part of speech and provided some example for each of them. Then a list of common prefixes and suffixes in English language presented to learners. While reading text passage, they learnt new vocabularies. The identification of vocabularies with same word structure was done individually or in pair work activities. Learners taught to analyze words into some meaningful parts as roots and its prefix or suffix. For the next session, learners were asked to provide some example of new vocabularies in sentence. They were actively involved in the learning process. This method could be useful for developing learners' autonomy. For example: develop and developments were two words in a text. During the instruction period participant learnt that *ent, er, tion* in the development, worker, collection are noun making ending affixes that can change part of speech (verb to noun).

#### *Using Word Structure as a Part of Encoding Strategy*

- Learning new word through analyzing its structure
- Specific instruction was given by teacher within context
- Learners find new word through the text
- Learning is not just root memorization (meaningful learning)

The third group as a control group did not use any specific strategies. All learners in control group taught through conventional way such as translation, definition, or dictation. After the instruction period, two post-test administered. Immediate post-test as a recall test administered immediately after the end of instruction. Two weeks later, all groups took another post-test as a retention test. Their reliability will be met through Kudor-Richardson 21 formula.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Data analysis*

The collected data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 17). In order to determine whether using word list and word structure as two vocabulary learning strategies are effective on Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' vocabulary development, once the scores of the pre-test and two post-tests (immediate and delayed recall tests) were obtained, the means and standard deviation of the Scores of 60 participants were calculated. The One-way ANOVA was used to calculate the data. Post-hoc Scheffe test was used to indicate the potentialities of significant differences between the variables. SPSS Statistics were conducting to analyze the data. The level of significance was set to be .05. Descriptive statistics was conducted to pre-test and two post-tests to determine if there is any difference between the rehearsal group and encoding group regarding the recall and retention of newly learned vocabulary.

### *Results of the Pre-tests among Three Groups*

First, the data obtained through a sample of language proficiency test as a homogeneity test was analyzed statistically. In this analysis, the homogeneity of groups determined based on their levels of second vocabulary language knowledge. Thus, the students' overall scores on the test were collected from their records. The reliability of the tests was calculated by KR.21 formula for pre-test ( $r=0.759$ ), for immediate Post-test ( $r=0.814$ ) and delayed post-test( $r=0.790$ ).After the instruction period, participants took an immediate and delayed post-test consisting 35 multiple-choice items. Table 2 represents Descriptive statistics such as, means and standard deviations which computed to summarize the participants' scores on the pre-test.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for the Pre-test

No.	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
1	Rehearsal	20	18.3500	1.44154	16.00	21.00
2	Encoding	20	18.4000	1.36665	16.00	21.00
3	Control	20	17.5000	1.98773	14.00	21.00
Total		60	13.5714	1.60786	9.00	19.00

Table 2 displays the number of participants in each group, mean scores, and standard deviations for each group which administering on pre-test. As the data indicted the means for rehearsal, encoding and control groups respectively were 18.35, 18.40, and 17.50. So there were not significant differences in students' performances on pre-test among three groups.

Table 3: One-way ANOVA on Pre-test

Scores pre-test					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.233	2	5.117	1.617	.207
Within Groups	180.350	57	3.164		
Total	190.583	59			

One-way ANOVA was conducted to assess if there is a significant difference between the three groups regarding their vocabulary level before the instruction periods. The test was also used as a base to estimate the improvement of each group by comparing it with the post-test. As the data indicated in Table 3, the P value is .207, which is far above the 0.05 level of significance. Since the observed F (1.617) is less than critical F (3.118), therefore, there is not a significant difference among the participants of the three groups on the pre-test; and it indicates that they are homogeneous.

#### Results of the Immediate Post-tests among the Groups

The first research question of this study was whether encoding and rehearsal strategies influence on developing EFL learners' vocabulary recall among pre-intermediate EFL learners. To do this aim, an immediate post-test was administered to see the amount of vocabulary recall of students and to reject or confirm the first null hypothesis. Then students' scores on immediate post-test among three groups were analyzed statistically. Table 4 shows descriptive statistics regarding the three groups' performances on immediate post-tests as the students' recall test.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for the Immediate Post-tests

No.	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
1	Rehearsal	20	24.1000	2.04939	21.00	28.00
2	Encoding	20	25.1000	2.69307	21.00	31.00
3	Control	20	23.0500	2.30503	19.00	27.00
Total		60	13.5714	1.60786	19.00	31.00

As the data indicated in the above table, after instruction period, students performed better on immediate test than the pre-test. However, the means of immediate post-test were 24.10, 25.10 and 23.05 for rehearsal, encoding and control groups respectively. Encoding group with mean of 25.10 performed better than the other groups on the immediate post-test. The maximum scores for the immediate test are 28 for rehearsal, 31 for encoding, and 27 for control groups. The second One-way ANOVA was used to see whether there was any difference between means of the three groups after the instruction, and which of the three groups performed better on the immediate post-test which led to recall vocabulary easily. Table 5 shows the result of the One-way ANOVA for the immediate post-test of three groups.

Table 5. One-way ANOVA (Immediate Post-tests)

ANOVA					
Scores post-test					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	42.033	2	21.017	3.761	.029
Within Groups	318.550	57	5.589		
Total	360.583	59			

Table 5 illustrates a significant difference among the 3 groups regarding the vocabulary Scores At the end of the instruction period on immediate posttest. Since Observed F ( $F=3.761$ ,  $p < .05$ ) is greater than the Critical F ( $F_c=3.118$ ), therefore the difference between the groups was significant. So, the first null hypothesis stating there is not any relationship between encoding and rehearsal strategies in developing EFL Learners' vocabulary recall is rejected and it is obvious that these two vocabulary learning strategies effect on the learners' vocabulary achievement.

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 6: Post-hoc Scheffe test- Multiple Comparisons (Immediate Post-tests)

(I) groups	(J) groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
A	B	-1.00000	.74757	.414	-2.8790	.8790
	C	1.05000	.74757	.379	-.8290	2.9290
B	A	1.00000	.74757	.414	-.8790	2.8790
	C	2.05000*	.74757	.029	.1710	3.9290
C	A	-1.05000	.74757	.379	-2.9290	.8290
	B	-2.05000*	.74757	.029	-3.9290	-.1710

A: Rehearsal group      B: Encoding group      C: Control group

The multiple comparison of the results show no significant difference between group A (rehearsal ) and the other 2 groups, i.e. group B (encoding ) and group C (control) respectively; but group B shows a significant difference from the other groups in which the level of significant was .029. Also the control group shows a significant difference from encoding group's level of significant.

#### Results of the Delayed Post-tests

The second research question of this study was whether encoding and rehearsal strategies influence on developing EFL learners' vocabulary retention among pre-intermediate EFL learners. The second post-test as a delayed post-test was administered to all groups to answer question and to reject or confirm the second null hypothesis. Table 6 illustrates the descriptive statistics in delayed post-test among three Groups:

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics for the Delayed Post-test

No.	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
1	Rehearsal	20	21.6500	2.04939	19.00	25.00
2	Encoding	20	23.1500	2.69307	20.00	30.00
3	Control	20	20.0500	2.30503	19.00	27.00
Total		60	13.5714	1.60786	16.00	25.00

Table 7 shows descriptive statistics of delayed post-test among three groups. The mean and standard deviations of three groups on delayed post-test was  $M=21.65$  and  $SD=2.04$ ,  $M=23.15$  and  $SD=2.69$  and  $M=20.05$  and  $SD=2.30$  for rehearsal, encoding and control groups respectively. It means that vocabulary development regarding retention of vocabulary in encoding group was significantly better than the other groups. By a mean's comparison of three groups' performances on immediate post-test, it is obvious that students' overall performance on immediate post-test was significantly better than delayed post-test. As the mean of rehearsal, encoding and control groups on immediate test was 24.10 25.10 23.05, in contrast to their means on delayed post-test that was 21.65, 23.15 and 20.50 for rehearsal, encoding and control groups respectively. However, in this two tests, encoding group performed better than other groups; that is encoding group was able to recall and retention of vocabularies better than rehearsal or control groups. The following Table illustrates the results of the third One-way ANOVA for delayed post-test among the three groups:

Table 8: One-way ANOVA (Delayed Post-tests)

Scores post-test					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	96.133	2	48.067	10.298	.000
Within Groups	266.050	57	4.668		
Total	362.183	59			

Table 8 shows the statistical analysis of One-way ANOVA on the three groups' Delayed post-test scores. As data indicate, Since Observed

Table 9: Post-hoc Scheffe test- Multiple Comparisons(Delayed post-tests)

(I) groups	(J) groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
A	B	-1.50000	.68319	.099	-3.2172	.2172
	C	1.60000	.68319	.073	-.1172	3.3172
B	A	1.50000	.68319	.099	-.2172	3.2172
	C	3.10000*	.68319	.000	1.3828	4.8172
C	A	-1.60000	.68319	.073	-3.3172	.1172
	B	-3.10000*	.68319	.000	-4.8172	-1.3828

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

A: Rehearsal group B: Encoding group C: Control group

F (F=10.29, p<0.05) is less than Critical F (Fc=3.118), there is a significant difference between groups. Therefore, the second null hypothesis stating there is not any relationship between encoding and rehearsal strategies in developing EFL Learners' vocabulary rejected is rejected.

Table 9 shows the second multiple comparisons of the results for delayed post-test. As the data indicates no differences observed in group A and other groups. As it is observed in second row, such a difference is observed when comparing performance of the participants in groups B (encoding) with other groups (sig=.000). In the third row, the control group also shows a difference from encoding group's level of significant.

### Discussion

In order to determine the effect of the encoding and rehearsal strategies on retention and recall on the development of English vocabularies, two sets of post-test administered to participants. Moreover, it aims to examine if learners are able to retain and recall new words better by using encoding strategy or rehearsal strategy. The results of pretest, immediate and delayed post-tests indicated not only using of VLSs developed learners' vocabulary knowledge but also participants at the encoding group were better to retain and recall of material than other groups. The discussion of analyzed data it should be address to research questions and null hypotheses of this study.

a) To what extent do encoding and rehearsal strategies influence on developing EFL learners' vocabulary recall among pre-intermediate EFL learners?

All participants administered by an immediate post-test to identify their recall. Generally, all groups' vocabulary knowledge developed through instruction period. As shown in Table 3, the means of two experimental groups on the immediate test were greater than control group. Moreover, the results of comparison between groups' performances on pre-test and immediate post-test supported that after instruction period there was significance difference between the means of pre-tests and post-tests which led to developing learners' vocabulary knowledge. In another words, encoding and rehearsal strategies as the two VLSs effect on the developing learners vocabulary knowledge regarding recall of vocabulary. Therefore, the first null hypothesis of this study that claimed there is not any relationship between encoding and rehearsal strategies in developing EFL learner's vocabulary recall among pre-intermediate EFL learners was rejected.

Based on the finding of this study, it can be claimed using of two VLSs during instruction period was main reason for the better performance

of experimental groups and their effective vocabulary development. The encoding group performed better than rehearsal group but their difference was not great. However, some researchers rejected rehearsal strategy as an appropriate way to learn vocabulary especially for long time (Wei, 2007) but Many EFL learners frequently use of word repetition and memorization to learn vocabulary. One possible answer to applicability of rehearsal strategy might be learning vocabulary through memorization is common among language learners yet. Word repetition is a favorable condition in learning vocabulary (Nation, 2001). Vocabulary learning through lists of words is useful when a large numbers of vocabularies need to be learning in short periods of time especially in early stages of language learning (Nation, 1980).

The finding of this study is consistent with the results obtained from the research conducted by Baleghizadeh and Ashoori (2010) conducted a study to determine the impact of two subcategories of encoding and rehearsal strategies, keyword, and word list on the immediate retention of learners' vocabularies. The results of immediate post-test revealed that the keyword method performed better on recall compared to the word list method. However, the finding of research conducted by Herusatoto (2011) shown that learners who learning words in isolation (word list) retained the target words and the meanings better than those who learning through context (using contextual clue).

b) To what extent do encoding and rehearsal strategies influence on developing EFL learners' vocabulary retention among pre-intermediate EFL learners?

The delayed test was the second post-test of the current study that administered to determine the effect of encoding and rehearsal strategies on the learners' vocabulary development as well as retention of materials. Results of One-way ANOVA indicated statistically significant difference between the experimental groups performing on the delayed post-test regarding retention of vocabulary. It also reveals that the two experimental groups performed better than the control one. Moreover, encoding group performed highly better than the other groups. Therefore, the participants who were instructed through encoding strategies retained vocabularies better than those who used rehearsal strategies. Therefore, the second null hypothesis that claimed the relationship between encoding and rehearsal strategies in developing EFL learner's vocabulary retention among pre-intermediate EFL learners was also rejected.

The finding of this study is consistent with the results obtained from the research conducted by Baleghizadeh and Ashoori (2010) concerning the significant effect of key word method on immediate retention of learners' vocabularies rather than word list method. In another study conducted by Sadeghi, Nasrollahi, Mazandarani and Mesgar (2011), they concluded that that experimental group which trained through analyzing words to their functional and grammatical affixes positively performed vocabulary learning better than control one.

There are various reasons that could be attributed to the better performance of learners in the encoding group. First, as previously mentioned; the word encoding refers to some meaningful connection between what you have learned and what you already know, in other words learning through meaningful connection of past and new material is the main part of encoding. Chastain (1988) claims that "for longest retention, new knowledge must be associated with previous knowledge, that is, it must be tied up to existing information nodes in the cognitive network" (p, 42). So learning vocabulary is not matter of rote memorization such as rehearsal strategies. In this line Lawson and Hogben (1996) state "Rehearsal strategy is important for maintaining a particular item but not be very effective for long-term use" (p.104). Another reason of success of encoding material might be learner involvement and attention. In encoding group, after the first session of instruction through word structure method, all of participants actively involved in learning process. For example as soon as teacher wrote new word "Communication" on the board, learners were analyzed parts of word e.g., **compete** as a root and **ation** as the noun making suffix individually or pair work.

Context is another reason for superiority of encoding to rehearsal strategies in this study. Rehearsal group was presented a list of words consisting of words' definition, pronunciation, synonyms, and sample of new word in sentence. Everything was ready and learners were only to memorize vocabularies through repetition. Context (reading passage) was not important while in the encoding group, a text passage was read by teacher and learners focused on the new words which were bold. After the instruction they had to find other word which were making through affixing process.

As previously mentioned there are some factors affecting on the VLSs selection e.g., learning style, age, motivation, language proficiency, gender. In the current study, learners' age and their background knowledge were affected on learning in some way. Both in pre-test and post-tests performances, older learners did better than younger one. It seems that adult learners performed better in vocabulary learning than younger one. Another important factor was their background experiences on the language learning. In this study, the range of English language learning was 5 to 8 years. Those learners with more language learning experiences performed better either in encoding group or rehearsal one.

## CONCLUSION

Vocabulary is known as an important parts of language learning. Most the time, EFL learners are complained that learning host of words in a short time is really difficult. One way to learn vocabulary effectively is providing different techniques and methods for learners. VLSs are appropriate ways in presenting variety of suitable methods during vocabulary learning process. In the current study, we investigated the role of encoding and rehearsal strategies in developing vocabulary regarding the learners' retention and recall. After the analyzed data, it can be stated that two experimental groups that used of VLSs were shown to be more effective in L2 vocabulary development. Since, Both of them were affected on the retention and recall of learning vocabularies, Therefore two null hypotheses of this study were rejected. Moreover, the findings of current study confirmed that encoding group outperformed in vocabulary development concerning recall and retention than other groups. In addition to important role of VLSs on learners' vocabulary development, although we also need to stated that learning vocabulary is a very personal activity and learners' ability is important to their L2 vocabulary comprehension and development.

Many language teachers in EFL contexts teach vocabulary in a traditional way. In this situation, EFL learners have to learn in just passive way because teacher is responsible of the classroom, presenting of strategies or technique and materials as well. It is better that learners become responsible for their learning by participating in the selection and presenting of method and learning materials through use of VLSs. According to finding of this study, it can be claimed that use of VLSs can lead to effective vocabulary learning. Teachers are recommended to benefit from varieties of materials and techniques rather than just using of traditional ways of teaching vocabularies. Besides, the results of this study suggested those learners trained through encoding strategies learn vocabularies in term of recall and retention better than rehearsal group and control group. Therefore, it is recommended to incorporate this strategy into learners' vocabulary learning process. Before using VLSs, learners should be aware of the significant role of VLSs by their teachers. Finally, as previously said, some important issues related to selection of VLS should take into account such as age, gender, background knowledge, learning style or learning strategies.

One suggestion for further studies is that the current study can be done in other geographical areas because this study was conducted at Islamic Azad University of Ramhormoz. Also this study investigated the role of encoding and rehearsal strategies on vocabulary development through reading course among EFL learners at pre-intermediate level. In order to achieve generalizable results, the same studies can be done in other language skills such as writing, speaking or listening among other learners with elementary, intermediate or advance level of knowledge and other VLSs can be used as well. It also suggested taking into account the possible role of gender and its effect on vocabulary's development.

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VERB AFFIXATION OF LAMPUNG LANGUAGE IN KUNTARA RAJA NITI BOOK AND TEXTBOOKS:  
A MORPHOLOGY STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This research explains morphologically the verb affixation of Lampung Language in Kuntara Raja Niti book (1901) and textbooks. In the explanation, the data which contain verb affixes in Kuntara Raja Niti book and textbooks are collected, analyzed and determined in order to find the types of the affixes. As results, this research has found six prefixes, seventeen circumfixes and two infixes of Lampung language verbs.

**KEYWORDS:** Verb Affixation, Lampung Language, Morphology, Affixes, Qualitative

INTRODUCTION

Lampung language is one of the local languages in Indonesia, which is still used and maintained by Lampung people. Lampung language is one of the world languages which has their own letters called '*Had Lappung*' or Lampung alphabets. There are two main dialects found in Lampung language; there are "Abung" and "Pesisir." In the development, Van Royen cited in Hadikusuma (1988) has divided Lampung dialects into A and O dialects. It is called A dialect because the vocabularies ended with /a/ vowel whereas it is called O dialect because ended with /o/ vowel. This A dialect sometimes called 'Pesisir dialect.' This dialect is found and used in Belalau, Peminggir Teluk Semangka, Teluk Lampung, Way Kanan, Sungkai, Komering, Krui, Melinting, dan Pubian while O dialect is found and used in Tulang Bawang (Menggala), Northern of Lampung, Centre of Lampung, and Eastern of Lampung.

Research about Lampung language has been done by Walker (1976). He published a book title "*A Grammar Of The Lampung Language: The Pesisir Dialect Of Waylima*." In that book Walker describes words, utterance and morphological rules of Indonesia language which is freely used in the Lampung language contexts especially for a person who lives in Lampung or often having contact with Lampung people. Other linguists who have already done a research for Lampung language are Nazaruddin (1988) who describes about the syntax of "Pesisir" dialect, Sudirman (2006) who describes about geography dialect and found variations of phonemes in Lampung affixes and Wetty (1992) who describes the morphology of Abung dialect. In her research, Wetty describes the development of part of speech in Lampung language and she does not found any circumfixes in Abung dialect.

Based on the researches that have been done before, there is no specific research in morphology that concerned with verb affixation. This research tries to describe the affixation of verb in Kuntara Raja Niti book which contains original text of Lampung language and using middle school textbooks from Warsiyem (2007) as other reference for modern text of Lampung language.

This research will focus on morphemes. The area of grammar concerned with the structure of words and with relationships between words involving the morphemes that compose them is technically called morphology, from the Greek word *morphe* 'form, shape'; and morphemes can be thought of as the minimal units of morphology (Katamba, 1993; Aronoff and Fudeman, 2005; Carstairs and Mc.Charty, 2002). There are two kinds of morphemes. Morphemes that can stand on their own are called free morphemes, and ones that cannot are bound morphemes (Tadjuddin: 2003). However, a single word may constitute several morphemes for examples cited from Fromkin and Rodman (1998):

- One morpheme : *boy, desire*
- Two morphemes : *boy + ish, desire + able*
- Three morphemes : *boy + ish + ness, desire + able + ity*
- Four morphemes : *gentle + man + li + ness, un + desire + able + ity*
- More than four: *un + gentle + man + li + ness, anti + dis + establishment + ari + an + ism*

From the examples above, morphemes like *boy, desire, gentle* and *man* may constitute words by themselves. These are free morphemes. Other morphemes like *-ish, -ness, -ly, dis-, trans-* and *-un* are always parts of the words. These morphemes called bound morphemes or it can be called affixes.

The affixes can be separated into parts such as prefix, suffix, infixes and circumfixes. English language only has prefix and suffix. However, infix and circumfix occur in some language. Prefix is an affix that occur before a morpheme (like *en-* in *enlarge*), suffixes is an affix which occur following a morpheme (like *-ance* in *performance, -ness* in *whiteness*, and *-able* in *readable*), Infix is an affix which inserted into other morphemes (Bontoc morphemes, spoken in Philipines: *fikas* "Strong" which is a noun/adjective will change into *fumikas* "to be strong" in order to be a verb) and circumfix is an affix which attached to another morpheme both initially and finally (Chikasaw, a Muskogean language spoken in Oklahoma: *chokma* "he is good" as affirmative becomes *ik + chokm + o* as "he is not good" as negative). (Fromkin and Rodman, 1998; Aronoff and Fudeman, 2005; Carstairs and Mc.Charty, 2002). The process of affix attachment to a morpheme is called affixation.

In addition, many morphemes also have different pronunciations, called allomorphs Carstairs and Mc.Charty (2002), the choice between them being determined by the context. For example, *-s* addition for plural words in English has different sound such as: [s] (as in *cats* or *lamps*), [z] (as in *dogs* or *days*), and [ɪz] or [əz] (as in *horses* or *judges*). Verb affixation in Lampung language is the most productive affixation in Lampung language. Therefore, this research will only focus on that matter.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses Descriptive-qualitative method. The method has been seen by Bogdan and Taylor as a procedure that result descriptive data such as verbal or written words (Moleong, 1993:3). Descriptive terms suggest that this research conducted based on the facts or phenomenon which is textually noted. The data in this study were collected through observe and note methods. It is accordance with what is stated by Mahsun (2005: 90-92). This collecting method was called observe method because the way to collect the data was done textually by observe the verb affixation. Furthermore, the data were noted and then divided based on the their topic.

For data analysis, this research uses intra-lingual equivalence. In this step, the data of Lampung language verbs were compared with Indonesian Language verbs. In the presentation of the data, the analysis will be presented in two ways, namely: (a) formulation using

common words, including the use of technical terminology by describing the process of verb affixation, and the result of verb formation. (b) formulation that uses signs and symbols.

The examples of signs and symbols are: (1) curly braces ({}) which is used to mark the morphological unit in a morpheme. It usually a bound morpheme, (2) the square brackets ([ ]) indicates that the unit inside of the brackets is a phonetic unit and it is used in the field of phonology to symbolize a particular sound that does not have any status of phoneme, (3) arrow (→) is used to indicate changes in verbs form, (4) a plus sign (+) indicates the addition of the form, (5) single quotation marks (') indicates the meaning and (6) the symbol letters such as abbreviation like BL indicates Lampung language.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

### **1. Prefixation of {N-}**

The research shows that prefixation of {N-} is commonly found in Lampung language verb. The prefix {N-} has five allomorphs: ng-, n-, ny-, m- and nge-.

#### **a. Prefixation of {N-} with ng- allomorph**

{N-} prefix becomes *ng-* is formed when {N-} joined the base that begins with vowels (a, i, u, e, o) and the vowels then assimilated. In addition, prefix {N-} becomes *ng-* formed when joining the base begins with consonant [k] then [k] is assimilated. For examples:

1. {N-} + ator → **ngator** 'to manage'  
(19/3) Pandai ngator Pengetuha, Penglaku.
2. {N-} + injam → **nginjam** 'to borrow'  
(11/1) Mak munsu nginjam bidak.
3. {N-} + unut → **ngunut** 'to find'  
(4/5) Jual beruang serta kajang, dan Penyimbang ni ngemik gerok, mak ngunut kekurangan di humbul barih. Tani sina ngulah pukandang jenong tani sinapun.
4. {N-} + emik → **ngemik** 'to possess'  
(4/5) Jual beruang serta kajang, dan Penyimbang ni ngemik gerok, mak ngunut kekurangan di humbul barih. Tani sina ngulah pukandang jenong tani sinapun.
5. {N-} + osegh → **ngosegh** 'to expel'  
(19) .... Belanda ngoseghia ...
6. {N-} + kunci → **ngunci** 'to lock'  
(4/5) Ngunci kahandak.

#### **b. Prefixation of {N-} with Ny- allomorph**

{N-} prefix becomes *Ny-* is formed when {N-} joined with the base that begins with consonant [s] and [c], both of the [s] and [c] consonants is assimilated. For examples:

7. {N-} + sahut → **nyahut** 'to reply'  
(13) Maka nyahut Temenggung Singa Pati : "Ya Gustiku sepatah kata Tuanku akan ku turut".
8. {N-} + cambuk → **nyambuk** 'to whip'  
(15/4) Sai nyutuk makkung tekas lengan ni mena nyambuk.
9. {N-} + cuba → **nyuba** 'to try'  
(53) Ngeramat nyuba baya jenong hukum sinapun sai kara nyau ni hati.
10. {N-} + sukak → **nyukak** 'to change'  
(60) Maka wat ngemaling di mahan mak kenebok, suwa debingi, makkung munsu nyukak hejongan sai kedau mahan sina begawoh atau hejongan mahan ni.
11. {N-} + sangka → **nyangka** 'to suppose'  
(68) Maka perkara sangka-menyangka, teduh meneduh, ki sai nyangka kalah ya dihukum kebalik tali reti ni ya nyukak di sai kakak.

#### **c. Prefixation of {N-} with n- allomorph**

{N-} prefix becomes *n-* is formed when {N-} joined with base that begins with consonant [t] and then [t] consonant is assimilated. Contoh:

12. {N-} + tayuh → **nayuh** 'do tayuh'  
(10/12) Mak dapok mak di ajak sai tuha lapah nayuh.
13. {N-} + tutu → **nutu** 'to pound'  
(13/6) Hun nutu gelebung mak ngurau ya.
14. {N-} + tenggalan → **nenggalan** 'to consider'  
(96) Nenggalan di tengah bingi
15. {N-} + terima → **nerima** 'to accept'  
(48/3) Jelesa miskin kira-kira haga nerima suduk.

16. {N-} + tinjuk → **ninjuk** 'to catch'  
 (59) Maka meranai ninjuk muli, sampai ditunggang ni kuruk pulan lebih sanga pungenahan, kejuju sampai ngebiyan anying ki muni-muni muli sina dibatok meranai sina, dan muli sina kira makkung cinta atau akil balikh sina ninjuk adok ni, sanga mahan muli sina lain kedau haga, atau makkung suka, ki tubas jadi, meranai sina ngebayar beli ni ngepih dan rega bedak lunuh ni rial sawik harung bah menurut pangkat muli sina, ya nyamporkon badan ni di kanca pereda ni.

**d. Prefixation of {N-} with *m-* allomorph**

{N-} prefix becomes *m-* is formed when {N-} joined the base that begins with vowels (a, i, u, e, o) and the vowels not assimilated. In addition, {N-} becomes *m-* is formed when {N-} joined with the base that begins with [h] and [p] consonants, [h] and [p] consonants is assimilated. For examples:

17. {N-} + *unggak* → **munggak** 'to raise'  
 (40/4) Maka Ratu Majapahit munggak di pusaban ...
18. {N-} + hinok → **minok** 'to stay overnight'  
 (15/4) ... dipa lagi rang minok
19. {N-} + pagas → **magas** 'to stab with a spear'  
 (84) Maka wat nyabut gegaman tajam mak permisi pai, maka hulun sai rados disan tekebas nyawa ni ki ya haga magas didenda siwa pitis Rp.36,-. Ngeramat nyirang baya jenong hukum sinapun.
20. {N-} + pisol → **misol** 'to slaughter'  
 (100) Tapi ki muli mak suka atau ahli waris ni mak suka nemu kon tian rua musti tian rua jaja-jama misol kibau hurik sai, serenta muli, ngemuli muloh merani rena munih, sebab liom malu tian rua, gegoh, cuman meranai tambah nyukak hejongan mahan sina bugawoh sina lebih kerugian ni meranai.
21. {N-} + pekik → **mekik** 'to scream'  
 (12) ... jama bunyi sai mekik

**e. Prefixation of {N-} with *Nge-* allomorph**

{N-} prefix becomes *nge-* is formed when {N-} joined with the base that begins with all of the consonants except [P, T, K, S, C] then the consonants is not assimilated. Furthermore, {N-} becomes *nge-* can also be formed with the base that begins with [h] (not only for {N-} prefix with *m-* allomorph). However, it differs with *m-*, in {N-} prefix with *nge-* allomorph the [h] consonant not assimilated. For examples:

22. {N-} + jaga → **ngejaga** 'to guard'  
 (10/10) Ngejaga rulung.
23. {N-} + lawan → **ngelawan** 'to fight'  
 (25) Ya mula ni kidah pun angguan ni Punyimbang, ngelawan adik wari dang kurang pinggung pikir angka jaman mak akhir dang kurang ati-ati angka ni makkung mati, dang kurang angok-angok angka ni lagi dapok.
24. {N-} + hapak → **nehapak** 'to guide'  
 (30) Sebab ki lapah nehapak jelema buta, napong jaoh bakal tejajan, sebab itu kita berjalan awas-awas, hiwon-hiwon.
25. {N-} + gudok → **negudok** 'to stir'  
 (40/4) Sungai bulok dibulok-bulok, Badak purang negudok kubang, tanoh dikukut ti cakak kon di hulu sina pantangan anak Ratu.
26. {N-} + maling → **ngemaling** 'to steal'  
 (51) Maka perkara maling kak wat bukti kak wat saksi ni dan sai ngemaling kak nerima salah, ya laju kilu hukum di Perwatin.

**2. Prefixation of *bu-* and *be-***

Besides {N-} prefix this research found *bu-* and *be-* prefixes. Below is the explanation of those prefixes.

**a. Prefixation of *Bu-***

*Bu-* prefix used with the base that begins with consonant and then the consonant is not assimilated. For examples:

27. *Bu-* + *sesat* → **busesat** 'to go astray'  
 (2/3) Mak busesat.
28. *Bu-* + *langgar* → **bulanggar** 'to have a mosque'  
 (2/4) Mak bulanggar atau musigit.
29. *Bu-* + *geduk* → **bugeduk** 'to have a drum'  
 (2/6) Mak bugeduk.
30. *Bu-* + *kahandak* → **bukahandak** 'to wish'  
 (2/8) Mak bukahandak.
31. *Bu-* + *balah* → **bubalah** 'to speak'  
 (10/3) Simah bubalah.

**b. Prefixation of Be-**

*Be-* prefix is used with the base that begins with consonant or vowel and then the consonant or the vowel is not assimilated. For examples:

32. Be- + *iman* → *beiman* 'to have faith'  
(96) ... jelemabeiman ...
33. Be- + *kawan* → *bekawan*. 'to have friend'  
(1) ... bughung sai *bekawan*...
34. Be- + *gughau* → *begughau*... 'to joke'  
(1) lagi *begughau*...
35. Be- + *kaca* → *bekaca* 'to use glass'  
(2) Niku *bekaca* di wai
36. Be- + *bunyi* → *bebunyi* 'to sound'  
(9) Mak beni bel *bebunyi*

**3. Prefixation of ti- and te-**

Besides {N-}, bu- and be- other prefixes found in this research are ti- and te-. Below is the explanation of ti- and te- prefixes.

**a. Prefixation of ti-**

*Ti-* prefix is used with the base that begins with consonant or vowel and then the consonant or the vowel is not assimilated. For examples:

37. Ti- + *urau* → *tiurau* 'called'  
(48) Tetapi kiwat jelema ngan ni nyawakon ya tengenah ni atau ya nengis ni, atau ditengani ni dapok *tiurau* mit Perwatin sina maka ya nemonkon cawa jelema 12 sudi jeno, ampai dapok diterima jadi saksi, maka wat saksi 12 pasal sina tiulah lagi ditaksir Perwatin, acak nyaksikon batu, kayu.
38. Ti- + *rerap* → *tirerap* 'cut'  
(54) Maka wat ngemaling bubuahan atau tinanaman, mak tiranting, mak *tirerap* dan mak tigelegai kejuju ni di pinggir rang.
39. Ti- + *gelegai* → *tigelegai* 'shaken'  
(54) Maka wat ngemaling bubuahan atau tinanaman, mak tiranting, mak tirerap dan mak *tigelegai* kejuju ni di pinggir rang.
40. Ti- + *ililik* → *tiilik* 'stepped'  
(74) Maka wat mupika kon hulun, taksir kedo kak bangat ni, dan *tiilik* pangkat sai bedusa sina mari ngitung tepung ni.
41. Ti- + *kejanguh* → *tikejanguh* 'revealed'  
(90) Maka wat *tikejanguh*, taksir pangkat ni sai dihayakni sina, danda mulai rua belas rial harung bah, dan pukakas ni akuk, kiya sai kedau ya sayang di pekakas ni beli ni muloh pira ya timpu ya ngebeli barang sina jono ni.

**b. Prefixation of te-**

*Te-* prefix is used with the base that begins with consonant and then the consonant is not assimilated. For examples:

42. Te- + *jajau* → *tejajau* 'lost'  
(30) Sebab ki lapah ngehepak jelema buta, nepong jawoh bakal *tejajau*, sebab itu kita berjalan awas-awas, hiwon-hiwon.
43. Te- + *tahan* → *tetahan* 'hampered'  
(64) Maka wat jelema ngemaling kena *tetahan* lambung darak, dipinggir rang atau pinggir huma atau randos dihulun burakal, hukum ni diulangkon ni kebelah di sai kedau tenahan sina, atau rega ni separo jelema makai tungga bugawoh.
44. Te- + *tutuk* → *tetutuk* 'carried away'  
(76) Maka wat nyerumah barang atau daw belanja atau binatang maka lebon atau luang atau cadang atau pupika, periksa munih api barang ngan sai nyerumah, sina *tetutuk* munih kelebonan, atau cadang atau luang atau pupika, diputus hukum suka ni nengah rinci jelema haga kecewa.
45. Te- + *liyu* → *teliyu* 'passed'  
(80) Maka wat jelema *teliyu* atau ratong nginjang derani, kejuju ki debingi hulun mak pandai disahaja ni, maka wat kepetenahan tiyuh sina sai mak ketentuan sebab ni, menurut kuntara pasal 79 hukum ni Tupai lalu kelapa jatuh.
46. Te- + *kebas* → *tekebas* 'thrown'  
(84) Maka wat nyabut gegaman tajam mak permisi pai, maka hulun sai randos disan *tekebas* nyawa ni kiya haga magas didenda siwa pitis Rp.36,-. Ngeramat nyirang baya jenong hukum sinapun

**4. Prefixation of di-**

*Di-* prefix is a prefix that is found in Lampung language. Below is the explanation of di- prefix.

**a. Prefiksasi di-**

*di-* prefix used with the base of word that begins with consonant or vowel and then the consonant or the vowel is not assimilated. For examples:

47. Di- + *tetok* → *ditetok* 'cut'

(1) Anak salah anak sai malah, culuk salah culuk *ditetok*.

48. Di- + anggu → **dianggu** 'believed to be'  
(6/3) Wajib juga *dianggu* ki pandai di ram bator.

49. Di- + lulih → **dilulih** 'asked'  
(10/8) Lika *dilulih* muli temui.

50. Di- + guwai → **diguwai** 'performed'  
(11/2) Mak *diguwai* hulun Penglaku.

51. Di- + penah → **dipenah** 'waited'  
(11/4) Mak *dipenah* hun mengan kibau.

## 5. Circumfixation of {N-} ...-ko/-kon/-i

On the last explanation, I have mentioned that {N-} has several allomorphs such as ng-, ny-, n-, m-, and nge-. To form circumfixes, those five allomorphs then joined with the base and ended with -ko/-kon/-i suffixes which result several circumfixes such as: ng-...-ko/-kon, ng-...-i, ny-...-ko/-kon, ny-...-i, n...-ko/-kon, n...-i, m-...-ko/-kon, m-...-i, nge-...-ko/-kon, nge-...-i.

### a. Circumfixation of Ng-...-ko/-kon

Ng-...-ko/-kon circumfix is formed when {N-} joined the base that begins with vowels (a, i, u, e, o) and the vowels then assimilated then added -ko/-kon suffix. In addition, prefix {N-} becomes circumfix ng-...-ko/-kon is formed when joining the base begins with consonant [k]; [k] is assimilated then added -ko/-kon suffix.

52. {N-} + kuat + -kon → **nguatkon** 'to strength'  
(46) Turunan anak Jawa sai *nguatkon* tata-titi, nangga bumi keraton.

53. {N-} + ingok + -kon → **ningokkon** 'to remember'  
(56) Maka wat barang tinggal, dihulu hulun, sai ngehalu ya rulus hati, mulang barang bugawoh, ram dang mak *ningokkon* hati kedua sai betik, maka sampai jadi pekara, ulah sai ngehalu ya saking piyot, wat saksi ni sai temon nunjukkan, jak sai budakwa maka dihukum barang mulang, dihapik ni kiri-kanan, dimuka dan belakang jadi kelima batang, ngejabok baya jenong hukum sinapun. Ya haga makai pintor jama kedua.

54. {N-} + intar + -ko → **ngintarko** 'to deliver'  
(143) Maka wat ngiring gegoh Kuntara pasal : 88 bedua ngelakuni, dan pok ngiring seperti kuntara pasal 105. Maka ya mulang cuma diterangkan Penyimbang ni bugawoh, sebab ya lapah pinangguran rua telu Penyimbang *ngintarko* ya, ganta ya kak mulang, Penyimbang sina nguraw sampai 5-6 nyawako bedua jara ulang tiyung, cabi ni kak ratong, dan perkara alat ni mak ngedok denda cuman Penyimbang sina ngeguwai hanekan kanan bugawoh, ulah ya haga nemuiko kanca pureda ni.

55. {N-} + ucak + -kon → **ngucakkon** 'to return'  
(124) Ngeramat ngelakung baya jenong hukum sinapun, *ngucakkon* tiyuh kedua, tiyuh kedua humbul atau kebun.

56. {N-} + kenal + -ko → **ngenalko** 'to command'  
(8) ... sai bakas *ngenalko* ...

### b. Circumfixation of Ng-...-i

Ng-...-i circumfix is formed when {N-} joined the base that begins with vowels (a, i, u, e, o) and the vowels then assimilated then added -i suffix. In addition, prefix {N-} becomes circumfix ng-...-i is formed when joining the base begins with consonant [k]; [k] is assimilated then added -i suffix.

57. {N-} + ubat + -i → **ngubati** 'to cure'  
(83) Maka wat hulun buhaban bedas atau laju mati di jenganan, anjak memenganan, lamon jadi perkara sapa sai kedau makanan atau memasak sina sai kena di hukum *ngubati* ya, atau ngebangun ya dan segala ongkos-ongkos hal sina.

58. {N-} + unyah + -i → **ngunyah** 'to mock'  
(3) ... muli guwai *ngunyah* ...

59. {N-} + aku + -i → **ngakui** 'to admit'  
(41) ... guwaingakui dusa ...

60. {N-} + kuruk + -i → **nguruki** 'to enter'  
(41) Maling sina *nguruki* nuwaku

61. {N-} + koret + -i → **ngoreti** 'to cut with sickle'  
(41) Bebai sina *ngoreti* huma

### c. Circumfixation of Ny-...-ko/-kon

Ny-...-ko/-kon circumfix is formed when {N-} joined with the base that begins with consonant [s] and [c], both of the [s] and [c] consonants is assimilated then added with -ko/-kon suffix. For examples:

62. {N-} + cawa + -kon → **nyawakon** 'to say'  
(9/5) ... nganninyawakon...

63. {N-} + saksi + -ko → **nyaksiko** 'to see'

- (48) Tetapi kiwat jelema ngan ni nyawakon ya tengenah ni atau ya nengis ni, atau ditengani ni dapok ti uraw mit Perwatin sina maka ya nemonkon cawa jelema 12 sudi jeno, ampai dapok diterima jadi saksi, maka wat saksi 12 pasal sina tiulah lagi ditaksir Perwatin, acak *nyaksikon* batu, kayu.
64. {N-}+ sani + -kon → *nyanikon* 'to tidy up'
- (65) Maka wat jelema ngemaling kena tinahan dilambung darak, tapi ngan ni ancun, lain gegoh sudi jeno, musti di ulohkon ni unyin atau *nyanikon* pepah ni tinahan sina.
65. {N-}+ sadang + -kon → *nyadangkon* 'to break'
- (133) Jumlah 15 pasal sai *nyadangkon* atau ngebinasakan Pepadun, tetapi ki hantara ..... atau gincing dapok diadilkon segala bagi dan segala tungguan ni ..... hejong ni ki lagi wat Pepadun lam buai sina sai barih.
66. {N-}+ cacak + -kon → *nyacakkon* 'to utter'
- (135) .... ni ya kilu ragam ngumbankon sai dia *nyacakkon* sai disuya ni sina musti diragami Perwatin.

**d. Circumfixation of Ny-...-i**

Ny-...-i circumfix is formed when {N-} joined with the base that begins with consonant [s] and [c], both of the [s] and [c] consonants is assimilated then added with -i suffix. For examples:

67. {N-}+ calak + -i → *nyalaki* 'to fool'
- (118) Cepala buha nahun, *nyalaki* anggopni, tapi ki pedom atau buhaban dang dihukum.
68. {N-}+ sahut + -i → *nyahuti* 'to reply'
- (118) Siti *nyahuti* urauan indukna
69. {N-}+ cuba + -i → *nyubai* 'to try'
- (121) Nyak *nyubai* kawai sina
70. {N-}+ cabut + -i → *nyabuti* 'to pull'
- (121) Nyak *nyabuti* uban indukku
71. {N-}+ sirang + -i → *nyirangi* 'to pass'
- (122) Ulat *nyirangi* tumbang...

**e. Circumfixation of n-...-ko/-kon**

n-...ko/kon circumfix is formed when {N-} joined with base that begins with consonant [t] and then [t] consonant is assimilated then added -ko/-kon suffix. For examples:

72. {N-}+ temui + -kon → *nemuikon* 'to found'
- (4/1) *Nemuikon* hulun tandang, atau himpun manuk.
73. {N-}+ temon + -kon → *nemonkon* 'to correct'
- (48) Tetapi kiwat jelema ngan ni nyawakon ya tengenah ni atau yenengis ni, atau ditengani ni dapok ti uraw mit Perwatin sina maka ya *nemonkon* cawa jelema 12 sudi jeno, ampai dapok diterima jadi saksi, maka wat saksi 12 pasal sina tiulah lagi ditaksir Perwatin, acak nyaksikon batu, kayu.
74. {N-}+ tunjuk + -ko → *nunjukko* 'to show'
- (56) Maka wat barang tinggal, dihulu hulun, sai ngehalu ya rulus hati, mulang barang bugawoh, ram dang mak ngingokkon hati kedua sai betik, maka sampai jadi pekara, ulah sai ngehalu ya saking piyot, wat saksi ni sai temon *nunjukkon*, jak sai budakwa maka dihukum barang mulang, dihapik ni kiri-kanan, dimuka dan belakang jadi kelima batang, ngejabok baya jenong hukum sinapun. Ya haga makai pintor jama kedua.
75. {N-}+ tegi + -kon → *negikon* 'to build'
- (123) Maka wat *negikon* linggis, cepala nyukak kepunggor, nuruikon linggis cepala nyukak kubor, ki sampai tekas anjak pungi ni di tengah tiyuh, hukum ni musti diakuk Penyimbang tiyuh sina linggis ni.
76. {N-}+ terang + -kon → *nerangkon* 'to explain'
- (134) Supaya gegoh sina mula didenda rasan ki mak mampu nyukak ya sina dilupukkon jadi padangan Batin Semerga, ahli waris ni busai lupuk dia cuma mesol kibau hurik *nerangkon* sai jadi padangan sina, pupadun ni tinggal sipa helau ni sina mak lungkap lagi, habis perkara ngampang.

**f. Circumfixation of n-...-i**

n-...-i circumfix is formed when {N-} joined with base that begins with [t] consonant and then [t] consonant is assimilated then added -i suffix. For examples:

77. {N-}+ timbak + -i → *nimbaki* 'to shot'
- (19) ... Belanda *nimbakirakyat* ...
78. {N-}+ tutu + -i → *nutui* 'to pound'
- (20) Hun *nutui* pari
79. {N-}+ timpa + -i → *nimpai* 'to press'
- (21) Dang *nimpai* kukut ku
80. {N-}+ tepuk + -i → *nepuki* 'to tap'
- (21) Ia *nepuki* pok pedom
81. {N-}+ tutuk + -i → *nutuki* 'to follow'
- (22) Ulun tuha selalu *nutuki* hagana sana

ganta



**g. Circumfixation of m-...-ko/-kon**

*m-...-ko/-kon* circumfix is formed when {N-} joined the base that begins with vowels (a, i, u, e, o) and the vowels not assimilated. In addition, {N-} becomes *m-* is formed when {N-} joined with the base that begins with [p] consonant, [p] consonants is assimilated then added *-ko/-kon* suffix. For examples:

82. {N-}+ putus + -ko → **mutusko** 'to decide'  
(9/5) *Mutuskon* perkara ya mak tesok.
83. {N-}+ perelu + -kon → **merelukon** 'to need'  
(9/5) Rincian kurang pandai mak *merelukon* badan, jenong Penyimbang sinapun.
84. {N-}+ pangkal + -kon → **mangkalkon** 'to initialize'  
(50) Maka wat hulun jubal ulah hutang piutang atau makanan, atau pekerjaan atau dandan pakaian, atau pukakas sahintiru, *mangkalkon* jubal ulah sai segabor di ingok ni tetapi saksi ni mawat, bukti ni mawat, maka di kain kon busumpah setih sesuatu, maka tian rua berani unyin, maka taksir tian rua sapa sai sayung kehidupan ni, sina sai besumpah labuh perkara ni menang.
85. {N-}+ perhati + -kon → **merhatikon** 'to observe'  
(14) ... *merhatiko* usulan ...
86. {N-}+ pati + -kon → **matikon** 'to kill'  
(19) ... Sultan ngarapat *matiko*...

**h. Circumfixation of m-...-i**

*m-...-i* circumfix is formed when {N-} joined the base that begins with vowels (a, i, u, e, o) and the vowels not assimilated. In addition, {N-} becomes *m-* is formed when {N-} joined with the base that begins with [h] and [p] consonants, [h] and [p] consonants is assimilated and then added *-i* suffix. For examples:

87. {N-}+ pungker + -i → **mungkeri** 'to deny'  
(51) Maka wat ngelagoki perkara radu putus diputuskon Perwatin rinci ni *mungkeri* dengki, musti didenda segera perkara.
88. {N-}+ hiwang + -i → **miwangi** 'to cry'  
(51) Dang *miwangi* nasib hore
89. {N-}+ patuh + -i → **matuhi** 'to be loyal'  
(52) Ya *matuhi* cawa ulun tuhonno
90. {N-}+ patuk + -i → **matuki** 'to bite'  
(53) Asu *matuki* daging
91. {N-}+ payung + -i → **mayungi** 'to cover'  
(53) Nyak *mayungi* niku

**i. Circumfixation of nge-...-ko/-kon**

*nge-...-ko/-kon* circumfix is formed when {N-} joined with the base that begins with all of the consonants except [P, T, K, S, C] the consonants is not assimilated and then added *-ko/-kon* suffix. For examples:

92. {N-}+ gantung + -kon → **ngegantungkon** 'to hang'  
(2/5) Mak *ngegantungkon* kelekup (kentong).
93. {N-}+ jalan + -kon → **ngejalankon** 'to do'  
(29) Mari jenong jelema pandai ya *ngejalankon* tilik tidai 5 perkara.
94. {N-}+ jamuk + -ko → **ngejamukko** 'to give'  
(93) Ngeramat ngelidung baya jenong hukum sinapun ya *ngejamukkon* sai mak betik haga di hun tekana, denda sina mulang di sai ngedakwa sina, Perwatin cuman ongkos perkara gawoh.
95. {N-}+ gampang + -kon → **ngegampangkon** 'to make easy'  
(102) Ngeramat ngepar baya nama hukum sinapun, ya *ngegampangkon* kehimpunan.
96. {N-}+ buntor + -kon → **ngébuntorkon** 'to make round'  
(130) Ngeramat ngungkor baya retini ya *ngébuntorkon* mahan keduwa tapi ki jelema handak pi'il pusanggiri dang dihukum atau didenda.

**j. Circumfixation of nge-...-i**

*nge-...-i* circumfix is formed when {N-} joined with the base that begins with all of the consonants except [P, T, K, S, C] the consonants is not assimilated and then added *-i* suffix. For examples:

97. {N-}+ lagok + -i → **ngelagoki** 'to suppose'  
(23) Maka wat *ngelagoki* ...
98. {N-}+ racun + -i → **ngeracuni** 'to poison'  
(23) *Ngeracuni* nama hukum...
99. {N-}+ cida + -i → **ngecidai** 'to break'

(24) ... wat sai haga *ngecidai* ia induh...

100. {N-}+ lindung + -i → **ngelindungi** 'to protect'  
(24) Ngeramat *ngelindungi* baya...

101. {N-}+ hadop + -i → **ngehadopi** 'to face'  
(26) ... niku *ngehadopi* nya...

#### **6. Circumfixation of be-...-an and bu-...-an**

This research found bu-...-an and be-...-ancircumfixes. Below is the explanation of those circumfixes:

##### **a. Circumfixation of bu-...-an**

*bu-...-an* circumfix is formed when *be-* joined with the base that begins with consonant and the consonant is not assimilated then added with *-an* suffix. For examples:

102. Bu-+ pekal + -an → **bupekalan** 'to have place'  
(2) Mak *bupekalan*ragah
103. Bu-+ peselok + -an → **bupeselokan** 'to insert'  
(100) Kuruk Batin, tanda ni meranai sina cakak mahan muli, makai bidak, busabuk, *bupeselokan*, buselikap, bulistar.
104. Bu-+ serah + -an → **buserahan** 'to surrender'  
(49) Kuruk Batin, tanda ni meranai sina cakak mahan muli, makai bidak, busabuk, *buserahan*, buselikap, bulistar.
105. Bu-+ tabrak + -an → **butabranken** 'to clash'  
(28) Mobil sina *butabranken* di ranglaya
106. Bu-+ kirim + -an → **bukiriman** 'to send'  
(28) ...meranai sina *bukiriman* surat jama muli

##### **b. Circumfixation of be-...-an**

*be-...-an* circumfix is formed when *be-* joined with the base that begins with consonant or vowel and the consonant or the vowel is not assimilated then added with *-an* suffix. For examples:

107. Be- + karet + -an → **bekaretan** 'rubberized'  
(25) Ani *bekaretan* dibuwokni
108. Be- + salam + -an → **besalaman** 'shake hands'  
(27) Dang lupa *besalaman* jama ulun tuha
109. Be- + timbal + -an → **betimbalan** 'to exchange'  
(27) Wat acara *betimbalan* delom gawi sina
110. Be- + iring + -an → **beiringan** 'together with'  
(28) Motor sina *beiringan* jama mobilku
111. Be- + sabai + -an → **besabaian** 'to be related to'  
(28) Ia *besabaian* jama maha niku

#### **7. Circumfixation of ti-/te-...-ko/-kon/-i**

As I explain before in Lampung language besides {N-}, bu-, and be- prefixes there are te- and ti- prefixes. In circumfixation, ti- or te- is ended with -ko/-kon/-i suffix. Below is the explanation of te- and ti- circumfixations.

##### **a. Circumfixation of ti-...-ko/-kon**

*ti-...-ko/-kon* circumfix is formed with the base that begins with consonant or vowel. The consonant or the vowel is not assimilated then added *-ko/-kon* suffix. For examples:

112. Ti- + uloh + -kon → **tiulohkon** 'returned'  
(62) Ki kak munsu tengemaling ni *tiulohkon* dihapikni kiri kanan, jadi ketiga batang dan hejongan seperti
113. Ti- + ucak + -kon → **tiucakkon** 'uttered'  
(5) ...daighahti*tiucakkon* ...
114. Ti- + siyap + -kon → **tisiyapkon** 'prepared'  
(44) ... ghaduti*tisiyapkon* ...
115. Ti- + cawa + -kon → **ticawakon** 'spoken'  
(60) Tiyan *ticawakon* ...
116. Ti- + lebon + -ko → **tilebonko** 'erased'  
(50) Motor ayah *tilebonkon* adik

##### **b. Circumfixation of ti-...-i**

*ti-...-i* circumfix is formed with the base that begins with consonant or vowel. The consonant or the vowel is not assimilated then added *-i* suffix. For examples:

117. Ti+ gelagh + -i → tigelaghi 'named'  
(57) ... luwaghtigelaghi ...
118. Ti+ gawang + -i → tigawangi 'cleaned'  
(77) ... ghiktigawangi ...
119. Ti+ sapon + -i → tisaponi 'cleaned'  
(78) Nuwa sina tisaponi anak muli
120. Ti+ pedom + -i → tipedomi 'to sleep on'  
(79) Pok pedom mahani dang tipedomi
121. Ti- + injam + -i → tiinjami 'loaned'  
(79) Ia tiinjami tapis

## 8. Circumfixation of di-...-ko/-kon/-i

There are two circumfixations of di- prefix. Both of them are di-...-ko/-kon or di-...-i. Below is the explanation of both circumfixes.

### a. Circumfixation di-...-ko/-kon

di-...-ko/-kon circumfix is formed when di- joined with base that begins with consonant or vowel. The consonant or the vowel is not assimilated then added -ko/-kon suffix. For examples:

122. di- + ungsi + -kon → diungsikon 'evacuated'  
(12) Diungsikon hulun nyangsang.
123. di- + urus + -kon → diuruskon 'managed'  
(49) Maka perkara kak wat saksi ni kak wat bukti ni dan ya kak nerima, musti diuruskon pai tanda buserah ni nurun jak kedua pihak, nimbang rega perkara sina tanda ni mak nyilor di segala putusan Perwatin.
124. di- + kayin + -ko → dikayinko 'asked'  
(50) Maka wat hulun jubal ulah hutang piutang atau makanan, atau pekerjaan atau dandan pakaian, atau pukakas sahintiru, mangkalkon jubal ulah sai segabor di ingok ni tetapi saksi ni mawat, bukti ni mawat, maka dikayinkon busumpah setih sesuatu, maka tian rua berani unyin, maka taksir tian rua sapa sai sayung kehidupan ni, sina sai besumpah labuh perkara ni menang.
125. di- + putus + -kon → diputuskon 'decided'  
(51) Maka wat ngelagoki perkara radu putus diputuskon Perwatin rinci ni mungkari dengki, musti didenda segera perkara.
126. di- + tarik + -kon → ditarikkon 'pulled'  
(57) Maka muli ditarikkon meranai, liwat anjak panjang telu, sina tekab jaba adok ni ki mak jadi telaju kahjong, meranai sina nurun petelu pak likor rik kibau sai rega 12 rial dan nyukak rega bedak lunnyuh ni muli sina pak likor rung bah nuruni pangkatni muli sina.

### b. Circumfixation of di-...-i

di-...-i circumfix is formed when di- joined with base that begins with consonant or vowel. The consonant or the vowel is not assimilated then added -i suffix. For examples:

127. di- + tangan + -i → ditangani 'organized'  
(48) Tetapi kiwat jelema ngan ni nyawakon ya tengenah ni atau ya nengis ni, atau ditangani ni dapok ti uraw mit Perwatin sina maka ya nemonkon cawa jelema 12 sudi jeno, ampai dapok diterima jadi saksi, maka wat saksi 12 pasal sina tiulah lagi ditaksir Perwatin, acak nyaksikon batu, kayu.
128. di- + marah + -i → dimarahi 'to be angry at'  
(54) Antak dimarahi bugawoh, sai dimaling ni sina dang diakuk laju kon dia gawoh.
129. di- + butong + -i → dibutongi 'to be angry at'  
(136) Maka muli atau bebai dibutongi Penyimbang ni baka cawa dan Penyimbang ni kilu ragam di Penyimbang-penyimbang barih, mesti diperiksa pai api ya ngandung, ulah capa, ki mak butantu retini ngampang.
130. di- + gheghing + -i → digheghingi 'liked'  
(42) ... mulani ia digheghingi ...
131. di- + alam + -i → dialami 'experienced'  
(41) ... api sai dialami ...

## 9. Circumfixation of ke-...-an

ke-...-an circumfix is found in Lampung language. This circumfix can be said a unique one because there is no ke- prefix used as a verb in Lampung language. In order to make a verb ke- prefix must be added with base and ended with -an suffix. Below is the explanation of ke-...-an circumfixation.

### a. Circumfixation of Ke-...-an

ke-...-an circumfix is formed when ke- joined with the base that begins with consonant. The consonant not assimilated then added -an suffix. For examples:

132. ke- + tengis + -an → ketengisan 'heard'  
(35) ... ketengisan mula ya ...

- |      |   |   |                                    |
|------|---|---|------------------------------------|
| 133. | ke- + rugi + -an<br>(69) ... kalah segala <u>kerugian</u>   | → | kerugian 'suffered financial loss' |
| 134. | ke- + hilang + -an<br>(76) <u>Kelebonan</u> atau cadang ... | → | kehilangan 'stolen'                |
| 135. | ke- + betong + -an<br>(78) Nyak radu <u>kebetongan</u>      | → | kebetongan 'saturation'            |
| 136. | ke- + betoh + -an<br>(79) Nyak radu <u>kebetohan</u>        | → | kebetohan 'famine'                 |

#### 10. Infixation of ...-en-...and ...-em-...

There are only found two infixes in Lampung language. Those two infixes are...-en-... and...-em-....Below is the explanation of those infixes:

##### a. Infixation of ...-en-...

...-en-... infix is formed when base which begins with consonant is separated by separating the first letters from the base then added ...-en-... infix. After the infix added then the rest of the letters joined in. For examples:

- |      |  |   |                   |
|------|--|---|-------------------|
| 137. | Kebok→K + -en- + bok<br>(53) Mangka perkara maling ya mak asing ni mak hurani hujan, rangok sangun mak <u>kenebok</u> , jenganan bangkang, ya munih tepak nerima di hukum Perwatin ya ngulangkon barang sai watas diakukni sina gawoh, dan saksi dapok mak busumpah.   | → | kenebok 'closed'  |
| 138. | Kuta→K + -en- + uta<br>(150) Anying ki wat sai kedau ya dihukum nyukak denda sina dan ngeganti kerugian sai dicadangkoni ni, anying sai cadang sina mak <u>kenuta</u> , mak tigelegai, denda sudi bugawoh dapok mak ngeganti kerugian sai cadang.  | → | kenuta 'fenced'   |
| 139. | Cecar→C + -en- + ecar<br>(159) Maka wat ngusi nuar sampai nyadang kon hasil pulan seperti hui, buluh, damar, tahi-tahi ni kayu sai radu ditanda kejuju ki ya sangun nyansat, nyadang kon ya atau ngakuk ya didenda rua belas rial Rp.24,- dan sai diakuk ni sina mulang tau disukak ni di sai kedau tinanda, seperti <u>cenecar</u> tinerap, tisingkil, tapi ki tian rua jejama ngaku kedau, ketahu periksa kuntara pasal 50 tapi periksa pai tian rua sapa sai randos disanjenganan ni musti sai jaoh kalah, ki gegoh jaoh ni tian rua berani sumpah unyin, mak ngedok saksi kuntara pasal : 50 sudi ngan ni putus. | → | cenecar 'cut'     |
| 140. | Panjal→P + -en- + ajal<br>(167) Dang <u>penanjat</u> nyak jama kukutmu   | → | penanjat 'kicked' |
| 141. | Pajak→P + -en- + ajak<br>(169) Kikim <u>penajak</u>  | → | penajak 'boiled'  |

##### b. Infixation of ...-em-...

...-em-...infix is formed when the base which begins with consonant is separated each other by separating the first letters from the base then added ...-em-... infix. After the infix added then the rest of the letters joined in. For examples:

- |      |  |   |                              |
|------|--|---|------------------------------|
| 142. | Pukem→p + -em- + ukem<br>(178) Pudana <u>pemukem</u>             | → | pemukem 'rounded'            |
| 143. | Guppo→g + -em- + uppo<br>(178) Tian <u>gemuppo</u> hagok masigit | → | gemuppo 'droves'             |
| 144. | Gatem→g + -em- + atem<br>(177) <u>Gematem</u> suara bedil        | → | gematem 'to keep on booming' |
| 145. | Gercik→g + -em- + ercik<br>(176) Way Batanghari <u>gemercik</u>  | → | gemercik 'crackling'         |
| 146. | Tebeng→T + -em- + ebeng<br>(177) Niat <u>temebeng</u> .          | → | temebeng 'straight'          |

#### D. CONCLUSION

This research has tried to answer the unsolved questions about the verbs affixation in Lampung language in Kuntara Raja Niti book and textbooks using morphology study. The finding of this study found that there are six types verb prefixes in Lampung language The six types of prefixes are {N-}, *bu-*, *be-*, *ti-*, *te-* and *di-*. Prefix {N-} has five allomorphs: *ng-*, *ny-*, *m-*, *n-*, and *nge-*. However, other prefixes such as *bu-*, *be-*, *ti-*, *te-* and *di-* do not have allomorphs. Moreover, there are 17 (seventeen) verb circumfixes. There are: *ng-...-ko/-kon*, *ng-...-i*, *ny-...-ko/-kon*, *ny-...-i*, *n...ko/-kon*, *n-...-i*, *m-...-ko/-kon*, *m-...-i*, *nge-...-ko/-kon*, *nge-...-i*, *bu-...-an*, *be-...-an*, *ti-...-ko/-kon*, *ti-...-i*, *di-...-I*, *di-...-ko/-kon*, *ke-...-an*. There are only two verb infixes found in this research. Two kinds of infixes are ...-en-... and...-em-.... However, there are no independent verb suffixes found in this research.

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#### ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to utilize the personal, cultural and historical information that students bring to the class in order to make a more flexible and dynamic teaching strategy, in literature classes. Based on the schema theory which assumes the construction of the meaning to reside in the interaction of the literary text and background knowledge of the students and by considering the issue of interpretive communities, the researcher tends to create a correlation between the students' knowledge and their shared assumption as a small community and directing it through literature to achieve a more flexible syllabus. Interpretive communities share the patterns of signifying meanings in a particular community. By considering the classroom as a community with certain background and interests, the teacher may evaluate the concerns of the students, in achieving a more flexible teaching strategy, in the class. In this method, class becomes a dynamic field to accomplish the objectives of the class; teacher must be alert to evaluate the collective interests of the class as a community, in order to promote certain language skills such as reading and listening, as well as aesthetic learning through what students demand, as a group and what is appropriate for the class. In this sense, this research attempts to challenge the pre-established literary canons which are employed, in the classes in order to facilitate the process of learning and transform it to a more challenging task, by providing the material based on the logical pleas of the class.

**KEYTERMS:** Flexible Teaching Strategy- interpretive communities- Literature Class- Schema Theory.

#### INTRODUCTION

Teaching literature has long been considered a challenging task, especially in literature classes, in which the aim of the instructors of the course is to educate not only aesthetic dimensions of a certain literary text, but also some particular skills, such as reading and writing. The complicated nature of these courses heightens with the heterogeneity of the classes; different classes would vary in number, race, gender and age of students. This would intensify the complexity of assumed educational objectives of the course. One of the best solutions for this problem is homogenizing the students, based on certain factors, such as age and gender and race. However, in the present multi-cultural societies, it appears to be impossible. Thus, utilizing the dynamic educational potential of students could be the answer. This research attempts to scrutinize a more dynamic teaching strategy by employment of pre-established collective knowledge of students, in presenting practical teaching techniques.

Many scholars have devoted their researches to scrutinizing different methods of literature teaching to optimize the outcomes of literature classes. Literature has emerged from the mere fictional presentation of events into a demanding field of educational contemplation, by endowing students with many other practical educational skills, such as reading, writing and listening skills. In this regard, literature transforms into a pragmatic educational domain that transcends its conventional role as a subject of entertainment. Thus, many teachers focus on literature, as an attractive educational realm; one that entertains and teaches, concurrently.

Among many approaches that investigate various methods of teaching literature, some are of pivotal significance. The postmodern tendency to locate the core of meaning in individuals is the one that appreciates the subjective interpretations of readers, as the major intention of literary texts. This involves glorification of pre-established insight that assists the readers to analyze the texts. Each individual brings a unique set of presumptions to the procedures of reading activity. However, there are many shared comprehensions by readers of a same book, based on their socio-cultural paradigms. In that case, evaluating the possible pragmatic methods of teaching literature simplifies by investigating the communal appreciation of a literary work. The issues which are going to be discussed in this research are the definition of schema theory, its affiliation with interpretive communities providing more flexible teaching approaches such as permanent evaluation of the student's interest based on teacher's objectives, in the class. Accordingly, the main aim of this study is challenging the classical traditional literary canon, in order to create a more fruitful educational goal. Some stratagems that could be applied in the class include the permanent evaluation of the student's mandates, employing the multiple intelligences of the students, participation of the students in achieving the class's objectives and involving the students, in the process of assessment.

#### THEORY

Texts are defined in the scope of the active interaction of the readers' perceptions and significations that are conveyed to them by complicated socio-cultural codes. There are numerous ongoing procedures that direct readers to the intended message of the text. However, these processes are not static and refashion continually, based on construction of pristine semantic knowledge of the readers.

According to Bartlett (1932) who has coined the term 'schema theory', this notion means that "meanings are not contained within the text but are constructed in the interaction between the text and the interpreting background knowledge" (p. 79). Therefore, there is always strife in construction of immaculate meanings, since, the text have no signification, in isolation; Perkins (1983) entitles this as "semantic constructivity". The most focal issue is that the schemas are dynamic and tend to modify by incoming experiences; it implies that they are "an active organization of the past reactions or experiences which must always be supposed to be operating in any well adopted organic responses" (p. 201). The fact that readers with different experiences might have different discernments of the same text transforms the reading activity and construction of the meaning, into a creative endeavor, varying from one reader to another.

According to Iser (1972) the meaning is generated by "meeting of the writer, text and the individual mind of the reader with its own particular history of experience, its own consciousness, its own outlook" (p. 189) and it is the "convergence of the text and the reader that brings the literary work into existence" (p. 196). This existence is materialized in the process of realization of text. Iser proposes that, "the written text imposes certain limits on its unwritten implications in order to prevent these from becoming too blurred and hazy, but at the same time these implications worked out by the readers' imagination, set the given situation against a background which endows it with far greater significance than it might have seemed to possess on its own" (p. 190). This provides a wide range of significations that are rooted in the original text. The process of the construction of the meaning or the 'destination' of text, then resides in the interpretive acts of the readers and not the writer; therefore, the origin of the unity in the process of the reading is embedded in the elucidations of the reader, as Barthes (1967) mentions (p. 150). There is a great emphasis on the reader's role, in creation of the meaning that takes place by bringing his



prior knowledge into the progression of the interpretation of the texts, in the phenomenological theories of reading by critics like Ingarden, Iser, and Fish. They all agree that there are some gaps that must be filled up by the readers; this constitutes the act of reading as an individual process that is related to the past experiences of the readers, as well as being shaped and constructed by their present social affairs. This research aims to create a sense of affiliation between the issues of semantic theory and the idea of interpretive communities of Stanley Fish, in order to find more flexible strategies for teaching literature, as a second language.

The concept of schema is correlated to another idea, introduced by Stanley Fish (1980), interpretive communities'. The signification of a specified text is based on the policies that readers utilize in reading; it implies that it is not the text but the knowledge or schemas of the readers that determines the act of signification or construction of the meaning. According to Fish, these policies may be shared by many readers of the same text and these strategies "exist prior to the act of reading and therefore determine the shape of what is read" (p. 219). It signifies that the schema knowledge of the readers is not stable and its dynamicity is a good proof that schemas are not only fashioned, in the course of reading but they are shaped by past experiences, too. According to Fish, reading patterns modify, as the individuals of a society amend their assumptions about the issues around them. By employing a progressive model of reading stratagems, these tactics transform into not an everlasting and accepted but learned and artificial sets of techniques. In this way, the meaning is not "extracted but made and made not by encoded forms but by interpretive strategies that call forms into being" (p. 220). Semino (1995) believes that from a cognitive point of view, the perception of the reader results from "the application of certain portions of the reader's background knowledge (schema) to the interpretation of the text" but this schemata is not a fixed entity but it is a flexible perception which "depends on the extent to which the existing schemas of the readers are confirmed or challenged during the process of interpretation" (p. 79). Just like the notion of interpretive strategies of Fish, the schemas are considered to be "prior knowledge" of the reader, constructed by socio-cultural paradigms of members of a community (p. 82). Considering the point that a classroom could be considered a small community where the members may share the reading tactics, the teacher of a literature class may find a mutual ground in the class, in order to structure a more flexible course syllabus. By fusing the concepts of schema theory and interpretive community the researcher attempts to implicate a term which will inclusively attribute to both of the theories, defined as **Group Schema** or **Collective Schema**. The next section of this research is dedicated to schema theory and its correlation with literature. In this part, the process of reading literary texts and creation of new schema knowledge is reviewed.

### *Schema Theory and Literature*

Schema theory could be applied to almost all documents as well as literature, in order to assist researchers in articulating educational approaches, for a better cognition of learning materials. More than any type of document, a literary text is capable of deconstructing the existing significations, in the process of reading, due to its polyphonic quality. This heterogeneous nature of literature is the key to developing numerous teaching techniques, based on students' responses, in the classroom. Thus, the major responsibility of the teacher resides in appreciating the wide range of presumptions and directing them toward the appropriate meaning.

Semino (2001) believes that the relation of schema theory and literature is that, "literary texts tend to challenge and modify the readers' existing schema" and if readers "apply different schemas or different variants of the same schema; they will end up with different understandings" (p. 346). Having this in mind, then the goal of teaching should be generating appropriate responses by students, by motivating them about the literary texts. Britton (1968) puts this as, "to refine and develop responses the children are already making rather than instructing them with the responses"; therefore, in the literature classes the teacher must act as the "mediator to help students to take knowledge and make sense of the text" (p. 183). The most important issue is that the schemas are dynamic and tend to remold, by coming experiences; it implies that they are "an active organization of the past reactions or experiences which must always be supposed to be operating in any well adopted organic responses" (Bartlett, 1932, p. 201). Thus, the ongoing performance of appreciation of meaning resides not in the text alone, but dwells in the unique responses of the readers.

A critical debate, raised by critics against the schema theory is that "it seems to assume a very rigid division of background knowledge into separate compartments, thereby failing to do justice to the flexible, creative and tolerant way in which we apply our knowledge of old experiences to new ones" (Semino, 1995, p. 83). Guy Cook (1990) suggests that the most significant role of schema theory is that despite the Russian formalist's assumption that rigidly limits the text to its linguistic devices with certain key concepts such as de-familiarization and de-automatization, the schema theory provides a dynamic frame for active participation of readers' knowledge of the text (pp. 212-13). In literary texts, this confrontation of the readers' prior schemas and the present ones may result in violation of the existing schemas of the readers and eventually leads to "schema refreshment"; and that is why the literary texts offer the readers an opportunity to experience new situations and create new schema knowledge. Sometimes, schema knowledge is reinforced by a text and sometimes it is interrupted and altered by new coming information in the texts. Literary texts challenge the confirmed assumptions and therefore would formulate diverse results, ranging from authenticating the schemas of the text to rejecting the presented schemas. The discursive quality of literary texts would reinforce the process of generating polyphonic assumptions, by readers of the text. This explicitly advocates the existence of multiple numbers of elucidations, in reading process.

### *Teaching Literature, Significance, Objectives and Material*

The first step in determining the strategies of teaching literature is that the teacher must have a clear idea of why he/she is teaching literature; according to Nojournian (2007), one thing must be taken for granted in teaching literature,

First and foremost, teachers of English literature should primarily explain this idea that literary texts are not primarily intended to get across a particular moral, philosophical, or political message. Of course, these implications could always come as the final stages of reading process. Many writers by treating their own material as nonjudgmental do not expect the reader to come to a particular message even in the final stages. Reading literature for them is supposed to share a particular experience (p. 121).

Hence, literary texts would be classified among other texts which are designed for certain educational aims. This quality is fortified by a communal appreciation of literature. Students would react more positively to the texts that have a shared meaning for them. This would formulate a new pattern for reading literary materials that promotes the desired objectives of the teacher.

According to Tarakcoiglu (2003), studying literature involves not only reading certain literary works, but objectives of the literature classes differ from other courses. It indicates that while the student in an EFL literature class employs the structures of a certain language, he/she is,

Supposed to acquire and store the conventions and traditions about literature as well as getting

acquainted with the authors, texts, nature, history and culture of the target language. At the end of this process, the student is assumed to become an expert or authority that is equipped with the necessary and enough knowledge to analyze, criticize, and write about literature, literary history, literary theories, periods, authors and literary works (p. 214).

Obviously, the sole aim of literature classes is not to entertain the students, by providing amusing material for the class, but there are crucial objectives that must be fulfilled. Literature classes should boost the creativity of the students and lead them to appreciation of the literary concepts. There also must be certain objectives in teaching literature and the objectives have to embrace "development of knowledge of world of literature, practice in reaching and discussing creative work and introduction of literary concepts" (Muyskens, 1983, p. 413), as well as having this issue in mind that "techniques used in teaching literature must be interesting, in order to make the initial experience with literature pleasurable and material is a part of this" (p. 415). Not only the literary aspects of the text but the linguistic and educational aims are taken into account when a text is prepared for the class, "Typical goals for beginning and inter-mediate high school or college students may include the practice of language acquisition skills, practice in reading comprehension, and the stimulation of literary appreciation" (p. 415). This would ensure the pivotal objective of literature classes, in absorbing the attention of students who are primarily exposed to literary texts. However, there is another challenging task ahead of the literature teachers, preparing educational materials for the class.

Preparation for literature courses is always a hard task to do for the instructors, since this planning is never "cut off from the arbitrary external pressures of time, space, and money.... and the Academic calendar of the semester invariably shapes intellectual and pedagogical decisions" (Showalter, 2003, p. 42). Usually material preparation is mentioned very little in methods of teaching literature and literary texts are chosen, merely, for "linguistic and language skills" (Muyskens, 1983, p. 414). They may be divergent approaches for preparing materials for the class such as teaching from one's own "area of research specialization and making it a subset of research" or making teaching "an exploration for us and students" (Showalter, 2003, p. 45). In this method, teaching is not a static procedure, with fixed materials, but it converts into a literary expedition that engages students, as well as teachers. The outcome of this activity is the mutual interaction between the students and their instructor; it leads to a more fruitful educational goal.

According to Susanne Bock (1995), a suitable material for literature classes must have certain features, materials must,

Activate existing background knowledge (content schemata) by relating the content of the text to the students' own cultural experiences, encourage prediction. Predicting (allowing students to formulate hypotheses about the text before reading commences) is a further way of encouraging students to utilize what background information they possess and arousing their interest in the development of the story and Fill in background knowledge where it is missing through explicit presentation of the cultural, historical, and/or social context of the text (p. 155).

Among the materials which are widely used in literature classes, the anthologies seem to be the most popular form, for the instructors of literature classes. Their availability, canonicity and their adaptability to the semester format of the educational time, make anthologies the best choice as a teaching material. Although anthologies seem to be the best available material for literature classes as they prepare the students for the future standard examinations, by equipping them with the required knowledge of the course, the obstacles such as "cultural and linguistic deficiencies" may interfere with the maximum profit of the chosen materials. But the problem with the entire traditional and old style anthologist is that "they don't develop critical thinking, fostering passive acceptance of authority" (Mojica, 1997, p. 210). More than abolishing the active critical thinking of the students, the canonized anthologies would preserve the existing dominant social disciplines and marginalize the dissident voices. This opposes the true purpose of literature, in generating an unprejudiced world. According to historicists the problem with anthologies is that "teaching anthologies and histories of literature are instruments of indoctrination... preserving the structure and inequality of society" (208). As a result, a new teaching methodology must be defined that transcends the common conventional teaching patterns.

The next part of the research is devoted to finding and presenting some practical methods which could be used in literature classes where the literary competence of the students plays a crucial role, in students' appreciation of the text, in order to challenge the pre-existing methods of teaching literature based on the affiliations of schema theory and interpretive communities; this means using the multiple intelligences of the students and their diverse schema knowledge as a group, to create a more fruitful and flexible teaching strategy.

#### UTILIZING GROUP SCHEMA (COLLECTIVE SCHEMA) AND TEACHING STRATEGY

In moving toward a flexible syllabus in literature classes, the most important issue is to give the students the opportunity to be active, in the process of development of material for the class which will hopefully increase the motivation of the students, continuously, during the course. Giving space to students in preparation of the material does not mean to ignore the authority of the teacher; the teacher must move in a presumed direction to achieve the accepted standards and objectives of the class. Accepting to have a flexible curriculum means that the teachers must be willing to experience more flexible and modern policies of teaching, instead of applying traditional systems, by creating a good relation with students,

It should be clear by now that teachers' relationships with students are central to student learning. Becoming competent and caring mentors for a broad range of students, therefore, means developing specific skills and competencies for teaching... Teachers and prospective teachers, especially those who have not had extensive experience with students of diverse backgrounds, need to learn to understand human differences in order to tap into the intelligence and capacity of all students. This is a life-long journey, and professional development is a central component of the journey. (Neieto, 2010, p. 215)

Accordingly, in the contemporary multi-cultural societies, there is a demand for unprejudiced teaching materials, which would satisfy the diverse interests of the students, without offending them, racially, culturally and socially. To achieve this goal, a very accurate material planning must be designed, by employing the following steps:

-Primary Evaluation: The first step in a literature class is to consider the fact that the best time to evaluate the interests of the students in order to make a meaningful connection of those interests with the aims of the class is the first session. The teacher must try to give introduction to the subject in a well organized pattern to draw the attention of the students to the issues which are of great significance for

the progress of the course. This includes the objectives of the course, the desired frameworks of the course and the patterns of educational evaluation.

- Utilizing Multiple Intelligences: According to Gardner (1983), in "Frames of Mind", the notion of intelligence means: "human ability to solve problems or to make something that is valued in one or more culture" (p. 12) and this means no matter how a problem is solved, as long as individuals may find different solutions for that. Based on this assumption, Gardner names some types of intelligences such as musical, logical-mathematical, special, intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences. It is also significant to consider that individuals may have different strength and talent in using their intelligences. According to Pool (2000) benefitting the Multiple Intelligences in the class will give the students a chance to "immerse themselves into the intelligence areas" and at the same time the teacher may experience a new technique of teaching where he/she could "cooperate with colleagues to develop a menu of appropriate strategies and secure resources for each intelligence"(12). To schedule the class based on the multiple intelligences concept means to respect the diverse discrepancies of the individuals' understandings and their unique cognitive ability. By considering the shared schemas of the students about certain fields of human knowledge, a fruitful teaching strategy could be planned.

-Multi-Dimensional Schedule: According to Nieto the syllabus of the course is usually prepared based on the official programs of the educational systems and usually presents a one dimensional program where the desires of students are neglected, "the curriculum in schools is at odds with the experiences, backgrounds, hopes, and wishes of many students. This is true of both the tangible curriculum as expressed through books, other materials, and the actual written curriculum guides, as well as in the less tangible and 'hidden' curriculum as seen in the bulletin boards, extracurricular activities, and messages given to students about their abilities and talents"(p. 166) . The teacher must remind the students that there is not going to be a rigid syllabus in the class and the significant points that will be covered are to be reviewed in the class. Afterward, the students are asked to find different ways to go through the important subjects, on their own way. Of course, the teacher must be an active monitoring agent in the class, by guiding the students toward the objectives of the class. Flexibility of the teacher in planning the syllabus is very crucial, in achieving the aims of the class.

-Group Construction: in this method, the teacher must divide the students to groups, according to their common interests based on their group schemas or their shared knowledge that they bring to the classroom. The teacher may group the students based on other forms of literary materials such as movies, plays, music or even a popular writer may serve as the basis of constructing a team, in the class. The more homogenous the groups are, the more challenging, the desired objective become. Of course, there may be some difficulties in classes where students may be of different age groups or belonging to different cultural, social or racial communities. Therefore, the Maximum profit of this method is gained in a racially, socially, culturally homogeneous groups. According to Nojournian,

One of the basic approaches to teaching literature is to develop and transform the individual appreciation to a group one. Experts in education call this process, the process of move from individual to collective response. Students are encouraged to share their views with others and they are supposed to discover that this will only deepen the level of understanding and appreciation of the text. (p. 128)

- Challenging the Pre-established Literary Canons: the most popular materials for teaching literature are anthologies which are divided into different canonized issues such as thematic, women's, ethnicities and focus anthologies. In this method of teaching, the most important aim of the teacher is to use anthologies as a supplement for the class activities instead of making it the dominant authority, in the class. The teacher may choose some of the materials from anthologies, but that does not mean that they should be the governing element of the teaching.

-An Active Participation of the Students in the Progress of the Course: the teacher may use other forms of arts such as painting, music, movies and plays in order to activate and deepen the literary knowledge of the students. Again the role of the teacher is not neglected in this method but the teacher acts as a mediator in transmitting the knowledge to the students. Using another form of art in relation with literature, may help the students to widen their knowledge of literature, as well as expanding their range of vocabulary in EFL literature classes. According to Tarakcioglu (2003), "students get familiarized with more and more vocabulary and structures as well as the variety of their applications in different situations. In this way, they gradually manage to express themselves, in a variety of ways articulately and appropriately" (p. 218). The instructor may select a literary material, depending on the subject of the course; it may be a poem, a play or a short story and ask different groups to find the other versions of that literary work. For example, the group who are in the music group may find the related piece of music which seems to be in close relation with the features of the text. The teacher and other students may observe the information that students have brought to the class, as their shared interest and knowledge; and then it is the time when teacher start to present his own lecture about the topic, in order to achieve the objectives of the class.

-Utilizing New Forms of Technology: nowadays, many educational institutions are equipped with high tech instruments; however, many developing countries lack the simplest educational facilities. Nonetheless, even the simplest computer- aided activities along with audiovisual and transparencies might be used in the class to facilitate, not only the process of increasing aesthetic knowledge of the students about the literature, but strengthen their listening and speaking skills, as well as improving their linguistic competency, through authentic material.

-Encouraging Critical Thinking in the Students: based on the postmodernist assumption about the subjectivity of interpretations and glorification of individualism in this theory, the teacher of the literature class must encourage students to express their feelings about the literary text, scrutinized in the class. The appropriate opportunity must be provided for the students to analyze the literary materials, based on their own understanding of literature; but of course, again it is the responsibility of the teacher to guide the students to the desired goals of the class. There are always preferred versions of literary appreciations that are advocated by specified social groups. It is teacher's duty to provide an explicit framework for the class, based on social paradigms. This would not imply the thorough agreement with dominant educational discipline. They would encourage students to contemplate on different issues of their societies, under the direct supervision of the instructor.

-Participation of Students in the Assessment Process: here, the students may have the opportunity to have an active share in assessment process. The teacher may prepare some questionnaires about each group's seminars and activities with relation to the students' area of interest. Each group which had the most approving scores (evaluated by providing more beneficial information to other students, having more common points with the literary texts that the teacher had supplied for the class and the capacity to deepen and sharpen the groups' schemas) would have a better chance to get the higher point. Of course some portion of the mark is attributed to the teacher's opinion about the students and their group work.

Whatever the targets of the class are, the educators have the responsibility to prepare students to live successful lives, by obtaining a chance of employment for financial self-support, competent participation in the community and contributions to society; to achieve this aim, a flexible method of teaching must be utilized.

## CONCLUSION

This research is an attempt to infuse two different theories, for enriching the teaching strategies in literature. By combining the schema theory and the notion of interpretive communities, the researcher wishes to introduce a new word, **Group Schema**, which means the collective knowledge that students bring to the class, in order to create more flexible teaching stratagems, in literature classes. Based on the schema theory, the meaning of a text resides not in the text solely but it is created by the interaction of the text and the prior knowledge that readers bring to the text, which is influenced by the social, cultural, racial background of the individuals, as well as their personal diversities. According to the concept of interpretive communities, the strategies of signification or construction of meaning is based on the collective reading policies of the society which is a dynamic process. In moving toward a flexible teaching strategy, there must be a constant evaluation of student's demands in the class, not to ignore the authority of the teacher, in guiding the students to the pre-assumed objectives of the class. On the whole, in this method of teaching, all the pre-established canons and traditional systems of teaching are challenged, in favor of a more flexible teaching strategy to formulate new versions of materials which are related to literature, like music and movies. This would result in creation of an enriched educational environment, under the monitor of the instructor.

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## THE ATTITUDES OF EFL LEARNERS TOWARDS USING MIND MAPPING SOFTWARE ON THEIR READING COMPREHENSION

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### ABSTRACT

Nowadays, the technological developments are one of the inseparable parts of teaching especially in English language teaching programs. Reading as one of the important and purposeful macro skills of literacy is mainly based on the interaction of an active reader and the text in order to get the meaning (Alderson & Urquhart, 1984; Koda, 2005). And as many stated, the comprehension is the most important part of reading (e. g. Pressley, 2006). There are lots of modern devices which suits reading comprehension. Mind mapping softwares are among them. This study aimed to search the attitudes of 31 EFL female students towards the use of mind mapping softwares on reading comprehension activities. They were sophomore students of business management at Hakimian university, Bojnourd, Iran. The research was conducted through an attitude questionnaire and the data was analyzed by calculating the frequencies of the answers to these 17 questions in the Lickert type. The results showed that the participants' attitudes were significantly positive towards the use of mind mapping softwares on their reading activities in order to enhance comprehension. Most of them found them an interesting tool, although expressed that it is more difficult to design a mind map by software in comparison to its handmade designation. They emphasized on some of the advantages of software mind maps like sharing or even designing their mind maps with others via internet.

**KEYWORDS:** Attitudes, Mind Mapping Software, Reading Comprehension, Female Learners

### INTRODUCTION

In second language learning programs, reading English texts has a significant role. Reading can be regarded as especially important because it is assumed to be one of the central means for learning new information (Grabe & Stoller, 2001). It is one of the essential macro skills especially for students who study English as a part of their education and they might be required to read textbooks, carry out research, prepare reports, etc. Therefore, they need to comprehend successfully as well as to read effectively. Nowadays, the progress of the technology has made some changes in different aspects of our life and in education as a part of it. This technological development is extended to the ELT and particularly in the scope of reading comprehension, too. There are lots of reading strategies which governs by technological tools as computers, web, etc. Graphic organizers, concept map, and mind maps are among them.

When you want to express your ideas and concepts, you can demonstrate them visually in the form of a mind map (Buzan & Buzan, 1993; Wycoff, 1991). "A mind map is a colourful, visual form of note-taking that can be worked on by one person or a team of people. At its heart is a central idea or image. This is then explored by means of branches representing main ideas, which all connect to this central idea." (Buzan, 2004, p. 10). Actually the origins of mind mapping belongs to the note takings of some genius people like Da Vinci, Edison, Einstein and Michaelangelo, that were investigated by Buzan in 2003. In fact Tony Buzan involved with mind mapping strategy by studying the techniques they used in their notes; that it was a proven for the use of both halves of the brain by them that resulted some kind of creativity (Hofland, 2007).

The flexible links of mind maps, capacity of using images, colors, and lots of other useful options facilitate different actions as brainstorming, analyzing, comprehending, etc. One hundred uses of mind maps are mentioned by Congdon (2011), Foreman (2009), etc. There are two kinds of mind maps: hand-made mind maps and software mind maps. Thanks to the progress of technology, nowadays there is a chance to design mind maps by computers. Among the increasingly number of mind map software programs, we can mention some of them like, Free mind map, Buzan i mind map, personal brain, mind manager, x mind. It's a fact that there are some benefits of computer mind mapping over manual mind mapping. There are lots of quotations that state this superiority, but lots of them bode in cases like:

"However, the areas where computer Mind Mapping can offer a significant improvement to personal productivity are the areas of: automatic Mind Map generation; Mind Map editing; data storage; data retrieval; text input; and the organisation of data." (Buzan & Buzan, 1996, p.274).

The mind maps created by computer software are printable and you can make copies for the use of a group of people. It may occur most of times that when designing a mind map, you realize that it takes more space to complete it, so in manual working you are forced to redraw it in a bigger paper; but in the computer ones you can continue without any worry about its small size, because the computer can magnify the branches and sub-branches (it is known as Mega Mind Map) (Buzan & Buzan, 1996). It must be mentioned that you can also see the overall mind map simultaneously. In other words, they are macro and micro manager of the information. They also make the opportunity to draw the branches and sub-branches separately and then link them to the main theme which is located in the center. The computer mind maps are portable, so they have the ability to be used or edited by other soft wares. Drawing a mind map by aids of computers is faster than handmade ones, even with few tool requirement and they can be saved in computers with their vast memory capacity. It is clear that working with a computer, will make the opportunity of recoloring and repositioning the mind maps, as the mind map soft wares have a toolbar to control these options. They can also record the ideas that are produced spontaneously during brainstorming. Mind map soft wares are capable to receive the key words and to place them in central theme or sub-branches. Organizing and reorganizing information are important advantages of computer mind maps, as Buzan and Buzan (1996) mention:

"An integrated data organisation environment allows you to group files into directories, sub-directories and sub- sub directories, etc., enabling you to locate easily and with instant retrieval capability items from any category" (p. 277).

The recent computer mind maps do not give just one version of mind map for inputs, in fact they enable us with a variety of mind map forms for an indicate data. In other hand, their show is equipped with the mood of presentation in a 3D view to give more insight to audience. As Buzan and Buzan (1996) avouch for the appropriateness of using mind maps for the aim of lecturing as it makes a balance between spontaneous and fresh talk and the clear and well-structured one. It's certain that the computer made mind maps have the capacity of transferring via internet or share them online for the use of working purposes or group discussion. One of the superiorities of software mind maps that are provided by the aid of computers over hand writing mind maps is that when you want to design a mind map, you may study for many times after starting a mind map, so software mind maps give this chance to you to avoid rewriting while your information

increased in intervals. This editing process is available in the stage of editing the not precise structures and also the ideas that are located in not appropriate places.

#### **REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE**

A few numbers of studies have been devoted to incorporate the use of mind mapping soft wares in order to improve learners reading comprehension, and as we said, this study is an attempt to fill the gaps in this realm. Some of the past studies in this scope are presented below.

Kim and Kim (2012), in a study to find the educational outcomes of using digital mind maps in elementary level classes, perceived its positive effects for example in memorizing vocabularies and they also introduced mind mapping as a tool that suits with different learning styles. Benavides et al (2010), searched on the effects of mind mapping software on reading comprehension for the students of Bachelor degree in English attending reading and writing in English II course at Universidad de Oriente Univ, San Miguel. The data in this dissertation analyzed in three parts: contrastive analysis of students' assignments, questionnaire, and content analysis. The results in the first part showed that 17 students out of 25, had progress in visualizing skill and determining important skill. The results of questionnaire showed that 100% of the students considered the Mind Mapping Software as a good tool for the improvement of reading comprehension skill and as a technique to summarizing reading and to organize the ideas. And the last part indicated synthesizing skill is the highest and most complex form of comprehension.

Ellozy and Mostafa (2010), in an attempt searched to find the effects of using E-maps in developing critical reading skills of seventy first year Egyptian students who enrolled at the American University in Cairo. The results showed that the majority of the participants found it as an active tool to enhance critical thinking and its visualization feature led them to a better communication. In fact it improved their analytical and synthetic skills. Liu, Chen, and Chang (2010) studied the effect of computer-assisted concept mapping strategy on reading comprehension of EFL learners and the results showed that its positive effect appeared more in low-level students than the high-level ones. Also it showed that it increased the participants' use of other English reading strategies—listing, enforcing, and reviewing. Tucker, Armstrong, and Massad (2009) in a survey discovered that 41 percent of respondents in business use either hand-drawn maps or mind mapping software. Their results indicated that in education 43 percent (about 75 percent of it is related to female and about 25 percent to male), in government 10 percent, and in other sectors it is 0.06. Ruffini (2008), tried to test the effects of using e- maps to organize and navigate the online content of twelve students and finally reached to the positive effects. Bidarra, Guimarães, and Kommers (2000), in a study on mind mapping and the creation of Hyperscapes, found that they can give learners control over multimedia materials and improve motivation.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The purpose of this study is to shed light on the attitudes of Iranian EFL learners towards the use of mind mapping software on their reading comprehension. In other words, this study attempts to find answers to the following research question:

1. What are the attitudes of Iranian female EFL learners towards using mind mapping software as a tool to improve their reading comprehension?

#### **METHODOLOGY**

In order to find the purpose of this study which aimed to investigate students' attitudes towards using mind mapping software while reading comprehension, the quantitative data of the participants were gathered through a questionnaire.

##### ***Participants***

The participants of this study were 31 female students of business management at Hakimian University of Bojnourd, Iran. They were participating in general English course as their compulsory one. It must be mentioned that these students passed the pre-university general English in their previous semester and they are familiar with mind maps and how to use them in comprehending reading text since they have been taught to use mind maps and have used them for 16 sessions in their last semester. The general English semester lasted two hours per week for 16 weeks and this is their second semester they participating in the university. Their ages ranged from 18 to 23 and we selected just female students as the limitation in the number of male students in this university and in this field of study forced us.

##### ***Instruments***

As mentioned before, the quantitative data of this study was collected through an attitude questionnaire. The questionnaire was composed of 17 questions in relation to the use of software mind maps in reading comprehension activities. The questions are close-ended and the responses are based on 4-point Likert scale, that 1 stands for "strongly agree", 2 for "agree", 3 for "disagree", and 4 for "strongly disagree". The questionnaire was designed by the researcher with some inspirations from the questionnaire prepared by Hariri and Tahriri (2013) and studied by another EFL instructor of university to be confirmed. Also the questionnaire was piloted on another group of 15 students in the same university and with the same field of study to be informed of the possible problems and to correct them. It must be mentioned the participants were familiar with mind mapping, especially hand-made ones from their last semester but at the number of treatment sessions in this semester for using mind map soft wares were 14 sessions and in each session 15 minutes were allocated to it. In this treatment period, the students got familiar with mind map soft wares and cooperated to do it in the class for the reading texts of their course book. The main textbook that was considered for this semester was "Inside Reading 2" (intermediate) by Lawrence, Zimmerman, and Zimmerman (2012). They also tried designing mind maps by their own computers out of the class in the home.

##### ***Procedure***

The rational for selecting these participants was based on the fact that the researcher was the teacher of this class in the current and previous semester and they practiced mind maps in their last semester as an extra activity for each session. So, there was no need to introduce mind maps to them as they were familiar to it from their last semester. The data gathered by the researcher herself as the teacher of this class. It must be mentioned that the participants taking part in the study were aware of the intentions of the study and were guaranteed that their responses did not have any effect on their course score.

##### ***Data Analysis***

After the data from the questionnaire were gathered, they were analyzed by determining the frequency for each of the questionnaire's



questions. At the end, the results were presented in the form of table too.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

As we said, the answers of the questionnaire were based on the Likert scales, these answers are showed in Table 1 below:

*Table 1: Students' Responses to Attitudes Items about the Use of Mind Map Software in Reading Comprehension*

Items	Students' Responses							
	1 Strongly Agree		2 Agree		3 Strongly Disagree		4 Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	2	10%	6	30%	3	15%	9	45%
2	4	20%	11	55%	3	15%	2	10%
3	6	30%	10	50%	3	15%	1	5%
4	4	20%	10	50%	2	10%	4	20%
5	5	25%	8	40%	3	15%	4	20%
6	0	0%	3	15%	7	35%	10	50%
7	5	25%	10	50%	1	5%	4	20%
8	4	20%	12	60%	1	5%	3	15%
9	4	20%	13	65%	1	5%	2	10%
10	4	20%	5	25%	4	20%	7	35%
11	5	25%	3	15%	5	25%	6	30%
12	6	30%	7	35%	2	10%	4	20%
13	5	25%	6	30%	3	15%	6	30%
14	6	30%	10	50%	2	10%	2	10%
15	5	25%	10	50%	2	10%	3	15%
16	3	15%	4	20%	5	25%	8	40%
17	4	20%	10	50%	3	15%	3	15%

According to the early questions of the questionnaire, most of the participants indicated that software mind maps are more interesting than handmade ones but both of them help the learners in their reading comprehension. They said that training how to mind map by a software needs lots of training and special courses. Most of them mentioned some superior characteristics of software mind mapping on handmade ones (item 12), as sharing knowledge of a reading passage along peoples along world (item 4), or communicating with other students (item 13). They consider it as a new way of working on reading comprehension and most of them were disagree that using mind maps in reading comprehension is a waste of time and few of them felt isolated when practicing reading by mind map soft wares. Half of them in item 10 expressed that mind map soft wares are complicated to use but the rest were disagree, as in the item 11, half of them were not the type to use soft wares. Most of the participants (80%), stated that they are pleased to use mind map soft wares for their reading comprehension in the future especially at their own homes. But most of them considered the designation of a mind map by soft ware more difficult than its handmade one (item 16) but it is more useful for solving the post-reading questions (item 17).

As we mentioned earlier, there are few studies conducted to investigate the role of mind map softwares on the students reading comprehension, but the findings of this research is in line with the results of some of the studies mentioned in the literature review as Benavides et al (2010) who expressed the positive role of mind map soft wares in summarizing, organizing and summarizing a reading passage which help increasing the comprehension. Also it is in line with Liu, Chen, and Chang's (2010) study that proved mind map softwares had positive effects on low-level EFL learners. This study also reached to some further information about the attitudes of the participants towards paper made mind maps and software mind maps that they stated although the mind maps designed by a software are more interesting than the handmade mind maps, but it needs to be instructed in order to design a mind map with a software.

## CONCLUSION

The present study aimed at examining the attitudes of 31 EFL female university students that their proficiency level was mainly elementary towards the use of mind map softwares on their reading to improve their comprehension. Due to the approximately positive conclusions of the study, it may be premature to state that there is significant attitudes of these university EFL learners towards using mindmapping softwares in the reading comprehension. Most of the participants said that they enjoyed using mind map softwares and they will use it in the future but it needs some instruction to gain a good command of it. Nevertheless, further research replicating this study should be carried out in the future to conclusively determine the authenticity of such relationship. One of the limitation for doing this study was the use of computers to work with mind maps in the class by the participants, and as in that university there were no facility for this issue to prepare computers for each student and all the students were not able to have personal laptops and bring them to the class, so the researcher used her personal laptop and showed the content via a projector.

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## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire of Learner's Attitudes towards Using Mind Map Software in Reading Comprehension

Age: .....

Instruction: Please read the following questions and choose one answer from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (4).

**strongly agree      agree      disagree      strongly disagree**  
**1                      2                      3                      4**

No.	ITEM
1	The mind map soft wares are more interesting than the handmade ones.
2	I need do a lot of training in a course which uses mind mapping software to understand how to use them.
3	Mind maps (whether soft wares or handmade) help me to have better reading comprehension.
4	I enjoy sharing my knowledge of a reading passage with peoples all around the world via mind maps software.
5	As a new way of reading, I think mind-mapping soft wares are interesting.
6	Using mind map software in a reading process is a waste of time.
7	Mind map soft wares provide me with learning opportunities that I have never tried before in usual reading classes.
8	I felt isolated when I participated in a course using mind map soft wares.
9	It is easier for me to comprehend what I've read through mind map soft wares than without them.
10	The mind map soft wares are complicated to use.
11	I am not the type to do well with soft wares.
12	There are lots of advantages in designing a mind map by software than handmade.
13	Software mind maps are more suitable to communicate more with other students than the handmade ones.
14	In the future, do not want to use mind map soft wares.
15	I would like to be able to use mind map soft wares at home.
16	Designing a software mind map is easier than its handmade one.
17	When I use mind map soft wares for a reading passage, I'm more able to solve post-reading activities.

## ON THE EFFECT OF ASSESSING THREE KINDS OF FORM-FOCUSED INSTRUCTION ON EFL LEARNER'S ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the nature of three types of focus on form in three communicative classrooms on English as a Foreign Language milieu. The study was conducted with intermediate participants in a private language institute in Bandar Abass, Iran. Based on a mixed method, containing both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, the effectiveness of input-enhancement, dictogloss, and consciousness-raising was traced through a pre-test-post-test design and a two-week classroom observation. SPSS analysis revealed input enhancement and consciousness-raising had significant effects on the gain scores of two groups. The study also showed that there was more viable teacher-learner interaction involving "use of preposition" in consciousness-raising than the two other tasks. The study suggested that Iranian EFL learners could benefit more from consciousness-raising task if appropriately incorporated into classroom activity.

**KEYWORDS:** Task-based instruction, Form-focused instruction, Input enhancement, Dictogloss, Consciousness-raising

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the tendency toward task-based instruction has increased. Task-based instruction has been recommended as a way forward in English Language Teaching. Ellis (2003) believes that "task-based instruction (TBI), as an offspring of the strong version of communicative language teaching, with an emphasis on meaning over form, fluency over accuracy, experiential approach over analytic one, has been glorified, denigrated, proscribed and prescribed quite furiously by different perspectives. The immediate mastery over authentic language use, attainment of communicative competence and performance, numerous supportive evidence from Second Language Acquisition theories, all in all seem to herald a new panacea to the ailment of language learning". Focus-on-form instruction in second language teaching is defined by Long (1991, pp. 45–46) as an attempt that "overtly draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication". This definition of focus-on-form is in line with Spada (1997) of the concept of form-focused instruction (FFI) in which FFI refers to "pedagogical events which occur within meaning-based approaches to L2 instruction but in which a focus on language is provided in either spontaneous or predetermined ways". This new approach encourages learner to acquire communicative and grammatical knowledge. So, FFI or focus-on-form deals with any pedagogical effort which is performed to draw learner attention to form either explicitly or implicitly.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

TBI, however, has confronted many criticisms in its own turn. One of the most critical issue that has been pointed to, is the role of "grammar instruction". TBI, in stark contrast to task-supported instruction based on the Cognitivist Approach, is heavily grounded in Implicit Learning Model, based on Interactionist view. Although the latter is predominated theory-wise, in practice it failed to account for various aspects of language learning, such as: development of linguistic competence and accuracy, lack of idiomaticity or sociocultural appropriateness, and the hazard of fossilization that may induce a false, pidginized glib. FFI is proposed as a viable solution to compensate these deficiencies. At the heart of FFI is the "focused task", a task which is designed to induce learners to process or produce a linguistic form. This approach should not be confounded with traditional approach to grammar, in which the teaching of grammar was equated with "forms only" in an isolated, decontextualized and artificial manner to memorize grammatical forms, devoid of any meaning, through controlled drills and exercises such as: repetition and substitution. On the other hand, FFI is meaning-oriented and endeavours to draw learners conscious or subconscious attention into grammatical points while they are engaged in negotiation of meaning to achieve a communicative purpose. In this way, input can promote both meaningful interaction and acquisition of salient linguistic forms.

#### *Theoretical Framework*

As it is claimed the most prevalent and valid conceptualization of FFI in SLA research realizes at three levels:

- 1- Proactive conceptualization at syllabus design level (Williams & Doughty, 1998),
- 2- Reactive conceptualization at methodological process level (Long & Robinson, 1998),
- 3- Postactive conceptualization or after-task-completion (Skehan & Foster, 2005).

At the level of syllabus, 'task' could be designed in such a way that incorporates a specific linguistic structure. Structure-based communication task is a focused task that can be implemented through task-naturalness, task-utility and task-essentialness (Loschky & Bley-Vroman, 1993). Comprehension or interpretation task is another important alternative in FFI. At the level of methodology, FFI could be performed either implicitly (e.g. recasting and clarification) or explicitly (through metalinguistic comment, query). Postactive FFI aims to observe and identify learners error and diagnose them either through direct correction or indirect, delayed feedback.

The current study concentrated on the second level of FFI namely, 'reactive conceptualization at methodological process level' in which three kinds of presented task were performed explicitly or implicitly. Teachers involved in this study provided different tasks at this level of focus on form which were focused on 'preposition'. For instance, the first group of learners was benefited from comprehension activities by focusing on the input in input enhancement task. The second group was benefited from production activities by concentrating on the output in dictogloss task (by reconstructing the text as closely as possible to the original version in a collaborative work). The last task made a language point the topic of language and raised the explicit attention of learners to the form in consciousness-raising task. So, in all of these tasks learners implicitly or explicitly concentrated on form and exchanging of information for obtaining meaning or communication purposes.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

We begin our overview of task-based instruction with the two most prevalent and well accepted definitions of a 'task' provided by Ellis and Nunan. Ellis (2006) defines task in the following way: "A task is a work-plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or

written skills and also various cognitive processes". Nunan (2006) believes that "a task is a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form".

Most of the studies carried on the task investigated the effectiveness of focus-on-form instruction in three kinds of task namely, input enhancement, dictogloss, and consciousness-raising. A number of research studies investigated the effect of input enhancement on noticing and language acquisition. For example, Jourdenais et al. (as cited in Ellis, 2003) used a think-aloud procedure to determine whether the highlighting of target forms would affect learners' on-line processing of forms, found that the think-aloud protocols of students exposed to enhanced text contained significantly more episodes related to the target forms than the group who did not have enhanced texts.

In dealing with 'dictogloss', Swain and Lapkin (as cited in Fotos & Nassaji, 2011) compared Grade 8 French immersion student's performance of an information gap task involving a picture-story and dictogloss task where they first listened to the story and took the notes before attempting to reconstruct it. They predicted that because the dictogloss task afforded the learners a linguistically-encoded content, they would have more time to attend to form (a corollary of accuracy) than in the information gap task where the information was supplied pictorially and thus had to be encoded linguistically by the learners. However, there were no statistically significant differences in the frequency of 'language-related episodes'. On the other studies relating to dictogloss, Kowal and Swain (as cited in Ellis, 2003) found that Grade 8 French immersion students both noticed and produced exemplars of the present tense when working in pairs to reconstruct a text that had been devised to practice this structure.

The last pieces of research studies pertains to the consciousness-raising (CR) tasks which were conducted by Ellis and Fotos (as cited in Ellis, 2003) to examine whether the grammatical understanding that resulted from learners performing a CR task was as good as that resulting from traditional grammatical explanations provided by a teacher showed that the CR tasks used in this study led to a good understanding of the target grammar points and resulted in plentiful meaning negotiation. On the other study, Sheen (as cited in Fotos & Nassaji, 2011) compared direct and indirect consciousness-raising in a six-week beginners' French course for Japanese students, reporting that students in the two groups did equally well in written post-test of the structures taught.

One of the Researches which examined the effect of task repetition on learning enhancement in EFL learners was conducted by Ahmadian. Ahmadian (2012) considered the significance of repetition of the same or slightly altered tasks at intervals. He considered how teachers might develop the pre-, while-, and post-task phases of lessons. He ultimately found that instead of focusing upon the performance of tasks in isolation, the concept of task repetition moves the focus of debate clearly towards the pedagogic use of tasks within lessons.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study examined the effectiveness of focus-on-form instruction in three kinds of task (input enhancement, dictogloss, and consciousness-raising) at methodological process level. Thus, this study investigated three groups of EFL learners who dealt with three different kinds of task to focus on form adopted in classroom. "Preposition" used for the form in focus since most of EFL learners encountered with different problems in accurate use of prepositions due to their low saliency and insensitivity of learners.

#### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

In recent years, language teaching and learning have trends toward communication dimension of language via focus on form. This kind of focus as an active and meaning-based to language teaching and language learning. Various researchs and studies were conducted in EFL milieu concerning the effect and nature of explicit and implicit focus on form. It is one of the concern of EFL teachers that how much learners' attention is directed to communication by focusing on form. As Sheen (2003) points out that "the debate revolve around the degree to which teachers need to direct learners' attention to understanding grammar whilst retaining a focus on the need to communicate".

#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study sought to find the answer for the following questions:

- a) Do different types of focus-on-form have different effects on EFL learner's academic achievement?
- b) Which type of focus on form affects students' use of English preposition the most ?

#### **METHODOLOGY**

This study conducted through a mixed method. The choice of the methodology was mainly in line with Ellis' (2003) recommendation for research on tasks: "FFI studies could be examples of hybrid research, or a combination of confirmatory and interpretive paradigm". Such a procedure added more to the depth and credibility of the results. Thus, this study was carried out in two phases: a quantitative phase followed by a qualitative one. Data were collected and analyzed through both perspectives. The quantitative phase involved administration a pre-test-post-test design. At first, a pre-test administered to capture pre-existing differences among groups and to make them statistically equivalent from the outset. Later on, two weeks of instruction based on FFI were followed. At the end of intended instruction post-tests administered to measure any changes in the learner's accurate usage of preposition (gain score) which in turns indicated the effectiveness of instruction. The second phase, a qualitative data collection, involved classroom observation and note-taking in order to address the second research question, which mainly aimed at revealing if three different types of tasks would lead to more meaningful interaction containing using prepositions or not.

#### **Participants**

This study drew on convenient sampling. The researchers used the available sample at an institute in Bandar Abbas, Iran. Although this type of sampling is the weakest or the least desirable type of sampling but as Miles and Huberman (as cited in Dorney, 2007) claim that "convenient sampling is the most common sampling strategy, at least at the postgraduate research level. It is not purposive but largely practical: the researcher uses those who are available". Three major groups (classroom) of learners, who were studying at the same levels, *intermediate level or Real course* at level 8, were chosen for this study. Thirty-five participants (two groups each with 12 participants and one group with 11 participants) participated in this study. They studied at three different classes with three different teachers (each of teachers had more than three years teaching experience in language institute) although all of the participants were at the same level (8) and studied the same textbook (Real). Then, three different tasks (input enhancement, dictogloss, and consciousness-raising) were allocated for three groups (each class or group was allocated one task).

### Materials

Tasks were the core material for this study. Three kinds of task were considered: input enhancement, dictogloss, and consciousness-raising. These tasks were extracted from textbook under the instruction. The textbook used for this course was *Real* (Craven, 2008). This book has communicative themes realting to social, travel, work, study, and etc.

Input enhancement involves "typological enhancement of input to draw learners incidental attention to salient features of target language that may be left unnoticed otherwise" (Fotos & Nassaji, 2011). Here, the teacher provided a short text in which prepositions were bolded and learners were exposed to 'bold prepositions' (e.g. appendix C, task 1). The second group was benefited from dictogloss. As Nassaji (1999) explains dictogloss as a technique in which "the teacher reads a short text twice and at a normal speed to group of students. The students are instructed to listen very carefully and to write down as such information as they can as they listen to the story. When the reading is finished, the students are divided into small groups and are asked to use their resources to reconstruct the text as closely as possible to the original version. Finally, the students are asked to compare and analyze the different versions they have produced". So, in this study, the teacher read a short text (e.g. appendix C, task 2) for learners twice at a normal speed. The learners listened carefully and took notes, e.g some key phrases. Then, they reconstructed the story later. Here, the aim was to test whether the learners could product "preposition" accurately or not.

The last group was benefited from the instruction of consciousness-raising task. Consciousness-raising (C-R), as an explicit focused task with linguistic content, required learners to use their metalingual ability to move beyond semantic processing to syntactic processing through negotiation of form. As Ellis (2003) mentions that "C-R tasks seem to be an effective means of achieving a focus on form while at the same time affording opportunities to communicate". In this group, learners should concentrate explicitly on the preposition on the text which was provided by the teacher. For instance one of the task implemented in the class by learners presented in appendix C, task 3 in which learners should underline time preposition on the text firstly and then write the time phrase in the provided table.

### Instruments

Tests constituted the main instruments for this study. A pre-test (appendix A) administered at the beginning of the research constructed based on a focus on different usages of prepositions. This test was extracted from the book of *Grammar in Use* (Murphy & Smalzer, 2009) and given to three teachers who cooperated in this study in order to judge whether it was at the level of student or not. In order to have a more reliable test, it was administered to the similar group of students (studied at level 8 of *Real* course) before the beginning of the study. Post-test (appendix B) was another instrument followed the same format and from the same mentioned resource although the questions were different. Observation of the researchers during classroom constituted another instrument for gathering in-situ data. Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Aray, Jacobs, & Sorenson, 2010, p 424) introduced the concept of human as instrument to emphasize the unique role that qualitative researchers play in their inquiry.

### Procedures for Data Collection and Data Analysis

Data were triangulated through classroom observation and field note-taking of interaction between teacher-student, and two tests (pre-test, post-test). Three instructors administered the pre-test on the same day and allocated the same amount of time for students at the beginning of the study. Pre-test included 15 blanks and each correct answer received one positive score total of 15 scores. Researcher spent eighteen session of class observation (six sessions for each teacher) which lasted ninety minutes for each session. Although the teachers followed a set routine of communicative instruction in their classes, some of the times of the classes were allocated to dealing with provided tasks (focusing on form) through communication. During classroom observation, the researchers endeavored to capture as many relevant teacher performances as possible, including their use of materials, classroom management in interaction with students.

Data were transcribed and codified. A post test was administered by three instructors after two weeks instruction and the criterion for scoring procedure was the same as pre-test. Mean scores were calculated for correct and wrong use of form for each of the task for pre-test and post-test separately. The researcher compared mean scores of each group in the form of paired t-test in pre-test and post-test to obtain the amount of progress in learning for each group. The level of significant was pre-set to .05 ( $p < .05$ ). Percentages for learning gains (progress from pre to post-test) were calculated for each kind of tasks.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section involves findings from both phases of research. First, the quantitative phase is examined. Findings from the current study indicated that two tasks out of three tasks which focused on form affected on EFL learners academic achievement. Table 1 shows that learners had progress from pre- to post-test (learning gains) for input enhancement.

Table 1: Learning gains from pre to post-test for Input Enhancement

Input enhancement	N	Mean/15	SD	SEM	t	p
Pre-test	12	8.41	2.50	0.722	4.213	0.001
Post-test	12	11.16	2.20	0.637		

As indicated in 'table 1', the learners' mean, which was only 8.41 out of 15 on the pre-test, increased to 11.16 out of 15 on the post-test. The learning gain from pre- to post-tests is highly significant ( $t = 4.213$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ); it indicates that students made impressive progress on this task from pre- to post-tests as a result of FFI (instruction of input enhancement).

Results from dictogloss task indicated (table 2) that learners had less or no progress from pre-to-post test.

Table2: Learning gains from pre to post-test for Dictogloss

Dictogloss	N	Mean/15	SD	SEM	t	p
Pre-test	12	8.50	2.57	0.743	0.484	0.638
Post-test	12	8.75	2.38	0.689		

As illustrated in 'table 2'. The learners' mean, which was 8.50 out of 15 on the pre-test, increased to 8.75 out of 15 on the post-test. The learning gains from pre- to post-tests are less or no significant ( $t = 0.484$ , and  $0.638 < p$ ); it indicates that students had less or no progress on this task from pre- to post-tests as a result of the instruction of dictogloss task. The learning gains made from pre- to post-test for consciousness-raising task as they are presented in 'table 3' showed that learners had highly progress in this kind of task.



*Table 3: Learning gains from pre to post-test for Consciousness-raising*

Consciousness-raising	N	Mean/15	SD	SEM	t	p
Pre-test	11	8.36	3.10	0.936	4.737	0.001
Post-test	11	12.27	2.72	0.821		

Table 3 indicated that the learners' mean, which was only 8.36 out of 15 on the pre-test, increased to 12.27 out of 15 on the post-test. The learning gain from pre- to post-tests is highly significant ( $t = 4.737$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ); it shows that students made impressive progress on this task from pre- to post-tests as a result of the instruction of consciousness-raising task.

The researchers observed two weeks of classroom instruction. The main goal of this phase was to examine which type of focus on form (FOF) motivated more opportunities for learners to use preposition. Below, there are three examples taken through filed-noting during classroom observation. They also revealed the type of classroom interactions between teachers and learners.

*Example on: Input enhancement*

Attention may be drawn to a target form via typographical means such as underlining, color-coding, or bolding target structures that appear within a meaningful setting. For instance, in this study the teacher administers a text contains some bolded items (preposition). He asks his students to first read the text individually. Later he asks them to be paired and look more carefully at the bolded items. There is some discussion between students (student-student interaction). Teacher adds more explanations on the board and gives some oral examples.

\_Teacher (to the class): do you understand it?

\_Class: YES!

In another situation, the teacher brings a picture to the class. By using picture, teacher wants to learn using the correct form of "preposition" for *directions*. He writes every preposition with different color beside each picture. He addresses to students:

\_Teacher: Look! *On* (blue color) the left is kitchen.... and *on* (blue color) the right is the dining room. There is bathroom just *at* (red color) the top of the stairs and living room here just *at* (red color) the bottom of stairs. *Opposite* (yellow color) to our room is Abigail's room and *next to* (green color) Abigail's is your room.

\_Student: Excuse me! Use *on* for top and right and *at* for bottom and left.

\_Teacher: Pay attention to color...

\_Student: Pardon me! You mean we use *on* for the left and right directions because you use the same blue color and *at* for the top and bottom because you use the same red color.....

\_Teacher: Right! You got it.

Although some understanding-checking questions popped up during the instruction, examples of initiation or use of preposition by the learners were rarely observed in this classroom.

*Example two: Dictogloss*

In the beginning of the class, teacher and students review some points related to the previous lesson. Then, the teacher informs students that they are going to have a new classroom activity.

He presents oral introduction and make students understand what they are going to learn in this lesson. After that, He reads the provided text for students loudly with a normal speed twice.

T: We'll have a dictation, a new one. I'll read a text aloud and omit some parts of it, the preposition. You have to write the correct prepositions while you are writing the text.

Teacher divides students in four groups (each group contains three students) and requests students to cooperate with each other. He only observes discussion of the students for reconstructing the text and finding the correct preposition. At the end, students try to sort every part of the text in the separate sentence.

\_Students: We find appropriate prepositions and separate each sentence.

\_Teacher: Good! I'll explain them on the board.

After the dictogloss, the teacher turns to the board and organizes them in categories and adds more explanation (Teacher-whole class interaction).

*Example three: consciousness-raising*

The pedagogical grammar hypothesis and its consciousness-raising techniques are the undeniable forefathers of focus-on-form theory and techniques. Rutherford and Sharwood Smith (1988) define consciousness-raising as "the deliberate attempt to draw the learner's attention specifically to the formal properties of the target language" (as cited in Gascoigne, 2001).

For performing consciousness-raising task in the current study, the teacher asks learners to work in pair. He gives them a text followed by a table. The students are asked to read the text and organize the prepositions in the pre-made table. Then the teacher asks every pair to read one of the examples and explain if it's a time preposition, place preposition or other types.

\_Student A: "*On*" Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> May, but we say "*in*" June?

\_Teacher: great! And why?

\_Student A: well.....we use "*in*" for months?

\_Teacher: Good! And?

\_Students: but for time, sorry date (?), we should use "*on*"

\_Teacher: can you give me an example about your own birthday?

\_Students: I was born on April 23d, 1987? But, I was born in April

\_Teacher: yeah!



In another situation, students discuss about a subject. Teacher goes near to them.

\_Teacher: What's the matter?

\_Students: We have a discussion about using the right preposition for university.

\_Teacher: and did you reach an agreement?

\_Students: Which one *on*, *at*, or *in* can we use with university?

\_Teacher: Do you study at Azad university (Student A)?

\_Student A: Yes

\_Teacher: How about you, do you study at Azad university or at Payame-noor university (Student B)?

\_Students: Thanks. We got it. We must use *at*.

\_Teacher: So, would you like to continue our discussion about other prepositions such as...

Pertaining to consciousness-raising task, the teacher tried to develop students basic abilities to understand what they listen to or read and to convey information, knowledge, and ideas by actively interacting with the students and creating positive attitude toward communication through dealing with everyday's life matters. It could be observed that learners were more prone to initiate and use preposition while working with consciousness-raising task.

### Discussion

The discussion section is devoted mainly to summarize and discuss the results obtained from the effect of three kinds of task on EFL learners' academic achievement. The researchers considered this question that do different types of focus-on-form have different effects on EFL learner's academic achievement? They examined the results of the study and realized that the learners who were benefited from two types of task instruction pertaining to input enhancement and consciousness-raising had better progress in their learning. According to the results, students made significantly fewer errors on the post-test than on the pre-test for each of these tasks. For supporting this claim, results obtained from pre-test showed that in pre-test about 56% of participants in input enhancement, 56.6% of participants in dictogloss, and 55.7% of participants in consciousness-raising correctly answered the questions pertaining to prepositions, while these results for post-test were 74.4% for input enhancement, 58.3% for dictogloss, and 81.8% for consciousness-raising respectively. These findings confirmed that using different types of focus-on-form had different effects on the performance of learners. This matter was evident in the progress of learners from pre-to-post-test due to their benefiting from each of these tasks instruction separately. So, dealing with different tasks had different effects in learners academic's achievement.

Considering the second question of the research that which type of focus on form affects students' use of English preposition the most? The researchers endeavored to consider both qualitative and quantitative finding of the study. Although the main focus was on qualitative approach. Pertaining to quantitative results in the form of numbers revealed that the learners who were benefited from conscious-raising task had better performance in dealing with preposition from pre-to-post test compared to two other groups. In the qualitative phase, The field-notes made by the researchers during classroom observations indicated the low frequency of teacher-learners interaction during two types of task, input-enhancement and dictogloss. It is suggested that learners didn't find many opportunities to use preposition during these two FOF. However, a considerable meaningful interaction was engendered during consciousness-raising which went beyond the understanding-checking on the part of teachers. These findings are in line with Ellis (2003) idea about the effectiveness of consciousness-raising task as he believes "C-R tasks seem to be an effective means of achieving a focus on form while at the same time affording opportunities to communicate". This could be a viable, yet not totally generalizable, answer to the second research question which aimed at finding which types of three FOF encouraged more interaction and use of preposition on the part of learners. It could be concluded that "use of preposition" is more motivated via tasks like consciousness-raising in EFL classrooms.

### CONCLUSION

Grammar instruction continues to be a controversial area of research in applied linguistics. As a celebrated approach toward grammar instruction in a communicative-oriented language teaching, Focus-on-form received positive attention due to its balanced approach toward fluency-accuracy and its applicability in EFL contexts. The present study attempted to examine the efficiency of three models of FoF; namely input enhancement, dictogloss, and consciousness-raising; on learning "*preposition*". To achieve this goal, three intermediate classrooms (35 EFL learners) in a private language institute, where the main focus is meaning-based communication, were chosen.

Based on quantitative (pre-test post-test design) and qualitative data collection (observation and field notes), results revealed that EFL learners who were exposed to input enhancement and consciousness-raising task instructions had better progress in appropriate use of preposition compared to the other group who received dictogloss task instruction. Findings from the current study have correspondent to the effectiveness of consciousness-raising task instructions in enhancing learning in learners in some of the previously conducted studies in this area such as, the work of Ellis and Fotos (as cited in Ellis, 2003), and Sheen (as cited in Fotos & Nassaji, 2011) and the effectiveness of input enhancement task in increasing learning in the work of Jourdenais et al. (as cited in Ellis, 2003). Meanwhile, the analysis of classroom observations indicated that more meaningful interaction was engendered during performing consciousness-raising task than the other two tasks. The current study suggested that Iranian EFL learners could benefit more from consciousness-raising task if appropriately incorporated into classroom activity. However, since this study was conducted on a small-scale with a limited sample, generalization should be done with care with different contexts and participants.

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**Appendix A**

**Pre-test**

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_ Term: \_\_\_\_\_  
Course: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: **20 min**

Select an appropriate preposition from the following list for each sentence.

Preposition list: **at, in, by, on, on time, to, in time, of, about, with, for.**

1. Three people were taken ..... the hospital after the accident.
2. You can rent a car ..... the airport.
3. I just started working ..... the sales department.
4. Write your name ..... the top of the page.
5. Can I pay ..... credit card?
6. They sent me a check ..... 200 dollars.
7. Raschel showed me some photos ..... her family.
8. I'll see you ..... Friday morning.
9. I want to deal ..... some problems.
10. If something happens ....., it happens at the time that was planned.
11. There is somebody ..... the building.
12. When you leave the hotel, please leave your key ..... the front desk.
13. Who was responsible ..... all that noise last night.
14. Lisa is upset ..... not being invited to the party.
15. I'm in hurry. I want to be home ..... to see the game on television.

**Appendix B**

**Post-test**

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_ Term: \_\_\_\_\_  
Course: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: **20 min**

Select an appropriate preposition from the following list for each sentence.

Preposition list: **on, at, for, in, to, in time, of, about, on time, with, by.**

- 1- Don't go out ..... the train. Wait until it stops.
- 2- How did you get here? Did you come ..... train?
- 3- The company closed down because there wasn't enough demand ..... its product.
- 4- Don't meet me ..... the station. I can get a taxi.
- 5- Amy works at a bank and her brother is ..... the medical school.
- 6- The bus was late this morning, but it's usually ..... .
- 7- I'm going ..... vacation next week.
- 8- There has been an increase ..... the number of traffic accidents recently.
- 9- The police want to question a man in connection ..... the robbery.
- 10- Thank you. It was very kind ..... you to help me.
- 11- I didn't do it ..... purpose. It was an accident.
- 12- It was a lovely day. There wasn't a cloud ..... the sky.
- 13- I've thought ..... what you said, and I've decided to take your advice.
- 14- Will you home ..... for dinner.
- 15- I don't like going out ..... night.

**Appendix C**

**Task 1: Input Enhancement**

- **Please read the following text and pay attention to the bold words.**

So, welcome to English Studies International everyone. My name is Anna and I'm the director of studies. All right, so the first thing is

what's happening today? So **from** 9 am **until** 10.30, you'll do some tests. **After** you've done the test, **at** half past ten, you can have a break. **After** the break **at** 10.45, Rebecca will be waiting **for** you **in** reception to give you your books. **At** 11 o'clock, please come back here **to** the Learning Center, and Stewart, the Manager, will give you an introduction **to** the Learning Center. **At** half past eleven you will meet Christine. Christine will talk to you **about** the social programme **at** English Studies International. These are all the activities that you can do **after** school. So that **until** midday. Then **at** midday, I will come back. You will meet me again and I'll give you your timetables. Then you can have lunch **in** the canteen. During lunch, Berit will be **in** her office if any of you have accommodation problems. Then, this afternoon you could either listen to a talk **about** London or you could do a conversation class if you know London already.

**Task 2: Dictogloss**

- **Please listen to me carefully. I read the text twice and you listen to me, after I finished my reading you should discuss about it in group and reconstruct the text.**

Before we begin the first activity, I'd just like to talk about a few classroom rules. You know, to help your learning. These are rules for all my students. Ok, so, the first one- the most important rule- when you're in here, inside the classroom, you must speak English. You all have lots of different first languages so it makes sense to use English to each other. A second rule is about being on time in the morning. Lesson start at 9 o'clock so you must get here on time- before 9 is even better- so we can all start studying together. It's not really very polite to arrive 20 minutes late because it disturbs the people who did come on time. It makes things hard for your classmates. And another thing is mobile phones. You mustn't use your mobile during the lesson. Again it's not very polite. In fact, please turn your phone off completely during the lesson.

**Task 3: Consciousness-raising**

- **Please underline the time expression in this passage.**

I made an appointment to see Adam at 4 o'clock on Monday 13th May to speak about my application for a job. Unfortunately, he was involved in a car accident in the morning and rang to cancel the appointment. I made another appointment to see him at 11 o'clock on Thursday 23th May. However, when I got to his office, his secretary told me that his wife had died at the night and that he was not coming into the office that day. She suggested I reschedule for sometimes in Jun. So, I made a third appointment to see Adam at 2 o'clock on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> Jun. this time I actually got to see him. However, he informed me that they had now filled all the vacancies and suggested I contact him again in 1988.

- **Now, write the time Phrases into this table.**

At	On	In

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## ABSTRACT

Launching and developing the virtual and electronic education in universities and educational institutions, and generally, the higher education system, has been regarded by education scholars, communication and information technology professionals, and policy makers and those involved in the teaching and learning activities. Traditional training, despite its prominent role in history and authenticity throughout the years in training, learning and human knowledge, no longer is sufficient to meet all the educational needs of diverse clients from training in the era of information and communication such as continuous education, lifelong learning, and in-service training. At the same time, the use of faculty and students of modern communications technology and e-learning has always faced with the problems. The main objective of this study is to investigate the barriers and strategies for the development of e-learning among the students of physical education in Hamedan province in Iran. The scope of this study is Bu Ali Sina University and, Hamedan Azad University, Iran. Information for this study has been developed using a survey and the questionnaire technique. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: personal information including gender, age, educational level, GPA and University; and, e-learning barriers in the form of four barriers and 35 items. Then the reliability coefficient was determined using Cronbach's alpha (0.92) and the questionnaires were distributed among physical education students (especially) higher education students. To investigate the hypothesis, inferential statistical techniques such as the Kolmogorov – Smirnov test (KS), one-sample t-test and independent t-test were used. The results showed that infrastructure and equipment barriers, credit and financial barriers, educational and administrative barriers and human barriers of physical education students are involved in e-learning. The results also showed that among Bu-Ali Sina University and Azad University, there is no difference in the field of e-learning barriers, educational and administrative barriers, credit and financial barriers and human barriers. However, there are differences in the perception among Azad University students and Bu-Ali Sina University in the infrastructure and equipment barriers.

**KEYWORDS:** Barriers, e-learning, students, physical education

## INTRODUCTION

Emergence of communication networks such as the internet, along with advanced tools and educational facilities, caused the method of teaching to be changed. It enables a wide range of knowledge seekers, from near and far distances, to enjoy training network; and, with methods different from conventional types implement scientific programs. This new method of learning is called e- (virtual learning), today is known as the most advanced teaching methods and it is benefiting from variety of advanced technologies, such as networking, databases, and knowledge management, etc. (Galusha, 1997).

The international dimensions of education and the need for it is imminent, that is, while e-learning development is still serving his childhood, it sets universal and effective influence on the world of education. Despite the great discussion of this phenomenon, it still has a great impact on vocational training and its various international aspects (Jokar, 2007).

Ballard (2000) argues that Information deforms modern Technology Educational institutions through new methods of watching and learning; it teaches students new ways of teaching and knowledge transfer, and it teaches teachers and managers new ways of organizing educational systems. However, the universities will be successful in the information age which their changed structure for the integration of distance learning courses. Those institutions that do not alter the structure may be overlooked by educational planners (Scott, 2000). E-learning has been continuously introduced as an alternative way to enhance traditional approaches. E-learning uses network technologies for the creation, enrichment, provision and facilitating of learning at any time and place (Abdon et al, 2007).

The issue of quality education has always been considered and is gaining more importance day by day (Abdon et al, ibid). Since the dominant mode of teaching and learning is teaching in the classroom, today new communication methods and spaces are provided which would allow teaching - learning process outside the classroom. Recent advances in computer and information industry, entry of information networks and communication technologies has faced the designers, planners, managers and executives of educational programs with new methods and procedures. Penetration of new information technologies in educational institutions has changed the simple relationships between the teaching and learning. With the development of information and communication technology at the Universities, it is expected that learning models to be evolved and more attention should be paid to the revision of the curricula (Fathnejad and Mokhtari, 1386).

However, computer-assisted learning also has its own limitations, such as lack of a good substitute for the teacher, Human and emotional interactions as well as classroom face-to-face communication (Twomey, 2004). Other limitations in the use of computers in Iran higher education are: lack of proper understanding of virtual learning environments, lack of proper infrastructure and telecommunication, lack of enough bandwidth to transmit and receive information. Moniee (2004) in his article argued that system of supply and demand for higher education still does not have an accurate understanding of virtual spaces and it is not well acquainted with the features and functions; and, basic IT skills are not still well known (Moniee, 2004). In this system, the success of learner is associated with technical skills in the use of computers and networks (Shuster, 2003). In addition, high rate of received messages and sending the solutions is a time consuming activity

and it requires information management skills (Twomey, 2003).

Three different evolution waves have been identified in the history. The first wave, that included some enhancements in cities and developments in rural areas, continued till 17th century. Then, the second evolution wave, which is termed 'industrial revolution', came into existence as the second great transformation that history ever had. And thus, for nearly three centuries ago, the evolution of these two waves with different velocities simultaneously continued till now (Toffler, 2002).

Today, with the incredible advances in information technology, preparation and distribution of information has become a new trend. As the second wave expanded and strengthened the human power, the third wave, by making the best use of computer, enhanced intellectual power and it gradually replaced hand workers with knowledge workers. The third wave, as the fundamental principle of the second wave, is moving toward greater diversity. In the first wave of civilization, people were not so dependent on the time because the works did not have a lot of continuity but in the second wave of civilization, delay of an employee or a worker could impede the work of many others. The third wave has personal and particular timing not public and general timing (Toffler, 2002).

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The international dimensions of education and the need for it is imminent, that is, while e-learning development is still serving his childhood, it sets universal and effective influence on the world of education. Despite the great discussion of this phenomenon, it still has a great impact on vocational training and its various international aspects (Shuster, 2003).

Esmaeeli Salumahaleh (2013) discusses the issues and obstacles of e-learning implementation in cultural, educational and technology dimensions in higher education. Analysis of this study shows that, in scholars and students' view, the problems related to telecommunication infrastructure and lack of access of students to computers and communication lines, are matters that cause e-learning not to be implemented successfully in Iran. According to experts, it covers a broader range of issues; they mention other obstacles and challenges for e-learning implementation such as: stakeholders' reaction to e-learning approach, inability of this approach in the transfer of university culture, particular challenges of implementing the first time, the issues facing electronic writing lesson plans, problems of telecommunications infrastructure, failure of proper facilities, as well as software and hardware costs, the social deficiencies of this type of distance learning and inadequate access of students to facilities.

Naghavi (2007), in his study, discussed about 'the Attitudes of Faculty and Graduate Students of Agricultural Extension and Education toward Distance Learning via the Internet'. Additionally, he considered the proficiency level of Information Technology of faculty and graduate students as a necessary element of e-learning development; moreover, he investigated the barriers of the expansion of this type of education (Naghavi, 2007).

In another study on the barriers to the development of the e-learning on the educational system in Iran, these barriers were divided into six categories:

- technological;
- Cultural and social;
- Pedagogical;
- Legal and administrative;
- Strategic; and,
- Economic (Houseinilorgani et al, 1387).

In other studies, including Frazeeen (2004), it has been shown that implementing e-learning would be merely successful when the courses are theoretical.

Mirzayi (2013), in his study entitled the barriers of e-learning development in higher education in students view, has stated that the new information technology has an extraordinary ability to change or adjust teaching and learning activities in all educational institutions and it provides facilities for developing scientific environments that were not possible before. For this reason, many of the universities tend to start using the electronic courses by information technology for e-learning and online learning. However, several studies indicate that the development of e-learning in the educational system is faced with many problems; and unfamiliarity of policy makers and educational planners with these systems can impose a lot of costs for educational institutions.

Esmaeeli Salumahaleh (2013) in his paper entitled "Barriers to the development of e-learning in the teachers' service training" came to the conclusion that technical factors have the highest contribution to the development of e-learning barriers in teachers' service training educational, and respectively cultural, social, educational, economic, legal, administrative and strategic factors are in the next priorities.

Research results by Mirzayi (2013) showed that agents like evaluation, resources management, program management, means of communication and dialogue, learner-centered agent and flexibility, respectively, affect the pedagogical barriers of e-learning.

The major issues, problems and serious challenges in the higher education system are growing demand to enter into this system, entering the information age, the need to achieve information literacy, production rate and the need to design a system of continuous and lifelong education, User-centered education, expansion of educational justice, to stay ahead of fast caravan of dramatic changes in the global education system and finally potential to attract students from other countries which the development of e-learning is an appropriate response to address these challenges (Musakhani, 2005).

Iran, in terms of population, is the world's youngest country in which 70% of the population is under 30 years of age. On the other hand, young people have a higher tendency to continue academic education. Due to recent developments in this world and entering the information age in which knowledge provides the highest value, we are faced with a challenge that utilizing e-learning can overcome it (Montazer, 1388).

Distance learning has its roots in ancient times and some experts believe it is related to the time of Plato and his student Dionysius, but since the evidence shows the first distance education methods has been performed by making the use of mailing a question and answer exchange by post in the years since 1728 have. Since then education has performed many forms like extensive, academic guidance, through



correspondence, tape recorder, television programs, and recently, video and satellite. But new forms of distance education, with the use of modern computer technology and, more importantly, the Internet were a new phenomenon (Angle, 2000).

Kurtus (2000) and Beneke (2001) have mentioned that the main issues of virtual learning are lack of social interaction and the interval between students and faculty members' activities. According to them, students can't interact with friends and classmates when faced with possible problems and images and texts may not satisfy the learners. Some researchers asserted cases such as illiteracy in Educational Technology, lack of training in this area, inexperienced faculty members in the effective use of new technologies, and their resistance for virtual courses as the main issues of e-learning (Anstead et al, 2004; Alston et al, 2003; Kelsey et al, 2002; Dillon and Walsh, 1992).

Oliver (2002) in a study entitled 'quality assurance of E-learning in Australian higher education' discusses the factors leading to successful adaptation and sustainable use of virtual learning in higher education in Australia.

In some studies, lack of social participation and social interaction between students and professors have been considered and their results suggested that students, in e-learning, do not possess the possibility of interacting with friends and classmates and getting help when they are faced with problems and then, probably images and texts may not be satisfying for them (the students). So, the students are deprived of the sense of community in e-learning; and, the students' sense of resentment and despair in e-learning courses is more in comparison to traditional courses (Kurtus 2000; Beneke 2001; Lieblein 2000).

Frazeen (2006), in his final dissertation, entitled 'effective factors in quality of web-supported learning' considers the relationship and impact of several basic factors. He divided these elements in following six groups: organizational and educational factors, instructor, students, technology and educational designing (Frazeen, 2005).

Howard (2009) in his study entitled 'investigation of ICT infrastructure and human resource capacity in Liberia' concluded that the development of ICT in this country is depended on the improvement of the following factors: telecommunication infrastructure, human resources, economic, social and information-technology-based curriculum planning.

Kurtus (2000) in his researches, about Development, establishment and application of E-learning, stated that in the E-learning readiness of human resources, these items are essential and effective: physical, cognitive, emotional, social and cultural factors. A glance at the recent changes in educational system shows that most of these changes in the phase of educational technology utilization have focused on acquiring early technology skills.

Panitz (2008) in his study, about the advantages of electronic and participatory learning about motivating the learners, stated that working students, had less interest in face to face education (Panitz, 2008).

Chahill (2008), based on Duderstat (2001), in this regard, stated that the higher education must meet these changes and they should invest in capacities which make the new types of learning, independent of time and place limitation, possible, in order to create a persuasive view in their future in the next millennium (Chahill, 2008). Gamble (2009) in his research entitled 'The learning effects in a multicultural environment' compared and investigated the impacts of an E-learning course that was held in China and the US (Gamble, 2009).

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Are infrastructure and equipment barriers, credit and financial barriers, educational and administrative barriers and human barriers of physical education students involved in e-learning?

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### ***Research instruments***

This research is a descriptive survey. The most common approach for collecting data in the survey is questionnaire (Kurlindger, 1997).

### ***Research Participants***

In the present study, the population is all the students of physical education at the Azad University of Hamedan and Bu-Ali Sina University in the bachelor and master degrees levels that some of them are selected by sampling and their comments were utilized. To determine the sample size in this study Farmers and Morgan formula were used. Based on population, physical education students of Islamic Azad University, Hamedan were a total of 290 subjects which 165 were selected as the sample based on Morgan and Farmers formula. Physical education students of Bu Ali Sina University were a total of 267 cases which 155 subjects were selected. Finally, the questionnaires were distributed and collected and 150 questionnaires from Azad University students and 120 questionnaires were collected from Bu-Ali Sina University which, totally, 270 patients were considered as the sample size.

### ***Data Collection Method***

According to the research objectives, the best possible way to collect data was using questionnaires to examine physical education students' attitudes and views about e-learning barriers. The questionnaire was researcher-made and they are composed of two parts: the first part was on the individual characteristics including age, gender, educational level, GPA and university education and the second part contains barriers in e-learning consisting of 35 questions. The questionnaire is divided into four categories including barriers to infrastructure and equipment (technical) with 12 items (questions 1 to 12), credit constraints (financial) including 8 questions (from 13 to 20), educational and administrative barriers with 6 items (from questions 21 to 26) and, human barriers with 9 items consisting questions 27 to 35. Responses based on a Likert scale have five values including very low, low, medium, high, very high, which is graded in the order of importance from 1 (very low) ... to 5 (very high).

### ***Research Procedure***

To evaluate the accuracy of the indicators, criteria, and items in the survey formal validation and experimental validation method were used. Therefore, the research instrument (questionnaire) was given to 15 physical education experts and computer science experts. Then points were collected, evaluated and finally, used in the modified questionnaire. The experimental validation of the collected data was compared with solid and uncertain data in the pre-test stage.



In this method, for determining the reliability of the questionnaire Cronbach's alpha coefficient is used, so that the alpha coefficient derived from a total of 30 questionnaires by SPSS equals to 0.92 indicating the reliability of the survey instrument to measure the variables.

In this study, the analysis of the obtained data was used using descriptive and inferential statistics. For data analysis, the descriptive statistics such as the mean, median, mode, standard deviation, variance, minimum and maximum are used and inferential statistics, such as Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (KS), one-sample t-test and independent t-test were used.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As is shown in table 1, the highest frequency goes to the students who are aged between 20 to 30 years (67 percent) and the lowest frequency goes to the students who are 41 to 50 (4.8 percent).

*Table 1: Statistical description of the students' age*

age	frequency	percentage
20 - 30	181	67.0
31 - 40	76	28.2
41 - 50	13	4.8
Total	270	100

Median: 28

Mode: 25

Maximum: 46

Minimum: 20

Characteristics related to gender have been shown in table 2 which 39.6% are male students and 60.4 percent of them are female.

*Table 2: Statistical description of student gender*

gender	frequency	percentage
Male	107	39.6
female	163	60.4
Total	270	100

In table 3 it can be seen that 39.3 percent of students are studying in bachelor and 60.7 in MA degree in physical education.

*Table 3: Degree statistical description*

degree	frequency	percentage
Bachelor	106	39.3
Master	164	60.7
Total	270	100

In table 4 it can be seen that 55.6% of the students are from Azad University and 44.4% of them are enrolled in Bu-Ali Sina University.

*Table 4: University statistical description*

University	frequency	percentage
Azad	150	55.6
Bu Ali Sina	120	44.4
Total	270	100

### *E-learning barriers*

Table 5 shows the survey data related to e-learning barriers in physical education students' perspective. In the table, the mean and standard deviation of the e-learning barriers are also mentioned.

*Table 5: useful markers of different e-learning barriers*

e-learning barriers	mean	SD
Azad	3.51	0.628
Bu Ali Sina	3.6	0.479
Total	3.56	0.568

Before examining research hypotheses, it is necessary to check the normality of research variables by using Kolmogorov-Smirnov. Table 6 presents the study of normal variables.

*Table 6: the study of normal variables*

variables	Z test	Sig.
E-learning barriers	0.874	0.429
Infrastructure and equipment barriers	1.435	0.063
Credit and financial barriers	1.346	0.054
Educational and administrative barriers	1.367	0.056
Human barriers	1.026	0.243

According to the above table, it is concluded that the significance levels of all variables is more than 0.05. Therefore, the data are normalized variables and the normality of the variables justifies the use of parametric test in order to deduce the research hypotheses.

#### First Research Hypothesis

$H_0$  : Infrastructure and equipment barriers play a role in physical education students' e- learning.

$H_1$  : Infrastructure and equipment barriers do not play a role in physical education students' e- learning.

To test the above hypothesis, the parametric one-sample t test was used. This test was used for quantitative variables and to assess the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of a variable in the evaluated condition. Table 7 shows the descriptive statistics related to the first research hypothesis.

Table 7: Descriptive statistics of infrastructural barriers

Mean	SD	Standard error mean
3.58	0.665	0.04

The table above shows that the mean range of questions relating to the above hypothesis is 3.58 and standard deviation is 0.665. This shows that the mean is higher than average. Table 8 presents the confirmation of the first research hypothesis.

Table 8: Results of one sample t-test to evaluate the role of infrastructure and equipment barriers in e-learning

Test value = 3						
Up	down	Mean difference	Sig.	Freedom rate	T test	Result
0.668	0.509	0.589	0.001	269	14.549	$H_1$ is confirmed

Obviously, the obtained significance level is much smaller than the 0.05 which shows that there are significant differences between the mean values. On the other hand, since the mean of samples in table 8 is somewhat higher scores Value (mean = 0.589), so, the infrastructural barriers and equipment are involved in e-learning of physical education students. Therefore, the first hypothesis of this study is confirmed and the null hypothesis is rejected.

#### Second Research Hypothesis

$H_0$  : Credit and financial barriers play a role in physical education students' e- learning.

$H_1$  : Credit and financial barriers do not play a role in physical education students' e- learning.

To test the above hypothesis, the parametric one-sample t test was used. This test was used for quantitative variables and to assess the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of a variable in the evaluated condition. Table 9 shows the descriptive statistics related to the second research hypothesis.

Table 9: Descriptive statistics of credit and financial barriers

Mean	SD	Standard error mean
3.69	0.669	0.04

The table above shows that the mean range of questions relating to the above hypothesis is 3.69 and standard deviation is 0.669. This shows that the mean is higher than average. Table 10 presents the confirmation of the first research hypothesis.

Table 10: Results of one sample t-test to evaluate the role of credit and financial barriers in e-learning

Test value = 3						
Up	down	Mean difference	Sig.	Freedom rate	T test	Result
0.779	0.618	0.669	0.001	269	17.153	$H_1$ is confirmed

Obviously, the obtained significance level is much smaller than the 0.05 which shows that there are significant differences between the

mean values. On the other hand, since the mean of samples in table 10 is somewhat higher scores Value (mean = 0.669), so, credit and financial barriers are involved in e-learning of physical education students. Therefore, the first hypothesis of this study is confirmed and the null hypothesis is rejected.

### Third Research Hypothesis

$H_0$  : Administrative and educational barriers play a role in physical education students' e- learning.

$H_1$  : Administrative and educational barriers do not play a role in physical education students' e- learning.

To test the above hypothesis, the parametric one-sample t test was used. This test was used for quantitative variables and to assess the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of a variable in the evaluated condition. Table 11 shows the descriptive statistics related to the third research hypothesis.

Table 11: Descriptive statistics of administrative and educational barriers

Mean	SD	Standard error mean
3.53	0.835	0.05

The table above shows that the mean range of questions relating to the above hypothesis is 3.53 and standard deviation is 0.835. This shows that the mean is higher than average. Table 12 presents the confirmation of the first research hypothesis.

Table 12: Results of one sample t-test to evaluate the role of administrative and educational barriers in e-learning

Test value = 3						
Up	down	Mean difference	Sig.	Freedom rate	T test	Result
0.633	0.433	0.533	0.001	269	10.491	$H_1$ is confirmed

Obviously, the obtained significance level is much smaller than the 0.05 which shows that there are significant differences between the mean values. On the other hand, since the mean of samples in table 12 is somewhat higher scores Value (mean = 0.533), so, administrative and educational barriers are involved in e-learning of physical education students. Therefore, the first hypothesis of this study is confirmed and the null hypothesis is rejected.

### Forth Research Hypothesis

$H_0$  : Human barriers play a role in physical education students' e- learning.

$H_1$  : Human barriers do not play a role in physical education students' e- learning.

To test the above hypothesis, the parametric one-sample t test was used. This test was used for quantitative variables and to assess the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of a variable in the evaluated condition. Table 13 shows the descriptive statistics related to the forth research hypothesis.

Table 13: Descriptive statistics of human barriers

Mean	SD	Standard error mean
3.42	0.69	0.04

The table above shows that the mean range of questions relating to the above hypothesis is 3.42 and standard deviation is 0.69. This shows that the mean is higher than average. Table 14 presents the confirmation of the first research hypothesis.

Table 14: Results of one sample t-test to evaluate the role of human barriers in e-learning

Test value = 3						
Up	down	Mean difference	Sig.	Freedom rate	T test	Result
0.507	0.342	0.424	0.001	269	10.109	$H_1$ is confirmed

Obviously, the obtained significance level is much smaller than the 0.05 which shows that there are significant differences between the mean values. On the other hand, since the mean of samples in table 14 is somewhat higher scores Value (mean = 0.533), so, human

barriers are involved in e-learning of physical education students. Therefore, the first hypothesis of this study is confirmed and the null hypothesis is rejected.

#### **Fifth Research Hypothesis**

$H_0$  : There is not any significance between e-learning in Azad University and Bu Ali Sina University students.

$H_1$  : There is significance between e-learning in Azad University and Bu Ali Sina University students.

To test the above hypothesis, the parametric independent T test was used. Table 15 investigates the differences related to the e-learning barriers among these two groups.

*Table 15: Differences between two independent groups of the fifth research hypotheses*

variables		Loon Test		T-test			
		F test	Sig.	T-test	Freedom Level	Sig.	Mean Difference
Learning barriers	variances equality	7.047	0.008	- 1.52	268	0.129	- 0.105
	Lack of variances equality			-1.57	267.41	0.118	- 0.105
Infrastructure and equipment	variances equality	8.25	0.004	- 2.86	268	0.004	- 0.23
	Lack of variances equality			- 2.95	267.34	0.003	- 0.23
Credit and financial	variances equality	0.264	0.608	- 1.21	268	0.227	- 0.099
	Lack of variances equality			- 1.22	262.76	0.223	- 0.099
Administrative and educational	variances equality	3.95	0.048	- 0.24	268	0.807	- 0.025
	Lack of variances equality			- 0.24	265.65	0.805	- 0.025
human	variances equality	11.326	0.001	- 0.81	268	0.416	- 0.068
	Lack of variances equality			- 0.83	267.63	0.403	- 0.068

Table 15 shows that significance levels of Loon test for all variables except credit and financial variables is less than 0.05 indicating the lack of equality of variances between the two populations of the studies (Azad University and Bu-Ali Sina University). Thus one of the conditions of independent parametric t-test, except in the case of credit and financial variables, are not observed, whereas in credit and financial variables, the equality of variances must be reported. However, the significance level of the t-test in the bottom row in all variables apart from the infrastructure and equipment barriers is more than 0.05, which shows that with 95% confidence there is no difference in the field of e-learning barriers among Azad and Bu-Ali Sina University students. However, there are differences regarding infrastructure and equipment barriers among Azad and Bu-Ali Sina University students' perception.

#### **CONCLUSION**

New information technologies have great ability to change or reform teaching and learning activities in all higher education institutions and provide opportunities for the design of new media which have not been possible before. For this reason, many universities in Iran want to set up electronic courses using information technology capabilities in the form of e-learning or online learning. However, the review of researches shows that e-learning development in educational systems is faced with many problems that policy makers and planners' unfamiliarity with their education can impose heavy costs on educational institutions. This paper aims to familiarize planners, policymakers, students and faculty on issues ahead of physical education students' use of e-learning.

The first hypothesis results showed that barriers of infrastructure and equipment are involved in physical education students' e-learning. Strengthening and developing telecommunications infrastructure in educational institutions and to provide access to the networks in mentioned institutions is one of the important steps in the development of electronic learning, because the effectiveness of e-learning depends on the availability and reliability of the software and hardware and lack of good telecommunication infrastructure strongly affects the relationship between the learner and the educational system.

The results of the second hypothesis showed that credit and financial barriers are involved in physical education students' e-learning. Zhang et al (2002) and Wilson and Moore (2004) considered the cost of internet access development of virtual training as problematic. They believe the price of internet access is still high; so many students cannot easily use method as a low-cost method. Providing sufficient funds for facilities and e-learning tools is a serious need for universities.

The results of the third hypothesis showed that administrative and educational barriers are involved in physical education students' e-learning. The nature of academic disciplines in planning for the use of e-learning is important. E-learning can be an alternative to traditional training and should be focused on courses and subjects that traditional education system is not able to meet their troubles.

The results of the fourth hypothesis showed that human barriers are involved in physical education students' e-learning. Investing in the education of manpower and training of skilled manpower is another important issue the development of e-learning. The development of e-learning will fail without a skilled and capable workforce and the traditional system resistance will increase and entry to higher education information technology will make be harder. The difference between traditional classroom training and e-learning is like the difference between driving a car and flying a helicopter, while some of the skills acquired but these skills are not enough.

#### **Implication of the Study**

Finally we can say that universities and educational institutions cannot overcome obstacles to the development of e-learning without

adopting a holistic and integrated approach; and, policies for directing and providing the necessary resources to facilitate the development of e-learning should be determined. The present study deals with barriers and limitations in the commissioning and development of e-learning course in Hamadan Universities and more research should be done in this area.

#### Recommendations

1. The users' skills and technical knowledge of the English language and mastering of software, hardware and networking are necessary factors for the development of web-based training in Iran. Before planning for the development of e-learning, students' familiarity and mastery of computer skills and attending in workshops will be indispensable.
2. Since the shortage of qualified, proficient and competent teachers and experts in the field of e-learning and electronic content production is obvious, it seems training interested teachers and experts is essential.
3. Now, software and educational content and material for the development of e-learning in many academic disciplines have not been developed yet. Necessary steps should be taken in this regard.
4. Based on the research findings, low speed and inappropriate connection are the main problems in the development of e-learning. Accordingly, improved communication infrastructures in Iran to increase internet speed are essential in Iran. Although effective actions have been done in this regard, it's not enough for the development of e-learning and investment is needed.
5. In Iran, training the teachers for optimal use of e-learning software is a must. Many professors are both distrustful of e-learning and novice of the necessary software.
6. Given the practical nature of academic fields, holding troubleshooting classes alongside electronic-training sessions is a necessity.
7. Strengthening the Internet Security Systems Network to increase safety and protect the content, material and tests is a necessity in the E-learning network. Currently, e-learning applications and software can easily be penetrated.
8. Currently, many of the students do not have access to high speed Internet at home. It is necessary to provide facilities to access electronic education.
9. Since Most of the agricultural fields and trends have a lot of practical and laboratory courses and the possibility of holding a full curriculum does not exist in electronic form, the future researchers should study on blended learning which, to a large extent, solved the electronic learning problems.
10. It is recommended that e-learning is used in colleges with purely theoretical courses like Literature College and researchers in the above fields investigate in the field of e-learning.
11. It is recommended that in future studies, in most aspects of the operation studies the research team should be composed of students, teachers, advisors and one of the faculty members of Computer and Information Technology to provide technical advice in the field of e-learning infrastructure and operational mechanism.

#### Research Limitations

This study was done in the context of Hamedan Province and it is limited to merely Hamedan universities. Additionally, since the issue of e-learning is a rather new challenging topic introduced by the government, some political limitations are standing against electronic education development. For instance, the high cost of developing enough infrastructures to develop any kind of electronic learning should be financed by the government and yearly budget which is considered another limitation in this research.

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**IDEOLOGICAL MANIPULATION IN TRANSLATION:  
A CASE STUDY OF JEAN WEBSTER'S "DADDY LONG LEGS"**

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**ABSTRACT**

Among other factors such as culture that have an impact on the minds of the translators when producing the Source Text are ideological and time-factors. The present study attempts to identify the ideological terms that were translated from English to Persian. This study also examines the strategies used by the translators. To this end, the translations of Webster's novel, which were translated before and after the Islamic Revolution in 1975 in Iran, are investigated. The data analysis is performed based on Fairclough's model (1989). The results show that to overcome cultural and-ideological misunderstandings, the translators adopted many strategies such as addition and omission, and they intentionally or-unintentionally ignored the needs of children who are the readers of the Target Text. Overall, it was found that the Islamic Revolution had a crucial impact on the nature of used strategy by translators of novels written for children.

**KEYWORDS:** Source Text, Ideological Words, Fairclough's Model, Translation, Target Text

**INTRODUCTION**

Book translation for children is not a straightforward matter. Beyond the forces of manipulation and profit, there exist several other problems connected with the actual translation process (Khawira, 2010). Because of the limited experience and background knowledge about children, translators encounter an array of problems adapting the target text to the level of children's understanding. Cultural differences between the Source Text (ST) and the Target Text (TT), which may even lead to censorship, should also be considered. Such cultural and ideological differences among Iranian and other cultures can result in mistranslations and likely breakdowns. In this regard, Sertkan (2007) points out that "the act of translation is not an innocent one since the translator is influenced by his/her own cultural values and his/her ideology, which causes him/her to 'manipulate' the source text by making some additions, omissions, adaptations (P. 6). However, the translated CHLT may cause breakdowns concerning morals, ideologies, and social customs, especially if the source and target cultures have little in common. To solve this problem, Puurtinen (2000) holds that Critical Discourse Analyses (CDA) aims at revealing how ideology affects linguistic choices made by a text producer and how language can be used to maintain, reinforce or challenge ideologies" (P.178).

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

***Ideology***

Ideology is one of the most frequently used notions in the academia, particularly in the social sciences. Mason (1994) defines ideology as a "set of beliefs and values which inform an individual's or institution's view of the world and assist their interpretation of events, facts, etc" (P. 25). Van Dijk (2000) also holds that ideology is mostly associated with "systems of ideas, especially with the social, political or religious ideas shared by a social group of movement" (P. 5). In addition, Hatim (2000) defines ideology as "a body of ideas which reflects the beliefs and interests of an individual, a group of individuals, a societal institution, etc., and which ultimately finds expression in language" (P. 218). Therefore, the term 'ideology' encompasses a range of beliefs, ideas, attitudes, and interests held by an individual, a group of individuals, institutions, and so on. An important point in Hatim's (2000) definition is the relationship between ideology and language in that the latter becomes a medium for the expression of the former.

***Ideology and Discourse***

It is worth noting that language has a crucial role in the expression of ideology. As far as language is concerned, the concept of discourse should not be overlooked. Language and discourse cannot be thought as separate areas, and it is through language and discourse that ideology finds expression. Discourse is a term that is widely used in the contemporary human sciences, and it is "used to describe any organized body or corpus of statements and utterances governed by rules and conventions of which the user is largely unconscious" (The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory 2000, P. 100). As it can be seen in these definitions, discourse embodies what is 'social'. This social aspect is emphasized by Fairclough (1989). Fairclough (1992) believes that "discourse *constitutes* the social. Three dimensions of the social are distinguished-knowledge, social relations, and social identity" (P. 8). In this respect, discourse as a discursive language has a crucial role in the expression of ideology. Therefore, many scholars highlight the relation of discourse and ideology (Fairclough, 1989; Van Dijk, 2000; Wodack, 2002).

***Ideology and Manipulation***

Lefevere (2004) is one of the representatives of the manipulation school in translation. He believes that translation consists of four systems: ideology, poetics, register and language, and points out that the translator should not only translate words and sentences but also the ideology, poetics, and register. After adopting the contributions to translation studies made by Even-Zohar (1990) and Foucault (1980), Lefebvre (2004) tries to study translation in the context of politics, ideology, economy and culture, and discuss further factors that restrict the rewriting in the translation. In Lefevere's (2004) words, translation is a rewriting of the original text. All rewritings, whatever their intentions, show a certain ideology and poetics and as such manipulate the literature to function in a given society in a given way. In this regard, rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect can help the evolution of literature and society. Beside, rewriting can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices, and the history of translation is also the history of the literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another (Lefevere, 2004).

***Ideology and Translation***

Sertkan (2007) states that "The 'cultural turn' is a term used in Translation Studies to describe a shift of emphasis towards the analysis of translation from the perspective of cultural studies" (P.6). Baker and Saldanha (2009) also hold that the practice of translation was for a long

time, and in some cases remains, deeply implicated in the religious ideology, as it can be seen in the grim fate of translators such as Tyndale in Britain and Dolet in France. As Claramonte (2003) explains the interaction between ideology and translation, it is of interest to many contemporary authors who tackle it from different perspectives. Furthermore, Schäffner (2003) elucidates the relationship between ideology and translation. Schäffner (2003) argues that:

"The relationship between ideology and translation is *multifarious*. Any translation may be reproduced as ideological since the choice of a source text and the use to which the subsequent target text is put is determined by the *interests, aims, and objectives of social agents*. But ideological aspects can also be determined *within a text itself*, both at the lexical and grammatical level"(P. 23)

## METHODOLOGY

### *Theoretical framework*

The present study examined three different Persian translations of Jean Webster's novel "*Daddy Long Legs*" before and after the Islamic Revolution in 1979 to find the breakdowns and to explore the strategies used by translators to translate the text using the method of Critical Discourse Analyses (CDA) as proposed by Fairclough (1989). To achieve the results, this paper employed three values of words such as experiential, relational, and expressive values.

### *Corpus of the Study*

This study focused on the ideological manipulation in the translation in general, and examined the ideological manipulation in the translation of children's novels in particular. As the methodological tool for examining this factor, the researcher used the Fairclough's (1989) model of CDA since it is more comprehensive with respect to Van Dijk and Wodak's method for examining the ideology of the translator. The samples were extracted from the novel: Webster, J. (1912). *Daddy Long Legs*. Chales L. Webster Publisher.

### *Design of the Study*

The study aimed to identify the ideological terms used in English to Persian translations of children literary text. One of the major concerns of the translation studies was to examine the quality of a translation, especially the ideological manipulation. This study is a descriptive research and had a quantitative design. It dealt with the translation of CHL and compared three Persian translations (including Dana, 1340; Mahdavian, 1375; Solimani, 1388) with the novels written by Webster *Daddy Long Legs* as the original text to find the strategies used to translate the ideological terms before and after the Islamic Revolution in 1979. A method of CDA introduced by Fairclough (1989) was used to start the study. Afterward, the data sources were completely read to find the breakdowns and the strategies used by the translators to deal with such breakdowns.

### *Procedure of the study*

The steps used to perform the present study were as follows: First, the source text and then the translations were carefully read by the researcher and the other research aide with an eye on Fairclough's (1989) three classes of word values namely experiential, relational, and expressive values. Afterward, lexical items (words, phrases, and expressions) that sounded 'different' were extracted from the translations text. Next, the collected data was compared with the corresponding terms in the ST.

### *Data analyses*

In the present study, CDA was used as a methodological tool for the identification of the 'manipulations' that appeared to have an ideological stance in the target texts. The analyses of the three different versions centered around three main word values introduced by Fairclough (1989) including *experiential, relational, and expressive* values.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To answer the first question regarding whether the ideological terms are used in the translation of children literature texts from English into Persian text, the present study considered the "*Experiential values, Relational values, and Expressive value of words*" based on Fairclough's (1989) model:

### *Experiential values:*

#### *Sample:*

"The only drawback to my perfect, utter absolute happiness was the fact Mr. Lippett couldn't see me leading the **cotillion** with Jimmie McBride"(Webster, 1912, P. 200).

- 1- "تنها نگرانی من در این شادی و خوشی و لذت این بود که مادام لپیٹ در آنجا حضور نداشت مرا با جیمی ماک براید ببیند که چگونه رقص را افتتاح کردم." (دانا، 1340: 155)
- 2- "تنها چیزی که شادی عمیق و فوقالعاده ام را خدشه دار می کرد این بود که خانم لپیٹ در مجلس نبود که من و دوستانم را ببیند." (مهدویان، 1375: 110)
- 3- "تنها نقص این شادی کامل و بی نقص این بود که خانم لپیٹ نمی توانست خوشحالی من و جیمی مک براید را ببیند." (سلیمانی، 1388: 145)

Through transliteration and gloss use the back translation to be easily understood, the above extract is from part '31<sup>st</sup> December'. In Mahdavian's ideology for rendering the ST to the TT, he translated '**cotillion**' to 'مجلس نبود که من و دوستانم را ببیند', his addition in the target text was an appropriate example of paraphrasing strategy. In this way, the story became closer to the target-language audience. In the Persian and Islamic culture, '**cotillion**' is also not a lawful action, and has negative impact on the children's belief. Therefore, Mahdavian's strategy became closer to the target-language audience. Solimani's manipulation to render the ST was similar to Mahdavian's strategy, whereas in Dana's strategy, she did not consider the Persian children's needs. She should submit a better term that was closer to the TT culture and lacked the bad effect on the Persian children. As a result in the first question, the words '**dance**', '**ballgame**', '**Bless**', '**cotillion**', '**monkeys**', '**مشروب**', were the ideological terms that the translator manipulated. Such terms were summarized in Table 1. The following abbreviations used to describe the results:

EE: Euphemistic expression  
EV1: Experiential value  
EV2: Expressive value  
RV: Relational value  
TT1: Dana's Target text

TT2: Mahdavian's Target text

TT3: Soleimani's Target text

OR: Original word

Table 1: Ideological terms according to Experiential value of Fairclough's (2001) model

OR (EV1)	TT1	TT2	TT3
Alcohol	مشروب	الکل	مشروب
Monkey	—	میمون	—
Cotillion	رقص	حذف	خوشحالی
Bless	خدا ترا حفظ کند	خدا پشت و پناهت	خدا پشت و پناهت
Dance ,ball game	در مجلس بال	ضیافت و بازی	جشن
Dance	رقصیدن	حذف	پیش آنها باشد

**Relational value:****Sample:**

"Jimmie McBride is going to have a college friend visiting him part of the summer, so you see we shall have plenty of men to **dance** with" (Webster, 1912, P. 90).

1- "جیمی مک براید یک نفر از رفقای دانشکده اش را دعوت کرده که بیشتر تابستان با آنها باشد بنابراین بقدر کافی مرد بر هست که با ما برقصند". (دانا، 1340: 195)

2- حذف (مهدویان، 1375: 180)

3- "جیمی مک براید هم قرار است از یک نفر از دوستان دانشکده اش بخواهد که مدتی از تابستان پیش آنها باشد". (سلیمانی، 1388: 191)

This example is from part "2<sup>nd</sup> June". Translator 1 strategy for ideological manipulation was literal translation. According to the Islamic culture and law, the word '**Dance**' is not appropriate for children literature. She had to submit a word that considered Persian children's needs and had to make the translation closer to the target language culture, especially with regard to its bad effect on the Persian children. Translator 2 omitted this sentence and translator 3 omitted the word '**dance**'. As a result in the first question, the words '**dance**', '**ballgame**', '**Bless**', '**cotillion**', '**monkeys**', '**مشروب**', were the ideological terms that the translator manipulated. These terms were summarized in Table 2. Therefore, in the first hypothesis, the words '**sauced**', '**samples**', '**naughty puppy**', '**bottle of rum**', '**dance**' were manipulated since they were considered the ideological terms.

Table 2: Ideological terms according to relational value of Fairclough's (2001) model

OR (RV)	TT1	TT2	TT3
Dance	رقصیدن	حذف	پیش آنها باشد
Care-time	زندگی آزاد و بیقید	حذف	فارغ الیال
Bottle of rum	حذف	حذف	بطر رام
Naughty puppy	حذف	توله سگ	توله سگ شیطان
sauced	شاشیده	خیس کردن	حرف بی ادبانهای زدن
Samples	خانم سمپل	خانواده سمپل	خانم سمپل
Run away	قاجاق شویم	جیم شویم	فرار کنیم

**Expressive value:**

"Bless you my child" (Webster, 1912).

1- "خدا ترا حفظ کند". (دانا، 1340: 200)

2- "خدا پشت و پناهت دخترم!" (مهدویان، 1388: 180)

2- "خدا پشت و پناهت بچه جان" (سلیمانی، 1375: 193)

This portion was extracted from part "3<sup>rd</sup> August" the word '**Bless**' had the religious connotation, and translated to '**خدا**'. This word did not appear in the ST. In the present study, the expressive value was to do with the persuasive language pertaining to the constant emphasis

on the belief in God and the idea that God was the sole source of power and authority, and the three translators chose the addition strategy to translate this ST item. Table 3 shows the words that the translators manipulated:

Table 3: Ideological terms according to expressive value of Fairclough's (2001) model

OR (EV2)	TT1	TT2	TT3
Monkey	حذف	میمون	حذف
Bless you	خدا ترا حفظ کند	خدا پشت و پناهت	خدا پشت و پناهت

To answer the second question, the following table provides the descriptive statistics on the strategies used in the three translated version's of the English book.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of the translation strategies in the three translated versions

Strategy(EV1)	TT1	TT2	TT3
Addition	33.3 0/0	26.6 0/0	39.9 0/0
Omission	33.3 0/0	39.9 0/0	19.9 0/0
adaptation	0 0/0	0 0/0	19.9 0/0
Literal translation	33.3 0/0	33.3 0/0	19.9 0/0

In the version translated by translator 1(1340), the target text (TT1) strategies on addition, omission, and literal translation were identical. 33.3 percent of the 100 percent was related to addition, omission, and literal translation and TT1 did not use adaptation strategies, whereas in the version translated by translator 2 (1375) (TT2), the most used strategy was the literal translation with 39.9 percent out of 100. Similarly, there was no adaptation strategy such as translator 1 strategy. In the target text (TT3), translator 3 strategy, the strategy used most was addition. Therefore, the strategy of the ideological manipulation was different according to the period of time, i.e. before and after the Islamic Revolution in 1979. With respect to the third research question regarding whether a different strategy used in the ideological manipulation before and after the Islamic Revolution in 1979, this study considered the three word values in Fairclough's model, and analyzed the strategy of the ideological TT1 (Dana, 1345) before the Islamic Revolution with the strategy of TT2 (Mahdavian, 1375) after the Islamic Revolution.

Sample text:

"To Princeton, to attend a **dance** and a **ballgame**, if you pleased!" (Webster, 1912, P. 101).

1- "برای اینکه در مجلس بال آنها استفاده کنیم". (دانا، 1340:250)

2- "برای شرکت در ضیافت و بازی". (مهدویان، 1375:200)

3- "تا با اجازه شما در جشن آن دانشگاه شرکت کنیم". (سلیمانی، 1388:210)

This extract was from part "24<sup>th</sup> April". The extracted words, **dance** and **ballgame** were kinds of dance that were popular in the foreign culture, unlike the Persian culture. According to the Iranian culture, men are not allowed to dance. Further, it is prohibited in Persian Islamic culture. Translator 3 translated the words '**dance** and **ballgame**' as 'جشن'; this addition in the TT was appropriate example of the paraphrasing strategy. In this way, the story became closer to the target-language culture. translator 2 translated it as 'وضیافت و بازی' and translator 1 translated it as 'مجلس بال', translator 2 strategy added the words 'جشن'; it seems that this was a sort of distortion that pointed to the intervention of the religious-conservative ideology. In this way, the story became closer to the target-language audience, especially for the Persian children. In Dana's strategy, Persian children's need was not considered; however, she submitted a word that was closer to the target language culture. This study compared the strategies used by three translators, whereas translating Webster's book "Daddy Long Legs". Therefore, once the study compared the translation by Dana (1340), before the Islamic Revolution, and the translation made by translator 2 (1375), after the Islamic Revolution. The strategies used by the translators for the ideological manipulation of the children's novel were addition, omission, adaptation, and literal translation.

## CONCLUSIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Three different translated versions of a children's novel before and after the Islamic Revolution in 1979 indicated that during the time Dana (1340) translated this work, there was not so much prohibitions for people on dancing, even in children's novels, whereas during the time Mahdavian (1375) translated the work, the laws changed following the Islamic Revolution in 1979. New sort of power and law were put into effect (Islamic culture). Hence, people's beliefs and thinking that unconsciously affect the ideology of people, in general, and writers, publishers, and translator, in particular differ. Therefore, after lapse of time, some roles such as allowing dance between men and women changed in the Islamic culture. In the Mahdavian version, there was a high distortion of a ST; it was more omission on the ST. The translator omitted the whole term in order to deal with an ideological item or phrase that deviate the norms in the target culture. Furthermore, based on the analysis of fifteen sentences chosen based on three word values of Fairclough's (1989) method, the present study showed that lapse of time had an important impact on changing the ideology of the translators. It was found that the Islamic Revolution had a crucial impact on the nature of used strategy by translators of novels written for children. Therefore, the strategies were utilized by the translators for the ideological manipulation of children novel, and these strategies were consciously or unconsciously changed with the lapse of time and power of the government. Hence, a shift was observed in the application of the strategies before and after the Islamic Revolution. In this regard, the present study suggests some pedagogical implications. It is clear that the translators manipulated the source text because of conscious and unconscious factors. This study identified the ideological manipulation on children novel, in particular children literature in the lexical choices in three different translations' version of the Webster (1912) novel. It may emphasize that further research in the translated children's literature is needed. The researcher notes that very little has written about the theoretical aspect of translating children's literature into Persian, and the constraints that govern any literature entering the Iranian children's literature. In addition, the researcher

intends to highlight the point that requires further research on the translation of picture books and inter-textual references in children's literature. As a result, the present study shed some light on the translation of children literature. It also specifically shed light on the translation of the novel. Moreover, the translators can use the explored strategies for the ideological manipulation of children novel.

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## ABSTRACT

There are many researches on thematic progression in English texts, but it is very limited research of the thematic progression in Sundanese texts. This article tries to describe the thematic progression in Sundanese texts which are written by Sundanese female writers. The data obtained from a collection of short stories in Sundanese language which is written by eleven Sundanese female writers. The employed method is descriptive method. The present researcher analyzes and describes the data from eleven paragraphs. The result shows that 27% the Sundanese female writers use simple thematic progression and 73% use multiple thematic progressions. There are three types of simple thematic progression; they are linear theme (9%), constant rheme (9%), or constant theme (9%). The multiple thematic progressions have three different types; two element thematic progression (36.50%), three element thematic progression (18.25%), and four thematic progression (18.25%). It is concluded that the dominant thematic progression used by Sundanese female writers is the two element thematic progressions as the part of multiple thematic progression.

**KEYWORDS:** Thematic progression, Sundanese Female Writers, Sundanese texts, simple thematic progression, multiple thematic progressions

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an island country that has many local languages. Referring to Summer Institute (SIL) International publication, based on the 2000 census, Indonesia has 719 local languages and thirteen of them have died as mentioned the following “*The number of individual languages listed for Indonesia is 719. Of these, 706 are living and 13 are extinct. Of the living languages, 21 are institutional, 97 are developing, 248 are vigorous, 265 are in trouble, and 75 are dying.*”

Sundanese as one of the living languages is the second rank of the speaker population, after Javanese. As the living language, Sundanese should be maintained well to avoid the extinction. That is why the present writer needs to do research on Sundanese language besides she is a native of Sundanese language.

Recently, many researches are on thematic progression in English texts as described by Zhu Yongsheng (1995), his research on *Patterns of thematic progression and text analysis* or Eva Tuckyta Sari Sujatna on *Thematic Progression in Business English Paragraphs* (2011).

This article tries to describe the thematic progression of Sundanese texts which are written by the Sundanese female writers. This research based on the two formulation of the study, they are 1) what thematic progression used by Sundanese female writers? and 2) what pattern of thematic progression used by Sundanese female writers?

The approach applied on this research is Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as found by Halliday. He introduces his approach on his well known book “*An Introduction to Functional Grammar*” which is being revised in 1994 and 2004 with Matthiessen.

This approach concern clause in three different metafunction of meanings, they are clause as message, clause as representation, and clause as exchange. This article observes clause as message in every clause in the Sundanese female writers’ paragraph to obtain the thematic progression.

Clause as exchange concerns mood and residue. Mood itself is represented by subject and finite while the residue is the rest of the mood. The mood type can be classified mainly into indicative and imperative, while the indicative itself classified into declarative and interrogative (Sujatna, 2013: 51).

Clause as representation or transitivity concerns three mainly things, they are process, participants, and circumstances. Processes in Sujatna (2013) which in line with Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) and Deterding and Poedjosoedarmo (2001) are six types. They are material process, mental process, verbal process, relational process, behavioural process, and existential process. Every process influenced the types of the participants.

Clause as message, as the main point of this research, concerns theme and rheme. Theme and rheme in a clause can help readers to understand the message or information in a clause. A theme in a clause comes first and followed by the rheme. It is still be possible in English clauses there is only a rheme without a theme. In Sujatna (2013: 13), she argues that “A writer puts the theme first and this orients the reader to what is about to be communicated.” Theme can be identified as marked and unmarked theme. Unmarked theme is the theme that usually known as subject (grammatical subject). It can be pronouns, proper nouns, nominal group, or nominalization. The marked theme is classified into four types. They are complement as marked theme, adjunct as marked theme, predicator as marked theme, and prepositional phrase as marked theme. Based on the form, the theme can be identified as simple and multiple themes. The simple theme consists of one element while the multiple themes consist of more than one element.

A text can be said as cohesive and coherence text if they (the clauses) tight each other as Hasan mentioned in Paltridge (2000: 139) “*Cohesive devices help a text hang together, or be cohesive. That means they contribute to what Hasan terms a text’s ‘unity of texture’. The schematic structure of the text, in turn, provides a text with ‘unity of structure.’*”

Thematic progression is also known as schematic structure or method of development of a text as Hasan (1989) in Paltridge (2000: 140), “*The notions of theme and rheme are also employed in the examination of thematic progression, or method of development of a text. Thematic progression refers to the way in which the theme of a clause may pick up, or repeat, a meaning from a preceding theme or rheme.*” In other words, the thematic progression consists of theme and rheme that refers to the way in which the theme of a clause may pick up.



Deterding & Poedjosoedarmo (2001) in line with Paltridge (2000) divide the types of thematic progression into *constant*, *linear*, *split* and *zig-zag*. The constant, linear, and split thematic progression could be in theme and rheme so that it becomes constant theme and constant rheme, linear theme and linear rheme, and split theme and split rheme. In this article the present writer divides the thematic progression into seven types. They are: constant theme, constant rheme, linear theme, linear rheme, split theme, split rheme, and zigzag. The followings are the illustration of the thematic progression.

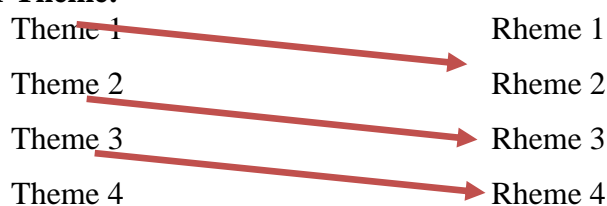
**Constant Theme:**



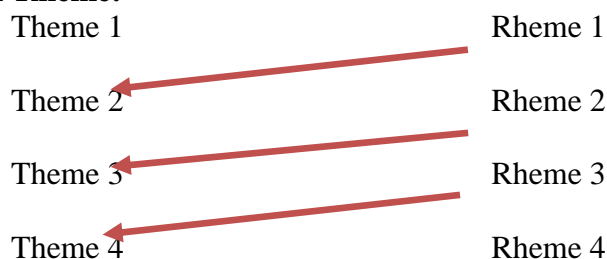
**Constant Rheme:**



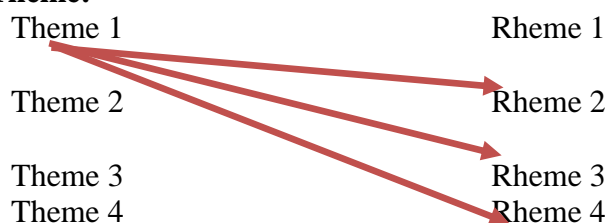
**Linear Theme:**



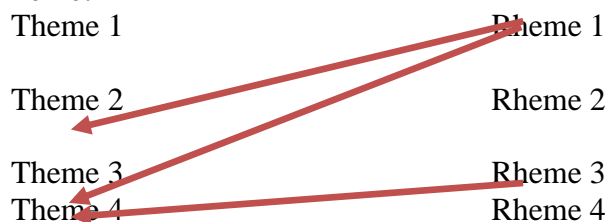
**Linear Rheme:**



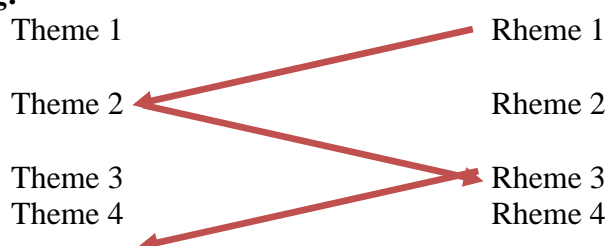
**Split Theme:**



**Split Rheme:**



### Zigzag:



### METHODOLOGY

The employed method is descriptive method. The present researcher analyzes and describes the data from eleven paragraphs. The paragraphs are taken randomly from the eleven Sundanese short stories which are written by eleven Sundanese female writers. The title of the collection of the short stories is *Berlian IICarpon Wanoja*. This book is published in 2013. Firstly, the present researcher, find a paragraph from every short story. Secondly, the present researcher analyzes the paragraph based on the thematic progression. Thirdly, the present researcher classifies them into the type of thematic progression whether they are simple or multiple thematic progressions. Finally, the present researcher can obtain the dominant thematic progression used by the Sundanese female writers.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As the present writer mentioned earlier, this article tries to describe the thematic progression of the Sundanese female writers in their short stories. The data collected are the paragraph obtained randomly, one paragraph from one writer, so that the data becomes eleven paragraphs.

Based on the research, from the eleven paragraphs, the present writer found that the thematic progressions of the Sundanese female writers mainly are simple and multiple thematic progressions as seen in following table.

Table 1: Sundanese Female Writers' Thematic Progression Type

No	Thematic Progression Type	Element of Thematic Progression
1	Simple	- Linear Theme - Constant Rheme - Constant Theme
2	Multiple	- Constant Theme and Linear Theme - Linear Rheme, Constant Theme, and Linear Theme - Constant Theme, Linear Rheme, Linear Theme, and Split Rheme - Constant Rheme, Zigzag, Linear Rheme, and Constant Theme

The table 1 shows that the thematic progression types used by the Sundanese female writers are simple and multiple. From the data, the simple thematic progression identified as linear theme, constant rheme, or constant theme. The multiple thematic progressions identified as two element thematic progressions, three element thematic progressions, and four element thematic progressions. The two element thematic progression found is constant theme and linear theme while the three element thematic progressions found is linear rheme, constant theme, and linear theme. The four element thematic progressions found are two groups. The first group is constant theme, linear rheme, linear theme, and split theme while the second group is constant rheme, zigzag, linear rheme, and constant theme. The following chart is the percentage of each type.

Chart 1: The Sundanese Female Writers' Thematic Progression Type

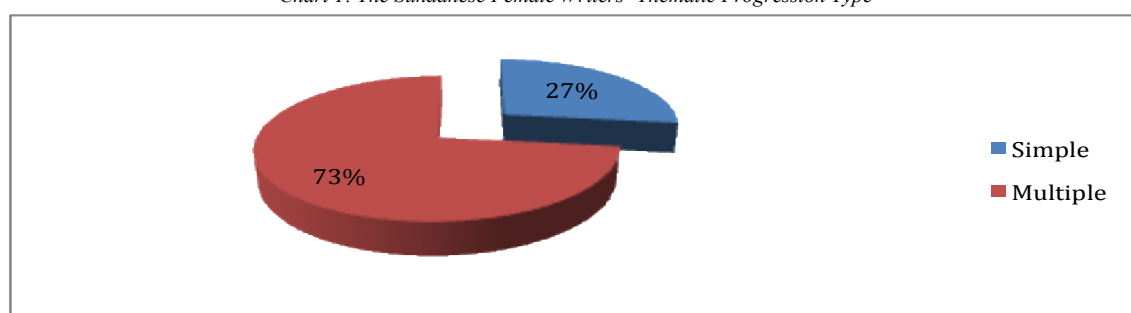


Chart 1 describes that the multiple thematic progression (73%) is the dominant used by the Sundanese female writers while the simple thematic progression is 27%. The data obtained from the eleven paragraphs. It means that the three types of simple thematic progression, each reaches to 9% as described in chart 2 while the multiple thematic progression which has three different groups is described in chart 3.

Chart 2: The Simple Thematic Progression

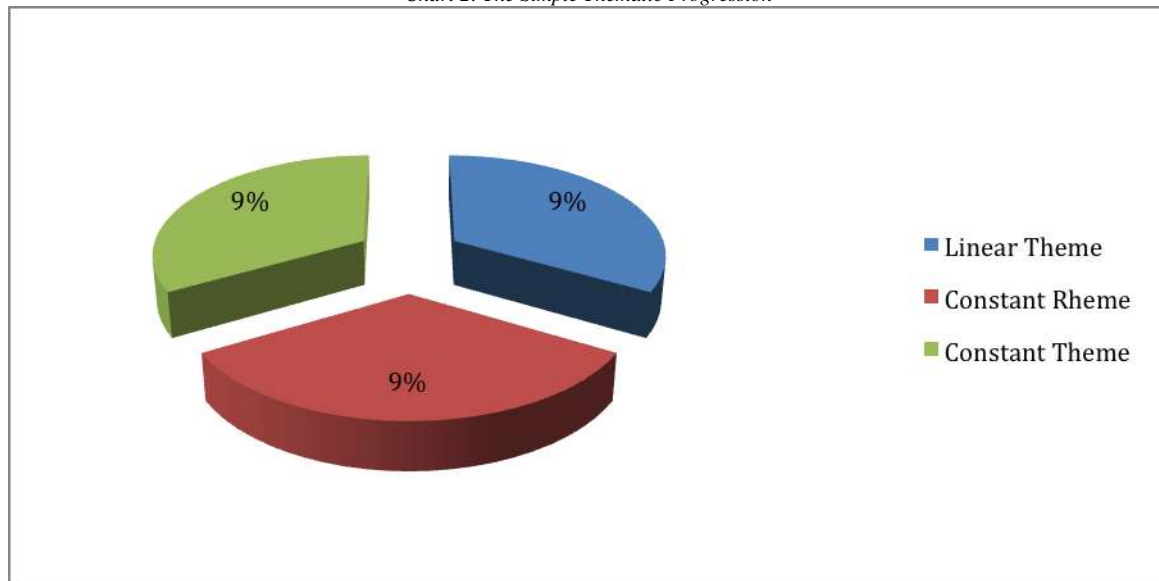


Chart 2 shows that the linear theme reaches 9%, constant rheme reaches 9%, and constant theme reaches 9% or one writer from the eleven Sundanese female writers. The following chart is the description of the multiple thematic progressions element chosen by the Sundanese female writers.

Chart 3: The Multiple Element of the Thematic Progression

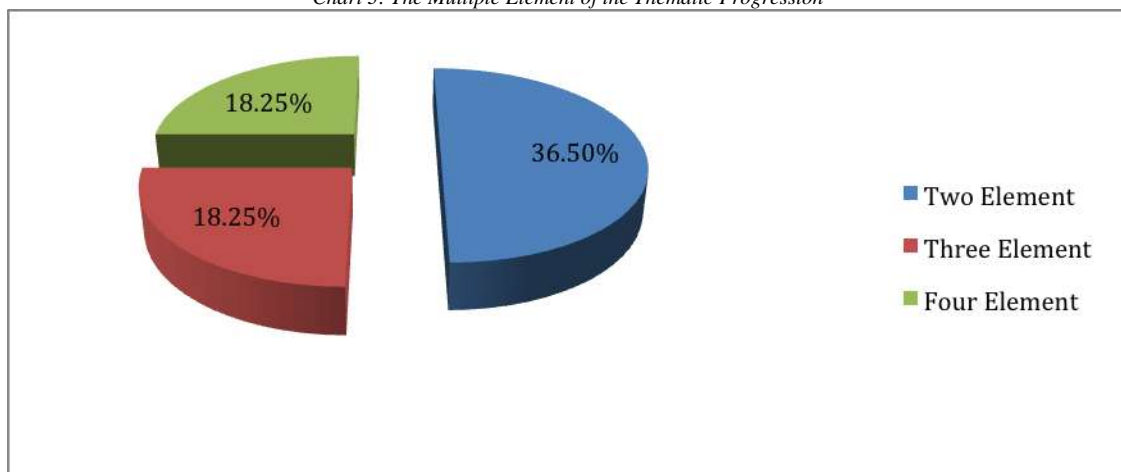


Chart 3 describes that the two element thematic progression is the dominant one (36.50%) or four writers from the eleven Sundanese female writers. The three and the four element thematic progression reach 18.25% or two writers of each from the eleven writers. The thematic progression chosen by the Sundanese female writer which has two elements are constant theme and linear theme (two writers from eleven writers) and linear rheme and constant theme (two writers from the eleven Sundanese female writers). Totally, the two element thematic progression is four writers (36.50%) from the eleven Sundanese female writers. The three element thematic progression is linear rheme, constant theme, and linear theme (two writers from the eleven Sundanese female writers). The four element thematic progression is two groups. The first group is constant theme, linear rheme, linear theme, and split rheme (one writer from the eleven Sundanese female writers) and the second group is constant rheme, zigzag, linear rheme, and constant theme (one writer from the eleven Sundanese female writers).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the research of thematic progression of the Sundanese female writers, it is concluded that the Sundanese female writers use both simple and multiple thematic progression in their paragraphs. As the result, the dominant thematic progression used by the Sundanese female writers is the two element thematic progression as the part of multiple thematic progressions. As a preliminary study, the present researcher hopes this research can be a trigger for the next research in other languages.

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## THE ROLE TOPIC FAMILIARITY IN DEVELOPING BILINGUALS AND MONOLINGUALS' VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE

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### ABSTRACT

Teaching vocabulary is one of the main components of any language teaching methods concerned with English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL). Therefore, this study investigated the role of topic familiarity in developing vocabulary retention and recall through incidental teaching of vocabulary among intermediate bilingual (i.e., Arabic/ Farsi) and monolingual (i.e., Farsi) students. Administering a homogeneity proficiency test (Fowler & Coe, 1975) at the intermediate level, 60 students (i.e., 30 bilinguals and 30 monolinguals) were randomly selected and divided into two groups as the participants of the study. They participated in six weeks of teaching vocabulary while both groups received the same instruction and materials. Two types of topics (i.e., familiar vs. unfamiliar) were adopted among the pool of topics and the participants were taught the intended vocabularies during the research period. Data analysis was administered through Independent Samples *t*-test at the end of treatment period to assess the learners' differences on the level of vocabulary retention and recall. The results showed the difference between the two groups was significant ( $p < .05$ ). In other words, the group who dealt with familiar topics outperformed the group who worked on unfamiliar topics concerned with vocabulary achievement post-test. The results also indicated that bilinguals outperformed monolinguals in vocabulary learning. In sum, it may be claimed that topic familiarity can enhance incidental vocabulary acquisition in reading comprehension skill, especially among bilinguals rather than monolinguals.

**KEYWORDS:** Topic familiarity, vocabulary, bilinguals, monolinguals

### INTRODUCTION

Recently, there has been a spate of interest in how to teach vocabulary and why the rate of second language incidental vocabulary learning is lower for some learners as opposed to others (Widdowson, 1980). Moreover, some factors may contribute to the individual differences observed for vocabulary acquisition through reading, and some can affect language output (speaking and writing). According to Hulstijn (1993), these factors, likely to be involved in reading, are both interactive and compensatory. When a component of processing is deficient, it can be compensated for by other components of processing (Stonovich, 1980, p.65).

According to schema theory (Stonovich, 1980), the degree to which successful compensation may be achieved depends upon previous knowledge. Sometimes the level of reading skills becomes relevant to text processing and comprehension (e.g. when background knowledge is limited); and sometimes the level of background knowledge may be more significant (e.g. when reading skill is limited).

Pulido (2004b, p.37) pointed out that cultural familiarity has direct and positive relationship with vocabulary acquisition. In her work, Pulido (2007, p.14) proved that her students learning Spanish language could guess the meaning of nonsense Spanish vocabulary items better through reading with more familiar topics than less familiar ones.

Background knowledge has been known to influence text processing, comprehension and lexical inferencing during reading (Al-Shumairei, 2006; Othman, 2007; Schmidt-Rinehart, 1994). Thus, this factor should be determinant of vocabulary development through reading as well as reading and listening comprehension. On the other hand, background knowledge has been known to influence language output (speaking and writing) (Pulido, 2004a; 2007). However, this line of research has been scarcely investigated concerned with the impact of topic familiarity on vocabulary acquisition and language output through reading (Nation & Waring, 1997). To this end, the present study considers the impact of topic familiarity on language output and incidental vocabulary retention and recall through reading of familiar and unfamiliar topics (Lewis, 1993).

### *Statement of the problem*

Developing vocabulary knowledge of second or foreign languages has always been the main concern of not only the learners of English but also those who want to learn English language outside the atmosphere for communicative contexts (Nation & Waring, 1997). On the other hand, developing vocabulary knowledge of the students has been the main concern of teachers who teach second or foreign language, and it is surprising for them why the rate of second language vocabulary learning is lower for some learners as opposed to others (Nation, 2001).

The teachers and researchers also wonder if there are any differences in vocabulary acquisition of bilingual and monolingual learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) through reading. Most of previous studies have been done on monolingual language learners (Carrell, 1987). Another point is that most of the studies (Johnson, 1981) were related to the effects of cultural familiarity, proficiency and sight vocabulary on vocabulary acquisition, and some studies (Pulido, 2004a) have focused on reading comprehension as dependent variable.

However, despite the research boom in the area of topic familiarity, on the one hand, and vocabulary acquisition on the other hand, no study has been done on both monolingual and bilingual English learners. This study aims at studying the role of topic familiarity in vocabulary acquisition among bilingual and monolingual EFL learners.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Pulido (2007), the hypothesis that vocabulary gain and retention would be superior after reading stories that depicted more familiar as opposed to less familiar scenarios is not consistently supported. First, there was no effect of topic familiarity obtained on the translation measure. That is, for both models, gain and retention of new vocabulary were not affected by the conditions under which the new

vocabulary was encountered (i.e., more vs. less familiar scenarios). Second, on the more robust translation recognition measure, the effects due to topic familiarity were obtained only on the initial measure of gain, when tested concurrently with each of the L2 proficiency vocabularies. That is, at short-term intervals (i.e., 2 days after reading), learners at all proficiency levels demonstrated greater vocabulary gains after reading the texts for which they reported greater levels of familiarity. Thus, this finding provides partial support for schema-theoretic and knowledge-based views of learning and memory, wherein the possession of appropriate background knowledge is assumed to facilitate attention allocation, the construction of mental representation, and in her study, the forging of form-meaning connections for new words. Pulido concluded that at least at time intervals in the short term, it is assumed that greater familiarity (i.e., expertise with the topics depicted within the scenarios) provides a cognitive foothold from which to construct and integrate information about new words.

Ellis (1994) provides another perspective and additional information concerning the role of background knowledge in the process of incidental vocabulary acquisition. This is accomplished via an experimental design that (a) oriented learners to the more naturalistic task of reading for comprehension (as opposed to a task that oriented learners to guess the meaning of unfamiliar and/or target words) and (b) subsequently assessed participants' memory for specific new form-meaning connections that may have been established during reading.

However, in the light of the unexpected two-way interaction between topic familiarity and time obtained in both models when translation recognition served as the dependent measure, it appeared that any effects on vocabulary gain that may be due to topic familiarity are only short-lived. Contrary to her expectation, there was a significant decrease in memory over time (4 weeks) for the target words encountered within the more familiar stories. That is, if there was subsequent learning of the real words corresponding to the underlying concepts of the target words from the more familiar stories, learners may have experienced interference at the second testing interval. So, in her study the hypothesis could not be confirmed, however, as there was no measure administered to detect learner look up or learning strategies between testing intervals.

#### ***Text comprehension and second language vocabulary acquisition***

Mackey (2000) examined the relationship between text comprehension and second language vocabulary acquisition through reading more and less familiar texts. She found out whereas the role of passage comprehension in incidental vocabulary gain and retention through reading was in general robust, the nature of the relationship between passage comprehension and intake was inconsistent, instead fluctuating as function of the reader's background knowledge.

Level of comprehension achieved from reading the brief script-based narrative passage proved integral to incidental gain and retention of semantic feature of new L2 lexical items from the passages. Increases in passage comprehension as demonstrated by the recall of semantic propositions, were accompanied by increases in gain and retention of the target nonsense words that appeared in those passages (Hulstijn, 1992).

According to Pulido (2004a), it is assumed that with greater levels of comprehension contextually relevant passage information becomes and remains more available in working memory. This may have enhanced the potential for relevant background knowledge to be activated during the process of constructing a mental representation of the passage, which, in turn, would have increased the likelihood of successful lexical inferencing to resolve the meaning of any unfamiliar words deemed relevant or important during reading.

According to Koda (2005), the strategic explicit processes that are assumed to have contributed to these lexical gains through reading included, to some unknown degree, (a) noticing that certain words were unfamiliar and that there was a gap in existing knowledge; (b) inferring meaning from context using linguistic and extra linguistic, or background knowledge; and (c) elaborative rehearsal, or attending to the connections between the new lexical forms and their meanings and associating the new words with previous knowledge.

Furthermore, the above insights showed that topic familiarity affected text processing, comprehension, and lexical inferencing and gain, but it did not affect the role that text comprehension played in incidental vocabulary gain, and this was demonstrated by the lack of a significant correlation interaction between passage comprehension and topic familiarity. The greater the level of passage comprehension is, the greater is the gain, regardless of the reader's level of familiarity with the topic. On the other side, there is a direct relationship between passage comprehension and intake of new lexical forms encountered through reading (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Pulido (2004a) says, the level of passage comprehension is less closely related to the level of intake, when learners read within the more familiar scenarios than when they read within less familiar scenarios. And as comprehension improves, recognition memory for the target words from the less familiar conditions surpassed memory for the target words from the more familiar conditions. She adds the better comprehend pay less attention to the target words while reading within the more familiar and easier topics. Next, when vocabulary gain is considered, more target words were initially remembered from the more familiar stories.

Wode (1999) claims the construction of a coherent mental representation of a text involves the interaction between explicitly stated textual information and background knowledge. According to Paribakht and Wesche (1999), to the extent that the construction of mental representation of script-based texts improves, the accessibility of lexical form, but not meaning, from those texts also appears to be influenced by the interaction between explicitly stated textual information and background knowledge. The greater the level of comprehension, the greater the chances of making form-meaning connections for new lexical items encountered through reading.

#### ***Content familiarity and reading comprehension***

Al-Shumairei (2006) examined the relative effects of content familiarity and language ability on texts comprehension performance. Al-Shumairei found out, content familiarity was found to have significantly affected the students' overall comprehension performance.

According to Al-Shumairei (2006), the lack of prior knowledge (content familiarity) seems to affect to the low-ability students but not the high-ability students. One possibility is that background knowledge helps readers at a certain proficiency level but not those at other levels. The other possibility is related to language ability effects; that is, the lack of prior knowledge seems not to hinder the high-ability students' performance on the unfamiliar passages as their proficiency level compensates for this lack of familiarity and they perform better (Zimmerman, 1997). Therefore, the knowledge of language including vocabulary and reading skills may help the high-ability students to overcome the unfamiliarity of topic and content. The language knowledge frees the learners' cognitive resources to make effective use of the skills and strategies of their comprehension procedures.



## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main questions to be pursued in this study are as follows:

1. To what extent does topic familiarity affect L2 incidental vocabulary retention and recall of intermediate EFL learners?
2. Is there any difference, in terms of vocabulary acquisition, between monolingual and bilingual learners?

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

The research was conducted with the help of 60 participants majoring in EFL. They were at the second year and enrolled in Reading Comprehension course. They included 30 monolingual Persian speakers and 30 bilingual Arabic–Persian speakers including 34 males and 26 females. The participants were selected on the basis of availability out of 120 students from Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz. The bilingual participants were selected out of a 50 bilingual population and monolingual participants were selected out of 70 monolingual population. The participants' age ranged from 19 to 43 years old.

### Instrumentation

*Translation recognition test:* The test was administrated to evaluate the recall process and vocabulary acquisition of the participants. In this 40-item test, the participants were asked to recognize the equivalent translation of the vocabulary items. In order to have a reliable test, they conducted a pilot study and calculated the reliability coefficient of the test. The test was administrated to fifteen students of the same level of the participants. Using KR–21 formula, the reliability of the test was met at ( $r=.76$ ).

### Materials

1. *Passages:* The texts used for the present study were eight narrative passages, four pertaining to more familiar topics and four to less familiar topics. The texts were selected from Alexander (1967) "*Developing Reading Skills*" and Alexander and Vincent (1986) "*Make Your Point*".

2. *Target words:* Forty lexical items (noun, verb, and adverb), representing concepts frequently associated with the stories, were chosen evenly from among the eight stories, that is, five per story.

### Procedure

This study followed a pre–test and post–test design to evaluate the role of topic familiarity in language output and incidental vocabulary retention and recall through reading among monolingual and bilingual EFL learners in Ahvaz Islamic Azad University. To this end, the participants were divided into two groups of monolingual (Persian speaker) and bilingual (Arabic–Persian speaker) learners i.e. each comprised 30 learners. Then, the researchers examined the level of learners' familiarity and their background knowledge of on the content of the passages through a questionnaire (Al-Shumairei, 2006). This made the researchers sure that the participants were unfamiliar (or less familiar) with four of the text book passages. As mentioned earlier, no participant was expected to know the meaning of any of target words. For this, before reading each text, the researcher derived the target words from the texts and asked the participants about the meaning of these words to know whether or not the participants knew anything about these words, because the researcher was going to study the acquisition of these target words, so these words must not be known before the study.

The study lasted about six weeks (five sessions). In the first phase, two passages (one familiar and one unfamiliar) were provided for participants to be studied and worked on. After studying the texts as reading comprehension activity, providing a 10–item translation–synonym production test (five for familiar and five for unfamiliar text), the researcher asked about the meaning of target words and assessed the vocabulary retention of the participants. Following the retention test, the participants were asked to rewrite the stories using every vocabulary item that they could remember. The researcher did this to evaluate how many of target words the participants could remember and use in the process of rewriting. In the second, third, and forth weeks, the researcher did the same but on the other texts. During the last phase, in the sixth week (two weeks after the last session of treatment) the researcher administrated a forty–item translation recognition test (as a post– test) to assess the recall process of the participants. That is, all participants completed a measure of word recognition memory.

This procedure was piloted by Pulido (2004a, 2007) and Al-Shumairei (2006) in their researches. Before reading each passage, all participants were oriented to the task of reading for the purpose of answering comprehension questions of the passages.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To test the research hypotheses, the researcher compared monolingual and bilingual students' performance in using topic familiarity, a parametric technique for analyzing the quantitative data. In this study, the independent variable was topic familiarity with two levels including familiar and unfamiliar texts. In this way, the study investigated the role of the two independent variables through *t*–test, in order to find out, whether or not topic familiarity influences learning incidental vocabulary (i.e. , dependent variable) of monolingual and bilingual (i.e. moderate variables) Iranian EFL students at the intermediate level. To do so, the descriptive statistic compared the means of two monolingual and bilingual groups with each other and also presented means and standard deviations of the two groups who focused on familiar and unfamiliar topics in pairs for learning vocabulary achievement.

In this case, the hypothesis of mean equality of two groups was rejected ( $p<0.05$ ), and also the students' mean in using familiar topics (Mean=14.18) was greater than the students' mean in using unfamiliar topics (Mean=11.95). Too, the difference of the confidence interval showed these results based on which the topic familiarity had a significant effect on incidental learning vocabulary and the first null-hypothesis was rejected. The results are shown in Tables 1 and 2 as follows:

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Vocabulary Achievement(Pre-test vs. Post-test)

Groups			N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Familiar Topic	60	14.18	3.028		.391	
Unfamiliar Topic	60	11.95	3.175		.410	

*Table 2: Paired Samples t-test of Vocabulary Achievement (Pre-test vs. Post-test)*

	Groups	t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)	Std. Error Mean
Familiar Topic vs. Unfamiliar Topic	3.998 59	.000		.559	

The paired Samples *t*-test was run on to compare the mean score of the bilingual group (A) and monolingual group(B) in using familiar topics in learning incidental vocabulary and it yielded statistically significant difference. The results of *t*-test for the effect of these familiar topics in learning vocabulary as independent variables statistically indicated mean differences. To evaluate the effects of familiar topics on learning vocabulary by bilingual and monolingual students, the sample means of bilingual and monolingual groups were compared.

*Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Vocabulary Achievement (Bilinguals vs. Monolinguals)*

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Monolinguals	30 13.17	2.601		.475	
Bilinguals	30 14.73	2.741		.500	

Tables 3 shows that bilingual students had a better performance in using familiar topics in learning incidental vocabulary than the monolingual group's and the second null hypothesis was also rejected. Table 4 indicates the results of *t*-test.

*Table 4: Independent Samples t-test on Vocabulary Achievement (Bilingual vs. Monolingual)*

	Groups	t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)	Std. Error Mean
Monolinguals vs. Bilinguals	2.271 58	0.027		.690	

The results of Independent Samples *t*-test showed a significant difference between bilingual and monolingual groups in using familiar topics in learning incidental vocabulary. According to T-distribution table (Hatch & Farhady, 1999, p. 267), a ratio of observed *t* (-2.271) was calculated for a .05 level of probability. The ratio was much greater than the critical *t* (2.000); therefore, the differences between two groups were statically significant. The hypothesis of equality of means of two group was rejected, because the ( $p=0.027<0.05$ ) and also the mean of the bilingual group (Mean=14.73) was higher than the mean of the monolingual group (Mean=13.17).

### **Discussion**

In the present study, in order to measure the short term vocabulary retention of the EFL learners between familiar and unfamiliar texts, four quizzes were administered each session (one at the end of each session). Then they were asked to rewrite the stories (i .e. familiar and unfamiliar) using new vocabulary items (target words). The mean of vocabulary items used in rewriting activities showed that the learners' performance was better on familiar topics in both activities (quizzes and rewriting activities). This showed that all the participants stored vocabulary items of familiar text book contents better than those of unfamiliar texts book contents.

H01. Topic familiarity does not significantly affect L2 incidental vocabulary retention and recall of intermediate EFL learners.

The results appeared to support the schemata theory of reading and research on L2 reading. According to Anderson (1977), schema theory of reading, knowledge of text content can facilitate comprehension during encoding/decoding process by providing a knowledge structure to which readers can compare and fit pieces of incoming information. The results showed that the content familiarity on reading comprehension have significantly affected the learners' overall comprehension performance, and scored higher on the familiar passages, compared with their performance on unfamiliar passages. The findings of the present study are consistent with Al-Shumairei (2006) indicating that background knowledge increases receptive skills, such as passive vocabulary.

Othman (2007) also found that background knowledge and topic familiarity had a significant effect on listening comprehension. Providing the learners with background knowledge as well as systematic knowledge, equips learners with the necessary information to facilitate comprehension of an unfamiliar topic. The findings of this study are also consistent with those of Othman (2007).

Pulido (2003) compared the role of topic familiarity and proficiency on vocabulary acquisition. She got results inconsistent with those of the present study. She found that proficiency had greater effects on vocabulary acquisition, compared to topic familiarity. That is, topic familiarity, according to her results, has little effect on vocabulary retention and recall. But in another study, Pulido (2007) found that cultural and topic familiarity had greater effect on vocabulary acquisition, a finding consistent with those of the present study. As mentioned in the procedure section, every session the participants were asked to rewrite the stories using new vocabulary (target words). The mean of used vocabulary items indicated that they used more vocabulary items of familiar passages (Mean=9.5) than those of unfamiliar passages (M=8.8). These results indicated that topic familiarity has positive effects on elaboration and rewriting the stories using more newly learnt vocabulary items. Comparing the means of quizzes on both familiar and unfamiliar topics indicated that the learners' performance on quizzes (administered at the end of each session) gained higher scores on vocabulary retention and recall on familiar topics rather than unfamiliar topics.

H02: There is no significant difference, in terms of the level of vocabulary acquisition, between monolingual and bilingual learners.

Whether bilinguals or monolinguals are better in vocabulary acquisition is another concern of the present study. The results of *t*-test (Tables

3 and 4) showed that the mean score was higher for bilingual group than monolingual group's mean score. Therefore, bilingual learners used schema and other strategies better than monolingual learners on vocabulary acquisition. It can be implied from the results of this study that bilinguals and monolinguals have different degrees of background application. However, it is necessary to have an adequate explanation in mental factors and strategy use among bilingual and monolingual subjects in the performance of language and vocabulary test. Psychological factors may affect strategy use among bilinguals and monolinguals in the performance on the acquisition of vocabulary items as language element. Another reason may be due to the flexibility of bilinguals' mind which is concluded in Romaine's (1989) study. In discussing that bilingualism affects thought process and language learning Hakuta (1986, p. 15) has pointed out that research on bilingualism in general in the beginning of 20th century was guided by the question of whether bilingualism had a negative effect on intelligence. It was carried out largely on immigrant populations in the United States. More recent work, however, has been concerned to demonstrate a positive effect (Romaine, 1989, p. 99).

A brief glance at the two opposing viewpoints will give an idea of some of the issues on the differences between bilingual and monolingual EFL learners in vocabulary retention and recall. In summary, the results of this research showed that bilinguals outperformed monolinguals. This is consistent with the results of previous study performed by Romaine (1989). He concluded that bilingual persons who are equal in both languages are found to have slightly higher IQ scores than monolingual persons. He also found that bilingualism is associated positively with greater cognitive flexibility and awareness of language.

## CONCLUSION

Incidental or indirect vocabulary learning occurs without the specific intent to focus on vocabulary. During reading, new word meanings are derived and learned even though the reader's purpose for reading is not the learning of new vocabulary. Research on reading and vocabulary learning has identified several factors which contribute to the individual differences observed for incidental vocabulary acquisition through reading. Among these factors are reader's age, reading purpose, inferencing ability, the amount of exposure to unknown words, the amount of verbal ability, dictionary use, and several text and word characteristics (Hulstijn, Hollander, & Greidanus, 1996; Knight, 1994; Swanborn & De Gloor, 2002).

The results indicated that the background knowledge did affect the intermediate bilingual and monolingual EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition. At the end of the course, two sets of post-test from both familiar and unfamiliar texts were administered, and the results of the test were compared to find the effect of background knowledge. The results of the study confirmed that vocabulary acquisition could be improved through familiar topics.

It was discovered through the findings of this study that there is a significant positive relationship between topic familiarity and incidental vocabulary learning. That is to say, when topic familiarity increases, so does incidental gain of new vocabulary. More topic familiar learners demonstrated higher word learning through reading than less topic familiar readers.

Topic familiarity seems to have significantly affected the incidental vocabulary acquisition. While prior knowledge of content seems to have facilitated the reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition of the students, which was reflected in their performance, the lack of prior knowledge reduced the degrees of both comprehension and vocabulary acquisition.

## Implications

First, language educators need to take advantage of the significant effects of the content familiarity on learners' vocabulary acquisition. Therefore, they should provide low achievers, especially beginners and those at the elementary level, with familiar content in order to enable them to deploy the appropriate skills and strategies to understand the texts and consequently to learn new vocabulary items. Then, they can advance step by step, making the texts more challenging in terms of language difficulty, renewing vocabulary items, and in terms of unfamiliarity of the content as the learners' language ability improves. If the topics and texts are familiar to them, their memory and cognitive resources can be freed somewhat to concentrate on the language-processing aspects such as sentence patterns. They can guess and learn vocabulary items better and better during reading familiar topics. From a parallel viewpoint, the results of this study suggest EFL learners some points. The results indicated that topic familiarity and background knowledge can improve vocabulary acquisition. Thus they can benefit considerably from studying familiar texts and stories to enhance their vocabulary range. More important, bilingual learners benefit from two different languages and consequently they can benefit from two different cultures. So, they may be provided with more familiar texts.

Material designers are well counseled to design their vocabulary activities in such a way that necessitate the employment of background knowledge. Also, they should bear in mind that vocabulary items should be embedded in not only familiar texts but also in a right time and at a suitable level that conforms to the readers' actual potential in cognition, in order for them to comprehend and learn the reading passages and new vocabulary items respectively. That is, material designers should design their materials based on familiar topics for the EFL learners. For example, EFL teachers may use the passages which are familiar and famous for the majority of the learners. They can design the material based on the mother tongue of those bilingual readers for better understanding. Curriculum designers should be aware of some places of our country where there are a lot of bilingual residents who live there to design a complicated and comprehensive plan to aware and select those teachers who are bilingual and teach English in those areas such as Iran.

## Suggestions for Further Research

No experiment is without its limitations. The present study investigated the impact of one reader-based factor of topic familiarity on incidental vocabulary gain. However, other reader-based factors such as proficiency, passage sight vocabulary items, etc. are other variables whose effects on incidental vocabulary gain through reading and its relationship with background knowledge need to be explored.

This study described the gains in knowledge associated with new lexical items in terms of semantic features. Aside from semantic feature, the acquisition of lexical knowledge also consists of learning morphological syntactic, orthographic, and pragmatic features. It is an empirical issue whether or not the same effects associated with the variables of topic familiarity would be replicated when assessing gains of such additional components of lexical knowledge. This matter can be investigated in other studies focusing on incidental vocabulary learning during reading. The brief nature of the texts used in this study may have induced greater levels of use of micro-processing strategies, or more attention to surface structure than might have been the case with the employment of lengthier texts which tend to encourage greater use of macro-processing strategies, or reading to get gist (Swaffar, Arens, & Byrnes, 1991). Future research may also wish to consider the effects of passage length on incidental vocabulary acquisition.

Finally, this study compared Persian speakers as monolingual and Persian-Arabic speakers as bilingual learners. In the future studies, the researchers can compare the speakers of other languages (e. g., Turkish or Kurdish) and also consider the case of gender concerning vocabulary acquisition through reading familiar and unfamiliar topics.

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**STRONG EXPLETIVES, EMPTY ADJECTIVES AND TAG QUESTIONS USAGE AS A GENDER MARKER IN A SERIAL FILM “F.R.I.E.N.D.S”**

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**ABSTRACT**

This article examines the phenomenon of men and women's language. This article focuses on three linguistic features of men and women's language. They are expletives, empty adjectives, and tag questions usage. These three linguistic features used by speakers in their utterances are believed to convey speakers' feelings as well as their social meanings. This qualitative descriptive research socio-linguistically provides the insight of how men and women speak differently through these three linguistic features by Lakoff (1975) and Holmes (2001). The data are taken from a serial film *Friends*. Apparently, the present writer has found out that strong expletives words found in *Friends* characters' utterances are used to show speaker's expression of anger, frightening, start, until frustration and also sometimes to be the curse words to elicit humor. The founding empty adjectives words are to show speaker's expression of joy, interest and also gratitude and speaker's agreement of something. The tag questions are used by speakers not only to show speakers' uncertainty but also to get information more detail, and to involve hearers to agree what speakers have stated before. Another founding mentions that men and women don't speak differently but they just express their feelings in different way through different linguistic features depending on their hearers.

**KEYWORDS:** Expletives, Empty Adjectives, Tag Questions, Gender Marker, Serial Film.

**INTRODUCTION**

In a social interaction, we can find utterances. These utterances are used as a means for humans to express their feelings, besides by using gestures. Through utterances, we can study people's feelings whether they are in sadness, happiness, certainty, or even in an uncertainty. It is because sometimes the utterances contain not only explicit meaning, but also implicit meaning.

In Sociolinguistics, the purpose of the language use as a tool for humans to express their feelings is linked with linguistic features in men and women's language. This linguistic features term was first introduced by Lakoff on her research year 1975 to describe the speech characterization based on speakers' gender. This speech characterization in linguistic features is varied. For example, there is empty adjectives use in people utterances to convey agreement, excitement, etc.

Linguistic features in Sociolinguistics are categorized by speakers' gender. Gender is a system of meaning – a way of constructing notions of male and female – and language is the primary means through which we maintain or contest old meanings, and construct or resist new ones (Eckert & Ginet, 2003). Gender in Sociolinguistics refers to men and women's behavior socially and culturally constructed. In other words, language can be distinguished based on the speakers' gender through different linguistic features usage.

In Sociolinguistics, the different linguistic features usage as a kind of language use for expressing humans' feeling connected to the language and gender issue is shown by the use of 'strong expletives' by men, 'empty adjectives', and 'tag questions' mostly used by women. Strong expletives refer to the language use uttered by the speakers when they curse something really bothering. Empty adjectives are usually found when women want to compliment something they like. Tag questions can be simply considered as yes-no question but, it is a unique one. This question is unique because it has to be preceded by a clause and has its own function in a social interaction.

In short, it is true that from childhood until adulthood or from males until females are believed that they have a different way of speaking from each other. The difference refers to the way of speaking that both reflects and produces a subordinate position in a society. Women's language by Lakoff is rife with such devices as mitigators (*sort of, I think*) and inessential qualifiers (*really happy, so beautiful*). This language renders women's speech tentative, powerless, and trivial; and as such, it disqualifies them from positions of power and authority. In this way, language itself is a tool – it is learned as a part of learning to be a woman, imposed on women by societal norms, and in turn it keeps women in their place. As a result of this argument by Lakoff, there are two most significant theories on social differences between males and females. They are “difference theory” and “dominance theory”.

The “difference theory” between men and women in the same group, living in different or separate cultural worlds resulted that it promotes different ways of speaking (Uchida, 1992). This theory is sometimes called “two-culture theory”. In simple terms, although men and women live in the same environment they establish different relations with society as if each belonged to a different environment and culture, the result of which is consequently reflected in the language of both genders as in other aspects of their lives. So, cross-gender communication is to be taken as cross-cultural or bi-cultural communication. In “dominance theory”, men and women are believed to inhabit a cultural and linguistic world, where power and status are unequally distributed. In this theory, also called power-based theory, the focus is on male dominance and gender division. Thus, this present writer is interested to conduct a mini research about three linguistic features; strong expletives, empty adjectives, and tag questions usage based on speakers' gender in the serial film *Friends* utterances (1994-2004). The present writer found a lot of data about these three linguistic features in the serial film *Friends*. Besides that, the movie doesn't only have rich characters like in a daily life but also various episodes telling about daily issues in real life.



#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The investigation and identification of differences between men's and women's speech date back across time until 1970s. Lakoff (1975) first introduced women's language to distinguish men and women's different speech. Lakoff (1975) proposed theories on the existence of women's language. Her book 'Language and Woman's Place' has served as a basis for much research on the subject. She mentions ten features for women's language. As cited in Holmes (1993, p. 314), these ten features are:

1. Lexical hedges or fillers, e.g. you know, sort of, ...
2. Tag questions, e.g. she is very nice, isn't she?
3. Rising intonation on declaratives, e.g. it's really good.
4. Empty adjectives, e.g. divine, charming, cute.
5. Precise color terms, e.g. magenta, aquamarine.
6. Intensifiers such as just and so.
7. Hypercorrect grammar, e.g. consistent use of standard verb forms.
8. Superpolite forms, e.g. indirect requests, euphemisms.
9. Avoidance of strong swear words, e.g. fudge, my goodness.
10. Emphatic stress, e.g. it was a BRILLIANT performance.

Lakoff's hypotheses have both pros and cons. These pros and cons are shown by some research responded men and women's difference in language. First reaction was made by Dubois and Crouch (1975) launching a critique on Lakoff's claims, especially on tag questions. They examined the use of tag questions within the context of a professional meeting and concluded that at least in that context males used tag questions more than females did. Their conclusion was that Lakoff's hypothesis might be biased in favor of highly stereotyping beliefs or folk linguistics. Dubois and Crouch (1975) questioned Lakoff's findings as Lakoff had used introspective methods in her study. They argued that her conclusions were made on uncontrolled and unverifiable observation of others and were based on a highly skewed and non-random sample of people. Despite such and many other similar observations, Lakoff believes that the use of tag questions by women is the sign of uncertainty. Krammarae (1991) discussed the phenomenon of "stranger compliments" from men to women. It is reported that such street remarks are still heard, sometimes with racist as well as sexist overtones. There is, however, the occasional reversal, with women yelling out numbers as men walk by ("Hey, you're at least 9") or appreciative comments on the men's bodies ("Love those abs").

Another research distinguishing language based on gender was conducted by Elizabeth Kuhn (1992). Kuhn examined university professors' use of their authority on the first day of classes to get students to do what the professors wanted them to. Kuhn found male professors displaying more authority than women in both American and German universities at the highest levels in the academic hierarchy. And in both the US and Germany, men still predominate as the recognized authorities in academic and other domains. While analyzing the electronic mails of a number of men and women, Bunz and Campbell (2002) stated that social categories such as age, gender, etc. do not influence politeness accommodation in e-mail. Nemati and Bayer (2007) also studied the same issue about language and gender issue. Their article entitled "Gender Differences in the Use of Linguistic Forms in the Speech of Men and Women: A Comparative Study of Persian and English" was conducted to determine whether men and women were different with respect to the use of intensifiers, hedges and tag questions in English and Persian. To conduct the study, R. Lakoff's (1975) ideas concerning linguistic differences between males and females were taken into account. Their findings of the study did not confirm Lakoff's opinion regarding gender-bound language at least in the three areas and the corpus inspected in this research.

Many studies have been conducted about language and gender in the issue of men and women speak differently like mentioned above. However, there is only a little connected to how men and women speak differently by examining some similar relationship among the linguistic features used in their speech. Thus, to examine Lakoff's hypothesis, the present writer selected three linguistic features, from the list above, namely strong expletives, empty adjectives and tag questions used by speakers in a serial film "Friends" as a means to convey their feelings as the basis of analysis. This research examines whether the speakers based on their gender speak differently – in a way of speaking – or not.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The present research is carried out to study the utterances by speakers in the serial film "Friends" which contain three linguistic features; strong expletives, empty adjectives, and tag questions. The present study, therefore, seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What strong expletives, empty adjectives, and tag questions are used by the speakers in a serial film "Friends"?
2. What are the functions of the strong expletives, empty adjectives, and tag questions used by the speakers in a serial film "Friends"?
3. What are the similarities and differences strong expletives, empty adjectives, and tag questions used by the speakers in a serial film "Friends"?

#### **METHODOLOGY**

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative approach is concerned with the process of certain phenomenon (Fanani, 2010). This method focuses on words and description rather than numbers (Maxwell, 2000). Descriptive research method is conducted by making a description systematically, knowing the characteristics and relationship among phenomena investigated. The data are taken from the utterances in a serial film Friends (1994-2004) created by David Crane and Marie Kauffman production. It is one of American blockbuster sitcoms. The film revolves around a circle of friends in Manhattan, a borough of New York City. The episodes provoke issues close to real life issues.

The focus of this study is to find the utterances containing strong expletives, empty adjectives and tag questions and their functions. Social dimension by Holmes (1992, 2001) and context by McManis et al. (1987) are mainly used in this research to examine their functions.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**



To answer the research questions, the selected utterances containing strong expletives, empty adjectives, and tag questions are firstly categorized and then analyzed based on speakers' gender and their context by using social dimension by Holmes (1992, 2001). There are four social dimensions used in this research. They are social distance, social status, formality scale, and two functional scales. The social distance is used to measure the relationship among participants. If the speakers are close to each other, the relationship will bear solidarity. If the speakers' relationship to each other is not close, it will result to the existence of power to one speaker in the social interaction. A status scale concerned with participant relationships causing high and low status by looking at the power of the speakers. A formality scale relates to the setting or type of interaction. And two functional scales refer to the purposes or topic of interaction.

To figure out the second research question finding the functions of the use of expletives, empty adjectives, and tag questions, the present writer connects the social dimension to the context theory by McMannis et al. (1987) in order to examine the meanings explicitly and implicitly. There are 4 types of context by McMannis (1987) as follows:

1. *Physical context* includes *setting* and the object or topic that is discussed in the social interaction.
2. *Social context* is context that explains the social relationship and social background between speaker and hearer.
3. *Epistemic context* is context describing one schemata about something discussed in the social interaction owned by speaker and hearer like the similar schemata owned by speaker and hearer about one certain place or object of the discussion.
4. *Linguistic context*, this context explains the relationship between the discussed utterances and previous and also the next utterances as the intended meaning.

Epistemic context is the basic knowledge that shared by the speakers and listeners. Everything that the speakers and the listeners share is related to epistemic context. To answer the third question, the present writer then analyzed thoroughly the data found in the research to find out the similarities and differences between the use of strong expletives, empty adjectives, and tag questions in men and women utterances. To answer the research questions in this paper, the present writer also refers to these two tables below as scales to help determine which expletives are strong or weak, and to classify the function of linguistic features used by speakers in the serial film Friends.

Table 1: expletives words scale (by Klerk in Johnson and Meinhof's article, year 1997: 157-158)

Value of Expletives	Expletives Words
Value of 1	<i>beggar, blinking, blooming, bother, brother, crikey, cripes, darn, dear, drat, flick, flip, fool, golly, gosh, grief, heck, hoender, jeepers, mother, Pete's sake, pluck off, rash, ruddy, Schweppes, shaving cream, sherbet, shirt, shivers, shize, shoot, shot, shucks, sugar, wow.</i>
Value of 2	<i>ass, blast, bull, buzz off, can it, clot, cork up, cow, creep, damn, dog, dozz, egghead, imbecile, gag it, GCM, geez, gits, heavens, holy mackerel, idiot, jis, jislaaik, jissus, jurrah, moron, shiff off, shut up, shut your trap, sow, tripe, twerp, twit, voetsek, vrek, wench</i>
Value of 3	<i>drop dead, 'f, faggot, Glory, god, hell, holy cow, holy mother, jerk, Lord, mess off, Mother Mary, scab.</i>
Value of 4	<i>bastard, bitch, bloody, bulldust, donder, dosball, go suck, slut, stuff you, tit, up yours.</i>
Value of 5	<i>bumface, Christ, crap, drol, dwat, dwax, fart, gwat, Jesus, kak, kaffir, shittoes, siffy.</i>
Value of 6	<i>bulldung, bullshit, moer, shit, shithouse, son of a bitch, wank a plank, wanker.</i>
Value of 7	<i>jerk yourself, piss off, screw yourself, wop.</i>
Value of 8	<i>arse, arsehole, bugger, cock, dick, dickface, dickhead, dildohead, doos, dushbag, fucket, poephol, prick, shitface, shittrap.</i>
Value of 9	<i>cunt, cuntface, cuntsucker, fuck, fucker, fucking, poes.</i>
Value of 10	<i>mother-fucking.</i>

Table 2: List of kinds and functions of tag questions (cited from Axelsson, 2011: 41-45)

Type of Tag	Function	Example
Informational (Algeo 1990: 445)	To get information.	You haven't got the ages of these other guys, have you?
Confirmatory (Roesle 2001: 32)	To get confirmation.	Q: Well I think you did see it, didn't you? no? A: No, well I can't remember. (Roesle 2001: 33)
Involving/facilitative (Roesle 2001: 33)	To involve the listener by them agreeing to a statement.	This is quite nice an anorak, isn't it? (Roesle 2001: 33)
Punctuational (Algeo 1990: 446)	To give emphasizes.	You classicists, you've probably not done Old English, have you? course you haven't. (Algeo 1990: 446)
Softening (Holmes, 1995: 81)	To be polite of to soft harsh statements.	You've got a new job Tom, haven't you? (Holmes 1995:81)
Challenging (Holmes, 1995: 81)	To force a response from a "reluctant hearer."	Q: Now you er fully understand, don't you? A: Yes, Sir, indeed, yeah.
Preemptory (Algeo 1990: 447)	To undermine the hearer by pointing out something they clearly should know.	I wasn't born yesterday, was I? (Algeo 1990: 447)
Aggressive (Algeo 1990: 447)	To undermine the listener by pointing out something they clearly could not know.	Q: I rang you up this morning, but you didn't answer. A: Well, I was having a bath, wasn't I? (Algeo 1990:447)

'Tag questions' are divided into two types (Eckert and Ginet, 2003: 167-168). They are tags containing an inverted auxiliary form,

called as *canonical* tags (Holmes, 1983) or *variant* tags and a pronoun that agrees with the subject of the main clause (anchor) and *invariant* tags. Canonical tags include the auxiliary form followed by the subject of the anchor such as “is it”, “don’t you”, etc. The invariant tags are simple tags like “no?”, “eh?”, “right”, “okay”, “innit?” and “weren’t it?” These tags are not affected by the clause or anchor preceded the tag.

Based on the data analysis, it is resulted that ‘strong expletives’ in the serial film ‘Friends’ are used by both men and women characters in their utterances. They use ‘strong expletives’ to curse, or insult. However, ‘strong expletives’ are mostly found in men’s utterances in the serial film ‘Friends’. So, it can be inferred that the use of ‘strong expletives’ as a means to curse or insult something annoyed the speakers is one of the characteristics in men’s linguistic features.

‘Empty adjectives’ use in the serial film ‘Friends’ shows that not only women use ‘empty adjectives’ but also men do it too. However, the most frequency of the ‘empty adjectives’ use is showed in women’s utterances. It can be said that ‘empty adjectives’ use is categorized as women’s linguistic features to signs agreement of the speakers to hearers. In addition, there is actually a difference between the uses of ‘empty adjectives’ in both speakers.

‘Tag questions’ use in the serial film ‘Friends’ shows that both genders; men and women use tag questions in their utterances. The ‘tag questions’ uses found in data include two types of ‘tag questions’; canonical and invariant tags. Yet, the number of the ‘tag questions’ as the data in this research shows that men use more ‘tag questions’ than women do (10 out of 17). So, it cannot be said that ‘tag questions’ is one of women’s linguistic features. The ‘tag questions’ uses in the data are mostly used as a means to get information and to involve the hearers by them agreeing the statements.

Here are the explanations of the result:

### ***Strong Expletives***

#### ***Strong Expletives used by men***

(1) Season 8, episode 04

[Scene: Joey and Rachel's, Joey is standing at the counter as Ross enters.]

**Joey** : Whoa! What are you doing here? How did your date go?

**Ross** : Great! I'm across the street having sex with her right now. Your story **sucks!**

**Joey** : Hey! Look, if it didn't work it's because you didn't tell it right! Show me how you did it.

**Ross** : No! No, I don't...don't want to.

(2) Season 10, episode 10

[Scene: Monica's apartment. Monica is cleaning with a vacuum and then she cleans it with a dust buster. The guys enter the room.]

**Chandler**: Hey!

**Joey**: (to Chandler) **You son of a bitch!**

**Chandler**: Is it me, or have the greetings gone downhill around here?

**Monica**: (goes to Chandler) Phoebe and Rachel saw you with Nancy today and... em... they think you're having an affair.

**Rachel**: Who's Nancy?

**Ross**: What's going on?

**Monica**: (turns to them) Ok, alright, you guys, you'd better sit down, this is pretty big.

(3) Season 10, episode 07

[Scene: Monica's apartment. Somebody knocks the door]

**Laura**: Oh, it's nothing. I went on a date with a guy who lived in this building and it didn't end very well.

**Monica**: Ohh... that wouldn't by any chance be... Joey Tribbiani?

**Laura**: Yes!

**Chandler**: Of course it was!

**Laura**: Yeah, we had a really great night and in the morning he promised he would call me and he didn't.

**Chandler**: **RAT BASTARD!**

**Laura**: So you're not friends with him?

**Monica and Chandler**: **OH GOD NO! Nope, no, no, no. No! No, no. Nope! No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. NO!** (finally Monica concludes) **No!**

From the data above, ‘strong expletives’ are used by men speakers in (1), (2), and (3). They are *sucks*, *son of a bitch*, and *rat bastard*. They are uttered by men speakers to deliver their anger to insult to hearers (other men). Besides to express speakers’ anger, ‘strong expletives’ are also used to express solidarity (3).

#### ***Strong Expletives used by women***

(4) Season 10, episode 01

[Scene: Mike's apartment]

**Precious**: He proposed to you? This is the worst birthday ever. (she starts to cry again)

**Phoebe**: Look, Precious... Mike's not worth this. You're an attractive, intelligent woman and let's face it, Mike's kind of a wang. I mean, he proposed to me while he was still seeing you... He was gonna break-up with you on your birthday? And, I don't like to kiss-and-tell, but he cheated on you a lot this weekend.

**Precious**: Oh, my God, maybe you're right. Maybe I don't need him. I deserve to be treated with respect.

(Mike enters the apartment.)

**Precious**: **Screw you, Mike!** You're a coward and a bastard, and I hope you rot in hell.

(she slaps him in the face, Mike looks like he doesn't believe what just happened. Precious leaves, and he turns to Phoebe.)

In data (4) above, ‘strong expletives’ is used by a woman speaker delivered to a man hearer to convey her anger to him. The ‘strong

expletives' used above is *screw you*. The speaker is upset because the man, Mike, treated her previous girl bad. Besides to express anger, it can also be inferred that the use of 'strong expletives' there is to show speaker's solidarity uttered by a woman, Phoebe, about what happened to other woman, Precious.

#### **Empty Adjectives**

##### **Empty adjectives used by women**

(5) Season 3, episode 10

[Scene: Monica and Rachel's, Chandler is entering numbers on a calculator as Ross reads off how much he's sold.]

**Joey:** What? Rachel, listen, have you ever heard of Fortunata Fashions?

**Rachel:** No.

**Joey:** Well my old man is doing a plumbing job down there and he heard they have an opening. So, you want me to see if I can get you an interview?

**Rachel:** Oh my God! Yes, I would love that, oh, that is so *sweet*, Joey.

**Joey:** Not a problem.

**Rachel:** Thanks.

(6) Season 8, episode 14

[Scene: Joey and Rachel's, Rachel is balancing an aluminum can on her stomach as Ross enters.]

**Rachel:** Hey Ross! Check it out! I learned a new trick!

**Ross:** Hey uh, I brought you some lunch.

**Rachel:** Ohh! That's so *sweet* of you! Oh yum! (Takes a bite out of the sandwich and starts to get sick.) Did you put pickles on this?

**Ross:** Well yeah!

(7) Season 10, episode 4

[Scene: Joey's Apartment. Joey is in charge to make sure that nobody (Monica, Chandler, Judy, or Joey) leaves the Emma's birthday party while Ros is picking up Rachel who forgot to bring her driving license]

**Judy:** Well, we better get going, it's late. Jack's not allowed to drive at night anymore. He has trouble staying in his lane.

**Jack:** Last winter I went up on a church lawn and drove right through a manger scene. The papers thought it was a hate crime.

**Judy:** Anyway, it was *lovely* seeing you.

**Joey:** Ok! (Opens the door for them)

**Judy:** Bye... Bye dear.

**Joey:** Nighty-night!

**Judy:** Nighty-night!

**Joey:** Bye, bye.

In (5), (6), and (7) the 'empty adjectives' used there are *sweet*, and *lovely*. They are used by women speakers to men and women hearers. The 'empty adjectives' use there is to express their agreement of something and that they are also happy about something offered by the hearers.

##### **Empty adjectives used by men**

(8) Season 3, episode 13

[Scene: Richard's apartment, Richard is giving an apartment tour to his date]

**Richard:** Ah well, this is the living room.

**Richard's Date:** Impressive.

**Richard:** All right. This is the kitchen.

**Richard's Date:** Oh, that's real pretty. Wait a minute, don't I get to see the bedroom?

**Richard:** The bedroom. Well it's pretty much your typical... (opens the door as Monica hides under the covers, and quickly closes the door before his date can see the room.) bedroom.

**Richard's Date:** We're still on this side of the door.

**Richard:** Um-hmm.

**Richard's Date:** Yeah, but I didn't get to see it.

**Richard:** Oh shoot! Maybe next time. (yawns) Thanks for a *lovely* evening. (shows her out)

In data (8) above, the 'empty adjectives' use is uttered by a man speaker to a woman hearer. The 'empty adjectives' used is *lovely*. The 'empty adjectives' use in the data above is to express speaker's feeling as a compliment or gratitude to the woman hearer and also to end of the social interaction.

#### **Tag Questions**

##### **Tag questions used by men**

(9) Season 1 Episode 1

[Scene: Central Perk, Chandler, Joey, Phoebe, and Monica are there.]

**Phoebe:** Ooh! Oh! (She starts to pluck at the air just in front of Ross.)

**Ross:** No, no don't! Stop cleansing my aura! No, just leave my aura alone, *okay*?

**Phoebe:** Fine! Be murky!

**Ross:** I'll be fine, *alright*? Really, everyone. I hope she'll be very happy.

**Monica:** No you don't.

**Ross:** No I don't, to hell with her, she left me!

**Joey:** And you never knew she was a lesbian...

(10) Season 1 Episode 1

*(There's a knock on the door and it's Paul.)*

**Monica:** Hi, come in! Paul, this is... *(They are all lined up next to the door.)*... everybody, everybody, this is Paul.

**All:** Hey! Paul! Hi! The Wine Guy! Hey!

**Chandler:** I'm sorry, I didn't catch your name. Paul, **was it?**

**Monica:** Okay, umm-umm, I'll just--I'll be right back, I just gotta go ah, go ah...

**Ross:** A wandering?

**Monica:** Change! Okay, sit down. *(Shows Paul in)* Two seconds.

**Phoebe:** Ooh, I just pulled out four eyelashes. That can't be good.

*(Monica goes to change.)*

**Joey:** Hey, Paul!

**Paul:** Yeah?

(11) Season 1 Episode 5

*[Scene: Central Perk, all are there.]*

**Chandler:** So, Saturday night, the big night, date night, Saturday night, Sat-ur-day night!

**Joey:** No plans, **huh?**

**Chandler:** Not a one.

**Ross:** Not even, say, breaking up with Janice?

**Chandler:** Oh, right, right, shut up.

**Monica:** Chandler, nobody likes breaking up with someone. You just gotta do it.

In (9), (10), and (11) above, there are 'tag questions' uses. They include canonical and invariant tags like 'was it', and 'huh', 'okay', 'alright'. The 'tag questions' are used by men speakers to express their feeling like confirmatory, and uncertainty to both men and women hearers.

#### Tag questions used by women

(12) Season 1 Episode 1

*[Scene: Iridium, Monica is working as Frannie enters.]*

**Frannie:** Hey, Monica!

**Monica:** Hey Frannie, welcome back! How was Florida?

**Frannie:** You had sex, **didn't you?**

**Monica:** How do you do that?

**Frannie:** Oh, I hate you, I'm pushing my Aunt Roz through Parrot Jungle and you're having sex! So? Who?

**Monica:** You know Paul?

**Frannie:** Paul the Wine Guy? Oh yeah, I know Paul.

(13) Season 1 Episode 13

*[Scene: Central Perk, Phoebe is there with her boyfriend Roger, talking to Rachel and Monica.]*

**Phoebe:** Thanks. Okay, now go away so we can talk about you.

**Roger:** Okay. I'll miss you.

**Phoebe:** Isn't he great?

**Rachel:** He's so cute! And he seems to like you so much.

**Phoebe:** I know, I know. So sweet... and so complicated. And for a shrink, he's not too shrinky, **y'know?**

**Monica:** So, you think you'll do it on his couch?

In data (12) and (13) above, the 'tag questions' use are uttered by women speakers other women hearers. The 'tag questions' uses there include canonical and invariant tags such as 'didn't you' and 'y'know'. In (12), the use of 'tag questions' is uttered by speaker to elicit information of something being discussed. In (13), the speaker uses the 'tag question' there is to involve the hearer by them agreeing to a statement.

#### CONCLUSION

This paper's goal is to examine the use of strong expletives, empty adjectives, and tag questions based on the speakers' gender, their functions, and their similarities and differences.

It can be concluded that the findings of this research include three big points as the answer of the research questions. Firstly, 'strong expletives' found in the serial film 'Friends' include two categories. The first category is 'strong expletives' uttered by a man (as a speaker) to other man (as a hearer) such as *sucks*, and *son of a bitch* (uttered *face to face*), and *crap*, *stupid son of bitches*, *rat bastard*. The second one is 'strong expletives' directly uttered by a woman (as a speaker) to a man (as a hearer) such as *screw you*. Secondly, 'empty adjectives' are mostly found in women's utterances in the serial film "Friends". They are used by women (as the speakers) when they talked to both men and other women (as hearers). The 'empty adjectives' found in this research are *sweet*, *fantastic*, *adorable*, and *lovely* uttered by women speakers to both men and other women as hearers. But, the 'empty adjectives' uttered by men speakers to women hearers is *lovely*. Thirdly, 'tag questions' used by speakers include two types of 'tag questions'; canonical and invariant tags. They are *was it*, *is it*, *didn't you*, *okay*, *alright*, *y'know*, and *huh*. Men speakers use more 'tag questions' women do.

Based on linguistic features' function, it can be inferred that 'strong expletives' are used to express speakers' anger and show solidarity to the hearers that also upset speakers. 'The empty adjectives' used by speakers, mostly women, is to express speakers' joy and to agree something that makes them please. 'Tag questions' in this research are used by speakers to get more information and to involve hearers to agree with what speakers have stated before, as a facilitative.

Another finding in this research is that both men and women are actually use 'strong expletives', 'empty adjectives', and 'tag questions'. However, they are used in different way. Men speakers use 'strong expletives' only to men hearers. Women speakers use

'strong expletives' only to men speakers. Men speakers use 'strong expletives' only to men hearers but, women speakers use 'strong expletives' only to men hearers. It can be said that 'strong expletives' is men's linguistic feature since it is used mostly by men speakers. In the 'empty adjective use', women use it more than men do. Women speakers use 'empty adjectives' to both men and women hearers, but men speakers use 'empty adjectives' only to women hearers. So, it can be said that 'empty adjectives' is women's linguistic feature. 'Tag questions' use in this research is also used by both men and women speakers. Yet, men speakers use it more often than women do. The invariant tags are used by speakers only to close hearers like best friends while canonical or variant tags are used by speakers to their acquaintances as the hearers and when speakers and hearers are in a formal situation like in a work place.

#### Limitations of the study

This study examines the men and women's language and focuses only on three linguistic features usage; strong expletives, empty adjectives, and tag questions. There are some limitations for this study related to the topic discussed in this article as follow:

1. This article considers only at three kinds of linguistic features by men and women in their utterances. And also this article only concerns on the reason of men and women's linguistic features usage seen from social factors. So, the future research is needed to be able to study this issue not only from social factors but also from other factors.
2. The data taken in this article are from a serial film "Friends" scripts. It is suggested the future research take the data from more natural sources by using recording technique and etc.
3. The data in this article mostly describe informal setting like conversation between friends at home, café, etc. So, a less informal setting like in a work place between participants' different social status is suggested to future research.

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## ABSTRACT

To examine the impact of transitioning traditional reading comprehension assessments to computer-based, 66 male English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners aged 8 to 12 years were assigned to take two different twenty-minutes reading comprehension tests with the same level of difficulties on paper and computer screen using scrolling text to navigate through pages. They also completed an attitude questionnaire to reveal their attitudes towards computerized testing. The findings revealed that there are no significant differences in reading comprehension scores across testing modes. In addition, evaluating the Likert type questionnaire revealed that the majority of students prefer to take the test on computer. The findings also suggest that the amount of reading comprehension among children does not differ considerably while switching from paper/pencil-based assessment into computer-based assessment. Hence, schools with no or limited computers and the Internet facilities should not be concerned about the students' performance and their level of achievement.

**KEYWORDS:** computer-based assessment, paper/pencil-based assessment, attitude.

## INTRODUCTION

Computerized testing began in the early 1970s (Drasgow, 2002; Wainer, 1990). Limited computer capability and high costs, however, used to limit the implementation of computerized testing. With the advent of new technologies, computerized testing has begun to be developed and implemented in large-scale testing programs such as licensure, certification, admissions, and psychological tests (Kim & Huynh, 2007). For example, the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) has been administered in computer-adaptive format for several years. Likewise, in 1998, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) began transitioning to computer-adaptive testing. Recently, the new TOEFL Internet-Based Test (IBT) began administration via the Internet in a non-adaptive format. Increased testing requirements and tight deadlines imposed by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) (Public Law No: 107-110) have led to new ways that states can measure student performance more efficiently (Kim, et al., 2007).

The advantages of computers are well known and apparent (Al-Amri, 2009). Computers offer test developers the opportunity to improve their productivity and lead to innovation in their fields. The standardization of test administration conditions is one of the benefits offered by Computer-Based Testing (CBT). No matter what the tests' population size is, CBT helps test developers to set the same test conditions for all participants. Al-Amri (2009) also believed that CBT improves all aspects of test security by storing questions and responses in encrypted databases and enables testers to create randomized questions and answers from vast question pools. Moreover, offering different test formats and the immediate presentation of different types of feedback, either to students or to testers, are other great advantages of CBT. Collecting different performance data such as latency information is a unique feature of CBT (Olsen, Maynes, Slawson, & Ho, 1989). On the examinees' side, they are able to receive greater measurement efficiency and the possibility to take the test at any time. On the other hand, there are some disadvantages that users have to be aware of before opting for computer-based testing, which led many scholars to suggest conducting systematic studies to check equivalency and comparability of paper-based tests and computer-based tests (Parshall, Spray, Kalohn, & Davey, 2002). For example, students need some degree of computer literacy in order to avoid the mode effect on computer-based testing (Alderson, 2000).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

As there has been a growing interest in computer-based testing in large-scale assessments, several comparability studies have involved elementary and secondary students over the past few years. Russell and Haney (1997) investigated the mode effects on middle school students' performances on open-ended items in writing, science, math, and reading, as well as multiple-choice and short-answer items in language arts, science, and math from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), and extended writing test items. They found that the effect of administration mode was not significant for the multiple-choice items, but a substantial effect was found for the open-ended items. The results showed that students who were used to writing by the computer performed better when they responded to the open-ended test using a computer rather than using pencil and paper.

Similar findings were found in studies by Russell (1999) and Russell and Plati (2001), who reported that students who were accustomed to writing using a computer performed better on the open-ended tests when they wrote using a computer than when they wrote by hand. Pommerich (2004) investigated the item-level mode effects of English, reading, and science reasoning tests in grades 11 and 12 and found that examinees responded differently to some items under the various interface features, although the mode effect in general was small. Pommerich found that the paging condition group outperformed the scrolling condition group in the reading and science reasoning tests, and the automatic scrolling group performed slightly better than the semi-automatic scrolling group in the English test.

Two comparability studies on the online versions of the NAEP math and writing tests showed that the paper group significantly outperformed the computer group in the eighth-grade NAEP mathematics test, but no mode effect



was found for the eighth-grade NAEP essay test (Sandene, Horkay, Bennett, Allen, Braswell, Kaplan, 2005). The NAEP studies also found that students' familiarity with computers was related to their performance. Particularly, hands-on measures of keyboarding skill were found to be a significant predictor of students' performances on the NAEP online writing test (Sandene, et al., 2005). Although the NAEP studies have directly investigated administration mode effects in the K-12 large scale assessments, the NAEP is a low-stakes assessment and the lack of consequences for its results could affect student motivation to take the test seriously, and the results may not be generalized to high-stake statewide assessments.

Regarding the comparability of these two assessment modes on children as the participants, Barnes (2010) examined the feasibility of using CBA with children who have not yet started the first grade. Kindergarten children were able to perform the assessment nearly as well on the CBA as they did on the traditional paper version of the test. However, most children under four years of age were not able to complete a CBA independently. The children reacted positively to the CBA and seemed to enjoy using the computer, but the test results indicate that the CBA was more difficult and may be measuring something more than rhyme awareness for the preschoolers. In 2005, Sim examined the comparability of CBA and PPBA on 20 children, aged between 7 and 8 of mixed gender. The results showed that the majority of children performed better on paper than computer although there was no significant difference.

In fact, a lot of research works have been conducted to evaluate the comparability of computer based assessment and paper and pencil based assessment. Some studies revealed that there is a significant difference between the two testing modes on test scores (e.g. Scheuermann & Björnsson, 2009; Choi, Kim, & Boo, 2003), while other studies reported opposite or inconsistent results (e.g. Al-Amri, 2009; Boo, 1997). However, unlike the abundance of CBA research done with older or special needs students, there is a dearth of available research focusing on the issues of computer-based assessment with typically developing young children (Barnes, 2010). Therefore, a practical comparison between these two methods needs to be done in order to identify whether the testing mode has considerable influence on the performance of children when they sit for a reading comprehension assessment. In other words, due to the scarcity of empirical research concerning language assessment and use of technology in language assessment in Iran, this study hopes to raise awareness on the use of technology in language assessment in Iranian context.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Specifically, the research questions were:

1. Is there any significant difference between computer-based assessment and paper and pencil based assessment when assessing reading comprehension among primary school students?
2. What is the test takers' attitude towards computer-based assessment compared with traditional assessment?

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

This study recruited 66 male EFL learners aged 8 to 12 years from one of the well-known language learning institutes to take part in PPBA and CBA as the participants. Since the numbers of students who were at the required level of proficiency and appropriate for this study were not high enough to employ random selection, all of the students who had the requisites to sit for the reading comprehension assessments were selected as the participants. They were chosen from among five different proficiency levels ranging from *High Beginning* to *Low Advanced*. The number of students per class ranged from 5 to 23. It is necessary to notify that every student sit for the required placement tests at the very beginning of his entry into the institute. Hence, there were no worries about the proficiency levels of the children.

### Instruments

Two reading comprehension tests as well as an attitude questionnaire were utilized in this study as the data collection instruments, which are described below in details.

#### Reading Comprehension Test

Based on the proficiency levels of the participants, two different tests with the same level of difficulty containing a reading passage, a short story, and some associated multiple choice items were extracted directly from released *Read Theory* or *English for Every One* organizations. The tests for PPBA and CBA, different in terms of content but similar in terms of difficulty level as well as number of paragraphs and question items, were also checked by the institute teachers to ensure from their appropriateness.

With regard to the CBA, some points are necessary to be referred to in advance. Firstly, the reading comprehension tests were embedded in a dynamic web page with a submit button at the bottom of the page to send the students' entered answers to the website database. Secondly, in order to avoid building a separate website from scratch, the researchers preferred to benefit from the existing online form builders such as Google Drive, Adobe Acrobat Form Creator, and so on which not only allow to use their templates for creating the desired pages, but also offer facilities to the developer to analyze the entered data.

#### The Attitude Questionnaire

After completing the web-based reading comprehension assessment, all students were asked to complete a web-based questionnaire that consisted of five question items. The purpose of this questionnaire was to measure students' attitude toward computer-based assessments. The questions were addressing the extent to which the use of computers has considerable influence on the amount of comprehension when children sit for the reading exams. Since the participants were children of eight to 12 years and there was a great fear about their perception and understanding of the question items, translating the items into their native language (Persian) would resolve this concern and prevent from any kinds of misinterpretation.

A good number of similar questionnaires from the previous studies (e.g. The National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2007; Documents & Resources for Small Businesses & Professionals, 2010; Melhado, 2010) were evaluated to extract the appropriate items for children. Then, the selected items were merged in a well-designed format and checked by the institute's teachers as well to ensure from their appropriateness and the validity of items. The questionnaire was designed according to the Likert scale with 5 question items and four possible answers for each one including *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Disagree*, and *Strongly Disagree*. In other words, based on some researchers' idea (e.g. Chang, 1994; Cronbach, 1950; Adelson & McCoach, 2010; Kulas, Stachowski, & Haynes, 2008), the *Neutral* (*Neither Agree nor Disagree*) option was omitted from the middle of the scale in order to avoid children having spurious answers and instead, specify exactly their viewpoints towards the questions.

To ensure its reliability, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was calculated. Based on Cronbach's formula, the researcher achieved an alpha value of 0.83, which indicates a very acceptable degree of reliability to be utilized in the study.

#### Procedure

The process of data collection for this study was done during May 2013. Students were given twenty minutes to complete the reading comprehension tests in two attempts of administration, one for PPBA and the other for CBA. At the end of CBA, the students were also given an additional 10 minutes to complete the attitude questionnaire. To control for effects that might result from differences in the computers available within each class, a set of MSI 11-inch laptops were brought into the classes with no external mice. The laptops were chosen among the small and light weighted sizes to be appropriate for children as the participants.

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to answer the first and second research questions, a paired-samples t-test at 0.05 levels of significance was conducted and the frequencies of each item in the questionnaire were calculated respectively. The descriptive statistics for PPBA and CBA is depicted in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for PPBA and CBA

Assessments	Mean	N	SD
Paper/Pencil based Assessment	57.29	66	19.56
Computer based Assessment	63.33	66	23.70

Note: N=Number of the students; SD=Standard Deviation

Table 2 presents the output of Paired-Sample t-test.

Table 2: Paired-Samples T-test Results of comparison between PPBA and CBA scores

	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
Paper – Computer	-6.03	26.78	-1.832	65	.072

Note: SD=Standard Deviation; Sig. =Significance value; df stands for Degrees of freedom. \* $P < .05$ , \*\* $P < .01$

The results of Paired-Sample t-test suggest that the amount of reading comprehension among children does not differ considerably while switching from traditional mode of testing into the computerized one.

To analyze the questionnaire, the researcher made use of only the simple comparisons of frequency percentages related to the predefined answers for the questionnaire's questions, namely, *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Disagree*, and *Strongly Disagree*. This measure identified that which item has the most frequency among the others and consequently determined the students' attitude toward CBA. Table 3 and figure 1 represent the descriptive statistics and the column chart associated with the questionnaire respectively.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for attitude

Mean	SD	N
17.78	2.54	5

Note: SD=Standard Deviation; N=Number of items

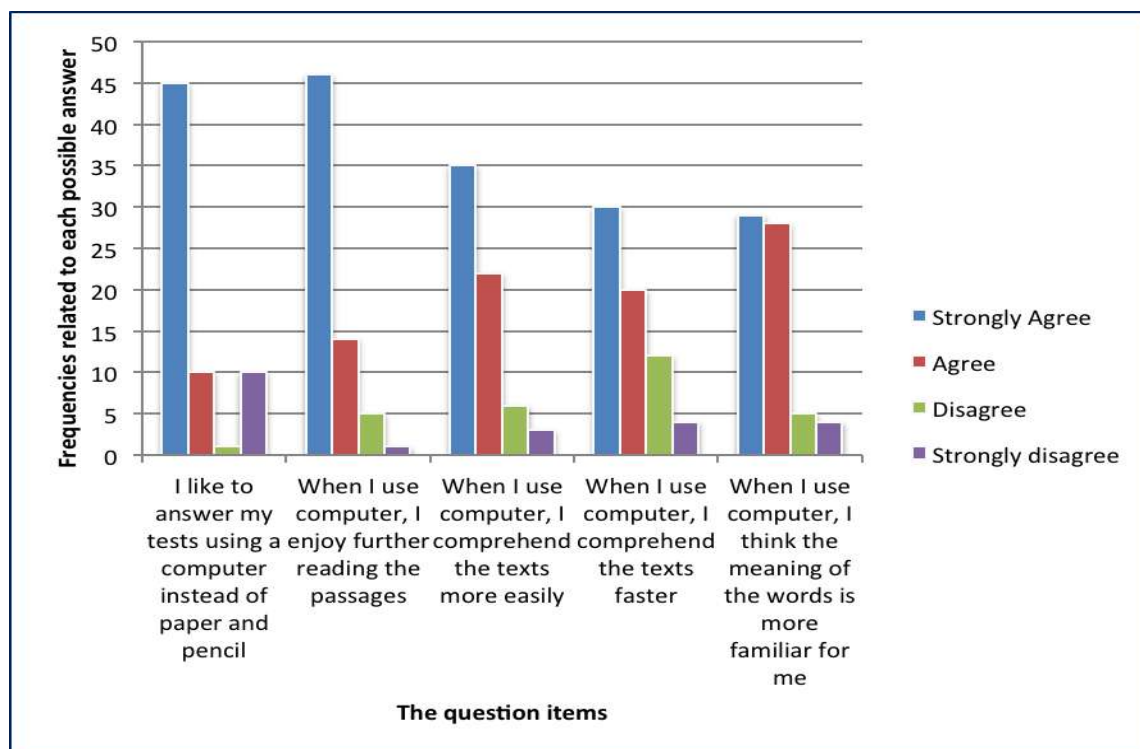


Figure 1: Column chart showing frequencies of each possible answer of the Likert-type questionnaire

Obviously, the first two possible answers, *Strongly Agree* and *Agree*, had the most frequencies in each question, so it is simply concluded that the participants had better feeling and attitude towards administering the assessments using computers. In addition, the researcher's observation at the time of CBA is another evidence for this claim.

Regarding the first research question, the analysis of the results proved that the kind of administration either paper-based or computer-based will not significantly influence the participants' performance in reading comprehension assessments and the existing differences are not considerable and salient but due to chance or other external factors.

This finding is in line with Higgins, Russell, and Hoffmann (2005)'s study who investigated the Effect of Computer-Based Passage Presentation on Reading Test Performance and found that there were no statistically significant differences in reading comprehension scores based on computer fluidity and computer literacy. Likewise, the study carried out by Baumer, Roded, and Gafni (2009) on the Equivalence of Internet-Based vs. Paper-and-Pencil Psychometric Tests, revealed that the modality of administration does not affect test performance. Pommerich (2004) also conducted a research on English, Reading, and Science passage-based tests and found that there were no significant differences in scores across modes for the Reading test. In addition, Al-Amri (2009) investigated the comparability of computer-based testing versus paper-based testing and found that testing mode has almost no significant effect on the overall validity and reliability of the tests. He also asserted that computer familiarity has no influence on students' performance and the other factors such as computer attitude and prior testing mode preference do not have any critical impact on the overall students' performance.

However, this finding may be at odds with some previous studies as well. For instance, Fitzpatrick and Triscari (2005) in their study found that item parameters and cut score results are comparable across administration modes. Likewise, the study performed by Choi and Tinkler (2002) revealed that the computerized Oregon statewide reading and mathematics tests were more difficult for third graders, but the paper version of the test was more difficult for tenth graders. They also found that mode effects were more pronounced in reading tests than in mathematics tests. Similar findings were reported in the study by Way, Davis, and Fitzpatrick (2006), who investigated the comparability of paper and online versions of the Texas statewide tests in mathematics, reading/English language arts, science and social studies at grades 8 and 11. The results showed that the tests were more difficult for the online group than for the paper group and the administration mode effects were more evident for ELA than for other subjects.

Regarding the second research question, the analyses of the attitude questionnaire as well as the researcher's observation at the time of CBA administration identified that children had a better sense and attitude toward taking the examinations using computers.

This finding is consistent with the results of many previous related studies. For instance, Higgins, Russell, and Hoffmann (2005) in their study, which was referred to earlier, examined the attitude of the participants as well. They asked the participants whether they thought it was easier or harder to take the test on computer or paper. Of the 135 students who responded to this item, 82% reported that it was easier to take the test on computer. In addition, students were asked in a selected response format if they would have preferred to take the test on computer or on paper. Of the 161 students who responded to this item, 87% reported that they would prefer to take the test on computer. Likewise, Way, Davis & Fitzpatrick (2006) believed that according to recent surveys, students tested online feel comfortable with taking tests on the computer and tend to prefer it to traditional paper testing. Moreover, the research work done by Chua (2012) showed that the computer-based testing has effectively increased intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of the test takers in challenge, curiosity, self-efficacy, involvement, joyfulness, comprehension and social dimensions. However, answering the test in a shorter time with higher testing motivation level did not help a test taker to achieve a higher score.

The majority of previous studies are in agreement with the above finding. However, there are some other studies which are in contrast with the current study. For example, the results of the study done by Ward, Hooper, & Hannafin (1989) indicated a negative attitude toward computer testing so that seventy-five percent of the computer-tested group either strongly agreed or agreed that computer testing was more difficult than traditional methods. In addition, Durndell & Thompson (1997) and Whitely (1997) believed that females usually have more negative attitudes toward computers than males. Moreover, Sam, Othman & Nordin (2005) in their study found that the respondents had moderate computer anxiousness and medium attitudes toward the Internet. Yet, it is not extravagant to say that almost all of the recent studies have reached the same conclusion as that of the current study; because with the vast development of technology and its usage in the lives of people around the world, the students' positive attitudes towards computerized assessment is not unexpected.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the above-mentioned discussion, it can be concluded that although the mode of testing does not noticeably influence the amount of children's reading comprehension, the teachers, schools and institutes can benefit from technology particularly the computers and internet in their educational environments to promote and encourage students towards assessments. Furthermore, those schools and institutes, which do not have required facilities to bring technology in the classrooms, should not be worried about the students' performance and their level of achievement.

## Limitations and Implications

Due to the nature of the present research, which necessitated providing similar PCs or laptops for a number of students in order to carry out computer-based assessment, there were some limitations in some aspects of this study such as the small sample size, lack of female participation, low speed of internet, and so on. Hence, future research should be conducted on a larger and more diverse sample of students and should be expanded to include students in other grade levels. The number of passages and items should also be increased. The future study with a larger and more diverse sample and more items may show more subtle differences in the performance of participants particularly when female students are also taken part in the study.

The current research can be incorporated into regular classroom settings and English language learning institutes with the intention of improving the quality of learning, teaching, and testing. In the case of classroom scale assessment, teachers can make informed decisions of how they can measure children's reading comprehension especially using computers and technology, which have come to the lives of children around the world in the recent decades, as the alternative tools for traditional assessments. In the case of large-scale assessment, the study may provide a basis for test designers/developers especially in measurement organizations and English language institutes to act according to the results.

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#### ABSTRACT

This study was an attempt to investigate the effect of two different types of learning modalities, namely cooperative and competitive, on English as a foreign language (EFL) impulsive and reflective learners' writing achievement. For this purpose, 120 learners from among a total number of 185 intermediate learners studying at Tac English Language School of Tehran, Iran, were chosen all taking a PET (Preliminary English Test) first, for homogenization prior to the study. They also filled out the Eysenck and Eysenck's (1991) Impulsiveness Questionnaire (EIQ), which in turn categorized them into two subgroups within each learning modality setting, consisting of impulsives and reflectives. All in all, there were four subgroups: 30 impulsives and 30 reflectives undergoing the cooperative learning treatment, and 30 impulsives and 30 reflectives experiencing the competitive learning treatment. Part three of the writing section of a PET was used as the posttest of this study, after each group was exposed to the treatment for 18 sessions in nine weeks. At the end of the instruction, the mean scores of all four groups on the posttest were computed and a two-way ANOVA was run to test all the five hypotheses raised in the study. The results showed that the effect of the teaching technique depends on the cognitive style of the learners. However, it was found out that each of the independent variables alone was significantly effective on writing ability of the learners. Specifically, cooperative learning technique was more effective both on reflective and impulsive learners compared with competitive technique. As for the cognitive style, it was revealed that reflective learners performed better both in cooperative and in competitive techniques in comparison with the impulsive learners.

**KEYWORDS:** Competitive Learning, Cooperative Learning, Impulsive Learners, Reflective Learners, Writing.

#### INTRODUCTION

In recent years many attempts have been made to improve the methods and techniques that enable language learners to achieve their goal which is communicating accurately and appropriately in a foreign language. In order to attain this goal, the learners must obtain necessary skills for communicating effectively. These skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among these four skills, writing is very important and needs considerable attention; it has taken a significant place in most language classes and it is often used as a testing device for teachers and sometimes a way of memorizing and learning for learners (Nunan, 1989). In addition to the importance of writing skill in language learning, gaining the ability to write in either the first or the second language is one of the most difficult tasks a learner encounters and one that few people can be said would fully master (Rivers, 1981).

Considering the significance and the difficulty of writing skill, language teachers should pay attention to all of the possible factors which contribute to the teaching of writing and among these factors teachers' awareness of their learners' characteristics and learning styles has a great value. According to Falk (1978), "in order to understand foreign language learning, it is necessary to examine not only the linguistic properties of the language, but also the physical, psychological and sociological characteristics of the learner" (p. 353).

As Celce-Murcia (2001) remarks, "learning styles are the general approaches that students use in acquiring a new language or in learning any other subjects" (p. 359). One of the factors which can be related to learning style is the personality type of different individuals and among all different personality types and learning styles the one which requires more study is perhaps Reflectivity/Impulsivity learning style. Messer (as cited in Jamieson & Chapelle, 1987) believes that "Reflectivity/Impulsivity is the extent to which a person reflects on a solution to a problem for which several alternatives are possible" (p. 532).

In addition to different personality variables and cognitive styles which impact foreign language learning, one cannot ignore the role of the modality of learning. One established dichotomy in this regard is competitive and cooperative learning. Cooperative learning exists when students work together to accomplish shared learning goals (Johnson, Johnson, & Stanne, 2000). And each student can achieve his/her learning goal if the other group members achieve theirs (Deutsch, 1962, as cited in Johnson, Johnson & Stanne, 2000).

Cooperative learning is usually compared with competitive learning. Within competitive situations, individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to themselves and detrimental to others. The students try to perform faster and better than their classmates and they realize that "they can obtain their goals if and only if the other students in the class fail to obtain their goals" (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 5).

Taking the importance of all mentioned factors into consideration, the teacher should be aware of all possible differences among the learners and also know that, not all learners with different cognitive styles and characteristics benefit from the same way of teaching.

#### WRITING

There is not a complete consensus among researchers to give a clear definition of writing skill, and it has been defined in a variety of ways. Finocchiaro (1988) defined writing as written thinking since students are encouraged to express their ideas, experiences, thoughts, and feelings. Chastain (1988) views writing as "a basic communication skill and unique asset" (p. 244) in process of learning a second language. He further adds that writing with its unique features, contributes to overall language learning. According to Lado (1964), to write is to put down the graphic symbols that represent a language one understands, so that other can read these graphic symbols if they know the language and the graphic representation. Defining in another way, Celce-Murcia (1991) views writing as "the ability to express ones' idea with reasonable accuracy and coherence in written form in a second or foreign language" (p. 233).

This lack of consensus may reflect the complexity of writing skill, and its multidimensional aspects. Writing is so complex that one will not be able to give his/her students simple formula for good writing, and teachers should attract the students' attention to the complexity of the process to help them to pose a better piece of writing (McKay, 1984). According to Harris



(1969), "writing involves the simultaneous practice of a number of varieties of different abilities, some of which are never fully achieved by many students, even in their native language" (p. 68).

Regarding the difficulties of learning and teaching writing skill, the reason that makes the teachers and the learners concern about this skill is importance of it. Writing is a very important skill also for pedagogical purposes. Paulston (1972) asserts, "writing is used as a service activity in educational settings and the value of writing as a service activity is admired by many teachers" (p. 36). Chastain (1988) views writing as a "basic communication skill and a unique asset" (p. 244). In the process of learning a second language, he adds that, writing with its unique features, contributes to overall language learning.

#### *Cognitive Styles*

Of particular interest to personality researchers has been the concept of cognitive style. Cognitive style in Ausubel (1968) view is defined as "self-consistent and enduring individual differences in cognitive organization and to various self-consistent idiosyncratic tendencies, that are not reflective of human cognitive functioning in general" (p. 170).

Since "cognitive styles are usually defined as an 'individual's preferred' and 'habitual' modes of perceiving, remembering, organizing, processing and representing information" (Dornyei, 2005, p. 125), it differs from one person to another and different individuals manifest different dimensions of cognitive style. According to Fontana (1995), there are some dimensions of cognition that are related to education and one of them is the dimension of impulsivity/reflectivity.

#### *Impulsivity/Reflectivity Cognitive Styles*

dimension of reflectivity/impulsivity is concerned with the degree upon which people think about the accuracy of their responses or the speed of answering the questions. According to Srivastava (1997), "impulsive individuals tend to offer the first answer that occurs to them even though it is frequently incorrect, while the reflective individuals tend to ponder various possibilities before deciding" (p. 2).

According to Rashtchi and Keyvanfar (2002) "Reflectivity/ Impulsivity relates to one's degree of contemplation over decision-making and problem solving. In simple terms, a reflective person takes into account a variety of factors before making a calculated decision, while an impulsive person makes quick guesses and relies heavily on his/her hunches" (p.114).

Ehrman and Leaver (2003) view reflectives as the persons who prefer to first think and then respond. They often benefit from relatively complex thinking and tend to work accurately. However, their slowness can result in incomplete work on tests. On the other hand, impulsives respond very rapidly and tend to complete their work fast but often with less accuracy than do reflectives. "They reach decision and report them very quickly with little concern for accuracy" (Kagan, as cited in Jamieson, 1992, p. 492).

#### *Impulsivity/Reflectivity and Second Language Success*

Regarding all the information provided about impulsive and reflective cognitive style, one may conclude that one dimension is better than the other. In other words, reflective individuals perform better than the impulsive ones. But it is not true, since according to Fontana (1995), "all cognitive style theorists stress that ideally we should be able to operate at either end of a dimension, depending on the circumstances" (p. 206).

It is easy to see that there are some situations in which the individual is needed to act quickly, such as some tests with limited time. Consequently, if the individual spends too much time on a test to make sure about the accuracy of answer, s/he may lose the time as well as the chance to learn something through the process of answering quickly and relying on his hunches. In academic settings, a reflective learner might be labeled slow. A very reflective learner may have difficulty finishing a test on time; however, the completed portions are probably correct (Rozenecwajc & Corroyer, 2005).

On the other hand, according to Block and Harrington (1974), impulsives are anxious because stress is induced by the uncertain and ambiguous nature of the situation. Furthermore, impulsive behavior like routine actions and thought processes are sometimes inappropriate and erroneous. Therefore as Fontana (1995) points "there has to exist a means by which, routine behaviors and thoughts can be inhibited and replaced, situationally or long term, by appropriate behavior or thought" (p. 3).

From the above paragraphs it can be concluded that the hypothesis that one style is better than the other is not true, since, it is the individual's ability to change his/her style according to the situation that determines success.

#### *Cooperative Goal Structures*

According to Lin (1997), the cooperative goal structures (win-win orientation) invite the learners to assist each other in reaching the goal. Here, the learners share the same goal and put their effort in reaching that goal by helping each other in carrying out class activities. In this kind of goal structure, the learners are motivated and feel responsible for the outcome.

Johnson and Johnson (1991) emphasize that five basic elements are necessary for effective use of the method. These five elements are as below:

**1. Positive interdependence:** Positive interdependence means that pupils see themselves as linked to the others in the group in such a manner that they cannot succeed unless the other members of the group succeed. (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

**2. Face-to-Face interaction:** According to Brown and Parker (2009), "face-to-face interaction is an element of cooperative learning by which learners can promote each other's success during discussions and cooperative tasks which includes:

- Orally explaining how to solve problems
- Teaching one's knowledge to others
- Checking for understanding
- Discussing concepts being learned
- Connecting present with past learning" (p. 507).

**3. Individual and Group Accountability:** Individual accountability exists when the performance of each individual pupil is assessed and the results are subsequently reported to both the individual and the group (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). According to Johnson and Johnson (1999), individual and group accountability is described as below:

- "Keeping the size of the group small. The smaller the size of the group, the greater the individual accountability may be.
- Giving an individual test to each student.
- Randomly examining students orally by calling on one student to present his or her group's work to the teacher (in the presence of the group) or to the entire class.
- Observing each group and recording the frequency with which each member-contributes to the group's work.
- Assigning one student in each group the role of checker. The checker asks other group members to explain the reasoning and rationale underlying group answers.
- Having students teach what they learned to someone else" (p. 4).

**4. Interpersonal & Small-Group Skills (Social Skills Training):** According to Brown and Parker (2009), Social skills which must be taught include "Leadership, Decision-making, Trust-building, Communication and Conflict-management skills" (p. 509).

**5. Group Processing:** As Brown and Parker (2009) states, Every so often groups must assess their effectiveness and decide how it can be improved based on the steps described below:

- Group members discuss how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships.
- Describe which member actions are helpful and not helpful
- Make decisions about what behaviors to continue or change (p. 510).

#### *Merits and Demerits of Cooperative Learning*

A number of researchers identified a positive general trend in research examining the effects of cooperative learning on student achievement (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 1991; Johnson, Johnson, & Stanne, 1986; Ravenscroft, Buckless, McCombs, & Zuckerman, 1995; Sharan, 1980; Slavin, 1995). According to Sharan (1980) some of the benefits of cooperative learning are briefly mentioned hereunder:

- **Celebration of diversity.** Students learn to work with all types of people. During small-group interactions, they find many opportunities to reflect upon and reply to the diverse responses fellow learners bring to the questions raised.
  - **Acknowledgment of individual differences.** When questions are raised, different students will have a variety of responses. Each of these can help the group create a product that reflects a wide range of perspectives and is thus more complete and comprehensive.
  - **Actively involving students in learning.** Each member has opportunities to contribute in small groups.
  - **More opportunities for personal feedback.** Because there are more exchanges among students in small groups, students receive more personal feedback about their ideas and responses.
- Though cooperative learning had been widely accepted and has many advantages, it was by no means a panacea that could solve all the educational problems. There were, like all other teaching methods, limitations in cooperative learning.

Most of the limitations of cooperative learning came from not being able to implement the cooperative structure carefully. If the teachers just put the students into groups to learn and didn't structure the positive interdependence and individual accountability, then it would not be unusual to find groups where one person did most (or all) of the work and the others signed off as if they had learned it or had done the work.

It was also considered time-consuming to teach materials in a cooperative way, although more students might have learned and retained better of the material. This might be true, especially in the beginning when cooperative learning was new to the teacher and to the students (Kagan, 1994).

#### *Competitive Goal Structures*

Competitive situations are ones in which students work against each other to achieve a goal that only one or a few can attain. In competition, students perceive that they can obtain their goals if and only if other students in the class fail to obtain their goals (Deutsch, 1962; Johnson & Johnson, 1989).

The competitive goal structures, according to Lin (1997), require the learners to act against each other in order to achieve the desired goal which is learning. This kind of goal structure invites the learners to compete against each other. It consequently leaves the participants with a win-lose situation.

Based on Walters (2000), since it is probable in the process of using competitive goal structures to ignore some students unintentionally, some factors are nice to be mentioned such as:

- Competition is better to be used for those learners who enjoy competing.
- Competition is better to be formed in a way that all students have the same chance of winning.
- It is better to teach them how to compete against themselves more than each other.
- Reward should be provided for the learners to encourage them in the process of learning (p.98).

#### *Merits and Demerits of competitive Learning*

Competition is not without its advocates, and several reasons for this are offered in the literature. First, competition may generate interest and excitement in topics or tasks that would otherwise be of limited interest to students. Team-based competitive approaches (e.g., class-wide games) may be especially effective at making instructional material more enjoyable and engaging.

Good and Brophy (2008) suggest that competitive classroom activities may be appropriate if all students have a chance to win, and when a team approach is used rather than individually based evaluations. These practices may reduce the likelihood that the same students are always the winners and losers, in which the losers become embarrassed and demoralized. Further, competition between groups (using a team-based approach) may increase cooperation within groups, as students are unified in working towards a common goal (i.e., outperforming the other teams).

Second, competitive approaches may be appropriate within the context of behavior management, such as when the teacher is attempting to

reduce disruptive behaviors and increase positive behaviors. For example, interventions such as the Good Behavior Game and its variations (Tingstrom, Sterling-Turner, & Wilczynski, 2006) use team-based competition to motivate students and modify their behaviors.

Third, some (e.g., Good & Brophy, 2008) argue that competition in the classroom will prepare students for competition in their lives beyond school (i.e., the workplace). The reasoning behind this argument is that if all classroom tasks are cooperative, students may become overly dependent on their classmates when completing academic tasks and may be unable to perform in competitive or individual contexts in the future.

Although competitive learning has some advantages it has its own demerits too. Good and Brophy (2008) summarize several ways in which classroom competition may negatively impact students' development, learning, and motivation. For example, if students become preoccupied with winning or losing the competitive activity, they may lose sight of important instructional objectives and content. From the student's perspective, performance takes precedence over learning.

Further, according to Good and Brophy (2008), inherent in the practice of competition is the necessity for someone to lose. If the same students lose over and over despite their best efforts, they may come to see the world as unfair and are likely to give up when faced with challenging academic tasks, as they have learned that failure will be the outcome no matter how hard they try to succeed.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To fulfill the purpose of the present study the following questions were raised:

- Q<sub>1</sub>. Is there any significant interaction between teaching technique and cognitive type in their effect on EFL learners' writing achievement?
- Q<sub>2</sub>. Is there any significant difference between the effect of cooperative and competitive learning on impulsive EFL learners' writing achievement?
- Q<sub>3</sub>. Is there any significant difference between the effect of cooperative and competitive learning on reflective EFL learners' writing achievement?
- Q<sub>4</sub>. Does cooperative learning have a significantly different effect on impulsive and reflective EFL learners' writing achievement?
- Q<sub>5</sub>. Does competitive learning have a significantly different effect on impulsive and reflective EFL learners' writing achievement?

## METHODOLOGY

In order to find appropriate answers to the posed questions, the researchers followed certain procedures and made use of certain instruments, which are reported in this section.

### Participants

To fulfill the objectives of this study, 120 female intermediate EFL learners with the age range of 15-25, studying in a language school of Tehran, Iran, participated in this research. These candidates were selected non-randomly from the total number of 185 students and among the learners whose scores on the Preliminary English Test (PET) fell one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the sample mean. It is worth mentioning that the sample PET was run to 30 students in the same language school with similar characteristics to the participants of this study first, and after doing item analyses and also calculating the reliability of the test, and excluding five malfunctioning items, PET was administered to the main candidates.

Also it is notable that in addition to one of the researchers, herself as a teacher and rater, another trained rater who was MA holder in TEFL with five years of teaching experience, participated in this research to correct and score the learners' writing and speaking based on the Akef and Hajhashemi (2012) rating scale for writing and predetermined official Cambridge General Mark Schemes for speaking.

### Instrumentation

To fulfill the purpose of this study, the researchers used the instructional materials and tests as described below.

Preliminary English Test (PET): This test is designed by Cambridge ESOL and is used as a proficiency test for selecting the intermediate sample among the whole participants. PET consists of three main sections: a 35-item reading comprehension test and an 8-item writing test in the first part (1 hour and 30 minutes), a 25-item listening comprehension test in the second part (35 minutes) and a speaking test consisting of four sections in the third part (10-12 minutes).

The Impulsivity sub-scale of Eysenck and Eysenck's Impulsiveness Questionnaire: Eysenck and Eysenck's (1991) Impulsiveness Questionnaire (EIQ) contains 54 items and assesses Impulsiveness (19 items), Venturesomeness (16 items) and Empathy (19 items). A standardized Persian impulsivity sub-scale of the questionnaire consisting of 19 likert scale items was used in this study. Salimi (2001) prepared a Persian version of this questionnaire, and its Impulsiveness sub-scale was validated with 1820 subjects from Tarbiat Modarres University of Iran. It is worth mentioning that the instrument reliability was estimated through Cronbach alpha to be as high as 0.8.

The range of Impulsiveness scores is from 19 to 95. The candidates who got scores from 60 to 95 were considered impulsive, and those who got scores from 19 to 40 were considered reflectives. It should be mentioned that scores from 41 to 59, which show medium impulsivity, were excluded from this study and the needed time for answering the questions of this questionnaire was 10 minutes.

Writing posttest: Part three of the writing section of a PET was used as the posttest of this study. This part contains two questions in which the learners were supposed to write about 200 words that were scored according to the rating scale described below. The needed time for answering the two questions of this part was approximately 45 minutes.

Writing rating scale: In order to rate all the writings used in this study, the researchers used *the Analytic rating scale* selected from what has been designed by Akef and Hajhashemi (2012, p. 243). This rating scale was applied to evaluate learners' general writing ability through assessing different aspects of written scripts such as fluency, structural accuracy, vocabulary (range and appropriateness of vocabulary choices), coherence, cohesion, relevance, organization, and mechanics of writing.

Speaking rating scale: The rating scale used to rate the oral proficiency of the subjects was the predetermined official Cambridge General Mark Schemes for speaking. The rating was done on the basis of the criteria stated in the rating scale including the range of scores from 0 to 5.

American English File student book 3: The main textbook in this study was "*American English File*" by Oxenden and Latham-Koenig (2011). This book consists of seven files and each of them is divided into three lessons of A, B, and C and contains different tasks and exercises for all the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. In this study, in each term, the first two chapters of this book were covered and covering each chapter lasted about seven sessions.

American English File workbook 3: American English File workbook by Oxenden and Latham-Koenig (2011), was also utilized in this study. According to the student book, work book has also seven files, including three lessons of A, B, and C. In this study the first two chapters of the workbook were covered during each term.

Oxford word skills book: Oxford Word Skills by Gairns and Redman (2008) was used in this research. Oxford Word Skills is a series of three books for students to learn, practice, and revise new vocabularies in basic, intermediate, and advanced level. Each book contains 80 units of vocabulary presentation and practice. In this study, eight units of this book were covered during one term in each class.

Story book: Oxford Bookworms Story books are the story-telling series used in this study. These books include original and adapted texts in seven carefully graded language stages, which take learners from beginner to advanced level. In this study, "*Robinson Crusoe*" story book by Defoe (1993) was used. This story book contains nine sub-titles, which the teacher and the learners usually worked on each section every two sessions.

### **Procedure**

Before conducting this study, the researchers piloted the sample PET and after calculating the reliability of the test and running item analysis, the researchers omitted five items which were malfunctioning and again calculated the reliability of the test. Consequently, this time the test showed the acceptable reliability of 0.82.

As the treatments were conducted in two terms, the participant selection procedures were also done at the beginning of each term meaning that, in the first term, the researchers administered the already piloted PET to 95 intermediate EFL learners and 76 participants who scored one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the sample mean were chosen for the next step.

Afterward, the researchers conducted EIQ among the learners and thereby, selected 30 most impulsive and 30 most reflective learners from the 76 learners as the main candidates for the first phase of this study. All these candidates received the same treatment of cooperative learning during the term.

At the beginning of the second term, like the first term, the above procedures were conducted among 90 learners, 72 learners whose scores fell one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected, and finally after conducting EIQ, 30 most impulsive and 30 most reflective candidates were chosen as the main candidates of the second term and received the same treatment of competitive learning.

It is worth mentioning that in addition to check the homogeneity of the two groups' (cooperative and competitive) writing mean scores across the two terms through a *t*-test, the researchers ran another *t*-test on the mean scores of impulsives and reflectives on the writing part of the PET at the outset of each term to make sure that both of the groups of impulsives and reflectives were the same in their writing ability.

In the cooperative group, the students experienced being in different groups during one term, and even sometimes the group members were changed in one single session in order for the students to learn to work cooperatively with different individuals rather than a specific group. During the whole term, in the first phase, group work was encouraged while competitiveness was de-emphasized and the students had to do the exercises and drills cooperatively and in group.

Also, in the cooperative group, all the time, the students' activities in the groups and their interactions were under the teacher's supervision and the learners knew that they had to do their best in assisting and cooperating with other students, since the teacher considered positive marks for the students' assistance and cooperation in the groups. Immediately after this treatment, the first group of this study which was practicing English in a cooperative way underwent the writing posttest.

In the competitive classes, for some activities, the teacher divided the learners into the groups which included both impulsives and reflectives. These students knew that even if they were in groups, they would be assessed based on their individual efforts and outcomes. Comparing to the previous treatment, this treatment included less group works.

In the competitive group the teacher's instruction method did not change at all; instead, the way the students practiced every single part changed in comparison with the previous treatment. In all of the activities of the competitive classes, each student was only responsible for her own activities and assignments even if she worked in the group, or asked for assistance from her group members; also all the time and in the process of doing all the activities, the teacher encouraged the students to try to be the best one and compete against each other. Being "the best" required the students to be both quicker and more accurate in comparison with their classmates. Each time that the students succeeded to answer the questions accurately and before others, the teacher put a positive mark for them and these marks were counted at the end of the term and affected the total class participation marks of the learners.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This study was an attempt to investigate the effect of two different types of learning modalities, namely cooperative and competitive, on impulsive and reflective EFL learners' writing achievement. The design of this study was quasi experimental posttest only, since the selection of the participants was done non-randomly and the groups were intact ones. The dependent variable was EFL learners' writing while the independent variable was teaching modality having two levels of competitive and cooperative learning. The control variables were gender (female) and the language proficiency (intermediate), whereas the moderator variable was the cognitive style (impulsiveness/reflectiveness).

#### ***Descriptive Statistics of the PET Piloting***

In order to select the participants required in this study, the researchers used a sample of the general English Proficiency Test (PET). Prior to the actual administration, the test was piloted among 30 students to make sure that it could be used confidently for this screening.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the PET Piloting

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Skewness Ratio
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
PET Piloting	30	48	72	60.87	6.771	-.064	.427	-0.149
Valid N (listwise)	30							

As the above table shows, the mean and standard deviation of the PET piloting scores were found to be 60.87 and 6.771, respectively.

As another step, since the writing and speaking parts of the proficiency piloting test were rated by two qualified raters, the researchers also conducted an inter-rater reliability on the scores given by the raters in this study to the 30 participants. The Pearson Product Correlation was run to make sure that the two raters enjoyed a significant degree of consistency in their scoring. Table 2 and Table 3 below show that the two raters demonstrated a significant correlation.

Table 2: Inter-Rater Reliability of the Two Raters for the Writing Part

	Rater 1	Rater 2
Rater 1		
Pearson Correlation	1	.735**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	30	30
Rater 2		
Pearson Correlation	.735**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	30	30

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 3: Inter-Rater Reliability of the Two Raters for the Speaking Part

	Rater 1	Rater 2
Rater 1		
Pearson Correlation	1	.560**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.007
N	30	30
Rater 2		
Pearson Correlation	.560**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	
N	30	30

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

#### Descriptive Statistics of the Cooperative Group's PET Scores

As discussed earlier, prior to the selection of the participants, 95 students took a piloted PET at the outset of the first term from whom 60 were chosen for the two experimental groups of impulsives and reflectives undergoing the cooperative treatment. Table 4 displays the descriptive statistics of the scores related to the 95 students.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of the Scores Obtained by the 95 Students on the Piloted PET

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Skewness Ratio
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Pre-PET for the Cooperative Group	95	42	74	60.73	7.007	-.362	.247	-1.465
Valid N (listwise)	95							

Among the above 95 students, a total of 76 whose scores fell one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean were selected. Next, the researchers administered the EIQ, through which she selected 30 most impulsive and 30 most reflective learners from the 76 participants as the main candidates of this study.

To make sure that these 30 impulsive and 30 reflective participants bore no significant difference in terms of the dependent variable of this study (i.e. writing) prior to the treatment, the researchers ran an independent samples t-test on the mean scores of the two groups on the writing part of the PET. The following table reports the result of the t-test.

*Table 5: Independent Samples t-Test of the Impulsive and Reflective Participants in the Cooperative Group Prior to the Treatment*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.562	.465	-.372	58	.711	-.266	.717	-1.70202	1.168
Equal variances not assumed			-.372	57.351	.711	-.266	.717	-1.70237	1.169

According to Table 5, with the  $F$  value of 0.562 at the sig value of 0.465 being larger than 0.05, the variances of the two groups were not significantly different. Therefore, the results of the  $t$ -test with the assumption of homogeneity of the variances were reported here. As the results indicate ( $t = -0.372$ ,  $p = 0.711 > 0.05$ ), there was no significant difference between impulsive and reflective learners' writing pretest scores. Therefore, the researchers could rest assured that any probable difference between the two groups at the end of the study could be attributed to the effect of the independent variable(s).

#### ***Descriptive Statistics of the Competitive Group's PET Scores***

The procedure of participant selection for the competitive group was identical to that of the cooperative group. In this phase, a total number of 90 students took the same piloted PET. Table 6 below displays the descriptive statistics of the scores for these 90 students.

*Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of the Scores Obtained by the 90 Students on the Piloted PET*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Skewness Ratio
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Pre-PET for the Competitive Group	90	44	77	60.89	6.666	-.167	.254	-.657
Valid N (listwise)	90							

Among the above 90 students, a total of 72 whose scores fell one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected. Again, the researchers administered the EIQ through which 30 most impulsive and 30 most reflective participants were identified within this sample of 72.

Again, to make sure that these 30 impulsive and 30 reflective participants bore no significant difference in terms of the dependent variable of this study (i.e. writing) prior to the treatment, the researchers ran an independent samples  $t$ -test on the mean scores of the two groups on the mean scores of the two groups on the writing part of the PET. The following table reports the result of the  $t$ -test.

*Table 7: Independent Samples t-Test of the Impulsive and Reflective Participants in the Competitive Group Prior to the Treatment*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	2.827	.098	.128	58	.898	.100	.780	-1.46162	1.66162
Equal variances not assumed			.128	56.268	.898	.100	.780	-1.46265	1.66265

According to Table 7, with the  $F$  value of 2.827 at the significant level of 0.098 being larger than 0.05, the variances of the two groups were not significantly different. Therefore, the results of the  $t$ -test with the assumption of homogeneity of the variances were reported here. As the results indicate ( $t = 0.128$ ,  $p = 0.898 > 0.05$ ), there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups' writing prior to the treatment.

Therefore, the researchers could rest assured that any probable difference between the two groups at the end of the study could be attributed to the interaction of the relevant independent variables of the competitive learning or the cognitive type (being impulsive or reflective). Moreover, to show that the writing abilities of the two groups (cooperative and competitive) were the same, prior to the second term treatment, the researchers ran an independent samples  $t$ -test on the mean scores of the two groups on the writing part of the PET.



Table 8: Independent Samples *t*-Test of the Cooperative and Competitive Groups Prior to the Treatment

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.377	.540	-.150	118	.881	-.083	.555	-1.183	1.016
Equal variances not assumed			-.150	117.56	.881	-.083	.555	-1.183	1.017

According to Table 8, with the *F* value of 0.377 at the sig value of 0.540 being larger than 0.05, the variances of the two groups were not significantly different. Therefore, the results of the *t*-test with the assumption of homogeneity of the variances were reported here. As the results indicate ( $t = -0.150$ ,  $p = 0.881 > 0.05$ ), two groups of cooperatives and competitiveness were not significantly different regarding their writing skill. Therefore, the researchers could rest assured that any probable difference between the two groups at the end of the study could be attributed to the effect of the independent variable(s).

#### Posttest

Once the treatment in each group was over, the posttest (a writing part of a PET as described in the previous chapter) was conducted. As there were two independent variables of teaching technique (cooperative and competitive) and cognitive type (impulsive and reflective), and one dependent variable (writing) in this study, a two-way ANOVA was needed for the posttest analysis. But firstly the assumptions of normality, and homogeneity of variances were met. The following table shows the descriptive statistics of the posttest scores belonging to the four subgroups.

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics of All Four Subgroups on the PET Writing Posttest

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Skewness Ratio
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Reflective Cooperative	30	26	32	29.166	1.599	.034	.427	.08
Impulsive Cooperative	30	25	31	28.000	1.553	.177	.427	.42
Reflective Competitive	30	23	29	26.566	1.381	-.400	.427	.94
Impulsive Competitive	30	19	28	23.466	1.833	.291	.427	.69
Valid N (listwise)	30							

According to Table 9, all the distributions were normal as the skewness ratios of all the sets of scores fell within the normality range of  $\pm 1.96$ . Hence, the first assumption is met. The following figures depict the distribution of the scores. The next assumption was checking the homogeneity of variances. In this regard the Levene's test of equality of error variances was conducted. The following table shows the result of the Levene's test.

Table 10: Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

F	df1	df2	Sig.
.719	3	116	.542

As Table 10 demonstrates, the variance of the dependent variable across the groups is equal ( $F = 0.71$ ,  $p = 0.54 > 0.05$ ), hence, homogeneity of variances as the second assumption is also met. Accordingly, in order to test the hypotheses, running a two-way ANOVA was legitimized. The following table shows the result of the two-way ANOVA.

Table 11: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	546.200 <sup>a</sup>	3	182.067	71.110	.000	.648
Intercept	86188.800	1	86188.800	33662.966	.000	.997
Cognitive	136.533	1	136.533	53.326	.000	.315
Technique	381.633	1	381.633	149.055	.000	.562
Cognitive * Technique	28.033	1	28.033	10.949	.001	.086
Error	297.000	116	2.560			
Total	87032.000	120				
Corrected Total	843.200	119				

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Technique	381.633	1	381.633	149.055	.000	.562
Cognitive * Technique	28.033	1	28.033	10.949	.001	.086
Error	297.000	116	2.560			
Total	87032.000	120				
Corrected Total	843.200	119				

a. R Squared = .648 (Adjusted R Squared = .639)

Dependent Variable: writing scores

As shown above, the interaction between the two independent variables was significant ( $F = 10.94$ ,  $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ); therefore, the first null hypothesis stating that *there is no significant interaction between teaching technique and cognitive type in their effect on EFL learners' writing achievement* is rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference in the effect of teaching techniques for impulsive and reflective learners. In other words, the effect of the teaching techniques depends on being reflective or impulsive.

By virtue of this interaction and the main effect of technique, as shown in the fourth row of the above table ( $F = 149.05$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ), the second hypothesis stating that *there is no significant difference between the effect of cooperative and competitive learning on impulsive EFL learners' writing achievement* is also rejected. Table 9 above depicts that the impulsive learners who received cooperative teaching technique outperformed those impulsive learners who received competitive learning practice (28.00 vs. 23.46 respectively). The last column of Table 11 above shows the effect size, (Partial Eta Squared) which has turned out to be 0.56. Expressed in percentage, 56 percent of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable. Using Cohen's (1988) criterion, this can be classified as large effect size (1%=small, 6%=medium, 13.8=large). The conclusion is that cooperative technique was significantly more effective for impulsive learners.

Likewise, as the teaching technique main effect turned out to be significant, the third hypothesis stating that *there is no significant difference between the effect of cooperative and competitive learning on reflective EFL learners' writing achievement* is rejected. By retrospect to table 9 above, it can be concluded that cooperative technique has been significantly more effective on reflective learners compared with competitive technique as the reflective learners who were exposed to the former outperformed those who were exposed to the latter (29.16 vs. 26.56 respectively). The effect size also is large based on the observed Partial Eta Squared value (0.56).

As Table 11, the third row exhibits, the main effect of cognitive type was significant ( $F = 53.32$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) too. This leads to the rejection of the fourth hypothesis stating that *Cooperative learning does not have a significantly different effect on impulsive and reflective EFL learners' writing achievement*. By comparing the writing mean scores of the two groups, impulsive cooperative versus reflective cooperative (28.00 vs. 29.16 respectively), it is concluded that between the two cognitive types who received cooperative teaching technique, reflective learners performed significantly better in the writing posttest. The effect size, (Partial Eta Squared) has turned out to be 0.315. In other words, 31.5 percent of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable. Using Cohen's (1988) criterion, this can be classified as large effect size.

By the same token (the significance of the cognitive main effect), the fifth hypothesis stating that *competitive learning does not have a significantly different effect on impulsive and reflective EFL learners' writing achievement* is rejected. Table 9 above shows that competitive technique was significantly more effective on reflective learners' writing compared with the impulsive learners (26.56 vs. 23.46). The effect size, (Partial Eta Squared) has turned out to be 0.315. In other words, 31.5 percent of the variation in the dependent variable writing scores) is explained by the independent variable (cognitive type), which is a large effect size according to Cohen's (1988) criterion.

## CONCLUSION

The present study attempted to investigate the effect of two different types of learning modalities, namely, cooperative and competitive learning on impulsive and reflective EFL learners' writing. Based on the data analyses, the researchers found that the interaction between the two independent variables was significant and cognitive style of reflectivity/impulsivity interacted significantly with the two modalities of learning. It can be concluded that, the effect of the teaching technique depends on the cognitive style of the learners. However, it was also revealed that each of the independent variables alone was significantly effective on writing ability of the learners.

Regarding modality of teaching, specifically, cooperative learning technique was shown to be more effective both on reflective and impulsive learners compared with competitive technique. In other words, both reflective and impulsive learners benefited more from cooperative technique than from competitive technique.

This result is supported by previous researches in the literature; many studies generally portray the higher effectiveness of cooperative learning (Deutsch, Coleman, & Marcus, 2006; Johnson, Johnson, & Stanne, 2000; Norman, 2005) and also certain studies in the context of Iran (e.g. Marashi & Baygzadeh, 2010) showed that cooperative learning led to better results (albeit the personality factor was not included and the dependent variable was overall achievement and not just one language skill).

On the other hand, in contrast with the result of this study, some other researches prove the advantages of competitive learning and claim that competition, in an educational setting, will improve academic achievement in students, motivating them to perform to the best of their ability and leads to better results than cooperation (Hayes, 1976; Michaels, 1978).

As for the cognitive style, it was shown that reflective learners performed better both in cooperative and in competitive techniques; this result is in agreement with some other researches about R/I cognitive style. In a little different research, inductive reasoning was discovered

to be more effective with reflective persons (Kagan, Pearson, & Welch, 1966), suggesting that generally reflective persons could benefit more from inductive learning situations. In another study, Katz (1980) found that reflectives are more attentive and have better short-term auditory and visual memory in different tasks.

#### Limitation of the study

Like any other studies, this study also faced a limitation. The rules and restrictions which exist in some language schools in Iran, did not allow the researcher/teacher, herself being a female, to have male learners in her classes. Hence, the result of this research cannot be necessarily generalized to male EFL learners.

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## THE EFFECT OF FORM-FOCUSED INSTRUCTION (FFI) ON TEACHING ENGLISH GRAMMAR TO IRANIAN LEARNERS AT THE INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

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### ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the effects of form-focused instruction (FFI) on teaching English grammar to Iranian learners at the intermediate level. The design of the study was a pre and post-test which dealt with 40 participants at the intermediate level and comprised of two experimental groups. The pre-test on grammatical patterns was administered to assess the participants' knowledge on the patterns in the passages at the beginning of the course. Then they were taught through implicit and explicit Form-focused instruction (FFI) developed by R. Ellis (2004) and Spada and Lightbown (2008). Each group included 20 participants. The implicit FFI group received grammatical pattern instruction through indirect instruction which focused on the use of grammatical patterns in the contexts and reading passages discussion. The explicit FFI group received instructions on how to use the structural patterns and immediate feedback coming from the peers and the teacher in the classroom. The treatment took 10 sessions and ended in a post-test stage to evaluate the course effectiveness. Data were analyzed through Independent Samples *t*-test and results showed that there was a significant difference between the two groups. In other words, the explicit FFI group outperformed the implicit FFI one. Implications of the study for teachers who practice English grammar could be the use of explicit instruction on forms and then put them into practice contextually.

**KEYWORDS:** Form-focused instruction (FFI), English grammar, implicit, explicit

### INTRODUCTION

It is generally agreed that some attention to grammatical form is fruitful, perhaps necessary, but many issues related to the teaching of grammar still need further research and more treatment. One of the most recent trends in applied linguistics is centered on the most effective forms of grammar teaching in the communicative classroom (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Lightbown, 1998). For many years, there was a dichotomy between Focus on Form (Long, 1991) in teaching grammatical structures of a language. Taken these concerns into account, in recent years much has been written, on both theoretical and empirical aspects of the form-focused instruction in second language learning and foreign language learning contexts.

Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen (2001) found that learners who engaged in communicative, focus-on-form activities improved their grammatical accuracy and their use of new forms. On the acquisition of a particular form through form-focused instruction, noticing, Celce-Murcia (2001, pp. 272-273) explains that through repeated conscious encounters with a particular form the learners' consciousness is raised. This helps the learners to notice that forming late activities ad form and restructure her hypotheses about that, form, and this leads to its acquisition. Focus on form, in part, shows the inefficiency of the current communicative approaches in teaching a language. Celce-Murcia (2001) noted, "considerable research shows that when students receive only communicative lessons, with instruction on grammar points, their level of accuracy suffers" (p. 268). This, in part, shows the significance of grammar and the focus in it. Furthermore, Larsen-Freeman (cited in Brown, 2001) said, "grammar is one of the dimensions of language that are interconnected. Grammar gives the forms or the structures of language but those forms are literally meaningless without a second dimension that of semantics, and a third dimension, pragmatics" (p. 362).

Explicit FFI in instructing grammar means presenting and explaining a predetermined set of grammar rules, usually but not necessarily followed by practice during the teaching period immediately while implicit FFI deal with the correction feedback within the context without direct notice to FFI in a direct corrective feedback mode. The terms implicit and explicit FFIs may be used similarly to Spada and Lightbown's (2008) isolated and integrative FFIs.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Another category is focus on forms versus focus on form. In focus on forms, we teach language features based on a structural syllabus specifying the features to be taught and their sequence. Activities used in this criterion are mostly grammar translations, mimicry, or memorization. Focus on form, on the other hand, is in the instruction whose main emphasis remains on communicative activities or tasks, yet in these activities the teacher intervenes to make students more accurate in language use whenever needed.

The categories focused on this study are implicit FFI versus integrated FFI. Implicit FFI is provided in activities that are separated from the communicative use of language, but it occurs as part of a program that also includes CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) and CBI (Content Based Instruction). In explicit FFI learners' attention is drawn to language form during communicative or content-based instruction.

In English language teaching there has always been an argument among many scholars on the best and effective way to teach grammar. To date, many different methods and approaches have come into and gone out of existence. It is commonly assumed that grammar knowledge is consisted of two types: explicit and implicit knowledge. According to N. Ellis (2005), these two types of knowledge are distinct and exist in separate parts of the brain. Further, R. Ellis (2006) lists seven criteria that can be used to distinguish between explicit and implicit grammar knowledge. These criteria include, among others: level of awareness, accessibility and whether learners can verbalize the knowledge. The distinction between explicit and implicit needs to be considered in relation to another common distinction- isolated versus integrative FFI (Lightbown & Spada, 1990).

Recently, a plethora of studies and reviews on second language acquisition (SLA) research have shown that focus on form instruction (FFI) has potential for learners and develop learners' awareness of target language (Spada, 2006). Long (1991) distinguished "focus on forms" and "focus on form" instruction. Focus-on-forms is evident in the traditional approach to grammar teaching based on a synthetic syllabus. The underlying assumption is that language learning is a process of accumulating distinct entities. In such an approach, learners are required to treat language primarily as an "object" to be studied and practiced bit by bit and to function as "students" rather than as "users" of the



language (Ellis, 2006). In contrast, focus-on-form “draws students’ attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication” (Long, 1991, pp. 45-46). According to Long and Robinson (1998), such an approach is to be distinguished not only focus-on-form but also form focus-on-meaning, where there is no attempt to induce attention to induce attention to linguistic form at all. Implicit explicit FFI are differentiated in terms of a number of characteristics. Ellis (2010) presents these characteristics in Table 1 as follows.

*Table 1: Implicit and explicit forms of form-focused instruction*

<i>Implicit FFI</i>	<i>Explicit FFI</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attracts attention to target form</li> <li>• is delivered <i>spontaneously</i> (e.g., in an otherwise communication-oriented activity)</li> <li>• is unobtrusive (minimal interruption of communication of meaning)</li> <li>• presents target forms in context</li> <li>• makes no use of metalanguage</li> <li>• encourages free use of the target form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• directs attention to target form</li> <li>• is <i>predetermined</i> and <i>planned</i> (e.g., as the main focus and goal of a teaching activity)</li> <li>• is obtrusive (interruption of communication meaning)</li> <li>• present target forms in isolation</li> <li>• uses metalinguistic terminology (e.g., rule explanation)</li> <li>• involves controlled practice of target form</li> </ul>

Focus on form can be either explicit or implicit methods use it in line with their principles. In fact, explicitness and implicitness can be put at the two ends of a continuum with differing degrees along it some of the techniques that are usually used to focus on form in class: “recast”, “input enhancement”, and “consciousness raising task”. In recast, “the teacher reformulates what the student has said or written incorrectly in a more accurate, meaningful, or appropriate manner” (Celce-Murcia, 2001, p. 257). In this way, the learner is more likely to notice a particular form. Consciousness-raising task refers to the learners induction of a grammatical generalization from the examples data she has been given. According to Lyster (1998, p.187), among the techniques that focus on form, explicit techniques are more useful and productive. Karbalaee, Pourzargham and Kazemi (2013) studied the role of form focused instructions and noted that focus on form instruction through visual medium enhances grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension. This instruction provides English as foreign language (EFL) learners with input enhancement as a technique to promote EFL reading proficiency.

Instructors can encourage learners to focus on form in several ways. Ellis (2001a) has distinguished two types within the category of “focus on form” and “focus on forms”. The distinction is Planned and Incidental. Focus on form may be planned and focused on pre-selected structures, or it may be incidental, arising spontaneously at any point in a communicative activity. Advocates of incidental FonF assume that classroom activity is based on communicative tasks and that attention to form should be paid only when grammatical difficulties arise which lead to (or are anticipated to lead to) a communicative breakdown (Barnard & Scampton, 2008). Planned FonF, on the other hand, involves the treatment of predetermined grammatical features, but differs from FonFs because it occurs when the learners’ attention is primarily engaged in processing meaning (Barnard & Scampton, 2008). Various empirical studies investigating FonF in some English as a Second Language context have been recently conducted, notably by Ellis and his associates (Ellis, 2001a and b; Ellis 2002, Karbalaee, Pourzargham & Kazemi, 2013). Moreover, FonF appears to be consistent with current Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories.

Teachers might design a task to encourage learners to notice forms in the input (e.g., prepositions of location such as in, on, under), or they might explicitly teach these forms and provide opportunities for meaningful practice. Focus on form may be reactive, including explicit corrections to student language, recasts, clarification requests, and other types of feedback. Focus on form is most frequently teacher-initiated, but it is also initiated by learners through questions and requests for explanation. Although second language acquisition research has not definitively answered many important questions regarding form-focused instruction, studies (e.g., Karbalaee, Pourzargham & Kazemi, 2013) have provided promising evidence that focus on form is correlated with more acquisition of new grammar and vocabulary than non-form-focused approaches.

### **Teaching Grammar**

The topic of grammar teaching continues to be a controversial matter in the field of Applied Linguistics and SLA and teachers often take opposing views. On the other hand, the debate on the place of grammar in instruction has played a prominent part in the history of English language teaching. This debate revolved around the question of whether grammar instruction helped learners acquire proficiency in second language acquisition. Further, the study of how learners acquire a second language has helped us shape thinking about how to teach the grammar of a second language (Ellis, 2006). There are many answers to this question which could be placed along a continuum with extremes at either end. At one end are highly explicit approaches to grammar teaching, and at the other end lies implicit approaches that avoid mention of form. N. Ellis (2005) suggests that traditional grammar teaching is viewed as the presentation and practice of discrete grammatical structures. This is, according to him, the view promulgated in teacher handbooks. It contributed to learning but this was of limited value regarding development of communicative ability and fluency (Long, 1991). According to Nassaji and Fotos (2004), for the reevaluation of grammar, FFI is a necessary component of language instruction. It provides EFL/ESL learners with enough positive feedback coming from EFL/ESL teachers and peers. More over, the evidence comes from a large number of laboratory and classroom-based studies as well as extensive reviews of studies (e.g., R. Ellis, 2006) on the effects of instruction over the past 20 years.

### **Form-Focused Instruction (FFI)**

The term “form” is used to refer to structural aspects of language, which includes phonological, lexical, grammatical and pragmalinguistic aspects of language (Ellis, 2001, p. 1). The meaning of the term “focus on form” is best understood when compared to and contrasted with that of the terms “focus on forms” and “form-focused instruction”. The treatment of grammar in second language teaching has received much attention over the years. In earlier approaches to second language teaching, such as the Grammar Translation Method, the Audiolingual Method, the Silent Way and Total Physical Response (TPR), syllabuses were designed around target language grammatical structures, lexis, and functions and notions. In these approaches grammar was typically taught overtly and often separately from meaning (Long & Robinson, 1998, pp. 15-16). This treatment of grammatical structure is known as focus on forms (Doughty & Williams, 1998, p. 3). In more recent approaches to second language teaching, such as Task-based Language Teaching, grammar is treated more covertly and is not taught separate from meaning. This treatment of grammatical form is known as focus on form, and is defined by Long and Robinson (1998, p. 23) as “...an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features-by the teacher and/or one or more students- triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production”. Doughty and Williams (1998, p. 211) points out that focus on forms and focus on



form are "not polar opposites". She further stresses that "focus on form entails a focus on formal elements of language, whereas focus on forms is limited to such a focus ...". Doughty and Williams (1998, p. 3) emphasize that the crucial distinction between focus on forms and focus on form is that "focus on form entails a prerequisite engagement in meaning before attention to linguistic features can be expected to be effective".

A further distinction is pointed out by Ellis (2001, p. 15) who states that with focus on form the attention to form must be "brief and unobtrusive". The term 'form-focused instruction' (FFI) is used by some authors as an umbrella term which includes both focus on form and focus on forms. Ellis (2001, p. 2) states that form-focused instruction is a cover term for terms such as " 'analytic teaching', 'focus on form', 'focus on forms', 'corrective feedback/error correction' and 'negotiation of form' ". Ellis (2001, p. 1) defines form-focused instruction as "any planned or incidental instructional activity that is intended to induce language learners to pay attention to linguistic form". Klapper and Rees (2003, p. 287) cite a definition in which form-focused instruction is defined as "... any pedagogical effort which is used to draw the learners' attention to language form, either implicitly or explicitly". Doughty and Williams (1998, p. 4) point out that the term 'form-focused instruction' is also frequently used in literature to refer to instruction which is in fact focus on forms. They emphasize that "form-focused instruction" encompasses both focus on forms and focus on form.

A fundamental feature of focus on form is that at the time when learners' attention is focused on a linguistic form, they must already be familiar with the meaning and the appropriate usage of that form. If information about meaning and usage are lacking, the attention to form would be considered focus on forms. Ellis (2002, p. 420) use the term "form-based instruction" but do not offer a definition for this term. Based on their discussion of different kinds of treatment on forms in second language teaching, it is however assumed that they use this term to be similar in meaning to 'form-focused instruction'. Doughty and Williams (1998) define "focus on form", "focus on forms" and 'form focused instruction' schematically as follows: Sheen (2005) proposes that there is a fundamental difference between focus on form and focus on forms, as far as the theoretical underpinnings of these two approaches are concerned. According to Sheen, focus on forms is based on the assumption that when learners learn a second language in a classroom situation they are learning a skill, and that they are utilizing general cognitive processes to do so. As a skills-learning activity, the focus of forms approach is seen to take place in three stages:

- Learners are brought to understand the grammar, by means of overt grammar explanation, which often includes explanation in the first language and a comparison of the first and target language structures;
- Non-communicative and communicative exercises in which the targeted grammatical forms can be practiced;
- Learners are provided with plentiful opportunities for communication, in which they can use the targeted grammatical constructions, so that the use will eventually become automatic and accurate (Sheen, 2005, p. 304).

By contrast, focus on form, according to Sheen (2005, p. 303), derives from the assumption that first and second language acquisition are to a certain extent similar processes. Both these processes are seen to utilize "exposure to comprehensible input arising from natural interaction". Focus on form is, however, also based on the realization that there are significant differences between first and second language acquisition. Typically, learners' exposure to the target language is insufficient for them to acquire the grammar, and in order to make up for this lack of exposure learners' attention needs to be focused on structural elements of the target language, i.e. there needs to be some focus on form (Sheen, 2005). The above definitions and accompanying discussion of the terms "focus on form", "focus on forms" and "form-focused instruction" were presented in an attempt to point out all possible distinctions between these terms. It is important to note, however, that these distinctions are theoretical distinctions, and that the two approaches are not mutually exclusive in practice. Although it is important from a course design perspective to distinguish between focus on form and focus on forms, and to design materials and classroom methodology according to decisions informed by theory about how attention to linguistic form should catered for, both focus on form and focus on forms could be used in the same course and in the materials designed for it. As stated above, the two terms do not represent polar opposites, but should rather be seen as lying along a continuum.

In another investigation, Ellis (2002) investigated the effectiveness of FFI on learners' free production of target language (TL) and conducted the survey aimed to discover the role of FFI in developing learners' implicit knowledge of target language. He also concluded that effects of FFI were durable. Klapper and Rees (2003) also performed a longitudinal study about the effectiveness of FFI, lasting four years, involving two groups of whose second language was German. One group received focus on forms while the other received focus on form. At the end, the group receiving focus on forms was proved to gain greater proficiency. They concluded that there is still a role for formal (declarative) knowledge of language in contexts where naturalistic input is limited. Lyster (2004) also conducted a comparative analysis of five quasi-experimental studies on the effects of FFI on 49 French immersion classes in Canada, about the effects of FFI on some problematic features of French for English learners (Perfect and past tenses, the conditional, second-person pronouns and grammatical gender.) Overall FFI proves to be useful in learners' improvements. This shows that in cases where the target structure is non-existent in L1 explicit instruction may be very helpful. It is important to know that interpretation of FFI findings should be done cautiously. The reason is that findings are difficult to compare and often contradictory since there are many variables involved. Important factors in succeeding FFI are learners' developmental stage, the structure(s) to be taught, the instructional context and the material. This technique is not based on longitudinal research and the effects of input and output is not measured using automatically produced language and therefore they are not reliable. Also strange methods are used which seem to draw learners' attention deliberately to some forms and make them use them. Also some parallel factors, like the use of computer could facilitate results.

### ***Implicit versus Explicit FFI***

Originally, the notions of isolated and integrated form focus instruction (FFI) introduced by Spada and Lightbown (2008) who have chosen to use the terms isolated and integrated to describe two approaches to drawing learners' attention to language form in L2 instruction. Accordingly, isolated FFI is provided in activities that are separate from the communicative use of language, but it occurs as part of a program that also includes communicative language teaching (CLT) and/or content based Instruction (CBI). In addition, isolated FFI may be taught in preparation for a communicative activity or after an activity in which students have experienced difficulty with a particular language feature (Spada & Lightbown, 2008). They state that in isolated FFI, the focus on language form is separated from the communicative or content-based activity. This approach differs from Long's focus on forms, which refers to language instruction and practice organized around predetermined points of grammar in a structural syllabus, that is, form-based instruction that is not directly tied to genuinely communicative practice. On the other hand, in integrated FFI, the learners' attention is drawn to language form during communicative or content-based instruction. This definition corresponds to focus on form (both planned and incidental) which is called by Ellis (2002) and by Doughty and Williams (1998). That is, although the form focus occurs within a communicative activity, the language features in focus may have been anticipated and planned for by the teacher or they may occur incidentally in the course of ongoing interaction.

#### RESEARCH QUESTION

This study was to investigate whether there was any difference between implicit and explicit FFI in teaching grammar to Iranian intermediate English as a foreign language (EFL) learners.

#### METHODOLOGY

##### Participants

The participants were 40 adult male students, studying EFL at Iran Language Institute (ILI). Their age was ranging between 19 and 25, on average. Initially, the samples were chosen out of 100 students who were willing to take part in the research. They were given Nelson's proficiency test (Fowler & Coe, 1975) and those whose scores were one standard deviation above or below the mean were considered as the participants of the study. The participants were randomly divided into two experimental groups as isolated FFI group and integrated FFI group.

##### Materials

For this study, the text book entitled, "Active Reading 2" developed by Anderson (2007) was selected. The researchers' main criteria for choosing this material was that the text book is designed for the students at the intermediate level and its units included passages on grammatical points. The passages were taught to focus on their structural patterns through FFI.

##### Instrumentation

To have a homogeneous research sample, the researchers used a piloting Nelson's proficiency test (Fowler & Coe, 1975). It included 50 multiple choice items on grammatical patterns at the intermediate level. Its reliability index was calculated through KR-21 formula as ( $r=0.964$ ). The pre and the post-tests of this study were the same. This test was a 40-multiple choice items which cover grammatical patterns of the passages. Its reliability index was calculated through KR-21 formula as ( $r=0.865$ ). The content of the test included the structures chosen to be taught based on implicit and explicit FFI. Most of these structures were subordinate clauses like adjective clauses and noun clauses. Other structures such as subject-verb agreement and tenses were also incorporated in the treatment period.

##### Procedure

The nature of this study is a causal comparative one. Both comparison-contrast and experimental researches are done. The main purpose of this study is to find out whether isolated FFI or integrated FFI have any effect on grammar proficiency of intermediate Iranian EFL learners and if yes, which one of them is more effective. The diagram of the procedure is as follows:

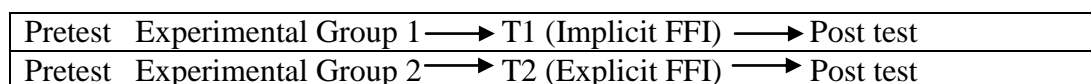


Figure 1: The Design of the Study

In order to collect data from the participants, students of the two experimental groups took a general English proficiency test (Nelson 050 D) as a pre-test at the outset of the experiment in order to ascertain their homogeneity. A pre-test was administered and fifty language learners were selected based on their scores which were within the range of Standard Deviation (SD) around the mean or not. The language learners whose scores were within the following range were selected. The forty participants were categorized into two twenty person groups. In order to make these two groups homogeneous, they were chosen so that the frequency of each of their mark is the same or almost the same. The grammar teaching in the two classes differed according to Isolated and Integrated FFIs.

In implicit FFI class, first the researchers and participants discussed the main ideas and the content of each unit; then they went through the formal structures and grammatical rules. During this task, the researchers did not correct their errors. After the task, the researchers focused on the forms in which learners had problem to use and the forms they did not use at all. In this case the forms in the pre-test which they did not use at all. Their errors were reviewed, given explanations. And the other desired forms, the pre-test forms that learners did not use, were explained briefly and given examples. These techniques were based on Ellis (2006) recommendations.

In explicit FFI class, the learners' opinions regarding the topic were asked and discussed, just like the Isolated FFI one. However, FFI was performed during the task. While performing the activity, the researchers stopped the communication for a little while and introduced the structure and asked learners to use it. If they made errors in the use, the researchers corrected those using implicit recasts and/or some brief explanation of the rule. Nevertheless, the researchers made sure that grammar teaching does not hinder communicative activity for too long. The instruction lasted for 10 sessions in 5 weeks. After that both groups were given the post-test which was exactly a modified pre-test for determining the research hypotheses.

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

##### Results

The descriptive statistics of the two experimental groups who were studying grammar through implicit and explicit FFI are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics (Pre-test)

	Groups		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Implicit FFI	20	14.1000		3.07622	.68786	
Explicit FFI	20	14.4000		2.92719	.65454	

Table 2 shows both implicit and explicit FFI groups gain homogeneous scores in taking grammar test at the pre-test stage. Since the mean of the scores cannot indicate the significant difference between the implicit and explicit FFI groups, Independent Samples *t*-test was run to clarify actual differences. Results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Independent Samples *t*-test (Pre-test)

Groups	df	<i>t</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Implicit FFI vs. Explicit FFI	38	-.316	.754	-.30000	.94952

Table 3 shows that there is not a significant difference between the implicit and explicit FFI groups since observed  $t$  ( $t_o = .316$ ) which is less than the critical  $t$  ( $t_c = 2.042$ ) with  $df = 38$ .

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics (Post-test)

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Implicit FFI	20	15.1500	3.57292	.79893
Explicit FFI	20	17.4500	2.45967	.55000

Table 4 shows both implicit and explicit FFI groups gain different scores in taking grammar test at the post-test stage. Independent Samples *t*-test was used to measure the significant differences.

Table 5: Independent Samples *t*-test (Post-test)

Groups	df	<i>t</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Implicit FFI vs. Explicit FFI	38	2.371	.023	2.30000	.96994

Table 5 indicates that there is a significant difference between the implicit and explicit FFI groups since observed  $t$  ( $t_o = 2.371$ ) which is greater than the critical  $t$  ( $t_c = 2.042$ ) with  $df = 38$ .

### Discussion

Although both experimental groups of implicit and explicit FFI who received the same material and time of instruction, the results showed that the explicit group taught through FFI on grammatical patterns outperformed the implicit group receive FFI in indirect way. The result of the present study are matched with Spada and Lightbown (2008) and Karbalaee, Pourzargham and Kazemi (2013) who emphasized that explicit and integrative FFI are more effective than implicit or isolated FFI. They noted that FFI may learners to focus on communicative or content-based instruction of the target language that they may not acquire without guidance. Thus both activities either implicit or explicit are helpful; however, the role of explicit FFI may show the role of instruction that is provided in clear step by step activities followed by both the teacher and learners in the context of communicative activities.

The results of the present study shows that form-focused instruction (FFI) approach and especially explicit modality has been more effective than implicit FFI. This is matched with the results of several studies (e.g., Doughty & Williams, 1998). The findings of this study may be important in the area of second language acquisition that supports the need for pedagogical interventions in order to push L2 learners towards higher levels of proficiency (Ellis, 2006). Generally speaking, FFI includes the ones with incorrect usage, and the ones with incorrect usage, and the ones not used during the task performance but considered useful and natural to use in the selected task. He also states that whether focusing one form intensively or more than one form extensively is a crucial decision in this criterion (Ellis, 2006). MEQ (2002) introduces the task, the program, and students as sources of forms to focus on. Students' immediate needs and their order of acquisition are of utmost importance in choosing the forms to focus on. Also the programs of elementary, intermediate, and advanced learners in courses play a vital role here. In the case of errors, teachers can gather necessary data from learners and plan FFI based on errors they make. Questions regarding grammar should be answered since they reckon awareness and interest in English. Norris and Ortega (2000)'s study is one of the most important studies performed in this area. By comparing the results of forty nine studies to investigate the effectiveness of SL instruction performed between 1980-1988, they tried to figure out which categorization of FFI is more helpful and whether the FFI effects are durable or not. They found out that both focus on forms and focus on form were effective, there is no significant difference between their effectiveness and that explicit attention to grammar structures were more effective than the implicit one and that explicit attention was more effective in focus on forms. Also they found out that FFI effects are durable.

### CONCLUSION

Since the explicit FFI group outperformed the implicit FFI group, we may conclude that explicit FFI holds a wide range of classroom feedback that occurs as the need or opportunity arises, as well as the kind of planned interaction that requires the repeated, but natural, use of a particular language form (Spada & Lightbown, 2008). These activities are focusing of forms in the context of situation to provide enough feedback coming from both teachers and learners on the correction of ill-formed structures, especially, according to Spada and Lightbown (2008) "those for which there is a misleading similarity to the first language (L1), and those that are unlikely to cause communication breakdown" (p. 181).

In sum, the contribution of the present study is two-fold. Firstly, teaching grammar is a conscious activity with clear guidance and pattern practice in a context which is clarified and modified by the teacher. Secondly, the grammatical activities should be put in practice in a

meaningful and contextual manner. Thus the EFL learners learn sentence structures and then they use them in a real context created by the teacher or other peers. Feedback could be provided from three sources to check the correctness of the processes. First from the peers, then from the materials reviewed in the classroom, and finally by the teachers. Teachers should not involve in the process of learning to take the time of the class. They just facilitate the process with a minimum intervening. Teaching grammar through FFI may be a great help to the teachers in EFL contexts. Since in EFL contexts such as Iran language exposure outside the classroom is rare and the learners have to learn formal structures in the classroom and use it in their conversational activities just for pedagogical purposes. Further researches may focus on various areas of teaching language skills such as reading, listening and speaking. This study dealt with male participants; however, females could be participated in the future research to have a comparative study on FFI. The main limitations of the present research were that the small size of the population since the results could be more reliable if we work on the greater research sample.

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## THE EFFECT OF TEACHING PARAGRAPH WRITING RULES ON THE READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension ability is a fundamental competency expected from students learning a second language. Furthermore, it is suggested that L2 learners' difficulties in reading skill may be due to lack of ability to write rather than difficulties in reading and syntax. Thus, the current research attempts to investigate whether asking teaching paragraph writing rules prior to reading comprehension will improve the quality of students' comprehension. The participants were 60 Iranian secondary students studying in a school in Iran. The data were collected from 2 separate language institutes that were selected randomly. The findings from T-test showed that participants who received two weeks treatment demonstrated 23% improvement in their reading comprehension skill. Thus, the findings suggested that teaching paragraph writing is supposed to be an effective technique in provoking students to comprehend more easily.

**KEYWORDS:** Paragraph writing rules, teaching, reading comprehension, skills, essay, Iranian secondary learners

### INTRODUCTION

Writing skill is deemed to be difficult for EFL students in the language teaching (Richards, 1990). According to Richard and Renandya (2002), the difficulties include those in (1) generating and organizing ideas using an appropriate choice of vocabulary, sentence and paragraph organization and (2) putting such ideas into an intelligible text. As for Vietnamese EFL students, besides these difficulties, they also have to face many other obstacles when learning to write compositions in English.

Writing is the most difficult language skill to master in both, the native language (L1) and the second/foreign language (L2). This is so because real effective writing requires that we be aware of a series of aspects essential to convey meaning: a high degree of accuracy to avoid ambiguity of meaning, the use of complex grammatical devices for focus and emphasis; a careful choice of vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and sentence structures to create a style which is appropriate to the eventual readers (Hedge: 1988). Besides the linguistic knowledge, cognitive and socio-cultural (discourse and sociolinguistic knowledge) aspects also influence our capacity to produce good written texts. All this takes time, a good training in the writing process, lots of practice, and the writer's intuition and skillful perception to materialize his/her thoughts on paper—if not an innate talent.

Since the theory of "communicative competence" was advanced by Hymes, it has to a great extent encouraged and enlightened many linguists who are not satisfied with the analysis of language merely based on its structures and forms. So, communicative teaching approach gradually came into being. Nowadays, it has been generally admitted that the communicative teaching approach has some merits in the improvement of learners' communicative competence. As one aspect of the communicative competence, the ability of writing can also be greatly improved through this approach. However, the communicative approach is not the cure-all, and it also has some defects of its own.

#### *What is writing?*

Writing is a process, not a —product which has been far from being new. Also, writing is a complex process of exploring one's thought, discovering ideas and generating meaning (Flower and Hayes, 1980). In this way, the writing process is a sharp tool to discover meaning, to perfect a piece of writing both in thoughts and in grammatical accuracy and to bring intelligence to the writing. Therefore, Byrne (1988) declares writing is a process of encoding (putting your message into words) carried out with the reader's expectations; or, as confirmed by Nunan (1999, p. 273), —a complex, cognitive process that required sustained intellectual effort over a considerable period of time.

The concept of writing has been widely discussed by many researchers and there is wide information on the topic. For the purpose of this article, I will briefly make reference to the differences between the spoken and the written language. Then, I will concentrate more on the definition of writing as a means and as an end. As in speaking, the writing ability draws on many of the same linguistic resources, but relies on distinctly different mental processes. While linguists and other scholars have held that speech is primary and writing is a reflection of spoken language, educators have contended that the written language is more correct than the spoken language. Recent studies, however, have tended to reconcile both views. "Neither oral nor written language is inherently superior to the other, but oral and written texts do vary across a number of dimensions, including (but not limited to) textual features, socio-cultural norms and patterns of use, and the cognitive processes involved in text production and comprehension" (Cushing Weige: 2002, 15).

#### *Influence of Writing on Reading*

The influence of writing on reading comprehension has been expressed through the concept in which reading is trying to discover what a piece of written text means by understanding the words a writer is using. When reading, —we don't just wait for the meaning to come to us, we go for it aggressively. We look deeply into the text hunting in certain specific ways searching for clues as to what the writer is trying to say (Peha, 2003:3).

Taking into consideration the effects of writing on reading comprehension, there are a number of studies that fail to show an apparent correlation between these ability with the intention of proving that writers must also be readers and vice versa. For instance, Battle (1986) concluded that freshmen did not appear to absorb reading skills as a function of learning to write. Or, several compositions themselves have not been without ambivalence toward the importance of reading in improving student writing (Tribble, 1996).

Nonetheless, reading can advance learners' ability to write since reading can aid the learners' process of writing as affirmed by Brown (1987, p. 331), —by reading and studying a variety of relevant types of text, students can gain important insights both about how they



should write and about subject matter that may become the topic of their writing. In other words, reading can provide models for writing. Murcia and Olshtain (2000, p. 158) state that:

Many writing course and certainly most autodidactic strategies in writing involve using well-written passages from literature, or passage written by others, as models for one's own writing. Thus, many writing classes begin with reading texts, analyze them, looking at them as models for writing or using them as a piece of communication to response to. For these reasons, reading playing a decisive role in the development of writing ability for reading appears to be an essential pre-condition to produce good writers.

#### ***Importance of teaching writing***

Of all the four language skills, ESL learners often find writing a daunting task owing to its complexity. This is because it does not simply require learners to memorize written symbols and put them on paper. According to Scarcella (1984), writing involves the writer to employ high-order thinking skills as well as communication skills which include conceptualization, inference, creativity, organization, and the summarization of sophisticated ideas. Hence, there is a growing need for teachers to come up with effective writing instruction for L2 learners. It remains crucial for three primary reasons: first, the ability to write well is a fundamental skill for academic or professional success but is a particularly difficult skill for ESL learners to master (National Commission on Writing, 2004). Second, writing can be especially effective in developing learners' academic language proficiency because they will be more eager to explore lexical or syntactic terms in their written work (Weissberg, 1999). The third reason being writing allows students to master various subject matters because it heightens learners' awareness towards knowledge gaps and apply problem-specific knowledge into other areas (Reeves, 2002).

Writing is widely acknowledged as an "intricate" and complex task as well as the "most difficult of the language abilities to acquire" (Allen & Corder, 1974, p. 177). As a means of communicating and a tool of learning a language" (Wolff, 2000), writing is a complex process even in the first language. Undoubtedly, it is more complicated to write in a foreign language.

This study aims to investigate the influence of teaching paragraph writing rules on the reading comprehension of Iranian intermediate students. Having to say this, a teaching design is taken into consideration in which paragraph writing is being taught.

#### ***The Present Situation of the Teaching Design of EFL Writing***

As an indispensable part of EFL, the teaching design of writing not only shares the common characteristic of FL, but also has its unique features (e.g. Li, 2000; Zhang et al, 1995): The phenomena such as general, abstract and scattered teaching content, poor practice, one-sided teaching concept and priority, stereotyped process are very common in teaching practice. Well designed teaching is very rare phenomena. Most classroom teaching of EFL writing turns into instruction of writing theory or mechanics, some even convert into literature appreciation. Many teachers follow the basic routine from "model analyzing → task assigning → composing by students → checking and assessing" which in this paper, this mentioned basic routine form is considered.

#### ***Design of Teaching Activity***

Previous research (Lantolf & Johnson, 2007; Cheon 2008; Mondada and Pekarek Doehler, 2004, p. 501) proves that language acquisition only happens during the practice. So the core of the design of teaching activity in EFL writing is to create and implement communicative task based on real situation.

#### ***Paragraph writing***

The main focus of this research is teaching opinions at the paragraph level and to consider its effects on reading comprehension. Therefore, paragraph writing or the organization of a paragraph is of primary importance. However, writing builds larger units from smaller ones; that is, writers use words to make sentences, sentences to make paragraphs, and paragraphs to make such compositions as letters, reports, and college themes (Hart & Reinking 1990:11). Rajatanun (1988:95) said that a paragraph is a unit of writing which expresses one central idea and consists of two kinds of sentences: a topic sentence and a number of supporting statements.

O'Donnell and Paiva (1993:2-4) provided more details about the essential parts for paragraph writing which include a topic sentence, supporting sentences, details, logical order, logical connectors, a concluding sentence, unity and coherence. The ideas in the paragraph must be presented in logical order by using transition words or connecting words which indicate the relationship between the ideas (chronological, causal, etc.). A paragraph may have a concluding sentence, which restates the main idea in a different way. According to Reid (1994:42), the concluding sentence summarizes the material, offers a solution to the problem, predicts a situation, makes a recommendation, or states a conclusion.

Unity and coherence are also main components of a paragraph, together with the main idea and the supporting details. Even when a paragraph is unified, and the topic sentence is well supported, the paragraph can still "sound" choppy unless the writer uses coherence devices to make the paragraph smoother. Coherence means "to stick together." In writing, it means that one thought flows smoothly into the next. One way to achieve coherence is with the use of connectors called transition words or phrases that link one sentence to another (Wyrrick 1999:211).

Therefore, to produce an effective piece of writing, students should focus on organization by 1) choosing an appropriate topic sentence 2) identifying general and specific statements 3) arranging sentences in order and 4) inserting or deleting some sentences and ending with a concluding sentence.

#### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Consequently, lots of researchers are constantly on the move to discover new ways and methods to teach language writing more effectively. According to Scarcella (1984), writing involves the writer's employing high-order thinking skills as well as communicative skills which include conceptualization, inference, creativity, organization, and summarization of sophisticated ideas. Although the reason for low-efficiency in writing teaching is very complicated, previous studies have found that well-designed classroom-teaching plan is crucial in motivating and developing the writing skills of EFL learners and the implementation of scientific classroom-teaching design is a core element in enhancing the quality and efficiency of teaching practice (Melor Md Yunus et al, 2012).

For many years, the teaching of writing was neglected as a result of concentration on the aural approach (Brookes & Grundy, 2000). It is true that there was a specific demand for spoken language, but the importance of writing should be equally valued. "How to teach writing" in ESL classes is a question that has no definite answer.

Different teachers have different teaching styles and methods. Experts and teachers have stressed many features of ESL writing, and they



have developed a variety of approaches to the teaching of writing. Raimes (1983) presents six approaches to the teaching of writing: the controlled-to-free approach; the free-writing approach; the paragraph-pattern approach; the grammar-syntax-organization approach; the communicative approach; the process approach. Nunan (2003) firstly gives a brief comparison between process and product approaches to the teaching of writing, and then presents the functional grammar approach and the discourse-based approach for writing. He also gives some suggestions on teaching: a writing program should incorporate elements of process and product approaches; a teacher should create his own professional practice in the teaching of second language writing based on the related theories.

We can conclude that writing is of course, not easy and in some way, more difficult than speaking (Norris 1983:63). Writing is more complex in that it tests a person's ability to use a language and the ability to express ideas. As a result, a person needs to write not only coherently but correctly, which requires more time and effort (Liu and Braine 2005:623-624).

Regarding many difficulties in the field of teaching writing, a proper teaching model of writing is selected by which language utilization was somehow facilitated. Since there are many studies done in the field of writing and reading comprehension, there is no study in which the correlation among teaching writing rules and the reading comprehension of intermediate is investigated. Reading comprehension improvement is closely connected to the knowledge of vocabulary, but the main research question in this study is whether writing knowledge and ability affects reading comprehension or not.

As far as we have concerned, reading and writing have a mutual effect. Reading builds the knowledge of diverse kinds to write on or to employ in writing; writing reinforces knowledge in a way that builds schemata to read with. Reading and writing interact with each other, possibly making use of the same cognitive structures to create a text world (Kucer, 1985). Thus, an integrated-skill classroom is an ideal environment to apply Steve Peha's —Read like a writer approach as an integration and reciprocal interaction of reading and writing.

Having the above-mentioned issues in mind, the researchers believe that investigating writing knowledge is a worthwhile enterprise in Iran, not only for pedagogical purposes but also for the insights it affords into the cognitive processes involved in reading and vocabulary acquisition. Any research that attempts to do so may advance our understanding of the nature of writing knowledge and its relation to reading comprehension.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question of the study would be as follows:

Does teaching paragraph writing rules affect on the reading comprehension ability of Iranian EFL learners?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Study Design*

The design of this study was based on experimental research, in which the respondents were divided into two groups of 'experimental' and 'control'. Therefore, first, a pre-test was administered for checking participants' ability to write. Then, participants were divided into two groups; experimental and control. For the experimental group, students were taught the lesson by using paragraph teaching rules while the control group was given a lesson without using this treatment. After accomplishing the lesson, a post-test was given to both groups in order to evaluate their progress.

### *Participants*

60 (sixty) students were chosen as the participants of this research. The participants of this study were selected randomly among the language institutes in West of Iran. The students were picked from two classes consisting of high and lower achievement students in each class. However, the students were put through the research as a group without dividing or discriminating the students according to the race, gender or social background.

### *Instruments*

#### *Pre-test*

A pre-test of reading comprehension was used as the first instrument in this study. The aim of the pre-test was to determine the students' ability to comprehend a text or an essay. In the pre-test, both groups were given an essay where they had to respond to some comprehension questions drawn from the essay in which the researcher provided as the pre-test. Based on the pre-test results, the experiments were conducted where teaching paragraph writing was used in the experimental group whereas for the control group, traditional methods such as traditional reading comprehension were used.

#### *Treatment*

For experimental group, participants received 2 treatments within 2 weeks. **In the first treatment**, teaching writing and paragraph essay rules were introduced to participants. **For the next treatment**, some comprehension questions were given to another group of participants together. Then, the teacher discussed the research procedure for them accordingly. However, for the control group, directed texts with questions were given to participants where they had to respond based on the content given. However, they had to respond everything on their own.

#### *Post-test*

After accomplishing the treatment, a post-test was given to both groups to evaluate their progress. In order to acknowledge the validity and the reliability of the pre-test and post-test as well as the treatments sessions, the materials that have been used by one of the teachers were selected as the instruments for this research.

### *Procedure of the study*

In this study, we are supposed to deal with the effect of teaching paragraph writing rules on reading comprehension of the Iranian intermediate students. To do this, we decide to select two rather similar groups in the form of experimental and control groups in which a pre-test and post-test were administered in each group to examine the amount of reading comprehension progress in the case of teaching writing rules. In pre-test, the scores of each group were obtained rather the same (% 61 for each group). According to our research hypothesis, we predicted that

experimental group will progress more in the case of reading comprehension only if it utilizes the treatment. In the next part the research findings will be depicted.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The major question addressed in this study was whether the use of teaching writing paragraph rules would improve students' reading comprehension or not. The result of the post-test indicated clearly that the respondents in the experimental group who were exposed to the treatment showed a remarkable improvement in post-test compared to control group who used the traditional method of responding to comprehension questions. Therefore, the result analysis have also answered the research question that teaching writing rules can be used to help students develop their critical thinking skills in reading compared to traditional method.

As the table shows, in pre-test both the control and experimental group obtained rather the same results (61%). In the treatment period, the participants experienced two stages in which guided practice and teaching writing rules were administered in the first stage and comprehension questions were released in the case of second stage of the treatment. Afterwards, a post-test was administered that the control group and experimental group obtained 61 % and 84 %, respectively. As it is depicted in the table 1, a very simple comparison of pre- and post-test results reveals that the post-test scores of control and experimental groups are 61 % and 84 % respectively indicating that the treatment accentuated the research hypothesis and a total of 23 % progress is observed in the case of experimental group scores. Therefore, teaching paragraph writing rules affects positively on the reading comprehension ability of Iranian EFL learners. The differences of the pretest and post-test were listed in the following table:

*Table 1: the results of pre- and post-test and the differences of each*

N o	Group	Pre-test	Action taken	Action taken	Post- test	Differences
1	Control	61%	Guided practice	Comprehension questions	61%	-----
2	Experimental	61%	Teaching writing rules & Guided practice	Comprehension questions	84%	23%

Lastly, as the students came from the various level of proficiency, some of them could not communicate in the target language. However, with the help from the rest of their friends, they were able to engage in meaningful communicative language even though the main objective of the treatment was more on writing and reading skills. In addition, with the use of teaching writing, students were seemed to be actively involved in the classroom activity regardless their different level of proficiency.

## CONCLUSION

Most of the students especially in Iran find reading as the most difficult skill compared to other skills i.e. listening, speaking and writing skills. Regardless of primary or secondary students, reading is the least proficient that most of the students are lacking of. The most common reasons given by the teachers based on their observation of their students are passive participation during interactive activities and lack of ideas. Due to these reasons, the technique of teaching writing was used to boost the students to think critically and actively participate in reading activity conducted in the classroom. This treatment plays a very important role in teaching which may arouse students' thinking skills.

As conclusion, the use of teaching writing had a good impact on students' writing, as it could change the students' perception toward reading from passive participation to actively participate in discussion session. Moreover, teaching writing helped them to improve their critical thinking through stages as they learnt how to organize and developed their existing ideas in writing and reading. It was also proven that to teach writing among Iranian students is more effective compared to traditional methods of writing, which are unable to improve students' interest in writing and reading and create critical thinking environment among the students.

### Study Limitation

Since this is an experimental study and a treatment must be administered, learners may experience many changes during the treatment period. There are two tests, mostly, in experimental researches in which students can get familiar with the test format and general questions. Therefore, this can affect the post-test results which a rather pseudo-achievement may be observed in such cases.

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## ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence, motivation and vocabulary knowledge in undergraduate students. To fulfill the purpose of the study, 59 undergraduate English as a Foreign Language students took part in this study. The investigation was done through using two tests and one questionnaire including Vocabulary Size Test (VST) (Nation, 2007), the Schutte Self-report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) (Schutte et al., 1998), and the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) developed by Pintrich, Smith, Garcia and McKeachie (1991). Using the Vocabulary Size Test (VST), the participants were divided into three groups of high, mid, and low. To analyze the data, One-Way ANOVA and Multiple Comparisons (Scheffé) were used. To check the correlation, Pearson correlation coefficient was run. Considering the participants' levels, it was found that motivation had a positive and significant correlation with emotional intelligence in high, mid, and low groups. The findings, furthermore, indicated that all components of motivation had positive and meaningful correlation with all subscales of emotional intelligence in high, mid, and low groups. That is, by increasing vocabulary knowledge, students become motivated to use information consisted in emotion to make effective decisions. In other words, those who are more emotional intelligent and motivated can produce positive emotions in their own and others to ask their questions and expand their vocabulary knowledge.

**KEYWORDS:** Emotional intelligence, Motivation, Vocabulary Knowledge

## INTRODUCTION

In today's educational system, learner is an active participant. In other words, Learners are being asked what they want to learn and are encouraged to set their own goals for pedagogical attainment. Even though these instructional methods add value to the student and his will, these methods may put students who are unable to function well at a disadvantage. That is the instructor's duty and art to handle the class in such a way that neither of the groups feel frustrated, and he should use different teaching methods which meet the needs of both groups of students. Thus, language instructors should apply more appropriate teaching methods by which learners of different styles and personalities benefit, and their self-esteem, self-confidence and motivation increase.

In the last decade or so, a tremendous amount of facts has been discovered on the role emotions play in our lives. Researchers have found that "even more than IQ, one's emotional awareness and abilities to deal with feelings will determine success and happiness in all walks of life, including family relationships" (Gottman & DeClaire, 1998, p. 20). In other words, Goleman (1995), and Salovey and Mayer (1990) asserted that research has demonstrated that EQ can explain success in education and life more than IQ. Salovey and Mayer (1990), also, introduced the term Emotional Intelligence (EI) as the ability to perceive, understand, and manage one's own and others' emotions. In the same year, they defined EI as a type of social intelligence including the ability to manage and control one's own and others' emotions and to make use of the information to lead thinking and acting. It is the potential to perceive and understand the feelings of others and create interpersonal interactions. Then, Goleman (1995) stated that emotional intelligence consists of "knowing what you are feeling, recognizing what others are feeling, managing the feelings in relationships, and using your feelings to motivate yourself--even in the face of frustrations" (p. 43).

In case of motivation, Gardner (1985) defined motivation as "the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language" (p.10). Oxford and Shearin (1994, p. 12) stated that "motivation determines the extent of active, personal involvement in L2 learning", but Dörnyei (1998), Van Lier (1996), Crookes and Schmidt (1991) warn that it is a multifaceted factor and that "no available theory has yet managed to represent it in its total complexity" (Dörnyei, 1998, p. 131). Also, Tremblay and Gardner (1995) considered motivation in terms of effort, attention and persistence whereas Van Lier (1996) based on work by Vygotsky (1962, 1978) and Keller (1983), lists motivational intensity, affect, and cognition. Ford (1992) also identified three motivational factors which are personal goals, emotional arousal processes, and individual beliefs which direct, energize, and regulate goal-directed activity.

Vocabulary has long been considered as a prerequisite and strong determinant of reading achievement. In this regard, Hui (2004) stated that "without enlarging vocabulary size or breadth, students do not have real reading ability and communicative competence" (p. 477). "It is clear that a large and rich vocabulary is the hallmark of an educated individual. Indeed, a large vocabulary repertoire facilitates becoming an educated person to the extent that vocabulary knowledge is strongly related to reading proficiency in particular and school achievement in general" (Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2002, p. 1).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous study demonstrated that emotional intelligence is connected with success in many domains, including enhancing performance in interviewing (Fox & Spector, 2000), contextual performance, work settings (Carmeli, 2003), student learning (Brackett & Mayer, 2003), effective teaching (Ghanizadeh & Moafian, 2010), classrooms (Petrides, Frederickson, & Furnham, 2004), academic performance (Gil-Olarte, Palomera, & Brackett, 2006), and cognitive tasks (Schuttes, Schuetplez, & Malouff, 2001). The concept of intelligent was initially identified by Spearman (1904) as Dickens (2007) asserted:

Spearman (1904) first accounted for the observation that people who perform well on one type of mental ability also tend to do well on many others. For instance, individuals who are good at identifying patterns in chains of abstract drawings are also good at quickly sequencing and arranging pictures to tell a story, telling what three dimensional shapes drawn in two dimensions will resemble when

rotated, tend to have large vocabularies and are quick at arithmetic. This pattern of moderate to strong positive mutual relations across the whole spectrum of mental abilities led Spearman to hypothesize the existence of a general mental ability similar to the usual notion of intelligence (p. 1). Thus, vocabulary breadth of EFL learners might be a good predictor of their general intelligence.

Gardner (2001) studied the roles of the student, the teacher and the language researcher in understanding the motivation to learn another language. He highlighted the socio-educational model of second language acquisition. Vaezi (2008) in her research, *Language Learning Motivation among Iranian Undergraduate Students*, explored that Iranian EFL learners had very high motivation and positive attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language and that they were more instrumentally motivated. Thus, she supported the idea of some researchers who believe that in a foreign language setting learners are instrumentally motivated. Ghanizadeh and Moafian (2010) investigated the relationship between EFL teachers' emotional quotient (EQ) and their pedagogical success in language institutes. In addition, the role played by their years of teaching experience in their EQ and the relationship between their age and EQ were also studied. Subsequent data analyses revealed that there was a credible and meaningful relationship between teachers' success and EQ. Furthermore, significant correlations were found between teachers' EQ, their teaching experience, and their age. The results also revealed the teacher's emotional intelligence to be a critical factor in the process of teaching. Skourdi and Rahimi (2010) compared two models of emotional intelligence based upon the ideas proposed in Salovey and Mayer (1990), and Saklofske, Austin, and Miniski (2003) to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence, linguistic intelligence, and vocabulary learning, especially receptive breadth of vocabulary, among EFL learners. A correlational analysis revealed that there was an interesting pattern of significant relationship between emotional intelligence and first language, between emotional intelligence and vocabulary knowledge and between first language and vocabulary knowledge. Moreover, emotional intelligence was found to be a potential predictor for first language acquisition. Parsa, Jahandar, and Khodabandehlou (2013) studied the effect of verbal intelligence on pre-intermediate learners' knowledge of lexicon. The correlation done on the data indicated a positive relationship between verbal intelligence and knowledge of lexicon. Besides, the analysis of the results revealed that participants who had higher verbal intelligence also had higher marks in vocabulary test, and the participants who had lower verbal intelligence had a lower mark in the vocabulary test.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As this review has demonstrated, there are a lot of interesting and challenging works on about emotional intelligence, motivation, and vocabulary knowledge. All in all, considering the aforementioned studies, this paper addresses the following research question:

Q. Is there any profound relationship between emotional intelligence and motivation at different levels of vocabulary knowledge for Iranian EFL learners?

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

The participants in this study were 82 male and female senior students, majoring in English Teaching at Islamic Azad University. Two classes were randomly chosen at English Language Department of Shiraz University; in one selected class, there were 36 female and 13 male participants, and in the other one, there were 26 females and 7 males ranged from 21 to 29 years of age. Out of all of 82 tests and questionnaires distributed, 78 were returned. After being screened for usability, 59 responses were found to be complete and proper for analysis purposes. The respondents, finally, were 44 female and 15 male participants. Seniors who had passed all reading comprehension courses were selected for this study as it was assumed that they should enjoy some vocabulary knowledge.

### Instruments

Two tests and one questionnaire were employed in this research. The first test was the Schutte Self-report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) (Schutte et al., 1998), the first was the Vocabulary Size Test (VST) (Nation, 2007); the second one was Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) (Pintrich, Smith, Garcia & McKeachie, 1991), and the last one was the Schutte Self-report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) (Schutte et al., 1998) consists of a 33 item self-report measure of emotional intelligence. The items in the SSEIT are prepared on a five-level Likert scale. In this kind of test, Petrides and Furnham (2000), Ciarrochi, Chan and Bajgar (2001), and Saklofske, Austin and Minski (2003) identified some factors. The factors are Perception of Emotions (PE), Managing Emotions in the Self (MES), Managing Other's Emotions (MOE) and Utilizing Emotions (UE). The reliability index of the test was calculated, and it was found to be 0.91.

### Procedure

First, Nation's Vocabulary size Test (2007) was given to subjects to determine their vocabulary size, and the level of their vocabulary knowledge. Second, the Schutte Self-report Emotional Intelligence Test was administered. They were asked to show the extent to which they agreed with the statements by checking one of the five responses in the answer sheet. The responses to this questionnaire ranged from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. Finally, the Motivation Strategies for Learning Questionnaire was used. In order to complete these tests and questionnaire, there was no time restriction.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Having a glance at the related literature in the area of EI, motivation and vocabulary knowledge, it was showed a clear need to undertake a study in this regard. Thus, the present study focused on the role of emotional intelligence, motivation, and the vocabulary knowledge of EFL learners. It was hypothesized that no relationship exists between emotional intelligence and vocabulary knowledge at different levels of vocabulary knowledge of EFL undergraduate students.

Based on the students' scores of the vocabulary knowledge test, they were divided into three groups of high, mid, and low. At first, the median was calculated to find two midpoints and the mid scores turned out to be 55 and 39. Then, they classified in three groups. Those who got scores 55 or higher were put in the high group, those whose scores were between 39 and 55 were considered as the mid group, and the students with the scores of 39 or lower were put in the low group. In order to see if the difference in the performance of all three groups was significant; in other words, if the cutoff scores for dividing the participants into three groups were appropriate, a One-Way ANOVA was run. Table 1 shows the results.



*Table 1: One-Way ANOVA to Compare the Participants' Vocabulary Mean Scores in the Three Groups*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Vocabulary Knowledge	Between Groups	10819.673	2	5409.836	109.037	.000
	Within Groups	2778.429	56	49.615		
	Total	13598.102	58			

According to Table 1, there was a significant difference in the performance of all the groups of high, mid, and low. Moreover, in order to observe the vocabulary mean scores between the performances of the three groups, a Scheffé test was carried out. The results are shown in Table 2.

*Table 2: Differences in Vocabulary Knowledge among the Three Groups  
Multiple Comparisons (Scheffé) on Vocabulary Breadth*

Multiple Comparisons (Scheffe) on Vocabulary Breadth						
Vocabulary Knowledge (I)Vocabulary Levels		Mean Difference(I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
	(J)Vocabulary Levels				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
High	Mid	21.718*	2.233	.000	16.10	27.33
Mid	Low	13.125*	2.196	.000	7.60	18.65
Low	High	-34.843*	2.382	.000	-40.83	-28.85

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

As shown in Table 2, the results indicate a significant difference in vocabulary knowledge scores among the high, mid, and low groups with the level of significance set at  $P < 0.05$ . Thus, it can be concluded that the three groups performed differently. In other words, the cut points to classify the participants into three groups were truly selected. Then, the correlational analysis was run for all these three groups. The results of the relationships among the different components of emotional intelligence and motivation in the high group are reported in Table 3.

*Table 3: Correlations among Different Components of EI and Motivation in the High Group*

		Intrinsic Goal Orientation	Extrinsic Goal Orientation	Task Value	CLB	SELP	Test Anxiety
PE	Correlation	.774**	.609**	.525**	.757**	.322	.144
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.010	.031	.000	.208	.582
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17
MES	Correlation	.833**	.448	.680**	.798**	.319	-.034
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.071	.003	.000	.212	.898
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17
MOE	Correlation	.623**	.591*	.393	.602*	.533*	.176
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.013	.119	.011	.028	.499
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17
UE	Correlation	.840**	.493*	.655**	.773**	.546*	.186
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.045	.004	.000	.023	.476
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

As it can be observed, the correlational findings of the above table indicate that in the high group, the correlation between two of six components of motivation including Intrinsic Goal Orientation and Control of Learning Beliefs, and all the emotional intelligence subscales is high and significant at the 0.01 and 0.05 levels. Moreover, there exists positive and significant correlation between the other components of motivation and all the emotional intelligence subscales. But Test Anxiety has no significant correlation with Managing Emotions in the Self (MES) (-.034). That is to say, with increasing the control of learning beliefs, learners become motivated to use information contained in emotion to make effective decisions. In other words, believing that they are capable to manage emotions in owns and others, and handle relationship, learners manifest more persistence in expanding their vocabulary knowledge.

*Table 4: Correlations among Different Components of EI and Motivation in the Mid Group*

		Intrinsic Goal Orientation	Extrinsic Goal Orientation	Task Value	CLB	SELP	Test Anxiety
PE	Correlation	.519**	.343	.355	.575**	.368	.402
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.101	.088	.003	.077	.051
	N	24	24	24	24	24	24
MES	Correlation	.386	.163	.432*	.428*	.425*	.313
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.062	.448	.035	.037	.039	.137
	N	24	24	24	24	24	24
MOE	Correlation	.527**	.282	.455*	.716**	.418*	.290
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.182	.026	.000	.042	.169
	N	24	24	24	24	24	24
UE	Correlation	.491*	.290	.527**	.627**	.316	.138
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	.169	.008	.001	.133	.520
	N	24	24	24	24	24	24

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

According to Table 4, in the mid group, there exists positive significant correlation among all the components of motivation and all the emotional intelligence subscales. Moreover, there are moderate significant correlations between Control of Learning Beliefs and all the components of emotional intelligence in the 0.01 and 0.05 levels in this group. The results of the analysis in the low group are presented in Table 5.



Table 5: Correlations among Different Components of EI and Motivation in the Low Group

		Intrinsic Orientation	Goal Orientation	Extrinsic Orientation	Task Value	CLB	SELP	Test Anxiety
PE	Correlation	.513*		.271	.525*	.630**	.320	-.194
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.030		.277	.025	.005	.196	.441
	N	18		18	18	18	18	18
MES	Correlation	.244		.169	.724**	.690**	.436	-.080
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.328		.503	.001	.002	.070	.753
	N	18		18	18	18	18	18
MOE	Correlation	.463		.332	.611**	.581*	.471*	0.16
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.053		.179	.007	.011	.048	.949
	N	18		18	18	18	18	18
UE	Correlation	.637**		.385	.268	.559*	.403	-.179
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005		.115	.282	.016	.098	.476
	N	18		18	18	18	18	18

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

The outcomes of correlational analyses in Table 5 show that in low group, there are positive and significant correlations among all components of motivation-except Test Anxiety-and all the components of emotional intelligence. Test Anxiety has no significant correlation with emotional intelligence subscales. The correlational analysis between total emotional intelligence and total motivation was also run. The results can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6: Correlation between Total EI and Total Motivation in the Three Groups of Vocabulary Knowledge

				Total Motivation
High Group	Total Intelligence	Emotional	Pearson Correlation	.868**
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
			N	17
Mid Group	Total Intelligence	Emotional	Pearson Correlation	.742**
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
			N	24
Low Group	Total Intelligence	Emotional	Pearson Correlation	.707**
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
			N	18

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

As it can be observed in Table 6, the correlational findings revealed that in the high group, the correlation between total emotional intelligence and total motivation was high and significant at the 0.01 level ( $r = 0.86$ ,  $P < 0.1$ ). It means that with an increase in emotional intelligence, students' motivation will be higher. Moreover, there existed a positive and significant correlation between total emotional intelligence and total motivation in the mid group ( $r = 0.74$ ,  $P < 0.1$ ). In the low group, also, the correlation between total emotional intelligence and total motivation was high and significant at the 0.01 level ( $r = 0.70$ ,  $P < 0.1$ ). Thus, the total emotional intelligence scores of the students in the three groups, high, mid and low correlated highly and significantly with the total motivation. That is to say, a credible and meaningful relationship between Iranian EFL university learners' emotional intelligence and motivation mean scores was observed, which implies that those who are more emotional intelligent and motivated can produce positive emotions in their own and others to ask their questions and expand their vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, the results rejected the hypothesis of the study, which assumed that there was no relationship between emotional intelligence and motivation at different levels of vocabulary knowledge. The findings of this study are in line with those of Aki (2006), who figured out that language learning is a concept that depends on both the learner and the instructor when it comes to human psychology and interpersonal communication. According to Aki (2006), "what is important in language learning is not high intelligence values; rather, it is being emotionally intelligent or at best, having the ability to recognize, employ, comprehend and manage emotions" (p. 66). On the other hand, these results are in conflict with what was reported by Vali-Mohammadi and Bagheri (2011). They reported that there was no significant and meaningful relationship between emotional intelligence, motivation and vocabulary size. But there existed some relationship between them when the students were divided into three groups of high, mid and low based on the scores of the vocabulary size test.

## CONCLUSION

This study was an attempt to investigate the possible bond between emotional intelligence, motivation and vocabulary knowledge of EFL university students. Based on the results obtained in this study, one can conclude that there is a significant relationship between students' emotional intelligence, motivation and vocabulary knowledge which indicates that students with greater emotional intelligence and motivation have greater power of learning vocabulary. Specifically speaking, a profound relationship between EFL students' emotional intelligence and motivation was observed which indicates that those who are more emotional intelligent and motivated can produce positive emotions in their own and others to ask their questions and expand their knowledge. In addition, among all components of motivation, it was the Control of Learning Beliefs (CLB) which had the highest contribution. This may be due to the fact that those students, who have a greater control over themselves and their learning, benefit from a higher degree of motivation. They can easily motivate themselves to learn new materials. Besides, those students with a greater ability of managing their emotions have greater power of learning.

Since the outcome of the present study proves a significant relationship between EFL college students' emotional intelligence, motivation and their academic achievement in expanding vocabulary knowledge; therefore, more appropriate courses which aim at improving students' vocabulary knowledge in foreign language should be included in the curriculum so that students' academic achievement will promote as a result.

## Limitation of the Study

Like many other studies, the present study had some limitations which could hinder the generalization of the results to other situations. First and foremost, if a larger sample size were considered, the obtained results could have been more significant and reasonable than they are now.

Second, the present study was conducted on the relationship between emotional intelligence, motivation and vocabulary knowledge, and the results of this study may not be applicable to the other language skills and sub-skills such as grammar, but it can be helpful in conducting other research to explore the relationship between other language skills and personality factors.

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## A CROSS-DISCIPLINARY MOVE ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH ARTICLE ABSTRACTS

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### ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to analyze the research article abstracts across three disciplines: applied linguistics, applied economics, and mechanical engineering. The analysis mainly focuses on the rhetorical structure, i.e. the constituent moves and steps. In addition, self-mention of the author as well as the voice and tense of the verbs included in each move are examined. To this end, 21 published abstracts from each field (a total of 63 abstracts), all appearing in established, international journals, were selected. The model proposed by Hyland (2000), composed of 5 moves, was employed as a general guideline and the steps and moves were identified and studied in the three groups of abstracts. The results compared and contrasted the dominant move patterns of each field, their unique moves/steps, the typical voice and tense of verbs employed in each move, and the differences regarding the self-mention. All in all, the findings of this study had important pedagogical implications for the practitioners in ESP and EAP fields.

**KEYWORDS:** cross-disciplinary, research articles, abstract

### INTRODUCTION

The research article (RA) is the most important genre in the academic community. Its purpose, according to Hyland (2000), is two-fold: communicating new knowledge to members of the academic community and persuading them to accept the claims. As a pivotal section of RA, abstract seems to have received increasing attention specially in recent years with the explosion of information in the academic world. What renders abstract its high significance is the unique function it has, namely, "the gateway that leads readers to take up an article, journals to select contributions, or organizers of conferences to accept or reject papers" (Lorés, 2004, p. 281).

Body of research on abstracts includes studies focusing on the analysis of the organizational pattern in terms of its constituent moves (e.g. Lim, 2006) or/and the analysis of the grammatical and stylistic features that characterize these moves (e.g. Pho, 2008). Most of these studies are cross-linguistic, examining the structural variations of abstracts of a single discipline across different languages. Another possible direction of analysis, which has seemingly not received its due attention, is cross-disciplinary analysis which could make great pedagogic contributions particularly to the ESP and EAP classroom. Hence, employing the latter type of analysis, the present study attempts to compare the rhetorical structures and grammatical features of research article abstracts across three disciplines (applied linguistics, applied economics, and mechanical engineering) and discuss their similarities and differences.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This section will begin by reviewing the most pertinent aspects to the study at hand, namely, genre analysis, research article as a genre, and RA abstract as a part genre. Next, the three most popular models for the rhetorical analysis of RA abstracts are presented. They are Swales (1981) three-move model, Bhatia's (1994) four-move model, and Hyland's (2000) five-move model. Finally, a brief account will be given of a number of studies analyzing RA abstracts.

#### *Genre analysis*

As one of the most significant approaches to text level analysis, genre analysis has aroused great interest, particularly in applied linguistics, where it has been defined as the "study of situated linguistic behavior in institutionalized academic or professional settings" (Bhatia, 1997, p. 181). The reason behind such popularity among applied linguists is perhaps its remarkable pedagogic implications for the practitioners in the communicative ESP and EAP classroom (Brett, 1994). Familiarizing students or novice researchers with appropriate disciplinary conventions like the proper linguistic aspects of communicative functions is an example of such implications.

A genre has been defined by Swales and Feak (2009) as "a type of text or discourse designed to achieve a set of communicative purposes" (p. 1). These communicative purposes, which are reflected in distinctive structural patterns, are both the most important common features shared by the texts belonging to the same genre and, at the same time, the most important unique features differentiating one genre from another (Holmes, 1997).

A genre is mainly described in terms of its rhetorical structure, i.e. its constituent moves. A pioneer in the application of this framework in genre analysis was Swales (1981, 1990). In his studies, he investigated research articles in academic discourse based on 'rhetorical movement' analysis. A move, according to Swales (2004) is "a discoursal or rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse" (p. 228-9). Simply put, while having its own purpose, each move contributes to the overall communicative purpose of genre (Santos, 1996). Each rhetorical move can be realized through a number of smaller rhetorical elements referred to as 'steps' by Swales (1990) or 'strategies' by Bhatia (1994). Both moves and steps are functional units and can be optional or obligatory in a genre (Samraj, 2009).

#### *Research article abstracts*

As one of the most attended genres in academic writing, research article (RA), has been widely researched and has yielded fruitful pedagogical findings (Yearley, 1981). In early studies it was often confused with register and it was first labeled as a 'genre' by Crookes (1986). Research articles put forward a claim as an explicit, logical argument in a well-defined form of conventional style and format following an established method which has been approved by the academic community (Gilbert, 1976). This standard format includes different sections each of which is considered as a part-genre of the RA (Swales & Feak, 2009).

The abstract, as its primary part-genre, is a brief summary accompanying the RA whose main function is to help readers make a decision in selecting the readings. It has been defined by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) as "an abbreviated, accurate representation of the contents of a document, preferably prepared by its author(s) for publication with it" (Lorés 2004, p. 281). The acceleration of the

exchange of information in recent years has directed noticeable amount of attention towards abstract. Such attention stems from the crucial role abstracts play in today's research world in which millions of RAs are being published every year. That is, according to Ventola (1994), abstracts have turned into "a tool of mastering and managing the ever increasing information flow in the scientific community" (p. 281).

#### ***Models for RA abstracts***

In his pioneer study on move-analysis, Swales (1981) proposed a four-move structure for RA introductions: 1. Establishing the field; 2. Reporting previous research; 3. Preparing for the present research; 4. Introducing present research. In 1990, Swales posited a revised version of this framework called Create a Research Space (CARS), as a three-move pattern. The CARS model has influenced numerous later studies on the structure of the introduction as well as abstracts (Bhatia, 1997; Samraj, 2002, 2005). This model consists of three rhetorical moves, each of which is divided into several steps as follows:

- Move 1 Establishing a territory
  - Step 1 Claiming centrality
  - Step 2 Making topic generalization(s)
  - Step 3 Reviewing items of previous research
- Move 2 Establishing a niche
  - Step 1A Counter-claiming
  - Step 1B Indicating a gap
  - Step 1C Question-raising
  - Step 1D Continuing a tradition
- Move 3 Occupying the niche
  - Step 1A Outlining purposes
  - Step 1B Announcing present research
  - Step 2 Announcing principal findings
  - Step 3 Indicating article structure

Recognizing RA abstracts as a genre, Bhatia (1994) proposed a four-move model which has been accepted by many scholars (e.g. Swales, 1990; Salager-Meyer, 1992; Santos, 1996; Phantama, 2000; Promsin, 2006). An abstract, according to him, gives information on four aspects of the research article it is describing: 1. what the author did, 2. how the author did it, 3. what the author found, and 4. what the author concluded. Accordingly, his model consists of the four following moves:

1. Introducing the purpose;
2. Describing the methodology;
3. Summarizing the results;
4. Presenting the conclusions;

Finally, a more elaborate model which has been influential for lots of studies is Hyland's (2000) model of RA abstracts (Li, 2011). It includes five moves: Introduction, Purpose, Method, Product, and Conclusion. The functions of the moves and their constituent steps are indicated in the following:

1. Introduction (*Establishes context of the paper and motivates the research.*)
  - Step 1. Arguing for topic prominence.
  - Step 2. Making topic generalizations.
  - Step 3. Defining terms, objects, or processes.
  - Step 4. Identifying a gap in current knowledge
2. Purpose (*Indicates purpose, thesis or hypothesis, outlines the intention behind the paper.*)
  - Step 1. Stating the purpose directly
3. Method (*Provides information on design, procedures, assumptions, approach, data, etc.*)
  - Step 1. Describing the participants
  - Step 2. Describing the instruments or equipment
  - Step 3. Describing the procedure and conditions
4. Product (*States main findings or results, the argument, or what was accomplished.*)
  - Step 1. Describing the main features or properties of the solution or product
5. Conclusion (*Interprets or extends results beyond the scope of the paper, draws inferences, points to applications, or wider applications.*)
  - Step 1. Deducing conclusions from results.
  - Step 2. Evaluating value of the research.
  - Step 3. Presenting recommendations

Compared with the IMRD model, this framework distinguishes the abstract's purpose from the introduction, because it has a different role from the introduction's typical purpose of providing a justification for the research. In this framework, a product move is adopted instead of the result move, as Hyland (2000) clarified that this move can better account for abstracts from the social science fields, which sometimes include not only a statement of empirical results but also a statement of the argument.

#### ***Previous studies***

Most studies analyzing any of the RA sections, including abstracts, have focused on the rhetorical structures of that section in terms of its constituent moves (e.g. Lim, 2006; Samraj, 2002; Yang & Allison, 2003). Apart from that, sometimes these studies have also investigated the grammatical and stylistic features that characterize the moves on the sentence level, such as the uses of hedging (Hyland, 1996), modality (Salager-Meyer, 1992), personal pronouns (Pho, 2008), and citations (Swales, 1990).

Generally, a brief examination of research on abstracts seems to reveal two trends. The first and more popular trend involves the employment of move-analysis in contrastive rhetoric, that is, studying cultural variation in discourse structure. Such cross-linguistic studies mainly compare English abstracts with those of other languages within a single discipline (e.g., Bonn & Swales, 2007; Busch-Lauer, 1995; and Martin, 2003). The second trend which has not been as much probed involves the cross-disciplinary analysis of abstracts. This trend investigates variations of the rhetorical or other features of abstracts from two or more disciplines written in the same language

(e.g., Melander, Swales & Fredrickson, 1997; Pho, 2008; and Samraj, 2005). Since the latter trend is followed by the present study two prominent examples of it are briefly presented.

Samraj (2005) compared RA abstracts from two closely related disciplines: conservation biology and wildlife behavior. Analyzing a total of 24 abstracts randomly selected from two journals, she found that the overall layout of the RA abstracts was similar: Purpose-Method-Results-Conclusion. However, when she examined aspects of the abstracts beyond the traditional moves, differences stood out. The rhetorical structure in conservative biology abstracts included some moves ascribed to RA introductions, for instance, centrality claims, but they were not present in wildlife behavior abstracts. She concluded that the rhetorical structures of even closely related disciplines could vary.

Similarly, Pho (2008) analyzed the rhetorical organization, the linguistic realization of moves and authorial stance in 30 abstracts from three journals in two disciplines: applied linguistics and educational technology. He noted that three moves were found in almost all the abstracts: presenting the research, summarizing the findings and describing the methodology. He also pointed out that the combination of certain linguistic features would help distinguish one move from the other moves, such as the grammatical subjects, verb tense and voice.

In the same vein, as an inter-disciplinary move analysis, this study intends to compare the rhetorical structure and certain grammatical features of abstracts from three different disciplines: applied linguistics, applied economics, and mechanical engineering.

## METHODOLOGY

A total of 63 RA abstracts belonging to the three disciplines of applied linguistics (AL), applied economics (AE), and mechanical engineering (ME) constituted the data for the present study. This corpus consisted of three groups, each containing 21 abstracts which were randomly selected from three leading, internationally accredited journals of the corresponding discipline. Table 1 indicates the names of these journals and the number of abstracts taken from each. In addition, all the articles from which the abstracts were selected were published between 2010 and 2012 in order to control for time differences.

*Table 1: The journals from which the abstracts were taken.*

<b>Applied linguistic (21)</b>	<b>Applied economics (21)</b>	<b>Mechanical engineering (21)</b>
TESOL Quarterly (7)	Journal of Applied Economics (7)	Journal of Fluid Mechanics (7)
The Modern Language Journal (7)	The Journal of Applied Economic Research (7)	Journal of The Mechanics and Physics of Solids (7)
Applied Linguistics (7)	Applied Economics Journal (7)	Journal of Mechanical Engineering Research (7)

Prior to the analysis of the data, a pilot study was conducted on six abstracts (two from each discipline) as a result of which the researchers managed to decide on the model to be followed in their study, namely, Hyland's (2000) five-move model. The reason was that it was found to be most appropriate for the structure of the examined abstracts especially due to the helpful distinction it offered between introducing the background research area and presenting the research purpose. The five moves are Introduction, Purpose, Method, Product, and Conclusion. A move unit can be composed of one or more sentences or at least clauses. The following example illustrates the linear order of these moves in an applied linguistics abstract:

This paper investigates whether any difference exists in the degree of second language attrition between two siblings in terms of grammatical complexity, grammatical accuracy, lexical complexity, and lexical productivity based on their storytelling [M2- Purpose] The subjects' L1 and L2 are Japanese and English, respectively. The siblings (one male, one female) have similar L2 profiles with respect to attained proficiency, including literacy, but differ in age. Their storytelling data was collected over a period of 31 months. [M3- Method] The siblings showed similar attrition patterns with the exception of grammatical accuracy, but the difference surfaced only after the second year [M4- Product] It indicated that the period of disuse was differentially affected according to their ages. The younger sibling's data also suggest that maturational factors may play a role in handling grammatical complexity and accuracy simultaneously. [M5- Conclusion]

All the abstracts were analyzed using this framework. As discussed by Ackland (2009), the identification of moves and consequently the setting of move boundaries in abstracts are usually accomplished through two approaches, one is based on the content of the abstract, called a "top down" approach, and the other is based on linguistic signals, called a "bottom-up" approach. In this study, the textual boundaries of these units were identified primarily on the basis of semantic criteria, that is, the top-down approach. Having identified the moves, steps, and the move pattern in each abstract, the next phase, namely, the grammatical analysis, was conducted. In this phase, the tense (present/past) and the voice (active/passive) of the verbs characterizing each move were identified. Finally, the self-mention of the author (use of personal pronouns) was marked in the abstracts.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In spite of their distinct features corresponding to the different disciplines they belong to, the three groups of abstracts interestingly showed a considerable degree of conformity. This section begins with discussing these commonalities. Taking a micro view, it then goes on to compare the three groups regarding each move and step in Hyland's (2000) model. Finally, it is wrapped up by pointing out the overall differences between them.

### *Commonalities*



Table 2: The number of abstracts including each move

	Applied linguistics	Applied economics	Mechanical engineering
Introduction (I)	6	10	8
Purpose (P)	21	20	21
Method (M)	17	14	17
Product (R)*	21	20	19
Conclusion (C)	16	17	13

\* In order to be distinguishable from the purpose move, the product move is shown by the letter R (standing for Result) in the move patterns

A number of noteworthy features were found to be shared by the abstracts of the three disciplines. One was that the least frequent move in all the disciplines was introduction. As evident in Table 2, it was included in only 6 AL, 10 AE, and 8 ME abstracts.

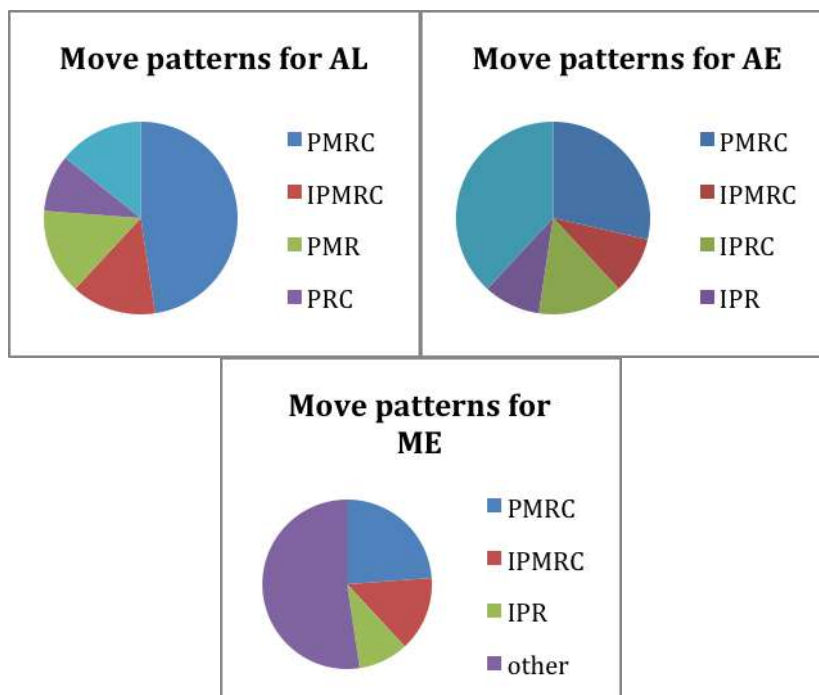


Figure 1: The most common move patterns

In addition, as illustrated in Figure 1, the pattern PMRC turned out to be the most frequent move pattern observed in all the three groups with 10 times of occurrence in AL, 6 in AE, and 5 times in ME abstracts. Another common feature was that the introduction move was, in all the disciplines, mainly embodied through its second step, namely, making topic generalizations. In the same vein, the conclusion move was most often realized through its first step, deducing conclusions from results. Finally, regarding the tense and voice of the verbs, present tense verbs in active voice constituted the dominant type of verbs in all the three sets of abstracts (see Table 3).

Table 3: The tense and voice of the verbs

	The voice of the verbs		The tense of the verbs	
	Active	Passive	Present	Past
Applied linguistics	79%	21%	69%	31%
Applied economics	76%	24%	81%	19%
Mechanical engineering	55%	45%	77%	23%

### Move analysis

#### Introduction

This move was present in 10 AE and 8 ME abstracts. Its occurrence, however, was not as much in AL where it was observed in only 6 abstracts. It is also worth mentioning that this move was commonly realized through one step and simultaneous use of more than two steps in the same abstract was hardly ever observed. Furthermore, out of the four steps embodying introduction – namely, arguing for topic prominence, making topic generalizations, identifying a gap in current knowledge, and defining terms, objects, or processes – the second one was most often employed to represent this move. In spite of the similarity of AL and AE in the rare application of other steps, ME abstracts employed them more considerably. Finally, no remarkable difference was witnessed between the three disciplines regarding the tense and voice of the verbs so that, in all the three, the present active verbs dominated this move.



### Purpose

This move, which was realized through the direct statement of the purpose, was included in all AL and ME abstracts and in 20 AE abstracts. A striking point regarding this move was that in some cases it was integrated with method (P+M) and, in some others, with product (P+R) to form one single move. Following are examples of such hybrid moves.

P+M: Adopting the constructionist conception of research interviews, the current study introduces a comparative analysis of two interviews with a multilingual speaker of Korean, English, and Japanese conducted by two researchers who come from distinctive cultural, linguistic, and professional backgrounds.

P+R: Building on models of electoral competition with reputational mechanisms, I show that term limits decrease the vote share of candidates from parties less able to reward or punish candidates. Candidates suffer by not being able to credibly commit to policies far from their own preferences.

More interestingly, each discipline was unique in the application of these hybrid moves so that AL included three instances of P+M and no P+R. AE, on the contrary, had three instances of P+R with no P+M. And, ME abstracts included both moves with three occurrences of P+M and four occurrences of P+R. As for the common type of verbs in this move, present tense constituted the dominant tense in the three groups. However, such conformity did not exist for the voice of the verbs. While in AL and AE almost all verbs were active, in ME there was an equal share of both active and passive voices.

### Method

While equal number of abstracts (17) in AL and ME contained the third move, it occurred in fewer AE abstracts (14). As mentioned earlier, in a few AL and ME abstracts this move was embedded within purpose move to form a single move but such integration was not observed in any AE abstracts. Furthermore, the three steps of this move were rather equally employed in AL corpus. In AE and ME abstracts, however, the application of the last step, i.e. description of the procedure, was much more salient. With regard to the tense of the verbs, in AL, past tense verbs existed almost twice as much as present ones. The case was, however, quite different in AE and ME. The present tense verbs were much more than past ones in these two disciplines. As for the voice of the verbs, active verbs outnumbered passive ones in AL and AE. In contrast, ME abstracts had far more passive verbs than active ones in this move.

### Product

This move was included almost equally in the three disciplines, in 21 AL, 20 AE, and 19 ME abstracts. To reiterate, this move in a few AE and ME abstracts merged with purpose to form a single move but such integration was not observed in any AL abstracts. Furthermore, in all the three disciplines, the present active verbs dominated this move. Nonetheless, some degree of diversity was witnessed involving the intensity of the use of this tense and voice. The proportion of present to past tense was much higher in AE abstracts and that of active to passive voice was much greater in AL as compared to the other two disciplines.

### Conclusion

Among the examined abstracts, 16 AL, 17 AE, and 13 ME abstracts ended with conclusion. There were three steps representing this move, namely, deducing conclusions from results, evaluating value of the research, and presenting recommendations. Interestingly, this move was, in all the three groups, mainly realized through the first step, in some cases through the second one, and rarely through the last one. Finally, no remarkable difference was witnessed between the three disciplines regarding the tense and voice of the verbs so that, in all the three, the present active verbs dominated this move.

### Overall differences

The most significant difference between the three examined groups of abstracts involved the number of identified move patterns for each discipline. As a rule of thumb, the smaller the number of move patterns in a group, the more abstracts having the same pattern, and the more homogeneous that group is, in this respect. As evident in Table 4, the analysis of AL abstracts revealed only 7 move patterns whereas 12 and 14 different patterns were found out in the case of AE and ME respectively. Hence, while AL was relatively homogenous regarding the employed move patterns, AE and ME were more heterogeneous, in this regard.

Table 4: the move patterns identified in each discipline

	Applied linguistics	Applied economics	Mechanical engineering
1	PMRC (10)	PMRC (6)	PMRC (5)
2	IPMRC (3)	IPMRC (2)	IPMRC (3)
3	IPR	IPR (2)	IPR (2)
4	PRC (2)	PRC	PMRCPRC
5	PMR (3)	PRMC	PMR
6	IPMR	PMRCMRC	PMRCMRC
7	IPRC	IPRC (3)	IPMRPMRC
8		IPMR	IPMR
9		PRCM	PRCPR
10		IPMC	PRMR
11		PMRMR	PM
12		IRC	IP
13			PRC
14			PMRMR

The second difference was about the number of moves constituting each abstract, regardless of the repeated moves. As illustrated in Figure 2, most abstracts in AL and AE disciplines were composed of 4 moves. In ME corpus, however, the majority of abstracts included only three moves.

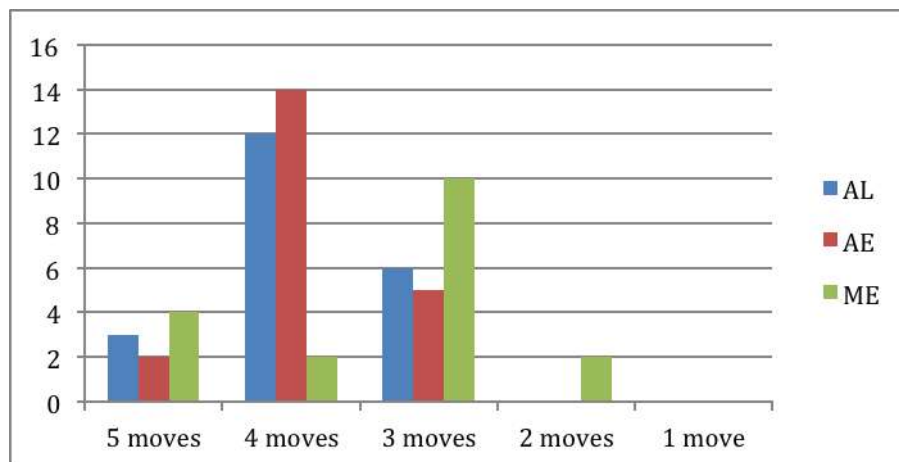


Figure 2: The number of moves included in the abstracts.

The third noteworthy difference dealt with the repetition of a move in the same abstract. This case was manifested in such patterns as PMRCMRC. One possible explanation for such repetition could be a stage-wise report of different phases of a study. This feature was observed in 6 ME, 2 AE, and no AL abstracts.

Next important difference was in the application of the hybrid moves discussed earlier. There were instances of P+M in AL abstracts with no occurrence of P+R. In contrast, instances of P+R were observed in AE with no P+M. And in ME abstracts, both these moves were identified.

Still, another difference which is worthy of attention is that, apart from introduction which was the least frequent move, method seemed to have been less emphasized in AE and conclusion seemed to have occupied this position in ME.

The sixth difference involves the proportion of the passive verbs to the total number of verbs. Although they were outnumbered by the active verbs in all the three disciplines, passive verbs had a relatively much more remarkable percentage in ME as compared to the other two groups. As indicated in Table 3, in ME the passive verbs were almost twice as much as the ones in AL and AE.

And the last but not the least, concerns the self mention of the authors. In both AL and AE, more than half of the abstracts (11) included pronouns such as I, we, our, etc. referring to the author whereas, in ME, less than one third of the abstracts (6) was marked by such self mention.

## CONCLUSION

As discussed in detail, the contrastive cross-disciplinary analysis of RA abstracts revealed the existence of both similarities and variations in the rhetorical structure as well as grammatical features between the abstracts of the three disciplines: applied linguistics (AL), applied economics (AE), and mechanical engineering (ME).

Based on the results of the rhetorical analysis, the main similarities were the position of introduction as the least frequent move and that of PMRC as the most frequent move pattern. This finding shows that, not surprisingly, most RA abstracts follow the pattern which, according to Hyland (2000), is the conventional structure set by the English academic discourse community. In addition, since almost all abstracts in the three groups included purpose and product, these two moves can be considered as obligatory moves in these disciplines.

The major rhetorical difference, on the other hand, was that AL had the least variety of move patterns and no cases of repetition of a move within the same abstract. ME had the opposite position, being relatively heterogeneous in this respect. And AE's position was somewhere in between closer to that of ME. This finding appears to be somehow contrary to the common belief that expects ME as a "hard discipline" (Hyland, 2000, p. 9) to follow more strict norms and conventions in RA writing.

The other important difference involved the use of hybrid moves. As indicated in the results, the method move was in some AL and ME abstracts embedded in the purpose move to form the hybrid move P+M. This was found to be quite in line with both Santos' (1996) and Pho's (2008) findings indicating that method could merge with purpose partially or totally in the RA abstracts of applied linguistics and educational technology. The other hybrid move found in this study was the integration of purpose with product (P+R) in some AE and ME abstracts. This was in line with Li's (2011) findings showing that in his English corpus the product move was sometimes foregrounded in the purpose move. In general, some scholars believe that the phenomena of move merging can be attributed to the condensed structure of the part-genre abstract (Santos, 1996; Pho, 2008).

The last noteworthy difference between the three sets of abstracts regarding the rhetorical analysis was that, apart from introduction, the method move had relatively fewer occurrences in AE corpus and the conclusion move had this position in ME corpus. This can allude to the less salient role of these moves in the corresponding disciplines as these disciplines place less emphasis on them. This finding, also, confirms Ge and Yang's (2005) claim on the existence of a significant difference in the frequency of moves in relation to disciplinary characteristics.

As for the linguistic analysis, the results indicated the dominance of present tense verbs with active voice in all the three disciplines. In spite

of this similarity, the percentage of passive verbs was much higher and the self-mention of the author considerably lower in ME corpus as compared to the other two groups. One justification could be the more intensive use of scientific language in ME discipline as a “hard science” to sound more objective through the greater application of passive structures and fewer cases of personal pronouns.

All in all, this study demonstrated that disciplinary variations could influence the textual organization of the abstract and that, as Melander, Swales, and Fredrick (1997) maintained, disciplinary factors may create preferences for certain rhetorical and linguistic features by members of different academic discourse communities. The findings of this study had important pedagogical implications for the practitioners in ESP and EAP fields. Genre analysis could expose students to and provide them with the explicit knowledge of genre conventions and the mastery of genre knowledge would help students become members of their disciplinary community, and also explore and produce more complex genres (Bhatia, 1997; Hyland, 2002; Loi & Evans, 2010). Moreover, awareness of genre practices would make students benefit from thorough understanding of specific texts and would guide them in producing academic discourse following the required norms and thus would increase their chances for publication and effectively participate in international academic discourse communities.

Finally, the present study was a cross-disciplinary genre analysis of RA abstracts. Future research could take language into account as well and as dual contrastive analysis investigate the effects of both discipline and language in the generic structure of the abstract. In addition, this study was conducted on 63 abstracts from three disciplines. Future research should be conducted on a bigger corpus including more disciplines. Also, while the current study included only written discourse analysis, future studies can take one step further by carrying out interviews with the authors so as to explore the socio-cultural factors more comprehensively.

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## ABSTRACT

New word form in information technology is always getting appeared more and more, year by year along the rapid development in high technology in information and communication. The new words appear in many ways such as compounding and derivational. This paper analyzed the regularities from the old meaning to the new meaning related to the form of the words itself. It can be analyzed through source-oriented and product oriented. It will describe how far the old word form involved in making new words in Information Technology. The result shows that compounding take part much more than other process in new word form than derivations. In other hand, borrowing process of new words appeared because of the need for naming a product especially in information communication technology. The result shows that most of compounding words are categorized in product-oriented while derivational words are categorized as source-oriented. Those analyzing may conclude that the motivation of compounding form usually caused by the near concept look like with the two words in compounding. So, compounding become the simpler and easier process to describe the new meaning while derivational form, the words still have the root from the old word and it might be caused by the meaning which still has near meaning with the old word as the source.

**KEYWORDS:** Morphological Regularities, New word-form in IT, Source-oriented, Product-oriented, Meaning shift analysis.

## INTRODUCTION

New words in IT are still being discussed in many theorists whether they have relationship to the old form or not. New word may enrich the vocabularies in such language however it involves the human cognition who made that new word. Some of the words formed by many ways based on the need and the conventional. In the other side, there are lots of new words appeared from joining two old words into compounding process or derivational process. Some has similar meaning but some has far from the former meaning. As stated by O'Grady (1997) that human language makes use of a variety of operations or processes that can modify the structure of a word, either by adding some element to it or by making an internal change to express a new meaning or to mark a grammatical contrast. It is interesting to find out the meaning shift and explore the reason why the new word from. New word appeared can be analyzed in many ways, such as grammatical, morphological, or semantics. This research, the writer wants to describe based on morphological regularities and describe the new meaning from the new word itself.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Word-Formation

Formation in new words play important role to decide the meaning and the product or concept as the reference. According to Onysko and Michel (2010) the symbolic quality of language creates a conceptual distance between an utterance and what it stands for. New word appeared in many processes whether those are from the compounding by joining two old words and have relation with the former meaning or have no relationship with the former meaning itself. There are two forms which dominated in new word. Those are compounding and derivations. As stated by O'Grady (1997) that derivation and compounding are the two most common types of word formation in English.

### Compounding

Many theorists stated that compounding are joining two or more words but has different or new meaning. Combining into one word, there are lots of variations, such as noun-noun, adjective-noun, etc.

*Table 1: The example of new word form through compounding*

New word	First word	Second word	Meaning shift
Firewall	Fire	Wall	Kind of protection to computer viruses.
Download	Down	Load	Pick or save file which shared in internet.

As we can see, in the table 1 shows new words are formed by compounding and basically the meaning is far from the meaning in each word, for example *firewall*. This new word from compounding clearly explained the meaning on the analogy of the function of *firewall* itself. As everyone knows, firewall used to protect or blocked computer from virus or bug while we connect to the internet. Although each word; *fire* and *wall* refer to different meaning to the new compounding word *firewall*. Therefore, it makes easier and shorter describing the meaning.

### Derivations

The second form in new word formation based on Tamy's system of recombination is affixations or it usually also called derivations. In this process there is suffix or prefix in the new word form, but it is rarely appeared in a new word in information communication and technology. Take for example *adaptor*. *Adaptor* come from the general word *adapt*+*or* this combination appear with suffix *-or*. This makes change the meaning from old form and also the category of the word, *adapt* is a verb while *adaptor* is a noun. This process emerged because it is used as prototype or norm or probably the morphological idiom status.

### Morphological Regularity

There are two schemes in morphological regularity according to Bybee (2001: 126), the two types schemas are source oriented and product oriented.

### Source-Oriented

Source oriented is the scheme which describes the structural model from the old word to the new word. As stated by Onysko and Michel

(2010), Source oriented schemas are the generalizations over pairs of basic and derived form. Bybee (2003) also stated that a better candidate for source oriented generalization would be an affixation process. Bybee in Onysko and Michel (2010) gives the example of source oriented. From the word *believe* – *unbelievable*. *Unbelievable* emerges from the old word *believe*, it has basic meaning from the old word and model. Another examples are *adaptor*, *modulator*, and *projector*. Those new words formed from the source or old word.

Adaptor = *adapt* as the source word then *-or* as suffix

Adaptor is a charger for electronics such as laptop and it is used to change current AC to DC. This function is to adapt the current DC so that the electricity will get the current as they need. Suffix *-or* may appear because it was used for naming a thing.

#### Product-Oriented

Product oriented means generalization to sets of complex or derived forms. In Bybee (2003) proposal stated that product oriented has similarity with the other or old form. Similarity can be compared by form or meaning, but meaning has stronger influence than form. Bybee also divided similarity into three categories: Phonological connection, semantic connection, and symbolic connection. Bybee found that semantic connection usually used in innovation in language. The new word tried to make similarity to other form or meaning. It also does not mean that this case used to lead semantic change but make it semantically more similar to other word or form. For example; *motherboard*, it is a small tool in a board of computer which has similar function as a mother or has main function. This new word has similar meaning with *mother*.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

This paper aims to:

1. To classify the word formation and morphological regularities in new word formation in ICT.
2. To know what dominant process happen in new word-form in ICT.
3. To know what dominant type of morphological regularities to new word-form in ICT.

### METHODOLOGY

#### Data Collecting Technique

In this paper, the writer used document in collecting new word in information, communication and technology. The data sources that the writer used are computer magazine entitled *Computer World* published by the YGS Group in Connecticut for three editions in 2013, *PC and Tech Authority* magazine published by *Hay Market Media* in Australia for three editions in 2013, and the others are from computer books.

#### Analyzing Data Technique

The writer clasifies the data based on the category in word formation (compounding or derivation). Then, the writer classifies the data into the type of morphological regularities (source oriented or product oriented). Both classifying counted to find the dominant type and elaborate the reason based on the finding. At the end of analyzing, the writer describes the meaning shift to the each new word form by understanding the source in the contexts and also from the Cambridge learner's dictionary, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of this paper shows that most of the new word-form in ICT dominated by compounding. By compounding two words, it is quite easy to describe the meaning that people referred. The important of the new word-form may exist is when the word may represent the meaning in such concept and easy to understand or it might be to shortened the meaning or function of the thing itself. Such as *smartphone*, it will be too long to describe in a word for phone which are able to do so many things not only for calling and texting but also accessing the internet, playing games, and so on. Those functions can be shortened by the word *smart*. Below is the table of the word formation type. While in the derivational process, as the second dominant type in new word formation in ICT, most of the words are noun or name of the certain new things in ICT.

Tabel 2: New Word Form Type

No.	New words	Compounding	Derivational
1	Motherboard	✓	
2	Touchpad	✓	
3	Smartphone	✓	
4	Facebook	✓	
5	Keyboard	✓	
6	Bluetooth	✓	
7	Blackberry	✓	
8	Trackball	✓	
9	Touchscreen	✓	
10	Netbook	✓	
11	Internet	✓	
12	Intranet	✓	
13	Download	✓	
14	Upload	✓	
15	Password	✓	
16	Username	✓	
17	Firewall	✓	
18	Homepage	✓	
19	Processor		✓
20	Speaker		✓
21	Twitter		✓
22	Customize		✓
23	Overhead		✓
24	Adaptor		✓
25	Modulator		✓

*Table 3: Classifying the Type of Morphological Regularities*

No.	New words	Source oriented	Product oriented
1	Motherboard		✓
2	Touchpad		✓
3	Smartphone		✓
4	Facebook		✓
5	Keyboard		✓
6	Bluetooth		✓
7	Blackberry		✓
8	Trackball		✓
9	touchscreen		✓
10	Netbook		✓
11	Internet		✓
12	Intranet		✓
13	Download		✓
14	Upload		✓
15	Password		✓
16	Username		✓
17	Firewall		✓
18	Homepage		✓
19	Processor	✓	
20	Speaker	✓	
21	Twitter	✓	
22	Customize	✓	
23	Overhead	✓	
24	Adaptor	✓	
25	Modulator	✓	

This table shows that new words in ICT are forming from the meaning from the old word or near with the old word definition or function while the source oriented is usually happened in derivational type which still has the structure from the old word.

*Tabel 4: Meaning Shift Analysis*

No.	New words	First word	Second word	Meaning shift analysis
1	Motherboard	Mother	Board	Integrated PCB board to attach all component for computer (PC)
2	Touchpad	Touch	Pad	Place used as <i>mouse</i> in netbook or laptop.
3	Smartphone	Smart	Phone	New gadget which has touch screen picture, and use high technology such as internet.
4	Facebook	Face	Book	Kinds of social media
5	Keyboard	Key	Board	A board to type an alphabet or numeric
6	Bluetooth	Blue	Tooth	Near communication wireless device and may be used to send file each other
7	Blackberry	Black	Berry	Kind of smartphone
8	Trackball	Track	Ball	A tool formed like a ball and used as touchpad
9	Touchscreen	Touch	Screen	Screen in a gadget which is able to control directly by touching the screen
10	Netbook	Net	Book	Small laptop which has good performance in internet
11	Internet	Inter	Net	Data communication international network
12	Intranet	Intra	Net	Data communication local network
13	Download	Down	Load	Copy data from internet network
14	Upload	Up	Load	Share data to internet network
15	Password	Pass	Word	Sort of word used as keyword for computer or kind of tool
16	Username	User	Name	Identity of the user in certain tool
17	Firewall	Fire	Wall	Windows protector for viruses used in computer
18	Homepage	Home	Page	Main page in an application
	<b>Word</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Affix</b>	<b>Meaning Shift</b>
19	Processor	Process	-or	Mind in a computer to process the data
20	Speaker	Speak	-er	A tool as loud speaker to up volume speech
21	Twitter	Twit	-er	Kind of social media
22	Customize	Custom	-ize	Standard setting in a software
23	Overhead	Head	-over	Part of printer cartridge
24	Adaptor	Adapt	-or	Tool as charger to change current AC to DC
25	Modulator	Modul	-or	Tool used to send data in high frequency.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis above, it can be concluded that people formed new word may have two process as majority, those are compounding



and derivations. Those used to make easy to remember or it already as schemata in our mind about that word from the old one, such as compounding which formed from two old words become one or derivations process which need suffix or prefix to form a new word. Both compounding and derivations process mostly refer to the product oriented scheme because it needed to naming a new word/ it can be adapt from logical cognitive perspective of human mind. We may conclude based on the analysis above that compounding forms are motivated by product-oriented. People will give the name for the thing based on concept that they want to describe and to make it simpler they just combine two words to memorize easily. In the other hand, source-oriented more often occur in derivational forms because the root still the same but it appear in new word which has similar and entail to the root meaning, process, or characters.

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## ABSTRACT

The present study seeks to investigate the effect of the number of the academic achievement tests using a four-choice achievement test on Islamic theology. The tests were constructed by omitting the distracters, so two-choice or three-choice test formats were reproduced from the original. The test was administered to a population of 600 last-year high school students in Andimeshk, a southwest city in Iran. They were selected on a stratified random basis with equal ratio. The obtained results showed the reliability of four-choice, three-choice and two-choice tests items to be 0.77, 0.76 and 0.65 respectively. All of these three coefficients were significant with the probability of  $p \leq 0.001$ . The results of the present research suggested that there was no significant difference between the reliability coefficients of the four-choice, and three-choice tests with the probability of less than 0.05 ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). It also showed that there is a significant difference between the reliability coefficient of the four-choice and two-choice test, and between the reliability coefficients of the three-choice and two-choice test items with the probability of less than 0.01 ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). The pedagogical implication of the study could be the point that instructors who are in some way concerned about the reliability of their tests should as far as possible avoid using two choice items e.g. true false items.

**KEYWORDS:** number of choices, reliability, multiple-choice tests, academic achievement.

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays tests are considered to be one of the methods for the quantification of the psychological and educational characteristics of individuals. Testing process has been engaged in two distinct aspects during its history of existence and evolution: a) from one hands, construction and development and b) from the other hand, the statistic theory for the analysis of tests (Homan, 1996).

Constructing multiple-choice items continues to be considered as a kind of art in spite of all the tremendous efforts to mechanize and computerize them. The innovativeness and skill required for including concepts in a problem, clarity and expressiveness in phraseology of questions, and finally insight and expertise for producing distracting choices which attract weak examinees all involve planning, and precise, direct analysis of questions (Thorndike qtd in Homan, 1996).

Multiple-choice items may generally include 3, 4, 5 and even 6 choices. But more than 70 years ago, measurement experts discovered that there was a quantitative, logical reasons for constructing four-choice or three-choice items. Although four-choice items are the most commonly used ones, sometimes a three-choice item constructed based on correct scientific and statistic approaches is better than a four-choice or five-choice item which contains some choices.

A variety of psychological tests are used in all aspects of modern life especially in the area of education which tends to employ tests, including academic achievement tests in order to measure any kind of educational changes. These tests include various types, including true-or-false, two-choices, matching, multiple-choice, and short-answer tests (Seif, 2007). Thus, it is important to scrutinize the criteria of a test before it is used to measure and evaluate the learners' aspects such as emotion, aptitude, and academic achievement so that the obtained results can be usable and reliable for the consequent, important planning and decision-making purposes.

Speaking so, some criteria have been developed for validating tests, two of which are by far more important (Pasha Sharifi, 1973): One is the test validity. It means that the score of the test should be consistent with the attribute which the test aims to measure (Pasha Sharifi, 1993). In other words, the appropriates of the test to measure the intended attribute is determined by several methods which include: a) formal validity, b) criterion validity, c) concurrent validity, d) predictive validity, and e) construct validity (Seif, 2007).

The second important criterion of test that should be considered is its reliability. It means the stability of a subject's score in the test a long time. It means that if a test is administered to a certain group of subjects several times, the score will be similar in all times (Pasha Sharifi, 1993). A test reliability can be determined by the following methods:

- 1) Scoring reliability
- 2) Test-retest reliability
- 3) Parallel forms reliability
- 4) Split-half method
- 5) Kudar and Richardson method
- 6) Cronbach's Alpha

The above methods can be used based on the question type and the intended goal, as well as the appropriateness of the method (Seif, 2005). Various studies have been carried out on the impact of the number of choices on the reliability of multiple-choice tests. Some of them are as follow:

Mattson (1952, qtd in Delavar, 1993) presented a theoretical model that could predict the reliability of two to five-choice tests. Based on this model, estimating the reliability of tests containing a higher number of choices was improved. Zimmerman (1953, qtd in Delavar, 1993) performed a study on five-choice tests, which did not support Mattson's model. William and Ebal (1957) performed a study on two, three

and four-choice tests, the results of which did not show any significant difference with their reliability coefficients.

Castin (1970/1972) made a comparison on a sample consisting 207 individuals regarding the test reliability. The results showed that three-choice tests enjoy a higher reliability compared to four-choice tests, but there is no significant difference between them. Stratton and Casts (1980) studied the reliability of 2-, 3-, and 4-choice tests using an economics test on a sample composed of 260 subjects. The results showed that three-choice tests enjoy a higher reliability composed to two-, and four-choice tests.

Steven et al. (1987, qtd in Beiraghi, 1997) carried out a study on 3-, and 5-choice tests regarding their reliability. The results suggested that there was a significant difference between their reliability coefficients. Hadian (1976) performed a study on 3-, 4-, and 5-choice tests. The results showed that three-choice test have a higher reliability coefficient. Beiraghi (1997) also studied a sample of 200 individuals. The results showed that the total score of the subjects on the three-choice tests was higher than that on the four-choice tests, and that there was no significant difference between the reliability coefficients of the three-choice and four-choice tests. Although multiple-choice tests have, undoubtedly, been the most commonly used tests in the past fifty years. This question has been always posed that what the appropriate number of choices in a multiple-choice test should be so that such tests could enjoy the highest possible reliability. Today, multiple-choice tests are used in the area of education more frequently than any other kind of tests for the following reasons:

Firstly, the subject is able to answer a large number of questions in a specified time. In other words, such tests can measure a large number of educational goals, and an important fraction of the subject content in a limited time. Secondly, multiple-choice tests give a lower chance to the examinee to make a blind guess compared to true-or-false tests. The third reason for the frequent use of multiple-choice tests is that they are easier to score, correct and interpret, so they result in economy on human force, time and cost.

It should be also noted that the results of such tests serve as a basis for educational promotion and for admission in university entrance exams, as well as for employment in the public sector organizations. Therefore, the validity and reliability of these tests are emphasized by, and much of interest to testing experts. Also, the condition for the validity of a test is that it can have a desired reliability (Seif, 2011). In spite of the fact that the test reliability is affected by numerous factors, including the difficulty index of the items, homogeneity or lack of the homogeneity among the responders. This question is always asked that how the number of choices can affect the test reliability especially on academic achievement tests.

Up to the present time, studies resulted in contradictory results. With respect to the importance of a test reliability which can lead to its usability or no usability, and the fact that multiple-choice tests are the most commonly used measurement instruments, the present research aims at finding answers to the following research questions and hypotheses:

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) What is the reliability of four-choice tests?
- 2) What is the reliability of three-choice tests?
- 3) What is the reliability of two-choice tests?
- 4) Is there any significant difference among the reliability coefficients of the two-, three-, and four-choice tests?

#### RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

- 1) There is a significant difference between the reliability coefficients of the three-choice and four-choice tests.
- 2) There is a significant difference between the reliability coefficients of the two-choice and four-choice tests.
- 3) There is a significant difference between the reliability coefficients of the two-choice and three-choice tests.

#### METHODOLOGY

The present research is a correlational and comparative study. First, the reliability coefficient of each of the test formats was calculated. Then the correlation coefficients of different tests' reliability was compared using a significance test.

##### *Subjects*

The statistics population of the present research consists of all the male and female last -year high school students in Andimeshk, a southwest Iranian city, in the school year 2011-2012. Their age ranged between 17 and 19. Their fields of study were Mathematics, Experimental science, and Humanities. Out of this population which covered 600 individuals, a sample of 300 individuals -50% males and 50% females- was selected on a stratified and multiple-step sampling basis using the information delivered by the statistics Bureau of Andimeshk Education Office. Then, these individuals were placed in three groups of 200 on a random basis.

##### *Instrument*

The research instrument in the present research was a 35-item multiple-choice academic achievement test on Islamic theology administered in the Entrance Exam for the state-run Iranian universities. The content validity and formal reliability of the test were optimal according to the respective experts' assertions. The first reason for selecting this instrument was that the test had been constructed by the Iranian Organization for the Measurement of Education (IOME), and as a result, it is expected to display a comparatively high degree of psychometric criteria. Secondly, since it was a general test administered to the examinees of different fields in a nation-wide level, it was possible to choose a larger sample of subjects.

##### *Procedure*

Two-choice and three-choice tests were prepared by randomly omitting the distracting choices from this four-choice test. Then, each group resembled randomly to one of the test formats (two-choice, three-choice, and four-choice tests). Scoring the test was performed on a zero and one basis. The total score was determined to range from 0 to 20 (0-20). Each format was scored with respect to the distraction of the negative marks due to guesswork.

The data were analyzed using the SPSS software. The reliability coefficients of each format were calculated by the split-half method (odd-even). The correlation coefficients of difference between the reliability coefficients were calculated by a significance test.

# **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The present research seeks to study the impact of the number of choices on the reliability of multiple-choice tests. The research was done using the two-choice, three-choice, and four-choice tests administered to a sample of 600 male and female students. The research findings are presented in the following tables:

*Table 1: The four-choice test results*

Statistic index/test splits	N	Mean	variance	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	reliability coefficient
Odd half	206	5.25	8.7	2.94	0.21	0.63
Even half	200	4.61	8.32	2.88	0.20	
whole test	200	9.86	26.13	5.11	0.36	0.77

Based on the results of the Table (1), the reliability of the four-choice test was 0.63 using the split-half method. The reliability of the test was calculated to be 0.77 according to Spearman-Brown's formula.

*Table 2: The summarized results of the three-choice test*

Statistic index/test splits	N	Mean	variance	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	reliability coefficient
Odd half	200	7.34	12.55	3.54	0.25	0.61
Even half	200	5.83	11.10	3.33	0.24	
whole test	200	13.17	37.1	6.09	0.43	0.76

Based on the results presented in Table (2), the reliability of the four-choice test is 0.61 using the split-half method, and the reliability of the whole test is 0.76.

*Table 3: The summarized results of the two-choice test*

Statistic index/test splits	N	Mean	variance	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	reliability coefficient
Odd half	200	8.25	7.7	2.77	0.2	0.48
Even half	200	9.25	7.2	2.68	0.19	
whole test	200	17.5	23.26	4.82	0.34	0.65

Based on the results presented in Table (3), the reliability coefficient of a half test is 0.48, and the total reliability of the test is 0.65 using Spearman-Brown's method.

*Table 4: A comparison of the statistic indices of the different formats of the multiple-choice test*

Statistic index/test splits	N	Mean	variance	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	t	Sig.
Odd half	200	10.1	26.13	2.77	0.21	16.98	p≤0.001
Even half	200	13.41	37.1	2.68	0.20	16.45	p≤0.001
whole test	200	17.8	23.26	4.82	0.36	12.03	p≤0.001

The results of Table (4) show that the mean of four-choice tests equals 10.1, and that the means of three-choice and two-choice tests are 13.41 and 17.8 respectively. The results also show that the standard deviations of the four-choice, three-choice, and two-choice tests are 5.11, 6.09, and 4.82 respectively. Therefore, it shows that the mean of the two-choice test is greater than that of the three-choice test, and that the mean of three-choice test is greater than that of the four-choice test.

In this study, as shown by Table (4), the standard deviation of the three-choice test is greater than that of two-choice and four-choice tests. The Table (4) also shows that the reliability of the four-choice test (0.77) is greater than that of three-choice test (0.76) and two-choice test (0.65). The reliability of three-choice test (0.76) is also greater than that of the two-choice test. The findings presented in Table (4) show that

the “t” calculated for the four-choice test is 16.98. Three-choice and two-choice test have a calculated equaling 14.45 and 12.30 respectively. They are also significant with the probability of  $p \leq 0.001$ .

Table 5: A comparison of the reliability of coefficient of tests

Statistic index/ comparisons	df	r	t	$\alpha$
Three-, or four-choice test	197	0.77 or 0.76	0.31	$p > 0.05$
Two-, or four-choice test	197	0.77 or 0.65	3.85	$p \leq 0.01$
Two-, or three-choice test	197	0.76 or 0.65	3.54	$p \leq 0.01$

The results of Table (5) show that a significance test is performed between the reliability coefficients of the four-choice test (0.77) and three-choice test. The observed “t” was calculated to be 0.31, which is not significance with the probability of less than 0.05 ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). As a result, the first hypothesis of the research was not confirmed. Furthermore, the significance test of difference between the two reliability coefficients was done between the reliability coefficients of the four-choice test (0.77) and the two-choice test (0.65) in the respective samples. The observed “t” was calculated to be 3.85, which is significant with the probability of less than 0.01 ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). Thus, the second hypothesis of the research is confirmed.

Similarly, the significance test was done between the reliability coefficients of the three-choice test (0.76) and the two-choice test (0.65). The observed “t” was calculated to be 3.54, which is significant with the probability of less than 0.01 ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). So, the third hypothesis is confirmed, too.

As it was stated, the present research showed the reliability coefficients of two-, three-, and four-choice tests to be 0.65, 0.76, and 0.77. All the three reliability coefficients are significant with the probability of  $p \leq 0.001$ . In this study, there was no significant difference between the reliability coefficients of three-choice and four-choice tests, and between those of two-choice and three-choice tests. Thus, out of the three hypotheses of the research, the first hypothesis was not confirmed, but the second and third hypotheses were confirmed.

The results of the present research are in agreement with Mattson (1952, qtd in Delavar, 1973). Castin (1970/1972), Stratton and Castts (1980), Michel, Max, and William (1991, qtd in Hadian, 1996), Beiraghi (1997). In these studies, it is emphasized that the higher the number of choices is the greater the reliability coefficient of a test is. In addition, in these studies, there was no significant difference between the reliability coefficients of three-choice and four-choice tests. This results was also found in the present research, to some extent. Thus it seems that an increase in the number of choices is one of the factors which affect the reliability of multiple-choice tests, which is emphasized in the literature.

The results of present work is in disagreement with William and Ebal (1957), Zimmerman (1953, qtd in Delavar, 1973), Steven et al. (1987, qtd in Beiraghi, 1997) and Hadian (1996). In these studies, no significant difference was reported between the reliability coefficients of two-, three-, and four-choice tests, but in the present work, there was a significant difference between the reliability coefficients of four-choice tests and two-choice tests, and those of three-choice and two-choice tests.

The results of four-choice tests showed no significant with three-choice tests. A reason for the discrepancy between the results of the present research and the other studied may lie in the difference in methodology, sample size, the test length, use of negative mark, test type etc. Although, reliability is considered to be a psychometric criterion influenced by many factors such as test length, difficulty, index, homogeneity or heterogeneity of responders, it seems that in multiple-choice tests, the number of choices can influence the test reliability. Owing to this fact, test developers should give enough care to the number of choices and their efficacy when they intend to construct these tests. In this way, the test accuracy to measure the intended attribute will increase.

## CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The present study was intended to find a plausible answer to the general research question of if there is any significant difference between the reliability coefficients of the two-choice and three-choice tests. By analyzing the data gathered from this investigation it was concluded that there is significant difference between the reliability coefficients of the two, three and four choice test formats. That is to say, the reliability of four and three choice test item formats have a higher value in comparison to two choice test items. This leads to the conclusion that instructors who are in some way concerned about the reliability of their tests should as far as possible avoid using two choice items e.g. true false items in designing their tests.

## Limitations of the study

Every study essentially faces some limitations. The present study is not an exception since this study was carried out on last-year high school students, the high homogeneity of the subjects may have had some effects on the reliability of the test formats. Therefore, it is suggested that any generalization of the results of this study to upper or lower levels be done with caution. So, it is suggested that more extended studies be done on upper and lower educational levels by experts using longer multiple-choice formats and different subject matters. It is also suggested that academic achievement centers be established in Iran in order to plan and develop tests with higher reliability especially in academic achievement. These centers can design and construct tests with higher validity and reliability using the competent and knowledgeable experts' experiences.

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**BILINGUAL AND MONOLINGUAL DIFFERENCES ON SELF-ESTIMATES OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES  
REGARDING GENDER: A STUDY OF  
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN IRAN**

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**ABSTRACT**

In the history of psychology, the nature of intelligence has been studied generally from two different perspectives. The first views intelligence as a unitary concept while the second supports multiple concept of intelligence. With respect to the effects of bilingualism on cognitive development, literature prior to the 1960s mostly shows that bilingualism is a negative phenomenon and thus has negative consequences on cognitive abilities while researches conducted after the 1960s mainly indicate cognitive advantages in bilingualism. As such, the primary objective of the present research was to explore the different intelligences in a sample of monolingual and bilingual high school students (fourth grade) of Fars and Khuzestan provinces in Iran. Furthermore, the study intended to investigate how students' intelligences vary with regard to their gender. To fulfill these objectives, 448 monolingual and bilingual students were selected from among 67031 students in the 2012-2013 academic year. The data was collected through Multiple Intelligences Survey questionnaire developed by Armstrong (1993). The findings revealed that the bilingual students rated themselves higher on linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, and interpersonal intelligences than monolingual peers while monolingual students rated themselves higher on intrapersonal intelligence than bilingual students. Moreover, the male students gave higher self-estimates for logical-mathematical, spatial, and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences than their female peers while female students gave higher self-estimates for linguistic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences than their male peers.

**KEYWORDS:** Intelligence, Multiple intelligences, Cognitive development, Bilingualism, Gender

**INTRODUCTION**

***Background of Intelligence Theories***

In the history of psychology, an increasing number of studies and researches have been done on human intellectual abilities or talents. To classify psychologists working on the nature of intelligence, Paik (1998) clearly stated that there are two major schools of thought. The first school supports the notion of a unitary concept of intelligence and claims that there is one general form of intelligence referred to as factor 'g' which is difficult to be changed and can be assessed for instance by means of paper and pencil tests (Gardner, 2004). The leading members of this group are Eysenck, Galton, Jensen, and Spearman. The second school supports the notion of multiple concept of intelligence and as Noruzi et al. (2010) argue "these theories suggest that rather than being fixed, unitary and predetermined, intelligence is modifiable, multi-faceted and capable of development (p.161)". In other words, intelligence exists in different forms. The major supporters of this school include scholars such as Gardner, Sternberg, and Thurstone.

***Ideas related to general (unitary) concept of intelligence***

The theory that humans possess general intellectual abilities measurable by psychometric testing, using surveys and questionnaires, dates back to Galton's work in 1869. At that time he believed that human intelligence, being a function of sensory apparatus, was inherited and resulted from evolutionary processes. He tried to devise a set of tests assessing students' reaction times and other simple sensory processes (Cattell & Ferrand, 1896, as cited in Ciancolo & Sternberg, 2004).

Galton (1869) was the first person who coined the phrase "nature vs nurture", an argument which still continues among experts. Defending the 'nature' side of the debate, he summarized his investigation maintaining that genetics played a critical role in an individual's intelligence and later supported this theory with a series of studies on identical twins grown up in separate environments (Fancher, 1985). Galton's innovative assumption supports the "hereditary" psychometric view that intelligence comprises one or more stable, fixed entities in the brain and that it is an inborn characteristic of the individual (Massalski, 2009). Galton believes that individual differences in intelligence are mainly related to sensory skills or capacities, i.e. if an individual possesses more keen sensory capacities, he/she will be more intelligent (Selçuk, Kayılı & Okut, 2003 as cited in Temiz, 2004). Galton's idea and work on human intelligence was a starting point for new theories of psychometric testing on human intellect (Jenson, 1987).

Spearman (1904), inspired by Galton's work, formulated a two-factor theory of intelligence. Supporting the notion of one or a single type of intelligence, he claimed that intelligence existed as a general factor "g" associated to some extent with all mental processes (Gardner, Kornhaber & Wake, 1996) and could be measured and measurement of intelligence is the measurement of the factor 'g' (Gardner, 1983). This generalized mental ability is available to the individual to the same degree in all mental operations. He believed that in addition to the general factor "g", there are also some specific abilities that he called "s" factors, such as verbal, mathematical, and artistic skills which are

related to specific mental operations and vary from act to act. (Cianciolo & Sternberg, 2004). This became Spearman's "two-factor" theory of intelligence.

In order to assess the general intelligence, Alfred Binet together with Theodore Simon devised the first test of intelligence, focusing on verbal abilities, in 1905 (Gardner, 1983). According to Binet, intelligence is realized in mental functions at complex levels such as comprehension and judgment and could be measured (Gardner, 1983; Paik, 1998).

Later, the American psychologist Lewis Terman (1916) at Stanford University revised the Binet-Simon scale, which was renamed Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales. It became the most popular test in the United States for decades. Lewis Terman was also the first to utilize the intelligence quotient (IQ) score previously developed by William Stern in 1912. Terman developed a new method of scoring intelligence which is calculated by dividing a person's mental age by his/her chronological age and multiplying this number by 100 (Cianciolo & Sternberg, 2004).

Drawing on the Galton's findings, Jensen (1969) strongly supported the hereditary component of human intelligence with cultural forces affecting it only to a small extent. He formulated a model of intelligence in which he separated Spearman's (1904) g factor into two ability sets. Level I abilities included memory functions and simple learning processes while Level II abilities included abstract reasoning and conceptual thought (Jensen & Miele, 2002 as cited in Brian King, 2008).

#### *Ideas related to multiple concept of intelligence*

This school of thought considers intelligence not as one single entity, but as several forms of intelligence. Theories related to multiple concept of intelligence claim that there are different forms of intelligence rather than one general factor ('g' factor).

Thurstone (1938), one of the proponents of multiple concept of intelligence, challenged the single-score concept of intelligence and assumed that there are relatively independent mental faculties (Gardner, 1983). Thurstone, originator of "The Theory of Primary Mental Abilities", argued that intelligence was comprised of seven "primary mental abilities": verbal comprehension, word fluency, number facility, spatial visualization, associative memory, perceptual speed, and reasoning (Thurstone, 1938).

Another theory based on multiple perspectives relates to Guilford's theory. He approaches intelligence as multidimensional and dynamic. Guilford formulated a model of intelligence that consisted of 120 specific abilities. He proposed that each ability was based on the combination of three dimensions: content, cognitive product, and mental operation (Guilford, 1956).

Sternberg (1988), as one of the huge and most known proponents of multiple forms of intelligence, stresses that intelligence should not be reduced to a single overarching construct or general ability. He maintains that the theories based on IQ could not thoroughly account for nature of intelligence. According to Sternberg, the tests of IQ can give you a score, but what they do not give you is an understanding of the mental processes that underlie the score (Sternberg, 1990). Sternberg (1998) also proposes a 'triarchic' model of intelligence. He asserts that individuals have three independent abilities: analytic (judging, comparing, contrasting, etc.), creative (inventing, discovering, imagining, etc.), and practical (applying, implementing, using, etc.).

#### **Multiple Intelligence Theory**

Gardner (1993) challenged the notion of one or a single type of intelligence like the Spearman's general factor or 'g' and the concept of Intelligence Quotient (I.Q.) He claimed that traditional views of intelligence are one-dimensional and I.Q. tests generally concentrate on logical-mathematical and linguistic intelligences. He further (1999) argued that intelligence should not be described as one single entity shown by a score on a regular pencil-and paper test used to predict the students' success in schools. He justifies that these intelligence tests do not measure, for example, the ability of a chess player, an athlete, or a master violinist since these individuals, as well as many others, exhibit intelligences that are not measured by these tests (Gardner, 1999).

Gardner's book "*Frames of Mind*" which was published in 1983 suggested the theory of multiple intelligences (often abbreviated as MI theory). Gardner here maintained that intelligence was not just one single entity but it consists of several independent primary intelligences. (Gardner, 1983) Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences has questioned long-agreed upon assumptions about intelligence and presented an entirely new way of thinking about intelligence. With his new theory, Gardner attempted to develop a new paradigm for intelligence research (1983, 1993, and 1999).

He defined intelligence as "the ability to solve problems or to create products that are valued within one or more cultural settings." (Gardner, 1983 p. 33) But later in the book "*Intelligence Reframed*" intelligence was defined "as a biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture" (Gardner, 1999, p. 34).

According to Gardner (1983), any set of abilities or skills must fulfill the following criteria to be regarded as intelligence:

1. The ability must be ingrained in the brain, so that a localized brain lesion could deprive a person of that specific ability e.g., a stroke to the head causing loss of linguistic ability.
  2. The ability is demonstrated by the existence of remarkable individuals such as idiot savants, prodigies and other remarkable people.
  3. The ability must have an identifiable core operation or set of operations e.g., pitch, rhythm, etc. which are core operations of musical ability.
  4. The ability should possess a distinctive developmental path for an individual to become an expert in that ability e.g. the developmental path practiced to become proficient in linguistic ability.
  5. The ability should originate from an identifiable evolutionary history or evolutionary credibility, such that our early ancestors exhibited that ability.
  6. The ability should be supported empirically by experimental and psychological tasks which help explain that the ability is independent of other abilities e.g., a person can walk and talk at the same time because these involve two different types of abilities; linguistic and kinesthetic.
  7. The ability should be supported by psychometric findings e.g., a physicist might score high in mathematical ability but low in Kinesthetic ability.
  8. The ability must be liable to be encoded in a symbol system e.g., particular symbols are used to represent mathematical abilities.
- (Gardner, 1983, 1993, 1996; Gögebakan, 2003; Chen, 2004; Denig, 2004; Tahriri, 2010)

Based on the above-mentioned criteria, Gardner (1983) originally suggested that all normal individuals possess seven independent forms of intelligence: linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal. He slightly revised his theory in 1999 and added another intelligence type to the intelligence profiles, that is, natural intelligence. (Gardner, 1999; Katzowitz, 2002). Each type of intelligence is discussed below.

**Linguistic Intelligence** is the capacity to use, and manipulate language effectively and productively, orally or by writing, the potential to learn languages and the sensitivity to spoken and written language (Gardner, 1999, Armstrong, 2000). Poets, journalists, and novelists are among those having high linguistic intelligence (Shepard, 2004; Fogarty, 2005; Gardner, 2006).

**Logical-Mathematical Intelligence** involves having the ability to use numbers effectively (Armstrong, 2000), to analyze problems logically, to carry out mathematical operations and to be scientifically minded (Gardner, 1993). The individuals who are clever with mathematical problems, experiments, problem solutions and keen on reasoning logically, clearly and scientifically are those possessing this type of intelligence (Teele, 2000).

**Spatial intelligence includes** the abilities to form mental images, and also to think in pictures and images (Goldman & Schmalz, 2003). Those students who have highly developed senses for color, line, shape, form, space and also have the ability to visualize ideas are talented in this type of intelligence (Armstrong, 1994). According to Teele (2000), the students who are superior in spatial intelligence are interested in art activities, reading maps, charts and diagrams, thinking in images and pictures.

**Musical intelligence** encompasses the capacities to perform, compose and appreciate musical patterns (Gardner, 1993). People like musicians, singers and composers who are capable of manipulating music and combining its elements possess a high level of musical intelligence (Gardner, 2006; York, 2008).

**Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence** involves the skills to use one's whole body or parts of the body to solve problems (Gardner, 1993). It is the ability that enables the individuals to make use of their bodies appropriately. Those possessing this intelligence are successful in classes where physical and hands-on activities are provided (Teele, 2000). Athletes, dancers, surgeons, actors, technicians, typists, etc. are among those having high bodily-kinesthetic intelligence (Stager, 2008).

**Interpersonal intelligence** entails the proficiencies of an individual to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of other people and also to work cooperatively with others. Individuals such as teachers, salespersons, religious leaders and politicians who deal with other people possess a high interpersonal intelligence (Gardner, 1999).

**Intrapersonal intelligence** is defined as, "knowledge of the internal aspects of a person: access to one's own feeling life, one's range of emotions, the capacity to make discriminations among these emotions and eventually to label them and to draw on them as a means of understanding and guiding one's own behavior" (Gardner, 2006; p.17). People with a high intrapersonal intelligence enjoy being alone and can also understand and appreciate their own powers, weaknesses and inner feelings. (Teele, 2000).

**Naturalistic intelligence** is the ability to be aware of, classify, explain, and associate to things and objects experienced in surroundings and nature (Gardner, 1999) and to understand the relationship among species (Raeburn, 1999). This kind of intelligence is displayed in people with jobs such as farming, hunting, gardening and biologists (Teele, 2000).

Thus, Gardner has struggled to justify that the unitary views of intelligence were not adequate measures of a person's intellectual abilities and instead he developed the theory of MI which suggests a multidimensional view of intelligence. Gardner (1993) believes that intelligence is an inborn attribute or faculty of an individual and human cognitive potentials can be better described in terms of several intelligences. In fact, MI theory is not meant to classify students merely into categories such as "linguistic" or "logical-mathematical", but it holds that each person possesses a combination of different intelligences. Any normal individual can develop these skills or abilities to a reasonably high level of competence. Furthermore, several intelligences generally work together to carry out specific tasks (Gardner 1983).

#### ***Bilingualism and Cognitive Development***

According to Lewis (2009, as cited in Buyson, 2010), there are approximately six thousand languages which are used in 193 countries all over the world i.e. the number of languages are thirty times more than the number of nations. Given these figures, it is therefore not surprising that about two-thirds of the world's population grow up in bi- or even multilingual settings (Crystal et al., 2004). Consequently, Bilingualism, bilingual individuals and the acquisition of two languages have become the focus of interest for social psychologists, linguists, sociologists and cognitive psychologists for a relatively long period of time (Guagnano, 2010).

One of the subjects that has attracted the attention of many scholars is the relationship between bilingualism and intelligence. Indeed, the studies and works done in this area can be found in the literature from the early part of 20<sup>th</sup> century (Hakuta, 1986). Interestingly, psychological research on the impacts of bilingualism on cognitive development began with rising interest in psychometric intelligence testing in the early 1920s and continued progressively through the first half of the 20th century (Diaz, 1983). If one were to look at the literature on bilingualism and intelligence, it would clearly appear that the literature prior to the 1960s mostly showed that bilingualism was a negative phenomenon and thus had negative consequences on cognitive abilities. (Baker, 2006).

Yet, the subjects used in the earlier researches and tested by various measures of intelligence primarily composed of bilinguals who belonged to groups of newly arrived immigrants from certain racial groups (mainly southern and eastern Europeans) to the United States. As Brigham (1922; as cited in Hakuta, et al. 1987) stated; these groups were the representatives of the Alpine and Mediterranean races in our immigration who were intellectually inferior to the representatives of the Nordic race which formerly made up about 50% of our immigration (p. 197).

Hakuta et al (1987) asserts "in explaining the poor performance of the new immigrants on intelligence tests, the battle line was drawn between those who believed in genetic versus those who believed in experiential explanations. The hereditarians, who believed that IQ test performance was attributable largely to genetic factors, accounted for the poor test performance of the new immigrants - those primarily from Southern and Eastern Europe - in terms of selective migration (p. 288)." In contrast to the hereditarians, there were psychologists who emphasized the environmental factors associated with intelligence test scores and believed that IQ could be developed through experience. So, they were trying to explain the poor performance of immigrants using experiential factors. They thus inferred that bilingualism - an experiential factor - must cause some kind of mental confusion, resulting in the poor development of verbal skills. (p. 289).

The history of research on bilingualism and cognitive development has generally been categorized into two main periods. Researches conducted primarily before the 1960s and those conducted primarily after the 1960s.

*Studies conducted primarily before the 1960s*

To be brief, it seems that the findings of studies (done toward the end of the 1950s) on the cognitive effects of bilingualism generally revealed that bilingual individuals performed lower than their monolingual counterparts on tests of intelligence. According to Cummins (1979, 1984), these studies broadly concluded that bilingualism resulted in cognitive deficiencies, lower IQ scores, even mental retardation. Indeed, terms such as mental confusion and language handicap were often associated with bilingual children in these studies (Cummins, 1979, 1984) and it was argued that these factors, in turn, negatively affected their academic performance.

In accordance with this view, a number of comparative studies reported that bilingual individuals got lower scores in intelligence tests (Darcy, 1946; Jones and Stewart, 1951; as cited in Grosjean, 1982), lower scores on vocabulary development (Smith, 1949; as cited in Romaine, 1989), lower standards in written composition, more grammatical errors (Harris, 1948; Saer, 1924; as cited in Hakuta et al, 1985) and they had a considerably reduced vocabulary (Barke & Williams, 1938; Grabo, 1931; Saer, 1924; as cited in Hakuta et al 1985) in comparison to their monolingual counterparts.

*Studies conducted primarily after the 1960s*

Peal and Lambert's (1962) prominent study was contrary to the findings of previous researches that implied bilingualism was a detrimental phenomenon and cognitively led to negative effects. Hakuta and Diaz (1985) clearly states; "the results of Peal and Lambert's study showed that bilinguals performed significantly higher than monolinguals on tests of both verbal and nonverbal abilities; the bilinguals' superiority in nonverbal tests was more clearly evident in those subtests that required mental manipulation and reorganization of visual stimuli, rather than mere perceptual abilities." (p.322).

Researches conducted after the 1960s, particularly over the past thirty years, have mainly indicated cognitive advantages in bilingualism. The findings of comparative studies have affirmed that bilingual sample outperformed their monolingual counterparts on measures of intelligence and on nonverbal tests. The bilinguals showed superior performance on cognitive abilities such as advanced concept formation, classification, attentional tasks, divergent thinking, problem solving and different verbal skills. (Pearl & Lambert 1962; Diaz 1983; Hakuta Ferdman, & Diaz 1987; Cummins, 1979, 1991; Wodniecka, Craik, Lou & Bialystok, 2010; Andreou & Karapetsas, A. 2004)

It is worth-mentioning that a large number of studies conducted in the first half of the 20th century were imperfect in that they suffered from a wide range of methodological deficiencies and thus a great many researchers maintain that the findings of the early studies on bilingualism are not typically reliable (Cummins, 1976). In their study, Peal and Lambert, (1962) reviewed the earlier researches and tried to clarify the reasons why the studies before 1960 were negative. In order to discredit their validity, Peal & Lambert argued that these studies suffered from some confounding variables affecting the outcomes of the studies which the researchers failed to control. The major challenges in this field were related to methodological issues such that bilingual and monolingual subjects belonged to different socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds i.e. in most cases, bilinguals were from low- income families and were recent immigrants to the United States. Additionally, the same IQ tests that were constructed and intended for mainstream monolingual populations were also used with minority bilingual subjects. Peal and Lambert (1962) equally insisted that the subjects were not truly "balanced bilinguals" who are proficient in both their first and second language but probably belonged to "pseudo-bilinguals" who have not yet achieved appropriate abilities in their second language. In this regard, Diaz (1983) states "the degree of bilingualism was determined by "foreignness of parents", family names or even residency which are variables too unstable and inaccurate to be accounted for in a scientific research (p.26)".

Through their authentic study on the comparison between bilingual and monolingual children in 1962, Peal and Lambert found that in contrast to previous researches on bilingualism, the bilingual children outranked monolingual children on both verbal and non-verbal tests of intelligence. The reason behind this difference related to the care which was taken in the way the previous researches were conducted (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). In their research paradigm, Peal and Lambert attempted to compare balanced bilinguals with monolinguals and to appropriately control the socioeconomic status, parental education, years of schooling and other relevant variables which they thought might confound the results (Hakuta et al., 1987).

Since Peal and Lambert's (1962) influential research, a variety of studies have taken into account the effects of bilingualism on the intellectual functioning affirming the cognitive advantage in several cognitive abilities among bilingual people in comparison to monolingual peers. The following literature provides a brief summary of some of the studies regarding the effects of bilingualism on different dimensions of cognitive abilities .

In a study to determine the effect of degree of bilingualism on child's cognitive ability, Hakuta and Diaz (1985) conducted a longitudinal study. The research consisted of 123 subjects of Puerto Rican descent with the mean age of 6 years. They were divided into groups on the basis of their degree of bilingualism which was reliably measured by particular proficiency tests. Their conclusion emphasizes a strong relationship between the degree of bilingual proficiency and a child's cognitive development.

Martin-Rhee and Bialystok (2008; as cited in Quin Yow, 2010) carried out a study aimed at comparing the performance of 4 to 5-year-old monolingual and bilingual children on a series of Simon Tasks on a computer. On each trial, a red or blue square was presented either on the left or right side of the monitor and children were to press as quickly and accurately as possible a left (or right) button if a red square appeared and a right (or left) button if a blue square appeared. On congruent trials, the target matches the side of the correct key press; and on incongruent trials, they mismatch. Quin Yow (2010) states; "according to Simon (1969), in an incongruent trial, the child has to inhibit his response to press the button on the same side of the square and press the button on the opposite side of the square. The correct performance on the incongruent trials required a child to ignore the position of the square and focus only on the color of the stimulus. This additional effort increases the response time in an incongruent trial compared to a congruent trial and is known as the Simon effect. (p.15)" The result of their study indicated that bilingual children performed more rapidly and accurately than their monolingual peers in tasks and processes demanding higher level of cognitive functioning such as selective attention as well as inhibitory control.

Cummins (1979) believes that cognitive benefits of bilingualism will develop if bilinguals achieve a certain level of bilingual proficiency. Accordingly, He formulated "Threshold Hypothesis" which holds child's cognitive development emerges only when a bilingual child attains a certain level of competence in the first and second language. To support the Thresholds hypothesis, Ricciardelli's (1992) conducted a study which involved 57 Italian-English bilingual and 55 English monolingual children. The aim of the study was to investigate the influence of

bilingualism on children's cognitive abilities including verbal and non-verbal abilities, creative thinking and metalinguistic awareness. The results of the study showed that proficiently bilingual children in Italian and English performed significantly better than both English monolinguals and bilinguals who were proficient in English but less proficient in Italian. She concludes the findings appropriately conform to the Threshold Hypothesis.

In order to test metalinguistic awareness, Ben-Zeev (1977) tested Hebrew-English balanced bilinguals and a group of monolinguals in a symbol substitution task to replace words in a sentence. For instance, they were asked to quickly substitute the word "spaghetti" in the sentence "The boy is cold" to produce "Spaghetti is cold" instead of the grammatically correct sentence: "Spaghetti are cold". They were asked to perform the task while violating the grammatical linguistic rules and showing that the meaning of a word was just a convention. In this test requiring awareness and attention to linguistic features, bilinguals were better than monolinguals at understanding that they can arbitrarily change names for things.

Additionally, the majority of studies appeared to confirm positive outcomes of bilingualism on the levels of metalinguistic awareness development. For example, the typically comparative researches conducted on the skill to recognize syntactic errors (Galambos, 1982), the ability to compare words along semantic rather than phonetic features- separating the meaning of a word from its sound (Ianco-Worrall, 1972); the talent to be more attentive to the arbitrariness of names assigned to concepts (Bialystock, 1987, 1988; Hakuta, 1986); the capacity to analyze redundant and contradictory sentences (Cummins, 1978), and many others primarily propose that bilinguals were significantly superior than their monolingual peers. As a whole, based on large literature, one may conclude that the findings on different aspects of metalinguistic awareness were consistent across studies.

Razmjoo (2008) conducted a study which intended to determine the relationship between multiple intelligences and language proficiency among the Iranian Ph.D candidates participating in Shiraz University Ph.D Entrance Exam. He tried to find out whether one of the intelligence types or a combination of intelligences are predictors of language proficiency and to discover the effect of sex on language proficiency and types of intelligences. The results of the study suggested; "there is no significant relationship between language proficiency and multiple intelligences as a g-factor and language proficiency and each of nine-intelligence types. Moreover, none of the intelligence type could predict the Iranian's English language proficiency. Finally, there is no significant difference among the Iranian male and female Ph.D candidates in terms of their proficiency and with respect to the types of intelligences they use (p. 170-171)."

Mazoochi and Saeidi (2013) sought to compare linguistic intelligence of 100 Iranian bilingual (Persian and Turkish) and monolingual (Persian) university students regarding their gender. The major findings of the study were as follows: that there is a significant difference between female bilinguals and monolinguals linguistic intelligence. However the male participants revealed no difference regarding their linguistic intelligence (pp. 329-330).

In an attempt to investigate the students' multiple intelligences according to their preferences and how students' multiple intelligences differ in terms of grade level, Gögebakan (2003) conducted a research with 321 students of three classes from first grade, third grade, fifth grade and eighth grade. Results revealed that the students multiple intelligences differ according to their grade levels. Moreover, regarding gender, the results indicated that male students gave higher self-estimates for logical-mathematical and bodily kinesthetic intelligence than their female counterparts whereas female students gave higher estimates of musical intelligence than male students.

Having reviewed the studies above, there appears a gap in the literature within the context of high schools in Iran. The primary objective of the present research, then, was to explore the different intelligences in a sample of monolingual and bilingual high school students (fourth grade) of Fars and Khuzestan provinces in Iran. The second objective of the study was to investigate how students' intelligences vary with regard to their gender.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study thus concentrated on the following research questions:

1. What different intelligences do monolingual and bilingual high school students have in Fars and Khuzestan provinces?
2. Do students' multiple intelligences differ with regard to their gender?

## METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the research methodology and procedures of the study. It begins by describing the sample used. Then, it presents data collection instruments and procedures and the statistical analysis of the obtained data. Finally, this section concludes by exploring the results, discussions and limitations concerning the study.

### Participants

All fourth grade regular high school students of Fars and Khuzestan provinces in Iran in the 2012-2013 academic year that amounted to 67031 students were identified as the target population of this study. The sample comprised of 448 monolingual and bilingual students whose ages ranged from 17 to 19. They were selected from 17 high schools by random stratified sampling technique. 251 (56%) of the participants were female and 197 (44%) were male. Only those students who spoke Persian as native language in Fars province were selected as monolingual participants and those who spoke Arabic as native language and Persian as second language in Khuzestan province as bilingual participants. The breakdown of the sample with respect to place of residence and gender is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of the Subjects by Place of Residence and Gender

		Gender		Total
		Female	Male	
Province	Fars	131	112	243
	Khuzestan	120	85	205
Total		251	197	448

### Instruments



In this study, the data about the intelligence profiles of the participants was collected using Multiple Intelligences Survey. This questionnaire is a self-reported instrument developed by Armstrong (1993) and is based on the Howard Gardener's (1993) theory of Multiple Intelligence and has been used in numerous studies investigating self-estimates of intelligence (Tahriri, 2010). This inventory includes totally 80 items; 10 statements for each of the eight intelligence dimensions based on Gardner's (1993) classification of intelligence types. Respondents check the statements that best describe them, then the scores on each intelligence type are totaled by adding the checked items on the specific intelligence dimension.

The English questionnaire was translated into Persian to ensure the participants' understanding of the items. The translation of the questionnaire was done during the research conducted by Tahriri (2010). Then, two university instructors translated the Persian version of the questionnaire back into English to confirm the reliability of the translation. It is worth nothing that Cronbach alpha coefficient of the overall MI inventory was found to be .84 in Tahriri's study.

In this research, through a pilot study, the Persian version of the multiple intelligence questionnaire was administered to 56 monolingual and bilingual students with a goal of studying its reliability. The test-retest method was used for obtaining evidence for the reliability of the questionnaire. The correlation coefficient was calculated and the reliability was found to be .83. So it seemed to be reliable enough to be employed in the study.

#### **Data collection and Analysis**

In order to gather data, the necessary permission to conduct the study was granted from the offices of education. Before the administration of the Multiple Intelligences Survey, the investigator explained the purpose of the investigation to the respondents in the selected schools and encouraged them to give correct answers. The participants had the option to answer the questionnaire or otherwise. Then, the Multiple Intelligences Survey was administered to them to collect the necessary data. The time of the survey session was at the proper class hours determined by the school management. This investigation was conducted in February 2013. As for the data analysis, the data so collected was coded and entered into SPSS to be analyzed statistically. With the aim of achieving the objectives of the study and for drawing conclusions, descriptive and inferential statistics were employed using central tendency measures (mean and standard deviation) and independent t-tests.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This study was conducted to comparatively investigate the students' multiple intelligence differences in bilingual and monolingual societies in Iran. It also examined whether there was a statistically significant difference between the students' multiple intelligences preferences in terms of gender. The summary of the findings, conclusions and discussions are presented in this section.

#### **Results**

The findings of the study are presented in the order of the research questions introduced above.

#### **1. What different intelligences do monolingual and bilingual high school students have in Fars and Khuzestan provinces?**

The first research question was concerned with monolingual and bilingual high school students' differences on each of the eight intelligence dimensions. To find out the answer to this question, an independent sample t-test was run to compare the monolingual and bilingual students' mean scores for each of the eight intelligence dimensions. Here, monolingualism and bilingualism were independent variables and the eight types of intelligence were dependent variables. The results are shown in Table 2.

*Table 2: Descriptive Statistics and Independent Samples t-test for Intelligence Types of Bilingual and Monolingual Students*

Intelligence Types	Area	N	Mean	Std	t-statistics(t)	df	g
<b>Linguistic</b>	Fars	243	4.47	1.065	-6.894	446	<0.001
	Khu...	205	5.17	1.069			
<b>Logical-Mathematical</b>	Fars	243	5.84	.957	-8.010	446	<0.001
	Khu...	205	6.58	.995			
<b>Spatial</b>	Fars	243	5.49	.942	-8.085	446	<0.001
	Khu...	205	6.24	1.018			
<b>Bodily-kinesthetic</b>	Fars	243	5.28	1.994	-1.099	446	0.564
	Khu...	205	5.29	2.073			
<b>Musical</b>	Fars	243	4.78	2.019	-2.188	446	0.073
	Khu...	205	4.80	2.065			
<b>Interpersonal</b>	Fars	243	5.01	.998	-8.600	446	<0.001
	Khu...	205	5.80	.940			
<b>Intrapersonal</b>	Fars	243	4.82	.992	6.867	446	<0.001
	Khu...	205	4.19	.933			
<b>Naturalistic</b>	Fars	243	4.32	2.029	2.208	446	0.070
	Khu...	205	4.30	2.013			

As can be seen in Table 2, based on students' mean scores, std and p value ( $p < 0.05$ ), there are significant differences among the scores of the monolingual and bilingual participants on each intelligence type. That is, the bilingual students rated themselves higher on linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial and interpersonal intelligences than monolingual peers while monolingual students rated themselves higher on intrapersonal intelligence than bilingual students.

#### **2. Do students' multiple intelligences differ with**

**regard to gender?**



With reference to the second question whether the students' multiple intelligences differ with regard to gender, another independent sample

t-test was computed to establish if gender differences existed for students' estimates of their own multiple intelligence. Here, gender was the independent variable and the eight types of intelligence were the dependent variables. The results are shown in Table 3.

*Table 3: Descriptive Statistics and Independent Samples t-test for Intelligence Types of Female and Male Students*

Intelligence Types	Gender	N	Mean	Std	t-statistic(t)	df	Sig
<b>Linguistic</b>	Female	251	5.19	1.062	9.958	446	<0.001
	Male	197	4.19	1.032			
<b>Logical-Mathematical</b>	Female	251	5.52	.965	-7.261	446	<0.001
	Male	197	6.23	1.104			
<b>Spatial</b>	Female	251	5.27	1.008	-7.496	446	<0.001
	Male	197	6.01	1.042			
<b>Bodily-kinesthetic</b>	Female	251	5.02	1.008	-10.069	446	<0.001
	Male	197	6.01	1.074			
<b>Musical</b>	Female	251	5.50	2.089	2.168	446	0.077
	Male	197	5.48	2.003			
<b>Interpersonal</b>	Female	251	5.85	.987	7.973	446	<0.001
	Male	197	5.11	.962			
<b>Intrapersonal</b>	Female	251	4.67	1.045	3.275	446	.001
	Male	197	4.34	1.098			
<b>Naturalistic</b>	Female	251	4.68	2.020	-2.235	446	.066
	Male	197	4.70	1.951			

As shown in Table 3, based on students' mean scores, std and p value ( $p < 0.05$ ), there are significant differences among the scores of the male and female participants on each intelligence type. That is, the male students gave higher self-estimates for logical-mathematical, spatial and bodily-kinesthetic intelligence than female peers while female students gave higher self-estimates for linguistic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences than male peers.

### Discussion

The present study intended to primarily explore the students' multiple intelligence differences in bilingual and monolingual societies in Iran. Accordingly, the first research hypothesis of the present investigation was concerned with the differences of multiple intelligences between bilinguals and monolinguals. As the results indicates, the bilingual students were superior in linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, and interpersonal intelligences than their monolingual peers while monolingual students were superior in intrapersonal intelligence than bilingual students. Therefore, the first null hypothesis, there is no significant difference between Iranian monolinguals (Persian) and bilinguals (Arabic and Persian) in terms of Multiple Intelligences scores, was rejected.

The findings related to the first research question are in line with the outcome of the study by Mazoochi and Saeidi (2013) who compared the linguistic intelligence of 100 Iranian bilingual and monolingual university students and indicated that there is a significant difference between female bilinguals' and monolinguals' linguistic intelligence.

Additionally, this research also supports most studies conducted after 1960s on the impact of bilingualism on cognition, associating bilingualism with positive effects. To mention a few, this finding is consistent with various studies that indicated the better performance of bilinguals over monolinguals on verbal and nonverbal intelligence tests (Peal & Lambert, 1962), the bilinguals' superiority in tasks and processes demanding higher level of cognitive functioning such as selective attention as well as inhibitory control (Bialystok, 2004; Martin-Rhee & Bialystok, 2008; as cited in Quin Yow, 2010), the bilinguals' skill to be more sensitive to the communicative needs of their conversational partners than monolingual children (Nicoladis, 2008), bilingualism with positive effects on metalinguistic awareness (Ben-Zeev, 1977; Bialystok, 1991) and the positive influences of bilinguals' second language proficiency on verbal intelligence of bilingual children in comparison to the monolinguals and on the individual components of nonverbal intelligence (Sampath, 2005; p.2052).

Furthermore, the second goal of the study was to investigate how students' intelligences vary with regard to their gender. Thus, the second research hypothesis of the present research was concerned with the differences of multiple intelligences between male and female students. As the results indicates, the male students were superior in logical-mathematical, spatial, and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences than female peers while female students were superior in linguistic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences than male peers. Consequently, the second null hypothesis, There is no significant main effect of gender on the students' Multiple Intelligences scores, was also rejected.

With respect to the effect of gender on different dimensions of multiple intelligences, the findings support the outcomes of several studies (Furnham 2001; Furnham, Rakow, & Make 2002; Gögebakan, 2003; Looi, 2005; Ramzi, Abouchdid, & Singhal, 2008; Lin, 2009; Shahzada, Ghazi, Nawaz Khan, & Shabbir, 2011). For instance, the result of Lin's research (2009), with the objective of investigating gender and major differences in self-estimates of different aspects of Gardner's multiple intelligences among 411 pre-service teachers in Taiwan, showed that "males' self-estimates of mathematical, visual-spatial, and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences were significantly higher as compared to the female sample. In contrast, self-estimates of verbal-linguistic and musical-rhythmic intelligences were significantly higher for the female than for the male sample" (p.6).

## CONCLUSION

As the findings of the study reveal, the difference between Iranian monolingual (Persian) and bilingual (Arabic and Persian) participants' scores on Multiple Intelligences Survey questionnaire was found to be statistically significant. In other words, the bilingual subjects gave higher self-estimates for linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial and interpersonal intelligences than monolingual peers while monolingual students gave higher self-estimates for intrapersonal intelligence than bilingual students. Furthermore, according to the results shown in Table 3, one can understand that there are significant differences among the scores of the male and female participants on each intelligence type in that the male students rated themselves higher on logical-mathematical, spatial and bodily-kinesthetic intelligence than female peers while female students rated themselves higher on linguistic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences than male peers.

It would be interesting to note that this study is intended to be utilized as a theoretical component of the project leading to adjustment in educational policy and program development creating educational equality by particularly emphasizing on dual language or bilingual programs throughout the country. Additionally, the outcomes of MI studies clearly suggest that students have different potentials, interests, skills and styles of learning. Therefore, this study paves the way to improve the teaching styles to match to the students' learning styles and to diversify activities and methods of teaching to improve learning success of students. To put it differently, such studies demonstrating the MI profile of the students may help educators to design a variety of opportunities for students in the classroom to meet the needs of learners with different intellectual abilities.

Admittedly, the most notable limitation of this research relates to the fact that the results were limited by sample size and might not reliably be generalizable to the population of other areas in Iran. That is, the sample surveyed in the present study was not really representative of the whole population with cultural differences in other areas. In this regard, Gardner (1999) maintains that multiple intelligences have a cultural component and the cultural setting influences activation or deactivation of intelligences. Thus, when interpreting the results, it is of utmost importance to view the outcomes of this inquiry locally and not universally. However, further studies investigating various aspects of cognitive capacity in terms of bilingualism and gender and incorporating samples of different locales should be conducted in order to provide reliable results and present a thorough picture of the phenomenon under study.

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## COMPARISON OF THE QUALITY OF DISTANCE LEARNING COURSE WITH TRADITIONAL TRAINING COURSES IN INFECTION CONTROL FOR DENTAL STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to assess the quality of infection control training using distance education and the comparison of such assessment with classroom teaching method for the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> dental students of Hamadan Faculty of Dentistry. This intervention – empiric study was conducted in the Faculty of Dentistry, Hamadan University of Medical Sciences in 2013, Iran. The subjects were 73 junior and senior divided into two groups. The scores of both groups were compared and analyzed to evaluate teaching methods in promoting student information in the field of infection control. The collected information will be analyzed by SPSS19 software, descriptive statistics and statistical tests such as t-test and paired t-test. Distance education used in this study is a type of asymmetric training and the CD-ROM based training was used in implementing and running the e-learning system. The use of distance learning methods (CD-ROM Model) had overall a better effect than the method of classroom teaching.

**KEYWORDS:** Distance Learning, E-learning, Education, Class Teaching Method, Infection Control

### INTRODUCTION

New technology has created fundamental changes in the educational system and it is able to solve many inefficiencies of the traditional educational system (Reime et al, 2008; Chaffin et al, 2008; Kossioni et al, 2013). In recent years, e-learning systems have greatly increased.

E-Learning in the definition means learning the educational basics via the Internet or Intranet or using multimedia such as a DVD or CD-ROM for the learner (Gray et al, 2007). Due to the increasing number of new universities and enrolled students, increasing the need for their presence at the University, shortage of teachers and its subsequent economic issues, the explosive growth of available resources, the use of new teaching methods in the Health Sciences necessitate some opportunities to change traditional teaching methods in the class (Woo et al, 2000). Some of the advantages of distance learning are: easy access to contents anytime and anywhere for students, lack of possible simultaneous presence of all students at a specific time and space, students' participation in their learning process, more repetition of materials if necessary, flexible time of training, lowering the cost (Anaraki et al, 2004; Garland et al 2010; O'Neill et al, 2011). This method has some disadvantages; there should be an easy access to computers and the Internet. The learners are separated from the educators and due to lack of a face-to-face and eye contact some learners may misunderstand the content (Schonwetter et al, 2012).

E-learning method has been considered dentistry and it seems that it has high and growing potential in dental education (Matteos et al, 2010; Richards, 2008; Sitzmann et al, 2006). Determination of the best way for education for today's generation of dentists is not a simple issue; not only educational concepts are important, but the way of education is extremely important (Barnes et al, 2013). Although numerous studies examined the application of these methods and its weakness and strength points of this training method in medical and nursing students, specific research in the field of distance education in dental education is rather low (Barnes et al, 2013).

When examining the literature at the intersection of teaching and learning with information and communication technology (ICTs), one is struck by the relative lack of focus upon the potential problems and drawbacks of the incorporation of technology into educational work-life (i.e. Granger, Morbey, Lotherington, Owston, & Wideman, 2002; Hassini, 2006; Liaw, Huang, & Chen, 2007; Marbach-Ad & Sokolove, 2001; Marbach-Ad & Sokolove, 2002; Mazzolini & Maddison, 2007; Ruthven, Hennessy, & Deane, 2005).

A study done by Gray (2007) in the UK showed that continuous Medical Education of infection control for the dentists has been successful in the case of CD-ROM and this leads to their knowledge increase in this context; additionally, the learners were satisfied in applying this method of teaching (Chaffin et al, 2008). On the other, one of the concerns of today's society is strict observing of infection control and preventing the transmission of dangerous contagious diseases such as hepatitis and AIDS during dental treatments (Abdelaziz, 2011). As a result, training dental students in this context and codifying regular and ongoing courses of infection control training is necessary to be reminded and updated their dentistry (Favretto, 2005). So, to achieve convenient, consistent and low cost infection control training techniques is necessary.



The aim of this study is to assess the quality of infection control training using distance education and the comparison of such assessment with classroom teaching method for the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> dental students of Hamadan Faculty of Dentistry.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION**

The research question of this study would be:

Does the quality of distance learning (e-learning) courses differ from that of traditional classroom teaching methods in terms of control infection for Hamedan dental students?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***The Study Population***

This intervention – empiric study was conducted in the Faculty of Dentistry, Hamadan University of Medical Sciences in 2013. The subjects were 73 junior and senior students who no courses in the field of infection control were provided to them. According to the university curriculum, infection control course, which is a mandatory course, was presented to the students. In the first group, 35 students of 5<sup>th</sup> semester attended in a class this lesson through traditional teaching methods (physical attendance in the classroom); and, a trainer taught them 8 sessions in the second semester of 2013 according to the curriculum; and, some teaching aids were used such as preparing PowerPoint slides in class. At the beginning of the semester, a test was taken from the student to determine their level and at the end of the semester final exam was taken from this group of students (Total questions = 30).

The second group consisted of 38 students of 4<sup>th</sup> semester which this lesson was presented in the first semester of 2013 via distance learning method. Before presenting the lesson a preliminary test was taken from this group.

### ***Instruments of the Study***

Shortly, the instruments of this study were tests and a CD-ROM based model of teaching which will be discussed in details here. Two pre-tests were taken to ensure that the two groups are the same in terms of basic data in the field of infection control. Since separating groups in terms of age and gender reduces the studied population, the effect of education was considered regardless of such factors; in fact, the two groups were matched in this regard.

Distance education used in this study is a type of asymmetric training and in implementing and running the above system the CD-ROM based training was used. With this method, students were provided with a self-centered approach (Gordon et al, 2004).

### ***Data Collection Procedure***

As mentioned above, for data collection pre- and post-tests, including 30 items, are used among 2 separate groups of students. In the present study, students' hardware was considered and it was assured that all of them have easy access to computers and skills necessary to use computers. Educational content was similar in both groups based on approved topics of college curriculum in the field of infection control and it was established using reputable books and websites in this context. For example, infection control operation was presented by a qualified person in this area. Before presentation of CD content to students, in a briefing session at the beginning of the semester implementation of distance education was explained to all students.

### ***CD-ROM preparation method***

Desired content was divided into separate sections for training in such a way that each training topic can be presented in two or more 20-minute-parts in order to help the learners learn the training materials eagerly and tirelessly. After planning and organization of training course the content was divided into multiple separate sessions and different ways of presentation were used such as audio and video files to improve education. To this end, the following procedure was used in the preparation of CDs:

1. Text preparation: Headings subject and the main content were shown in the form of a simple text in PowerPoint format slides; and, slides were prepared, based on the standard, in such a way that the text did not exceed 6 lines per page. In training, images and animations related to the topic of the slides were used to attract the learners and prevent them from being fatigue or exhausted.
2. Audio files preparation: The educators explained the educational materials in an appropriate environment and their voices were recorded. Then the recordings were separated regarding each slide. To prepare audio file Wave Pad sound software was used.
3. PowerPoint Audio Preparation: Audio and visual files to PowerPoint were matched with each other using I-Spining Software. Thus, the audio file will appear on the display along with displaying text in PowerPoint according to content being presented by educator at appropriate intervals and by taking the necessary feedback. Thus, the optimal combination of written words and audio along with conservation and recovery capabilities leads to increase the information stored in the learner's mind.

Then all the audio and visual PowerPoint files regarding Infection control training were collected in a file in 6 chapters and the references of materials were also added. Educational set prepared in the form of DVD and was set at the homepage of the University which was entitled 'virtual learning' at the students' disposal.

File size was sufficient that could be readily and easily available for download for all the learners. In a follow-up, the researchers made sure that all the educators had adequate access to educational materials for all training semester (4 months) and the learners had enough time to study training subjects. At the end of the second semester, students will have a final exam. Exam questions were perfectly matched with the first group of questions in terms of complexity and numbers (which was assessed by experienced teachers).

### ***Data Analysis***

The scores of both groups were compared and analyzed to evaluate teaching methods in promoting student information in the field of infection control. The collected information will be analyzed by SPSS19 software, descriptive statistics and statistical tests such as t-test and paired t-test.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**



In this study, 73 students were tested. Firstgroup, including 38 people,trained under distance education method and second group,including 35 people, experienced the classroom training.The comparison of test results (pre test)of 2 groups showed that the average pre-test scores in distance education (Group 1) is 35.6% and class training (Group 2) is 35.7%. Therefore, a significant difference does not exist between the scores of students in the two educational methods (0.976 = P value) (Table 1).

The mean scores of the studentsinthe final test in the group of distance education was 64.6% and in the case of group classroom instruction 58.5% which statisticallythere is a significant difference between the scores of these two groups of students (0.015 = P value) (Table 2).

*Table 1: Comparison of mean scores of the 2 groups at the initiation of study*

groups	participants	Mean scores (20)	SD	The test statistic	Degree of freedom	P value
e-learning	38	7.13	1.711	-0.030	71	0.976
Classroom-based	35	7.14	1.517	-0.030	70.905	

*Table 2: Comparison of mean scores of the 2 groups at the end of study*

groups	participants	Mean scores (20)	SD	The test statistic	Degree of freedom	P value
e-learning	38	12.92	2.271	2.486	71	0.015
Classroom-based	35	11.71	1.832	2.508	69.828	

According to Table 3, the mean percentage scores of students in Group 1 increased from 35.5% in the initial testto 64.6% at the end of the period. It shows there is a significant difference in terms of their awareness of infection control before and after the training among two groups (0.000 = P value).

*Table 3: Results of the initial and final Test in distance education group*

groups	participants	Mean scores (20)	The test statistic	Degree of freedom	P value
Pre-test of 1 <sup>st</sup> group	38	7.13	-15.077	37	0.000
Post-test of 1 <sup>st</sup> group	38	12.92			

According to Table 4, the mean percentage scores of students in Group 2 increased from 35.7% in the initial testto 57% at the end of the period. It shows there is a significant difference in terms of their awareness of infection control before and after the training among two groups (0.000 = P value).

*Table 4: Results of the initial and final Test in distance education group*

groups	participants	Mean scores (20)	SD	The test statistic	Degree of freedom	P value
Pre-test of 2 <sup>nd</sup> group	35	7.14	1.517	-13.254	37	0.000
Post-test of 2 <sup>nd</sup> group	35	11.71	1.832			

### **Discussion**

According to the results this study, the averagescores of student on the final exam in comparison to the beginning test in the course in both methods had significantly increased. So, both methods were effective in promoting the learner's knowledge and skillsin controlling the infection.In addition, in our study the average final grades for distance education group was 64.6% and for classroom instruction group is 58.5% which can be stated that distance learning method is a more effective method than classroom instruction group.

Among the reviewed articles, the study of Garland and colleagues (2010) andReime and colleagues study (2008)was similar without study(Garland, 2010).The results of these two studies, unlike the present study, did not show asignificant difference between the methods of distance education with traditional methods.

In a study done by Garland,E-Learning was compared with classroom teaching method regarding infection control in the health of students (Garland, 2010). A study done by Reime on infection control training of nursing students was examined; and, distance education (CD-ROM Model)was compared withthe lecture method (Lecture Model) (ibid).While in the present study distance learning is a type of asymmetric CD-ROM-based training and the surveyed study populationsare dentistry students.

In these two studies, unlike our study, a pre-test has not been taken at the beginning.But satisfaction questionnaire of training method was provided and the impact of age and gender in the effectiveness of training methods was assessed in which in this study, due to the limited number of samples, these variables were similar between the two groups.

Also a study ofStizmann and colleagues similar toReime reported that when the training content and the learners are the same, e-learning as classroom teaching method can influence on the students' awareness in training (Gordon et al, 2004). Our study also reported that methods of distance learning and classroom teaching methods were equally effective in terms of various educational concepts (Atack et al, 2008; Ruiz et al, 2006; Woo et al, 2000; Bernardet al, 2004; Gordon et al, 2004).

### **CONCLUSION**

In our study, the presented topics and the trainer for both groups were similar.So, the only variable was the educational method.But unlike the aforementioned studies,method of distance educationwas more effective than the classroom instructionmethod.The difference in the results can be used to explainthat limitations and challenges of distance learning methods should be overcome. The disadvantages of distance education fail for a better distribution of educational contentbetween training clients;this means that despite the collection of appropriate materials, it may not be possible for learners to access to such materials or they may not pay attention to thattraining material (Chaffin, 2008).Other flaw in the mentioned studies is lack of opportunity for asking questions appropriate time (Atack et al, 2008).

Also due to the large units in a semester course for students and the existing constraints in the learning environment usually classes were held in the afternoon that the students were very tired which affected the quality of education. Since the method of e-learning lacks time and space constraints for learners, they can choose their own appropriate time for training. It seems that in our study, these factors led to a more effective approach than that of classroom training.

In a study done by Gray and colleagues (2007), the effectiveness of distance learning methods in the type of CD-ROM in the training of infection control was reviewed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Analysis of test scores in pre- and post-tests revealed that Gray's CD-ROM training method in infection control is significantly associated with knowledge increase in this area (Chaffin, 2008). In this study, the CD-ROM model was used and pre- and post-test was taken from the learners. In our study, the CD-ROM method has been effective in infection control training, but it was not compared with other training methods. Gray (2007) has assessed the client's satisfaction level training course but we have not done that.

According to the study of Schonwetter there are several types of distance education each of which has its own merits and demerits; and, they have their own specific features and needs (Schonwetter et al, 2012). Although CD-ROM approach was not the best one in the various methods of distance education, it was acceptable. Based on the existing facilities at the colleges, it seemed that this approach is most useful regarding student access to the needed tools for this procedure such as broadband (Woo et al, 2000). However, previous studies have reported the effectiveness of the CD-ROM as well (Favretto et al, 2005; Kossioni et al, 2013; Al-Omari et al, 2005).

#### **Limitations of the study**

In our study, to minimize the limitations and problems of e-learning methods educational content was placed on the site and DVD content were delivered to the students. Also, the professor at the beginning of training session held a briefing session for the students and explained about the teaching methods and how to access the content; and, also the course objectives were described. In addition, the teachers and their training methods were introduced to the students to communicate with them in the case of any question. Since this method of training was provided in the form of course curriculum, students had to pass the method in order to pass the course.

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EXPRESSIVE SPEECH ACT OF JUDGES' NARRATIVES IN  
X-FACTOR INDONESIA TALENT SHOW ON RAJAWALI CITRA TELEVISI INDONESIA (RCTI):  
A PRAGMATIC STUDY

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**ABSTRACT**

This article tends to find out the types of expressive speech act of judges' narratives and politeness strategies and substrategies used in X-Factor Indonesia talent show broadcasted by *Rajawali Citra Televisi Indonesia (RCTI)*. The method used in this article is descriptive method which describe the data systematically, actually, and accurately. The technique of data collecting uses uninvolved conversation observation technique. The use of this technique means that the present writer does not involve in the dialogues. Meanwhile, for the technique of data analysis, the present writer uses pragmatic competence-in-dividing. The data used in this article is judges' narratives of X-Factor Indonesia talent show broadcasted from March 22 to May 3 2013. The main theory of this article is the pragmatic theory of Searle's Speech Act and Brown and Levinson's Politeness Strategy (2007). The result of the research shows that the types of expressive speech act of judges' narratives of X-Factor Indonesia are praising, congratulating, thanking, and criticizing. The politeness strategies of X-Factor Indonesia judges are positive politeness, bald on record, and off record strategies.

**KEYWORD:** pragmatics, expressive speech act, politeness strategy, narrative, X-Factor Indonesia

**INTRODUCTION**

*The Background of Study*

In X-Factor Indonesia talent show, the judging of the commentators or judges plays a very important role in affecting the contestants' performance. This is due to the fact that the contestants must perform better than their performances before. The comments or the judging of the judges can be also called as narratives. According to Chaer (2010: 22), "*narrative can be mentioned as the realisation of abstract language.*" In the realisation, speakers of a language consist of heterogenous community. This results to the diversity of narratives of the language. Further, Chaer explains that language can be abstract because it cannot be observed empirically, while narratives can be observed empirically by listening.

The politeness of one's narrative can be different from the others based on knowledge and social background of that person. This also apply to the judges' narratives of X-Factor Indonesia. Each judge has its own way or strategy in choosing sentences that will be delivering to the contestants. This strategy makes each of judges' narrative different from the others.

Brown and Levinson in Chaer (2010) devide the scale of determining the ranking of politeness of a narrative into three scales. These three scales are determined contextually, socially, and culturally. The three scales are (1) social distance, which is based on the parameter of age, sex, and sociocultural differences; (2) social status of the speaker and the addressee, which is based on the asymmetrical speaker and addressee; (3) speech act, which is based on the speech act relative position between one and another.

This is what makes the present writer interesting to study further about narratives of X-Factor Indonesia judges. This article focuses on the use of expressive narratives and the realisation of politeness strategies.

**THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

*Pragmatics*

The first theory used in this research is the theory of Pragmatics. There are several definitions regarding pragmatics. According to Leech (1993: 1) "*proposes that one cannot understand completely the characteristic of language, should he/she does not understand pragmatics, that is how language is used to communicate.*" This statement shows that pragmatics cannot be separated form the use of language. In Rahardi (2009: 20), Levinson defines pragmatics as the study of language focusing on the relationship between language and its context. This context has been grammaticalized and codified so that it cannot be separated from its structure of language. This limitation of Levinson can be explained as follow: "*Pragmatics is the study of those relations between language and context that are grammaticalized, or encoded in the structure of language.*"

*Speech Act*

Speech act used in the form of performative sentences is formulated by Austin (1962) as in three different acts, that is, (1) locutionary act, (2) illocutionary act, and (3) perlocutionary act. Locutionary act is an act of stating something as the way it is (*The Act of Saying Something*). Illocutionary act is an act of stating and doing something (*The Act of Doing Something*). Perlocutionary act is an act of affecting someone or the one who listen to the narrative. Perlocutionary act is often called as *The Act of Affective Someone* (the act of affecting someone). Searle in Rahardi (2009) classifies the illocutionary act of narrative into five types of narrative, that is, assertive, directive, expressive, commissive, and declarative. This research focuses on the expressive type functioning of stating or showing the speaker's psychological attitude of certain circumstances as (a) thanking, (b) congratulating, (c) pardoning, (d) blaming, (e) prasing, (f) criticizing, and (g) condoling.

*SPEAKING Theory*

Hymes (1962) in Sumarsono (2011, 335) proposes what he calls as SPEAKING. This stands for “*S*=Situation, *P*=Participant, *E*=End, *A*=Act sequence, *K*=Key, *I*=Instrumentalities, *N*=Norms, *G*=Genre”. The *S* stands for situation which refers to the settings, interactions, and scenes. The *P* stands for participant involved in interactions. The *E* stands for end which refers to the purposes of the interactions. The *A* stands for act sequence which refers to the forms and contents of the interactions. The *K* stands for key referring to the style of how the speaker communicate. The *I* stands for instrumentalities which refer to the media and forms of interactions. The *N* stands for norms referring to the norms of interactions and interpretations, and the *G* stands for *genre* which refers to types of interactions.

#### ***Politeness Strategy***

Brown and Levinson (1987: 60) divides the politeness strategies into five strategies. These five strategies are bald on record strategy, positive politeness strategy, negative politeness strategy, off record strategy, and ‘don’t do the FTA’ strategy.

#### ***Bald on Record Strategy***

According to Brown and Levinson (1987: 69-70), the bald on record strategy is a strategy of saying something clearly. The main reason of choosing this strategy, based on Brown and Levinson (1987: 95) is due to the speaker’s logic of doing FTA to the extent.

#### ***Positive Politeness Strategy***

Brown and Levinson (1987: 101) proposes that the positive politeness strategy is a strategy of doing FTA in the way of saving face or keeping the positive face of the addressee. By doing the FTA, the speaker gives an impression that he/she has the same intention as the addressee of showing friendship between them.

#### ***Negative Politeness Strategy***

Based on Brown and Levinson (1987: 129), the negative politeness strategy is a strategy of saving negative face of the addressee to maintain the free act of the addressee. By doing this strategy, the speaker recognizes and respects the negative face of the addressee.

#### ***Off Record Strategy***

Brown and Levinson (1987: 211) argues that the off record strategy is a strategy of doing FTA indirectly by letting the addressee to freely interpret the speaker’s narratives.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

According to the explanation above, the research questions of this article are:

1. What types of expressive narratives are used in X-Factor Indonesia judges’ narrative?
2. What types of politeness strategies are used to realize the expressive narratives of the X-Factor Indonesia judges?

### **METHODOLOGY AND TECHNIQUE**

#### ***Method***

The method used in this research is descriptive-qualitative. This method aims to describe the characteristics of the data and the related phenomena systematically, actually, and accurately (Djajasudarma, 1993:8). The word of ‘descriptive’ is derived from a latin word “*descriptivus*” which means ‘analyzing’. A descriptive research is a research of collecting information about the subject of the research and its attitudes in a certain period. The descriptive-qualitative research tries to describe the whole tendency or existing situation, that is the situation as the way it is at the time of the research (Mukhtar, 2013:10).

#### ***Method and Technique Of Data Collecting***

This research uses an observation method. In accordance with the name, this method provides the data by observing the use of language in the real situation. Meanwhile for the technique, the present writer uses tapping technique as the basic. Further, it is also used uninvolved conversation observation technique as the following technique (Sudaryanto, 1993: 133-136). The following technique or the advanced one which supports the research is the technique of uninvolved conversation observation. The use of the technique means that the present writer does not involve in the dialogues or conversations. The present writer does not participate in the conversations. Here, the present writer’s role is as an observer by listening what is said (not what is talked about) by the participants in the dialogue (Sudaryanto, 1993: 134-135). The concept of dialogue falls into a wide definition. It means that the dialogue here refers to an interaction involving at least two participants which happens to be a speaker and an addressee in the way of communicating to each other (two ways interaction) or in the way of contacting (one way interaction). Uninvolved conversation observation technique is used to observe the dialogue between the speakers (judges of X-Factor Indonesia) and the addressees (the contestants) in X-Factor Indonesia Show on Youtube channel of X-Factor Indonesia. After using the uninvolved conversation observation technique, it is used the writing technique.

#### ***Method of Data Analyzing***

In analyzing the data, this research uses pragmatic competence-in-dividing (Sudaryanto, 1993: 15). This method is compatible when the language used as the object of the research has a relationship with the things outside the language itself no matter what the relationship is. Thus, the one which determines in the analysis as the ‘suprasegmental’ key is the addressees, for example in determining the imperative sentence which can affect the addressee.

#### ***Data source***

This research is classified as a qualitative research. The methodology of qualitative one is a procedure which results descriptive data such as written or spoken data in a speech community (Djajasudarma, 1993:10). The data source of this research is transcriptions of X-Factor Indonesia judges’ narratives during the show. The number of the show used in the research is about seven episodes broadcasted from March 22 to May 3 2013, which happens to contain twenty five of expressive narratives.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Table 1: The Result of Using Assertive Speech Act of X-Factor Indonesia Judges' Narratives

No	Types of Expressive Speech Act	Amount	Percentage
1	Praising	18	72 %
2	Congrating	3	12 %
3	Thanking	1	4 %
4	Criticizing	3	12 %
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 2: The Realisation of Using Politeness Strategy in Expressive Speech Act of X-Factor Indonesia Judges' Narratives

No	Types of Expressive Speech Act	Politeness Strategies and Substrategies	Amount	Percentage
1	Praising	Positive Politeness (attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods))	6	24 %
2		Positive Politeness Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)	2	8 %
3		Positive Politeness Intensify interest to H	5	20 %
4		Positive Politeness seek agreement	1	4 %
5		Positive Politeness joke	1	4 %
6		Positive Politeness be optimistic	1	4 %
7		Positive Politeness include both S dan H in the activity	1	4 %
8	Congratulating	Positive Politeness include both S dan H in the activity	1	4 %
9		Positive Politeness intensify interest to H	1	4 %
10		Positive Politeness Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)	1	4 %
11	Thanking	Positive Politeness use in group identity markers	1	4 %
12	Criticizing	Bald on record	2	8 %
13		Off Record Strategy give association clues	2	8 %
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>25</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 2 shows the realisation of politeness strategy of expressive narratives in X-Factor Indonesia judges' narratives. The most frequent of politeness strategy used in the narratives is the positive politeness with the substrategy attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods). The data analysis based on the classification of table 1 and 2 as follow:

#### Types of Expressive Speech Act

##### Expressive-Praising

- (1) This narrative is spoken by Anggun C. Sasmi (the International female singer of Indonesia), she is the speaker while for the addressee is Gede Bagus (a contestant from Bali). At the show aired on March 22 2013, he sang a song titled "Aku Sedang Ingin Bercinta" popularized by The Rock Indonesia.

Juri 3 : Gede! (D1.21)  
 Judge 3 : Gede  
 Judge 3 : Gede (D1.21)  
 G : Ya, Mbak. (D1.22)  
 G : Yes, (older woman)  
 G : Yes, Miss (D1.21)

Juri 3 : (Tertawa) Pokoknya/ malam/ ini/ *aku/ puas/ sekali/ melihat/ kamu/ dan /aku/ senang/ karena /kamu/ setiap/ kali/ aku/ kasih/ tantangan/, kamu/ tuh/ mau/ gitu loh/. Gak/ takut/ sama/ sekali/ dan/ ini/ buat/ aku/ kelebihan/nya./ /kamu/ juga/ bukan/ Cuma/ suara./ dalam /mental/ di /kepala/ kamu/ tuh/ mau /banget/ dan/ buat /aku/ seru/ malam/ ini/. **Bangga/ aku/ sama/ kamu./** (D1.23)*

Judge 3 : (laughing) the basic/ night/ this/ I satisfied/ once/ see/ you/ and/ I/ happy/ because/ you/ every/ times/ I/ love/ challenge/ you/ that/ want /like that/ right/. Not/ afraid/ same/ once/ and/ this/ make/ I/ excess/ you/ too/ not/ only/ voice/ in/ mental/ in/ head/ you/ that/ want/ very/ and/ make/ I/ yell/ night/ this/ proud/ I/ same /you/

Judge 3 : (Laughing) The point is, tonight I am very satisfied seeing you and I am happy because everytime I give a challenge, you are so welcomed. You are not afraid at all and this is your advantage to me, you have not only voice but also the spirit in your head that you are so welcomed and you make me rock tonight. I am so proud of you

G : Terima/ kasih./ Mbak/ Anggun/. Terima/ kasih/ semua/. (D1.24)  
 G : accept/ love/ older women/ Anggun./ accept/ love/ all/.  
 G : Thank you Miss Anggun. Thank you all.

The type of expressive speech act-praising in the data (1) is marked by the use of the praising words that is *puas* (satisfied), *senang* (happy), dan *bangga* (proud) (D1.23). The speaker seems to be impressed by the addressee's performance that night.

##### Expressive-Congratulating

- (2) The following narrative is spoken by Bebi Romeo (a male singer of Romeo band) addressed to Nu Dimension (a male group contestant) on the March 22 2013 show. That night, Nu Dimension sang a song titled "Kirana" popularized by Dewa 19.



Juri 2 : Karena /menurut/ saya,/ "Kirana"/ bukan/ lagu/ yang,/ bukan/ lagu/ yang,/ /emmm,  
/lagu/ popular/, tapi /cukup/ pintar/ gitu/ loh/ dengan/ notasi-notasi/ yang/ nggak,/ menurut/ saya/ bukan/ notasi  
/murahan/ gitu./ Dan/ kamu /berhasil/ membuat/ notasi-notasi/ itu/ juga/ dengan/ mahal  
/kedengerannya,/ dengan/ formasi/ grup/ yah./ **Sekali/ lagi/ selamat/ untuk/ Nu Dimension/**  
**malam/ ini./ (D5.3)**

Judge 2 : because/according to/I/ Kirana/ not/ song/ particle /not/ song/ particle /emmm/ song/ popular/ but/  
enough/ smart/ like that/ right/ with/ notations/ particle/ not/ according to/ I/ not/ notation/ cheap/ like that/  
and/ you/ success/ make/ notations/ that/also/ with/ expensive/ listened/ with/  
formation/ group/ well/ once/ too/ safe/ to/ Nu Dimension/ night/ this/.

Judge 2 : Because I think "Kirana" is not a song..emmm, it's not a popular song, but it's smart enough with those  
notations. I think those are not low quality notations. And you are succeeded making those notations into a whole  
new level, they sound high quality with that group formation. Well, once again congratulations  
to Nu Dimension for tonight.

ND : Terima/ kasih /Mas /Bebi. (D5.4)

ND : accept/ love/ older man/ Bebi

ND : Thank you Mister Bebi

In the data (2), the type of expressive speech act-congratulating is marked by the use of the word *selamat* (congratulation). The use of such a word functions as congratulating marker for the outstanding performance of Nu Dimension that night.

#### *Expressive-Thanking*

- (3) The following narrative is spoken by Rossa (an Indonesian female singer) addressed to Fatin (the youngest female contestant) on the March 29 2013 show. That night, Fatin sang a song of "It Will Rain" popularized by Bruno Mars

Juri 4 : Alhamdulillahilahirabilalamin,/ setiap/ hari/ Jumat /saya /mules/ banget/ rasanya/kalau/ Menunggu/ ini/  
Fatin/ ini/, apa/ namanya?/ Pujian /dari/ tiga/ mentor/mereka/ adalah orang-orang/ yang /paling/  
kompeten/. Mau/ mereka/ memuji/atau/ pun/ mengkritik/ itu/ adalah/ satu /hal /pelajaran/ buat/ kita/  
mudah-mudahan/ minggu/ depan/ kita /bisa/ semakin/ lebih/ baik/ lag/i. Amin./ **Terima/kasih/ juga/ buat**  
**/Fatinistik /yang /selalu/ memberikan/ semangat/, terima/kasih /banyak./ Good /Job/ Fatin! (D17.28)**

Judge 4 : thanking god/ every/ day/ Friday/ I/ stomachache/ very/ feel/ if/ wait/this/ Fatin/this/ what/ name/  
compliment/ from/ three/ mentor/ they/ are/ people/ particle/most/ competent/ want/ they/ praise/ or/even/  
criticize/ that/ is/ one/ thing/ lesson/ make/ we/ easy/ Sunday/ front/ we/ can/ more/ more/good/ again/  
amin/ accept/love/ too/ make/Fatinistik/particle/ always/ give/ spirit/ accept/ love/ many/ Good/ Job/ Fatin.

Judge 4 : (Thanking God), every Friday I am nervous waiting for this. Fatin, this is, what is it called? The  
compliments from the three other mentors, they are the most competent people. Whether they praise or  
criticize, it is a lesson for us, so that next week we can be better. Amin, Thank you for Fatinistik that  
always give their support, thank you. God Job Fatin.

F : /Terima/ kasih/. (D17.29)

F : accept/ love/

F : Thank you.

The type of expressive speech act-thanking in the data (3) is marked by the use of the frase 'thank you' spoken by the speaker to the addressee. The speaker thanks to Fatin's fans who always give support to Fatin during the Fatin's performance in X-Factor.

#### *Expressive-Criticizing*

- (4) The following narrative is spoken bay Ahmad Dani (a male singer of Dewa band) to Fatin on the April 12 2013 show. That night, Fatin sang a song of "Arti Hadirmu" by Audi (an Indonesia female singer).

Juri 1 : Komentarnya/... Aaa/, komentarnya/ **kamu/ gak/ cocok/ nyanyi/ lagu/ ini./ (D26.37)**

Judge 1 : comment/.../aa/ comment/ you/ not/ compatible/ sing/ song/ this/

Judge 1 : My comment...aa..my comment is that you are just not right singing this song

F : Oh/, ya /Mas /Dani/. Terima/ kasih. (D27.38)

F : Oh/ yes/ older man/ Dani/ accept/ love

F : Oh/ yok Mister Dani. Thank you

In the data (4), the type of expressive speech act-criticizing is marked by the use of the sentence "kamu gak cocok nyanyi lagu ini" (you are just not right singing this song) (D26.37). The use of this sentence describes that the speaker does not like the addressee's performance that night. The speaker directly gives his critic to the addressee.

#### *The realisation of Politeness Strategy*

##### *Expressive-Praising – Possitive Politeness-notice, attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods)*

- (5) The following narrative is spoken by Anngun C. Samsi (an International singer of Indonesia) to Shenna (a contestant from Jakarta) on March 22 2013 show. That night, Shenna sang a song of "Ratu Sejagad" by Vina Panduwinata.

Juri 3 : Shenna,/ aku/ liat/ kamu/ nyanyi/ lagu-lagu/ sedih/ berkali-kali/  
**penghayatannya/ dapet/, dan /kalau/ kamu/ nyanyi/ lagu/ seneng/ pun/ penghayatannya**  
**/dapet./ gayanya/ dapet/ karena/ kamu/ tuh/ memang/.. /Ini/ sebenarnya/ susah/ loh/ buat/ penyanyi/**  
untuk/ nyanyi/ lagu/ yang seneng/ itu/ susah./ Kalau/ nyanyi/ lagu/ sedih/ itu/ gampang/  
sebenarnya/ karena/ mungkin kan/ kita/ bisa/ masukin/, kayak/ nyari-nyari/  
pengalaman/ diri/ sendiri/ yang/ bikin/ kita/ sedih/, tapi/ **gak/ banyak/ orang/ yang/**  
**bisa/ nyanyi/ lagu /seneng/ tuh //dengan/ berhasil/, kamu/ berhasil/ sekali. (D2.20)**

Judge 3 : Shenna/ I see/ you/ sing/ songs/ sad/ times/ comprehension/ get/ and/ if/ sing/ song/  
happy/ even/ comprehension/ get/ style/ get/ because/ you. that/ indeed/ this/ actually/  
difficult/right/ make/ singer/ to/ sing/ song/ particle/ happy/ that/ difficult/ if/ sing/ song/ sad/ that/ easy/



actually/ because/ maybe/ we/ can/ include/ like/ search/experience/ self/ alone/  
 particle/ we/ sad/ but/ not/ many/ people/ particle/ can/ sing/ song/ happy/ that/ with/  
 success/ you/ success/once.  
 Judge 3 : Shenna. I observe that you sing sad songs many times. And everytime you get the  
 messages of the song. Also when you sing happy songs as well you get the messages because you are....Actually,  
 it is difficult for a singer to sing a happy song. It is very difficult but to sing a sad song is very easy  
 since we can add our own experiences that make us sad. Not many  
 actually who can sing a happy song, and it works for you. it really works.  
 S : *Makasih/Mbak/ Anggun.* (D2.21)  
 S : Thank you/ older woman/ Anggun  
 S : Thank you Miss Anggun

In the data (5), the realisation of the politeness of the expressive narrative is marked by the words choice that are bold in the data (D2.20). Those words show that the speaker really likes the addressee's performance that.

#### Expressive-Praising – Positive Politeness-Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)

- (6) The following narrative is spoken by Rossa (an Indonesian female singer) to Mikha (the youngest male contestant) after he sang a song of "Sempurna" by Andra and The Backbone.

Juri 4 : **Wow**!, Mikha!/. (D8.1)  
 Judge 4 : Wow/ Mikha  
 M : *Ya, /Mbak.* (D8.2)  
 M : Yes/ older woman  
 M : Yes/ Miss  
 Juri 4 : *Pertama-tama/ saya /suka/ karakter/ suara/ kamu/. Dari/ awal/ kamu/ ada/ di/ depan/ saya/ dan/ cara /kamu/ menyanyi/ malam/ hari/ ini /sama/ sekali/ terlepas/ dari/ yang/ sebelumnya/ yang/ menyanyikan/ lagu/ ini, / dan /dirilis/ sebagai/ album/ mereka, / malam/ hari/ ini/ kamu/ menjadikan/ lagu/ ini/ memang/ lagu /kamu/. Yang/ satu/ lagi/ yang/ pengen/ saya/ komentari/ adalah/ luar/ biasa /panggunnya/ yah/, hanya/ ada/ di/ X Factor Indonesia /deh/ kayaknya./ Keren/ banget/ Kak/ Ari Tulang./ membuat/ kegilaan- kegilaan /di/ atas/ panggung/ ini /dan/ Mikha/ malam/ hari/ ini/ semua/ cewek /atau/ pun/ cowok/ juga/ jerit-jeritin/ nama kamu/. (D8.3)  
 Judge 4 : first/ I/ like/ character/ voice/ you/ From/ beginning/ you/ exist/ in/ front/ I/ and/ way/ you/ sing/ night/ day/ this/ same/ once/ from/ particle/ before/ particle/ sing/ song/ this/ and/ released/ as/ album/ they/ night/ day/ this/ you/ make/ song/ this/ indeed/ song/ you/ Particle/ one/ again/ particle/ I/ comment/ is/ out/ ordinary/ stage/ yes/ only/ exist/ in/ X-Factor Indonesia/ yes/like/. Impressive/ very/ older man/ Ari Tulang/ make/ craziness/ in/ above/ stage/ this/ and/ Mikha/ night/ day/ this/ all/ girls/ or/ even/ boys/ too/ yell/ name/ you/  
 Judge 4 : First of all, I like your voice character. Since the beginning you stood in front of me and they way you sang tonight, regardless the others who sang this song before and it was released as their album, tonight you make this song yours. One thing I would like to comment is that the stage is amazing and it is only in X-Factor Indonesia. It is very impressive that Mister Ari Tulang made this craziness on the stage and Mikha, tonight not only girls but also the boys are yelling for your name.  
 M : *Makasih/ Mbak.* (D8.4)  
 M : Thank you /older woman  
 M : Thank you Miss*

The realisation of the politeness of the expressive narrative in the data (6) is marked by using the interjection "wow". The use of the interjection shows the impressiveness of the speaker towards the addressee. Then, the use of the sentence, "saya suka karakter suara kamu" (I like your voice character) and "Mikha malam hari ini semua cewek atau pun cowok juga jerit-jeritin nama kamu" (Mikha, tonight not only the girls but also the boys are yelling for your name) shows that the speaker exaggerates the addressee's performance in that show that night

#### Expressive-Praising – Positive Politeness-Intensify interest to H

- (7) The following narrative is spoken by Bebi Romeo to Shenna after she sang a song of "Ratu Sejagad" by Vina Panduwinata.

Juri 2 : *Karena/malam/ hari/ ini/ kamu /memang/ superstar/ ya/, kamu/ bagus /sekali/ Malam/ ini, Shenna/. (D2.9)  
 Judge 2 : because/ night/ day/ this/ you/ indeed/ superstar/ yes/ you/ good/ once/ night/ this/ shenna/  
 Judge 2 : Because tonight you ARE a superstar. You are so impressive tonight. Shenna.  
 S : *Makasih-makasih.* (D2.10)  
 S : Thank you, thank you  
 Juri 2 : *Kamu /punya/ suara/ mutlak/ saya/ bilang/. Kamu/ nyanyi/ bintang/ kecil pun, / kamu/ enak/ Shenna/. (D2.11)  
 Judge 2 : you/ have/ voice/ absolute/ I/ say/ You/ sing/ bintang kecil/ you/ delicious/ Shenna/  
 Judge 2 : I must say you have an absolute voice. Even if you sing bintang kecil, you will still sound good**

The realisation of the politeness strategy in the data (7) that shows the expressive-praising is marked by the use of compliment sentences. The choice of using the sentence "Kamu memang superstar ya" (You ARE a superstar) can attract the addressee because she is praised like a superstar. Then, by using the sentence "Kamu punya suara mutlak" (You have an absolute voice) also show the same perception. The speaker uses the word "mutlak" (absolute) to attract the addressee's attention.

#### Expressive-Praising – Positive Politeness-seek agreement

- (8) The following narrative is spoken by Ahmad Dani to Shenna after she sang a song of Ratu Sejagad on the March 22 2013 show.

Juri 1 : *Gimana/ rasanya/ jadi /penyanyi/ jazz?. (D2.1)*

- Judge 1 : how/feel/ become/ singer/ jazz?  
 Judge 1 : How does it feel becoming a jazz singer?  
 S : Ya.... (D22.)  
 S : Yes  
 Juri 1 : Saya/ gak /bisa/ mengingkari/ memang/ kamu/ soulnya/ di/ dalem/ itu /mungkin/ waktu/ mamamu/ ngidam/ kamu/ atau/ hamil/ kamu/ mungkin/ ada/ software-software/ jazz/ yang/ masuk/ ke/ dalam /darahmu/. Jadi/ udah/ build/ in/ di/ dalem/. Jadi, meskipun/ kamu/ gak/ tahu/ itu/ jazz/ tapi/ lagu/ ini /memang/ cocok/ sekali/ kamu/ bawain./ dengan/ ya/ pasti/ karena/ basicnya/ juga/ lagu/ ini /gak/ straight/ pop./ lagu/ ini/ sebenarnya/ ada /basic/ ragtime/, new/ orleans/ juga/. Lagu/ ini/ diaransemen/ new /Orleans/ juga/ cocok./ New /Orleans/ itu /adalah/ kota/ dimana/ jazz/ itu/ pernah/ tumbuh/. Jadi, lagu/ ini/ cocok/ banget /buat/ kamu/ malam/ ini./ (D2.3)  
 Judge 1 : I/ not/ can/ deny/ indeed/ you/soul/ in/in/that/maybe/ time/ your mother/ crave/ you/ you/ or/ pregnant/ you/ maybe/ exist/ software-software/ jazz/ particle/ enter/ to/ in/ your blood/ so/ already/ build/in/ in/ inside/ so/ although/ you/ not/ know/ that/ jazz/ but/ song/ this/ indeed/ suitable/ once/ you/ bring/ with/ yes/ sure/ because/ the basic/ too/ song/ this/ not/ straight/ pop/ song/ this/ actually/ exist/ basic/ ragtime/ new/ orleans/ too/ song. This/ arranged/ new/ orleans/ too/ suitable/ new/ orleans/ that/ is/ city/ where/ jazz/ that/ ever/ grow/ so/ song/ this/ suitable/ very/ make/ you/ night/ this/  
 Judge 1 : I cannot deny that your soul are indeed in that song. Perhaps, when your mother craved for you or was pregnant of you there were jazz softwares that ran into your blood. So it was already built in. So, although you do not know jazz but this song fits perfectly for you. The basic of the song are not straight pop. This song actually has the ragtime basic of New Orleans too. It is also suitable when the song is arranged into New Orleans too. New Orleans is the city where jazz also ever developed. Thus, this song fits perfectly for you tonight.  
 S : Makasih/ Mas/ Dani (D2.4).  
 S : Thanking/ older man/ Dani  
 S : Thank you Mister Dani

The realisation of the politeness in the data (8) is marked by the repetition of the bold sentence (D2.3), this repetition is used to point out the agreement that the speaker really likes the addressee's performance that night.

#### Expressive-Praising – Positive Politeness-joke

- (9) The following narrative is spoken by Bebi Romeo to Fatin Shidqia Lubis after she sang a song of "Mercy" on the April 5 2013 show.

- Juri 2 : Ya/, Fatin/ ya/. Artinya/ 100 /tahun/ sekali/, dunia/ ini /perlu /suara /kamu/. Kamu /bukan/ main/, kamu/ main/ bukan/ malam/ ini/. (D23.6)  
 Judge 2 : Yes/ Fatin/ Yes/ meaning/ 100/ year/ once/ world/ this/ need/ voice/ you/ you/ not/ play/ you/ play/ not/ night/ this  
 Judge 2 : Yes, Fatin, well, it means that every 100 years, this world needs your voice/ you Are outstanding, outstanding you Are.  
 F : Makasih/ Mas/ Bebi./ (D23.37)  
 F : Thanking/ older man/ Bebi  
 F : Thank you Mister Bebi  
 Juri 2 : Papa /seneng/, papa/ seneng./ (D23.38)  
 Judge 2 : Daddy/ happy/ Daddy/ happy  
 Judge 2 : Daddy is happy, daddy is happy

The realisation of positive politeness of expressive narrative-praising in the data (9) is marked by the use of the joke sentence to break the ice. It is used to make the situation more relaxed. In the bold sentence above, the speaker intentionally changes the narrative, "Kamu bukan main, kamu main bukan malam ini" (You ARE outstanding, outstanding you ARE)

#### Expressive-Praising – Positive Politeness-be optimistic

- (10) The following narrative is spoken by Bebi Romeo to Fatin in the show on March 29 2013. That night, Fatin sang a song of "It Will Rain" by Bruno Mars.

- Juri 2 : Heeh/ iyaaa/. Saya/ yakin/, saya/ yakin/ malam/ ini/ pasti/ lebih/ bagus/ versi/ kamu/ dari /versi/ Bruno Mars/. (D17.17)  
 Judge 2 : Yes/ yes/ I/ believe/ I/ believe/ night/ this/ sure/ more/ good/ version/ you/ from/ version/ Bruno Mars  
 Judge 2 : Yes, yes, I believe..I believe that tonight your version is better than Bruno Mars'  
 F : Amin./ ya/ Allah./ Amin./ Alhamdulillah. / (D17.18)  
 F : Amen/ yes/ God/ Amen/ thanking God  
 F : Amen O'God. Amen/ Thanking God

In the narrative (10), the realisation of positive politeness of expressive narrative is marked by the use of a word containing optimism meaning, that is, the word 'believe'. In the narrative (D17.17), the speaker believes in the outstanding performance of the addressee.

#### Expressive-Praising – Positive Politeness-include both S dan H in the activity

- (11) The following narrative is spoken by Bebi Romeo to Alex Rudiart. That night, Alex sang a song of "Beraksi" by Kotak (Indonesia Rock Band)

- Juri 2 : Gak/ apa-apa/ Lex/, intinya/ semua/ masukan/ dari/ juri/ kita/ tampung/ sama-sama/ ya/, untuk/ kita/ lebih/ perbaiki/, untuk/ penampilan/ kita/ kedepannya/. Dan/ malam/ ini/ Papa/ menambah/ singkatan/ Papa/ jadi/ PPBSK/ papa/ dan/ penonton/ bangga/ sama/ kamu./ (D4.16)  
 Judge 2 : not/ what/ Lex/ the core/ all/ input/ from/ judge/ we/ keep/ same/ yes/ to/ we/ more/ better/ to/ performance/ we/ onwards/ and/ night/ this/ Daddy/ add/ abbreviation/ daddy/ become/ PPBSK/ daddy/ and spectator/ proud/ same/ you  
 Judge 2 : It's OK Lex, the point is all input from the judges, we keep it together for

- us so that our performance can be better in the future. And tonight Daddy adds the abbreviation from  
Papa to *PPBSK*, daddy and the spectators are proud of you.  
Al : *Terima/ kasih/ terima/ kasih/ Mas.* (D4.17)  
Al : accept/ love/ accept/ love/ older  
Al : Thank you, Thank you Mister

The realisation of the politeness in the data (11) is marked by the use of the pronoun '*kita*' (we). This shows that the speaker include the addressee into that narrative, and the narrative brings together the speaker and the addressee

#### *Expressive- Congratulating – Positive Politeness- include both S dan H in the activity*

- (12) the following narrative is spoken by Rossa (as the speaker) to Shenna (as the addressee). That night, Shenna sang as ong of *Ratu Sejagad* by Vina Panduwinata.

- Juri 4 : Shenna/ **aku/ sangat/ bangga/ sama/ kamu.** Setiap/ minggu,/ setiap/ kita /berlatih,/ apapun/ yang/ aku/ bilang./ kamu/ selalu/ berusaha/ untuk/ menangkap/ itu/, mengembangkan/ sesuai/ dengan/ jiwa/ kamu/. Dan/ **aku/ senang/ banget/ kerja/ sama/ kita/ berdua/ juga/ selalu/ asik.** Buat/ aku,/ momen-momen/ yang/ aku/ tunggu/ itu/ kalau/ latihan/ sama/ kamu/ dan/ Fatin/. **Congratulation.** (D2.30)  
Judge 4 : Shenna/ I/ very/ proud/ same/ you/ every/ Sunday. Every/ we/ practice/ anything/ particle/ I/ say/ you/ always/ try/ to/ catch/ that/ develop/ as/ with/ soul/ you/ and/ I/ Happy/ very/ work/ same/ we/ together/ too/ always/ fun/ make/ I/ moments/ particle/ I/ wait/ that/ if/ practice/ same/ you/ and/ Fatin. Congratulation  
Judge 4 : Shenna, I am very proud of you. Every week, everytime we practice, everything I say, you always try to catch it, develop it to your soul. And I am very happy working together with you, it's always fun. To me, the moments I always wait for are when I practice together with you and Fatin. Congratulation  
S : *Makasih/ Teh/ Oca.* (D2.31)  
S : Thanking/ older woman/ Oca  
S : Thank you Miss Oca

In the data (12) the realisation of the politeness of the expressive-narrative-congratulating is marked by using the word 'congratulation'. The use of the word 'congratulation' refers to the previous narrative, that is. '*aku senang banget kerja sama kita berdua juga selalu asik.*' (I am very happy working together with you, it's always fun). This shows that there is no distance between speaker and the addressee.

#### *Expressive-Congratulating – Positive Politeness-intensify interest to H*

- (13) The following narrative is spoken by Bebi Romeo (as the speaker) to Nu Dimension (as the addressee). That night, Nu Dimension sang a song of *Kirana* by Dewa 19.

- Juri 2 : Karena /menurut/ saya,/ "*Kirana*"/ bukan/ lagu/ yang,/ bukan/ lagu/ yang,/ /emmm, /lagu/ popular/, tapi /cukup/ pintar/ gitu/ loh/ dengan/ notasi-notasi/ yang/ nggak/, menurut/ saya/ bukan/ notasi/ murah/ gitu/. Dan/ kamu/ berhasil/ membuat/ notasi-notasi/ itu/ juga/ dengan/ mahal /kedengerannya/, dengan/ formasi/ grup/ yah./ **Sekali/ lagi/ selamat/ untuk/ Nu Dimension/ malam/ ini.** (D5.3)  
Judge 2 : because/according to/I/ *Kirana*/ not/ song/ particle /not/ song/ particle /emmm/ song/ popular/ but/ enough/ smart/ like that/ right/ with/ notations/ particle/ not/ according to/ I/ not/ notation/ cheap/ like that/ and/ you/ success/ make/ notations/ that/also/ with/ expensive/ listened/ with/ formation/ group/ well/ once/ too/ safe/ to/ Nu Dimension/ night/ this/.  
Judge 2 : Because I think "*Kirana*" is not a song..emmm, it's not a popular song, but it's smart enough with those notations. I think those are not low quality notations. And you are succeeded making those notations into a whole new level, they sound high quality with that group formation. Well, once again congratulations to Nu Dimension for tonight.  
ND : *Terima/ kasih/ Mas/ Bebi.* (D5.4)  
ND : accept/ love/ older man/ Bebi  
ND : Thank you Mister Bebi

In the data (13), the realisation of the polsitive politeness with the substrategy intensify interest to H is shown by using the bold sentence above (D5.3).

#### *Expressive-Congratulating – Positive Politeness- Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)*

- (14) The following narrative is spoken by Rossa (as the speaker) to Nu Dimension (as the addressee). That night Nu Dimension sang a song of *Kirana* by Dewa 19.

- Juri 4 : Nu Dimension, /**wow.** Saya/ bilang/ emang/ kurang/ ajar/ Mas/ Dani/ ini/ tiba-tiba/ bawa/ Dewa 19/, dan/ saya/ setuju/ deh/ dengan/ Mas/ Bebi/ dan/ Anggun./ Apapun/ itu/, meskipun/ bentuknya/ udah /featuring/, tapi/ kalian/ sendirinya/ pun/ bisa/ merupakan/ tontonan /sendiri/ yang/ menarik/ gitu/, dan/ ketika/ dikolaborasikan/, kalian/ bisa/ tampil/ dengan/ apa/ ya/ **Blend/ aja/ gitu/ nggak/ kalah/ pamor/ sama/ Dewa 19-nya/ yang/ emang/ udah/ legend/ gitu.** / **Congratulation.** (D5.7)  
Judge 4 : Nu Dimension/ wow/ I/ say/ indeed/ less/ lesson/ older man/ Dani/ this/ suddenly/ bring/ Dewa 19/ and/ I/ agree/ with/ older bebi/ and/ Anggun/ anything/ that/ although/ the form/ already/ featuring/ but/ you/ self/ right/ can/ is/ performance/ self/ particle/ attractive/ like that/ and/ when/ collaborated/ you/ can/ perform/ with/ what/ yes/ Blend/ just/ like that/ not/ lose/ prestige/ same/ Dewa 19/ particle/ indeed/ already/ legend/ like that/ congratulation.

Judge 4 : Nu Dimension, Wow, I must say that Mister Dani is rude for suddenly bringing Dewa 19, and I agree with Mister Bebi and Anggun. Whatever it is, although it is already a featuring, but you guys yourselves are already an attractive performance and when it is collaborated, you can perform as what?. Just Blending in, as great as Dewa 19 which is already a legend. Congratulation.

ND : *Terima/ kasih/ Teh/ Oca./ (D5.8)*

ND : accept/ love/ older woman/ Oca

ND : Thank you Miss Oca

The realisation of the Politeness strategy of expressive narrative-congratulating in the data (14) is marked by using the bold sentences. The sentences explain the performance of Nu Dimension which is great as the legendary band of Dewa 19.

**Expressive-Thanking – Positive Politeness-use in group identity markers**

- (15) The following narrative is spoken by Rossa (an Indonesia female singer) to Fatin (the youngest female contestant) in the show on March 29 2013. That night, Fatin sang as song of “It Will Rain” by Bruno Mars.

Juri 4 : *Alhamdulillahilahirabilamin./ setiap/ hari/ Jumat/ saya/ mules/ banget/ rasanya/ kalau/ Menunggu/ ini./ Fatin/ ini/ apa/ namanya?/ Pujian/ dari/ tiga/ mentor/ mereka/ adalah orang-orang/ yang/ paling/ kompeten/ Mau/ mereka/ memuji/ atau/ pun/ mengkritik/ itu/ adalah/ satu/ hal/ pelajaran/ buat/ kita/ mudah-mudahan/ minggu/ depan/ kita/ bisa/ semakin/ lebih/ baik/ lag/i. Amin./ Terima/ kasih/ juga/ buat/ Fatinistik/ yang/ selalu/ memberikan/ semangat/ terima/ kasih/ /banyak./ Good/ Job/ Fatin./ (D17.28)*

Judge 4 : thanking god/ every/ day/ Friday/ I/ stomachache/ very/ feel/ if/ wait/this/ Fatin/ this/ what/ name/ compliment/ from/ three/ mentor/ they/ are/ people/ particle/most/ competent/ want/ they/ praise/ or/even/ criticize/ that/ is/ one/ thing/ lesson/ make/ we/ easy/ Sunday/ front/ we/ can/ more/ more/good/ again/ amin/ accept/love/ too/ make/Fatinistik/particle/ always/ give/ spirit/ accept/ love/ many/ Good/ Job/ Fatin.

Judge 4 : (Thanking God), every Friday I am nervous waiting for this. Fatin, this is, what is it called? The compliments from the three other mentors, they are the most competent people. Whether they praise or criticize, it is a lesson for us, so that next week we can be better. Amin, Thank you for Fatinistik that always give their support, thank you. God Job Fatin.

F : */Terima/ kasih/. (D17.29)*

F : accept/ love/

F : Thank you.

In the data (15), the realisation of the positive politeness with the strategy of use in group identity markers in the expressive narrative-thanking is marked by the word ‘Fatinistik’. The word ‘Fatinistik’ is the name for adalah Fatin Shidqia Lubis’ fans (one of the X-Factor Indonesia contestants). The speaker in the narrative (D17.28) thanks exclusively to ‘Fatinistik’ who always give their support to their idol, Fatin.

**Expressive-Criticizing – Bald on record**

- (16) The following narrative is spoken by Ahmad Dani (a male singer of Dewa band) to Fatin in the show on April 12 2013. That night, Fatin sang a song of *Arti Hadirmu* by Audi (an Indonesian female singer).

Juri 1 : *Komentarnya/... Aaa/, komentarnya/ kamu/ gak/ cocok/ nyanyi/ lagu/ ini./ (D26.37)*

Judge 1 : comment/.../aa/ comment/ you/ not/ compatible/ sing/ song/ this/

Judge 1 : My comment...aa..my comment is that you are just not right singing this song

F : *Oh/, ya/ Mas/ Dani/. Terima/ kasih. (D27.38)*

F : Oh/ yes/ older man/ Dani/ accept/ love

F : Oh/ yok Mister Dani. Thank you

In the data (16), the realisation of the politeness in expressive narrative-criticizing is marked by using the bald on record strategy shown by the bold sentence. The speaker directly shows his disappointment to the addressee by saying “*kamu gak cocok nyanyi lagu ini.*” (you are not just right singing this song).

**Expressive-Criticizing – Off Record Strategy-give association clues**

- (17) The following narrative is spoken by Bebi Romeo (an Indonesian male singer) to Fatin Shidqia (a female contestant) after she sang a song of *Arti Hadirmu* by Audi (an Indonesian singer).

Juri 3 : *Ya/ Fatin/ tadi/ aku/ juga/ cari/ waktu/ kamu/ mulai/ nyanyi/ lagu/ ini/ ini/ gongnya/bakal /dimana sih/? Tapi/ tadi/ ternyata/ gak/ ada/ gongnya/ itu./ Tapi/ kan/ malam/ ini/ kalian/ semua/ /diberi /kesempatan/ nyanyi/ dua/ lagu/. Jadi/ walaupun/ tadi/ sebenarnya/ gak/ jelek./ Cuma/ gak/ ada /istimewanya/ penampilan/ kamu./ Itu/ aja. (D26.45)*

Judge 3 : Yes/ Fatin/ a while ago/ I/ also/ search/ time/ you/ start/ sing/ song/ this/ this/ gong/ will/ where/ But/ a while ago/ apparently/ bot exist/ gong/ that/ but/ right/ night/ this/ you/ all/ given/ opportunity/ sing/ two/ song/ so/ although/ a while ago/ actually/ not/ ugly/ only/ not/ exist/ special/ preformance/ you/ that/ only/

Judge 3 : Well, Fatin, I was waiting “the special moment fo the song’ since you began singing that song, wondering where it would be? But apparently, there was no such a thing. But tonight you are given an opportunity to sing two songs. So, actually it was not that bad, it’s just not that special the performance of yours.

F : *Makasih/ Mas. (D26.46)*

F : Thanking/ older man

F : Thank you Mister

The realisation of the politeness strategy in the expressive narrative-criticizing in the data (17) is marked by using the off record strategy of 'give association clues' by associating 'gong' as the climax marker (the special moment). The speaker hoped that there would be a climax part from the addressee's performance, but apparently there was no such a thing. This is shown by the use of the last sentence in the narrative (D26.45), "*sebenarnya gak jelak, cuma gak ada istimewanya penampilan kamu.*" (actually it is not that bad, it's just not that special the performance of yours).

### CONCLUSION

Based on the data classification and analysis, the types of speech act used in the X-Factor Indonesia Judges' narratives are expressive-praising, congratulating, thanking, and criticizing. Furthermore, the most dominant speech act used by the X-Factor Indonesia judges is expressive-praising. It is 18 (72%) narratives from 25 narratives.

For the realisation of the politeness strategy in the expressive narratives-praising of X-Factor Indonesia judges, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), is the positive politeness strategy with the substrategies 'attend to H' (his interest, wants, needs, and goods); Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H); Intensify interest to H; Seek agreement; Joke; Be optimistic; and Include both S and H in the activity. In the expressive narratives-congratulating, the politeness strategy found is the positive politeness strategy with the substrategies 'Include both S and H in the activity; Intensify interest to H; and Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)'. Meanwhile, in the expressive narrative-thanking, the politeness strategy used is the positive politeness strategy with the substrategies 'use in group identity markers', and last for the expressive narrative-criticizing, the politeness strategies used are the bald on record strategy and Off record strategy with give association clues substrategy.

### Limitations Of The Study

This study examines about narratives of X-Factor Indonesia judges and focuses only the use of expressive narratives and the realisation of politeness strategies. There are some limitations for this study related to the topic discussed in this article as follow:

1. This article only focuses on the use of expressive narrative and the realisation of politeness strategies. Thus, for the future study, it can study the speech act as a whole aspect,
2. The data taken in this article are the narratives of both male and female X-Factor Indonesia judges. It is suggested in the future that the narratives data are compared and studied regarding the use of the narratives and the politeness strategies,
3. This research studies the narratives of X-Factor Indonesia judges from pragmatic point of view. In the future, it is suggested that it can be studied by focusing on its style of language.

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THE ROLE OF TOPIC IN EFL LEARNER'S READING  
COMPREHENSION AND RECALL

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**ABSTRACT**

English as a Foreign Language reading comprehension and recall can be affected by a large number of discursial factors, including |topic" and "title" as representative of the theme of the text. The present study aimed at examining the effect of text topic on foreign language learners' reading comprehension and recall. To this end, the impact of three kinds of text topics, i.e., major topic, minor topic and unrelated topics was measured on foreign language learners' reading comprehension and recall. The materials of the experiment were piloted in advance on learners (n = 100) of the same proficiency level. 99 EFL learners majoring in English language translation in Mashhad Azad University participated in the main study. The instrumentation included CELT (The comprehensive English Language test) and a tailored reading comprehension test consisting of three reading passages. The Multiple Choice reading comprehension tests were administered to 3 homogenized groups each comprising 32, 30 and 36 subjects. Data were analyzed through one-way analysis of variance and post hoc Scheffe tests. The results showed a significant effect of major topic on the reading comprehension performances and recall of the participants.

**KEYWORDS:** topic, reading comprehension, recall

**INTRODUCTION**

Among the four language skills, reading probably plays the most important role in foreign and second language learners' academic achievement. As a result, this skill is worth in-depth investigation from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Researchers have investigated numerous text-related and reader-related factors determining EFL/ESL readers' comprehension.

Readers need to integrate various text-processing skills in order to derive the text overall meaning. Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) emphasize the need for ESL/EFL learners to develop both bottom-up and top-down reading approaches. Before the reading takes place, students' background knowledge about the topic of a text should be activated. This can be performed through the choice of titles, subtitles, headings, captions, etc. These cues may provide a good overview and get the students to activate what they know about the topic and helping them speculate the likely text content (van Dijk, 1977).

Ideas in a text are related to the topic and unified by cohesive devices. Cohesive devices call upon a speaker's background knowledge in a process of comprehension and recall. They enable participant hearers or readers to read between the lines: to make references to preceding discourse, to interpret the relationship of incoming material to the prevailing topic or theme; in short, to follow the links in a chain. As de-Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) state "we impose coherence by establishing a configuration and our prior knowledge of how the world is organized." In other words, listeners or readers must know what is being talked or written about in order to be able to understand the text since each text discusses one particular topic which distinguishes it from another text. Moreover, as Van Dijk (1977) points out, the context is involved in the recognition of the entailment relations in terms of which the topic of discourse is defined. That is, the topic representation is entailed by the joint set of propositions expressed by the sentences in the text only given certain items of real-world knowledge. So 'topic' is a notion which seems to be essential to the concept of cohesion and coherence since "coherence will be envisioned as the outcome of combining concepts and relation into a network composed of knowledge spaces centered around main topics". Hence, it is important for EFL teachers to be aware of the role of the "topic" for texts.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Discourse issues have been the center of attention for a long time and every now and then different theories have been put forward by the experts in this field. This importance, however, to a large extent, lies in the crucial role of Discourse Analysis in assigning boundaries for the interpretation of meaning. In this regard, topic can be viewed as one of the most significant discourse boundaries, or to be more explicit, as one of the elements of discourse which constraint the possible interpretations for comprehension of a text. Moreover, a distinction should be made between the topic as the main underlying theme of the text and "the title" as "a way" or "a mode of "representing the topic. (Brown & Yule, 1996). We know that the ultimate goal is the topic, but we have several different possibilities of the title. Since the researchers are going to scrutinize the comprehensibility of journalistic texts therefore the question is what can be chosen as a title for reading comprehension passages which provides both more effective reading comprehension and increase of recalling for the readers. As topic is one point which remains in the mind, the assumption is that the title which is closest to the topic (major topic) might be regarded as the best clue for students' comprehension and recall in authentic issues.

In a series of experiments reported by Bransford and Johnson (1972) subjects were pretested with constructed texts to read, comprehend, and recall. The aim of the experiments was to demonstrate that the comprehension of English texts depends not only on knowledge of the language, but also on extra-linguistic knowledge, particularly related to the contexts in which the texts occur. Predictably, the experiments showed that comprehension and recall of passages were significantly better when subjects were provided, before reading, with what Bransford and Johnson called "The topic of the passage". Correspondingly, there is for any text, a number of different ways of expressing "the topic". Each different way of expressing "the topic" will effectively represent a different judgment of what is being written (or talked about) in a text. There will always be a set of expressions of the topic. In the terms used by Tyler (1978), "the topic" can only be "one possible paraphrase "of a sequence of utterances. What is required is a characterization of "topic" which would allow each of the possible expressions, including titles, to be considered (partially correct), thus incorporating all reasonable judgments of "what is being talked about".



### ***The relationship between topic and comprehension***

As Chastain (1988) believes, all readers can become confused if they are suddenly engulfed with a flood of language without any orientation as to the context or topic. Thus readers (listeners) have to activate relevant background knowledge and use it to anticipate the ideas the message may contain. Joiner(2008), in an article entitled "listening from the inside out", states that establishing a frame of reference enables listeners to develop "frames of expectations" regarding what they are likely to hear, which help them know how to listen and what to listen for.

Understanding is described, according to Brown (1999) as "a process of prediction and sampling rather than a desperate attempt to keep up with the words flashing past." Likewise, Richards (1998) identifies three interrelated levels of processing that seem to be activated in comprehending language; i.e., identifying propositions, interpreting illocutions, and activating real-world knowledge. One thing people commonly do in comprehension is to draw the obvious implications. In short, comprehension calls on people's general capacity to think-to use information and solve problems. Indeed, in inferring what is meant, people consider non-linguistic factors that are far removed from the utterance itself (Dabir, 1991). In the same way, Prabhu (1987) maintains that comprehension draws on extra-linguistic resources to the extent necessary. There is a complementary relationship between linguistic resources and extra-linguistic ones. Likewise, comprehension, according to Riverse, (1981), "requires a deep knowledge of the theme of the speaker's discourse, because much of comprehension is drawing inferences." So a great deal of what we comprehend "is not in the linguistic information we are receiving at all, but is the extra-linguistic knowledge which we have acquired through our life in terms of past experiences.

Prior knowledge plays a supportive role in comprehending a written message. The earliest study on the impact of schemata on reading comprehension dates back to the classical research of Bartlett (1932). In his study, English participants were asked to read and recall a story from an unfamiliar culture, and the major finding was that recall was inaccurate. Distortions found in the retellings of the story conformed to the past experiences of the readers, and additions to and elaborations on the storyline in the retellings caused redundancies. Along the same line, Lee's study (1986) showed that the participants recalled more from content-unfamiliar texts than content-familiar ones. In a study by Carrell (1984) the nonnative readers found to fail to use background information because they were linguistically bound. The nonnative readers tended to process at the word and sentence levels and did not attend to the top level organizational features and background information since the language itself was demanding. Johnson (1982) conducted a study to explore the effect of the cultural origin of prose on the reading comprehension level. The results revealed that the cultural origin of the stories had a greater effect on comprehension than the syntactic or semantic complexity of the text. Some other studies have shown similar effects in that participants better comprehended or remembered passages that were more familiar to them (e.g. Ammon, 1987; Carrell, 1983; Johnson, 1982; Langer, Bartolome, Vasquez & Lucas, 1990). The literature supports the position that content schemata have a greater role than language on reading comprehension and recall. (Keshavarz, 2007) Studies conducted by Koh (1985) and Peretz and Shoham (1990) indicate that participants do not necessarily perform their best on texts with familiar content.

Therefore, both listeners and readers have to activate relevant background knowledge and use it to anticipate the ideas the message may contain. According to Clark and Clark, (1977), "people try to attack all the facts they know about single entity to a single memory. "This allows them to see all the facts about that entity at a glance.

In conclusion, topics serve as devices for categorizing and arranging information so that it can be interpreted and retained. Briefly, "topics" activate participants' background information to which the text must be related in order to be comprehended.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The purpose of the study is to explore the relationship between text topics and EFL readers' comprehension and recall of texts. Therefore, the following research questions were formulated. Research questions:

1. Does text topic type have any significant effects on EFL learners' reading comprehension?
2. Does text topic type have any significant effects on EFL learners' recall?

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Participants***

The subjects of the study were 200 EFL male and female senior students (21-30 years old) in Mashhad Azad University who were majoring in English language translation. In order to ascertain homogeneity of subjects in terms of their general English proficiency at the outset of the study, CELT test (Comprehensive English Language Test) was administered to all of the participants. In order to test the homogeneity of the aforementioned group, a one-way ANOVA was run the results of which attested that study. To answer these questions, the Comprehensive English Language Test (CELT) was administered to the students in order to verify their homogeneity. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run to compare the means of the three groups. The descriptive statistics in Tables 1 provides an overall view of the participants' performance on CELT and table 2 shows the results of one-way ANOVA consequently.

*Table 1: Descriptive statistics of CELT scores*

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	N	Min	Max
1	82.56	26.59	101.02	32	20	120
2	85.3	26.15	685.82	30	29	120
3	96.38	27.21	740.38	36	25	150

*Table 2 : One-way ANOVA CELT by three groups*

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean Squares	F Observed	F Critical
Between groups	3728.08	2	1864.04	2.61	3.15
Within groups	67671.39	95	712.33		
Total	71399.47	97			

#### ***Instrumentation***

The instruments were used in this study: one reading comprehension test consisting of three passages. The reading comprehension tests were taken from English journals. The researchers piloted the tests with a sample of learners (n=100) with the same level of English language

proficiency at the same university as the participants of the present study. For each of the texts, 10, 8 and 6 MC test items were developed. The tests were piloted and pre-tested with a sample group of participants (n=100). Concerning the psychometric properties of the reading comprehension tests, the reliability of reading comprehension test, as estimated using Cronbach's alpha, were .69. The test was validated against the reading comprehension sub-test of a TOEFL. The result of concurrent validity of the researcher-made measure on reading comprehension showed an index of 0.73, which is relatively high.

### **Procedure**

#### *Subject grouping procedure*

Ninety nine EFL learners were chosen as the subjects of the study and randomly assigned to three groups. The subjects were all seniors majoring in English.

#### *Test Administration Procedure*

The participants were asked to read the texts and answer the MC items. Then, the participants were asked to read the texts once more and write down what they could remember on their recall answer-sheets without looking back at the text and the MC questions. Here, the purpose was to measure the participants' recall of what they read rather than their EFL writing ability. Therefore, the researchers asked the participants to write their recalls. The time allocated to each test was 45 minutes, which had been determined to be suitable in the pilot study by.

#### *Scoring Procedure*

The MC-test papers were scored based on the number of correctly-answered items. The recall task was scored based on the correct propositions recalled by the participants. For the sake of a consistent scoring procedure, the researchers defined propositions as the relationships between a predicate and its arguments. As G. Brown (1983) maintains, this is the most frequently used definition in the text analysis literature. Then, the recall tasks were scored by the researchers. Each recall task was scored twice, once by each of the two researchers. A correlation index of .79 was found between the scores given to the recall protocols by the two raters. The average of the two scores was considered as the final score assigned to each recall protocol. The scores from the multiple choice test of reading comprehension and the recall tasks constituted the data for statistical analysis.

### **Data analysis**

SPSS was used for statistical analysis of the data consisting of the participants' reading comprehension scores, their scores on their recall scores. To examine the main effects of the independent variables that is topic on the participants' comprehension and recall of the texts, the researchers ran a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) twice: once for the data related to the participants' reading comprehension (i.e., the participants' scores on the MC items) and once for the data related to the participants' recall of the texts.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This study was conducted to answer the following questions: 1. Does topic have any significant effects on EFL learners' reading comprehension? 2. Does text topic have any significant effects on EFL learners' recall?

The study included one independent variable i.e. Text topic including texts with major topics, minor topics and unrelated topics. Text readability of 3 selected reading passages of English journals was computed using Fry formula. Table 3 shows the readability indexes of the passages. According to Fry formula reading passages with readability indexes between 3 and 11 are considered to be intermediate.

*Table 3: Readability Index*

Passages	Index
A	6.86
B	4.72
C	4.41

The first research question asked whether there is a significant difference between major topic, minor topic group and unrelated topic group on reading comprehension MC tests performance. Table 4 summarizes the results of the one-way ANOVA.

*Table 4: One-way ANOVA of MC Reading Comprehension Test*

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean Squares	F Observed	F Critical
Between groups	772.72	2	386.36	26.80	3.15
Within groups	1369.51	95	14.41		
Total	2142.24	97			

As the table 4 suggests, there is a significant difference between major topic group, minor topic and unrelated topic groups across MC reading comprehension test ( $F = 26.80, p < .05$ )

To further determine where the difference among the effects of text topic types on MC reading comprehension test performance lies, a post hoc Scheffe was run the results of which follow in Table 5.

*Table 5: The summary result of the Scheffe test on the reading comprehension MC test*

Comparisons	Mean Differences	Minimum significant difference 5%	df
Major topic G Vs Minor topic G	6.26*	2.40	60
Major topic G Vs Unrelated topic G	5.71*	2.30	66
Minor topic G Vs Unrelated topic G	0.55 <sup>ns</sup>	2.34	64

Table 5 and figure 1 suggest major topic group (Mean= 12.46) has dramatically outperformed the other two groups (minor topic mean =6.20 and unrelated topic mean = 6.75) on the reading comprehension MC test. According to Table 5, , at the level of 0.05, there was no significant difference between minor topic group mean scores and the unrelated topic group mean scores.

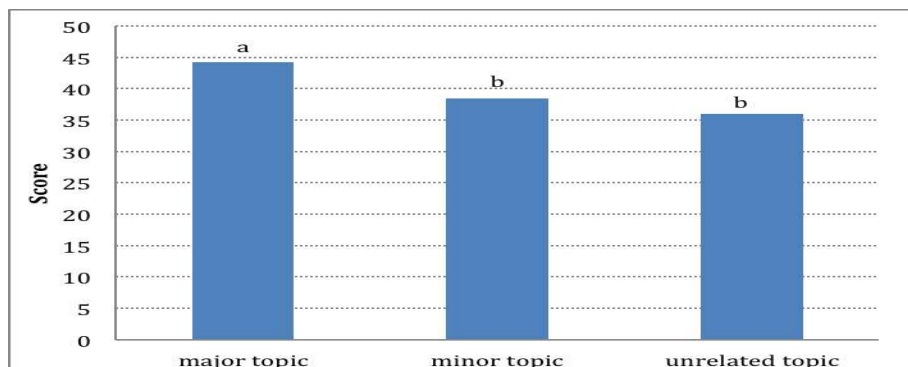


Figure 1: major topic group

The second question in the study addresses the difference in the effect of text topic including major topic, minor topic, unrelated topic) on recall test. Table 4 demonstrates the results of one way analysis of variance to this end.

Table 6 : One-way ANOVA of Recall Scores

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean Squares	F Observed	F Critical
Between groups	1206.8	2	603.4	18.6	3.15
Within groups	3079.02	95	32.4		
Total	4285.8	97			

According to Table 6, there is a significant difference among text topic types in the recall test ( $F = 18.6, p < .05$ ). Since the one-way ANOVA demonstrated a significant difference among the effect of the 3 text topic types on recall test performance, a post hoc Scheffe test was carried out to see where exactly the difference lies. Table 7 summarizes the results of the Scheffe.

Table 7: The summary result of the Scheffe test on recall test

Comparisons	Mean Differences	Minimum significant difference 5%	df
Major topic G Vs Minor topic G	5.80*	3.60	60
Major topic G Vs Unrelated topic G	8.29*	3.44	66
Minor topic G Vs Unrelated topic G	2.49 <sup>ns</sup>	3.50	64

In the recall test too, as depicted by Table 7 and figure 2, performance of the major topic group (major topic group mean = 44.22) has been dramatically superior to those of minor topic and unrelated topic groups (minor topic group = 38.42 and unrelated topic group = 35.93).

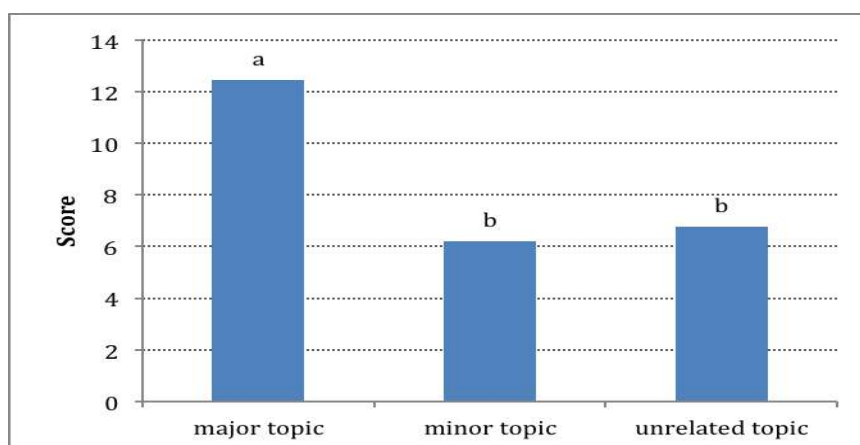


Figure 2: performance of the major topic group

## CONCLUSION

This study aimed at investigating the usefulness of text topic type for improving EFL learners' reading comprehension and recall. The EFL learners were provided with the same texts with different topics (major i.e. the closest to the main idea, minor i.e. the closest to the supporting idea and unrelated) both to draw the learners' attention to the text and help them comprehend and recall the text more effectively.

The findings of the study provided strong evidence in support of major text topic type in general since major text topic group significantly outperformed both the minor text topic and unrelated text topic groups in the reading comprehension test. In this sense, therefore, the results strongly corroborated those, among others, Johnson (1982), Carrell (1983), Ammon (1987), Vasquez and Lucas (1990), Keshavarz (2007) which advocated the use of content familiar texts for reading comprehension. There are several factors that can account for this effectiveness: The provision of major topic arouses learners' noticing to the main idea of text (Schmidt, 1992). Major text topic successfully draws learners' attention, activates EFL learners' relevant background knowledge, orients them toward the text and helps them to anticipate the ideas in the text. Possible, moreover, major topics can assist learners to immediately connect the text main idea to its supporting ideas and, thereby, comprehend it more effectively but it contradicts with Studies by Koh (1985) and Peretz and Shoham (1990) who concluded that participants do not necessarily perform their best on texts with familiar content. The results of the study further indicated that there was no significant difference between minor text type and unrelated text type groups. This is compatible with Carrell (1984) and Johnson (1982). One possible reason is that all readers can become confused if they are suddenly engulfed with a flood of language without any or the right orientation as to the context or topic (Chastain, 1988).

Another finding of the current study was major text topic group significantly outperformed both the minor text topic and unrelated text topic groups in the recall task. In this sense, the study is in line with Bartlett (1932) who concluded content- unfamiliar texts were recalled inaccurately but it contradicts with Lee (1986) who found that the participants recalled more from content-unfamiliar texts than content-familiar ones

The findings of the present study are compatible with those of Bransford and Johnson (1972) indicating that comprehension and recall of passages were significantly better when subjects were provided, before reading, with "the topic of the passage". One reason for the effectiveness of major text types on the recall task could be that it facilitates the main idea connection. According to research in human memory, it is the depth of the process of reading comprehension which determines the chance for the text to be recalled, i.e. Mental Effort Hypothesis. Learners retain meaning if they are engaged in deep processing which involves exploitation of contextual clues and their previous knowledge (Hulstijn & Laufer, 2001).

Overall, the results of the study support the use of major text topics in general and imply that teachers, materials developers and text designers can take advantage of them particularly when the goal is for them to trigger and promote reading comprehension and recall. Major topics should be available to foreign language learners while they are engaged in reading tasks. The presence of major topics can arouse learners' consciousness towards text, activate the relevant background knowledge and avoid learners from making wrong inferences. However, the findings of this study need to be verified against future research involving texts with other genres or different text readability.

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## THE EFFECT OF ALTERNATIVE TEACHING ON IMPROVING EFL LEARNER'S READING COMPREHENSION

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### ABSTRACT

The present study intended to examine whether alternative teaching strategy could maximize Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' reading comprehension better than the traditional single teaching. Employing alternative teaching proposed by Cook and Friend (2004), two intermediate EFL classes (total N=30) who already passed level 5 at a private language institute in Ilam, Iran were selected. They were all female, aged 17-25. Three experienced male teachers aged nearly thirty-nine took part in the study. In one class, reading comprehension was implemented by one teacher and in the other class two teachers cotaught the students. The findings of the study revealed that there was a significant difference between the control and the experimental group in terms of their reading improvement and that experimental group outperformed the control group. This finding implies that the implementation of alternative teaching strategy in educational systems, at least for teaching reading comprehension in an EFL context like Iran, can be contributive.

**KEYWORDS:** Co teaching, alternative teaching, reading comprehension, traditional teaching,

### INTRODUCTION

The second language teaching profession has long been involved searching for methods that would be generalizable across widely varying audiences, and could successfully be used to teach a foreign language to students in the classroom. To meet the demands of the diverse language learners in multiple worldwide contexts, researchers and practitioners have gradually learned from the continued search to realize that "there never was and probably never will be a method" (Nunan, 1991, p. 228) for all learners, and thus come up with a cautiously eclectic, integrated approach aiming to help teachers make enlightened choices of classroom tasks and activities that are solidly grounded in the valuable findings from research on L2 learning and teaching (Brown, 2001).

It can be, more or less, observed that an increasing number of students are placed in an English class with any variety of different knowledge and background that influences their learning a new subject differently. Students with poor performance and other special needs are generally expected to achieve the same level of success as other learners. Accordingly, Reith and Polsgrove (1998) aptly state that, "it is not enough to merely place students within general class settings without providing appropriate training, materials, and support to them and their teachers. "If done so, their failure is the outcome" (p. 257).

Due to overpopulation and misplacement of the learners in large classes, it seems that fulfilling all the responsibilities of teaching including planning, practice, evaluation and above all implementing remedial programs to meet the needs of the learners with poor performance may not be possible for a single teacher. Therefore, there is some intuitive appeal for a new mode of service delivery because greater number of students with instructional problems may be accommodated in general education classes.

Drawing upon the above-mentioned views, among the many ideas and options for meeting these diverse, yet somehow related, challenges, co teaching had received widespread attention and been used by many special and general educators to meet the needs of secondary students. Accordingly, the present study attempts to investigate the possibility of its implementation in Iranian EFL teaching context.

### *Co-teaching definitions and models*

Co-teaching, or having more than one teacher in the classroom has become a popular teaching structure to provide an inclusive setting for special education students while insuring that they are in the least restrictive environment. In the co-teaching classroom there is typically a general education teacher and a special education teacher in the classroom. Co-teaching may also be considered as a strategy which includes mixed-perspectives of two teachers. It is defined as "a restructuring of teaching procedures in which two or more educators possessing distinct sets of skills work in a coordinated fashion to jointly teach academically and behaviorally heterogeneous groups of students in an integrated educational setting" (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995, p. 46). Elsewhere, Villa, Thousand, and Nevin (2008) reiterate the responsibility shared by the co-teachers. They define it as "two or more people sharing responsibility for educating some or all of the students in a classroom". In contrast, single teaching as Aliakbari and Mansouri Nejad (2010) note, is defined in a way that one teacher is responsible for supervising all tasks of lessons, in the current and relatively traditional teaching model over a specific time.

Co-teaching offers several advantages over traditional single-teacher teaching method, including the provision of multiple learning perspectives (Smith, Hornsby, & Kite, 2000), reduction of teaching redundancy (Hartenian, Schellenger, & Frederickson, 2001), and the promotion of teamwork and communication between teachers (Andrews & Wooten, 2005).

Sharon (1997) identified several alternative models of co-teaching: A: One Group: one lead teacher, one teacher "teaching on purpose"; B: Two Groups: Two teachers teach the same contents; C: Two groups: One teacher re-teaches, one teacher teaches alternative information; D: Multiple Groups: Two teachers monitor/teach; content may vary; E: One group: two teachers teach the same content. Watkins and Caffarella (1999) identified four types of teams based on variations in working style: parallel teaching, serial teaching, co-teaching, and co-facilitation. Friend and Cook (2004) described the more common approaches as One-Teach-One Support, One-Teach-One Drift, Alternative Teaching, Parallel Teaching, Station Teaching, and Team Teaching. Further explanation of their idea is presented below.

**One Teach, One Observe.** One of the advantages in co-teaching is that more detailed observation of students engaged in the learning process can occur. With this approach, for example, co-teachers can decide in advance what types of specific observational information to gather during instruction and can agree on a system for gathering the data. Afterward, the teachers should analyze the information together.

**One Teach, One Drift.** In this second approach to co-teaching, one teacher keeps the primary responsibility for teaching while the other professional circulates through the room, providing unobtrusive assistance to students.

**Parallel Teaching.** In parallel teaching, the teachers are both teaching the same information, but they divide the class group and do so simultaneously.



**Station Teaching.** In this co-teaching approach, teachers divide the content and the students. Each teacher then teaches the content to one group and subsequently repeats the instruction for the other group. If appropriate, a third "station" could require that students work independently.

**Alternative Teaching:** In most class groups, occasions arise in which several students need specialized attention. In alternative teaching, one teacher takes responsibility for the large group while the other works with a smaller group.

**Team Teaching:** In team teaching, both teachers are delivering the same instruction at the same time. Some teachers refer to this as having "one brain in two bodies." Others call it "tag team teaching" (Cook & Friend, 2004). Most co-teachers consider this approach the most complex but satisfying way to co-teach. However, to achieve the desired outcome, this approach is most dependent on the co-teachers' styles (Cook & Friend, 2004).

Among the models specified here, alternative teaching has received special attention. To Murawski & Swanson (2001) alternative teaching is a strategy in which one teacher teaches the large group, while the other teaches or re-teaches the content or the skills to the small group. One major feature of this model is that teachers may regroup students and may alternate roles in teaching the large and the small groups. Friend and Cook (2004) suggest alternative teachers to be used in the following situations:

- In situations where students' mastery of the concepts taught or about to be taught varies tremendously
- When extremely high levels of mastery are expected for all students
- When enrichment is desired
- When some students are working in a parallel curriculum

Inspired by these ideas and recommendation, the present study intended to put the issue under scrutiny.

#### **REVIEW OF THE RELATED STUDIES**

Research on co-teaching has so far examined the effect of co-teaching structures on students' academic learning (Bauwens, Hourcade, & Friend, 1989; Cook & Friend, 1995; Dieker, 2001; Fennick, 2001; Fennick & Liddy, 2001; Rice & Zigmond, 2000; Vaughn, Schumm, & Arguelles, 1997; Zigmond & Magiera, 2001). In a comprehensive study of inclusion in 18 elementary and 7 middle schools, Walther-Thomas (1997) found that the lower student-teacher ratio resulted from the presence of co-teachers in normal-sized classrooms led to strong academic progress and enhanced student self-confidence.

The role of co-teaching has also been manifested along technology. For instance, Jang (2006) incorporated web-assisted learning with team-teaching in seventh-grade science classes, and used a quasi-experimental method, assigning the four sampled science classes into experimental and control groups. The results showed that the average final exam scores of students experiencing the experimental teaching method were higher than the scores of those receiving traditional teaching. However, his study aimed to integrate two simultaneous interventions into courses of science teacher education method in order to explore the effects of such integration on learning technology.

Dahlberg and Hoover (2003) investigated the effects of co-teaching on K6 Student Discipline and Attendance. The results supported the positive impacts of the approach and made it clear that the students felt more connected to school when they were in a co-taught classroom. Further, Students in co-taught settings had fewer behavioral issues in school, and overall had fewer referrals per student.

Maultsby and Barbara (2009) examined the impact of collaborative teaching (co-teaching) on the reading, language Arts and Math achievement of Middle Tennessee students in grades 5-8, as measured by the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) Achievement test. Within the context of this study, the co-teaching model of instruction is defined as the special and general educator, referred to as co-teachers, sharing equitably the tasks of the lesson planning, implementation, and assessment. Six schools participated in the study. Three of the schools implemented co-teaching practices at the beginning of 2008-2009 school years. The remaining three schools did not. The dependent variables were students' reading, language Arts and Math TCAP Achievement test scores over a two year period. The independent variables were gender, ethnicity, disability categories, type of classroom (one with co-teaching practices and one without co-teaching practices), and type of student (student with a disability or student without a disability). Results from a paired samples *t*-test indicated an increase in Math achievement for students with disabilities instructed in classrooms with co-teaching practices and a decrease in Reading/Language Arts achievement for students without disabilities instructed in classrooms with co-teaching practices. No other conditions produced significant increases in this study.

Aliakbari and Mansouri Nejad (2010) studied the effect of co-teaching on learning process in general and the grammar proficiency in particular. To do so, they selected a group of 58 first-grade students studying English in junior high school assigned to two classes receiving two different treatments in grammar instruction. In one group, learners received grammar instruction from co-teachers and in other grammar instruction was delivered by a single teacher. They found that the difference in method of grammar instruction did not lead to significant difference in participants' performance in the grammar test. However, they conducted the study on the basis of team teaching model as an approach in co-teaching. Many studies have been done on co teaching while relatively little attention has been paid to its application in different situations in Iran. Hence, the present study is to investigate the impact of alternative teaching strategy on students' reading comprehension.

#### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

A number of studies investigated the influence of different teaching methods on different domains of language skills. However, few studies investigated the effect of co-teaching on language skills such as speaking, writing, listening and more specifically reading improvement. The present study aimed at filling some of the gaps in the area of co teaching by comparing two groups of Iranian EFL learners studying English as a foreign language in a language institute so as to examine whether alternative teaching strategy could maximize EFL students' reading comprehension better than the traditional single teaching. For This purpose, alternative teaching proposed by Cook and Friend (2004) was adopted.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTION**

More specifically, the present study attempted to find an answer for the following research question:

Does implementing alternative teaching model improve Iranian EFL learners' reading proficiency better than the traditional single teacher practice?



## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

Two intermediate EFL classes (N=30) who already passed level five at a private language institute in Ilam, were selected. They were all female, aged 17-25. Because of the inclusion of a few participants, the subjects were intact and therefore no random sampling was made. Three experienced male teachers aged about 39 also took part in the study. All of the teachers had Master degrees in English, language teaching.

### Material and instrument

One of the major challenges in developing a reading comprehension test is to select texts and tasks appropriate for learners at a given level of language proficiency. For this reason, *Interchange* (Richards, J. C., Hull, J., & Proctor, S. (2005) *Interchange: Book 3*. (3rd Edition) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.) which is generally practiced in language institutes was used as the textbook. The textbook included sixteen lessons, the first five lessons of which were taught to the students during the course.

As for instruments, two tests were employed in the study. A placement test was administered as the pre-test to determine the homogeneity of the students and an achievement test as the post-test to determine whether employing alternative teaching model and single teacher resulted in significant difference in the students' reading proficiency.

### Procedure

The study was undertaken in Tanin Language Institute in the city of Ilam, west of Iran. After administering the placement test, thirty students were assigned to study in level six. Based on their score, the students were equally distributed into two classes, each containing fifteen students. The experimental group was taught by two teachers using alternative teaching model during five weeks on even days wherein one teacher called lead teacher, taught the large group who were supposed to be more talented and the other (co-teacher or supporter) worked with the small group who needed more explanation, and remedial activities. The latter group was taught by one single teacher during the same period. The same content was taught in both classes. The lead teacher and the support teacher made decisions about the content and organization of the lesson cooperatively. They also determined the appropriate structures for alternative remedial or enrichment lessons that would promote student learning. The lead teacher conducted formal teaching, including the entire stages of reading instruction such as pre-reading, reading and post-reading. All the learners were encouraged to participate actively in the learning process. They also implemented supplementary activities for the whole group, small groups or individuals before or after the formal lesson. The support teacher attempted to find out the learners' weaknesses and help them with activities by which they were able to guess unknown vocabularies by known words and grammatical structures which have not been previously learnt and internalized.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As mentioned earlier, two tests were employed in this study. At the first stage, a pre-test was administered so as to ensure that the two groups were homogenous in terms of their language proficiency. The mean scores obtained through the pretest for the control and experimental group were 69.53 and 71.40, respectively. To see whether the two groups were significantly different or not, T-test was run, the result of which is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Results of Independent Sample Test on Learner's language proficiency in pretest.

T	DF	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
-.621	28	.540	-.4	6.44

Since the value of the T-observed was less than T-critical at  $P < .05$ , ( $t = 0.621$ ,  $DF = 28$ ,  $p < .05$ ), it can be concluded that there was not a significant difference between the control group and the experimental group with regard to their general language proficiency. In other words, the control and the experimental groups were at almost the same level of English competency.

To investigate the effect of alternative teaching strategy and traditional single teacher teaching on EFL Learner's reading comprehension improvement, an identical achievement test based on the content taught during the course was administered to both classes. The mean scores of the control and the experimental groups were further processed to explore whether there is a significant difference between their reading improvements. The results revealed that the mean scores for the control and the experimental group on the posttest was 64 and 77.33, respectively. Therefore, another t-test was run to show if there was a significant difference between the two groups of learners in their achievement scores.

Table 2: Result of Independent Sample test on the Learners' Reading comprehension on the posttest

T	DF	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
-2.326	28	.028	-13.33	5.73

Since the T-observed was higher than the T-critical ( $t = -2.326$ ,  $DF = 28$ ,  $p < .05$ ), it can be claimed that there was a significance difference between the control and the experimental group in their reading improvement.

## CONCLUSION

This study focused on the effect of alternative teaching strategy on EFL students' reading comprehension. The data collected and analyzed indicated greater improvement in reading comprehension of the experimental group. Therefore, with regard to the stated research question, it can be concluded that the alternative teaching contributed more to learners' reading comprehension improvement. In other words, the learners in the experimental reading class whose course was taught by co-teachers, performed remarkably better than learners who experienced the reading class course in the control class with single teacher.

One important aspect of the result was that all individuals in the experimental group benefited from the alternative teaching strategy. It can thus be concluded that the learners' engagement and the practice of co teachers can enhance classroom performance and encourage greater student participation.

Further analysis of the results demonstrated that most of the poorer learners in the pretest had a better performance in the posttest: that is, they scored higher on the posttest (see Appendix). These findings are in line with Murawski and Swanson (2001) who underlined the fact that co-teaching had a beneficial effect on students' outcome. Therefore, it can be safely concluded that alternative teaching can be more contributive to the improvement of the learners who take part in co-taught classes.

Although the results of this study indicate the positive impact of the alternative teaching strategy, care must be taken in overgeneralizing the findings in various contexts. Despite its significance, this model requires the co-teachers to work cooperatively and collaboratively to plan appropriate instructional programs and materials so as not to baffle the students in the learning process. Moreover, this study suggests further research to be directed to investigate other variables that might affect co-teaching methods including the culture, genders, and level of learners.

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Appendix: Learners’ pre-test and post test scores

Control Group			Experimental Group		
Student ID Number	Pretest	Post test	Student ID Number	Pretest	Post test
1	85	80	16	87	90
2	78	70	17	75	75
3	80	75	18	83	85
4	89	80	19	85	85
5	75	75	20	75	85
6	90	85	21	92	95
7	95	85	22	94	95
8	65	65	23	68	80
9	45	35	24	55	60
10	40	40	25	53	65
11	55	45	26	57	60
12	60	55	27	58	70
13	70	65	28	72	75
14	81	75	29	78	80
15	35	30	30	39	60

**A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF GENERIC ORGANIZATION OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS BY IRANIAN STUDENTS ACROSS HUMANITIES SUB-DISCIPLINES**

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**ABSTRACT**

Genre studies have attracted many researchers' attention. The present study was to observe the differences in generic structure of doctoral dissertation acknowledgement texts written by Persian native and English non-native (Iranian) PhD students. To this end one hundred (sixty in Persian and forty in English) dissertation acknowledgement texts were selected. Hyland's (2004) model was utilized for the study. After analyzing each text, the main moves and their steps were extracted and the frequencies of each one were calculated and compared. Also, a chi-square test was applied to check whether differences between Persian and English texts were meaningful. The results showed that there were some differences but these differences were not statistically significant. In addition, two new steps called "thanking God" and "opening" steps were discovered throughout this study. And the difference in using these steps between Iranian students writing in Persian and English was statistically significant.

**KEYWORDS:** doctoral dissertation, acknowledgement, move analysis, steps, sub-disciplines.

**INTRODUCTION**

With no doubt, writing a dissertation either for a Masters or a Doctorate student is a difficult process requiring not only days and nights of devoted times of the writer, but also the support and encouragement of the people around, academically or otherwise. Acknowledgement is most probably the section of the dissertation that the writer writes with utmost joy. They are read first by the ones who were with the MA and/or PhD students throughout this difficult path. Furthermore, these are the parts of the texts where the writers need to express their gratitude to the ones helped them appropriately considering the very intricate rules of communication (e.g., the face needs of the other and the self, the social context, representation of the self). Therefore, as Hyland (2004) argues, these sections are significant in enabling authors build a credible scholarly and social character in readers' mind.

Despite this important function of the acknowledgments, the analysis of the genre and its components (e.g., the move structure, thanking order and the thanking patterns) has not received a deserved attention in the literature yet. The literature of the acknowledgments comprises very few studies conducted in recent years (i.e., Al-Ali, 2010; Gesuato, 2004; Hyland, 2003, 2004). The common point of research in acknowledgments is that there is a crucial necessity for further research in the area since insufficient knowledge in constructing acknowledgments may lead to improper expressions of gratitude which may result in a reflection of an incompetent academic and social identity of the students completing their Masters and Doctorate degrees (Hyland, 2004).

As Buyukkantarcioglu (1998, p.159) asserts "the choice language is very significant in maintaining social relationships". As for thanking expressions, which constitute the main body of the acknowledgments, the choice of language is especially important. Thanking as inherently being a face-enhancing act, can become face-threatening with an inappropriate use of language, when contextual (e.g., cultural environment) and/or personal factors (e.g., degree of intimacy) are disregarded. In the same vein, Eisenstein and Bodman (1993, p.64) argue that while, as a ubiquitous speech act, the act of thanking can "engender feelings of warmth and solidarity among interlocutors" when properly performed, it can also endanger the course of relations when performed otherwise. Moreover, if the act, expected by the reader/hearer, is not performed at all, the hearer/reader may get hurt or annoyed (Spencer Oately, 2008).

To this end, the current study intends to contribute to the fields of sociology, Persian literature, religion, geography, history, social sciences, and English language Teaching (henceforth ELT), English literature, linguistics and translation in the following respects: In regard to the generic structure analyses of the acknowledgment sections the study will:

- (1) reveal the organization, i.e. the move structure, the thanking order in Persian Literature dissertation acknowledgments, with that of religion, social sciences, geography, history and sociology comparing to English translation, linguistics, English literature and ELT dissertation acknowledgements, and display how they formulate their thanking expressions addressed to the ones supported them in their journey of writing their MA or PhD dissertations,
- (2) act as the recent comparative study in the analysis of dissertation acknowledgments written by Persian native speakers and English non-native speakers.
- (3) raise awareness on the importance of the genre, leading possibly to better organized and written acknowledgments, in which a more unique and creative tone of voice sounds.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The history of acknowledgments actually goes back to the times when the authors were dependent on the powerful ones in authority in order to publish their academic works (Giannoni, 2002). Though in time the reasons for including acknowledgments in academic papers have changed, they were always a part of published texts appearing either as a part of preface or as a separate section (Giannoni, 2002).

The first study in literature on acknowledgments, as far as the author is aware, is the one conducted by Mackintosh in 1972 (cited in Tiew & Sen, 2002, p.44), where it examines the structure of acknowledgments and determines a three step move as the acknowledgment of the (i) help of individuals, (ii) access to data, (iii) facilities.

In 1987, Ben-Ari, investigates two hundred anthropological ethnographies and defines acknowledgments as genres having a peculiar construct that differ from the main text it is added to. He mainly asserts that (1987, P.65) acknowledgments are:

Formulations that take on an intermediate position between the internal contents of the Ethnography and the people and relationships outside it: They are both an introduction to an intellectual product and a reconstruction of the external contributions that have gone towards its realization.

The literature on dissertation acknowledgements , on the other hand, is quite limited. Despite acknowledgments being a very common section of dissertations (i.e.,80% of MA and 98% of PhD dissertations in Hyland & Tse, 2004) very few studies in linguistics /applied linguistics have examined the structure of the acknowledgments written by MA and PhD students. The literature mainly comprises the studies conducted by Hyland (2003, 2004) and Hyland and Tse (2004), which aim at exploring the structure of the acknowledgments and the patterns of thanking expressions appearing in acknowledgments based on a corpus of 240 MA and PhD dissertations written by non-native speakers of English in six academic fields (i.e. Applied Linguistics, Biology, Business Studies, Computer Sciences, Electronic Engineering and Public Administration).

More specifically, Hyland (2003) focuses on the textualization of the gratitude suggesting that acknowledgments reflect authors' unique rhetorical choices which are shaped by the authors' social and cultural characteristics and by the field they get specialized in. Hyland (2004) generates a content-based framework for acknowledgments by introducing three separate moves ; **Reflective Move, the section where the author comments on her experiences; Thanking Move, the place presenting gratitude to academic assistance, resources, family and friends; and Announcing Move**, the last part including the acceptance of responsibilities for flaws or errors and dedication of the thesis.

In addition to the previous findings on acknowledgements, Hyland and Tse demonstrate the lexico -grammatical patterns of the thanking expressions by categorizing them under five categories as: Nominalization, Performative verb, Adjective, Passive, and Bare mention.

Al-Ali (2004) works on a corpus of 100 acknowledgments written by Arabic native speakers in English within the framework of the move structure proposed by Hyland (2004), the Reflective –Thanking-Announcing Move structure. As one additional move he encounters with the “Thanking Allah” pattern in the Arabic PhD dissertation.

In his latter article, Al-Ali (2010) reviews 100 acknowledgments written in Arabic by students from soft sciences .Examining the acknowledgments, Al-Ali builds a new move structure (see Table 1) for the Arabic acknowledgments, observes the thanking strategies employed in the moves and makes a socio-cultural analysis of the PhD dissertation acknowledgments written by the native speakers of Arabic.

*Table 1: Number of Move components in Dissertation Acknowledgements written in Arabic Source : Al-Ali, 2010:8*

Component Moves of Arabic acknowledgements n: 100	Number of Moves
1. .Opening	25
2.Praising and Thanking Allah(God)	70
3.Thanking Supervisors and other Academics	100
4.Acknowledging Access to Resources	62
5.Thanking for Moral Support	61
6.Invoking and Blessing	68
7.Closing	52
8.Signing off	20

Al-Ali (2010) maintains that the choice of language in acknowledgments very much depend on some socio-cultural and religious motivations .For instance, he (2010:20) reveals that 25% of the acknowledgments written in Arabic start with verses from the Qur'an or sayings of the Prophet, emphasizing the significance of praising Allah and 70% of the acknowledgments include the “Thanking Allah” move. Reporting from Hyland (2005:197) Al-Ali states that meta-discourse of the similar texts show notable differences in accordance with the cultural background of the authors.

One contrastive study in literature, as far as the author is aware, is Giannoni's (2002) study on the Acknowledgement sections of English and Italian research articles. In his article, he compares and contrasts the structure of acknowledgments on the basis of a move structure he develops (i.e.,Introductory move, Main move). His corpus of acknowledgments consists of 100 acknowledgments (50 for each set of English and Italian corpora) collected from 50 English and 19 Italian research journals written in six academic fields (i.e., three social sciences and three natural sciences ).

The study (Giannoni, 2002) reveals that while the Italian acknowledgments are more elaborate than the English ones regarding the move structure, English employs more variation in wording. Moreover, while impersonal constructions are higher in percentage in Italian acknowledgments, English thanking expressions appear more with direct constructions of thanking. One of the findings of the study that Giannoni states is the difference in focus between the corpora. He (2002, p.25) argues that the focus of acknowledgements is on “help” in English acknowledgements, but on the “value” in Italian ones, which might be an indication of the “utilitarian” understanding of Anglo-Saxon academicians and the “value-favoured” understanding among Italian ones.

In Turkish and Iranian context, however, neither acknowledgements of research articles nor dissertation acknowledgements have been investigated in the fields of linguistics, applied linguistics or in English Language Teaching so far. This study will be addressing this gap in the Iranian context and will add a new dimension to the research on acknowledgments by examining the patterns of thanking in accordance with their addresses for the first time.

#### ***The socio-cultural context of the study***

To have a clear conception of the nature of gratitude and thankfulness in Persian dissertation acknowledgments, some light need to be shed on the broader socio-cultural context of thankfulness and gratitude as a communicative event. Fairclough (1995:112-29) emphasizes the centrality of the situational context by looking at issues related to the place of production of the text and the socio-cultural factors that go into producing and interpreting it. As the genre texts under analysis are produced and interpreted in relation to their cultural context, it is necessary to define culture. There are many definitions for culture because it can be conceptualized and defined from various perspectives .For instance, Samovar and Porter (1994) define culture as:

The deposit of knowledge ,experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, hierarchies, religions, roles, [...],and Material objects, and

possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations Through individual and group striving (p.11).

The cultural values, which are defined by Samovar and Porter (1994) as 'a set of' organized rules for making choices...' (p.15), specify and even constrain how members behave and interact in particular communicative contexts.

As the texts are produced by Iranian writers, it is supposed that the writers' cultural values and the socio-cultural context are complexly woven into the ideology presented in these texts. In this way, these socio-cultural factors are essential in understanding the writers' communicative purposes as they manifest their effects on the content choice and schematic structure of the texts, which are constructed in these situations (Kress, 1989:19). Therefore, the texts produced by Persian writers are assumed to be influenced by Persian culture-specific conceptual categories that include ,among others, religious affiliations and beliefs ,social customs and hierarchy, as well as commitments related to family, relatives and friends.

Regarding religious affiliations , the vast majority (95%) in Iran is Muslim and Persian speaking. The overwhelming majority of Iranians' practices are governed by Islamic prescriptions (Al-Ali, 2006: 694). In this regard, Harries (1958:40) points out that 'Islamic law embraces the whole range of personal and social life' in Iran. Despite regional differences in the religious specifics of adherents, Islam provides a framework within which Persians from all around the world tend to identify themselves as one people (Harris, 1958). Thus it is likely to argue that Islamic religion is one of the basic features of culture that has influence on the Iranian socio-cultural practices. Their social life, as Castleton (2006:76) points out, is generally regulated by religious percepts to the extent that social values are largely indistinguishable from religious values and practicing a communicative event tends to be derived from an inner need to satisfy religious beliefs.

The Iranian writers share a common heritage of Islamic values , amongst which are 'thanking' and 'paying gratitude'. Consequently, Islamic religion has prescribed a shared body of values and convictions for conduct related to paying gratitude that delineate and constrain the Persians' faith. Gratitude, according to McAuliffe (2003), is a moral marker usually paid in response to kindness. It is 'a spiritual and moral state of mind, spiritual in the sense of acknowledging the believer's obligations to the creator ,and moral in the sense of maintaining rightful conduct in relation to God and to those appointed by God [i.e.people]' (p.370). Gratitude is an attribute of divinity due to the fact that the Holy Qur'an mentioned ninety-nine names and titles for Allah(i.e .the most beautiful names that belong to Allah),one of which is al-fakur (meaning the All-Thankful).

While the Holy Qur'anic prescriptions and the prophetic sayings played a seminal role in promoting thankfulness to Allah and parents , the social customs and traditions, as well as commitments related to family, relatives and friends also helped to support and disseminate gratitude. The Iranian society has developed a set of shared understandings ,modes of actions that provide overarching principles for Iranian interaction considered appropriate for the individual needs and the desired ends the society sets for its members. This type of cultural grammar includes aspects of relationships between members of the Iranian society related to a system of rights, duties and favors in the form of behavior expressions realized in offering help, or services initiated and exchanged between persons. These kinds of help in turn normally set up obligations: the favored person has the duty to return the favor with something of equal value or preferably of a little greater value. In the case of Ph.D. dissertation writers, there are individuals who either do favors or have the duty to fulfill obligations for the writers. These individuals include, besides others, supervisors, other academics, wife, husband, parents, relatives and friends. To illustrate ,academic supervisors have a duty to supervise the thesis, provide critical feedback, and shape the reported work through their ideas and insights. This is considered by the supervisees as a favor which in turn elicits an obligation from them in the form of thanking and paying gratitude. In other words the supervisors and other academics are entitled to certain duties from their supervisees. Mutual obligations and favors are also demanded of those with kinship ties to the writers ,such as parents, wives, husbands ,brothers and sisters since the Muslim Iranian culture could be termed as 'a kinship culture'(Al-Ali, 2006: 707) Brothers are expected to be supportive morally. Therefore, one can say that there is a kind of 'corporateness' between the family members as they see themselves in relation to others, as members of groups (i.e .extended family), and are expected to sacrifice their own needs for the greater good of the group. Because it is taught that the individual achievement of the favored person is for the benefit of the family members (Rugh, 1985: 278-9).

Actually in Iran, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is little research on dissertation and no research on acknowledgements. This study is concerned with the identification of schematic moves and sub-moves (steps) that are specific to acknowledgement text of doctoral dissertation in the field of humanities. After identifying the patterns they were compared to find similarities and differences between generic structure of native and non-native acknowledgement texts. Results of this study can help EFL, ESP and EAP teachers to teach these patterns to students and students in turn can use these patterns in their writing. Syllabus designers also can include them in their writing. Syllabus designers also can include them in their syllabuses of EAP writing.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is there any difference between type and frequency of move structure in doctoral dissertation acknowledgements texts written by Iranian students in Persian and English in sub-disciplines of Humanities?
2. Is there any difference between type and frequency of steps in doctoral dissertation acknowledgements texts written by Iranian students in Persian and English in sub-disciplines of Humanities?
3. Is there any difference between acknowledgements scheme in doctoral dissertation written by Iranian students in Persian and English in sub-disciplines of Humanities?

Based on the above questions the following null hypotheses were constructed:

1. There is no difference between type and frequency of move structure in doctoral dissertation acknowledgement texts written by Iranian students in Persian and English in sub-disciplines of Humanities.
2. There is no difference between type and frequency of steps in doctoral dissertation acknowledgement texts written by Iranian students in Persian and English in sub-disciplines of Humanities.
3. There is no difference between acknowledgement scheme in doctoral dissertation written by Iranian students in Persian and English in sub-disciplines of Humanities.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Corpus construction and procedures*

A total of 100 acknowledgment sections written in Persian by doctoral Persian native speakers and English by doctoral English non-native speakers were selected for the present study. To minimize variations across disciplinary boundaries, the sample was restricted to acknowledgment sections covered humanities (social sciences, literature, geography, history, sociology, religion, English literature, English



Language Teaching, Linguistics, Translation) .Ten acknowledgment sections were analyzed from each of these ten academic disciplines. The length of the texts ranges from 74 to 784 words. The average was 216 words. The sections were written in Persian by Persian native speakers and English by English non-native speakers from Iran, Mashhad .Soft knowledge domains have been focused due to homogeneity of Persian and English Ph.D dissertations .The other reason for the focus on these disciplines is to consider Persian written acknowledgments that rely on localized input and compare it to English written acknowledgments by non-native speakers of English. To control rapid changes within any of the disciplines, the texts were selected from dissertations written over a period of fifteen years (1998 to 2013). Extracts were taken from this set of dissertation sections omitting the writers`names or any element that revealed anything about the identity of the people concerned.

#### ***Theoretical framework and procedures of data analysis***

To identify the genre component options available to Ph.D. acknowledgments writers that are used to articulate the communicative purposes of the dissertation acknowledgment texts and socio-cultural forces that give explanations for these generic resources and the lexico-grammatical devices used to realize these options, Bhatia`s (2004) notion of genre was employed which considers a genre text as a socio-cultural practice. Since no research, as far as I know has been carried out on acknowledgment genre in Persian texts to offer a grounded language identification and description of the acknowledgment genre component options and their lexico-grammatical textualization , Hyland`s (2004) coding scheme was utilized for a corpus of English dissertation acknowledgments written by postgraduate students ,with modifications and additions of certain moves. Hyland`s analysis is based on Swalean (1990) genre moves for article introductions which has been profitably extended by genre analysts to other academic genres .Genre analysis has been approached from different perspectives. Whether approached in terms of the existence and arrangement of obligatory and optional structural elements (Halliday & Hassan 1989: 63-4), or recognizable communicative events characterized by a set of consistent communicative purposes (Swales 1990: 58; Bhatia 1993: 13), or typification of rhetorical actions (Miller, 1984:151; Bazerman,1994:315-16), or regularities of staged, purposive social processes(Martin 1992, p.505), genre theory covers a lot in common ground (Bhatia 2004, p.22).Despite these seemingly different perspectives stimulated by different orientations, genre analysts study genre as a communicative linguistic behavior in a particular setting. It is characterized by identifiable communicative purposes that shape the schematic move options used by writers to construct the genre. Table 2 below provides a description of the modified coding scheme. The additions and modifications of Hyland`s coding scheme include the addition of five moves :` Opening`, `Thanking Allah (God)` ,` Invoking and Blessing`, `Closing` and` Signing off`.

All of the acknowledgements texts were first electronically scanned and converted to computer text files. Each of the texts was then coded for the generic moves by the researcher herself. After discussing and presenting a definition of each move, I asked another trained linguist to code a sample of thirty texts. On a check of inter-rater reliability , the two raters had an agreement rate of 91% in identifying and categorizing the moves on 30 (30%) selected acknowledgements. Quantitative analysis of linguistic features and their frequencies within moves was then performed. The component moves which appeared most frequently in my analysis of post-graduate student acknowledgements are listed in Table 1.

The role of the socio-cultural perspectives that contribute to the construction and interpretation of this discourse genre were also investigated. These perspectives cover a range of features such as beliefs, norms and conventions, which in turn give rise to the unstated behavioral principles (Bhatia 2004: 25) on the part of the members of a particular academic or professional group when they participate in social or academic communicative events .According to Bhatia (2004:20), the emphasis at this level of analysis tended to extend the analysis beyond the textual product to include the broad socio-cultural context to account for the way text is constructed and often interpreted , used, and exploited in specific institutional or academic contexts to achieve particular communicative purposes.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Genre analysis is used here to find out the component rhetorical moves and the lexico-grammatical devices post-graduate students utilize to construct an acknowledgement text. The analysis of the generic structure of Persian acknowledgements accompanying Ph.D. dissertations has shown eight-move components (see table 1).The texts analyzed demonstrated differences in the number and frequency of moves employed, as well as the type of component moves included. In the corpora analyzed, the moves higher up the list usually made their first appearance before those lower down. There were , however, some exceptions. Move 5,`Thanking for Moral Support, sometimes, occurred before Move 4,`Acknowledging Access to Resources, and Move 6,`Invoking and Blessing`tended to appear immediately after the thanking moves 3,4,5.

*Table 1: Component Moves of Acknowledgements*

Component Moves of Persian Acknowledgements, n=100	No .of Moves	
	Persian	English
1.Opening	25	0
2.Praising and Thanking Allah(God)	70	30
3.Thanking Supervisor(s) and other academics	100	100
4.Acknowledging Access to Resources	62	64
5.Thanking for Moral Support	61	61
6.Invoking and Blessing	48	0
7.Accepting responsibility    (closing)	0	42
8.Dedication    (Closing)	10	20

The individual components of the acknowledgements section genre found in the corpora are presented. The frequency of each component and the order in which these individual components occur are given in Table 1.

#### ***Opening***

The first component of the Persian acknowledgments examined was the `Opening`. It occurred in \_\_\_\_\_ percent of the sample. This component opens with one of the following options as is shown in Table 2:

*Table 2: Distribution of opening options across Corpus*

Opening Option	Frequency in Persian	Frequency in English
Qur`anic verse	8%	0
Prophetic saying	5%	0



Prayers on the Prophet	6%	0
Invocation followed by the formulary	6%	0
Expression <i>wa-baad (and then)</i>		
Total	25%	0

### ***Praising and thanking Allah***

This component occurred in 70 percent of the Persian acknowledgements analyzed. When employed, it generally occupies the first position in comparison to other thanking component options. This component contains expressions of gratitude, and praise to Allah (God) for his favors; one of these bounties is making the completion of the Ph.D. dissertation task possible. The corpus revealed that the praising expressions and gratitude are both prevalent in the corpus of 70 percent of Persian texts while only 30 percent of English majors corpus (written in English) revealed phrases of praising and gratitude to Allah.

*Table 3 : Expressions of Praising and Thanking Allah*

Expression Type	Frequency in Farsi	Freq in English
Praising phrases	35%	5%
Thanking phrases	15%	10%
Praising followed by Thanking phrases	20%	15%
Total	70%	30%

### ***Thanking supervisors and other academics***

The aim of this component is to pay off one's intellectual debts to individuals who have made significant intellectual influence and contributions of various kinds such as originating the idea of the thesis, shaping the reported work through their ideas and insights, or providing critical feedback. Further, it reflects a rich mix of personal, moral, intellectual stimulation provided by intellectual, and conceptual support received from members of the discourse community ( i.e. principle dissertation advisors, doctoral committee members, senior academics, and instructors ). This component registers personal and 'behind the scenes' interactions. It also gives insights into the values and attitudes of the discourse community and the relationship between the individual and the world of academia .Since this component is the only step that has been found in all texts, it can be considered an obligatory constituent.

The corpus showed that the acknowledgers tend to exploit elaborate and deferential patterns of thanks and gratitude expressions especially to their supervisors. They utilize overt forms of thanks expressed mainly through nominalization, or a performative act to realize this component as shown in Table 4.

*Table 4: Patterns Expressing 'Thanking Supervisors and Other Academics'*

Form	occurrences	Frequency
I.nominalization	307	85%
1.Conjoined synonyms other than 'thanks'	92	30%
2.'Thanks'conjoined with other synonyms	215	70%
II.performative verbs	46	15%
Total	353	100%

### ***Acknowledging access to resources***

This component includes thanks and gratitude addressed to participant subjects and those who avail or provide access to data, technical assistance, clerical help (e.g. proofreading, typing , and statistical analysis),financial support ,or facilities that are necessary for the academic study. This step occurred in 62 percent of the acknowledgements analyzed and generally followed component 3.To repay some of the assistance received to accomplish their degree ,dissertation writers tend to use overt expressions of thanks which involve either a bare performative verb 'I thank' without an introductory preface ,which accounted for 40% of all forms or its simple nominalization 'thanks' (45%).

### ***Thanking for moral support***

This category collates expressions of feelings of gratitude for psychological, spiritual, and moral support, encouragement, patience and care received from family members, relatives, friends and colleagues during the period of study. In particular, the data analyzed showed that this category allows the writers to thank parents for their love, supplications and invoking; wife/husband for patience, sacrifice, love and care; children for patience; brothers, sisters and relatives for love and moral support; and friends for help, psychological support and hospitality.

The data revealed that commitment to the social community represented by the extended family ( i.e. father, mother, brothers, and sisters), relatives and friends was evident in 61% of the texts analyzed. Virtually most of the moral support moves employed in the corpus contained at least a word of gratitude to one's parents who were mentioned before other members of family. This high frequency can be explained with reference to religious affiliations as the first thing that Allah enjoins upon man is to show gratitude to Him and to one's parents.

### ***Invoking and blessing***

Another favored strategy is invoking God's (Allah's) favors upon acknowledgees. This act includes requests of Allah's bestowal of divine favor on an addressee to protect and guard him/her from evil thereby bringing him/her happiness. Invoking and blessing are generally fulsome , often even lavish, virtually in this corpus ; they occurred in over half of the acknowledgements analyzed. It is interesting ,however, that this strategy carries explicit interpersonal connotations, similar to patterns of complimenting behavior at speech events, such as phatic conversation (Holmes, 1995; wolfson, 1989 [quoted in Hyland, 2000:53]). However, there are not direct invoking and blessing in the corpus (Farsi & English) but still we can find it in the Opening and Thanking Allah and Supervisors and academics. Neither of these invocations is arbitrary; they are part of their culture reflecting their realm of thought. 'It may seem obvious that words with special culture- specific meanings reflect and pass on not only ways of living characteristic of a given society but also ways of thinking'(Wierzbica, 1997,p.5).

A significant issue related to this strategy is the fact that more than 80 percent of the writers who included this component chose this strategy to supplement the 'Thanking Move', particularly thanking supervisors and academics. Further, this component does not occur only once in each acknowledgement genre. Most often the writers opted for a composite 'Thanking' followed by Invoking and Blessing'; this pattern is repeated several times. That is to say, when an acknowledgee is thanked, this act is often supplemented by invocations.

#### *Closing*

Instead of ending abruptly, about half of the writers (42%) add a sentence or a few to conclude the whole text in order to give it a sense of completeness. This move was present in only English dissertation acknowledgements and was not present on the other Persian corpus, and always followed the Thanking move when it did occur. For the writers who employed it, this move provided a means of publicly making a declaration of their authorial accountability for the dissertation's contents or dedicating the work to an esteemed individual, although the two steps never occurred together.

#### *Accepting responsibility*

By clearly stating their responsibility for possible shortcomings in the data, results, and ideas in a dissertation, writers not only seek to absolve their advisors and collaborators of blame for any deficiencies, they also assert their ownership of the product. This implication is clear in the juxtaposition of assistance and independence often seen in this step:

-I have received much useful advice throughout the writing of my thesis, but all the faults that remain are obstinately my own. (Ling. PhD)  
-Notwithstanding all of the above support for this project, any errors and/or omissions are solely my own. (Elt. PhD)

Accepting responsibility therefore clearly redresses the impression of dispersed responsibility or uncertain authorship which may have been given in the Thanking move and functions to re-establish the student's rights to be regarded as an independent researcher.

#### *Dedicating the thesis*

Only a handful of texts included this step, and perhaps for this reason it stands out as a particularly warm and heartfelt act of thanks unrelated to any rhetorical intent. Here writers borrow a device they have seen in books, although virtually unknown in academic papers, to offer a tribute to people who have made a special contribution to their lives beyond the confines of the research context:

-I would like to dedicate this dissertation especially to my parents for both of them have thought me the meaning of life and its significance.

Here the formal conventions of academic writing and the rhetorical strategies of self-promotion are laid briefly aside and the writer is able to present him or herself in a way which corresponds more closely to a more familiar social identity. In this step we find an attempt to both break free of the restrictions of dissertation discourses and to put the completed research experience into a wider perspective.

### **CONCLUSION**

The preceding snapshot of the component strategies that are employed offers insights about Persian dissertation acknowledgement genre with its discourse structures and the linguistic choices that tend to occur in this genre. In order to understand the rationale governing the rhetorical construction, which in turn reflects the communicative purpose of this genre, I now turn to discuss socio-cultural values and academic constraints that give rise to both the template strategic potential components and the lexical choices available to the writers evidenced in this corpus.

#### *Socio-cultural factors affecting the acknowledgement schematic components*

A discursive look at the generic components, which are ritually drawn upon in writing the acknowledgement texts, displays some of the religious and socio-cultural motivations for the behavioral strategic choices to articulate the communicative purpose of this genre. For way of illustration, twenty-five instances of this genre were initiated with an 'Opening' based on Qur'anic verses or Prophetic sayings. Evidently, although this option does not have a high frequency of occurrence (25%), it is in no means being considered arbitrary. The instances used to express this move seem to reflect the Qur'anic and Prophetic sayings, which focus on the centrality of praise and thankfulness to Allah (God). The centrality of the concept of Allah is fully fledged and reflected in the 'Thanking Allah' component, where seventy percent of the writers present their thankfulness and gratitude to Allah. The examples related to this strategic option show that the writers tend to contemplate Allah's right of praise and gratitude upon them because Allah is thought the source of inspiration, health, patience, perseverance and strength. According to the Qur'anic prescriptions, thanking and praising Allah for his munificence result in increasing the graces of Allah and getting very close to His mercy.

'If you are grateful, I [your Lord] will add more favors unto you; but if you show ingratitude, truly My punishment is terrible indeed.' (Ali 1989:605)

Religious affiliation is further reinforced by the sixth component, Invoking and Blessing'. Calling upon Allah to bless the acknowledgees, the writers usually employ invocations to supplement the thanking components addressed to their supervisors (i.e. Move 3), and to those who were of help in access to data (i.e. Move 4). That is to say, the acknowledgers do not employ thanking and gratitude acts, but these acts are also often supplemented by invocations. Cycles of this pattern including Component 3 or 4 followed by invoking and blessing element reoccur. Such cyclicity could be explained with reference to the cultural belief that 'the word of thanks by itself is not usually a sufficient response to a Farsi compliment and needs to be complemented by additional words' (Nelson et al. 1996, p. 429). This behavior also comes out in the 'Closing' (Move 7), where it is sometimes expressed by a sentence or a stretch of sentences having roots in the Holy Qur'an containing either supplications and/or praises for Allah to bless the writers and to bring them more success. Therefore these strategic components in this paper can be seen as contextualization cues that bring about the impact of religious beliefs and values of the writers.

Acknowledgement texts also furnish indications about the social system of favors and obligations constraining the acknowledgement behavior of the writers. For instance, in the 'Thanking for Moral Support' Move, the writers thank their wives for supporting and serving the daily nurturing of their family while their husbands are being heavily engaged in preparing their theses. In Muslim culture or collectivistic one such as the culture in this study, where in groups take precedence over individual (Triandis 1983), family members see their happiness as resting in the realization of certain corporate purposes: in experiencing a satisfying family, and in exerting efforts to strengthen and coalesce family ties. Likewise, the system of favors and obligations sets up a kind of moral obligation on Iranian Muslim family members who have affective kinship ties to the writers, such as parents, brothers and sisters to support the Ph.D. writers by supplications and invoking, as well as financial support which is returned in the form of thanking and paying gratitude. Thus, one can claim that there is a kind of 'corporateness' between the family members, seeing themselves as members of an in group (i.e. extended family) who are expected to sacrifice their own needs for the greater good of the group. That is because in-group thinks that the individual achievement of the acknowledged person is for the benefit of the group. Similarly, Mursy and Wilson (2001: 138) point out that Iranian Muslim society, 'which basically derives its values from Islam, elevates the group above the individual and values responsibilities and obligations towards the

community'. However, while the Iranian social ideology values corporateness, and sacrifice to fulfill the extended family's goals, a fundamental truth for Westerners is associated with individualism, equal rights and the chances to realize individual goals (Rugh 1985, pp.276-77).

In contrast to Western view, the nature of interaction and social relationships practiced by the graduate students seems to show similarity with non-Western way of viewing interpersonal relations in which politeness functions at the level of society rather than at the level of individuals. For instance, Gu (1990) endorses its normative constraints on each individual' (p.242). Accordingly, individuals behave in conformity with culturally expected norms that are institutionalized by the society. That is to say they place the society's face above their individual desires. As pointed out by Foley (1997), Chinese can be characterized as sociocentric. In such cultures 'the individual and his autonomy are not singled out as the local understanding of person; rather his embeddedness in the social context is the stuff of this definition as a person' (p.266).

If a comparison is drawn between the results obtained from analyzing the generic structure of Farsi and English acknowledgements written by Iranian native speakers and those reported in Hyland's (2004) study of Ph.D. dissertation acknowledgements, one can claim that there are differences as well as similarities. There are general similarities in schematic component moves with respect to the thanking moves (Thanking supervisors, and Thanking for data access, clerical and technical support, and for moral support). Thus, it might be argued that the use of these generic components (i.e. Hyland's model) in the Persian texts may give an impression of the influence of the western practice which might have been imitated by the acknowledgers who either have been taught by instructors having been influenced by the western practice, or having had an idea about acknowledgements written by western authors. Another explanation is that both Farsi and English acknowledgement data share general communicative purpose (i.e. acknowledging credit to anyone who has helped in any way) which is, in turn, articulated by these similar thanking generic moves. Related to this justification is that academic genres, to a certain extent, transcend the territorial constraints of ethno-cultural allegiance (Widdowson 1990) and linguistic borders. Accordingly, it is anticipated that Farsi and English texts develop some similar tendencies to articulate the general communicative purpose of their academic discourse community.

Although both Farsi writers and the non-native speakers of English employed similar thanking schematic moves, Farsi writers' data exhibit cultural specific differences in the use of generic resources in terms of the type of rhetorical component choices, naming practices and organization conventions. With regard to the first point, the Farsi writers tend to use certain components such as 'Opening', 'Thanking Allah', 'Invoking and Blessing', 'Closing' and 'Signing off' which is subcategorized to accepting responsibility and Dedication of thesis that do not surface in the English texts analyzed by Hyland (2004) except for the final steps of dedication and accepting the responsibility. The researcher has found out this subtle difference between Farsi and English written texts; while there are opening and thanking Allah, and invoking in the Farsi texts, the closing stages are missing on the other hand, there is no opening and invoking and only 20% 'thanking Allah' move in the English texts also last stages of closing move are present i.e. the writers accepted their responsibility and dedicated their work to their loved ones. The occurrence of these additional components in Farsi texts reverberates and reinforces the socio-cultural proclivities of the Muslim Iranian writers explained at the beginning of this section. These culture specific-preferred patterns of discourse also reinforce Hyland's (2005:197) view that there is 'considerable variation in the role played by meta discourse in similar genres written in different cultures', as different cultures have different expectations for writing.

As for the second observation, the heading of the Persian acknowledgements has not achieved the same degree of uniformity in terms of naming conventions as it is the case in English. That is because various nomenclatures are sometimes used as titles for the Persian acknowledgement section. To illustrate, the title of this section presents writers with several options, the most frequent of which (70%) is 'Thanks and Appreciation'. Other options are 'a word of thanks' (12%), 'thanks and dedication' (8%), or simply a one word title 'Thanks' (5%). Sometimes, this section is included under the heading of other sections such as the 'Introduction', or mingled with the 'Dedication' section. In other words, the title has not gained a large degree of uniformity in comparison with its English counterpart.

The third point is the observation that the Persian acknowledgements seem to incorporate a number of epistolary conventions of professional letter genre such as the 'Opening', 'Closing', and Signing off as well as 'Thanking for Allah' moves. This was shown in the way twenty-five percent of the Persian acknowledgements are prefaced with the 'Opening', e.g., 'In the name of Allah'. Then Praising for Allah occurred in nearly 70% of the Persian acknowledgments. The 'Closing' and 'Signing off' move was merely evident in 42% of the English instances in the form of accepting the responsibility or Dedication of the thesis. While comparing to Arabic acknowledgements written by Al- Ali (2004), the Closing move was evident in fifty-two percent of the instances that typically close with ritualistic praises and supplications for Allah. Likewise, the 'Signing off' move which is placed at the end of the Arabic texts occurred in 20% of the Arabic acknowledgements. These components reflect the epistolary conventions of Persian professional letters. This tendency suggests that not all of the genre components included in the Persian acknowledgements are an exclusive property of this particular genre since some ingredient components are likely to be found in other well-established genres. Therefore, one may conclude that these lexical, and generic component options seem to be appropriated (Bhatia 2004:87-88) to shape a new generic form.

The generic structure which is the overall organization of the acknowledgement text reveals how each component of the text contributes to the overall communicative function of conveying gratitude and thankfulness. The analysis of the corpus revealed that acknowledgement texts comprise a common rhetorical schematic structure built around an eight staged meaningful basic component moves: Opening > Praising and Thanking Allah > Thanking Supervisors and other Academics > Acknowledging Access to Resources > Thanking for Moral Support > Invoking and Blessing > Closing -accepting responsibility-dedication. However, no single corpus sample neither contained all of these components nor presented them in this order.

The data also exhibit cultural specific differences in the use of generic and lexical resources. It was observed that the Persian writers tend to use certain components such as 'Opening', 'Thanking Allah', 'Invoking and Blessing', components that are absent in the English texts. Another remark is that conventionally accepted generic forms seem to have given way to accommodate newly accepted practices. This is evinced in the tendency that Iranian Muslim writers exploit some generic conventions of another well-established genre, to communicate socially and academically accepted communicative purposes. This study also has shown that the type of components included in most of the acknowledgements analyzed shows a predisposition to resort to the socio-cultural values which can be attributed to the ideology that characterizes most distinguished of Iranian society. At the same time, as already mentioned, some generic practices or writing habits have been borrowed from the West. Sell (1991) believes that 'it is not true to say that people in one culture can never have the faintest idea of what people in other cultures feel' [and that] 'people in different cultures can never feel the same things exactly' (p.14).

This paper examined (1) how the Persian L1 writers express their thanks, (2) the influence of situational and socio-cultural factors on the choice and (3) the lexico-grammatical options available to them. However, much work remains to be done to find out the boundaries

between personal rhetorical choices available to writers, the options related to the socio-cultural constraints, the ideas borrowed from other dissertations, and those due to the general academic conventions that transcend socio-cultural allegiance. We need qualitative research based on personal interviews with the writers of the acknowledgement genre to tease out their consciousness of their rhetorical choices in the process of production of these texts. The research needs also to be extended to other disciplines, such as hard sciences in Persian, and to other languages to compare and contrast how gratitude is expressed. Also, the impact on genre patterns of situational factors such as the author's age, gender, seniority, and publishing experience can be examined. Clearly, we need to examine writers, readers and texts in greater detail to tease out the limits of personal choice and the kinds of effect they can have. The effort is worthwhile for it will help to ensure that students understand the options available to them and the effects of manipulating these options for interactional purposes.

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## ABSTRACT

Among other factors that affect translators' mind while producing a text, their spiritual intelligence level might be an influential element. The present study tries to discover whether there is any significant relationship between translators' spiritual intelligence level, and the quality of religious texts translation they produce. The research also investigated the relationship between spiritual intelligence components and quality of translation. To this end, a sample of 42 male and female BA graduated students of English Translation Studies comprised the participants of the study. The participants received a package of four tests: a translation test and two sets of questionnaires were used one to measure the spiritual intelligence level and the other to determine the favorite genre of the subjects for translating. An additional Test of English as a Foreign Language also was applied in order to determine the subjects' English foreign language proficiency level. The research questions were analyzed using Pearson correlation test. The findings of the study revealed that there was no significant relationship between the level of spiritual intelligence of translators and the quality of their translation and between spiritual components only critical existential thinking and transcendental awareness can be positive predictors of the quality of English to Persian translations of religious texts. The analysis also showed that females' spiritual intelligence is significantly higher than average score among males and level of spiritual intelligence cannot be a good predictor to determine the translators' favorite genre.

**KEYWORDS:** Spiritual Intelligence, Quality of translation, TOEFL test

## INTRODUCTION

Human beings have different abilities which have significant roles in their overall performance and behavior. Ignoring the impact of these factors makes the understanding and interpretation of behavior difficult. "Undoubtedly, in the era of communication and dialogue among civilizations, translation as a human behavior occupies a crucial role in transferring different ideas among different nations" (Shangarffam & Abolsaba, 2009, p. 103).

Translation is a phenomenon that has a crucial effect on people's life. It has been regarded as an art, craft, and science by various scholars during the history (Ordudari, 2008). According to Newmark, "translation is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text" (1988, p. 5). But, the problem is that translation is not as easy as it seems. Even in a single language, choosing synonymous words is a difficult task.

According to Edmonds (1998) "When it admits more than one lexicalization, it is often difficult to choose which of these 'synonyms' is the most appropriate for achieving the desired pragmatic goals" (p. 507). In the case of religious texts, the difficulties are expanded. Translating religious texts is a difficult activity for a variety of reasons: firstly, there is a huge chronological gap separating the original text, its culture, language and context, from the target text and audience; secondly, there is the issue of revelation, and the divine nature of the text (Williams & Chesterman, 2002); thirdly, "centuries of veneration have given them [religious texts] a thick overlay of meanings" (Long, 2005, p. 3); finally, although not exhaustively, "the semantic space required in the target language can already be occupied, and the vocabulary and grammatical structures available to convey the message may already be "culturally loaded with indigenous referents" (Long, 2005, p.1).

Generally translation is not a simple process that only requires transforming words from one language into another. As Chen (2007) asserts, "it is unquestionable that the process of translation needs to engage in a great deal of decision-making activities". Levy claims that the process of translation is similar to the process of playing the game of chess (as cited in Venuti, 2000). Considering the process of decision-making in translation as a particularly complex procedure, Willis suggests that the translator should pay his attention on to the factors that lead to choices, rather than on the choices themselves (as cited in Baker, 1997). He further indicates that the final decision depends on a host of factors. Furthermore recent studies (Murphy, 2006) made it obvious that translation has always gone hand in hand with so many factors, thus it should be studied along with other fields, and it is not separated from them. One of the fields that can have a close relationship with translation is psychology. No one can deny the role of memory, language competence, world knowledge, experience, and practice in the success of a translator. The translator has his own feeling about language and his translation. This feeling consists of a 'sixth sense' and also it includes intelligence and sensitivity as well as knowledge (Newmark, 1988). The combination of all these feelings comes into play in the task of translation. "Translation is an activity of intelligence requiring creative problem-solving in novel, textual, social, and cultural conditions", (Robinson, 1997, p. 51). But what *kind* of intelligence does it utilize? Gardner defines intelligence as "the ability to find and solve problems, the ability to respond successfully to a new situation and the capacity to learn from one's past experiences" (1983, p. 21). He has proposed eight intelligences, including linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, naturalist, and bodily-kinesthetic (Gardner, 1983, 1993, 1999). Recent decades have also observed broad literature on social and emotional intelligences which describe cognitive abilities of emotional perception on intra- and inter-personal levels (Gardner, 1983; Mayer, 1990). As Gardner (1983) explains, "owing to heredity, early training, or, in all probability, a constant interaction between these factors, some individuals will develop certain intelligences far more than others; but every normal individual should develop each intelligence to some extent, given but a modest opportunity to do so" (p. 278). This means that teachers can now add a new role to their traditional ones: they should activate the less developed types of intelligence in each learner as well as to optimize and draw upon those types that are already active, in order to enhance students' educational opportunities and options (Martins, 2011). Among the intelligences proposed, the concept of *spiritual intelligence* (SI) has remained a forerunner in the past decade (Emmons, 2000 a; Nasel, 2004; Wolman, 2001; Zohar & Marshall, 2000). Vaughan (2002) defined SI as the ability to give meaning which is based on deep understanding and the awareness of existential questions, and the ability to use multiple levels of consciousness in problem solving. Using Gardner's definition of intelligence, Emmons (2000 b) argues that spirituality is a form of intelligence. He claims that spirituality predicts functioning and adaptation as demonstrated by correlations of spirituality with improved health or well-being. As noted above, development of multiple intelligences by Gardner (1983) motivated language educators began to explore the relationship between multiple intelligence (MI) and language learning/teaching, although it has never, to our knowledge, been applied to translator training (Martins, 2011).



The aim of the present study is to investigate the relationship between spiritual intelligence and translation. There are several purposes for this study: first, as the available literature in Iran is low on empirical research on the relationship between translation and spiritual intelligence, the scarcity of research and a need for spirituality in learning and teaching situations necessitates undertaking a study in this field. Second, if the translators' spiritual intelligence can help the translator in perception of the text connotative meaning which is purely associated with the non-literal senses of a word (Yule, 1996) and affects the translation quality, the translators will try to improve this aspect of themselves.

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### *Multiple Intelligences*

Psychological testing has remained a critical tool that school psychologists use to assist in educational, behavioral and vocational decision-making (Hu & Oakland, 1991). And also the concepts of multiple intelligence and learning style are widely encountered and used today in education, business, arts and other areas of daily life. There is a substantial research on multiple intelligences and learning style in different fields and with different purposes. As suggested by an assumption, combining individual multiple intelligences and learning style in education may help students learn in fields other than those in which they are strong (Silver et al., 1997). Multiple intelligences concept introduced by Gardner (1983). He argues that high scores in mathematics and language tests cannot alone serve as a proof of human intelligence. Intelligence is something beyond the scores made in standard paper-and-pencil tests used to estimate success at schools. In other words, traditional intelligence tests cannot measure the abilities of a chess player, an athlete or a violinist. Gardner (2004) maintains that intelligence incorporates too many abilities not to be explained by a single factor. He describes intelligence as the capacity of an individual to create products that are valued in one or more cultural settings, his/her skill to produce effective and efficient solutions to problems in daily life and also his/her ability to discover new and complex problems demanding solutions (as cited in Saban, 2004). Gardner (1983) first defined seven different types of intelligence and then introduced "naturalistic intelligence" as the eighth type. Regarding human's different types of dominant intelligences, therefore, it seems inevitable that the theory of multiple intelligences will influence curriculum, learning approaches and assessment-evaluation processes. Considering the translator as a learner, Robinson (1997) puts forward that "translation is an intelligent activity involving complex processes of conscious and unconscious learning" (p. 49). He maintains that, "translation is an intelligent activity, requiring creative problem-solving in novel, textual, social, and cultural conditions" (p. 51); but what kind of intelligence does it utilize?. It may seem that translators and interpreters are intelligent *only* linguistically; as if the only intelligence they need on their work as translators are the ability to understand and produce language. It is not. Technical translators need high spatial and logical/mathematical intelligence as well. Interpreters need high bodily-kinesthetic and personal intelligence. Translators of song lyrics need high musical intelligence.

### *Spiritual Intelligence*

Spiritual intelligence (SI) is one of the human abilities that distinct human from the other beings. According to Amram (2009), spiritual intelligence is a kind of ability that causes self-consciousness, self-control, profound understanding of meaning of life, purposefulness, increase in peace, the ability to communicate effectively with others and mental health. Spiritual intelligence does not refer to a specific religious orientation. So in this part, the concentration is on the reviewing of theorists' viewpoints about definitions, dimensions and the studies done to establish a connection between spiritual intelligence and human's some different behaviors. Spiritual intelligence (SI) is one of the human abilities that distinct human from the other beings and it is a difficult term to define. As Crichton asserts that "there are a lot of challenges to define and describe spiritual intelligence: what is it, how it functions, and whether it can be learned or improved; though none of the authors addressed all of these issues" (2008, p. 8). Spiritual intelligence as a new dimension of human intelligence has been presented by Zohar and Marshall and linked the term "SQ" (spiritual quotient) that stands for Spiritual Intelligence. He believes that SQ becomes the fundamental basis of effective usage of EQ and IQ as being argued by people. It is also been denoted by people as the intelligence of the soul. One's IQ comes from the reasonable and logical thinking while EQ derives from the associated habit-bound and pattern awareness emotional thinking. A person's creativeness, understanding, rule-formulating skill and rule breaking thinking reframe and alter our previous thinking that further provides a person the SQ. SQ permits an individual to include a greater, profound and more affluent context to the present just like the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts. There is no such essential connection with organized religion as to the term "*spiritual*" relative to intelligence.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is there any significant relationship between EFL learners' spiritual Intelligence and the quality of their English to Persian translations of religious texts?
2. Is there any significant relationship between components of spiritual intelligence (critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, transcendental awareness, and conscious state expansion) and the quality of EFL learners' English to Persian translations of religious texts?
3. Is there any significant relationship between EFL learners' spiritual Intelligence and their gender?
4. Is there any significant relationship between EFL learners' level of spiritual intelligence and their favorite genre?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants of the research*

The target sample of the current study included male and female EFL graduate students of English translation studies living in Dargaz, Iran. The present study relied on a self-selected sample of participants which fell, into the category of opportunity/convenience-sampling in that it relied upon suitable participants in the local to be recruited via correspondence. To remove the effect of EFL level as a variable which might have affected the quality of translation, firstly, participants were homogenized through a sample of a TOEFL test. About 55 graduate students from Dargaz took part in this study, but data from 19 participants were discarded due to EFL proficiency test, reducing the number of sample to 42.

### *Instrumentation*

In order to conduct the study and to investigate the proposed hypotheses, ie, to investigate the variables types of spiritual translation, the researcher used some sets of tests including a rendering and transferring test of translation, and a questionnaire to measure the EFL learners' SI level and also the genre preference of the subjects. An additional TOEFL test was also applied in order to determine the subjects' EFL proficiency level.

#### Procedure

The following steps were taken to accomplish the purpose of the study: First, to ensure the sample's homogeneity, a sample TOEFL test was administered to 55 students among which 42 students whose scores fell within one standard deviation above and below of the mean of the TOEFL test were selected. The participants were all allowed to use any kind of dictionary they desired. First, the translation test was administered to the participants and once each participant had finished the assignment, s/he was given the questionnaires to fill. The time allocated for administering the translation test was 60 minutes and it took 15 minutes to answer the questionnaires. The spiritual intelligence questionnaire had a fixed scoring rubric provided by its designer, and the Khanmohammad and Osanloo's (2009) model was used to rate the translations. To avoid subjectivity as a major problem in scoring the translations, three different raters rated the learners' translations. Therefore, each participant's translation score was the average of the scores given by the three raters.

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To investigate the first hypothesis, that is, there is no relationship between the spiritual intelligence and the quality of EFL learners' English to Persian translations of religious texts, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the obtained Scores on Translation Test, and Spiritual intelligence

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Translation	73.05	18.407	42
SI	60.74	13.245	42

As it can be seen, table 1 shows the results of variables of religious translation and SI. The mean and standard deviation of religious translation are 73.05 and 18.407 respectively. Also, another variable; the mean and standard deviation of SI are 60.74 and 13.245 respectively. Therefore, it should be noted that the difference between these two variables was not significant. In order to find the difference, the researcher conducted Pearson Correlation Test between these two variables.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Test between Translation and SI

		Translation	SI
Translation	Pearson Correlation	1	.221
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.160
	N	42	42
SI	Pearson Correlation	.221	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.160	
	N	42	42

Table 2 shows the Pearson Correlation Test between religious translation and SI. As the table indicates, the level of significance is .160 and is more than threshold 0.05. Therefore; the present results did not reject the first hypothesis. In fact, the relationship between religious translation and SI are not significant. To address the second hypothesis, there is no significant relationship between critical existential thinking and the quality of EFL learners' English to Persian translations of religious texts, the following analysis was conducted.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of the obtained Scores on Translation Test, and CET (Critical Existential Thinking)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Translation	73.05	18.407	42
CET	17.45	4.203	42

As it can be seen, table 3 illustrates the results of variables of religious translation and CET as components of SI. The mean and standard deviation of religious translation are 73.05 and 18.407 respectively. Also, another variable; the mean and standard deviation of CET as component of SI are 17.45 and 4.203 respectively.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Test between Translation and CET

		translation	CET
Translation	Pearson Correlation	1	.751**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	42	42
CET	Pearson Correlation	.751**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	42	42

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above table

illustrates Pearson Correlation Test. As the table indicates, the level of significance is .000 and less than threshold 0.01. Therefore, the relationship between religious translation and CET as components of SI is significant. The correlation between translation and CET are equal to 0.751 and correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). So the results reject the null hypothesis.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of the obtained Scores on Translation Test, and PMP (Personal Meaning Production)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Translation	73.05	18.407	42
PMP	14.24	3.818	42

As it can be seen, table 5 illustrates the results of variables of religious translation and PMP as components of SI. The mean and standard deviation of religious translation are 73.05 and 18.407 respectively. Also, another variable; the mean and standard deviation of PMP as component of SI are 14.24 and 3.818 respectively. Therefore, it should be noted that the difference between these two variables was not significant. In order to find the difference, the researcher conducted Pearson Correlation Test between these two variables.

Table 6: Pearson Correlation Test between Translation and PMP

		Translation	PMP
Translation	Pearson Correlation	1	.111
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.483
	N	42	42
PMP	Pearson Correlation	.111	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.483	
	N	42	42

As the table shows, the level of significance is more than threshold level of 0.05. Therefore, there are not any relationship between religious translation and PMP. So the obtained results support the null hypothesis, that is, There is no relationship between personal meaning production and the quality of EFL learners' English to Persian translations of religious texts.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics of the obtained Scores on Translation Test, and TA (Transcendental Awareness)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Translation	73.05	18.407	42
TA	17.10	4.259	42

As it can be seen, table 7 illustrates the results of variables of religious translation and TA as components of SI. The mean and standard deviation of religious translation are 73.05 and 18.407 respectively. Also, another variable; the mean and standard deviation of TA as component of SI are 17.10 and 4.259 respectively. In order to find the difference, the researcher conducted Pearson Correlation Test between these two variables.

Table 8: Pearson Correlation Test between Translation and TA

		Translation	TA
translation	Pearson Correlation	1	.327*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.035
	N	42	42
TA	Pearson Correlation	.327*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.035	
	N	42	42

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The above table indicates Pearson Correlation Test between these two variables. As the table shows, the level of significance is .035 and less than 0.05. Therefore, the Pearson coefficient for the relationship between religious translation and TA is .327, and it is positive. This tells us that, as religious translation increases, TA increases. Thus, our hypothesis indicated that "there is no significant relationship between transcendental awareness and the quality of EFL learners' English to Persian translations of religious texts was rejected.

*Table 9: Descriptive Statistics of the obtained Scores on Translation Test, and CSE (Conscious State Expansion)*

translation	73.05	18.407	42
CSE	11.74	3.596	42

Also, in the above table shows the mean and standard deviation of these two variables. The mean of religious translation and CSE are 73.05 and 11.74 respectively.

*Table 10: Pearson Correlation Test between Translation and CSE*

		Translation	CSE
Translation	Pearson Correlation	1	.012
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.940
	N	42	42
CSE	Pearson Correlation	.012	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.940	
	N	42	42

Table 10 indicates the Pearson Correlation Test between religious translation and CSE. As the table indicates, the level of significance is .940 and is more than threshold 0.05. Therefore, the relationship between religious translation and CSE are not significant. In fact, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between conscious state expansion and the quality of EFL learners' English to Persian translations of religious texts was not rejected.

#### ***Spiritual intelligence and Gender relationship***

To investigate the second hypothesis, that is, there is significant relationship between EFL learners' spiritual intelligence and their gender, according to their gender, the average score of the participants was calculated. The results are indicated in Table 11.

*Table 11: Descriptive Statistics of SI Scores according to gender*

Gender	N	Maximum Score	Minimum Score	Average
Female	23	82	36	62.45
Male	19	75	27	54.44

In this research, the strongest spiritual intelligence that girls had was 82 and the weakest intelligence score for them was 36. But about the males the strongest spiritual intelligence was 75 and the weakest intelligence score for them was 27. Comparing the average scores of two groups, the level of spiritual intelligence varies in people according to their gender. In this study, females with average score 62.45 have a higher spiritual intelligence than males with 54.44 average score. So the hypothesis is confirmed.

#### ***Spiritual intelligence and favorite genre relationship***

To examine the last hypothesis, that is, there is significant relationship between EFL learners' level of spiritual intelligence and their favorite genre, the participants were divided into two upper and lower groups according to their spiritual intelligence scores; and also their probable favorite genre was assumed through the questionnaire which was explained in details in the previous chapter. The results are indicated in percentage in the Table 12 Comparing two groups, we can see there is no significance different between upper and lower group according to their obtained scores in each genre. Unexpectedly, participants in lower group who enjoyed of lower spiritual intelligence were more interested in religious text translation than the upper group. But the differences were not significant. Thus, the hypothesis that "EFL learners who have high level of spiritual intelligence are intrinsically interested in translations of religious texts", was rejected.

*Table 12: Upper and Lower genre preference*

	Genre		
	Religious	literary	scientific
Upper group	%33.30	%28.5	%38.09
Lower group	%47.6	%19.04	%33.33

## CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the relationship between two sets of scores on a translation production test and a spiritual intelligence questionnaire which were obtained from the same participants. Based on the results of this study, the main null hypothesis was not rejected. In other words, the research provided evidence that there was not any significant relationship between the spiritual intelligence and the quality of English to Persian translations of religious texts. However, further studies may be required on this topic in order to draw more certain conclusions. In addition to the main hypothesis, the next claim that there was no correlation between the quality of English to Persian translations of religious texts and the components of spiritual intelligence, two of them were rejected and two confirmed. In simple terms, in spite of null hypotheses, there was significant relationship between CET (critical existential thinking) and the quality of EFL learners' English to Persian translations of religious texts and also between TA (transcendental awareness) and the quality of EFL learners' English to Persian translations of religious texts. But as predicted, there was no relationship between the other two components of spiritual intelligence, that is, PMP and CES and the quality of religious text translation. Regarding the fact that among all people, no group has experienced more difference than what men and women done (Glick & Rudman, 2008), the third positive hypothesis saying "there is significant relationship between EFL learners' spiritual intelligence and their gender", was confirmed. The results showed that women have a higher level of spiritual intelligence than men. The findings of the study also showed that there is no meaningful relationship between spiritual intelligence and translators' favorite genre. It means that level of spiritual intelligence cannot be a good predictor for translators' favorite genre.

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A CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF EFL LEARNERS'  
'AMBIGUITY TOLERANCE' AND 'ACCULTURATION' IN RECEPTIVE SKILLS

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## ABSTRACT

Due to the detrimental effects of foreign language ambiguity on multiple areas of language achievement, a large body of research has been devoted to examining the sources of ambiguity intolerance. Yet very few have considered acculturation and proficiency level of learners as causal factors in foreign language Ambiguity Tolerance. This enquiry proposes hypothesized links between foreign language ambiguity tolerance, three components of Schumann's (1978, 1986) acculturation theories (assimilation, preservation, and adaptation), and selected cognitive variable proficiency level as (high, mid, low) in the Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) context. A set-wise regression analysis revealed the two variables that contributed significantly to the prediction of foreign language ambiguity tolerance: preservation, and English language proficiency. The pedagogical implications of these findings for reducing FL ambiguity intolerance and for improving foreign language learning and acculturation are discussed. An important finding indicates that learners' inclination to resist the TL culture can lead to increased levels of ambiguity intolerance. Hence, strategies need to be devised and implemented to allow learners to develop stronger security about their roots and simultaneously reaching out to global world where multilingual and multicultural societies are the norm.

**KEYWORDS:** Ambiguity tolerance, Schumann's acculturation theory, Acculturation, Receptive skills

## INTRODUCTION

McLaughlin (1987) and Daniels (2000) acknowledge that acculturation theory originated with the ethnographic work of Linton (1960, as cited in Daniels 2000,p.1), who studied the changes Native Americans needed to make in order to become more integrated into mainstream American society. He identifies the notion of the distance separating the two cultural groups and the social and psychological changes which would be necessary for closer interaction to take place. Social distance would be associated with the actual contact which was available between the two cultures, while psychological distance represented the extent to which the learner wanted to become closely adapted to the dominant culture. Perhaps the earliest model toward centrality to learner factors was Schumann's acculturation /pidginization model (1978). Gass and Selinker (2008) assert that the model developed from Schumann's observation of the untutored acquisition of English by Alberto, a 33- year old, working class Costa Rican living in the Boston area. Alberto lived in a Portuguese- speaking neighborhood and worked in a factory staffed by NNSs of English. Due to his limited contact with English speakers, it is not surprising that Alberto was not a very successful language learner. Schumann explained Alberto's limited acquisition of English by pointing to Alberto's social and psychological distance from speakers of the TL.

Reading and listening in a foreign language may be a rather ambiguous process that involves processing unknown linguistic and cultural input, which might eventually cause uncertainty and/or confusion on the part of readers or listeners. Success in such a complex and uncertain process may involve a myriad of factors, one of which could be tolerance of ambiguity that readers exhibit during reading. It is significant to explore this psychological construct since an awareness of how it influences foreign language learners and learning may alter the way teachers plan and execute their lessons, and help learners overcome their psychological barriers. Thus, this study was prompted by the desire to understand tolerance of ambiguity in relation to such factor, proficiency level and its correlation with students' acculturation in their EFL reading and listening comprehension success. Below is presented a brief review of related literature, followed by a description of the research methodology and findings. The findings are then discussed in the light of literature, conclusions are drawn and suggestions are made.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Ambiguity and Tolerance*

Early definitions of ambiguity regarded uncertainty in real life. In such definitions, ambiguity was described as caused by the nature of cues available in the context or stimulus given. McLain (1993), for example, defines ambiguity as not having sufficient information about a context. According to Budner (1962), ambiguous situations can be of three types: new situations, complex situations, and contradictory situations. These are, respectively, where there are not sufficient or non- existent cues, where there are too many cues, and where cues are not easy to distinguish. Norton (1975), further, summarizes causes of ambiguity as 1) multiple meanings, 2) vagueness, incompleteness, or fragmentation, 3) a probability, 4) unstructured, 5) lack of information, 6) inconsistencies and contradictions, and 8) unclear. Kazamina summarizes current definitions and concludes that ambiguity is marked by "novelty, complexity, insolubility and lack of structure" (1999,p. 69).

Related to the concept of ambiguity is *tolerance*. Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of English language defined tolerance as "a fair and objective attitude toward those whose opinions, practices, race, religion, nationality, etc. differ from one's own; freedom from bigotry." Such a definition of tolerance precludes acceptance of ambiguous situations whereas intolerance may entail considering uncertainties and unclear meanings as potential sources of discomfort and treat (Norton, 1975). Tolerance of ambiguity, then, can be a reflection of our personality (Ely, 1989; Ehrman, 1993; 1994). As such, people with tolerance of ambiguity are likelier to feel comfortable under uncertain conditions (Budner, 1962).

### *Ambiguity Tolerance (AT) and Language Learning*

Ely (1989) defines AT as the acceptance of uncertainties. Such tolerance can be translated into the language learning context as "an ability to deal with ambiguous new stimuli without frustration or without appeals to authority. It allows for indeterminate rather than rigid categorization" (Ellis, 1994: 518). In this sense, students with AT, then, are expected to feel comfortable with learning a new language with its uncertainties and unknown structural and cultural norms to be dealt with. McLain (1993), for example, reports that students who are tolerant of ambiguity are more willing to take risks and open to change (Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975; Naiman, Frohlich, Stern & Todeso,



1978) and show endurance on tasks and higher levels of achievement (Chapelle, 1983; Naiman, Todeso, and Florich, 1975). Similarly, White (1999) views AT as a reaction to uncertainties whereby ambiguity is accommodated so that it does not impede progress. Our level of AT may also influence the use of certain language learning strategies. Ehrman and Oxford (1990) found that learners with intuitive type of personalities who have relatively higher levels of AT reported that they often guessed from context whereas sensing type of personalities with lower AT reported that they disliked having to guess from context. Further, learners, who are called judgers, reported not using compensation strategies like the sensing type of students because of their discomfort with ambiguity, whereas perceivers who can tolerate uncertainty tended to use of metacognition while perceivers reported that they disliked metacognitive behaviors, reflecting their also illustrated the influence of AT on the use of strategies. The first student who was comfortable with ambiguity did not want to use a dictionary in extensive reading and wanted to carry on without looking up unknown words. However, the second student who was not so tolerant “first figured out the sentence structure, checked the meanings of unknown words, and then translated it into Japanese” (ibid: 89) to minimize any possible ambiguity.

Ehrman (1993; 1999) maintains that tolerance of ambiguity operates at three levels: *intake; tolerance of ambiguity proper; and accommodation*. On the first level, tolerance enables learners to receive linguistic input. Students with tolerance of ambiguity can perceive and accept new information even though it involves many unknown elements. The second level involves being able “to hold contradictory or incomplete information without either rejecting one of the contradictory elements or coming to premature closure on an incomplete schema” (1993, p.331). At this level, the learner has taken new information in and needs to deal with contradictory or incomplete information (e.g. inferring meanings of unknown vocabulary in an article). The last level has been borrowed from constructivist psychology (Piaget, 1967) and involves adopting the self according to new material. That is, this level entails integrating new information with the existing schemata, restructuring the latter

#### ***How tolerant should learners be of ambiguity?***

Ambiguity is an inevitable reality of learning a new language and people do tend to have different levels of ambiguity. As reviewed above, research indicates that AT is related to achievement in language learning. However, concerns have also been expressed regarding over-tolerance. This is because such high levels of tolerance may result in unquestioned acceptance (Ely, 1995; Kazamina, 1999). Ely maintains that the lack of sensitivity to ambiguous linguistic data may cause early pidginization or fossilization in language development. The question then becomes “what level of ambiguity is ideal for success in language learning?” It is generally suggested that a moderate level of tolerance of ambiguity should be beneficial for effective language learning. Ely claims “the ideal case, of course, is that of the learner who is neither inhibited by low tolerance of ambiguity nor oblivious to linguistics subtleties” (ibid: 93). However, Kazamina (1999) purports that this mid-point has not yet been fully defined. To elucidate this mid-point, El-Koumy (2000) illustrated that moderately tolerant students were more successful than both high tolerance students and low tolerance students. His findings are illustrative of what degree of tolerance is suitable for language learning and in all four language skills. Yet, more research is needed to understand the nature and place of AT in the process of foreign language learning.

#### ***The acculturation model***

The acculturation model, developed by Schumann, is based on social and psychological factors. “Acculturation” is defined as the social and psychological taxonomy of factors which are believed to be important in the process of SLA in natural contexts. The major claim of the model is that acculturation, which is a cluster of social-psychological factors, is the major cause of SLA (Schumann, 1978, 1990). Schumann states that any learner can be placed along a continuum ranging from social-psychological distance to social-psychological proximity with the speakers of the target language. The degree of language acquisition, then, would correlate with the degree of the learner’s proximity to the target group. Schuman (1986) claims that acculturation, or the integration of the L2 learner into the target linguistic community is not a direct cause of second language acquisition (SLA), but rather it is the first in a chain of factors which results in natural SLA. Schumann (1986, p.385) proposes that “acculturation as a remote cause brings the learner into contact with TL-speakers and verbal interaction with those speakers as a proximate cause brings about the negotiation of appropriate input which then operates as the immediate cause of language acquisition. According to Schumann (1978), social distance refers to the learner as a member of a social group that is in contact with another social group whose members speak a different language. He enlists various factors that shorten the social distance:

*Social dominance*: If the second-language learning (2LL) group is politically, culturally, technically or economically dominant to or subordinate to the target language (TL) group, social contact between the two groups will tend not to be sufficient for optimal target language acquisition. If they are nearly equal in status, then there will be more contact between the two groups and thus, acquisition of the target language will be enhanced. *Assimilation, preservation, and adaptation*: The best condition for L2 acquisition is obtained when the 2LL group wants to assimilate into the TL group. The second best condition occurs when the 2LL group wants to adapt to the TL culture for intergroup interaction without assimilating to it. The least favorable conditions obtain for acquiring the L2 when the 2LL group wishes to remain separated linguistically and culturally from the TL group. *Enclosure*: The more 2LL group, the more likely the contact with the TL group, the more favorable the conditions will be for L2 acquisition. *Cohesiveness and size, Congruence*: The more similar the culture of the two groups, the more likely there will be social contact and thus language acquisition. *Attitude, Intended length of residence and the psychological factors* affect the psychological distance are: *Language shock* (Learner’s confusion when using L2), *Culture shock* (Learner’s disorientation as a result of culture differences).

#### ***Acculturation: Types, Stages and Kinds of Learning***

Trawinski (2005) cites social and psychological distances determine how much input the learner will be exposed to, and how much input will be converted in to intake. Schumann (1978) believes that the level of language proficiency the learner achieves strictly depend on the degree of acculturation. He distinguishes three functions of language, which may also be considered as the three stages of language development:

- Communicative function (the transmission of referential information only)
- Integrative function (the mark a membership of a particular social group)
- Expressive function (the display of linguistic virtuosity)

The acculturation model developed by Schumann (1978) emphasizes identification with a community as a primary requirement of SLA. According to Schumann, there are two types of acculturation. The first type takes place when the learner is socially integrated with and psychologically opens to the target group. The second type of acculturation has all the characteristics of the first type except for the psychological open-ness of the learner. Brown (1980) postulates the process of acculturation in the target language natural environment consists of four stages:

**Euphoria**-the learners get excited over the newness of the surroundings

**Culture- shock**- emerges as individuals feel the intrusion of more and more culture differences into their own images of self and security

**Cultural stress**- gradual recovery: some problems of acculturation are solved, while others continue for some time. The learner starts to understand the differences in thinking. The learner's problems center around the question of identity, she/he does not perceive herself/himself as belonging to any culture.

**Full-recovery**- adaptation, assimilation or acceptance of the new culture. A new identity developed.

Schumann (1978) also describes the kind of learning which take place in this model. He suggests that the early stages of SLA are characterized by the same processes that are responsible for the formation of pidgin languages. If the social and/or psychological distance is great then acculturation is impeded and the learner does not progress beyond the early stages of language acquisition. As a result his/her target language will stay pidginize. Pidginization is characterized by simplifications and reductions occurring in the learner's inter-language which lead to fossilization when the learner's inter-language system does not progress in the direction of the target language (Gitsaki, 1998).

#### *Evidence Supports the Acculturation Model*

Schumann (1978) provides some supporting evidence from different studies that these variables enhance or inhibit SLA. He also postulates that psychological factors, especially motivation, may have more influence on SLA than social factors (Stauble, 1977). It is interesting to note that according to this model, variables other than acculturation are of minor or moderate importance for SLA. For example, instruction is assumed to have no important role in SLA. In this regard, Schumann (1978, p.368) states: "... Educational institutions are really only free to manipulate teacher, method, and text variables. I believe that these variables are so weak in terms of the total language learning situation that no matter how much we attempt to change them, we will never achieve much more success than we are achieving now". Norton Pierce (1995) highlights the strength of Schumann's model in the socio-cultural contexts of language learning without neglecting the role of individuals in the language learning process. It recognizes, furthermore, the importance that must be placed on regular contact between language learners and speakers of the target language for successful language learning to take place. Moreover, Doughty and Long (2003) postulate that Schumann's model applies to L2 acquisition in the natural settings only. They maintain that, in FL learning the situation is quite different because most social and affective variables lose their importance in conscious learning. Consequently, the Acculturation Model can not be used directly for purposes of working out a methodology for FL instruction. Finally, according to Schumann (1986), acculturation is a dynamic process that takes place over time. A learner's social and psychological distance profile may change during the course of his or her stay in the TL environment.

#### *Acculturation Extended Model (AEM)*

It should be noted that the acculturation model focuses on social and psychological factors and ignore other variables in SLA. That is why some scholar added other variables to account for SLA along with acculturation factor. Ellis (2008) and Larson-Freeman (2007) assert that an elaborated version of Schumann's model was provided by Anderson as cognitive dimension. Anderson built the nativization model on Schumann model in particular by providing a cognitive dimension which Schumann did not consider. According to Ellis (1985) the model consists of two major processes:

**-Nativization:** The process of assimilation of the input. The learner modifies the L2 input to match his/ her internalized knowledge of L1, other languages and the world. This process is visible in the first stage of language acquisition.

**-Denativisation:** The process of accommodation. The learner modifies his/her internalized knowledge to accommodate L2 input. This process is typical for later stages of language acquisition when L2 production is close to target norm.

Teske and Nelson (1974, cited in Navais, et.al.2005) offered the first complete psychological perspective on acculturation. According to these writers, acculturation included changes in material traits, behavior patterns, norms, institutional changes, and importantly, values. However, Teske and Nelson did not go further in their psychological analysis of how members of diverse cultures accommodate to one another. This was left to Berry (et. Al., 1992), who expanded on the view of acculturation to include varieties of adaptation and specifically identified the following four factors: assimilation, integration, rejection, and deculturation. The importance of Berry's model was that it recognized the importance of multicultural societies, minority individuals and groups, and the fact that individuals have a choice in the matter of how far they are willing to go in the acculturation process. Today, there are numerous instances of ethnic groups who have managed to revive their ancestral language and culture (Fishman, 2001). Thus, acculturation was not seen as a strictly unidimensional process of cultural change but as a process forced by intergroup contact with multiple outcome.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Despite the significant research efforts and advances in exploring factors associated with FL ambiguity tolerance, previous studies have mostly considered the links between FL ambiguity tolerance and socio - demographic variables or personality variables. Less attention has been paid to the role of culture, particularly acculturation, in FL ambiguity tolerance. Furthermore, although acculturation has thus far been shown to be a possible source of ambiguity, how its different aspects operate to affect ambiguity in EFL setting remains unclear. The present research purports to investigate the relationship between three facets of acculturation (assimilation, preservation, and adaptation) and FL ambiguity in the Iranian EFL context. This study aimed to understand how tolerant Iranian learners of English are in the preparatory English classes as well as to explore the relationship between Tolerance of Ambiguity and one major variable: language proficiency. Given that much of the discussion on acculturation focuses on immigrants and most scales developed to measure acculturation center on bilingual immigrant contexts (Anderson et al., 1993; Stephenson, 2000; Tsai, Ying, & Lee, 2000), a questionnaire was designed for this study to probe into the issue. In an attempt to bridge these research gaps and offer insights into multifaceted nature of FL ambiguity tolerance (AT).

#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- 1) How tolerant are Iranian university level EFL learners of ambiguity?
- 2) Does tolerance of ambiguity increase as level of English proficiency develops?
- 3) What are the relationships between learners' FL ambiguity tolerance, acculturation, and selected socio-demographic variable?

#### **METHODOLOGY**

##### *Participants*

The participants included 188 undergraduate students participating in conversation classes at Safir Language Institute in Mashhad, Iran. Of the whole participants, the majority was females while there were fewer male students (106-56% vs. 67-36%). Fifteen students did not report their gender. The students had a mean age of 19.67 (SD= 1.51), representing a very close age band. They generally had an intermediate level of English proficiency (108-57%), followed by pre-intermediate (48-26%), and advanced (27-14%) students. A big proportion of students perceived themselves as average readers and listeners (115-61%) while 34 students (18%) reported that they thought they were good at reading and listening in English. An important proportion of students (19%) thought they were not good at receptive skills in English. The participants were selected based on a local Teacher-made placement test.

### Instruments

The Participants were invited to complete a paper-based questionnaire which consisted of three parts: (a) the Foreign Language Classroom Ambiguity Tolerance Scale (FLCATS) ; (b) the EFL Student Acculturation Questionnaire (ESAQ) ;and (c) the Background Questionnaire. The FLCATS (Ely, 1995) with some demographic questions. Although there are other scales for measuring AT available in the literature (e.g. Budner, 1962; Norton, 1975) , to the best of our knowledge , FLCATS is the only published scale especially designed for measuring ambiguity tolerance in language learning. The (ESAQ) was developed to assess learners' levels of acculturation in various domains (cultural values, social interactions, and life choices).The background questionnaire elicited information on participants' gender , proficiency level in reading and listening skills. Each instrument was first translated into Farsi and checked through back-translation to ensure that alteration in meaning of the items had not occurred. They were pilot- tested prior to the formal study.

*The Foreign Language Classroom Ambiguity Tolerance Scale:* The version of FLCATS used in this study has 12 items with a four point likert scale. The items aim to measure students' agreement level with statements depicting intolerance of ambiguity in given situations. This version of FLATS was previously reported to have high internal consistency (Kazamina , 2000) and was employed in this study with the consent of Professor Christopher M.Ely. In its original version the FLTAS was used with anchors being at 4 (strongly Agree), 3(Agree), 2 (Disagree), and 1 (Strongly Disagree). In this current study, however, to avoid any bias and not to make students take a forced decision between a negative or positive choice ( Dornyei,2001), Ely's FLTAS was modified to have a five point Likert scale, inserting a new anchor 3( not sure).Moreover, the scale, originally written in English, was translated into Farsi. Back translation measures were taken and no significant semantic shift was detected by two expert readers. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability for Farsi version of the FLTAS with the five point Likert scale was found to be .75.

*The EFL Student Acculturation Questionnaire:* The ESAQ was developed following the criteria for inventory development (Dornyei, 2003; Gilham, 2000) to assess learners' acculturation levels in an EFL context. The initial items were developed based on theoretical frameworks of acculturation (Schumann,1978, 1986). Prior to the pilot test, three experts in educational psychology and EFL pedagogy were asked to scrutinize item clarity, redundancy, and reliability. The preliminary version of the questionnaire was piloted among 100 students in the same institute and their comments were incorporated accordingly to refine the questionnaire. The final version included 21 items on 5-point Likert scales in which 5 indicated *strongly agree* and 1 indicated *strongly disagree*. Evaluated with an exploratory factor analysis (principal axis extraction with direct oblimin rotation), the questionnaire revealed a three- factor solution which optimized parsimony and interpretability. Appendix A contains all the variables and items that have been submitted to correlation and regression analysis. The three factors included in this instrument were as follows:

- 1) Assimilation measuring an adoption of cultural norms, values, and lifestyles of the TL group
- 2) Preservation assessing the attributes that one maintains one's own cultural values while at the same time rejecting those of the TL group
- 3) Adaptation measuring an adjustment to the TL group's cultural norms and at the same time keeping their own cultural values

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *How tolerant/ intolerant are Iranian EFL learners of ambiguity at tertiary level?*

To identify the level of ambiguity tolerance of the students, descriptive statistics were utilized. To avoid any misunderstandings, the readers are reminded that the items in the FLCATS sought respondents' reactions to statements describing intolerance of ambiguity in some language learning contexts. Disagreement with an item, then, is conversely a sign of tolerance. Therefore, while interpreting how tolerant students are, a mean of 3.00, which was also the anchor for *not sure* , can be used as the border line of tolerance/ intolerance. Values above this border line will indicate lower levels of tolerance while those below will suggest more tolerance depending on their distance to the mean score of 3.00. Table 1 presents students' mean scores from the FLCATS.

Table 1: Ambiguity Tolerance scores from the SLTAS

	N	Mean	Sd
Total Ambiguity Tolerance Score	175	3.69	.47
When I'm reading something in English, I feel impatient when I don't totally understand the meaning.	186	3.85	.99
It bothers me that I don't understand every thing the teacher says in English.			
When I write English compositions, I don't like it when I can't express my ideas exactly.	188	4.40	.84
It is frustrating that sometimes I don't understand completely some English grammar.	186	4.28	.92
I don't like the feeling that my English pronunciation is not quite correct.			
I don't enjoy reading something in English that takes a while to figure out completely.	186	4.14	1.05
It bothers me that even though I study English grammar some of it is hard to use in speaking and writing.			
When I'm writing in English, I don't like the fact that I can't say exactly what I want.	185	4.11	.96
It bothers me when the teacher uses an English word I don't know.	188	3.82	1.23
When I'm speaking in English, I feel uncomfortable if I can't communicate my idea clearly.			
I don't like the fact that sometimes I can't find English words that mean the same as some words in my own language.	186	4.05	1.06
One thing I don't like about reading in English is having to guess what the meaning is.			
	186	4.35	.80
	187	3.42	1.36
	186	4.30	.85
	188	3.88	1.13
	188	2.99	1.33

The participants reported a level of tolerance of ambiguity that is a little above the mid- point (mean= 3.69). This gives support to Oxford (1999) who claimed that with its uncertainties language learning can be quite an ambiguous and stressful experience. The level of tolerance identified here shows that the participants in this study, on average, will not exhibit high tolerance/ intolerance of ambiguity, neither accepting without questioning nor being hampered by incomplete linguistic information. However, an item-by-item analysis of the scale reveals a mean range between 4.35 and 2.99, which indicates that the total score of 3.69 should not lead to stereotyping as people may have different levels of tolerance of ambiguity: low, moderate, or high tolerance (El-Koumy, 2000; Ely, 1995; Ehrman, 1999).

To explore whether participants could be placed in the suggested three ambiguity groups, a further K- means cluster analysis on SPSS was performed. The results can be seen in Table 2.

*Table 2: The results of grouping*

Ambiguity Cluster	N	% OF TOTAL N	MEAN	SD	Minimum	Maximum
High (H)	18	10.3%	2.7176	.3761	1.75	3.08
Moderate (M)	74	42.3%	3.5000	.1655	3.17	3.75
Low (L)	83	47.4%	4.0773	.2019	3.83	4.58
Total	175	100.0%	3.6933	.4788	1.75	4.58

A further analysis of variance (ANOVA) between these three groups confirmed that these clusters of students were distinct from one another ( $p < .000$ ) in terms of AT. The differences can be seen in

*Table 3: Differences between three AT clusters*

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Direction of Differences
Between Groups	32.141	2	16.070	356.706	.000	H>L P<.000
Within Groups	7.749	172	4.505E-02			M>L P<.000
Total	39.889	174				H>M P<.000

Descriptive statistics, coupled with cluster analysis and analysis of variance, point to three different groups of students according to their tolerance of ambiguity. An important proportion of students ( $f = 83$ ; 47.4%) had very high levels of intolerance (mean=4.07), while a similar proportion ( $f = 18$ ; 10.30%) reported they can tolerate ambiguity to a great extent (mean=2.71). This means that, expectedly, there are variations among language learners and they will not always tolerate ambiguity unanimously.

#### ***Does tolerance of ambiguity improve as proficiency improves?***

A slight improvement has been detected in tolerance of ambiguity as the level of English proficiency increases. Table 4 shows the mean values for tolerance of ambiguity for each proficiency level.

*Table 4: The findings from analysis of variance*

Proficiency Level	Tolerance of Ambiguity (Mean)	N	SD
Elementary (E)	3.6913	44	4894
Pre-intermediate(P)	3.7475	101	4814
Intermediate(I)	3.4647	26	4070
Total	3.6901	171	4806

*Table 5: Effects of proficiency level on tolerance of ambiguity*

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig	Direction of differences
Between Groups	1.654	2	.827	3.693	.027	E<P P<.511
Within Groups	37.614	168	.224			I>P P<.055
Total	39.268	170				I<E P<.007

The only significant difference was observed between pre-intermediate and advanced students in favor of the latter ( $p < .007$ ). Although there was also a considerable difference between the intermediate and advanced learners, this difference was slightly outside the significance level ( $p < .055$ ). This finding shows that as students improve their language proficiency, their level of tolerance also improves. This is to be expected as students becoming more equipped may feel safer in dealing with new information. After all, with their advanced level of language proficiency, the participants must have mastered both an important proportion of grammatical structures and very valuable advanced vocabulary to be able to read and listen without looking up unknown words (Nation, 1990).

#### ***What are the relationship between ambiguity tolerance, acculturation and socio-demographic variable?***

Normality of the questionnaire data was first checked using the Shapiro-Wilk test (Shapiro & Wilk, 1965). The results indicated that the distribution of the FLCATS scores were normal. Justifying the use of Pearson product-moment correlations and a multiple regression approach, no violations regarding the linearity were identified. To examine the relationships between FL ambiguity tolerance, EFL student acculturation (i.e. assimilation, preservation, and adaptation), and selected socio-demographic variable, Pearson product-moment correlations were used (see Table 1). One acculturation –related variable, preservation, was found to be the largest correlate of FL ambiguity intolerance, explaining 6.25% (i.e.  $.252^2 = 6.25\%$ ) of the variance. Ambiguity tolerance was also found to correlate significantly with the following variable: proficiency level (pre-intermediate, intermediate, advanced), in reading and listening comprehension.

Table 6 : Pearson of correlations of ambiguity tolerance with selected variable

Independent variable	FLCATS (r)
<b>EFL Student Acculturation</b>	
Assimilation	.09
Preservation	.25*
Adaption	.13
<b>Selected socio-demographic variable</b>	
Proficiency level	
High	-.19*
Mid	
low	

\*p &lt;.05

Table 6 presents the unstandardized regression coefficients and intercept, the standard error of the unstandardized coefficients, the standardized regression coefficients, the semi-partial correlations, and the squared multiple correlation coefficient (R<sup>2</sup>) of the model which maximum proportion of variance was explained. The analysis of set-wise regression revealed that preservation, proficiency level, (the higher would have more tolerance of ambiguity) reading/listening ability of FL learners contributed significantly, to the prediction of their ambiguity tolerance. The semi-partial correlation coefficients (Table 6) suggested preservation was the best predictor of FL ambiguity intolerance, accounting for 23.8% of the variance followed by proficiency level of the learners which explained 18% of the variance respectively.

Table 7: Selected multiple regression model for predicting FL ambiguity tolerance

Independent variable	Regression Coefficient	Standard Error	t value	Standardized regression co.	Semi-partial coefficients
Intercept	1.859	.304	6.114		
Preservation	.083	.042	1.989*	.205	.181
English proficiency	-.64	.040	-1.590	-.148	.145

An important result of this study is the confirmation of the speculation that preservation in Schumman's acculturation theory (1978,1986) was found to be a significant predictor of FL ambiguity. This finding suggests that ambiguity intolerant EFL students were likely to have disposition to resist the TL culture so that their cultural identity would remain intact. In other words, increased cultural preservation can result in reduced contact with the TL group and greater social distance, which exacerbated FL ambiguity.

There are positive correlations between proficiency level of the learners and tolerance of ambiguity. Consistent with previous findings (Baily, Daley, 2000; MacIntyre, Noels,1997), higher proficiency is the predictor of ambiguity tolerant EFL learners . The other studies showed females rather than males are more intolerant of ambiguity as well.

## CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore the nature of ambiguity tolerance in reading and listening in a foreign language among tertiary level learners of English and its relationship with acculturation. It determines likely relationship between tolerance of ambiguity and cognitive variable , proficiency level. The findings of this study allow the authors to draw some conclusions. Firstly, the tertiary EFL learners participating in this study reported having a moderate level of ambiguity intolerance in language learning. Cluster analysis confirmed that the majority of the learners have either a high or moderate level of intolerance while only a small number of them have low intolerance. Therefore, it can be said that learners in an EFL context are generally less tolerant of ambiguity. The findings also suggested that there is a significant difference between ambiguity tolerance and learners' language proficiency levels, indicating that the higher the proficiency level, the more tolerant learners become in foreign language learning. One factor that may have impacted this result is that, as learners develop their linguistic knowledge, the need to control every detail in language learning becomes less important, thus resulting in higher tolerance of ambiguity.

The implications of this study are two- fold: pedagogical and further research. Firstly, students were found to have low tolerance of ambiguity. Such levels of intolerance can simply interfere with the learning process. As active agents in this learning process, teachers, then, have responsibilities to assist learners in their efforts to succeed in language learning. They should be prepared to set an agenda and share it with their students to help them increase their awareness of classroom procedures as well as the content to be learnt. As suggested by the literature, when learners are informed about classroom procedures, they feel more comfortable, self-confident and motivated in the language classroom (Dornyei,2005; Williams & Buerden,1997), which may in turn help lower intolerance of ambiguity. Secondly, as this study also indicated, pre-intermediate and intermediate learners tend to be less tolerant of ambiguity. Therefore, it could be more conducive to learning if teachers adopt a teaching approach, especially with such lower proficiency level students, that includes more insight into negative affective factors influencing language learning and acculturation.

An important finding indicates that learners' inclination to resist the TL culture can lead to increased levels of ambiguity intolerance. Hence strategies need to be devised and implemented to allow learners to develop stronger security about their roots and simultaneously reaching out to global world where multilingual and multicultural societies are the norm.

As for implications for further research, we need to note that this study is not without limitations. Firstly, the study did not employ a standard measure of reading/listening comprehension. Neither did it measure the students' proficiency level through standardized placement test. Finally, this study focused on a small number of university level Iranian EFL learners from one educational context. Therefore, it would be fruitful to further explore the relationship between all these variables employing more standardized measures and larger samples.

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#### ABSTRACT

The paper critically analyzes the Semantic Translation from the popular comic The Adventure of Tintin 'The secret of the Unicorn'. Related to translation, culture manifests in two ways. First, the concept or reference of the vocabulary items is somehow specific for the given culture. Second, the concept or reference is actually general but expressed in a way specific to the source language culture. In practice, however, it is suggested that a translator should take into account the purpose of the translation in translating the culturally-bound words or expressions. One of the translation method which is focused on the cultural context is Semantic translation.

This research also describes the practical possibility of loyalty in Semantic translation. Since loyalty as a major translation criterion has been understood in many ways, the present writer feels that it is essential to investigate the subject in order to find the variation of the lexical in the cultural context that is loyal to the source language by using a translation comic The adventure of Tintin 'The Secret of Unicorn' as a case study. The research found that it is possible to find the equivalent of lexical in cultural context that is loyal to the sense and message of the source language.

**KEYWORDS:** The Semantic Translation, The Loyalty Concept, French and English languages, The Translation Comic

#### INTRODUCTION

In the field of visual story, such as comic, the translation allows us to understand the content of the story and also to recognize the writer and their idea. Thanks to the translator, there are many kinds of visual story books are produced in the different languages, so it can be accessed to the reader in whole world. Newmark (1988: 15) has said: "The translator's job isn't limited on transferring the linguistic system of language but they also have to be able to create the appropriate language and acceptable usage to represent the story through the sentence in order to express their idea." It means that they have to be competence on predicting the right word and term which are equivalent to the target language and sending a message from the source text to the target language.

The comic translation is more complicated than the other translation in the others genres, because it doesn't only need the competence of linguistic but also the competence of transferring the culture. The comic book which is translated to the others languages, for example from French to English, is not only transferring the linguistic system but also different culture and the idea of the author to the reader from the source language to the target language. In the process of translation, the competences of translator are important. For consideration, a good translator must not only understand the source language and the target language but also have a skill to understand the situation and the context of the story from the source language and translating that to the target language appropriately. The translators do their job by using the concept, the method and the technique of translation to transfer the sense of source text to the reader of the target language in order to produce the good translation.

The translator might be loyal on translating the source language to the target language by using the equivalence and the correspondence procedure to transfer the sense from the source language to the target language.

There are so many of comics which are translated in English. One of the translation comics which is quite popular in the world is The adventure of Tintin . The series of The adventure of Tintin are distributed in whole world and translated into many languages, including English. As we know, the original language used of the comic The adventure of Tintin is French. It was created by the Belgian cartoonist Georges Prosper Rémi who is known with the name Hergé. There are 23 complete series of The adventure of Tintin. Thanks to the translator, because of their translation, we know very well all the series of The adventure of Tintin and of course we can recognize very well the characters of the casts in this comic, and it is described excellently by the result of their translation.

According to that subject, the present writer proposes the title for the thesis research as 'The Loyalty Concept of Semantic Translation in French – English Translation comic The Adventure of Tintin 'The Secret of Unicorn'.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

##### *The Loyalty Concept*

The loyalty is an important concept in the translation. It determines the trust of the message from the source language to the target language. It is a principal in whereas the translator who is loyalty to the message of the source language to the target language and culture, to the material and the style of the source text, and also loyal to the sense of the source language. They make the equivalent or correspondence translation to the text of the source language for the readers of the target language.

Kalawole and Salawu (2008) proposed that loyalty in translation is passing of the message from one language into another by producing the same affect in the other language, (in sense and in form), in a way that the reader of the translation would react exactly as the reader of the original text.

Tende in Guidère (2008 : 84) recommended the necessity of a good knowledge of both languages (source language and target language) and a distinction between the sense and the word for the translator to produces a target text which is loyal to the source language. Then, the translators use the loyalty concept in the translation to the literature books by translating the source text according to the message of the author and the sense from the source text.

According to Lederer (1994 : 51 -124) the concepts of Loyalty in translation are the translation is loyal to the author's message, the sense of the translation is equivalence to the source language, the translation has the cultural transfer from the source language to the target language. In the other side, Guidère (2008 : 83-85)

proposed that the loyalty concept is the translation which is loyal to the structure of the source text and correspondence to the source text.

The responsibility that translators have toward their partners is what I call 'loyalty'. The loyalty principle was first introduced into Skopostheorie in 1989 (Nord 1989, cf. Nord 1997: 123 ff.) in order to account for the culture-specificity of translation concepts, setting an ethical limitation on the otherwise unlimited range of possible skopoi for the translation of one particular source text.

#### ***The semantic translation***

The translator tries to translate the words by using the prediction of the cultural context that resemble to the oriented culture on the equivalent sense to the target language. Newmark (1988 : 46) proposed that the semantic translation may translate less important cultural words by culturally neutral third or functional terms but not by cultural equivalents - *une nonne repassant un corporal* may become 'a nun ironing a corporal cloth' - and it may make other small concessions to the readership.

The semantic translation is a way to write more pliable and refer more to the rule of the target language, comparing to the faithful translation. In the other hand, this method more concerns to the esthetic and expressive way on translation. For example :

Source language : Il est **un rat de bibliothèque**. (Hoed, 1993 : 18)

Target language : He is **a worm book**. (Hoed, 1993 : 18)

Halliday in Halliday and Hasan (1985: 5) states that there was the theory of context before the theory of text. In other words, context precedes text. Context here means context of situation and culture (Halliday and Hasan, 1985: 7). This context is necessary for adequate understanding of the text, which becomes the first requirement for translating. Thus, translating without understanding text is non-sense, and understanding text without understanding its culture is impossible.

Before that, the definition of culture should be understood by all translators before their created the translation products. From Koentjaraningrat (1996: 80-81) and Hoijer (1967: 106) the culture are (a) culture seen as a totality of knowledge and model for perceiving things, (b) immediate connection between culture and behavior and events, and (c) culture's dependence on norms. It should be noted also that some other definitions claim that both knowledge and material things are parts of culture.

So, the relation between language and culture are proposed by Snell-Hornby (1988: 40) who said that the connection between language and culture was first formally formulated by Wilhelm Von Humboldt. For this German philosopher, language was something dynamic: it was an activity (energia) rather than a static inventory of items as the product of activity (ergon). At the same time language is an expression of culture and individuality of the speakers, who perceive the world through language. Related to Good idea on culture as the totality of knowledge, this present idea may see language as the knowledge representation in the mind.

Nida and Taber explained on "*closest natural equivalent*", however, we can infer that cultural consideration is considered. They maintain that the equivalent sought after in every effort of translating is the one that is so close that the meaning/message can be transferred well.

In this study, in a large part, the basic conceptualizations of loyalty concept in translation are taken from Kalawole and Salawu (2008), Tende, Lederer (1994), Guidère (2008), Skopostheorie (1989). And there are also some theory of semantic translation from Newmark (Newmark (1988), and the theory of Halliday (1985) and Snell-Hornby (1988) about the language and culture.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The present study is undertaken to examine The Loyalty Concept of Lexical used in Semantic Translation From French – English Translation Comic The Adventure of Tintin 'The Secret of the Unicorn. The present study therefore, seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How to determine the loyal concept of lexical used in Semantic translation ?
2. Is it possible to find the equivalent lexical which is loyal in Semantic translation?

#### **METHODOLOGY**

This research is conducted based on the qualitative method. Alwasilah (2002) said that a qualitative method can be used to uncover and to understand what is behind any phenomenon. The descriptive method is employed to define, classify, analyze and describe the available data. Djajasudarma (1993) proposed that the descriptive method aims to describe factual and explain the character, situation, language phenomena in order to gain a systematic, factual and accurate data".

The process of data collecting can be described as follows :

- Reading the comic
- Conducting close reading strategy on the comic by reading thoroughly and repeatedly
- Collecting textual evidence by taking on the type of data
- Making data presentation and categories the data
- Conducting textual analysis the collected data descriptively
- Drawing conclusion

In this study, the collections of Semantic translation are taken from the translation comic 'The Adventure of Tintin' in French and English version. It was created by the Belgian cartoonist Georges Prosper Rémi who is known with the name Hergé. There are 23 complete series of The adventure of Tintin.

#### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**French : *Vingt....ça me coûte plus cher* (p.1)**  
**English : *Seven.....but I'm robbin myself* (p.131)**

Based on the statement "*the culture is about both knowledge and material things*", Value of currency are included of the material thing and automatically it is a part of the culture. In this kind of translation, the translator tried to change the value of currency from Franc to Pound in

order to be acceptable in the target language. The loyalty concept can be seen in the sense and the message which is sent from the source language to the target language, just like what Lederer said about the sense and message indicates the loyalty concept in translation. ‘**Vingt**’ that must be translated ‘Twenty’ in word-to-word translation, is translated “**Seven**” in pound currency as a result of the loyalty of cultural context in Semantic translation .

In Pragmatic, the way of people talk in certain situation is the cultural context because there is a part of behavior. ‘*ça me coûte plus cher*’ is the way of talk in the bargain situation and a part of cultural context. It must be translated ‘*I give you a cheaper price*’ in word – to – word translation. But in the other hand, in English language, the sentence usually use in the bargain situation and as a behavior of the English people is ‘*but I’m robbin myself*’ and It is a part of the cultural context. In the loyal concept, according to Lederer and Guidère, the sentences send the same sense, and message that can be accepted by the readers from the target language as the loyalty concept in the cultural context.

**French :** *Police Secrète ! Police secrète !* ....Vous direz ça au commissariat ! (p. 3)

**English :** *Special Branch ! Special Branch !* .....You can tell that to the inspector ! (p. 133)

According to Newmark, in Semantic translation, the terminology is a part of the cultural context, and every language has their terminology word which different from one language to another language but send the same sense and message. ‘**Police Secrète**’ that must be translated as the *secret police* in word-for-word translation, is attached by the cultural context in terminology of English language and translated as **Special Branch**. It is loyal because based on Tende’s explanation that the most important thing in translation is the acceptable message in the target language and that must be adapted with their culture. ‘**Police Secrète**’ and **Special Branch** send the same sense and message which is attached by their own culture.

**French :** Il est vraiment *très beau*. (p. 3)

**English :** It really is *a beauty* (p. 133)

The loyalty concept, according to Guidère, is also included the syntactic aspect in the translation. This kind of translation is attached by the syntactic process when *très beau* which is identic with the beauty in masculine thing, is translated only with *a beauty* which is identical with the feminine thing. It happened because in French is known the classification of masculine and feminine noun as a result of the norms in the structural use in each language, and norms is a part of culture. So, this translation shows the loyalty concept in semantic translation because it does not change any sense and message of the word although both languages brought their own cultural context in field of structural.

**French :** *Saperlipopette* (p. 6)

**English :** *Great Snakes* (p. 136)

*Saperlipopette* is a term or cursing word in French, it expresses for the shocking situation. The translator transferred it into English with *Great Snakes* which is known as the expression of the negative situation. It is the match translation product when the reader from both languages also can predict the shocking situation from the both cursing word. The cursing word is a kind of behavior and it is a part of the cultural context, it is loyal because it send the same sense and message from the source language to the target language.

**French :** *Mon dieu !* que vous est – il arrive ? (p.10)

**English :** *Good heaven !* Whatever’s happened ? (p.140)

*Mon dieu* and *Good heaven* are the positive word in the shocking or surprising situation. Even though *Mon dieu* is usually translated as *My god* in English but according the cultural context *Good heaven* would be more acceptable for the reader in the target language, because according to Tende’s explanation that the most important thing in translation is the acceptable message in the target language and that must be adapted with their culture. *Good heaven* must be more acceptable in certain cultural context of behavior. Somehow, *Good heaven* does not change any sense or message of the source language.

**French :** *Sapristi !*...On me l’a de nouveau vole ! (p. 10)

**English :** *Goodness gracious !* I’ve been robbed again (p. 140)

Although *Sapristi* has the negative expression of the situation and *Goodness gracious* is more positive, but according to the cultural context, this translation is possible and acceptable for the reader because it consider the cultural context (behavior) from the target language. Based on Lederer and Guidère, this translation is loyal because it does not change any sense which considers the cultural context of the target language and the message of the source language.

**French :** *Nom d’une pipe !* C’est cet individu qui nous a croisés dans l’escalier, hier soir, en venant chez vous!.....il me souviens : il m’a bousculé !.... (p. 10)

**English :** *Great Scotland yard !* .....That man we met last night on the stairs on our way here!.....I remember now : he bumped into me!..... (p.140)

*Nom d’une pipe* and *Great Scotland yard* are the cursing phrases which represent the negative expression. It is a kind of behavior from the people in the target language in using that sentence in certain situation. it is acceptable because it does not change the sense and the message from the source language although in the word – for – word translation, the source language wasn’t translated correctly, but behavior on using the sentence can be acceptable in semantic translation theory which is emphasized in the cultural context. However, that translation is loyal in their cultural context in Semantic translation.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The analysis constitutes on important aspect of practical semantic translation. The assessment of the translation the comic The Adventure of Tintin ‘The secret of Unicorn’ in this study is based on target language and target culture-oriented translation theories which are usually called as the semantic translation. Particularly, this analysis used the interpretative theory which is focused on ‘the sense’ rather than ‘the word’. This paper attempted to trace the problems of semantic translation in the cultural context. The present writer discovered that emphasis has shifted from the form of the Source text to the responses of the receptor; therefore, the response of the receptor to the translated message now plays an important role in determining the loyalty concept in translation. This implies that the loyalty concept in

translation must then be explained as the degree to which the average reader reacts to the translated message just as the receptor reacts to the original text. This translation is successful by approaching the two ideals needed in semantic translation such as loyal to the sense and the message of the source language.

Finally, it can be concluded that theoretically a text which is embedded in its culture is both possible to translate into other languages. The degree of its closeness to its source culture and the extent to which the meaning of its source text to be retained is very much determined by the purpose of the translation. To close, it is suggested that in the translator considered the procedures explained above to translate culturally-bound words or expressions.

#### ***Limitations of the study***

The limitation of study is important to give the frame of the study in order to be focus on certain case that needs to be found. The limitations of this study are :

1. To describe the determination of the loyalty concept in semantic translation
2. To identify the possibility of the loyalty concept in semantic translation

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DOES TEACHING METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES AND COOPERATIVE LEARNING AFFECT READING  
COMPREHENSION ABILITY?

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**ABSTRACT**

The present study is an attempt to investigate the comparative effect of teaching metacognitive strategies and cooperative learning on the reading comprehension of Iranian intermediate English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners. To fulfill the purpose of this study, a group of 90 male and female intermediate learners of Aryanpour School of Culture & Education in Tehran, Iran took a piloted sample Preliminary English Test (PET) as a proficiency test and 64 of them were selected as homogenous learners and were divided into two experimental groups. One experimental group received metacognitive strategies based on Chamot & O'Malley's "Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA)" (1994), and the other one cooperative learning based on "Cooperative Learning" Model by Novak, (1991). To make sure that the students were not significantly different in terms of their reading comprehension ability, they were given a piloted reading comprehension pretest. Both groups were instructed by the same teacher (one of the researchers) using the same material -American Headway. At the end of the training, 18 sessions, a piloted post-test of reading comprehension was administered to both groups. The analysis of the test scores using *t*-test revealed that the experimental group which received metacognitive strategy training did statistically better in their post-test, which means that an increase in students' performance in reading comprehension due to the effect of teaching metacognitive strategies was occurred. The implication is that metacognitive strategy training can be included in regular English reading courses. This result may help EFL teachers to bear in mind the beneficial of teaching strategies especially when dealing with reading comprehension.

**KEYWORDS:** Cooperative Learning, EFL Learners, Metacognitive Strategies, Reading Comprehension,

**INTRODUCTION**

One of the most necessary and vital skills that a person has to acquire in his/her life is reading. This is understandable as reading has always been connected with knowledge, maturation of thoughts, advancement, modernization and so forth. Nearly every aspect of life involves reading. Reading is a receptive skill, similar to listening, during which readers decode the message of the writer and try to recreate it anew (Rashtchi & Keyvanfar, 2010). In fact, reading can be seen as a dialogue between the reader and the text or between the reader and the author. According to Chastain (1988),

*Reading is a process involving the activation of relevant knowledge and related language skills to accomplish an exchange of information from one person to another. Reading requires that the reader focus attention on the reading materials and integrate previously acquired knowledge and skills to comprehend what someone else has written. (p. 216)*

It is a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols in order to construct or derive meaning (reading comprehension). Reading is seen as an extremely complex activity involving a combination of perceptual, linguistic and cognitive abilities (Brumfit, 1980).

Effective reading is not something that every individual learns to do (Nunan, 1999). Learning to reading is difficult especially for those reading in a second or foreign language because it is an essential skill to acquire knowledge and exchange information (Chien, 2000; Dlugosz, 2000; Huang, 2005; Salinger, 2003). However, most English instructors still focus on correcting the learners' grammar or increasing their vocabulary (Chi, 1997; Griffiths, 2008; Tsao, 2004). To improve learners' reading abilities, effective strategies and assistant tools should be carefully considered (Cassata-Widera, 2008; Lin, 2008; Zittle, Johari, & Eastmond, 2005). Successful readers use a flexible repertoire of strategies and cues to comprehend texts and to solve problems with unfamiliar structure and vocabulary which is quite difficult for second language learners to achieve. But the instructors seldom teach learners how to use learning strategies effectively to improve their reading comprehension; consequently, learners cannot master this language skill effectively (Berkowitz, 1986; Carnine and Carnine, 2004; Chi, 1997; Griffiths, 2008; Rivard & Yore, 1992; Tsao, 2004).

Strategies are specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques that students (often intentionally) use to improve their progress in developing L2 skills (Oxford, 2002). These strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language. They are tools for the self-directed involvement necessary for developing language skills (Oxford, 1990).

Among these strategies, metacognitive strategies are considered as the most essential ones in developing learners' skills (Anderson, 1991). Metacognitive strategies are related to how we think and learn (Ashman & Conway, 1993). The aim of these strategies is to teach the learners how to set objectives, how to be effective and independent. It was emphasized by O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Russo, and Kupper (1985) that learners without metacognitive approaches have no direction or ability to monitor their progress, accomplishments, and future learning directions. On the other hand, learners who have developed their metacognitive awareness are likely to become more self-regulating and autonomous language learners (Hauck, 2005). According to Paris and Jacobs (1984), "metacognitive strategies help students to focus attention in an understanding of the content, to connect past knowledge with new information and to code them in their memories" (p. 2083-2093). These strategies also involve readers' deliberate mental behaviors for directing and controlling their cognitive strategy processing needed for successful performance (Phakiti, 2003).

The current understanding of reading strategies has been shaped significantly by research on what expert readers do (e.g., Bazerman, 1985; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995). Through metacognitive strategies, a reader allocates significant attention to controlling, monitoring, and evaluating the reading process (Pressley, 2000; Pressley, Brown, El-Dinary & Afflerbach, 1995). Regarding the above-mentioned discussions it seems that the metacognitive strategies are considered as essential elements in learning reading comprehension.



Another possible solution to increase the learners' ability in reading comprehension skill is creating an environment in which the learners will have opportunities for their participation. In this regard many ways have been proposed, one of them is cooperative learning (CL).

Cooperative Learning with its roots in ancient tribal customs has traditionally been a part of educational practice. Its effectiveness has been documented through hundreds of research studies (Johnson & Johnson, 1986; Kagan, 1986; Slavin, 1988).

As Barros, Rodriguez-Artacho, and Verdejo (1998) state, "Cooperative Learning is originally based on the social constructivist view of learning and as a major teaching/learning strategy, aims to make instruction more relevant and students more responsible" (p. 45). Cooperative Learning refers to instructional method that students work together in small groups to accomplish shared learning goals. It is a successful teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject (Bramlett, 1994). Dohron (2002) describes cooperative learning as the use of small groups for instructional purposes that require students to work together for their own and each other's learning. Dohron (as cited in Zuheer, 2008) adds,

*In order for cooperative learning groups to be cooperative in nature, the students in the groups must believe that all the group members are equally important to the success of the group. They must be able to use the appropriate interpersonal and small-group skills that are needed to work cooperatively. (p.45)*

Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates learn. In this process, students are assigned to groups of two to five members by the instructor for the purpose of achieving academic and social tasks (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1998).

By now, it is not perhaps redundant to say that through "cooperative learning" and "metacognitive" strategies, the teacher can involve most of the students in the use of language, and teach them how to use their thinking strategies for better understanding of the text. But to find out how cooperative learning and metacognitive strategies work as improving elements for better reading comprehension, this study is conducted to see whether or not cooperative learning and metacognitive strategies have significant effect on reading comprehension of EFL learners.

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### *Metacognitive Strategies*

Metacognitive strategies "are higher order executive skills that may entail planning for, monitoring or evaluating the success of a learning activity" (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, p. 44). In simple terms, metacognition is thinking about thinking. Its scholarly description comes from cognitive psychology that approaches metacognition as one's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes and products or anything related to them. Active monitoring, consequent regulation and orchestration of these processes to achieve a goal also seem to be the necessary components of metacognition (Flavell, as cited in Goh, 2008). In link with this definition, metacognitive development can be described as conscious development in one's metacognitive abilities, such as the move to greater knowledge, awareness and control of one's learning, selecting strategies, monitoring the progress of learning, correcting errors, analyzing the effectiveness of learning strategies, and changing learning behaviors and strategies when necessary (Ridley, Schutz, Glanz, & Weinstein, 1992).

O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Mazanares, Russo, and Kupper (as cited in Vianty, 2007) stated that "metacognitive strategies involve thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring of comprehension or production while it is taking place, and self-evaluation of learning after the language activity is completed" (p. 506). Metacognitive strategies also involved readers' deliberate mental behaviors for directing and controlling their cognitive strategy processing for successful performance (Phakiti, 2003).

Among native English speakers learning foreign languages, Purpura (1999) found that metacognitive strategies had a significant, positive, direct effect on cognitive strategy use, providing clear evidence that metacognitive strategy use has an executive function over cognitive strategy use in task completion. Studies of EFL learners in various countries (e.g., in South Africa, Dreyer & Oxford, 1996; in Turkey, Oxford, Judd, & Giesen, 1998) uncovered evidence that metacognitive strategies are often strong predictors of L2 proficiency.

### *Cooperative learning*

Cooperative learning is one strategy for group instruction which is under the learner-centered approach. Slavin (1995) describes cooperative learning as an instructional program in which students work in small groups to help one another master academic content (Slavin, 1995). Cooperative learning involves students working together in pairs or groups. They are a team whose players must work together in order to achieve goals successfully (Brown, 1994). In addition, cooperative learning is a within-class grouping of students who learn to work together on specific tasks or projects in such a way that all students in the group benefit from the interactive experience (Kessler, 1992). As Johnson (2005) puts it, cooperation is not assigning a job to a group of students where one student does all the work and the others put their names on the paper. It is not having students sit side by side at the same table to talk with each other as they do their individual assignments as well. It is not having students do a task individually with instructions that the ones who finish first are to help the slower students. On the contrary, cooperative learning is a teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates learn, thus creating an atmosphere of achievement. Students work through the assignment until all group members successfully understand and complete it.

Cooperative learning has been found to be both an effective instructional method (Slavin, 1996) and a successful way to enhance social and academic development among children (Deen, Bailey, & Parker, 2001; Johnson & Johnson, 2003; Slavin, 2000). The end product of cooperative learning is collaboration and joint ownership. Also, researchers have found that students not only feel more engaged but also perceive that their learning task is more important when working in a small group than during large-group instruction (Peterson & Miller, 2004). The most important goal of cooperative learning is to provide students with the knowledge, concept, skills, and understanding they need to become happy and contributing members of the society (Slavin, 2001).

Cooperative Learning focuses on achievement and is goal oriented. In Cooperative Learning, each individual goal oriented efforts contribute to others' goal attainment. Cooperative goal structures create a situation in which the only way group members can attain their own personal goal is if the group is successful. Therefore, to meet their personal goals, group members must help their teammates to do whatever helps the group to succeed or to encourage their teammates to give in their best efforts.

#### **Reading Skill**

Reading is considered as one of the most important skills which despite lots of research and due to its complicated nature sounds impossible to be described in a single comprehensive definition. According to Grabe (1991), simple definitions typically misinterpret complex cognitive processes such as reading. Aebersold and Field (1997) also note that, "The act of reading is neither completely understood nor easily described. In the most general terms we may say that reading involves the reader, the text, and the interaction between reader and text" (P. 5). They further state that reading is what happens when people look at a text and assign meaning to the written symbols in the text.

Chastain (1988) mentioned that as it is true for other skills, reading is a process involving the activation of relevant knowledge and related language skills to exchange information from person to person. He believes that reading is a receptive process in that the reader is receiving a message from a writer. Reading also is known as a decoding process, since language is regarded as a code and the reader must figure out the meaning of the message. In Goodman's view (1967), "Reading is a psychological guessing game in which the reader constructs, as best as he can, a message which has been encoded by a writer as a graphic display" (P. 135). He further states that reading is an ongoing process in which the reader selects the most productive language cues from the text to help him predict what comes next. Celce-Murcia (2001) maintains that, "reading as an interactive, socio-cognitive process involves a text, a reader, and a social context within which the activity of reading takes place" (P. 154).

#### **RESEARCH QUESTION**

To fulfill the purpose of this study, the following research question was posed:

Is there any significant difference between the impact of metacognitive strategies and cooperative learning on EFL learners' reading comprehension?

#### **METHODOLOGY**

##### **Participants**

To fulfill the objective of this study, 64 male and female intermediate EFL learners with the age range of 18-60 studying in Aryanpour School of Culture & Education in Tehran, Iran participated in this study. These participants were non-randomly selected and homogenized through a piloted Preliminary English Test (PET) among 90 learners. The participants whose scores are one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean were selected. Then, the homogenized participants were randomly divided into two experimental groups, each containing 32 participants. One experimental group treated with metacognitive strategies and the other one with cooperative learning.

It is worth mentioning that a group of 30 students with almost similar characteristics to the target sample participated in the pilot study of proficiency test (PET) and reading pre & post-tests. Also, both researchers assessed writing & speaking sections of the PET based on the specific rating scales.

##### **Instrumentation**

To fulfill the purpose of the study the following instruments were used:

##### **Preliminary English Test (PET)**

The researchers used a sample of PET for homogenizing the participants in terms of their general language proficiency at the beginning of the study which covers the four main language skills: reading (35 items), writing (7 items), listening (25 items), and speaking. The PET test used in the study was a sample of the Preliminary English Test (PET) adopted from "Objective PET" by Louise Hashemi and Barbara Thomas (2010), Cambridge University Press. The allotted time for this test was an hour and thirty minutes. The Cronbach's Alpha was employed for this purpose and an acceptable reliability of .83 was obtained.

##### **Writing Rating Scale of PET**

The rating scale used to rate the writing section of PET was the one provided by Cambridge under the name of *General Mark Schemes for Writing*. The rating was done on the basis of the criteria stated in the rating scale including the rating scale of 0-5.

##### **Speaking Rating Scale of PET**

The rating scale used to rate the oral proficiency of the subjects was the predetermined official Cambridge General Mark Schemes for speaking. The rating was done on the basis of the criteria stated in the rating scale including the range of scores from 0 to 5.

##### **Pretest and Post-test of Reading**

The tests were adopted from "Objective PET" by Louise Hashemi and Barbara Thomas (2010), Cambridge University Press. The learners were given a pretest to make sure they are not significantly different in terms of their reading comprehension ability before employing treatment. And they were given a post-test at the end of the study to see which group did better. Both tests had 35 items done in 40 minutes each.

##### **Material**

All the subjects in this research study received instruction based on "New Headway Second Edition" by John and Liz Soars (2009), Oxford University Press.

##### **Procedure**

To achieve the purpose of the study and to address the research question, the following procedures were followed. 90 male and female students with age range of 18-60 were randomly selected from intermediate level classes at Aryanpour School of Culture & Education in Tehran. Prior to the treatment, a sample PET test was piloted among a group of 30 students with almost similar characteristics of the representative sample. Then the three characteristics of individual items (Item Facility, Item Discrimination, and Choice Distribution) were calculated and two malfunctioning items were discarded from the test battery. The Cronbach Alpha formula was employed for calculating the reliability of the tests' scores gained by the participants. The writing part was rated according to the rating scale provided by Cambridge for PET by the researchers. First, the rating scale was shared between them and then in order to make sure that both had the same understanding of it, a few papers were rated by both. Since it was shown that there was consistency between the papers they rated, the researchers moved to the actual practice. Later on, the inter-rater reliability was calculated on the basis of the ratings done by both

researchers for the pilot test of PET. Since there was an acceptable consistency between the two raters, the researchers went through the same procedure for the main participants.

An already piloted PET was given to 90 intermediate level students of Aryanpour School of Culture & Education who were selected randomly. The reading and listening parts were scored objectively, each question received 1 point. For the writing part, the first sub-part includes 5 items and each received 1 point and for the two other sub-parts which required students to write paragraphs the scoring was based on the analytic scale for rating writing tasks of PET by researchers. Also, the speaking part of PET was rated according to the rating scale provided by Cambridge General Mark Schemes for speaking following the same procedure for correcting writings. Based on the obtained results, 64 students whose score fall between one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected as the participants of the study. The 64 participants were randomly divided into two groups, each group with 32 participants; one experimental group which received teaching the metacognitive strategies and another experimental group which followed the cooperative learning strategy. To make sure that the students were not significantly different in terms of their reading comprehension (the dependent variable of the study) they were given a piloted reading comprehension pretest. All the participants were taught using the same material and they received the same amount of instruction. All classes comprising the two groups were instructed by the same teacher (one of the researchers). The course consisted of 18 sessions, two hours each, spanning over a period of approximately six weeks.

#### *The Metacognitive group*

In this experimental group the students received instructions for metacognitive strategies. Chamot & O'Malley's "Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA)" (1994), was chosen to apply for strategy training. The sequence of instruction in the CALLA approach is a five phase recursive cycle for preparation, presentation, practicing, evaluating, and applying learning strategies.

The descriptions of the above-mentioned stages are as follows:

*Preparation:* In this phase, the teacher explained the importance of the metacognitive strategies and one or more metecognitive strategies were explained in each session. The learners in this phase used the strategies to plan and create their ideas. For example, they were given a limited time to create ideas on the topic to talk with the class.

*Presentation:* The teacher talked about the characteristics, usefulness and the application of the strategies explicitly and made clear through some related examples. Then the learners used the strategies to organize their own created ideas and used them more related and effectively to the topic.

*Practicing:* In this phase the learners had the opportunity of practicing the learning strategies with an authentic learning task.

*Evaluating:* There were some activities used in this phase for evaluation, such as self- questioning, debriefing discussions after using the strategies. Learners shared their ideas with the teacher one by one and got hints from her, or they shared it with the class and had a whole class discussion.

*Applying learning strategies:* In this final phase the learners were encouraged to:

- 1) Use the strategies they find more useful;
- 2) Apply these strategies to new contexts; &
- 3) Devise their own individual combinations and interpretations of metacognitive learning strategies.

#### *The Cooperative Group*

In the second experimental group which received cooperative learning, considering the number of the learners (32) they were grouped into eight groups of four. One important point was that competitiveness was de-emphasized and the group work was encouraged. In these groups the teacher focused on the four main steps of cooperative learning by Novak (1991) in every session of the reading tasks. The learners were aware of the steps which were: planning, Acting, Observing and Reflecting.

The descriptions of the above-mentioned stages are as follows:

*Planning:* After grouping the learners, the teacher and students started a discussion based on the topic of the reading passage and students gave their own ideas. Then, they discussed the topic in groups.

*Acting:* The learners read the text in a given time, and then start to restate what they read and compared it with their first discussion. In this step, the learners also helped each other with any difficulty and tried to facilitate one another's understanding.

*Observing:* The teacher changed the group members and asked them to discuss what they read, with new group members, while doing her own observation.

*Reflecting:* The teacher evaluated the procedure according to the learners' group evaluation and feedback.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Descriptive Statistics of the PET Proficiency Test Piloting***

Prior to the administration, the PET test, reading comprehension pretest, and reading comprehension post-test were piloted with 30 learners of almost the same characteristics to make sure that the tests could be used confidently for screening.

The PET consisted of 67 items including three sections of reading (35 items), writing (7 items), and listening (25 items) and also another section for speaking. The test was administered to a group of 30 intermediate-level EFL learners at the Aryanpour School of Culture & Education bearing almost the same characteristics as the target sample. All items went through an item analysis procedure and two items were discarded due to their malfunctioning characteristics.

Following the piloting of the test, the mean and standard deviation of the raw scores and the reliability were calculated. The mean and the standard deviation of this administration were found to be 70.20 and 7.46 respectively.

Also, Cronbach's Alpha was employed for calculating the reliability and an acceptable reliability of .83 was obtained. After deletion of the 2 malfunctioning items, the reliability of the test shifted to .87.

There were two writing tasks in the test rated by the two researchers using the predetermined PET rating scale. The rating scale used in this study was the official Cambridge General Mark Schemes for Writing. The rating was done on the basis of the criteria stated in the rating scale including the range of scores from 0 to 5.

In order to calculate the inter-rater reliability between the two researchers, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used. The results showed that there was a significant correlation (.85) between the two raters in the piloting of Writing Part 2 and (.79) in the piloting of Writing Part 3.

The speaking part of the proficiency test (piloting) was also rated by researchers using the predetermined PET rating scale. The rating scale used for this aim was the official Cambridge General Mark Schemes for speaking. The rating was done on the basis of the criteria stated in the rating scale including the range of scores from 0 to 5.

The Pearson correlation coefficient was also used in order to calculate the inter-rater reliability. The results showed that there was a significant correlation (.76) between the two raters/researchers.

#### **Descriptive Statistics of the PET Proficiency Test Administration**

After the procedure of piloting the PET test, it became an instrument to homogenize the students for this study. On the whole, 90 students participated in the test administration. After the administration of the test, descriptive statistics were conducted just as was done in the piloting phase. Table 1 shows these statistics with the mean of 80.12 and the standard deviation of 8.23.

*Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the PET Administration*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
VAR00005	90	58.00	91.00	80.1211	8.2384
Valid N (listwise)	90				

The reliability of the PET in this actual administration for homogenization of the subjects was calculated too (Table 2). An index of .91 reassured the researchers of the reliability of this test.

*Table 2: Reliability of the PET Administration*

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.91	65

From among the 90 students who took the test, 64 students' scores who fell between one standard deviation below and above the mean were selected to participate in this study. The 64 participants were randomly divided into two experimental groups -Metacognitive (32 participants) & Cooperative (32 participants).

#### **Descriptive Statistics of Reading comprehension Pretest Piloting**

Before starting the treatment, a "Reading Comprehension Pretest" was administered by the researchers to know the students' reading comprehension ability before the treatment. The test was thus piloted with 30 students prior to its real administration and the descriptive statistics and reliability were calculated (Tables 3 and 4 respectively).

*Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Reading comprehension Pretest Piloting*

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
VAR00001	30	1.00	11.00	12.00	11.940	4.6692	21.756	-.183	.427
Valid N (listwise)	30								

*Table 4: Reliability of the Reading Comprehension Pretest Piloting*

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.819	35

#### **Descriptive Statistics of the Reading Comprehension Post-test Piloting**

The researchers administered a parallel form of the Reading Comprehension pretest as post-test among the experimental and control groups once the treatment was completed in order to compare the post-test of both groups to see whether there was any improvement for each group in comparison to their previous stage. The Reading Comprehension Post-test was thus piloted with 30 students prior to its real administration and the descriptive statistics and reliability were calculated (Tables 5 and 6).

*Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of the Reading Comprehension Post-test Piloting*

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
VAR00004	30	5.00	10.00	15.00	10.5600	3.20955	10.2455	-.059	.427
Valid N (listwise)	30								

Table 6: Reliability of the Reading Comprehension Post-test Piloting

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.833	35

It should be mentioned that, after calculating item facility, item discrimination and choice distribution no malfunctioning item was observed in pretest and post-test of reading comprehension.

#### Checking the Normality

The present data were measured on an interval scale, and none of the subjects' perform dependently on the tests. The assumption of normality is also met. As displayed in Table 7 the values of skewness and kurtosis are within the ranges of  $\pm 2$ .

Table 7: Normality Assumptions

Group		N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
		Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Meta-Cognitive	PET	32	-.193	.414	.755	.809
	Pretest	32	.218	.414	-.808	.809
	Post-test	32	-1.032	.414	-.213	.809
Cooperative	PET	32	-.196	.414	.262	.809
	Pretest	32	-.301	.414	-1.114	.809
	Post-test	32	-.642	.414	.002	.809

The assumption of homogeneity of variances will be discussed after reporting the results of the independent *t*-test.

#### Descriptive Statistics of the Pretest of Reading Comprehension by Groups

An independent *t*-test was run to compare the meta-cognitive and cooperative groups' mean scores on the pretest of reading comprehension in order to prove that the two groups enjoyed the same level of reading ability prior to the main study. As displayed in Table 8 the mean scores for meta-cognitive and cooperative groups on the pretest of reading comprehension are 22.13 and 22.63 respectively.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics of Pretest of Reading Comprehension by Groups

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Meta-Cognitive	32	22.13	5.428	.960
Cooperative	32	22.63	5.154	.911

The results of the independent *t*-test ( $t(62) = 1.88, P = .064 > .05, r = .23$  it represents a weak to moderate effect size) indicate that there was not any significant difference between meta-cognitive and cooperative groups on the pretest of reading comprehension test (Table 9). Thus it can be concluded that the two groups enjoyed the same level of reading ability prior to the main study.

Table 9: Independent *t*-test of the Means of Pretest of Reading Comprehension by Groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.033	.855	1.889	62	.064	2.500	1.323	-.145	5.145
Equal variances not assumed			1.889	61.834	.064	2.500	1.323	-.145	5.145

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is met (Levene's  $F = .033, P = .855 > .05$ ). That is why the first row of Table 9, i.e. "Equal variances assumed" was reported.

An independent *t*-test is run to compare the meta-cognitive and cooperative groups' mean scores on the post-test of reading comprehension in order to probe their effect on the reading ability of the students. As displayed in Table 10 the mean scores for meta-cognitive and cooperative groups on the post-test of reading comprehension are 31.53 and 28.19 respectively.

Table 10: Descriptive Statistics of Post-test of Reading Comprehension by Groups

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Meta-Cognitive	32	31.53	4.016	.710
Cooperative	32	28.19	3.237	.572

The results of the independent *t*-test ( $t(62) = 3.667, P = .001 < .05, r = .42$  it represents an almost large effect size) indicate that there is a significant difference between meta-cognitive and cooperative groups on the post-test of reading comprehension test (Table 11). The experimental group which received metacognitive strategy training did statistically better in their post-test, which means that an increase in students' performance in reading comprehension due to the effect of teaching metacognitive strategies was occurred.

Table 11: Independent *t*-test of the Means of Post-test of Reading Comprehension by Groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	2.046	.158	3.667	62	.001	3.344	.912	1.521	5.167
Equal variances not assumed			3.667	59.327	.001	3.344	.912	1.519	5.168

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is met (Levene's  $F = 2.04$ ,  $P = .158 > .05$ ). That is why the first row of Table 11, i.e. "Equal variances assumed" is reported.

### Empirical Validity

The Pearson correlations between the PET and pretest & post-test of reading comprehension are employed as the empirical validity indices of the latter two tests. The statistically significant correlation between the pretest ( $r(62) = .51$ ,  $P = .000 < .05$ ) and post-test ( $r(62) = .34$ ,  $P = .005 < .05$ ) with the PET test indicate that the pretest and post-test of reading comprehension enjoy empirical validity (Table 12).

Table 12: Empirical Validity

		PET
Pretest	Pearson Correlation	.511**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	64
Posttest	Pearson Correlation	.347**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005
	N	64

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### CONCLUSION

The analysis of the scores using the independent sample *t*-test showed that the mean score of the metacognitive and cooperative groups on the post-test of reading comprehension were 31.53 and 28.19 respectively. Also, the analysis of the test scores using *t*-test revealed that the experimental group which received metacognitive strategy training did statistically better in their post-test, which means that an increase in students' performance in reading comprehension due to the effect of teaching metacognitive strategies was occurred. To conclude, it seems that using metacognitive strategies make the learners have better understanding of the reading text. Also, learning these strategies help students to find out what they want or what they need to know. Oxford (1990), also says that learners who are more aware of strategies and more advanced seem to use the strategies better. This again shows the importance of improving the students' metacognitive strategies in teaching and learning. Studies proving the effectiveness of strategy training are likely to convince English teachers, teacher trainers, course book writers and curriculum designers to be more aware of the benefits of strategy training and include these strategies in their lessons, course books and curricula.

As reported in Dhiab-Henia's study (2003), a traditional approach to reading comprehension fails to equip students with highly developed and positive strategies required for comprehending the text they read. The teachers should help students to become efficient readers and enhance their reading ability. Gradually, the students need to be moved from dependency on the teacher to more independent readers. This independence can be achieved by assisting them in being efficient in the use of certain strategies. As suggested by Salataci & Akyel (2002), strategy instruction has a positive effect on students' reading strategy use and reading comprehension in English. In this regard, Dhiab-Henia (2003) has provided quantitative and qualitative evidence about the efficiency of metacognitive strategy training on the way that university students function in their reading. According to Zhang (2001), if researchers could ascertain EFL readers' metacognitive strategic knowledge, it would help teachers make a more informed choice in teaching second language or foreign language reading.

At the end, it is worth mentioning that like any study, this research faced some limitations, which has to be taken into consideration while attempting to generalize its findings. The number of the male and female participants was not the same so, the researcher was provided with the unequal number of male and female participants. There was no determined age range of participants and the classes were filled with any adults ages 18 up to 60. Therefore, the findings of the study may not be generalizable to other age groups.

### Suggestions for Further Research

The following are suggested for further studies:

1. Lysynchuk, Pressley, d'Ailly, Smith, and Cake (1989), however, noted that one of the major problems in intervention research studies of reading comprehension strategy instruction was an exclusion of the examination of long-term effects of strategy instruction. Unfortunately, the current study also did not examine long-term effects (the intervention in this study occurred in approximately 7 weeks). Thus, further research should examine long-term effects of metacognitive and cooperative strategies on students' reading comprehension performance.



2. According to National Reading Panel (2000), vocabulary is critical to reading comprehension. In this study, however, vocabulary performance was not included as a dependent measure. Future research examining effects of metacognitive strategies on vocabulary of students is recommended.
3. It is suggested that in future research a large size of subject be included in the research. The more subjects will result in greater reliability and validity.

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## THE EFFECT OF RECEIVING ELECTRONIC FEEDBACK AND THE EFFECT OF GENDER ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE WRITING PERFORMANCE

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### ABSTRACT

The current study tries to suggest the findings obtained in a research project investigating whether development in writing performance has resulted from applying electronic feedback (email) in writing class. This study attempts to examine the difference between electronic writing modes and old-fashioned writing styles. The project has forty participants studying English in Karoon Language Institute of Tooyserkan, Iran who were chosen through the present intact classes and attended two different EFL writing courses; a computerized classroom and a traditional one. Then the results and findings were investigated. The major finding demonstrated that e-mail users made enhancement in their writing achievement. Another finding suggests that female users (in the electronically oriented group) showed a greater improvement on their writing performance than male users.

**KEYWORDS:** E-mail, English Language, Feedback, Writing

### INTRODUCTION

Nowadays computers and technology ingrained in different parts of our life. By the advent of IT, communication becomes easier and distance between people become closer. It makes this chance for people to communicate to each other in different parts of the world at a same time. One of the most common forms of technology is Internet and e-mail which pervade our daily life and because of they have been replaced for all means of traditional communication they have had a distinctive place in every part of life. Soon afterwards www started to be utilized in education especially in learning context. Their importance as a tool for developing learning cannot be regarded (Vargas, 2010). They have made foreign language materials easy to access and use and help learners experience the target language. They suggest numerous benefits in educational domain, such as greater levels of participation (Gonzalez-Bueno, 1998 as cited in Shang, 2007), more motivation and interest (Skinner & Austin, 1999 as cited in Shang, 2007), reducing anxiety (Kupelian, 2001 as cited in Shang, 2007), becoming familiar with the aspects of syntax and semantic knowledge (Chen, 2008), more language functions (Wang, 1998 as cited in Shang, 2007), etc. By considering these beneficial aspects and growing understanding of its potentials there is an emphasis of various application of this novel technology in more practical aspect of teaching and learning situations.

With these descriptions, it is expected that research's results provide a path for teachers to benefit from the hypothesis; e-feedback can be seen as a supplement in better teaching and learning writing foreign language.

### Rationale

As the topic of this project suggests the study aims to investigate the efficiency of using electronic feedback on the promotion of language writing performance with regard to the gender of learners. According to the research questions, it attempts to see the effect of computer work in writing skill. That is to say, it tries to report if it is economical and cost effective for teachers, students and institutes to employ computers at school. In other word, it tries to show if some positive outcomes in writing skill have been made by means of email transmission. In so doing, it is going to explore whether males e-mail users make a significant difference in their achievement in writing English as a foreign language. For these purposes, following hypotheses are presented:

N<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference between e-mail users vs. traditional group in their achievement in writing English as a foreign language.

N<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant difference between male and female email users in their achievement in writing English as a foreign language.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### *Research on E-mail in the Teaching of ESL Writing*

Various studies have looked at the role of multimedia feedback in electronic class. And most of these studies make support teaching and learning grammar and writing skill via email. For instance Sullivan and Pratt (1996) have established from their research that over fifteen weeks students in the computer-assisted classroom showed a significant gain in writing due to the networked computers. Students in the C.A classroom demonstrated not only more interest in discussions, and, subsequently, more practice writing English.

In 2000, Gonzalez-Bueno and Perez (as cited in Kupelian, 2001) have investigated the effect of using e-mail on writing dialogue journals on learners of Spanish as an L2. Results demonstrated that students who used e-mail for their dialogue journals out-performed those who used pencil and paper in the amount of language generated.

Similarly, Al-Jarf (2001) conducted a study in which 113 ESL female freshmen students in their writing course in Saudi Arabia were exposed in two different writing instructions: traditional in-class writing instruction in control group and a combination of traditional and online (web-based) writing instruction. Results revealed that the experimental group made more gains as a result of web-based instruction. So, Web-based instruction seemed to be an important factor in enhancing the writing quality of ESL students. Therefore, it can be suggested that the use of web-based instruction as a supplement to traditional in-class writing instruction was significantly more effective than using traditional writing instruction alone.

Similar findings were generated in Liao's study (2002) as cited in (A Razak & Asmawi, 2004) when she established an e-mail key pals project with her students in Sophomore EFL Writing at National Chung Hing University (NCHU). Her findings indicated that e-mailing improved EFL learners' writing abilities as it provided practice in reading and writing using the target language to express ideas and opinions to real audience.

A related study was performed by Chuo (2007) to investigate the effects of the WebQuest Writing Instruction (WQWI) program on Taiwanese EFL learners' writing performance. The results indicated that students in the WQWI class improved their writing performance significantly more than those in the traditional classroom writing class. The findings suggested that integrating web resources into EFL writing instruction was effective for enhancing students' writing performance and provided a positive learning experience. The findings of this research also support those of Shang (2007) who carried out a research on email application with 40 non-traditional EFL students in an intermediate reading class at a university in Taiwan. Results demonstrate that the nature of email application promotes written accuracy and sentence complexity. The findings and suggestions emerging from the mentioned studies are in line with results of other studies like, Li (2000) as cited in Shang (2007) who examined the linguistic characteristics of 132 emails of ESL students in tasks that differed in terms of purpose, audience interaction, and task structure. Statistical results showed that in email tasks involving audience interaction, students tended to produce syntactically and lexically more complex texts.

Recently, Bridge and Appleyard (2008) tried to make comparison between electronic and paper-based assignment submission and feedback. 47 radiotherapy physics students submitted assignments and received feedback via features within the Virtual Learning Environment Blackboard. Results indicated that 93% of students preferred having their feedback available online rather than printed and handed to them. Overall, students preferred online assignment management to postal or physical hand-in.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

In this research 40, 20 males and 20 females Iranian English language learners in Karoon Language Institute of Tooyserkan, Iran participated. Students were from 16 to 18 years- of -age at an intermediate English level. The students were chosen through intact groups and were divided into four groups, two groups as the control groups and the two others as the experimental groups and their homogeneity was confirmed by Nelson Test. Four groups took a pre-test (first writing) and a post-test (last writing) English language writing skill. Then the experimental groups received the treatment (writing and receiving feedback electronically). The two other control groups had their traditional writing class (paper-based correction of errors).

### ***Instrumentation and Materials***

The first instrument was Nelson English Language Test developed by WS Fowler and Norman Coe and was published 1976, which was used to determine the homogeneity of the learners. The book consisted of three different levels of tests from elementary to advance. It is necessary to mention that researcher chose intermediate level which involved 40 tests which contained 50 items (it is included in appendix) and students had to choose the correct answer from four choices. In the current study, for calculating reliability of the test the researcher used Kuder-Richardson Formula 21 (K-R21), and reliability of .73 was achieved for the Nelson pre-test that is considered appropriate for the research purpose. It is worth mentioning that due to the fact that Nelson Test is a standardized test of proficiency, and the index of reliability includes .73, consequently, its validity was assumed to be satisfactory (see Appendix A).

And the other instrument which was used in the study was four students' papers, their pre and post writing, which the students were expected to write during the project. And the last instrument was Yahoo Mail. It was the main instrument which was used in this project. It was able to provide feedback for students about their mistakes such as spelling, capitalization, subject-verb agreement and punctuation,...and the correct forms were suggested, so the learners had the opportunity to benefit from these suggestions.

### ***Procedure***

As mentioned before, this study has four groups, two groups as the control groups and the two others as the experimental groups, as a result it includes one male control group, one male experimental group, one female control group and one female experimental group and their close homogeneity was confirmed by Nelson Test. They attended in two different classes, control groups in traditional class and experimental groups in electronic one. Then process methodology was employed in both classes. Control groups received traditional classroom instruction and met in a traditional environment the entire time and they are expected to write compositions and received researcher's feedback on their papers. Meanwhile, the learners of experimental groups met in the electronic classes in which included writing their compositions in Yahoo Mail and sending them to their teacher's mail and receiving feedback electronically. The e-class lessons which were used in the experimental setting directed students in carrying out their assignments by guiding them in completing their writing assignments on the computer. The only difference between the four classes was the students' use of networked computers in two classes. Each class was expected to write four compositions which they were scored based on IELTS Writing band descriptors which its table and its components are included in the appendix (see Appendix B).

### ***Variables and Data Analysis***

The researcher has employed a quasi-experimental design which was performed with one independent variable (method of teaching: computerized or traditional setting) investigated through application of email. In the present research, the following statistical steps were taken.

First, statistical procedures were used to check the homogeneity level of learners. Secondly, the main cause of promotion of writing ability in this research was determined. Therefore, a t-test was used to observe the effectiveness of e-instruction in experimental groups.

Thirdly, a t-test was used to test any significant differences in the promotion of writing skill as a result of applying email between email users and non-users.

At the end, another sample of t-test was run too, to explore any significant difference between male users and female users in their writing achievement with regard to their gender.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The first statistical test was Mann-Whitney test which is used to compare the difference between the means. In this case, the researcher used it to ensure that the difference between the two groups regarding their writing skill was not significant. The results indicated that the level of significance of the obtained index of sig. (.397) does not exceed .05. In other words, the probability level in this test was less than .05 ( $p < .05$ ). Hence, the difference between the mean scores of the two groups on pretest was found to be non significant and both the groups were found to be almost equal before intervention.

As we mentioned before, the experimental group received treatment. So, to measure the effectiveness of e-instruction on their writing performance, another Mann-Whitney test was run as a t-test to compare the results of the students in experimental and control groups on the post-test.

The results revealed that the difference between the groups is meaningfully significant at .000 level which is well above the conventional level of .05. The probability level in this test was higher than .05 and the significant level which was assumed by the researcher was ( $p > .05$ ). Therefore, there is a significant difference between the two groups in favor of experimental group. In so doing, the students who received e-assignments had a better performance compared to those in the second group who participated in traditional context.

The next statistical test, Wilcoxon Test, deals with the comparison of the results of the students in experimental and control groups on their pre-test and post-test. Two pairs of t-test were used to investigating significant differences between pre-test and post-test of control and experimental groups.

Results showed that experimental group was significantly better on the post-test compared to the pre-test. Because t-value was .021,  $p < .05$ , it means the outcomes of learners' final writing was higher than in their pre-test, which is an indication of the effect of email on improving students' knowledge.

However, a sample of t-test in control group demonstrated same results too. The estimated-t showed improvement in the students' performance from the pre-test to post-test too. It means that the feedback provided by computer and the one which provided by the instructor had a similar effect on their final writing achievement.

And the last one is related to the comparison of the male and female subjects in the experimental group on their post-test. To meet this aim, a Mann-Whitney Test as t-test was run to explore the difference between writing performance post-test scores in the male and female users. In this case, the level of significance (.000) indicates that the difference between the means is absolutely significant. In other word, the scores of the female users revealed that female users performed better than male users did. It helps the researcher to conclude that female users outperformed male users quite significantly on the post-test in the experimental group.

### **Discussion**

Research Question 1, "Is there any significant differences between e-mail users vs. traditional group in their achievement in writing English as a foreign language?"

The results obtained through the application of Mann-Whitney test as a t-test revealed that significant differences between mail-users and paper-pen users were found. It was suggested that the students exposed to e-instruction were better performers. In other word, applying e-mail had a stronger positive effect on students' writing skill than traditional style. This improvement was brought about by the corrective nature of the email activity that provides a room for some common writing rules such as spelling, punctuation, and capitalization in which some grammatical mistakes are addressed by underlining and the students are provided with some choices that help learners to polish their written document with the suggested replacements and make a grammatical accurate written language. Thus it is evident that e-mail is a writing tool that can help students to write English effectively.

Also, in the next phase the null hypothesis: "There is no significant difference between e-mail users vs. traditional group to their achievement in writing English as a foreign language" was tested too. Two pairs of t-tests were used to investigate significant differences between pre-test and post-test of control and experimental groups. Results suggested enhancement in the students' performance in both groups from the pre-test to post-test. It can be said that both paper-pen method and computer method are effective to different degrees. Although results showed that both methods (paper-based and computer-based) were effective in improving writing skill but, the effect for the computer-based group is greater proving that teaching writing through electronic medium can lead to higher achievement in writing skill. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

With regard to the second research question: "Is there is any significant difference between male and female email users in their achievement in writing English as a foreign language.", the results outlined in previous pages already indicated the rejection of the second null hypothesis because significant differences were observed between the male and female experimental groups in favor of the female group. In other words, writing composition of the female experimental group was better in comparison with the males. The scores on the e-assignments revealed that females in the e-setting performed better than what males in the similar condition did. It can be concluded that the treatment in the female experimental group has been more effective than the male one. In these two classes, the girls showed perseverance and interest when they were going through the treatment. They also made fewer mistakes than the boys did. On the contrary, the boys were less motivated and did not notice to what they were writing. They made many mistakes and did not pay attention to the underlined words or phrases. As a result, female users made a great difference on the level of writing skill at the end of the course. Therefore, the hypothesis is strongly rejected.

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

In sum, the analysis conducted here revealed that the electronic medium could bring some positive changes in the outcome of learners' final writings and enhance grammatical written accuracy. This is because email generates a room for correcting some common grammatical problems therefore, students who are afraid of making mistakes can benefit from the immediate feedback which offers new opportunity for students to make their writing more organized through self-correction in a non-threatening atmosphere which leads to be independent of teacher. It may be due to computer can be a very important source of providing input which is authentic which facilitates learning. It is interesting to note that as students paid more attention to grammatical accuracy, they tended to decrease the number of mistakes. Therefore, it is evident which supports our claim that using e-mail as a technique in writing classes for EFL students improve their English writing.

The findings of this research also support those of Carter and Nunan (2002 cited in Ghalami Nobar and Ahangari, 2012) who had suggested that the repetitive nature of input through internet assists learners in understanding linguistics cues. Therefore, learners can easily engage in language practice and real learning context.

The findings having emerged from this study are in line with several studies such as Shaver's (1986), and Allen and Thompson's study (1995) as cited in (Al-Jarf, 2001) who found that using a computer assisted collaborative writing by L1 elementary, middle, high school and college students increased the quantity of writing instruction and the amount of student writing more than those using traditional instruction. Also, in Al-Jarf's study (2001) Web-based instruction seemed to be an important factor in enhancing the writing quality of ESL students. It helped enhance their writing ability (achievement) and resulted in a significant improvement in their posttest (achievement test) scores.



These findings support those of Cooper and Selfe (1990; Spitzer's, 1989 cited in Sullivan & Pratt, 1996) which had noted the advantages of using networked computers for writing. Therefore, it can be suggested that the use of web-based instruction as a supplement to traditional in-class writing instruction was significantly more effective than using traditional writing instruction alone.

Although the findings in this research have provided answers to research questions but, in order to raise generalizability of the results following list of recommendations is suggested for further study:

- This study was performed to explore the effect of computer-based feedback on EFL writing performance. Further research can be suggested to investigate the usefulness of e-feedback on other skills such as speaking, reading, listening, and so on.
- This study has been performed on a group of intermediate language learners. Although it worked for them, we cannot make sure that it will work for all language learners. Thus, it can be a good idea to carry out same research for other levels and larger groups of students or in higher education such as college or university.
- Since this study examines only implementation of email into EFL writing instruction, one area that does seem worthy of investigation is exploring the effect of incorporating other aspects of web technologies such as synchronous discussion among students in the class, or collaborative projects with other groups of students besides email in curriculum to enhance learning.

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## Appendix

### Choose the correct answer. Only one answer is correct.

Last June my brother...1.....a car. He had had an old scooter before, but it....2.... several times during the spring. "What you want is a second-hand Mini," I suggested. "If you give me the money," he said, ".....3....one tomorrow." "I can't give you the money," I replied, "but what about Aunt Myra. She must have enough. We...4....her since Christmas but she always hints that we...5..... go and see her more often."

We told our parents where we were going. They weren't very happy about it and asked us not to go. So...6.....But later that same day something strange.....7..... A doctor.....8..... us that Aunt Myra.....9.....into hospital for operation.".....10.....go and see her at the same time," said my mother. "You two go today, but don't mention the money."

When we...11....., Aunt Myra.....12....."I'm not seriously ill," she said, "but the doctor insists that.....13.....to drive my car. You can have it if you promise.....14..... me to the seaside now and again." We agreed, and now we quite enjoy our monthly trips to the coast with Aunt Myra.

- 1) A. wanted to buy
- B. wanted buying
- C. liked to buy
- D. liked buying
- 2) A. was breaking down
- B. was breaking up

- 8) A. rang for telling
- B. rang to tell
- C. rung for telling
- D. rung to tell
- 9) A. had gone
- B. had been



- C. had broken down
- D. had broken up
- 3) A. I get
- B. I'm getting
- C. I'm going to get
- D. I'll get
- 4) A. are not seeing
- B. haven't seen
- C. didn't see
- D. don't see
- 5) A. should
- B. shall
- C. would
- D. will
- 6) A. that we haven't
- B. that we didn't
- C. we haven't
- D. we didn't
- 7) A. occurred
- B. took the place
- C. passed
- D. was there

- C. has gone
- D. has been
- 10) A. We may not all
- B. We can't all
- C. All we can't
- D. All we may not
- 11) A. have come there
- B. were arriving
- C. got there
- D. came to there
- 12) A. was seeming quite happily
- B. was seeming quite happy
- C. seemed quite happily
- D. seemed quite happy
- 13) A. I'm meeting so old
- B. I'm getting too old
- C. I get so old
- D. I get too old
- 14) A. taking
- B. bringing
- C. to take
- D. to bring

**Choose the correct answer. Only one answer is correct.**

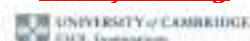
- 15. Can this camera..... good photos?  
A. make                      B. to make                      C. take                      D. to take
- 16. Who was the first person.....today?  
A. spoke to you                      B. you spoke to                      C. you spoke                      D. whom you spoke
- 17. I can't find the book.....  
A. nowhere                      B. everywhere                      C. anywhere                      D. somewhere
- 18. There was a house at.....  
A. the mountain foot                      B. the foot of the mountain  
C. the feet of the mountain                      D. the mountain's foot
- 19. A person who talks to ..... is not necessary mad.  
A. himself                      B. oneself                      C. yourself                      D. itself
- 20. I'll be 13 tomorrow,.....?  
A. am I                      B. aren't I                      C. won't I                      D. will I
- 21. Did you hear.....Julie said?  
A. what                      B. that                      C. that what                      D. which
- 22. Spanish people usually speak ..... than English people.  
A. quicklier                      B. more quicklier                      C. more quickly                      D. more quicker
- 23. That old lady can't stop me.....he tennis match on my radio.  
A. to listen                      B. listening                      C. listen to                      D. listening to
- 24. I haven't got a chair.....  
A. to sit                      B. for to sit on                      C. to sit on                      D. for sitting
- 25.....at the moment, I'll go the shops.  
A. For it doesn't rain                      B. As it doesn't rain  
C. For it isn't raining                      D. As it isn't raining
- 26. Bill drinks..... whisky.  
A. any                      B. none                      C. too many                      D. so much
- 27.....are very intelligent.  
A. Both of them                      B. Both them                      C. Both they                      D. The both
- 28. In a shop.....customers.  
A. it is important pleasing                      B. it is important to please  
C. there is important pleasing                      D. there is important to please
- 29. Don't leave your shoes on the table.  
A. Put off them!                      B. Take them off!  
C. Pick them off!                      D. Pick up them!
- 30. ....in my class likes a teacher.  
A. All persons                      B. All pupils                      C. Everyone                      D. All people
- 31. We expected about 20 girls but there were..... people there.  
A. another                      B. others                      C. some                      D. more
- 32. Your bicycle shouldn't be in the house!  
A. Take it out!                      B. Get out it!                      C. Put it off!                      D. Take away it!
- 33. What time does the bus.....Bradford?  
A. go away to                      B. go away for                      C. leave to                      D. leave for
- 34. She.....be Canadian because she's got a British passport.  
A. can't                      B. isn't able to                      C. mustn't                      D. doesn't need
- 35. "Our daughter.....", they said.  
A. was born since three years                      B. is born for three years ago  
C. was born three years ago                      D. has been born since three years ago
- 36. When..... English?  
A. has he begun to study                      B. has he begun study  
C. did he begin to study                      D. did he begin study

37. Do you want some cheese? No,.....  
A. I've some still                      B. I still have much  
C. I don't want                         D. I've still got some
38. Brenda likes going to the theater and .....  
A. so do I                      B. so go I                      C. so I like                      D. so I am
39. .... from London to Edinburgh!  
A. How long there is                      B. What a long way it is  
C. What distance is there                      D. How long is
40. He's a good guitarist, but he plays the piano.....  
A. quick well                      B. too hardly                      C. very good                      D. much better
41. When you go to the shops, bring me.....  
A. fruit tin                      B. a fruits tin                      C. a tin of fruit                      D. a tin of fruit
42. Molly doesn't eat fish.  
A. So doesn't John.                      B. Neither does John.  
C. John doesn't too                      D. John doesn't that either
43. The airport is five miles.....  
A. away from here                      B. from here away  
C. far from here                      D. far away from here
44. Please ask .....and see me.  
A. to Bill to come                      B. Bill to come                      C. to Bill come                      D. Bill come
45. She always buys.....my birthday.  
A. anything nice to                      B. anything nice for  
C. something awful to                      D. something awful for
46. Aren't they friends.....?  
A. of yours                      B. of you                      C. to yours                      D. to you
47. She hardly ever eats.....potatoes.  
A. or bread or                      B. bread or  
C. neither bread or                      D. neither bread nor
48. This is the record we.....  
A. like so much                      B. are liking so much  
Like it much                      D. like it much are liking it much
49. She's going to buy.....new trousers.  
A. some pair of                      B. some                      C. a couple of                      D. this
50. Is she going to school? No, .....  
A. she doesn't                      B. she's cycling                      C. she gets by bus                      D. to the shops

## IELTS Task 2 Writing band descriptors (public version)

Band	Task Response	Coherence and Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range and Accuracy
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fully addresses all parts of the task</li> <li>presents a fully developed position in answer to the question with relevant, fully extended and well-supported ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention</li> <li>skillfully manages paragraphing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'</li> </ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sufficiently addresses all parts of the task</li> <li>presents a well-developed response to the question with relevant, extended and supported ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sequences information and ideas logically</li> <li>manages all aspects of cohesion well</li> <li>uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a wide range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly to convey precise meanings</li> <li>skillfully uses uncommon lexical items but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation</li> <li>produces rare errors in spelling and/or word formation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a wide range of structures</li> <li>the majority of sentences are error-free</li> <li>makes only very occasional errors or inaccuracies</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>addresses all parts of the task</li> <li>presents a clear position throughout the response</li> <li>presents, extends and supports main ideas, but there may be a tendency to over-generalise and/or supporting ideas may lack focus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>logically organises information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout</li> <li>uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under/over-use</li> <li>presents a clear central topic within each paragraph</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision</li> <li>uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation</li> <li>may produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a variety of complex structures</li> <li>produces frequent error-free sentences</li> <li>has good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>addresses all parts of the task although some parts may be more fully covered than others</li> <li>presents a relevant position although the conclusions may become unclear or repetitive</li> <li>presents relevant main ideas but some may be inadequately developed/unclear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>arranges information and ideas coherently and there is a clear overall progression</li> <li>uses cohesive devices effectively, but cohesion within and/or between sentences may be faulty or mechanical</li> <li>may not always use referencing clearly or appropriately</li> <li>uses paragraphing, but not always logically</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses an adequate range of vocabulary for the task</li> <li>attempts to use less common vocabulary but with some inaccuracy</li> <li>makes some errors in spelling and/or word formation, but they do not impede communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms</li> <li>makes some errors in grammar and punctuation but they rarely reduce communication</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>addresses the task only partially; the format may be inappropriate in places</li> <li>expresses a position but the development is not always clear and there may be no</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>presents information with some organisation but there may be a lack of overall progression</li> <li>makes inadequate, inaccurate or over-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a limited range of vocabulary, but this is minimally adequate for the task</li> <li>may make noticeable errors in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses only a limited range of structures</li> <li>attempts complex sentences but these tend to be less accurate than simple sentences</li> </ul>

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4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conclusions drawn</li> <li>presents some main ideas but these are limited and not sufficiently developed; there may be irrelevant detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use of cohesive devices</li> <li>may be repetitive because of lack of referencing and substitution</li> <li>may not write in paragraphs, or paragraphing may be inadequate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>spelling and/or word formation that may cause some difficulty for the reader</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>may make frequent grammatical errors and punctuation may be faulty; errors can cause some difficulty for the reader</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>responds to the task only in a minimal way or the answer is tangential; the format may be inappropriate</li> <li>presents a position but this is unclear</li> <li>presents some main ideas but these are difficult to identify and may be repetitive, irrelevant or not well supported</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>presents information and ideas but these are not arranged coherently and there is no clear progression in the response</li> <li>uses some basic cohesive devices but these may be inaccurate or repetitive</li> <li>may not write in paragraphs or their use may be confusing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses only basic vocabulary which may be used repetitively or which may be inappropriate for the task</li> <li>has limited control of word formation and/or spelling; errors may cause strain for the reader</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses only a very limited range of structures with only rare use of subordinate clauses</li> <li>some structures are accurate but errors predominate, and punctuation is often faulty</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not adequately address any part of the task</li> <li>does not express a clear position</li> <li>presents few ideas, which are largely undeveloped or irrelevant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not organise ideas logically</li> <li>may use a very limited range of cohesive devices, and those used may not indicate a logical relationship between ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses only a very limited range of words and expressions with very limited control of word formation and/or spelling</li> <li>errors may severely distort the message</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>attempts sentence forms but errors in grammar and punctuation predominate and distort the meaning</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>barely responds to the task</li> <li>does not express a position</li> <li>may attempt to present one or two ideas but there is no development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has very little control of organisational features</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses an extremely limited range of vocabulary; essentially no control of word formation and/or spelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cannot use sentence forms except in memorised phrases</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>answer is completely unrelated to the task</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fails to communicate any message</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>can only use a few isolated words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cannot use sentence forms at all</li> </ul>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not attend</li> <li>does not attempt the task in any way</li> <li>writes a totally memorised response</li> </ul>			



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# MOTIVATION AND THE ATTAINMENT OF LEARNERS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) IN NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

This paper examines motivation in the light of its affective roles in learning of English language as a second language. It acknowledges the lack of motivation for both the students and the teachers of English but emphasizes the fact that the assumed need of English language by the learners will to a large extent affect the attainment level of ESL learners. There is an attempt to unravel the implication of different kinds of motivation on language learning with special attention to the kinds of motivation used by the learners of English as a second language in Nigeria and how learners can maximise this for an improved proficiency in it.

**KEYWORDS:** motivation, language learning, second language, acquisition, first language

## INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that a child whose mental and physical capabilities lie within the normal range will grow up to acquire a language and most of the time need arises for the learning of more language(s). Motivation in language learning can be the drive that compels one to learn or study a language. In other words, motivation is the factor that spurs learners of language to learn a particular language.

There are two major types of motivation: Extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation. The extrinsic motivation operates when learners learn as a factor external to them while intrinsic motivation comes into play when a language is learnt because of factors internal to the learner. From psychological perspective, motivation is regarded as the internal drive directing behavior towards some end (Firth, 1997). Also Huitt (2001) submits that motivation is an internal state or condition that serves to activate or energise behavior and give it direction. From both definitions, it is obvious that in psychology, though external factors are acknowledged, motivation is approached through internal factors. The internal condition is highly emphasized.

In Nigeria, the importance of English Language cannot be over emphasized based on the roles it performs especially in the educational sector. No wonder, Bamgbose (1971) says that English Language is most noticeable in the field of education and Bamisaye (1995a) acknowledges its status as the Nigeria's most important language, thereby describing it as a 'legal alien'.

The second language is a language that is learnt after the first language has been acquired. There is no gain saying that the learning of English Language by students in Nigeria has become as indispensable as the air that one breathes since the success and survival of a student in school will, to a large extent, depend on his knowledge of English. At this juncture, it is pertinent to emphasize that a second language (L2) is not always learnt. There could be instances of second

language acquisition, in which case a child is exposed to two languages at an early age, thereby acquiring the two languages simultaneously.

In Nigeria, most children learn English language as a second language at school. In this case, the teachers serve as the role model. No wonder, Bamisaye (1995a) aptly points to the fact that the learners as well as the teachers of English language face a lot of problems in learning/teaching endeavours in Nigeria. The issue of motivation constitutes one of the major problems associated with language learning which, according to this paper, will be approached by examining the kinds of motivation for learning the language. This is the goal of students learning the language.

## **MOTIVATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Adegbite (2003) asserts that motivation is the desire or determination to learn a language. In learning any language, there is a goal that is set to be achieved. The goal will motivate individual learners or students of language in the process of learning and eventual attainment in the language. Therefore, one can say that motivation in language learning refers to the orientation and attitude of a learner towards target language learning and the community of the language. It is with due consideration of this factor that motivation in language learning can be classified into Instrumental and Integrative motivation (Gardener & Lambert 1972; Munkaila & Haruna, 2001).

Learners of a language are said to have been instrumentally motivated when the orientation is based on an interest to learn a language for utilitarian purpose i.e., to transact a business, in order to succeed in an examination etc. The instrumental motivation is recognized by Ariyo (2004b) as extrinsic motivation, which he describes as learning of a language as a sort of utilitarian adventure.

Integration motivation, on the other hand, refers to when learners are oriented to learn about the culture of the language community and cultivate a sense of belongingness toward the community. In such a case, learners will be willing to adapt the behaviour. Ariyo (2004b) asserts that language learning correlates with intrinsic motivation positively if the aim is to identify with the culture of native speakers of the language. Therefore, integrative motivation encompasses not only the language but the culture associated with the language.

## **THE IMPLICATION OF INSTRUMENTAL MOTIVATION**

Pride and Holmes (1974) submit that motivation is instrumental in form, if the purpose of language study reflects the more utilitarian value of linguistic achievement such as getting ahead in one's occupation, securing a job and the likes, if this definition is taken 'carte blanche,' then instrumental motivation is premised on the notion of learning a language for specific purpose[s].

Instrumentally motivated learners focus on areas of need. Since the learning of a target language is directed towards certain goals, efforts and energy invested in learning decrease once those goals are achieved or when the learners assumed they have learnt enough to achieve the goals. It

is a pertinent observation that different languages reflect different cultural practices. The culture of a particular language environment differs from another. Therefore, learners that are instrumentally motivated have little knowledge about the culture of the community of the target language.

Another distinct factor is the use of the second language. Learners are not likely to use the target language outside the context for which the language is learnt. Even in schools, learners are basically pre-occupied with sailing through tests and examinations, which in most cases, are basically theoretical in approach. Once, they can successfully achieve that, they are no more interested in putting the language into use outside the school environment.

Learners that are instrumentally motivated have little knowledge about the lexico-grammatical system, meaning system and sound system of the language. Suffice to say that the knowledge of a learner at each level of the grammar of the language will also depend on the goals. A student that does not intend to study English in any tertiary institution might not pay adequate attention to the sound system of the English language.

Instrumentally motivated learners can hardly attain near native – like proficiency, let alone native – like proficiency in the target language as long as the orientation remains the same. The fact remains that they do not even desire to be.

## **THE IMPLICATION OF INTEGRATIVE MOTIVATION**

Pride and Holmes (1972) staunchly argue that a language may be learnt as a means of being accepted in another cultural group because of dissatisfaction experienced in one's culture. Also the interest to learn another culture might just be the same as the learner's own culture. It is along this reasoning that Ariyo (2004b) asserts that language learning correlates with intrinsic motivation positively if the aim is to identify with the culture of the native speakers of the language. The point being emphasized here is that learning about the culture of the target language is the crux of the matter in integrative motivation.

Learners are encouraged to speak the target language in both formal and informal environments. No doubt, there will also be certain needs, but the focus is not only on immediate needs, but a continuous learning of culture until they become 'linguistic members' of the language community. Learners are exposed to wide stylistic variations of the target language coupled with a deep knowledge of the verbal behavior. Also, the learners will cover extensively the phonology, morphology, semantics and syntactic systems of the target language. No wonder, Adetuyibi and Osundahunsi (1984b:140) agree that this type of motivation (integrative) will stimulate learners to think creatively and to express their thoughts intelligibly.

Integratively motivated learners are emotionally attached to the culture of the target language, therefore, they possess a sense of belonging to the language community of the target language. There will be more successful learning when a target language is learnt in order to be part of those that speak the language. This leads to better learning and the learners could attain near proficiency in the target language.

In an ESL situation, the learners of English have acquired a language (first language) and in most instances, an ESL learner is a linguistic adult. It becomes obvious that English will be the second sequential language. In apt reference to the submission of Ariyo (2004a), there exists different purpose for teaching English in Nigeria. As a matter of fact, teaching or learning of the language, since it is an L2 is goal oriented. No wonder, Adegbite (2003) stresses the fact that motivation is an affective element in language acquisition.

According to the provision stipulated in the National Policy on Education (1981):

*Government will see to it that the medium of instruction in the primary school is initially the mother tongue or the language of immediate community and at a later stage, English.*

From the quoted of the National Policy on Education, there is the provision for the use of both indigenous language and English language as media of instruction in early and later primary school respectively. The use of English by ESL learners is most noticeable in the formal setting; therefore the learning environment is restricted. These cannot but have grave consequences on the attainment level of learners of English.

Adegbite (2003) opines that in Nigeria, English is learnt mainly through formal instruction in the classroom. He reiterates further that this context for learning English in a second language environment contrasts in certain respects from the context whereby second language learning takes place in English as a mother tongue environment. This observation captures the linguistic environment of learners of English as a language in Nigeria.

Davies (2006) acknowledges the fact that second language learners could possess communicative competence in the target language but he aptly excludes areas such as accentual speed and judgment of grammatically. Despite this, it is pertinent to say that communicative competence is not one of the major goals in Nigeria. The concern of Nigerian learners is to achieve the functional purpose for which English language is meant to serve and the success of such purposes.

The functional purposes of English in Nigeria include: Language of Administration and Government; Mass media; Education; Science and Technology; Religion; Business and Commerce; Law and Politics; International relations (Ariyo,2004a).These functions of English are utilitarian in purpose, therefore, it seems quite unnecessary for second language learners to pursue native speakers competence in the language.

The L2 learners are not exposed to models that are native speakers. Most L2 learners are taught by teachers who also learnt the language as L2. In essence, they do not have access to language resources from the natives. The ESL environment is not conducive for the learning process; an attempt to use English as a native speaker might be socially unacceptable expect for a few elite parents that encourage their children to be simultaneous bilinguals whereby they learn and use English both at home and school.



The mastery of the language of instruction determines the performances of learners in their academic pursuit. Therefore, the level of academic attainment will also go a long way to influence the level of proficiency in the language. No wonder, Ariyo (2004b) submits that people of high academic attainment are better in English language proficiency.

Adegbite (2003) opines that most Nigerian learners of English have instrument reasons for learning the language, which show through their low level achievement in it. He further observes that the impersonal and distant communicative role, which English plays in the lives of individuals and the society as a whole, keeps the standard of the language low. The question that readily comes to the mind is, how can the attainment level of ESL learners' proficiency be increased despite the fact they are instrumentally motivate?

Learners need a change in approach to orientation. Though, the fact remains that the learning of English is a sort of utilitarian adventure, learners should approach the learning with a positive attitude and they should not set a limit or target for themselves.

In linguistic, the native speaker serves as a resource and also a standard setter (Davies, 1991). The focus or goal of ESL learners is not to be sacrificed on the altar of attaining native speaker proficiency since this will lead to loss of identity but ESL learners should accept the native speakers' use of the English language. In this case, a learner will not be perceived as a 'linguistic bastard' if he sounds 'too English' especially in the academic or school setting.

Students are usually tested based on the Standard English and not necessarily as expected from ESL students. An instance is the test of Oral English, which a candidate is expected to have mastered correct pronunciation of sounds since there is no different Phonology of English for ESL learners.

The fact that integrative motivation leads to better learning does not make an ideal option for learners of English as a second language because it results in loss of cultural identity. Even, Adegbite (2003) rightly observes that children that are encouraged to learn English without recourse to their mother tongue end up failing to achieve mastery of either language.

Despite the main premise of this work which has been strongly articulated afore time, Native speakers also need to encourage ESL learners as rightly observed by Kubota (2001) thus:

There is the need for Native Speakers to develop positive attitude towards other speakers of English...They should develop skills to complement them

This submission is very far removed from the fact that ESL is inferior to NE, since the possibility of cross cultural communication cannot be ruled out, hence, through complementary cross cultural communication; both ESL learners and speakers will not suffer cultural loss.

## CONCLUSION

There is no doubt; motivation is an affective factor in language learning. Both teachers and learners are to approach the learning and teaching of ESL with positive attitudes stressing that good English should be used intelligibly with the right words, grammar, pronunciation and meaning. That is, the ability to discern 'what to say', 'how to say it', 'to whom to say it' and 'in

what context'. By this, a speaker knows the appropriate words to use in appropriate manner to the right person in the right situation which fall within the research objectives of linguists interested in pragmatics.

I acknowledge that the points in this paper are by no means exhaustive they could go a long way in assisting teachers and learners of ESL. Therefore, the fact that the various purposes for learning of ESL, have been accomplished should not discourage continuous learning, since there would also be room for improvement, which will improve the attainment level of such learners in English.

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# THE EFFECT OF FORM-FOCUSED VS. MEANING-FOCUSED INSTRUCTION ON READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH CONTENT-BASED INSTRUCTION AMONG IRANIAN GUIDANCE SCHOOL STUDENTS

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## ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to investigate the effect of form-focused vs. meaning-focused instruction on the development of reading comprehension among Iranian elementary EFL learners in a content-based context. Therefore, SAMA junior high school (related to Islamic Azad University) in Mashhad, was chosen as the research site. A general language proficiency test of Nelson (book1, Elementary 050A) was used to measure their general language ability. Also, standard KET reading comprehension test was implemented to examine the participants' reading comprehension development level. Participants were divided into: form-focused instruction (FFI) group, meaning-focused instruction (MFI) group, and a control group. The numbers of students were 30, 28 and 28 respectively. The FFI group performed activities such as underlining structures in texts. The MFI group was assigned activities such as pair/group discussion, while the control group did not receive meaning/form-focused instruction. The data were analyzed via SPSS software to compare the means of the groups involved. The results ascertained that form and meaning-focused groups significantly outperformed the control group. It also disclosed that form-focused group performed better than meaning-focused group on KET reading comprehension test unexpectedly. As a conclusion, it might be generalized that both form-focused and meaning-focused methods of teaching can promote the reading comprehension of EFL learners in a content-based context.

**KEYWORDS:** Reading comprehension, Focus on forms, Focus on form, Form-focused instruction, meaning-focused instruction, content based instruction.

## INTRODUCTION

There is a discussion among many scholars about the effective type of instruction. Some (Krashen, 1994) believe that exposure to input is enough for learners to acquire the language while the others (Long, 1991; Doughty & Williams, 1998; Norris & Ortega, 2000) refer to the effectiveness of attention to form. According to Doughty and Williams (1998), pedagogical interventions embedded in communicative activities can be effective in overcoming classroom limitations on second language acquisition (SLA). Therefore, form-focused instruction and meaning-focused instruction were two types of instruction which have been used for investigating on this issue (the effective type of instruction) in this study.

One of the major skills in second language acquisition is reading comprehension. Reading is the cornerstone of a learner's success in school and consequently through his/her life since it is one of the basic life skills the lack of which affects the students' academic growth (Anderson, Heibert, Scott & Wilkinson, 1985). According to Grabe (1995), in all students' academic careers, students must learn to make the transition from learning to read to reading to learn other information. There is little discussion in most reading development discussions on how this transition to academic learning from reading can be made. Therefore, some questions have been raised on the relationship between reading instruction and content-Based Instruction (CBI) and the role of CBI in reading instruction. It is worth to know that CBI provides a natural framework for incorporating text-structure awareness and formal knowledge of language structure and also demonstrating how language serves useful functions for communicating. CBI is useful for language skills development in many L2 contexts (also Mohan, 1990; Crandall, 1993). Thus, because of the advantages of CBI, the background context of this study was content-based instruction.

Teachers can measure their students understanding level through different ways one of which is reading comprehension. Because reading with comprehension is the basis of all content areas, it is essential that a variety of needs relating to reading comprehension to be met. Furthermore, many researchers (Fotos & Hinkel, 2007; Nassaji, 2007) studied the effectiveness of two types of instruction (Focus on form and focus on meaning) on different areas in learning second language context specially their effect on productive skills (speaking and writing), but here in this study the researcher was interested in investigating receptive skills such as reading comprehension and wanted to know whether these types of instructions could affect reading comprehension or not. The main purpose of this study is the assessment of students' reading comprehension through form/meaning-focused instruction in order to figure out which type will lead to better results.

In this study, the teacher can motivate the learners positively; giving the students of each group the chance to participate in the form/meaning-focused activities (depending on the experimental group they are assigned to), giving them a fresh opportunity to work in small groups with their classmates on language activities which will give them a strong sense of motivation and accomplishment. Therefore; the students are self-motivated and take an active role in their own learning process. It also provides language teachers with information about different activities which is needed in each experimental group. Language teachers might be encouraged to examine different activities during their teaching process of different skills.

Fortunately, studies have contributed to the field of SLA and applied linguistic in general. This is achieved through searching more on a subject which has not been fully expounded in previous studies on reading comprehension development. This study tries to look at reading comprehension development from a new viewpoint. Therefore, in the present study, the researcher has been interested in investigating the effects of two various types of instruction (form-focused and meaning-focused instruction) that may affect the development of reading comprehension indirectly. Consequently, the implementation of this study tries to answer the following research questions:

1. Does implementing focus on form in the context of content-based instruction have any significant effect on reading comprehension development among the Iranian guidance school students?
2. Will meaning-focused tasks through content-based instruction lead to development of reading comprehension skill of the Iranian guidance school students?

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Some L2 scholars believe in the role of implicit instruction more than explicit language learning (e.g., Krashen, 1994; Long, 1996), but empirical studies show that explicit attention to form in communicative contexts is more effective (Spada, 1997; Norris & Ortega, 2000; Roy Lyster, 2004). Focus on form instruction is a kind of instruction that may hold up the important factors of communicative approach such as student-centeredness and authentic communication, and, on the other hand, maintains the value of the occasional study of some L2 grammatical forms (Long, 1991; Alex Poole, 2005).

Long (1991) and Long and Robinson (1998) believed that focus on form instruction is different from instructions which are aimed at teaching grammatical forms, rather than using language for communication. This type of instruction, which they call focus on forms instruction, focuses on the grammatical forms that the teacher can transmit to his/her students so it is teacher-centered, but focus on form instruction is learner-centered due to its aim of responding to the learners' perceived needs in a spontaneous manner.

Both focus on forms and focus on meaning instruction are valuable and complement each other, but focus on form instruction keeps a balance between these two by calling on the teachers and the students to attend to form when it is needed in a communicative class (Long, 1991, Long & Robinson, 1998, Poole, 2005). Ellis (2001) claimed that form focus instruction is any type of planned or unplanned instructional activity which leads learners to pay attention to form.

Spada (1997, p. 73) asserted, "FFI will mean any pedagogical effort which is used to draw learners' attention to language form either implicitly or explicitly. This can include the direct teaching of grammar language through grammatical rules or reaction to learners' errors". According to Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen (2002), there are three kinds of basic approaches in form-based instruction. Table 1 shows the syllabus, primary focus and distribution of them. As the table shows, the focus on forms has intensive distribution and structural syllabus and its primary focus is on form. The planned focus on form has task based syllabus an intensive distribution and its primary focus is on meaning, in contrast, the incidental focus on form has task based syllabus but extensive distribution and its primary focus is on meaning.

*Table 1: Types of form-based instruction*

Type	Syllabus	Primary focus	Distribution
1. Focus on forms	Structural	Form	Intensive
2. Planned focus-on-form	Tasked-based	Meaning	Intensive
3. Incidental focus-on-form	Tasked-based	Meaning	Extensive

Source: Ellis et al. (2002, p.420)

According to Long and Doughty (2009), fluent reading comprehension requires some processing sub skills and linguistic knowledge bases in order to allow the reader to comprehend texts to the level required. Researches on L2 syntax and discourse knowledge have shown that there are strong relations between these two language knowledge bases and reading comprehension. Researches on Dutch students have shown that grammatical knowledge is a powerful predictor of reading comprehension abilities of students. Studies of Schoonen, Hultijn and Bossers (1998), Van Gelderen et al. (2004) and also both Alderson (2000) and Enright, Bridgeman, Cline, Eignor, Lee, and Powers (2002) (in reading assessment research) have shown the same result that is syntactic knowledge is strongly related to reading comprehension.

Content-Based Instruction (CBI) has been defined as teaching content or information in the second language being learned without direct effort for teaching the language itself (Krahnke, 1987). There are several general subjects that are used in CBI: mathematics, science, and social studies. Crandall (1995) cited that Kessler and Quinn (n.d.) introduced Science Learning and Second Language Acquisition as an example of CBI that is the lesson gives new science concepts to learners through the text and enables them to acquire the language skills in a way that while they interact with the new input, they can develop their language skills too.

Also to support the positive side of CBI, Crandall (1995) cited that according to Penfield and Ornstein-Garlicia's (1981) suggestion, teachers may use the learners' first language to introduce and discuss new scientific concepts, depending on the class situation. The effectiveness of teaching science through CBI is revealed in bilingual as well as monolingual English environments. English can be developed along with learning science (pp. 71-72).

Scholars stated that for a child to comprehend an author's written message it requires him/her to be able to analyze and sort through multiple layers of text meaning. The layers are broken down into four separate processes: First, in order to comprehend a written passage properly, a learner must be able to decode the words on the page (Wagner & Tannenbaum, 2007). Second, he/she needs to hold the information in working memory for long enough time in order to process the information more extensively (Gathercole & Alloway, 2008). Third, the learner must have sufficient vocabulary, grammar and syntactical skills so that he/she can organize and interpret the text efficiently (Paul, 2006; Wallach, 2008). Fourth, learners need to access higher order thinking



skills in order to process the text and go beyond the surface layer of it and infer possible meaning (Wolf, 2008).

Furthermore, there are several studies in which researchers have experimentally attempted to increase attention to form within an overall focus on meaning. For example, Hulstijn (1989) measured the effect of exposing learners to target texts and giving them activities which require focus either on meaning or on form. He found that meaning group scored better than formal group and even showed no disadvantage on form-oriented activities (also Doughty, 1991). Similarly, Spada and Lightbown (1993, p.218) decided to compare a purely communicative control group with another communicative group but with focus on form added to it. However, they declared that it was the unplanned “context embedded focus on form” that occurred unexpectedly in their control group (by the “wayward” teacher) that caused comparison subjects to outperform the experimental group.

Finally, since there is not enough research in the educational context in reading comprehension, this study tries to analyze English teaching and learning in the context of education in Iran from practical perspectives, through ‘focus on form’ and ‘focus on meaning’ theories so, it wants to disclose whether form-focused instruction or meaning-focused instruction has any effect on the development of reading comprehension among elementary learners in a CBI setting.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants and Setting***

For the purpose of this study, SAMA guidance school (related to Islamic Azad University) in Mashhad, Ghasem-abad was chosen as the research site. All the students in this school participated in content classes such as science, math and computer. They were at elementary level, however, they were more competent than their peers in other schools due to their content classes and extra English classes they had in SAMA institute.

Among 100 students, 86 students were qualified for the research due to the result of Nelson test. Their age ranged from 13-14. They were divided into three groups of 28, 28, and 30 participants. Two groups were chosen as the experimental groups and the other as the control group. Therefore, 86 students were taught under three different conditions: each class was randomly assigned to one condition: the form-focused instruction group (N=30), the meaning-focused instruction group (N=28), and the control group (N=28).

### ***Instrumentation***

First, Nelson English language test, series 050A, developed by Fowler and Coe (1976) was used to determine the learners’ level of proficiency and homogenize the students in terms of English language proficiency. It consisted of two sections: structure and vocabulary in the form of multiple choice questions. There were, 50 items and the time allotted was about 40 up to 45 minutes. The Nelson test is a standard test, however, in order to test the reliability of the test in this study for these students in Iran, a Kuder-Richardson was calculated to determine the degree of internal consistency. The analysis was done considering the data from the whole participants taking part in the study. The value gained through the analysis is 0.602 which is considered at an acceptable level of reliability.

Second, a reading comprehension test from Cambridge Key English Test (2008) (KET) was administered as both pre-test and post-test. It consisted of four reading comprehensions each with seven multiple questions.

### ***Design***

The design of this study is quasi-experimental design, since it was impossible for the researcher to set learners randomly to these three classes. The subjects in this study were somehow intact, but the researcher administered two tests: 1) Nelson English language test, series 050A, developed by Fowler and Coe (1976) as homogeneity test and selected 28, 28, and 30 participants in each group. 2) A reading comprehension test from Cambridge Key English Test (2008, KET) as a pre-test in order to make sure that they are at the same level of language proficiency. KET was used to compare the data from pretest and post-test in order to see which treatment is efficient. After that the researcher divided the students into two experimental and one control groups. Experimental groups received treatment, while the control group did not. After the treatment, the participants were asked to take the reading comprehension test, again as a post-test. The results were compared with the subjects' grades which were obtained previously in pre-tests. Therefore, the design of this study would be intact group pretest-posttest design.

### ***Procedure***

The researcher went to SAMA school and talked about this study with the guidance school principal. After accepting the request, she introduced the researcher to her colleagues and let her start the study. This study was conducted in the second semester of 1390-91 in SAMA guidance school in three groups. First, the Nelson English language test was administered. The test takers were 100 female students. Only 86 students passed the test. The rational for administrating this test is to determine the subjects with nearly the same proficiency level. The passing mark was 30 out of 50. Those who scored 30 – 35 have been considered to have the same level of proficiency for this study. After the test administration, the subjects who acquired the acceptable score were chosen to contribute to the investigation in each group. Then, two groups were randomly considered as experimental groups and one as control group. After that the researcher used another test (KET reading comprehension tests) as a pretest in order to find out students' ability level of reading comprehension before doing the treatment. Next, the appropriate form and meaning-focused instructions were implemented as a treatment for each experimental group. Treatment was implemented in two months for about 16 sessions. At the end of term, the two experimental groups along with the one control group were given KET reading comprehension tests again as the post test.

In FFI group, it was tried to involve the learners more with form and grammatical points. It is important to mention that because the subjects of the study were school students they used their own books (their content books: Science in English) like other groups in this research. At first, the teacher introduced the topic by asking direct or indirect questions and showing related pictures for motivating learners and activating their background knowledge. Then, the students were asked to read a text form their course book (Science by Poursafar & YousefiNamin, 2010) paragraph by paragraph. Students had no dictionary for unknown words. However, when students wanted to ask the meaning of a word, the teacher would provide the necessary meaning of the word. When reading was completed, she addressed the questions or comments of the students.

After completing the text, the students did some activities after the teacher's modeling the steps of the activities. In this activity, each pair of students read the text again and tried to underline the structures that they saw. Students had 5 to 10 minutes for this activity depending on the length of the text. After that the teacher asked some volunteers to come to the board and discuss or even teach the points they knew about the forms other students could ask their related problems on that structure. Moreover, they had some home activities. The teacher divided them in some groups and assigned some tasks to each member. They had to find a text, of course related to their own lesson in school which is science, from internet or short story books. Then they read it, underlined the form structures and made questions and answered them.

The next step was checking and reviewing their individual tasks with their friends and then delivered their work to the teacher. Another activity which they had to do was a kind of short class research. In this activity, each group chose one topic from their book and they read at least two related texts about it. Then, they tried to write a short paragraph about whatever they understood from their studies with their own sentences and also they had to care about the form and structure of their sentences. The researcher's aim in assigning these different activities was just motivating the students and keeping them fresh. Besides the different activities, the researcher had a short list of grammatical points which most of the subjects had problem with, and tried to focus on those points more than others in the activities. She made this list through analyzing the results of the Nelson test.

In the second experimental group, MFI, the first part of this treatment is similar to the form-focused instruction group that is the teacher had a kind of warm up by talking about the topic in order to awaken students' background knowledge. Then, the students were asked to read a text paragraph by paragraph and state the main idea of each paragraph. The teacher answered the students' questions or comments about words' meaning. Upon the completion of the text, students had pair or group discussion tasks. The teacher gave discussion topics based on the texts of students' course book (Appendix). First, students worked in pairs, and discussed the topic. Then the entire groups discussed the topics in class with each other while the teacher managed and observed the discussion. They had some home activities, too. The teacher divided them in some groups and assigned some tasks to each member. They had to find a text, which is related to their own lesson, from internet or short story books. Then, they have to read it at home and discuss about the main idea of their text in class. Also, for motivating the students they sometimes have short class research activity like the form-focused group but, in this group students give lecture about the texts which they had read (the teacher did not ask them to be careful about the structures during their lecture).

Within the control group, the teacher talked about the topic in order to activate student's background knowledge. Then the students read the text paragraph by paragraph, and after which the teacher provided learners with the new words and paraphrased the text. Learners' homework included a text which was summarized and paraphrased by the students, and the text's questions were answered. The teacher was the authority and the only source of knowledge, and students were passive recipients of knowledge presented to them.

Finally, on the last session in all three groups, the KET reading comprehension test was administered as the post-test of the students' achievement in reading comprehension.

In order to sort and display data in a meaningful way, the researcher went through different statistical procedures. The Kolmogorov-smirnov normality test beside the one way ANOVA (or equivalent tests such as Welch if needed) and scheffe post hoc test were used in three groups of form-focused instruction, meaning-focused instruction and control groups in pretest, posttest and language proficiency tests.

After checking the normality of data by Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for all data in KET reading comprehension test (Table 2), in order to ensure the homogeneity of groups at the beginning of the research, one-way ANOVA (or equivalent tests such as Welch if needed) was used.

Table 2: Results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for KET

Group	Variable	N	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	p-value
Control	Pre	28	.970	.303
	Post	28	1.011	.259
Form	Pre	30	.759	.612
	Post	30	1.146	.145
Meaning	Pre	28	.692	.725
	Post	28	.492	.969

To ensure the homogeneity of groups with respect to reading comprehension, one-way ANOVA was used. As Table 3 shows there is no significant difference ( $F=1.312$ ,  $P=.275 > 0.05$ ) among three groups with respect to reading comprehension. The results show P-Value equals .098 which is more than  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

Table 3: Results of one-way ANOVA for pretest

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	P-value
Between Groups	15.120	2	7.560	1.312	.275
Within Groups	478.229	83	5.762		
Total	493.349	85			

After two months (about sixteen sessions) of treatment, the KET reading comprehension test was administered again in control and experimental groups. In order to find out each group's reading comprehension development, the three groups were presented with the same reading comprehension test as pretest. Since equality of variance which is one of the ANOVA defaults is

not established (the Levene test was used to ensure the constancy of variances), it is better to use ANOVA equivalent tests such as WELCH, Brown-Forsythe. Table 4 shows there is a significant difference among three groups according to the treatment that they have received. Results show that Welch and Brown-Forsythe tests' P-Value are 0.002 and 0.007 respectively, which are less than is  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The null hypothesis can be rejected with 95 percent. This means that there is a significant difference between scores in experimental and control groups.

*Table 4: Results of WELCH, Brown-Forsythe for Posttest*

	Statistic <sup>a</sup>	df1	df2	Sig.
Welch	7.145	2	52.029	.002
Brown-Forsythe	5.260	2	71.910	.007
a. Asymptotically F distributed.				

The highest rank in the experimental group is the form group which got 11.13 and the other experimental group (meaning group) that obtained 10.85 is ranked as second. The control group (9.10) is ranked as third.

*Table 5: Results of Scheffe post hoc test for posttest*

Group	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Control	28	9.1071	
Meaning	28		10.8571
Form	30		11.1333
Sig.		1.000	.921
Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.			
a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 28.636.			
b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.			

As Table 5 shows, there is a significant difference in form and control groups. Also there is no significant difference in form and meaning groups. Therefore, it can be said that students' reading comprehension development in form focused group is much better than control group while there is not a very significant difference in the reading comprehension development of students in form focused group and meaning-focused group.

## CONCLUSION

The whole findings of this study can be clarified in light of research null hypotheses:

1. Attention to form in content based classroom has no impact on the development of Iranians' guidance school students' reading comprehension,
2. Meaning-focused tasks through content based instruction will not lead to the development of reading comprehension.

In order to test the null hypotheses, three groups of 28, 28, 30 students were selected through applying a Nelson English Language Test (Book1, elementary learners) from among 100 EFL learners. Next, learners received different treatment base on the research aims. Finally, the students' score in reading comprehension tests (KET) were compared through different statistical analyses.

The result of the first null hypothesis was rejected surprisingly, showing the fact that learners achieved higher reading comprehension development in form-focused instruction group. Although, it was expected that focus on form will not impact on the development of reading comprehension. The second null hypothesis was rejected, too. But, statistical results show that meaning-focused instruction have less impact on reading comprehension development than the form-focused instruction. In fact, there is not very much significant difference between these two groups.

These findings also indicated that form-focused activities (such as underlining structures) can familiarize learners with grammatically correct and meaningful sentences while meaning-focused activities (such as discussion) help learners to be fluent even with ungrammatical meaningful sentences. So, when they (subjects in meaning-focused group) were encountered the correct forms in text, they were unfamiliar with those forms. The form and meaning activities were implemented generally and the students did not aware of the aim of those activities which were reading comprehension development.

Implementation of procedures that help learners process comprehensible input while at the same time giving them opportunities for language awareness, has been one of the greatest challenges for EFL teachers. In other words, effective language teaching needs input processing and acquisition, which is combined with focus on form (Bourke, 2008). Language awareness has to do with the raising of learners' awareness of features of the target language. Therefore, the teacher's role is not the "all knowing one", but he/she is a facilitator of learning.

Another point is that the teacher should realize the importance of pair/group work for learners' language learning in general. Pair/group work gives students a strong sense of motivation and accomplishment. Students can help each other to perform the activities which they do not handle by themselves. In this study, participants in both experimental groups were involved in pair/group work and tried to handle their problems in understanding meaning of texts and also their linguistic difficulties with the help of their peers and their teacher.

Seba's case study in 2008 confirms the role of focus on form in group work for enhancing reading comprehension. Moreover, Shak (2006) referred in her article that learners find their own linguistic shortcomings and develop strategies for solving them during working with a partner. This process which includes cognitive comparison tends to raise learners' awareness of certain grammatical structures. Therefore, this study also tried to use the positive points of the previous researches' results in its experimental groups by putting participants in several groups and assigning different activities proper to each experimental group. Also, the role of the teacher was the mediator and the facilitator.



Finally, familiarity with the activity procedures is an important point in accurate accomplishment of the activity. Therefore, teacher's modeling of the activity is useful at the first sessions of instruction. Moreover, it is critical to provide students with feedback because students tend to remember their incorrect solutions. Consequently, the teacher as a facilitator of learning process needs to be available during activities and attends to the accuracy of the final product.

Some important limitations to this study which should be noted: First, this study was conducted in the context of Mashhad SAMA junior high school which is a CBI context; therefore, more investigation could be carried out in order to see whether similar results will be obtained in other settings. Moreover, randomizing the subjects was not possible because these classes already existed at schools. Therefore, subjects were intact and a quasi-experimental design was implemented. Then, the female students were the only participants in the study, therefore, the factor of sex was not cleared up that is it is not obvious whether utilizing form-focused and meaning-focused instruction would be more beneficial for a particular sex or not.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **Discussion Topics**

Students talked about the following topics:

1. Talk about plants. How do plants grow from seeds?
2. Talk about different kinds of animals. How do some animals without backbones live?
3. Discuss about the properties of matter. What makes up matter?
4. Talk about the galaxy. What do you know about sun, moon, and planets? Discuss about the earth moves.

5. Talk about whatever you know about your body. The importance of bones and muscles for your body.
6. Discuss about your body health needs. How can you stay healthy? What causes disease?
7. Talk about energy. What do you know about different kinds of energy? Discuss about different energy changes in your body and in nature.
8. Talk about the universe. How do scientists learn from space?

## CORPORA USE IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH WRITING

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### ABSTRACT

This study mainly focuses on how to use corpora to help students develop their English writing skills. The rapid growth of technology has made it more easily available for teachers and students to have access to online corpora. However, the use of corpora in the English writing classroom is still a practice many teachers are not very familiar with. Hence, the paper makes a summary of the characteristics of the main popular British and America Corpora. Then it demonstrates online corpora are useful resources to aid students in two aspects ---words choice, sentence-level errors correction. The results indicate that Corpus-Assisted instruction is one of the positive and effective ways in teaching English writing, as well as to minimize the teacher's workload.

**KEYWORDS:** English, Corpora, Writing skills, Word choice, Errors correction

### INTRODUCTION

In [linguistics](#), a corpus (plural *corpora*) or text corpus is a large and structured set of texts (now usually electronically stored and processed). They are used to do statistical analysis and [hypothesis testing](#), checking occurrences or validating linguistic rules on a specific universe.

McEnery (2006), define a corpus in modern linguistics as “a collection of sampled texts, written or spoken, in machine-readable form which may be annotated with various forms of linguistic information” (p. 4). That is to say, a corpus is a compilation of natural texts stored into a computer that contains interpretative linguistic information that is useful for the analysis of a language. According to Cook (2003), through the systematic analysis of corpora, it is possible to observe the different patterns and regularities of language use.

[Jabbour \(2001\)](#) points out that “a corpus approach befits teaching second language reading and writing, since both activities are text oriented and make use of words and word combinations, or lexical patterns, within the confines of discourse” (p. 294). In other words, a corpus approach provides meaningful input into the language side of L2 writing instruction, while important rhetorical concerns and issues may be in the teaching and learning of writing in another language, the language domain—syntax, punctuation, style, vocabulary development, etc.—also commands attention. L2 writers, particularly below the advanced level of proficiency, are also language learners eager to develop greater knowledge and command of the linguistic resources necessary for effective writing. A corpus is now seen as a primary contributor of these resources because, as [Tao \(2001\)](#) observes, of its “potential to make explicit the more common patterns of language use” (p. 116).

Corpus-based activity has also been considered beneficial to L2 writing by offering learners a rich experience of real language ([Thurstun J. & C.N Candlin, 1998](#)). Corpora, which are, as noted earlier, databases of authentic language uses culled from multiple sources, provide learners with large quantities of real-life target language discourse. Exposure to these examples of genuine language use can enrich learners' understanding of specific uses of target words in a wide variety of contexts and expand their English knowledge. Students' encounters with these multiple samples of discourse combinations should then contribute to growth as L2 writers.

This paper will mainly focus on how to use corpora to help students develop their English writing skills. In details, the paper will demonstrate online corpora are useful resources to aid students in two aspects---words choice, sentence-level errors correction. It proves to be that Corpus-Assisted instruction is one of the positive and effective ways to develop students' English writing skills, as well as to minimize the teacher's workload.

## **THE REALITY OF EVER-INCREASING TEACHER'S WORKLOADS**

Gene Fowler, American journalist and biographer said: "Writing is easy. All you do is to sit staring at a blank sheet of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead." Writing can be a slow, painful process even in our mother tongue, but when it is in a second language the problems (and the pain) are magnified. Given the amount of conscious effort involved in the writing process, learners in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classrooms understandably expect feedback on their work and may feel discouraged if it is not provided ([Hedge 1988](#)).

The difficulty for the teacher, however, is in balancing the needs of individual students for meaningful feedback with the unfortunate reality of ever-increasing workloads. In our universities, for example, it is not uncommon for teachers to have at least 3 English classes, with 70 or so students per class. This means around 121 essays to mark for each assignment every other week, especially CET-4 is approaching, this number can easily double or triple.

## **THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF ONLINE CORPORA**

In response to the needs and difficulties of writing, Here, the paper strongly recommend the teachers and students who teach and learn English writing the four popular free-online corpora—two America English and two British English Corpora. They are believed to be beneficial in English writing.

### ***The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)***

The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (<http://corpus.byu.edu/coca>) is the largest freely-available corpus of English. The corpus contains more than [425 million words](#) of text and is equally divided among spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, and academic texts. It includes [20 million words each year from 1990-2011](#) and the corpus is also updated once or twice a year (the most recent texts are from March 2011). Because of its design, it is perhaps the only corpus of English that is suitable for looking at [current, ongoing changes](#) in the language.

The interface allows you to search for [exact words or phrases](#), [wildcards](#), [lemmas](#), [part of speech](#), or [any combinations of these](#). You can [search for surrounding](#) words (collocates), within a ten-word window (e.g. all nouns somewhere near *faint*, all adjectives near *woman*, or all verbs near *feelings*), which often gives you good insight into the meaning and use of a word. The corpus also allows you to easily [limit searches by frequency and compare the frequency](#) of words, phrases, and grammatical constructions, in at least two main ways:

By genre: comparisons between spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, and academic, or even between sub-genres (or domains), such as movie scripts, sports magazines, newspaper editorial, or scientific journals.

Over time: compare different years from 1990 to the present time. You can also easily carry out semantically-based queries of the corpus. For example, you can contrast and [compare](#) the collocation of [two related words](#) (little/small, democrats/republicans, men/women), to determine the difference in meaning or use between these words. You can find the frequency and distribution of [synonyms](#) for nearly 60,000 words and also compare their frequency in different genres, and also use these word lists as part of other queries. Finally, you can easily create your own lists, of semantically-related words, and then use them directly as part of the query.

### ***Word and Phrase Information***

WORD AND PHRASE. INFO (<http://www.wordandphrase.info>). This site allows you to see detailed information on the top 60,000 words (lemmas) of English, based on data from the [Corpus of Contemporary American English \(COCA\)](#).

WORDS: You can see the overall frequency for each word, as well as the frequency of words in different kinds of English -- spoken, fiction, magazines, newspapers, and academic writing. For each word you can also find the 20-30 most frequent collocates (nearby words) and see 200 or more concordance lines (words in context). You can also see a list of synonyms and (from WordNet) words with more specific and more general meanings, and in all of these cases you can click to see the entries for those related words as well.

TEXT: You can enter any text that you would like in the form at the left -- for example, a paper that you've written, or a newspaper article that you've copied from another website. After inputting the text, you can then see useful information about words and phrases in that text. First, it will highlight all of the medium and lower-frequency words in your text and create lists of these words that you can use offline. This frequency data can help language learners focus on new words, and it can allow you to see "what the text is about" (i.e. text-specific words). You can also have it show you the "academic" words in your text.

Second, you can click through the words in the text to see a detailed "word sketch" of any of the words -- showing their definition, and detailed information for the word from COCA -- collocates (which provide meaning into the meaning and usage of the word), re-sortable concordance lines, and the frequency of the word (overall, and by genre). Finally, you can do powerful searches on selected phrases in your text, to show related phrases in COCA. In this way, this resource is like a "collocational thesaurus" to see what related phrases are most likely in different styles of English.



For example, if you click on the words *potent argument* in the text that you enter, it will suggest alternate ways to express this (e.g. *powerful* or *convincing argument*), and it will show you the frequency of those phrases in COCA -- overall, and by genre. This will help you use "just the right phrase", based on a huge collection of native English texts.

### ***The British National Corpus (BNC)***

The British National Corpus (<http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/>) provides a representative sample of contemporary English, as experienced by a British speaker- though the issue of representativeness is a very thorny one. BNC is a 100 million word collection of samples of written and spoken language from a wide range of sources, designed to represent a wide cross-section of British English from the later part of the 20th century, both spoken and written. The latest edition is the *BNC XML Edition*, released in 2007.

Written part: The written part of the BNC (90%) includes, for example, extracts from regional and national newspapers, specialist periodicals and journals for all ages and interests, academic books and popular fiction, published and unpublished letters and memoranda, school and university essays, among many other kinds of text.

Spoken part: The spoken part (10%) consists of orthographic transcriptions of unscripted informal conversations (recorded by volunteers selected from different age, region and social classes in a demographically balanced way) and spoken language collected in different contexts, ranging from formal business or government meetings to radio shows and phone-ins.

### ***The Bank of English (BoE)***

The Bank of English (<http://www.collins.co.uk>) is another well-known British corpus, has sub-corpora of informal speech, various newspapers, books and magazines, BBC World Service broadcasts, and spoken and written data from the USA and Australia.

## **USING CORPORA TO DEVELOP STUDENTS' ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS**

### ***Proper Word Choice***

Language can be used as a means to control people and influence what they think and do (Bourdieu, 1991; Fairclough, 1995). The choice of words, sentence structure, register, or discourse structure can radically alter people's perceptions toward a method, a belief, or an ideology. Strong word choice is characterized not so much by an exceptional vocabulary chosen to impress the reader, but more by the skill to use everyday words well.

Here's a problem in students' writing like "负责" in the sentence "我负责学生会", they always confuse by the words and phrase such as run, manage, be in charge of, be responsible for. Based on the evidence from corpora, students would be well advised to stay clear of the word "*run*" and the phrase *in charge of*, both of which would seem to be associated with power (e.g., *run the show*, *in charge of the country*). In addition, the data show that "*run*" frequently occurs with nouns which describe non-human entities and may give the feeling to the native-speaker audience that their new masters regard them as automatons who simply have to be told what to do. Meanwhile, the verb "*manage*" or a phrase such as "*responsible for*" which do not seem to carry the same connotation of power and are more frequently associated with people. Given the corpus evidence, the students finally use the utterances such as *I am responsible for Student Union* or *I manage the Student Union* and to avoid phrases like *I am in charge of Student Union* or *I run the Student Union*.

Another example is that a student who wants to use the word “*inquire*” in an essay might be confused about which words best “collocate,” or link, with that word. By connecting to a corpus database and then typing in the word “*inquire*,” also known as a keyword because it activates a search procedure and something called a “concordance program,” the student would eventually see a long list of actual uses of the word with different collocations. These uses occur in the form of portions of sentences, with the keyword positioned in the middle of them. The purpose of the concordance program is to produce such a list. Each example of the keyword in use is a concordance, and the concordancing program provides a series of concordances, as reflected in the following samples for the keyword “*inquire*”:

They will then be able to offer advice and first hand experience when parents *inquire about* good local schools.

When he started to *inquire about* my life, I deflected the conversation by saying that I had sold one of the famille rose vases.

They were both widows, so there was no husband's welfare to *inquire about*.

There is, however, no general duty actively to *inquire about* contracts between others.

The American military government resented the presence of UNTCOK since it was bound to *inquire into* many features of the political scene,

They *inquire into* the consequences of historical events.

Occasionally special committees were set up to *inquire into* particularly important or topical questions.

The Royal Government had decided to recommend the appointment of a Royal Commission to *inquire into* the possible limitation or modification of the death penalty. We first acknowledge the person and only *inquire into* facts later if necessary.

If you search <http://www.wordandphrase.info/analyzeText.asp>, some samples for the same word can be shown as the following:

1	MAG	... is looking for a new shirt to buy a new or sweatshirt and	inquire	about	a	shirt	oat . Same time next year ? Around
2	SPOK	says he 's already contacted the city 's budget department to	inquire	about	a	payback	for a search that included more
3	FIC	, laughing now , too , and so I do n't	inquire	about	a	special	number , or if we should carry bu
4	MAG	Ruben S. Ojeda , Pasadena (626/564-2688) // You should	inquire	about	a	tile	's durability . Every ceramic tile can t
5	ACAD	was sent to a national sample of 360 school psychologists to	inquire	about	about	current	accountability practices . Pot
6	SPOK	I accompanied her to university of Chicago emergency room to	inquire	about	admittance	on	to inquire about getting som
7	NEWS	at the narrow mobile home 30 miles north of Detroit to	inquire	about	an	inquiries	" sexually suggestive " note f
8	MAG	of on-site baby-sitting services ? You may also want to	inquire	about	available	activities	In and around your lodg
9	MAG	by the Grief Recovery Institute . Call your local hospital and	inquire	about	bereavement	programs	. Check your local newspaper for

The information above is known collectively by the more technical term, “concordance output.” Students can study this output, or information, closely and see how a keyword operates in context with closely related words. They can also obtain a second key type of output known as “collocate output.” Collocate output indicates how often (within the larger corpus) a keyword is collocated, or linked, with specific surrounding words. Students will encounter additional statistical information about the frequency of this collocation. With this information at hand, students can then compose their own sentences using the keyword with increased knowledge of how to link the word with appropriate collocates.

### ***Sentence- level Correction***

Teachers face difficult decisions on how to best utilize limited time and resources both inside and outside the classroom to correct students’ essays. A greater focus on accuracy is likely to reduce the amount of actual writing practice students get and affect their fluency, while less attention to mistakes may deprive them of the tailored feedback they need to develop their interlanguage. In addition, practical realities can often outweigh any pedagogical considerations, with teachers simply too busy to provide more individual feedback even when they believe it would be beneficial.

One effective way to encourage students to focus more on error correction, while at the same time providing them with the support they need, is to train them in methods to query online corpora. Here is an example to demonstrate how to use online corpora to improve student’s drifts, let us look at some student writing errors:

- A. ‘Since then, the food price started to soar... ’
- B. ‘...the boy’s confidence changed greatly ’
- C. ‘... Her parents died for a car accident’

Ask students to work in pairs, try to decide what the problems are with each of these sentences.

Analysis:

In (A), a search using the keywords *since+then* in COBUILD (or COCA and WordandPhrase.Info) gives the following example sentences (known as concordance lines) from the corpus: Episcopal church services has increased by 23 *since* then. [p] What difference would it make if Constitutional Committee in 1991 and have *since* then served on panels dealing with a wideas a grade A8 administrator in May 1993 and *since* then have worked in Directorate-General 1Aoldest members. They were elected in 1920 and *since* then their relationship has been a close18 months ago after a bloody military coup. *Since* then thousands of Haitian refugees have been

From these examples, we can see that “*since then*” is typically used with the present perfect tense in native speakers’ texts (have + past participle) and we can conclude that (i) should be rewritten as ‘Since then, the food price has started to soar ... ’

In (B), a search for *confidence+changed* in COBUILD (or COCA and WordandPhrase.Info) produces the following: Lookup Error: No matches.

This means that there are no examples of this pattern in the whole COBUILD corpus, which is made up of 56 million words! We can therefore conclude that this is not a natural expression. So how would a native speaker write this idea? A search using the keyword “*confidence*” produces the following example concordance lines:

Gary seems to grow in *confidence* the more he plays.  
I was tearful all the time and I lost my *confidence*.  
I couldn't sleep and I suffered from lost and bewildered. How can I regain my *confidence*?  
I should be reaching and I have got my *confidence* back.  
He felt that the market reached its lowest point in the first half of last year and that a number of signs now pointed to returning *confidence*.  
Only the person to whom the duty of *confidence* is owed will be allowed to sue; in other words, an outsider who is adversely affected by trading in shares to which the information relates, will again have no remedy.  
It would not have the *confidence* of the people, so it would never work.

From these examples, we can see that there are many ways to describe how confidence changes in English, depending on whether it increases or decreases.

In (C), a search using the keywords “*car accident*” in the BNC produces the following example concordance lines: CN3 815 To take one example, a man was killed in a car accident. CEK 1948 Her husband dies in a car accident alongside another woman and driven by grief and jealousy, she investigates his secret life and becomes G15 2972 For many years, Marek wrote, he had believed his mother when she said his father had been killed in a car accident. HH0 2263 In fact I cause a car accident by obstructing someone's driveway. HWL 7 I covered the mouthpiece and said: ‘Salome's been involved in a car accident.

We can see from these examples that ‘was killed in ...’ (passive construction) or ‘somebody died in ...’ are more appropriate structures to use.

To sum up, such an approach allows students to learn how to revise their drafts. This experience is both meaningful and valuable. In the course, students go beyond the language they learn in the classroom and in their books, what's more, have a better understanding and enrich knowledge of the use of English language.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, we explored both British and America Corpora provide significant and authentic resources for English teaching and learning. Teachers can develop instructional materials and activities involving a corpus-based orientation; students can make a proper choice of words in English writing and revise their drafts within Corpora. In the course, students go beyond the language they learn in the classroom and in their books, what's more, have a better understanding and enrich knowledge of the use of English language. So, it's one of the best ways to improve student's English writing skills; as well as minimize the teachers' workload. However, corpora may sound reasonable in theory, applying it to the classroom is challenging, because the information it provides appears to be so chaotic. For this reason, it is the teacher's responsibility to harness a corpus by filtering the data for the students. Personally, I support having students conduct their own analyses. This paper, of course, is only the tip of the iceberg. The further studies on how to use Corpora to develop students' English writing skills are expected more and need both educators and researchers corporate effort.

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## THE USE OF EFL STUDENTS' L1 IN ENGLISH CLASSES

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### ABSTRACT

This empirical study was carried out to observe classroom dynamics in terms of the quantity of use of L1 in two third grader high school intact classes in Andimeshk, Iran. The aim of the study was to investigate both students and teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward the use of Farsi (L1) in English (L2) classes. After analyzing the data gathered using classroom observations and interviews, it was concluded that an excessive use of Persian (L1) could have a demotivating effect on the students. The outcomes of this study were in line with other similar studies carried out in different contexts. One of these studies of which this research is a replication was conducted by Mahmoudi (2011). This study also showed that the over use of L1 in L2 classes might lead to students' dissatisfaction.

**Key Words:** L1 (Persian), L2 (English), Attitudes.

### INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of language teaching in general and English language teaching in particular, the role of the students' native language and its influence on the L2 learning has been the focus of many linguists, researchers and teachers. Since the time when classical languages including Greek and Latin were taught to many learners there has been a general assumption that the only job of the students was to translate either from Latin and Greek to their L1 or vice versa. Then when audio-lingualism was in its heyday, the use of learners' L1 was supposed to be totally banned. The reason was the assumption that there might be negative influence coming from L1 to L2 learning. The use of the students' native language in foreign language classes has always been a matter of "to be or not to be". This is a very controversial area as different theories of second



language acquisition propose different hypotheses about the value of L1 use in L2 classes. Some theories have advocated a monolingual approach because they believe that the processes of L2 and L1 learning are identical. They believe that maximum exposure to L2 and least exposure to L1 are of crucial importance may obstruct L2 learning process (Krashen, 1981; Cook, 2001). Yet, some language experts and educationalists have argued against the complete elimination of L1 from L2 classes (Nation, 2003; Larsen-Freeman, 2001) and have reiterated that a judicious and well-planned use of L1 can give positive results. As it was mentioned at the beginning of this introduction, the role of the native language has had a rocky history during the course of second language acquisition research. This subfield of SLA has come to be known as language transfer. It has always been assumed that, in a second language learning situation, learners rely extensively on their native language.

Lado, in his early and influential book, *Linguistics Across Culture* (1957: 2), states this clearly:

Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture – both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture, and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practiced natively.

Lado's work and much of the work of that time was based on the need to produce pedagogically relevant materials. To produce these native language –based materials, it was necessary to do a contrastive analysis of the native language and target language (Gass & Selinker, 2008). This entailed making detailed comparisons to find similarities and differences between L1 and L2.

In this study, the point which requires special attention is the attitudes and perceptions of teachers and pupils as the key players of L2 classes towards using L1. Teachers' and students' attitudes on the use of L1 in L2 classes have been sought in different countries and contexts of English language teaching. Schweers (1999) conducted a research on the use of Spanish as the students' L1 in English classes at the University of Puerto Rico to see how frequently the teachers used L1 in their English classes. He reported that almost all students supported the use of Spanish in English classes. The students believed that using L1 in English classes could lead to better understanding of texts and this made students feel more comfortable, less tense and less lost. The researchers added that using L1 led to positive attitudes toward learning English and also it encourages them to learn more English. In the same line, Kim Anh (2010) studied the attitudes of Vietnamese university teachers towards using Vietnamese (L1) in teaching English. A questionnaire and a semi-structured interview were used to collect the data. The findings of the study indicated that judicious use of L1 is found to be necessary in some situations in teaching English. In this research, almost all the participants supported the use of L1 in their classes. They stated that L1 was part of their teaching method and could play a positive role in their classroom. Such a view is in line with that of Atkinson (1987) who sees L1 as a classroom resource.

Tang (2002) conducted a similar study in the Chinese context. The data was collected through interviews and classroom observations. The results were to a large extent similar to those of Schweers' (1999) research in the context of Puerto – Rico, but Tang's research added two more reasons for using L1 in L2 classrooms including: effectiveness and being less time consuming. The study revealed that the use of L1 in L2 classes not only doesn't hinder L2 learning but also it helps teaching and learning.

The use of Persian in teaching English in Iran has also been under Scrutiny. Nazary (2008) for instance, elicited the attitudes of Tehran University students towards the use of Persian in English classes. Based on the results obtained from this study, the author concluded that Iranian university students in an unmistakable divergence from the previous studies were reluctant to use Farsi in their L2 (English) classes. This divergence prompted another study conducted by Mahmoudi (2011). The study was carried out to observe classroom dynamics in terms of the quantity of use of Persian on two pre-university Iranian classes. The aim of the study was to seek both the students and the teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards the use of Persian in English classes. The findings of the study showed that an excessive use of Persian could have a de – motivating effect on students.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION**

The aim of this empirical study is to address the following research question:

- What are third grader high school teachers and students' attitudes towards the use of Persian (L1) in English (L2) classrooms?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

In order to obtain the necessary data for the study two third grader intact high school English classes were selected. There were 25 students in class A and 28 students were in class B. All participants in both classes (A & B) were male. The teaching methodology employed in the two classes will be described in the observation section given below. The age range of the students in both classes was 16–18. The classes were taught by two teachers, holding MA degrees in TEFL. The last but not the least point to put here is that both these schools from which these classes were selected were private schools located at affluent and privileged parts of the city. The study was carried out in Khozestan, Iran.

### ***Instruments***

Two instruments were employed to collect the data. They were: observation and interview conducted by the researcher. Both classes were observed to reflect the quantity of Persian (L1) and English (L2) use. In order to provide the researcher with an in-depth understanding of the interviewees' perceptions, attitudes and feelings semi-structured interviews were employed. Both the teachers and the students were interviewed in Persian. Each interview lasted about 10 to 15 minutes.

### ***Procedures***

It lasted a period of 70 days (10 weeks) to collect the required data for the study. That is to say, during this period, every week both classes were observed by the researcher for about 30 to 40 minutes each session. The researcher took note on what happened in both classes on the part of

the teachers and the students. Based on their mid-term scores, 4 students from each class as high achieving and low achieving students were interviewed. The reason why the students were selected from the extreme points was to see whether they held different or similar attitudes towards the use of Persian and English in their classes. The two teachers were also interviewed to have their attitudes towards the use or no use of L1 (Farsi) in their English (L2) classes.

## **FINDINGS**

The instruments used in this study were observations and semi-structured interviews. Here the main points observed in classes A and B are briefly highlighted.

### ***Class A observation***

Throughout the course of observation of class A, the observer could see that the major part of class time was given to focus on grammar exercises, translation of texts, sentences and giving Persian equivalents for all the words and expressions in each lesson. In teaching reading the teacher read the text aloud line by line and translated every sentence and word in the text. After covering the whole text this way, the teacher using Persian explained any and every grammatical point to the class, and the students were supposed to take notes in their L1. The teacher also did his best to translate each sentence into the students' L1. For instance, he occasionally wrote a sentence on the board and encouraged a collective translation of each sentence into Persian.

Class A was nearly observed for about 280 minutes during a ten session program. It was observed that about 70% was purely Persian and the remaining 30% was given to reading over the text, or reading out grammar exercises by the students and teacher. A few words were read aloud by the teacher to show where the stress pattern was. Although the teacher was the only voice in the classroom, he did not have the necessary control over the class. For example, many students were either busy doing assignment for other subjects or they were very noisy. Generally it seemed that the majority of the pupils were not very interested in participating in class activities. Many were bored and tired. That is a general lack of motivation and interest was felt in the class.

### ***Class B observation***

In terms of the method of teaching which assigned the teacher and students' behavior in the classroom, this class was different from class A. For example, in teaching reading there was an activation session during which the teacher asked a few general relevant questions to activate the students' background knowledge so there might be better comprehension by them. Then the students were supposed to read the paragraphs of the text one by one. After each paragraph two or three questions relevant to the content of the paragraph were asked so the students' comprehension could be checked for. In case there were any new words in the text the teacher did not provide the students with Persian equivalents for the words. But he informed students of the clues they could use to guess the meaning of the words. He also employed other techniques including giving synonyms, antonyms, examples and the like so the students might get the meaning.

In teaching grammar, the instructor put the grammatical topic of the lesson on the board and gave examples in L2 to show how this structure or grammar point is used. He also asked students to refer to the paragraphs of the passage to underline or specify the sentences constructed based on the grammar point just introduced. It seemed that the teacher was going to focus the students'

attention to the new structures given in the text thereby they could perceive how these structures are actually used in a real context.

The major part of the class time was given to English (L2) to do most of the activities in class. Of course, where necessary a short time explanation in students L1 (Persian) was given by the teacher. Most likely, this teacher chose his way of teaching based on his student's English background in English. That is, most of the students in class B have attended private language institutes. This probably helped both the teacher and the students to be more at ease when English was used in their classes.

### ***Interviews***

In order to be better informed of the attitudes and perceptions of teachers and students in both classes one-to-one interviews were conducted with the two teachers and four students in each class. The interview was based on the following questions.

- 1) How much of class time do you speak Persian in your English classes and why do you think teachers should or should not speak Persian in their English classes?

#### ***Teacher A:***

One main reason to use Persian in my English classes is that I'm always concerned about my students' proficiency in English and I'm afraid they may not understand me. In addition, the use of L1 (Persian) in teaching L2 (English) has been a norm in our English classes and learners expect to be taught the same way. Parents are also concerned about using English by teachers. Because they think that using L2 will have a detrimental effect on the students comprehension of the lesson's which in turn adversely affects their final exams. The teacher himself is not the only one to decide how much Persian to use in teaching English. There are always beyond the class forces regarding this issue. To sum everything up, it is highly that teacher A and his student were not so comfortable to use English in their class because of variables which were not easy to be controlled by the teacher.

#### ***Teacher B:***

As far as my students can follow me, I try my best to use English (L2) in my English classes. But this does not mean that I don't use Persian while I'm teaching English. I sometimes use L1 in my classes when it is necessary as I think in certain cases using L1 will help me provide a non-threatening environment which is of crucial importance for my English students.... I believe that the way English is taught in Iran will lead us nowhere as our products, our students, have not shown to be very successful in oral communication in English. Of course I'm not here to say that the use of Persian should be banned in our classes, but I'm against the improper over use of L1. It should be used properly.....

- 2) How often do you think teachers should use Persian in their English classes?

#### ***Teacher A:***

I think the use of L1 is more beneficial in teaching English in our current educational system because the purpose of teaching English in our country is not oral communication.... See the English textbooks. They speak for themselves! I believe the use of L2 depends on the level and background of the students. The needs of the students should also be accounted for. That is to

say, most of our students think of English as a credit course to pass not as a course which may open a window on a new world. Under the current circumstances of English teaching in Iran I believe using L1 is an effective way of teaching L2. You know the students and their families' satisfaction directly influences the teachers' promotion and other fringe benefits of teachers.

***Teacher B:***

A false belief about teaching English is that, English teachers should by no means employ their student L1 in teaching English to their students. But L1 is inevitably used in both learning and teaching English. However, overusing L1 is not the only way to teach L2 (English). One occasion in which the use of L1 may be of high benefit is when communication in English (L2) fails to happen. In addition, I believe we should not be led by the students and their families' emotions and feelings not to use L2 in our classes.... I think we teachers should be duty – bound and we should try our best to follow the correct principles, because professional issues including theoretically supported methodology of teaching should be dealt with accordingly.

In addition to the teachers of classes A and B two high achieving and two low achieving students were interviewed to see how they think of the use or no use of L1 (Farsi) in teaching L2 (English) by their teachers. The researcher did his best to elicit the students' responses for the following questions.

- 1) Should teachers use L1 in teaching English classes?
- 2) If not, why should teachers not use L1 in teaching English (L2)?
- 3) If yes, in what situations should teachers employ L1?

***The high achieving student (class A):***

As we participate in our English class, we should always think of the purpose for which we study English. I believe that is communication.... If we attend our English classes to seek that purpose we should hear and speak English to learn it. I think our teacher should speak English in the classroom because this is the only place where we can learn English and practice English. But unfortunately I sometimes think we have two Persian literature teachers as both our Persian literature teacher and our English teacher teach the same way (they both speak Farsi). And this demotivates me to come to our English class not because of the teachers' personality but because of his overuse of Farsi in teaching English. We hear a little English but a lot of Persian. It's very boring to be in an English class where you really learn no English....

***The low – achieving student (class A):***

Our English teacher speaks Persian most of the time. He translates everything into Farsi. He explains grammar in Persian. We memorize many words and grammar rules. But we cannot use them to speak or write in English. Sometime the class gets very monotonous and boring. We ask our teacher to speak English but he doesn't do it. Definitely we are deprived of the chance of using English even in our English class because of overusing Persian.... Our teacher doesn't want us talk, think or discuss in English. We don't know why we should call such a boring class as English class.

***The high – achieving student (class B):***

I believe that to learn English in order to communicate with English speaking people we have to listen, speak and discuss in English. Luckily, we have a very active class because our teacher speaks English. His way of speaking is very encouraging. We understand him because he speaks very clearly. He uses very easy words when he speaks. When there is a feeling of non–

understanding our teacher recognizes it. Therefore, he occasionally uses Persian so we may not get confused. Our teacher always encourages us to participate in class activities. For example, he asks us to express ourselves in English. He sometimes uses audio and visual aids in the class to add more fun to classroom activities. Our previous teacher was the only voice in the classroom. We heard little if any English from him and we did not speak English. I like both my English teacher and my English class because now I feel English ....

***The low – achieving student (class B):***

When our English teacher speaks English we enjoy our time although we do not understand everything. I think using Persian in English class is very helpful when we cannot understand difficult words and grammar. I believe using Persian is helpful for weaker students who have not had a chance to attend private institutes.... Though my English is not good, I feel our new teacher has managed to make us feel more motivated and interested to learn English. We need to hear English and speak English any way to learn it... . Although one students' view is not easily conclusive , that is to say , one cannot easily generalize an idea expressed by one student to all the other students , it can , however , be a clue for the researcher to see how the students may perceive the use or nonuse of English in their classes

## **DISCUSSION**

Inspired by the rise of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), some experts in the field of language learning and teaching have rejected any use of L1 in L2 learning classes (Atkinson, 1987) while others have advocated the use of L1 as an efficient way to make it easy for the students to understand L2 (Nation, 2005). According to Larsen–Freeman (2012) judicious use of the students' native language is permitted in CLT classes. She further believes that, where ever possible, the target language should be used not only during communicative activities, but also for explaining the activities to the students or in assigning homework. The students learn from these classroom management exchanges, too, and they realize that the target language is a vehicle for communication, not just an object to be studied.

In the same line many experts believe that one main area of concern should be the attitudes and motivation of students to learn and use L2. Depending on the learner's attitudes, learning a second language can be a source of enrichment or a source of resentment. According to Light Bown (2003) if the speaker's only reason for learning the second language is external pressure, internal motivation may be minimal and general attitudes towards learning may be negative. Based on the above mentioned reasons and many studies done in the field, learners' perception, motivation and attitudes towards L2 have been found to be of crucial importance in mastering it. The main aims of this empirical study were to observe the two classes in terms of the quantity of use of L1 as well as to reflect the attitudes and perceptions of the students and teachers towards using Persian (L1) in English (L2) classes. As stated above, the two classes were observed. In class A the teacher mainly used Farsi to do almost anything in the class.

That is to say, the class was dominated by grammar – translation method. In class B however, great attempt was done on the part of the teacher to use English and involve students in group



work activities. The teacher in class B also did use audio – visual aids so the students could be exposed to English more.

In class A the purpose of language learning was found to be reading and translation. The class was then a Grammar Translation Method (GTM) oriented one.

In terms of varieties of activities the two classes were observed to be very different. In class A there was a monotonous and fixed pattern. Most activities were in the fixed framework of translating from either L1 into L2 or vice versa. A great deal of class time was allocated to grammar explanation in Persian. The students were also asked to answer after reading questions and memorize English words together with their Persian equivalents. As the researcher observed the classroom for 10 weeks, it was found that the students did not enjoy their class time. They were very passive and bored. That is to say, the class was not lively. The passivity of the students in class A, as Dornyei (2001; 73–74) believes, could be attributed “first and for most” to the monotony of language tasks. He warns that “both teachers and students can easily turn into the familiar routines. The routines, then, can easily turn into a monotonous ‘daily grind’, with the class losing its edge. Monotony is intensively related to variety.

In class B on the other hand a variety of activities, exercises and tasks were given to the students to do. Group work, pair work, audio visual aids, combining reading with speaking activities in English were used by the teacher so he might better involve every student into the classroom dynamics.

Indeed, in class B the teacher was aware of the importance of employing various types of activities so that the monotony of the class atmosphere may lessen.

Using such a kind of diverse language tasks and activities, as Dornyei (2001) puts it, could guarantee the breaking of learning monotony and making teaching – learning an enjoyable experience to both teachers and their pupils.

In order to better delve into the students attitudes and perceptions about the use of L1 (Persian) in their L2 (English) class interviewing with teachers and students was another source of data. Teacher A was greatly in favor of using Persian in his class because he believed in the context of Iranian schools, the syllabus designed and the content of the books are not very suitable for teaching and learning English communicatively. He also claimed that in terms of their proficiency the Iranian students are not homogeneous. He mentioned the lack of enough time and the likes and disliked of the students’ parents related to the method that teachers apply in their classes. However such a stance is rejected by Larsen – Freeman (2012) who believes that L1 should be used only judiciously.

As another source of data two students from each class were also interviewed. These students were high achiever and low achievers in both classes. That is from each class a high and a low achieving student was interviewed. After they were interviewed both high and low achieving students in class A and B had rather similar attitudes towards using Persian in their English classes. All four students were in favor of using more L2 in their English classes. Of course, this is in sharp contrast with Butzkam (2003; 36) who believes “with growing proficiency in the foreign language, the use of native language becomes largely redundant and the foreign language will stand on its own two feet”. The findings of this study are not also in line with another study conducted by other researchers including AL–Nofaie (2010) and Brooks Levis, (2009). They both claimed that in their context L2 learners are in favor of using L1 in L2 classes.

The findings of the present study are yet in line with another two studies carried out by Mahmoudi (2011) and Nazary (2008). In the first study a group of pre – university students were observed and interviewed to see what their perception and attitudes towards the use of L1 in teaching L2 were. The study came to the conclusion that L2 domination in L2 classes is supported. The present study is, of course, a replication of the study done by Mahmoudi but in a different context and on different subjects. The second study was carried out by Nazary. The participants were a group of Tehran University students. They were found to be reluctant to use L1 (Persian) in L2 (English) classes on the grounds that any minutes of using L1 will diminish a minute of their exposure to L2.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study are in line with the previous studies done in the Iranian context. The study shows that the third grader high school students like pre–university students in Mahmoudi's study (2011) and university students in that of Nazary were supportive of L2 domination in their English classes and they were reluctant of excessive use of Persian (L1) in the context of Iranian schools. However, the results of this study are by no means prescriptive, because as Ellis (2008; 801) points out, the use of L1 in L2 classes depends on the instructional contexts. Another important point for conclusion is that there is a relationship between teachers' attitudes and their classroom practice. This goes along with Richards (1982) viewpoint that teachers' classroom practices could be viewed as reflections of their beliefs and perceptions about the nature of language and how language is learnt. As it is evident from the findings of this study then we can sum everything up that although a teacher like teacher A in this study blames other external factors that might have a detrimental effect on his effectiveness, teacher B teaching under more or less the same conditions indicated that a teacher can effectively and efficiently take benefit from the least to the best of the advantage. We teachers should not be waiting for an ideal class to come. Our effectiveness is when we can make a change in our students' perception and attitudes towards English which can be to their benefit.

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## THE EFFICACY OF EX-IMPLICIT IN BETWEEN IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT GRAMMAR TEACHING APPROACH ON SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS' WRITING

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### ABSTRACT

Implicit knowledge, also known as tacit knowledge or intuitive knowledge may manifest itself in one's behaviour or judgments about grammaticality, but it cannot be articulated. Explicit knowledge on the other hand can be verbalized and explicated. For example, native speakers of English intuitively know the regularities in the use of a definite, indefinite or zero article, but are generally unable to describe the principles. This article contrasts implicit knowledge with explicit knowledge and explains the difficulties in implicit and explicit learning. Finally, it will present the pedagogical implementation of explicit and implicit grammar teaching and learning in an integrated approach namely Ex-implicit Grammar Teaching Approach in the classroom context.

**KEY WORDS:** Implicit knowledge/ learning/ teaching, Explicit knowledge/ learning/ teaching, SLA, pedagogical implementation, Ex-implicit Grammar Teaching Approach

### INTRODUCTION

Bialystok (1994) claimed that explicit knowledge can be learnt at any age. However, there are age-related constraints for L2 learners before they develop their own abilities to learn a second language. As Krashen (1982) argued, the use of explicit knowledge may enable L2 learners capable of learning only those rules that are formally and functionally simple.

The author believes that we cannot separate those two types of knowledge, namely implicit and explicit knowledge, because implicit knowledge is formed in a learner's memory and will be transferred to explicit knowledge when the teacher activates the learner's memory by interaction and feedback and use all this activated information as input for the target task. Paradis (1994) asserted that the difficulties associated with learning need to be examined separately in relation to the type of knowledge (implicit/explicit). On the other hand, Ellis (2006) suggests that when investigating learning difficulty in the construct of implicit knowledge, it may require tapping into what a learner intuitively feels to be target-like. Further aspects involving random and time

pressured or automatic processing of stored linguistic knowledge are also essential but would require elaborate research techniques. In contrast, investigating learning difficulties in the context of explicit knowledge may be easier since the focus and concern generally relate to task performance in controlled environments. Other concerns may include motivational techniques and response elicitations that can be done free of any time pressure.

This article consists of six main sections; the introduction is presented in section one, the literature review comes in section two, the discussion is presented in section three, the pedagogical implementations will be presented in section four, while conclusion will be presented in section five, and finally, the references is in section six. In the following, literature review will be presented.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Vygotsky's discussion (1887) in Wells (1994, p.1) pointed out that scientific concepts in contrast with spontaneous concepts have four features: Generally; systematic organization, conscious awareness, and voluntary spontaneous concepts are developed inductively and unconsciously: where they are hard to be reasoned with, while scientific concepts are developed deductively and purposely. He adds that the scientific concepts provide the framework and the systematic meaning to a new presented item and it usually takes place in school learning.

In the same line, Lantolf (2008, p. 42) in Ellis (2008) pointed out that the implicit knowledge is acquired without learner's awareness of its existence as the acquisition of the mother language, while explicit learning is totally opposite, it is acquired intentionally.

In this field, an issue arose seeking to identify the nature relationship between these two knowledge: Lantolf (2008, p 43) and Ellis (2005, p. 144) mentioned that three independent positions are suggested in the way that implicit and explicit knowledge relate to each other: The first position is: *the non-interface position* where the two types of knowledge do not relate to each other and it describes the implicit knowledge as the bridge to spontaneous performance. The second position is: *the strong interface position* where the explicit knowledge can be implicit knowledge through continuous practice. The third position is: *the weak interface position* where the ability of transformation from implicit knowledge to explicit knowledge is through drawing the learner's attention:

Lantolf (2008, p. 42) made a comparison between the three positions recognized by Ellis (2005), to the Vygotsky theory, he concludes that the implicit knowledge tends to take the same spontaneous knowledge path, while explicit knowledge is not quite the same with scientific knowledge, this is because the explicit knowledge do not necessarily be systematic and correct and generalization of particular behavior as the scientific knowledge do.

The aim of this article is to draw on insights from the applied linguistic literature and Second Language theories (SLA) to develop the practical approach of teaching writing which is called Innovated Writing Process (IWP) approach suggested by Mourssi (2012d). The IWP aims at improving Second/Foreign Learners of English level of writing as well as speaking, see Appendix A, where the teacher can integrate the skill of writing with speaking. He/she can change the teaching method according to the mistakes or points of weakness of his/her learners; this highlights the role of error analysis leading to metalinguistic feedback which can be achieved following a Communicative Grammar Language Teaching Approach (CGLTA) where the teacher interacts freely with learners. This allows for his/her learners to participate in the task,

and to raise a high degree of awareness on the learners' part. This will lead learners to be able to interact, negotiate and discuss, which, in turn, results in preparing them to revise and redraft and improve their writing as well as speaking in a suitable educational and interactional environment (Mourssi, 2012b). This, in turn, will lead us to the importance of the pedagogical implementation of explicit and implicit grammar teaching and learning in an integrated approach namely Ex-implicit Grammar Language Teaching Approach in the classroom context. First, the difficulties in implicit and explicit learning will be presented in the following part.

### ***Difficulties in Implicit and Explicit Knowledge/Learning***

According to Ellis (200, p. 431), the distinction between implicit and explicit knowledge of L2 learners can shed light on the reason why some grammatical structures are more difficult to learn than others. To substantiate, Ellis (2005) conducted an experiment using 17 grammatical structures and traced the learning difficulties in each of these structures by applying both explicit and implicit forms of knowledge. Findings show that structured items identified as easy within the context of implicit knowledge were, on the other hand, described as difficult in the constructs of explicit knowledge. With its inverse relational structure, there was no correlation between the ranks of orders concerning the difficulty experienced with the 17 grammatical structures. A regression analysis demonstrated that both types of knowledge (explicit and implicit) can predict general proficiency.

In explaining the difficulties most L2 learners confront, Ellis (2006, p. 432) hypothesized that some features are naturally easier or more difficult to learn than others due perhaps to the manner the human mind manages its intrinsic properties. Therefore, learning difficulties are still a universal phenomenon; L2 learners of all nationalities confront the same type of ease and difficulty over the same features and structures. One empirical study that supports Ellis' (2006) hypothesis draws on the theory of "natural order" (Dulay & Burt, 1973; Krashen, 1977) in relation to second language acquisition. Ellis (2006) suggested the need to differentiate between implicit and explicit knowledge forms present in an L2 learner based on the seven principal dimensions tabulated below:

*Table 1: Ellis' Seven Principal Dimensions (2006, p. 433)*

<b><i>Dimension</i></b>	<b><i>Implicit knowledge</i></b>	<b><i>Explicit knowledge</i></b>
<i>1 – Awareness</i>	<i>It involves unconscious awareness</i>	<i>It entails conscious awareness</i>
<i>2 – type of knowledge</i>	<i>It is procedural knowledge</i>	<i>It is declarative knowledge</i>
<i>3 – Systematicity and certainty of L2 knowledge</i>	<i>It is highly systematic when established in a learner's inter language (Tarone 1988)</i>	<i>It is imprecise, inaccurate and inconsistent (Sorace 1985)</i>
<i>4 – Accessibility of knowledge</i>	<i>It allows automatic processing</i>	<i>It requires more controlled processing (Preston 2002)</i>
<i>5 – Use of L2 knowledge varies according to the specific conditions under which learners are asked to perform tasks</i>	<i>Learners access their implicit knowledge when they are pressured to perform the same task rapidly, so their speech is less accurate</i>	<i>When learners have plenty of time to plan production on-line, their speech becomes more accurate because they access their explicit knowledge (Yuan and Ellis (2003)</i>
<i>6 – Self report</i>	<i>It is not verbalisable</i>	<i>It is verbalisable</i>
<i>7 – Learnability</i>	<i>It is not learnable at any age</i>	<i>It is learnable at any age</i>



***Implicit Knowledge in Contrast with Explicit Knowledge***

One way of distinguishing explicit knowledge from implicit knowledge is by determining whether the learner is aware or unaware of the underlying regularities and knowing the extent whether a learner can or cannot verbalise these regularities. Hulstijn (2006, p. 130) provides good definitions of the difference between: Explicit/Implicit knowledge, Explicit/Implicit teaching, and Explicit/Implicit learning. The author believes that Second/Foreign Learners of English may have a good amount of explicit knowledge and are conscious of the rules of using English grammar. However, with random grammar generation, they have not internalized this form of explicit knowledge. Implicit learning is generally described as non-conscious learning. In contrast, explicit learning is conscious learning. To illustrate, a table of comparison is provided below:

Table 2: *Explicit and Implicit Learning*

<b><i>Explicit learning</i></b>	<b><i>Implicit learning</i></b>
<i>* It involves conscious operations such as hypothesis formation and testing</i>	<i>* It does not have or does not involve conscious operations. It is unconscious.</i>
<i>* The learner is aware of what has been learned</i>	<i>* Learner is learning without being aware of what has been learned.</i>
<i>* It is concerned with learning language items (e.g. vocabulary) by means of overt strategies such as: memorization techniques, direct grammar explanations, analyzing mistakes, and knowing the difference between L1 and L2.</i>	<i>* It refers to learning primarily by means of unconscious exposure to input.</i>
<i>* Explicit teaching: information about a language is given to the learners directly by the teacher or text book.</i>	<i>* Implicit teaching: information about the language is given to the learners indirectly by teacher or text book.</i>

With regard to implicit and explicit learning, Hulstijn (2006, p. 131) mentioned that explicit and implicit learning are the two for which the least consensus exists. He explained that explicit learning is input processing with conscious intention to find out whether the input information contains regularities to work out the concepts and rules with which these regularities can be captured. He added that implicit learning is input processing without such an intention, it takes place unconsciously. He noted that learning is defined with reference to the nature of the knowledge learned, in other words, explicit and implicit learning is the learning of explicit and implicit knowledge. The discussion will be presented in the following section.

**DISCUSSION**

Relating to how to implement these findings in the Ex-implicit Grammar Teaching Approach suggested in the Innovated Writing Process approach (Mourssi, 2102d, see Appendix A for details) the researcher believes that teachers can use the learner's implicit knowledge in the first stages of writing process. It can be used in brainstorming and giving ideas related to the target topic in general and to the target linguistic item in particular. Then, students can draw up their first draft, revising, and (re)drafting their writing after receiving explicit grammar teaching for the linguistic items which could not be understood implicitly. Receiving both implicit and explicit grammar teaching in an integrated approach, namely Ex-implicit grammar teaching approach, they can concentrate more on the forms, having enough time to rewrite, asking their peers or teacher in performing the task properly without feeling shy or hesitating to ask for help in front of their classmates. Achieving these stages in an organized manner might help Second/Foreign Language Learners participate effectively in writing tasks. This, in turn, will lead to actual

improvements in their internalized grammatical system and, in turn, result in improving their speaking as well as their writing.

Hulstijn (2006, p. 129) is convinced that there are good theoretical and educational reasons to involve implicit and explicit learning in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research. By comparing some differential factors between L1 and L2, Hulstijn (2006, p. 129) was able to ascertain that success in the acquisition of an L1 is the result of full mastery of and ample exposure to the language since childhood. L2 learners, on the other hand, require a comprehensive range of both theoretical and practical inputs. Thus, L1 leans toward universal and natural forms of acquisition whereas L2 acquisition is dependent upon variables and differentials. There are scholars working in different disciplines who have argued that L1 acquisition relies on the processes of implicit learning whereas the acquisition of L2 relies on both implicit and explicit learning (Krashen, 1981; Bley, Vroman, 1991; Dekeyser, 2003; Ellis, 2004 and 2005).

To achieve success in SLA which is similar to some extent to success in first language acquisition, it is generally considered then that one needs to increase and provide learners of L2 with comprehensive input theoretically and practically. With regard to writing, in other words, wherever learners commit errors or mistakes, the teacher has to analyze and explain the nature of these mistakes in his interaction (metalinguistic feedback, Mourssi, 2012b), where all of these gaps will be taken as comprehensive input or will be used as intake for the writing task. We can consider all what is presented explicitly to the learners as input to be formed in the learners' memory and form their implicit knowledge. This knowledge can be activated later when learners expose to similar linguistic items stored in their memory. There are many factors which form the input received by learners, among them is the method of teaching, degree of awareness, motivation to write, speak and participate in the writing activity, in addition to the amount of learners' exposure to L2.

Ellis (2006, p. 434) examined the learning difficulty of certain grammatical structures in the context of implicit knowledge and identified several variables that make grammatical features either easy or difficult, and these were: frequency, saliency, functional value, regularity and processability. Ellis (2004) surmised that L2 learning in the context of explicit knowledge consists of analytical and meta-linguistic knowledge forms, whereby the meta-linguistic constitutes conscious representations of linguistic structures that can be verbalized on demand, whereas analytical knowledge consists of lexis for labelling linguistic structures.

Hulstijn (2006, p. 130) assumed that curriculum planners, material designers, teachers, and learners all have some vested interest in knowing which linguistic domains L2 learning might best benefit from in either implicit or explicit learning modes. To comment on Hulstijn's point of view related to implicit and explicit learning, first of all, I think that his point of view depends on previous findings of Ellis related to the same area.

According to the researcher's point of view, he thinks both types of implicit and explicit memories have to be used in the target linguistic item, where the teacher should draw on both categories of memories in teaching the target linguistic item. The learners' degree of awareness

and the role of the teacher to motivate learners to verbalize their knowledge and interpret it as they write, revise and redraft are crucial. Moreover, teachers and learners often have to decide when and where they use their implicit knowledge in the different stages in writing activity, requiring them to have a sufficient amount of lexical and grammatical items and knowledge of the difference between forming target-like sentences in the L1 and the L2. In the following, pedagogical implementations of ex-implicit grammar teaching will be presented.

## **PEDAGOGICAL IMPLEMENTATIONS**

Lantolf (2008, p. 44) in Ellis, (2008) associates proceduralization with explicit knowledge, he mentions that the possibility of explicit knowledge to be transformed to implicit knowledge or automatized with conscious control looks like when an individual learns how to shift gears in driving a car. He followed the same image which was made by Leantief (1981) in illustrating the significant distinction between spontaneous and scientific knowledge.

Based on the language learners' level and the individual differences, and the important role of interaction in acquiring second language grammatical rules, I think that Ex-implicit Grammar Teaching Approach and implementing IWP approach in writing might help second language learners acquiring both simple and complex rules related to forming target-like sentences in L2.

Ellis (2002) preferred the instruction to be in explicit knowledge but the domain aim should be on building the implicit knowledge. This means that explicit acquired knowledge is proceduralized to be an implicit knowledge as the weak interface position believes. He mentions that this could be done through engaging students in communication activities. This view was supported by Lantolf (2008, p. 44) who recommended to enhance the acquisition of implicit knowledge, the explicit knowledge should be associated with engaging students with communicative activities, explicit grammar is appropriate and more sufficient to be used because in this way learners will be motivated for analyzing rules for themselves. All what is mentioned support my contribution to knowledge, which comes in presenting the pedagogical implementation of explicit, and implicit grammar teaching and learning in an integrated approach namely Ex-implicit Grammar Teaching Approach in the classroom context in order to improve students' written accuracy and fluency as well. An integrated type of feedback which gathers between implicit and explicit feedback, namely Ex-implicit feedback, will be presented in the following part

### ***Ex-implicit feedback***

Explicit and implicit feedback are the two types of corrective feedback, Ellis (2008, p. 339) stated that implicit feedback is no obvious indicator that an error has been committed, but explicit feedback indicated an error has been committed. Explicit feedback takes several forms based on the source of problem indicated. Ellis, (2008, p. 339) ensured that a number of studies have investigated the effects of implicit and explicit feedback on SLA. He added that both types of corrective feedback are effective in promoting acquisition of the grammatical structures.

For example, Carroll and Swain, (1993); Nagata, (1993); Carroll, (2001), Rosa and Leow, (2004), demonstrated that explicit feedback was more effective than implicit feedback. Similarly, Ellis, Loewn, and Elam's (2006) study of the effects of recasts and metalinguistic feedback on the acquisition of English past tense *-ed* also found that explicit type of feedback is more effective than implicit feedback. On the contrary, Leeman (2003) found that implicit feedback is more effective than explicit feedback. In my point of view, I think that it is difficult to form a conclusion regarding which type is more effective, but I think it is better to gather between both

types in the classroom context and form Ex-implicit feedback, where explicit feedback can be more effective with low level language learners, while implicit feedback can be more effective with higher level language learners. In addition, recasts feedback which represents the implicit type of corrective feedback can vary enormously and explicit feedback also can be varied depending on whether it only indicates an error had been committed in order to provide correction, or it includes metalinguistic information.

To implement and follow a certain type corrective of feedback whether it is implicit or explicit or integrating both in a form of Ex-implicit, there are two very important factors which have to be taken in consideration, they are: the nature of the target structure-simple or complex – and the level of language learners, having in consideration the individual differences. In my point of view, I think following explicit feedback is more effective with simple rules with beginner learners of English, and following ex-implicit feedback is more effective with complex rules with higher level of learners.

Some studies support my conclusions: (Dekeyser, 1995; Robinson, 1996; Ayoun, 2001), proved that implicit instruction is more effective than explicit instruction, while Scott (1989) and deGraff (1997) proved that explicit instruction is more effective for learning complex structures.

In a study based on one structure was related to regular simple past tense carried out by Ellis (2008), he concluded that typical learner errors in the simple past –*ed* involve either omission or miss formation only. Ellis (2008) concluded that the most effective feedback in promoting acquisition of –*ed* simple past is the metalinguistic feedback. On the contrary, Doughty, and Varela (1998); Han (2002, p. 357) didn't find a positive effect for recasts on the acquisition of grammar. In the case of both Doughty and Varela and Han, the recast treatment was provided over several weeks and the recasts were repeated at the same error. This the recasts became salient to the learners, and it was extremely brief-consisting of a single word. As a result, the recasts will have only limited effect on any grammatical structure.

In general, because Second/Foreign Language Learners are usually older when they start acquiring a second language they are more developed cognitively than First Language Learners. This comes with an exception which would be the compound bilingual, who learn the second language at the same time as the first language. This point was supported by: Marinova-Tedd, Barshal, and Snow, (2000), who mentioned that old learners appear to have distinct advantages in several areas: they tend to learn more quickly than first language learners, they have greater knowledge of the world in general than first language learners, they can control over the input they receive related to L2 than first language learners, they have the ability to learn and apply rules which an aid in facilitating the acquisition process, they already have a first language from which they can transfer strategies and linguistic knowledge.

Some researcher do not support the author's idea here: Richard-Amato (2003) pointed out that being older may not always be advantages us in learning a second language; Long (1990) mentions it seems that older learners have some maturational constraints affecting the language acquisition process; MacIntyre and Charos (1996) mentioned that old learners may find themselves afraid to make errors; Newmarks, (1983) commented that old learners may have poor

attitudes and lack motivation, depending on their feelings and their condition in learning L2; Schachter, (1974) and Kleinmann, (1977) added old learner may avoid using certain structures altogether because they are not part of their first language repertoire.

## CONCLUSION

Based on what is mentioned above, it can be concluded that we can integrate both types into what is termed in the current article as Ex-implicit Grammar Teaching/learning where implicit teaching/learning may be effective with high level language learners while explicit teaching/learning may be effective with low level language learners. Since any language has both simple and complex rules, ex-implicit teaching/learning may be effective with both, having in consideration the level of the language learners and the individual differences.

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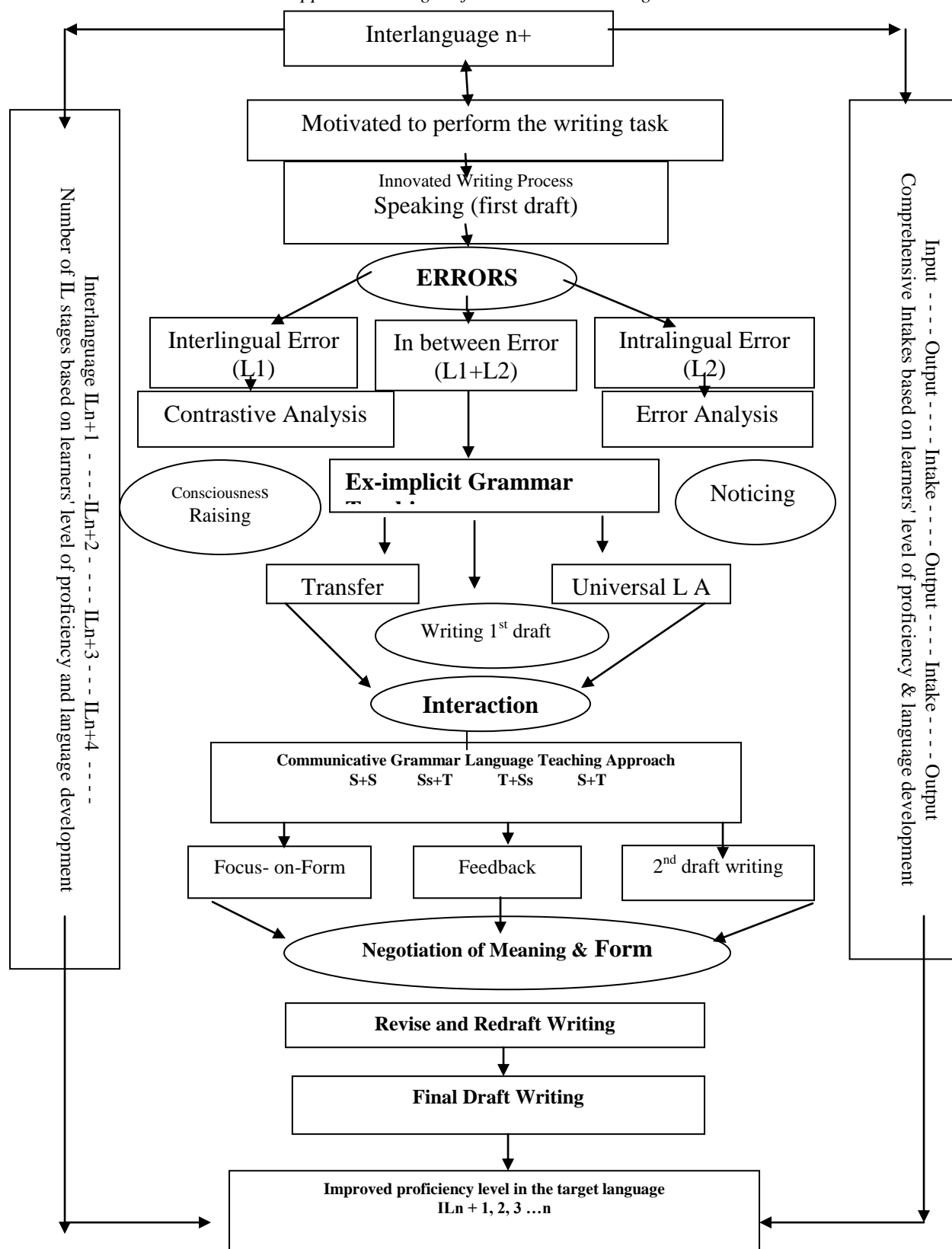


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Appendix A: Stages of the Innovated Writing Process



# THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG GENERAL ENGLISH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' SELF-EFFICACY, THEIR ANXIETY, AND THEIR ACHIEVEMENT

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## ABSTRACT

This study was an attempt to explore the possible relationships among university students' self-efficacy in General English (GE) course and their achievement in this course. Moreover, the differences in GE course achievement among university students of Humanities, Sciences, and Engineering were examined. Furthermore, it checked the relationship between GE achievement among such students and their level of anxiety. Also, the differences among anxiety mean scores of students of humanities, sciences, and engineering were explored. The results of the study indicated that first there is a significantly positive relationship between the university students' self-efficacy and their achievement in GE course. Second, there is a negative correlation between GE university students' self-efficacy and their level of anxiety. In other words, university students of humanities suffered more than other university students. Third, there are significant differences in GE course achievement among the three groups. Fourth, there are significant differences in self-efficacy among the three groups of university students. Fifth, the differences in anxiety among the three groups of students were significant. In addition, the results of teachers' interviews were also in agreement with those of the questionnaires. The results of this study can invite the attention of GE course teachers to the fact that encouraging their students to find ways to enhance their self-efficacy and manage their anxiety can be highly useful for them to achieve higher scores in GE course.

**KEY WORDS:** Self-efficacy, Anxiety, general English, Humanities, Engineering, Sciences, achievement.

## INTRODUCTION

Few studies have paid adequate attention to the relationship between psycho-affective factors and anxiety. The studies cover a wide range of issues such as the relationship between gender and anxiety, self-perception and anxiety (Kitano, 2001), the effect of gender, nationality, and first language experience on classroom anxiety (Machida, 2001), apprehension of negative evaluation and higher level of anxiety (Kitano, 2001), the relationship between affective factors and anxiety links with language proficiency (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Gardner et al, 1977; Yamashiro & Mclaghlin, 2001; Yashima, 2002), and risk-taking, motivation, as predictors of language achievement and anxiety. Due to the importance of the role of psycho-affective factors which influence language anxiety and consequently the EFL learners' performance, it appears important

to examine the effect of such factors like self-efficacy on anxiety level and achievement of foreign language learners. The available literature on psycho-affective variables indicates the scarcity of research concerning the effect of self-efficacy on GE learners' anxiety and achievement. This motivated the researcher to focus his concentration on examining the effect of GE university students' self-efficacy on their anxiety and achievement.

Self-efficacy is closely related to the concept of motivation (Jarvis, 2005; Dörnyei, 2005). In other words, the higher the more self-efficacious the students are, the higher their level of motivation is. In addition, a number of research conducted in EFL literature have confirmed the pivotal role of motivation on foreign language learning success. Thus, exploring the foreign language learning process in light of self-efficacy is a useful research avenue which can be very beneficial as a focus of EFL studies.

Furthermore, the lack of adequate research on GE university students is clear. University students in Iran just study English as a foreign language in a three credit course. It is obvious that this course cannot provide university students with much exposure to English. Therefore, investigating the level of psychological factors such as self-efficacy and anxiety to get a better understanding of the current psychology of GE university students can initiate conducting much more practical research in this neglected realm.

Self-efficacy practice has caught the attention of EFL/ESL researchers since 1990s (Gimenez, 1999). However, the need to carry out research on self-efficacy focusing on GE students at the level of university is strongly felt. Another important variable in university GE studies is anxiety whose significance was established in a load of research. Bearing in mind the importance of these two variables, this study focuses on the relationships among GE university students' self-efficacy, their anxiety, and achievement.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### ***Self-efficacy***

Researchers have explored the utility of Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy in a wide range of settings for understanding behavior for over 20 years. Self-efficacy is essentially an individual's belief in his or her ability to perform a specific task or behavior. Bandura (1997) emphasized that self-efficacy is not a general quality possessed by individuals, but rather specific beliefs an individual may have around particular tasks or behaviors. For example, an individual with higher social self-efficacy is said to have greater confidence in his or her ability to interact with others socially.

In other words, Bandura (1997) has defined self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). To put it other way, self-efficacy is referred to the judgments of what individuals are able to do with whatever skills they possess rather than the judgments of the skills themselves. Research studies show that self-efficacy is a flexible concept (Klassen, 2004). Therefore, it is useful to explore the self-efficacy sources and the factors that contribute to the concept of self-efficacy.

In addition, because individuals with levels of self-efficacy incline to set themselves more ambitions and goals, to do their best and be more persistent while encountering problems (Bandura, 1995; Schwarzer & Fuchs, 1996) they prefer to have more mastery experiences. Besides, since the relationship between self-efficacy and behavior is reciprocal, such individuals' self-efficacy will stay at high level or even increase.

In contrast, individuals with lower levels of self-efficacy tend to set less goals and ambitions, allocate less effort and surrender easier when facing difficulties. As a result, they will have less frequent mastery experiences and their chances of failure may rise as well. As a consequence, due to their attribution style, their level of self-efficacy will drop. Therefore, as maintained by Bandura (1995), "disbelief in one's capabilities creates its own behavioral validation" (p. 4). As Bandura (1997) dubbed, there are four significant sources of self-efficacy: Mastery or enactive experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physiological or emotional state.

Mastery or enactive experience refers to the past experience of success or failure. "Successes raise efficacy appraisals; repeated failures lower them, especially if the failures occur early in the course of events and do not reflect lack of effort or adverse external circumstances" (Bandura, 1986, p. 399). A strong sense of efficacy is likely to be developed through repeated successes. To put it in another way, if an individuals have already performed a certain behavior well, then they are likely to have stronger self-efficacy beliefs with regards to that behavior. Bandura (1997) posited that performance accomplishment, or *enactive mastery*, is the most influential source for self-efficacy beliefs.

Social persuasion is the third primary informational source for self-efficacy beliefs. If others give individuals reinforcement for a behavior, then they are likely to have higher self-efficacy for that behavior. Self-appraisals of competence are partly based on the opinions of significant others who presumably possess evaluative power (Bandura, 1997). People who are persuaded verbally that they possess the abilities to accomplish a given task are more likely to persist longer when confronted with difficulties and develop a sense of self-efficacy. Raising unrealistic beliefs of a person's self-efficacy coupled with failure when performing the task, however, will only discredit the persuader and further undermine the person's perceived self-efficacy. Therefore, encouragement is a powerful tool for increasing self-efficacy beliefs in others

### ***Research on self-efficacy***

Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy has proven especially useful for researchers in the field of counseling psychology. Specifically, research in the areas of vocational and academic behavior has been productive over the past 20 years. As the body of literature related directly and indirectly to self-efficacy theory is so vast, the following review will focus primarily on the literature directly relevant to the field of counseling psychology, namely vocational and academic behavior. The application of self-efficacy theory to vocational behavior and career counseling primarily originated with the research of Hackett and Betz (1981). Hackett and Betz addressed that women were significantly underrepresented in many managerial and professional occupations (e.g., lawyer, physician, engineer, professor). The model proposed by Hackett and Betz, based on Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory, was created for better understanding the influences of women's socialization on their career development patterns. The argument is made that self-efficacy beliefs are significant for determining whether more women will begin choosing nontraditional careers for females.

More recently, Peggy Hsieh and Schallert (2008) tried to consider the interrelationship of the two constructs of self-efficacy and attribution theory and also their influence on language learners' achievement. They focused their study on 500 undergraduates in French, German, and Spanish. In their regression analysis of the EFL learners' achievement; they found self-efficacy as the strongest predictor of their achievement. More interesting, they noticed that internalizers, learners who attribute their failure to internal factors, such as lack of effort, had higher levels of self-efficacy than externalizers, those who attribute their failure to the external factors, such as luck.

Roberts and Dyer (2005) examined the effect of web-based online teaching of vocabulary on EFL learners' self-efficacy, motivation, and critical thinking. They maintained that individualized online activities may contribute more to students' achievement than the traditional face-to-face class. They presented the web based lecture in the form of text-based Power Point presentation. They found that the effect of such online activities significantly influenced their self-efficacy, motivation, and critical thinking. Also, they recommended that EFL teachers take advantage of online course to boost their learners' self-efficacy which in turn improves their motivation. Furthermore, they discovered that online courses can orient learners to positive attitudes towards learning English.

Goaker (2005) explored the effect of peer teacher training programs on the self-efficacy and instructional skills of TEFL teachers. He compared the difference in self-efficacy mean scores of two groups of teachers, one experimental, and the other control. The student teachers were selected from English language teaching Department of European University of Lefke, North Cyprus doing their Teaching Practicum course (EDU 420) as part of a B.A. Teacher education program. The findings of this study indicated that those student teachers trained through peer teacher training showed higher orientations of self-efficacy and instructional skills than those with such program. Thus, the findings implied that peer coaching training programs

Adams (2004) explored the effect of peer model performance in the seminar course of postgraduate students on their self-efficacy in this course. Prior to the study he maintained that such task for international postgraduate is daunting, and the literature both in Australia and abroad confirms their lack of self-efficacy in this course. This paper presents findings He observed a seminar performance of a peer to that of a senior academic to check the level of self-efficacy of the students at an Australian university. Participants responded to a 19-item questionnaire which measured self-efficacy for four areas of seminar presentation: speech, display, content, and presenter presence. The findings demonstrated that the use of a peer model performance was more effective pedagogical for improving students' self-efficacy in this course.

Also, within the realm of research self-efficacy Unrau and Beck (2004) examined research self-efficacy of two groups of university students: 75 speech language pathology students and 60 Social Work students. There were interested in investigating whether such students' research self-efficacy might change under the influence of research and practice courses. They found that taking part in both courses improved these students' research self-efficacy. In other words, whenever courses in these two majors are accompanied by applied research leaning and opportunities to practice them out of class, they can augment students' research self-efficacy.



Talking about teacher self-efficacy, PekkanliEgel (2009) examined the effect of English EFL pre-service teachers' reflection on their teaching efficacy. To do so, they assessed 67 undergraduates' self-efficacy beliefs at one of the Turkish faculties of education. He found that feedback plays a pivotal role in teachers' reflection which, in turn, improves their self-efficacy. Thus, providing more feedback for themselves, EFL teachers can improve their mastery experience, leading to higher levels of self-efficacy.

Saka and Surmeli (2010) explored the relationship between pre-service teachers and their communication skills. They found a positive and high correlation between the two variables. In other words, the more self-efficacious the teachers were, the more skillful they were in their communication.

Wong (2005) explored the relationship between graduate ESL students' self-efficacy and their language learning strategies. The participants were also pre-service language teachers from a teachers' college in Malaysia. He discovered six categories of language learning strategies from the participants' responses. His findings demonstrated that there was a positive and high significant relationship between the two variables. In line with the above findings, the findings of the interviews showed that high self-efficacy pre-service ESL teachers expressed more frequent use of language learning strategies than those with lower levels of self-efficacy.

More recently, Graham (2011) analyzed the effect of listening strategies on EFL learners' self-efficacy and sense of control in listening comprehension. His findings showed that listening strategies can positively influence EFL learners' self-efficacy. In turn, this boosted self-efficacy can contribute to higher level of achievement.

### ***Anxiety***

Many researchers have tried to identify the construct of anxiety, a significant individual difference in language learning, for many years. Within different fields of study such as psychology, anthropology, and education new insights and perspectives on the concept of anxiety have been explored. Most of the findings in the nineteenth century relate anxiety to a sense of threat and fear to individuals' psychological state while interacting with the environment (Freud, 1920).

In later decades, anxiety was considered a state of apprehension or an ambiguous sense of fear which is indirectly associated with an object (Scovel, 1978). Later, Rholes, Riskind, and Neville (1985) asserted that anxiety might have rooted in an expected physical peril which is accompanied by depression. In other words, anxiety occurs when a loss is anticipated. However, Spielberg (1976) had made a distinction between fear and anxiety. Fear appears due to a "real objective danger in the environment" (p. 6).

Two major classifications of anxiety have been discussed in the literature; the first one is a dichotomous distinction between 'debilitative' and 'facilitative' anxiety and the second one a trichotomy of anxiety into 'trait', 'state', and 'situation specific'. Facilitative anxiety is a encouraging and positive derive that can best be defined as enthusiasm before a challenging task. On the other hand, debilitative anxiety involves feeling of fear that hinders the process of learning (Matsuda & Gobel, 2003). The earlier research studies conducted on anxiety indicated that different levels of both facilitative and debilitative anxiety might be present in the same individuals at the same time. For example, Albert and Haber (1960) pointed out that "an individual might possess a large amount of both a anxieties, or of one but not the other, or of none of either" (p. 213). Scovel (1978) also asserted that the two kinds of anxiety may function

together because both “work in tandem, serving simultaneously to motivate and to warn, as the individual gropes to learn an ever changing sequence of new facts in the environment” (p. 139).

Moreover, some researchers such as Kuhl and Bechmann (1985) have distinguished between static and dynamic anxiety. Static anxiety refers to 'ruminating about the causes and feelings' (Ford, 1992, 113) and the dynamic one refers to taking real action in order to tackle a problem or lessen feelings of apprehension.

Trait anxiety has been described as the probability of individuals becoming anxious in any situation (Spielberger, 1983) or “a constant condition without a time limitation” (Levitt, 1980, p.11). In other words, this tendency to become anxious is a permanent personality trait. On the other hand, state anxiety is a transitory emotional condition, which is activated by the nervous system, such as the stress felt before taking a test (Kim, 2001). Moreover, Spielberg (1966, p. 12) had defined state anxiety as a “transitory state or condition of the organism that varies in intensity and fluctuates over time”.

Situation specific anxiety refers to the anxiety consistently felt in a specific situation. In other words, as McIntyre and Gardner (1991) maintained, it can be regarded as the trait anxiety limited to a specific situation. They also maintained that the situation specific attitude towards anxiety “offers more to the understanding of anxiety because the respondents are queried about various aspects of the situation” (p. 91). Oh (1990) presumed that foreign language anxiety is a “situation specific anxiety that students experience in the classroom which is characterized by self-centered thoughts, feelings of inadequacy, fear of failure, and emotional reactions in the language classroom” (p.56).

Also, Von Worde (2003) described some examples of internal, physical, and functional manifestations of anxiety in foreign language students. He illustrated the internal and functional reactions to language anxiety in the statement of one the participant of his study: “I just completely blank out and everything is like a jumble in my head” (p. 5). Some other students “reacted by losing patience or becoming angry” and some also they had to “look ahead in the book” (p.5). The physical responses were reported to be headaches, shaking, food tapping, clammy hands, and pounding heart.

### ***Research on language learning anxiety***

The role of anxiety in language learning was not put much emphasis because previous studies usually generated contradictory results and were hard to interpret (Chastain, 1975; Scovel, 1978). Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) believe that using general measures of anxiety is the reason to generate contradictory results. Based on the situation-specific perspective, recent studies have focused on anxiety which is specific to language situations. After examining the concept of language anxiety empirically, researchers find language anxiety is distinct from any other type of anxiety and is not merely a composite of other anxieties (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991).

In order to identify and measure foreign language anxiety, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), in which 33 question items

ask respondents to respond to situations specific to foreign language learning anxiety and reflect the three components of foreign language anxiety: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (Ganschow & Sparks, 1996). For example, they ask questions about students' anxiety in situations like speaking in front of the language class, taking exams in language course, and perceiving other students' evaluation of them. Due to the scale's success on construct validation and reliability, FLCAS has been widely adopted by many researchers to explore learners' foreign language anxiety (Aida, 1994; Chang, 1999; Ganschow et al., 1994; Ganschow & Sparks, 1996; Liao, 1999).

According to Horwitz (2001), when researchers interested in the field of anxiety tried to use FLCAS findings with regard to anxiety and language achievement turned to be uniform. Thus, anxiety was regarded to have a pivotal role on EFL learners' success. Using FLCAS researchers have found a consistent negative correlation between the two variables.

Recent studies into the nature of the relationship between anxiety and reading performance show that higher levels of anxiety influence the reading process in several ways (Sellers, 2000). First, high levels of anxiety may direct 'attentional capacity' away from the reading process. Second, anxiety can slow down the application of such reading processes as letter and word recognition. Third, anxiety can influence the learner's decision-making process, for example, deciding on meaning or on what strategy to use. Reading anxiety has also been studied.

By using the Language Reading Anxiety Scale: a five-point, 20-item Likert scale questionnaire specifically developed to measure reading anxiety), Saito et al., (1999) explored links between general FL anxiety and FL reading anxiety among learners of French, Japanese, and Russian. They found that FL reading anxiety is related but distinguishable from general FL anxiety.

Similarly, Matsuda and Gobel (2001) conducted a study concerning English majors in a Japanese university and found no statistically significant relationship between the foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCAS) and the foreign language reading anxiety (FLRAS) as a whole. However, by conducting factor analyses they found that some subcomponents of the two scales were closely related.

MacIntyre et al. (1998) cite several studies (Cle'ment et al. 1977; 1980; 1994; MacIntyre et al. 1997) that mark close relationship between foreign language anxiety and self-evaluation, and they consider the plausibility of considering the two variables as a single construct: self-confidence. Furthermore, factor analyses in Cheng et al. (1999) and Matsuda and Gobel (2001) highlight the important role of "self-confidence" in identifying components of foreign language anxiety.

Also, Cheng et al. (1999) found a significant relationship between "Low Self-confidence in Speaking English" and "Low Self-confidence in Writing English." Likewise, Matsuda and Gobel (2001) observed a strong link between "Low Self-confidence in Speaking English" and "Reading Confidence/Enjoyment." Supporting these findings, Gardner et al. (1997) report high correlations and consistency for the measures of Language Anxiety, Self-confidence, and Can Do ratings of proficiency.

In other words, confident learners claim low anxiety and feel that they have the ability to perform well, while less confident learners suffer from higher anxiety and feel that they lack the ability to do well. The Can Do ratings mentioned above are learners' perceptions of their own abilities, and

it has been observed that learners often overestimate or underestimate their proficiency (Gardner et al. 1977; MacIntyre et al. 1997; Spezzini & Oxford, 1998). Research also points to the relationship between foreign language anxiety and learners' actual proficiency and performance, although findings to date have yielded somewhat inconsistent results.

As a great deal of research indicates a negative relationship between anxiety and proficiency (e.g., Aida, 1994; Bailey, 1983; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Phillips, 1992), the effects of facilitative anxiety have also been reported (e.g., Bailey, 1983; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Tobias, 1986; Brown, et al., 2001). In turn, the causal issue remains controversial. While Cle'ment (1980) reports that self-confidence leads to achievement, Gardner et al. (1997) based on their causal modeling that yielded a statistically significant path from achievement to self-confidence—suggest that proficiency leads to self-confidence. Yashima (2002), however, tested the Gardner theory in a Japanese EFL setting and reported that the path from L2 proficiency to self-confidence was not significant.

In a closely related investigation, Ghonsooly (2003) examined reading anxiety produced as a result of practice TOEFL and IELTS tests and found that testees had greater anxiety with the reading section of IELTS than the one in the TOEFL. For these testees, vocabulary was the most anxiety provoking element compared to the length and structural complexity.

Saito *et al.* (1999, p. 203) examined reading anxiety and found that it is influenced by two factors: a) unfamiliar scripts, b) unfamiliar cultural material. The first factor deals with sound-symbol correspondence; thus, the weaker such a correspondence is, the more anxiety the reader experiences. L2 Readers experience this kind of anxiety when they try to decode the text but fail to make it comprehensible. To date, most of the studies done clearly reflect the debilitating aspect of anxiety in L2 reading research leaving us stranded with the critical question of how to reduce the negative effects of high anxiety.

With regard to the factors moderating the effect of anxiety on language achievement such as age and gender several research has been conducted. Some researchers considered age an important moderating factor within the relationship between anxiety and language learning achievement. Onwuegbuzie (1999) found a positive and significant correlation between anxiety and age. He used multiple regression analysis to analyze the collected data. To put it another way, older language learners experience higher levels of anxiety than the younger ones.

Talking about the moderating effect of gender, many researchers have reached consistent results about such effect within the interrelationship of anxiety and language learning achievement (Chang, 1997; Daly, Kreiser, & Rogharr, 1994; Felson & Trudeau, 1991). Most of them assert that female language learners experience higher levels of anxiety than the male ones. Padila, Cervantes, Maldonado, and Garcia (1988) reported that female language learners were more likely to be under the influence of language anxiety than the male ones.

Elkhafaifi (2005) discovered that male and female language learners' level of anxiety depends on the type of anxiety they experience. For example, female Arabic language learners showed

significant higher levels of general language anxiety than the male ones. However, no statistically significant difference was observed with regard to gender in Arabic listening anxiety.

To the best of the researchers' knowledge, there has been no research on university students' self-efficacy and anxiety in the domain of GE studies. Only few studies have been conducted in the field of general education; however, they are only available through paid membership. Unfortunately, due to the restriction in the country the researchers could not access these articles. The dearth of research on GE university students' achievement with regard to their self-efficacy and anxiety is a good justification for the present effort which is trying to investigate such constructs.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study seeks answers to these questions:

1. Is there any significant relationship between GE university students' Self-efficacy and their GE achievement?
2. Is there any significant relationship between GE university students' Self-efficacy and their anxiety?
3. Are there any significant differences in GE achievement of GE university students of Humanities, Sciences, and Engineering?
4. Are there any significant differences in self-efficacy of GE university students of Humanities, Sciences, and Engineering?
5. Are there any significant differences in anxiety of GE university students of Humanities, Sciences, and Engineering?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

270 university students at the faculties of Engineering, Sciences, and Humanities at Shahid Beheshti University and Tehran University participated in this study. 90 students who were attending their General English Course at each of these three faculties were selected through stratified random sampling. It should also be noted that their participation was quite voluntary. The participants ranged between 19 and 24. They were both male and female.

### *Instruments*

#### *EFL learners' self-efficacy Instrument*

For the purposes of this study, the Persian version of Self-efficacy scale developed by Ghonsooly and Elahi (2010) was used to measure the participants' self-efficacy. This scale contains 11 five-point Likert-type items which produce a possible range of scores from 11 to 55 with higher scores reflecting higher levels of self-efficacy and lower scores reflecting lower levels of self-efficacy. Cronbach's alpha of the questionnaire is 0.82 which indicates a high reliability. The participants' Grade Point Averages (GPA) of their General English Course exams also served as the instrument to measure their General English achievement.



*Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale*

The other instrument used in this study was the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) which was developed by Saito et al. (1999). It consists of 20 five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. Students' self-reports of anxiety is elicited by this scale over various dimensions of reading, their target language reading perceptions, and their perceptions of the difficulty level of reading in their own language compared with the target language (Saito et al. 1999, p. 204)

*Interview*

An *unstructured* interview with 10 students of each group was conducted about the amount of time and effort they spent on GE homework and tasks. Their attitudes towards GE course, their attempts and efforts to gain higher scores in this course were also examined. Each interview took about half an hour. Unstructured format was used in this study because as Dörnyei (2007) words:

It allows maximum flexibility to follow the interview in unpredictable directions, with minimal only interference from the research agenda. The intention is to create a relaxed atmosphere in which the respondent may reveal more than he/she would in informal contexts, with the interviewer assuming a listening role.....This kind of interview is most appropriate when a study focuses on the deep meaning of particular phenomena (p. 136).

***Data collection***

Before distributing the questionnaires, the participants were informed briefly about the purposes of the study and the possible implications their results may have for GE teachers and university students. They were told that all the collected information would be kept confidential. They answered the two questionnaires in about 30 minutes. Ten days after the final exam of GE courses, the participants' GPA of all their GE exams during the semester was provided by their teachers.

***Data analysis***

The collected data were put into SPSS software to be analyzed. The Pearson product moment formula was used to answer the first and the second questions. One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to answer the third, fourth, and fifth questions of the study.

**RESULTS**

The first research question deals with the possibility of any significant relationship between GE university students' self-efficacy and their GE achievement. The statistical technique of Pearson-product moment Correlation was used to investigate this research question. Table 1 summarizes the correlation coefficient between the two variables.



Table 1: The Relationship between GE university students' self-efficacy and their GE achievement

		SE	GEA
SE	Pearson Correlation	1	.751*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N		136
GEA	Pearson Correlation	.751*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	90	

Note: *SE*= Self-efficacy, *GEA*= General English Achievement

As seen, the correlation coefficient for the two variables in question turned out to be 0.75 which is significant at  $P < 0.05$ . This correlation is moderately high and positive. Therefore, it can be concluded that the higher GE university students' self-efficacy is, the better achievers they are. Thus, the first null hypothesis was rejected at 0.05 level of significance ( $r = 0.75$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

The second research question seeks to establish whether there is any relationship between GE university students' self-efficacy and their anxiety. Pearson-product moment Correlation was used in order to investigate this relationship. Table 2 summarizes the correlation coefficient between the two variables.

Table 2: The relationship between GE university students' self-efficacy and their anxiety

		SE	Anxiety
SE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.729*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N		136
Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	-.729*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	90	

As shown in the table above, the correlation coefficient was calculated to be -0.72, which is significant at  $P < 0.05$ . This correlation is moderately high and negative. Therefore, it can be concluded that the higher GE university students' self-efficacy is, the less their anxiety is. Thus, the second null hypothesis was rejected at 0.05 level of significance ( $r = 0.729$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

The third question regards the significance of the possible differences between the achievement of university students of Humanities, Sciences, and Engineering in GE. The following table shows the mean scores of the two groups.

Table 3: Mean Achievement Scores of the three groups of university students

Students	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Humanities	90	12.75	2.49	.29
Sciences	90	14.63	1.56	.28
Engineering	90	16.27	1.48	.25

As seen in table 3 the achievement mean scores of the three groups of students are different. University students of engineering have the highest mean score, 16, and 27. The university students of Humanities have the lowest mean scores, 12, 75. Finally, university students of sciences have the middle mean score of achievement among the three groups, 14, 63. Table 4 demonstrates whether such differences in mean scores are significant or not.

Table 4: Determining the Significance of the Differences in Achievement Scores

GE	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	216.50	2	108.25	68.93	.000
Within Groups	370.63	267	1.57		
Total	587.14	269			

The above table demonstrates that the differences among the three mean scores is significant. However, the analysis of variance indicates just the difference among the three groups, but in order to find out which pairs were significantly different, the Scheffe test was run.

Table 5: A comparison of GE mean scores of the three groups of university students

Scheffe

Fields	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
Humanities	90	12.75		
Science	90		14.64	
Engineering	90			16.27
Sig.		1.000	1.000	1.000

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

Table 5 demonstrates that the difference in mean scores among the three groups is significant at  $p < 0.05$  and students of Engineering have obtained higher scores in self-efficacy than students of Sciences and Humanities.

The fourth research question deals with the possible significance of differences among the three university groups' self-efficacy. Table 6 shows the self-efficacy mean scores of the three groups.

Table 6: Mean SE Scores of the three groups of university students

Students	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Humanities	90	18.61	2.49	.29
Sciences	90	29.96	1.56	.28
Engineering	90	39.61	1.48	.25

As shown, the mean score of Engineering students is 39.61, that of Sciences students is 29.96, and that of Humanities students is 18.61. Table 7 demonstrates that the difference in mean scores among the three groups is significant at  $p < 0.05$  and students of Engineering have obtained higher scores in self-efficacy than students of Sciences and Humanities.

Table 7: Determining the Significance of the Differences in Self-efficacy Scores

SE	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	71429.884	2	35714.942	21.895	.000
Within Groups	384956.86	267	1631.173		
Total	456386.74	269			

As indicated, the differences among the three mean scores of self-efficacy in the three groups are significantly different. The next table, Scheffe test, demonstrates which pairs of groups are significantly different in self-efficacy.

Table 8: A comparison of the self-efficacy mean score of the three groups of university students.

Fields	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
Humanities	90	18.61		
Sciences	90		29.96	
Engineering	90			39.61
Sig.		1.000	1.000	1.000

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

Table 9 indicates that the difference in self-efficacy mean scores among the three groups is significant among all the pairs. In other words, university students of engineering are significantly more self-efficacious than the other university students and university students of humanities are the least self-efficacious students.

Table 9: Multiple Comparisons of the three pairs

(I) Fields	(J) Fields	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Science	Humanities	5.350*	6.406	.706	-10.43	21.13
	Engineering	-33.650*	6.406	.000	-49.43	-17.87
Humanities	Science	-5.350*	6.406	.706	-21.13	10.43
	Engineering	-39.000*	6.386	.000	-54.73	-23.27
Engineering	Science	33.650*	6.406	.000	17.87	49.43
	Humanities	39.000*	6.386	.000	23.27	54.73

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The fifth research question deals with the possible significance of difference among the three university groups' level of anxiety in GE course. Table 9 shows the anxiety mean scores of the three groups.

Table 10: Mean anxiety mean scores of the three groups of university students

Students	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Humanities	90	72.25	1.22	.32
Sciences	90	59.14	1.17	.29
Engineering	90	44.81	1.61	.38

As shown, the mean score of Engineering students is 44.81, that of Sciences students is 59.14, and that of Humanities students is 72.25. Table 11 demonstrates that the difference in mean scores among the three groups is significant at  $p < 0.05$  and students of Engineering have obtained lower scores in anxiety than students of Sciences and Humanities.

Table 11: Determining the Significance of the Differences in Anxiety Scores

Anxiety	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	61241.724	2	35714.942	21.895	.000
Within Groups	26516.389	267	1631.173		
Total	374172.581	269			

As indicated, the differences among the three mean scores of anxiety in the three groups are significantly different. The next table, Scheffe test, demonstrates which pairs of groups are significantly different in self-efficacy.

Table 12: A comparison the anxiety mean score of the three groups of university students.

Fields	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
Humanities	90	72.25		
Sciences	90		59.14	
Engineering	90			44.81
Sig.		1.000	1.000	1.000

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

Table 13 indicates that the difference in anxiety mean scores among the three groups is significant among all the pairs. In other words, university students of engineering are significantly less anxious than the other university students and university students of humanities are the most anxious students.

Table 13: Multiple Comparisons of the three pairs

(I) Fields	(J) Fields	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Science	Humanities	4.740*	5.102	.407	-8.83	18.75
	Engineering	-22.320*	5.221	.000	-45.55	-17.87
Humanities	Science	-4.740*	5.102	.407	-18.75	8.83
	Engineering	-28.000*	5.221	.000	-48.28	-19.66
Engineering	Science	22.320*	5.102	.000	17.87	45.55
	Humanities	28.000*	5.221	.000	19.66	48.28

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

### Interview Results

The results of the interviews corroborated those of the questionnaires. Most Engineering students believed that they were capable of good communication and reading ability in English. They maintained that through regular exercise they have reached a better level of English. 8 out of 10 believed that besides being advantageous for their future career, learning English gives them a sense of pleasure and prestige, so they felt they should make all their efforts to accomplish in GE course. For example, an engineering student said "I have high motivation to learn English. I try very hard to have good grades and gain a sufficient level of competence in English." In general, more than seven of Engineering students asserted that their previous experiences, especially at

the institutes, were beneficial to their success in GE course. In addition, they mentioned that their teachers have played a pivotal role in their positive attitude towards GE course. Eight of them pointed out that they want to have higher speaking and reading abilities like their teachers. Some of their teachers were good models for them. Talking about anxiety, more than eight interviewed engineering students did not have any major problems in handling their stress in GE course. One said "When you have good attitude towards English, you try very hard to tackle possible problems". More than six emphasized that their high motivation can contribute to coping with the anxiety in GE course.

Also, interviews with students of Sciences indicated that more than half of them were keen on learning English. For instance, one of them said "My teachers' encouragements have provided me positive attitudes towards English." Another one said "Spending more time with my classmates while doing English helped me to succeed in GE course." Furthermore, more than six of them took advantage of their teachers' advice to deal with the sources of anxiety in GE course. One said "Unfamiliar words, difficult pronunciation, and finding the main ideas of the passage paragraphs are among the anxiety makers; however, by following my teacher's tips I can tackle them."

In spite of the fact that both GE students of Engineering and Sciences revealed high levels of self-efficacy in GE, university students of Humanities showed the opposite. Seven out of ten were not highly motivated to learn English. They believe that their negative attitude towards English roots in their previous bitter experiences especially at high school. Three of them explained that even teachers treat them differently from other university students. One said "our teacher frequently compared our performance in GE with the other university students, especially engineering students." On the side of anxiety, almost all of the interviewed students expressed their high levels of anxiety with GE. One said "What I suffer most in GE course is my high level of anxiety; I think my low abilities in this course are really embarrassing, especially when I do not understand the unfamiliar words and phrases.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study are in agreement with those previously mentioned in the review of literature. For example, MackIntyre and Gardenr (1955), and Trylong (1987) found a negative relationship between students' anxiety and their self-ratings of language proficiency. Moreover, Kitano (2001) indicated that there is a negative relationship between Japanese university students' language anxiety and their self-perception. As to second research questions involving the relationship between self-efficacy and foreign language reading anxiety, a significant negative relationship was observed between the two variables. High self-efficacious participants experienced lower anxiety than low self-efficacious participants. As Bernhardt (1997) maintains the result may be interpreted by the fact that high self-efficacious participants feel really confident because of the experiences they have gained in solving problems and the approaches they have developed based on those problem solving experiences. This corroborated what was observed in the interviews. For instance, having good attitude towards English, university students of engineering and sciences expressed lower anxiety compared with the other university



students. They benefited from their teachers' advice to manipulate their anxiety arising from not knowing unfamiliar words or phrases. This indicates that they have taken advantage of useful vicarious experiences in their GE course which in turn has led to lower levels of anxiety. On the other hand, university students of humanities suffered from higher levels of anxiety compared to other university students. Their mastery experiences were full of anxiety. Teachers somehow labeled them as "those with low ability".

However, it is interesting that Cubukcu (2008) found no significant relationship between language anxiety and self-efficacy, contrary to the findings of the present study. Furthermore, he reported no difference between high self-efficacious learners and low self-efficacious in language anxiety. Nevertheless, he pointed out that this contrast might occur due to the Turkish educational setting, the learners' lack of ability, or their sense of embarrassment to express their opinions directly in public. In addition, the response to the first research question in this study showed a positive relationship between GE university students' self-efficacy and their achievement in this course. High self-efficacious learners also performed better than low self-efficacious learners in GE achievement. Such findings are in agreement with those of Wigfield (1994, cited in Pintrich and Schunk, 1996) and Chen (2007, cited in Rahimi & Abedini, 2009)). Wigfield considered self-efficacy a good predictor of school students' achievement. Besides, Chen (2007) found a significant relationship between EFL learners' listening achievement and their self-efficacy. Chen's (2007) findings and those of the current study both indicate that EFL learners' self-efficacy is a significant factor in the achievement of higher scores in English language skills such as listening or reading comprehension. Furthermore, these findings can be interpreted in the light of the possible link between self-efficacy and use of language learning strategies; that is, high self-efficacious learners might use more suitable language learning strategies than those with lower levels of self-efficacy. Such postulate can be supported by the research conducted by Siew and Wing (2005), and also Magogwe and Oliver (2007). They all emphasized the relationship between EFL learners' self-efficacy and use of language learning strategies.

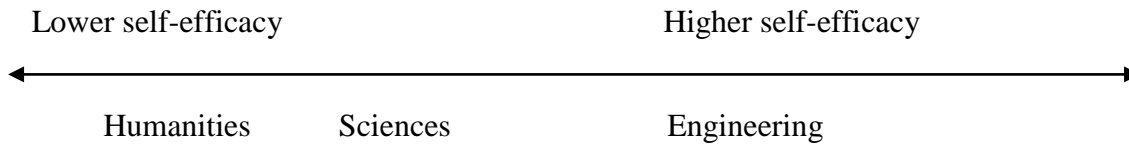
## CONCLUSION

Self-efficacy in GE refers to individuals' perceptions of their abilities of success in this course, mainly reading comprehension activities. Individuals with high levels of self-efficacy perceive themselves of carrying out GE course activities. However, those with lower levels of self-efficacy consider themselves incapable of standing chances of success in GE. The researcher tried to see if this factor has a bearing on GE university students' anxiety and achievement.

As another part of the study, the significance of any difference between the self-efficacy of university students of engineering, sciences, and humanities, was also investigated. The results showed a significant difference in GE achievement between the three groups of students. Students of engineering turned out to be better language achievers, excelling students of sciences and humanities.

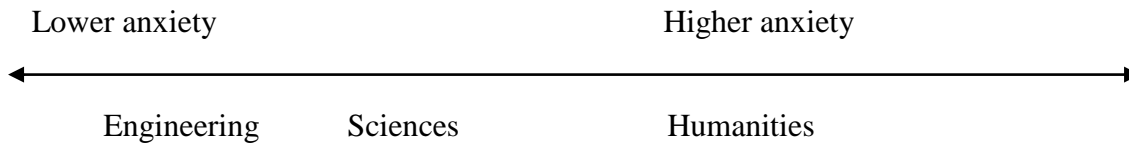
This study also explored the significance of any possible relationship between GE course and anxiety. Such correlation appeared to be highly negative,  $-.72$ . Following statistical analysis demonstrated that the difference among the three pairs of university students was significant, with the student of humanities suffering from the highest level of anxiety compared with the other pairs.

Figure 1



Common statistical procedures such as one-way analysis of variance indicated that the difference in anxiety mean scores among these groups was significant.

Figure 2



Every useful study opens new directions for further study. University GE self-efficacy and anxiety are both important subjects that require more in-depth studies. Research in these areas can be continued in the following directions:

1. Replicating this study with a larger number of participants could yield more credible results.
2. Investigating the relationship between self-efficacy in GE course and learner related factors such as motivation can be useful.
3. Investigating the relationship between teacher's LOC and teacher burnout can be a very useful area of research.
4. Also, investigating the relationship between teacher's reflection and teacher burnout can yield interesting results.
5. Replicating this study within a qualitative framework can provide more insights into the variables of this research.
6. Finally, giving this study a gender perspective can be worthwhile.

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## Appendix A

### FLRAS Questionnaire (English)

*Directions: Statements 1 through 20 refer to how you feel about reading English. For each statement, please indicate whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4), disagree, or (5) strongly disagree by marking the appropriate choice. Please give your first reaction to each statement and mark an answer for every statement.*

NOTE: SA=strongly agree, A=agree, N=neither agree or disagree, D=disagree, SD=strongly disagree

1. I get upset when I am not sure whether I understand what I am reading in English.  
SA      A      N      D      SD
2. When reading English. I often understand the words but still cannot quite understand what the author is saying.  
SA      A      N      D      SD
3. When I am reading English. I get so confused I cannot remember what I am reading.  
SA      A      N      D      SD
4. I feel intimidated whenever I see a whole page of English in front of me.  
SA      A      N      D      SD\
5. I am nervous when I am reading a passage in English when I am not familiar with the topic.  
SA      A      N      D      SD
6. I get upset whenever I encounter unknown grammar when reading English.  
SA      A      N      D      SD
7. It bothers me to encounter words I cannot pronounce while reading English.  
SA      A      N      D      SD
8. I usually end up translating word by word when I am reading English.  
SA      A      N      D      SD
9. By the time you get past the funny letters and symbols in English, It's hard to remember what you're reading about.  
SA      A      N      D      SD
10. I am worried about all the new symbols you have to learn in order to read English.  
SA      A      N      D      SD
11. I enjoy reading English.  
SA      A      N      D      SD
12. I feel confident when I am reading in English.  
SA      A      N      D      SD
13. Once you get used to it, reading English is not so difficult.  
SA      A      N      D      SD
14. The hardest part of learning English is learning to read  
SA      A      N      D      SD
15. I would be happy just to learn to speak English rather than having to learn to read as well.  
SA      A      N      D      SD
16. I don't mind to reading to myself, but I feel very uncomfortable when I have to read English aloud.  
SA      A      N      D      SD
17. I am satisfied with the level of reading ability in English that I have achieved so far.



- SA      A      N      D      SD
17. English culture and ideas seem very foreign to me.
- SA      A      N      D      SD
18. You have to know so much about English history and culture in order to read English.
- SA      A      N      D      SD
19. I find it hard to comprehend an English text which contains unfamiliar cultural material.
- SA      A      N      D      SD
20. I find it hard to comprehend an English text which contains unfamiliar cultural material.
- SA      A      N      D      SD

### Appendix B

EFL learners' self-efficacy scale in Reading Comprehension (English)

Name:      Age:      Gender:      Semester:

- 1) I have the ability to focus all my concentration on the content of the text I am reading.
- SA      A      N      D      SD
- 2) I believe that my reading comprehension proficiency improves every day.
- SA      A      N      D      SD
- 3) I am capable of improving my reading comprehension skill.
- SA      A      N      D      SD
- 4) Reading L2 texts is stressful.
- SA      A      N      D      SD
- 5) My reading comprehension teacher believes that I am proficient.
- SA      A      N      D      SD
- 6) I enjoy practicing reading L2 texts with a proficient friend.
- SA      A      N      D      SD
- 7) I believe that by more practice of reading L2 texts, I can improve the course grades.
- SA      A      N      D      SD
- 8) In my reading class, I am always volunteer to answer the questions the teacher asks.
- SA      A      N      D      SD
- 9) I am among the best students in my reading class.
- SA      A      N      D      SD
- 10) Although my world knowledge is good, I have problems in reading comprehension.
- SA      A      N      D      SD
- 11) I don't mind getting high scores in my reading course.
- SA      A      N      D      SD

## THE INFLUENCE OF EFL STUDENTS' SELF-ESTEEM ON THEIR SPEAKING SKILLS

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims at investigating the relationship between the EFL intermediate students self – esteem and their speaking skills. Accordingly, two groups of university students were selected as the low and high self – esteem participants. This was done by their responses given to a questionnaire developed by Lui et al. (2005) to measure self – esteem. After selecting the participants, the researcher utilized a standard oral proficiency test based on the scales provided by Farhadi et al. (1995), measuring five sub skills of vocabulary, structure, pronunciation, fluency and comprehensibility to evaluate the speaking ability of the participants at the end of the study. By analyzing the data were gathered from the participants. That is to say the high self-esteem students were found to be more inclined to involve themselves in the conversations and other spoken activities on the classroom including the oral production of stories in English. It was found that there is a statistically significant correlation between the students self – esteem and their verbal performance.

**KEY WORDS:** self – esteem, speaking ability

## INTRODUCTION

The affective domain is difficult to describe scientifically. A large number of variables are implied in considering the emotional side of human behavior in the second language learning process. Based on Brown (2007, p. 153), affect refers to emotion or feeling. The affective domain is the emotional side of human behavior, and it may be juxtaposed to the cognitive side. Brown further claims that the development of affective states or feelings involves a variety of personality factors, feelings both about ourselves and about others with whom we come in contact. Understanding how students feel, respond, believe and value is an exceedingly important aspect of a theory of second language acquisition.

Self- Esteem, as one important factor of human affective domain, has been found to play an extremely important role in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). In this line, Brown (2007, p. 154) proposes that no successful cognitive or affective activity can be carried out without some degree of self – esteem, self – confidence and self – efficacy – belief in your own capabilities to successfully perform that activity. Many definitions have been given for self-esteem. But the following is the most well accepted definition given by Coppersmith (1967, pp. 4-5):

By self – esteem, we refer to the evaluation which individuals make and customarily maintain with regard to themselves; it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which individuals believe themselves to be capable, significant, successful and worthy. In short self – esteem is a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in attitudes that individuals hold toward themselves. It is a subjective experience which the individual conveys to others by verbal reports and other overt expressive behavior.

As it is indicated in the literature, different terms such as ‘Self-concept’, ‘Self-esteem’ and ‘self-confidence’ are often used interchangeably and inconsistently because they may refer to different ideas about how people think about themselves (Stern, 1995).

Some researchers view self-concept and self-efficacy as the same construct. But others view them as two different constructs (Bong & Clark, 1999; Choi, 2005). Huitt (2004) distinguished the two terms ‘self-concept’ and ‘self-esteem’ by stating that ‘self-concept’ is the cognitive aspect of self, but ‘self-esteem’ is the affective aspect of self, which refers to one’s feelings of self-worth. Self-confidence is not always what we think it is.

Some experts (e.g. Miyagawa, 2010) distinguish between self-confidence on one side and self-esteem on the other. Self-confidence is about what we can do by virtue of our efforts or what we are good and bad at. Self-confidence grows along with the quality of the effort. Self-esteem is more fundamental and is about the feeling of being worth something just because we are who we are, and not because we have done something.

Nativists believe that any normal child can learn a first language because of the availability of what Chomsky (1959) refers to as the Universal Grammar (UG). However, when it comes to learning of a foreign language, especially at the later stages, there are factors which can either inhibit or enhance the process of learning. These factors can be cognitive, affective, biological and socio-cultural variables (Stern, 1983). Academic self-esteem positively affects school performance. Whatever the case, it is almost certain that there is a significant relationship between self-esteem and achievement in second language acquisition.

Throughout the history of language learning and teaching, many other studies have been conducted to see the effects of self-esteem on EFL/ESL students' performance, Adelaide Heyde (1979) studied the effects of the three levels of self-esteem, i.e., global situational and task self-esteem on the performance of an oral production task by American college students learning French as a foreign language. She came to the conclusion that all three levels of self-esteem correlate positively with performance on oral production measure, with the highest correlation occurring between task self-esteem and performance on oral production measures. Concerning the relationship between self-esteem and achievement in second language acquisition, the results of a study by Hayati and Ostadian (2008) revealed that students listening comprehension was significantly influenced by their self-esteem, supporting earlier studies in this area.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION**

The aim of this study was to answer the following question:

Is there a significant relationship between self-esteem and speaking skills of intermediate Iranian EFL students?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

The participants of this study were 38 undergraduate EFL students studying towards a B.A degree in teaching English as a foreign language at Azad University of Dezful, Iran. These participants were about to sit for the final exam of their required course of oral production of stories, which is normally offered in the third semester of their B.A program. There were 18 male and 30 female students selected from population of 129 students by the results obtained from their responses given to the self-esteem questioner developed by Lui et al. (2005) as a measure of self-esteem.

### ***Instruments***

First an Oral Proficiency Test (OPT) was administered to determine the proficiency level of the students. The OPT was administered by two university EFL professors to check for the homogeneity of the spoken proficiency level of the participants. This was done to insure that all the students participating in the research were at roughly the same level of spoken proficiency. A speaking scale developed by Farhadi, Jafarpour and Birjandi (1995) was used by the interviewers and the researcher, who was also the instructor teaching the course of oral production of short stories, to the participants at Dezful University. This scale was utilized by the interviewers and the researcher to measure the students' speaking ability in terms of the following components:

1. Accent
2. Structure
3. Vocabulary

4. Fluency
5. Comprehension

Scores were given on a 6 point scale ranging from the least appropriate (1) to the most (6). Comprehension as intended by Farhadi et al. was interpreted to mean the extent to which the subjects could comprehend what was said by the speaker. In order to measure the participants' self-esteem, the researcher provided a questionnaire taken from Marsh and Herbert (2007) containing 20 items.

### ***Procedure***

Right from the beginning of the course, the self-esteem questionnaire was distributed among a group of 129 students to select the required participants of the research. The participants were required to fill the questionnaires out. The questionnaires then were collected for the purpose of analysis. The aim of the researcher was to group the participants into two groups, including those who were found to be the students having a high degree of self-esteem and those who indicated a low degree of self-esteem. That is, the questionnaire was distributed among a population of 129 EFL students taking the same course (Oral Production of stories). From among these students, 18 were selected as the ones having the highest degree of self-esteem (HSe) and 20 others as the lowest self-esteem (LSe). This was done after ranging the students' responses to the items in the questionnaire. That is to say, the researcher ranged the students' scores obtained from the self-esteem questionnaire to determine the highest and the lowest students in terms of their level of self-esteem. Having been selected as the participants of the study, these students were interviewed at the end of the term by two interviewers who were both EFL university professors. As it was mentioned before, a speaking scale developed by Farhadi, Jafarpoor and Birjandi (1995) was used by both the interviewers and the instructors to make their judgment about the students' oral proficiency as reliable as possible. The scale used by the teacher and the researcher both as the raters of the students spoken performance made it essential to give careful attention to the following points suggested by Farhady et.al. (1995) in order to make the scoring as reliable as possible.

1. Each interview must be carefully structured.
2. The number of raters will not be less than 20 for each case.
3. The candidates should be put at ease in order to make the results both more valid and reliable.
4. Each interview will be recorded for scoring and future reference.
5. Scoring will be discrete rather than holistic.

In order to determine if there was a significant relationship between the students obtained scores on the final exam in the form of the structured interviews and the subjects' self-esteem determined by the self – esteem questionnaire, the researcher calculated the correlation coefficient of the scores obtained on the speaking test and the scores resulted from the self – esteem questionnaire.

## **RESULTS**

In order to see if there is a significant relationship between the performance of the students on the OPT and their academic self – esteem, the researcher run a t - test won the results obtained by the high self – esteem students on the OPT and that of the low self – esteem subjects on the same test. The following table provides the results obtained from the t – test.

Tables one and two: one sample t – test results on the OPT

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
OPTLSeA=Oral Proficiency Test Low Self -esteem A	20	7.5000	3.59092	.80296
OPTLSeB=Oral Proficiency Test High Self -esteem B	20	15.9000	2.22190	.49683

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
OPTLSeA=Oral Proficiency Test Low Self -esteem A	9.340	19	.000	7.50000	5.8194	9.1806
OPTLSeB=Oral Proficiency Test High Self -esteem B	32.003	19	.000	15.90000	14.8601	16.9399

Based on the results given in table one, the mean and the standard deviation of the scores obtained from the Oral Proficiency Test (OPT) given to the low self- esteem students were 7.50 and 3.59. The mean and the standard deviation for the high self – esteem group on the same test (OPT) were 15.90 and 2.22 respectively. At the 95% confidence interval of difference one can conclude that as P is less than 5% ( $P < 5$ )  $p=0$ , the difference between the means obtained from the t – test is statically different. That is to say, the means of the OPT given to the low and high self – esteem students were 7.50 and 15.90 respectively. There is a difference value of 8.40 of the mean of the two groups on the same test. Based on the data provided in tables one and two, it can be concluded that it is highly likely that the students’ self – esteem influences their oral performance in the form of spoken English.

To see if there is a significant correlation between the participants’ self – esteem and their oral production in their English classes Pearson correlation statistics was also run on the results obtained from their responses to the items in the questionnaire distributed among them and their scores obtained from the OPT. Based on the results represented in the following tables , one can come to the conclusion that there is a high correlation between the participants self – esteem and their performance on the OPT. Put it another way, the correlation is significant at the %5 level. One can compare the results given in the following two tables to come to the same conclusion provided above.



*Tables three and four: Correlations between the students' self-esteem and their oral performance (speaking)***Correlations**

<b>Correlations</b>		LSeA=Low Self - esteem	OPTLSeA=Oral Proficiency Test Low Self -esteem A
LSeA=Low Self –esteem	Pearson Correlation	1	-.192
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.417
	N	20	20
OPTLSeA=Oral Proficiency Test Low Self -esteem A	Pearson Correlation	-.192	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.417	
	N	20	20

<b>Correlations</b>		HSeB=High Self -esteem	OPTLSeB=Oral Proficiency Test High Self -esteem B
HSeB=High Self - esteem	Pearson Correlation	1	-.497*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.026
	N	20	20
OPTLSeB=Oral Proficiency Test High Self -esteem B	Pearson Correlation	-.497*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.026	
	N	20	20

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

These findings are in part in line with the findings of Niki Maleki and Mohammadi (2009). They found that the more successful learners regarding the oral communication had higher self – esteem than less successful ones in performing oral communication tasks. To sum up concerning the main question raised in this study one can be safe to conclude that there is a significant relationship between self – esteem and spoken fluency and classroom oral participation.

**CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

This study aimed at investigating the relationship between self – esteem and oral (speaking) skill of the intermediate EFL students. For this purpose, two groups of intermediate EFL Persian students were selected as the participants of the study. There were twenty students in low self-esteem group and 18 in high self – esteem group.

Their level of self– esteem was determined based on their responses given to a self – esteem scale questionnaire developed by Liu et al. (2005). Based on the results obtained from the participants' responses to the self – esteem questionnaire and their performance on an standard oral proficiency test, it was concluded that there was a high correlation between the participants self – esteem and their oral performance. Based on the findings of this study and many other studies

conducted on this issue, foreign – language teachers should consider academic self – esteem as a powerful motivating force that can optimize language learning processes and more importantly consider enhancing student self –esteem as one of the primary goals of language education. However, the researchers do not claim the results obtained from this study are absolutely conclusive. Put it another way, as people come to learn a new language in a foreign context, not only their self-esteem may influence their performance in general and their spoken performance in particular but also many other factors including their motivation, attitudes towards the language they are going to learn, the context in which they are going to master the new language are extremely influential in this regard. So the story of second language acquisition is interestingly comparable to the story of the elephant which was supposed to be described by a group of people in a dark room. And they all came to different descriptions of the whole body because they just touched parts of the body. The same story still is the case for SLA.

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### *Appendix*

The self – esteem questionnaire used in the study

1. I can follow the lessons easily.
2. I day-dream a lot in class.
3. I am able to help my classmates in their schoolwork.
4. I often do my homework without thinking.
5. If I work hard, I think I can go to the Polytechnic or University.
6. I pay attention to the teachers during lessons.
7. Most of my classmates are smarter than I am.
8. I study hard for my tests.
9. My teachers feel that I am poor in my work.
10. I am usually interested in my schoolwork.
11. I often forget what I have learnt.
12. I am willing to do my best to pass all the subjects.
13. I get frightened when I am asked a question by the teachers.
14. I often fell like quitting school.
15. I am good in most of my school subjects.
16. I am always waiting for the lessons to end.
17. I always do poorly in tests.
18. I do not give up easily when I am faced with a difficult question in my schoolwork.
19. I am able to do better than my friends in most subjects.
20. I am not willing to put in more effort in my schoolwork.

## INVESTIGATING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION IN PAKISTAN

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### ABSTRACT

This study attempts at examining the factors that influence English Language Teachers' job satisfaction in Pakistan. The factors like job security, workplace flexibility and fairness, handsome salary and reward, job autonomy and conducive behavior of leadership increase the job satisfaction whereas the absence of job security, job autonomy, handsome salary and reward, workplace flexibility and fairness and conducive behavior of leadership brings dissatisfaction among the teachers. The study is quantitative in nature. 500 questionnaires were distributed to collect data from English language teachers irrespective of age, gender, experience, level and sector. On the basis of the findings, some recommendations regarding job satisfaction of English Language Teachers are given at the end of this study.

**KEYWORDS:** job security, workplace flexibility and fairness, handsome salary and reward, job autonomy and conducive behavior of leadership

## INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction is a factor that plays a significant role in improving English Language Teachers' performance. Locke, (1976) defines the job satisfaction as a positive and pleasing emotional state from the appraisal of one's job or experience. The very definition suggests that the employees' attitude towards their jobs is formed by their behaviors, beliefs and feelings. According to Galup, Klein and Jiang (2008), successful organizations ensure their employees' job satisfaction realizing the fact that poor job satisfaction can cripple an organization. Kalleberg (1977) suggests that job satisfaction includes two components. These are intrinsic (referring to the work itself) and extrinsic (representing the facets of the job external to the task itself) job satisfaction. Lashbrook (1997) is of the view that leadership style plays an important role in influencing the employees' job satisfaction.

Bogler (2001) demonstrates that the different leadership styles engender different working environments and directly influence employees' job satisfaction. Emery and Barker (2007) state that transformational leaders motivate and encourage their followers to take on more responsibility which increases employees' sense of accomplishment and job satisfaction. Castaneda and Nahavandi (1991) indicate that the employees are more satisfied with both relational and task-oriented behaviors exhibiting simultaneously by their heads. Spector (1997) refers to job satisfaction in terms of how people feel about their jobs and different aspects of their jobs. Ellickson and Logsdon (2002) support this view by defining job satisfaction as the extent to which employees like their work. Schermerhorn (1993) defines job satisfaction as an affective or emotional response towards various aspects of an employee's work. Reilly (1991) defines job satisfaction as the feeling that a worker has about his job or a general attitude towards work or a job and it is influenced by the perception of one's job.

Wanous and Lawler (1972) state that job satisfaction is the sum of job facet satisfaction across all facets of a job. Abraham Maslow (1954) suggested that human needs from a five-level hierarchy ranging from physiological needs, safety, belongingness and love, esteem to self-actualization. Based on Maslow's theory, job satisfaction has been approached by some researchers from the perspective of need fulfillment (Kuhlen, 1963; Worf, 1970; Conrad et al., 1985).

Herzberg's Two Factor Theory encompasses factors that cause satisfaction and dissatisfaction among employees. According to this theory, quality of work, pay, physical working conditions and job security are the factors associated with dissatisfaction of the employees. He uses the term 'motivators' for the factors like opportunities for promotion and personal growth, recognition, responsibility and achievement that increase the job satisfaction of the employees. (Greenberg & Baron, 2003: p. 153). There is another theory named Value Theory. This theory is about the job reward. According to this theory, the key to employees' job satisfaction is to minimize discrepancy between employees' desires and job rewards (Greenberg & Baron, 2003: p. 153-154). Better human resource management practices also play a vital role in enhancing the employees' job satisfaction (Bloom & Van Reenen, 2007; Petrescu & Simmons, 2008).

This study investigates the factors that influence English Language Teachers' job satisfaction in Pakistan and the specific objectives of the study are as under:

- To explore the reality of working conditions in educational organizations.

- To point out the workplace problems faced by English Language Teachers.
- To find out the factors that increase job satisfaction among English Language Teachers.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Leadership directly influences the performance of employees. If the leadership is conducive for employees, the employees' performance will be improved. Leadership is a way to influence the groups' behavior and direct them towards achieving the defined goals (Robbins, 2003, P314). There have been discussions about leadership and leaders since man started working in group. Leader can be defined as a person who has managerial authority and who can influence others. Leadership is simply what the leader does. Leaders should have the qualities like drive, desire to lead, honesty and integrity, self-confidence, intelligence, job-relevant knowledge and extraversion. Leaders influence the behavior, feelings and performance of their subordinates. Performance of subordinates is improved if they are positively influenced by their leaders. Researches have been made to explore the leadership styles to find the most effective one for both the quality and quantity of work. The autocratic style, the democratic style and laissez-faire style and their impact on employees' performance have been deeply researched. In autocratic leadership, work methods are dictated to the employees not involving them in decision making process.

In laissez-faire leadership, the leaders let the group make decisions and complete the work in whatever way it saw fit. In democratic leadership style, the employees are involved in decision making. It is concluded that democratic style is the most effective to make employees' performance better. Recently, the researches are being made to investigate the influences of transactional and transformational leadership on employees' performance. Burns (1978) opines that transactional and transformational leadership styles are more prominent among leadership styles. Transactional leaders give rewards and punishments to encourage performance, making the leader/ worker relationship essentially an economic transaction. (Bass, 1985). Transactional Leaders work with their team members exchanging rewards with them and being responsive to their immediate interests. Transformational leaders are active leaders that have four distinguishing qualities: charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985; Conger, 1999).

Charisma is the extent of pride, faith and respect leaders encourage their workers to have in themselves, their leaders and their organizations. Inspiration is the ability to motivate followers through communication of high expectations. Intellectual stimulation is the frequency with which leaders encourage employees to be innovative in their problem solutions. Finally, individualized consideration is the degree of personal attention and encouragement of self-development a leader imparts to the employees (Bass, 1985; Bass, 1990). Conducive leadership style create eagerness



among employees to achieve the goals with sincerity and it also brings satisfaction among employees (Aydin & Ceylan, 2009). Lee and Ho, (1989) are of the view that the employees are more satisfied if they are involved in decision making by the leadership. Tanke (1990) states that unpleasant behavior of the leader creates dissatisfaction among the employees and even the employees may leave the organization. Markow and Klenke (2005) and Milliman et al. (2003) point out that the pleasant behavior of the leadership can enhance the efficiency and job satisfaction of the employee.

The term job autonomy refers to the state of the self-governing of the people (Smith, 1993). Job autonomy is one the important factors that enhances the employees' job satisfaction (Dawson, 1987). Job autonomy is one of the key factors that play a vital role for the job satisfaction of the employees (Nguyen et al, 2003) Person's job is more than some obvious activities. The factors like the nature of work, supervision, present pay and promotion opportunities bring satisfaction among employees (Robbins, 2003: pp. 78-79). Hackman (1990) is of the view that intrinsic as well as extrinsic rewards play an important role for employees' satisfaction. James Brown (2007) defines the fairness as equal treatment in which all the employees receive the same benefits rendering the same services like other employees in the organization. Lepper and Green (1978) state that the employees experience greater satisfaction in the situations where the probability of making endogenous attributions is higher than the probability of making exogenous attributions. Lawler and Porter (1967) opine that the performance of the employees will be increased if they get proper reward of their efforts. They further state that if the employees' rewards are inequitable to their co-workers, it will result dissatisfaction.

Adams (1963) expresses that the employees are dissatisfied if the rewards will not match their efforts. Podsakoff (1982) gives his view that employees are more satisfied when they receive just rewards after their performances. Hackman (1976) demonstrates that the employees perform better with satisfaction if they will be favored. Herman (1973) is of the view that the economic conditions affect job satisfaction-performance relationship. Miller (1982) explains that job security and higher pay are important factors that bring job satisfaction. Furnham (1992) categorizes the factors that can have impact on job satisfaction into three categories: organizational policies and procedures, working conditions at workplace and personal issues of employees. Robbins (1998) gives his opinion that flexible work situations and supportive work environments bring satisfaction among employees and increase their performance.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

The present study aimed at discovering the factors that influence English Language Teachers' job satisfaction in Pakistan. The findings of the study and its recommendations will be placed in front of decision makers in the educational sector to be taken into consideration. This study will be helpful for the heads of the educational institutes to increase the job satisfaction of their employees.

## HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

This study will test the following hypotheses.

- H.1. Job security increases the job satisfaction.
- H. 2. Job autonomy also enhances the job satisfaction.
- H. 3. Workplace flexibility and fairness bring job satisfaction.
- H. 4. Handsome salary and reward are the factors that maximize the job satisfaction level.
- H. 5. Conducive and positive behavior of leadership ensures job satisfaction.

## METHODOLOGY

The population of this study was 500 in-service English language teachers irrespective of gender, level, age, experience and sector. Teachers of English were selected for collecting data because English is taught as a compulsory subject and the teachers of English are involved in almost all the programs. The study was quantitative in nature. Data were collected through questionnaire using random sampling method. The questionnaire used a five point Likert scale. Five variables: job security, workplace flexibility and fairness, handsome salary and reward, job autonomy and conducive behavior of leadership were addressed in this study. There were twenty items in questionnaire and four questions on each variable were to be answered by each respondent. Keeping in mind the research ethics, the questionnaire was given for filling to those who showed their willingness. 398 out of 500 (79.60%) questionnaires were received. 8 questionnaires were incomplete enough not to be interpreted. The responses of remaining 390 questionnaires have been interpreted through charts.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### CHART

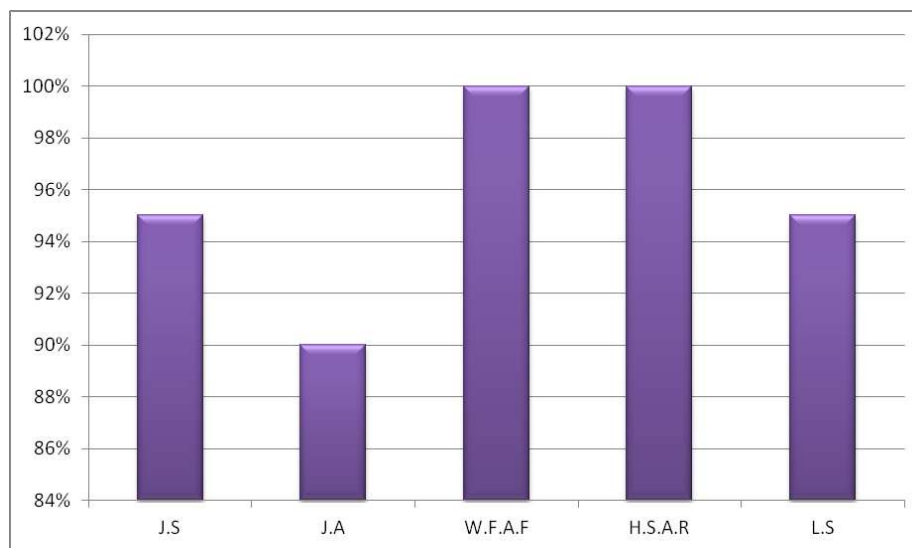
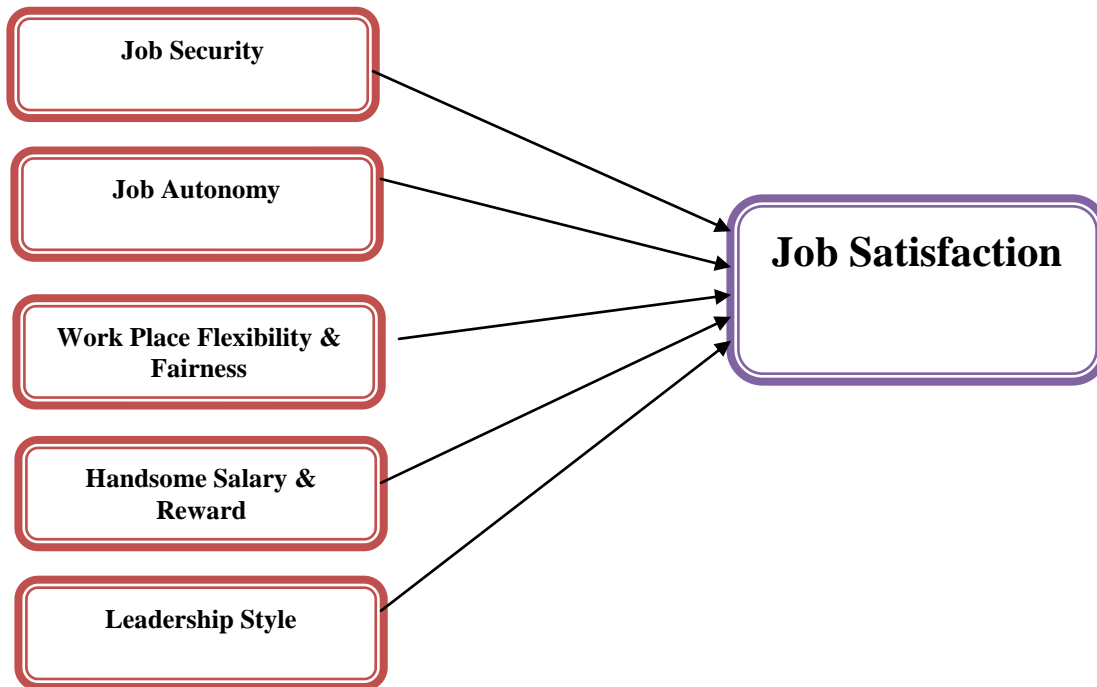


Chart 1 given above shows the responses of 390 respondents on the questions about the factors that influence the job satisfaction of English language teachers. 371 respondents out of 390 agreed that Job Security is factor that influences job satisfaction. As far as Job Autonomy is concerned, 351 out of 390 respondents considered it an important factor that influences job satisfaction. Leadership Style has been taken as an important factor that affects job satisfaction by 371 out of 390 respondents. Handsome Salary and Reward are the factors that affect job satisfaction, this is supported by 390 out of 390 respondents. All 390 respondents agreed that Workplace Flexibility and Fairness are the factors that influence job satisfaction. All variables are given below according to the response of the respondents.

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Response &amp; Percentage</u>
Job Security (J.S)	(Agreed by 371 out of 390 respondents & 95%)
Job Autonomy (J.A)	(Agreed by 351 out of 390 respondents & 90%)
Leadership Style (L.S)	(Agreed by 371 out of 390 respondents & 95%)
Handsome Salary and Reward (H.S.A.R)	(Agreed by all 390 respondents & 100%)
Workplace Flexibility and Fairness (W.F.A.F)	(Agreed by all 390 respondents & 100%)

See the figure below for the quick understanding of the factors that influence job satisfaction of English language teachers.

**Figure**



- H.1. Job security increases the job satisfaction.
- H. 2. Job autonomy also enhances the job satisfaction.
- H. 3. Workplace flexibility and fairness bring job satisfaction.
- H. 4. Handsome salary and reward are the factors that maximize the job satisfaction level.
- H. 5. Conducive and positive behavior of leadership ensures job satisfaction.

Hypotheses (1-5) are about the factors that influence job satisfaction were taken by the researchers before starting this study. Hypotheses need no longer discussion here. Data interpreted above clearly proves these hypotheses.

## **CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS**

The problem of this study was to investigate the factors that influence English Language Teachers' job satisfaction in Pakistan. The limitations of the study are as under:

- 100 % accuracy cannot be assured because the survey is subjected to the biased and prejudiced responses of the respondents.
- This research was carried out in a short span of time and the researchers could not widen the study.
- The study can be generalized to the limited population.

The findings support that the factors like job security, work place flexibility and fairness, handsome salary and reward, job autonomy and conducive behavior of leadership increase the job satisfaction whereas the absence of job security, job autonomy, handsome salary and reward, workplace flexibility and fairness and conducive behavior of leadership brings dissatisfaction among the teachers. On the basis of findings, here are some recommendations as under:

- Educational organizations should ensure the workplace flexibility and fairness so that they may decrease the employees' turnover.
- Educational organizations should discourage the favoritism to increase job satisfaction level among the employees to provide them peace of mind and relaxation so that they may work with innovation and enthusiasm.
- Absenteeism, tardiness and health sets backs due to stress can be reduced if the employees meet job security and job autonomy.
- Salaries of the employees should be increased to that level where they feel comfortable to fulfill their needs easily. In this way, their working efficiency can be increased
- Government of Pakistan should take some immediate measures to formulate some laws ensuring the job security of the employees working in private sector educational organizations.

In short, if the above stated recommendations are taken into the consideration by the decision makers of the education sector, the employees' job satisfaction level will be increased to that level where they will perform enthusiastically putting their best efforts.

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## TRANSLATION QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF NEWS TRANSLATION IN ISNA NEWS AGENCY

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### ABSTRACT

Translation, particularly news translation, is an essential means of communication in information exchange era. Its quality influences international relationships and leads to offer readers either accurate or wrong information. Accordingly, it is essential to evaluate the quality of translated news texts. It is also important that the task of translation quality assessment be carried out with consideration of text function and its context. In this study, it is attempted to evaluate the quality of news translations in one of the major news sources of Iran media, namely ISNA news agency through the application of objectified discourse-based TQA model of Farahzad (1992). By applying this model to the corpus of the selected texts used in the present study, the researchers rated 10 news texts translation for 5 criteria of appropriateness, accuracy, naturalness, cohesion and style.

### INTRODUCTION

News as a major part of today's communications plays a considerable role in the exchange of information. This information exchange would be of value if it is proper and accurate. While there is not a united language for all people worldwide, there is no remedy of translation.

According to Hatim and Mason (1997, Cited in Khajeh and Khanmohammad, 2006), translation is an act of communication that is permanently dealing with at least two different languages along with a broad network of elements including cultural, historical, political and ideological differences. In order to establish a proper communication and offer a tangible and meaningful translation, one needs to transfer the original utterances to his/her audiences thoroughly. It is possible when the translator is aware of source text (ST) and target text (TT) structure, text function in both ST and TT context, and culture-specific elements and the characteristics of the audiences. In other words, translation should be meaningful, accurate, and functional for its context.

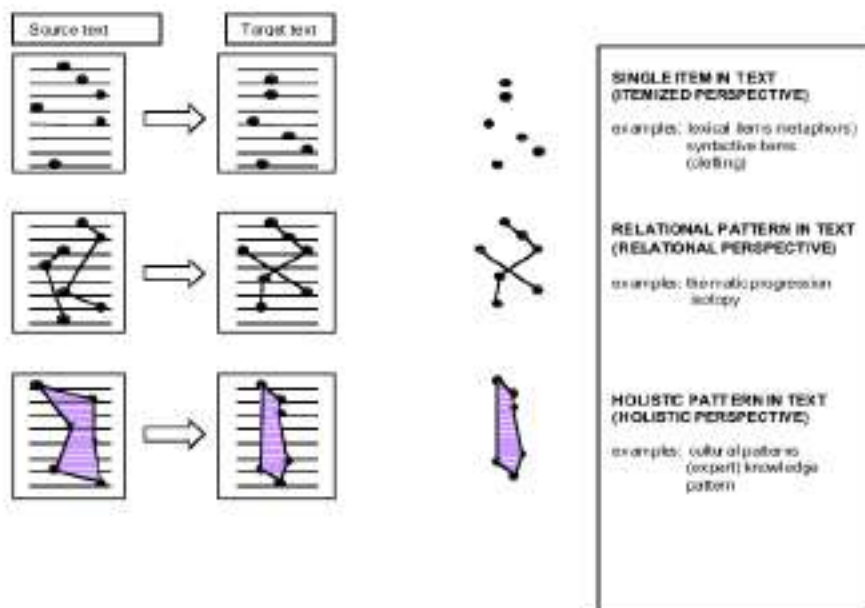
In this study, the researchers evaluated the quality of news translation in Iranian Students News Agency applying TQA model of Farahzad (1992), in which 5 criteria of appropriateness, accuracy, naturalness, cohesion and style were introduced as quality indexes.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### *Different Perspectives to a Text*

Arbogast (2001) explains that each text can be seen from different perspectives. In an *Itemized Perspective*, individual problems in a text such as metaphors, cohesive devices and ambiguities are investigated. These items are usually of local essence and should be treated as culture-bound matters. The translator often resorts to compensation strategies in such cases. The *Relational Pattern Perspective* describes patterns that can be identified and traced subsequently in the whole text. He/She should find such patterns and find an alternative for the whole pattern. With a *Holistic Pattern Perspective*, the translator deals with holistic patterns which are functional entities in a text. These holistic patterns have not an identifiable starting point like relational patterns. The whole pattern is made up of elements that are *functionally related to each other*. Coherence, cultural and general or specific knowledge patterns are some examples of such patterns (Figure1).

FIGURE 1



### ***Functionalist view of translation evaluation***

In the functional approach, translation is not simply a text reproduction and the function of a text is its use in a situation in which it is applied. The functionalists believe that each and every text gains its function just in its context. Hence, without considering the particular context of a text, the translator is not allowed to provide a correct and functional translation

According to *Christina Schaffner* (1998), the criteria for evaluation of translation quality will be different depending on the purpose of the assessment and on the theoretical framework which the evaluator applies and in assessing the quality of the translation. The TT is compared to the ST to find out whether the TT is an “accurate, correct, precise, faithful, or a true reproduction of the ST” (pp. 1). This comparison, based on Newmark (1991), involves both quantitative and qualitative aspects, or in other words, it investigates the status of accuracy referentially and pragmatically.

Translation evaluation in functional approaches, according to Lauscher (2000), is determined by factors related to the target culture rather than the source text. Translation is seen as a process of text production on the basis of a source text, and the target text is considered as a text in its own right. In the process of functional translation quality assessment, the evaluator compares SL and TL structures and pragmatic parameters in ST and TT. The evaluator then determines to what extent these parameters matched in ST and TT. In functional view of translation, the proper translation is pragmatically adequate or functionally appropriate. The functionalist approaches to translation also propose the function and the purpose of the TT as the most essential criterion of all translation and translation quality assessment. From a functionalist approach, the quality of a translation depends on the text user and the way in which s/he considers it as appropriate and corresponding to its purpose and the specific context.

As House (1997: cited in Baker, 1998) proposes, ST and TT are likely to be functionally adequate or equivalent when their functions in their respective contexts are alike so the degree of matches and mismatches between textual profile and the function of ST and TT is the scale of adequacy and quality of a translation. From House (2001) point of view, the translator should take into account the “interconnectedness of context and text” because the language and the real world are interdependent (p. p. 247).

### ***Farahzad’s TQA model***

Farahzad (1990) introduced her first model for TQA in an essay which was offered in Denmark conference, entitled: “translating and interpreting training”. This model which is basically designed for educational settings, as Tajvidi (2005) states, provides one of the most applicable models for TQA. In her model, she suggests criteria of appropriateness, accuracy, naturalness, cohesion and style for scoring a long text and considers two ways for it.

In the holistic version of this model, the evaluator reads the translation once and considers 20 percent of the total score for each index. On the other way, or objectified version, the target text is read twice, once for checking accuracy and appropriateness, and then for cohesion and style. Objectified version is somehow time-consuming but more precise and reliable. In this way, sentence or clause is the unit of translation. In order to score cohesion and style, the elements of cohesion (e.g. transitional, appropriate use of pronouns, linkages, etc.) and style of discourse (e.g. choice of words, grammatical structures, etc.), are evaluated in the whole text. According to what

Farahzad (2012) said in an interview with the researchers, translation of journalistic texts should be scored based on an objectified version of her model and rater should read each text twice.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The aim of this study was to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent is news translation accurate and appropriate in Iranian Students News Agency, according to TQA model of Farahzad?
2. Regarding Farahzad's model, what is the most problematic translation quality index in news translation in ISNA?
3. How much is the News translations cohesive in ISNA news agency?

The researchers will answer all the questions by using scores which are made based on Farahzad's TQA criteria, namely, appropriateness, accuracy, naturalness, cohesion, and style.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this study, 10 in-brief news texts were taken incidentally from among 50 short news items. Each item consisted of up to 25 sentences. The researchers concentrates on in-brief news items because too long items may cause some distracters like fatigue both for the translator and the raters during the process of translating and scoring.

### ***Participants***

A group of 10 translators rendered 10 English texts into Persian. All of the translators were M.A students in translation studies who had been homogenized through precise written examinations (semi-TOEFL) and interviews which were taken by ISNA international editorial board.

The researchers read each translated text twice. At first, the researchers divided each source text into its units of translation, compared ST and TT pairs and scored appropriateness, accuracy, and naturalness for each unit of translation. Then, she read the translation as a whole text and scored it for cohesion and style.

### ***Design***

In the scope of the present study, the process of rating consisted of two phases. In the first phase, the researchers divided each source text into its units of translation. The unit of translation, based on what Farahzad (2012), asserted in an interview with the researchers, could be word, compound, or phrase. Generally each verb takes a score. If a sentence is consisted of a main clause and subordinate clause(s), the main clause receives one score and each sub-clause another score; no matter how many sentences/clauses were in its translation.

Then the researchers compared TT and ST pairs and scored each unit for accuracy, appropriateness, and naturalness. Afterward, in the second phase of rating, she read each translation as a whole text and scored the translation for cohesion and style. Finally, 10 score-sheets for 10 translations were collected and analyzed in order to find the lowest quality index in news translation in ISNA.

In the next step, the researchers calculated the percentage for appropriateness, accuracy, naturalness, cohesion, and style in order to be more tangible and based on the same scale. In this way, the comparison of translations scores became easier and more tangible. Finally, the researchers compared the scores of different quality index to find out what quality index was the most problematic one for translators in news translation in ISNA.

It is necessary to mention that the process of scoring the translated texts was checked step by step through the supervision of Farahzad. The researchers referred to Farahzad in different phases of the scoring process in order to assure the correctness of the process.

## RESULTS

The corpus consists of 10 sets of total scores each of which was sum of 3 scores, namely, appropriateness, accuracy, and naturalness; two other criteria, cohesion and style, were scored separately as holistic measures. (Separate scores have been given for all 5 criteria additionally). Because the number of translation units for each source-text item (and the resulted total score for each translated text) was different, thus the quality index percentages in their respective text were calculated.

At last, the researchers compared scores of each criterion (appropriateness, accuracy, cohesion and style, and naturalness) in order to find out which criteria raised difficulty more in translation of news texts in ISNA.

Following are instances of the translation evaluation of 10 news translated texts which is based on the quintuple translation quality index of Farahzad (1992) TQA model. In the first round of rating, three quality scales of appropriateness, accuracy, and naturalness were scored. In the second phase, the rater read each text as a whole and gave a score for style and cohesion:

Source text No.1:

1.Afghan President Hamid Karzai would pay an important visit to Pakistan next week
رییس جمهور افغانستان هفته آینده سفری مهم به پاکستان خواهد داشت
2.to talk Islamabad on board over peace talks with Afghan Taliban as well as US troops drawdown plans
تا با اسلام آباد بر سر مذاکرات صلح با طالبان و طرح خروج نظامیان آمریکا از افغانستان گفتگو کند.
3.Sources said on Monday
ترجمه نشده است.
4.Well-place diplomatic sources told this scribe that
به گزارش ایسنا به نقل از روزنامه نیشن، منابع خبری دیپلماتیک اظهار داشتند که
5.President Karzai would visit Pakistan from June 10
حامد کرزای رییس جمهور افغانستان 20 خرداد به پاکستان سفر خواهد کرد
6.and the leadership of the two countries would also take stock of the state of bilateral relations, peace and stability in the region and the proposed Indo-Afghan defense pact.
و رهبران دو کشور به ارزیابی روابط دوجانبه، صلح و ثبات در منطقه و پیشنهاد پیمان دفاعی هند و افغانستان خواهد پرداخت.
7.In a related development, the visiting deputy foreign minister of Afghanistan Jawed Ludin is finalizing with his Pakistani counterpart the agenda of talks of the Afghan president with Pakistani leadership.
در همین راستا جاوید لودین، معاون وزیر امور خارجه افغانستان با همتای پاکستانی خود در حال نهایی سازی دستورکار مذاکرات رییس جمهور افغانستان با رهبران پاکستانی است.
8.Mr. Ludin,...met Minister of State for foreign affairs Hina Rabbani Khar
وی ...با حنا ربانی خوار، وزیر امور خارجه ی این کشور دیدار کرد
9.who is on a two-day official visit to Pakistan,
در سفر دو روزه خود به پاکستان،..
10.and discussed host of issues of bilateral interest.
و طیفی از مسائل مربوط به منافع دوجانبه را مورد بحث قرار داد.
11.Hina Rabani Khar ... emphasized further consolidation the relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan.
حنا ربانی خوار... بر تحکیم هرچه بیشتر روابط میان پاکستان و افغانستان تاکید ورزید.
12.Embedded: while talking to the Afghan dignity
در مذاکرات با این مقام پاکستانی
13.She expressed her satisfaction over the current state of bilateral relations,
وی نسبت به وضعیت کنونی روابط دوجانبه...، اظهار رضایت کرد.
14.(Adjective clause) which had under gone tremendous change under the present democratic regime
که در حکومت دموکراتیک کنونی دستخوش تغییرات عظیمی گردید،



TABLE 1

Tr. Unit	Appropriateness	Accuracy	Naturalness	Total score
1	1	1	1	3
2	1	1	1	3
3	0	0	0	0
4	1	0.5	1	2.5
5	1	1	1	3
6	1	1	1	3
7	1	1	1	3
8	1	1	1	3
9	0.5	1	1	2.5
10	1	1	1	3
11	1	1	1	3
12	0	0	-	0
13	1	1	1	3
14	1	1	1	3
Sum	11.5	10.5	12	35

As it is shown in table 1, the translator did not render any Persian translation for sentence No. 3, so the rater considered 0 score for all indexes. In an interview with the researchers, Farahzad (2012) also confirmed that in cases for which the translator did not offer a translation all criteria would take 0 score.

In sentence 4 the translator did not offer the precise translation for “well-placed” and the rater, gave half of the score for accuracy.

In sentence No.9 it seemed to the rater that diction of the text could be more accurate if the expression of "ملاقات" substituted "دیدار", because the first expression was used just in a meeting with individuals. Therefore, it seemed that the meaning was not caught and rendered completely.

Note: according to the commissioner hints and some news translation formats, the expression of "به گزارش خبرگزاری ایسنا به نقل از..." should be added in order to quote the original news source.

Furthermore, in sentence No.12, “Afghan dignity” was translated as "مقام پاکستانی" which is absolutely wrong and distorts the meaning. Such mistakes are not ignorable at all in news

agencies environment. It is obvious that the translator knows well the meaning of the words but false translation was produced because of carelessness.

### *Status of Quality Indexes in the Corpus of the Study:*

5 proposed criteria of translation quality were investigated in 10 English news texts in the previous section. The status of each index of quality in whole corpus of the study is wrapped up in table No.11 to indicate the relative status of the criteria.

The scores of style and cohesion were considered out of 10% of the total number of translation units in their respective texts.

TABLE 2

Text No.	Appropriateness	Accuracy	Naturalness	Style	Cohesion
1	11.5	10.5	12	1.3	1.3
2	13	13	12	1.5	1.5
3	5.5	5	9	1.7	1.6
4	17	15	17	1.8	1.7
5	15.5	14	14	1.5	1.4
6	9	5	10	2.05	2.1
7	11.5	12	12	1.2	1.2
8	15.5	16	16	2.3	2
9	18	20.5	18	2.5	2.4
10	11.5	11	11	0.9	1.1
Total score	126	120	129	16.85	16.3

### *Quality Index Averages*

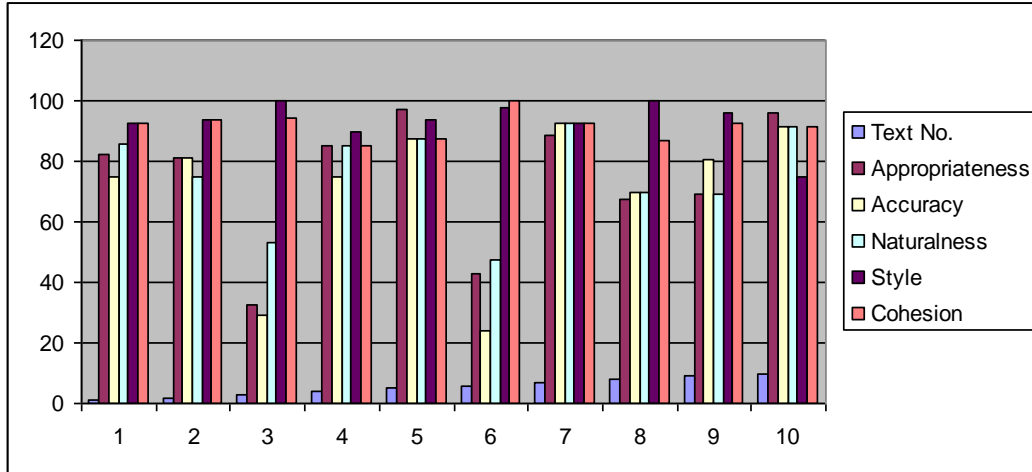
In Table 3, the percentage score is calculated for all the scores. In this manner the comparison of results is more convenient.

TABLE 3

Text No.	Appropriateness	Accuracy	Naturalness	Style	Cohesion
1	82.14	75	85.71	92.85	92.85
2	81.25	81.25	75	93.75	93.75
3	32.35	29.41	52.94	100	94.11
4	85	75	85	90	85
5	96.87	87.5	87.5	93.75	87.5
6	42.85	23.8	47.61	97.61	100
7	88.46	92.3	92.3	92.3	92.3
8	67.39	69.56	69.56	100	86.95
9	69.23	80.76	69.23	96.15	92.3
10	95.83	91.66	91.66	75	91.66
Overall mean	74.13	70.62	75.65	93.61	90.55

**Quality Index Scores Percentages**

FIGURE 2

**Status of Quality Indexes for Each Text**

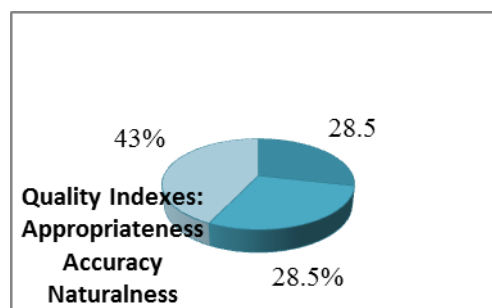
As it is clear, table No.3 indicates that among three criteria of appropriateness, accuracy, and naturalness the best and the worst scores respectively belong to naturalness and accuracy. Two last columns of the table show the status of style and cohesion scores for each text. The maximum score for style belongs to text no. 3 and no.8 and minimum score for style is for text no.10 which acquired just 75% of the optimum score (1.2 for text No.10). Text 6 gained 100% of score for cohesion while text No.4 with 85% enjoyed the worst cohesive translation. The status of quality indexes in each text was depicted in the Figure 2.

Table No.4 shows that what quality index gained the maximum score in each text. In the last row of the table further indicates that how many times quality index have acquired maximum score. According to the table, it is known that the index of naturalness has relatively better status in comparison with appropriateness and accuracy. The pie chart made this information more tangible (Figure 3).

TABLE 4

Text No.	Appropriateness	Accuracy	Naturalness
1			*
2	*	*	
3			*
4	*		*
5	*		
6			*
7		*	*
8		*	*
9		*	
10	*		
Frequency	4(28.5%)	4(28.5%)	6(43%)

FIGURE 3



*Overall Frequency of Quality Indexes with Maximum Scores*

## CONCLUSION

Having applied the TQA model of Farahzad (1992), the researchers, in answer to the first question, found out that in the corpus of the present study, Persian translations of English in-brief News texts could score 74.13%, 70.62%, and 75.65% of the maximum possible scores respectively for quality indexes of appropriateness, accuracy, and naturalness.

According to the results and figures which were provided, it seems that the quality of accuracy is the lowest measure among others. Findings of the study indicate that quality scores for index of cohesion ranged between 85 to 100 percent of the maximum score possible. This variation range implies that almost every translation in the corpus of the present study was cohesive. This means that cohesion elements like lexical and grammatical cohesion, cohesive ties, and referential elements (such as pronouns) were distributed all over the translations well.

From all quality indexes, style and cohesion had better status in comparison with others. In the scope of this study, the quality index of style got 93.61% of possible scores. With the exception of text No.10 which showed a diversion, almost every translation scored more than 92% of the score for style. Cohesion as another yardstick for quality assessment was of pretty satisfactory status and acquired 90.55% of the total score. On the other extreme, lowest scores were given to accuracy and roughly 70% of the maximum scores were gained on average. Two indexes of naturalness and appropriateness had fairly similar positions in scoring by gaining 75.66% and 74.13%.

Regarding the importance of preserving the precise meaning in translation particularly in translation of news, the researchers emphasize the significance of appropriateness and accuracy as two priorities in translation. The results of the study show that the status of these quality indexes unfortunately acquired the lowest scores. Although all the translators had professional capacities, they did not transform and transfer the exact meaning of the original. Sometimes the translation got the score for appropriateness but lost all or part of the accuracy score. It is possibly because of lack of command on target grammar and writing skills and can be a subject to further research.

Based on the findings of the present study, it is implied that in almost all of the translations, elements of form, that include terminology, text construction, and cohesive devices took into consideration. Relevant text format and style of the news items were followed in almost all texts to high extent. This helps the feasibility of translation fluency and integration which can improve the quality of naturalness as well. The quality index of naturalness was of better position in comparison with appropriateness and accuracy somehow because of good status of style consideration and application of cohesion elements. On the other hand, not satisfactory status of appropriateness and accuracy scores influenced the quality of naturalness and thwarted the positive effect of good translation format and text cohesion to some extent.

At the end, it seems necessary to mention that as it is the case with almost any study done in the area of applied linguistics and translation issues, this research does not intend to come to an absolute conclusion based on its findings. Put it another way, it is still necessary to carry out further studies to better verify the influence of the other factors not mentioned and focused on in this study on the quality of the translated news texts in other sources of media rather than the Iranian media, namely ISNA news agency through the application of objectified discourse-based TQA model of Farahzad (1992).

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## **A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO TEACHING OF LANGUAGE THROUGH LITERATURE IN MODERN CLASSROOMS – A BRIEF PERSPECTIVE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

A reader may experience manifold feelings while going through a text. It is not only the subject that the author has discussed in the text but also its sound presentation that leaves an immutable impression on the mind of the reader. Literature provides manifold opportunities to readers to acquire the ability to encounter several situations in their life time. The paper accentuates the need for teaching literature in educational institutions in a conscious manner. It is potential to illuminate the readers' private world and teach the grandeur of a language. A committed reader will have a chance to update his/her knowledge besides correcting his/her language impairments through meticulous reading of literature. The research proves that through the study of literature, learners of a language unconsciously acquaint themselves with language rules, which they feel elusive to learn independently.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Language teaching has acquired vital significance during the last two decades in education institutions. An observation of how language is taught in the present scenario reveals that the pedagogues of English prefer to have such a syllabus as to help the learners hone their language skills. Since the development of skills has become the primary aim of the instructors, it cannot be denied altogether that there is a gradual diminution of focus on literature in learning centers. The actual problem lies in the situation where the instructors and learners as well seem to have been convinced that the study of literature is a mammoth task, which is in many ways not useful in improving the basic language skills. When students proceed with the notion that the purpose of language learning is to acquire ability to express themselves effectively, they are loath to accept any text that would present the nebulous imagination of the author, which they feel, is beyond their comprehension. There should be integrated approach to the teaching of language and



literature and it is high time to believe that the absolute indifference to literature would leave language teaching null and void.

## LITERARY BASED READING MATERIAL

For the teachers especially those who are working in the areas where the regional language outclasses the second language, imparting sound education in a second language is an arduous task. An effective model and a well-founded curriculum is therefore necessary to fulfill this purpose. The newly issued *National English Syllabus Standard* (Department of Education, P.R.C, 2003) for compulsory education clearly states that “English learning is not only a process for students to master English knowledge and skill and improve their practical language use... but also a process for teachers to train their will, mould their temper, enrich their life, develop their individual character and abilities and sharpen humanist qualities.” A systematic and disciplined approach is indispensable in teaching-learning process and the drafting of this recipe is wholly dependent on the discretion of the one who should aim at the optimum results it would produce for the pleasure of the two potential parties (the teacher and the learner) involved in the task. To achieve this goal, the text has to be an assemblage of a variety items which would include introspection and reflection on the part of both the pedagogue and learner.

The world's orientation towards science, technology and industrial development is now questioning the purpose of having a class for the study of literature in education centers. Votaries of science argue with magisterial voice that the study of Chaucer and Dryden is less useful to the students compared to the study of the task that would teach them how to develop the skill of telephonic conversation. In such predicament, English is treated just as a tool for communication. It no more enjoys the magnitude of being a discipline in humanities and as a result its role in literature has fallen into decline. In accordance with the changing opinions regarding English language, the current curriculum accentuates the need for linguistic skills and therefore the learning centers are welcoming the skill-oriented syllabus rather than literature-oriented one.

The learner develops a wide range of analysis of the written work when the text is conducive to contemplation and consequently he/she accepts the text as his/her best instructor that would help him/her in many ways to strengthen his/her language and literary competence. Improving critical thinking should be the first priority objective of education. The kind of education the individuals receive during their stay in institutions is reflected through their behavior. Their actions are totally dependent on their analysis and thinking. In a broad sense, it means that any individual who is expelled from the world of literature is seldom blessed with an opportunity to mutate himself/herself as a complete man. Therefore, the learners need to study the kind of syllabus that is useful to them in two ways: one in improving their language skills and other in molding their character through critical thinking. Since it is the study of the past, reflection of culture, revival of history, enlightenment of spirit and delineation of philosophy, it is capable of building firm character among the readers. Emerson (1837) says in his speech, “Our anniversary is one of hope, and, perhaps, not enough of labor. We do not meet for games of strength or skill, for the recitation of histories, tragedies and odes, like the ancient Greeks; for the parliaments of love and poesy, like the troubadours; nor for the advancement of science, like our contemporaries in the British and European capitals. Thus far, our holiday has been simply a friendly sign of the survival of the love of letters amongst a people too busy to give to letters any more. Who can doubt that poetry will revive and lead in a new age as the star in the constellation Harp, which

now flames in our Zenith, astronomes announce, shall one day will be the polar-star for a thousand years?"

He emphasises the need for renaissance and production of great literature. Without literature there is neither national development nor individual progress. It is necessary that the teachers who possess profound knowledge and deftness in communication and good awareness of culture, history and philosophy are needed in this mission.

## **LANGUAGE TEACHING THROUGH LITERATURE**

Povey (1967:42) claims that the study of literature can extend the students' knowledge of vocabulary and syntax. It should be designed in such a way that the instructor can prepare various tasks to involve the students in language learning. Learners need to obtain an opportunity to study the stylistic features of the text and learn the extensive use of words in their creative writing.

A.G. Gardiner's 'ON SAYING PLEASE' shown below provides empirical evidence that literature is a fount for language study.

*Having searched my pockets in vain for stray coppers, and having found I was utterly penniless, I told the conductor with as honest a face as I could assume that I couldn't pay fare and must go back for money." "Oh, you need not get off that's all right," said he. "All right," said I, "but I haven't a copper on me." "Oh, I'll book you through," he replied. "Where'd ye want to go?" and he handled his bundle of tickets with the air of a man who was prepared to give me a ticket for anywhere from Bank to Hong Kong. I said it was very kind of him, and told him where I wanted to go and as he gave the ticket, I said, "But where shall I send the fare?" "Oh, you'll see me some day all right," he said cheerfully, as he turned to go. And then, luckily my fingers, still wandering the corners of my pockets, lighted on a shilling, and the account was squared. But that fact did not lessen the glow of pleasure which so good natured an action had given me.*

## **TEACHER'S ACTIVITY**

The teacher can use this text for developing various skills of students. The following are the tasks the instructor can prepare:

- **COMPREHENSION** ( Asking pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading questions)
- **GRAMMAR** (Reported Speech, clause-definition and types, question formation, conjunctions and prepositions)
- **VOCABULARY** (Suffixes, prefixes, formation of negative words with prefixes and suffixes, one-word substitutes, phrasal verbs)

The teacher should provide examples from the passage. This will help students to learn through reading. Grammar learning that would seem an onerous burden, when taught independently, would enchant the learners when they learn through context in the literary text and it offers them

lasting thrilling experience when they apply their knowledge. A careful study of any literary text, which is simple and delightful, would help students to use words wisely in speech and writing.

Learning does not mean students' listening to the elucidation of any theory to record it on their mind and then to regurgitate it. If learning is defined as memory and retention of information, attentive listening is the only measure to attain this goal. No doubt, learning of this kind would be useful to fetch percentage but it is apparently too weak to aid the individuals in crucial moments like decision making, problem solving, solution discovery and self-evaluation. Any amount of learning is impossible without learner's participation in the activity of learning. A learner is to be made a focal point in learning programme by making his/her mind busy in thinking and action. Asking questions and evaluating answers in conscious manner would promote an access to critical thinking in learners.

The following comprehension questions can be asked to test the understanding ability of students:

What does the author of the text intend to focus on? (Tick the right answer)

- a. Duty-mindedness
- b. Deceitfulness
- c. Sweet-tempered attitude
- d. All the above

- 'As honest a face as I could assume'-Illustrate the meaning of the clause.
- What do you understand the character of good-natured people like? (Tick the right one)
  - a. Cheerful b. gloomy
- Do you want to be like the conductor? Why? (Write your answer in not more than three sentences)

Have you ever encountered a man like the conductor in the passage in your life? If so, present your experience with him/her in black and white.

The students may be encouraged to disclose the situations when they felt offended because of the impoliteness of certain persons in their life. Such activities will keep the classroom lively and they are also useful in generating humanistic qualities in them.

Sowden (1987:28) suggests that literature can be used in the teaching of language 'by the linguistic manipulation of literary texts chosen for their real literary worth, but with an eye to their suitability for such manipulation'. He goes on to list examples of manipulation exercises that include cloze, vocabulary recognition and development, grammar reinforcement and extension, sentence building and pronunciation practice. These, he claims, 'will challenge the student, ensuring he gets completely involved in the language and style of the text, so increasing his familiarity with the language and improving the facility and accuracy with which he uses it' (1987:32).

## LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH POETRY

On interacting with teachers and students of several Engineering Colleges in the state of Andhra Pradesh in India, the researcher discovered that according to the majority of teachers and

students, poetry is something that comprises nebulous thoughts, unfathomable ideas, implied meanings, and vague illustrations. It has all intricacies and; no doubt, its hidden grandeur on several occasions may question the rationality of a reader and ultimately s/he may end up in absolute confusion. It is true that poetry does not proffer as much satisfaction to a teacher as prose does. According to Lackward, "Often language art teachers report feeling uncomfortable teaching poetry, either because they are not sure how to teach it effectively (owing to lack of pedagogical role models), or because they find it elusive themselves." Not having any specific strategy or method that can be attributed to poetry teaching is the possible reason that the learner and the pedagogue can adduce for the absence of any orientation towards its teaching. Hanauer (2001:320) suggests that poetry can be used in the second-language classroom to focus attention on formal language structures, 'a task that can enhance linguistic and cultural knowledge of the target language'. Tomlinson (1986:41) suggests that poetry 'can break down the barriers and involve learners in thinking, feeling and interacting in ways which are conducive to language acquisition'.

The research concludes that poetry teaching would be effective when students are encouraged to appreciate the qualities of a given poem. It suggests multiple ways to orientate the attention of students towards poetry and delineates methods to improve the communicative ability

The teacher can create a situation and encourage the students to compose a small poem. Students will start thinking and struggle to find suitable words to make appropriate expression. They are encouraged by their own success. The teacher can give pre-reading and post-reading activities to improve the students understanding. Gradually students acquire skill to reduce, expand, analyze, or discuss the original text. Tomscha (1987:17) recommends teacher re-writing a poem in the learners' native language; students then translate it back into English and compare their translation with the original. Ambatchew (1997) suggests that literature can be demystified through students attempting to write their own poems. Lima (1999) lists post-reading activities that include writing the unwritten parts of a text, expansion and/or reduction of the original, as well changing the point of view and genre. Wales (1990) sees rewriting as a creative way to promote engagement with the text and discussion about style. Skills developed in this way may later be put to good use in a stylistic approach to literary study (Carter, 1986; Lazar ,1993:28).

Such student-centered syllabus that orientates the students towards the active involvement is an indispensable aid to them in the learning process. Making students to prepare such texts is another useful technique in this process. Students who are intimidated at the thought of literature begin to realize how it would facilitate the enormity of the task and be useful to them in achieving their goals.

The poem is suitable to prepare many tasks based on grammar, vocabulary. Activities which are useful to students based on text interpretation, debate would generate thinking ability in students. The teacher has to make use of this and benefit the students.

## LANGUAGE MASTRY TO UNDERSTAND PROFOUND LITERATURE

Saunders says:

Until there is considerable language mastery and until there is considerable experience of current literature, reflecting current, even local, issues and concerns, there is little sense in compelling students to grapple with books about remote events, written in a highly complex and antiquated style (for example, Dickens, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy). Until language mastery is achieved, the teaching of literature should occupy a secondary place, and books should to a large extent be prescribed for their usefulness in achieving that mastery. They should help reinforce the process of learning the language as a current medium of expression.

Examine the following, which is an exact contrast.

The old fable covers a doctrine ever new and sublime; that there is One Man, — present to all particular men only partially, or through one faculty; and that you must take the whole society to find the whole man. Man is not a farmer, or a professor, or an engineer, but he is all. Man is priest, and scholar, and statesman, and producer, and soldier. In the divided or social state, these functions are parceled out to individuals, each of whom aims to do his stint of the joint work, whilst each other performs his. The fable implies, that the individual, to possess himself, must sometimes return from his own labor to embrace all the other laborers. But unfortunately, this original unit, this fountain of power, has been so distributed to multitudes, has been so minutely subdivided and peddled out, that it is spilled into drops, and cannot be gathered. The state of society is one in which the members have suffered amputation from the trunk, and strut about so many walking monsters, — a good finger, a neck, a stomach, an elbow, but never a man.

(An extract from the speech of Ralf Waldo Emerson delivered on 30th August 1837)

Students who intend to learn language cannot enjoy a passage like this. Moreover, they feel they are mentally strained to understand the depth of philosophy in the text. Literature of such quality can be introduced at matured level of students; after they have acquired the complete knowledge of philosophy so that they can derive pleasure from reading such texts; otherwise, they only confirm that literature is something so potential to baffle the readers with its complicated features. The pedagogue also fails to prepare any interesting tasks based on this for the benefit of the students.

## COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Although for many people language is just the development of communicative skills, it is necessary to admit that literature, in other words a sound and impressive expression of thought, will function admirably in helping students to refine their expressions in day-to-day actions. How this activity is done is in the hands of the instructor. If s/he can use literary text deftly, it will produce multiple benefits and students realize that it is not meant just for classroom discourse but is handy in many ways. Literary text is a fount of hidden language skills and while going through it students will enjoy a departure for activities to promote communication in and outside the classroom. Thus Collie and Slater (1987:10) describe their overall aim in integrating language and literature as 'to let the student derive the benefits of communicative and other activities for language improvement within the context of suitable works of literature. By studying literature, students not only develop an insight into linguistic forms but also acquire the knowledge of cultural values and conventions of different ages embedded in language. According to Stern (1991:330), the link between culture and language seems to be obvious and intimate, and literature is seen as the ideal vehicle for explaining it to learners. Other language-based activities

can also deepen the students' understanding of the literary text. Whiteson (1996), for example, mentions, among other activities, critical or descriptive writing about the text, group discussion, prediction, role-play and dramatization.

## CONCLUSION

Study of literature provides an access to learning of grammar and vocabulary. With its most appealing features, literature is capable of orientating the students towards learning the best and most effective language. Since it is a storehouse of various events and incidents, it creates stimuli in learners to interact with the text and peers to strengthen their communicative competence. It provides authentic exposure to English and bolsters confidence in students that they are able to create untold and unseen texts as it sets itself as a model for ideal learning. It enlightens the readers and promotes introspective thinking which results in their change of characters.

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## THE EFFECT OF TWO DIFFERENT PRE-READING ACTIVITIES ON GUESSING THE MEANING OF UNKNOWN WORDS BY IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed at investigating the extent to which Iranian pre-university students undertaking two different activities, predicting from topic and outlining, guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from the reading context. Also, it was an attempt to compare the effect of these two pre-reading activities on the students' ability in guessing unfamiliar words. Among the 70 Iranian pre-university students who volunteered for this study, 49 were selected based on their performance on the Oxford Solution Proficiency Test. They were assigned randomly into two experimental groups: Outline Group and Predict Group. Each group received 8-sessions of treatment. Each session, they were required to read a text from the students' textbook including some unknown lexical items which were bolded and numbered in order to be guessed by the participants. The results highlighted the low rate of guessing accuracy by the students in both groups. Furthermore, the findings revealed that there is not statistically significant difference between the two experimental groups in terms of ability in guessing unfamiliar words from the reading context.

**KEYWORDS:** Guessing word meaning, pre-reading activity

### INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE

Guessing word meaning or lexical guessing is to make "informed guesses as to the meaning of a word in light of all available linguistic cues in combinations with the learner's general knowledge of the world, her awareness of context and her relevant linguistic knowledge" (Haastrup, 1991, p. 40, as cited in Soria, 2001). Guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words in a target material extends knowledge of vocabulary (Shokouhi & Askari, 2010; Hamada & Park, 2011) and to guess correctly, readers must be familiar with 95-98% of tokens in a reading text (Nation & Meara, 2002). Liu and Nation (1985) take the view that deriving the meaning of unknown words from context is a good strategy for handling words of low frequency in a passage. For them, the

teacher should not allocate a substantial amount of time to teach these words, as they do not occur frequently, so the best way to deal with them is to encourage learners to make use of the available clues in the context in order to decipher their meanings.

Conversely, Swan (2008) does not consider word-meaning guessing from context as a strategy for learning vocabulary, but a compensatory strategy. According to Clark and Nation (1980), the skill of guessing meaning from context enables the learners to save time and to read without interruption and dictionary use. For them, developing this skill results in developing the reading skill.

Research indicates that a larger amount of background knowledge results in long-term retention (Kintsch, 1998; Ellis, 2001; Robinson, 2003). Prior knowledge of the topic is important for reading that activates background knowledge and helps with guessing the meanings of unknown words (Soria, 2001; Tumolo, 2007). Pulido (2008) also argues that familiarity with the topic leads to more accuracy of word meaning inferences. He further compares the topic which is more familiar to less familiar one, that appropriate background knowledge causes students pay more attention to what they are reading. As far as Rivers (1981) is concerned, knowledge of text topic and context is a prerequisite for reading practice. He points out that familiarity with semantic area assists learners in guessing the meaning of unfamiliar lexical items.

Several studies have been carried out that investigated the relationship between pre-reading activities and lexical guessing. Exploring the impact of discussions prior to reading on lexical inferencing ability and English language proficiency, Samadi (2012) studied the Iranian university freshman students taking their general English course. The findings of her study revealed that discussions prior to reading lead to relative development in learners' word-meaning inferencing and general language proficiency.

Studying on high school junior students, Rouhi and Asghari (2011) investigated whether familiarity with a text topic has effect on word guessing from the text and the text comprehension, whether employing pre-reading activities, pre-questioning and previewing, improve word guessing and getting meaning from a text of familiar topic, and whether employing pre-reading activities, pre-questioning and previewing, improve word guessing and getting meaning from a text of unfamiliar topic. They assigned the students into four groups: the first group with a familiar topic and without pre-reading activities (G1), the second group with a familiar topic and with pre-reading activities (G2), the third group without a familiar topic and with pre-reading activities (G3), the forth group without a familiar topic and without pre-reading activities (G4). The findings showed that G1 and G2 outperformed G3 and G4, that is, the performance of groups with a familiar topic was better than the groups with an unfamiliar one whether with pre-reading activities or without those. Put it simply, the implementation of pre-questioning and previewing does not promote guessing word meaning and reading comprehension. Therefore, they concluded that the important factor which has a role in lexical inferencing and understanding a reading text is topic familiarity, not provision of pre-questioning and previewing.

Studying the Farsi-speaking EFL learners and native speakers of English, Paribakht and Wesche (2006) compared lexical guessing in L1 and L2. The findings revealed that L1 English readers, who were at high intermediate and advanced level, guessed 89.3 percent of unfamiliar words in the text correctly and L1 Farsi readers guessed 79.0 percent of unfamiliar words in the text

written in Farsi correctly and only 11 percent of those words in the text written in English, while these L1 Farsi readers guessed meanings for 79.0 percent of English lexical items.

As far as the research concerning the effect of pre-reading activities on word guessing is thin, more research is needed to clarify suitable pre-reading activities which improve inference accuracy. Consequently, the primary objective of this study was to investigate the extent to which the Iranian pre-university students undertaking two different activities, predicting from topic and outlining, guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from the reading context. Also, it was an attempt to explore whether there is statistically significant difference between these two groups in ability in guessing unfamiliar words.

Based on the above-mentioned literature, this study addressed the following research questions:

1. To what extent do the Iranian pre-university students undertaking two different pre-reading activities, predicting from topic and outlining, guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from the reading context?
2. Is there any significant difference between the effects of the two activities on the Iranian pre-university students' ability in guessing unfamiliar words from the reading context?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

70 pre-university female students with an average age of 17 volunteered for the study. Out of the initial 70 students, only 49 students selected based on their level of proficiency, namely elementary, were randomly classified into two experimental groups for the study.

### ***Instruments and materials***

The following instruments and materials were used in the study:

#### ***English placement test***

A standard proficiency test, namely Oxford Solution Proficiency Test by Linda Edwards (Oxford University Press 2007), was administered to volunteers of the study to select homogeneous subjects for this study. The test consisted of 50 multiple choice questions which assess students' knowledge of key grammar and vocabulary from elementary to intermediate levels. It also includes a reading text with 10 graded comprehension questions. Finally, there was a writing task that assesses students' ability to produce the language.

#### ***Test of novelty***

Since the unknown words were needed for the study, a search was made for those words which the participants did not know. Hence, a checklist of 130 lexical items was designed and copies of it were distributed among the students. They were supposed to write the mother tongue equivalent for the words they knew. The unknown words were recognized as being 129 on the part of students.

### *Reading texts*

The readings were from the students' textbook, i.e. *Learning to Read: English for Pre-University*. The texts covered a variety of topics such as speech, exercise, earthquakes, space, and IT. The book consisted of eight lessons, each with a reading text, that is, eight texts were used for this study.

### *The guessing test*

In each of the reading texts mentioned in the previous section, 9-15 unknown lexical items were bolded and numbered in order to be guessed by the participants.

### *Procedures*

Prior to the main study, a pilot study was conducted to indicate the time which had to be allocated for the sessions and also to find out about the possible problems that might occur during the study.

To determine the subjects' level of proficiency at the beginning of study and to ensure the homogeneity of the participants of the study, a standardized language proficiency test was administered to the total of volunteers. 49 selected students were randomly classified into two experimental groups for the study.

The whole experiment lasted more than three weeks, 10 sessions. Each session, the students in Group A (Outline Group) were given a handout of the outline of the assigned text and were asked to read it carefully. They were given 3 minutes to read the outline and make sense of it. After reading the outline, the students had to read the reading passage individually to guess the meanings of the selected bold and numbered unknown words.

Before approaching the reading passages, the students in Group B (Predict Group) were given the topic of assigned text (written on the board). They were asked to predict the content of the text, that is, what they may encounter in the text and write it in their first language on a piece of paper. The reason was that the students were not able to write in English. Similar to the first group they were given 3 minutes to complete the pre-reading activity. After writing their prediction, first, the students in this group were asked to read the whole text, then to guess the meanings of unknown lexical items.

### *Data Analysis*

To answer the first research question, the correct answers and the total guesses of the two groups were counted and their percentages were calculated. To answer the second question, data was analyzed running descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics included the means, standard deviations, and standard error mean obtained from the scores of participants in both experimental groups for their correct guesses on eight lexical guessing tests from eight reading texts. Furthermore, a t-test tested the null hypothesis at .05 levels of significance in order to investigate if there was any significant difference between the scores of the two experimental groups.

## **RESULTS**

Tables 1 and 2 below show the findings regarding guessing attempts of the subjects and their guessing accuracy. As displayed in Table 1, even though the students in Outline Group guessed

the meanings of almost 62 percent of the unknown words, only 16 percent of their guesses were correct. Also, it shows that although students in the Predict Group guessed the meanings of almost 63 percent of the new words, only 18 percent of their guesses were correct. Based on these results, it could be concluded that there was low rate of correct guessing by the students in both groups.

*Table 1: Percentage of total and correct guessing by the two groups*

Group	Total guessing	Correct guessing
Outline Group	62.68	16.49
Predict Group	63.82	18.09

As Table 2 shows, the mean score for the two groups was almost the same, that is, Outline Group had a mean score of 1.77 and Predict Group a mean score of 1.94.

*Table 2: Descriptive statistics for two groups guessing gain*

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Outline Group	22	1.7727	.49346	.10521
Predict Group	27	1.9444	.65260	.12559

Prior to the independent *t*-test to answer the second research question, a normality test was run to compare the mean scores of the two groups on the guessing tests in order to probe the difference between the effects of the two pre-reading activities. The results are displayed in Table 3 below.

*Table 3: The normality test*

	N	Skewedness	Kurtosis	K-S	Sig. (2-tailed)
Outline Group	22	0.219	-0.203	0.095	0.15
Predict Group	27	0.378	-0.979	0.159	0.077



As displayed in Table 3, since P-values of the two groups are greater than .01, the data did not show any marked deviations from normal distribution and enjoyed normal distribution; therefore the independent t-test was administered. Results are displayed in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Results of independent-samples t-test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.523	.473	-.418	47	.678	-.30303	.72453	-1.76060	1.15454
Equal variances not assumed			-.410	40.863	.684	-.30303	.73842	-1.79445	1.18839

As shown in Table 4, the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met (*Levene's*  $F = .52$ ,  $P = .47 > .05$ ). The results of the independent t-test ( $t(47) = -1.019$ ,  $P > .05$ ) indicated that there was not any significant difference between the two groups' mean scores on the guessing tests. Put it simply, although the overall guessing grade of students in Predict Group was higher than Outline Group, this difference was not significant. That is to say, the null hypothesis was confirmed at .05 level of significance.

## DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND SUGGESTIONS

This study aimed at investigating the extent to which the EFL students undertaking two different activities guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from the reading context. Also, it was an attempt to explore whether there is statistically significant difference between predicting from the two activities in ability in guessing unfamiliar words from the reading context.

Analysis of the results concerning the first research question highlighted the low rate of guessing accuracy by the students in both groups. This is in line with Paribakht and Wesche's (2006) study who found that Farsi speakers could guess correctly the meanings of only 11 percent of unknown words in the text written in English, while they guessed the meanings of 79 percent of the target words. However, their study shows lower level of correct guessing probably because of lack of pre-reading activities. Paribakht and Wesche's justification for low success rate of L2 inferencing is "insufficient L2 proficiency, lack of relevant content schemata, and less effective L2 inferencing procedures" (p.127). The reason for low rate of correct guessing in the current study is probably due to the reason. That is, the students' low level of proficiency. Furthermore, some previous studies (i.e., Alavi & Kaivanpanah, 2009; Shen & Wu, 2009; Tavakoli & Hayati, 2011; Riazi & Babaei, 2008) indicate that the level of language proficiency plays a significant role in lexical inferencing.

The participants of the current study did not have sufficient vocabulary and grammar knowledge necessary to understand the text around the unknown lexical items so that they could not decipher their meaning. This was clear from the fact that they appealed to the teacher or considered other students for help. This result confirmed Ranjbar's subjects' performance who (2012) proved that grammatical knowledge plays a significant role in word-meaning guessing.

During reading the texts, there were a large number of words, in addition to the unknown words, which were translated by the students, that is, the Farsi equivalent of those words had been written above or beneath them. This could be an indication of the students' attempt in order to get as close as possible to the meaning of the unknown words. These cases were observed by Soria (2001) as well who studied the advanced and intermediate learners.

For a number of the new words, some of the participants initially guessed the meanings, but they crossed them out. It is probably because of their low degree of risk-taking. As Istifçi (2009) found that intermediate level learners possessed higher inference accuracy in comparison to low-intermediate level learners probably because of learner's level of language proficiency or the extent to which they tend to take risks.

Analysis of the results concerning the second research question revealed that the two experimental groups performed the same on guessing tests. The findings suggest that there is not statistically significant difference between predicting from topic and outlining in ability to guess unfamiliar words on the part of Iranian pre-university students. Therefore, it can safely be concluded that the effect of outlining and predicting from topic on word-meaning inferencing is either the same or they do not have any significant effect at all. Although, based on the literature on pre-reading activities, which indicates that reading comprehension of students increase with introducing these activities, the first conclusion seems to be more acceptable. It should be mentioned that there was no control group in the study to compare its results with the results of the two experimental groups. This point is admitted as one of the limitations of the study that can be subject of further studies. Besides, this study was concerned with predicting from topic and outlining, the same research can be carried out to investigate the effect of other pre-reading activities in guessing ability of EFL learners. Also, another study can be conducted with both sexes to examine whether different results will be obtained. Besides, the same research can be conducted at different language proficiency levels or with participants in other age ranges.

This research faced a number of limitations which have to be taken into consideration while attempting to generalize its findings. One limitation is that the participants in the study were only female students. Furthermore, the sample size was low. If the sample size was larger, the researcher could also have had another group as control group in the study to compare its results with the results of the two experimental groups. Besides, students were at elementary level of language proficiency and at the specific range of age.

## IMPLICATIONS

The results of this research study provide information to language teachers about the implement of both outlining the text by the teacher and predicting from the text topic on the parts of the EFL learners. It may give teachers the insight that incorporating these activities into the classes may not help elementary students much to decipher the meaning of unfamiliar lexical items. On the other hand, lexical inferencing may not be so useful strategy for learners at this level. If the teachers want to apply lexical inferencing strategy, they should make students aware of the importance of lexical inferencing in both L2 reading comprehension and vocabulary learning. Teachers should teach students effective L2 inferencing procedures to infer correct word meaning, especially checking their guesses to be sure that they are correct. Also, teachers should be sure that students' word knowledge is at established level for most of the words in an assigned text to guess word meaning correctly. Besides, teachers should make them aware of different sources of information which they may have to assist them to derive word meaning.

Second, syllabus designers and material developers can also benefit from the results of this study. They should not include material and syllabus lexical inferencing for the students at elementary level. Again if syllabus designers and material developers do so, they should include material and syllabus information about the importance of lexical inferencing in both L2 reading comprehension and vocabulary learning. Also, they should include material and syllabus effective L2 inferencing procedures to infer correct word meaning.

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# THE STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COOPERATING WITH PEERS AS AN INDIRECT VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGY ON THE IRANIAN UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION

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## ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to compare the effect of Cooperating with peers as indirect vocabulary learning strategy on reading comprehension skill. To fulfill the purpose of the study, a language proficiency test was administrated to one hundred male and female university students who studied in a course other than English as their major in Omidiyeh Islamic Azad University, Khuzestan, Iran. Ultimately, sixty intermediate students were selected and assigned into two experimental (A) and control (B) group. The first group was taught vocabulary through Cooperating with peers as indirect vocabulary learning strategy for developing their vocabulary storage in reading comprehension and group (B) was assigned as control group. After ten sessions of treatment, the two groups were given a post-test of an achievement vocabulary test. Data analysis was conducted through t-test statistics. It demonstrated that the experimental group (A) who utilized Cooperating with peers vocabulary learning strategy outperformed the control group (B) who was the control group in terms of the mean and standard deviation gained in the post- test ( $p < .05$ ). *t*- Test analysis revealed that there was a significant difference between the two groups learning vocabulary at intermediate level. In other words, Cooperating with peers strategy at intermediate level can lead to higher achievement of vocabulary storage in reading comprehension of intermediate level of Iranian EFL undergraduate students.

**KEYWORDS:** Vocabulary Learning Strategy, Indirect vocabulary learning Strategies, Reading Comprehension, Cooperating with peers strategy

Vocabulary learning is an essential element in language learning that affects all portions of learners' academic life, and also having good command on vocabulary has a direct relationship with comprehension, the more our vocabulary knowledge increase the more our comprehension will be, also students who have problem with vocabulary acquisition are placed under an additional burden, especially, when required to read texts that are filled with technical words (Flynt & Brozo, 2008). Unfortunately, many students have a lower retention rate for vocabulary words, and need specific strategies to help them increase their overall vocabulary (Flynt & Brozo, 2008).

Vocabulary learning strategy is a subcategory of language learning strategies (which in turn are a subcategory of learning strategies in general). (Oxford, 1990: 8), vocabulary learning strategy organizes knowledge about what learners do to find out the meaning of new words, retain them in their memory for a long time, recall them when needed in comprehension, and also apply them in language production (Catalan 2003, cited in: Ruutemets, 2005).

Language learning strategies have received specific attention in the researches that were done by Chamot (1987), Cohen (1998), Oxford (1990), and Schmitt (1997). According to Schmitt (1997), vocabulary learning strategies are even the focal of observation in second language learning and teaching with the increasing nature of vocabulary acquisition and its emphasis on large exposure to the language. Language learning strategy application is the focus of attention in second or foreign language acquisition. Research on language teaching and learning strategy use has revealed that learners, on the one hand, tend to employ learning strategies in vocabulary learning more than in any other skills of language learning activities and, on the other hand, general language learning strategies may be used in vocabulary learning (O'Malley et al., 1985). According to Jo Moir and Paul Nation (2008), in the previous days it was widely assumed that vocabulary teaching is not important matter as it can happen by itself; thus, the teaching of vocabulary was not favorite (Nation, 1990). Stern (1975) and Rubin (1975) were probably among the first researchers who brought up the idea of successful language learners. The idea can probably help us with both understanding more about the nature of language learning and also to facilitate the language learning process for others. With regard to this, most of the research in the area of language learning strategies has focused on the identification, description, and classification of useful vocabulary learning strategies.

Vocabulary learning strategy is a very effective in language proficiency development because it constitutes the basis for learners' ability in other skills, such as speaking, reading, listening and writing. Griffiths (2006) points out that recently the importance of teaching vocabulary has been acknowledged. The result and effect of the correct use of vocabulary learning and teaching strategies is vocabulary retention and following of that vocabulary knowledge, which is a key element in language learning since 'words are the building blocks of language and without them there is no language' (Milton, 2009:3).

Cohen (1998, p. 1) states that strategies can be very different in nature, ranging from planning the organization of one's learning (a metacognitive learning strategy) through using mnemonic



devices to learn vocabulary (cognitive learning strategy) and rehearsing what one expects to say (a performance strategy) to bolstering one's self-confidence for a language task by means of "self-talk" (an effective strategy).

Strategies help language learners retrieve and store material, and facilitate their learning by structuring its environment (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992, p. 219). Not only do LLSs facilitate learning but also accelerate it. Strategy use correlates with students' language proficiency (Oxford, 2001, p. 170) and self-confidence (Chamot, 1994, p. 331). Concerning language learning strategies (LLSs) designed to encourage students to relate sentences to things they already know, Willingham (2006, pp. 42-43) adds that by prior knowledge, students are encouraged to apply what they know from their own lives to the text, or to consider the theme of the text before reading it, and by vocabulary comprehension relationship Willingham (2006) states that students are encouraged to use background knowledge to make educated guesses about the meaning of unfamiliar words.

In terms of Hedge (2000), such strategies can be either cognitive (i.e., direct mental operations to understand and store new words) or meta-cognitive (i.e., indirect strategies that facilitate the conscious efforts to remember new words). Some researchers have revealed that indirect strategy instruction is more effective in developing vocabulary learning storage (Saragi, Nation, & Meister, 1978; Jenkins, Stein & Wysoki, 1984).

The present study is an attempt to shed more light on the role of Cooperating with peers as an indirect vocabulary learning strategy to *examine the impact of this strategy on the Iranian learners' reading comprehension at intermediate level*. Cooperating with peers as an indirect Vocabulary learning strategy is the main variable of the present study and also is considered one of the vocabulary learning strategies. Exploration of this strategy has helped learners use processes to improve their skills in a foreign language.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

As far as the review of literature is concerned, there are very few studies which have focused on the effect of indirect vocabulary learning strategy generally and Cooperating with peers specifically in a second or foreign language and reading comprehension ability in that language. So, the following sections concerning the subject of the study, first vocabulary learning strategy, indirect vocabulary learning strategy in reading comprehension have been reviewed briefly, followed by an overview of the some experimental studies of indirect vocabulary learning strategies in English linguistic literature. These are the main areas of research directly relevant to this study.

### *Vocabulary learning strategy*

According to Oxford (1990), language learning strategies are particular activities adopted by learners to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations. Utilization of learning strategies is very important in vocabulary learning and depends on learners' attempts to a large extent. According to Nation (2001), vocabulary learning strategies make learners be able to take more responsibility for their own learning. He believes that a large amount of vocabulary can be acquired by using vocabulary learning strategies. Nation (2001) proposes that a large number of vocabulary learning strategies are helpful at all steps of vocabulary learning and can be used to an extensive range of

vocabulary. He points to the fact that language learners by the help of these strategies can control their own learning without the presence of a teacher. In addition, Nation, in his research, reveals that learners are very different in the proficiency that they apply strategies with. Thus, language learners should be instructed in use of vocabulary learning strategies.

### ***Indirect vocabulary Learning Strategy***

Indirect vocabulary learning is defined as a technique of vocabulary learning which occurs without the specific intent to focus on vocabulary. Several studies have been shown the effectiveness of this way of learning word meanings from context (Jenkins, Stein & Wysocki, 1984; Nagy, Herman & Anderson, 1985). Several researchers (Fraik & Tulving 1975, Schmidt 1990) have suggested that the way in which learners' process material influences incidental learning. They stress the importance of 'noticing', or attending, in second language learning and maintain that incidental learning can result from task demands which cause learners to focus attention on specific features of input which are crucial for learning.

### ***Some related experimental works***

Hunt and Beglar (1998) point out that great amount of vocabularies are acquired incidentally through extensive reading and listening. Consequently, motivating students to read and listen extensively can prepare them with great chances to be familiar with new vocabularies. In terms of Huckin and Coady (1999), too, except for the first few thousand most common words, vocabulary learning generally occurs through extensive reading with the learner guessing the meaning of unknown words. This process is indirect learning of vocabulary for the learning of new words and is the byproduct of the reading. However, this process of incidental learning of vocabularies occurs gradually as Anderson (1985; cited in Richards and Renandya, 2002) claims. The indirect vocabulary learning strategy, as Hunt and Beglar (1998) point out; can be a very effective approach for all language learners at all levels.

Shmidt (1990; cited in Nyiazadeh, 2009) also states that indirect learning is surely passive in that it can occur when the focus of attention is on some relevant emphasize of input. However, he believes that since indirect learning is useful in task-based language, pedagogy is still a fruitful area of investigation. He further notes that there is an argument that maintains what is learned—whether indirect or direct—is what is noticed.

Ellis and He (1999) explored the roles of modified input and output in the indirect acquisition of word meaning. Their study proved that interactional output which provides opportunities for learners to use new vocabularies strengthen to better indirect vocabulary learning.

Paribakht and Wesche (1999) also conducted research studying the relationship between reading and indirect L2 vocabulary learning. Their study established indirect acquisition of new lexical knowledge through reading of thematically related texts; hence, vocabulary knowledge may be acquired as a by-product of reading comprehension. In addition, their study displayed that among learners' strategies, inferencing, was the main vocabulary strategy use employed.

Cusen (2005) in his exploratory study used diary to identify and classify vocabulary learning strategies of Romanian English major and minor undergraduates at university of Brasov. He used

Oxford learning strategies classification as the analytical framework of his study. He found that advanced learners with a professional interest in the study of English seem to use almost all the types of strategies from Oxford analytical framework. The learners appeared to use other strategies relatable to the context of his study and/or to each individual.

However, the above mentioned studies did not depict specific the Cooperating with peers as an indirect vocabulary learning strategy in developing vocabulary in reading comprehension. So with the gap existing in the literature, the present study is aimed at identifying the role of Cooperating with peers as an indirect vocabulary learning strategy in reading comprehension among intermediate Iranian undergraduate EFL learners. The rationale underpinning the selecting of the subjects at the intermediate level for the study is that the researcher has wished to focus scrupulously on this level and investigate the role of indirect vocabulary learning strategy on the development of vocabulary in reading comprehension of Iranian learners.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Most of the latest studies are focused on general language learning strategies. Little attention has been given to vocabulary learning strategies and specially indirect vocabulary learning strategy and reading comprehension. *According to Davies and Pearse (2000), Harley and Hart (2000) and Nation (2003)*, words are the tools we use to access our background knowledge, express ideas, and learn about new concepts. Learners' lexical knowledge is linked strongly to academic success. Vocabulary size was shown to be the best predictor of reading comprehension in L1 and L2 (Coady, 1997).

Therefore, this study was conducted to see the possible effects of Cooperative with peers as an *indirect vocabulary learning strategy on* reading comprehension of Iranian university students in an EFL setting. In Iran, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, very little studies have been conducted investigating the use of indirect vocabulary learning strategy (VLS) and no study found to conduct about Cooperating with peers directly by Iranian EFL learners.

So, teachers can have a clear view to integrate strategy training into the classroom instructional plan to make learners aware of impact of indirect vocabulary learning strategy that they may use unconsciously in order to learn vocabulary items effectively. Exploration of this strategy has helped learners use processes to improve their skills in a foreign language. Furthermore, utilization of vocabulary learning strategies has been found to affect students' performance in language learning (Sarani & Kafipour, 2008).

## RESEARCH QUESTION

The main question to be examined in this study is as follows:

Do Cooperating with peers vocabulary learning strategy has any significant effect on the development of vocabulary knowledge of the Iranian undergraduate intermediate students?

### ***Participants***

The researcher selected 100 English as Foreign Language (EFL) university students from Islamic Azad University of Omidyeh in Khuzestan in Iran studying non-English majors in the course of general English (mostly in the second and third semester) based on non-random judgment sampling. They participated in a homogeneity test adapted from Objective Placement Test (Lesley, Hanson & Zukowski- Faust, 2005) as a homogeneity test and finally sixty students whose scores were one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean ( $M=30$ ) were selected. Then they were randomly divided into two groups; group A (18 female and 12 male) as an experimental group received Cooperating with peers as an indirect vocabulary learning strategy while group B (8 female and 22 male) considered as a control group. The age of the participants generally ranged from 19 to 25. Seemingly, they were originally from different regions of the country.

### ***Instruments***

Initially, the subjects in two groups took the Objective Placement Test of Interchange (Lesley, Hanson & Zukowski- Faust, 2005), which used as a standardized measurement to check the homogeneity level of the subjects in terms of language proficiency. The test contained 40 multiple-choice of vocabulary items. In order to verify the reliability of the pre-test and post-test, the researchers selected 40 students from different departments in Omidyeh Islamic Azad University to participate in the pilot study in two phases, one for the pre-test and the other one for post-test. That is, 20 students for pre-test and 20 for post-test. Calculating the reliability coefficient of the test through KR-21 formula, the researcher found the reliability of the homogeneity test at ( $r=.78$ ).

A post- test including also 40 items was administered to both groups at the end of treatment period after ten sessions. It takes eight lessons and was designed as a summative test. This test indicated 40 multiple-choice items of vocabulary achievement test which was developed by the researcher based on the materials taught in the classrooms. The vocabulary items in the test selected mainly from the new lexical items of reading comprehension texts. The reliability of the post- test was ( $r=.88$ ) based on KR-21 formula.

Another instrument was the reading tasks and activities as the course materials which the researcher afforded to both the experimental and control group. These reading tasks and activities were extracted from the Select Readings (intermediate level) written by Lee and Gunderson (2002).

### ***Procedure***

In this study, 100 Iranian university students who study in a course other than English as their major were selected. To make sure of the homogeneity of the learners, the researcher used an Objective Placement Test as language proficiency test (Lesley, Hanson & Zukowski- Faust, 2005). Having obtained the scores and the average mean ( $M = 30$ ) of the scores calculated. Sixty learners whose scores were around the mean were selected. Therefore the thirty homogeneous intermediate students were selected to utilize Cooperating with peers strategy for developing their

vocabulary storage in reading comprehension and other thirty students in group B were assigned as a control group with no strategy use in teaching and the treatment in this class was as usual as before, the teacher read the text one time and gives the students equivalent or synonym of new words. In this study, the treatment period lasted for ten sessions. On the first session, the students in A Group received introduction on Cooperative with peers vocabulary learning strategy. The procedure was implied by the corresponding researcher (teacher) for both classes. The next section will introduce the treatment period of Cooperating with peers strategy.

### *Cooperating with peers*

As Oxford (1990) mentioned, this strategy involves a concerted effort to work together with other learners on an activity with a common goal. Reading activity, simulations, and other active exercises challenged students to develop their ability to cooperate with peers while using vocabulary learning strategy. Reading, through usually is considered an independent activity, was a cooperative enterprise as well. For example, one student works with his/her group on English-language on reading activity. Each group member had part of the story to read, and together they figured out the entire story through a process of negotiating, requesting, and cooperating (Oxford, 1990).

Therefore, indirect vocabulary learning strategy instruction can be looked at as a process of learner empowerment which raises learner's vocabulary of the more effective strategies for learning the language and by enabling them to employ the strategies in learning vocabularies.

### *Data Collection*

After the treatment, to find out the effectiveness of *Cooperating with peers vocabulary learning strategy on reading comprehension* of experimental group and compare the improvement in two groups, both groups took part in a post-test of the vocabulary and reading comprehension test after completing the course.

The researchers dealt with comparing vocabulary learning strategy regarding, a parametric technique for analyzing the descriptive data. In this way, the study investigated the role of the Cooperative with peers vocabulary learning strategy through independent samples *t*-test analysis, in order to find out, whether these strategy influence students' vocabulary knowledge of Iranian EFL university students at the intermediate level of English reading proficiency or not.

To begin with, an independent sample *t*-test analysis was run on the mean score of the two groups. The results of *t*-test analysis for the effect of this strategy in reading comprehension as an independent variable statistically indicated mean differences are shown in Table 4.1. The data obtained through post-test (Table 1) were analyzed (using SPSS 11.5 software) in different steps.

**Table 1:** Result of the *t*-test (post-test of both groups)

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Experimental G	30	10.00	34.00	40.00	38.5667	1.97717
Control G	30	14.00	29.00	39.00	33.7333	3.26880

The results of the post-test in the two groups were compared using independent samples *t*-test statistical procedure, whose result showed that the mean scores of the experimental group ( $M = 38.56$ ,  $SD = 1.97$ ) was significantly different from the control group ( $M = 33.73$ ,  $SD = 3.26$ ). Also the minimum and maximum scores in experimental group are 34 and 40 while in control



group the minimum and maximum scores are 29 and 39. In other words, the experimental group outperformed the control group on the post-test.

Also, critical  $t$  ( $t= 2.000$ ) was less than observed  $t$  ( $t= 5.45$ ) based on  $df = 48$ . In this case, there was a significant difference between experimental and control group in developing learning vocabulary at intermediate level. In other words, Cooperating with peers strategy was effective in improvement of vocabulary of Iranian EFL learners at intermediate level.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The major concern of the present study was to explore the effectiveness of Cooperative with peers on reading comprehension of the EFL students. The results of  $t$ -tests indicated statistically significant difference between the experimental group (A) and control group (B) in reading comprehension achievement post-test. It indicated that the Cooperating with peers is effective in improving EFL vocabulary storage on reading comprehension achievement of university students at the intermediate level of English. This result can be more approved and confirmed by this evidence that there was a significant difference between experimental group (A) who received this indirect strategy and control group (B). Moreover, the mean of experimental group was higher than control group based on the post-test scores.

Although it is generally believed that most words are learned from context and it is a very useful and productive way to learn words, the usefulness of this method of vocabulary learning for all learners at different levels of proficiency is open to question. Waring (1995, p. 2), for instance, argues that, "Beginners need a basic vocabulary before they can even start to learn from context as they have insufficient knowledge and the text is too dense with unknown and partly known words." In fact, they do not also possess enough knowledge of grammar and consequently cannot make use of grammatical contextual clues to guess meaning from the context. He finally recommends that guessing from context be left to a later stage when the learner has enough knowledge base from which to work. However, not all contexts are intrinsically reader friendly.

## **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

This study has been carried out upon the hypothesis that teaching indirect vocabulary learning strategy is comparatively more effective than traditional teaching of vocabulary by providing only the dictionary definitions or list of words and memorizing the words. The instruction lasted for ten weeks. In the course of this time, the researcher (teacher) employed the mentioned strategy and instructed the participants how to use this strategy in their reading comprehension. At the end of the students were administered the reading comprehension post- test and the results of the tests were compared to find the effect of training.

The results indicate that generally there is a great difference between the experimental and the control group performance of the subjects in the learners who were instructed using Cooperating with peers strategy. So presenting the target vocabulary items in context and using indirect



vocabulary learning strategies like the selected strategy make a remarkable difference in terms of overall performance for a particular group of student like intermediate level of students.

The findings of this study indicated that this kind of indirect vocabulary learning strategy had a positive impact on reading comprehension of EFL students because according to the results we got the researcher can claim that, Cooperating with peers vocabulary learning strategy had an impact on students of this study and is an effective strategy. Indirect vocabulary learning strategy is the strategies that suggested for learning vocabulary at a particular level of language proficiency such as intermediate level.

Concerning the implications related to curriculum developers and material producers it can be stated that they should definitely work in cooperation with both teachers and students. Together with teachers, they should decide what learning strategies they need to identify. It should be the curriculum developers' responsibility to allocate enough time in the curriculum for teachers to conduct strategies research in their classes.

With respect to material producers, they should produce materials that teachers will use throughout their class research. That is, the materials they produce should be congruent with students' learning strategies and they should be appealing to students' needs and interests. This process requires continuous evaluation of every single stage or material used. For this reason, curriculum developers and material producers should collect feedback from teachers and students in order to identify the weaknesses and strengths of their products. This will enable them not only to produce better materials but also to develop them. All in all, curriculum developers and material producers should work cooperatively with teachers and students so that they can design a better program, appropriate materials and tasks that will promote a more efficient and a more effective language learning atmosphere. According to the findings of this study, it is suggested that material designers may develop teaching materials based on strategy-instruction especially on indirect strategies.

At the end, the point should be highlighted that the present study had some limitations. This study was just limited to intermediate EFL learner's context. Other contexts like ESL context with different levels of students also should be considered in futures studies. In other hand, the ten-session time frame of this study is too short to provide anything more than an indication of possible direction of the Cooperative with peers vocabulary learning strategy and reading comprehension. With regard to language skills and learning strategies, this study was just limited to reading ability and vocabulary learning strategy of EFL learners. Other skills of language learning for future study also recommended.

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## APPLYING THEME AND RHEME IN INDONESIAN EFL STUDENTS' WRITING: AN ATTEMPT TO IMPROVE COHESION AND COHERENCE

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### ABSTRACT

The notions of Theme and Rheme have widely been explored in research on linguistics. However, little research has been carried out about Theme and Rheme in relation to the writing class, referring to the Indonesian students. This paper discusses the theoretical framework of Theme and Rheme and the analysis of Theme and Rheme in some texts of the Indonesian university students of the second semester to improve cohesion and coherence. It has been demonstrated that the understanding and the application of these notions have enabled the students to evaluate their own compositions and improve the coherence of their compositions. It is, therefore, important to teach Theme and Rheme in a writing class.

**KEYWORDS:** Theme and Rheme, Indonesian EFL students, cohesion, coherence

### INTRODUCTION

Most learners find it difficult to write a second or foreign language composition. Some of the reasons are lack of grammatical competence and lack of writing skills of arranging clauses or sentences into a good paragraph or essay. Pertinent to writing skills, one of the crucial elements is developing coherent and cohesive compositions. A coherent and cohesive writing requires the mastery of cohesive devices that can combine the ideas developed in the writing into one complete way of thought.

There have been some researches on cohesion. Studies of cohesion often focus on cohesive ties as part of creating textual cohesion (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). However, according to Stotsky (1983) in Wang (2007) cohesive ties themselves are not sufficient to create a coherent text. A study done by Witte and Faigley (1981 in Mellos, 2011) found that students wrote better papers when they developed an ability to use Theme and Rheme more effectively in their writings. Ventola (1992) argues that vital information on cohesion and coherence can be obtained through textlinguistic research. One of the areas in which cohesion and coherence can be developed is through Theme and Rheme. After conducting a research on Theme and Rheme in compositions of ESL students at San Diego University, Mellos (2011) concludes that "the theme-rheme framework provides students with a grammatical resource to make conscious theme and rheme choices that improve the coherence of their texts by making the connections between ideas clear, allowing for topic development, and giving sentences a clear focus." A study carried out by

Belmonte and McCabe-Hidalgo (1997) has proved that the notion of Theme and Rheme can be very useful in evaluating L2 writing.

The purpose of this paper is to apply insights gained from observing patterns of Theme and Rheme relations in students' writing in Indonesia to help improve coherence at the discourse level. This paper begins with an overview of the theoretical framework underlying this approach, in particular discussing the notions of Theme and Rheme, which is drawn from a Systemic Functional Linguistics. The paper also discusses the results of analyzing twenty five compositions of Indonesian EFL University students obtained during a writing class and the implications for teaching writing.

## **WRITING**

Producing a piece of writing requires some skills that involve the structure of the writing and the sentence skills. In the structure of a paragraph, the structure is a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence, while sentence skills include verb forms, run-on sentences, fragments, word choices, punctuation, and so on (Langan, 1996). It is important for learners to master these skills in writing.

Besides the mastery of the structure of the writing and the sentence skills, learners are demanded to have the ability to produce a cohesive and coherent piece of writing. Coherence refers to the overall connectedness of the ideas in a piece of writing. Cohesion refers more specifically to connections between sentences. A discourse may be said to be cohesive but incoherent. The following example illustrates a cohesive but incoherent writing.

(1) I am a teacher. The teacher was late for class. Class rhymes with grass. The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. But it wasn't. (Taken from <http://www.onestopenglish.com/support/ask-the-experts/methodology-questions/methodology-coherence-and-cohesion/154867.article>)

The example (1) shows us that some words are repeated: teacher, class, and grass. However, the coherence is missing since each clause stands alone and does not contribute meaning at discourse level.

## **THE CLAUSE AS A MESSAGE: THEME AND RHEME**

All languages contain messages to be delivered, and they are organized in such a way that the speakers of the language understand. With regard to this, the message is the crucial point of communication to be conveyed through language. In English, meaning which is realized in the clause has three distinct functions. They are the Theme functions, the Subject functions, and the Actor functions. The Theme functions are realized in Clause as a Message. It is this element the speaker selects for grounding what the speaker is going to say. The Subject functions are realized in the Clause as an Exchange, which involves a transaction between speaker and listener. The last functions, the Actor, are represented in the Clause as Representation, in which the Actor is the active participant in the process.





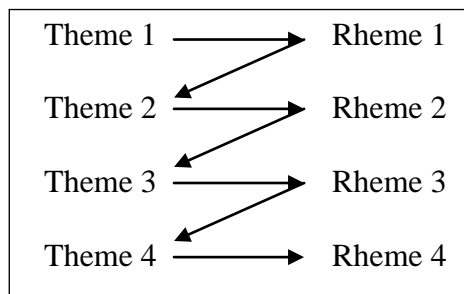
adverbs, prepositional phrases, nonfinite clauses, and finite clauses such as what is more, that is to say. Although linking devices are required to join clauses, at the discourse level, the progression of the Theme is crucial too. The thematic progression can reveal the unity or coherence of a discourse. Being a cohesive discourse does not necessarily mean a coherent one. It is, therefore, important to consider the thematic and rhematic progression.

A parallel textual system to Theme and Rheme is the notions of Given and New information. Given is the information that has already been known to those involved in the interaction. New signals the exciting bit of information that has not been mentioned earlier. The unmarked pattern is that Given information is included in the Theme of a clause and New information is somewhere in the Rheme (Butt, *et al.* 2000: 146). The example of the nursery rhyme *The farmer in the dell* illustrates the thematic progression in a narrative discourse.

- (6)     1        The farmer takes a wife  
          2        The wife takes a child  
          3        The child takes a nurse  
          4        The nurse takes a dog

The thematic progression of the nursery rhyme is illustrated in figure1.

Figure 1: Thematic Progression of *The Farmer in the Dell*



The Themes in the nursery rhyme above demonstrate the interrelated Themes and Rhemes in which the Themes are derived from the Rhemes.

## METHODOLOGY

The data of the research are the explanatory compositions written by EFL university students in Bandung, Indonesia, sitting on the second semester taking Essay Writing course. Twenty five students, divided into two groups, were selected based on the scores they obtained on the first holistic evaluation in week 3. The evaluation was comprised of development of ideas, organization, and grammar/structure with equal weighting. Group I consisted of 10 (ten) students scored 60 or lower, and group II were 15 (fifteen) students scored 61 or higher. On the first piece of writing, all students were asked to write an essay on one of the following topics:

1. The most useful invention
2. The best job
3. A parent's greatest responsibilities
4. Good manners
5. The worst movie of all time

The scores the students obtained on the first evaluation serve as the baseline, and during this time the notions of Theme and Rheme were not introduced but they were guided through the process

of writing. In week 4, the notions of Theme and Rheme were introduced. They were taught to apply the notions of Theme and Rheme for the self-assessment of their own compositions and for peer-editing. In week 8, both groups were asked to write an essay on one of the topics:

1. Life lesson from school
2. Cheating
3. Studying in high school and in university
4. School uniform

Since the essays were relatively long, I put my focus on the introductions of the essays. The justification of the limitation is that the introductory paragraph of an essay is crucial in organizing the essay as the thesis statement located in the introduction guides a writer in writing an essay. Through a coherent introductory paragraph, a writer can better her essay.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to denote the contrast of the introductions of the two groups, I analyzed two introductions written by two students. Text (1) was written by a student in group 1, and text (2) by a student in group 2. Both texts (1) and (2) are about the best job.

Text 1 (by AR)

(1) Which job do you want: a job which can give you a lot of money or a job which can be useful for everybody? (2) Most people want a job which can give them a lot of money. (3) That is a character of human (4) and I don't blame someone who thinks about it. (5) But if we always keep that argument, (6) we don't realize (7) we are like beggars (8) because our mindset is what Indonesia has done for you. (9) We have to change our mindset become what you have done for Indonesia. (10) This mindset belongs to someone who works to create our future. (11) It is a teacher. (12) A teacher is the best job in the world (13) because the duty of this job is to create someone to become a leader in every country and make someone good or smart in academic or action to develop every country, especially our country.

In text (1) two Themes are introduced in clause (1): interpersonal and topical. Interpersonal Theme1 (Th1interpersonal) is *which job*; topical Theme 1 (Th1topic) is *you* and the Rheme 1 (Rh1) is *want a job which can give you a lot of money or a job which can be useful for everybody*. Th2 (*most people*) is a new Theme; Rh2 (*want a job which can give them a lot of money*) is derived from Rh1. Th3 (*that*) is from Rh2; Rh3 is a character of human. In clause (4), the textual Theme (Th4text) is *and*, which signals additional information to clause 3; Th4topic is *I* and Rh4 is *don't blame someone who thinks about it*. In clause 5, there are two Themes, textual and topical Themes. The textual Theme (Th5text) is *but if*, which contrasts and conditions the information in the preceding clause in clause (4) and (5). Th5topic (*we*) is a new Theme since agents mentioned in the preceding clauses are *you*, *most people*, and *I*. Rh5 is *always keep that argument* is derived from Rh2. Th6topic (*we*) is the same as Th5 topic; Rh6 is *don't realize*. Th7topic is *we*, which is also the same as Th5topic 5 and 6. Rh7 is *are like beggars*. Th8 text is *because*; Th8topic is *our mindset* and Rh8 is *what Indonesia has done for you*. Th9topic is *we*, which is also the same as Th5, 6, and 7. Rh9 is *we have to change our mindset become what you*

have done for Indonesia. Th10topic (*this mindset*) is derived from Rh9; Rh10 is *belongs to someone who works to create our future*. Th11topic (*it*) to some extent is derived from Rh10. Rh11 is *a teacher*. Th12topic (*a teacher*) is derived from Rh11; Rh12 is *the best job in the world*. Clause (13) comprises Th13text (*because*), which signals reason for Rh12 and Th13topic (the duty of this job). Rh13 is *to create someone to become a leader in every country and make someone good or smart in academic or action to develop every country, especially our country*. The following figure (Figure 2) illustrates the Theme and Rheme progression of text (1).

Figure 2: Theme and Rheme Progression of Text (1)

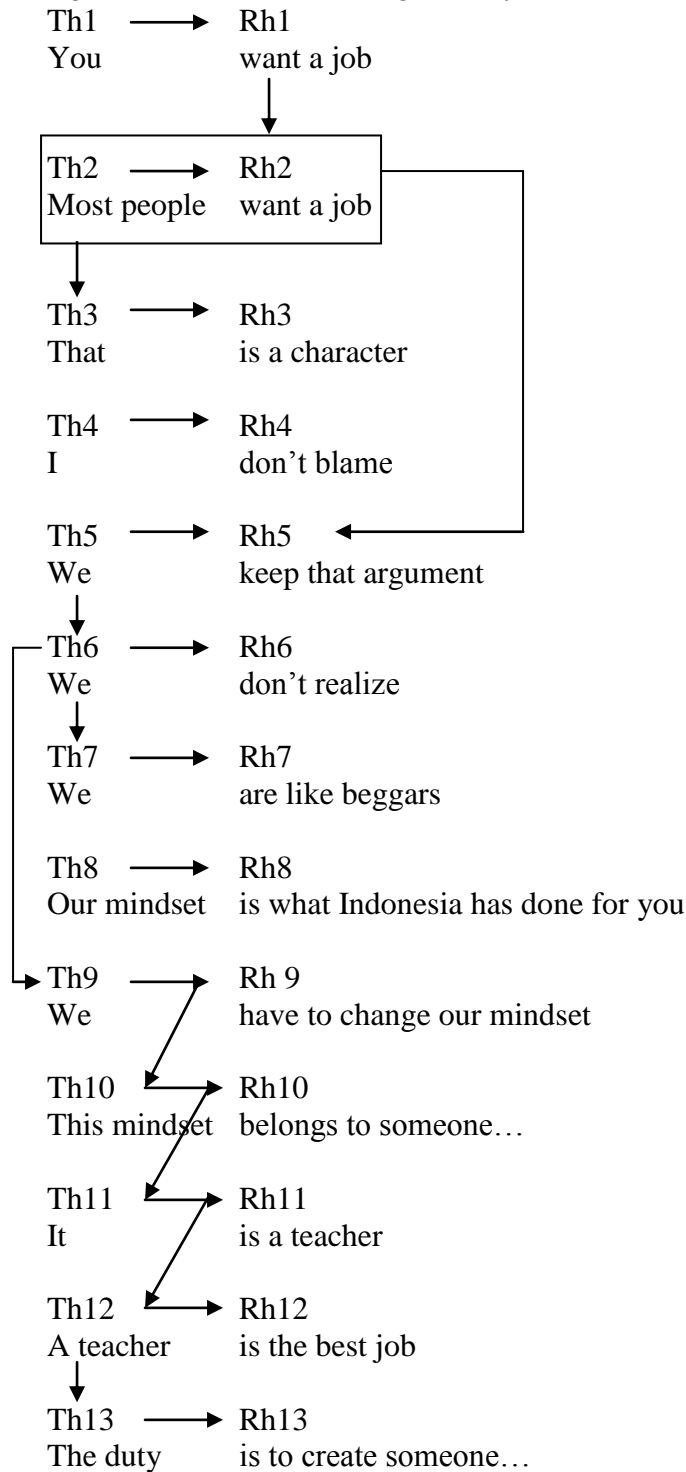


Figure 2 shows us that Th4 and Th5 are not derived from any of the Themes nor the Rhemes. Rhemes (3), (4), (6), (7), (8) are not developed at all. This indicates that the text does not develop the ideas mentioned in preceding clauses. Instead, the student jumped from one idea, a character, to another idea, which tells about a teacher. In terms of cohesion, this text is cohesive as there are repeated words and linking devices.

Text 2 (by AA)

(1) As college students, we should start to think about the future. (2) The future is about (3) what job a college student should take after graduating from college. (4) This problem is what I have started to think recently. (5) The question “What kind of job should I take?” is always stuck in my mind. (6) I finally got enlightened at a time (7) that the best job that would fit and beneficial to you is a job that you like, you master at, and could provide you with the fund to live for the future.

Clause (1) in text (2) comprises two Themes: interpersonal and topical. Th1 interpersonal is *as college students*, and Th1topic is *we*. Rh1 is *should start to think about the future*. Th2topic = (Rh1) is *the future*, and Rh2 is *about*. Th3interpersonal is *what job*; Th3topic is *a college student*, and Rh3 is *should take after graduating from college*. Th4 is the same as Rh3; Rh4 is *what I have started to think recently*. Th5topic (*the question “What kind of job should I take?”*) is derived from Rh3; Rh5 is *always stuck in my mind*. Th6topic (*I*) is a new Theme, but it is clearly one of the constituents mentioned in Rh3 and Rh4. Th6interpersonal is *finally*, and Rh6 is *got enlightened at a time*. In clause (7), Th7text is *that*, and Th7topic is *best job that would fit and beneficial to you*. The Rh7 is *a job that you like, you master at, and could provide you with the fund to live for the future*. The following figure (Figure 3) illustrates the Theme and Rheme progression of Text 2.

Figure 3: Theme and Rheme Progression of Text 2

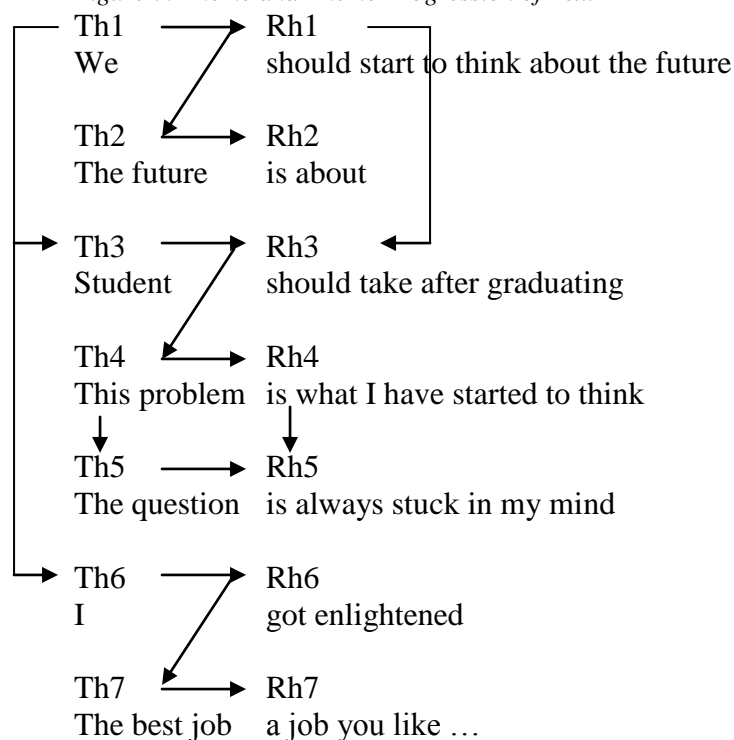


Figure 3 depicts the relationship of the Themes and Rhemes in Text 2. As shown above, the Themes and Rhemes of the text are interrelated. The student referred to preceding Theme and Rheme prior to introducing a new idea. Therefore, text 2 is coherent. Cohesion is seen from repeated words, synonyms, and linking devices.

From the analysis of text (1), it is clear that the relationship of clauses (7) and the subsequent clauses is not clear as the Theme is not derived from any of the Rhemes. Some Rhemes are not further developed and just left hanging without any explanation. Thus, the coherence of the text is not well-built. Text (1) is ended by *A teacher is the best job in the world because the duty of this job is to create someone to become a leader in every country and make someone good or smart in academic or action to develop every country, especially our country*, which does not provide sufficient room for idea development in following paragraphs. On the other hand, the ideas in text (2) are better developed as seen from Theme and Rheme progression. Text (2) is ended by a thesis statement about the criteria of the best job. Text 2, therefore, is more coherent than text (1).

After the application of Theme and Rheme, in week 8, the students were told to write essays on one of the topics (life lesson from school, cheating, studying in high school and university, and school uniform). Each student's introduction was evaluated on the basis of sentence skills and development of ideas. The following text is one sample of the analysis.

Text 3 (by JP)

(1) When I was in elementary school, (2) I think (3) high school was the perfect place to study and improve my skill.(4) It was better than university (5) because my surroundings taught me that university courses were hard to study. (6) But my opinion changed (7) since I was admitted to university. (8) Now, I think (9) that university is the best place to study (10) because I can learn only what I want, improve my soft skills, and be responsible.

Clause (1) of text 3 has two kinds of Themes, namely textual and topical Themes. The student, (JP) thematized textual Theme (Th1text) *when*, and Th1topic is *I*. Rh1 is *was in elementary school*. Th2topic is *I* and Rh1 is *think*. Th3topic is *high school*; Rh3 is *the perfect place to study and improve my skill*. Th4topic is *it* (*high school*=Rh1), and Rh4 is *better than university*. In clause 5, Th5text is *because*, which signals reason of Rh4, and Th5topic is *my surroundings taught me that university courses were hard to study*. In clause (6), the beginning is Th3text *but* to signal contrast with clauses (3) and (4). Th6top (*my opinion*) is the same as Rh3; Rh6 is *changed*. Th7text is *since*, Th7topic is *I*. Rh7 is *was admitted to university*. Th8text (*now*) begins clause (8), which denotes the change in time course referring to clause (1); Th8top is *I* and Rh8 is *think*. Th9topic is *that* and Th9topic is *university*; Rh9 is *the place to study*. Th10topic *because* begins clause (10); Th10topic is *I* and Rh10 is *can learn only what I want, improve my soft skills, and be responsible*. The Theme and Rheme progression indicates that JP developed the ideas well as seen from the Themes derived from Themes or Rhemes of preceding clauses.

Overall result of the students' performance after the application of Theme and Rheme is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Student Performance

Group	Number of students	Performance
1	2	Low
	8	Improved
2	9	Stagnant
	6	Improved
Total	25	

From the table, we can see that 8 students in group 1 who were in the low achievers, could improve their performance and produced more cohesive and coherent introductions; 2 students did not get any improvement. Six students belonging to group 2 improved their performance, and the performance of 9 students remained the same.

Significant results were obtained from students of group 1 because 8 out of 10 could improve their writing skills, particularly in coherence. Only 6 students of group 2 improved, while others remained the same. The reasons for this are unrevealed since no interview was undertaken. However, I assume this could be caused by their awareness and understanding of producing coherent and well-developed ideas in their compositions due to their higher level of English proficiency.

## CONCLUSION

This study proves that the notions of Theme and Rheme is useful to guide students in developing ideas; thus, the application of Theme and Rheme can improve coherence in writing. With regard to teaching writing, it is highly recommended that teachers understand the development of ideas through Theme and Rheme. With such analyses I have demonstrated, teachers can diagnose students' weaknesses in writing. Students, on the other hand, will benefit the insight of Theme and Rheme and apply them when drafting and revising their compositions. This will certainly produce more cohesive and coherent compositions. In addition to this, students themselves can self-evaluate the way they develop their ideas in their compositions. Despite the fruitful results of the application of Theme and Rheme on Indonesian EFL students' writing, to obtain more comprehensive accounts on the application of Theme and Rheme, further research on different text-types is required.

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## **Authenticity and Sampling in C-Tests: A schema-Based and Statistical Response to Grotjahn's Critique**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The paper aims to respond to Grotjahn's (2012a) critique of Khodadady and Hashemi's (2011) paper "Validity and C-Tests: The Role of Text Authenticity" by employing reduced redundancy (RR) and schema theories. It counter argues that developing conventional C-Tests on several short texts and modifying their contents do not render them "genuine" for RR has nothing to do either with the number and length of texts to be chosen or with mutilating a set number of words constituting those texts. Without acknowledging, however, the conventional C-Test designers resort to the macrostructural view of schema theory to justify measuring "special knowledges" assumed to be conveyed in several texts. They do, nonetheless, utilize its micro structures, i.e., their constituting words, when they mutilate every second word from the second sentence and onwards. Based on the RR and schema theory as well as the texts selected and the data presented by several authors, the points raised by Grotjahn are discussed and suggestions are made for future research.

**Keywords:** Schema theory, reduced redundancy, sampling, authenticity

### **INTRODUCTION**

Critiquing my joint paper "Validity and C-Tests: The Role of Text Authenticity" (Khodadady & Hashemi, 2011) [henceforth K&H] Grotjahn (2012a) announced that "it was severely flawed" (p. 12). Although the very time Grotjahn had spent on the critique necessitated appreciation, I found it rather surprising that he had not mentioned even a *single* strongpoint in the entire paper. As a language educator who has offered various courses in applied linguistics at both undergraduate and graduate levels in general and language testing in particular for over two decades to both native and non-native speakers of English, I have always done my best to help both language learners and teachers see the advantages of a research project, however flawed it might sound to them, before they focus on its possible disadvantages. Therefore, I appreciate Grotjahn's (2012) critical reading of my earlier paper as well, i.e., C-Tests: Method Specific Measures of Language Proficiency (Khodadady, 2007), which provides the necessary background for the points I will raise to address the *assumed* flaws. In contrast to Grotjahn, I will choose more *positive* headings in order not to activate unfavorable schemata in my reader's minds before they formulate their own on the basis of what they read. I will first focus on review of literature and then address the theoretical foundation of C-Tests and the authenticity of texts upon which they must be developed if they are accepted and employed as measures of language proficiency.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Grotjahn (2012a) claimed that “K & H’s literature review is incomplete” (p. 12). However, instead of referring to K&H to support his claim, he refers to Khodadady (2007). In addition to the fallacy of criticizing the content of one study on the basis of the content of another, what Grotjahn quotes from Khodadady is, unfortunately, removed from its context. Based on the decontextualised phrase “lack of research on C-Tests” quoted from Khodadady, he announces that “C-Tests are among the best researched testing instruments” (p. 21) and provides Eckes and Grotjahn (2006) and Grotjahn (2010, 2012b) as his chief references.

Since in his critique Grotjahn (2012a) might have unintentionally left out the paragraph preceding the quoted phrase, it is quoted below to provide the necessary context.

Although C-Tests were invented in 1981, they have received little attention in *English* language testing literature. For example, in his fairly comprehensive review of correlational studies conducted on C-Tests so far, Sigott (2004, pp. 61-65) could tabulate 28 among which only 11, i.e., 39%, have been in English. This is reflected in textbooks written for teacher training programs, e.g., Madsen (1983), Heaton (1988), Baker (1989), where C-Tests are not even mentioned. Similarly, there is no entry for C-Tests in the *Dictionary of Language, Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992). Bachman (1990), however, referred to C-Tests as variants of cloze tests in passing (Khodadady, 2007, p. 21).

Based on the reasons outlined above for the lack of long due original research papers written in *English*, which was originally italicized in the quoted paragraph to emphasize the variable of language in which the research projects need to be done *as well as* reported, Khodadady (2007) argued that

The overall public and expert inattention might be attributed partly to a lack of research on C-Tests and partly to their nature. Davies (1990) dubbed them ‘a particular and rather recondite use of the cloze test’ (p. 94) and thus obliged researches like the present one to contribute to those studies which have already shed some light on their internal, empirical and factorial validity (p. 21).

The first directly quoted paragraph preceding the phrase quoted in the paragraph above, i.e., a lack of research on C-Tests, is composed to draw the attention of testing experts and students alike to the very fact that there is still an urgent need to design and conduct research projects on C-Tests and report them in *English* so that scholars who write textbooks in English can include C-Tests as important, though method specific (Khodadady, 2007), measures of language testing. While I appreciate the attempt of designers of the site given by Grotjahn, i.e., [www.c-test.de](http://www.c-test.de), to provide interested readers with open-access links on C-Tests, *even* that site falls short of providing diverse enough studies written in English to support his decontextualized argument. Out of 43 links, only 18 (41.9%) are in *English*, showing statistically that 58.1% of links are all in *German* not in *English*. Furthermore, C-Tests need to be developed in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, to name a few. [This suggestion does not mean that I am unaware of the C-Tests designed in languages such as French and Japanese!]

### ***Prescriptive Vs. Descriptive Approach in Testing***

Grotjahn (2012) claimed that the K & H's C-Test developed on a single authentic text is not *genuine*. The claim is based on Klein-Braley's (1997, p. 65) belief that "because the C-Test consists of a number of different texts the sampling of content classes is better. Examinees who happen to have special knowledge in certain areas no longer have substantial advantages over other examinees" (p. 65). According to Grotjahn (2012a) the belief "implies that C-Tests *always* [Italics added] consist of several texts and that therefore a single long C-Test text with 180 gaps such as K & H's authentic C-Test (AC-Test) is not a genuine C-Test" (p. 21). With due respect, I disagree with Klain-Braley's belief and what it implies to Grotjahn. What she says is not an *absolute* rule to be followed by test designers. I strongly believe that the time for prescribing certain rules to be followed by everyone is long over. As a matter of fact, science established itself as an indispensable tool to understand the functioning of various variables when it questioned the validity of some beliefs held by authorities.

It is, for example, argued in this paper that Klain-Braley (1997) contradicted herself unconsciously when she employed reduced redundancy (RR) as a theoretical rationale for C-Tests but followed schema theory in practice. While the former has nothing to offer as far as the number of texts employed in C-Tests is concerned, the latter does address and necessitate the selection and inclusion of various texts by resorting to its macro structural approach. To support the argument, schema theory will be described, albeit briefly, and then C-Tests will be analyzed within an RR perspective.

### ***Macro and Micro Structural Views of Schema Theory***

According to schema theory, reading comprehension ability can be measured either macro structurally or micro structurally (Khodadady, 1997, 1999). A given text is viewed as a single schema or macro structure which requires "special knowledge" in Klein-Braley's (1997, p. 65) words or "a conventional knowledge structure that exists in memory" in Yule's (2006 p. 132) perspective. However, no one still knows, as Grabe (2002) put it, "how it would work for reading comprehension" (p. 282). Although cloze tests were developed originally as measures of readability, they were later employed in language testing as integrative measures of language proficiency assuming that test takers' would employ their language proficiency, not their "special knowledge" of *a* given text, to restore its deleted words on the basis of hypotheses they formulate as they read the text (Khodadady & Herriman, 2000). Klein-Braley, however, interpreted language proficiency as "special knowledge" of *a* given text and extended it to "*special knowledges*" of several texts. (Notice that the plural morph –s is deliberately added to knowledge by the present author.)

Although Klein-Braley (1997) subscribed to the macro structural view of schema theory when she emphasized "*special knowledges*" measured by several short texts, she violated one of its main principles when she developed her C-Tests on *general topics* assuming that these general topics are synonymous with *allegedly different* areas of human knowledge. In order to help the test takers activate their "special knowledge" of a certain text or schema test designers conventionally provide its title and leave its first sentence intact. However, Klein-Braley

employed Text 1, 2, 3 and 4 as the titles of the four piloted texts on which she developed her final C-Test. She did, nonetheless, leave the first sentences of these texts intact as the second principle followed by followers of macro structural/top-down approach of schema theory stipulates. (It must be emphasized that reduced redundancy cannot, by its very nature, say anything about providing the title and first sentences because its occurrence is based on randomness or probability. In natural settings any part of any text can go missing because of variables such as noise and distraction.)

Since there is no title for the texts employed by Klein-Braley (1997) to address the nature of “special knowledge,” the titles of the texts selected by Babaii and Ansary (2001) are given here. These conventional C-Test designers have been chosen because Grotjahn (2012a) seemed to have agreed with their selection of texts and reliability analyses. The titles are “A slip of the Tongue”, “the End of the World”, “A 50 Percent Thief”, and “Keep the Torch Burning”. These topics deal, according to the present author, with the usual issues encountered by almost all proficient English readers. It remains to be found out how Klein-Braley and Grotjahn would justify their claim that the “special knowledge” of a given test taker of C-Test developed on “A slip of the Tongue” will, for example, be different from, say, that of the second or third test taker?

Similarly, it remains to be explained by Grotjahn how, say, the first test taker’s “special knowledge” of “A slip of the Tongue” will be different from his knowledge of “The End of the World” or “A 50 Percent Thief”. This assumption violates Spolsky’s (1973) insistence on a *single* “knowledge of the language” (p. 7) based upon which a test taker can restore the missing parts of a message. In other words, *a single knowledge of the language* will be enough to restore the missing parts of *any* given text and thus assuming the existence of “*special knowledges*” on the part of test takers violates the principle upon which C-Tests are designed.

Interestingly enough Grotjahn (2012a), however, objected to K&H’s use of using *C-Tests* in plural and emphasized that Klein-Braley used its singular form, i.e., *C-Test*. As discussed previously, the use of *C-Test* is not only misleading but also flies against the results reported by Klein-Braley (1997) herself as shown in Table 1. In describing the table she wrote, “the reliability coefficients have been calculated for the *individual tests* [italics added] using KR-21” (p. 67). As can be seen, the descriptive statistics of C1, C2, C3 and C4 are reported as *individual tests*. Since Klein-Braley could not solve the self-created problem of using the singular C-Test for each of its four constituting tests, she employed C1, C2, C3 and C4. Khodadady (2007) simply referred to them as C-Test 1, C-Test 2, C-Test 3 and C-Test 4, respectively, and treated them as *individual tests* as Klein-Braley (1997, p. 67) herself did.

**Table 1: Basic test statistics for the tests of reduced redundancy (Klein-Braley, 1997, p. 67)**

Test	Mean	SD	P	$r_{KR(21)}$	$r_{COSTA1}$
CLOZE1	6.38	2.91	.32	.51	.71
CLOZE2	4.34	2.58	.22	.52	.58
C1	15.15	4.28	.61	.70	.68
C2	10.69	5.85	.43	.86	.66
C3	14.86	4.98	.60	.79	.53
C4	10.42	4.71	.42	.78	.45
MC1	16.32	3.31	.63	.46	.55
MC2	13.47	3.35	.56	.49	.61
CE1	14.10	4.89	.56	.72	.56
CE2	8.64	5.45	.35	.64	.45
DICT	31.36	12.54	.62	.94	.71
DELTA	83.40	22.07	.58	.93	1.00

It is further argued in this paper that the assumed “special knowledge” of a given text is based on macro structural school of schema theory adopted and operationalized by the designers of earlier IELTS modules (e.g., Clapham, 1996, Kelly, 1978). The assumption was that since the background knowledge required for understanding a given field such as humanities is different from another field such as engineering, the test takers wishing to continue their academic studies in engineering in English would be at a loss if their reading comprehension texts were chosen from humanities. What Klein-Braley (1997) and other designers of conventional C-Tests such as Babaii and Ansary (2001) did not notice was that neither titleless and numbered texts such as 1, 2, 3 and 4 nor texts dealing with general topics such as “a slip of the Tongue” and “the End of the World” are field-dependent and thus could not represent various types of “special knowledge”. Even if they did, studies after studies showed that proficient test takers having “special knowledge” of a given field did not necessarily perform significantly differently on the tests developed in their field than those possessing “special knowledge” in a different field.

### ***C-Tests and Reduced Redundancy***

Since providing an operationalized definition of “special knowledge” in terms of schema theory to establish C-Tests as macro structural measures of language proficiency is too difficult, if not impossible, Klein-Braley (1997) employed RR as a viable rationale to provide C-Tests with a theoretical foundation. Similar to her, Spolsky (1973) is quoted below in order to find out whether it can be applied to conventional C-Tests.

The non-native’s inability to function with reduced redundancy, evidence that he cannot supply from his knowledge of the language the experience on which to base his guesses as to what is missing. In other words, the key thing missing is the richness of knowledge of probabilities - on all levels, phonological, grammatical, lexical, and semantic - in the language (p. 17)

According to Klein-Braley (1997), Spolsky assumed that “knowing a language certainly involves the ability to understand a distorted message, to make valid guesses about a certain percentage of omitted elements” (p. 47). As can be seen, there is no indication of “special knowledge” of the distorted message neither in Spolsky’s nor in Klein-Braley’s quoted claims. Klein-Braley does, however, provide a lengthy review of literature dealing with cloze test as measures of RR without any indication of how “special knowledge” relates to RR and whether she has borrowed the concept from top-down models of reading or schema theory.

As discussed before, choosing a number of texts for the development of C-Tests is based on macro structural view of schema theory. If test takers coming from diverse fields such as humanities and engineering are going to take them as valid measures of language proficiency then choosing representative texts from their respective fields would be justified. However, it does not apply to the tests developed by Klein-Braley (1997) because they are not developed on any “special knowledge” which might be known to certain test takers, say those of humanities, and stay unknown to others, say engineering. It is, therefore, suggested that instead of choosing a number of short texts dealing with general topics, more C-Tests be developed on single authentic texts written for the literate English speaking public as K&H did. It is also suggested that C-Test



items be developed on first sentences to find out whether their being kept intact has any significant effect on test results.

### ***Randomness and Reduced Redundancy***

This paper attempts to show that RR has nothing to do with “special knowledge” upon which Grotjahn (2012a) questioned the development of an authentic (A)C-Test on a single text. It also tries to show that neither cloze tests nor C-Tests comply *fully* with the stated principle of RR as conceived by Spolsky. The concept of noise as the main cause of distortion in native speakers’ reception of messages in real life is based on *probability*, i.e., it occurs randomly and may affect any parts of an authentic text. Although Spolsky (1973) had observed the occurrence of RR, he remained quite vague in its description as far as the present author’s knowledge and experiences allow. Spolsky believed, for example, RR occurred “on all levels, phonological, grammatical, lexical, and semantic - in the language” (p. 17). It remains to be researched, for example, whether and how *semantic* is affected by RR. To begin with semantic is an abstract concept as is phonology. How would Spolsky himself and other believers in RR translate these ***abstract concepts*** into describing ***concrete missing parts*** of a distorted text?

Klein-Braley (1997) seems to be the first who translated Spolsky’s belief into practice *quantitatively* by announcing that “knowing a language certainly involves the ability to understand a distorted message, to make valid guesses about *a certain percentage* [italics added] of omitted elements” (p. 47). Along with her colleagues she developed C-Tests by mutilating *at least* 100 words constituting the second and subsequent sentences of texts. Grotjahn (2012a) offered “a practical advantage” as a rationale saying that “the raw scores do not have to be converted into percentages” (p.24). The present author could not, however, make out how “a practical advantage” can be used as ***a theoretical basis*** as K&H wrote, “there is no theoretically sound basis to establish a cut off number for the items comprising the C-Tests, i.e., 100, as Klein-Braley (1997) did” (p. 35).

The concept of randomness in RR is emphasized in this paper because it embodies several cardinal variables playing significant roles in language testing. Surprisingly however, Spolsky (2001) revealed his unfamiliarity with these variables when he preferred C-Tests over cloze tests simply because the results obtained on the former do not support his *vague* theory of RR. According to him,

By omitting words, which are *linguistic* [italics added] elements with certain properties a cloze test was biasing itself to testing certain areas of language ... the technique she [Klein-Braley] proposed as an alternative, the C-Test, used half words. A half word is much less linguistic - not a discrete item - and so much more information theory-oriented and integrative. Essentially, a C-Test was much closer to a noise test in the *randomness* [italics added] of the reduction of redundancy and so a purer example of an integrative rather than a discrete item test (p. 7).

What Spolsky (2001) stated in the quoted block above is self-condemning for several reasons/variables. *First*, how can deleting complete word be *linguistic* and *non-random* but their mutilation be *integrative* and *random*? If we consider integrativeness as an indispensable part of context, then the opposite will hold true. While it is impossible to restore any omitted word without having access to its context, Khodadady (2007) showed that out of 99 mutilated words comprising Klein-Braley’s (1997) C-Tests, 11 functioned quite well when they were removed from their textual context and presented as single mutilated words to be restored on the basis of

directions given in C-Tests. In other words, test takers could restore eleven percent of items on the C-Test without having any context!

Secondly, RR cannot specify which words/items, i.e., every second word, must be mutilated if they are chosen *randomly*, hence Spolsky (2001) contradicted himself by claiming that C-Tests are “much closer to a noise test in the *randomness*” (p. 7). Thirdly, noise can affect all textual units, e.g., words, phrases and clauses, and the advocates of RR need, therefore, to justify the nature of the missing items in terms of the “phonological, grammatical, lexical, and semantic” levels specified by Spolsky (1973). Fourthly, RR cannot endorse leaving the title and first sentence of a given text intact because these two textual units might also go missing when it takes place in reality. And finally noise distorts *authentic* texts which are produced and processed for *real* purposes in *real* places at *real* times and for *real* purposes.

### ***Text Authenticity and C-Tests***

This paper supports Khodadady (2007) and K&H’ view that authentic texts have **not** been used in the development of conventional C-Tests and questions Grotjahn’s (2012a) decontextualized quotations of K & H’s sentences in order to prove that the development of C-Tests on authentic texts is endorsed and brought up by Klein-Braley (1997) *first*. He writes

Although K & H on p. 31 explicitly refer to Klein-Braley (1997, p. 64), they only state “that between four to six carefully selected texts should be chosen”, omitting the qualification “preferably authentic”. (p. 21)

Grotjahn (2012a) quotes both K & H and Klein-Braley in an ambiguous way. His manner of quotation leads readers to the conclusion that K & H deliberately omitted the phrase “preferably authentic” from the sentence he quotes from K & H. In other words, the quoted *that clause* belongs to K & H, i.e., “that between four to six carefully selected texts should be chosen” (p. 31) whereas the phrase “preferably authentic” belongs to Klein-Braley (1997, p. 64). The following quotation provides the original context to which K & H referred to *indirectly*.

A number of texts, usually between four and six, are put together to make a C-Test. Because of problems with text difficulty, usually overestimated by the test constructor (cf. Klein-Braley, 1985b; 1994), one should begin with more texts than will be finally needed. The texts are ordered intuitively according to difficulty (Klein-Braley, 1997, p. 65).

Klein-Braley (1997) did suggest the selection of “preferably authentic” (p. 64) texts. However, she did not provide her readers with any specific definition of authenticity. Neither did she supply them with any references to verify her suggestion. For example, nobody knows what sources she used to select Texts 1, 2, 3 and 4 to develop her C-Tests from. In contrast, K&H employed “why don’t we just kiss and make up” (Dugatkin, 2005) published in *NewScientist* magazine whose authenticity can be verified by all interested readers. They chose this magazine because its articles are “more academic than ... articles in quality newspapers” (Clapham, 1996, p. 145) and they provide standard scientific texts for public readership.

Not only did Klein-Braley (1997) provide no references to find out what sample authentic texts she had preferred but also she believed that “no language test is *authentic*” (p. 48). She argued that “normal language is not produced in order to be assessed.” The present author, however, argues that English writers produce normal/authentic texts to be read. *Whatever texts which are produced to be read by the literate public are authentic*. This argument was employed to question the construct validity of the TOEFL by highlighting the fact that its reading comprehension texts are written by language testing experts in order to *test* reading comprehension ability (see Khodadady, 1997). Since the texts upon which the TOEFL is designed are not *authentic*, i.e., *they are not written to be read*, it lacks construct validity. The same argument was employed by K&H to show that the four texts employed by Klein-Braley (1997) were not *authentic* because they were not written to be *read*. If they were, she would have provided their sources or references.

### ***Sampling Authentic Texts for C-Tests***

According to Klein-Braley (1997), a number of texts need to be selected to develop C-Tests because their writers may face “problems with text difficulty” (p. 65) and thus may have to do away with some. Finding texts with appropriate difficulty is not only problematic for designing language proficiency tests such as C-Tests, it violates the principle of authenticity in that the authentic texts written to be read by literate public may have all levels of assumed difficulty. Furthermore, it poses a real problem which becomes more complicated and time consuming when the test designers realize that some of their chosen texts have functioned poorly in the pilot phase and they must, therefore, look for suitable substitutes. In Baghaei’s (2008) words,

For developing a C-Test battery the number of the texts used should be more than the number required since even native speakers cannot obtain perfect scores (95%) on some texts. They believe that native speakers should perform perfectly on language tests. To what extent this view is credible is another issue (p. 33).

The selection of texts written to be *read* by the literate public not only ensures authenticity and dispenses with the necessity of administering C-Tests to *native speakers* but also relieves C-Test designers from looking for a number of texts with appropriate difficulty levels. K&H, therefore, chose a single text whose C-Test items functioned as well as conventional C-Tests developed on four texts as will be discussed shortly. The only reason Klein-Braley (1997) provided for the cumbersome and theoretically questionable process of choosing a number of texts instead of a single authentic text is her adamant attempt to sample texts addressing “*special knowledges*”. This attempt is, nonetheless, misplaced because RR has little, if any, to do with text selection.

In addition to the fallacy of employing “special knowledge” as a synonym for a given area of knowledge such as humanities and engineering, the very necessity of choosing short texts in order to account for “*special knowledges*” fails to represent the types of texts proficient test takers are going to read when they enter higher education centers. If we take academic textbooks and articles as the most normal types of texts read by college and university students, none of these texts consist of a single paragraph! In other words, the C-Tests developed by Klein-Braley (1997) and her followers not only fail to accommodate authenticity in content and audience but also misrepresent academic texts as single short paragraphs!

Since Klain-Braely (1997) ***did not*** provide the sources of her texts so that their intended audiences could be objectively explored, those of Babaii and Ansari (2001) will be addressed as representative samples of conventional C-Tests. Their “eight excerpts were taken from two ELT textbooks, viz *Practice and Progress* (Alexander, 1968) and *To start you practicing* (de Freitas,

1974)” (p. 217). Out of eight conventional C-Tests developed on eight texts *written for teaching English*, only five were kept for final administration because three of them did not reveal Babaii and Ansari’s expected item characteristic indices providing further evidence to support the earlier argument made in this paper, i.e., developing conventional C-Tests entails the cumbersome process of choosing more texts and trying them out in a pilot phase.

Babaii and Ansari (2001) distorted not only the texts of their C-Tests but also the title of the first book they gave as one of the two sources of their selected texts. The full title is not *Practice and Progress* but *Practice and Progress: An Integrated Course for Pre-Intermediate Students* which was published in 1967, not in 1968. As the original title implies, the content of the textbook was written for *teaching* English; therefore, the passages developed in the textbook were not *authentic* in that no proficient English user was supposed to *read* them for the sake of comprehension. Furthermore, the stated level of its would-be users is *Pre-Intermediate* which renders the C-Tests developed on the texts of this textbook questionable if not invalid in terms of their construct validity.

In addition to choosing the texts of an inappropriate proficiency level, Babaii and Ansari (2001) simplified the texts Alexander (1967) had already modified the texts to teach English to *Pre-Intermediate Students*. Alexander himself did not state where he got the passages from. However, he did declare that “each passage contains examples of the language patterns the student is expected to master” (xv) implying that they were particularly *written* for teaching purposes because their constituting number of words also varied according to the students’ level of achievement. While the passages employed for Unit 1, for example, consisted of just one hundred words, they increased to 180 in Unit 4. The educational purposes of *artificially written* or *modified* passages is further emphasized in a section called “For Whom the Course is Intended”, Alexander identifies four types of students among whom are “students in need of remedial work: e.g., ... students who have begun English several times and never got beyond the point of no return” (p. xii)

From among the 26 passages presented in Alexander’s (1967) Unit 4, Babaii and Ansari (2001) chose “A Slip of the Tongue” for inclusion in their C-Test. They refer to this passage along with the other three as “excerpts ... *taken* [italic added] from two ELT textbooks” (p. 213). They do not, however, tell their readers that they have *modified* the “excerpts” as well. While the passage they have included in their C-Test consists of only 80 words, it comprises 181 in Alexander (1967, p. 217). In addition to shortening the text, they changed the constituting words of the passage. For example, the sentence “He *was obviously very* nervous ...” is changed to “He *seemed extremely* nervous ...” for no apparent reason. This means that conventional C-Test designers like Babaii and Ansari not only employ language *teaching* materials for *testing* purposes but also impose their own interpretations on what they choose. (The original passage developed by Alexander and the text simplified by Babaii and Ansari are given in Appendix.)

### ***Content Representation and C-Tests***

In contrast to the macro structural approach of schema theory which falls short of providing any objective and measurable unit of “special knowledge” (e.g., Grabe, 2002), its microstructural

perspective considers any word/phrase comprising an authentic text as a schema whose comprehension on the part of its readers depends on its meaning in relation to syntactic, semantic and discursal relationship it holds with other schemata. [Interested readers are referred to Khodadady (2012) for more details.] Since the comprehension of each and all schemata comprising a given text determines their comprehension and thus behave as its main unit, they must be employed as the *best* and *only* units to develop test items on.

Grotjahn (2012a) seemed to be following the microstructural approach of schema theory because he believed that choosing one authentic text to develop AC-Test would under represent content in terms of *lexis*. He wrote

What is new, however, is K & H's use of a single long authentic text, calling this a C-Test. However, using only one text can lead both to content underrepresentation (e.g., with regard to lexis) and to (severe) bias and unfairness (cf. the quote from Klein-Braley), and, as a consequence, can jeopardize construct validity (p. 21).

Not only the first criticism dealing with the *alleged* content underrepresentation of AC-Test developed by K & H but also the second prescriptive criticism regarding the assumed “(severe) bias and unfairness” of the test are subjective because the data support the opposite as shown in Table 2. If we accept Richards, Platt and Platt's (1992) definition of lexis as “the vocabulary of a language in contrast to its grammar” (p. 213), it is best represented by semantic schemata, i.e., adjectives, adverbs, nouns and verbs. As can be seen, Dugatkin (2005) employed 866 semantic schemata to write the single authentic text consisting of three parts. K & H reproduced its introduction section to develop their AC-Test.

**Table 2: The frequency of semantic, syntactic and parasyntactic tokens comprising texts**

Schema domains	Klein-Braley's four texts		K&H's single text		Dugatkin's (2005) text	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Semantic	174	51.3	271	46.2	866	50.5
Syntactic	148	43.7	222	37.8	638	37.2
Parasyntactic	17	5.0	94	16.0	211	12.3
Total	339	100.0	587	100.0	1715	100.0

As it can also be seen in Table 2, the number of semantic schemata comprising the single AC-Test developed by K&H, i.e., 271, is greater than that of Klein-Braley's (1997), i.e., 174. The Chi-Square analysis of frequency showed that the difference in the number is statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 21.144$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and thus the AC-Test represents content/lexis significantly better than C-Tests. If we take content representation as a measure of fairness, then AC-Tests are fairer than the conventional C-Tests developed on short and modified texts. It is counter argued in this paper that these are the conventional C-Tests which are biased because their designers manipulate the texts syntactically, semantically and discursively to develop, pilot and select well functioning items. In other words, conventional C-Test writers *write* and/or *modify* a number of short texts dealing with general topics and pilot them in order to get their own desired response.

#### ***Internal Validity of Conventional C-Tests and AC-Tests***

In addition to the statistically significant and higher representation of content, AC-Tests are superior to conventional C-Tests in terms of their internal validity. In order to support the



superiority, K&H followed scholars such as Baker (1989) and specified two indices which must be used *together* in order to establish it *statistically*. They announced, “for determining the discrimination power of items point biserial correlations ( $r_{pbi}$ ) between the total test score and individual items were calculated and coefficient of 0.25 and higher were used along with acceptable  $p$ -values as indices of well functioning items” (p. 34).

Grotjahn (2012a), however, called the results reported by K&H “surprising in several ways” (p. 22). As one of the *allegedly* surprising results, he questions “the small range of item difficulties in the standard C-Test” of K & H which contradicts his “own extensive data sets and also to the data reported by Klein-Braley (1996), Jafarpur (1999) or Babaii and Ansari (2001)”. After focusing on the reported range, i.e., .37 to .73, he wonders “whether the difficulty values in the standard C-Test are correctly calculated.” Table 3, presents the frequency of correct responses given to each item on the conventional C-Tests. They were divided by the number of participants, i.e., 135, to get the  $p$ -values (PVs). As can be seen, the PVs are correctly calculated and reported. (The CRs were not given by K & H because they are conventionally considered redundant. Conventional C-Test designers like Klein-Braley (1997) do not, for example, provide their readers with their mean  $r_{pbi}$  let alone the  $r_{pbi}$  of each item.)

**Table 3: Correct responses (CRs) given to each item on the C-Test and their  $p$ -values (PV)**

Item	CR	PV	Item	CR	PV	Item	CR	PV	Item	CR	PV	Item	CR	PV
1	99	.73	21	75	.56	41	67	.50	61	52	.39	81	72	.53
2	91	.67	22	62	.46	42	83	.61	62	62	.46	82	70	.52
3	76	.56	23	75	.56	43	65	.48	63	67	.50	83	88	.65
4	74	.55	24	80	.59	44	79	.59	64	90	.67	84	61	.45
5	74	.55	25	65	.48	45	77	.57	65	59	.44	85	72	.53
6	78	.58	26	76	.56	46	56	.41	66	62	.46	86	88	.65
7	99	.73	27	58	.43	47	63	.47	67	68	.50	87	76	.56
8	89	.66	28	71	.53	48	77	.57	68	56	.41	88	64	.47
9	65	.48	29	83	.61	49	78	.58	69	80	.59	89	68	.50
10	90	.67	30	61	.45	50	71	.53	70	63	.47	90	50	.37
11	96	.71	31	70	.52	51	66	.49	71	77	.57	91	70	.52
12	75	.56	32	67	.50	52	83	.61	72	89	.66	92	57	.42
13	79	.59	33	75	.56	53	80	.59	73	61	.45	93	63	.47
14	75	.56	34	65	.48	54	75	.56	74	83	.61	94	84	.62
15	61	.45	35	53	.39	55	63	.47	75	64	.47	95	68	.50
16	87	.64	36	80	.59	56	81	.60	76	84	.62	96	75	.56
17	68	.50	37	58	.43	57	74	.55	77	78	.58	97	85	.63
18	92	.68	38	73	.54	58	81	.60	78	69	.51	98	78	.58
19	64	.47	39	89	.66	59	57	.42	79	57	.42	99	77	.57
20	80	.59	40	61	.45	60	79	.59	80	60	.44			



Grotjahn (2012a) also stated that K & H should not have generalized from the results obtained on the administration of a single AC-Test to all AC-Tests and their generalization is, therefore, another surprising result which must be treated as a flaw. This statement is questionable at best because all research projects are conducted to generalize their findings otherwise there would be no use for their publication. Klein-Braley (1997), for example, made similar generalizations about testing procedures other than C-Tests. After administering the conventional C-Test employed by K & H along with the tests specified in Table 1 she declared that “the C-Test shows superior performance over the other test procedures in the categories difficulty level, reliability, validity, [and] factorial validity” (p. 71).

Furthermore, Grotjahn (2012a) claimed that “the reported number of well-functioning items in the AC-Test is not correct (at least according to Table 4)” and based on this claim he concluded that “it appears that K & H have taken into account only the values for the discrimination index” (p. 23). Both the claim and conclusion are unfounded because the 97 well functioning items, i.e., 3, 5, 10, 11, 14, 17, 18, 19, 21, 24, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 35, 37, 40, 42, 45, 46, 47, 50, 51, 52, 55, 56, 57, 59, 60, 62, 63, 65, 66, 68, 69, 70, 73, 77, 81, 82, 86, 89, 90, 92, 95, 100, 101, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 110, 111, 112, 113, 115, 118, 120, 122, 124, 125, 126, 130, 132, 133, 135, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 155, 157, 158, 160, 161, 163, 165, 166, 170, 173, 174, 179, and 180, all have acceptable difficulty *and* discrimination indices, i.e., IFs between .25 and .75 and IDs equal to or higher than .25, which can be checked in Table 4.

And finally, Grotjahn (2012a) expressed surprises other than those brought up in previous paragraphs. Since they are all based on the mere assumptions made on the indices employed to determine item functioning, they will not be addressed. (For example, without checking the 97 well functioning items given in Table 4 and enumerated in paragraph above, he announces that “It *appears* [italics added] that K & H have taken into account only the values for the discrimination index” and then based on this totally *subjective assumption* he surprisingly subtracts 12 items from 97 claiming that they “are acceptable with regard to discrimination but not in terms of difficulty.”) Aside from unfounded assumptions he bring up a peculiar objection regarding the standard deviations obtained on conventional C-Tests and AC-Tests which needs to be addressed separately.

### ***Comparing Conventional C-Tests with AC-Test: Standard Deviations***

In order to reject K & H’s adoption of standard deviations (SDs) as indices of comparison between standard C-Test and AC-Tests, Grotjahn (2012a) argued that SDs “clearly depend on the range of the scale and in comparing standard deviations, one has to take this fact into account” (p. 23). Based on this argument he concludes, “therefore the conclusion that the AC-Test distinguishes best among the test takers, because it has the highest standard deviation, is not sufficiently substantiated ...”. This conclusion stands in sharp contrast to its interpretation by authorities such as Thornkdike and Hagan (1977) who declared that the SD “is a measure of variability that goes with the arithmetic mean. It is useful in the field of tests and measurements primarily as providing a *standard* [italics added] unit of measure having comparable meaning from one test to another” (p. 46).

Grotjahn (2012a) brought up the range of a scale in order to reject K & H’s statement that standard deviations are “standardized by their very nature” (p. 35). He seems to have forgotten the fact that SDs are based on the arithmetic mean which derives their strength from normal

distribution and for this very reason SDs provide the best and simplest index to compare two measures such as conventional C-Tests and AC-Tests. According to Thorndike (2005),

This unvarying relationship of the standard deviation unit to the arrangement of scores in the normal distribution gives the standard deviation a type of *standard* [italic added] meaning as a unit of score. It becomes a yardstick in terms of which groups may be compared or the status of a given individual on different traits expressed. For example, if John's score in reading is 1SD above the mean and his score in mathematics is 2 SDs above the mean, then his performance in mathematics is better than his performance in reading (p. 49).

The results of language proficiency tests are used to reach educational decisions. As such they play a significant role in test takers' lives. According to the results obtained by K&H, while conventional C-Tests did not differentiate among many test takers because they obtained the same score, the AC-Test did accomplish the task because of its constituting items and higher magnitude of SD as shown in Table 4. As can be seen, seven test takers have, for example, scored 58 out of 99 on the conventional C-Test and their Z scores are all .40, indicating that they are of the same level of language proficiency. However, while only test takers four and five have obtained the same score on the AC-Test, i.e., 111 out of 180, test taker one's Z-score on AC-Test, i.e., 1.5, is over three times higher than his Z-score on the standard C-Test, i.e., .40, indicating that the former provides a much better measure of his proficiency as those of test takers 2, 3, 4, and 5 do. These differences are all reflected in the SDs of conventional C-Test and AC-Test, i.e., 11.358 and 21.589, respectively (see K & H's Table 2 on page 5 and 6).

**Table 4: The scores of seven test takers on the standard C-Test and AC-Test**

Test taker	Standard C-Test		AC-Test	
	Raw score	Z Score	Raw score	Z Score
1	58	0.40108	130	1.55498
2	58	0.40108	113	0.76754
3	58	0.40108	112	0.72122
4	58	0.40108	111	0.6749
5	58	0.40108	111	0.6749
6	58	0.40108	103	0.30434
7	58	0.40108	98	0.07274

### ***Reliability Estimate of Conventional C-Test and AC-Test***

As a pioneering designer of conventional C-Tests Klein-Braley (1997) employed Cronbach's alpha to explore the reliability of her conventional C-Test on the basis of its individual gaps as reproduced in Table 5 below. K & H applied the same reliability estimate to their data. Surprisingly, however, Grotjahn (2012a) named and criticized Khodadady (2007) specifically for using the estimate and declared that "K & H's reliability estimation for the C-Test and the AC-Test is flawed since the authors calculate Cronbach's alpha on the basis of the individual gaps" (p. 24).

Table 5: Basic test statistics for grouped test procedures reported by Klein-Braley (1997, p. 68)

Test	Mean	SD	P	$r_{t(\text{ALPHA})}$	$r_{(\text{DELTA})}$
ALLCLOZE	10.72	4.79	.27	.66	.65
C-TEST	51.15	16.71	.52	.85	.70
ALLMC	29.90	5.44	.60	.51	.70
ALLCE	22.86	9.28	.46	.75	.65

As an alternative to Cronbach's alpha, Grotjahn (2012a) suggested several approaches whose descriptions run for five paragraphs! What the present researcher understands from the descriptions is that since there is a possibility of "local item dependence (LID) and correlated errors" (p. 24), conventional C-Test designers must employ different approaches whose application is as cumbersome as choosing a large number of texts to replace those which may not function as expected. These approaches are questionable as far as the present author is concerned simply because they are fundamentally utilized to overcome the problem created by *faulty items* and *associated errors*. Using statistics to overcome inherent problems with proficiency tests such as conventional C-Tests, it sounds both esthetically and logically unacceptable. The most feasible approach would be to use the alpha for the tests employed as K & H did or to discard their mal functioning items and to calculate their alpha by employing their well functioning items as Khodadady (2012) did.

## CONCLUSION

This study analyzed conventional C-Tests in terms of the texts chosen by their designers and contended that they are not based on reduced redundancy (RR) because their mutilation of words is systematic rather than based on probability. Neither is the selection of several texts justified in RR because it has nothing to do with "special knowledge" of a given unauthentic text as assumed by Klein-Braley (1997). The conventional C-Tests were developed originally to overcome the shortcomings of cloze tests as integrative/top down measures of language proficiency. They did, however, create shortcomings of their own when their designers adopted a prescriptive approach in their development.

Developing conventional C-Tests on several short and modified texts does not necessarily render them "genuine" as Grotjahn (2012a, p. 21) claimed it to do. Neither do conventional C-Tests measure "special knowledges" because they do not address schemata as macro structures. They are, instead, developed on single words and should therefore be viewed as offshoots of micro structural approach of schema-theory. It is, therefore, suggested that instead of choosing several short texts and modifying them to serve testing purposes, normal/ authentic texts written for being read by literate English users be selected to write theoretically strong and empirically superior C-Test as K & H did.

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### Appendix

Alexander's (1967) original text and the text upon which Babaii and Ansari (2001) developed their first C-Test

#### A slip of the Tongue

People will do anything to see a free show- even if it is a bad one. When the news got round that a variety show would be presented at our local cinema by the P. and U. Bird Seed company, we all rushed to see it. We had to queue for hours to get in and there must have been several hundred people present just before the show began. Unfortunately, the show was one of the dullest we have ever seen. Those who failed to get in need not have felt disappointed as many of the artistes who should have appeared did not come. The only funny things we hear that evening came from the advertiser at the beginning of the programme. He was obviously very nervous and for some minutes stood awkwardly before the microphone. As soon as he opened his mouth, everyone burst out laughing. We all know what the poor man should have said, but what he actually said was: 'This is the Poo and Ee Seed Bird Company. Good ladies, evening and gentlemen!' (Alexander, 1967, p. 217)

#### A Slip of the Tongue

On a variety show presented by P. and U. Bird Seed Company, a funny thing happened. It came from the advertiser at the beginning of the program. He seemed extremely nervous and for some minutes stood awkwardly before the microphone. As soon as he opened his mouth, everyone burst out laughing. We all knew what the poor man *should* have said, but what he *actually* said was: "This is the Poo and Ee Seed Bird Company. Good ladies, evening and gentlemen!" (Babaii & Ansari, 2001, p. 217)



## **Goals of Reciprocal Teaching Strategy Instruction**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Reciprocal teaching strategy plays a crucial role in language use, language improvement and language learning. In the context of English language teaching (ELT), reciprocal teaching strategy is an integral aspect of communicative competence that can impact the desire to use the language as well as the quantity and quality of foreign language learning. Although there is a small and committed body of individuals who have worked to encourage the incorporation of reciprocal teaching strategy instruction in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes, reciprocal teaching still tends to be the neglected component of many language programs. In this paper, some important goals for RECIPROCAL TEACHING such as increased reciprocal teaching strategy research, focus on developing learners' communicative competence, focus on reciprocal teaching in teacher education, focus on comprehension strategies, focus on discussion and appropriation, and focus on studies about the goals of reciprocal teaching strategy, goals of reciprocal teaching strategy and benefit of reciprocal teaching strategy.

**Key words;** Communicative competence, reciprocal teaching, comprehension strategies, goals of reciprocal teaching.



## INTRODUCTION

In the context of English language teaching (ELT), reciprocal teaching is an integral aspect of communicative competence that can impact the desire to use the language as well as the quantity and quality of reading comprehension development (Palincsar & Brown, 1984). Reciprocal teaching strategy instruction tends to be ignored in the language learning, and teachers need to be encouraged by the idea of teaching through reciprocal teaching instruction in their reading classrooms (Doolittle, Hicks, Triplett, Nichols, & Young, 2006). Yet, reciprocal teaching strategy instruction does not have a secure place in most language curriculums. Within the current trend in ELT, it is up to individual teachers to incorporate reading comprehension in their classrooms. However, a lack of formal training combined with an absence of program directives means that it is up to teachers to inform and prepare themselves for how to best meet their students' needs. Consequently, most teachers do not provide instruction at all and those few that have generally adopted a hit or missing approach rely on materials that lack grounding and the desired results.

Consequently, most teachers do not provide instruction at all and those few who have generally adopted a hit or missing approach rely on materials that lack grounding and the desired results. This condition is worsened by the fact that reciprocal teaching strategy and explicit teaching method is marginalized and treated superficially (Stricklin, 2011).

Therefore, it is important to understand that students are not receiving the training they need in this important aspect of linguistic competence. What would affect and improve reciprocal teaching instruction for English language learners? This study reviews several goals that are very important for teaching reciprocal teaching instruction.

Communicative competence is the purpose of reciprocal teaching strategy instruction teaching and learning (Foster & Rotoloni, 2005). It stresses the need for meaningful communicative tasks in the language classroom, including those which focus on reciprocal teaching strategy in reading comprehension. Reciprocal teaching strategy practices are related to daily use of English language learning including reading comprehension, for instance, small groups working.

Learners can become careful readers in their own reading task. This shows that learners need exposure to reading materials so they can understand different types of texts in comprehension. By using reciprocal teaching strategy instruction, instructors can give students meaningful exposure to variability in reading comprehension and improve their communicative competence (Rubin, 1987).

### ***Why Reciprocal Teaching Strategy?***

Firstly, reciprocal teaching strategy has caused a revolution in reading comprehension which has been advocated by Palincsar and Brown (1984). Reciprocal teaching strategy is an instructional model that improves students' reading comprehension (DEECD, 2008). It also enhances understanding of complex texts and thus facilitates readers to gain confidence and motivation to read (DET, 2006). Secondly, Alvermann (2001) recommends that students' perception of how competent they are as readers affects how motivated they are to learn in subject area such as reading comprehension. Alvermann goes on to discuss that engaging learners in various small groups and intervening tasks as a tool for learning is preferable to intervening task only as a repository of data to be memorized. Thirdly, learners need to be familiar with the reciprocal teaching model and to have experience in using and practicing its functions.

Reciprocal teaching is an instructional model based on helping and fostering practice. In this model, the teacher first models a set of reading comprehension strategies and then step by step transfers responsibility to the readers (Brown & Palincsar, 1985; Palincsar & Brown, 1984). Furthermore, reciprocal teaching strategy involves three main important factors, (1) the teaching and learning of reading comprehension strategies, (2) the dialogue among students and teacher where the teacher models why, when, and where to use these reciprocal teaching strategies, and (3) the determine of the teacher' role by the learners, that is, learners begin to model the reading comprehension model for other learners. Thus, the aims of reciprocal teaching are for readers to learn the reading comprehension strategies, learn how and when to use the strategies, and become independent in reading comprehension.

Reciprocal teaching strategy has the general methodology which consists of teachers and students, usually in small groups, reading a section of text. The teacher models appropriate reading comprehension strategies while leading a dialogue of the task. In the process of discussion and modeling, the teacher encourages readers to generate questions in the text and strategies. The teacher provides this discussion to facilitated both reading comprehension and strategic cognition (Palincsar & Brown, 1984).

This reading, discussion, and questioning continue in the process of the text reading. Moreover, as readers become more proficient with the discussion process and the reading comprehension strategies, the teacher begins to have readers take the role of teacher or discussion leader. As readers begin to lead the discussion process, the teacher plays the role of facilitator, rather than a leader. The teacher models and elaborates different parts of the text to readers only at the level each one of them is able to negotiate at any one time. However, as the students become more proficient, the teacher improves her/his demands, requiring participation at a slightly more challenging level. This changing from a teacher-centered model to a student-centered model is the goals of reciprocal teaching strategy and encourages students to be independent readers (Palincsar & Brown, 1984, p. 13).

### ***Comprehension Strategies***

According to Ahmadi and Hairul (2012), Palincsar and Brown (1984), along with discussion and the appropriation of the role of a teacher with the students of the reciprocal teaching strategy, the use of comprehension strategies is one of the important of three central pillars. Comprehension strategies are situated to provide better recognizing texts – to help the understanding of meaning during the reading process. Palincsar and Brown (1984) used four kinds of reading comprehension strategies which are explained in the following sections:

#### ***A. Questioning***

The identification of information, themes, and ideas that are important enough to show further consideration is called questioning. And the main important information or opinions are used to generate questions that are used as self-assessment for the reader. Questioning provides a task for understanding the text more deeply and construct the meaning from writing texts.

### *B. Summarizing*

The process of explaining the important information and opinions within a text and integrating these into clear and concise words that communicates the essential meaning of the text is called summarizing. Summarizing can be upon a single paragraph, a section of text, or an entire passage. It involves the motivation to create a context for recognizing the specifics of a text.

### *C. Clarifying*

The elaboration and clarification of unknown, difficult, or unfamiliar aspects of texts are called clarifying. These aspects can include an awkward sentence or text structure, unfamiliar words, unclear references, or obscure concepts. Clarifying motivates readers to clarify confusion through re-reading, the use of context in which the text was written and/or read, and the use of external resources such as a dictionary or ask questions from peers or instructor.

### *D. Predicting*

The combining students' background knowledge, current knowledge from the text, and the text's structure and pictures to create hypotheses related to the direction of the text and the author's intent message is called predicting. Predicting is an overall rationale for reading to confirm or reject self-generated hypotheses.

Palincsar and Brown (1984) explained these four reading comprehension strategies were taught during the discussion in which the teacher modeled the use of each of the strategies. Moreover, others have successfully taught the reading comprehension strategies prior to engaging in the dialogue process.

### ***Discussion and Appropriation***

According to Carter and Fekete (2001), reading comprehension strategies alone are not enough to reach the goals of reciprocal teaching. Discussion is also a main important factor achieving the goals of reciprocal teaching strategy. The discussion refers to the dialogue, questions and answers, and feedback that occur during the process of reading and recognizing the text. During the early steps of reciprocal teaching, the teacher interprets, in small groups, the overall nature of the reading comprehension strategies, why, what, when and how to use the strategies.

The teacher then selects a part of the text and the teacher and learners silently read that section. Typically, reciprocal teaching begins with the reading of short passages, for example, a paragraph or a page, and proceeds to longer passages. After that the teacher begins to model the reciprocal teaching process by generating and asking a question which the students assist to answer. The teacher may ask several questions before summarizing the section of text that was read.

According to Rosenshine and Meister (1994), following the summarization process, the teacher will clarify any difficult sentences, words, or grammar within the text. Then, through the use of text-based cues, the teacher will prepare a prediction for the next paragraph of text. As the teacher improves through questioning, summarizing, clarifying, and predicting, the readers are active and are encouraged to participate in dialogue. Particularly, readers' participation involves (1) explaining or commenting on other readers' summary, (2) recommending other questions, (3) suggesting on another's predictions, (4) asking clarification of material they did not recognize, and (5) trying to resolve problems.

This cycle of dialogical questioning, summarizing, clarifying, and predicting continue as a teacher-centered process until learners figure out the processes themselves. Gradually the teacher

transfers responsibility of the process to the students adopted the role of dialogue leader. These students then begin the discussion questioning, summarizing, clarifying, and predicting process, while the teacher assumes the role of guider and observer.

Similarly, it is concluded that the process of discussion begins with one student generating questions and others preparing answers and suggestions, one student summarizing and others preparing explaining and simplifications, one student detecting difficult sentences and others clarifying and obtaining relevant resources, and one student predicting the upcoming paragraph and others refining and provide alternative hypotheses. The use of this discussion, in conjunction with the reading comprehension strategies, leads to the satisfaction of the previously identified goals of reciprocal teaching. Readers learn the reading comprehension models need to learn what, when and how to use the models of reading comprehension strategies, and become independent in the use of these strategies (Hart & Speece, 1998; Rosenshine & Meister, 1994).

### ***Foundations for the Use of Reciprocal Teaching Strategy***

Vygotsky (1978) stated that the use of the reciprocal teaching strategy consist of reaching for the goals of reciprocal teaching and it is based on the literature and social constructivist philosophy and cognitive psychology theory. This is essential as it separates the reciprocal teaching strategy from other reading comprehension strategies and provides a particular model for its use.

Social constructivism, as a basis for reciprocal teaching strategy, emphasizes the social generation of knowledge. Every function in learners' cultural improvement has two parts; first, on the social part, and on the individual part (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57). This social generation of knowledge involves three elementary assumptions: (1) knowledge and meaning are active creations of socialization; (2) knowledge and meaning are social creations and as such reflect social negotiation and consensus; and (3) knowledge and meaning are constructed for the goals of social adaptation, discourse, and goal achievement (Gergen, 1999; Prawat & Floden, 1994).

Reciprocal teaching is based on active socialization on these three assumptions, both teacher-centered and students-centered, where the knowledge that is constructed from the given text is negotiated within dialogue communities and is not merely transferred from teacher to student. Furthermore, reciprocal teaching focuses the instrumentalist supposition that knowledge should be useful. That is, reciprocal teaching focuses the role of language in communication, recognizing, and activities. While social constructivism prepares a solid philosophical for the use of reciprocal teaching, cognitive psychology prepares a solid theoretical foundation.

There are several empirical studies from cognitive psychology to prove the usefulness of reciprocal teaching in fostering reading comprehension. Rosenshine and Meister (1994) investigated a meta-analysis of sixteen quantitative studies emphasizing on reciprocal teaching strategy and the result showed that firstly, reciprocal teaching has an important effect on students' reading comprehension performance, secondly, reciprocal teaching has an important effect on students' reading comprehension performance relative to standardized tests. Accordingly, Rosenshine and Meister (1994) explained that reciprocal teaching is most important for poorer

readers. These results showed that reciprocal teaching strategy should be considered in different level of studies.

### ***Studies on the Goals of Reciprocal Teaching Strategy***

Palincsar and Brown (1986) explored that when reciprocal teaching was examined in a group of students from just fifteen to twenty days, the result showed that students' reading comprehension improved from thirty to eighty percent. Accordingly, Palincsar and Klenk (1991) found in their study that students not only increased their comprehensive proficiency at once, but students also kept the developed comprehension proficiency when tested a year later. Reciprocal teaching strategy is especially important when incorporated as part of a treatment for struggling students (Cooper et al., 2000) and it is used with low-performing learners in various situations (Carter, 1997).

Reciprocal teaching originally designed for small-group instruction with struggling students and has proved to yield positive and consistent results with different levels of students who are taught in groups working and affected their activities in reading comprehension (Cooper et al., 2000; Palincsar & Brown, 1984, 1986; Palincsar & Klenk, 1991, 1992). According to Rosenshine and Meister (1994), conducted sixteen studies of reciprocal teaching strategy in their investigations and explored that reciprocal teaching strategy is a model that develops reading comprehension. Similarly, Lubliner (2001) detected that reciprocal teaching strategy is an effective technique for teaching that can enhance on the kind of reading comprehension that is necessary not only for developmental test scores but also for an information age.

Lori D. Ockus (2003) explained that there is a need for readers to learn sophisticated reading skills that they can utilize in the workforce and in a world that is exploding with print materials and information. Readers need to be prepared to understand and monitor various complicated texts from books to electronic sources, and it is believed that the reciprocal teaching approach can facilitate achieving goals.

### ***Goals of Reciprocal Teaching Strtaegy***

Ahmadi and Hairul (2012), Ahmadi and Pourhossein (2012), McLaughlin and Allen (2003), Pearson, et al., (1992) interpreted that reciprocal teaching strategy was designed by Palincsar and Brown in 1984 with different goals and helps students reading comprehension at different grade levels. The goals of reciprocal teaching strategy are as follows:

1. To enhance learners' reading comprehension through four reciprocal teaching strategies (making prediction, generating questions, clarifying, and summarizing).
2. To frame the four reciprocal teaching strategies by modeling, helping, guiding, and, providing the strategies while reading.
3. To direct learners to become meta-cognitive and reflective in using the four strategies.
4. To assist learners evaluate their reading comprehension through reciprocal teaching strategy.
5. To utilize the classroom environment of learning to increase and frame reading comprehension.

6. To empower instruction in a different classroom environment, help students in reading comprehension.
7. To be part of the bigger framework of reading comprehension strategies that provide reviewing, generating questions, making predictions, evaluating, and monitoring.

Accordingly, McLaughlin and Allen (2002) and Pearson, Roehler, Dole, and Duffy, (1992) explained that reciprocal teaching strategy has different goals as follows;

- To promote student's reading comprehension through various kinds of reciprocal teaching strategy; predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing and to make the four strategies by modeling, helping, and applying the strategies while reading and assist students to utilize metacognitive and strategy in their reading activities.
- To guide students control their reading comprehension and use monitoring strategy through four sub-sections of reciprocal teaching, to utilize the social nature of studying to enhance and scaffold reading comprehension.
- To empower teaching in different classrooms setting and to be part of the broader framework of comprehension strategies that comprises previewing, self-questioning, making connections; visualizing, knowing how words work, monitoring, summarizing, and evaluating.

### ***Benefits of Reciprocal Teaching***

Several investigations (Carter, 1997; Palincsar & Brown 1984, 1986; Palincsar, Brown & Campione, 1989; Palincsar & Klenk, 1991, 1992) have found that students who have been teaching with reading comprehension and are taught how to think about texts, in this way are able to feel comfortable to participate in dialogues and engaging with both fiction and non-fiction grade level texts. They understand how to make sense of what they are reading whether it is in the context of interest reading, classroom reading, social studies text, science text, or even in other word problems and their reading comprehension levels develop strongly.

According to Oczkus (2003), reciprocal teaching used in collaborative groups among students for three weeks and enhanced reading comprehension on assessments by thirty to eighty percent. Palincsar and Klenk (1991) explained that students developed reading proficiency immediately and also showed that they had maintained these proficiency on tests performed a year later. It can be concluded that reading comprehension was improved through the use of this instructional model and students who used reciprocal teaching strategy benefited from this strategy and improved their reading competency (Oczkus, 2003).

Allen (2003) elaborated that reciprocal teaching instruction for a while of two weeks was taught to the students prior to teaching it. Feedback was given to the students on a daily basis. The study



found positive changes in the students' abilities to generate questions, answer questions, and summarize information.

Hashey et al., (2003) stated that the instructors found improvements in students' confidence and success, in their recognizing and use of strategies, and in their enjoyment of literature. This study concluded, most of the students agreed that reciprocal teaching helps them understand the book more and facilitates their reading comprehension (Hashey et al., 2003).

Accordingly, a revised version of reciprocal teaching can benefit learners who try to comprehend not only mathematical vocabulary problems but also all the field of target language learning programs. The four components of this strategy as: clarifying, questioning, summarizing and planning (Van Garderen, 2004). In a reciprocal teaching math classroom, one learner is assigned to be the group leader. He or she leads the other learners through each of the four sub-sections of reciprocal teaching strategy. The group members first clarify any vocabularies or phrases that are not recognizable. Then the leader uses questions to help the groups in identifying the key parts of the problem. Next, the leader summarizes the purpose of the word problem and finally helps the group in creating a plan to solve the problem. Each person in the group takes a turn being the leader (Van Garderen, 2004).

## CONCLUSION

Reciprocal teaching is a powerful teaching strategy which allows students to play different roles to practice prediction, questioning, clarifying and summarizing. These are important strategies for fostering and monitoring comprehension. To make it a success, it is important to find the right passage for students to practice these strategies and for students to practice these strategies regularly. Most teacher preparation programs can introduce some focus on reciprocal teaching strategy issues and that strategy can be better incorporated into language learning curricula and better assessed. We are now at a point where most EFL/ESL teachers recognize that there is nothing wrong with having an appropriate strategy in fostering EFL/ESL learning programs, and that programs should be the goals of reciprocal teaching approaches. Reciprocal teaching strategy in reading comprehension is advancing and there is a key role of virtual worlds and other sorts of practical opportunities informed by research. There are always students involved in real communication with texts and they need to try to achieve the goals of reading and comprehend the written message/messages, rather than putting all the responsibility on the shoulders of the teacher. Teachers in the field of study, teaching and research are the people best equipped to help students. For those of us who teach at universities and colleges, we can start with our own students. A major change in teachers' attitudes towards reciprocal teaching instruction is indispensable and it is their job to speed up change. By incorporating current research and its implications into their teaching practice, teachers can help learners gain the skills they need for effective improvement in English language learning activities. It must be borne in mind that teachers are the models for their learners, so first of all they should have a good strategy in their teaching; otherwise, they can harm their students.

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## **EGAP or ESAP? Towards Meeting the Academic English Language Needs of Undergraduates**

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### **ABSTRACT**

“Needs analysis” is an important stage in language curriculum design as learners’ language needs in the target literacy contexts can be determined. Nonetheless, many higher learning institutions overlook this component and hastily jump into designing a language course on an ad hoc basis due to the hassles of conducting it and a lack of awareness of needs analysis as a tool in curriculum development. The findings of this study offer a potential solution for institutions with similar contexts. Drawing upon two comprehensive needs analysis approaches – Target Situation Analysis and Present Situation Analysis, this study investigates the academic English language needs and language ability of the pre-university students at The University of Selangor, Malaysia. Data from multiple perspectives: students, ESL (English as a Second Language) lecturers and subject lecturers were collected via three sets of questionnaires. Empirical evidence indicates that the students had greater difficulty with the language rather than the content of subject matters. Besides that, another interesting finding is the differing opinions between the ESL and subject lecturers regarding the students’ ability in handling writing and listening tasks. The results also indicate that English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) courses are more suitable to fulfil the students’ current learning needs as compared to English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) courses. These findings have implications on curriculum planning and review, materials development and implementation of teaching methods.

**Keywords:** English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP), English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP), Needs analysis, Curriculum design

## ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES AND NEEDS ANALYSIS

At the tertiary level, there are three types of English language courses which are commonly offered to students – general English proficiency courses, English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) courses and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses. In the discussion of curriculum development for EAP, which is also the focus of the present study, “needs analysis” or assessing students’ language needs is always considered a crucial component and is fundamental to an EAP approach to course design (Tajino, James & Kyoichi, 2005; Jordan, 1997). Nonetheless, many institutions are lacking awareness of or have overlooked this important component in course design (Cowling, 2007) and due to this reason, Jordan (2002) criticised that the language support that is provided to university students tended to be on an ad hoc basis. Hamp-Lyons (2001, cited in Tajino et al., 2005) articulated that “EAP begins with the learner and the situation, whereas General English begins with the language” (p. 27). It is understood that the nature of EAP courses is different from other types of English language courses. Thus, institutions or course developers should consider the users’ voices (both lecturers and learners) when deciding on the course content.

The growth of EAP is derived from the awareness of ESP practitioners that all the tertiary level students possess different learning needs which is hardly to be fulfilled by teaching them the same type of English language (Soo & Tam, 2011). This view is in line with Sabariah and Rafik-Galea’s (2005) claim that the development of EAP is a result of dissatisfaction with the lack of generalizability of ESP courses. In a study conducted in Hong Kong to find out tertiary students’ English language needs, Evans and Green (2007) found out that most undergraduates actually need language support that is oriented towards academic rather than general English. Thus, the value of EAP cannot be ignored as it is closely associated with students’ academic success. There are two sub-strands under EAP - English for Specific Academic Purposes’ (ESAP) and ‘English for General Academic Purposes’ (EGAP) (Blue, 1988a cited in Jordan, 1997). The difference between ESAP and EGAP is that ESAP courses focus on the actual tasks that students have to carry out while EGAP courses select more general contexts (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). To be specific, ESAP is the language required for a particular academic subject such as medicine and engineering, and its contents include the language structure, genres, vocabulary and the particular skills needed for the area of study. Whereas EGAP selects a more common or non-subject-specific type of language elements such as study skills and its main objective is to equip learners with the necessary skills to complete tasks in a general academic setting (Jordan, 1997).

With reference to what should be focused in needs analysis, Wei and Flaitz (2005) perceived it as something which is subjective as learners’ needs in several skills or only a specific skill can be examined. They also reported that in conducting needs analysis to identify students’ academic language needs, researchers can collect data to identify the tasks students will encounter in university content classrooms and also to analyse the skills the students need to perform those tasks successfully. The latter focus is actually concerned with the student learning styles and strategies which is seen as an important aspect in needs analysis by Kavaliauskiene and Uzpalienė (2003). Thus, needs analysis can be regarded as the process of establishing what and how of a language course (Mo, 2005).

To look more closely into this issue, Dooley (2006) speculated needs analysis as a very practical and the most effective way of identifying specific English language needs. It is considered practical because it is context specific and therefore the information used to design the curriculum is reliable which will then definitely match with the real needs of the learners.

Additionally, it is considered an effective way of assuring the value of the language programme because both students and lecturers will contribute in the needs analysis and this step could provide a more complete and comprehensible picture when deciding on the language course content. Therefore, the designing of any language programmes with needs analysis being conducted will help both instructors and learners to clear some doubts on the effectiveness of the language course.

After being aware of the fact that every individual, in the process of language learning, has certain needs to be fulfilled, institution or to be more specific the language course developers should not take things for granted by just putting in their own assumptions only to predict what might work best for the students. It is believed that the hassles that one might face while conducting needs analysis is the main reason that cause those involve in programme design abandon this important step. Although it is less time consuming and could develop and implement a programme in a shorter time, they will foresee a lot of other important aspects which are not possible to be predicted by any party except the target users. With such a concern, needs analysis is a good platform to elicit information on what the students want, need and already know using their perspectives. Due to this reason, Liz Hamp-Lyons (2000, cited in Jordan, 2002) noted that needs analysis is “fundamental to an EAP approach to course design and teaching” (p.74).

In view of the above, the purpose of this study is (1) to identify the difficulties encountered by the students in using English language in their learning tasks with regard to listening, reading, speaking and writing skills, and (2) to seek the views on the degree of importance of the various language skills in helping the students to learn.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The theoretical aspect of this study is based on the Target Situation Analysis (TSA) and Present Situation Analysis (PSA) approaches (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). The TSA approach is used to determine the learners’ academic English language requirements and the PSA approach is applied to assess the learners’ strengths and weaknesses in different language skills.

### ***Subjects***

Three groups of respondents participated in the study: 93 first year undergraduates, 10 ESL (English as a second Language) lecturers and 8 subject lecturers. This is in line with the suggestions that needs analysis should use multiple sources to increase its reliability and validity (Brown, 1995; Long, 1999; Witkin & Asltschuld, 1995; Keita, 2004). The students of this study were the second semester degree students from three faculties of the University of Selangor, Malaysia, and all of them were also post-foundation students in the same university. The inclusion of both ESL and subject lecturers in the study is considered important as their respective demands and needs pertaining to the students’ language needs could be different.



Therefore, this is an additional dimension to overcome the gap of responses derived from both lecturers as the use of multiple sources such as learners, teachers and domain experts (Long, 2005) can ensure that a wide variety of data can be gathered and compared.

### ***Instrumentation***

Questionnaire was selected as the instrument for the study because it can be used to collect data with large numbers of people and it is easy to administer and analyse if possible response are structured (Faiz, 2005). It is also the least consuming ways of collecting information, and this is why learners' needs are usually specified through questionnaires which enable researchers to determine long-term aims and short-term objectives (Kavaliauskiene & Uzpaliene, 2003).

In developing the questionnaires, several related studies on needs analysis were referred to, including Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998; Deutch, 2003; Saraswathy, 2003; Muhammad Nadzri, 2004; Banerjee and Wall, 2006; Evans and Green, 2007 and Cowling, 2007. Besides that, the researchers' own experience in teaching EAP courses in the university also contributed to the construction of the questionnaires. Although a number of questionnaires from previous works were used as reference, it had to be modified in a way where it can fulfil the objectives of this study especially after considering the focus of the study, institutional setting and more importantly the respondents of this study. A few shortcomings were detected in those questionnaires, for instance, the choice of language and terminologies used in the questions which were considered inappropriate and hardly understood by students who are not from language education or linguistics background. Three different questionnaires were used to collect the data for the study, one for the students, one for the ESL lecturers and a parallel one for the subject lecturers. These survey questionnaires consist of 71 close-ended questions or items and 8 semi close-ended questions. As Creswell (2008) states that semi close-ended question has all the advantages of close and open ended questions and while it also provides limited open-ended information to encourage responses, it does not overburden the researcher with information that needs to be coded. As these questionnaires were developed for the purpose of this study which was based on the specific need of the present research context, no assumptions were made about either the dimensional structure or internal consistency of the items. Instead, each statement or item was analysed individually.

### ***Pilot Study***

The student questionnaire was piloted on 34 students who were in their third semester and the lecturer questionnaire was piloted on 4 ESL lecturers and 2 subject lecturers. The students were chosen for the pilot study because they had undergone the same courses as the respondents of this study in an earlier semester. On the other hand, the lecturers were selected based on their experiences of teaching the students. They were invited to comment on the questionnaire layout, content, item wording, instruction and the constructions of questions in the survey. This was to test the comprehension of the items in the questionnaires and to eliminate misunderstanding and ambiguities when answering the questions. From the pilot study, it was found that the students faced problems in understanding some of the technical terms such as 'subject matter', 'organization of texts', 'abbreviations', 'supporting details' and 'scanning'. Besides that, they had problems in distinguishing the meaning conveyed by some of the questionnaire items. With the feedback, the researchers removed some of the difficult or technical terms and replaced them with simpler words. The researchers also combined similar items and rephrased them.

***Data Collection and Analysis***

The student questionnaires were administered and completed by the students while they were attending lectures in the classroom. Permission was obtained from the lecturers in advance before collecting the data. The researcher gave an explanation of the objective of administering the questionnaires and the way to answer the questions. The researcher was present throughout the session to help the students if they were facing any problems in answering the questionnaires and this was also to ensure the return of all questionnaires distributed. For the lecturers' questionnaires, it was sent to the lecturers by the researchers. They were briefed on the objective of the study personally and the importance of their involvement in the study. Descriptive statistics were used to report the analysis. The responses from the questionnaires were tabulated and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

***Students' English Language Proficiency***

Judging from the emerged responses, the students showed much more confidence in their receptive skills (reading and listening) than in their productive skills (speaking and writing), which reported higher percentage of students with average and lower proficiency level. The ESL lecturers, on the other hand, seemed to have negative perceptions of the students' ability in all the four skills. In their opinions, the students had only achieved average or lower level of proficiency in the four skills. The subject lecturers' responses were also relatively similar with the ESL lecturers' responses. In their view, the students seem incredibly weak in writing and speaking as compared to listening and reading skills. However, despite the strict feedback given by the ESL lecturers, there was still an obvious agreement between them and the students that the students' reading skill was better than the other skills and writing was the most serious problem among them.

***English Language Ability in Reading, Listening, Speaking and Writing Skills***

Although a greater number of students expressed some degree of ease in most of the reading sub-skills as compared to the others, they do face difficulties also in certain sub-skills such as to understand difficult words in reading texts, reading quickly to get the general meaning of reading texts, identifying main points and supporting details. The problem of understanding difficult words, which was claimed difficult by most of the students (44.1%), could be the main factor that directly causes them to face difficulties in other sub-skills. As Coady and Huckin (1997) believe that vocabulary acquisition is the central and the most primary in language learning. Thus, it could be inferred that their lexical competence has an impact on reading ability. The ESL lecturers also found that the students had difficulty (a lot and some) in sub-skills like understanding the content of textbooks, identifying main points and supporting details and skimming to get the general meaning of reading texts. Of all these, having to understand the content of reading materials like textbooks and journals was identified as the students' most serious problem. One lecturer commented in the questionnaire that "*the students will normally take a long time to finish reading just one-page long text*". Besides that, one lecturer also wrote that "*without an English-Malay dictionary, I don't think they can survive*" while another

mentioned that “*they feel bored whenever I ask them to do reading comprehension exercise*”. Thus, there is a need to strengthen students’ reading sub-skills.

In terms of listening, having to understand lecturers who speak fast in English was considered as their major difficulty (having a lot of difficulty and some difficulty - 53.8%). This is followed by difficulty in taking lecture notes (34.4%) and getting the important points of lectures (33.3%). In comparison with the students’ responses, the ESL lecturers reported that the students experienced the most difficulty in following a classroom discussion which is conducted in the English medium and in understanding lecturers who speak fast in English. For the first problem, it was perceived that the students struggled to understand the content of the discussion. One ESL lecturer wrote in the questionnaire that, “*It is hard to have classroom discussion with students especially when the issue discussed are beyond their existing knowledge*” while another also commented that “*It is hard to get them to respond in classroom discussion as they always look blur...in fact they are not clear of what is going on*”. However, the subject lecturers generally felt that their students did not face serious problems in most of the listening sub-skills.

As for speaking (Table 1), the students perceived that they faced a lot of and some difficulties in almost all the speaking sub-skills. At the top of the list is the ability to use correct pronunciation (58.1%). This is followed by difficulty in using suitable words and sentences (54.9%), getting ideas to speak (52.7%), speaking confidently (51.6%), speaking fluently (49.5%) and giving presentation in class (49.5%). This finding lends support to those presented by Evans and Green (2007), whose subjects reported that they find it difficult to speak accurately, communicate ideas fluently and present information orally. On this matter, Evans and Green advocate that students’ development in fluency and accuracy is probably impeded by the fact that subject lecturers place greater emphasis on content rather than other criterion.

Table 1: Students’ perceived difficulties when speaking and communicating in English (N=93)

	A lot of difficulty	Some difficulty	Little difficulty	No difficulty
Speaking sub-skills	Percentage (%)			
Using correct pronunciation	14.0	44.1	32.3	9.7
Speaking fluently	11.8	38.7	46.2	3.2
Speaking confidently	16.1	35.5	37.6	10.8
Getting ideas to speak	9.7	43.0	35.5	11.8
Using the right words and sentence patterns	6.5	48.4	38.7	6.5
Giving presentation in class	14.0	36.6	38.7	10.8
Asking and answering questions	7.5	37.6	39.8	15.1
Participating in small group discussions	5.4	18.3	40.9	35.5
Participating in large group discussion	4.3	32.3	38.7	24.7
Speaking with friends in English outside the class	8.6	30.1	33.3	28.0

Table 2: Comparison of ESL and Subject lecturers' perceptions towards the difficulties faced by the students while speaking and communicating in English

Speaking sub-skills	A lot of difficulty		Some difficulty		Little difficulty		No difficulty	
	Percentage (%)		Percentage (%)		Percentage (%)		Percentage (%)	
	EL	SL	EL	SL	EL	SL	EL	SL
Using correct pronunciation	60.0	-	40.0	62.5	-	37.5	-	-
Speaking fluently	100.0	50.0	-	50.0	-	-	-	-
Speaking confidently	100.0	50.0	-	50.0	-	-	-	-
Getting ideas to speak	40.0	62.5	60.0	37.5	-	-	-	-
Speaking grammatically correct English	70.0	50.0	30.0	50.0	-	-	-	-
Using the right words and sentence patterns	20.0	-	80.0	-	-	50.0	-	50.0
Giving presentation in class	60.0	-	40.0	-	-	62.5	-	37.5
Asking and answering questions	-	12.5	100.0	12.5	-	50.0	-	25.0
Participating in small group discussions	-	-	100.0	25.0	-	50.0	-	25.0
Participating in large group discussion	50.0	-	50.0	-	-	50.0	-	50.0
Speaking with friends in English outside the class	80.0	62.5	20.0	37.5	-	-	-	-

EL – ESL lecturers (N=10); SL – Subject lecturers (N=8)

As shown in Table 2, while some of the students rated themselves as facing only a little or no difficulty, all the ESL lecturers reported that all of their students, in fact, had either a lot of difficulty or some difficulty in all the speaking sub-skills. On this matter, some of them commented that *“the students are too shy to speak in front of the class”, “they are lack of confidence to present ... dare not to project their voice”, “they are unable to construct proper sentences and always use back the same words”, “they will never speak English with friends and the worst is they continue speak Malay to me although I only use English with them”* and one lecturer even wrote that *“when I ask them to speak in English, they always reply me by saying ‘tak pandai’ (not capable of). The comments demonstrate that, besides having problem to speak grammatically correct English, the students are also not confident in using the language to communicate. Moreover, five of them also commented on the students’ poor pronunciation such as “they pronounce English words just like their mother tongues” and “some of the students cannot pronounce or differentiate certain sounds like [th], [e] and [ae]”.*

Similarly, one subject lecturer stated that *“the good ones are ok and not so bad, but the weak ones will always use English with Malay”* while the other one wrote that *“they can’t present and talk smoothly if they don’t refer to papers”*. Apart from this, one of the lecturers realized that although the students were able to give a presentation but they were unable to organize and deliver their ideas or points clearly. He wrote that, *“The way the students present are so not organized... they love to jump from one point to another without linkage...sometimes I also can’t*

get what they mean”. Overall, the above findings are borne out by Jordan (1997) who speculates that the most persistent problem encountered by the students (in most of the surveys conducted) is the lack of ability to express themselves adequately in the spoken language. Moreover, participation in academic discussion has also been noted by him as an area of major difficulty especially in comprehension of spoken English (e.g. when speakers speak too fast and use difficult vocabulary), the pressing need to formulate a contribution quickly (e.g. cannot think of what to say) and inability to formulate an idea in English. In conclusion, the students need be given more opportunities to practise group discussion in order to acquire good oratory skills.

Table 3 below demonstrates the students’ difficulties in writing skills. Among the major difficulties (either a lot or some) encountered by the students are writing grammatically correct sentences, using a variety of sentence patterns and words, using correct punctuation, writing bibliography, writing body section, organizing points and getting ideas to write. The findings, similar to those in Evans and Green (2007), suggest that the students perceive themselves as experiencing greater difficulty with the language rather than the content or structure of academic texts. One of the ESL lecturers commented that “*the students have serious problem in planning for writing...there is no flow in their writing*”. Another lecturer also added that “*It is hard for the weak students to think of idea to write and elaborate points*”. Besides that, one of them stated that “*the students always use direct translation from Malay or Chinese language in composing*” and the other one mentioned that “*they use the same function words throughout... they are very weak in using tenses, subject-verb agreement and preposition*”.

Table 3: Comparison of students and ESL lecturers’ perceptions towards the difficulties faced by the students when writing in English

Writing sub-skills	A lot of difficulty		Some difficulty		Little difficulty		No difficulty	
	Percentage (%)							
	S	EL	S	EL	S	EL	S	EL
Using correct spelling	4.3	-	34.4	50.0	49.5	50.0	11.8	-
Using correct punctuation	5.4	-	43.0	100.0	44.1	-	7.5	-
Using suitable words	6.5	60.0	32.3	40.0	49.5	-	11.8	-
Using varieties of words	5.4	50.0	45.2	50.0	43.0	-	6.5	-
Writing grammatically correct sentences	14.0	70.0	44.1	30.0	40.9	-	1.1	-
Using a variety of sentence patterns	8.6	60.0	45.2	40.0	37.6	-	8.6	-
Linking sentences in a paragraph	2.2	90.0	33.3	10.0	46.2	-	18.3	-
Getting ideas to write	6.5	60.0	34.4	40.0	41.9	-	17.2	-
Organizing points/ information when writing	5.4	-	38.7	100.0	37.6	-	18.3	-
Writing introductions	4.3	-	25.8	100.0	48.4	-	21.5	-
Writing body sections	6.5	-	39.8	100.0	39.8	-	14.0	-
Writing conclusion	5.4	60.0	34.4	40.0	43.0	-	17.2	-
Rewriting other’s ideas using your own words (citation)	7.5	80.0	29.0	-	46.2	20.0	17.2	-
Using suitable format in writing e.g. letters and reports	7.5	-	30.1	80.0	44.1	20.0	18.3	-
Writing bibliography	7.5	-	40.9	60.0	38.7	40.0	12.9	-

S – Students (N=93); EL –ESL lecturers (N=10)



Contradictory to what the students and ESL lecturers had perceived, surprisingly, all the subject lecturers reported that their students did not face a lot of difficulties in most of the writing sub-skills except for citation. A plausible reason for this is that they only require the students to achieve sufficient level of communicative competence or only focus on the subject matter or content and not so much on the writing skills or style of writing. This is affirmed by Weir (1988, cited in Jordan, 1997) where the subject tutors are more concerned with content than with mechanical accuracy features, and their criteria of assessing written work are on the relevance and adequacy of the subject content, the clarity of message and the arrangement and development of written work. On the same matter, Jordan (1997:48) criticises that “the subject tutors are often linguistically unaware and cannot always distinguish a poorly conceived idea from an idea that is expressed through inadequate English”.

### ***English Language Needs***

Generally, most of the students (around 90%) and all the subject and ESL lecturers seemed to indicate support for the relative importance of all the listening tasks as they ranked all the listening tasks as either very important or important to the students. This is closely matched with their perceptions with regard to the students’ listening ability discussed above. The important tasks were listening to understand lectures, to follow discussions, to follow instructions, to understand social conversation and to understand presentation. With regard to this, one ESL lecturer stated that “*the students have to deal with different people such as lecturers, peers and officers from different departments to solve different kind of academic and non-academic matters*”. Similarly, another lecturer also wrote that “*In learning, the students have to engage in various conversations with individuals of different background especially in obtaining information*”.

More than 80% of the students ranked all the speaking tasks as ‘very important’ and ‘important’. The responses, following the degree of importance, were participating in discussion, communicating with lecturers inside and outside of the classroom, presenting written assignments, making suggestions, communicating with other students inside and outside of the classroom and communicating with people in different social situation. Similarly, the ESL and subject lecturers’ responses towards the importance of various speaking tasks were also quite parallel. All the speaking tasks were regarded as either very important or important by them especially in the need to communicate with people in different social situation. In addition, a few lecturers suggested the inclusion of negotiation skills in the English language course.

Similar to the responses gained pertaining to aural and oral needs, an impressively high number of students also viewed the identified reading tasks as being ‘very important’ and ‘important’. These include reading lecture handouts, reading and making own notes, reading newspaper articles and reading technical materials such as journal. According to the perspectives of the ESL lecturers, all the reading skills were considered either ‘very important’ or ‘important’ and the subject lecturers placed the greatest emphasis on the task - reading and understanding technical material where all of them rated it being ‘very important’ to the students.



Overall, the students mainly had the same perceptions when judging the importance of various writing tasks where most of the tasks were ranked 'very important' and 'important' to them. Topping the list of the perceived important writing tasks is taking lecture notes. This is followed by project-writing, summary-writing and report-writing. According to the results, writing daily journals and writing proposals were given the least emphasis. This was probably due to the perception that these tasks were not relevant to their course of study. Conversely, unlike some students' responses, the ESL lecturers considered all the writing tasks as 'very important' and 'important'. In contrast with the ESL lecturers' opinions, writing daily journals was deemed as the least important writing skill by the subject lecturers. The same responses were also obtained from the students. Besides that, the subject lecturers also did not see the importance of summary-writing and presenting visual data.

## **CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study has identified first year undergraduates or post pre-university students' difficulties in performing various language tasks and perceived needs in EAP learning. This is predominantly helpful to the students as English is the main medium of instruction in most of the courses conducted in the Malaysian higher learning institutions and different demand of the language is required in their learning. The findings of this study in part concur with those revealed in Muhammad Nadzri (2004), Siti Hamin and Ismie Roha (2005), Evans and Green (2007) and Yeoh (2006). It appears that the students encounter a number of serious problems in the four language skills. Although most of the sub-skills are covered in the present English courses conducted in the university, the responses revealed that they were still not proficient enough in using the language in their study. In this regard, the current syllabus of the language courses should be enhanced or improved so that the students can be exposed to sufficient input of language. With the recommendations to revise the current syllabus, the mismatch between the EAP courses and the students' actual learning needs could be reduced. In other words, designing an EAP course which can cater for the students' real learning needs and the development of learner ability to transfer language knowledge (Kavaliauskiene & Uzpaliene, 2003) would be the current implication for successful EAP teaching and learning.

Some implications with reference to the conduct of needs analysis were also drawn from the current study. The nature or the type of English language courses which are to be offered to the concerned groups of students has to be studied at a wider level where a joint effort should be initiated among the related stakeholders. Most of the previously conducted needs analysis was the initiation of the English department. Although some of the researches involved both the students and the content instructors in giving responses or feedback, they, especially the content instructors, were excluded when writing the language course syllabus. In most situations, the syllabus was written by the English language instructors based on the generalization made from the responses obtained. As a consequence, some important insights which could be derived from the mismatch or discrepancies in opinions might be ignored.

As students' academic language needs should not be restricted to only a specific learning situation (Kavaliauskiene & Uzpaliene, 2003; Wei & Flaitz, 2005), it is also vital to look at the possibility in which the students will engage in any activities or functions that require them to use the language in the institution. This will, then, determine the design of the needs analysis especially in the scope of analysis and the selection of approaches and data-collection instruments.

Some recommendations pertaining to the design of academic language tasks and EAP course delivery are made based on the findings in this study. At the course level, more listening activities that involve taking down notes, identifying main points, understanding social conversation and following a classroom discussion should be carried out in the language class as these are the major listening difficulties encountered by the students. In addition, the ESL lecturers should always be alert of their speed of speaking in class as most of the students and ESL lecturers stated that the students had difficulty in understanding the lecturers when they speak fast in English. Furthermore, as the majority of the ESL lecturers stated that the students had a lot of difficulties in understanding the content of discussion, it is recommended that pre-tasks such as brainstorming should be conducted before the real listening task as it could provide an overview of the issue discussed and also to trigger the students schemata. Besides that, short pauses and recapitulation by the language instructors in between the session would also be helpful to recover the students' memory load. This is rather helpful especially for the low proficiency students.

More speaking activities and time should be allocated in the language class in order to boost the students' confidence to speak in English especially to overcome their language anxiety. The students also need to be given more opportunities to involve in group discussion in order to acquire good oratory skills. In addition, the finding also suggests that the students need to be exposed to some training in phonetic transcription so that they are able to discriminate between consonants, vowels, homophones, etc. The students need the knowledge of how letters and combination of letters are to be sounded as the students perceived that they faced the most problem in using correct pronunciation. Besides that, there is also a need to enhance the students' negotiation skills and ability to converse in different social contexts. This can be done by involving the students in drama activity such as simulation and role-play where the students will engage in various conversations with people of different situations and events. This is also a good method of training students in decision-making.

The establishment of a programme for vocabulary enrichment is another strategy to help the students to expand their vocabulary. The content of the programme could be worked out with the cooperation between the language instructors and content experts. This is in line with the students' major difficulties in understanding difficult words and the content of textbooks. It is believed that the programme could also help the students to improve on other language skills. As Coady and Huckin (1997) believe that vocabulary acquisition is the central and the most primary in language learning, thus, it could be inferred that lexical competence has an impact on learner's overall language ability.

The finding also suggests that ESAP (English for Specific Academic Purposes) courses are more suitable in fulfilling the students' current learning needs as compared to EGAP (English for General Academic Purposes) courses. This is confirmed as the majority of the respondents expect the students to learn the language in a content-based environment where the instructional materials used in the language class should be relevant to the students' course of learning. With

this, it is strongly recommended that, when assigning the students into language classes, they should be streamed according to their respective programme or academic department.

The findings of the needs analysis are predominantly helpful in developing an understanding of the students' learning preferences and provide implications in the process of course development, classroom preparation, curriculum planning and review, material writing and implementation of teaching methods.

One limitation of the present study lies in the research instrument. The data of the needs analysis was obtained using the questionnaires administered to the students, ESL lecturers and subject lecturers. The researchers did not use a combination of methods to collect the data. Besides that, there was no classroom observation and investigation into the materials used in the current language courses. Thus, the outcomes of the needs analysis were fully relied on the perceptions, comments and suggestions of the respondents. Additionally, the present study also did not incorporate any form of tests to examine the students' real ability of handling different language sub-skills. Their strengths and weaknesses in various sub-skills were identified via the perceptions given by the stakeholders in the questionnaires administered. Besides that, the study also did not analyse to what extent the students' level of proficiency in the four language skills were actually matched with their perceived ability in performing the sub-skills. Lastly, more valuable data pertaining to the students' language needs may be attained if all the students and more subject lecturers were involved in the study.

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## **An Investigation into Topic Oriented Opinions in Iranian EFL Teachers**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The present study aimed to explore whether EFL teachers' opinions based on classroom topics can affect the teaching and learning process. To this end, upon filling in a revised teachers' opinion scale, formulated based on Rumpf's (2010), 15 male and female Iranian EFL teachers at a language institute were assigned to three opinion groups; namely, positive, moderate and negative. Cluster analysis of the scores indicated that Iranian EFL teachers were mostly moderate as far as their opinions about teaching were concerned. A Kruskal Wallis test also approved of the significant differences among the three teacher groups which laid further proof on the validity of the used scale.

**Key words:** teacher opinions, topic orientation, mental process



## **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

It is hard for educators to remain totally unbiased while teaching; especially in Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) classes. Because language, in this case English, is important to every individual in various ways. It is clear that teachers' opinions on the subject matter affect the atmosphere of the classroom in positive and sometimes negative ways.

Within the classroom context, some teachers stand out as more excited than others. This is, maybe, because their own personal interests and tastes were being reflected on how they taught certain subjects and topics (Rumpf, 2010). A critical question, thus, is what teachers can do to guarantee that their personal opinions do not influence students learning in a negative way. Teachers must be conscious of the outcome of their opinions on the presentation of the material. They have to see what the students see and get as an objective third party. If a teacher does not really enjoy a topic, they should still teach it as if they are eager about the topic.

The issue of learners' performance as influenced by other factors has been discussed in several previous English teaching studies, contexts and societies. (e.g., Cates, 2000; Rumpf, 2010; Niemi & Niemi, 2007; Heafner & Friedman, 2008). Not only English language but also other areas of social studies have been discussed within this framework. However, different variables other than teacher opinion have been discussed. Such previously discussed variables consist of anxiety, motivation, technology, duration, and atmosphere.

Focusing on what affects learning; the mental processes of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, topic oriented opinions in this study, is beneficial and helpful in many respects especially for reaching educational aims. Therefore, a significant step taken in this study is looking for the existence of the teachers' opinions as a crucial factor in determining many other subsequent events in the learning environment.

## **RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

The result of this study will be primarily helpful and effective for EFL teachers because they notice how important their opinions and attitudes are in learning contexts. Therefore, they would try to monitor their opinions more closely using various strategies by themselves or asking their colleagues for help. Teachers may also want to reflect on their opinions to maximize students learning.

Students who are directly in contact with learning that is influenced by the aforementioned effects can also benefit a more organized teacher opinion with regard to the learning process. Thus, teachers' eagerness may create a positive impact on students' learning, comprehension, problem-solving and analyzing the material in the best possible way.

Teacher opinion seems to be a significant individual characteristic in English as a Second Language (ESL)/EFL teaching and learning contexts. Thus, studying this variable in its own right and also in relation to language skills would yield beneficial results to both learners and teachers.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

There has not been much literature on teacher opinion in the field of TEFL or applied linguistics; however, most of the studies conducted in this regard have focused on the impact of teacher opinion on several learning styles, factors and consequences. Rumpf (2010) believed that teachers might want to reflect on their opinions to maximize students' learning in the social studies classroom. Whether a teacher likes or dislikes the topics they are teaching to the students there are impacts on the classroom. When a teacher enjoys the topic has positive impacts on the students sparking enthusiasm and interest. The opposite is when a teacher does not enjoy the topic they are teaching. The quality of learning for the student is not the same when a teacher does enjoy the topic.

Niemi and Niemi (2007) tried to determine how teachers would state their opinions in the classroom, as well as how they let students express their ideas in such an environment. The results stated that teachers expressed their ideas in the classroom, and repressed students' opinions. This was a main factor of students' shortage of incentive and hindrance in the classroom. The research was done through interviews and classroom observations over a course of two months. Through these methods it was concluded that the teachers were expressing their opinions in a more negative manner which was actually creating negative outcomes for the students.

A study done by Fredricks, Alfeld, and Eccles (2010) sought to determine the motivation of students and how their environments increased or decreased their interest in the subject matters. This related to the topic of teachers' opinions which made it obvious that interest on the side of teachers is understood as an advantage to the students.

Rumpf (2010) conducted a study on the influence of teachers' opinions on teaching and learning. The results showed that teachers' enthusiasm created a positive impact on students' learning and the converse was also true. This study was done through a questionnaire, interviews and observations. The population in her study was social studies teachers at the secondary level. There were 14 participants from the middle and high school of one region. These teachers were chosen by a convenience sampling. All participants were white-skinned, middle class teachers between the ages of 30 and 50.

In Niemi and Niemi's (2007) study, teachers were stating their opinions and repressing those of the students. This was in both a conscious and unconscious way. In Rumpf's research the teachers admitted they were not causing negative feeling about topics in the students, but it is obvious that this data contradicts the previous study done by Niemis. Teachers' opinions can have negative effect on the students based on Niemis' study which was not what the participants in her study thought was occurring. So educators really need to be aware that their opinions factually impact the students. Fredricks, Alfeld, and Eccles (2010) mentioned that passion for school is more probable to happen when students felt supported and teachers' model enthusiasm and cause enough learning challenge. This would be similar to Rumpf's study where the results specified that enthusiasm was much more common when teachers liked a topic personally. When the teachers enjoyed a topic they reported such manner and therefore it was seen in their teaching

habits, methods and general classroom experience. The researcher's expectation is that the findings of the present study will correlate with the findings of the studies done by Rumpf (2010) and Fredricks, Alfeld, and Eccles (2010).

Gönen and Kocakaya (2006) sought to evaluate opinions of high school physics teachers on instructional activities and the content of physics textbooks. Effective learning is the chief goal of all educational activities and textbooks are very important for achieving this goal. Textbooks also have an important role in specifying teaching and learning activities in the class. Textbooks not only provide information, but also contribute the improvement of imagining and memory abilities, and intelligence and reading habits (Lockheed, Vail, & Fuller, 1986; Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991). Well prepared textbooks help teachers use the time effectively in lessons and make positive contributions to student achievement. However, if not prepared carefully, descriptions and figures in textbooks may cause misunderstanding.

Ardasheva and Brown (2011) conducted a qualitative study about content-area teachers seeking ELL preparation which discovered the relationship between content-area teachers' ideas, beliefs, and professional experiences and their decisions to seek planning in working with English language learners (ELLs). They administered the survey on six full time teachers, who registered in a graduate-level Sheltered Instruction course at a large U.S. Midwestern university, and interviewed them regarding their enrollment choices. The findings only partially supported the first theory that pre-existing positive ELL attitudes guided the teachers' decisions. Although different across individual teachers, motivational reasons for registration were at first based on (a) expected success in the learning experience (b) the perceived value of ELL preparation for quick and future professional goals and (c) consistency with teachers' self-concepts.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

More particularly, the present research will answer the following research question:

How are the Iranian EFL teachers categorized based on their topic oriented opinions?

## METHODOLOGY

As the study was concerned with questionnaire data, a descriptive correlational study using survey methodology was employed.

### *Participant*

The population targeted for this study consisted of 15 EFL teachers (both male and female) with B.A. or M.A. qualifications in English. The participants were selected through convenience sampling from the teachers at Shamim Arghavan Language Academy in Shiraz, Iran where Touchstone series was taught. All participants were middle class teachers between the ages of 25 and 35. The demographic information about the participants is presented in Table 1.

*Table 1: Demographic information about the participants in both phases*

Demographic variables		Number	Frequency %
GENDER	Male	6	40
	Female	9	60
AGE		15	Mean (30) SD (1.89 )

As Table 1 illustrates, of the 15 teachers, the majority were females (Females: 9 – 60% vs. Males: 6 – 40%). The teachers had a mean age of 30.

### ***Instruments***

The scale used in the study was mostly developed and formulated based on Rumpf's (2010) Teachers' Opinion questionnaire which embedded eleven questions used for collecting the data in the first phase of the study. As far as the validity of the scale was concerned, it was expert validated. Three university lecturers gave their feedback on the scale. Such university lecturers came from a different setting from the institute in which the study was conducted; therefore, it guarantees a greater amount of objective feedback. As for the reliability of the scale, Cronbach's alpha was applied to the scale. A number of 15 teachers teaching at a different institute took part in the reliability verification process. Table 2 shows the reliability of the newly formulated Teachers Opinion questionnaire checked through Cronbach's alpha.

*Table 2: Reliability estimate for teacher opinion questionnaire*

### **Case Processing Summary**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	15	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	15	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.963	11

As can be seen in Table 2, the reliability of teachers' opinion questionnaire equals 0.963 which was a satisfactory value.

It took the participants about 10 minutes to fill in the questionnaire to determine whether the teachers are interested in the specific topics or not. The questionnaire included 11 items with a three point Likert scale (see Table 3). The questions were Likert-like. Each response had its value ranging from 1 to 3 (Yes=1, Sometimes=2, No=3). The teachers were asked to rate themselves on a scale from yes to no in order to indicate what their opinions were like during teaching. A pilot questionnaire was sent to a few selected teachers. Such initial responses enabled the researcher to edit and remove the confusing or bad items as well as to adjust and reword questions which were leading to missing data.

#### ***Data Collection Procedure***

The study was carried out at a private language institute called Shamim Arghavan Language Academy in Shiraz, Iran, where Touchstone series was taught at adult level. The data were collected in the spring term of 2012. The first phase of data collection incorporated a descriptive design i.e., survey research based on questionnaire data. In the data collection session, the participants were given a consent form that assured their confidentiality. They were also told that participation was voluntary and they could withdraw from the study any time without penalty. The participants were told about the objective of the study in their native language (i.e., Farsi). Thus, when a participant agreed with an item it was a sign of positive opinion. Any value below the borderline of 2 would point to positive opinion while above the borderline would suggest negative opinion on the side of the participant.

### **FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

This section depicts the results of the teachers' opinion questionnaire analysis based on the scores the participants obtained in the 3 point Likert scale which incorporated 11 questions. It presents the results in two sections. First, the individual item and composite analysis of the questionnaire mean scores followed by the SPSS cluster analysis of the participants were done in order to group the participants in different opinion groups. A further Kruskal-Wallis test was run to see if the finally formulated groups were distinct from each other.

The participants were reminded before filling in the scale, that the items within the scale were intended to check for their attitudes towards the specific topics, therefore choosing 'Yes' was taken to be the sign of positiveness. Likewise, a mean of 2.00 which equaled the inserted anchor of 'Sometimes' could be interpreted as the borderline of positiveness vs. negativeness. This way, values below the borderline of 2 would show positive teachers' opinions while those above it would indicate negative teachers' opinions. This, of course, depends on their distance from the

mean score of 2.00. The study takes both individual and composite score of teachers' opinion into consideration. That is, individual items of the scale as separate indicators of teachers' opinion and the composite score as an overall sign of their opinions was taken into account. Table 3 presents the participants' mean scores from the scale along with total means of all items.

*Table 3: Scores from the Teachers' Opinion scale*

Item	N	Mean	SD
1. As a teacher of Touchstone textbook 3 do you find the unit topics interesting?	15	1.73	.884
2. Do you feel you teach the topics better because of your personal interest in them?	15	1.60	.737
3. Do you like spending a little more time on the topics during class?	15	1.87	.834
4. Do you think that your enthusiasm for the topics rubs off on the students more than if they were topics you were uninterested in?	15	1.73	.799
5. When you teach your favorite subjects do you see a difference in the grades of your students?	15	1.67	.816
6. Do you like your students to get better grades when you like the topics more?	15	1.80	.775
7. Do you feel that you convey the meanings better than other teachers because you like the topics more?	15	1.80	.862
8. Do you ever try to teach the topics you like using different ways when you find the material difficult?	15	1.73	.799
9. Do you ever try to teach the topics you like using different ways when you find the students bored?	15	2.07	.884
10. Do you think that you can manage the Touchstone-based classes (esp. Touch 3) better than others?	15	1.87	.743
11. Do you find yourself energetic and interested enough to teach the topics?	15	1.67	.816
<b>Total</b>	15	1.7758	.69733

As Table 3 indicates, a classification can be made through the calculation of each teacher's scores and putting him/her in a teacher opinion group ranging from positive to negative. An item-by-item analysis of the scale revealed a mean range between 2.07 and 1.60, and the total score of 1.77, so participants could be categorized according to their kind of opinion; namely, positive, moderate and negative. Thus in order to place the participants in the possible three teachers' opinion groups, a further K-means cluster analysis on SPSS was performed. The results indicated that the participants could be categorized into three distinct clusters according to their scores. Tables 4 and 5 present the results for the identified clusters of teachers.



Table 4: Clusters according to the individual item mean of the questionnaire scores

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
positive	4	1.0000	.00000	.00000	1.0000	1.0000	1.00	1.00
moderate	7	1.6494	.21274	.08041	1.4526	1.8461	1.45	2.00
negative	4	2.7727	.11736	.05868	2.5860	2.9595	2.64	2.91
Total	15	1.7758	.69733	.18005	1.3896	2.1619	1.00	2.91

Table 5: Participants grouping illustrated in percentage of each cluster

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Positive	4	26.7	26.7
	moderate	7	46.7	46.7
	negative	4	26.6	26.6
	Total	15	100.0	100.0

Table 4 presents three groups (i.e. clusters) of teachers according to the mean of their scores on the scale. The total mean and standard deviation of the group are 1.7758 and .69733 respectively. This indicated that the participants' scores were mostly scattered around the mid-point which was thought to be the borderline of teachers' opinion, so the participants were mostly oriented toward the mid-point. Table 5 further illustrates participants' grouping based on the percentage of each cluster.

Table 4 indicates that there are three different groups of participants based on the mean scores of individual item responses that participants marked in the three point Likert scale of teachers' opinion. As Table 4 shows, four of the teachers that participated in the study were clustered into the positive group as their mean score was below the point of "two" which was the borderline of teachers' opinion. As was expressed before, items on the scale elicited different opinions on the side of the teachers; thus choosing "yes" for each item was the sign of positiveness, so the mean of 1.00 could cluster four of the participants into the positive group.

Likewise, seven participants, i.e. the greater proportion of teachers, were placed in the moderate group (Mean: 1.64) who mostly chose anchor two (sometimes) to react to the items on the scale. The remaining four participants were placed in the negative group (mean: 2.77) because of marking anchor 3 (no) which was above the borderline two (sometimes) and indicated negativeness. Table 5 shows the same grouping based on the percentage of each cluster of participants; namely, four participants in positive group equaled 26.7 % while seven in moderate group equaled 46.7 % and four (26.6 %) belonged to the negative group.

#### ***Differences among the three clusters of teachers' opinions***

An additional Kruskal-Wallis test among the three identified groups further confirmed that the obtained clusters of participants were distinct from one another. Therefore, the differences were

significant enough to think of the formulated clusters as distinct from each other. These differences can be seen in Table 6.

*Table 6: Differences among the three clusters of participants*

group		N	Mean Rank
Teacher	positive	4	2.50
	moderate	7	8.00
	negative	4	13.50
	Total	15	

**Test Statistics <sup>a,b</sup>**

	Teacher
Chi-Square	12.410
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.002

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: group

As Table 6 illustrates, the differences among the three clusters of participants were significant ( $p > .000$ ). This would further prove that the participants' responses to questions within the scale have appropriately categorized them into the three groups of positive, moderate and negative which were distinct enough from one another. The results of data analysis so far suggest that the participants reported a total mean of 1.77, i.e. almost at the borderline, actually mildly below it.

Descriptive statistics combined with cluster analysis and Kruskal Wallis Test led us to three different groups of teachers according to their scores. An important proportion of participants ( $f = 7$ ; 46.67%) exhibited moderate group of teachers' opinion (mean = 1.64), a lower proportion ( $f = 4$ ; 26.67%) had positive opinions (mean = 1.00) and finally another low proportion ( $f = 4$ ; 26.67%) had negative opinions (mean = 2.77). This implies that, expectedly, there are variations among Iranian EFL teachers' opinions and they will not always have the same opinion toward the topics they teach. So the proportion of participants in positive and negative groups were the same while the moderate group incorporated the greatest number of participants. The frequency in each group further clarifies the differences among participants in their opinion; thus, laying further proof to the fact that Iranian EFL teachers didn't have the same opinion and were mostly of moderate type. In order to determine the place of this significant difference among the three groups, a further Scheffe test was applied to the mean scores of the three groups (see Table 7).

Table 7: Scheffe test to locate the place of difference among the groups

(I) Teacher	(J) Teacher	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
positive	moderate	-.64935*	.10121	.000	-.9315	-.3672
	negative	-1.77273*	.11418	.000	-2.0910	-1.4545
moderate	positive	.64935*	.10121	.000	.3672	.9315
	negative	-1.12338*	.10121	.000	-1.4055	-.8413
negative	positive	1.77273*	.11418	.000	1.4545	2.0910
	moderate	1.12338*	.10121	.000	.8413	1.4055

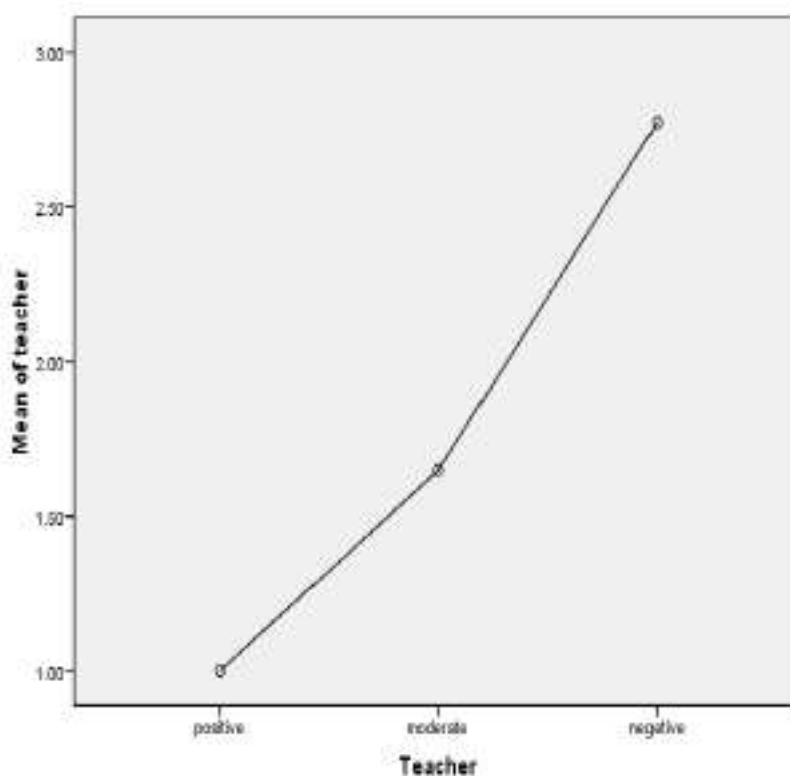
\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

#### Teacher Scheffe

Teacher	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
positive	4	1.0000		
moderate	7		1.6494	
negative	4			2.7727
Sig.		1.000	1.000	1.000

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

As Table 7 shows, positive and moderate groups were more similar to each other unlike the negative group (mean: 2.77). This similarity between positive and negative groups is better illustrated in Figure 1.



*Figure 1: Similarity and differences among the three group means*

As Figure 1 illustrates, the mean score of the positive group (mean: 1.00) and moderate group (mean: 1.64) exhibited more similarity to one another as compared to that of the negative group (mean: 2.77). So the variance is observable in the mean score of negative group.

## DISCUSSION

This piece of research aimed at investigating the Iranian EFL teachers' topic oriented opinions in educational contexts. In order to answer this question, 15 teachers (9 female and 6 male) filled in a questionnaire of 11 items. Upon analyzing the results, 4 positive, 7 moderate and 4 negative teachers were selected regarding their opinions on teaching topics. The cluster analysis indicated that the three groups of teachers' opinion were formed according to the analysis of participants' mean scores which were also proved to be distinct enough from one another through a Kruskal Wallis Test.

Fredricks, Alfeld, and Eccles (2010) determined that passion and enthusiasm for school are more likely to occur when students felt supported and teachers' model enthusiasm can create an adequate learning challenge. This would go hand in hand with the present study where the results determined that enthusiasm was much more common when teachers enjoyed a topic personally.

When the teachers enjoyed a topic they reported being more enthusiastic and therefore it was seen in their teaching methods, teaching habits, and overall classroom experience.

In Niemi and Niemi's (2007) study, teachers were expressing their opinions and muffling those of the students. This was in both a conscious and unconscious manner meaning sometimes the teachers were not even aware they were doing so. According to Niemis' study, teachers' opinions can have negative impacts on the students which showed congruence with the findings of the present study. Therefore educators really need to be aware that their opinions do in fact affect the students.

Rumpf (2010) conducted a study on the influence of teachers' opinions on teaching and learning. The results showed that teachers' enthusiasm created a positive impact on students' learning and the converse was also true. Whether a teacher liked or disliked the topics they were teaching to the students, there were impacts on students. The present research almost totally correlates with the findings of this piece of research.

## CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study may lead to some general conclusions and implications regarding teacher opinion in EFL contexts. First, teachers' opinion proved to be different in Iranian EFL teachers working at intermediate level; namely, they did not have the same topic oriented opinions. That was why three different groups were formed. Also, it was concluded that the Iranian EFL teachers were mostly shown to have a moderate level of opinion in language teaching. Cluster analysis also approved of this finding where the majority of the teachers were placed in the moderate group and the positive and negative groups were both in the second rank. Thus indicating that the same number of the participants were of positive and negative opinions. Therefore, it can be suggested that teachers in an EFL context like Iran are generally moderate in their teaching opinions.

Second, an important factor which was once again highlighted within this study was enthusiasm. When a teacher is personally interested in the material they can create an individual enthusiasm which shows up more strongly during the teaching of the topic. This enthusiasm helps spark students energy and interest in the material because they are curious as to why the teacher has become excited. Another point that the obtained result indicated was that teachers would tend to spend extra time on topics they were interested in rather than those they did not take a liking to. That is why when they were asked if they would spend more time on something they liked most of them answered 'yes'.

Third, this piece of research implies that teachers' opinions can act either as a kind of hindrance or encouragement in the process of language learning so teachers as influential members in learning contexts are expected to play a role in assisting learners in their efforts to reach greater success in language learning.

Finally, English teachers who participated in this study were mainly found to be moderate as far as their opinions were concerned. As teachers are logically expected to assist their students learning, it turns out to be quite essential for them to improve their opinions positively by, for example, observing the teaching of other classes with more positively-oriented teachers.

The present study could be said to suffer from the following limitations:

1. Although the topic under investigation was probably such a common story amongst all teachers and students in every age and level of education, scope of study incorporated teachers at institute level only.
2. Due to manageability concerns, the researcher applied a sample of convenience to the design of the study. The majority of the sample was middle class teachers aging from 25 to 35 years old. With a wider and more diverse sample of teachers to include in the future studies, the results would be more supported and show a wider area of experience by these teachers. Thus one would need to focus on larger samples from various educational contexts.
3. A single teachers' opinion scale was employed in the present study while it would yield interesting results if the subjects were exposed to other scales of teachers' opinion measurement and a comparison is made among the scales for EFL teachers of other academic levels.

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# **Fundamentals to Improve English Language Teachers' Performance in Pakistan**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to develop theoretical foundation for the researchers for empirical analysis in this field. This paper points out the fundamentals that are helpful for improving English Language Teachers' performance. The study is qualitative in nature. A lot of literature has been read by the researchers to find out some basic principles that are necessary for the better performance of English Language Teachers. The researchers have investigated the barriers that obstruct English Language Teachers' performance. It becomes essential to investigate barriers to reach some principles that are useful for increasing English Language Teachers' performance.

**Keywords:** Fundamentals, Improve, English Language Teachers and Performance

## **INTRODUCTION**

After reviewing the literature, the researchers concluded that the factors like knowledge sharing, knowledge creation, knowledge use, job satisfaction and leadership style play a vital role for

improving English Language Teachers' performance in Pakistan. If the teachers are satisfied with their jobs, their performance will be increased. Job satisfaction of teachers comes with positive and encouraging attitude from heads of educational institutes. Conducive leadership style of heads of institutes enhances the teachers' performance. If the teachers are at liberty to share and use their knowledge, the knowledge will be created that will ultimately improve English Language Teachers' performance.

## **USE OF KNOWLEDGE FOR BETTER PERFORMANCE**

Proper use of knowledge increases English Language Teachers' performance. Knowledge management practices ensure the best performance of the teachers. Managing knowledge includes three key processes: creating, sharing and exploiting knowledge. Block and Cameron (2002) opine that knowledge management shows a concern for considering the fact that knowledge possessed by individuals is a valuable asset. They are of the view that the knowledge is an intellectual asset and it must be developed and transferred to others. Liss (1999, p. 1) defines that "knowledge management is a formal, directed process of determining what a company has that could benefit others in the company and then devising ways to making it easily available." Bonner (2000) explains that there are few organizations that use the explicit and tacit knowledge of their employees effectively. Sternberg (1997) defines tacit knowledge as a highly personal and objective form of knowledge that can be only inferred from the discussion of others. Hansen et al. (1999) describe that explicit knowledge is academic data that is described in a formal language. Explicit knowledge needs an academic understanding that is achieved through formal education. Knowledge sharing and knowledge creation are interlinked. Knowledge sharing and its implementation provide solutions to many problems faced by organizations. This process is called knowledge creation. The process of knowledge sharing, knowledge creation and knowledge use is obstructed at the individual level and at the organizational level at the same time.

Siddiqui (2007) opines that the assessment system deeply influences the educational set-up of Pakistan. It does not allow the teachers to utilize their potential for using their knowledge. It is also concluded that nothing has been done to improve this system. Burgess et al, (2002) and Fisher (2004) conclude that prescriptive curriculum and tightly defined assessment system damage teachers' professional autonomy and creativity. Teachers are always bound to follow the instructions given by the heads of their organizations so they cannot use knowledge independently. They have to seek permission from higher authorities at every step. Hanke (2002) believes that if the curriculum and assessment system are not flexible for the teachers, the natural potential for the use of knowledge will be constrained. Scholte (2001) demonstrates that the teachers must enhance the competitive abilities of their students by using a number of technologies. In this way the learning of the students can be made better. It becomes necessary to have well equipped classrooms for using technologies. Less equipped classrooms cannot provide an environment in which the teachers can use their knowledge with ease. Here in Pakistan, lack of resources is an obstacle in making classrooms well-equipped. Crystal (2001) suggests that the

teacher should adjust their curriculum plans to meet the demands of society. But the situation in Pakistan is quite pathetic as far as the curriculum is concerned. The prescriptive curriculum does not allow the teachers to use their knowledge independently. The teachers are always bound to follow this well-defined curriculum. So, this situation is a hurdle for teachers to use their knowledge in classrooms. Heller (2005) agrees that the decentralization and deregulation of English curricula make the schools and teachers more autonomous in using knowledge. But in Pakistan, nothing has been done to change the curricula so the teachers are unable to use their knowledge freely. Smith (2008) says that the institutions are becoming autonomous in developing curriculum. In this way, teachers are free to teach whatever they want according to the taste of students. But in Pakistan, teachers are still bound to teach according to prescriptive curriculum. It hampers the teachers to use their knowledge. Al-Otaibi (2004) is of the view that motivated learners can pay high cost and even make sacrifices to achieve their goals in learning foreign language. It was also found that motivated learners can learn language more effectively. The assumption can be made that de-motivated students themselves are a great hurdle for teachers in using knowledge.

## **KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND KNOWLEDGE CREATION FOR BETTER PERFORMANCE**

If the process of knowledge sharing and knowledge creation is smooth among the teachers, the performance of the teachers will be increased. Leonard-Barton (1995) gives his opinion that an organization is both the storage of knowledge and creator of knowledge at the same time. Storage of knowledge is in the form of employees replete with unique skills and expertise and some formal knowledge in the explicit form. Knowledge creation starts after knowledge sharing. Shared knowledge of employees puts forward solutions to problems faced by an organization. Problem solving is one of the major knowledge creating activities. The positive role of an organization is very important in the effective process of knowledge sharing and knowledge creation process. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1997) are of the view in their knowledge conversion model that knowledge creation happens when there is the interaction between explicit and tacit knowledge. Knowledge conversion activities include externalization, internalization, combination and socialization. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) also explain that tacit knowledge gets converted into tacit knowledge by sharing experiences. Tsai and Ghoshal (1998) demonstrate that the interaction built through socialization among the employees of the organizations facilitates the knowledge sharing activities. So it can be concluded that the absence of socialization in the organization hinders the knowledge sharing and knowledge creation process. Lin (2008) explains that knowledge sharing behavior of the employees in organizations is very important in order to transfer the knowledge of an individual to many individuals to make the organizations successful. Jiacheng et al. (2012) agree that knowledge sharing behavior among employees creates cooperation for mapping out the fortunes of the organization. Szulanski (1996) suggests that some individuals are unwilling to share their knowledge because they feel that it will bring others to their level and their promotions will be disturbed. Abrams et al. (2003 p. 65) point out that “trust leads to increase overall knowledge exchange, makes knowledge exchanges less costly, and increases the likelihood that knowledge acquired from a colleague is sufficiently understood and absorbed that a person can put it to use.” Tsai (2002) gives his view that decentralized structure of the organization promotes communication and causes increase in employees’ motivation and satisfaction. Damanpour (1999) considers decentralized structure of the organization facilitative to the success of knowledge management activities and methods.

## **ROLE OF LEADERSHIP FOR BETTER PERFORMANCE**

Leadership directly influences the performance of the employees. If the leadership is conducive for the employees, the employees' performance will be improved. Leadership is a way to influence the groups' behavior and direct them towards achieving the defined goals (Robbins, 2003, P. 314). There have been discussions about leadership and leaders since man started working in group. A Leader can be defined as a person who has managerial authority and can influence others. Leadership is simply what the leader does. Leaders should have the qualities like drive, desire to lead, honesty and integrity, self-confidence, intelligence, job-relevant knowledge and extraversion. Leaders influence the behavior, feelings and performance of their subordinates. Performance of subordinates is improved if they are positively influenced by their leaders. Researches have been conducted to explore the leadership styles to find the most effective one for both the quality and quantity of work. The autocratic style, the democratic style and laissez-faire style and their impact on employees' performance have been deeply researched. In autocratic leadership, work methods are dictated to the employees not involving them in decision making process. In laissez-faire leadership, the leaders let the group make decisions and complete the work in whatever way it saw fit. In democratic leadership style, the employees are involved in decision making. It is concluded that democratic style is the most effective to make employees' performance better. Recently, the researches are being carried out to investigate the influences of transactional and transformational leadership on employees' performance. Burns (1978) opines that transactional and transformational leadership styles are more prominent among leadership styles. Transactional leaders give rewards and punishments to encourage performance, making the leader/worker relationship essentially an economic transaction (Bass, 1985). Transactional Leaders work with their team members exchanging rewards with them and being responsive to their immediate interests. Transformational leaders are active leaders that have four distinguishing qualities: charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985 & Conger, 1999). Charisma is the extent of pride, faith and respect leaders encourage their workers to have in themselves, their leaders and their organizations. Inspiration is the ability to motivate followers through communication of high expectations. Intellectual stimulation is the frequency with which leaders encourage employees to be innovative in their problem solutions. Finally, individualized consideration is the degree of personal attention and encouragement of self-development a leader imparts to the employees (Bass, 1985 & Bass, 1990).

## **ROLE OF JOB SATISFACTION FOR BETTER PERFORMANCE**

Factors like job security, job autonomy, workplace flexibility, handsome salary and soothing leadership style ensure job satisfaction among English Language Teachers. Job satisfaction is a factor that plays a significant role for improving English Language Teachers' performance. Locke (1976) defines the job satisfaction as a positive and pleasing emotional state from the appraisal of one' job or experience. The very definition suggests that the employees' attitude towards their jobs is formed by their behaviors, beliefs and feelings. According to Galup, Klein

and Jiang (2008), successful organizations ensure their employees' job satisfaction realizing the fact that poor job satisfaction can cripple an organization. Kalleberg (1977) suggests that job satisfaction includes two components. These are intrinsic (referring to the work itself) and extrinsic (representing the facets of the job external to the task itself) job satisfaction. Lashbrook (1997) is of the view that leadership style plays an important role in influencing the employees' job satisfaction. Bogler (2001) demonstrates that the different leadership styles engender different working environment and directly influence employees' job satisfaction. Emery and Barker (2007) state that transformational leaders motivate and encourage their followers to take on more responsibility which increases employees' sense of accomplishment and job satisfaction. Castaneda and Nahavandi (1991) indicate that the employees are more satisfied with both relational and task-oriented behaviors exhibiting simultaneously by their heads.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to point out some fundamentals that can improve English Language Teachers' performance. The problems that hinder English Language Teachers' performance have been investigated in this study.

Proper use of knowledge increases English Language Teachers' performance. Knowledge management practices ensure the best performance of the teachers. Managing knowledge includes three key processes: creating, sharing and exploiting knowledge. If the process of knowledge sharing and knowledge creation is smooth among the teachers, the performance of teachers will be increased.

Leadership directly influences the performance of the teachers. If the leadership is conducive for teachers, the teachers' performance will be improved. Factors like job security, job autonomy, workplace flexibility, handsome salary and soothing leadership style ensure job satisfaction and job satisfaction improves English Language Teachers' performance.

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## **Communication of Language Attitudes: An Exploration of The Ghanaian Situation**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Attitudes towards languages in Ghana are influenced by historical, sociological and cultural factors, the most prominent of which is a long period of British colonial rule (1821-1957), leading to the establishment of English as the most prestigious and the only official language of the country. In communicating language attitudes in Ghana, people are affected by the functions that English and the local languages perform as well as their potential use in a range of linguistic domains. As Ghana has not taken a definite stand on the national language issue, English performs many communicative functions; it is the language of the media, education, religion, government, judiciary, commerce and social interaction. Measures to promote indigenous languages have often been unsuccessful as knowledge of such languages generally does not confer any appreciable economic advantages. The present paper explores how Ghanaians communicate their language attitudes and reveals the current trend where Ghana's indigenous languages are being relegated to the background.

**Keywords:** Language attitudes, indigenous languages, English, multilingualism, communication.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Ghana has a uniquely complex linguistic landscape. The number of indigenous languages that are spoken has been estimated between 50 and 80. Different scholars have given varied figures for the number of languages of Ghana in view of the difficulty in classifications of varieties as either language or dialects (Bodomo, 1996, 1997; Dolphyne, 1988; Agbedor, 1996; Dakubu, 1988; Laitin, 1994; Gordon & Grimes, 2005). It is worth noting that eleven of the indigenous languages are government sponsored. These are Twi, Fante, Nzema, Ewe, Ga, Dangme, Dagbani, Dagaare, Gonja, Kasem and Gurunne. These government sponsored local languages are supported by the Bureau of Ghana Languages. During the periods when Ghanaian languages were used in primary education, these were the languages which were employed for instruction in schools.

Before formal education was introduced into Ghana, traditional education was conducted in the indigenous languages. With the introduction of formal education and the subsequent use of English as the medium of instruction, the indigenous languages were relegated to the background (Bamgbose, 2000). The situation, however, changed with the arrival of the missionaries who resorted to the development of the local languages in both their educational and missionary efforts. The use of the indigenous languages during the pre-colonial period (1529-1925) survived even during the time when the British Colonial government took over the administration of education in the country. During this period, a systematic pattern began to emerge with regard to both education and language use. The first legislation on the use of a local language in education was promulgated: An indigenous language was to be used as the medium of instruction while at the lower primary levels with English used thereafter (MacWilliam, 1969; Graham, 1971; Gbedemah, 1975). The policy was reversed and became unstable when the administration of the country came under the jurisdiction of indigenous Ghanaians in 1957. Since independence, the use of a Ghanaian language as the medium of instruction at the lower primary level has had a check-like history (Owu-Ewie, 2006). It is worth noting that the rise of nationalist movements in the Gold Coast was hardly linked with the development of the common language argument. What these Ghanaian nationalists had in common was a foreign language, English, which they used to condemn colonialism both on the political platform and on paper (Boadi, 1971). At present, the policy states that English should be used as the medium of instruction from primary one, with a Ghanaian language studied as a compulsory subject to the senior high school (Ameyaw-Akumfi, 2002). While post-independent governments appear to be making language policy, most of the time, they are only perpetuating colonial language policy (Bamgbose, 1991, 2000). Undoubtedly, if a country has had long history of contact with English, if in the multilingual situation it is the only link language among speakers of different languages, and if contacts with other countries through trade, industry and higher education are in English, it is logical that English occupies a central role in the language policy of the country in question. The main fact of language policy discourse in the world today is the role of English in relation to other languages. Language attitudes in Ghana tend to be affected by the functions that English and the indigenous languages perform in the everyday lives of Ghanaians. In comparison with the local languages, English has been used as an official language since Ghana was colonized by Britain and still enjoys an overwhelming position as the language of education and of mass communication.

## **LANGUAGE ATTITUDES OF GOVERNMENTS: FROM A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

After establishing trade contacts with the Gold Coast, the British colonial Government became more directly involved in administering the country and extending influence and jurisdiction beyond the coastal communities. The impact of some of the various social, political and administrative institutions that were established by British Colonial governments on the spread and influence of the English language was immense. During the reign of Sir Charles McCarthy (1822-1824), he made sure that English was more properly taught in government schools and English ways of life were more widely diffused among the local population. Not only did he order textbooks for use in the schools, he also introduced the wearing of European dress among the local people. By 1824, English was the only language spoken in the Cape Coast Castle School. This was in consonance with the report by the Education Committee of the Privy Council to the Colonial Office in 1847 which, among others, emphasized the need to disseminate a grammatical knowledge of the English language as the most important agent of civilization (Forster, 1965). Educational ordinances passed by the British Government in the nineteenth

century did not favour the indigenous languages. For instance, schools which used the indigenous languages as medium of instruction could not qualify for British aid. Lord Derby was reported to have said at the Colonial Office in Britain in 1883 that instruction in the native language may safely be left to the stimulus of self-interest and government subsidies are not required for its encouragement.

The rapid expansion in facilities and number of school attendants at both the primary and secondary school levels did not help the promotion of the use of the indigenous languages. Accelerated demands for education led to the appointment of a special committee in 1955, the Barnard committee, to investigate the possibilities of adopting English as the medium of instruction throughout the elementary school course. It is worth noting that it was an African government preparing itself for independence in 1957 that, in 1955, cast doubts on the use of the indigenous languages as medium of instruction by appointing the Barnard Committee (Sackey, 1997). Throughout the colonial period up to 1957, it can be realized that because Ghana had no common indigenous language which could serve as a national vehicular language for all the citizens, and also function as the language of government, law, education and social interaction at all levels, it was relatively easy for English assisted by the colonial government, to penetrate various spheres of life of the citizens. Out of the numerous indigenous languages in Ghana only four: Twi, Ga, Fante and Ewe were recommended for use in schools by 1927. Unlike most francophone countries which had French forced on them as medium of instruction through the Brazzaville Conference of 1944 and forbade the use of local language in schools (Djite, 2000), Ghana had the British, to some extent, lay a foundation for the use of the government sponsored indigenous languages as medium of instruction at the lower primary level.

As the language of formal education, English had to be learned at school. Without it, there could be no full participation in the social, economic and political life of the urban societies that were emerging. English became a language used for certain purposes by the educated Ghanaians. These eventually formed an elite group whose influence over the rest of society lay partly in their use of English and in the high degree of social advancement which this new status conferred on them. The educated elites varied widely in the areas of education, occupation and income. However, they were generally speaking, a cohesive group, cut off to some extent from their counterparts in traditional society by their status and use of English. Bilingualism became a hall mark of the educated Ghanaian. Nonetheless, political, social and economic prestige was attached to English alone. As the language of government, the legal practice and administration, English was socially sanctioned, especially in terms of political and economic benefits. It was the language used by lawyers and judges at courts above the level of those of the local councils.

The institutional structures making use of English did not cease after independence, they multiplied as many more people could read and write English. The English language today has to a large extent retained its pre-eminent position as the language everybody must learn if they are seeking employment in the civil and public sectors of the economy. However, there have been attempts made to challenge English as the official language. Since independence in 1957 there have been, at least, three institutional attempts from the political arena to raise the issue of a national language for Ghana. In 1961, the Convention People's Party (CPP) government opened

a debate in parliament on the national language case. Although Akan won some support, the government deferred its decision, arguing that Akan had not developed enough to handle high technical and technological issues.

In 1971, the national language case was again raised in parliament. Among the arguments raised were the widespread use of Akan in the country and the emotional satisfaction of using an indigenous language as a national language or lingua franca. The point was also made that the continued use of English prevented the vast majority of Ghanaians from participating in discussions of national matters. The parliamentary debate ended with the House adopting the motion that in view of the importance of a national language as a factor for national unity in Ghana, the House should take note of the necessity of a modern language or lingua franca. There was the admission that the English language was serving as a neutral binding force, and the choice of an indigenous language might raise opposition from speakers of other languages.

In 1992, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Government had to deal with the national language issue in Parliament since not all Honourable members were in favour with the use of English as the language of debate or discussion. In September 1995, parliament resolved by standing order that the proceedings of the House shall ordinarily be conducted in the English language, except that, a member may exercise the option to address the House in either Akan, Nzema, Ga, Ewe, Hausa, Dagbani, Dagaare or other local language provided facilities exist in the House for their interpretation. This decision was not implemented because Honourable members who chose to use an indigenous language in parliament might be ridiculed. Another reason was that interpreters would have a difficult task interpreting technical terms in the indigenous languages.

## **LANGUAGE ATTITUDES IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

In Ghana, a minority of the populace are able to speak English, although a certain level of proficiency is required for occupying any public office and for involvement in many and diverse facets of national life. Series of opinions from the public compelled the government to publish cultural and other educational materials in the eleven government-sponsored indigenous Ghanaian languages (Ga, Dangme, Ewe, Twi, Fante, Nzema, Gonja, Kasem, Dagbani, Dagaare and Gurunne). The Bureau of Ghanaian languages and the school of Ghana languages have been charged with the responsibility of organizing teaching courses for both adult and children learners in the local languages. Diploma and degree programmes in some of the indigenous languages are currently run in the Ghanaian public universities and institutions of Ghanaian languages. However, it is worth noting that attitudes towards the use of the indigenous languages within the educational sector remain rather argumentative. Teachers of indigenous languages are not much sought after and, quite often, students do not consider them as proficient academically as teachers of other subjects (Bamgbose, 1991). Indeed, teachers of African languages often try to regain their image by ensuring that they are able to teach some other course as well. Students have very high respect and admiration for teachers and other people who are able to express themselves fluently in English; even teachers have great respect for their colleagues in the English Departments and indeed all those who are very proficient in the use of English (Andoh-Kumi, 1997). Guerini (2007) observed that in most Ghanaian universities, lecturers and professors teaching indigenous languages are looked down upon by their colleagues in the same faculty.

The use of English as the teaching medium within the educational system tends to be preferred to the use of an indigenous language. Some parents are disappointed when they learn that their children are learning their own languages at school. Such parents do not understand why they should pay fees only for their children to learn languages they already speak (Andoh-Kumi, 1997). For most parents in Ghana, the purpose of schooling is to learn and be proficient in the English language. Competence in English is a means to one's well-being and prosperity. English therefore consolidates its position as the only language suitable for use in the local educational system. Dakubu (2005) reports that in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the German missionary, Rapp, noted that Ga teachers were not particularly interested in teaching Ga, but refused to teach Akan (which they all spoke) as a matter of ethnic pride, and consequently taught only in English. Colin Baker (1992) describes this linguistic situation as a language conflict attitude where languages in contact are in competition, with one language threatening, as it were, the other.

In 2008, the Ministry of Education Science and Sports, Ghana, in collaboration with the Ghana Education Service introduced a new instructional approach under the National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP). The rationale behind the adoption of this approach is the overwhelming evidence that mother tongue based instruction is a powerful tool for the acquisition of literacy skills. The NALAP is a contribution to the implementation of the former official language policy which stipulates that the Ghanaian language prevalent in the local area be used as the medium of instruction at the kindergarten and Lower Primary Levels while English is studied as a subject and used where necessary. By Primary Four, English replaces the Ghanaian language as medium of instruction and the Ghanaian language treated as just another subject. The use of Ghanaian language at the Kindergarten and lower primary level serves as background or pre-existing knowledge upon which conclusions and predictions can be made to facilitate transfer (Saville-Troike, 1988). Although the use of the child's primary language at the early stages of education has been empirically confirmed to be beneficial, the policy was changed because students' English language proficiency fell (Andoh-Kumi, 1994) leading to the abysmal performance in English and other subject areas. Other challenges the old language policy faced were the multilingual situation in Ghana especially in urban schools, the lack of teachers specifically trained to teach content subjects in the Ghanaian language and the prestige English enjoys as the official language.

Today, in some public Kindergarten Schools in Ghana, both the local languages and English are employed in communication but the latter has a higher percentage of usage. On the other hand, in private schools of the same level, only English is used in interaction. At urban areas, many pupils in Kindergarten can speak English since their parents speak English with them at home. Teaching children at that early stage of education in English is facilitated by the choice of English over the local language by parents. At the Basic School Level, English is the main language of instruction especially in urban areas. Teachers communicate in English with their pupils and encourage them to speak English always. Pupils are told to read the newspapers and story books in order to improve upon their proficiency and competence in English. It is at the rural areas that teachers occasionally combine English and the local language of the community in instructing their pupils. The Senior High Schools and the tertiary institutions in Ghana, really exhibit the official function of English as the language of instruction in education. At these levels students and teachers are



drawn from the heterogeneous ethnic regions of Ghana. Due to the multilingual nature of these educational institutions, English functions as lingua franca. The English language is sometimes code mixed with the local language in informal spoken discourse; where interlocutors share no common Ghanaian language, they are forced to use English (Torto, 2011). In these institutions English is used at all social gatherings. All notices and other forms of communication are in English. It is only in some rural Senior High Schools where occasionally the local language of the community is used concurrently with English at special functions like a durbar or Speech-and-Prize-Giving Day when many of the indigenous people are present.

## LANGUAGE ATTITUDES IN CHURCHES

During the British colonial era in Ghana, the Wesleyan mission, more than any other, supported colonial language policy in education. Being an English mission, the Wesleyans were immensely favoured by the colonial governments. Until the 1880s, English was generally not only the medium of instruction in all Wesleyan schools but also the language of preaching in their churches. African preachers often spoke to their indigenous congregations through interpreters. Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman, the Wesleyan Methodist Superintendent, argued that the use of the English language in Wesleyan schools and churches was part of a programme of hope for the time when the English language will become the classical language of all the tribes and people (Freeman, 1841). In comparing Basel Mission policy of encouraging use of the indigenous languages with Wesleyan emphasis on English, Freeman saw advantages for Methodist youth in respect of job opportunities in the government sector. On the other hand, Basel Mission policy though disqualified its youth from occupying important government and commercial positions, protected them from the negative influences associated with English language education. In religion, English was largely the language of worship in the Christian churches. It was more particularly linked with Wesleyan, Catholic and Anglican missionary activities than with the Presbyterians. In general, the more urban the society, the more English that was used. On the other hand, the more rural, the less English that was used and the more of the indigenous languages.

In recent times, the charismatic or modern churches that have emerged at the urban areas of Ghana use English instead of the language of the community. The local languages are used in some of the charismatic churches in the delivery of sermons and for the dissemination of vital information. The greater parts of the religious activities are in English. Similarly, liturgical activities in some orthodox churches (Methodist, Anglican, and Catholic) at urban settings in Ghana are basically in English. For instance, the Catholic Chaplaincy at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana uses only English during daily and Sunday masses. This attitude is due to the linguistic heterogeneity of the university community. However, at the Pedu Parish, (a suburb of Cape Coast) both English and Fante (the language of the community) are used during worship. For instance, the Bible readings, the sermon and eucharistic prayers are in both languages. One would expect that the language of the community (Fante) would dominate in the religious discourse but English features more. In the Presbyterian Church in Ghana, the indigenous languages feature more in their worship than the other orthodox churches. In an urban area the Bible readings could be in different local languages. It is at the rural areas of Ghana that Christian religious proceedings are in the indigenous languages only but in the cities and towns English dominates.

Given the fact that in Ghana, literacy in English is acquired through formal education, and that a sizable percentage of children have no access to formal education, it is not surprising that the English-speaking population is not a large one. However, what English lacks in numbers, it makes up for in prestige, status and functionality. Hence, language policy discourse in Ghana incorporates the role of English as an official language. One consequence of making a language an official language is the status it confers on the language and its speakers. The official language becomes dominant and other languages become disadvantaged and policies affecting such official languages affect the viability and stability of other languages used (Herriman & Burnaby, 1996). As an official language in Ghana, English holds a dominant position over the indigenous languages. In practically all African countries colonized by Britain, English remains an official or co-official language. Attempts to promote the use of any other language as national or official have resulted either in failure or partial success.

In Ghana, English is consistently employed in television and radio broadcasts, in daily newspapers and magazines, in almost all the administrative and legal documents published within the country, as well as in all official transactions (Huber, 1999). In Ghana, English enjoys great prestige as it is seen as a language of power and security. Competence in English gives one the power to exercise authority; it is a key to one's advancement in society. A person who wants to feel secure learns English as it is one of the requirements for employment in many areas (Saah, 1986). Educated politicians who visit their constituencies would rather speak English than use the dominant language of the area and educated chiefs would speak English to their subjects whenever they have the privilege of a visit by a minister of state or the president of the country (Sackey, 1997). Under normal circumstances, it is unlikely that a student would choose to learn a language that does not offer the prospect of a good job or social advancement. Many parents in Ghana send their children to English-medium schools (Andoh-kumi, 1999). Some parents insist on their children speaking English at home without regard to the indigenous language of the community. The idea is to position the children for a good education and prospects of economic advancement. Given the prevailing attitude that English-medium education is best, it is not surprising that parents opt for it in the belief that the earlier a child is exposed to instruction in English, the better will be its chances of success in higher cycles of education. Speakers of other languages are, to some extent, responsible for the hegemony of English, particularly in terms of their attitudes to their own languages. A family that abandons the mother tongue in favour of English as the medium of communication in the home cannot at the same time complain that its mother tongue has been marginalized in other domains.

It is worth noting that there is a section of the Ghanaian populace who disregard the importance of English in Ghana (Saah, 1986). For them, the status of English as the only official language of the country is an explicit indication of its dependence on the British administration, both culturally and economically. Another section of Ghanaians also consider the indigenous languages more apt to express traditional values and cultural issues, rather than academic matters. On the other hand, English is associated with western style of life; it is connected to the ideas of

prosperity and economic development. A certain degree of competence in English is a requisite for holding important and remunerative national offices.

Among the indigenous languages in Ghana, Akan is widely spoken (Torto, 2000). Akan enjoys considerable prestige and is currently employed in television and radio programmes, religious ceremonies, in politics, within the judicial system and so forth (Guerini, 2007). Minority local language speakers in Ghana feel threatened not only by the hegemony of English but also by a vehicular language like Akan. Linguistic loyalty tends to arise from resentment against a dominant ethnic group like the Asantes', whose native language has been accorded widespread prominence and prestige since the period of colonial rule (Turchetta, 1996). The case of Akan as a nationwide vehicular language is in conformity with the domain theory in language shift (Fishman 1964, 1991): the idea that when one language gets an expanded domain of use over others there is the tendency for bilingual speakers to shift to it. Dakubu (2005) reports that there is a perception among the Ga people of Ghana that they are losing their land, culture and language. The Gas feel their language is dying. This feeling is the result of usurpation of the functionality of the Ga language by other ethnic groups that have migrated to the capital city of Ghana where the Ga language dominates. Such conflicting attitudes by speakers of the indigenous languages tend to generate a situation in which linguistic policy reforms are executed intermittently in order to avoid ethnic tensions.

In comparison with other parts of the world where English is spoken, the language still plays a prominent role. In South Africa, where nine African languages are recognized as co-official languages with English and Afrikaans, English stands out as the dominant language. Furthermore, compared with English-medium education, education in an African language does not confer any significant benefits, either in terms of social mobility or better economic prospects (Alexander, 2001; Kamwangamalu, 1997). Consequently, there is increasing rate in enrolment in English-medium schools, with the result that loyalty to the mother tongue by the younger generation is weakening and competence in the mother tongue is decreasing (deklerk, 1999). Although it has been suggested that neither Afrikaans nor most of the indigenous African languages are in any danger now, the point has also been made that language shift towards English is clearly taking place at an accelerated rate, and the number of domains in which languages other than English can be used is rapidly declining (Reagan, 2001). In Japan, where English is not a central basis for deciding who has access to economic resources and political power (Tollefson, 2000); it is still the case that English is prestigious particularly in international business relations and communication. In other countries, where English is used for internal purposes, it is a major determinant of position and power. In Europe, where there are well-entrenched national languages, it is said that the popularity of English is also a looming threat (Dicker, 1996). It is reported that in Europe, English has become almost a lingua franca in, for example, Scandinavia and the Netherlands, and is the preferred first foreign language taught in schools in virtually all of Europe (Hoffman, 1988). In Switzerland, French Swiss are said to be more attracted to English than to German, while German Swiss also tend to favour English over French as a second language (Dicker, 1996). English has enormous prestige mainly because of its instrumental value. The impact of globalization has also accelerated the use of English in Europe. In Ghana, lack of familiarity with English constitutes one of the greatest impediments; it affects access to education, public services, jobs, political positions and effective functioning in society. The hegemony of English may be said to be beneficial when one considers its communicative and instrumental function, its role as lingua franca and its global attributes (Pennycook, 1994). However, the English language in Ghana poses a direct threat to the very existence of other languages (Pennycook, 1994) and to the country's linguistic and cultural diversity (Webb, 1996).

## CONCLUSION

In communicating their language attitudes, Ghanaians place a high premium on the English language at the expense of the numerous indigenous languages. Today, the English language is the most prestigious and the only official language of Ghana, a privileged position that the colonial language has enjoyed since independence till the present time. Though the minority of the population of Ghana are literate implying that the non-literate function well in the indigenous languages, the use of English continues to dominate the social, political, cultural and economic circles of communication. In Ghana, the indigenous languages are used in fewer domains and speakers are becoming less proficient in their mother tongues leading to code-mixing and possibly language shift. The current situation is that the indigenous languages are being relegated to the background in many spheres of the lives of the people of Ghana and this poses a great threat not only to the culture and traditions, but also to the very existence of the people. While government is concern about the pedagogy and acquisition of English in educational institutions, the crucial role of Ghanaian languages in forging national cohesion should also be considered. The multilingual situation in Ghana should be managed properly in order to protect the nation's indigenous languages from potential threat of death.

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# The Effect of The Involvement Load Hypothesis on Vocabulary Learning Through Synonyms, Definitions, And Exemplifications

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## BIO DATA

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## ABSTRACT

This article expatiates upon the full-fledged impact of the enlarged vocabulary on the overall dexterity in picking up L2s in general and reading comprehension in particular. The Involvement Load Hypothesis is counted as a prolific approach in heightening and broadening the vocabulary knowledge of L2 learners. To prove this, three approaches of L2 vocabulary learning that is, synonyms, definitions, and exemplifications are discussed. 180 male and female students participated as the participants of this study classified into 2 phases. In the first phase, these participants were divided into three 60 male and female subject groups (A, B, and C). Each group was supposed to have six classes during regular 50-minute English class sessions where they centralized on one of the three approaches, that is, synonyms, definitions, and examples, within the passages in order to learn new words in English. The findings based on the ANOVA test statistically unraveled that the participants who availed themselves of the definitions of the new terms did a better job on the test and excelled the other two. In the second phase, the 180 participants were classified into six 30 subject groups and got separate instructions on synonyms, definitions, and exemplifications. The results acquired through this phase were analyzed by a two-way ANOVA. The *F*-observed value for the interaction between the sex of the participants and the input modification on the performance of the participants on the posttest revealed that the input offered through giving definitions to the complicated words had a significant effect on the performance of the female participants only. Exemplification helped the male participants more than the female ones, and the passages along with the synonyms of the new terms helped the female and the male participants' performance to an equal degree. In the long run, the product of this study can broadly help L2 practitioners in the domain of teaching and materials development and the differences between the two sexes from the cognitive and metacognitive point of view in learning and teaching.

**Key Words:** definition, exemplification, involvement load hypothesis, language practitioners, synonyms

## **INTRODUCTION**

Schmitt (2008) holds that for both second language teachers and learners vocabulary is obviously a top priority (p. 18). Having an extensive vocabulary is believed to help L2 learners to partly handle unpredictable communicative situations (Nunan, 1999, p. 103). For L2 learners, big words (i.e., content words) are indisputably the very elements that make it possible for them to figure out meaning (Vanpatten, 2004, p. 276).

Despite the importance of vocabulary in L2 learning, there has been conspicuously less theoretical headway in this domain. A growing number of studies in recent years have examined the effectiveness of several techniques to promote incidental vocabulary learning through reading, such as glossing (i.e., providing the meaning of obscure words in the margins of a text). Because texts offer learners rich input where lexical items are highly contextualized, the addition of some kind of lexical intervention might further nurture lexical development. However, studies investigating the effectiveness of different lexical intervention tasks during reading have led to conflicting results (Long, 1985, p. 89).

The notion of involvement load includes both motivational (e.g., need) and cognitive components (e.g., search and evaluation). They also state that incidental tasks with a higher degree of involvement load are more conducive to the type of processing that is deemed crucial for learning. This hypothesis has important pedagogical implications and it allows us to manipulate task features and predict what tasks will be more effective. However, more empirical evidence is needed in order to support it. In the present study, incidental learning is interpreted as a learning condition in which learners process an L2 for meaning rather than for form (i.e., their goal is text comprehension rather than vocabulary learning) and unintentionally learn L2 forms and/or their meanings. Within this framework, learners may or may not pay attention to words and become aware of them while they are reading for meaning. Therefore, the notion of incidental learning is distinct from the notion of implicit learning, which takes place outside of awareness. While implicit learning can be incidental only, explicit learning can be both intentional and incidental. This view is different from others, where incidental learning is considered to occur when the object of learning is not the focus of attention. Most studies that are premised on the role of involvement, attention, and depth of processing in incidental vocabulary learning have rarely employed process measures, such as think-aloud protocols (Grabe, & Stoller, 2002). While attempts are made to mull over different areas of SLA, this task still needs to be undertaken in studies on incidental vocabulary learning. Moreover, Jiménez (1997) assumes that many of these studies will be incidental if learners are not instructed to learn the words. On the other hand, studies on intentional L2 vocabulary learning (Kamhi-Stein, 1998) have showed that type of words such as concrete and abstract nouns might have an effect on vocabulary learning. This issue remains mainly unexplored and intact in incidental vocabulary learning areas; however (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001, p. 45-55). The Involvement Load Hypothesis, although not at first formulated in the context of form-focused instruction, claims that in incidental learning situations the retention of forms (i.e., words) depends on the manipulation of cognitive and motivational variables within tasks. This claim can arguably constitute a technique in form-focused instruction

that, in effect, is very different from the default position taken in vocabulary learning and (Swain, 1985, p. 231).

### ***Sex Differences in Cognition and Metacognition***

Hapler (1992) maintains that while it is clear that males and females are physically different, the question of whether there are clear gender differences in intelligence, personality, cognition, or behavior are more difficult to address. Males and females do behave differently in some distances. For example, they appear to think differently, in other words, some psychologists (Lavadenz, 2000) would argue that males and females differ in term of fundamental cognitive processing.

Lavendez believes there are many stereotypes concerning gender differences, some are as follows:

1. Females are more caring and nurturing, and therefore become better teachers, nurses.
  2. Males are more suited for leadership, managerial roles in business and politics.
  3. Women have better verbal abilities, talk more, and are interested in social relationships and emotional issues.
  4. Males are less friendly, are more interested in objects than, and do not show their emotions.
  5. Females are poor in spatial skills, particularly if machines are involved (like parking a car), they cannot find their way easily and are hopeless at throwing.
  6. Males are better at science and math, while females are better at art and social science subject.
- (p. 25)

### ***Evidence for Sex Differences in Cognition, Perception and Attention***

Baker (1987) argues that all of our information about the world comes from our sensory systems, and the cognitive process begins with the ability to sense changes in the environment and to make some meaning out of this bombarding array of sensory stimuli. The first steps in the cognitive process are perception and attention, and possible sex differences in these earliest stages of information processing are interesting for two reasons:

This would provide a theoretical basis for sex-related differences at later cognitive stages. Perception and attention are two areas in which there are no sex-role stereotypes because we have little conscious awareness of the ways in which these systems function.

He also summarizes sex-related differences in perception and attention. Some examples are as follows:

- **Hearing:** Females are better at detecting pure tones.
- **Vision:** Males are better at detecting peripheral visual movements, while females have better acuity.
- **Taste:** Females have lower threshold for detecting sweet, sour, salty, and bitter substances.
- **Touch:** Females are more sensitive to touch on most regions of the body.
- **Attention Disorders:** Sex ratios for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) show a much greater proportion of males' suffers (Baker, 1987, p. 87).

### ***General Intelligence***

Winograd and Hare (1988) maintain that male brains on average are larger than female brains, but size is no guarantee of intelligence, and the common finding on standardized tests of general

intelligence (IQ) is that males and females show no differences. However, sex differences do emerge in terms of general knowledge. It has been found that males outperformed females in history, politics, geography, and science, while females only outperformed males in art (p. 94). More recently, it was unraveled that males performed better in sport, science, affairs, geography, politics, and history; whereas females outperformed males in cookery and medical activities (Robinson, 1995, p. 5).

### ***Verbal Abilities***

Chamot and O'Malley (1994) concluded that during the early school years, girls outperform boys in most aspects of verbal performance, for example:

1. They say the first word earlier.
2. They articulate more clearly at an earlier age.
3. They use longer sentences.
4. They are more fluent.
5. They learn to read sooner.
6. They perform better on tests of grammar, spelling and word fluency.

Anderson (1999) adds that differences in verbal ability are the first to catch the eyes among the two sexes. For instance, females aged 1-5 were more proficient at L2 skills than were males of the same age. There is also evidence that girls begin to talk earlier than boys, and when they do, they produce longer utterances with more advanced linguistic forms, and make fewer errors. McGuiness (2001) also conducted a large-scale longitudinal study on more than 9,000 children for 6 years and found that girls consistently scored higher on spelling, punctuation, language use, and comprehension. A strong female advantage in verbal abilities was taken for many years. McGuiness (2001) also found that all of the differences were very small, and an analysis by age showed no differences in the magnitude of gender differences. (Maccoby & Jacklin, 2004, p. 54)

Haplern (1992) also posits that females only seemed to outperform males in verbal fluency and synonym generation, and males outperformed on verbal analogies (p.216). Maccoby and Jacklin (2006) concluded that there was little evidence for a clear sex difference in verbal ability. However, some of the clearest evidence comes when we consider the lowest end of the verbal abilities distribution. Stuttering is overwhelmingly a female problem with a ratio of something like 4:1 in favor of females. Similarly, severe reading disabilities (i.e., dyslexia) are also a predominantly male problem with the severe forms of dyslexia occurring 10 times more often in males. Even boys who are not classed as language impaired are much more likely to show speech production problems and are usually slower at learning to read. Finally, after brain damage when language has been affected, males suffer more language impairment and take much longer to recover language skills compared to females who have suffered similar case (p. 47).

## BACKGROUND

### *Synonyms*

Newton (2001) holds that synonym is the derivative of the Greek word with the roots referring to the words that are different but have the same or similar meaning. AS a result, these words are called synonymous; for instance, *seek* is synonymous with *hunt*. They are found in all areas of speech including verbs, nouns, adjectives and others. Those who are involved with producing dictionaries posit that there are no synonyms that have the exact same meaning whether in social levels or context. This they say is because of phonic qualities, usage, and ambiguity of words. Some words just differ in seriousness; for instance, *cat* sounds more informal than *feline*. In the case of usage, some synonyms may have the same meaning when referring to one thing and not the same in others, for example *extended* and *long*. Synonyms are also an important resource for euphemisms that help in language usage. Synonyms can be used to reduce the repetition of certain words that reduces monotony of overusing a certain way. A thesaurus is a large database of synonyms and can be used to greatly enhance writing by offering a wide variety of synonyms. It is important though to understand a context before choosing synonyms. (p. 23)

He also goes on and maintains that different words with very similar or identical meanings are called synonyms. The words *beast* and *animal* are synonyms because they have very similar meanings. Similarly, the words *woods* and *forest* are synonyms. Words that are synonyms are said to be synonymous. In a figurative sense, two words having the same connotation are also said to be synonymous. Note that no word means exactly the same as any other word and, therefore, there are no exact synonyms with identical meaning in English. Certain words may convey the same general notion. For example, the words *slay*, *kill*, *murder*, *execute*, and *slaughter* all convey the same general idea. They are, therefore, employed as synonyms even though they are used in different senses and in different contexts. Words of any part of speech can be synonymous. But remember that if one member of the pair is a noun, the other member must also be a noun. Similarly, the synonym of an adjective will also be an adjective.

However, some words can have more than one meaning. For example, the word *pupil* can mean either student or the aperture in the iris of the eyes. Hence, *pupil* is not synonymous with *student* when it refers to a part of the eye. Similarly, the sentence *He expired* means the same as he died. Here the words died and expired are synonyms. But the sentence My passport has expired does not mean the same as My passport has died. The words expired and died are not synonyms in this context.

A good knowledge of synonyms will help you express the same idea in very many ways.

### *Definition*

Clark (2002) believes that a definition is a passage that explains the [meaning](#) of a term (i.e., a [word](#), phrase, or other set of [symbols](#)) or a type of thing. The term to be defined is the [definiendum](#). A term may have many different senses or meanings. For each such specific sense, a definition is a cluster of words that defines the term.

A chief difficulty in managing definition is the need to use other terms that are already understood or whose definitions are easily obtainable. The use of the term in a simple example may suffice. By contrast, a [dictionary definition](#) has additional details, typically including an [etymology](#) showing snapshots of the earlier meanings and the parent language. Like other words, the term definition has subtly different meanings in different contexts. A definition may be descriptive of the general use meaning, or stipulative of the speaker's immediate intentional



meaning. For example, in formal languages like mathematics, a stipulative definition guides a specific discussion. A descriptive definition can be shown to be right or wrong by comparison to general usage, but a stipulative definition can only be disproved by showing a logical contradiction.

A precise definition extends the descriptive dictionary definition (i.e., lexical definition) of a term for a specific purpose by including additional criteria that narrow down the set of things meeting the definition. Stevenson (2001) has identified persuasive definition as a form of proper definition that purports to describe the true or commonly accepted meaning of a word, but in reality stipulating an altered use, perhaps as an argument for some specific view. Stevenson has also noted that some definitions are legal or coercive whose object is to create or alter rights, duties, or crimes.

Providing the definition of the new words is another effective approach to teach the words; it connects the words being taught with their context and with the learners' prior knowledge. Concept of definition reflects the idea that students need to have some understanding of what a definition is and how it works before they can give the meaning of a word on their own. The concept of definition shows common elements of a dictionary definition. These elements include (1) the category to which the word being defined belongs (*What is this?*), (2) some characteristics of the word (*What is it like?*), and (3) some specific examples of the word. Learners refer to context, their prior knowledge, and dictionaries to find the elements needed to complete the map. Teaching learners to recognize and use information from word parts such as prefixes, suffixes, and roots can be an especially effective word-learning strategy for use with content area texts. These texts can contain many words that are derived from the same word parts. Although words such as *misread*, *interdependent*, and *substandard* can often be figured out from the context, decomposing such words into known parts like *mis-*, *read*, *inter-*, *depend*, and so forth not only makes the words themselves more memorable, but, in combination with sentence context, may be a useful strategy in determining the meaning of unknown words. Learners can acquire the meaning of word parts by inference as they read. Although such a strategy may be part and parcel of normal reading, many learners are unaware that breaking words into their parts can be a way to determine their meanings. In addition, learners often do not know the meanings of common word (Stevenson, 2001, p. 114-117).

### ***Exemplification***

Stahl (1986) holds that through this approach readers have a full access to the detailed examples of the new words and expressions in different sentences right following each of the new words and expressions within the context, and it is a productive helping readers to catch on the real meaning of the new word (p. 23).

He also holds that examples help people to understand far more than explaining the concepts in a paragraph. It takes more work to create examples, but even the simplest examples put side by side aid your readers' understanding while helping you to ensure that you actually know what you are talking about (p. 25).



## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Comprehending and summarizing L2 passages has always been considered as a complicated task for L2 learners. The approach in teaching reading comprehension has been predominantly communicative that emphasizes implicit, incidental learning. The techniques used in comprehension teaching include inferring the meaning of lexical items from the context in which they occur using the dictionary, realia, etc. (Richards & Rodgers, 1996).

According to Sokmen (1997), the argument against implicit instruction to facilitate L2 learning comes from a number of potential problems associated with inferring words from context (p. 237). A large number of studies on teaching reading comprehensions have shown the ineffectiveness of just using explicit instruction and the need to accompany it with implicit instruction or in context explanation of the new words and expressions (p. 202). To promote better learning, the current reading comprehension instruction emphasizes both implicit and explicit learning. While there is now more emphasis on explicit learning, it has been argued that the comprehension development of an L2 is more likely to be generally implicit or incidental beyond a certain level of proficiency (Carter & McCarty, 1998, p. 95).

L2 teachers often believe that providing the appropriate synonyms for the new terms in the passages would help L2 learners to better grasp the clear meaning of the overall passage. On the other hand, there are many L2 practitioners who argue that preparing the definition for the new words would be more fruitful for L2 learners to catch on the widespread meaning of the passages. Notwithstanding, in the third camp some L2 teachers are persuaded that the exemplification of the new term works definitely better to let L2 learners become aware of the essence of the meaning of the passages.

This study attempts to explore the effect of synonyms, definitions, and examples, on L2 learners' reading comprehension ability. On the other hand, educational practitioners, syllabus designer and material developers are expected to differentiate the male and female's amount of reading comprehension when they are exposed to the three aforementioned inputs.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. Do different kinds of teaching reading through synonyms, definition, or examples make any significant difference on L2 learners' overall reading comprehension?
2. Is there any significant difference between reading comprehension ability of those L2 learners who have been taught to employ synonyms, those who have taught to use definitions, or those who are provided with examples of the new words within the context?
3. Is there any difference between the male and female L2 learners to benefit from the three aforementioned approaches to comprehend the essence of the reading passages?

## **STATEMENT OF THE HYPOTHESES**

In order to gain access to more or less convincing findings to remove the pertinent ambiguities following null hypotheses were suggested.

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference between the amount of reading comprehension of the foreign language learners when they are exposed to synonyms, definitions or examples in the text.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no interaction of comprehension input – namely, synonyms, definitions, or examples in the overall comprehension of passages between the sex and the method.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participant***

This study, conducted in June 2009, involved 300 Iranian university students, who were all freshmen. Among them, 100 participants who participated in the pilot studies were excluded from the main study. All were Iranian L2 students between 19 and 25 years of age enrolled in the Islamic Azad University located in Pishva city in Iran. On the basis of their scores on the TOEFL the participants who got more than 70% of the scores were selected as the participants of this study- 180 male and female students. The Levene's test was also conducted and their homogeneity was confirmed- that is, they were more or less of the same level. This study involved two phases. In the first phase the 180 participants were categorized into three groups.

- Group A was assigned to get the reading passages provided with the synonyms of the new words.
- Group B was assigned to get the reading passages along with the definitions of the new words.
- Group C was assigned to get the reading passages along with the examples of the unfamiliar words and inside the texts.

An ANOVA test was run to compare the difference among the means.

In phase two, the participants were divided into six subgroups- that is, 30 male groups and three 30 female groups. A factorial design was assigned to illuminate the interaction between sex and methods.

It is also expedient to mention that all the tests that appeared in this research study had been diligently verified in terms of reliability and validity through the proper statistical measures.

### ***Instruments***

#### ***Phase 1***

In this phase the following instruments were employed:

1. Reading passages selected from TOEFL (Barron's, 1989)
2. Six intermediate piloted reading passages selected from the book titled *Developing Skills* (Alexander, 1967a) with the level of difficulty determined through the Fog index model.

#### ***Phase 2***

In this phase hereunder instruments were utilized:

1. Six intermediate piloted reading passages selected from the book titled *Developing Skills* (Alexander, 1967a) with the level of difficulty determined through the Fog Index model.

## ***Procedures***

### ***Pilot Studies***

As a preliminary step, two pilot studies were conducted 4 weeks before the main study. The purpose of the first pilot study was to choose 6 out of 10 passages that were appropriate in difficulty and content for use in the main study to identify vocabulary and information that needed modification. After constructing the multiple choice comprehension questions test on the six reading passages thus chosen, it was pilot tested in order to identify and modify items that were too easy or too difficult. For instance, items that almost all the participants had answered correctly or incorrectly were revised to make them more discriminating.

### ***Main Study***

The main study was administered in two separate phases. In the first phase 180 participants were divided into three 60 male and female subject groups (A, B, and C). Each group was supposed to have six classes during regular 50-minute English class sessions where they centralized on the synonyms, definitions, and examples within the passages. Three types of test booklets were prepared, each consisting of only one of the three versions (A, B, and C) reading task and test. Within each class, the same procedure was followed. The participants were told to read and try to understand the six short passages and to answer reading comprehension questions (10 items) and 20 multiple-choice questions.

In the second phase the same 180 participants took part, but this time they were divided into six groups- that is, 30 female and three 30 male participants.

Sex	Synonym	Methods Definition	Example
Male Subjects	G1	G2	G3
Female Subjects	G4	G5	G6

In this respect, other different piloted passages in three forms with the same level of difficulty- six passages for each vertical group- were assigned. These participants had also six classes during regular, 50-minute English class sessions. They were also given three kinds of test booklet, each involving exclusively one within each class, the same procedure was followed. The participants were told to read the short six passages based on the three versions (A, B, and C) and try to answer 20 multiple-choice questions.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

### ***Phase 1***

The data obtained through the procedure described above were analyzed by the analysis of variance (ANOVA). Tukey's HSD tests were also used in post hoc analyses to examine which of the mean differences among the three subject groups were statistically significant. Statistically, it

was unraveled that the participants who availed themselves of the definitions of the new terms did a better job on the test and excelled the other two. Hence, the first null hypothesis was rejected.

### ***Phase 2***

The results acquired through the procedure described above in phase two were analyzed by the two-way ANOVA on the total comprehension scores. The *F*-observed value for the interaction between the sex of participants and the input modification on the performance of participants on the test revealed that the input offered through giving definitions to the complicated words had significant effect on the performance of the female participants only. Exemplification helped the male participants more than the female ones, and synonyms of the new terms helped the female and the male participants' performance to an equal degree. Thus, the second null hypothesis as there is no significant interaction between the gender of the participants and the methods of teaching on their performance on the test was rejected, and it could be claimed that there was a significant interaction between the two variables.

## **CONCLUSION AND THE PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The major findings of the present study can be summarized as follows:

First and foremost, learners perceive their comprehension to be higher when they receive the modified input than when they receive unmodified one. Likewise, synonyms, definitions and examples within the passages have a more positive impact on the learners' reading comprehension than the intact reading passages. Elsewhere, examples input significantly enhance the reading comprehension of learners of the both sexes, but males are more benefited in this respect. Further, female learners benefit more than male learners when they are exposed to the definition input. On the other hand, definition helps the both sexes to better comprehend the essence of the passages. Last but not least, the sex of the learners and the type of input enjoy positive interaction.

Accordingly the findings of the present study suggest that the provision of any types of information in written input enhances reading comprehension. This study also unravels that female readers are cognitively and metacognitively different from male readers, and females are more sensitive and adoptive to the passages along with the definitions of the new words than the males. This trait of equality should also be taken into consideration in educational arenas.

On the other hand, Craik (2002) postulates that assessment is an essential part of the educational system (p. 120). In recent years, however, its importance has increased, and there are more assessments in schools. It also improves the instructional status of pupils and educational system as a whole. Because of this, it is crucially important that assessment is considered in terms of its fairness for the students of both sex as a measure of achievement. Put simply, the problem of equality and equity among male and female L2 learners should also be considered by test developers.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Despite the researcher attempted to conduct a sound study some limitations popped up in the current work as follow:

1. This study was administered in the Islamic Azad University, while the state universities were disregarded.
2. Specific range of the participants' age was utilized in this study, whereas other age ranges were ignored.
3. The participants were city dwellers, while the residents and students living in the remote rural areas were not considered at all.
4. There are absolutely other techniques to propel the vocabulary knowledge of the L2 learners, but nothing was stated in this respect.
5. The dexterity of the teachers in the area of teaching the pertinent techniques were not concerned whatsoever.

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# ***INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE LEARNING AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS WORLD***

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# CATEGORIAL FUNCTION AND LEXICO-GRAMMATICAL MEANING AS NEW THEORIES IN INDONESIAN LINGUISTICS

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## ABSTRACT

This research, entitled “Categorical Function and Lexico-grammatical Meaning as New Theories in Indonesian Linguistics,” aims at introducing and applying new concepts/theories to Indonesian Linguistics. Using qualitative method, it collects data from Indonesian online newspaper published in 2013, *Tata Bahasa Baku Bahasa Indonesia*, *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, and personal compositions. The research finds that affixes attached to base morphemes are either inflective or derivative—changing word categories). In relation to that, derivative affixes are called categorical function affixes for they can be used to verbalize, nominalize, adjectivalize, numeralize, and adverbialize. Affixes attached to base morphemes of which categories are verbs and non-verbs will result in varying lexico-grammatical meanings due to their verb inherent aspectuality and sub-categorical lexical meaning of each non-verb category.

**KEYWORDS:** *affixes, function, categorical, lexico-grammatical meaning*

## INTRODUCTION

Every language has its own system which consists of several components, namely phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. Grammar of a language is built on two of the four components, i.e. morphology and syntax. Indonesian morphology covers word formation by means of combining morphemes, affixation and composition, and reduplication. Accordingly, speaking about morphemes also entails examining morphological processes.

In a morphological perspective, word forms can be classified into base words (*makan*), affix-attached words (*mengkaji*, *membukakan*, *menjalani*), reduplicated words (*terbayang-bayang*), and composition words (*rumah sakit*). As for categories, they are classified into verb, noun, adjective, adverb, pronoun, number, preposition, and conjunction.

Being part of morphological processes, affixation offers vast attractions since it can be discussed from almost all aspects, to name but a few: affixes, base morphemes, and meanings. Affixation covers prefixes, infix, suffix, confix, and affix combination with base morphemes. In Indonesian language, they are evident in words such as *menuai*, *kinerja*, *satukan*, *pelatihan*, *menganugerahkan*, and *menganugerahi*. Indonesian prefixes are *me-*, *ber-*, *ter-*, *di-*, *ke-*, *se-*, *pe-*, and *per-*; infixes: *-el-*, *-em-*, *-er-*; and *-in-*, *sufiks*: *-kan*, *-i*, and *-an*, *konfiks*: *ke-an*, *pe-an*, *per-an*, *ber-an*, and *se-R-nya*; affix combination: *me(N)-kan*, *me(N)-i*, *memper-*, *memper-kan*, *memper-i*, *ter-kan*, *ter-i*, *di-kan*, *di-i*, *ber-kan*, *ber-an*, *per-kan*, and *per-i* (Kridalaksana. 1994:40--74).

As for syntax, the topic covers phrase, clause, and sentence, all of which can be examined with a focus on several aspects such as type, construction, and distribution.

Semantics talks about meaning in language. It can also be said that semantics talks about the structure of language in relation to the meaning of utterance or speech (Kridalaksana, 2008:216). It discusses the meaning of language units.

Palmer (in Djajasudarma, 2008:5) argues that examining meaning means interweaving language units. In other words, speaking about meaning (*makna*) entails understanding one word and its difference with another (Lyons in Djadjasudarma, 2008:5). Another term for meaning in Indonesian, i.e. *arti*, conveys lexical meaning of a word as lexeme. Sugono et.al. (2008:87) believes that *arti* covers the use of function that a unit of language carries. The last term for meaning is *erti* which can be understood as sub-entry. When attached with affixes, *mengerti*, the word can mean to know or understand (Sogono, et.al. 2008:381). Going from understanding the three terms, studying meaning can be said to be more relevant.

Research on morphology and semantics has been rigorously carried out, especially by several Indonesian linguists as follow:

1. Badudu, *Pelik-Pelik Bahasa Indonesia* (1993), on attaching affixes with base morphemes that create function and meaning.
2. Ramlan, *Ilmu Bahasa Indonesia Morfologi Suatu Tinjauan Deskriptif* (1987) on the function and process of affixation and reduplication
3. Kridalaksana, *Pembentukan Kata dalam Bahasa Indonesia* (1992) on types of affixes in relation to their varying function and meanings
4. Alwi, et.al., *Tata Bahasa Baku Bahasa Indonesia* (2003) on types of affix attached to base morphemes
5. Chaer in *Linguistik Umum* (1994), Kridalaksana in *Kamus Linguistik* (2008), and Djajasudarma in *Semantik 2 Pemahaman Ilmu Makna* (2009) on types of meaning—consisting of narrowed meaning and extended meaning, cognitive, emotive-connotative, referential, construction, lexical, grammatical, ideational, proposition, central, intentional, figurative, associative, contextual, idiomatic, and sayings.

The pieces of research in the above, however, have yet to cover:

- (1) concept/theory of affixes attached to base morphemes with categories such as verb and non-verb such as noun, adjective, pronoun, adverb, quantifier, and conjunction;
- (2) concept/theory of lexicogrammatical meaning, popularly known as grammatical meaning;
- (3) causes of divergent lexicogrammatical meanings attached to base morphemes with verb and non-verb categories.

The three aforementioned aspects are partly examined in my dissertation.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research uses qualitative method which, according to Djadjasudarma, is a procedure that results in descriptive data, both written and oral. Its objective is to create clear description on factual and accurate data or phenomena being scrutinized in the research.

Sudaryanto (1993:133) argues that collecting data can be carried out through *metode simak*, which consists of several basic techniques, namely *sadap*, *libat*, *cakap*, *simak bebas libat cakap*, *rekam* and *catat*. This analysis makes use of the last technique which covers:

- (a) reading and marking sentences that contain affixes attached to base morphemes;
- (b) taking notes and collecting all elements in part a;
- (c) composing corpus

In addition, it also makes use of distributional study, which is a method that relies on elements of the said language. This approach is based on a consideration that every language unit is related—building an integrated entity (Saussure in Djajasudarma, 1993:60).

## ANALYSIS AND FINDING

### *Categorial Function*

The concept of categorial function is examined because, in Indonesian language, every affix attached to a base morpheme is either inflective (unable to change word category) or derivative (able to change word category).

When affixes, such as *me(N)-*, *me(N)-kan*, and *me(N)-i* are attached to base morphemes, whose categories are verb or non-verb (noun, adjective, adverb, and number), in a morphological perspective, the affixes form derivative category. For example, affix *me(N)-* when attached to adjective *kecil* becomes *mengecil*; *me(N)-kan* when attached to number *dua* becomes *menduaskan*; *me(N)-i* when attached to noun *batu* becomes *membatui*. Such function, I argue, is called categorial function. The function of the three affixes when attached to base morpheme is to verbalize—making derivative verbs.

Such concept is also applicable to other affixes, resulting in certain morphological functions of verbalizing or non-verbalizing. The following are some examples:

- (1) *Pendaki gunung itu tewas di ketinggian 3.700m. (KBBI/2008/1469)*
- (2) *Ia meragukan kejujuran anak muda itu. (KBBI/2008/591)*
- (3) *Pikiran yang dikemukakannya bernilai. (TBBBI/2003/94)*
- (4) *Gadis itu bermobil ke sekolah. (DB/2013)*
- (5) *Dari semua kakaku Kusnolah yang terpandai. (TBBBI/2003/187)*
- (6) *Pak Lukman adalah orang terkaya di daerah kami. (DB/2013)*
- (7) *Terdakwa telah mengakui perbuatannya. (KBBI/2008/32)*
- (8) *Kami berlima akan mengikuti perlombaan itu. (DB/2013)*
- (9) *Keenam siwa yang hilang itu akhirnya ditemukan. (DB/2013)*
- (10) *Kami bekerja sekantor dengan orang Arab itu. (DB/2013)*
- (11) *Kami mengharuskan mereka tidur sebelum pukul 21.00. (KBBI/2008/486)*
- (12) *Juara pertama itu mendapat medali emas. (KBBI/2008/293)*
- (13) *Sebaiknya, Saudara cepat menyelesaikan tugas itu. (DB/2013)*
- (14) *Setinggi-tingginya kapal terbang tidak akan sampai ke langit. (DB/2013)*
- (15) *Kelengahannya menyebabkan dia terjatuh. (KBBI/2008/1235)*
- (16) *Masalah penduduk memerlukan penanganan yang serius. (TBBBI/2003/217)*
- (17) *Manisan buah-buah di Cianjur cukup mahal. (DB/2013)*
- (18) *Kekasih Riva bernama Zulham. (DB/2013)*

In the above sentences, affixes are attached to free morphemes. In sentences (1) and (2), affix *ke-*, attached to adjectives *tinggi* and *jujur*, carries a categorial function of nominalizing. In sentences (3) and (4), affix *ber-*, attached to nouns *nilai* and *mobil*, carries a categorial function

of verbalizing. As for sentences (5) and (6), affix *ter-*, attached to adjectives *pandai* and *kaya*, carries a categorial function of adjectivalizing. In sentences (7), affix *me(N)-I*, attached to personal pronoun *aku*, carries a categorial function of verbalizing. In sentences (8) and (9), affixes *ber-* and *ke-*, attached to numbers *lima* and *enam*, carry categorial functions of verbalizing and numeralizing, respectively. In sentence (10), affix *se-*, attached to noun *kantor*, carries a categorial function of numeralizing. In sentences (11) and (12), affixes, *me(N)-kan* and *me(N)-*, attached to adverbs *harus* and *dapat*, carry a categorial function of verbalizing. In sentences (13) and (14), affix *se-nya*, attached to adjectives *baik* and *tinggi* (reduplicated), carries a categorial function of adverbializing. In sentences (15) to (18), affixes *me(N)-kan*, *pe(N)-*, *-an*, and *ke-*, attached consecutively to conjunction, verb, adjective, and adverb—*sebab*, *duduk*, *manis*; and *hendak*, carry categorial functions of verbalizing and nominalizing

Table 1: Affix Categorial Functions

No.	Base Morphemes/Category	Affixes	Word Formation	Categorial Function
1	<i>tinggi</i> /adjective	<i>ke-an</i>	<i>ketinggian</i>	nominalizing
2	<i>jujur</i> /adjective	<i>ke-an</i>	<i>kejujuran</i>	nominalizing
3	<i>nilai</i> /noun	<i>ber-</i>	<i>bernilai</i>	verbalizing
4	<i>mobil</i> /noun	<i>ber-</i>	<i>bermobil</i>	verbalizing
5	<i>pandai</i> /adjective	<i>ter-</i>	<i>terpandai</i>	adjectivalizing
6	<i>kaya</i> /adjective	<i>ter-</i>	<i>terkaya</i>	adjectivalizing
7	<i>aku</i> /personal pronoun	<i>me(N)-i</i>	<i>mengakui</i>	verbalizing
8	<i>lima</i> /number	<i>ber-</i>	<i>berlima</i>	verbalizing
9	<i>enam</i> /number	<i>ke-</i>	<i>keenam</i>	numeralizing
10	<i>kantor</i> /noun	<i>se-</i>	<i>sekantor</i>	numeralizing
11	<i>harus</i> /adverb	<i>me(N)-kan</i>	<i>mengharuskan</i>	verbalizing
12	<i>dapat</i> /adverb	<i>me(N)-</i>	<i>mendapat</i>	verbalizing
13	<i>baik</i> /adjective	<i>se-nya</i>	<i>sebaiknya</i>	adverbializing
14	<i>tinggi</i> /adjective	<i>se-nya</i>	<i>setinggi-tingginya</i>	adverbializing
15	<i>sebab</i> /conjunction	<i>me(N)-kan</i>	<i>menyebabkan</i>	verbalizing
16	<i>duduk</i> /verb	<i>pe(N)-</i>	<i>penduduk</i>	nominalizing
17	<i>manis</i> /adjective	<i>-an</i>	<i>manisan</i>	nominalizing
18	<i>hendak</i> /adverb	<i>ke-</i>	<i>kehendak</i>	nominalizing

### Lexico-grammatical Meaning

Beside the categorial function in Indonesian linguistics, this research also examines lexico-grammatical meaning. Theory on lexico-grammatical meaning, I argue, is resulted from critiques on and elaboration of studies on grammatical meaning that has been popular among linguists. Whether realized or not, many believe that affixes convey grammatical meanings. The claim that affixes are grammatical comes from the fact that it is related to a subsystem in language organization in which meaning units combine and form bigger units of meaning (Kridalaksana, 2008:73). Grammatical meaning, therefore, can only be formed if there are joining language

units. Consequently, the notion that affixes are grammatical, in my opinion, is partly incorrect. The claim should say that affixes have the potentials of carrying grammatical meanings. Affixes that have yet to combine with language units would properly be called pre-grammatical.

Lexico-grammatical meaning in Indonesian linguistics was first coined by Professor Tadjuddin, my dissertation advisor. The term originates from lexical meaning and grammatical meaning. According to Tadjuddin (2013:30), “Lexical meaning is the meaning of a word in relation to phenomena outside language in a form of physical world description such as earth, sea, and man or of abstract concepts such as humanity, animalism, and plantation.” As for grammatical meaning, Tadjuddin (2013:32) argues that “it is generated by interaction or combination among various formal components.” Furthermore he divided grammatical meaning into grammatical invariant and lexico-grammatical meaning.

Grammatical invariant is a general meaning inherent in bound affixes, for example affix *me(N)-* when attached to verb *pukul*, noun *jamur*, dan adjective *merah* only carries verbalizing meaning with one grammatical invariant, namely active voice (transitive/intransitive)-- *memukul*, *menjamur*, and *memerah*.

This meaning is also evident in other affixes such as *be(R)-* and *te(R)-*. Affix *be(R)-* when attached to nouns *atap*, *sepeda*, and *telur* becomes *beratap*, *bersepeda*, and *bertelur* and carries verbalizing meaning with one grammatical invariant, which is active-intransitive. Affix *te(R)-* when attached to verb *baca* and *injak* becomes *terbaca* and *terinjak* also carries verbalizing meaning with one grammatical invariant, which is passive voice.

As for lexico-grammatical meaning, Tadjuddin argues that it comes from the integration of lexical forms with their lexical meaning and grammatical forms with their grammatical meaning. Affix *me(N)-*, for example, when attached to derivative verbs *memukul*, *menjamur*, and *memerah* with their differing lexical meanings results in varying lexico-grammatical meanings. The three words now mean to do (to hit-*pukul*), to become like (mushroom-*jamur*) and to turn (red-*merah*).

Similarly, affix *be(R)-* in *beratap*, *bersepeda*, and *bertelur* now have lexico-grammatical meaning to have (roof-*atap*), to ride (bicycle-*sepeda*), and to lay (egg-*telur*). Affix *te(R)-* in verbs *terbaca* and *terinjak* carries lexico-grammatical meanings to be able to be (read-*baca*) and to be (stepped on-*injak*).

The following data contain other affixes carrying several lexico-grammatical meanings.

- (19) Dalam rangkaian kegiatan Festival Bunga dan Buah Nusantara 2013 diselenggarakan Lomba **menggambar** Tingkat SD ....  
(<http://www.fbbnipb.com/2013/03/lomba-menggambar-tingkat-sd.html>)
- (20) Karena pengaman granat masih terpasang dengan baik, anggota Gegana dengan mudah **mengangkat** dan mengevakuasi granat dari lokasi penemuan.  
(<http://www.metrotvnews.com/metronews/video/2013/04/30/6/176406/Gegana-Amankan-Granat-di-Bantaran-Sungai-Pasar-Kembang>)
- (21) Anda mungkin ingin **membelikan** anak-anak Anda atau pun keluarga smartphone blackberry, berikut ini cara untuk mencari solusinya.  
(<http://duniablackberry.com/harga-blackberry-baru-dibawah-1-juta-2013.html>)
- (22) Madrid sementara harus tertinggal secara agregat 1-4 dari Dortmund setelah kalah **menyakitkan** pada pertandingan leg pertama di Signal Iduna Park pekan lalu.  
(<http://sport.detik.com/sepakbola/read/2013/04/30/092852/2233704/1033/>)



[schuster-percaya-madrid-mampu-balikkan-keadaan?991104topnews\)](#)

- (23) Aksi rampok di siang bolong ini, berhasil menggondol emas dengan cara **menembaki** salah satu penjaga toko.

<http://www.jambiexpres.co.id/berita-6800-pemilik-toko-ditembak-emas-disikat.html>

- (24) Terpancar wajah kegembiraan dari wajah sang ayah yang saat ini **memandangi** putra keempatnya itu.

<http://www.topix.com/forum/world/malaysia/T24E9C08RS9CA1UQE>

In sentences (19) to (24), affixes *me(N)-*, *me(N)-kan*, dan *me(N)-i* are attached to verbs *gambar*, *angkat*, *beli*, *sakit*, *tembak*, and *pandang*. The lexico-grammatical meaning that affix *me(N)-* carries is activity (action within a long duration) and semelfactive (momentarily); affix *me(N)-kan* carries a lexico-grammatical meaning to have someone do something or causative. Affix *me(N)-i* is iterative (in repetition) and continuative (continuous).

The varying lexico-grammatical meanings are due to the inherent aspectual meaning of verbs; activity verbs (*gambar* and *beli*), punctual verbs (*angkat* and *tembak*), and stative verb (*pandang*).

- (25) Petualangan **bersepeda** sesungguhnya dimulai pada Sabtu, 23 Maret. Di hari itu, peserta akan diboyong ke Sapta Tirta Pablengan di Karanganyar.

<http://www.tempo.co/read/news/2013/03/22/200468732/Garuda-Ajak-Penggemar-Sepeda-Jelajahi-Wisata-Solo>

- (26) "Hingga saat ini kami belum mendapat kepastian dia diizinkan **bermain** atau tidak," ujarnya.

<http://www.tempo.co/read/news/2013/03/19/099468038/Rahmad-Darmawan-Umumkan-28-Pemain-Timnas>

- (27) Dari pengamatan "PRLM", gedung dua lantai yang pernah dipakai Dinkes dalam tidak **terpakai**.

<http://www.pikiran-rakyat.com/node/231699>

- (28) ... Binod Chaudhary (57), orang Nepal pertama yang tercantum dalam daftar orang **terkaya** sedunia versi majalah Forbes.

<http://bisniskeuangan.kompas.com/read/2013/03/18/02472036/Chaudary.Miliuner.Pertama.dari.Nepal>

- (29) Cara membandingkan dua anak ini, menyebabkan kakak merasa **terjatuhkan** didepan adiknya.

<http://kesehatan.kompasiana.com/ibu-dan-anak/2012/12/16/tidak-suka-dibandingkan-511417.html>

In sentences (25) and (29), affixes *ber-*, *ter-* and *ter-kan* are attached to inanimate noun *sepeda*, dynamic verbs *pakai* and *main*, adjective *kaya*, punctual verb *jatuh*. Affix *ber-* carries lexico-grammatical to ride and to do. Affix *ter-* carries a lexico-grammatical superlative whereas affix *ter-kan* carries a lexico-grammatical meaning perfective.

- (30) ...Chris John, berharap bisa kembali bertarung menghadapi **petinju** Meksiko....

- (<http://olahraga.kompas.com/read/2012/12/10/12123460/Chris.John.Ingin.Hadapi.Marquez>)
- (31) ... lonjakan permintaan karena ketergantungan warganya yang tinggi pada **pemanas** listrik.  
(<http://www.pikiran-rakyat.com/node/228576>)
- (32) "**Ketua** Harian DPP Demokrat ini adalah lembaga baru hasil KLB ....  
(<http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2013/03/31/09541794/SBY.Tunjuk.Syarief.Hasan.Jadi.Ketua.Harian.Demokrat>)
- (33) Peringkat **kesatu** diraih oleh pebulu tangkis asal Bandung. (DB/2013)
- (34) **Timbangan** pada pedagang ikan itu sudah kurang baik. (DB/2013)
- (35) Pengaruh jenis kelamin terhadap **pilihan** makanan sudah sejak lama menjadi pertanyaan para ilmuwan dan ahli gizi.  
(<http://health.kompas.com/read/2013/04/23/11241497/pengaruhjeniskelamin.pada.makanan>)
- (36) **Secantik-cantiknya** orang, **sekaya-kayanya** orang, **semahal-mahalnya** makanan makanan yang dimakan toh akhirnya muaranya sama, menjijikkan dan bau.  
(<http://lifestyle.kompasiana.com/catatan/2012/12/27/inspirasi-dari-bilik-15-meter-persegi-514343.html>)
- (37) .... bahwa HIV AIDS bisa menular dari bersalaman, menggunakan WC yang sama, **tinggal** serumah, **menggunakan spre**i ....  
(<http://www.pikiran-rakyat.com/node/214149>)
- (38) Saya tidak ingat lagi wajah orang itu karena melihatnya hanya **sekilas**.  
(KBB/2008/698)

*In sentences (30) to (38), affixes pe-, ke-, -an, se-nya, and se- are attached to punctual verbs (tinju and timbang), adjectives (panas, tua, cantik, kaya, and mahal), dynamic verbs (pilih), inanimate nouns (rumah and kilas). Affix pe- carries lexico-grammatical meanings profession and tool. Affix ke- carries lexico-grammatical meanings chief and rank. Affix -an carries lexico-grammatical meanings result and tool. Affix se-nya carries a lexico-grammatical meaning intensity. Affix se- carries lexico-grammatical meanings one and temporary.*

The varying lexico-grammatical meanings that those affixes carry when attached to non-verbs are resulted from sub-categorical lexical meaning that each category has.

Table 2: Lexico-grammatical Meanings of Affixes

No.	Base Morpheme	Category/Sub-category	Affixation	Lexico-grammatical Meanings
1	<i>gambar</i>	dynamic verb	<i>menggambar</i>	activity
2	<i>angkat</i>	punctual verb	<i>mengangkat</i>	momentary action (semelfactive)
3	<i>beli</i>	dynamic verb	<i>membelikan</i>	action for indirect object
4	<i>sakit</i>	stative verb	<i>menyakitkan</i>	causative
5	<i>tembak</i>	punctual verb	<i>menembaki</i>	iterative
6	<i>pandang</i>	stative verb	<i>memandangi</i>	continuous
7	<i>sepeda</i>	inanimate noun	<i>bersepeda</i>	to possess/to ride
8	<i>main</i>	dynamic verb	<i>bermain</i>	activity
9	<i>pakai</i>	dynamic verb	<i>terpakai</i>	to be + past participle
10	<i>kaya</i>	adjective	<i>terkaya</i>	superlative
11	<i>jatuh</i>	punctual verb I	<i>terjatuhkan</i>	perfective
12	<i>tinju</i>	punctual verb I	<i>petinju</i>	profession
13	<i>panas</i>	adjective	<i>pemanas</i>	tool
14	<i>tua</i>	adjective	<i>ketua</i>	chief
15	<i>satu</i>	cardinal Number	<i>kesatu</i>	rank
16	<i>timbang</i>	punctual verb	<i>timbangan</i>	tool
17	<i>pilih</i>	punctual verb	<i>pilihan</i>	result
18	<i>cantik, kaya, mahal</i>	adjective	<i>secantik-cantiknya,</i> <i>sekaya-kayanya,</i> <i>semahal-mahalnya</i>	intensity
19	<i>rumah</i>	inanimate noun	<i>serumah</i>	one
20	<i>kilas</i>	inanimate Noun	<i>sekilas</i>	momentary

## CONCLUSION

The analysis on the categorial function and lexico-grammatical meaning finds that

- (1) Affixes in Indonesian language when attached to morphemes carry categorial functions of verbalizing, nominalizing, adjectivalizing, numeralizing, and adverbializing.
- (2) Affixes when attached to base morphemes of both verb and non-verb categories have varying lexico-grammatical meanings consisting of activity, to do something for (indirect object), semelfactive, causative, iterative, continuative, to have/to use, superlative, tool, profession, to be+past participle, perfective, result, chief, intensity, and one.
- (3) The variation of lexico-grammatical meanings that affixes carry is caused by (a) verb sub-category inherent aspectual meaning and (b) lexical meaning sub-category of every non-verb.

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## APPRECIATION

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## COMPARING THE PERFORMANCE OF EXTROVERT AND INTROVERT INTERMEDIATE FEMALE EFL LEARNERS ON LISTENING AND READING TASKS

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### ABSTRACT

The present study focused on the difference between English as a foreign language (EFL) introvert and extrovert learners regarding their reading and listening abilities. Instruments for this study included Preliminary English Test (PET), Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI), test of listening tasks (6 kinds of listening tasks, 80 items), test of reading tasks (8 kinds of reading tasks, 60 items). The study was conducted on 150 intermediate female EFL learners at Soodeh Language School and Kish Institute who participated and answered a PET test. The 108 homogeneous participants who scored one standard deviation below and above the estimated mean responded to EPI and based on the result of this questionnaire, they were divided into two groups of extroverts and introverts. Then both groups took the same test of listening and reading tasks and their results were compared. Finally, to observe whether or not there were any significant differences between the two groups in terms of performing reading and listening tasks, an independent t-test and a Mann-Whitney U test were run as the assumptions for a MANOVA were violated. The results indicated that introverts perform significantly better in listening tasks than extroverts. But in reading section there was no significant difference between the two groups of students.

**KEYWORDS:** Personality, Extrovert, Introvert, Task, Listening Comprehension, Reading Comprehension.

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years increasing numbers of teachers, in all subjects, have been looking for ways to change the traditional forms of instruction in which knowledge is transmitted. They have sought ways to make the classroom more “student-centered” and have investigated the different ways in which students can play more active roles in discovering and processing knowledge (Littlewood, 2000). In the field of language teaching, the approach which is currently best known in this respect is “task-based language teaching”.

For the past 20 years, task-based language teaching (TBLT) has attracted the attention of second language acquisition (SLA) researchers, curriculum developers, educationalists,

teacher trainers and language teachers worldwide. Long (1985) and Prabhu (1987), in their seminal writings, among others, supported an approach to language education in which students are given functional tasks that invite them to focus primarily on meaning exchange and to use language for real-world, non-linguistic purposes.

One of the major goals of EFL instruction is to prepare learners to be able to understand their interlocutors. The importance of listening cannot be underestimated since as Brownell (1995) believes that listening skills are as important as speaking skills. Speaking does not itself constitute communication unless what is said is comprehended by another person. Teaching the comprehension of spoken speech is therefore of primary importance if communication's aim is to be reached. Considering the importance of listening skill, Chastain (1988) maintains that, "to learn to speak, students must first learn to understand the spoken language they hear. The negative effect that undeveloped listening skills have on second language learning is quite profound. To communicate with native speakers, students must first learn to understand enough in real language situations to comprehend the gist of what native speakers are saying" (p. 193).

Another skill that should be considered in learning foreign languages is reading comprehension. Reading is an important skill for most students of English throughout the world, especially in countries where foreign language learners do not have the opportunity to interact with native speakers but have access to the written form of that language (Rivers, 1968). In the past reading was considered as a language learning process in which the teacher used reading materials to teach vocabulary and grammar, but nowadays it is considered as a communicative process in which reading for meaning is the core objective. Reading can be considered as a source of information, as a pleasurable activity, and as a means of extending one's knowledge of the language (Rivers, 1968).

"In the classroom there is a danger that reading or listening takes place in a void, without purpose or challenge. But it is possible to design tasks which will provide a context for written or spoken texts in order to provide the purpose or challenge which is basic to reading or listening in the real world. These tasks are valuable learning activities in themselves and by providing a context they also make the reading or listening into a meaning focused activity" (Willis & Willis, 2008, p. 33). The purposeful nature reading and listening enhance learning.

The concept of language teaching has always been with us at different stages. Some experts like Busch (1982) who writes about second language learning make the point that language is closely bound up with human behavior and personality. Nowadays, with so many people being interested in learning English, the factors that could impact on their learning effectiveness become more important to know. As we all know, many factors influence the second language learning process. Yet one of the most important elements for SLA research to explain is the great individual variability second language learners obtain in their respective second languages, so it's getting more important to know more about the influence of personality on SLA. Personality factor theory is founded upon the work of Jung (1923). Bradley and Hebert (1997) state that "according to the personality factor theory, individuals are predisposed to one of four preference alternatives in their behavior: (a) How a person is energized - designated by extrovert (E) versus introvert (I); (b) What information a person perceives - designated by sensing (S) versus intuition (N);



(c) How a person decides - thinking (T) versus feeling (F); (d) The life-style a person adopts - judging (J) versus perceiving (P)” (pp. 340-341).

In order to provide effective sensitive instruction, teachers of second or foreign languages need to learn to identify and understand their students’ significant individual differences (Ehrman & Oxford, 1995b; Ehrman, 1993). Among personality factors, Extroversion and, its counterpart introversion, are also potentially important factors in the learning of a second language.

The researchers believe that in spite of the attempts which have been made in the TBLT area to produce authentic, purposeful, informative, enjoyable and motivating contexts to encourage students to use language (especially in listening and reading skills) students’ achievement also depends on their personality type, particularly extroversion and introversion types because these personality types may influence students’ motivation, the strategies they choose to learn a language, classroom management and teaching language.

### ***Task-based Language Teaching***

The task-based approach to language teaching, according to Foster (1999), has evolved in response to a better understanding of the languages learned. Task-based language teaching (TBLT), according to Richards and Rodgers (2001), refers to an approach based on the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching. It may be considered as a logical development of communicative language teaching, since it draws on some of the following principles of communicative language teaching movement from the 1980s:

- Activities that involve real communication are essential for language learning.
- Activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning.
- Language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process.

They also suggest that tasks are proposed as useful vehicles for applying these principles. These principles provide a link between outside classroom reality and inside classroom pedagogy. At the interface with outside classroom reality, communication tasks enable the course to be organized around chunks of communication which reflect students’ needs, interests and experiences. At the interface with inside classroom pedagogy, they provide an organizing focus for the individual components of language that students have to learn in order to communicate.

Nunan (1991) states that task-based language teaching has the following characteristics:

1. Emphasizing on interaction in the target language.
2. Using authentic texts.
3. Focusing not only on language, but also on the learning process itself.
4. Enhancing learner’s own personal experiences.
5. Linking classroom language outside the classroom (p.68).

Tomlinson (1998) states that tasks have been used in foreign language classrooms since the mid-1970s. Since learners need to be able to communicate in English, the best way to develop communicative competence is to use the target language for communication.

Littlewood (2004) argues that there is continuity between task-based language teaching and the broader communicative approach within which it is a development. He further suggests that in a task-based approach “tasks serve not only as major components of the methodology, but also as units around which a course may be organized” (p. 324).

### ***Listening***

Lundesteen (1971, cited in Devine, 1978), states that listening is “the process by which spoken language is converted to meaning in mind” (p. 296).

One of the major goals of EFL instruction is to prepare learners to be able to understand their interlocutors. Rivers (1981) states that listening is not separated from speaking. In fulfilling a communication what is being said should be comprehended by another person. Rehearsed production is useless if we are to respond to the reply that it generates from our interlocutors.

Also Chastain (1988) maintains that both language teachers and students tend to overlook the importance of listening comprehension skills. They do so because their attention is fixed so completely on their ultimate goal, speaking, that they fail to recognize the need for developing functional listening comprehension skills as a prerequisite to developing skills.

### ***Reasons of Negligence***

As Chastain (1988) maintains, the reasons of neglecting the listening skill can be summarized as:

- 1) The listening comprehension process is internal and thus not subject to direct, external observation, examination, and correction. Therefore, language teachers and students tend to overlook its prerequisite importance in language learning because there is no immediate observable output.
- 2) Many teachers have learned that they should base classroom activities on behavioral objectives, so they expect students to produce a product that they can hear or see.
- 3) They can correct students' errors only if they hear them say something or if they read what they have written.
- 4) They feel more comfortable conducting activities in which they can control what the students are doing.
- 5) Tradition also contributes to the slight attention paid to listening in many language classes. Teachers tend to teach as they were taught, and the students tend to expect the same types of classes they have learned to associate with language classes. The result is that neither teachers nor students question the validity of traditional class activities.
- 6) Since teachers have little experience providing classroom activities that help students develop listening comprehension skills, they may not be prepared to generate and conduct the appropriate activities (p. 192).

Modi (2012) maintained that “while traditional approaches to language teaching tended to underemphasize the importance of teaching listening comprehension, more recent approaches emphasize the role of listening in building up language competence and suggest that more attention should be paid to teaching listening in the initial stage of second or foreign language learning” (p. 57).

### ***Factors Influencing Listening Comprehension***

Anderson and Lynch (1988) also identify factors that influence listening comprehension as follows:

#### ***Personal Style***

A more patient, reflective person takes more time to listen and, consequently, may be perceived as listening more effectively.

#### ***Intelligence***

Because intelligence, as a listening variable, interacts with number of factors such as personality, motivation, attitude, and interest in the subject.

#### ***Anxiety and Stress***

High anxiety in listening situations may lead to asking questions that have already been answered or making statements unrelated to current topic of discussion. While the fear of speaking is probably related to social approval, the anxiety one experiences as listener is more likely consequence of his fear of, misinterpreting or misunderstanding of the speaker.

#### ***Attitude***

Even under the best circumstances one tends to listen selectively. If one dislikes a speaker and anticipates that the speaker will have nothing valuable to say, it is likely that what one hears will confirm his expectations.

#### ***Gender***

Coleman (1978, cited in Anderson and Lynch, 1988) was among the first to suggest that females perform better on tasks that involve verbal ability, while men perform better when visual skills are involved.

#### ***Culture***

An individual culture, background, role, and other variables determine listeners' unique perspective.

#### ***Message and Speaker***

The clarity of the organization has a significant impact on listener's ability to comprehend and recall the information he hears. Speakers who use clear organizational strategies are easier to follow than those who present ideas randomly. A speaker's mannerism and delivery have an impact on credibility and affect the listener's attention, comprehension and retention (pp. 35-38).

### *Reading*

Many foreign or second language teaching authorities like (Richards and Renandya, 2002; Anderson, 2003; Nunan, 2004) believe that reading is the most important language skill. Richards and Renandya (2002) argue that in many second or foreign language teaching situations, reading receives a special focus. He believes that there are a number of reasons for this. First, many language foreign language students often consider reading as one of their most important goals. They want to be able to read for information and pleasure, for their career, and for study purposes. In fact, in most EFL situations, the ability to read in a foreign language is all the learners ever want to acquire. Second, written texts serve various pedagogical purposes. Extensive exposure to linguistically comprehensible written texts can enhance the purpose of language acquisition. Good reading texts also provide good models for writing and provide opportunities to introduce new topics, to stimulate discussion, and to study language. Reading, then, is a skill which is highly valued by students and teachers (p. 273).

Grabe (2001) highlights the importance of reading in academic settings. He states that in academic settings, reading is assumed to be the central means for learning new information and gaining access to alternative explanations and interpretations. Reading also provides the foundation for synthesis and critical evaluation skills. In addition, reading is the primary means for independent learning, whether the goal is performing better on academic tasks, learning more about subject matter, or improving language abilities (cited in Celce-Murcia, 2001).

Rivers (1968) believes that reading is a basic skill through which students at a higher level can learn to read great quantities of authentic material and to read for communication. They can also increase their knowledge and understanding of the culture of the speakers of the language, their people and their ways of thinking, their literature, and their past and present civilization.

### ***Reading Comprehension and Communicative Tasks***

Nunan (1993) defines a communicative task as a "piece of classroomwork which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on meaning rather than form" (p. 59). Strictly speaking, in task activities, the goal is nonlinguistic. The idea is to get something done via the language, to read a text and do something with the information (Long & Crookes, 1992). According to Knutson (1998) whole tasks involve performance of reading in conjunction with other skills: listening, speaking, or writing. For example, students in a small group might read a number of texts, such as brochures, timetables, or maps, and listen to radio weather or traffic reports in order to carry out the larger task of deciding on the best method of transportation to use on a trip. In such an activity, each student deals with one category of information, and all students must communicate their information to one another to come up with the best plan for the trip.

According to Davies (1995) "traditional reading exercises, such as multiple-choice, are extremely limited in their potential as learning activities. Reading tasks can probably be used as an alternative to the traditional approach to reading comprehension because they not only make use of authentic and challenging texts, but also involve the students interacting with the text and with each other. These two features of reading tasks, along

with other features, may motivate the reader to engage in the learning process more actively, hence, to learn the language better” (p. 144).

### ***Difference between Introverts and Extroverts***

According to Hjelle and Ziegler (1992) most of the efforts have been aimed at determining whether there are significant differences in behavior associated with individual differences along the introversion-extroversion continuum. Some empirically established ways in which introverts and extroverts have been found to differ include:

1. Introverts prefer theoretical and scientific vocations (e.g., engineering and chemistry), whereas extroverts tend to prefer people oriented jobs (e.g., sales and social work).
2. Introverts attain higher grades in college than extroverts. Also, students who withdraw from college for psychiatric reasons tend to be extroverts.
3. Introverts show higher arousal levels in the mornings, whereas extroverts show higher arousal levels in the evening. Furthermore, introverts work better in the morning, and extroverts work better in the afternoon (p. 284).

### ***Introversion-Extroversion and Reading and Listening comprehension***

The study of personality factors, in general, and extroversion/introversion, in particular, with regard to second language acquisition has recently begun to attract increasing attention. Several studies have been carried out to investigate if extroversion/introversion personality trait plays any role in the process of language learning. Pazhuhesh (1994) studied the relationship between the personality dimension of extroversion/introversion and reading comprehension. In her studies introverts were significantly better than their extrovert counterparts. Nasrabadi (1996) examined the role of extroversion-introversion personality dimension in EFL listening comprehension in Iran. He found significant results for extroverts. Daneshvari (1996) also examined the role of E/I in EFL listening comprehension in Iran. He concluded that extroverts were better listening strategy users in comparison with introverts. Brown (1994) “claims that extroversion may be a factor in the development of general oral communicative competence, which require face to face interaction, but not in listening, reading, and writing” (p. 174). But, Tucker, Hamayan and Genesee (1976) found that the more outgoing adventurous students in a one-year late (grade 7) French immersion program performed better on tests of listening comprehension and oral production than did the quieter students. Busch (1982, cited in Brown, 2000) tried to determine whether there would be any relationship between extroversion/introversion and English proficiency among the EFL students in Japan. The study came out to reject the hypothesis that the extraverts are more proficient than the introverts. The study clarified that extroversion had negative correlation with proficiency and the introverts had better reading comprehension and grammar proficiency than the extraverts.

There is no doubt that personality is one of the important factors which impact the second language acquisition, and it is a complicated aspect which is affected by different factors, such as ethnic background, culture, and environment, and so on. Although many

researches, as mentioned before, have made a lot of endeavors to study this, it is not surprising that the results of so many experiments are unclear, and that any conclusions can only be viewed as tendencies, not absolutes. More new findings are expected to come up with further development in the personality research area, and to put them into teaching practice of second language in order to the rapid development of second language teaching.

Although the importance of task- based teaching has been accepted by scholars like Skehan (1996); Willis & Willis (2001); Nunan (1991) in the field of language teaching, and despite the research projects (ex: Bangalore Communicational Teaching Project, 1979-1984, by Prabhu, & Ramani-cited in Long and Crookes-1992) done on the influence of task-based instruction on reading and listening skills, to the best knowledge of the present researcher, no important and substantial research has been conducted on studying the relationship between personality types (Extroversion/Introversion) and performing listening and reading tasks at least in Iran. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to compare the performance of Extrovert and Introvert Intermediate Female EFL learners on listening and reading tasks. To fulfill the purpose of the present study which was to see whether there were any significant differences between the performance of Extrovert and Introvert Intermediate Female EFL learners on listening and reading tasks, the following questions were raised:

1. Is there any significant difference between the performance of Extrovert and Introvert Intermediate Female EFL learners on listening tasks?
2. Is there any significant difference between the performance of Extrovert and Introvert Intermediate Female EFL learners on reading tasks?

## **METHODOLOGY**

In order to find appropriate answers to the posed questions, the researchers followed certain procedures and made use of certain instruments, which are reported in this section.

### ***Participants***

One hundred and eighty female EFL learners participated in this study, 30 of them who attended the pilot study were intermediate EFL learners at an English institute. And 150 intermediate learners who studied English at a language school and an institute took part in the main study. There was no random selection, and the researcher was not free in selecting the classes and instructional materials. Their age range varied between 13- 24.

### ***Instrumentation***

To meet the purpose of the study, the researchers used following instruments:

Preliminary English Test (PET): This test is designed by Cambridge ESOL and is used as a proficiency test for selecting the intermediate sample among the whole participants. PET consists of three main sections: a 35-item reading comprehension test and an 8-item writing test in the first part (1 hour and 30 minutes), a 25-item listening comprehension test in the second part (35 minutes) and a speaking test consisting of four sections in the third part (10-12 minutes).

Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI): EPI is a self-report personality inventory based on Eysenck's (1947-1952) factor analysis of personality which assumes three basic factors (the two



most important being extroversion/introversion and neuroticism). The original version of this test contains 57 yes/no questions based on which the degree of extroversion and introversion becomes clarified, but only 24 of them related to measuring the degree of extroversion and introversion. So in this study the Farsi translation of EPI test which contained 24 yes/no questions was administered. The translated version of EPI has been proved to be highly reliable at 0.8 level of significance and published in some books. But the English version of it was translated again to Farsi by a professional translator and compared to Farsi translation of EPI which was already translated and published. They were identical.

**Test of Listening Tasks:** This test was constructed by the researchers and consisted of 84 items which decreased to 80 items after piloting and doing item analysis. The test consisted of 6 kinds of listening tasks as follows:

Listening Cloze Tasks, Information Transfer Tasks, Communicative Stimulus-Response Tasks, True/ False Listening Tasks, Matching Tasks, Multiple Choices listening Comprehension Tasks.

**Test of Reading Tasks:** This test was constructed by the researchers and consisted of 63 items which decreased to 60 items after piloting and doing item analysis. The test consisted of 8 kinds of reading tasks as follows:

Matching Tasks, Gap-Filling Tasks, True/False Reading Tasks, Multiple Choice Guessing Meaning Tasks, Paraphrase Recognition Tasks, Multiple Choice Reading Comprehension Tasks, Ordering Tasks, Multiple Choice Cloze Vocabulary/Grammar Tasks.

### ***Procedure***

Initially, PET, Listening Tasks and Reading Tasks were piloted. Then PET was administered to the 150 subjects in order to come up with a group of EFL learners at approximately the same level of language proficiency but because of practicality issues and time limitation only listening and reading comprehension parts of the PET was administered in this study. Then, those whose score fell in one standard deviation above and below the mean of the sample were selected. The outcome was a homogenized group of 108 learners.

To determine the personality type of the subjects in terms of Extroversion/Introversion, the Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI) was administered on 108 learners. Through this questionnaire the learners were divided into two groups of extroverts (63 learners) and introverts (45 learners). In order to have equal number of participants in each group, the researcher randomly selected 45 of the extroverts to be in the Extrovert group and excluded the rest.

After determining the groups of introvert and extrovert, the test of reading tasks was administered. The test contained 60 items in three parts which was administered in three sessions because of the limited time that the institute and school allocated for administering the tests. Subjects took one part of the test in each session in 30 minutes.

After the test of reading tasks, the researcher administered the test of listening tasks. The test contained 80 items and was administered in 3 sessions. It took 30 minutes in each session to

administer the parts of the test. The participants listened to each part twice and filled out the answer sheet simultaneously.

After administering the tests and gathering the data, the Descriptive Statistics were estimated then a Mann Whitney U test was run to compare the mean score of introverts and extroverts on listening tasks and an independent t-test was run to compare the mean score of introverts and extroverts on reading tasks.

## RESULTS

This study was aimed to compare the performance of introvert/extrovert EFL learners on tasks of listening and reading. The design of this study is “A Criterion group design” which is a subset of Ex post facto design. In this study the personality type (Introversion and Extroversion) was the independent variable, the performance of students on listening and reading tasks were dependent variables and the level of language proficiency (intermediate level) and gender (female) were control variables.

### *The Homogeneity test*

A mock Preliminary English Test (PET) was used as a proficiency test for selecting the intermediate sample among the whole participants. Because the focus of this study was on the listening and reading skills; therefore just the parts of listening comprehension and reading comprehension of PET were used in this research. In order to check the reliability of the test, first of all PET was piloted among 30 intermediate EFL learners of an Institute. After analyzing item facility, item discrimination, choice distribution, and reliability (calculated through the KR-21 formula), PET was recognized suitable for being used in the study (table 1).

*Table 1: Results of the PET in the pilot study*

N	No. of items	Mean	Range	Variance	SD	r
30	60	35.43	45	225.84	15.02	0.95

As it is shown in the above table the reliability coefficient turned out to be 0.95 which assured the researcher that it could be used safely for the purpose of screening the main participants.

Therefore, this test was administered to a group of 150 intermediate EFL learners of a Language School and an Institute to homogenize subjects of the study. Based on the PET, those participants whose score fell in one standard deviation above and below the mean of the sample through the test were selected for the research. Therefore, 108 of the learners were selected to take part in the study. The results are presented below (table 2).

*Table 2: Results of the Homogeneity Test*

N	No. of items	Mean	Range	Variance	SD
150	60	41.40	44	125.10	11.18

In another step of the piloting, the test of listening tasks was administered. It took one session (1 hour and 45 minutes). And in the next session Reading Tasks were administered in one session (1 hour and 45 minutes). After piloting the Reading and Listening Tasks, Item analysis, Reliability

(calculated through the KR-21 formula) and Internal Consistency of the tests were checked. According to the piloting results, Listening Tasks decreased from 84 items to 80 items and Reading Tasks decreased from 63 items to 60 items (tables 3 and 4).

*Table 3: Results of the test of listening tasks in the pilot study*

N	No. of items	Mean	Range	Variance	SD	r
30	84	50.26	64	450.82	21.23	0.9667

*Table 4: Results of the test of reading tasks in the pilot study*

N	No. of items	Mean	Range	Variance	SD	r
30	63	38.33	39	226.29	15.04	0.94

In the last step of the piloting, in order to check the effect of discarding items on the reliability of the tests, the reliability and descriptive statistics of the test of listening tasks with 80 items and test of reading tasks with 60 items were analyzed, checked and estimated again. Results showed a very good degree of reliability. So, the tasks were recognized suitable for using in the study (tables 5 and 6).

*Table 5: Results of the test of listening tasks in the pilot study*

N	No. of items	Mean	Range	Variance	SD	r
30	80	46.8	64	441.06	21	0.9680

*Table 6: Results of the test of reading tasks in the pilot study*

N	No. of items	Mean	Range	Variance	SD	r
30	60	36	40	226	15.03	0.95

### ***The Descriptive Statistics: Test of Reading and Listening Tasks***

After determining the groups of introvert and extrovert through the administration of EPI, the test of reading and listening tasks were administered. Both groups of introverts and extroverts took the same tests. The test of reading tasks comprising 60 items in three parts was administered in three sessions and the test of listening tasks consisting of 80 items was administered in three sessions too. The descriptive statistics (mean, range, variance, standard deviation and also reliability) of the tests of reading and listening tasks were calculated. Reliability of the tests was calculated through the KR-21 formula. The results are shown in tables (7 and 8).

*Table 7: Results of the test of reading tasks for extroverts and introverts*

	N	No. of items	Mean	Range	Variance	SD	Reliability (r)
Extroverts	45	60	41.15	37	64.90	8.05	0.81
Introverts	45	60	43.8	34	108.34	10.40	0.90

*Table 8: Results of the test of listening tasks for extroverts and introverts*

	N	No. of items	Mean	Range	Variance	SD	Reliability (r)
Extroverts	45	80	51.84	53	169.63	13.02	0.90
Introverts	45	80	57.22	52	209.99	14.49	0.93

***The Inferential Statistics: Test of Reading and Listening Tasks***

To examine whether the null hypotheses were supported or rejected, the data gathered in this study was subjected to Multivariate-ANOVA (MANOVA), since there were two dependent variables (reading and listening) and one independent variable (personality trait). But, firstly the assumptions of the test should be met: 1. Normality of the distribution of each set of scores, 2. Homogeneity of variances. The following table (table 9) shows the descriptive statistics including skewness ratios used by the researcher to check the first assumption.

*Table 9: Descriptive Statistics of the scores obtained by the two groups on listening and reading tasks*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Skewness Ratios
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	
extroverts' reading	45	21.00	58.00	41.1556	8.05649	-.301	.354	0.85
Introverts' reading	45	25.00	59.00	43.8000	10.40891	-.350	.354	0.98
extroverts' listening	45	25.00	78.00	51.8444	13.02437	-.087	.354	0.24
Introverts' listening	45	24.00	76.00	57.2222	14.49120	-1.000	.354	2.82
Valid N (listwise)	45							

As shown in table 9 above, the last column, the skewness ratio belonging to the Introverts' listening scores exceeds the normality range of  $\pm 1.96$ , while the rest fall within the range. Therefore, as the first assumption was not met, running a MANOVA was not legitimate, and since there is no non-parametric equivalent for MANOVA, independent t-tests had to be run.

First, to see if there was any significant difference between the reading scores of introverts and extroverts, a t-test was run. The normality of the distribution as one assumption for a t-test is met, as shown in table 9. As table 9 indicates, the introverts outperformed the extroverts in the reading test (43.80 vs. 41.15). But, a further statistical analysis was needed to show whether the difference is significant or not. The following table (table 10) shows the result of the t-test:

*Table 10: Independent Samples t-test on the mean scores of reading tasks*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Reading Equal variances assumed	3.506	.064	-1.348	88	.181	-2.64444	1.96216	-6.54382	1.25493
Equal variances not assumed			-1.348	82.795	.181	-2.64444	1.96216	-6.54724	1.25835

With the equal variances assumed as the second condition for t-test ( $F=3.50$ ,  $p=.06>.05$ ), the t-test result is interpreted as there was no significant difference between the two groups regarding

their reading skill ( $t=1.34$ ,  $p=.181>.05$ ). So the null hypothesis stating that *there is no difference between the performance of extrovert and introvert female EFL learners on reading tasks* is maintained.

To see the difference between the listening skill of the two groups another t-test is needed, but as one set of scores belonging to the introverts was not normally distributed, the first assumption of t-test was violated. Therefore, the non-parametric equivalent test, Mann-Whitney U test, was run. The following tables (tables 11 and 12) show the result:

Table 11: Ranks of the two groups on the listening task

grouping		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Listening	extroverts	45	39.59	1781.50
	introverts	45	51.41	2313.50
	Total	90		

As table 11 displays, the introverts obtained a higher mean rank (51.41) compared with the extroverts (39.59). The following table (table 12) indicates the significance of the difference:

Table 12: Test Statistics<sup>a</sup> of the listening scores

	listening
Mann-Whitney U	746.500
Wilcoxon W	1781.500
Z	-2.148
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.032

a. Grouping Variable: personality trait

As table 12 depicts, the difference between the two groups turned out to be significant ( $M=746.5$ ,  $p=.032<.05$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that *there is no significant difference between the performance of extrovert and introvert female EFL learners on listening tasks* is rejected, with the conclusion that introverts performed significantly better in listening tasks than extroverts.

## CONCLUSION

In this study it was demonstrated that the introvert EFL learners were significantly better at listening tasks than the extrovert ones. One possible explanation for such a finding is that according to the personality characteristics of introvert learners, they tend to be better performers in receptive skills like listening, reading, and structure, since according to Eysenck (1965) “they generally have a reflective and thoughtful personality type that suits the receptive kinds of tasks” (p. 59-60). Another reason according to Eysenck (1965) is that “the typical extrovert does not like studying by himself and is generally impulsive individual” (p. 59-60). Also Burrus and Kaenzig (1999) claim that introverts prefer to work on their own than in groups, they do not like being in the center of attention and need time and space to complete the tasks. They need to know what they are expected to do and have suitable condition to concentrate. On the other hand extroverts require high stimulation, cooperating with others and movement to learn and do the tasks. They also like open discussions and discovery activities. Therefore based on the above mentioned findings we can conclude that the special characteristics of introverts: like high concentration and their eagerness to listen rather than to speak and also the kind of listening tasks and the context in which the listening tasks were administered could help them to perform better than extroverts in doing listening tasks.

As for the second hypothesis the researcher was interested to know if extrovert and introvert students were different with regard to their performance on reading tasks. It was shown that the introvert learners with the mean score of (43.80) perform fairly better as compared with extrovert learners with the mean score of (41.15). However the difference between their performances was not statistically significant. One of the justifications that we can come up with might be that introverts have been known as studious and hard-working students compared to more extroverted and outgoing ones. It gives the impression that they are more attentive and conscientious in certain receptive tasks like reading. Therefore, this attentive personality type may contribute to their performance on the types of tasks which need concentration. More over as reflected in table 10, there is a trend in the difference between extroversion-introversion when it comes to reading tasks that is in general, both extroverts and introverts had almost the same performance on the reading tasks part.

This finding is also in line with the finding achieved by Astika, Carrol, and Moneta (1996) which indicates no significant relationship between extroversion-introversion and reading section of the English language proficiency test and there was just a negative trend between extroversion and learners’ performance on the reading section. Also Vehar (1968) found no such significant difference in reading test performance between extroverts and introverts. Brown (1994) “claims that extroversion may be a factor in the development of general oral communicative competence, which require face to face interaction, but not in listening, reading, and writing” (p. 174). The reason for lower performance of extroverts has been explained more in the works of following scholars:

Ellis (1994) presents two major hypotheses concerning the relationship between extroversion/introversion and L2 learning. The first is that extroverted learners will do better in acquiring basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS). Extroverts are more eager to talk, to



join the groups and participate in classroom activities. They will use the language more in and outside the classroom. The second hypothesis is that introverted learners will do better at developing cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Entwistle and Wilson (1977) claim that introverts will achieve more because they have better long-term memory than extroverts. Besides, they take learning a language in a more serious way and spend more time on reading and writing due to their personality trait. The extroverts are not able to concentrate for a long time and are too sociable to learn with the same attention (Eysenck, 1957). Based on the above mentioned factors, one possibility for the findings of this study might be due to the kind of tasks used in this study. The tasks used in reading and listening tests did not have interpersonal communication characteristics. Therefore, based on the personality characteristics of extroversion and introversion which was mentioned before, extroverts could not show their ability better than introverts in performing reading and listening tasks.

Therefore, by studying the difference between extroverts and introverts and their probable effect on language skills like reading and listening comprehension, teachers can predict what kinds of activities and tasks students will enjoy, what sort of teaching methods they require and what their learning styles are. Therefore it can be concluded that using tasks for teaching listening and reading comprehension to introvert students is a useful approach but it does not mean that using these tasks for instructing listening and reading comprehension to extroverts is not useful. Thus, it is felt that this study has made some important contributions towards a better understanding of the extroversion-introversion personality variable and its relationship to some learning outcomes (i.e., performance on reading and listening tasks).

## **LIMITATIONS**

Like many other studies, the present study suffered from some limitations.

1. Due to the regulation of language schools and English institutes, the researcher was not able to deal with male students. The subjects who participated in this study were all female students. Therefore, the findings of this study may not be generalizable to male learners.
2. The probable effect of some other variables related to learners such as previous learning backgrounds and age, which might have affected their performance in reading and listening tasks, could not be controlled.
3. Because of shortage of time, the number of task-types which were chosen to apply was limited. And the researcher was not free to use a variety of tasks in tests.
4. Since the researcher was not allowed to select the participants or even classes, there was no random selection.
5. Since the selection of subjects was according to their level of language proficiency, there was not control over the age of the subjects.
6. The subjects participating in this study were selected from intermediate learners, because the researcher only had access to the intermediate level. So, only female EFL learners at intermediate level in a Language School and a Language Institute in Tehran were selected for this study; therefore, the findings are limited to them and might not be generalized to other levels.

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# IMPROVING STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT ON WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT THROUGH THINK PAIR SHARE

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## ABSTRACT

Students' achievement in writing descriptive text is very low, in this study Think Pair Share (TPS) is applied to solve the problem. Action research is conducted for the result and qualitative and quantitative technique are applied in this research. The subject of this research is grade VIII in Junior High School, Rantau Parapat, North Sumatera, Indonesia. In the first test, the students get the mean of mark 66,4375. It dramatically increases on the second test, which gets 78,125. Additionally, on the third test the mean of students' mark reaches a pick on 87,5625. Observation result showed that the students gave their good attitudes and responses during teaching and learning process by applying the application of TPS (Think Pair Share) method. Questionnaire and interview report showed that students agree that the application of TPS (Think Pair Share) method had helped them in writing descriptive text. It can be conclude that the students' achievement is improved when they are taught by TPS Method.

**KEY WORDS:** *Achievement, Writing, Descriptive Text and Think Pair Share*

## INTRODUCTION

### *The Background of The Study*

English is the language of global terms that need to be developed in Indonesia. Due to the ability to speak English, people have been able to obtain and provide information that was very important to develop oneself and the environment. Therefore, in Indonesian language has been incorporated into the curriculum of English schools and colleges so that English can be taught to the Indonesian people well and in line with expectations stated in the opening of the 1945 constitution that was to increase the nation intellectual life.

In learning the English language, there are four skills that should be taught to students. They are speaking, listening, reading and writing. In practice, learning the lessons taught writing after speaking, listening and reading. But this does not state that learning writing is not important. In fact, writing is a very important skill as writing needs practice and wring is the very difficult subject for the students. It is related to Oshima and Hogue (1999:3) that writing, particularly academic writing is not easy. It takes study and practice to develop this skill. For both native and new learners of English, it is important to note that writing is a process, not a "product". This means that a piece of writing, whether it is a composition for your English class or a lab report for your chemistry class is never complete; that is, it is always possible to review and revise, and review and revise again.

Writing is a very important capability for being owned by students, writing is also an excellent

communication tool. Through writing, each person is able to convey feelings, ideas, and announcements to others. Sharples (1999:8) actually, writing is an opportunity; it allows students to express something about themselves, explore and explain ideas. Student can convey their ideas in their mind by organizing them into a good text so that the others know them and they can think critically. Therefore, learning is very important for improved writing in particular learning of English in Indonesia because the writing is a process of transformation of thoughts and ideas into tangible forms of writing. In addition, many people choose writing as a means of effective and efficient communication of information to be conveyed in some ways like posting letters, business letters and important information in a company's product.

In the *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP)* 2006 syllabus of junior and senior high schools curriculum requires students to be able to write some kind of genre in writing. They are narrative, recount, descriptive, report, explanation, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, procedure, discussion, reviews, anecdote, spoof, and news items.

Based on the above, the descriptive text is one genre that must be mastered by students in learning English. And theoretically, according to Ervina Evawina S (2010:7) descriptive paragraph is a paragraph vividly portrays a person, place, or thing in such a way that the reader can visualize the topic and enter into the writer's experience.

In fact, not all students are able to write descriptive paragraph properly and in accordance with the existing elements in the descriptive text. Based on the researcher's observation at the time of the teaching practice program (PPL) contained 75% of students who were unable to write a descriptive paragraph. Teachers of English already have taught the material to students well but the students still had the problem in writing descriptive paragraph. In addition, the researcher also had looked the teachers of English language teaching by lecture, and then asked the students to write descriptive paragraph individually.

From the above, student's ability to write descriptive paragraph is very less because the learning methods that is adopted by teachers of English language was a method that does not fit anymore in this day because it reduces the interest and liveliness of the students in the learning process so that students are bored and do not want to continue learning as they have to do.

At this present time, there are already implementations Learning Revolution in teaching and learning that is learning is no longer centered on teachers. In other words, it is called "Teacher Centered Learning (TCL)" but it has been centered on students. It is called "Student Centered Learning (SCL)". Theoretically, SCL is an approach to education focusing on the needs of the students, rather than those of others involved in the educational process, such as teacher and administrators (<http://en.wikipedia.org>). So the teacher is only as facilitators and a provider of solutions in learning is no longer only as a source of knowledge in the learning process.

Based on the above, the researcher offers a method that have to be applied in the learning process of writing descriptive paragraph because Ransdell and Laure Barbier (2002: 143) maintain that a good writing strategy can be trained, and it can improve writing performance. The method that is offered by researcher is the implementation of Student Centered Learning



(SCL) and the development of Cooperative Learning (CL) that according to Slavin (1995:2) Cooperative Learning refers to variety of teaching methods in which students work in small group to help one another learn academic content. In cooperative classrooms, students are expected to help each other to discuss and argue with each other, to assess each other's current knowledge and fill in gaps in each other's understanding, so that the interest and active students in the learning process can be improved not only individually but in groups or together. Learning method, which the researcher refers to, is Think Pair Share (TPS).

Think Pair Share (TPS) is one of the Cooperative Learning methods which poses a challenging or open-ended question and gives students a half to one minute to think about the question. Students then pair with a collaborative group member or neighbor sitting nearby and discuss their ideas about the question for several minutes. The think-pair-share structure gives all students the opportunity to discuss their ideas ([www.wcer.wvasc.edu](http://www.wcer.wvasc.edu)). It is designed to motivate the students to tackle and success at problem, which initially are beyond their ability. It is based on the simple nation of mediated learning. Obviously, one alternative to solve the problem of writing descriptive paragraph is by applying TPS.

With the application of this method is expected to enhance students' skills in writing descriptive paragraph properly and in accordance with the existing elements in the descriptive paragraph.

### **THE PROBLEM OF THE STUDY**

Based on the background of the study, the problem of this study was formulated as follows:

“How do apply Think Pair Share method to improve the students’ achievement in writing descriptive Text?”

### **THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

In relation to the problem, the objective of the study was to investigate and to find out the improvement of students achievement in writing descriptive text through the application of Think Pair Share (TPS) method.

### **THE SIGNIFICANT OF THE STUDY**

Finding of this study are expected to:

1. to motivate the students to be better on writing descriptive paragraph,
2. to provide significant information for the English teacher in their attempt to decide the TPS in teaching descriptive writing in senior high school,
3. to increase the readers knowledge about TPS and descriptive paragraph and,
4. to help the next researcher candidate of the teacher to apply a model in teaching learning process.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### ***Achievement***

Travers (1970:447) states that achievement is the result of what an individual has learned from some education experience. Additionally, Yelon, Weinstein, and Weener (1977:301) express achievement as the successfulness of individual, while another source Smith and Hudgins (1964:95) says that achievement is to do one's best, to be successful to accomplish tasks



requiring skill and effort and to be recognized by authority.

Based on the opinions above, it can be concluded that achievement is the result, the successfulness, the extent or ability, the progress in learning education experiences that the individual indicates relation with his/her educational learning. Achievement concerns with what someone has actually learnt whereas aptitude is the potential for learning something. In other words, achievement is a success in reaching particular goal/status or standard, especially by effort, skill, courage, and so on.

### ***Writing***

Writing is a process of formulating and organizing ideas in right words to deliver the aim and present them on a piece of paper. According to Jones in R. Cooper and Odell (1977:33) writing is synonymous with discourse, and discourse is discussed in terms of its aims, it relate to the function of language, and in terms of its feature, which are the separate elements, devices, and mechanism of language.

On the other hand, Reinking, Hard and Osten (1993:188) state that writing is a way of communication and of course communicates all the time. And then Deporter and Heracki (2002:179) explain that writing is a whole brain activity, which uses bright brain side (emotion) and left-brain side (logic). Although right and left-brain sides are used in writing, right brain side has a big position because it is a place, which appears new ideas and emotion.

From the explanation above, we can state that writing is a whole brain activity to formulate and to organize ideas in right words to deliver and communicate the aims to the reader and present it on a piece of paper.

### ***Descriptive Text***

A descriptive text is a piece of writing that is intended to convey meaning to the reader through sensory details and provides image to the reader (<http://www.ehow.com>). Additionally, descriptive text is a paragraph that is defined as a group of sentences that are closely related in thought and which serve one comment purpose often used to describe what a person looks like and acts like, what a place looks like, and what an object looks like (<http://www.examples-help.org.uk>). Furthermore, Pardiyono (2007:34) state that description paragraph is a type of written text paragraph, in which has the specific function to describe about an object (living or non-living things) and it has the aim that is giving description of the object to the reader clearly.

From the definition above, it can be concluded that description paragraph is a paragraph that describes a particular person, place or event in great deal. Description writing vividly portrays a person, place, or things in such a way that the reader can visualize the topic and enter into the writer's experience. It is a way to enrich others forms of writing or as a dominant strategy for developing a picture of what something looks like.

Furthermore, Jolly (1984:470) asserts there are five types of descriptive writing paragraph. They are:

a. Describing Process

Describing a process not only explains how something was done, but also explains why it was done and what was needed to complete the process.

b. Describing and event

To describe an event, a writer should be able to memorize and remember what happened in the event. Supposed the writer will write about Tsunami that was happened in Japan. In this case, he / she has to explain all details related to the event, so that the readers can imagine the real situation and condition.

c. Describing a personality

In describing a person, the first thing that we do was recognizing his/her individual characteristics. We need to describe people occurs fairly areas of physical attribute (hair, eyes), emotional (warm, nervous), moral attributes (greedy, honest, worthy, trust), and intellectual (cleverness, perception)

d. Describing a place

Presenting something concrete was the way to describe place, for example: a home, a hospital, and school.

e.

f. Describing an object

To describe an object accurately was done by providing the physical characteristics of the object such as the color, form, shape, and so on.

***Part of Descriptive Text***

There are three part of descriptive text. They are: 1. Social function, which is to describe a particular person, places, or things. 2. Generic Structure, which is divided in to two. They are: a) identification: identifies the phenomenon to be described, and b) description: describe parts, qualities, characteristics. 3. Significant lexico-grammatical feature, that is focus on specific participant, use simple present tense. (<http://teacherside.blogspot.com>). Other source, Pardiyono (2007:34) maintain that three parts of descriptive, they are (1) communicative purpose, that was to describe an object (human and non-human), (2) rhetorical structure, there are two parts of rhetorical structure a) identification, that was statement that consist of one topic to describe; b) description, that was consist of the detail description about object that identify in identification, and (3) grammatical patterns, it was needed to understand that in descriptive paragraph, declarative sentence was used and using present forms.

From the two explanations above, we can conclude that the part of descriptive paragraph was divided in to three parts, they are:

a. Social Function

Describe the characteristics and conditions of the object person, thing, place, or animal) by using adjective and attribute.

b. Generic structure

It was divided into two part they are a) identification was to identify the phenomenon that was described, and b) description was to describe the qualities, characteristics, condition, and part of

an object in detail.

c. Grammatical feature

In description paragraph, it uses present tense as normally.

***Think Pair Share (TPS)***

The think, pair, share strategy is a cooperative learning technique that encourages individual participation and was applicable across all grade levels and class sizes. Students think through questions using three distinct steps:

1. **Think:** Students think independently about the question that has been posed, forming ideas of their own.
2. **Pair:** Students are grouped in pairs to discuss their thoughts. This step allows students to articulate their ideas and to consider those of others.
3. **Share:** Student pairs share their ideas with a larger group, such as the whole class. Often, students are more comfortable presenting ideas to a group with the support of a partner. In addition, students' ideas have become more refined through this three-step process.  
(www.teachervvason.fen.com)

On the other hand, Think-Pair-Share is a strategy designed to provide students with "food for thought" on a given topics enabling them to formulate individual ideas and share these ideas with another student. It is a learning strategy developed by Lyman and associates to encourage student classroom participation. Rather than using a basic recitation method in which a teacher poses a question and one student offers a response, Think-Pair-Share encourages a high degree of pupil response and can help keep students on task.

***The steps of Think Pair Share***

1. With students seated in teams of 4, have them number them from 1 to 4.
2. Announce a discussion topic or problem to solve. (Example: Which room in our school was larger, the cafeteria or the gymnasium? How could we find out the answer?)
3. Give students at least 10 seconds of think time to THINK of their own answer. (Research shows that the quality of student responses goes up significantly when you allow "think time.")
4. Using student numbers, announce discussion partners. (Example: For this discussion, Student #1 and #2 was partners. At the same time, Student #3 and #4 will talk over their ideas.)
5. Ask students to PAIR with their partner to discuss the topic or solution.
6. Finally, randomly call on a few students to SHARE their ideas with the class.

Teachers may also ask students to write or diagram their responses while doing the Think-Pair-Share activity. Think, Pair, Share helps students develop conceptual understanding of a topic, develop the ability to filter information and draw conclusions, and develop the ability to consider other points of view.

(<http://olc.spsd.sk.ca>)

**METHODOLOGY**

This research is conducted as an action research procedure since involved a substantive act with a research procedure to find the improvement. Stringer (2007:1) maintains that action research is a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday life. Action research focused on specific situations and localized solutions. Action research provided the means by which people in schools, business and community organizations; teachers; and health and human services may increase the effectiveness of the work in which they are engaged.

In this research, the data was collected by quantitative and qualitative approach. Quantitative data is collected by administrating composition text and qualitative was one research method that was describing the situation and the event (Sugyono, 2004:4).

Quantitative data is collected through evaluation sheet, which is administrated by the researcher. For gathering the qualitative data, the researcher used observation sheet, interview sheet and questionnaire. Observation sheet is used to identify all the condition that happened during the teaching learning process including teacher, students and the context of situation that are done by the collaborator, interview sheet is used when the writer want to identify the problems occurred in the learning process and questionnaire as the personal records which usually taken by the writer that was written up daily.

A collaborator is asked to observe and evaluate all the situations during the teaching learning process, the researcher, the students and the class in the teaching learning process.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The students' score increases from first evaluation to third evaluation. The writer gives the evaluation in second, fourth, and six meeting. During the research, it was found out that the students' score kept improving from first evaluation to last evaluation. By application TPS the students' score was significantly improved. The ranges of score improvement can be seen in the following table:

*Table 1: Range of Score Improvement*

Range of Score Improvement	Total Students
26-36	7
21-25	8
16-20	9
11-15	5
6-10	3
Number of Students	32

### a. Students who got the improvement score about 26-30:

- from 60-90
- from 60-90
- from 60-90
- from 60-90
- from 65-94
- from 60-88
- from 62-89

There were 7 students who got the improvement of score 26 – 30. They were students who did

not like English. But, after the teacher paid attention to them more, asked them problem, and applied TPS Method, they became interested in writing descriptive text.

**b. Students who got the improvement score about 21-25**

- from 65-90
- from 65-90
- from 63-88
- from 65-90
- from 70-93
- from 67-90
- from 65-87
- from 65-86

There were 8 students who got the improvement of score 21 – 25. They were active students during teaching learning process. Almost of them got points 87 up in the last evaluation. They were active from the first until the last meeting in asking questions and they discussed every problem that they faced with their own team and pair so that their scores also kept improving.

**c. Students who got the improvement score about 16-20**

- from 64-84
- from 70-90
- from 69-89
- from 63-83
- from 68-87
- from 70-88
- from 73-90
- from 70-86
- from 74-90

There were 9 students who got the improvement of score 16 – 20. Even though the improvement was not so high, it did not mean the students in this range were not competent in writing descriptive text. Two of them achieved satisfying score up to 90 that are PH and SF in the last evaluation. Then the low score in this range was just 83, it meant they could pass the test well.

**d. Students who got the improvement score about 11-15**

- from 75-90
- from 70-85
- from 70-85
- from 65-80
- from 60-75

There were 5 students who got the improvement of the score 11-15. The score improvement was not too high almost students in this range were smart students. There was one student who got the score just 75 in the last evaluation. It was RTI, but RTI still passed the evaluation.

Because they were very smart students, sometimes they did not pay attention to the teacher and in their own team, they were not serious to hear the explanation. But, they kept improve their score until the last writing evaluation because of the TPS method.

**e. Students who got the improvement score about 6-10**

- from 80-90
- from 76-85
- from 73-80

There were 3 students who got the improvement of score 6-10. The score improvement was low, but in these range just three students who got the improvement from 6 until 10. Then no one got lower than 80. It meant they are good students but they did not pay attention to the lesson that was given by the teacher.

There were difference in the lowest and the highest of students' writing score in each writing evaluation, which was given during the research. The differences showed that there was a significant improvement of students' writing. The improvement of students' score in each writing evaluation can be seen in the following table:

*Table 2: Comparison Score of Students' Writing Evaluation*

Type of Score	Evaluation I	Evaluation II	Evaluation III
	M1	M4	M6
	Cycle I	Cycle II	
Lowest Score	60	70	75
Highest Score	80	85	90
N	32	32	32

*Note: M = Meeting      N = Number of Students*

From the table above, it was seen that students' score kept improving. In writing evaluation I, the lowest score was 60 and the highest score was 80. In writing Evaluation II, the lowest score was 70 and the highest score was 85 whereas in the last writing evaluation, the lowest score was 75 and the highest score was 90. It showed the significant improvement in students' writing descriptive text.

The improvement of students' score in writing descriptive text through TPS (Think Pair Share) also can be seen from the mean of the students' score in every writing evaluation. The mean of students' score can be seen below:

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 & & \underline{2126} \\
 \text{Xfi} & = & \\
 & & 32 \\
 & & \underline{2500} \\
 \text{Xfi} & = & \\
 & & 32 \\
 & & \underline{2802} \\
 \text{Xfi} & = & \\
 & & 32
 \end{array}$$

*Table 3: The Improvement of Mean Scores of Students' Writing*



Meeting	Total Score	Mean
Evaluation I (Cycle I)	I	2126
Evaluation II (Cycle I)	II	2500
Evaluation III (Cycle II)	III	2802

The mean of the students' score in the first meeting was the lowest of all meetings. In the last meeting, the students' score improved. From the data analysis, the mean score of the students' writing increased from 66, 4375 to 87, 5635. It meant that the ability of students in writing descriptive text was improved.

In this research, the indicator of successful in writing descriptive text was if 75 % of students have got score up to 75 in their writing evaluation because the English passing grade at the school was 75. The number of the students who were competent in writing descriptive text was calculated below:

$$P1 = \frac{2}{32} \times 100 \% = 6,25 \%$$

$$P1 = \frac{26}{32} \times 100 \% = 81,25 \%$$

$$P1 = \frac{32}{32} \times 100 \% = 100 \%$$

*Table 4: the Percentage of Students' Writing Descriptive Text*

Evaluation	Cycle	Meeting	Students who got score 75 up	Percentage
I	I	I	2	6,25 %
II	I	IV	26	81,25%
III	II	VI	32	100%

In writing evaluation I, there were 2 students who got point 75 up. The percentage of students' achievement in descriptive text kept increasing when TPS method was applied. In the first cycle, 6, 25 % students got points 75 up whereas in the second cycle 100 % students who got points 75 up. The range of the first meeting (6, 25%) and the last meeting (100%) was 93, 75 %. It had been proved that 93, 75% students got the good score on their writing achievement. It can be concluded that TPS method worked effectively and efficiently in helping students in improving their achievement in writing descriptive text.

### ***Qualitative Data***

The qualitative data were taken from observation sheet, questionnaire sheet and interview that gained within two cycles.

### ***Observation Sheet***

From the result of observation sheet, it can be concluded that teaching learning process by applying TPS method run well. The situation of teaching learning process was comfort, lively, and enjoyable. Because from the data that was taken from the first (I) meeting to the last (VI) meeting we can find out that the Note in the data got good and very good. It means the score in this data was just gotten from 3 to 4.

So this TPS method created a good environment in teaching learning writing in which students became active in the process of writing, focus their mind to the teachers' explanation, and share in their team and pair and then finish in individually. In individually work, the students could improve their confidence to finish the work because they had discussed in team and pair.

### ***Interview***

From the interview data those were taken by the teacher and the students from the first meeting and the last meeting, we could find out that the teacher was very interesting to the students because the students were very active and enjoyed with English but students ability in writing descriptive text was not good enough and then the teacher did not have effort to improve it.

From the interview with the students in the first meeting, it can be found out that the students very interesting with English and most of the students like to write descriptive text, because from 6 students that the writer interviewed said like. So from this data we can conclude that most of the students like to write the descriptive text. That was why it was needed to improve their achievement in writing descriptive text by the application of TPS.

From the second interview that was taken from teacher, it can be find out that the application of TPS in teaching learning process especially in writing descriptive text was very helpful to improve the ability of students in writing descriptive text. And according to the teacher this method was very good because can make the students became active and enjoy the lesson.

Furthermore, from the last interview that was taken from the students it can be find out that most of the students like this method and the said that this method was very good to improve their achievement in writing descriptive text because they could be active and enjoy the material. And from the 6 students, all of them said TPS was very good and just one student said that it was very busy but the student also like. So, from the entire interview, it can be concluded that TPS method was very good to improve the students' achievement in writing descriptive text at Junior High School, grade IX and the teacher will apply TPS in teaching learning process not only writing but also another subject.

### ***Questionnaire***

From the result of questionnaire, it can be found out that TPS method can improve the achievement of students because from the data no one of the students fill in disagree and strongly disagree then no more than 4 students fill in the neutral. So most of the students fill in agree and strongly agree. It meant that this TPS method was very good for the students.

In significantly, from the data that was taken from questionnaire sheet I we could account that from the statement 1 until statement 8, the percentage of strongly agree was 331 with mean 41, 40625%, agree 431, 25 % with mean 53, 90625 % , neutral 37, 5 % with mean 4, 6875 % and disagree and strongly disagree 0 %. So, from this questionnaire data we can concluded that the students was very interesting and enjoy the TPS method in teaching learning process especially in writing descriptive text.

Besides that, from the data that was taken from the questionnaire sheet 2 it can be found in the

first statement that the percentage of students who chosen a was 71,875 %, b was 3, 125 %, c was 25 % and d was 9, 375 %. It meant that most of students had learned to work to gather from this TPS method. So they were active in teaching learning process. And then from the statement 2 the students who chosen a was 43, 75 %, b was 28,125 %, c was 15, 625 % and d was 12, 5 %. It meant that most of students had learned about pair accountability and pair responsibility. In additional, from the statement 3 the students who chosen was 84, 375%, b was 6, 25 %, c was 6, 25 % and d was 3, 125 %. It meant that most of students in this research had learned to produce something alone.

From the all questionnaire data, it can be concluded that the students were very interesting and enjoying the TPS method and they the students were not only improve their achievement in writing descriptive text but also improve their teamwork, responsibility and self-confidence.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### ***Conclusion***

Having analyzed the data that have been presented in the previous chapter, it was found that average scores of students in every evaluation kept improving. It can be said that there is a significant improvement on the students' achievement in writing descriptive text by applying the application of Think Pair Share method. It can be seen from the improvement of mean of students' score, namely: the mean of first evaluation (66,4375) sharply increased to the mean of second and the third evaluation, which have 78,125 and 87,5625 respectively. The score continuously improve from the first evaluation to the third evaluation. Observation result shows that the students give their good attitudes and responses during teaching and learning process by applying the application of TPS (Think Pair Share) method. Questionnaire and interview report shows that students agree that the application of TPS (Think Pair Share) method have helped them in writing descriptive text. It can be concluded that the application of TPS method significantly improves students' achievement in writing descriptive text.

### ***Suggestion***

The result of this study showed that the application of TPS method could improve students' achievement in writing descriptive text. In relation to the conclusion above, some points are suggested, as follow:

1. The English teachers are suggested to use TPS (Think Pair Share) method as teaching method to stimulate the students' learning writing spirit in teaching writing process.
2. For the readers who are interested for further study (university students) related to this research should explore the knowledge to enlarge the understanding about how to improve students' achievement in writing and search another reference.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

There are three limitations of this study; the first is administration procedure as the school in which the research was conducted was very difficult to get the permission from the Head Master. The researcher had to get the permission letter from the office of education as the requirement of doing the Unluckily, the researcher had spent the time to get the letter for two weeks. The second is the facilities on the school. There were many media that cannot be

provided by the school so that the researcher had to take the media from other institution. The last but not least is the cooperation with the students. Some of the students did not want to fill in the questionnaire, as we know this is one of the assessments in this study.

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## TOM STOPPARD'S 'SPIRITUAL LONERS': A STUDY OF FOUR EARLY ABSURD PLAYS

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### ABSTRACT

Tom Stoppard is a leading figure in contemporary British drama. He began his writing career in the early sixties. He was considerably influenced by the dominant literary trends in the first half of the twentieth century, the most important of which is absurdism, both thematically and technically. In the plays dealt with in this paper; namely, *The Dissolution of Dominic Boot*, *'M' Is For Moon Among Other Things*, *If You're Glad, I'll Be Frank* and *Albert's Bridge*, Stoppard not only employs the elements of the absurdist drama, but also presents a series of spiritual loners who are helpless and unable to cope with the realities of life. They are condemned to a life of boredom and meaninglessness and are put in a series of absurd situations.

**KEY WORDS:** Stoppard, absurd, spiritual loners, *The Dissolution of Dominic Boot*, *'M' Is For Moon Among Other Things*, *If You're Glad, I'll Be Frank* and *Albert's Bridge*.

### TOM STOPPARD'S 'SPIRITUAL LONERS':

#### *A Study of Four Early Absurd Plays*

Tom Stoppard belongs to the playwrights of the 1960s, who represent, according to Taylor(1971), "the Second-Wave" of post-war dramatists. This means that Stoppard burst upon the English theatrical world at a critical juncture. At that time, British theatre was almost completely 'Naturalistic' and was showing concern for social 'message' and involvement (Bigsby, 1976, p.3). However, in 1981, Stoppard told *Gambit* that his early writing career could best be seen in terms of his sense of alienation from the Osbornian school of angry young men writing socially-engaged dramas. (qtd in Sammelles, 1988, p.131) Keeping this fact in mind, one realizes the importance and special position of Stoppard's plays in the 1960s. Furthermore, Stoppard admits at this stage of his literary career that he has very few social and political preoccupations so that he writes without any social objectives in his mind. (Stoppard, 'Something to Declare', 1968, p.47)

The sixties was a decade of relative prosperity in England as far as mass production and accumulation of wealth were concerned, but it was a period of social and political confusion as well. This confusion was not restricted to England only. Indeed, people were facing hard times in many parts of the western world. In as far as Stoppard's literary career is concerned, Billington

(1987) gives an accurate diagnosis of the sixties as a decade of social, cultural and political chaos:

Stoppard was writing in the mid-sixties at a time of considerable political disturbance and social change: the Americans had begun bombing North Vietnam; racial riots had erupted in the Watts sections of Los Angeles; the Vatican Council had called for the modernization of the Catholic Church...While the Beatles have erupted all over British life. There was no reason why any of this should not find its way into Stoppard's work, but even his early plays hint that life is too much; that the best thing is to escape...from the surrounding chaos. (p.26)

As a result of this breakdown in man's confidence of finding consolation in the social or political structure of his country, he began to question more acutely issues such as the established religious convictions, the values of family life, and the meaning of his own existence.

Stoppard's early plays reflect his deep awareness of, and sensitivity to, the plight of modern man, by putting his characters under many kinds of pressure-psychological, financial, or metaphysical. He produces in these plays a series of 'spiritual loners,' people who reject and are rejected by their societies. (Sammelles, 1988, p.89) His early heroes, as Bigsby has well explained, are all trapped within a hostile mechanistic world, which is at odds with individual inspiration. (In Roberts, 1978, p.86) Dominic Boot in *The Dissolution of Dominic Boot*, loses his job; Glayds, in *If You're Glad, I'll be Frank*, is on the verge of a breakdown, due to her feeling of the meaninglessness of her life; and Albert, in *Albert's Bridge*, escapes from his harsh chaotic world and finds order in the structure of the bridge, an order not available on the ground.

Moreover, Stoppard emphasizes the importance of seeing his plays in performance. In an interview, he declares that he does not write plays "for discussion...I think of a play as an event in the theatre: to look for a kind of cryptogram in a play is to approach it in a way not really to do with theatre" (qtd in Bareham, 1990, p.34). In fact, he does not write plays primarily to be read or discussed, but to be performed, and to be seen in performance. This concern with the creation of a theatrical event on stage to alienate the audience and to keep them critically detached, besides being extremely entertained and concerned about the whole performance, is what links Stoppard with the Brechtian theatre.

This may explain why Stoppard likes to involve himself in playing around with quite complex theatrical effects and images, which link both thematic and technical adaptations of original theatrical themes that in turn projects the dilemma of man existing in a world devoid of meaning. (Hayman, 1977. pp8-9)

Another aspect of Stoppard's early theatrical career was his exploitation of the opportunities radio offered to the dramatists of the post-war period. Radio drama, in fact, is an excellent form; it sets an interesting challenge to the writer, the producer and the actor, while the listener is allowed to use his own imagination, instead of having everything imagined for him on the stage or the television screen. In commenting on radio as a theatrical medium, Guralnick (1990) rightly points out: "radio plays typically establish, and exploit, an unusual intimacy with the listener; they lend themselves easily to the dramatization of a character's interior thoughts, particularly dreams, fantasy, and the absurd; and they sometimes aspire to the condition of music, as in the plays of Samuel Beckett." (p.229) Indeed, radio is more effective than stage or television in conveying interior monologues, stream of consciousness and recollection. In *Albert's Bridge*, we



go inside Albert's thought, while a good deal of *If You're Glad*, happens inside Clayds's head. Listening to these radio plays, one feels that it would be a pity to present them visually on stage. (See Esslin, 1975, pp.38-42, and Wain, 1971, pp. 61-65)

At this stage of the discussion, it is necessary to study some of Stoppard's plays that were written during the 1960s, to point out those thematic, stylistic, and technical features of Stoppard's early plays that link them with the theatre of the Absurd.

*The Dissolution of Dominic Boot* (henceforth *Dominic Boot*)(1964) reflects Stoppard's employment of a situation rather than a plot: "I have tremendous difficulty in seizing a 'plot' but I am probably to tackle a situation" (qtd in Fleming, 1996, p.124).

Indeed, *Dominic Boot* is essentially an extended joke, as Fleming describes it (Ibid.). It has an autobiographical element, as Stoppard suffered from financial difficulties in his early career as a dramatist. Stoppard himself describes the four years between 1963 until his first success with *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1967) as "mainly self-unemployed"(Ibid, p.116). However, and in spite of these hard circumstances, Stoppard, like *Dominic Boot*, rarely refrained from taking taxis instead of using public transportation.

Stoppard was not the only person who suffered from unemployment and financial straits during the sixties. Many young men in Britain shared with him the same hard situation. This may help to explain Stoppard's preference of writing about "human beings under stress-whether it is about losing one's trousers or being nailed to the cross" (Berlin in Bareham, 1990. pp.107-108).

The play's idea is as simple as it is interesting. Stoppard summarizes it as follows: "The peg for Dominic Boot-man riding around in a taxi trying to raise the money he needs to catch up with the meter-is the only self-propelled idea-for-a play I ever had and I think I wrote it in a day"(Stoppard, 1983, p.7). The opening moments of the play give us an idea about the eternal characters' personalities as well as Dominic's distress:

*Fade in street-traffic.*

Vivian: Well, thanks for the lunch-oh, golly, it's raining.

Dominic: Better run for it.

Vivian: Don't be silly...(Up) Hey, taxi!

Dominic: I say Viv...

Vivian: Come on, you can drop me off. (*To driver*) Just round the corner, Derby Street Library. (*They get in-taxi drives*).

Dominic: Look, Vivian, I haven't got...

Vivian: Dush it-that's taken about ten shillings out of my two guinea hairdo-honestly, I'm furious. Don't you ever have an umbrella?

Dominic: Not when it's raining. (Ibid, p. 49)(All subsequent quotations are from this edition)

We immediately understand from this shorthand conversation what kind of relationship exists between Dominic and his selfish, demanding fiancée, Vivian. She gives him no chance to admit

his lack of money. Also, this scene signals the lack of love, warmth and understanding between them.

Stoppard presents here one of his Prufrockian characters-after T. S. Eliot's Alfred Prufrock in his poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." These characters are characterized by their helplessness and inability to cope with the realities of life. However, in spite of the hard situation in which Dominic finds himself as he fails each time he tries to raise the required taxi-fare, we never hear him complain about, or explain, his predicament to anyone.

All we hear is Dominic's inner thoughts and the chinks of the coins as he tries to meet the fare. He decides to go to the Metropolitan Bank in Blackfriars. At the bank, we are informed by Shepton, whom Dominic assumes to be Honeydew, that Dominic is overdrawn and that the bank has already refused two cheques from the restaurant at which he lunched with Vivian. These events are to be repeated in a second and a third bank.

What happens in the three banks clearly reflects Dominic's carelessness about other people and about his being continuously under stress. Despite that, Dominic struggles valiantly to keep in control. He tries to borrow from his work mates, Bligh and Cartwright. However, his requests are turned down. Even Dominic's mother, who is as self-centered and demanding a woman as Vivian, proves to be of very little help to him. This shows the difficult situation Dominic is suffering from, as he is expelled from his job. He is unemployed at the present time, and this will eventually lead to the mounting of his financial hardships. Also, his shorthand conversations with his mother reflect his feelings of loneliness and solitude and his need of someone to listen to, and sympathize with him in his predicament.

Indeed, it is rather interesting to notice that, in spite of the lack of communication among the characters, Dominic agrees with his mother that "It's quite wrong not to keep in touch with one's father"(p.54). Unfortunately, Dominic's father also fails to support him, as he receives him rather coolly and formally:

Dominic: Well, I was missing you, Father.

Father: Don't be *absurd* .....(p.56)(Italics mine)

The reply of Dominic's father here represents a severe and painful blow to all his attempts to communicate with others. Dominic Boot is an utterly desperate man now, especially after being let down by his mother, father and friend Charles Monkton. Here, Stoppard asserts people's need for mutual love, understanding and emotional involvement in their lives. It seems that Dominic is the only character in the play who is seeking others' understanding, and who is not imprisoning himself in a world of his own making. He thinks of asking Vivian's help who pushed him into his blight in the first place, but she proves to be extremely callous and apathetic to Boot's needs. Their meeting in the library ends up with a pathetic cry from Boot, in which he pours out all his anger and indignation at the absurd and meaningless situations he is constantly put in. He shouts at her: "OH, YOU STUPID COW, SHUT UP AND GIVE ME TEN POUNDS FOR THE LOVE OF GOD!"(p.57).

Finally, Dominic decides to sell everything he owns, except for a pair of pajamas, to the driver, who owns a shop where he sells a variety of goods, in exchange for the fare. At the end of the play, Stoppard presents a very ironical and painful picture about the blight of Dominic Boot. In fact, there is no remedy or solution for Dominic's ordeal, since the last scene is a repetition of the

first one. Dominic is left helpless, insecure, unable to communicate with others, and utterly lonely. Also, he is penniless, unemployed and in tears, for he realizes that he is trapped in a web of difficulties.

To sum up, this play is about a man who is always being urged to pull his socks up. This reminds us of Prufrock, who finds nothing to do but to pull his socks up. He is also desperate and on the verge of a nervous breakdown because of suffering endlessly in a world whose characters are enclosed in little boxes, unaware of the existence of the rest of people.

Wearing a raincoat and pyjamas only and without an umbrella, Miss Bligh hails a taxi while addressing Dominic, saying: "Taxi!...come on, Mr. Boot. Come on, you can drop me off..."(p.58). One can do nothing but smile at this ridiculous situation. In fact, the closing joke of the play suggests that Dominic is trapped in an unending cycle of financial problems.

As we shall see, such images of 'circularity' abound in Stoppard's other early plays.

Reading, or listening to, *'M Is for Moon Among Other Things* (henceforth *'M' Is for Moon*)(1964), one immediately notices how similar it is to many of Ionesco's plays, since it gives us a portrayal of a middle-aged, childless couple, and as it presents dramatically the boredom, loneliness and meaningless existence of the couple's lives.

In this play, Stoppard, like Ionesco, concentrates mainly on showing the mutual isolation of human beings and the meaninglessness of their daily actions, which constitute the major portion of their existence on earth.

Both Alfred and Constance imprison themselves separately in small boxes, unaware of each other's needs and desires. Actually, Stoppard succeeds in this play, as he begins to "explore the pathos of imprisoned littleness" (Jenkins, 1987, p.8).

Alfred and Constance are fully aware of their 'littleness' and meaningless existence. Therefore, they try to invest their lives with meaning. In other words, they try to evade the barrenness of their married life. Constance seeks to achieve this by attempting lexicography. She spends her time by browsing through her monthly installment of the M-N volume of encyclopedia, while her husband, Alfred, fantasizes about what he reads in the newspapers and hears on the radio- with the main story being the death of the American film actress, Marilyn Monroe. Alfred, while ignoring his wife's desires, dreams of being Marilyn's comforter, of holding her close to him, of helping her, and easing her traumatic experience.

Stoppard conveys the pair's boring existence in an interesting way. He begins with something of a sound puzzle. There is "*Silence- a man grunts and shakes his paper- a woman flips over the pages of a book and sighs*" (Tom Stoppard, 1983, p.61).(All subsequent quotations are from this edition) In fact, most of the play's dialogue, as we shall see, happens inside the characters' minds; that is, interior monologues, which help to give us an "autumnal picture of middle-aged,..., childless couple, whose thoughts and aspirations are richer than their humdrum lives," as Jenkins (1987) points out (p.12).

What we see here is a typical couple, married for a number of years, yet they do not know each other. What Stoppard wants to say is that people are isolated, lonely; people never really know each other, even when they are living together in the closest possible relationship.

Because of the meaninglessness of her life, Constance is increasingly preoccupied with time and counting the dates. She is appalled by the idea that time flies out without using it properly. Like Clayds, in *If You're Glad*, she is obsessed with time, and is extremely frightened by the fact that on "August the fifth, nineteen-sixty two...in half an hour I'll be exactly forty-two-and-a-half years old"(p.62).

She was born just as the clock struck half past ten at night. This means that she will be a day older each day the clock strikes half past ten. Constance may not be so worried about her being forty-two years old, or anxious about time, if her life with Alfred was happy and normal. However, this is not the case here. In fact, Constance sums up the whole of her meaningless life when she says: "Forty-two-and-a-half, and all I've got is a headache"(p.63). The word 'headache' is indicative, for it connotes that Constance has never been happy in her life with Alfred, that she is leading a miserable and lonely existence, and that even when she tries to voice her feeling to Alfred, he is not there to listen to, and comfort her. This reminds us of the fact that, as characters in an absurdist play, they are living in a world where love is unattainable and understanding is absent. A comparison with Ionesco's couples in *The Chairs*, *The Bald Soprano* and *Amedee* may be relevant here. These plays tell stories about the meaningless and absurd existence of middle-aged couples who use nonsensical language and clichés as a form of escape from, or a cover-up for, their purposeless lives.

Constance's reaction to Marilyn's death is quite different from Alfred's. Constance sees nothing specific in the death of Marilyn, since the latter does not appear in her encyclopedia, whereas Alfred invests the incident with his own fantasies.

Stoppard often refers to '*M' Is for Moon* as "his Marilyn Monroe's play," (Fleming, 1996, p.125) in the sense that Marilyn's death is pivotal to the play's action, for it helps to shed light on the characters' personalities, dilemmas and aspirations.

Constance is indifferent to Marilyn's death, because Marilyn represented everything that Constance is not. She became very famous as an actress during the fifties. The film producer turned her into a profitable project, in the sense that she became a victim of their materialistic greed. Marilyn lived paradoxically: she was under stress from the outside world which wanted her to be a paragon of sex. As a film star, she got all she aspired to, such as wealth, beauty and fame. However, she was suffering, like Constance, from loneliness in her empty life, which ended by her decision to commit suicide. This fact signals out the spiritual emptiness that spreads over in Western civilization, as suicides are largely due to the waning of religious beliefs and the dominance of materialistic philosophy and individualism.

Alfred's reaction to Marilyn's death takes another shape. To Alfred, her death is symptomatic of a hard, selfish world in which there is "no one to recognize her needs...No one to turn to, I mean. No wonder the poor girl got desperate. Those actors...they've got no humanity, no understanding..., it's such a selfish society"(p.66). Actually, Alfred gives us, in this statement, an accurate description of the world he, Marilyn and Constance were living in. Alfred, in fact, pities

Marilyn's death as he sees in it the death of his fantasies and dreams of a happy marital life. In another instance, Alfred almost identifies himself with Marilyn as he thinks:

Alfred: (*Thinks*): Abandoned...no love...like a child...(p.64)  
Alfred:...It's such a cold shallow world she was living in. No warmth or understanding- no one understood her, she was friendless (Ibid.)

These musings represent an accurate description of Constance's life. Also, Alfred comments indirectly on the nature of the world people live in, as they suffer from an increasing sense of isolation and loneliness in spite of the scientific developments in mass communication and the invention of many means of entertainment.

The crucial question, which Stoppard tries to answer in '*M' Is for Moon* is: What is the meaning of our life? In fact, he leads his listeners through making Constance question whether her life has any meaning, into questioning the meaning of their lives and their daily actions and, at the same time, makes them realize the absurdity and futility of their lives.

Constance tries, through writing entries in the encyclopedia, to invest her life with meaning. She thinks that, by doing this, she makes use of time: "...it's just that the time isn't all a waste" (p.65), in spite of Alfred's continuous ridiculing comments on her efforts. She also regrets losing her happy childhood and her ability to take decisions. When she was seventeen, she decided to change her name from Millie to Constance, for "it sounded more grown-up"(p.63). She yearns for the simple world of her childhood ABC, where each letter stood for one object only. It was years before she realized that 'M' was for moon, among other things. She is utterly desperate now, because she feels that she is compelled to go on in her tedious, monotonous life and actions. Commenting on the characters' attempts to make their lives meaningful, Billington (1987) remarks about the play:

It...adumbrates one of Stoppard's recurrent themes: the attempts of human beings to find some pattern or scheme that will somehow shape and explain the meaningless flux of existence... Stoppard himself- rather like his characters- seems to be yearning for something to counteract the randomness of experience. All art is, by definition, an attempt to order chaos (pp.21-22).

Finally, the play ends as it begins, for Stoppard repeats the first scene at the end of the play, to emphasize the fact that both Alfred and Constance are, like Dominic Boot, trapped in an increasing cycle of misunderstanding, loneliness, and boredom. Alfred, while failing to give his wife any kind of comfort, retreats into the fantasy of being Marilyn's comforter, while Constance, who again misunderstands her husband's solicitude and thinks he intends it for her, retreats to bed with her M's from her encyclopedia, rattling in her mind.

Stoppard's next play, *If You're Glad, I'll be Frank* (henceforth *If You're Glad*) (1966), represents his mediation on the nature of time and how modern society is imprisoned by it. The play "actually had its origins in a series the BBC were contemplating ...about people in absurd jobs

which did not really exist, and the idea of doing one about the speaking clock girl occurred to me then,” as Stoppard (1974) points out. (p.8) Gladys is the voice of the telephone-speaking clock, and she is doomed endlessly to announce the passing seconds. Her husband, Frank, is a bus driver and, like her, is doomed endlessly to drive his car from one station to another.

As a matter of fact, the special nature of their professions turns them into slaves to time, as they are so tied to timetables and schedules that they become almost machine-like objects, deprived almost of all free will. They function mechanically within a totally artificial inhuman framework, consequently imprisoning themselves in little boxes or cells that separate them from the outside world and from each other.

Man was and is still interested in the concept of time and its impact on him. His preoccupation with, and interest in time has escalated, due to the achievements in big strides in the scientific world, to the extent that people have started to be slaves to timetables, programmes and schedules.

Unlike other characters, Gladys objects to the prevailing, collective experience of time. For her, the scale of human life has been reduced to ‘nothing.’ Everything becomes petty and insignificant when measured against the omnipotence of time. Gladys suffers from spiritual dislocation whenever she ponders over things beyond the tiny world of the Post Office where she works, and her bus-driver husband’s enslavement to his timetable. She says:

And I feel sick  
When you look down from a great height  
You become dizzy. Such depth, such distance,  
Such disappearing tininess, so  
far away, rushing away,  
reducing the life size into nothing-  
it upsets the scale you live by.  
Your eyes go first, followed  
by the head,  
and if you can’t look away  
you feel sick,  
And that’s my view of time. (Stoppard, 1969, p.12)( All subsequent  
quotations are from this edition)

Actually, Gladys rejects the common notion of time; she insists that time is impartial, disinterested, and god-like. Consequently, she gives up everything, including her husband and other human beings, who think that time is something they invented for their own convenience and divided up into years, months, days, hours, and so on. People rely heavily on this division of time so as to make their lives orderly and systematic, and to know

When to retire;  
When to leave the station,  
renew their applications  
When their subscription  
have expired;  
....., etc, etc, (p.11)



T. S. Eliot presents, in 'Burnt Norton,' the same view point of time as impartial and indifferent to human beings. He believes that time is a continuum, an endless flux that engulfs man's existence. Man, in order to understand this continuum, imposes this division of time into past, present and future:

Time present and time past  
are both perhaps present in time future  
And time future contained in time past  
If all time is eternally present  
All time is unredeemable (Eliot, 1982, p.171, ll1-5)

Stoppard presents through Gladys another of his 'spiritual loners,' as she desperately attempts to evade the harsh realities of her world. In the past, she failed to gain admission to a nunnery. She sought 'serenity' and quiet life, but was rejected by the religious authorities because of her religious doubts. Gladys lives in an age of reason, in which rational thinking dominates especially in western societies. These societies witnessed, since the scientific works of Darwin and other scientists, many moral shocks that led to the prevalence of spiritual emptiness and religious doubts. Gladys is eager to escape this world, with its chaos and turbulence into an orderly existence, a world that provides her life with meaning and logical explanations. Her job as the speaking clock offers her this kind of order. However, as she goes on announcing the passing seconds, she is appalled by the omniscience of time. Through this unending repetition of time, Gladys experiences a portion of eternity as the seconds stretch ahead and behind her to infinity. Time, she believes, flows endlessly and reduces man within it to a very tiny part of its flow, in fact to nothing. Realizing that time is indifferent to human beings, she is driven to breakdown by this Olympian vision of time and its impartial progress. One of her wishes is to 'cough,' 'sneeze' and to whisper an obscenity (p.28), while she is performing her tedious and repetitive task. However, she is reluctant to do so, because this means the collapse of the system at the Post Office, though she is fully aware that this disruption would make no difference:

It can go without me  
and it will  
Time doesn't need me-  
They think I am time, but I am  
not-  
I am Gladys Jenkins...(p.27)

It is this keeping of her dull and monotonous job, despite her knowledge of its absurdity, that makes her position absurd and puts her on the verge of psychological breakdown.

Gladys's relationship with Frank is another piece of evidence of her enchantment with serenity and the quiet life. Frank, Gladys tells us, is as reliable and punctual as a clock; she informs us that he took his timetable seriously, to the degree that "you could set your clock by him"(pp.19-20). Frank is surprised to recognize, while dialing 'Tim' that the speaker is his wife, Gladys. He decides to rescue her, because he thinks that she is kept there against her will. However, he is unable to reach Gladys or release her from her ordeal, since he is a slave to his timetables and work routine. He is beaten back and ridiculed each time he enters the Post Office to meet the top

man or to ask about his wife. Finally, Frank is given a very severe blow when the First Lord replies callously and unsympathetically: “First Lord (*Chuckling*): My dear fellow-there’s no Gladys- we wouldn’t trust your wife with the time- It’s a machine, I thought everyone knew that...”(p.30).

This reply gives a true portrait of what life in the twentieth century has come to. We are going, like Gladys, to be machines or cogs in a big wheel. Here, Stoppard warns us that we will be reduced to puppets in a universe unsympathetic to our needs, if we lose our ability to master time, and reminds us that the clock is made for man and not vice versa.

Frank’s separation from his wife, and his inability to communicate with her, are aspects of the absurd situation they are put into. However, it strikes one as a hopeful gesture that- although the action is circular and the characters are imprisoned and repeat the same action- Frank will never stop looking for Gladys, as Gladys will keep on informing us about time.

The final scene of the play represents another image of circularity, as the First Lord manages to defeat Frank’s efforts to liberate Gladys from her self-inflicted prison, and as she will go on in her Sisyphean and self-consuming job “ad nauseum”(p.12). So will her husband.

As in *Dominic Boot* and *‘M’ Is for Moon*, the situation in *If You’re Glad* will remain the same, since Gladys will always be under the mental and psychological pressure of her work, and as she will be forced “to pull [herself] together, stop crying, and to control [her] voice”(p.31).

Levin (1976), in a comment on the significance of the play, points out that it represents:  
an assault on the whole concept of time as the irresistible force that compels societies...to trot obediently in its wake. It is a dazzling piece of work...juggling excellent but straightforward jokes...with a constant stream of time-metaphors turned inside out, all spinning round the still human nature of Gladys...The scenes switch between no fewer than six acting areas, with the cross-references of speech, movement, and lighting, all controlled by the inexorable pips.(p.38)

To depict Gladys’s predicament effectively, Stoppard creates an inner and outer voice, one for the speaking clock and the other for her inner thoughts. The latter, of course, has the dominant value in the play, for it informs us of her personal anguish, ordeal and private feeling in regard to the absurd limbo she finds herself in.

*Albert’s Bridge* (1967) is similar to *If You’re Glad* in many respects. Like Gladys, Albert is another character in Stoppard’s series of ‘spiritual loners.’ Like her, he tries to impose order on his chaotic life by devoting himself to repainting a bridge. Moreover, man for Albert, as for Gladys, becomes insignificant if measured from the height of the Clifton Bay Bridge, on which Albert is employed as a painter.

Albert was a philosophy student, and he wanted to stay on at university, but “they wouldn’t have [him]”(Stoppard, 1970, p.14). (All subsequent quotations are from this edition) It seems that studying philosophy made him unable to cope with ordinary life and human relationships. One notices that there is hardly any relation between Albert and those around him. This may explain his utter disregard for Fraser’s attempts to commit suicide and his wife’s desertion with their child. His feelings of loneliness and isolation make him seek resort in the bridge. Indeed, the play’s title reflects Albert’s obsession with bridges and towers. He chooses Paris as place for

spending his holidays with Kate, because this enables him to visit the Eiffel Tower. Besides, almost all the play's events take place around or on the bridge.

Albert has been painting the bridge for a number of years. He is quite happy and content in his job, for it offers him a pattern or an order that helps to shape his meaningless life.

However, Albert's solitude and quite life will not go on forever like that. The city engineer, Fitch, who is also obsessed with logic and patterns, produces to the town's Bridge Committee a scheme to save money by using a paint that will last eight years, and, therefore, the committee needs only one painter. Albert applies for the job and succeeds. He likes the distance it offers him. The clutter of everyday world looks like a neat pattern when viewed from the bridge, and the bridge itself has a self-contained logic-the whole thing utterly fixed by the rules that make it stay up. (p.16) Albert here has assigned himself a Sisyphean task of endlessly repainting the bridge. Unlike his work mate Dad, who gives up his job as a bridge painter, Alfred sees this endless task as a finite achievement:

Albert: Simplicity-so...contained; neat; your bargain with the world,  
your wages, your time, your energy, your property, everything you took  
out and everything you put in, the bargain that has carried you this far-all  
contained there in ten layers of paint-accounted for.(p.9)

Albert has forsaken everything, including his wife, child, and mother, in order to work on the bridge. His mother thinks that philosophy has changed him. It has made him think all the time. Like Beckett, Stoppard suggests that knowledge sometimes leads to bewilderment and uncertainty, as one is subject to different cultural trends and philosophies. (Wellwarth, 1971, p.46) As a philosophy student in the twentieth century, Albert comes across different and contradictory philosophical concepts. Apparently, this helps only to increase his confusion and bewilderment. Instead of wasting his time on philosophy, as his mother thinks, Albert could have been now a trainee executive with his father in the factory. Stoppard here develops the theme of non-conformism, which occurs in several of his early plays. Albert continues his job as a bridge painter and refuses to step on the treadmill of business and industry.

Albert gets married to Kate without an obvious motive. This again reflects his indifference to those around him. However, unlike the protagonists in the plays of the Absurd, Albert does not regret having a family. He does want to make them happy. The problem with Albert is that he does not feel really at home in the society in which he is condemned to live. When he is not on the bridge, he is haunted by the pettiness and futility of all he intends to do. His perspective about the world assumes another shape when he is on the bridge. He is happy there and thinks that there are some logical rules that govern the world and make it comprehensible to us. In this respect, Albert is like Gladys, a victim of perspective. He is seduced by the distant view of life as seen from the bridge, while Gladys is imprisoned into the infinite horror of time.

Another victim of perspective is the would-be suicidal maniac, Fraser. Just like Albert, who sees the whole town, people, university, and even his wife and daughter from the bridge as bricks, dots and beetles-that is, an existence orderly arranged- Fraser, who is appalled at the fragility of

the chains of economic causes and effects which keep civilization going on when he is on the ground, sees everything from the bridge as “Quite ordered, seen from above. Laid out in squares, each square a function, each dot a functionary. ...from a vantage point like this, the idea of society is just about tenable” (p.32). Fraser realizes that the only direction left for him to go in is upwards. So, he decides to climb the bridge, to escape the world and its miseries.

In his conversation with Albert, Fraser diagnoses the ills of modern British society. One can safely say that many parts of the world in the twentieth century suffer from similar problems. Fraser poses the well-known problems of mass production, unemployment, financial pressures, the feeling of insecurity in a world of shattered beliefs, noise and population explosion. Fraser realizes that “There is too much of everything, but the space for it is constant. So the shell of human existence is filling out, expanding, and it’s going to go bang” (p.30), and that “One is forced to recognize the arbitrariness of what we claim to be order. Somewhere, there is a lynch pin, which, when removed, will collapse the whole monkey-puzzle” (Ibid). Actually, this is exactly what happens at the end of the play when **1800** painters come to help Albert in painting the bridge in one day. Neglecting the rules of physics that keep the bridge stay up, it collapses under the weight of those men and with it Albert’s dreams of order and quiet life. The collapse of the bridge represents another kind of reduction to ‘nothing’ by taking a neat logic to its extreme.

Because of his deep sense and preoccupation with the bridge, Albert regards any visitor as a threat to his world of make-belief on the bridge. He asks Fraser to descend, but once he is told that Fraser intends to jump off the bridge, Albert says:

Albert: You come up to go down?

Fraser: To jump.

.....

Albert: Jump off? You’d kill yourself. Ah.

.....

Albert: Well, jump.

Fraser: Aren’t you going to try or to talk me  
out of it?

Albert: You know your own mind. And you’re  
holding me up. I’ve got to paint where you’re  
standing. (p.31)

This conversation shows Albert’s apathy towards human life and existence. Indeed, the bridge, for Albert, becomes both a symbol of life and a retreat from it. The bridge becomes his life and his final destiny, for in his insistence on working on it, he resigns himself to the ultimate truths of life, namely life and death.

The bridge, in fact, may give Albert a sense of importance, a sense of being in “the centre” of things” (p.37). This is why Albert and Fraser are horrified as the army of painters approaches. They recognize that it is their ultimate tragic end, and they sense the approaching collapse of their world. Hayman (1977) describes the death scene thoroughly:

Like Ros and Guil [in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*], who are almost flattered by the tragedy of their death, never having believed themselves to be important enough, Albert is caught by surprise: “Eighteen-hundred men-flung against me by a madman! Was I so

important?(p38) He knows that the basis of his existence is destroyed; he doesn't yet know that his life is. The changing tone of the marching indicates that more and more of the men have left terra firma and started the ascent. Soon we hear the noise of the rivets popping out of place. Fraser's apocalyptic prophecies are being carried to dramatic fulfillment and Albert...., dies with him as the bridge collapses. (p.68)

Stoppard ridicules here the bureaucracy that dominates our life through the character of Fitch, who loves efficiency as much as Albert does. For him, painting a bridge is "poetry ... a perfect equation of space, time, and energy" (p.18). It is the pointlessness and illogicality of his miscalculation that ultimately bring about the death of the 1800 painters and the collapse of Albert's world.

In these four radio plays-*Dominic Boot*, *'M' is for Moon*, *If you're Glad*, and *Albert's Bridge*-Stoppard writes on the anxiety and confusion of life, on modern man's plight as he is subject to ever-increasing pressures from the outside world, a world that is hostile to man's dreams and pushes him either to death (in the case of Albert in *Albert's Bridge*) or to an endless cycle of personal miseries and troubles in the other plays.

It is noteworthy that in these plays Stoppard exploits the medium of radio to write tightly-constructed plays, in which he effectively uses different characters' voices and sound effects in order to create different layers of meaning and to enhance aurally the experiences in a way which distinguishes them from works for the stage. In *'M' is for Moon*, Stoppard misleads his listeners several times. Constance: (*Thinks*):...I think enough for tonight-I wish the print wasn't so small...Have you seen my pills anywhere?(p.61) and her counting off months in her head lead some listeners to think that the dates and pills are related to contraception, but later on we know they are not. This kind of deception has served to shed light on Constance's loneliness and her unhappy married life with Alfred.

In all these plays, Stoppard largely succeeds in drawing his listeners' attention closely to his characters' worlds, by using condensed plots, interior monologues, shorthand dialogues, sound effects, and by moving rapidly from one scene to another, thereby forcing us to deduce much of what is happening, to participate and to share in their little lives, and in their dilemmas. His writing in these plays proves to be extremely deft. He wastes no sound, and many serve a double function. By using these techniques, the listeners are drawn more intimately to the action, since it is our responsibility to imagine what is going on. Jenkins (1987) points out that "in these scripts, Stoppard finds his own voice and his own vision of life's puzzling uncertainty." (p.8)

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### Biography

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## DEVELOPING DATABASES-DRIVEN WRITING FOR WRITING ACADEMIC PAPERS BY IRANIAN ACADEMIC MEMBERS

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### ABSTRACT

Iranian academicians cannot usually express their own findings within particular discipline domain because there are particular gaps between what is traditionally known and what is expected in the academic writing situation. This paper has been developed to help Iranian academic members, who are nonnative speakers of English, regularly find the writing of English paper a very challenging affair. On the other hand, candidates in this study are adults, fully occupied and workshops/overseas presentations have proved to be not enough effective instruments to shift them toward authentic writing, database-driven writing seems to work. Therefore, it seems databases for Iranian academicians in English for academic purposes should be developed to help individual academic members to know musts and musts not in their academic writing. These searchable databases must be designed in such a way that satisfies the constructivists' requirements for learner- autonomy and learner- orientation. Data elicited based on online interview and corpora analysis in form of CBDTS (corpus based descriptive translation studies) - on micro and macro levels, are put into matrices and their analyses are supportive of academicians' reliance on different types of mental translation use and their shift toward authentic writing after receiving feedback from searchable online databases.

**KEYWORDS:** Academic writing; CBDTS; Searchable online databases; Learner autonomy; Learner orientation

### INTRODUCTION

Academic members are introduced with their papers and expertise in writing scholarly articles by accurate and effective language use. Due to the cultural and educational distance between native and nonnative writers, some researchers have suggested that there may be more differences than similarities between L1 and L2 writing (Grebe & Kaplan, 1996). Assuredly, Academic writing is an intricate activity that needs academicians have the declarative knowledge about how to organize different parts of paper writing and the procedural knowledge of how to follow the values and goals of community in order to communicate

information to a particular audience. This study is useful and valuable, because it intends to provide a chance for academic members to have consciously use databases, which lead them to reliable success and prestige in writing academic papers.

On the other hand, in spite of the great progress made through the second language writing model in previous studies; little attention has been paid to how make databases, which academicians use practically them during academic writing in second language. Therefore, by considering that the Iranian academicians aren't socially and culturally familiar with audience expectations, rhetorical patterns and genre in English academic writing necessitate this study, specifically by representative documented databases, to deal positively with the needs and concerns of non-native writers and to provide genre and discourse pattern for Iranian academic members. Within the framework of writing research, this study first of all has a survey on existing scholarly literature review, and for eliciting data, the researcher relies on two methods; the former is an online interview and the latter is corpora analysis. Qualitative Survey and online interview technique for data collection will be favored; corpora analysis will also be used to find the necessitate elements for second language writing for Iranian academicians. The researchers believe that new finding of this study will be appealed to board audience, particularly Iranian academic member for writing their papers in English language.

Designing these online databases is becoming increasingly significant because they can be accessible and intentionally have been designed to help Iranian academicians succeed in the writing scholarly tasks by giving needed and applicable information. Clearly, Iranian academicians don't enough time to search every beneficial guideline for writing an authentic academic paper. Therefore, designing available electronic databases to illustrate an approach how to write scientific paper for most multidiscipline Iranian academic members are required. In each case, these electronic databases will let Iranian academicians access available a list of tips, which are required to be considered, for writing an international scientific paper. These databases cause to speed up their work and allowing them to produce better quality research. Surely, academic writing has its perfect and rational body, which makes it model as a self-study and reference guide for academicians needing to work independently. Consequently, the researcher tries to reach a situation in which all kinds of information are freely available to every Iranian academic member, while dealing academic writing.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION**

Are archived academic, stereotyped, cliché expressions effective and promoting means for academic members in their paper writing?

## **THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES**

In spite of basic similarities between L1 and L2 composing process, recent studies have disclosed that there are also important differences such as fundamental cognitive, linguistic, discourse, genre and audience related issues between L1 and L2 composing systems. Paying attention to the differences between first and second language writing, L2 learners compel themselves to match with the adoption of writing instruction to suit the special needs of L2 writing. Kroll argues that "we [still] have very little information on how people actually learn to write in second languages or how teaching might influence this" (Kroll, 2003, p.6). ESL teachers and SLA researchers have long been aware that ESL learners often have difficulties with academic writing in English (Lieber, 1980; Reid, 1989).

According to Raimes, “all of us who have tried to write something in a second language ... sense that the process of writing in an L2 is startlingly different from writing in our L1” (Raimes, 1985, p.93). Likewise, Aliakbari (2002) argued that L2 writing ability had no meaningful relationship with L1 writing. L2 writing ability and L1 writing ability were two separate tasks; that is, writing in L2 is a language-specific phenomenon, not a writing problem. These studies suggest that learners, especially those with inadequate proficiency in L2, rely on their L1 to achieve their goals and to solve any problems they encounter when composing in a new language. Thus, a major problem for these learners is how to overcome the negative effects of “transfer, or interference, of their L1 writing conventions in L2 writing” (Kubota, 1998, p.69).

Iranian academicians cannot usually express their own ideas and findings within a particular discipline domain because there are particular blanks between what is traditionally known and what is expected in the essay writing situation. Subsequently, they need to develop their knowledge about linguistic competence in terms of appropriate vocabulary and writing style and familiarity with the writing modes and skills required in the academic culture.

Kaplan (1966) contends that many students in ESL programs write texts which are significantly different from those written by native speakers of English. He notes that the writing problems, which L2 learners encounter, are not merely a byproduct of structural interference from their native languages; rather, they are result of transfer of rhetorical strategies and rhetorical patterns from their native cultures. Undoubtedly, culture affects the use of language in writing because each culture has its own patterns of discourse. L2 writer's text is intuitively recognized from that of an L1 writer by native speakers because L2 writers are likely to convey their native schemata to L2 writing position and they present written ideas in different ways from native speakers. The link between rhetorical features and writers' educational and cultural background can also be an important consideration in writing L2 papers because rhetorical features are culture-dependent.

Similarly, Kaplan (1966) asserts that differences in L2 writing might reflect different writing conventions that are learnt in L1 culture and may interfere with L2 writing. In contrast, some researchers (e.g., Cumming, 1989; Matsumoto, 1995) have claimed that L1/L2 writers may oscillate between the two languages whenever the need arises. L2 writers may bring their own sets of culturally and cognitively defined criteria to writing based on their L1 disciplinary, cultural and cognitive experiences internalized as different writing patterns.

Since, writers from different cultures present written ideas in different ways, L2 writer audience sense may be culturally different from L1 writers (Silva & Matsuda, 2001). In fact, the focus is on how a community defines writers and writing; how texts represent that community; how the community, its discourse, and disciplinary knowledge are constituted and reconstituted; and how participants in discursive practices form and are formed by these practices and the disciplinary and professional formations in which they participate (Kennedy, 1998).

In general, proficient L2 learners do not depend heavily on the L1 to drive the writing process because they have a sufficient level of L2 automaticity and knowledge to think and plan in the L2 (Jones & Tetroe, 1987). However, lower L2 proficiency writers rely more heavily on their L1 during the writing process in order to sustain the process and prevent a complete breakdown in language (Arndt, 1987; Cumming, 1989; Raimes, 1985; Uzawa & Cumming, 1989).

Concluded L2 writing research has indicated that L2 writers use their first language (L1) while writing in L2 (some researchers such as, Friedlander, 1990; Krapels, 1990; Uzawa, 1996; Woodall, 2002). Investigations have clearly shown that through organizing a text, L2 writers use their L1 strategies (Beare, 2000; Jones & Tetroe, 1987; Krapels, 1990; Uzawa & Cumming, 1989; Wang, 2003; Woodall, 2002), create ideas or expand text (Beare, 2000; Beare & Bourdages, 2007; Knutson, 2006; Krapels, 1990; Qi, 1998; Roca de Larios *et al.*, 1999; Uzawa & Cumming, 1989; Wang, 2003; Whalen and Me´nard, 1995; Woodall, 2002), or for overcoming linguistic problems such as vocabulary and grammar difficulties (Beare, 2000; Centeno-Corte´s & Jime´nezJime´nez, 2004; Cumming, 1989; Jones & Tetroe, 1987; Lay, 1982; Wang, 2003; Woodall, 2002).

A translator must be aware of genre, since language features will often vary depending on which genre is being translated. Culture affects the use of language in many ways and contrastive rhetoric research has discovered that each culture has its own patterns of discourse. Therefore, L2 writers are likely to transfer their native schemata to L2 writing situations (Hyland, 2002). ESL teachers and SLA researchers have long been aware that ESL learners often have difficulties with academic writing in English (Lieber, 1980; Reid, 1989).

Therefore, these theoretical and methodological problems show that because L2 writers are likely to be less fluent, less accurate and be less effective writers than L1 writers, they transfer subconsciously writing conventions of their L1 into L2 writing when confront with difficulties in L2 writing. Subsequently, academic writers become aware of the rhetorical differences in discourse and genre through exposure to academic essays and receiving feedback from online databases.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### ***Introduction***

Iranian academic writers usually know how to cope with specific writing format in their native language but when the demand of writing task changes in the English language, unfortunately they cannot cope with new situation because they do not have sufficient cognitive and metacognitive skills for new writing tasks.

### ***Participants***

The participants in this qualitative survey consisted of 30 Iranian academicians that were selected based on the index of their progressive presentations and publications to show their progress in academic paper writing, majored in Science and Engineering, from different disciplines, either from state or non-state funded Iranian universities; all have received their Ph.D. degree from Iranian Institutions. The number and level of their paper presentations are key factors in their selection. Possibility of their being connected to on-line system is another prominent factor in their participation to the study.

### ***Instrument***

To elicit reported strategy use from the target population, a 30 item semi-opened on-line interview, with five open-ended questions, in synchronous L1/L2 format was designed, including biographical questions, their attitudes toward English as well as questions concerning their use of communicative strategies.

On the other hand, because think-aloud writing study has limited generalizability, the other method as corpora analysis is used for documentation in this survey. The rationale behind using interview in this survey as one of the instrument is to help the researcher unmask the writers' requirements in terms of academic writing task (introspection) and pave the path to develop their own specific databases, e.g. archived End- note database format to avoid trial and error technique in future English academic paper writing.

Hence, corpora analysis was used as a second method in this survey, which is based on CBDTS (corpus based descriptive translation studies); in order to confirm the construct validity of the interview. For corpus analysis, parallel texts are needed for text analysis; therefore, academicians were asked to furnish us two papers: one was their first published paper in English and the other one was their latest published paper in English after learning new conventions of style, referencing and formation in second language through databases in order to provide an overall idea about their writing progress in the L2.

### **RESULTS**

On-line interview, as it appears in the (Table: 1) was analyzed. The qualitative data were converted into numerical matrices and they were analyzed. The analysis proves that 93 % of the candidates did not have a clear understanding of writing academic papers in their first writing academic paper but 67% of them have learned the meaning of authentic writing in their latest writing academic paper. Results taken from corpora analysis confirm authentic writing for 69 % of the candidates through using online searchable databases for academic writing.

Table 1: The frequency and percentage of qualitative data from answered questionnaire. Each cell represents the number and percentage of people that have chosen the desired question.

	No idea	Perfectly disagree	disagree	agree	Perfectly agree		No idea	Perfectly disagree	disagree	agree	Perfectly agree
Q 1	1 3.3%	26 86.7%	2 6.7%	0 0.0%	1 3.3%	Q 15	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 10.0%	18 60.0%	9 30.0%
Q 2	0 0.0%	27 90%	2 6.7%	0 0.0%	1 3.3%	Q 16	3 10.0%	3 10.0%	10 33.3%	12 40.0%	2 6.7%
Q 3	0 0.0%	18 60.0%	3 10.0%	9 30.0%	11 36.7%	Q 17	3 10.0%	7 23.3%	7 23.3%	11 36.7%	2 6.7%
Q 4	0 0.0%	11 36.7%	15 50.0%	1 3.3%	3 10.0%	Q 18	3 10.0%	0 0.0%	2 6.7%	14 46.7%	11 36.7%
Q 5	0 0.0%	8 26.7%	18 60.0%	2 6.7%	2 6.7%	Q 19	2 6.7%	5 16.7%	6 20.0%	12 46.7%	5 16.7%
Q 6	0 0.0%	24 80.0%	5 16.7%	0 0.0%	1 3.3%	Q 20	4 13.3%	3 10.0%	6 20.0%	11 36.7%	6 20.0%
Q 7	0 0.0%	18 60.0%	7 23.3%	5 16.7%	0 0.0%	Q 21	3 10.0%	3 10.0%	9 30.0%	13 43.3%	2 6.7%
Q 8	0 0.0%	14 46.7%	4 13.3%	4 13.3%	8 26.7%	Q 22	3 10.0%	1 3.3%	4 13.3%	21 70.0%	1 3.3%
Q 9	0 0.0%	24 80.0%	5 16.7%	0 0.0%	1 3.3%	Q 23	4 13.3%	6 20.0%	10 33.3%	8 26.7%	2 6.7%
Q 10	0 0.0%	20 66.0%	6 20.0%	3 10.0%	1 3.3%	Q 24	2 6.7%	1 3.3%	1 3.3%	14 46.7%	12 40.0%
Q 11	0 0.0%	13 43.0%	13 43.0%	2 6.7%	2 6.7%	Q 25	1 3.3%	0 0.0%	2 6.7%	18 60.0%	9 30.0%
Q 12	0 0.0%	0 66.07%	2 6.70%	26 86.7%	2 6.70%	Q 26	1 3.3%	0 0.0%	1 3.3%	13 43.3%	15 50.0%
Q 13	1 33.3%	20 0.0%	4 0.0%	0 13.3%	5 63.3%	Q 27	3 10.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	15 50.0%	12 40.0%
Q 14	6 20.0%	0 0.0%	8 26.7%	10 33.3%	6 20.0%	Q 28	3 10.0%	0 0.0%	4 13.3%	16 53.3%	7 23.3%

<sup>a</sup> Q1 to Q30 refers to question 1 to question 30 in online interview



*Paired Samples Statistics*

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	mean1	2.8952	30	.43579	.07956
	mean2	3.9576	30	.42972	.07846

Mean 1: shows the questions in the questionnaire which easily reflected translation style used by academicians in their first writing academic paper

Mean 2: shows the questions in the questionnaire which related to authentic writing style used by academicians in their latest writing academic paper

*Paired Samples Correlations*

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	mean1 & mean2	30	.085	.653

*The correlation between mean 1 and mean 2 is 0.85.*

Based on paired samples test between mean 1 and mean 2 was done by degree of freedom=29 and  $p\text{ value}=0 < \alpha = 0.05$  showed that *proficient academicians have sooner shift to authentic writing.*

*Paired Samples Test*

t	df							Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
lmean1 - lmean2	-1.06234	.58529	.10686	-1.28089	-.84379	-9.941	29	.000

## DISCUSSION

Corpora analysis of the two parallel texts was done on the basis of CBDTS in two levels, micro level and macro level.

Micro level refers to surface structure of the text, in which elements such as grammar, vocabulary, punctuations and text, in general were focused.

Iranian academic members had low linguistic knowledge of L2 because they had experienced less implicit or explicit exposure to the target language. Accordingly, they have not enough experience for starting formal writing.

Grammar is checked to verify written text for grammatical correctness. Usually, grammar of each sentence will be checked in a text pursue using various rules, detecting various errors, such as agreement in tense, number and word order. Each word is checked and looked up in dictionaries, and then the attempt to parse the sentence into a form that matches a grammar was checked.

Punctuation marks are symbols that indicate the structure and organization of written language. To become a sound and a successful writer, using proper punctuation is necessary. Without putting punctuation marks, documents can easily become misread and incomprehensible. Unfortunately, for many Iranian academicians, putting proper punctuation mark in the text is a difficult task.

Cohesion is the grammatical and lexical relationship within a text or sentence. Cohesion causes a link among linguistic elements to make a text semantically coherent together. Low skilled academic writers express their own opinion alone in words without the ability to relate their thought to the main idea and with noted facts.

Macro level of CBDTS refers to deep structure of text such as style, genre, texture, utterance meaning and discourse analysis. Style refers to how to structure what you want to say. When you are writing an academic essay, it requires a reasonably formal style of writing. This does not mean that you use long sentences with multisyllabic, obscure and colloquial words for expressing your new idea and findings. As matter of fact, style of writing scientific papers is different from literary essays; i. e. in academic essay, the writer expresses his/ her main idea firstly and then a series of details are added to support the main idea. Its logical progress will be covered just to support the main idea, but the style of literary essays is exactly the reverse.

Non-native speakers may need explicit instruction of what is socially and culturally appropriate in terms of the writers' roles, audience expectations, rhetorical patterns, stylistic conventions and contextual features in L2 written discourse (Silva & Matsuda, 2001; Leki, 1992).

Firstly, with regard to the Table 2, Iranian academicians undoubtedly made errors at the sentence level, which refers to grammar and sentence structure, (articles, modifiers, wordiness, passive voice use, conjunctions, nouns, incorrect use of numbers, incorrect use of prepositions, pronoun agreement, use of adjectives and adverbs, comparing two or more things, faulty parallelism, incorrect use of negatives, use of qualifiers and quantifiers, subject and verb agreement, verb agreement, verb form use, modal verbs and conditional sentences.), that were expected to overcome these grammatical and sentence structure errors by themselves as soon as possible. Poor grammar will undermine the writer credibility more swiftly than any other

single problem because readers become frustrated and prevent them from gleaning desired information.

Table 2: Frequent Errors at the Sentence Level by Iranian Academic Members

The number of eggs <del>were</del> estimated by Peters' chamber and adjusted to 100 eggs per ml.	The number of eggs <del>was</del> estimated by Peters' chamber and adjusted to 100 eggs per ml. (Explanation)
The recent spread different <del>kinds of diabetes is</del> often thought to be the result of a lack of exercise and eating the wrong food.	The recent spread different <del>kinds of diabetes are</del> often thought to be the result of a lack of exercise and eating the wrong food. (Explanation)
Take a saturday night's drinking: at midnight you may have 200 <del>mg</del> per 100 <del>mls</del> of blood in your system.	Take a saturday night's drinking: at midnight you may have 200 <del>mg</del> per 100 <del>ml</del> of blood in your system. (Explanation)
Applications of different isolates were approximately between 16 to <del>77%</del> fewer in soil treated with the fungus than in untreated soil.	Applications of different isolates were approximately between 16 to <del>77%</del> fewer in soil treated with the fungus than in untreated soil. (Explanation)
<del>Criterion</del> , which do not meet agreed, are stopped, in favor of others with higher possibilities of success.	<del>Criteria</del> , which do not meet agreed, are stopped, in favor of others with higher possibilities of success. (Explanation)
Data <del>suggests</del> the effect of all extracts on inhibition of egg hatching persisted even after the egg masses were transferred into distilled water (Table 4).	Data <del>suggest</del> the effect of all extracts on inhibition of egg hatching persisted even after the egg masses were transferred into distilled water (Table 4). (Explanation)
They must also <del>evaluated</del> against different species of Meloidogyne and other economically important genus <del>like</del> Heterodera and Globodera.	They must also <del>be evaluated</del> against different species of Meloidogyne and other economically important genus <del>such as</del> Heterodera and Globodera. (Explanation)
The leaf extract of Olea europaea had the lowest level of inhibition <del>on</del> hatch of nematode eggs (14 and 16% after 24 hr and 72 hr, respectively).	The leaf extract of Olea europaea had the lowest level of inhibition <del>to</del> hatch of nematode eggs (14 and 16% after 24 hr and 72 hr, respectively). (Explanation)
IRAN 1119 C and IRAN 1129 were <del>another</del> two best isolate (isolates) for reduction in multiplication rates of nematode.	IRAN 1119 C and IRAN 1129 were <del>other</del> two best isolate (isolates) for reduction in multiplication rates of nematode. (Explanation)
This report is an overview of the processes involved, the problems encountered, and <del>how they were solved</del> .	This report is an overview of the processes involved, the problems encountered, and <del>the solutions devised</del> . (Explanation)

Secondly, Likewise as show in Table.3, punctuation, act of placing punctuation marks (such as !, ?, ", etc.) within text in order to divide or clarify text, is not major academic problems. Surely, this weakness will be disappeared through reading more scientific notes and more writing performances.

Incorrect sentences	Correct sentences
However other products appear to require personal inspection and approval and in addition many people enjoy the activity of shopping, so, it seems unlikely that the internet will completely replace the shopping center.	Other products <del>however</del> , appear to require personal inspection and approval, <del>and</del> in addition many people enjoy the activity of shopping, <del>so</del> it seems unlikely that the internet will completely replace the shopping center. (Explanation)

The economy is strong but there are frequent strikes.	The economy is strong, <b>but/ yet</b> there are frequent strikes. <a href="#">(Explanation)</a>
For instance a few inventions, television, have had a major impact on everyday life	A few inventions, <b>for instance</b> television, have had a major impact on everyday life. <a href="#">(Explanation)</a>
Certain Masters courses especially American ones take two years.	Certain Masters courses, <b>especially</b> American ones, take two years. <a href="#">(Explanation)</a>
Four hundred people were interviewed for the survey then the results were analyzed.	Four hundred people were interviewed for the survey, <b>then</b> the results were analyzed. <a href="#">(Explanation)</a>

### **Genre**

Genre (sometimes called text genre) refers to a distinctive type of discourse. It is best defined as a set of patterns/forms/styles/structures, which transcend individual films besides texts, and which supervise both their construction by the film-maker plus their reading/viewing by an audience. They are also part of the "frames of recognition", which govern the institutional production, marketing and distribution of texts, besides the selection as well as consumption of those texts by viewers or readers.

Some [common genres](#) in languages of the world are

- Narrative (recounts events)
- Hortatory (suggests or commands actions)
- Expository (explains or argues)
- Procedural (details how to do something)

A translator must be aware of genre, since language features will often vary depending on which genre is being translated. Culture affects the use of language in many ways and contrastive rhetoric research has discovered that each culture has its own patterns of discourse. Therefore, L2 students are likely to transfer their native schemata to L2 writing situations (Hyland, 2002).

L2 writing tends to be a more laborious process for most non-native students with more attention paid to sentence construction and less to generating ideas, planning and goal setting (Wang and Weng, 2002). Since, writers from different cultures present written ideas in different ways, the L2 writer audience sense may be culturally different from L1 writer (Silva & Matsuda, 2001).

A second language academic writer must be aware of specific genre (patterns/forms/styles/structures) relating to text who wants to write. Unfortunately, many academicians without considering genre, which is confined to that specific essay, write down on paper what comes to their mind with translation through their first writing paper. Subsequently, Iranian academic members become aware of the rhetorical differences in discourse and genre through exposure to academic essays and receiving feedback from online searchable databases.

### **Style**

There are no rules for academic style that apply to all situations. The following styles (Table.4) are guidelines that should help academicians develop style of their own writing.

*TABLE 4: Standard Styles for Writing Academic Papers*

Incorrect	Correct
Avoid using two-word verbs such as go on or bring up.	Use continue or rise.
Avoid using etc. or and so on.	Insert and before the last item
Do not use question forms such as Why did war break out in 1914?	use statements: There were three reasons for the outbreak of war . . .
Good / bad are simplistic.	Use positive / negative
Do not use "I think" in your article writing	It is too personal
Do not use "are ok" in your article writing	It is too informal
Do not use "When we think about this"	It is too personal
Do not use idiomatic or colloquial vocabulary: kids, boss.	Instead use standard English: children, manager.
Be as precise as possible when dealing with facts or figures. Avoid phrases such as about a hundred or hundreds of years ago.	If it is necessary to estimate numbers use approximately rather than about.
Conclusions should use tentative language. Avoid absolute statements such as unemployment causes crime.	Instead use cautious phrases: unemployment may cause crime or tends to cause crime.
Do not contract verb forms: don't, can't.	Use the full form: Do not, cannot.
Avoid use of like for introducing examples.	Use such as or for instance .
Avoid use of thing and combinations nothing or something.	Use factor, issue or topic.
Avoid use of lots of.	Use a significant / considerable number.
Avoid use of little / big.	Use small / large.
Avoid use of 'get' phrases such as get better / worse.	Use improve /deteriorate.
Do not use of good / bad.	Use positive / negative, e.g. the changes had several positive aspects.
When writing lists, avoid using etc. or and so on.	Insert and before the last item
Do not use of past tense for expressing facts and hypotheses.	Use of present tense for known facts and hypotheses.
Do not use of first person pronounce.	Use of third person instead of first person
Avoid express your result in past tense.	Results description in your paper should be expressed in present tense because your results are not yet accepted as "facts"

## CONCLUSION

In fact, neglecting the Iranian academician's needs to publish in international publications for academic audiences without accurate and effective language use is not desirable. This survey indicates that Iranian academicians greatly got more writing feedback from online databases than alternative feedbacks, such as oral presentations, workshops and editors' feedback. Oral presentations in conferences do not provide opportunities for face-to-face Iranian academic writers' individually attention and discuss their writing problems and needs. By comparing the first written essay with the latest written essay by Iranian academicians after learning new conventions of style, formation and the other aspects of second language writing paper through designed online databases, they positively and clearly use all valuable comments for their writing developments.

One of the most efficiency of designing searchable database in this study is that the researcher of this study mostly focuses on repeatedly errors, which are mainly seen in the Iranian academicians' papers, in order to lead and encourage Iranian academic members to authentic writing papers. It is important to claim that most of feedbacks on second language writing in the previous studies were dedicated to limited time that causes to reduce lexical and grammatical errors in following writing. Therefore, one of the highly significant factor in this research study is that online searchable databases, which demonstrate information in order to choose the appropriate language and style, make a reference for every Iranian academic member to improve his/her academic writing for long-term period.

The other significant factor in this research is that it encourages Iranian academicians to receive constructivism instructions through their second language academic writing. Thus, when Iranian academicians directly use online/off line writing databases cause to save themselves from destructive effect of critical comments and suggestions. However, these searchable online databases lead indirectly Iranian academicians to learner-autonomy and learner-orientation to develop both manuscript and their writing abilities.

Online databases make Iranian academic members a chance to respond to the diverse cultural and educational backgrounds, and their writing needs by clarifying examples for resolving ambiguities in detailed explanations marking of papers by saving their time. In fact, searchable databases give Iranian academic members clear idea of their strengths and weaknesses in order to push them to autonomy on the base of written feedbacks.

Databases can not only lead to revisions in subsequent drafts but also have lasting effects on improving writing in later assignments.

Through the use of questionnaire and the think-aloud protocol in this study as first instrument, which is based on self-reporting because respondents cannot imagine the full context of situation therefore, they may read differently into each question and reply based on their own interpretation, it may have limited the enough information on writers' source use accurately or confidently when they are engaged in writing. Consequently, the researchers confronted with limited reliable and valid results from questionnaire.

The design of this study is process-oriented academic writing through using designed online searchable databases and few studies have been done on a process- orientation basis in writing academic writing subsequently, any study in this field is valuable to increase the reliability and viability of this research.

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## CRITICAL READING AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

Critical reading is an important component of developing literacy. It is commonly described as involving higher order thinking skills. The challenge for instructors is to activate students' awareness of this skill. Critical reading plays a central role in university study, yet how to develop this skill is not often discussed. Problems arise when adult learners are confronted with testing situations that require specific responses to text. The purpose of this study is to help you develop the skills to read, think and write more critically. The procedure involved several interventions: 1) reviewing current research on metacognition, critical thinking, and critical reading; 2) probing student awareness of critical thinking by a questionnaire; 3) adjusting teaching strategies to address the needs for critical reading skills. Results of pre- and post-questionnaires, analysis of quiz and tests, and a review of written reflections by students and instructor reveal learners' awareness and application of higher level critical thinking and critical reading skills. This research project was beneficial to both students and instructor in several areas; activating prior knowledge of critical thinking, reviewing of major aspects of critical reading, and increased focus on text structure and test question- and-answer relationships.

**KEY WORDS:** critical thinking, critical reading, metacognition

### INTRODUCTION

Critical thinking is also claimed to be important in the acquisition of language skills particularly writing and reading (Moore et.al, 2003). Two indispensable language skills that can help undergraduates secure, their academic success. However, studies on the relationship between critical thinking and these two language skills, especially those which use second language learners as the sample are still not sufficient. Similarly, there are not many studies conducted on the relationship of the aforementioned construct with general language proficiency. Research on critical thinking in relation to second language learning is still in its infancy stage. Scholars such as Carpenter & Johnson (2001) and Gordon (2004) consider critical thinking as a form of western cultural thinking and they hold the view that Asians students are not able to think critically because such nature of thinking is a form of cultural thinking that is alien to Asians. Nevertheless, two studies carried out on Japanese students Lipson & Wixon (1991) produced results which are able to refute the claim that Asians are deficient in critical thinking skills. The findings of the studies did not only show that Japanese students had critical thoughts but also indicated that critical skills could be taught to these students in an English language class. However, more researches need to be conducted in other Asian contexts. The importance placed on the need for university students to be critical in thinking and proficient in English is partly attributed to the problem of high unemployment rate in many countries. Several studies done to

determine the causes of high unemployment rate produced findings which indicate that competency in critical thinking and English language are among the abilities highly sought after by employers. A study involving 2,274 graduates who graduated in 2001, Meyers (2000) revealed communication skills as one of the main skills needed by the graduates to secure a job; i.e., most of the unemployed graduates in the study were found to have low proficiency in English. Another study on 241 employers' view on requirements sought in the graduates, Kurland (2000) confirms the finding of the former study indicating communication skills, particularly English communication skills, as one of the main six competencies required of the graduates; in addition, thinking skills were also rated to be important competencies by the employers who were interviewed. Similar results were found in a survey study on the perceptions of fifteen human resource personnel of national and multi-national organization in Malaysia. Weiner & Bazerman (2002) Proficiency in English was a quality that the personnel sought after when hiring new employees and was perceived to be an important contributing factor to an individual's success in the related organizations. These studies have raised awareness among many relevant parties on the crucial need to improve the standard of English and thinking skills among undergraduates to enable them secure a job upon completing their studies at the university. Critical thinking ability has been identified as one of the constructs which has been proven to be a good predictor of academic performance (Barnes, 1992). Hence, it is important for relevant university authorities to be informed of the critical thinking ability level of their undergraduates. To non-critical readers, text provides facts. Readers gain knowledge by memorizing the statements within the text. Critical readers thus recognize not only what a text says, but also how that text portrays the subject matter. They recognize the various ways in which each and every text is the unique creation of a unique author. A non-critical reader might read a history book to learn the facts of the situation or to discover an accepted interpretation of those events. A critical reader might read the same work to appreciate how a particular perspective on the events and a particular selection of facts can lead to particular understanding.

### **GOALS OF CRITICAL READING**

Text books on critical reading ask students to accomplish certain goals:

1) to recognize an author's purpose, 2) to understand tone and persuasive elements, 3) to recognize bias. Notice that none of these goals actually refers to something on the page. Each requires inferences from evidence within the text. Critical reading is not simply close and careful reading. To read critically, one must actively recognize and analyze evidence upon the page.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

How can a teacher more effectively teach critical reading skills? What strategies can a teacher implement to increase students' critical reading skills? How much practice in simulated tests do students need to increase their critical reading skills, so they can pass a standardized reading comprehension test at the end of a developmental reading course? The problem is that students did not make accurate judgments on the questions that were given in the reading comprehension test. This was especially difficult for adult learners who had not been in school for awhile, and who function on the literacy level of a junior high school student. The students need the knowledge of specific reading comprehension strategies.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

With regard to what has been presented above, the present research will address five major questions:

1) Is there any relationship between text structure and critical reading?

- 2) Is there any relationship between learners' knowledge of selected vocabulary, key ideas in sentences, paragraph patterns and critical reading?
- 3) Is there any relationship between the comprehension of denotation, connotation, the meaning of the text and critical reading?
- 4) Is there any relationship between stated or implied ideas, ordering of ideas, questions about a paragraph and critical reading?
- 5) Do learners benefit their metacognition in critical reading?
- 6) Do learners feel they had improved their critical reading?

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Students benefit from critical reading skills because it increases their abilities to respond to, evaluate, and remember text. The students benefit from a modeled step-by-step process of critical reading. Both students and instructor benefit from synthesizing, organizing, and interpreting ideas as presented in well-written texts on a variety of subjects. By responding to a questionnaire, students benefit by thinking critically and clarifying their perceptions. The instructor benefits by creating better analogies that address the students' diverse learning styles. Students also benefit by a review of the rudimentary terms of instruction; story grammar, expository text structure, metacognition, figurative language, controlled inference, assumption, deduction, and interpretation. The ultimate benefit is efficiency in reading and how to pull out of the material what you need.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Participants***

The participants of this study ranged from 20 to 25 year-old students selected randomly from 25 female students studying English as a foreign language (EFL) where the researcher is an instructor of a General English course. They were in the second year when learners exposed to a kind of learning to develop their critical thinking. A Nelson test was administered to the students to select and homogenize the intended number of students for the study. Next, 16 students, whose scores were between one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean in Nelson test, were selected to answer these tests, questionnaire, quizzes and learning logs. Cooperative learning groups were randomly formed and remained stable until the end of the research project. In groups, they could discuss their thinking and answers to reading selections from reading textbook. Learners discussed their responses in their cooperative learning groups. They listened to the reasons their fellow students chose other answers, argued, re-examined the text. The focus was on arriving at the best answers to the questions, but the learning groups prompted the students to appreciate the diversity in thinking that was evidenced by their answers.

#### ***Instruments***

1) A Nelson test Dadkhah (2002). It consisted of 40 multiple-choice items on grammar and vocabulary to estimate the proficiency level of the learners. The validity of the test was established by consulting with three experts. Its reliability was measured via cronbach's alpha that was 0.75.



- 2) The nine reading passages that are from one to three paragraphs long on diverse topics and dense with information. Three to five questions follow each passage and test readers' ability to discern main ideas, sentence relationships, conclusions, point of view, author's tone, and controlled inference.
- 3) Pre -questionnaire distinguish among the various expository text structures; enumeration/description, chronological order, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect. Students answered that they could identify relationships among main ideas and details.
- 4) A Quiz that followed several classes where learners discussed main ideas, significant details, sentence relationships and paragraph patterns.
- 5) Test 1 focused on denotation and connotation of words in sentences. Critical reading questions related to a short reading passage and a longer essay on how news is reported.
- 6) Test 2 focused on stated or implied ideas in paragraphs, key ideas in sentences, ordering of ideas in sentences, questions regarding a paragraph on classification, and critical reading questions related to an essay.
- 7) Learning Logs that is about seven students wrote responses to critical reading assignments. This seemed to benefit their metacognition because they extended the reading topic by relating to it personally.
- 8) Post- Questionnaire that is used at the end of Test 2, students responded to questions related to how they felt they had improved their critical reading.

### ***Procedure***

Data were collected through the following stages: At first, the participants of this study selected randomly from 25 female students studying English as a foreign language. Then, via the administration of the Nelson test, 16 students were selected as the participants of the study. Also, the procedure involved several interventions. All interventions focused on critical thinking and critical reading skills. The first one involved explaining the problem to the students. The researcher discussed critical thinking/critical reading skills; how they related to daily situations, testing situations, and college course reading requirements. The second intervention was a questionnaire that helped to focus the role of critical thinking in their daily lives. The third one was metacognitive modeling by the instructor using reading comprehension test passages and other text. Carmen (1994) calls this process *thinking aloud*, and by using specific reading passages with questions the instructor can detect sentence relationships and model analytical processes involved in comprehension.

### **RESULTS OF PRE- QUESTIONNAIRE**

The students generally expressed great confidence in their knowledge of text structure. Most answered that they could sometimes distinguish among the various expository text structures; enumeration/description, chronological order, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect. Students answered that they could identify relationships among main ideas and details nearly all of the time; only a few answered that they did not need clarification on this aspect. But most of the students answered that they needed clarification of the elements of grammar and examples that demonstrated the differences between narrative and expository text. The students appeared to be confident and knowledgeable about text structure, yet they needed support and review of the terms of instruction with examples of sophisticated text generally regarded as at college level. Students answered six questions related to metacognition; purpose for reading,



self-questioning, monitoring comprehension, use of strategies, and constructing meaning. Most students answered that they were generally aware of the purpose of their reading and consciously adjusted their speed and attention to suit the task. The students answered less confidently about the process of continual self-questioning to help determine if they were following the author's message, yet most answered that they understood what they were reading and stopped when they did not understand. Most students felt they could recognize statements of fact and opinion and about half answered that they sought answers for their questions when reading difficult text. Two students responded that they needed clarification of these terms and strategies. Students responded with less confidence to the ideas regarding their critical reading skills. The majority of students answered that they sometimes could detect source credibility, author's mood, and techniques. Many answered that they did not know how to establish evaluation criteria before making judgments about information they read.

### **RESULTS OF QUIZ**

Quiz followed several classes where learners discussed main ideas, significant details, and detected sentence relationships and paragraph patterns. Students had by then read several selections and answered critical comprehension questions. Also, the researcher had modeled critical reading comprehension test passages and reasoned the process of understanding question-and-answer relationships. Quiz tested their knowledge of selected vocabulary, key ideas in sentences, and paragraph patterns. An analysis of their scores revealed fourteen of the sixteen students passed with 78% or higher. An analysis of responses revealed errors in vocabulary comprehension as well as in detecting key ideas in sentences. Almost all students scored well on recognizing paragraph patterns. The students were required to outline a paragraph on a given topic according to their choice of a) chronology, b) place order, c) order of importance, d) listing of details, e) classification, f) comparison and contrast, or g) cause and effect. Then they wrote out the paragraph according to the outline. Two students were on the edge of failing; they claimed they did not know there would be a quiz and therefore hadn't studied.

### **COMPARISON OF TEST 1 AND TEST 2**

Test 1 focused on denotation and connotation of words in sentences, a related section on the shades of meaning, and critical reading questions related to a short reading passage and a longer essay on how news is reported. Test 1 was given three weeks after the treatment. Eleven out of sixteen students achieved 80% or better and two students failed. Test 2 focused on stated or implied ideas in paragraphs, key ideas in sentences, ordering of ideas in sentences, questions regarding a paragraph on classification, and critical reading questions related to an essay on auto sales practices. Test 2 was given six weeks into this research, and three weeks after Test 1. Eight out of sixteen students had improved their scores. Of those, the most dramatic improvement came from two students who had consistently written in their learning logs in response to critical reading prompts in class. In addition, they had received help through the researcher. But there was not a marked improvement in everyone's scores.

## **LEARNING LOGS**

About seven students wrote responses to critical reading assignments. This seemed to benefit their metacognition because they extended the reading topic by relating to it personally. Also they clarified their thinking by writing, and reinforced the meaning of what they had read. Because many of students were also workers and the lack of time were the reasons cited for not writing in the learning logs.

## **RESULTS OF POST- QUESTIONNAIRE**

At the end of Test 2, students responded to questions related to how they felt they had improved their critical reading. All of the sixteen students answered that they felt they had improved their understanding of critical reading. Two students remarked that they had never read critically before this course. One attributed her increase in comprehension to the vocabulary development. Another wrote that he had always read critically and that the strategies discussed in class helped his reading. Six students felt a slight improvement, and expressed the need for more practice in getting main ideas, concentration, retention of material, and distinguishing fact from opinion.

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings of the present study imply that more work needs to be done towards upgrading the standard of English language and critical thinking ability. The observed facts showed that the undergraduates did not have critical thinking ability level. So, further inquiry needs to be made regarding the low percentage of students who pass the test of reading comprehension. Increased communication with other instructors is recommended, and structured opportunities to share ideas about teaching strategies and critical reading materials would be helpful. Finally, the students had developed a tension concerning the subjective and objective elements of their critical reading. This was revealed by their answers to questions that were in some cases clearly ambiguous. It is important for instructors to recognize the subjective beliefs, values, and emotions behind learners' arguments. An atmosphere of anxiety, disequilibrium, and even discomfort is to be expected, and perhaps encouraged, because the process of developing critical reading mental structures will eventually challenge old ways of thinking and lead to an acceptance of new perspectives. Also, Ministry of Higher Education to upgrade the standard of English at the university, include critical thinking in the curriculum and promote assessments with emphasis on higher order thinking. At present, due to insufficient amount of empirical evidence, the general critical thinking ability of undergraduates is still not that transparent. Relevant information on the matter will help the university authority to both improve the academic performance of the students and better prepare them for future work.

## **LIMITATION OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

No study is complete by itself and cannot take every detail into consideration. Therefore, there are always aspects which are not accounted for. This research is no exception. There are some issues which were not controlled in this study and can be topics for further research by other researchers.

- 1) This study was done only in one city with a limited number of students. It is suggested that another study be performed with large numbers of students from more cities.
- 2) In this study only female students were questioned. Some other studies can be performed on both genders.

3) In this study, the participants were adolescents; in other studies adult language learners can be the focus of attention to see whether the same results will be obtained.

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# THE EFFECT OF PRE-TASK PLANNING THROUGH SPLIT-INFO AND BRAINSTORMING ON LEARNING AND RECALL OF LEXICAL ITEMS BY IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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## ABSTRACT

In recent years, research on the role of pre-task planning and its effect on vocabulary performance of learners has grown galore. In the same line, this study examined the effect of employing pre-task planning through split information and brainstorming activities on learning vocabulary of intermediate Iranian learners of English. To this end, six intact classes (N=42) were selected: Four experimental groups and 2 control groups. Oxford Solution Test scores revealed the homogeneity of learners. During 4 sessions of instruction, two classes practiced the vocabulary items through split information activity as pre-task planning; the other two classes worked on words through brainstorming; and the control groups learned the words through a traditional method of instruction without any pre-task planning. The results of *t-tests* indicated pre-task planning through split information and brainstorming activities enhanced vocabulary learning of the experimental groups; moreover, the experimental groups outperformed in vocabulary learning compared to vocabulary recall. According to the results of One-way ANOVA, although there was no significant difference between the experimental groups, a significant difference was observed between the experimental groups and the control groups in vocabulary learning and recall. Implications are for teachers, students, and materials developers.

**KEY WORDS:** Brainstorming; pre-task planning; split information; task; vocabulary learning

## INTRODUCTION

Vocabularies are foundation of each language; language is our basic tool for transferring messages. Importance of vocabulary can be seen from the researches that have been recently done. As the practitioners, we have to know the best ways of approaching teaching vocabulary, strengths and weaknesses of methods to be dominating in their application and to be effective in our purpose. Since, acquiring vocabulary through traditional method is a very problematic and difficult process, the most of language teachers and learners want to know which method or activity is more beneficial.

Lewis (1993) for the first time proposed the lexical approach and argued the lexis as the basis of language and necessary part of effective communication. He based this approach on grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar. He also states that the mastery of lexical relations is the key element of successful native-like performance in a foreign language.

Nation (1980) describes two strategies for learners to deal with new vocabulary. The first is learning words in a list and the second is approaching words using context clues. He also states that once learners know about three thousand words they can use the second strategy. By this point, he restricts the second approach (using context clue for learning vocabulary) to the more advanced learners.

Step by step, the trend of teaching and learning language slowly moved toward task- based approach. A quick literature review shows that task- based learning (TBL) has become a noticeable approach in the last decade. In a TBL context, students are free of language control and natural context is developed. Also, there are much more exposure to language and language arises from learner's need that is very enjoyable and motivating in the way of being learner-centered. According to Bowen (2012), the main advantage of TBL is using language for communication purpose and its main aim is to integrate all four skills and to move from fluency to accuracy; whereas, the main aim of traditional model is to move from accuracy to fluency.

Oxford (2006) introduced many types of well known tasks including problem-solving, decision – making, opinion gap, picture stories, and etc, which are employed in different situations to different purposes for activating different skills. The outstanding factor to designing of a task is making decision about its difficulty level. Ellis (2003) suggests that teacher can adjust the difficulty of a task by incorporating a pre-task and ensure that students have necessary abilities and strategies to engage in that task. According to this fact, the wide range of available activities are restricted to split information and brainstorming in this study.

Newton (1993) investigated superiority of communication tasks such as split information over shared information on the basis of how much negotiation of meaning in each type of task is available. Qualitative analyze of negotiations in Newton's study (1993) shown split information produce more negotiation than shared information task. However, qualitative analysis of negotiation suggested that more negotiation does not necessarily provide superior condition for language development. Also, the result of Yuan and Ellis (2003) study on pre-task and on-line task planning show that pre-task planning has positive influence on grammatical complexity. Their results shown that pre-task planner produce more fluent and lexical varied language than on-line planner. Newton (2001) suggests that dealing with new words during task performance by negotiation results not only rich language achievement, but longer retention.

Keating (2012) states that as Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) proposed, word learning and retention in a second language are contingent upon the amount of need, search and evaluation, in short, task's involvement that is impose. de la Fuente (2006) also states that different pedagogical (traditional vs. task-based) has no impact on immediate retrieval of learning vocabulary, but it has an impact on long term retrieval. In this respect, task-based lesson seemed to be more effective than traditional approach.

One of the noticeable theories in task-based teaching is that of Foster and Skehan (1996). They state that pre, mid and post task activities can help learners pay a balanced attention to both form and meaning and improve their learning. Since planning in pre-task stage is one of the task condition factors that largely affect second language production, there have been plenty of studies

that have focused on the interaction of planning and task performance (Ellis,1987; Foster & Skehan, 1996 ; Robinson, 1995; Yuan & Ellis, 2003). Although, these studies mostly concern oral task performance, still more researches are needed to explore its other areas.

In this study, focus is on examination of effect of pre-task planning through split information and brainstorming on vocabulary learning and recall of EFL learners. According to the some studies empirical task-based implementations show strong effect on learning language and task is an effective way of conceptualizing and learning (e.g. Ellis,1987; Foster & Skehan 1996). Even though, the researches to date provides general support to the claim that pre-task planning impacts positively on language production, especially in the case of fluency and complexity (Housen & kuiken 2009), the case of this design has not been touched before.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this study, it has been tried to find answer to some questions that have been raised about the already mentioned pre-task planning methods (brainstorming and split information activity) and its effect on learning and recall of vocabulary which is rarely investigated before. In this means, answer to the follow research questions is the main concern of this study:

- 1-Does pre-task planning through split-info activity have any effect on learning vocabulary of the Iranian EFL learners?
2. Does pre-task planning through brainstorming have any effect on learning vocabulary of the Iranian EFL learners?
3. Do different types of pre-task planning activities have any effect on long-term recall of the EFL learners?

To be shortened, this study is focused on the possible effect of pre-task planning with split information and brainstorming on learning and recall of vocabulary. Actually, comparison between these methods and traditional one in a similar context with the variables under the control can throw the light on the issue and the questions which are under investigation.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Research design*

The study employed a quasi-experimental design. The main purpose of the study was to examine the effect of independent variables on participants learning vocabulary. Another purpose of study was to investigate delay effects of mentioned strategies and to do more exact judgments for pedagogical purposes. Independent variables were pre-task planning through split information and brainstorming while dependent variable was learning vocabularies. There were 6 classes involved in the research, 4 of which belonged to the experimental group and 2 belonging to the control group. All classes were in intermediate level on the basis of test of proficiency at the beginning of term.

### *Participants*

Total number of participants was 42 Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) learners (all female between 14-26 years old in Tehran's Shokoh and Simin institutes). The selection of 6 classes was based on intact group selection, and to make sure of the homogeneity of the learners a version of Oxford Solution Test was administered by the institutes at the beginning of the new term. All the participants were in intermediate level according to the proficiency test. Six



participants were in class A and 8 in class B. with mean age of 19.53 and age SD of 3.94. These two classes were assigned to the split information group. There were 7 and 8 people orderly in Class C and D. With mean age of 17.84 and age SD of 4.14; they were assigned to the brainstorming group. Six participants were in class E and 7 in class F. These two classes randomly were assigned to the control group. Mean age of control group was 17.85 and their age SD was 4.46.

### ***Material***

#### ***Teaching material:***

The intermediate *Oxford Word Skill* book written by Gairns and Redman (2008) was used as teaching vocabulary material. Since the mentioned book was the common and necessary supplementary teaching material in Shokuh institutes, instructors preferred to utilize it. Target vocabularies were 100 words from 4 topics of this book. Selected units were 5, 19, 21 and 23 in which new words were introduced in the context of short readings plus a glossary section. Following each unit, there were at least 3 exercises in different styles requiring blank spaces to be filled in: true or false, spelling, and writing.

Unit 5 encompassed the two sub-topics of discussing both male and female appearance. Unit 19 included four sub-topics of talk about before, during, after sleep and sleep habits. Unit 21 involved sub-topics of car parts and driving tips. Unit 23 encompassed talking about fashion with two sub-topics of cloths and fashion. Material in pre-task planning sessions for split information groups was made up of 2 pictures and their related word/definition on separate papers.

#### ***Testing material:***

An Oxford Solutions Placement Test in the form of 50 multiple choice questions was used to assess the knowledge of grammar, vocabulary of participants, and homogeneity of prior knowledge in the classes which were selected to be involved in the study. In addition to the proficiency test, there were 3 sets of thirty-item multiple choices tests as pre-test, post-test, and delay test. Calculated reliabilities for pre-test were about 0.53. The reliability of post test and delay test were 0.69 and 0.65 respectively.

### ***Procedure***

At the beginning of the term and a week after conducting the pre-test, instructors had started to apply the methodology. Participants in all groups had received 4 sessions of 40 minutes. Four topics and 100 words were already determined as material and each topic was covered in a session with a week interval from the next one. Control groups received no treatment (pre-task planning) with the same time as the experimental groups.

For experimental groups, around ten minutes of each session were allocated to pre-task planning and 2 to 3 minutes before starting new topic were spent reviewing of last session vocabularies. There was not any pre-task planning in the control groups; they just did the task. Instructors first introduced related topic to act upon it in pre-task. In the remaining time, participants conducted the main tasks which were actually reading, glossary section, and answer to follow up exercises.

At the end of session answers were checked with classes. For keeping the condition unify and preventing halo effect, the same instructor was employed for classes with the same method.

*Pre-task planning through split information activity*

In all split information sessions, participants worked in pair and materials were divided into two parts: words plus definitions (word/definition) and pictures. Common characteristic of this planning was division of materials. It means each student received just a part of materials. In other words, half of the words/definitions and pictures were put in charge of one and the rest was put in charge of the partner. They had to take turn for asking their partner for the information they did not have. The pace in all split information planning sessions was the same: students were asked to interact for exchange of idea just in English and in certain time line (7 minutes for first subtopic and another 7 minutes for other subtopic).

*Pre-task planning through brainstorming activity*

There was an outline in all brainstorming sessions. Students sat on their seats which had been put around a table. Before beginning, instructor explained to them about the challenge they were due to face. To start the session, the topic was introduced and sub topics were made and written on board with students' participation. After introducing and categorizing, each student was given an index card. Participants were told that they had around a minute to record their ideas on an index cards and then had to pass it to the person on their left and continue until all the cards were written on.

The instructor asked students to write their ideas on each subtopic just in English. In the case that they didn't know the word and couldn't write an explanation instead, they were allowed to insert their word in Persian. Each session also had a certain time line that was told to the participants before beginning. There was, for example, just a minute for each index card and totally 8 minutes for all, depending on the number of participants and subtopics.

*Traditional method*

As with the other two previous methods, in traditional method there were 4 sessions and in each session one of the topics was covered. The primary difference between this and two previous methods was the absence of pre-task planning. The students were asked in the first session to study the reading section and related glossary from their book and then do the following exercise. At the end, the answers were checked with the class. At the beginning of each session, about three minutes were allocated to reviewing the vocabularies of the last session. All of 4 task topics in split information and brainstorming methods were covered with the same pace.

## **RESULTS**

*Statistical analysis*

To test the research hypotheses, descriptive statistics of each test (measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion) were run. Then the related normality tests were applied to decide upon the type of statistical tests to examine the research hypotheses. For more assurance, we used both numerical and graphical methods of testing normality to prove that data in this survey were normal. Since the obtained data were normal, and other assumptions of parametric techniques were met, the parametric statistics were utilized. The selected tests in accordance with research questions and hypotheses were independent paired *t-test*, paired *t-test*, and One Way ANOVA.

### Testing normality

Initially, for examining the normality of each group three factors of skewness, One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (K-S), and Q-Q plot were used and it has been concluded that distribution of scores for all group was normal to a large extent.

### Reliability of tests:

In addition to Oxford Solution Test which was used as the proficiency test, there were three more tests in this study that their reliabilities have already been calculated using KR- 21 formula. According to this formula, reliability of the pretest is about .53. This value is .69 for the posttest and .65 for the delayed test.

### Findings of the study:

#### Findings of hypotheses one and two:

H0 1: Pre-task planning with split information activity method has no effect on learning vocabulary of the Iranian EFL learners.

H0 2: Pre-task planning with brainstorming activity has no effect on learning vocabulary of the Iranian EFL learners.

The first and second hypotheses were tested through two different methods: independent sample *t-test* and paired sample *t-test*. According to the findings and on the basis of calculation of sample *t-tests*, observed value of 2- tailed statistic for the experimental groups and the control group (.00) was less than the alpha level of .05. So, we concluded that there was a significant difference between the experimental groups and the control group in their performance on the posttest. Also, observed value (.00) of 2- tailed test for the experimental groups in pretest and posttest was less than the alpha level of .05. It can be, therefore, concluded that there was a significant difference between performance of the experimental groups from time 1 (pretest) to time 2 (posttest). With a quick review of these findings we can figure out that the experimental groups out performed both in comparison to its own pretest and in comparison to the control group's posttest. Since, all the variables were constant and groups were homogeneous; it can be inferred that the higher performance of the experimental groups was as result of employing split information and brainstorming activities as pre-task planning. The null hypotheses, thus, were rejected.

( See Table 1. Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4 for the results of testing hypothesis one and hypothesis two)

Table 1:Independent Samples Test

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD	SED	Lower	Upper	

Independent test: Split	t- posttests & Control	Equal variances assumed	.661	.424	5.213	25	.000	4.720	.905	2.855	6.584
		Equal variances not assumed			5.160	22.390	.000	4.720	.915	2.825	6.615

Table 2: Paired Samples Test

Paired Differences										
			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference							
		M	SD.	SEM	Lower	Upper	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Pair 1	Paired t-test: pre& posttest of Split	12.929	10.081	1.905	9.020	16.838	6.786	27	.000	

Table 3: Independent Samples Test

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances      t-test for Equality of Means										
			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference							
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD	SED	Lower	Upper
independent posttest Brainstorm & Control	t-test: Equal variances assumed	1.782	.194	4.99	26	.000	4.210	.843	2.478	5.943
	Equal variances not assumed			4.85	20.381	.000	4.210	.868	2.403	6.018

Table 4: Paired Samples Test

Paired Differences										
			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference							
		M	SD	SEM	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)			

			Lower		Upper				
Pair 1	Paired test:Brainstor m – Group	t-	12.900	9.553	1.744	9.333	16.467	7.396	29 .000

*Findings of hypotheses three and four:*

H0 3: there is no difference between groups that received split information and brainstorming activities as pre-task planning and control group in learning vocabulary.

H0 4: there is no difference between groups that received split information and brainstorming activities as pre-task planning and control group in delayed recall of vocabulary.

We inferred from the test of homogeneity of variance that the groups were homogenous; so, One Way ANOVA was employed to test these hypotheses. Based on the results of this test, significant observed value (.00) for between group and within group was less than .05. So, it can be concluded that there was a significant difference between the groups that received split information and brainstorming activity as pre-task planning and the control group in learning and recall of vocabulary.

In multiple comparisons among the groups, the split information group had no significant difference with the brainstorming group, but it had significant difference with the control group in both learning and recall of vocabulary. The brainstorming group had also a significant difference with the control group, but no significant difference with the split information. Obviously, the experimental groups achieved the better results than the control group in recall and learning of vocabulary. For making a concluding remark according to the observed results of this study, we can say that learning and recall of vocabulary through different pre-task planning strategies are more effective ways than the traditional method. Therefore, the third and fourth null hypotheses were rejected and concluded that there is a significant difference between the groups which received split information and brainstorming activities as pre-task planning and the control group in learning and recall of vocabulary.

(see Table 5, Table 6, and Table 7 for the results of testing hypothesis three and Table 8, Table 9, and Table 10 for hypothesis four)

*Table 5: Test of Homogeneity of Variances(One-Way ANOVA)*

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.018	2	39	.371

Table 6: One-Way ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	180.129	2	90.065	19.313	.000
Within Groups	181.871	39	4.663		
Total	362.000	41			

Table 7: Multiple Comparisons

	(I) Group	(J) Group	MD(I-J)	SE	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval		
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Scheffe	group1	group2	.510		.802	.818	-1.53	2.55
		group3	4.720*		.832	.000	2.60	6.84
	group2	group1	-.510		.802	.818	-2.55	1.53
		group3	4.210*		.818	.000	2.13	6.29
	group3	group1	4.720*		.832	.000	-6.84	-2.60
		group2	-4.210*		.818	.000	-6.29	-2.13

Table 8: Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.048	2	39	.953

Table 9: One-Way ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	420.707	2	210.353	36.029	.000
Within Groups	227.698	39	5.838		
Total	648.405	41			



Table 10: Multiple Comparisons

		95% Confidence Interval					
(I) Group	(J) Group	MD(I-J)	SE	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Scheffe	group1	group2	1.929	.898	.113	-.36	4.21
		group3	7.621*	.931	.000	5.25	9.99
	group2	group1	-1.929	.898	.113	-4.21	.36
		group3	5.692*	.916	.000	3.36	8.02
	group3	group1	-7.621*	.931	.000	-9.99	-5.25
		group2	-5.692*	.916	.000	-8.02	-3.36

*Findings of hypotheses five and six:*

H0 5: Pre-task planning through split information activity has no effect on delayed recall of the Iranians EFL learners

H0 6: pre-task planning with brainstorming has no effect on delayed recall of the Iranian EFL learners.

Selected statistics for the hypotheses five and six was paired samples *t-test* between the posttest (time 2) and delayed test (time 3) of the experimental groups separately. Although, there was a significant difference between scores of the experimental groups from time 2 to time 3, based on the posttest and delayed test means, mean score of posttest had a decrease. So, the null hypotheses were accepted and concluded that pre-task planning through split information and brainstorming activities had no effect on recall of vocabulary of EFL learners in this study. ( see Table 11 and Table 12 for the results of testing hypothesis five and Table 13 for hypothesis six)

Table 11: Paired Samples Test

Paired Differences	t	df	Sig. (2-
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		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					tailed)	
		M	SD	SEM	Lower	Upper		
Pair 1	Paired t-test: poSttest & delayed posttest of Split Information - Group	20.786	3.635	.687	19.376	22.195	30.260	27 .000

Table 12: *Descriptive Statistics*

	Posttest:	Delayed:
Mean: Split information group	24.64	19.93
Mean: brainstorming group	24.13	18.00

Table 13: *Paired Samples Test*

		Paired Differences						
		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					Sig. (2- tailed)	
		M	SD	SEM	Lower	Upper	T	df
Pair 1	Paired t-test: posttest & delayed posttest of Brainstorm - Group	19.567	4.174	.762	18.008	21.125	25.673	29 .000

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

There are some researches that support the findings of this study and are focused on examination of the effect of pre-task planning and split information activity on learning vocabulary. Newton (1993), for instance, examined the superiority of communication tasks including split information over tasks which involve shared information. He claimed that negotiation of meaning while performing task has a deterministic role on the learning. His study's results showed that split information has more repetition and negotiation of meaning and these negotiations result in measurable learning of new words.

Foster and Skehan (1996), also, found that pre-task planning and task-based activities have positive effect on complexity and fluency of learners' language. In a study, Hall (1992) found that acquisition of vocabulary through split information activity was greater than reading activity. Hall (1992), likewise, found that vocabulary learning of students through interactive activities was greater than that of teacher fronted arrangement with a reading focused activity.

Even, we can claim that the results of this study are in the line with Nation (1990), Foster and Skehan (1996), and Hall's (1992) findings who believe that pre-task planning and split information have positive effect on learning vocabulary. Yuan and Ellis's study (2003) on pre-task and on-line task planning proved that pre-task planning has positive influence on grammatical complexity. Their results shown that pre-task planner produce more fluent and lexical varied language than on-line planner.

Notwithstanding all, some researcher's findings are against that of this study. For example, Nassaji (2012) suggest that collaborative task (cloze task) did not lead to greater learning vocabulary than individual task (editing task) and the latter was more successful in promoting negotiation and learning. Also, Mullen, Johnson and Salas (1991), and Diehl and Strobe (1987) show that people who work in isolation outperform both in quality and quantity of generated idea than who work in group. de la Funte (2006) also discusses that different pedagogical (traditional vs. task based) has no impact on immediate retrieval of learning vocabulary.

Long (1996), however, stated that the negotiation of meaning facilitates acquisition. Also, Fuente (2002) and Branden (1997) stated that negotiation of meaning has positive effects on learning lexical items. On the basis of a meta-analytic research, Mullen, Johnson and Sala (2010) reported a great deal of productivity loss in brainstorming group in comparison with nominal group, in terms of both quality and quantity. Although, everyone thinks working in group is always more efficient than working in isolation; recent researches (Mullen, Johnson & salas,1991; Diehl & Strobe, 1987) show that people who work in isolation outperform both in quality and quantity of generated idea than who work in group. Therefore, Mullen, Johnson, and Salas (1991), and Diehl and Strobe (1987)'s findings support this study's findings.

According to the obtained results, we might conclude that pre-task planning through split information and brainstorming activities have positive effect on vocabulary learning of EFL learners in this study, but no effect on delayed recall of vocabulary. By examining the results, subjects who received split information and brainstorming activities as pre-task planning have no significant difference in learning and recall of vocabulary. However, they have significant difference with the control groups in learning and delayed recall of vocabulary.

Despite the fact that these activities have no effect on delayed recall of vocabulary according to our findings, the performance of the subjects who received them as pre-task planning was higher than those in the control groups in recalling vocabulary. By examining the results of this study, one can see that the experimental groups' achievements are about the same in learning and recall of vocabulary; however, they are significantly different with the control group. To sum up, we can say that pre-task planning through split information and brainstorming activities enhanced

vocabulary learning of the experimental groups; moreover, the experimental groups outperformed in vocabulary learning compared to vocabulary recall.

## LIMITATIONS

In fact, one of the limitations of the study which has to be highlighted here is reliability of tests; with the values of .53 for pretest, .69 for the posttest and .65 for the delayed test that all are below .70, we can hardly claim that our tests are strongly reliable. Moreover, sampling from the same background, limited age and sex who are at the same context (available institutions) and using the small number of participants (42 people) have an influence on generalization of the results. The other issue is possibility of remembering the test items. Although there is enough interval time (a week) between pre-test and instruction, there is still the possibility of remembering the test items by the students and this means that recall of vocabulary may not be totally as a result of teaching methods. Besides, making decision about the target words which finally have to be tested and how of testing is also controversial.

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## HOW TO IMPROVE COLLEGE STUDENTS' AUTONOMOUS?

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### **ABSTRACT**

Studies on autonomous learning based on different theories show new ideas for teaching English. This study investigated 60 college students taking English reading course. A Nelson test was used to homogenize learners. For Group A, four periods of computer-aided learning were offered per week in order to strengthen the students' autonomous learning competence. The students in Group B were taught in a traditional way, working in classrooms for eight periods. The independent t-test was used to determine whether the means of the two groups were statistically different from each other or not. The most significant findings are that the new method promoted students' English language much better than that of traditional methods. The findings of this study are useful for teachers to apply motivative methods to improve learners' motivation. Also, students who take responsibility for their learning enjoy the freedom and power to make decisions in their learning. Knowing that learning is a product of one's own activities, a student feels more rewarded and enhances his/ her courage to get involved in an active learning process.

**KEY WORDS:** autonomous learning, traditional methods, motivative methods

### **INTRODUCTION**

Jenus and Lens (2005) believe that teaching a foreign language has problems to which teachers must pay attention in order to improve the learning process: 1) Language teaching requires not only skillful teachers but also innovative teaching techniques. 2) Teachers have to find practical ways to motivate students to learn the language and at the same time to sustain students' interests in the language learning process. According to Armstrong et al. (2009), teaching is a complex act because it deals with human beings. In fact, in a teaching class which consists of thirty students, teaching is a more complex job because these students usually come with varying needs, abilities, motivation and prior experiences. According to Biggs (1999) engaging with preferred individual learning styles is regarded as an important aspect for promoting the learning process. Many foreign researchers studied autonomous learning through classroom case studies such as Lee (2000) and Spratt et al. (2003). However, according to Gao (2005) case studies are not adequate for a long period of time. Still, the studies on autonomous English learning were focused on traditional college English education program. The development of college education, the special curriculum requirements of the program and the needs of students made it necessary to study the proper and effective way of English teaching and learning in college education.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

For a definition of autonomy, we might quote Holec (2000: 3, cited in Benson & Voller, 1999: 1) who describes it as 'the ability to take charge of one's learning'. On a general note, the term autonomy has come to be used in at least five ways (Benson & Voller, 1999: 2):

- for situations in which learners study entirely on their own;
- for a set of skills which can be learned and applied in self-directed learning;



- for an inborn capacity which is suppressed by institutional education;
- for the exercise of learners' responsibility for their own learning;
- for the right of learners to determine the direction of their own learning.

It is noteworthy that autonomy can be thought of in terms of a departure from education as a social process, as well as in terms of redistribution of power attending the construction of knowledge and the roles of the participants in the learning process. The relevant literature is riddled with innumerable definitions of autonomy and other synonyms for it, such as 'independence' (Sheerin, 2006), 'language awareness' (Lier, 2005; James & Garrett, 1991), 'self-direction' (Candy, 2003), 'andragogy' (Knowles, 1988; 2000) which testifies to the importance attached to it by scholars. As has been intimated so far, the term autonomy has sparked considerable controversy, inasmuch as linguists and educationalists have failed to reach a consensus as to what autonomy really is. For example, in David Little's terms, learner autonomy is 'essentially a matter of the learner's psychological relation to the process and content of learning--a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action' (Little, 2000: 4). It is not something done to learners; therefore, it is far from being another teaching method (*ibid.*). In the same vein, Leni Dam (1990, cited in Gathercole, 1990: 16), drawing upon Holec (1998), defines autonomy in terms of the learner's willingness and capacity to control or oversee her own learning. More specifically, she, like Holec, holds that someone qualifies as an autonomous learner when he independently chooses aims and purposes and sets goals; chooses materials, methods and tasks; exercises choice and purpose in organizing and carrying out the chosen tasks; and chooses criteria for evaluation.

To all intents and purposes, the autonomous learner takes a (pro-) active role in the learning process, generating ideas and availing himself of learning opportunities, rather than simply reacting to various stimuli of the teacher (Boud, 2002; Kohonen, 2001; Knowles, 2000). As we shall see, this line of reasoning operates within, and is congruent with, the theory of constructivism. For Rathbone (2000: 100, 104, cited in Candy, 2003: 271), the autonomous learner is a self-activated maker of meaning, an active agent in his own learning process. He is not one to whom things merely happen; he is the one who, by his own volition, causes things to happen. Learning is seen as the result of his own self-initiated interaction with the world. Within such a conception, learning is not simply a matter of rote memorization; 'it is a constructive process that involves actively seeking meaning from (or even imposing meaning on) events' (Candy, 2003: 271). Constructivism is a philosophical orientation in teaching theories. According to the theory, learning is constructed by the brain as it seeks to relate new knowledge to prior knowledge. Therefore, each student will have a unique construction. Such "inventories" of characteristics evinced by the putative autonomous learner abound, and some would say that they amount to nothing more than a romantic ideal which does not square with reality. This stands to reason, for most of the characteristics imputed to the "autonomous learner" encapsulate a wide range of attributes not commonly associated with learners. For instance, Benn (2000, cited in Candy, 2003: 102) likens the autonomous learner to one '[w]hose life has a consistency that derives from a coherent set of beliefs, values, and principles--[and who engages in a] still-continuing process of criticism and re-evaluation', while Rousseau (1999, cited in Candy, 2003: 102) regards the autonomous learner as someone who 'is obedient to a law that he prescribes to

himself'. Within the context of education, though, there seem to be seven main attributes characterizing autonomous learners (Omaggio, 2003, cited in Wenden, 2002: 41-42):

1. Autonomous learners have insights into their learning styles and strategies;
2. take an active approach to the learning task at hand;
3. are willing to take risks, i.e., to communicate in the target language at all costs;
4. are good guessers;
5. attend to form as well as to content, that is, place importance on accuracy as well as appropriacy;
6. develop the target language into a separate reference system and are willing to revise and reject hypotheses and rules that do not apply; and
7. have a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language.

### **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

In this research, the English language level of the students had faced even greater challenges. As a whole, the college English language teaching has some problems. Specially speaking, the traditional college teaching method does not take the special needs of individual students into account and pays little attention to the learning strategies of the learners. Zhao (2008) found that many College students spend as many as twelve years studying English, but students who are just taught in the classroom environment by teachers are more likely to hold a somewhat passive attitude, and low motivation, towards what is being learnt. Just because students have not been exposed to the actual communicative environment for so many years, they are not able to communicate in English with a real target language community. In sum, the problem with them was that their English language learning habits needed great improvement since they had been less able to manage their English learning effectively in their English learning activities for several years in middle school. It was important to consider how best to improve the teaching and learning styles in order to qualify them to an adequate degree in English language competence.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

It was expected that students would learn to manage their English language learning activities and become independent of teachers which would make a better preparation for their future study abroad.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

With regard to what has been presented above, the present research will address two major questions:

- 1) Could the new teaching and learning model save classroom teaching time? If so, how much time could be saved in our experiment?
- 2) What were the psychological benefits that the experimental students would get from the new learning model?

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Participants***

The participants of this study ranged from 19 to 21 year-old students selected randomly from 100 female students from the University of Najafabad. The learners were freshmen and their major was computer science. A Nelson test was administered to the students to homogenize the intended number of students for the study. Next, 60 students whose scores on the Nelson test were between one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean were selected to take part in the study. The students were from four teaching classes: two classes (Group A, 30 students) were involved in the experiments while the other two classes (Group B, 30) were taught in the traditional way.

### ***Instruments***

Data in this study were collected through using instruments as follows:

- 1) A Nelson test (1999, as cited in Dadkhah's thesis, 2002). It consisted of 40 multiple-choice items on grammar and vocabulary to estimate the proficiency level of the learners. The validity of the test was established by consulting with three experts. Its reliability was measured via cronbach's alpha that was 0.78.
- 2) The teaching book was *Concepts and Comments* by Patricia Ackert.
- 3) A questionnaire checklist to find out the future developments of their computer-aided autonomous English learning skills and their learning attitudes.
- 4) An interview checklist to show learners' autonomous learning process and their self-evaluation during it.

### ***Data Analysis and Procedure***

In this paper, the first comparison was via the administration of the Nelson test to show the two groups were at the same level in their English competence when they were admitted to the college. In the second semester, the classroom time of Group A was shortened to six periods, but another four periods of computer-aided learning were offered per week in order to strengthen the students' autonomous learning competence. The students in Group B were still taught in a traditional way, working in classrooms for eight periods and in computer-room for two hours each week. The independent t-test in SPSS software was used to determine whether the means of the students' English scores of the two groups were statistically different from each other or not. In our research, the two groups were compared on the first school year. The students' English scores of Group A and B in the examinations during the study were compared by using t-tests. At the same time, the relationship of autonomous learning time spent by the experimental group and the learning effectiveness would help to find out how much classroom teaching time was saved by adopting autonomous learning model.

## **THE RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS**

### ***The teacher's role and Teaching Methods in both Settings***

The teacher's role and Teaching Methods in this study varied according to different teaching and learning settings. Teachers made use of the texts to warm up students for the new teaching and learning model. In this sense, this part was also used as a good training of English learning skills as well as to make students aware of the new learning process. Students were asked to discuss questions related to learning strategies in English to perceive the differences between the traditional learning model and the computer – aided learning model. Generally speaking, students were encouraged to make best use of the learning materials selected via Internet in exploring each topic, which is offered in each unit in their course books. Teachers also forced them to analyze and re-organize these materials for their classroom presentation to check their language level. After evaluating the students' learning outcome, further suggestions from the teachers would be given to individual student for their future learning. The teachers also encouraged students to raise questions if they have any. Teachers also asked more questions to check and promote their learning. Therefore, questioning acted as an important step in developing and ensuring students' autonomy.

### ***Student Assessment***

Generally, student assessment is divided into two parts: one is by examination scores and the other is to measure students' daily working performance. However, the former has been too much emphasized in the traditional education system. Stiggins et al. (2004) pointed out that assessment is an important dimension of the learning process and should also be defined as assessment for learning. That is to say, sound assessment procedures become a learning experience eventually. Besides, learners usually desire indications of success and data gathered from fair and appropriate assessment procedures can provide these affirmations. Stiggins (2000) also claimed that evidence of success motivates learners to continue working and creates an expectation of future success. Performance assessment is especially useful in evaluating learner behaviors associated with such tasks as working with others, giving oral presentations, participating in discussions and using computers.

Although many important education objectives require performance assessment, the more important point is that in our experiment, the purpose of assessment was not to judge a student's once and for all, but to help her to develop her autonomous English learning competence.

## OUTCOMES AND FINDINGS

### *Post-tests and Scores Comparing between Group A and Group B*

At the end of the first semester and the second semester, all the first-year students took the final examination in English reading, listening and writing using the same papers. Score compared were conducted in reading scores, between group A and B were showed in table.

Group	cases	mean	St.d	Standard error mean	variances	T	Sig (2-tailed)
A	60	70.41	9.74	1.21	Equal variances assumed	3.95	.000
B	60	63.71	9.36	1.17			
A	60	23.08	6.70	.83	Equal variances assumed	.538	.592
B	60	22.47	6.00	.76			

From the table, it was found that, at the end of the first semester, the reading scores of group A were significantly different from those of Group B, with the former group having higher scores than the latter one in the two courses. This suggests that the English language level of Group A, the experimental group, was higher than Group B after three months 'computer-aided autonomous learning. Equally important, at the end of the second semester, the scores of the two groups had no significant difference, which suggested that the advancement of Group A was the same as Group B during the whole year's learning. Given two hours 'decrease of classroom teaching time and 2 hours 'increase of computer-aided autonomous each week in the second semester, it meant the higher effectiveness of English learning of Group A.

### *Interviews of the Students*

At the end of the second semester, 12 students from Group A were chosen at random to be interviewed about the autonomous learning process and their self-evaluation during it. The questions asked in the interview were:

- 1) Have you realized the differences between computer-aided autonomous English learning and traditional learning in terms of your responsibility?
- 2) Have you fully got involved in computer-aided autonomous English learning up till now?
- 3) Have you applied the autonomous learning strategies into your daily learning activities? If so, how to?

From the interview, it was noted that 90% of the students who were involved in the experiments claimed that they had gained knowledge about the responsibility of themselves in college English

language learning and had been trying to apply more and more of the strategies into their daily learning activities. Each student perceived and told about their different advancement in English level and English learning skills, with most of who felt satisfied with the whole years 'English learning process and outcomes. All the experimental students showed an active and expecting attitude towards the future language learning and using. On the other hand, the students in Group B, who experienced the traditional learning process, showed much less awareness and tended to be less proactive in their English learning.

### ***Questionnaires***

In the second semester, the second questionnaire was given to Group A to find out the future developments of their computer-aided autonomous English learning skills and their learning attitudes, with 60 copies of the questionnaire being available.

From the students' answers to the questionnaire, it was noticed that most of the students understood more about autonomous English learning and the majority of the students got more involved in it.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is found that the classroom teaching became more and more active and efficient. Experimental students learned more about each unit before class and they could explore further during the classroom learning and co-working. Teachers found it easier to achieve the teaching purposes working with the experimental students since both teachers and students have enjoyed class with the new teaching and learning model. According to the above mentioned data, the answers to research questions 1 and 2 are:

- 1) The teaching experiments also suggest that the new teaching and learning model saved classroom time. Specifically speaking, two periods 'time was saved each week, which would up to thirty -two periods in the whole semester.
- 2) According to the time spent on autonomous English learning and activities taken part in by the students during the time, the findings of the interviews and questionnaires, the experimental students felt quite positive about computer-aided autonomous English language learning and got more motivated during the first year. After the students found that they had learned a lot they eventually became proactive not only during the process, but also in future English learning.

### **LIMITATION OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

No study is complete by itself and cannot take every detail into consideration. Therefore, there are always aspects which are not accounted for. This research is no exception. There are some issues which were not controlled in this study and can be topics for further research by other researchers.

- 1) This study was done only in one city with a limited number of students. It is suggested that another study be performed with large numbers of students from more cities.
- 2) In this study only female students were questioned. Some other studies can be performed on both genders.
- 3) In this study, the participants were adolescents; in other studies adult language learners can be the focus of attention to see whether the same results will be obtained.

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## IMPERSONALIZED SUBJECT “WE” IN UNIVERSITY BUSINESS ENGLISH LETTERS WRITTEN BY NON NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS

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### ABSTRACT

In the developing quality of knowledge that university expands to each other's the cooperation and collaboration, especially in academics programs. They communicate to each others in written business English Language so that they use linguistics units in their communication. This writing explains one of the functions of negative politeness strategies in university business English letters, impersonalized subject “we” as a sender of the letters that belongs to sender not to impinge the receivers. University business English letters are represented or focused on cooperation where impersonalized “we” as a leader in the project who signed the letters, as team of power university authority and asking cooperativeness with the partners. Impersonalized subject “we” in the university business English letters are found out as many as 72 words from 30 letters. They are analyzed not only by combining of opening section, propositional section is the biggest portion and closing section as part of University business letters but also by inclusive dual, inclusive plural is the biggest portion, exclusive dual, and inclusive dual as part of referential.

**KEY WORDS:** Negative Politeness Strategies, Impersonalized Subject “we”, University Business English Letters and Referential

### INTRODUCTION

The most rapidly developing trend in higher education is a doing corporation between universities all around the world. They are not only joining the programs but also sending the students to each others, making contract with companies to apply their knowledge, asking some recommendations for passport and visa from the embassy. The international officer of university expands the reach of its partner institutions and gives them access to get an outstanding international program. This is a benefit for university and partner institutions so that they make it higher and better in academic knowledge.

In the joining program, they send their program and proposal to each other and they use English language as foreign languages. They use spoken and written language. In the written language, they send letters to each others. Thus it is not only necessary for the sender and receiver to know gramatical rules and large number of vocabulary of words but he or she must also know how to use language in various situations and cultures have also different norm concerning communication. The users of language must know not only structure, grammar rules but also all of the linguistic units.

Three are many definition of politeness. Brown and Levinson's (1987). Lakoff (1973). Smith (1992). Brown (1993). Holmes (1995). Christie (2002). Mills (2003). Fukushima (2000) Günthner (2000). Ide et al (1992).

There is a definition of Politeness is the sign of human civilization in social activities.

“Politeness is the attitude of one party to another party. It comes to both parties. It called the two parties "self " and "other". In letters, "self" usually means to the writer, and "other" may be the receiver, or a third party who has been mentioned or not mentioned in the letter”. (Leech: 1983, cited by Ya, S., 2011).

Impersonalize the Speaker and Hearer is the way of indicating reluctance to impinge on the hearer is to phrase the FTA as if the agent were other than the speaker. They consist in the omitting of the ‘I’ and ‘You’ pronouns.

The analysis of the university business English letters is based on the term of inclusive and exclusive. Inclusive or exclusive category is independent of number pronouns. The number distinct such as dual and plural (Scheibman., , 2004:379) for languages that make such four way distinctions, the inclusive dual refer to the speaker and one addresses (I+You singular). The inclusive plural includes the speaker and more than on addressee (I + You plural). Exclusive form refers to speaker and others who are not directly addressed – one other person in the case of dual (I + She, He, it) and more than one for the plural (I+ They). In Table 1 we can see the referential and patterning.

*Table 1: Referential of Subject subjects “we” and Patterning*

<b>Referential of Subject subjects “we”</b>	<b>Patterning</b>
The inclusive dual refer to the speaker and one addresses	I + You singular
The inclusive plural includes the speaker and more than one addressee	I + You plural
Exclusive dual form refer to speaker and others who are not directly addressed Singular	I + She, He, it
Exclusive plural form refers to speaker and other are not directly addressed Plural	I + They

Adapted from Scheibman., J (2004:379).

## THE SURFACE OF UNIVERSITY BUSINESS ENGLISH LETTERS

University Business English letters are formal letters. Every university business English letter is written communication that it has many functions such as not only persuade, influence, invite, inform answer but also reply the receiver or reader to do something. University Business English letters will give us next steps or programs in the next time. Every organization, institution and university must manage out going letters and incoming letters. Business English Letters in presenting a formal letter.

All the business letters have heading, addressee, salutations, date line, the messages and closing. (Gartside: 1981) In the part of business letter that three are "Opening section is contains the salutation, the opening line of the letters and secondary illocutionary as well as propositional elements which locate the letter in the discourse –dynamics perspective and pave the way for subsequent requests. Propositional section is the central part of the letter. It contains the primary proposition of the text and the central communicative aims and core of illocutionary program. The closing section contains elements external or secondary to the illocutionary and propositional program of the text". (Pilegaard: 1997)

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

There are literature reviews in business letters field. The first is "Toward Business Pragmatics" (Ya, 2001). The Paper discussed about business pragmatics based on the literature review of business discourse research relevant to pragmatics. Business pragmatics is usually evaluative the factors determining successful business interactions, and on how to find out which strategies or behaviors are associated with success. Successful business communication is determined by language use, business people who are pragmatically competent in business contexts and the most important in business pragmatics are business context and business pragmatic competence.

The second is "Discourse Analyses of Business Letter in Iranian and Native speaker" (Arvani, 2006). The paper discussed discourse analysis of business letters that they were written by native English speakers and non-native Iranian communicators. There are as many as 25 follow up letters were written by Iranians and there are 25 letters were written by Native English Speakers. All the letters were analyzed by notion of lexical density and grammatical words was studied. They were analyzed and studied not only notion lexical density, grammatical words, basis of model schematics structure, move and steps but also politeness strategies. The result of the research showed that the letters were written by Iranian In generally that politeness strategies were ignored

The third is "Business Linguistics and Business Discourse" (Daniushina, 2010). The paper suggests that applied linguistics and Business Linguistics were separated. Language used in the business communication and they are explored in linguistics aspect, practical purposes and functional typology of business components in business communication so that the definitions of applied linguistics and functional typology of business component in business communication are found out.

The fourth is “Politeness in Written Business Discourse: A Text Linguistic Perspective on Request”. (Pilegaard.1997). The paper tells us that the principles of business letters and practices of politeness strategies in business communication are analyzed. In the business such as sales letters, inquires letters, quotations letters order letters and others. They are divided into tree categorizes such as making contact, negotiating and in conflict. The senders of letters are correlated to sender status and business letters. Positive and negative politeness strategies were applied into business letters so that monitoring politeness strategies on the text level gives and makes valuable insight into the norms that govern British business communication.

## THE SURFACE OF THE FEATURE IN UNIVERSITY BUSINESS ENGLISH LETTERS

In this research that observes in University Business English Letters Written by Non-Native English speakers in presenting as formal English letters. Those formal English letters have heading, addressee, salutations, date line, the messages and closing. Researchers study as many as 30 in University Business English Letters The smallest business English letters are 57 words and the largest are 209 words and business English letters contains at least 2 paragraphs and the largest are 6 paragraphs.

According to those research in business English letters writing above that we focus on analyzing pragmatics, especially in negative politeness strategies of impersonalize subject “we” in University Business English Letters Written by Non Native English speakers. We are going to discuss impersonalize of subject “we” that are found out in the opening section, propositional section and closing section in university business English letters written by non-native English speakers and will be related to referential of inclusive dual, inclusive plural, exclusive dual and exclusive plural

## METHODOLOGY

The required data are taken from university business English letters. The letters are taken from Directorate of Partnership and International Relations Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) West Java Indonesia. The university business English letters are from many universities and many countries Non-Native English Speakers. The Data are out going and in coming university business English letters from 2011 to 2013. The writers of the letters are from Directorate of International Affair’s universities, Dean and Rector of university.

There are as many as 30 letters. There are 16 letters from Japan, 3 letters-from Taiwan, 1 letter from Malaysia, 2 letters from German, 1 letter from Finland, 5 letters from Indonesia, 1 letter from Thailand, and 1 letter from ASEAN University Network AUN/SEED-Net. The corpus in this study comprised 30 university business English letters. See in table 2

*Table 2: of impersonalized subject “we” is based on Pilegaard’s theory: Opening Section, Propositional Section and Closing Section. In the contents of opening section that salutation and opening line of the letter are deleted.*

No	Impersonalized subject “we” in university business letters	Paragraph	Name of Institutions	Referential of Inclusive and exclusive
1	We would greatly appreciate it if you could distribute our web address ( <a href="http://io.tmu.edu.tw/">http://io.tmu.edu.tw/</a> ) among your family, friends, and students.	Opening	Taipei Medical University	Exc P
2	We wish you harmony, health, and happiness for 2011	Closing	Taipei Medical University	Inc D
3	We would like to encourage the students of your university to take a part		Southern	Inc

	in one of the most prominent technological universities in Taiwan	Opening	Taiwan University	P
4	We started recruiting international students since 2005;	Propositional	Southern Taiwan University	Inc P
5	Now we have 207 international students from 21 different countries.	Propositional	Southern Taiwan University	Exc P
6	Not only do we offer various assistantships that cover that covers both tuitions and dormitory fees,	Propositional	Southern Taiwan University	Exc P
7	We also offer free Chinese classes that equip our international students our international students with a language skills that will give them a distinct advantage in a world where the Asia Pacific economy and the mandarin is becoming increasingly important.	Propositional	Southern Taiwan University	Exc P
8	We invite you to join us by helping your students not to miss out on this unique chance	Propositional	Southern Taiwan University	Exc P
9	We would be most appreciates if you could post them on the notice boards at your campus so that your students can purse this opportunity to continue their studies overseas	Closing	Southern Taiwan University	Exc P
10	Happy New Year! We are glad to introduce you our three summer schools 2013. These are three programs will be held by summer university of international office at Technische Universitat Munchen.	Opening	Technische Universitat Munchen	Inc D
11	We would be grateful, if these flyers could be posted and announced at your university.	Propositional	Technische Universitat Munchen	Exc P
12	For any further questions we would like to help you and.	Closing	Technische Universitat Munchen	Exc D
13	We are happy to see your students in Munich	Closing	Technische Universitat Munchen	Inc P
14	Last but not least, we, the whole Summer University Team wish you Happy New Years 2013!!!	Closing	Technische Universitat Munchen	Inc D
15	We are pleased to present to you the minutes 17 <sup>th</sup> Steering Committee Meeting and year 2012 Annual meeting of the AUN/SEED-net, as well as the latest issue of the SEED-Net News.	Opening	ASEAN University Network	Inc D
16	We would appreciate it if you could distribute both publications to any concerned person, and kindly not that can subscribe or view our news letters on line at:...	Closing	ASEAN University Network	Exc P
17	We look forward to embarking upon or continuing our exchange relationship with you over the coming year.	Opening	NUPACE Nagoya University	Inc D
18	We very much appreciate your continued co-operation with this endeavour.	Propositional	NUPACE Nagoya University	Inc D
19	We, at Aarhus University, have recently reorganized activities with focus on the four areas research, education, talent development and knowledge exchange with society in general.	Propositional	Aarhus University	Exc P
20	We regretfully inform you that your application toward Post Graduate program at Institut Teknologi Bandung is denied	Opening	ITB	Inc D
21	We do hope that this would not disappoint and discourage you from pursuing advanced education somewhere else.	Closing	ITB	Inc D
22	We wish you the very best	Closing	ITB	Inc D
23	We would like to send you the documents of the successful candidates as follows:	Propositional	ITB	Exc P
24	In the relation to the Frontier Lab@OsakaU and Osaka University Short-Term Student Exchange Program (OUSSEP) 2012-2013 Program at Osaka University, Japan, We would like to send you our prospective	Opening	ITB	Exc

	candidates as follows:			D
25	We would like to kindly request you to please grant Mr. X Type B-211 Visa (VKSb) valid for 60 days.	Opening	ITB	Exc D
26	We would greatly appreciate any assistance you could provide us in expediting this process	Propositional	ITB	Inc D
27	We kindly ask Visa Section of the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Singapore to assist Ms. X in obtaining Necessary visa and permit to enter Indonesia gain	Closing	ITB	Exc D
28	We are looking forward to continuing cooperation with you	Closing	University of Turku	Inc D
29	We currently offer allied health sciences courses such a pharmacy, physiotherapy and nursing at diploma level	Opening	Allianze University	Exc D
30	We are delight to express our intention to collaborate with your esteemed in institution in various academic effort especially in the field of pharmacy	Propositional	Allianze University	Exc P
31	We plan to explore the possibility of sending our diploma in pharmacy graduates to pursue a degree pharmacy in your university.	Proposition al	Allianze University	Exc. P
32	We would like appreciate very much if you could accept a visit from our university in the very near future to introduce our university and discuss matters further.	Closing	Allianze University	Exp P
33	We would like appreciate it if you display and hand out the brochures to prospective student, who would like study at University of Groningen	Proposition al	Groningen University	Exc P
34	We are delighted to send you the latest edition of our promotional degree-seeking students	Opening	National ChiaoTung University	Inc D
35	We hope to attract talented international students to pursue advance studies in our wide-range program.	Proposition al	National ChiaoTung University	Exc P
36	We would be very grateful to have your assistance in sharing the enclosed information to student in Vietnam.	Proposition al	National ChiaoTung University	Exc P
37	We wish to thank you that you sent application(s) to our Exchange Program of Japanese University Study in Science & Technology” (JUSST) a couple month ago	Opening	University of Electro Communication Japan	Inc D
38	We need to confirm the final intention of your student(s). whether or not each applicants will actually take up this study opportunity at UEC	Proposition al	University of Electro Communication Japan	Exc P
39	We will send you this “Form D” by facsimile to your international education office today.	Proposition al	University of Electro Communication Japan	Inc D
40	We will issue the Official Acceptance Advice for these successful, and start processing official paper work for visa and enrollment at UEC, but only after we receive your acknowledgement by “form D”.	Proposition al	University of Electro Communication Japan	Exc P
41	We receive your acknowledge by “ form D”.	Closing	University of Electro Communication Japan	Inc D
42	We hope that this exchange study will further develop our international friendship between your university and our university.	Closing	University of Electro Communication Japan	Exc P
43	We would like to thank you again for your warm friendship.	Closing	University of Electro Communication Japan	Inc D
44	We are sending two sets of transcripts in English and Japanese, one is for your records and the other is for the students	Opening	Kanazawa university	Exc P
45	We apologize for the inconvenience it might cause and thank you for		Kanazawa	Inc



	your understanding.	Closing	university	D
46	We would like to express our sincere thanks to announce you that for your continued support	Opening	Meiji University	Inc D
47	As one of the feature of the project, the SGJS will start a unique undergraduate program focusing on Cool Japan in April 2011, and now we are happy to announce you that we will also offer fall admission this year.	Propositional	Meiji University	Inc D
48	Now we are happy to announce you that we will also offer fall admission this year.	Propositional	Meiji University	Exc P
49	We will see the further strengthening of our valuable partnership.	Closing	Ritsumeikn University	Exc P
50	We publish this newsletter semiannually to provide people around the world with updates on research and other activities at Tokyo Institute of Technology	Opening	Tokyo Institute of Technology	Exc P
51	We hope that these brochures and CD are successful in sharing with you at present status and result of Osaka University's education and research efforts, and provide you with an expanded perfectives of the university's activities.	Propositional	Osaka University	Exc P
52	As we have already informed you by email,	Opening	Shibaura Institute of Technology	Inc D
53	We now start the acceptance of the application for the Hybrid Twinning Program 2012/2013.	Opening	Shibaura Institute of Technology	Exc P
54	We have been receiving excellent students from your university	Propositional	Shibaura Institute of Technology	Inc P
55	We are looking forward to receiving application again this year.	Closing	Shibaura Institute of Technology	Exc P
56	We would deeply appreciate it if you could inform your students of the programs described at the url's below and in the accompanying materials.	Propositional	Meiji University	Exc P
57	We are delight to enclose herewith official letter and application form for the International Graduate Program 2011.	Opening	Gunma University	Exc P
58	We sincerely hope that you will recommend some promising students for our program for their future study.	Propositional	Gunma University	Inc P
59	We would appreciate your assistance by providing us with your best judgment.	Propositional	Gunma University	Exc P
60	We would also very happy if you could pass this letter to others within your departments and organization.	Closing	Gunma University	Exc P
61	We highly recommended him to be inserted among your foreign languages teachers.	Propositional	Italia language Center	Exc D
62	At the same time, we also wish that together with the restart of Italian language teaching program there, fully managed by your esteem institution, the cultural- educations exchange programs between both countries will grow better in the near future.	Closing	Italia Language Center	Exc P
63	We would appreciate your kind cooperation in circulating this information within and outside your institution.	Closing	Keiko University Medical Science fund	Exc P
64	We hope this guide book will help further your interest in TUAT	Propositional	Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology	Exc P
65	If we can be of any further help or you have any question, please do not hesitate to contact us	Closing	Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology	Inc D
66	We are pleased to inform you that students below was selected as an exchange students for 2013/2014 in accordance with the agreement between ITB and Tokyo Institute of Technology	Opening	Tokyo Institute of Technology	Exc P

67	We would like to ask you to send us an application package for exchange students,	Propositional	Tokyo Institute of Technology	Inc D
68	or indicate where we can find your exchange students application from in your webpage	Propositional	Tokyo Institute of Technology	Inc D
69	we would like to continue the fruitful and friendly corporations between our universities	Closing	Tokyo Institute of Technology	Exc P
70	We have enclosed brochure and poster about the division of economics	Opening	Kanazawa University School of Economic	Exc P
71	We would like therefore appreciate if you could distribute the enclosed brochures and posters to students interested in the division of economics.	Closing	Kanazawa University School of Economic	Exc P
72	We are now setting a briefing schedule. For further details, please refer to attached page	Closing	Keio University	Exp P

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result of impersonalized subject “we” based on Pilgaard’s theory: Opening section, Propositional section and Closing Section. We can see in table 3.

*Table 3: The result of impersonalized subject “we” in the part of university Business English letters*

No	Part of University Business English Letters	Total of Impersonalized subject “We”
1	Opening Section	19
2	Propositional Section	29
3	Closing Section	24
<b>Total</b>		<b>72</b>

Based on the result statistics above, there are as many as 30 letters from many universities. The letters were written by Non-Native English speaker. We can see that the letters are analyzed by opening section, propositional section and closing section and there are as many as 72 impersonalized subject “we”. See table 3. Those opening section, propositional section and closing section are analyzed and the result them, we can see in figure1. Researcher found out that in the propositional section is the most usable of impersonalized subject we as many as 29 or 40%. It is because there is the central part or main messages in communicative aims of letters and in the closing section there are 24 or 33% because it elements external or secondary to the main message what will be done in the future time. In the opening section there are as many as 19 or 27% because it is a dynamics perspective and pave the way for subsequent requests or main message. We can see in figure 1.

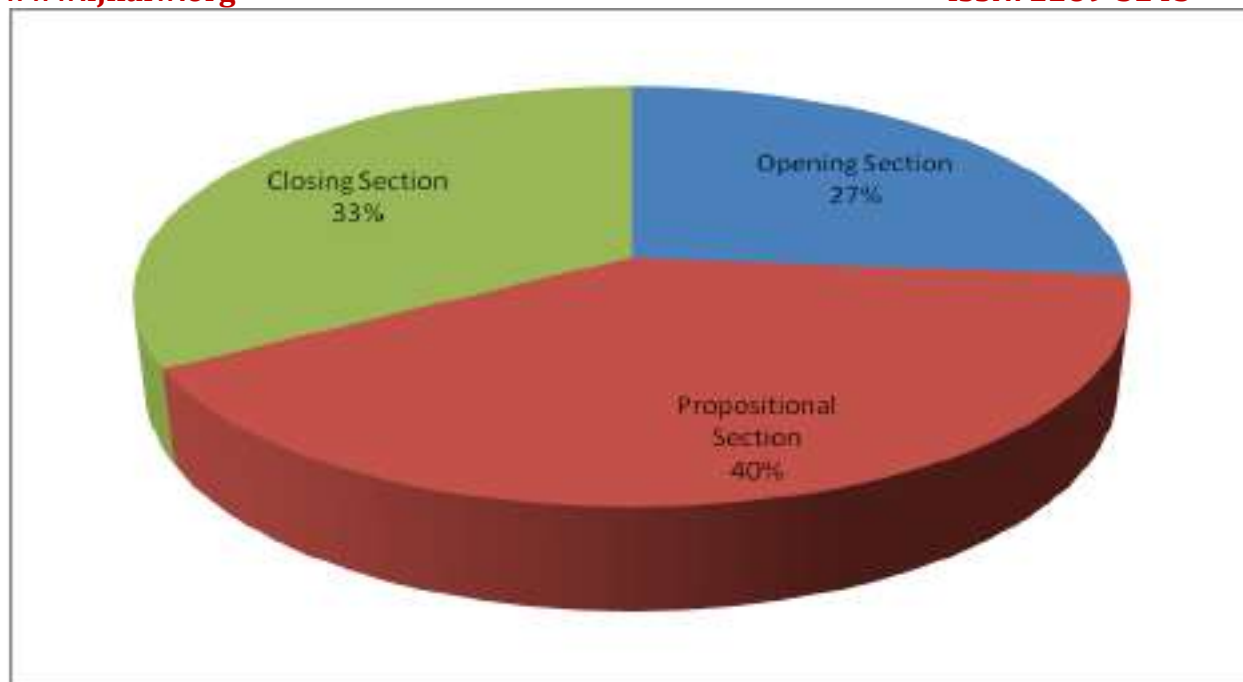


Figure1: The procentage of impersonalized subject “we” in university business Englis letters.

We can see in table 4, Impersonalized subject “we” divided into referential and part of university letters in university business English letters.

Table 4: Impersonalized subject “we” and Part of University Business English Letters

No	Part of University Business English Letters	Impersonalized Subject “we” and Referential			
		Inclusive		Exclusive	
		Inclusive Dual	Inclusive Plural	Exclusive Dual	Exclusive Plural
1	Opening Section	8	1	3	7
2	Propositional Section	6	3	1	19
3	Closing Section	9	1	2	12
Total		23	5	6	38

Based on the result statistics of referential in university business English letters, The referential of Inclusive dual (ID) and Exclusive Plural (EP) are more than Inclusive Plural (IP) and Exclusive Dual (ED). There are as many as 72 impersonalized subject “we” in university business letters that researcher found out the referential of Exclusive Plural 38 or 53% and referential of Inclusive Dual as many as 23 or 32%. In the referential of exclusive dual is 6 or 8 % of impersonalized subject “we”. Referential of Inclusive Plural is 5 or 7%. We can see in figure 2

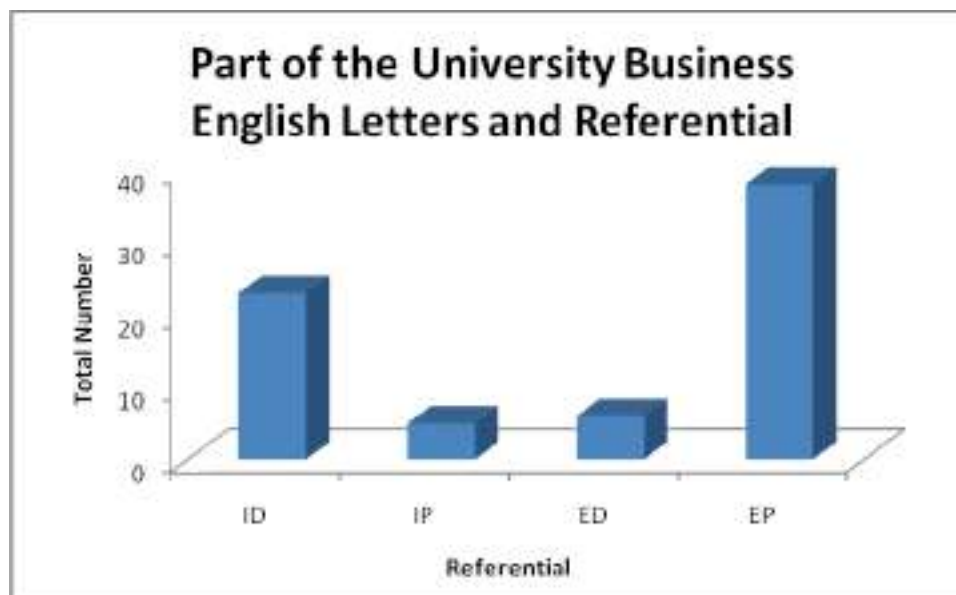


Figure 2: Impersonalized subject “we” divided into referential and part of message in university business English letters

The Referential of Exclusive in university business English letters is almost half more in the part of propositional section than in the opening section and closing section. In the Referential Inclusive is found out that in the propositional section is half more than opening section and closing section. But, in the Referential of Inclusive Dual and Exclusive Dual are found out that impersonalized subject “we” is less in the propositional section than opening and closing section.

In Figure 3, We can see in the opening section that Referential of Exclusive Inclusive dual is 42 % it mean that in the opening section of the letters sender and receiver is more powerful in the leading of the cooperation between universities. In referential Exclusive Plural is 37 %. It means that in the opening section refers to the importance of the corporation program is not only for the receiver but also for public in university.

In the exclusive dual is 16 % it means that in the opening section sender want to send the message is not only for receiver but also for students or are not mentioned in the letters specifically. in the Referential Inclusive Plural is 16 % it means that sender want to give the message not only personally but also for the institution.

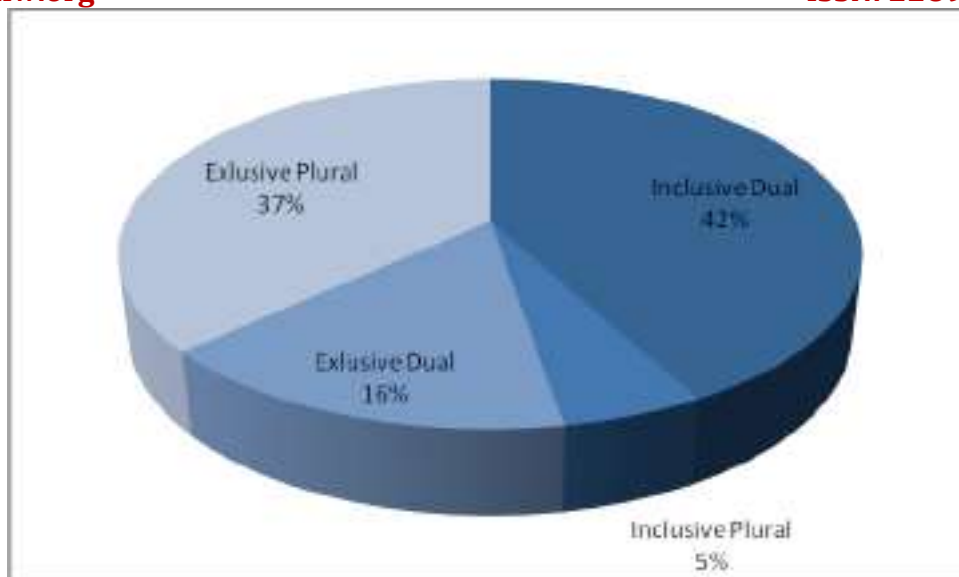


Figure 3: Opening section and Referential

In the propositional section that referential Exclusive Plural is 66% it means that in the main message of the letters that sender wants to give and informs as much and clear as possible the receivers. The university business English letters is not only for the sender and receiver personally but also receiver and sender are represented as part of the profit of the team of the institution or university but also in making contact is for students and people are not mentioned in the letters. The smallest result referential is exclusive dual. It logically means that the sender and receiver are not involved personally in the main message of the university business English letters. Inclusive dual is 21 % and inclusive personal is 10%. We can see in figure 4.

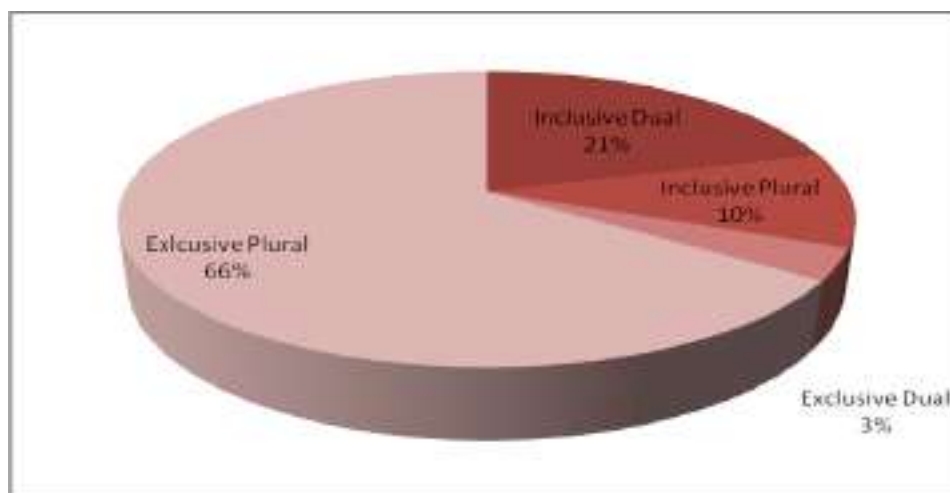


Figure 4: Propositional Section and Referential

In the referential of Exclusive plural is 50% in closing section in and Inclusive Dual is 30% and Exclusive is 8% and inclusive plural is 4%. See in Figure 5

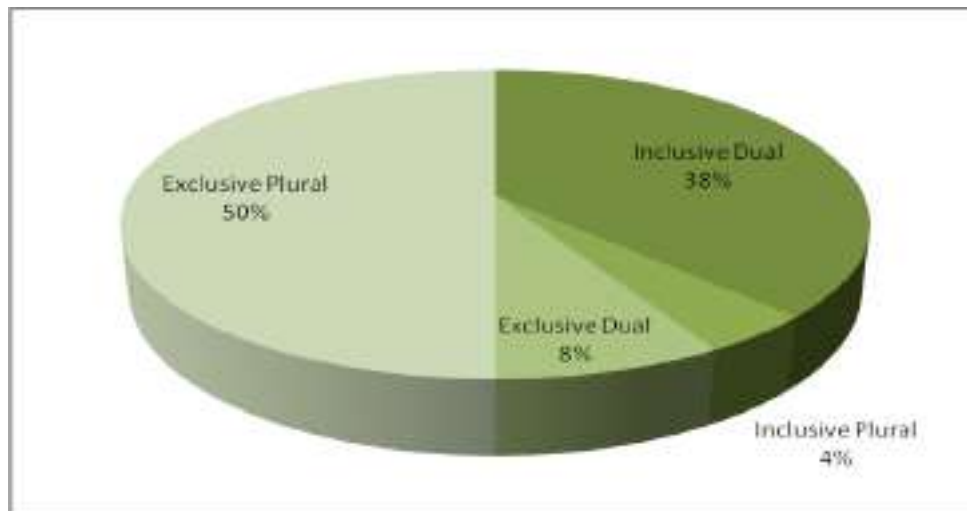


Figure 5: Closing Section and Referential

## CONCLUSIONS

According to the result above that there are three conclusions. First negative politeness strategies impersonalized subject “we” in the university business English letters are found out as many as 72 words from 30 letters. Second negative politeness strategies of impersonalized subject “we” are found out that it is biggest portion in propositional section. Third according to the referential that Exclusive Plural are found out as a bigger portion in part of the message university business English letters.

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## THE EFFECTS OF PERIPHERAL TEACHING ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' WRITING SKILL IN CYBER ENVIRONMENTS

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to find out the effects of peripheral teaching on Iranian EFL learners' writing skills in cyber environments. After administrating a Nelson (Fowler and Coe, 1976) test, a group of 80 homogeneous students at language institute were selected from a total population of 120 at the intermediate level in Dehdasht, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer Ahmad province, Iran. Then, they were randomly assigned to control and experimental groups. While experimental A was assigned to cyber environment and received instructions regarding peripheral teaching, B was selected as the control group. A t-test was conducted to compare the subjects' means and to determine the effect of peripheral teaching. The results depicted that peripheral teaching in cyber environments had a significant effect on improving Iranian EFL learners' writing skills, ( $P < .05$ ).

**KEYWORDS:** Peripheral teaching, Cyber environments, Writing skill

### INTRODUCTION

Creating and supporting learning environments that result in students achieving at the highest levels is a teacher's primary responsibility. To do this well, teachers must engage in professional self-renewal, which means they regularly examine their own and each other's practice through self-reflection and collaboration, providing collegial support and feedback that assures a continuous cycle of self-improvement. This kind of professional learning results in discovery and implementation of better practice for all. As professionals, teachers also contribute to practices that improve teaching and learning consistent with their school's mission and in collaboration with colleagues, school leaders, parents, guardians and other adults significant to students. They demonstrate leadership by modeling ethical behavior and by contributing to positive changes in policy and practice around activities that connect school, families and the larger community.

Scholars are looking for methods rather than the conventional ones to solve the teaching problems of the people living in the modern world, and they prefer to use the modern techniques of the world. Not only these researches verifies the first original findings, but also they say that other stimuli such as spoken words, faces and pictures can facilitate the following decisions as they are introduced under conditions that make it difficult to differentiate one stimulus from the other. Though there are questions about whether the observers will be able to differentiate one stimulus from the other or not, the prevailing conclusion is that noticeable information will be got when the observers experience little or no awareness of the things they perceived as indicated by their difficulty in differentiating one stimulus from the other.

Peripheral training has many applications in different sciences. According to Cracker (1998, P. 121), in weightlifting, "peripheral training is referred to as training the muscles acting on the joints that are farther from the spine". Examples of some muscles would be Biceps, Triceps, Forearms, lower leg muscles, etc. Some examples of exercises would be Leg extension, Hammer curls, Bicep Curls, Calf exercises, etc.

New times require new approaches to education. Today's context presents a complex combination of factors impacting learning. Global economic realities have created an imperative to build systems in which young people graduate high school with an array of skills that prepares them for college, work, and life. The persistence of differences in student experiences and outcomes, combined with high dropout rates create a need to act. And a strong focus on accountability and how to measure teacher and system effectiveness continue to drive the education reform discourse nationally.

Most diverse learning needs can be met in the general classroom when two guidelines are kept in mind by the classroom teacher: (1) Student performance is the result of interaction between the student and the instructional environment and (2) teachers can reasonably accommodate most student needs after analyzing student learning needs and the demands of the instructional environment. In fact, the adaptations made for a specific student's learning needs may be beneficial to many other students in the same classroom. Adaptations are simply good teaching techniques put to use.

Another thing that may have had relation to peripheral teaching is games. Teachers need to be careful that games include peripheral language that is not too difficult for the children. This is especially true when we use a game that was originally designed for native speakers of English. However, one of the wonderful things about games is that "they provide opportunities for children to come across natural chunks of language and use them interactively" (Crenshaw, 1977, P. 78).

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Despite its wide acceptance in applied linguistic research, TESL/TEFL curriculum has not adequately integrated techniques for developing communicative competence or sociolinguistic instruction on form- function mapping, which enables speakers to use language properly according to social expectations. Many current TESL/TEFL programs require courses in traditional grammar (or transformational grammar), communicative language teaching (CLT), and second language acquisition (SLA), all of which have significant shortcomings which require integration of new techniques for language analysis and teaching methodology to be included in future TESL/TEFL programs.

Teaching programs need to focus on not only novice teaching methodologies, but giving tools to practicing teachers to deal with the variety of issues presented in modern classrooms around the world. One problem currently facing institutions which teach EFL learners is the ability to meet the demands and the needs of potential learners. Additionally, many students drop out, because

the course books overloads their English skills, or they have personal challenges, or time management issues. Thus, TEFL programs are not as accessible or student supportive as they need to be. Indeed, because information/communication technology gives such quick and easy access to large amounts of information, it has become important for accredited institutions to critically review curriculum in terms of both accessibility (to learning) and accountability (of skills and knowledge). It is the need for TEFL programs to be more accessible, more instructionally effective and accountable, and more students supportive that motivates the current paper, whose purpose is to propose solution strategies for contemporary TEFL curriculum development (Smith, 2009).

Retaining core teachings serves to preserve the religious capital accrued and valued by existing members. Religious capital refers to members' degree of mastery of an attachment to a particular religious culture (Stark and Finke 2000). Members master their religion by learning the teachings and rituals necessary to comfortably interact with others in their religious group: when to say Amen, how to follow the liturgy, and interpretations of key religious stories (Iannaccone 1990). The core teachings also serve as the foundation for religious activities (e.g., prayer, rituals, miracles, and mystical experiences) that build up emotional ties to a specific religious culture and provide a certainty for the religious claims of the religion. Indeed, the more actively and the longer people practice a religion, the stronger their preferences for that religion (Sherkat 1997). Over time, this religious capital becomes intrinsic to how members experience religion. Revising core teachings, however, can reduce a member's religious capital in at least three ways: decreasing their mastery of the religion, eroding their emotional ties to a unique religious culture, and threatening the certainty of their faith.

Smith (2009), said that " peripheral teaching can compensate for the lack of information that is caused by the limitation of attention and working memory during core teaching" (P.32).

Rich (2009), also said that "young children see auras much easier, because their central vision is not yet damaged" (p. 36). Once they go to school they are told to use their vision in a certain way, and gradually they lose their natural auric sight.

Rich said that for any of you out there who are doing speed reading or trying to learn it may already know of this. For those who are trying and having a bit of difficulty, or even people who have bad vision, this is a way to greatly improve your peripheral vision (looking out the corner of your eye) that will cost you nothing but a few minutes every day. This skill will help you with things like reading, driving, sports activities, even just looking out your window will feel so different because of the range of your vision.

The online learning resources used to support asynchronous learning include email, electronic mailing lists, threaded conferencing systems, online discussion boards, wikis, and blogs. Course management systems such as Campus Cruiser LMS, Blackboard, WebCT, Moodle, and Sakai, have been developed to support online interaction, allowing users to organize discussions, post and reply to messages, and upload and access multimedia (Bourne,1998).These asynchronous forms of communication are sometimes supplemented with synchronous components, including text and voice chat, telephone conversations, videoconferencing, and even meetings in virtual spaces such as Second Life, where discussions can be facilitated among groups of students (Angelo, 1669). Online learning requires a shift from a teacher-centered to student-centered environment where the instructor must take on multiple new roles. The constructivist theory that supports asynchronous learning demands that instructors become more than dispensers of knowledge; it requires that they become instructional designers, facilitators, and assessors of both grades and their teaching methods McQuiggan (2007).

Yet, some researchers have described inconsistencies between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices (Calderhead, 1996; Kane et al., 2002). For example, Fang (1996), described a number of studies in which researchers found little relationship between teachers' beliefs and their instructional reading practices and suggested that "contextual factors interfered with teachers' ability to consistently apply their beliefs in practice" (p. 8). Results from a study of technology-using teachers supported this as well. Ertmer et al. (2001, P. 75), reported that "teachers' visions for, or beliefs about, classroom technology use did not always match their classroom practices. Despite the fact that most of the teachers described themselves as having constructivist philosophies, they implemented technology in ways that might best be described as representing a mixed approach, at times engaging their students in authentic, project-based work, but other times asking their students to complete tutorials, practice skills, and learn isolated facts". Teachers' explanations for these inconsistencies often included references to contextual constraints such as curricular requirements or social pressure exerted by parents, peers, or administrators. Scott, Chovanec, and Young (1994), observed a similar pattern in their study of the beliefs and classroom practices of 14 college professors. These results, then, point to the need for both researchers and practitioners to be aware of, and to account for, the potential influence of these types of contextual factors when examining teachers' beliefs or promoting teacher change.

Online exchange has also facilitated a greater connection between 'classroom' and 'fieldwork' in foreign language education as learners are now able to engage in 'semi- authentic' interaction with members of the target culture while still benefiting from the guidance and support of their tutors and classmates (Robert, 2010). While extensive periods of study abroad in the target culture continue to be seen as the ideal way to develop linguistic fluency in foreign language learners, online intercultural exchange is now increasingly being considered as an important tool for preparing students for study abroad as it allows them to experience intensive interaction with members of the target culture from the relative 'safety' of their own classroom. The European Commission's recent Green Paper on promoting the learning mobility of young people refers to online exchange as a tool for preparing physical mobility or as a second-best alternative for those students and young people who are unable to engage in traditional mobility programmes (European Commission 2009: 18).

Preliminary results suggest that these types of electronic models can be effective in increasing pre-service teachers' ideas about and self-efficacy beliefs for implementing technology in their classrooms. For example, Roehrig (2011), found that "pre-service teachers, who interacted with a set of multimedia problem-based scenarios in which practicing teachers discussed possible solutions to technology issues, showed significantly greater increases in their self-efficacy for teaching with computers compared to a control group" (P. 202). Other data supported the contention that users had changed their conceptions of how to integrate technology into their teaching. Ertmer and her colleagues (2003), found similar results with 69 pre-service teachers who explored Vision Quest, a CD-ROM that featured six classroom teachers who used technology effectively in their classrooms. Significant increases were noted in participants' ideas about and self-efficacy for technology integration. Although pedagogical beliefs were not specifically addressed in these studies, there is some indication that it may be possible to address teacher beliefs using similar strategies. Additional research, on the effectiveness of these and other methods for changing and/or refining pedagogical beliefs, is needed.

McQuiggan (2007), noted that "teachers' practice is more likely to change as they participate in professional communities that discuss new materials, methods, and strategies and that support the risk taking and struggle involved in transforming practice" (P. 3). "The establishment of a professional

learning community as a means to renew both teachers and schools is a common recommendation in the professional development literature" (Lave & Wenger. 2010).

O'Dowd (2010), stated that "Online exchange has also facilitated a greater connection between 'classroom' and 'fieldwork' in foreign language education as learners are now able to engage in 'semi-authentic' interaction with members of the target culture while still benefiting from the guidance and support of their tutors and classmates" (P. 22). While extensive periods of study abroad in the target culture continue to be seen as the ideal way to develop linguistic fluency in foreign language learners, online intercultural exchange is now increasingly being considered as an important tool for preparing students for study abroad as it allows them to experience intensive interaction with members of the target culture from the relative 'safety' of their own classroom. The European Commission's recent Green Paper on promoting the learning mobility of young people refers to "online exchange as a tool for preparing physical mobility or as a second-best alternative for those students and young people who are unable to engage in traditional mobility programmes" (2009, p. 154).

## RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

On the basis of the assumption that writing skill can be enhanced through peripheral teaching in cyber environments, the following hypotheses are formed:

1. There is a noticeable difference between Iranian EFL test-takers' performance across peripheral teaching method.
2. Knowledge gained through peripheral teaching remains longer in learners mind.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

The subjects participated in this study were 80 learners of English as foreign language who were chosen from 120 students studying English at Navid Language Institute in Dehdashat, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer Ahmad province, Iran. All the population of students attending the Institute was administered a Proficiency Test (Fowler and Coe, 1976). Those whose marks fell between +1 SD above and -1SD below the mean were selected as intermediate level. Then, they were randomly divided into two homogeneous groups known as one experimental and one control group. Each experimental and control group (A and B) consisted of 40 subjects, respectively.

### *Instruments*

The instruments used in this study to collect, estimate and analyze the data were a thirty-item test of Nelson English Language Proficiency Tests (Fowler and Coe, 1976) in addition to students' course books in language institute, Paragraph Writing. In fact, the afore-mentioned proficiency test was used to sieve the participants in terms of their proficiency levels. The rationale behind adopting this test for the purpose of the study was that it is one of the rare available standardized tests compatible with Iranian students to decide on the proficiency level. Two TV sets and a CD player were used as the educational technological devices to show the peripheral aspects of teaching in physical environment. To make the environment or the context of teaching in such a way that contribute to learners' core and peripheral teaching (Hofer, 1997). The cyber teaching representing an IBC constituted both on-line and off-line communication, live and corresponding through email with students. In order to compare the results obtained from the post-tests of the experimental and controls groups, a t-test was used to determine the potential differences between these two groups.

### *Procedure*



From a population of 120 students studying at Navid Language Institute in Dehdashat, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, Iran, 80 subjects were selected in terms of Nelson Language Proficiency Test (Fowler & Coe, 1976) as the subjects of the study. Those whose scores fell 1SD above and 1SD below the sample mean on a proficiency test were considered as the intermediate level. The rationale for choosing the intermediate level was that there weren't enough students at other proficiency levels in the aforementioned Institute. Then, the intermediate ones were randomly divided into two homogeneous groups, experimental and control groups (A & B). So A was assigned to experimental group and B to the control group. First, the proficiency test was administered to both experimental sub-groups considered as the pre-test.

In the experimental group A consisting of 40 subjects, peripheral teaching were done in cyber environment, internet. Teacher was frequently in an on-line communication with students. He taught writing skills, and students were required to write passages based on the given topics and sending them back to the teacher through e-mail. The teacher read and corrected them, but at this time, as peripheral teaching, he added some phrases at the bottom of their writings without any explanation about them.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the collected data is analyzed, using paired T-tests for all comparisons related to the effect of peripheral teaching methodology. The collected data was subjected to statistical analysis, descriptively and inferentially. To find out whether or not the differences between the subjects' means at this stage were statistically significant, the data were run through both paired and independent T-tests. To verify or nullify the stated hypotheses, the data obtained through Nelson language test (Fowler and Coe, 1976) as the homogeneity test and the post-test, tables 4.1 through table 4.3 all show different analytical procedures and phases. The early step used in analyzing data was to determine the homogeneity of the experimental and control groups regarding their levels of second language proficiency. So, the students' overall scores on Nelson language proficiency test were collected from their records. Table 4.1 shows the descriptive statistics, frequency, mean and standard deviation for each of the four groups in terms of Nelson language proficiency test. It shows that each of the four groups had approximately similar performance on Nelson language proficiency test, In effect, they show no apparent significant differences.

Table 4. 1: Sample Means and Standard Deviations for Homogeneity Test

Group	N	Maxi	Mini	Mean	Std. Deviation
Experimental Group (A)	40	16	5	11.67	2.20
Control Group (B)	40	16	3	10.80	2.60
Total	80	18	3	11.55	2.28

### Results of T-test for methodology use

A T-test was carried out to compare the experimental groups' mean scores of methodology use. Based on these results, the hypotheses of inequality of means were approved,  $p < 0.05$ . Tables 4.2 and 4.3 show the mean scores were higher for peripheral teaching in cyber environment. Therefore, learners use peripheral teaching and the second hypothesis was verified. And also these tables show that there is a significant difference between the experimental groups' means and the first hypothesis was verified.

Table 4.2: The result of paired samples T-test for comparing mean of pre-test and post-test in cyber experimental group.

test	mean	Standard deviation	T value	Degree of freedom	significant
Pre-test	11.51	2.69	4.56	39	.001
Post-test	13.88	2.35			

Table 4.3 shows the mean of post-test scores for cyber experimental group and control group. The mean of the post-test scores of the cyber experimental group was 13.88, while that of the control group was 12.05. The t-value for the post-tests scores between the cyber experimental group and its counter-part control group was 3.05. The degree of freedom was 78. The significant difference between the post-tests scores of the cyber experimental group and control group was at the significance level of .05. This means that a significant difference was found between the cyber experimental group and its counter-part control group at  $p < .05$ . This result indicates that the cyber experimental group's mean was significantly higher than the control group's mean scores. Based on these data, there was a significant difference between the cyber experimental group and its counter-part control group with core teaching methodology and first hypothesis was approved.

Table 4. 3: the result of independent T-test for comparing mean of post-test in cyber experimental group control group.

group	mean	Standard deviation	T value	Degree of freedom	significant
experimental	13.88	2.35	3.05	78	.003
Control	12.05	2.97			

## CONCLUSION

This study began with the assumption that peripheral teaching methodology could enhance the intermediate language learners' writing skills (Hofer, 1997). The instruction lasted for two months. In the course of this time, the researcher (teacher) employed the above-mentioned teaching methodologies and instructed the participants in the experimental groups how to use peripheral teaching in their writing skills. The participants in the control groups, on the other hand, did not receive any instruction on the use of these teaching methodology during their writing practice.

After the post-test, the results tables 4.2 and 4.3 indicated that the instruction of the peripheral teaching methodology did affect the intermediate language learners' writing skill. Namely, the writing ability of the experimental groups who had made use of peripheral teaching methodology surpassed that of the control groups in their groups' means.

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of systematic peripheral teaching methodology designed to assist students in writing skills. At the end of the course both the control and the experimental groups were administered the writing tests and the result of the T-tests were compared to find the effect of the peripheral teaching methodology. The results of the

study confirmed that the writing skills could be improved through peripheral teaching methodology (Tables 4.2 and 4.3).

The studies mentioned above revealed the fact that instruction of peripheral teaching methodology was pedagogically effective and precipitated the methodology use. If the teaching methodologies to enhance the writing skill are felt advantageous, it might be better to be limited to notifying intermediate language learners of peripheral teaching methodology which they have to be taught to make them better use writing skills.

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## THE EFFECT OF EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION OF VERBAL CONSTRUCTIONS ON COMPOSITIONS OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS: USING MOODLE

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### ABSTRACT

With the emergence of new computer technologies and computer-mediated language teaching, a host of research in recent years has been done on the effectiveness of Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment (MOODLE) in improving language skills of language learners. The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of explicit instruction of verbal constructions on compositions of EFL learners through MOODLE platform. The study attempted to examine the composition improvement by 84 students for the correct usage of structures: infinitive and participle constructions. The subjects were sampled from Islamic Azad University, Dezful, Iran from both girls and boys. Totally, 96 changes were traced and analyzed based on the degree to which students utilized teacher's revision. The resulting 96 changes showed that the participle comments were more influential on revisions than infinitive ones. The results of the study based on the given provisions may imply that language teachers should use more participle constructions than infinitive ones. Furthermore, the teacher's online revisions helped the students both learn in a relatively shorter period of time and reinforce their abilities and knowledge.

**KEYWORDS:** Verbal Constructions; English as a Foreign Language (EFL); Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment (MOODLE)

### INTRODUCTION

Explicit instruction involves directing student attention toward specific learning in a highly structured environment. The instruction is focused on producing specific learning outcomes. It is highly teacher-directed and effective for providing information or developing step-by-step skills. It also works well for introducing other teaching methods, or actively involving the learners in knowledge construction. Topics and contents are not only taught in a logical order but also are

broken down into small parts and taught individually. It involves explanation, demonstration and practice. Providing with guidance and structured frameworks to the learners is one of its crucial factors. Another important characteristic of explicit instruction involves modeling skills and behaviors and modeling thinking. This involves the teacher thinking out loud when working through problems and demonstrating processes for students. The attention of students is important and listening and observations are keys to success. Moreover, explicit instruction is useful for introducing topics and specific skills. It provides guided instruction in the basic understanding of required skills, which students can then build on through practice, collaboration, repetition, hands on activities and developmental play.

Plus, it begins with **setting the stage for learning**, follows by a clear explanation of what to do, by **modeling** of the process, and by multiple opportunities for **practice** until independence is attained. Explicit instruction moves systematically from extensive teacher input and little student responsibility initially to total student responsibility and minimal teacher involvement at the conclusion of the learning cycle. In addition to that, in order to achieve high rates of success during explicit instruction, several design and delivery factors must be considered. Briefly, some of the factors that increase level of success include teaching material that is not too difficult or advanced for students to learn through more minimally guided teaching approaches, clear presentations, dynamic modeling of skills and strategies, supported practice, active participation, careful monitoring of student responses, and immediate corrective feedback. All in all, explicit instruction is an instructional strategy used by teachers to meet the needs of their students and engage them in unambiguous, clearly articulated teaching.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The teaching practice of explicit instruction has been available to classroom teachers since the late 1960s. The effective teaching practices research identified most of the components of explicit instruction as essential for positive student outcomes (Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986). Instruction (please see Archer & Hughes, 2011) should be overt, and students should have multiple opportunities to practice the strategy under quality feedback conditions before they are expected to use the strategy on their own. Ellis and Worthington (1994) voice their support for the fact that the students can become independent, self-regulated learners through instruction that is deliberately and carefully scaffolded. Kame'enui and Simmons (1990) also express that explicit instruction initially provides sufficient learning opportunities for students to get the verbal associations, concepts, rule relationships, and cognitive strategies being taught and later, during expanded instruction, it is used to help students apply knowledge.

Several recent studies and reviews in SLA research have shown that explicit second language instruction does make a difference in learners' acquisition of target language norms. Doughty (1991), for example, shows that attention to form, either via detailed analysis of structure or highlighting of target language structures in context, promotes acquisition of inter-language grammar (Doughty, 1991, p. 431). Ellis (1995) also argues that although much of the acquisition of language form is the result of implicit learning, explicit instruction particularly involving grammatical consciousness-raising is also conducive to second language acquisition. Lando (1998) found that explicit and intensive form-focused instruction encourages an increased and more accurate use of other features that are closely related to the targeted ones when they are combined with continuous meaning-focused practice of instructed features.



A structured, systematic, and effective methodology for teaching academic skills (Archer & Hughes, 2011), explicit instruction is one of the best tools available to educators to maximize students' academic growth. Rosenshine (1987) also describes it as a systematic method of teaching with emphasis on proceeding in small steps, checking for student understanding, and achieving active and successful participation by all students, specifically, when the instructed strategies are categorized in a simple schema that can be easily learned and remembered (Souvignier & Mokhlesgerami, 2006). In addition to that, the teacher's examples serve as the heart of the teaching experience since this is the only way we get the logical structures of verbal associations, concepts, rule relationships, and cognitive strategies by comparing and contrasting examples of them (Kame'enui & Simmons, 1990). Stevenson and Stigler (1992) also add that the more time is available for instruction the more teachers can teach, the more learners can be engaged in instruction, and the more they can learn, (specially Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986) when the students spend much of their time being directly taught by their teacher. Also, group instruction has been found to be the most effective and efficient approach to teaching basic skills, Paris (1986) asserts that students can learn about features of reading like declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge through direct instruction as well as by practice. Part of a teacher's job is to explicate strategies for reading so that students will perceive them as useful and sensible. Swanson, 1999; Swanson & Siegel, 2001 characterize explicit instruction by a series of supports or scaffolds, whereby the learners are guided through the learning process with clear statements about the purpose and rationale for learning the new skill, clear explanations and demonstrations of the instructional target, and supported practice with feedback until independent mastery has been achieved. Consistence with these findings, Mastropieri et al. (2003) identified a typical explicit instruction sequence that includes: (a) state the purpose, (b) provide instruction, (c) model, (d) provide guided practice, (e) give corrective feedback, (f) provide independent practice, and (g) deliver generalization practice. In a review of explicit instruction, during school-based instruction (Sterling-Turner, Watson, & Moore, 2002) suggest that direct training methods led to higher treatment integrity than indirect training methods.

### ***Moodle***

Nowadays the growth of technology has opened new possibilities for communication and information. The use of technology in classroom worldwide has changed the practices of teachers and students. Within many of these classrooms, the use of technological tools and resources supports not only students as they search for information, design products and publish results but also teachers for creating structure, providing advice and monitoring the progress. Researchers (e.g. Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000) posit that a number of features of new technologies are consistent with principles of the science of learning and hold promise for improving education. They contend that new information and communications technologies (ICT) can bring exciting curricula based on real-world problems into the classroom, and provide scaffolds and tools to enhance learning.

The interactivity of technologies is cited as a key feature that enables students to receive feedback on their performance, test and reflect on their ideas, and revise their understanding (Roschelle, Pea, Hoadley, Gordin, & Means, 2000). Networked technology can enable teachers and students to build local and global communities that connect them with interested people and expand opportunities for learning. Indeed, one of the nowadays networked technologies is Moodle which has become a very popular among educators around the world as a tool for creating online

dynamic web sites for their students. It is a Course Management System (CMS), known as a Learning Management System (LMS) or a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and a “Free” web application that educators can use to create effective online learning sites (Moodle, 2013). Although Moodle can be used for many kinds of educational applications, it is based on socio-constructivist principles (Dougiamas, 1998; Dougiamas 2000) and most suited for an educational approach involving interaction amongst people rather than transmission of content. In spite of giving both teachers and trainers a powerful set of web-based tools for an array of activities, such as forum, messaging, quizzes, assignments, wikis, blogs, and databases (Cole & Foster, 2008), its positive impact of technology does not come automatically and it much depends on how teachers use ICT in their classes (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000).

### ***Verbal Constructions***

Since in this study the researcher wants to investigate the effect of explicit teaching of verbal constructions of participle”, and to + infinitives on the composition of EFL learners, he provides some information on these structures which are challenging and even problematic for the learners to grasp. First the definition of verbal; certain structures called verbal are derived from verbs but do not inflect for person and tense, nor combine with an auxiliary verb to form verb phrases. Verbals include “participles”, and “infinitives” (DeCpua, 2008). Participles are two types “-ing” and “-ed” which generally function as adjectives and sometimes as adverbs. They can indicate time and can be used in passive voice. Plus, the transitive verbs only can form “-ed” participles. Infinitives are the “to” + base verb which function as subject, object, adjective, adverb, and complement and can indicate time and can be used in passive voice, too.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

This study seeks to investigate, compare and answer the following questions regarding these two types of structures on the compositions of EFL learners in the Moodle context:

1. Does the explicit instruction of infinitive construction in traditional way have any effect on the compositions of Iranian EFL learners?
2. Does the explicit instruction of participle construction in the Moodle context have any effect on the compositions of Iranian EFL learners?
3. Does the explicit instruction of participle construction in the Moodle context outperform the infinitive construction in traditional way?

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Participants***

The study was conducted in Dezful, Iran with 84 (N=84) intermediate Iranian EFL learners at Dezful Islamic Azad University including 43 males (N=43) and 41 females (N=41) with age range of 19-28. Not only were the participants university EFL students and had passed two semesters in English translation course but also they had the experience of studying English in junior high school and high school. Additionally, in order to guarantee the learners' proficiency level, they also took a TOEFL proficiency test. Then the learners were randomly assigned to two groups of 43 and 41 learners in each group. It should be noted that these two groups were taught by the same instructor; yet, the only difference was the type of given feedback treatment to each group. For this study, the students were asked to write a paragraph between 100 to 120 words on

verbal constructions. The first group (N=41) were reminded to provide some infinitive phrases in their paragraphs and the second group (N=43) to provide participle phrases in Moodle context. The instructor then evaluated the students' drafts. The first group received overt correction on the infinitive and the second on the participle phrases.

### ***Instrument***

In this study, a multiple-choice test designed by the researcher was used with the purpose of collecting quantitative data. Since the test used in this study was not previously tested or validated, it was necessary to check its validity and reliability before administering it. In order to check the validity, the researcher consulted one of the members of the thesis committee and a test designer who analyzed it for its validity. After assuring its validity, the test was administered once and the data was put into SPSS. Cronbach's alpha was used to check the reliability. The result showed the reliability of the test. The pre-test with the reliability of 0.86 and the post test with 0.80 reliability. The test was also pilot tested on 64 intermediate university EFL learners of English translation course at Dezful Islamic Azad University. As a result of pilot testing, a few of the items were modified and deleted. The multiple choice test used as the pre-test was developed to assess students' general vocabulary, grammar, listening and reading abilities.

### ***Procedure***

In order to accomplish the objectives of this study and also increase its validity, the use of randomization, pretest/posttest administration and treatment was essential. The following steps were taken to carry out the study:

In this study effort was made to select the samples randomly. For the samples to be homogeneous the multiple choice test comprising of four parts (listening, vocabulary, grammar and reading) was taken from 110 Iranian EFL learners at Dezful Islamic Azad University and the students' answers were marked from 10 to 0 (best to worst). 84 students with the scores ranged between 2.5 and 4 out of 10 were chosen as the main participants of the study with the mean scores of 3.0654 and the standard deviation of 0.71138. After the homogeneity test determined the level of participants' language proficiency, attempts were made to assign the participants in the two groups randomly. The 84 students were assigned to two groups of 41 learners (N=41) in infinitive + "to" group and 43 learners (N=43) in participle group. The controlled group (N=41) were taught in traditional way on the subject of 'Free Time' using infinitive section of verbal constructions and the other group, the experimental group (N=43) were trained in Moodle platform on the subject of 'Sport' using participle section of verbal constructions.

Before starting explicit instruction of verbal constructions, the researcher assured himself that the participants of the second group were computer savvy. He invited the participants in internet cafe and in a session or two explained activities such as uploading files, chat, forum, messages, wiki, SCORM packages, quiz, lesson, online text and offline activities. He also provided them the opportunity on how to physically navigate his Moodle site and gain confidence in posting and responding to that. Despite of the given information and clarification, some of the participants encountered few problems in Moodle context. But it didn't take long that they became Moodle savvy and knowledgeable in this regard. Then, this procedure went on throughout the following teaching sessions he had with them. As their confidence and their understanding of the options

available on the site on how to log on, maneuver the site, chat, upload files, and posting responses grew, the researcher asked them to register themselves as new users in his Moodle website and based on the given instructions on personalizing their accounts, they uploaded their profile pictures and personal details. Then, the researcher officially opened his Moodle class to his second group of the participants on 10 February 2013.

As the course progressed, the teacher started teaching each verbal construction to the participants of each group in fourteen sessions of sixty minutes twice a week (i.e. Saturday and Monday for the 1<sup>st</sup> group and Sunday and Tuesday for the 2<sup>nd</sup> one). During these sessions, the teacher step-by-step explained the participle constructions to the second group via a host of activities including online submission of texts, collaborations in a wiki, chat appointment and forum discussion accompanied face-to-face classes. Acquiring all the necessary information and feedbacks on the participle construction during the first ten sessions, the participants were asked to write a paragraph of 100 to 120 words on the “sport” topic using participle phrases of verbal constructions and then to post it. While doing this activity, the learners received not only the appropriate feedback on their writings but also they had the opportunities to review and improve their paragraphs by viewing the other learners’ postings and feedbacks. In the meantime, they engaged themselves in chat and message modules in both intra- and inter-class connection to exchange comments and interact with their teacher and every registered friend on the system and that helped them reflect on their responses and engage them in higher-order thinking processes. In the last session or two, the teacher asked them to review and revise their drafts and finalize them. Then, their paragraphs were given to two raters for analyzing and assigning marks from best to worst (10 to 0). At the end of the term, the participants were also asked on voluntary interviews to express their views and attitudes towards the virtual mode of instruction.

### ***Statistical procedures***

After collecting the data (i.e. the scores given to the participants by the raters), the mean scores and the standard deviations of experimental and control group, the degree of differences between pre-test and post-tests for each group were calculated. Then three independent samples *t*-tests were conducted, one is run to show the homogeneity of control and experimental groups and the other two are conducted to indicate the effect of explicit instruction on learner’s written paragraphs to examine both on topics of *Free Time* and *Sport* and also to see whether explicit instruction had the same effect on each groups independent samples *t*-test were conducted. The mean scores of each group were also calculated independently to see whether each group was equally affected by the explicit instruction or not.

## **RESULTS**

The raw scores obtained from the pretest and posttest was analyzed through SPSS. The means, standard deviations and differences of means were computed for each group. Significance of difference between the mean scores of both the control and experimental groups were tested at .05level by applying independent sample *t*-test.

Table 1 reveals the descriptive statistics conducted to compare the mean scores of both control and experimental groups in pre-test and that shows the mean scores as 3.0610 and 3.0698 respectively. As the scores show, there is not any significant difference between the two groups and that proves the homogeneity between the control and experimental groups.

*Table 1: The descriptive statistics of pre-test in both control and experimental group*

Group	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
pre t-test Free Time	41	1.50	4.50	3.0610	.79996
pre t-test Sport	43	1.50	4.00	3.0698	.62280

Table 2 reveals the descriptive statistics conducted to compare the mean scores of control group in pre-test and post-test. The results indicate that the maximum average refers to the pre t-test Sport, this shows that the mean score of experimental group is higher than the control group.

*Table 2: The descriptive statistics of control group in pre-test and post-test*

Group	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
pre t-test Free Time	41	1.50	4.50	3.0610	.79996
Post t-test Free Time	41	3.00	6.00	4.4878	.72014
Valid N (listwise)	41				

Figure 1 shows clearly that the scores of post t-test Free Time are higher than the scores of pre t-test Free Time.

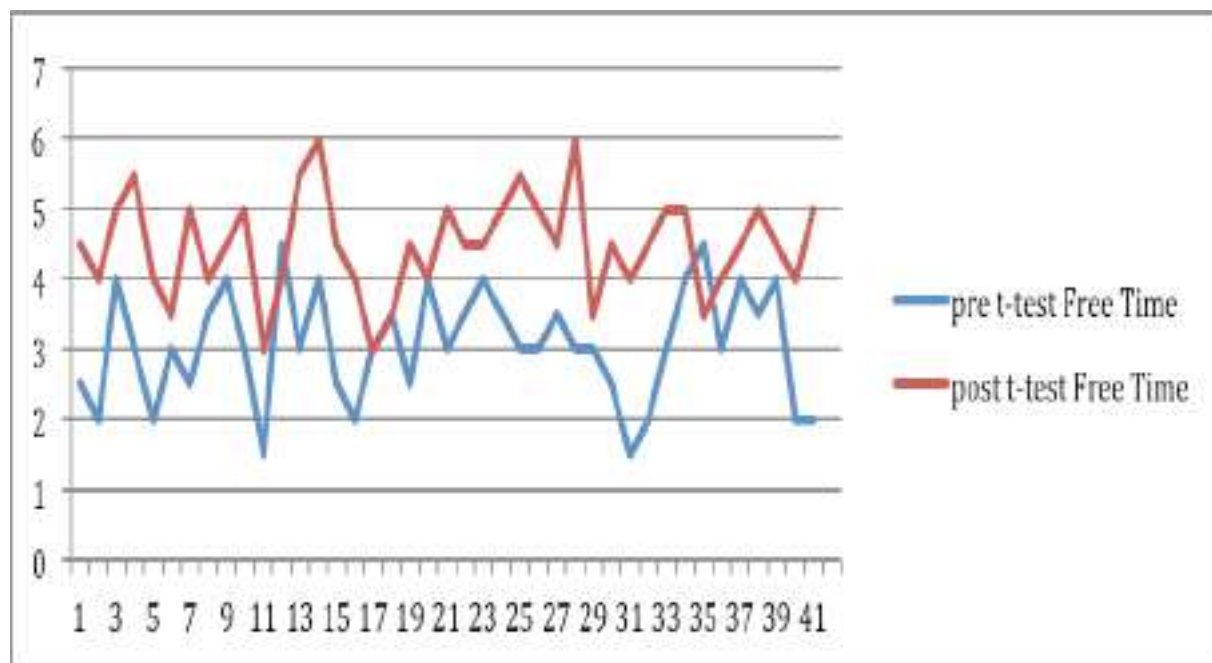


Figure 1: Patterns in pre t-test and post t-test Free Time

To find out whether there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test in control group, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted. The results which are presented in table2 show that there is a significant statistical difference between pre-test Free Time and post-test Free Time. The significant levels are below the significant value  $p < 0.05$ . It is 0.00.

Table 3: The independent samples *t*-test of control group in pre-test and post-test

Group		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	pre t-test Free Time - Post t-test Free Time	-1.42683	.98464	.15377	-1.73762	-1.11604	-9.279	40	.000

Table 4 reveals the descriptive statistics conducted to compare the mean scores of experimental group in pre-test and post-test. The results show that the maximum average refers to post t-test Sport with a mean of 5.965.

Table 4: The descriptive statistics of experimental group in pre-test and post-test



Group	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
pre t-test Sport	43	1.50	4.00	3.0698	.62280
Post t-test Sport	43	4.50	8.00	5.9651	.94740
Valid N (listwise)	43				

Figure 2 shows clearly that the scores of post t-test Sport are higher than the scores of pre t-test Sport.

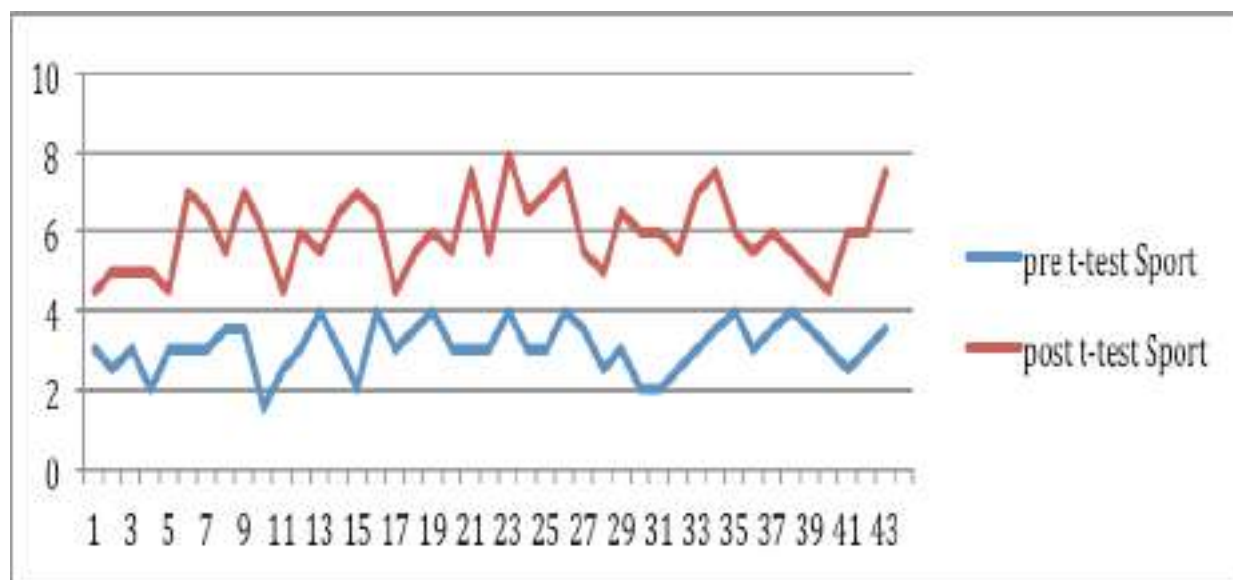


Figure 2: Patterns in pre t-test and post t-test Free Time

To find out whether there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test in experimental group, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted. The results which are presented in table5 show that there is a significant statistical difference between pre-test sport and post-test Sport. The significant levels are below the significant value  $p < 0.05$ . It is 0.00.

Table 5: The independent samples of *t*-test of experimental group in pre-test and post-test

Group	Paired Differences	t	df	Sig. (2-
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	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 pre t-test Sport - Post t-test Sport	-2.89535	1.00332	.15300	-3.20412	-2.58657	-18.923	42	.000

And also the post *t*-test of both control and experimental groups is compared through an independent samples *t*-test. The mean scores of both are 4.4878 and 5.9651 respectively. This shows that the mean score of experimental group is higher than the control group. And mean score of experimental group (i.e. post t-test Sport) is the highest mean among the other groups.

Table 6: The descriptive statistics of both control and experimental group in pre-test and post-test

Group	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
pre t-test Free Time	41	1.50	4.50	3.0610	.79996
pre t-test Sport	43	1.50	4.00	3.0698	.62280
Post t-test Free Time	41	3.00	6.00	4.4878	.72014
Post t-test Sport	43	4.50	8.00	5.9651	.94740

Figure 3 shows clearly that the scores of post t-test Sport are the highest among the scores of other groups. This indicates the superiority of post t-test Sport over the other groups.

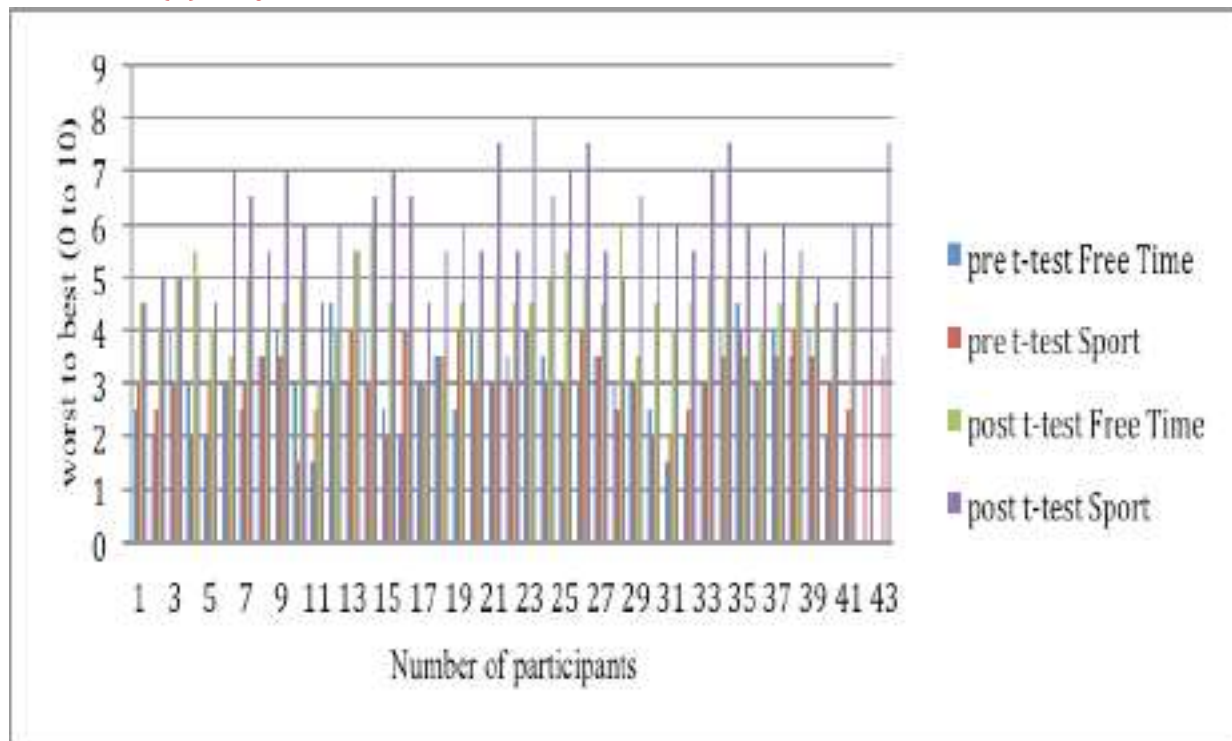


Figure3. Patterns in pre t-test and post t-test of both Free Time and Sport

## DISCUSSION

The effect of explicit instruction of verbal construction on the learner's compositions can be shown by resorting to both mean scores of the control and experimental group.

The first hypothesis of the study asks whether the explicit instruction of infinitive construction in traditional way has any effect on the compositions of Iranian EFL learners.

To see whether this hypothesis is retained or rejected, we must look at the mean scores obtained from the infinitive construction in traditional way (i.e. Free Time). We see that the participants' mean score in the post t-test is 4.48 (SD=.72) while the mean score of pre t-test is 3.06 (SD=.79). This shows that the explicit instruction in traditional way has effect on the learning of infinitive construction. So, it can be concluded that the explicit instruction in traditional way can help learners to learn infinitive construction better. The results of the independent samples *t*-test also show that there is a significant difference between these two groups as the significant level ( $p=.001$ ) is below the  $p$  value  $<0.05$ . So, our conclusion is retained and the beneficial effect of explicit instruction in traditional way is again confirmed. The programs, needless to say, that are based on explicit instruction have proven effective for enhancing reading comprehension (Ross, Smith, Casey, & Slavin, 1995; Simmons, Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathes, & Hodge, 1995).

The second hypothesis wants to know whether or not the explicit instruction of participle construction in the Moodle context has any effect on the compositions of Iranian EFL learners. To retain or reject this hypothesis, we have to resort to the mean scores obtained from the pre t-test and post t-test of participle instruction (i.e. Sport). The mean of post t-test score of Sport group is 5.96 (SD=.94) while the mean of pre t-test score is 3.06 (SD=.62). As in the case of Sport paragraph learners, we see that the mean score of the participants taught through the Moodle context is higher and it reveals the positive effect of the results of the explicit instruction in Moodle platform. The results of the samples *t*-test also show that the significant value ( $p=0.000$ ) is below the  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$  and prove that explicit teaching of participle construction in Moodle environment has had an effect on learners' paragraph writing.

The last hypothesis asks whether or not the explicit instruction of participle construction in the Moodle context outperforms the infinitive construction in traditional way. Again to retain or reject this hypothesis we have to resort to the mean scores obtained from both the mean of post t-tests of participle construction (i.e. Sport) and infinitive construction (i.e. Free Time). The mean of post t-test score of Sport group is 5.96 (SD=.94) while the mean of post t-test of Free Time is 4.48 (SD=.72). As in the case of Sport paragraph learners, we see that the mean score of the participants taught through the Moodle context is higher and it reveals the positive effect of the results of the explicit instruction in Moodle platform. The overall analyses of the data release a definite superiority of the explicit instruction of participle construction in Moodle context over the infinitive construction in traditional way. So, our conclusion is retained and the outperformance of explicit instruction in Moodle context to its traditional one is also confirmed. These findings are in consistence with Moodle's many features which help to enhance the teaching and provide the students with a powerful learning environment (Cole & Foster, 2007, P.5).

## CONCLUSION

This study reports a series of experiments regarding the effect of explicit instruction of verbal constructions on compositions of Iranian EFL learners in a Moodle context. The findings of the study are encouraging regarding the effect of explicit instruction of verbal construction on learners' paragraph writing. Therefore, we can conclude that providing the learners with explicit instruction in Moodle environment can effectively supply opportunities for learners to interact with instructors and fellow students, allowing learners to share ideas, build concepts based on existing knowledge, reflect on experiences and construct knowledge. Moodle provide collaborative tools like email, chat, discussion forums, virtual classrooms and reflective journaling features that assist student as they construct knowledge. Based on this conclusion, we suggest teachers of English using Moodle since it has more than 3,200 sites in more than 115 countries that help educators create online courses with a focus on interaction and collaborative interaction of content which is in a continual evolution. And, since the interest in Moodle is growing in the e-learning community with a user base of 83,008 registered and verified sites, serving 70,696,570 users in 7.5 million courses with 1.2 million teachers as a open source virtual learning environment, it's unwise to ignore its prominent role in today's learning community.

Furthermore, the researcher expects the teachers and educators to use Moodle as an awesome source of virtual learning, as its system is not only easier to use for both learning and teaching, but also it is more flexible to increase and develop its range of tools to meet needs of different groups in comparison to other online learning sites like Blackboard or WebCT. Moreover, the

other reason that the researcher places emphasis on using Moodle is the positive attitude that it will build towards virtual learning as it provides an exciting and interesting learning experience for the students and enables them to proceed at their own pace while having sufficient time to reflect on the learning materials.

### **LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

This paper is far from complete as the study is still in progress. However, sticking to this level of analysis the researcher found out that lack of learners' computer literacy and access to equipment to perform tasks was a major obstacle in doing this project. The low quality of internet connectivity and low internet speed were also a more hindrance than a help in the study. The other serious limitation which the researcher encountered was the low level of few participants' responsibility to set aside regular time study and to accompany in the research process with a full motivation despite of receiving adequate knowledge and training. And although the researcher found many supporting and convincing evidences to proceed with his research, further attempts, preparations and trainings should be made to escape these limitations.

### **Acknowledgment**

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## REPRESENTATION OF RACISM AND ETHNICITY IN AMERICAN BLACK SINGERS' TWEETS: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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### ABSTRACT

The typical media stereotypes American black singers as excessively racist and more ethnic than other singers. This study examines how three American black singers use twitter as an online social networking service to present their own personalities. The literature probes the spots of racism and ethnicity in the three singers' tweets. Fifteen tweets from each singer were collected, then coded, analyzed and described using critical discourse analysis. In addition, this study is a descriptive qualitative study on the representation of racism and ethnicity in American black singers' tweets involving (1) the themes of discourses that represent racism and ethnicity in American black singers' tweets, (2) the representation of racism and ethnicity in American black singers' tweet, (3) the meaning and values of American black singers' tweets. This study was conducted from September 2012 to May 2013. Based on the research findings, it was found that American black singers' tweets represent the maintenance of an existing group, and raising black people from the dominant of white class and the positions of power and stature in American society and they also have meaning and values of the concept of power to reflect the interests of the strength elite, online identity construction, and a place to counter the media stereotypes.

**KEY WORDS:** American Black Singers, Twitter, Tweet, Representation, Critical Discourse Analysis, Racism, Ethnicity, Power, Discourse

### INTRODUCTION

Twitter is a social networking service which has emerged as a new medium in spotlight through latest happenings, such as a suicide bomber hits north Nigeria Catholic church and the portrait of Obama win the election. Twitter users follow others or are followed. Unlike on most online social networking sites, such as Facebook or MySpace, the relationship of following and being followed requires no reciprocation. A user can follow any other user, and the user being followed need not follow back. (Kwak, Lee, Park & Moon, 2010).

Kwak, Lee, Park, and Moon (2010) also define that Twitter and its power have new information for sharing. Moreover, there are two supplies on Twitter as the followers and followings, the relation between followers and tweets, reciprocity, degrees of separation, and homophile. Besides, the rank user by the number of followers, PageRank, and the number of retweets and present quantitative comparison among them. The ranking by retweets pushes those with fewer than a million followers on top of those with more than a million followers. Through our trending topic analysis we show what categories trending topics are classified into, how long they last, and how many users participate.

A twitter user keeps a brief profile about oneself. The public profile includes the full name, the location, a web page, a short biography, and the number of tweets of the user. The people who follow the user and those that the user follows are also listed. (Kwak, Lee, Park & Moon, 2010).

In addition, tweet is a post or status update on [twitter](#), a social networking service. Because Twitter only allows messages of 140 characters or less, "tweet" is as much a play on the size of the message as it is on the audible similarity to Twitter. (Nations, 2013).

A tweet is a post on Twitter. Moreover, the act of writing a tweet is called tweeting or twittering. Tweets can be up to 140 characters long, including spaces, and can include URLs and hashtags. The 140-character limit comes from the 160-character limit required by the short message service. (Rouse, 2009).

Talking about ethnicity and racism of American black singers related to twitter as a social networking service is that extremely visible, but often lack appropriate sites for personal expression of ideas and personality, unlike other public figures. In the interviews, as well as in-stage displays of emotion are highly analyzed, but rarely do singers have an opportunity to share or present other non-professional aspects of their lives. If Bond's (2009) analysis is correct, Twitter provides an opportunity for American black singers to present a realistic representation of the self.

As Goffman (1959) contends, the self-presentation aspect of an individual is similar to a stage drama, so a fair amount of "production value" should be expected in the form of identity exaggeration. This statement is grounded in the research by Grasmuck, Martin, and Zhao (2009), in the claim that individuals tend to present a more socially desirable image of themselves online; it is vital to note that American black singers' tweets in on-line may be a hyperbole of their true self.

American Black singers have an opportunity to present themselves in the way they choose and can challenge main narratives of black ethnicity presented by journalists, and other media members by tweets. This study opens the door for further exploration into how American black singers can contribute to their own representation by the mainstream media. Before there can be research claiming singers use Twitter and other social media to undermine main paradigms, it is appropriate to first investigate the ways singers are currently using this medium. This study investigates and analyzes the ways in which select three American black singers use twitter to perform their personalities, as they relate to stereotypical ideas of black ethnicity. (Stefanone et al., 2010).

A CDA outline reverberates with Twitter dialogic conversations because these dialogues incline to be complete with scheming tendencies of writers (knowledgeable learners, educators) aimed at influencing the psychology and social behaviour of readers / communicants (peers) through normalizing discourses. However, Twitter's dialogic complexity in the flexibility those communicants often have with respect to where to post their messages, who to engage with, and the language to use during interactions. Moreover, Twitter and other social networking services like

Facebook or MySpace particularity is predicated on its distorting between private and public discourse through 'imagined audiences' and 'collision of contexts' (Boyd, 2011).

Moreover, Twitter, Facebook and MySpace are also grounded in the connectives framework of knowledge production that values connected networks, co-generation of knowledge by novices and experts and use of complex, adaptive systems for knowledge generation (Siemens, 2006). Moreover, the informal and unregulated conversations on twitter raise critical questions about the exercise of academic authority and democratic expression of views when academics are involved.

A Critical Discourse Analysis framework resonates with social networking services like Twitter dialogic conversations by "tweet" something from those the user follows to receive the message and its mechanism empowers users to spread information of their choice beyond the reach of the original tweet's followers. These dialogues tend to be replete with manipulative tendencies of writers (knowledgeable learners, educators) aimed at influencing the psychology and social behavior of readers / communicants (peers) through normalizing discourses. However, twitter's dialogic complexity deceits in the flexibility that the communicants often have with respect to where to post their messages, who to engage with, and the language to use during interactions.

In addition, the purpose of this study is to analyze the racism and ethnicity of American black singers' tweets, as they related to black ethnic group in the social dimension of the text, namely, the function of the participants involved in the messages. In this work the researcher will use the critical discourse analysis (CDA) – an analytic method chosen to explore the social processes that (re)produce and reflect knowledge and power relations through discourses (Fairclough, 2003), rather than exclusively on the specific grammatical and linguistic use of language (Galasinski 2008; Hodges et al. 2008). CDA explores the ways in which social structures and practices constitute how specific topics (such as sexual health) are discussed (or not discussed) (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). CDA positions social structures (such as ethnicity and the social ordering of men and women) as systems of social relations that do not produce equilibrium but that are instead 'characterized by dominance, exploitation, struggle, oppression and power (Johnstone 2008:28).

The power of dominant groups may be integrated in laws, rules, norms, habits, and even a quite general consensus, and thus take the form of what Gramsci called "hegemony" (Gramsci, 1971). Class domination, sexism, and racism are characteristic examples of such hegemony. Note also that power is not always exercised in obviously abusive acts of dominant group members, but may be enacted in the myriad of taken-for-granted actions of everyday life, as is typically the case in the many forms of everyday sexism or racism. Similarly, not all members of a powerful group are always more powerful than all members of dominated groups: power is only defined here for groups as a whole. (Essed, 1991).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

There are some studies which relevant with this reserch. They are related on the representation of black people in tweets. The studies used, among others, are, Rinkus's study, about an analysis of twitter usage by select black professional athletes presenting their online identities, as related to black hypermasculinity (2012). This study talks about the mainstream media stereotypes Black professional athletes as overly aggressive and more masculine than athletes of other ethnicities. In addition, it examines how three professional athletes use the micro-blogging service, Twitter, to present their own

identities through social media. The literature explores online identity formation, parasocial interaction, and masculinity in sports. Fifty tweets from each athlete were collected, then coded using critical discourse analysis, and deconstructed through impression management theory with a focus on the dramaturgical perspective. Results reveal that athletes portrayed more individualized identities when their sport was in the offseason, while athletes currently competing tweeted personal anecdotes less frequently.

Payne (2007) in his paper with title “How does the media portray black American”, he found that Many blacks seem to uphold their stereotypes. Many black rappers glamorize their lifestyle living only for material possessions, and bragging about being from the violent streets. Furthermore, many black reinforce other American’s view of them stereotypical by attacking white America whenever something goes wrong.

The power of dominant groups may be integrated in laws, rules, norms, habits, and even a quite general consensus, and thus take the form of what Gramsci called "hegemony" (Gramsci, 1971). Class domination, racism and ethnicity are characteristic examples of such hegemony. Note also that power is not always exercised in obviously abusive acts of dominant group members, but may be enacted in the myriad of taken-for-granted actions of everyday life, as is typically the case in the many forms of everyday racism. Similarly, not all members of a powerful group are always more powerful than all members of dominated groups: power is only defined here for groups as a whole. (Essed, 1991).

The relations between discourse and power are the specific forms of discourse, e.g. those of politics, the media, or science, is itself a power resource. Secondly, as suggested earlier, action is controlled by our minds. So, if we are able to influence people's minds, e.g. their knowledge or opinions, we indirectly may control (some of) their actions, as we know from persuasion and manipulation. (Van Dijk, 1993).

The process of data analysis in Critical Discourse Analysis is largely based on thematic analysis while also being highly situated in the context of text. (Phillips and Hardy, 2002). Moreover, Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) describe a text is the object of study and the “ideation level” where the text is used as a means for exploring the underpinning ideas and beliefs of the participants. At both these levels, Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) argue that the researcher should avoid seeking some form of ‘reality’ in terms of social relations, structures and hierarchies lying hidden within the text (a focus at what they describe as the social condition level).

## **FORMULATION OF THE STUDY**

Based on background of the study, this study tries to answer the following questions:

1. What are themes of discourses that represent racism and ethnicity in American black singers’ tweets?
2. What is the representation of racism and ethnicity in American black singers’ tweets?
3. What are the meaning and values of American black singers’ tweets?

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The Objectives of the study are to analyze the themes of discourses that represent racism and ethnicity in American black singers’ tweets and then describe the representation of racism and ethnicity in American black singers’ tweets and the meaning and values of American Black Singers’ tweets.

## THEORETICAL OUTLINE

There are several theories used in this research. Some of them are based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspectives. The theories used, among others, are, Rinkus (2012) and Van Dijk's theory on CDA, especially in Critical Discourse Analysis (1998). The theory of themes of tweets related to discourse is taken from Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008).

## METHOD AND TECHNIQUE

### *Method*

This study focuses specifically on how select American black singers; Trey Songz, Nasir Jones, and, Anthony Hamilton use on social networking service to broaden their social worlds and identities as viewed by the general public. Taking a critical approach, a discourse analysis was performed on postings from three American black singers, each with more than one thousand followers. Data was collected from a specific starting date, with fifteen tweets from each singer in consideration for the study. Critical Discourse analysis is a tool used to expose implicit meaning not explicit within discourse; "a critical discourse consists of groups of related statements that cohere to produce meanings and effects...a critical discourse produces the 'truth' about objects" that are spoken of (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008:230). Because this study used critical discourse analysis as its method, deep analysis was required from a contextual viewpoint.

Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) caution those using critical discourse analysis as a method to avoid "non-analysis" by expecting "exhaustive" quotations from empirical data to stand alone without explanation; each post was given ample attention. The data included fifteen tweets from each singer as listed in the sample. It is specific, and will not necessarily allow a high level of generalization to other singers. However, as these singers have been purposively selected specifically for their probability to "talk about" issues that would remove notions of ethnicity, a critical discourse analysis of individual postings aimed to reveal a personality presentation consistent with the research question (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

In addition, this research is using a qualitative research with a descriptive method. Berg (2001:6) mentioned the qualitative research as. "*Qualitative research properly seeks answer to questions by examining various social and the individuals who inhabit these settings.*" He (2001:7) then continued his statements with. "*Qualitative researchers, then, are most interested in how humans arrange themselves and their settings and how inhabitants of these settings make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles, and so forth.*"

## THE TECHNIQUE OF DATA COLLECTING

Each Tweet in the data set was read independently of the rest. Following this close reading, the researcher examined tweets from the American black singers separately and identified the themes of tweets that became present for each. By conducting a critical discourse analysis on the data, the themes of tweets were determined by exploring what the sample singers "talked about;" in which fields they entered into critical discourse analysis (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). The themes of tweets were then compiled in a separate document, and given operational instructions for identification (as follows, alphabetically) from the table below.

Table 1: Themes of Tweets



Themes of Tweets	Explanation
Active Lifestyle	Any tweet indicating or referencing Exercise.
Declarative Statement	Any tweet with an “I” Statement, or statement professing a point or idea.
Event Attendance	Any time the singer attends or references attending a specific happening.
Expressing Excitement	Any tweet featuring multiple exclamation points, or words commonly used to express excitement.
Family & Friends	Any reference to family or friends. This includes pets, when referenced by name.
Humanitarian	Any tweet related to the interests of humankind.
Introspection	Any tweet related to the singers’ emotion, or self-examination.
Music	Any tweet referencing music or musical Artists of any kind.
Photoshare	Any time a singer Tweets a photo
Promotion	Any tweet referencing a specific brand or Product.
Question	Any tweet using a question mark, a rhetorical question, or asking followers for a response.
Request	Any time a singer asks his followers to “do.” something, including “retweet.”
Salutation	Any tweet using a greeting, or a valediction (Closing).
Spirituality	Any tweet referencing “god” or “prayer,” or anything related to religion or spirituality.
Sports	Any tweet related to “sport” of any kind.
Travel	Any tweet where the singer indicates he is intransit, outside of everyday routine.
World News	Any time a singer Tweets about something News worthy happening outside the US.

The process of data analysis in Critical Discourse Analysis is largely based on thematic analysis while also being highly situated in the context of text. (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Moreover, Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) describe a text is the object of study and the “ideation level” where the text is used as a means for exploring the underpinning ideas and beliefs of the participants. At both these levels, Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) argue that the researcher should avoid seeking some form of ‘reality’ in terms of social relations, structures and hierarchies lying hidden within the text (a focus at what they describe as the social condition level).

However, tweets can be understood as systemic ways of groups of people talk about things together. Such repertoires a broadly based on the idea that there exists a range of language resources that a group or community draws on whose meaning is assumed to be commonly and unproblematically understood within that group. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

In addition, Critical Discourse Analysis is particularly interested in the consistency and variance in language use (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009) and how such discursive devices can be used to ‘manage’, lead or influence discursive interactions. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

By conducting a Critical Discourse Analysis on the data of tweets, themes of tweets were determined by exploring what the sample people “talked about.” (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Themes were



then compiled in a separate document, and given operational instructions for identification. They are (a) active lifestyle: any tweet indicating or referencing exercise, (b) declarative statement: any tweet with an “I” Statement, or statement professing a point or idea, (c) event attendance: any time people attends or references attending a specific happening, (d) expressing excitement: any tweet featuring multiple exclamation points, or words commonly used to express excitement, (e) family and friends: any reference to family or friends. This includes pets, when referenced by name, (f) humanitarian: any tweet related to the interests of humankind, (g) introspection: any tweet related to the peoples’ emotion, or self-examination, (h) music: any Tweet referencing music or musical artists of any kind, (i) photoshare: any time people tweets a photo, (j) promotion: any tweet referencing a specific brand or product, (k) question: any tweet using a question mark, a rhetorical question, or asking followers for a response, (l) request: any time people asks his followers to “do” something, including “retweet,” (m) salutation: any tweet using a greeting, or a valediction (closing), (n) spirituality: any tweet referencing “god” or “prayer,” or anything related to religion or spirituality, (o) sports: any tweet related to “sport” of any kind, (p) travel: any tweet where people indicates he is in transit, outside of everyday routine, and (q) world news: any time people tweets about something newsworthy happening outside the US. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

## **DATA SOURCE**

The data was statistically collected by a Twitter account created specifically for the purpose of this research; this newly created account followed the Twitter handle of each singer in the sample, so accumulating data automatically and instantaneously for analysis. Twitter is a free service, therefore the study was cost-free commercially; man hours spent were the main expenditure. The researcher had a laptop with Internet access; there were no fences in terms of data collection, aside from any unexpected web-page maintenance or similar downtime.

The writers took this research within 8 months (September 2012 – May 2013), that have relations to the subject taken in this research. These samples include three American black singers Trey Songz, Nasir Jones, and, Anthony Hamilton on Twitter. However, these three American black singers have created a stereotypical identity of the black male singer as overly dominance, racist, and ethnic in their tweets (Billings et al. 2002; Enck-Wanzer 2009; Lavelle 2010; Mercurio; Filak 2010). Goffman (1959) argues that when “an actor takes on an established social role; he (sic) finds that a particular front has already been established for it”. Focusing on the presentation of self through on-line identity allowed for sample data collection at a low cost. Due to the ease of access, researchers concerned with identity formation are turning more to social networking services, such as Twitter and Facebook (Bond, 2009).

These three American black singers; Trey Songz, Nasir Jones, and Anthony Hamilton are the great singers and so impressive. So, the media has created a stereotypical identity of them as overly racist and ethnic (Billings et al. 2002; Enck-Wanzer 2009; Lavelle 2010; Mercurio; Filak 2010). In addition, Goffman (1959) argues that when “an actor takes on an established social role; he finds that a particular front has already been established for it”. Focusing on the presentation of self through on-line identity allowed for sample data collection at a low cost. Due to the ease of access, researchers concerned with identity formation are turning more to social networking services, such as Twitter and Facebook (Bond, 2009). The data was numerically compiled by a Twitter account created specifically for the purpose of this research; this newly created account followed the Twitter handles of each singer in the sample, thereby accumulating data automatically and instantaneously for analysis. Twitter is a free service, so

the study was cost-free commercially; man hours spent were the main expenses. The writers had a laptop with Internet access; there were no barriers in terms of data collection, aside from any unexpected web-page maintenance or similar downtime.

## **WEIGHT AND RELEVANCE**

The result of this study is expected to give contribution to the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis of racism and ethnicity of American black Singers in tweets. It also gives feedback to educators about the implementation of the themes of discourse that reflect racism and ethnicity of American black singers' tweets. This study is also expected to be useful for them as a reference to conduct further studies in Critical Discourse Analysis of racism and ethnicity in American Black Singers' tweets.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Results***

This study focuses specifically on the representation of racism and ethnicity of American black singers' tweets in broadening their social worlds and identities as viewed by the general public. Taking a critical approach, a Critical Discourse Analysis was performed on tweets from three American black singers, each with more than two million followers. Data was collected from a specific starting date, with only fifteen tweets from each singer in consideration for the study. A Critical discourse analysis is a tool used to expose implicit meaning not explicit within discourse; "a Critical Discourse Analysis consists of groups of related statements that cohere to produce meanings and effects...a Critical Discourse Analysis produces the 'truth' about objects" that are spoken of (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008:230). Because this study used critical discourse analysis as its method, deep analysis was required from a contextual viewpoint. Twenty tweets from each singer was an appropriate amount to avoid becoming inundated with too much information, while still having substantial data for analysis. Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) caution those using discourse analysis as a method to avoid "non-analysis" by expecting "exhaustive" quotations from empirical data to stand alone without explanation; each tweet was given ample attention. The data included all tweets made by singers listed in the sample, including any tweets deleted retroactively. "Retweets," when the singer posts the tweet of another user, were omitted. The sample is specific, and will not necessarily allow a high level of generalization to other singers. However, as these singers have been purposively selected specifically for their probability to "talk about" issues that would remove notions of ethnicity, a Critical Discourse Analysis of individual tweets aimed to reveal a personality presentation consistent with the research question (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

Though the study focused specifically on three American black singers, there are millions of other active Twitter users. Tweets outside of the data set provided a vocabulary database when understood meaning could not be derived from a specific unit of text. The characters of tweet are proposed for confronting when the coder was unable to decipher an implied abbreviation. Assuming "U R" is intended to read "you are" is not a complicated translation, however, converting more advanced Twitter "lingo" proved difficult. In cases as such, the coder consulted the Twitter lexicon. Using the Twitter search function allowed the coder to find tweets outside the data set using the same unknown abbreviation; where context clues then provided the appropriate definition for the unidentified term. If there was ever a question as to the meaning of an abbreviated word, the coder followed this process. Because Twitter has such a massive textual database, tweets within the data set needing interpretation had a high level of transferability to other Tweets in the Twitter universe.

After establishing the forms of Trey Songz, Nasir Jones, and Anthony Hamilton's tweets, the writers coded each tweet is maintained awareness of the time separating successive tweets which indicated a grouping in some cases. There was no limit on the amount of themes potentially present in any given tweet. For each tweet the writers established context through citation. This context allowed the researcher to make a more informed form choice when it was not explicitly clear what the singer was referencing. Tweets are presented verbatim from Twitter website and are followed by analysis from the researcher. They are presented literal from the twitter and followed by analysis from the writers. The following are examples of how each tweet was coded:

**A. *TREY SONGZ***

**1. 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2012: Obama**

Themes of Tweets: Declarative Statement, Expressing Excitement, and World News

Trey Songz expresses his support to President Obama for the president election in the USA. He supports Mr. President because of the same ethnic with him as the black people. Moreover, this tweet represents racism and ethnicity. Through his tweet, he points out his stereotype about the power and existence of Obama as the Black people who is a great leader for the United States of America. He is also sharing his thoughts and entering into conversation with his fans about the president election.

**2. 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2012: Some people are truly delusional**

Themes of Tweets: Declarative Statement and Introspection

Trey Songz states his feeling to the people who are trusting in something that is not real. He is also giving out his point of view about the judgment. It represents racism and ethnicity.

**3. 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2012: Don't you be scared!!!!**

Themes: Declarative Statement and Introspection

Trey Songz just wants to show his good character to his fans and media by declaring his brave attitude. This tweet also bears the online identity, counter the media stereotypes, and sharing thought into conversation with his fans and media. This tweet represents racism and ethnicity.

**4. 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2012: I used to drink Cristal them fuckers racists...**

Themes: Declarative Statement, Introspection, Music and World News

Trey Songz posts one of the lyrics of Jaz-Z's song. He states about Jay-Z's references to Cristal champagne until 2006, the managing director of the Champagne house that makes Cristal told *The Economist* that he viewed his product's association with hip hop "with curiosity and serenity." In addition, this tweet represents racism.

**5. 6<sup>th</sup> November, 2012: Obama - P.O.T.U.S**

Themes: Declarative Statement and Expressing Excitement

Trey Songz declares his feeling about Obama wins the election for second term as president and he was so excited. Moreover, he points out his stereotype about the power and existence of Obama as the black people who is a great leader for the United States of America. Moreover, this tweet represents racism and ethnicity.

**6. 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2012: Politics as Usual**

Themes: Declarative Statement, Introspection, Music and World News

Trey Songz posts one of Jay-Z's song titles. Politics as usual means a disconnection from the people. It also means rich people keep on getting rich on the backs of the poor like black ethnic group. In addition, it makes easier for the upper-upper class to do whatever they want to increase their bottom line. This tweet represents racism and ethnicity.

7. 28<sup>th</sup> December, 2012: Birmingham lets get it!!!!!!

Themes: Declarative Statement, Travel and Expressing Excitement

Trey Songz is ready for his workout. He is so energized and happy for his stage. He uses an exclamation mark to the phrase "lets get it!!!!!!" It assumes a desire for motivation. In addition, he asks his fans of black ethnic group to watch his performance. Lastly, this tweet represents ethnicity.

8. 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2013: Back on American ground. LA never felt so much like home!!!

Themes: Declarative Statement, Introspection, and Travel

Trey Songz writes about his travel and feeling tough to going back to LA because of its horrible condition. Furthermore, it represents ethnicity.

9. 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2013: I'm me...everyday of my life.

Themes: Declarative Statement, Active Lifestyle, Introspection, and Photoshare

Trey Songz delivers his felling to fans and media about his personal life. This tweet represents ethnicity. Here, Trey Songz states that his life, personality, existence can represent black ethnic group in the world and counter the media stereotype, share thoughts, and enter into the conversation with fans. Moreover, it represents ethnicity.

10. 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2013: My favorite lady. I'd be nothing without you and the sacrifices u made for me. Happy Mothers Day to...

Themes: Declarative Statement, Expressing Excitement, Family and Friends, and Photoshare

Trey Songz tries to give love and care to his mother by delivering his feeling on twitter. In addition, it represents ethnicity.

11. 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2013: Hate it when they fakin

Themes: Declarative Statement and Introspection

Trey Songz implies his emotion to people who are basically not true to themselves and only do things to impress other people in an attempt to make friends. In addition, this tweet represents racism.

12. 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2013: I stole ALLL da kisses

Themes: Declarative Statement, Family and Friends, and Photoshare

Trey Songz implies the attention to his family's child. He tries to show off his well behavior. Moreover, it represents ethnicity.

13. 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2013: Extraordinary things... @**GreyGoose** #**CherryNoir**

Themes: Declarative Statement, Active Lifestyle, Expressing Excitement, and Photoshare

Trey Songsz shares a picture of what he did at an event by holding up a glass of vodka "Grey Goose – Cherry Noir" to his fans and media. Furthermore, he is more likely to engage with his fans by posting that picture. It delivers the online identity construction and counters the media streotype by showing his personality to his fans and media. It represents ethnicity.

14. 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2013: Today was a good day...

Themes: Declarative Statement and Photoshare

Trey Songz delivers his happiness to the media and posts his picture with a girl who is from black ethnic group. In addition, it represents the ethnicity.

15. 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2013: STORY...

Themes: Declarative Statement, Introspection, and Photoshare

Trey Songz states the journey of his life and he also wants to confirm to fans and media about his career path from the beginning until now as an American black singer. Furthermore, it represents ethnicity.

*B. NASIR JONES*

1. 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2012: Life Is Good / Black Rage Tour!!! Tickets on sale 9/21

Themes: Declarative Statement, Photoshare, Music, and World News

Nasir Jones brings "black rage" as the racial reality of America into the court by presenting "social context" or "social framework" evidence for his tour name. Haris (1999) has also described the black rage to judges as "social reality" or "racial reality" evidence. It describes a lawyer's gestalt, a theory of the case, an all-encompassing strategy that uses racial reality evidence to establish self-defense, diminished capacity, insanity, mistake of fact, duress, or other state-of-mind defenses allowed by the criminal law. Moreover, this tweet represents racism.

2. 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2012: Check this out! The kids of @ATLmusicproject performing I Can!  
<http://youtu.be/9CmSwEAkqvc> **#LifeIsGood #amplifyATL #ATL**

Themes: Declarative Statement, Family and Friends, Humanitarian, Music, and World News

Nasir Jones posts a Video of the Atlanta Music Project's activity. He delivers his care and love for children who have passion for music. He also shares his concern to children from black ethnic group. It represents ethnicity.

3. 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2012: Hey young world!! Go get my lil bro @MiguelUnlimite new album, out now!!  
<http://smarturl.it/KD?iqID=t>

Themes: Declarative Statement, Family and Friends, and World News

Nasir Jones aims to give support to one of American black singers who have the same ethnic with him. In addition, it represents ethnicity.

4. 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2012: Me & Pops for The Gap. #LifeIsGood

Themes: Declarative Statement, Expressing Excitement, Family and Friends, and Photoshare

Nasir Jones posts a picture of him and friends. They are from black ethnic group. In addition, they express their happiness after the show. This tweet represents racism and ethnicity.

5. 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2012: Happy Born Day Gov!!! @Jungle\_QB

Themes: Declarative Statement, Expressing Excitement, Family and Friends, Salutation and Photoshare

Nasir Jones aims to a birthday greeting to his friend who is also from black ethnic group. In addition, he shows off a picture of him and friends of black ethnicity to fans and media. In addition, it represents ethnicity.

6. 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2012: If you missed it, here's me and @hamiltonanthony performing "World's An Addiction" on **#CONAN**: <http://bit.ly/UeHzmE>

Themes: Declarative Statement, Event Attendance, Family and Friends, Music, and Expressing Excitement



Nasir Jones delivers his happiness about his performance with one of American black singers. This tweet represents ethnicity. Nasir Jones also shows off his performance to his fans by posting a video.

7. 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2013: Proof that Michael Jackson is the Greatest Musician Ever..Just Listen 2 Baby Be Mine. Period.

Themes: Declarative Statement, Expressing Excitement, and Family and Friends

Nasir Jones expresses his pride to Michael Jackson. He is a legend in the entertainment world as a singer who is also from black ethnic group. In addition, this tweet represents ethnicity.

8. 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2013: Shout out to the legendary Arsenio Hall !!! HE'S HISTORIC

Themes: Declarative Statement, Expressing Excitement, and World News

Nasir Jones states his expression of gratitude to one of the American black actors "Arsenio Hall". He is a legend in the entertainment world. This tweet represents ethnicity.

9. 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2013: Bring Back @ArsenioHall!! Check out how I inspired him to bring his show back!! <http://nasirjones.com/news/140191> #Arsenio Much love brotha!!

Themes: Declarative Statement, Expressing Excitement, and World News

Nasir Jones expresses his happiness and love to Arsenio Hall after he inspired him. As people know that Arsenio Hall is a legend in the entertainment world as an actor who is also from black ethnic group. In addition, this tweet represents ethnicity.

10. 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2013. Alkebulan. So I've herd. I don't not kno if America had another name first. America sounds Fly tho. Africa to. I'm used to it.

Themes: Declarative Statement, Introspection, and World News

Nasir Jones writes information about America and Africa and their other names actually. He is also sharing his thoughts and entering into conversation with his fans who are from black ethnic. It represents racism and ethnicity.

11. 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2013: Africa's original name was .....

Themes: Declarative Statement, Introspection, and World News

Nasir Jones tries to communicate with his fans who are from black ethnic group. He shares the ethnicity topic such as an African history in his tweets in order to get along with them. It represents ethnicity.

12. 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2013: Knowledge & Power

Themes: Declarative Statement and Introspection

Nasir Jones describes his point of view about knowledge and power. He tries to convey that being knowledgeable is not just one quality, but is many and a process of learning, experiencing, knowing and understanding. When people have knowledge, they have to understand the truly of powerful itself. It also represents racism and ethnicity in this world, especially for black ethnic.

13. 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2013: Happy G'day to @GabeHeight !!!!! My nig G code!!

Themes: Declarative Statement, Expressing Excitement, Family and Friends, Salutation

Nasir Jones aims to a birthday greeting to his friend who is also from black ethnic group. In addition, he shows off his care and love in order to give the online identity construction. In addition, it represents ethnicity.

14. 14<sup>th</sup> May, Let's hang backstage at @GovBallNYC! <http://bit.ly/17KxhCa> Enter now at @omaze & help me support kids worldwide thru @unicefusa

Themes: Declarative Statement, Expressing Excitement, Music, and World News



Nasir Jones invites his fans especially from black ethnic group to join with his event at Governor's ball NYC. Moreover, it represents ethnicity.

15. 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2013: S/O the good homie @quietAZmoney!

Themes: Declarative Statement, Family and Friends, and Expressing Excitement

Nasir Jones states his love to AZ. He is an American black rapper. This tweet also contains the online identity construction and represents ethnicity.

### C. ANTHONY HAMILTON

1. 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2012: Set your DVRs Sunday 11/4 to see my @[BlackGirlsRock](#) performance. Honored to be one of their 1st male performers!

Themes: Declarative Statement, Expressing Excitement, Music, Promotion, and World News

Anthony Hamilton shares information about black girls' activity as dynamic young women with leadership potential to participate in the program, which offers lectures and workshops lead by world-class professors and other professionals across sectors. It represents racism and ethnicity.

2. 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2012: Early VOTER?? I'm following YOU! Send me a pic (hide your address). [#VoteEarly #Obama2012](#)

Themes: Declarative Statement, Expressing Excitement, and World News

Anthony Hamilton expresses his support to President Obama for the president election in the USA. He also shows off his special vote to President Obama. In addition, he supports Mr. President because of the same ethnic with him as the black people. Moreover, this tweet represents racism and ethnicity. Through his tweet, he points out his stereotype about the power and existence of President Obama as the Black people who is a great leader for the United States of America.

3. 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2012: NF these [#EarlyVoters](#)---> RT @[NursePooka](#): @[HamiltonAnthony](#) me and my boo voted early! [Obama2012 #Forward @BarackObama pic.twitter.com/heoCYUKK](#)

Themes: Declarative Statement, Expressing Excitement, Request, and World News

Anthony Hamilton writes about his vote to President Obama.. Moreover, he points out his stereotype about the power and existence of Obama as the Black people who is a great leader for the United States of America. Moreover, this tweet represents racism and ethnicity.

4. 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2012: RT @[JESS3389](#): My daughter just said between voting @[BarackObama](#) & getting a follow from @[HamiltonAnthony](#) this is the BEST time of her life

Themes: Declarative Statement, Expressing Excitement, and Request

Anthony Hamilton retweets his fan's tweet about President Obama. His fan also states about her daughter who was voting for President Obama and getting a follow from him. Moreover, President Obama and Anthony Hamilton are American black public figures in the world. This tweet represents racism and ethnicity.

5. 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2012: Thanks to everybody who tuned in tonight to celebrate our women! Women of many shades, personalities (cont) <http://tl.gd/jt3e98>

Themes: Declarative Statement, Expressing Excitement, Humanitarian, Music, and World News

Anthony Hamilton expresses his gratitude to his fans who were attending in the black girls' event. This tweet represents ethnicity.

6. 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2012: Thank you Beverly Bond for giving us a platform to showcase our love you our sisters and our love (cont) <http://tl.gd/jt3f0g>

Themes: Declarative Statement, Expressing Excitement, Family and Friends, and Humanitarian

Anthony Hamilton expresses his gratitude to his friend “Beverly Bond” who supports the black girls in the world. He also tries to give the online identity construction in his tweet. In addition, this tweet represents ethnicity.

7. 4<sup>th</sup> November , 2012: And to all those who give kind words from the heart to me. I love you all sincerely! Thanks for (cont) <http://tl.gd/jt3fk2>

Themes: Declarative Statement, Expressing Excitement, Humanitarian, and Salutation

Anthony Hamilton writes about his gratitude to his fans always give kind words to him and support President Obama. He also expresses his special love to his fans who are black. This tweet represents racism and ethnicity.

8. 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2012: My friend our country need your vote. More than ever before we need to vote and get our family (cont) <http://tl.gd/jtaq0l>

Themes: Declarative Statement, Introspection and World News

Anthony Hamilton expresses his support to President Obama for the president election in the United States. Moreover, he supports Mr. President because of the same ethnic with him as the black people. This tweet represents ethnicity.

9. 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2012: RT @BarackObama: The choice in this election is clear. Make your voice heard. Confirm where you (cont) <http://tl.gd/jtarib>

Themes: Declarative Statement, Expressing Excitement, Request, and World News

Anthony Hamilton shows his support to President Obama by retweeting President Obama’s tweet. In addition, this tweet represents racism and ethnicity. Through his tweet, he points out his stereotype about the power and existence of Obama as the Black people who is a great leader for the United States of America. He is also sharing his thoughts and entering into conversation with his fans about the president election.

10. 6<sup>th</sup> November, 2012: Use your Twitter influence to help turn out the vote. Follow/retweet @Obama2012 and join the Twitter Team: <http://my.barackobama.com/twteam>

Themes: Declarative Statement, Expressing Excitement, Promotion, Request, and World News

Anthony Hamilton announces President Obama’s twitter team. He tries to persuade his fans to vote and join the Twitter team. It represents ethnicity as well.

11. 6<sup>th</sup> November, 2012: A beautiful family RT @thecrimsoncouch: @HamiltonAnthony Excited to share this vote with parents! #obamabiden2012 [pic.twitter.com/ZIO1bFCs](http://pic.twitter.com/ZIO1bFCs)

Themes: Declarative Statement, Expressing Excitement, Request, and Photoshare

Anthony Hamilton retweets his fan’s tweet about her vote with family for President Obama. In addition, this tweet represents ethnicity.

12. 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2012: Don't miss my performance of "World's an Addiction" w/ @Nas tonight on Conan. TBS at 11PM!

Themes: Declarative Statement, Expressing Excitement, Music, Promotion, and World News

Anthony Hamilton gives information about his performance through Twitter, he asks his fans to attend the event. In addition, he would perform with Nas who is also an American black singer. This tweet represents ethnicity.

13. 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2013: Me and Chuck Harmony! Mad talent!!  
Themes: Declarative Statement, Family and Friends, Expressing Excitement, and Photoshare  
Anthony Hamilton declares his friendship with one of American black public figures. This tweet bears the online identity and counter the media stereotypes about black people. Moreover, it represents racism and ethnicity.
14. 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2013: Austin it's you & me tonight. @urbanmusicfest <http://lockerz.com/s/288558967>  
Themes: Declarative Statement, Expressing Excitement, Music, Promotion, World News, and Photoshare  
Anthony Hamilton shares his picture for an event of Austin festival. This show would be performed by American black singers. Furthermore, it represents racism and ethnicity.
15. 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2013: Thanks in advance to every 1 who supports me my wife our family and the greater cause for us all. (cont) <http://tl.gd/lll9en>  
Themes: Declarative Statement, Expressing Excitement, Humanitarian, and World News  
Anthony Hamilton expresses his gratitude to his fans who always support him and family. His special thanks go to his fans who are black. This tweet represents racism and ethnicity

Table 2: Themes in Trey Songz, Nasir Jones, and Anthony Hamilton's Tweets

Themes	Trey Songz	Nasir Jones	Anthony Hamilton	Totals
Active Lifestyle				
Declarative Statement				
Event Attendance				
Expressing Excitement				
Family and Friends				
Humanitarian				
Inspection				
Music				
Photoshare				
Promotion				
Question				
Request				
Flattery				
Spirituality				
Sports				
Travel				
World News				

The most common theme among three American black singers was “Declarative Statement,” which makes a common sense of power. Twitter was created on the basis of sharing thoughts and entering into conversation (McMillan, 2011). “Declarative Statement” occurred in forty-five tweets; the second most frequent theme was “Expressing Excitement.” It occurred in only twenty-eight tweets. In addition, “World News” theme was found in twenty-one tweets; “Event Attendance” was only one tweet and none of coded themes, occurring in “Question, Spirituality, and Sports.”

## DISCUSSION

The research question asks themes of discourses that represent racism and ethnicity in the three American black singers' tweets, the representation of racism and ethnicity in American black singers' tweets, and the meaning and values of American black singers' tweet. They perform the concept of power to reflect the interests of the power elite, online identity constructions, and the media stereotypes, as they relate to racism and ethnicity. Literature suggests that mainstream media idealizes the racism and ethnicity as a characteristic of American black singers (Billings, et al., 2002; Hardin, et al., 2009; Trujillo, 1991). A Critical Discourse Analysis was used to detect themes present in the tweets of three American black singers. As the results of this study show, each singer in the sample uses Twitter to make declarative statements in a unique way. The 'talk' of the three American black singers shows racism and ethnicity as an overarching theme.

Using Twitter as a "front stage" for identity presentation, Trey Songz performs a personality showing declarative statement, active lifestyle, expressing excitement, family and friends, introspection and photoshare with his everyday life (Goffman, 1959). He also tweets about music and travel with his followers such as fans and media, expecting genuine care about his whereabouts and well-being. Nasir Jones presents declarative statement, expressing excitement, family and friends, introspection, photoshare with his followers to create the stereotypes of American black singers. He also shares his event attendance, humanitarian, music, salutation, and world news.

In addition, Anthony Hamilton performs his identity as a good singer. He always interacts on a personal level with his followers. He presents declarative statement, expressing excitement, family and friends, humanitarian, introspection, music, photoshare, promotion request, salutation, and world news. In addition, the most personal tweets pertain to "Expressing Excitement," and "Word News".

Moreover, the results of this study show that these three American black singers' tweets represent the maintenance of an existing group, and raising black people from the dominant of white class and the positions of power and stature in American society. These tweets also have meaning and values as the concept of power to reflect the interests of the strength elite, online identity construction, and a place to counter the media stereotypes. (Van Dijk, 1998).

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings indicate a vigorous conversation surrounding the rebellion of a dominant media ideology of American black singers as racism and ethnicity; however, they show the American black singers presenting the concept of power to reflect the interests of the strength elite, online identity construction, and a venue to counter the media stereotypes (Enck-Wanzer, 2009). Moreover, a deep analysis was conducted on the fifteen tweets from each singer to present an answer to the question regarding racism and ethnicity of American black singers and the most common theme among three American black singers' tweets was "Declarative Statement," which makes a common sense of power.

Furthermore, Critical Discourse Analysis is an effective method for deconstructing the identity of Twitter users, if the researcher is prepared to make argues on the themes exposed during coding. Twitter is a moderately new phenomenon, and until more research is present. This particular study presents future researchers an opportunity to see what has, and has not worked, in regards to the online identity presentation related to Critical Discourse Analysis through a social networking service.

## LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

There are no American white singers included in the sample, and only the American black singers are presented. Because the parameters surrounding Critical Discourse Analysis are not firmly distinct, it was essential to pay attention to what is considered non-analysis. Moreover, the researchers must be careful not to summarize or be partial during coding, and cannot conduct under analysis by simply discovering themes (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008:238). Consistent, deep analysis was the only way to correctly tribute the formulation of the study. If the researchers took a position on the content of these tweets, be it personal, political, or otherwise, the study would misplace validity. It was very important that when analyzing data of this type, the focus was on presenting the most accurate representation of the data possible. Taking a side in this study, making hypothesizes specifically to support the formulation of the study would have invalid all value of the study. Regardless of outcome, this research has rate in regards to understanding the social presentation of American black singers (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008:238).

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## SMART ASSESSMENT IN CYBER ENVIRONMENT: A SWOT ANALYSIS (THE PRACTICALITY OF SMART ASSESSMENT)

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### ABSTRACT

Despite stepping the world into the era of creating the e-learning content for educational system, e-assessment plays an important role in e-learning justice. The purpose of this qualitative study is to consider viability and practicality of e-assessment from multi-dimensional perspectives such as Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT), based on the learners, teachers and administrators attitudes toward designing an ideal agenda for performing e-assessment in an actual e-learning environment, and in line with the constructivists' approach and Richard's maxims. To this end, three questionnaires, a five-point Likert scale one- for three levels of respondents- ranging from 1(strongly agree) to 5 (no idea), are developed for data elicitation from participants, working in e-learning centers of some Iranian universities. Statistically, participants showed their interest in the strengths and opportunities as well as the operational values of e-assessment. But, the study has a deep challenge in its design; another challenging problem is the low IT literacy of the teachers and administrators and the final one refers to the misconception noble savage of the learners. Finally, this study predicts the future stance of development and expansion of e-assessment in the educational context with more collaboration among learners, teachers and administrators in educational settings.

**KEY WORDS:** E-assessment; SWOT analysis; Practicality, Viability

### INTRODUCTION

Assessment is central to the practice of education. For learners, good performance on 'high-stakes' assessment gives access to further educational opportunities and employment. For teachers and administrators, it provides evidence of success as individuals and organizations.

Assessment systems are used to measure individual and organizational success, and so can have a profound driving influence on systems they were designed to serve.

Hersh (2004) advocates the position that assessment of student learning should be considered an integral part of the teaching and learning processes as well as part of the feedback loops that serves to enhance institutional effectiveness. On the other hand, the high price of paper around the globe has already made official administrators both in the ministry of education and in the ministry of Sciences; Research and Technology use e-assessment in educational environments instead of traditional paper and pencil tests. It should be emphasized that there is a significant relationship between how to perform e-assessment and what the outcomes are in education because use of lonely technology will not lead to effectively teaching-learning outcomes.

Based on literature studies, a number of studies have been conducted on the use of e-assessment in education but few studies have been conducted on the how to measure viability of e-assessment in education. In other words, Smart Assessment in Cyber Environment has not been practically studied in educational system of Iran. Therefore, there are particular gaps about advantage and disadvantage use of smart assessment and how smart assessment in cyber environment should be materialized for better implementation.

Thus, this study, by considering that paperless exams have become a need and a must in educational settings and learner orientation and autonomy through e-assessment, intends to shed some light on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of Smart assessments in higher Iranian educational system for performing viable and practical e-assessment within an actual e-learning environment via describe achievable agenda.

The focus of this study is still largely on creating the virtual e-assessment content for educational system based on application of constructivists learning theory and Richard's maxims. By considering that the individual and dependent factors such as attitude and belief of students, teachers and administrators, engaging in e-assessment, play as an important role in the development and implementation of e-assessment, this study uses SWOT analysis in order to enable higher ministry of Iran education to use of viable e-assessment environments in the teaching-learning process instead of traditional paper and pencil tests.

Consequently, this study will depict the road map of Smart Assessment in Cyber Environment and how the system can be improved and expanded in the educational system. Lastly, Conclusion and recommendations are drawn for further researches on the use of E-assessment model in E-learning environments that adds to the practical objectified value of this research.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

R.Q1: To what extent do learners, teachers and administrators supportive of smart assessments?

R.Q2: To what extent are the findings of such assessments generalizable and global or just local?

## **RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS**

1-Neither learners, nor teachers and administrators have methodical and methodological conscious awareness of e-learning & e-assessment foundations.

2- Generalizability of this study is not possible.

## **THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES**

Assessment is not new to academia, with the roots of the current movement dating back over two decades (Martell & Calderon, 2005). In higher education, the first attempts to measure educational outcomes emerged around 1900 with the movement to develop a mechanism for accrediting institutions of higher education (Urciuoli, 2005). E-Assessment is a new online pedagogy that uses ICT to deliver education effectively and not about technology for technology's sake. E-Assessment is one of the domains of e-learning. It refers to assessment which is electronically delivered.

There are claims (Richardson, Baird, Ridgway, Ripley, Shorrocks-Taylor & Swan 2002; Ripley, 2004) that students prefer e-assessment to paper-based assessment, because the users feel more in control; interfaces are judged to be friendly; and because some tests use games and simulations, which resemble both learning environments and recreational activities. According to Hamilton & Shoen (2005), web-based testing has significant advantages in the areas of cost, ease of use, reliability, replicability, scoring, aggregating results, and data management. They explain that digital assessment measures can score themselves with great reliability and no subjectivity while making data available with immediacy. According to Page, project based learning can support critical thinking, multi layered decision making, goal setting, problem solving, and collaboration. As a result, many institutions are anchoring their assessment activities into meaningful scenarios so that students are being assessed on their abilities to apply learning into realistic situations (Page, 2006).

The existence of maladministration examination at any educational level has the greatest threat to the validity and reliability of any examination and consequently to the authenticity and recognition of diploma issued. McAlpine Mhairi's paper (2002) entitled: " Principles of Assessment" (CAA Centre, 2002) breaks assessment down into five main points or criteria that ensure this dialogue is worthwhile: clarity of purpose; validity/reliability; referencing (establishing a common measure across all candidates); the quality of assessment items/instruments; and grading, a process that relates directly to referencing.

The idea of having our assessments computerized is obviously attractive and e-assessment is emerging as a major driver for e-learning for both learners and staff. E-Assessment (sometimes known as Online Assessment, Computer-based Assessment or Computer Assisted Assessment –CAA) certainly has advantages. However, it also has some disadvantages and associated problems.

Research by Clariana and Wallace (2002) has shown that the use of CAA has a positive impact on the test scores of high attaining pupils, when compared to those from paper-based tests, because they assert that higher-attaining students more quickly adapt to new assessment approaches. Noyes, et al. (2004) suggests that lower-performing individuals will be disadvantaged when CAA is used because they assert that a greater work load and additional effort is required to complete a computer-based test. There is also the issue of defining requisite technical skills for students undertaking CAA such as, who should be involved in that training, and when should it take place, especially in the context of overloaded curricula, (Weller, 2002).

Plagiarism is a concern for many thinking of using CAA, (Weller, 2002); but Rovai, (2000) and Carroll, (2002) suggest that assessment design is the key to deterring plagiarism. O'Hare & Mackenzie, (2004) assert that there is a level of imagination and rigor required for the design of assessment online compared to that for more traditional forms of assessment.

Bull and McKenna, (2004: page 3) suggest a number of reasons that academics may wish to use CAA:

1. To increase the frequency of assessment, thereby, motivating students to learn, encouraging students to practice skills.
2. To broaden the range of knowledge assessed.
3. To increase feedback to students and lecturers.
4. To extend the range of assessment methods.
5. To increase objectivity and consistency.
6. To decrease marking loads.
7. To aid administrative efficiency.

Nichol and Milligan (2006) have taken this further to show how e-assessment can support these seven principles by providing:

Timely feedback, opportunities for re-assessment and continuous formative assessment to encourage students' self-esteem, statistics to help tutors evaluate the effectiveness of the assessment— questions answered very poorly can be re-examined in case poorly specified, timely information for tutors to be able to help shape teaching.

Research agrees that constructivism learning theory, which focuses on knowledge construction based on learner's previous experience, is a good fit for e-learning because it ensures learning among learners (Harman & Koohang, 2005; Hung, 2001; Hung & Nichani, 2001).

Honebein (1996) advanced a set of goals that aid the design of constructivism in learning settings. The goals are to:

- Provide experience with the knowledge construction process;
- Provide experience in and appreciation for multiple perspectives;
- Embed learning in realistic and relevant contexts;
- Encourage ownership and voice in the learning process;
- Embed learning in social experience;
- Encourage the use of multiple modes of representation;
- Encourage self-awareness in the knowledge construction process.” (Honebein, 1996 p. 11)

E-assessment has not been limited to certain methods but rather has been an eclectic mix of various approaches and techniques such as “Richard Maxims” that are developed from a good teaching system (1996):

- 1.The maxim of involvement (follow students' interest to maintain involvement)
- 2.The maxim of planning (plan and try to follow your plan)
- 3.The maxim of order (maintain discipline)
- 4.The maxim of encouragement (seek ways to encourage student learning)
- 5.The maxim of accuracy (work for accurate student output)
- 6.The maxim of efficiency (make most of the efficient use of class time)

7. The maxim of conformity (make sure your teaching follows the prescribed method)
8. The maxim of Empowerment (give the learner's control)

A major problem of learning and education policy in educational system is the separation of 'academic' and 'practical' subjects. Regrettably, learning and education policy is separated from 'practical' subjects. E-assessment has undoubtedly to play a major role in defining and implementing curriculum change in education. Governments have strong commitment to implementation of high quality e-assessment by good initial progress has been made in education system; therefore, there is a need to be vigilant that the design of e-assessment systems is driven by considerations.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Introduction***

The world stepped into the era of online information and technologies that virtually have impact on all sides of human life including economics, education, social and cultural sides. Undoubtedly, the progresses made advances in World Wide Web and Open Source software have led to many changes in the areas of teaching, way of education and learning, triggering to the formation of a new teaching and learning agenda, termed as "E-learning". Expansion of virtual E-assessment is one of the most appropriate approaches for making higher education for students by easily and conveniently accessing to self-assessment.

### ***Method***

This qualitative study, for evaluating the E-assessment effects on improving learning quality, favors descriptive/correlational method for survey because variables are non-experimental. Therefore, the correlation of independent variables such as, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats are considered with dependent variables which are the attitude of administrators, teachers and learners towards E-assessment. The qualitative data are gathered from learners, teachers and educational administrators through five likert-point questionnaires along with face-to-face interviews. Interviews are done at each selected E-learning center in order to obtain the participants' perceptions towards the effectiveness of E-courses. The qualitative approach was preferred as it would help the researcher to capture accurately the standpoints of participants in more facets. The whole process involved collecting information through the interview, asking questions about the data collected, decoding the meaning through a combination of techniques, analyzing and evaluating the conclusions and disseminating the findings.

### ***Participants***

As the aim of this qualitative study is to identify factors that affect the effectiveness of e-assessment in Iran's universities, statistical population (N=110) consists of three groups, including 10 educational administrators; 30 teachers and 60 learners from three Universities which offered their General English in e-assessment-based instructions format. It should be noted that unfortunately, they do not have enough IT literacy about e-assessment especially learners who are noble savage. The participants were invited to respond to items, receiving information in a face-to-face oral interview.

### ***Instrument***

On the basis of literature review, three questionnaires were developed to collect the necessary data from administrators, teachers and learners. The questionnaires covered four areas: 1) Strengths features; 2)Weaknesses features; 3) Opportunities features; 4) Threats features; main components of e-learning in higher e-assessment extension and educational system, which were measured on a five-point Likert scale which ranged from 1(strongly agree) to 5 (No idea). Content and face validity of research instrument was done by committee members and some experts in this field. Questionnaire reliability was separately calculated by Alpha Cronbach coefficient for each question of three questionnaire templates. Based on the results of this test and the correlation coefficient, some questions were eliminated and some others were modified. In general, the reliability for the each questionnaire as research instrument was estimated respectively students' questionnaire=0.80, teachers' questionnaire=0.89 and administrators' questionnaire=0.76. The compiled data from completed questionnaires, saving at data bank, were analyzed by SPSS version 18 for description and inference.

### ***Data Analysis***

Participants 'opinions were evaluated using a self-administered 40-item, likert scale questionnaire (items regarding Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of E-assessment method). Administrators, teachers and students ranked these choices in an order of completely agree (score: 5) to no idea (score: 1) in a manner which best described their opinions. In addition, open- ended questionnaires as a research instrument inviting administrators, teachers and learners to reflect their viewpoints about implementation of educational programs through E-assessment:

I) Strengths: If the method attracts the administrators, teachers and students to fallow the E-assessment eagerly (10 items: e. g. "E-assessment enables administrators, teachers and students to use a wide range of sources for discussing teaching subjects in an easier way than in traditional ways of teaching"; "Online assessments can provide increased instruction time for administrators and teachers for students").

II) Weaknesses: How do the administrators, teachers and students feel defenselessly in learning within e-assessment (5 items: e. g. "One of the noted barriers to use e-assessment is related to growing up professional candidates for planning and using online tests for evaluation processes"; "Lack of good experience in e- assessment history hinders new administrators, teachers and students from getting interested in its possibilities").

III) Opportunities: How do the administrators, teachers and students think about the effectiveness use of the e-assessment on learning outcome (12 items: e.g. "E- assessment can create co-operation in teaching among administrators, teachers and students"; " Using e-assessment make an opportunity for administrators, teachers and students to use new teaching methods in cyber teaching environments")

IV) Threats of using E-assessment: How do the administrators, teachers and students feel not enough ability to provide and use electronic educational materials in the e-assessment (8 items: e.g. " E- assessment courses can result in an overload of work that administrators, teachers and students find hard to cope with"; " the administrators, teachers and students specializing involved in e-assessment may see their work undervalued and downgraded by colleagues because it be considered more as a hobby than as rigorous academic teaching expertise").



## RESULTS

In order to determine the factors and effective fields for E-assessment application development in educational system, the determined variables from administrators, teachers and students were entered in to factor analysis.

**Descriptive Statistics of the students 'questionnaire**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Threats	40	8	20	14.70	2.356
Weaknesses	40	12	23	18.22	2.778
Strengths	40	20	47	36.25	6.134
Opportunities	40	20	53	38.90	6.961
Sum	40	70	138	108.08	14.759
Valid N	40				

The above descriptive statistics in the table seems to lend support to the fact that based on the completed students' questionnaire the students prefer items, related to the strengths and opportunities rather than the weaknesses and threats for implementing and improving e-assessment model in Iranian educational system.

### Strengths. Statistics, related to the students' SWOT analysis

		Opportunities	Strengths	Weakness	Threats	Sum
Opportunities	Pearson	1	.63 *	.32 *	.44 **	.86 *
	Sig. (2-	.	.00	.04	.00	.00
	N	4	4	4	4	4
Strengths	Pearson	.63 *	1	.03	.32 *	.31 *
	Sig. (2-	.00	.	.62	.03	.03
	N	4	4	4	4	4
Weaknesses	Pearson	.32 *	.03	1	.35 *	.59 *
	Sig. (2-	.04	.62	.	.02	.00
	N	4	4	4	4	4
Threats	Pearson	.44 *	. *	.35 *	1	.67 *
	Sig. (2-	.00	.03	.02	.	.00
	N	4	4	4	4	4
Sum	Pearson Correlation	.86 *	.31 *	.59 *	.67 **	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.03	.00	.00	.
	N	4	4	4	4	4

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Correlation among independent variables in the table including: Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats indicates that there is strong correlation at 0.01 probabilities between strengths and opportunities variables in the filled out questionnaire by the students.

**Descriptive Statistics of the teachers 'questionnaire**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Weaknesses	40	15	29	23.25	3.678
Threats	40	17	30	25.60	4.075
Opportunities	40	25	40	34.15	4.715
Strengths	40	28	50	40.90	5.683
Sum	40	97	147	123.90	15.293
Valid N	40				

The above descriptive statistics in the table seems to lend support to the fact that based on the completed teachers' questionnaire the teachers prefer items, related to the strengths and opportunities rather than the weaknesses and threats for implementing and improving e-assessment model in Iranian educational system.

**Statistics, related to the teachers' SWOT analysis**

		Strengths	Opportunities	Weaknesses	Threats
Strengths	Pearson Correlation	1	.749**	.497**	.744**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.001	.000
	N	40	40	40	40
Opportunities	Pearson Correlation	.749**	1	.443**	.645**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.004	.000
	N	40	40	40	40
Weaknesses	Pearson Correlation	.497**	.443**	1	.457**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.004	.	.003
	N	40	40	40	40
Threats	Pearson Correlation	.744**	.645**	.457**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.003	.
	N	40	40	40	40

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation table among independent variables of Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats, based on Pearson product correlation coefficient indicates that there is strong correlation at 0.01 probabilities among four independent variables in the filled out questionnaire by the teachers.

**Descriptive statistics of administrators' questionnaire**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strengths	10	25	40	32.60	4.949
Opportunities	10	22	45	35.10	7.156
Weaknesses	10	16	24	20.30	2.830
Threats	10	13	23	18.70	3.057
Sum	10	80	121	106.70	13.695
Valid N	10				

Considering the mean score of independent variables in the above descriptive statistics table, and based on the questionnaire from, filled out by the administrators, it seems that administrators' viewpoints about E-assessment application development in Iranian educational system at first

focuses on strengths variable and then on opportunities variable than weaknesses and threats variables.

#### Statistics, related to the administrators' SWOT analysis

		Strengths	Opportunities	Weaknesses	Threats
Strengths	Pearson Correlation	1	.646*	-.006	.542
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.044	.986	.106
	N	10	10	10	10
Opportunities	Pearson Correlation	.646*	1	.227	.586
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.044	.	.528	.075
	N	10	10	10	10
Weaknesses	Pearson Correlation	-.006	.227	1	.602
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.986	.528	.	.065
	N	10	10	10	10
Threats	Pearson Correlation	.542	.586	.602	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.106	.075	.065	.
	N	10	10	10	10

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation table among independent variables of Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats, based on Pearson Product Correlation Coefficient indicates that there is strong correlation at 0.05 probabilities between strengths and opportunities variables in the filled out questionnaire by the administrators.

Samples seem to be normal in our three groups; hence, analysis of variance can be favored to evaluate interrelatedness of the four basic factors in those three questionnaires.

Since, each group of participants is consisted a normal statistics society in this study, the researcher uses ANOVA, analysis of variances for evaluation of simultaneous effect of four independent variables on the E-assessment application development in educational system. By comparing means of strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats variables of the three questionnaires (administrative, teachers and students) with P-value more than 0.05 by means of ANOVA, analysis of variances it is easily indicative that they do not have any effect on each other.

Comparing means of strengths variable of the three questionnaires by ANOVA analysis (S=Students, T=Teachers and A=Administrators)

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
weakS	Between Groups	43.600	8	5.450	2.725	.439
	Within Groups	2.000	1	2.000		
	Total	45.600	9			
weakT	Between Groups	68.400	8	8.550	.267	.911
	Within Groups	32.000	1	32.000		
	Total	100.400	9			
weakA	Between Groups	70.100	8	8.763	4.381	.354
	Within Groups	2.000	1	2.000		
	Total	72.100	9			

Comparing means of Opportunities variable of the three questionnaires by ANOVA analysis (S=Students, T=Teachers and A=Administrators)

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
operationS	Between Groups	454.400	8	56.800	4.544	.348
	Within Groups	12.500	1	12.500		
	Total	466.900	9			
operationT	Between Groups	113.600	8	14.200	.580	.775
	Within Groups	24.500	1	24.500		
	Total	138.100	9			
operationA	Between Groups	448.400	8	56.050	4.484	.351
	Within Groups	12.500	1	12.500		
	Total	460.900	9			

Comparing means of Threats variable of the three questionnaires by ANOVA analysis (S=Students, T=Teachers and A=Administrators)

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
threatS	Between Groups	51.100	8	6.388	12.775	.213
	Within Groups	.500	1	.500		
	Total	51.600	9			
threatT	Between Groups	128.900	8	16.113	2.014	.499
	Within Groups	8.000	1	8.000		
	Total	136.900	9			
threatA	Between Groups	82.100	8	10.263	5.131	.329
	Within Groups	2.000	1	2.000		
	Total	84.100	9			

## DISCUSSION

This study develops information about successfully application of E-assessment in education context based on social studies research. However, the current study reveals that the usability of E-assessment is questionable and it cannot be relied upon, specifically in social science research.

This major drawback supports that questionnaire is not a reliable technique for data collection, especially when there is a discrepancy between what goes on in the mind of the researcher and what happens in the cognition of the respondents.

Therefore, the following suggestions receive priority:

- 1) ***Correct virtual communities selected for questionnaire distribution:*** The researcher should attempt to select communities, familiar with the subject of the research. As a matter of fact, they were interested in the use of E-assessment in educational system but they have not enough information about merit and demerit in use of such concepts.
- 2) ***Information overload:*** Possibly, the message in each item about E-assessment in the questionnaire was not attended to and just reacted to by the potential respondents. On the other hand, all of respondents do not have enough discretionary time to ask more information about meaning of ambiguous items.
- 3) ***Ease of refusing to participate in the survey:*** Questionnaire surveys rely greatly on respondents' initiative power to participate in. But the questionnaire mode of survey makes it easy to refuse by the participants. A potential respondent could simply delete the message received, either clicking or not clicking on the question with no explanation needed. Omitted responses decrease the validity of subsequent statistical analysis. The absolute number of incomplete items is not of great importance as is the percentage of the total number of returned questionnaires not fully completed.
- 4) ***Mistrust/fear of breach of anonymity:*** Perhaps some people mistrust questionnaire surveys or fear that their identity may be revealed.
- 5) ***Geographically diverse:*** The researcher has to travel to certain locations to find people who belong to certain organizations as participants. Assistance from professional organizations will definitely help to obtain valid and reliable results. Questionnaire surveys definitely cannot research much more geographically diverse regions that online surveys can. There are more expenses required for either participants or academics.
- 6) ***Great effort:*** On the other hand, to increase the response rate and obtain reliable and valid results from questionnaire surveys, great effort is required for designing a questionnaire. On one hand, it is important to include all the necessary items in order to collect the information needed and to control the length of the questionnaire as longer surveys may yield a lower response rate.
- 7) ***Limitations of the surveys:*** This survey is not reliable because the researcher collects data at a single point in time and not considers improvements in the educational system at different points in time. As matter of fact, frequent periodic surveys, often impractical, are expensive and time-consuming, but they add to the consistency of the findings.
- 8) ***Authenticity Question:*** This survey has not real authenticity because generally it cannot reflect potential pitfalls application of e-assessment in nowadays educational system. However, a single cross-sectional survey cannot unravel the different effects of each of SWOT factors on each other; in fact it is very difficult on the base of result of this survey to prove that exactly which factors actually cause impediment to the viability improvement of this application.

## CONCLUSION

This study supports that survey is not reliable enough, especially in certain social contexts, when there is a discrepancy between issues, derived from related literature and low literacy of respondents in some such issues. Hence, it is neither reliable and viable, nor generalizable.

Restrictions to this survey refer to gather data: 1) limiting access to large population of concern 2) lacking time and funding to carry out survey in different point of time 3) lower priority for carrying out a survey because of low IT literacy of participants to provide accurate, authentic responses 4) this self-constructed questionnaire with closed-ended questions may have a lower validity rate than other survey types 5) collecting data cannot reflect the individual respondent circumstances or the local culture that may be the root cause of respondent behavior.

The researcher confronted with real problems in collecting information from respondents because they were not willing to answer the questions since they believe they will not benefit from responding. Generally, respondents cannot imagine the full context of situation therefore they may read differently into each question and reply based on their own interpretation of the item – i.e. what is ‘agree’ to someone may be ‘disagree’ to someone else lead to subjectivity of responds. As a result, this study gets much more information about the educational system statues, what new and beneficial teaching techniques should be used, and how much progress has been made toward reform.

For better implementation of the flexible e-assessment system in educational system, a diagnostic assessment should be designed in the databases in order to identify preferred students’ learning styles.

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# **NATIVIZATION IN THE SPOKEN MODE OF COMMUNICATION: A STUDY OF THE INNOVATIONS IN THE PRONUNCIATION OF ENGLISH WORDS IN GHANA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The state of English today is that it bears the marks of all the languages and cultures with which it has come into contact. The socio-cultural conditions under which English is used in countries where it is a second language make it inevitable that its forms will depart from that of the native varieties. Research has shown that some innovations in English pronunciation may be due to the contact with languages with which it co-exists. The influence of indigenous languages on English occurs at all levels of linguistic analysis (lexical, morphological, phonological, semantic, syntactic and so on); however, pronunciation deviations are probably the ones most readily attributed to mother-tongue interference. The present paper is on nativization of the English language at the phonological level. The nature of the nativization is the influence of the indigenous Ghanaian languages on the pronunciation of English words by educated Ghanaians. The findings of the current study reveal that in Educated Ghanaian English (EGE) most words are articulated on the basis of their spellings.

**KEYWORDS:** Nativization, Spelling pronunciation, Received Pronunciation, Educated Ghanaian English, Communication, Non-native varieties of English

## **INTRODUCTION**

The growth and spread of English across the globe has given rise to many new varieties of English outside its native domains. The new Englishes have evolved into varieties which serve a wide range of communicative purposes and have developed their own character (Jenkins, 2003). With regard to the new varieties of English, Kachru (1997) establishes that the localized norms have distinctive linguistic, literary and cultural identity. Non-native varieties of English have developed through the imposition of English on populations that predominantly speak other languages. Speakers of non-native varieties are bilingual, having acquired English through the educational system (Bamgbose, 1997). With non-native varieties of English, the linguistic resources are creatively exploited by users to fashion out new forms of expression. Prator's (1968: 464) view on non-native varieties of English is worth stating here: "A second-language variety of English is a tongue caught up in a process that tends to transform it swiftly and quite predictably into an utterly dissimilar tongue." In Prator's opinion, a non-native variety of English should be regarded as a new type of English. More linguistic scholars have come to accept that non-native varieties of English exist in their own right and that they are suitable models for speakers in those nations for whom they are intended. Language is dynamic, and it is an aspect of growth and adaptation to cultural and linguistic settings that varieties of language develop.

The influence of local languages has left a permanent mark on non-native varieties of English in terms of code-mixing, code-switching, nativization, register-shift, loan translations and so forth.

What is needed is a concept of innovation which is a dynamic and systematic process involving not only language form but culturally determined as well as creative uses of English (Bamgbose, 1997). The process of nativization, by which non-native varieties of English emerge, consists in innovations in language form and language use. Linguistic scholars perceive nativization in varied ways. . For instance, Richard (1978) uses the concept in the sense of acquisition of native-like features by a learner in a second or foreign language context. This perception implies a process by which learners become like native speakers in their use of a second language. On the other hand, Owusu-Ansah (1997) views nativization as a process of linguistic change in which a foreign language becomes an integral part of the culture of a society which employs it as an additional language while it still maintains many features of the language as it is used by the native speakers. With this process, the foreign language in question loses some of its native-like characteristics. It acquires some features of the languages in the community in which it has been introduced.

Peter (1994) also supports the latter view on nativization. According to him, before a foreign language is integrated into a non-native culture, it loses some of its linguistic features. Kachru (1992) also perceives nativization in his own unique fashion. According to him, once English was adopted in a region, whether for science, technology, literature, prestige, elitism or modernization, it went through various reincarnations that were partly linguistic and partly cultural. The reincarnations were essentially caused by the new bilingual or multilingual settings, and by the new contexts in which English had to function. Gyening's (1997) position on nativization is also worth noting. In his view, as English spreads to all parts of the world, it has become necessary for its non-native speakers to fashion out for themselves words for concepts which are in their indigenous languages and cultures but which are absent from the English language and culture. Achebe (1972) also talks about nativization in his statement on the English Language. Achebe feels that the English language will be able to carry the weight of his African experience. But for him, it will have to be a new kind of English which is still in communion with its ancestral home, yet altered to suit its new African surroundings. Achebe regards nativized varieties of English as new Englishes.

The present study focuses on nativization as a process by which a language, foreign to a community, acquires certain characteristics which were not originally present in the language as it is used by its native speakers. This nativization process, which affects the foreign language, takes place at all levels of linguistic analysis such as pronunciation, meaning, grammar (morphology and syntax) and discourse and may help to distinguish the new variety so created from both native-speaker varieties and other non-native varieties. Nativization inevitably involves breaking native-speaker norms which define standard varieties. However, Bamgbose (1982) advocates the need to guide the process of nativization along the path of a national standard that is both internationally and locally acceptable. The present paper was inspired by the observation made by Sey (1973: 143): "The pronunciation of Educated Ghanaian English (EGE) is markedly different from Received Pronunciation (RP) although the latter is supposed to be the model aimed at in schools". The current study is an investigation of the innovations in the pronunciation of English words by educated Ghanaians.

#### **RECEIVED PRONUNCIATION (RP)**

Received Pronunciation (RP) is basically educated Southern British English. It has become more widely known and acceptable through the advent of radio. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) adopted this form of pronunciation for its transmission; thus, RP is often identified with BBC English. This special function of RP in broadcasting, has led to its being the form of pronunciation most commonly presented in books on the phonetics of British English and traditionally taught to foreigners. The BBC is constantly bringing the RP accent to the whole of Britain. The more marked characteristics of regional speech, and in the London Region, the popular forms of pronunciation, are tending to be modified in the direction of RP, which is equated with the correct pronunciation of English. In the United Kingdom (UK) certain types of regional pronunciations are well established. For instance, Scottish English speech is universally acceptable while the popular forms of pronunciation used in large towns such as London, Liverpool, or Birmingham are generally characterized as sub-standard or ugly by those who do not use them. Features of regional pronunciation, without RP influence will be found in highly educated and less educated speech. There is however a modified version of the regional pronunciation which has adopted certain RP characteristics. Three main types of RP can be distinguished: the conservative RP forms used by the older generation and, traditionally, by certain professions or social groups; the general RP forms most commonly in use and typified by the pronunciation adopted by the BBC; and the advanced RP forms mainly used by young people of exclusive social groups—mostly of the upper classes, but also, for prestige value in certain professional circles. It can be said that if improved communications and radio have spread RP extensively, these same channels have rendered other forms of pronunciation less remote and strange. In fact, RP itself will not yield the requisite result if used in inappropriate social situations, as it may be construed as a mark of affectation or a desire to emphasize social superiority.

At this point, one can infer that RP is not spoken by everybody in the UK. Gimson (1962) has observed that speakers of RP are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that their type of pronunciation is one which is used by only a very small part of the English-speaking world. It is worth quoting, also, what Sey (1973: 144) says about RP “It must be remembered that native English-speaking teachers, preachers, administrators and traders who have from the earliest times come into contact with Ghanaians have not always been Received Pronunciation speakers.” Abercrombie (cited in Kachru, 1992) is of the opinion that RP does not reflect the social reality of England. He thinks RP does not necessarily represent the English of educated people. His reason is that while those who speak RP consider themselves educated, they are out-numbered by the educated people who do not speak RP.

There has always existed a great diversity in the spoken realizations of English in terms of the sounds used in different parts of the UK and other places of the world where English is spoken. Today, the English are particularly sensitive to variations in the pronunciation of their language. However, great prestige is still attached to RP—an implicitly accepted social standard of pronunciation.

## **THE SOUND SYSTEM OF LANGUAGE**

Given that human beings have different physical features, in a sense, every individual has a physically different vocal tract. Consequently, in purely physical terms, every individual will pronounce sounds differently. There are then, potentially numerous physically different ways of pronouncing a word. Furthermore, each individual will not pronounce a word in a physically identical way on every occasion. Obvious distinctions occur when the individual is crying, is

asking for additional bottle of beer, or is suffering from a cold. There is a vast range of potential differences in the actual physical production of a speech sound and this phenomenon falls within the framework of phonology which is defined as the description of the systems and patterns of speech sounds in a language.

Phonology is based on a theory of what every speaker of a language unconsciously knows about the sound patterns of that language. Due to its theoretical nature, phonology is concerned with the abstract or mental aspect of the sounds in language rather than with the actual physical articulation of speech sounds. Phonology is about the underlying design of the sound type that serves as the constant basis of all the variations in different physical articulation of that sound type in different contexts (Yule, 1996). Phonology is also concerned with the abstract set of sounds in a language which allows us to distinguish meaning in the actual physical sounds we say and hear. The sounds /f/, /v/, /w/, /d/, and /p/ are abstract sound units which make the words *fine*, *vine*, *wine*, *dine* and *pine* meaningfully distinct. In fact, there are meaningful consequences related to the use of one sound segment rather than the others. Each one of these meaning – distinguishing sounds in a language is referred to as a phoneme.

The phoneme is a single sound type and it is represented by a single symbol. It is worth noting that slash marks are conventionally used to indicate a phoneme, /k/, an abstract sound segment, as opposed to the square brackets, as in [k], used for each phonetic or physically produced segment. An essential feature of a phoneme is that it functions contrastively. For instance, the two sound segments /h/ and /p/ are phonemes in English because they are the only basis of the contrast in meaning between the words *hot* and *pot*. This contrastive attribute is the basic test for determining the phonemes which exist in a language (Yule, 1996). From another perspective, if the sound /f/ is substituted for /d/, as in *five* and *dive*, there will be a change of meaning: the two sounds /f/ and /d/ will represent different phonemes.

While the phoneme is the abstract sound unit, there are several varied versions of that abstract sound segment regularly produced in actual speech. The different versions of the phoneme are referred to as phones. Phones are phonetic sound units and they are presented in square brackets. A set of phones which are variants of one phoneme are referred to as allophones of that phoneme. For instance, the [t] sound of the word *tie* is normally articulated with a stronger puff of air (aspiration) than is present in the [t] sound of the word *stair*. This aspirated version is represented as [t<sup>h</sup>]. The [t] sound between vowels in a word like *waiter* is often realized as a flap which is represented as [D]. In the pronunciation of the word *eighth*, the influence of the final dental sound [θ] causes a dental articulation of the [t] sound. This is represented as [t̪]. Since these variations - [t<sup>h</sup>], [D] and [t̪] - of the phoneme [t] form a set of phones, they would be referred to as allophones.

There are definite patterns to the types of sound combinations permitted in a language. Obviously, forms such as [vxrk] or [wcsg] do not exist in English. They have been formed without regard to some constraints on the sequence or position of English phonemes. Such constraints are called the phonotactics of a language and they are part of every speaker's phonological knowledge.



## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LETTER AND SOUND IN ENGLISH AND GHANAIAIAN LANGUAGES

Generally, each letter of the alphabet represents a particular sound segment of a language. Many early orthographic systems were based on a correspondence between the graphic representation and the phonology (Crane et al, 1981). However, as the pronunciation of many languages underwent significant transformations over the years, the orthography did not always keep pace with the pronunciation. For instance, in English, there is inconsistent relationship between the orthography and phonology. Hence, for the vast majority of words in English, their pronunciations are different from their spellings. One letter of the English alphabet can often be pronounced in different ways. For example, the letter *a* is pronounced differently in the following words: *hand*, *fast*, *cane*, *water*, *dare* and *about*. There are a few selected words below to further illustrate this assertion:

<i>Come</i>	/kʌm/
<i>Bus</i>	/bʌs/
<i>Doubt</i>	/daʊt/
<i>Colonel</i>	/'kɜ:nəl/
<i>Sword</i>	/sɔ:d/
<i>Circle</i>	/'sɜ:kl/
<i>Computer</i>	/kəm'pjʊ:tə/
<i>Journal</i>	/'dʒɜ:nəl/
<i>Goal</i>	/dʒeɪl/
<i>Clerk</i>	/kla:k/

The examples above show lack of one-to-one correspondence between the graphic representation of the word and the pronunciation. Giegerich (1992) also observes that a sound segment in English may be represented by different letters in different words. For instance, the sound /ʃ/ has varied graphic representations in different words: *shine*, *mansion*, *mission*, *duration*, *ocean*. Similarly, in words like *farm*, *doff*, *cough*, *philosophy* and *lieutenant*, different letters represent the same phoneme /f/. It is also worth noting that the letter *g* is pronounced differently in words like: *girdle* [gɜ:dl], *gist* [dʒɪst] and *genre* [ʒa:n]. A group of letters, for example, *ch* is pronounced differently in different words: *church* [tʃɜ:tʃ], *christmas* ['krɪsməs] and *charade* [ʃə'ra:d]. All these illustrations substantiate the lack of correlation between the spelling and the pronunciation of many English words. This inconsistent relationship between the sounds of words and their spelling in English has immense influence on the pronunciation of English words in non-native varieties of English like Educated Ghanaian English.

In contrast to the inconsistency in the correlation between English orthography and phonology is the display of correspondence between the graphic representation and pronunciation in some indigenous Ghanaian languages. For instance, most words in Ga (a Ghanaian language) are pronounced on the basis of their spelling. The Ga people are the ethnic or traditional group in Accra, the capital of Ghana. The Ga language is one of the minority languages of Ghana but because Accra is the centre of governance and economic activities, many Ghanaians actually speak Ga as a second language or at least demonstrate a considerable degree of communicative competence in it (Guerini, 2007). The one-to-one correspondence between the orthography and the phonology of the Ga language is illustrated below:

<b>Ga</b>	<b>English</b>
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<i>Ba</i>	Come
<i>Yaa</i>	Go
<i>La</i>	Sing
<i>Nu</i>	Water
<i>jara</i>	Market
<i>Kaa</i>	Crab
<i>Yaa wɔ</i>	Go to bed
<i>Baa ye niŋ</i>	Come and let's eat
<i>Ta shi</i>	Sit
<i>Yaa fo nu</i>	Go and fetch water

A similar correspondence between spelling and pronunciation exist in Fante; a Ghanaian language spoken in the Central and Western Regions of Ghana. In Fante, words are pronounced based on their spelling. The following are examples:

<b>Fante</b>	<b>English</b>
<i>Edziban</i>	Food
<i>Gyaadze</i>	Kitchen
<i>Buukuu</i>	Book
<i>nsu</i>	Water
<i>kɔ</i>	Go
<i>Bra</i>	Come
<i>Dzi</i>	Eat
<i>Miridzidzi</i>	I'm eating
<i>Merekyere adze</i>	I'm teaching
<i>Merekyerew</i>	I'm writing

There are many other Ghanaian languages like Ewe in the south, Konkomba in the north and so forth, in which lexical items are articulated on the basis of their spelling. This one-to-one correspondence between the orthography and the phonology of some indigenous Ghanaian languages has influenced the pronunciation of English words. The fact is that the indigenous languages in Ghana are acquired by the majority of Ghanaians at the early childhood stages and spoken in the home environment before they come into contact with the English language (Ngula, 2011). By the time they begin learning English, they would have already acquired the rules, structures and phonology of their first language (L1). It therefore becomes very easy for the acquired rules, structures and phonology of the L1 to be transferred into English. Bamgbose (1971:47) also supports this assertion: According to him, the influence of the local languages on English (as a second language) is immense because certain features of the local languages – phonological, grammatical and lexical – tend to be transferred into English. In Ghana, L1 influence plays a significant role in the spelling pronunciation encountered in the variety of English spoken. L1, indeed, serves as background or preexisting knowledge upon which inferences and predictions can be made to facilitate transfer. Hakuta (1990) also talks about transfer of linguistics features. According to him, native language proficiency is a strong indicator of second language development.

## METHODOLOGY

### ***Research Design and Instrument***

Sociologists and social psychologists are likely to depend on data gathered by the aid of questionnaire or the observation of the behavior of people under controlled experimental situations. The results are realized as numerical corpus analyzed statistically. Anthropologists collect data from uncontrolled human behavior; they employ the research technique of participant observation. Gal (1979) stayed for a year in Oberwart in Eastern Austria living with a local family for the purpose of collecting data for research on language choice and shift. Blom and Gumperz (1972), Gillian Sankoff (1980), Rubin (1968) and Dorian (1981) spent similar long periods staying in the communities in which they were conducting their investigations.

The present study adopted the ethnographic research design. This research design is based on the anthropological research technique of participant observation. According to Fasold (1984), although the subjects of the research may be interviewed and questionnaire data collected, these data are considered strictly supplementary; the main core of data consists of the observation of people's behavior as they carry on their everyday lives. Observation was the main research instrument used in the present study. It provided an empirical basis for capturing language used in its social context. The method of observation used was participant and non-participant. By means of the observation tool, the current researcher gathered data that reflected the way some educated Ghanaians pronounce English words.

### ***Data Collection Procedure***

The current study was based on observation of the pronunciation of English words by a cross-section of educated Ghanaians over a period of four years. The researcher observed that many English words were pronounced based on their spelling. This phonetic characteristic was due to the influence of the Ghanaian languages on English.

During the four year period of the study the researcher made an inventory of words that were pronounced based on their spelling. The investigator first noted the words that were articulated in a manner that is different from Received Pronunciation. He then did a phonetic transcription of the words based on their actual articulation. In fact, the researcher captured in his note pad only words whose pronunciations were based on their orthography. The words in focus were identified by means of auditory perception. The researcher was able to make a distinction between Received Pronunciation and spelling pronunciation due to his English background. He has his first and second degrees in English and he is currently pursuing his PhD in English at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

As a university teacher, the researcher recorded examples of spelling pronunciation from students' conversations and speeches. The researcher also recorded innovative pronunciations that were different from Received Pronunciation at such functions like presentation of manifestoes at the students' halls of residence and during Student Representative Council (SRC) executive elections. As the current investigator interacted with university administrators and colleague lecturers in informal conversations, at formal meetings and other discourse situations, he recorded the nativized versions in the pronunciations of English words. Spelling pronunciations were also recorded from both local and national radio and television networks. Innovative pronunciations different from Received Pronunciation were also recorded from sermons of clergymen presented during church services.

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

This segment of the paper analyses the corpus of the research and discusses the findings of the study. The table below shows the RP versions of the words in focus and also displays the nativized versions for comparative analysis of the data.

Word	Received Pronunciation	Nativised Version
Staunch	/stɔːntʃ/	[stantʃ]
Launch	/lɔːntʃ/	[lantʃ]
Method	/ˈmeθəd/	[metəd]
Govern	/ˈgʌvən/	[gəvən]
Discover	/dɪsˈkʌvə/	[dɪskəvə]
None	/nʌn/	[nən]
Colour	/ˈkʌlə/	[kələ]
Thwart	/θwɔːt/	[θwat]
Other	/ˈʌðə/	[ɔdə]
Quality	/ˈkwɒlətɪ/	[kwalitɪ]
Quantity	/ˈkwɒntətɪ/	/kwantitɪ/
Honest	/ˈɒnɪst/	[honest]
Honey	/ˈhʌni/	[həni]
Alumni	/əˈlʌmnaɪ/	[alumnai]
Young	/jʌŋ/	[jəŋ]
Deposit	/dɪˈpɒzɪt/	[depəsɪt]
Wrong	/rɒŋ/	[rəŋ]
Plumber	/ˈplʌmə/	[pləmbə]
Ladle	/ˈleɪdl/	[ladl]
Worry	/ˈwʌrɪ/	[wəri]
Monday	/ˈmʌndɪ/	[məndəɪ]
Wednesday	/ˈwenzdɪ/	[wenesderɪ]
Adjourn	/əˈdʒɜːn/	[ajən]
Attorney	/əˈtɜːnɪ/	[atənɪ]
Dove	/dʌv/	[dov]
Love	/lʌv/	[ləv]
Glove	/ɡlʌv/	[ɡlov]
Monkey	/ˈmʌŋki /	[mənki]
Oven	/ˈʌvən/	[ovɪn]
Comfort	/ˈkʌmfət/	[kəmfət]
Tongue	/tʌŋ/	[təŋ]
Among	/əˈmʌŋ/	[aməŋ]
Company	/ˈkʌmpəni/	[kəmpenɪ]
Blood	/blʌd/	[bləd]
Flood	/flʌd/	[fləd]
Brother	/ˈbrʌðə/	[brəda]
Mother	/ˈmʌðə/	[məda]
Gesture	/ˈdʒestʃə/	[gestʃə]
Gear	/ɡɪə/	[dʒɪə]
Wander	/ˈwɒndə/	[wanda]
Wonder	/ˈwʌndə/	[wənda]
Enjoy	/ɪnˈdʒɔɪ/	[endʒɔɪ]

Incumbent	/ɪnˈkʌmbənt/	[ɪnˈkʌmbənt]
Trouble	/ˈtrʌbl/	[trɒbl]
Courage	/ˈkʌrɪdʒ/	[kɔreɪdʒ]
Castle	/ˈkɑːsl/	[kɑstɪl]
Won	/wʌn/	[wɒn]
Thorough	/θʌrə/	[tɔrɔ]
Tomb	/tuːm/	[tʊmb]
Onion	/ˈʌnɪən/	[ɒnɪɔn]
Tough	/tʌf/	[tɒf]
Double	/ˈdʌbl/	[dɒbl]
Modest	/ˈmɒdɪst/	[mɔdest]
Country	/ˈkʌntri/	[kaʊntri]
Whistle	/ˈwɪsl/	[wɪstɪl]
Category	/ˈkætəgəri/	[katɪgəri]
Motor	/ˈməʊtə/	[moto]
Principal	/ˈprɪnsəpl/	[prɪnsɪpəl]
Culture	/ˈkʌltʃə/	[kɔltʃə]
Vulture	/ˈvʌltʃə/	[vɔltʃə]
Voucher	/ˈvaʊtʃə/	[vatʃə]
Squad	/skwɒd/	[skwad]
Squat	/skwɒt/	[skwat]
Effort	/ˈefət/	[efɔt]
Oval	/əʊvl/	[oval]
Festival	/festəvl/	[festɪvəl]
Animal	/ænɪml/	[animal]
Approval	/əˈpruːvl/	[apruvəl]
Formal	/ˈfɔːml/	[fɔmal]
Carnival	/ˈkɑːnɪvl/	[kanɪvəl]
Failure	/ˈfeɪljə/	[feɪluə]
Front	/frʌnt/	[frɒnt]

The data above reflect a trend that suggests that spelling pronunciation is dominant among educated Ghanaian users of English. This innovative way of pronouncing English words resulted in the replacement of RP [ɒ] with [a] in EGE, as in the pronunciation of *quality* and *quantity*. From the data RP /ɔ:/ was also realized as [a] in EGE, in words like *staunch* and *launch*. Similarly, in many words in the corpus, the RP /ʌ/ was articulated as [ɔ] in EGE, in the following words: *govern*, *discover*, *none*, *colour*, *other*, *honey*, *young*, *worry*, *Monday*, *love*, *monkey*, *comfort*, *tongue*, *among*, *company*, *blood*, *flood*, *brother*, *mother wonder*, *trouble*, *courage*, *won*, *thorough*, *tough*, *double* and *front*. In standard pronunciation, the *o*, *oo* and *ou* spellings in the words above are articulated as RP /ʌ/ but in Educated Ghanaian English they were articulated as [ɔ]. There were, however, some exceptional cases in the corpus with regard to the realization of RP /ʌ/. In words like *dove*, *glove*, *oven* and *onion*, the graphic symbol *o* is realized as /ʌ/ in standard British English but from the data it was pronounced as [ɔ]. In the current research, mother tongue influence played a significant role in the spelling pronunciations encountered. The letter *u* in words like *plumber*, *alumni* and *incumbent* is pronounced as RP /ʌ/ but it was articulated as [ɔ] and [u] respectively. Again, the graphic symbol *u* in words such as *culture* and *vulture* is realized as RP /ʌ/ but in the present study it was pronounced as [ɔ]. Ngula (2011) describes the phenomenon of spelling pronunciation in the English of educated Ghanaians as innovative feature of pronunciation that is giving Ghanaian English its own character. From the

corpus, the RP /ə/ was realized as [a] in the following words: *discover*, *colour*, *other*, *plumber*, *brother*, *mother*, *wander* and *wonder*.

It is worth noting that the vowel /ə/ is not unknown in the L1. In fact, in some Ghanaian languages /ə/ may be heard for [a] in rapid speech or in weakly stressed syllables (Sey, 1973). The vowels /ə/ and /a/ are not contrastive either in L1 or RP. They are sufficiently alike to be treated as free variants by EGE speakers. Other different realizations of the RP /ə/ in EGE are in the words: *company*, *thorough*, *category*, *motor*, *principal*, *comfort* and *effort*. The RP /ə/ was replaced with the following phones: [e], [ɔ], [ɪ], [o], [i], [ɔ] and [ə] respectively.

With EGE, the spelling of words largely influenced their pronunciation. In the present study, the initial vowel sound in the words *alumni*, *adjourn*, *attorney*, *among* and *approval* was pronounced [a] instead of RP /ə/. The speakers were influenced by the initial letter *a*.

The phenomenon of spelling pronunciation was also manifested in the articulation of the following words: *oval*, *festival*, *animal*, *approval*, *formal* and *carnival*. With RP, the penultimate letter *a* is not pronounced. This confirms the earlier description of the phonology of English made in this paper (the inconsistent relationship between spelling and pronunciation). However, the *a* spelling in the words cited were pronounced as [a] by the EGE speakers. Spelling pronunciation showed itself widely among educated Ghanaian users of English. The difference between RP and EGE pronunciation was established.

There were other English words that were nativised in the present study. The pronunciations of *castle*, *whistle*, *modest*, *honest*, *squad*, *squat*, *wander*, *thwart* and *deposit* were based on their spelling. However, with RP, the spelling is different from the pronunciation. For instance, the standard pronunciation of the *a* spelling in words like *squad*, *squat*, and *wander* is RP /ɒ/ but the nativised version in the corpus is [a]. Similarly, the RP version of words like *castle* and *whistle* is characterized by the deletion of the sound [t] in the pronunciation but the EGE version in the data has the [t] sound in it. Furthermore, the standard pronunciation of the *ar* spelling in *thwart* is RP /ɔ:/ but it was realized as [a] in the data.

From the data, certain diphthongs were articulated as if they were monophthongs. This innovation can be attributed to the phenomenon of spelling pronunciation. The diphthong /eɪ/ in *ladle* was articulated as [a] a monophthong. Similarly, the diphthongs in words like *motor*, *voucher* and *oval* were replaced with pure vowels. The pronunciation of the word *country* was influenced by the word *count*. The fact is that the *ou* spelling in *country* is not a diphthong. It is rather a monophthong /ʌ/ but it was articulated as [aʊ] a diphthong.

Another spelling pronunciation feature noticed in the study is the articulation of the words *young*, *wrong* and *among*. The *ng* spelling at the end of the words is the consonant sound /ŋ/ but it was pronounced as [ng] based on the orthography.

The findings of the current study are in tune with Sey's (1973) assertion that the pronunciation of EGE is distinct from RP. Stevens (1953) also remarks that the English spoken in Ghana is to a large extent unacceptable outside the country. He observed that there has been a deterioration of the standard of pronunciation from the past to the present. He added that if spoken English in

Ghana is not guided in the standard way, it might follow the pattern of spoken English in some parts of India, where the pronunciation is quite unintelligible to non-Indians. However, according to Bamgbose (1998) the phenomenon of spelling pronunciation in EGE satisfies two important criteria non-native varieties of English ought to meet: it maintains international intelligibility and retains local and cultural identities. Ngula (2011) is also of the view that spelling pronunciation has become the normal and most convenient way of pronouncing many English words in EGE. He added that spelling pronunciation is one of the innovative features of pronunciation that are conferring a mark of identity on EGE. Wells (1982) has observed that there are many words that have undergone this process of spelling pronunciation.

## CONCLUSION

The current study has tried to depict the way educated Ghanaians pronounce English words. The standard pronunciation that is expected is RP which is equated with the correct pronunciation of English words. Using evidence obtained from educated Ghanaian speakers of English, the present paper discovered that, in Ghana, the vast majority of English words are pronounced based on their spelling. As a nativized version of RP, spelling pronunciation has become an innovative feature in Educated Ghanaian English. Spelling pronunciation has become the most convenient and comfortable way of pronouncing English words. It is worth noting that some of the indigenous Ghanaian languages exert an influence on the way some educated Ghanaians pronounce certain English words. The present paper views the phenomenon of spelling pronunciation as innovation. The paper suggests that rather than condemning spelling pronunciation outright, it should be guided towards standardization. This is because spelling pronunciation, as an innovative feature of EGE pronunciation, maintains international intelligibility and retains local and cultural identities.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The current study was limited to educated Ghanaian speakers of English (students, teachers and non-academic employees). This approach was to enable the researcher to investigate the extent to which educated Ghanaians are able to articulate words in the standard RP way since the latter is the model taught in schools. The study incorporated students of the University of Cape Coast as they represent a cross-section of educated Ghanaians. The student population is a heterogeneous entity. The students are selected from the different regions of Ghana. Thus, the student population of the corpus represents the entire country. The present study also captured pronunciations of words based on their spelling from the media. This helped the researcher since the pronunciations from the television and the radio are reflections of the phonetic innovations in Ghana.

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## RETHORICAL TRANSFERENCE (A TRANSITIVITY ANALYSIS OF LEXICAL METAPHOR)

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### ABSTRACT

Rhetoric has been a very interesting phenomenon in the use of daily language, but then it is getting much more attractive linguistically with the employment of metaphor in an impressive way. Metaphorical expression, strictly speaking, has the capacity to decorate and beautify the content of speech in its own way. It brings about such an empowerment to the transfer of message and information. It, then, prominently bridges the smoother flow of rhetorical transference in a speech. With regard to the basic notion of systemic functional grammar, the term lexical metaphor has been part of ideational realization of metaphorical modes of expression. In such a reason, it is quite interesting to further investigate the nature of lexical metaphor from the perspective of systemic functional grammar. The basic instrumental device of the analysis is done through the transitivity analysis. This type of analysis has the potential to reveal the nature rhetorical transference within which the lexical metaphor adhered in a speech, the findings of the research show that there is one of the clause elements in the metaphor functioning as the nucleus of the metaphor. This phenomenon together with the other elements of the clause constitute the nature of the lexical metaphor.

**KEYWORDS:** lexical metaphor, transitivity, rhetorical transference

### INTRODUCTION

Metaphor comes up as one of people's options since it has its own uniqueness in carrying communicative messages more powerfully. Such a choice arises as there is an expectation that such a linguistic creativity can produce particular effect towards the audiences. In such a case, Orthony (in Orthony.ed; 1993:23) highlights that metaphor is basically a manifestation of language creativity to produce a non-standard effect with a not inferable meaning of the standard lexicon. This means that speakers of any languages have a tendency of using a language not in a conventional way as they want to get a more impressive effect of their speech.

In systemic functional grammar, the term 'metaphor' covers a sense of definition on the basis of interstratal relationship between semantics and lexicogrammar. It is simply defined as a realization of meanings through non-typical selections of grammatical features. Or in a more terminological paraphrase, it may be defined as variations of grammatical forms through which a semantic choice is typically realized in the lexicogrammar. In this respect, Thomson (1996:165) proposes a definition of grammatical metaphor as the expression of a different meaning through a lexicons-grammatical form which originally evolved to express a different kind of meaning. In relation to such definition, by which grammatical metaphor is used in rhetorical discourse, Downing and Locke (2006:165) state that grammatical metaphor is a very powerful in the presenting of information to influence the way the information is perceived by the

reconceptualization of an event as a participant, with the consequent restructuring of the rest of the clause.

Further discussing, Halliday (1985:321) makes a distinction between two main types of grammatical metaphor: interpersonal metaphors (or metaphors of mood), and ideational metaphors (or metaphors of transitivity). Mathiesen et.al (2010:111) further clarify the distinction that interpersonal metaphor is basically a resource for enacting a wider range of social roles and relationships in relation to tenor, allowing interactants to calibrate their interpersonal relations with respect to power and contact, while ideational metaphor is a resource for construing a wider range of phenomena in relation to field. The tendency in interpersonal metaphor is to “upgrade” the domain of realization from clause to clause nexus, making the realization more explicit, in a sense; this is used to give an explicitly subjective orientation to speech functions

The latter type, ideational grammatical metaphor, is chosen as the subject of this study regarding some basic features of ideational grammatical metaphor that may correspond to the basic nature of political speeches. In this respect, transitivity system that happens to be the rhetorical choice of metaphorical expression in political speeches is employed as the basis of the analysis. One common interpretation of ideational grammatical metaphor is that it is seen as relating to the way a particular word is used. Lipson (2004:78) further clarifies that ideational grammatical metaphor can be looked at two ways of its creation:

- (a) by using Processes metaphorically (metaphorical wording) and
- (b) by using NG to represent Processes (nominalization),

As Halliday (1994:342) describes the expression “a flood of protests”, the congruent meaning (i.e., the one with less variation in the expression of the meaning) for “They received a flood of protests” would be that “They received a large quantity of protests”. In the same respect, in the following sentences:

- (1) *We walked in the evening along the river to Henley.*
  - (2) *Our evening walk along the river took us to Henley.*
- (taken from Downing 1991: 110-11)

It's quite observable that the two expressions above share the same situation. However, the realization of the process constituents in (1) is congruent in fashion or is closer to the state of affairs in the external world, whereas example (2) shows metaphorical/incongruent mode of expressions by way of nominalization (walked => walk). Halliday (1994: 342) suggests that example (2) is called a grammatical metaphor. This is to say that, examples (1) and (2) share a degree of similarities and at the same time these examples evidence that one is more “basic” than the other. In the same respect, Halliday (1994:342) further argues that both the metaphorical and congruent forms are lexico-grammatical forms arrived at by a pass through the system network: they are independent realizations, but share a certain core of meaning.

As formulated above, this study is aimed at making an analysis of ideational grammatical metaphor which is made under the framework of systemic functional grammar. A great chance to further describe the metaphor is employed to a collection of political speeches delivered by Obama during his presidential election. Obama is considered by the writer as one prominent figure that has the capacity of producing impressive speech by way of using metaphorical expressions in line with its basic features of rhetorical speech in politic.

In this study, in a large part, the basic conceptualizations of grammatical metaphor and transitivity system are taken from Halliday (1985,1994), Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), Thomson (1996). However, there are also some other linguistic theories used to give more conceptual insight to the types of ideational grammatical metaphor which are taken from Lipson (2004), Downing and Locke (2006), Miller (2004), Eggins (2004), Freddi (2004), Morley (2000), Lock (1996), Butt et.al (1995). Some key terms concerning metaphor in general and other related issues are also taken by referring to Mathieson et.al (2010), Brown et.al, Charteris-Black (2004, 2005).

## **METHODS OF RESEARCH**

A number of speeches of Barack Obama during the American presidential campaign of 2010 were studied as he as running his campaigns for one of the world's most powerful positions. Disregarding the reasons why they strove for power, this study looked at how the choice of ideational grammatical metaphor is realized linguistically. The method of analysis is to locate grammatical metaphors where it appeared as linguistic choices which are made to depict ideas and concepts in certain ways. The method of analysis steps from the categories of grammatical metaphor comprising the subtype's ideational grammatical metaphor, metaphorical wording and nominalization. The speeches were analysed separately as well as comparatively.

The methodology used in this study is adapted from Charteris-Black (2004: 34-38) that in metaphor analysis three stages are involved, metaphor identification, metaphor analysis, and metaphor interpretation:

- (i) Selection of process type: material, mental, relational, with their various intermediate and secondary types.
- (ii) Configuration of transitivity functions: Actor, Goal, Senser, Manner etc. representing the process, its participant, and any circumstantial elements;
- (iii) Sequence of group-phrase classes: verbal group, nominal group, adverbial group, prepositional phrase, and their various sub-classes.

In this study, the collection of Barack Obama Speeches are downloaded from [www.barackobamaspeeches.com](http://www.barackobamaspeeches.com) where it compiles a comprehensive collection of Obama's speeches since the preliminary session of the campaign till the inaugural address of his presidential oath, that is in the period 2002 till 2009.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter presents an analysis of ideational metaphor on the perspective of functional grammar. Three steps of analysis will be done consecutively. First, the data will be analyzed to describe its transitivity configuration showing its semantic functions and its syntactic realization. Second, the data will be analyzed on the basis of its grammatical transfer showing the relevant

grammatical status towards its transitivity configuration. The last steps of analysis will be a combination of analysis showing congruent and incongruent analysis involving its basic and metaphorical meaning. However, this chapter is divided into two sections, Data Analysis and Discussion of the findings

The analysis of Metaphorical Wording focuses on the various transitivity configuration realized by the lexicogrammar. This will see on how the choice of word in different syntactic function creates metaphorical meaning. Some findings range from its classification on the basis of its process types. In this respect, mental process is realized in material process, or material process realized in mental process. This situation is also applicable for other types of processes as well. It also means that the presentation of the analysis will be categorized from its process type. Some sub-sections of the analysis are under the headings of material process, mental process, relational process, behavioral process, and verbal process. This is then to show that the Metaphorical Wording occurred on the basis of its process type. The stage of the analysis is carried out in three steps, namely, analysis of transitivity configuration, analysis of its grammatical transfer (initiated by congruence analysis), and analysis of its metaphorical meaning. And for the purpose of interpreting the meaning of the metaphors, the writer consults their lexical meaning to the Collins Cobuild Dictionary (CDROM:2006) and also Webster Collegiate Dictionary (CDROM:2003).

### 1. Metaphorical Wording on the basis of Material process

In this unit of analysis, all the Metaphorical Wordings are found to have the properties of material process. The data are found in various semantic classes of syntax (verb group, noun group, verb group) and for the purpose of bringing about a more comprehensible semantic analysis; the data are presented in the structure of a clause or clause complex.

*(1)Homes have been lost; jobs shed; businesses shuttered. Our health care is too costly; our schools fail too many; and each day brings further evidence that the ways we use energy strengthen our adversaries and threaten our planet (OB1-1)*

The sentence above comprises three metaphors with almost similar transitivity configuration:

a.	<i>Job</i>	<i>Shed</i>	
	<i>Business</i>	<i>Shuttered</i>	
	<i>Each day</i>	<i>Brings</i>	<i>Further evidence</i>
	Participant : Actor	Process : material	Participant: Goal

In terms of their transitivity configurations, the sentences above have one participant by which it carries a 'doing' meaning. In this case, the verb 'shed', 'shuttered', and 'brings' designates a

material process expressing an ‘action’ meaning. Those verbs designate a noun group semantically function as the actor of their action-meaning exemplified by the participants.

However, the process they represent depict different pattern from the perspective of their transitivity configuration. There is an incongruent realization of the process and their participants. The actor doesn’t fit to the logical function of the ‘doing’ thing in the process as ‘*job*’ cannot *set apart* or *fall into* something physically. In the following congruence analysis, there is an evidence that the speaker undergo a lexical choice that tend to be metaphorical, as in:

<i>Job</i>	<i>Shed</i>
Actor	Process
<i>Job</i> (‘s number)	<i>fell/decreased</i>
Actor	Process

From the congruence analysis above, there is no grammatical transfer since the incongruent and its congruent forms of expression are from the same type of transitivity configuration, which is all in the form of material process (*shed* → *decreases*). However, it is also quite clear that speaker intends to employ the word ‘*shed*’ metaphorically to make an analogy of job availability with something like a ‘*leaf*’ that can ‘*set apart*’ or ‘*fall*’ from ‘*its tree*’. As it may also mean that the job has somewhat getting more difficult to be obtained since there is not linear supply of job’s number for the outgrowing population of jobseekers.

<i>b.</i>	<i>Business</i>	<i>Shuttered</i>
	Participant: Actor	Process: Material

The transitivity configuration of the sentence above has one participant and one process. In this case, the verb ‘*shuttered*’ designates a material process, since it carries a ‘doing’ meaning (‘*to shutter*’ means ‘*to close by*; Meriam Webster dictionary’). While ‘*shuttered*’ designates a noun group semantically function as the actor of the action ‘*shuttered*’. This transitivity configuration shows that the actor doesn’t fit to the logical function of the ‘doing’ meaning in its process as the actor ‘*business*’ is not animate being or human like figure that can *close* by itself. In the following congruence analysis, there is evidence that the speaker employs a lexical choice that tends to be metaphorical, as in:

<i>Business</i>	<i>Shuttered</i>
<i>Participant : Actor</i>	Process : material
<i>Business</i>	<i>Shut down</i>
<i>Actor</i>	Process

From the congruence analysis above, it is quite clear that speaker intends to employ the word ‘*shuttered*’ metaphorically to show that the business has stopped because of particular reason. However, the metaphorical wording in 1a, 1b, 1c, occurred in the position of process.

## 2). *Our campaign was not hatched in the halls of Washington*

<i>Our campaign</i>	<i>was not hatched</i>	<i>in the halls of Washington</i>
Participant: Actor	Process : Material	Circumstance: place



The transitivity configuration of the sentence above depicts a material process. The verb '*hatched*' indicate a material activity by which the Actor '*our campaign*' expresses doing meaning. The transitivity configuration employs one participant, one circumstance and one process as the sample of the clause nexus.

Further discussing, there is an incongruent expression of the use of the process by which the Actor '*our campaign*' doesn't have the capacity of a thing that can '*hatch*'. In this case, it is very clear that the sentence can be said to be metaphorical since the process '*hatch*' is incongruently used by the participant '*our campaign*'. Consider the following congruence analysis:

<i>Our campaign</i>	<i>was not hatched</i>	<i>in the halls of Washington</i>
Participant: Actor	Process : Material	Circumstance: place
<i>Our campaign</i>	<i>originated</i>	<i>In the halls of Washington</i>
Participant : Actor	Process: Material	Circumstance

In such a case, there is a personification sample where the verb '*hatch*' is incongruently used to represent the idea of '*our campaign*' that basically comes from the people working in the halls of Washington.

### 3) *She's stealing my thunder*

<i>She</i>	<i>'s stealing</i>	<i>my thunder</i>
Participant: Actor	Process : material	Goal

The transitivity configuration of the sentence above depicts a material process. The verb '*is stealing*' indicate a material activity by which the Actor '*she*' expresses doing meaning. The transitivity configuration employs one participant, one Goal and one process as the root of the clause nexus.

Further discussing, there is an incongruent expression of the use of the participant by which the Actor '*she*' intend to do something (*stealing*) that is literally in appropriate and impossible to be done since '*my thunder*' is *almost invincible and untouchable*'. Then, the sentence can be said to be metaphorical since the process '*is stealing*' is incongruently used by the actor '*she*'. Consider the following congruence analysis:

<i>She</i>	<i>'s stealing</i>	<i>my thunder</i>
Participant: Actor	Process : material	Goal
<i>She</i>	<i>'s stealing</i>	<i>my precious thing</i>
Participant: Actor	Process : material	Goal

From the above congruent analysis, there is evidence, that the nucleus of the metaphor occurred in the participant (Goal) '*my thunder*' as an attempt to empower the Goal of the action metaphorically.

### 4) *Virginia, your voice can change the world tomorrow*

<i>Virginia, your voice</i>	<i>can change</i>	<i>the world</i>	<i>Tomorrow</i>
Participant: Actor	Process : material	Goal	Circumstance

The transitivity configuration of the sentence above depicts a material process. The verb ‘*change*’ indicate a material activity by which the Actor ‘*Virginia*’ expresses a doing meaning. The transitivity configuration employs one participant (Actor), one circumstance (time) and one process (Material).

Further discussing, there is an incongruent expression of the use of the participant by which the Actor ‘*Virginia*’ doesn’t have the capacity of a *human like* thing that can change ‘*something*’ or anything. The sentence can be said to be metaphorical since the process ‘*change*’ is incongruently used by the participant ‘*Virginia*’. Consider the following congruence analysis:

<i>Virginia, your voice</i>	<i>can change</i>	<i>the world</i>	<i>Tomorrow</i>
Participant: Actor	Process : material	Goal	Circumstance
<i>Your power</i>	<i>can change</i>	<i>the world</i>	<i>Tomorrow</i>
Participant: Actor	Process : material	Goal	Circumstance

As it is illustrated above, there is no grammatical shift in its syntactic categories and functions. The same semantic functions are shared both in its congruent or incongruent form. It also means that the choice of non-literal meaning is not because of grammatical shift or grammatical transfer among the participants and processes.

#### 5) *Change comes to Washington*

<i>Change</i>	<i>comes</i>	<i>to Washington</i>
Participant: Actor	Process : material	Circumstance

The transitivity configuration of the sentence above depicts a material process. The verb ‘*comes*’ indicate a material activity by which the Actor ‘*change*’ expresses doing meaning. The transitivity configuration employs one participant, one circumstance and one process.

Further discussing, there is an incongruent expression of the use of the process by which the Actor ‘*change*’ doesn’t have the capacity of a *human like* thing that can ‘*come*’ or make a moving like a living creature. The sentence can be said to be metaphorical since the process ‘*comes*’ is incongruently used by the participant ‘*our campaign*’. Consider the following congruence analysis:

<i>Change</i>	<i>comes</i>	<i>to Washington</i>
Participant: Actor	Process : material	Circumstance
<i>Change</i>	<i>Happens</i>	<i>to Washington</i>
Participant: Actor	Process : material	Circumstance

The above analysis has shown that the metaphorical nucleus occurs to the process ‘comes’ with its possible literal counterpart ‘happens’. This means that the Process with its lexical choice ‘comes’ has made the expression becomes wording-ly metaphorical.

6. *What North Carolina decided is that the only game that needs changing is the one in Washington, DC*

<i>what North Carolina decided</i>	<i>Is</i>	<i>that the only game that needs changing is the one in Washington, DC</i>
Participant: Identified	Process : relational	Participant: Identifier

Basically the transitivity configuration of the sentence above depicts a relational process. The verb ‘is’ indicate a relational status between the two participants ‘*what North Carolina decided*’ (identified) and ‘*that the only game that needs changing is the one in Washington, DC*’ (identifier) by which the participants are semantically connected with the ‘is’. However, to go into detail, more precise transitivity analysis is applied in the more detail description below:

What North Carolina	Decided
Participant: Senser	Process: Mental

Simply speaking, the clause above illustrate a personified character in the Participant ‘North California’. this has made the expression metaphorical in particular way. This phenomenon is strongly indicated by the illogical semantic relationship between the Senser ‘*North California*’ and the Process ‘*decided*’. A mental process of ‘*deciding something*’ must be done, by nature, by a human being. This character has successfully metaphorized the above clause to be metaphorical.

7) *Washington didn't give us much of a chance*

<i>Washington</i>	<i>didn't give</i>	<i>Us</i>	<i>much of a chance</i>
Participant: Actor	Process : material	Participant: Recipient	Participant: Beneficiary

The transitivity configuration of the sentence above depicts a material process. The verb ‘give’ indicate a material activity by which the Actor ‘*Washington*’ expresses doing meaning. The transitivity configuration employs three participants (Actor, Recipient, and Beneficiary), and one process as the nucleus of the clause.

Further discussing, there is an incongruent expression of the use of the process by which the Actor ‘*Washington*’ doesn’t have the capacity of a *human or human like* thing that can ‘give’. the sentence can be said to be metaphorical since the Actor ‘*Washington*’ is incongruently used with the process of ‘*giving*’. Consider the following congruence analysis:

<i>Washington</i>	<i>didn't give</i>	<i>Us</i>	<i>much of a chance</i>
Participant: Actor	Process : material	Participant: Recipient	Participant: Beneficiary
<i>(People in Washington)</i>	<i>didn't give</i>	<i>Us</i>	<i>much of a chance</i>
Participant: Actor	Process : material	Participant: Recipient	Participant: Beneficiary

The above analysis has shown that the Actor 'Washington' is the nucleus of the metaphor in that clause. The actor which is not human being has been personified like human figure that can give something.

## 2. Metaphorical Wording on the basis of Mental process

All data presented in this section of analysis are all categorized into mental process. The properties of being 'a mental process' clauses are determined mainly by the use of the verbs. In relation to the metaphorical use of the process, the clause is analyzed based on its transitivity configuration and then it's further analyzed to see the possible grammatical transfer within the process. The congruence analysis is conducted consecutively to figure out the possible meaning of the grammatical metaphor.

### 8) *The schools suffer*

<i>The schools</i>	<i>Suffer</i>
Participant: Actor	Process : mental

The sentence above has one participant and is in the form of mental process. Since it employs the verb 'suffer' which has a sense of affection, the sentence designates a mental process. The Actor 'school' which is inanimate and is not human like does not semantically correspond to the verb 'suffer'. Consider the following congruence analysis.

<i>The schools</i>	<i>Suffer</i>
Participant: Actor	Process : mental
<i>The schools</i>	<i>Undergo a bad situation</i>
Participant: Actor	Process: Material

The mode of its metaphorical expression is clearly understood by the use the verb 'suffer' to indicate the school condition that is not in well condition. The writer intends to make extra effect to the message by creating an analogy as if the 'school' is an animate being or human-like thing that can perceive a sense of feeling like 'suffer'. It is also quite clear that there is a grammatical transfer from material to mental process by which the expression is being metaphorical.

### 9) *In numbers (that) this nation has never seen*

<i>In numbers</i>	<i>this nation</i>	<i>has never seen</i>
Circumstance	Participant: Senser	Process : mental

Basically the transitivity configuration of the sentence above depicts a mental process. The verb 'seen' indicate a mental activity by which the Senser 'this nation' has perceived something.

However, there is an incongruent expression of the use of the process by which the Senser '*this nation*' doesn't have the capacity of *human-like* thing that can '*see*' or perceive something physically. In this case, the sentence can be said to be metaphorical since the participant '*this nation*' is incongruently used with the process '*seen*'. Consider the following congruence analysis:

<i>In numbers</i>	<i>this nation</i>	<i>has never seen</i>
Circumstance	Participant: Senser	Process : mental
<i>In numbers</i>	<i>(people of ) this nation</i>	<i>has never seen</i>
Circumstance	Participant: Senser	Process : mental

Based on the above analysis, it is quite clear the metaphorical nucleus of the clause. The Senser '*this nation*' has been made personified by referring it to the people of the nation. It also means that the changing character has made contribution to the meaning to be more metaphorical.

### 3. Metaphorical Wording on the basis of Relational process

This section of analysis compiles some relevant data to the use of metaphorical mode of Relational Process lexically by which the process is incongruently used. The same procedure of analysis has been previously done in the earlier sections. Hence, figuring out transitivity configuration of the metaphor is the first step before the analysis of the grammatical transfer within the clause. The last activity will be the interpretation of the metaphorical meaning based on its transitivity configuration.

10) *It Is the answer told by lines that stretched around schools and churches in numbers this nation has never seen*

<i>It</i>	<i>Is</i>	<i>the answer</i>
Participant : Identified	Process: Relational	Participant : Identifier

Basically the transitivity configuration of the sentence above depicts a relational process. The verb '*is*' indicate a relational status by which the participants is linked semantically.

### 4. Metaphorical Wording on the basis of verbal process

In this unit of analysis, all the Metaphorical Wordings are found to have the properties of material process. The data are found in various semantic classes of syntax (verb group, noun group, verb group) and for the purpose of bringing about a more comprehensible semantic analysis; the data are presented in the structure of a clause or clause complex. Verbal process identification is indicated by the use of the verb group in the process.

11) *(the answer/that is) told by the lines*

<i>(the answer/that)</i>	<i>is told</i>	<i>by the lines</i>
Verbiage	Process : verbal	Sayer

Basically the transitivity configuration of the sentence above depicts a verbal process. The verb ‘told’ indicate a verbal activity by which the Sayer ‘*the lines*’ expresses an utterance with ‘*the answer*’ as its verbiage.

However, there is an incongruent expression of the use of the process by which the Sayer ‘*the lines*’ doesn’t have the capacity of *human-like* thing that can ‘tell’ or produce oral communication ability. In this case, it is very clear that the sentence can be said to be metaphorical since the process ‘told’ is incongruently used by the participant ‘*lines*’. Consider the following congruence analysis:

<i>(the answer/that)</i>	<i>is told</i>	<i>by the lines</i>
Participant: Verbiage	Process : verbal	Participant : Sayer
<i>The lines</i>	<i>Contains</i>	<i>Some information (the answer)</i>
Participant : token	Process: Relational	Participant: value

Based on the congruent analysis above, it is quite clear that the Participant ‘*the lines*’ is instrumented to be more personified and carries metaphorical meaning by the process ‘told’. However, there is no grammatical shift among the clause elements.

12) *We pledge to work alongside you - to make your farms flourish and let clean waters flow; to nourish starved bodies and- (to) feed hungry minds*

<i>We</i>	<i>pledge to work</i>	<i>alongside you</i>	<i>(to) feed</i>	<i>hungry minds</i>
Participant: Actor	Process : material	Circumstance : Place	Process: material Process	Participant : Goal

Basically the transitivity configuration of the sentence above depicts a material process. The verb ‘pledge to work’ and ‘feed hungry mind’ indicate an external world activity by which the Actor ‘we’ makes up an event or a ‘happening’ of ‘work’ and also an action or a ‘doing’ activity of ‘feed’ with ‘*the hungry mind*’ as its Goal.

However, there is an incongruent expression of the process by which the Actor ‘we’ incongruently employs the verb ‘feed’ with the personified Goal of ‘mind’ which shows human-like capacity of feeling hungry. In this case, it is very clear that the sentence can be said to be metaphorical since the process ‘feed’ is incongruently used by the participant ‘we’ and ‘*hungry minds*’. Consider the following congruence analysis:

<i>We</i>	<i>pledge to work</i>	<i>alongside you</i>	<i>(to) feed</i>	<i>hungry minds</i>
Participant: Actor	Process : material	Circumstance : Place	Process: material Process	Participant : Goal
<i>We</i>	<i>pledge to work</i>	<i>alongside you</i>	<i>give support (to)</i>	<i>hungry minds</i>
Participant: Actor	Process : material	Circumstance : Place	Process: material Process	Participant : Goal

Based on the above analysis, it is clear that nucleus of the metaphor is applied to the Process ‘feed’ that does not literally correspond to the potential meaning of the Goal ‘*hungry minds*’. Literally the verb ‘feed’ means to give someone or something food to eat. This of course does not



match with Goal, 'hungry minds' that has the character of something inanimate that cannot eat anything.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The formation of transitivity configuration that features the metaphor nucleus and its syntactic realization. The discussion of metaphor nucleus is very essential to determine the pattern of metaphor. The transitivity analysis is instrumented to reveal such phenomenon. However, the configuration of the transitivity metaphor would be like the following:

### *She's stealing the thunder (MW3\_mp)*

It is quite possible that the nucleus of the metaphor can be either the participant (she: Actor, and my thunder: goal), process, or even the circumstance. In this instance, the participant 'she' is doing something rather impossible, 'steal the thunder'. An action that never be accomplished by any ordinary human being. Hence, from this point of view, there is a logical semantic relation between the whole elements of the clause that show this incongruent relation. Thunder must be the central of the in congruency in meaning that has the potential to make the clause metaphorical. The second way of figuring out the transitivity configuration is by applying congruence analysis, as in:

<i>She</i>	<i>'s stealing</i>	<i>my thunder</i>
Participant: Actor	Process : material	Goal
<i>She</i>	<i>'s stealing</i>	<i>my precious thing</i>
Participant: Actor	Process : material	Goal

Based on the above analysis, the syntactic and semantic position of 'my thunder' can be replaced by 'my precious thing' with almost equal meaning. This is to show that it is almost impossible to replace the process with any similar verbs included in material process. Hence, there two important phenomenon to be considered:

1. The transitivity configuration of ideational metaphor cover almost all types of processes, including material, mental, relational, and behavioural process. In this research, the most types existed in the speeches are material process with little occurrence of the other types. However, the grammatical transfer found in the data of the research shows that there are four types of nominalization are process as entity, attribute as entity, and circumstance as entity.
2. The discussion of metaphor nucleus is very essential to determine the pattern of metaphor. The transitivity analysis is instrumented to reveal such phenomenon. The nucleus of the metaphor can be either the participant, process, or even the circumstance

Since the study focuses on the nature of ideational metaphor in political speech, it is quite possible to further study in the other fields of discourse like business, economics, and the likes. In rhetorical speech, grammatical metaphor play an important role in shaping the message and information of the speech. However, since this study focuses on the ideational metaphor, there is a great change and challenge to further investigate the nature of the other types of grammatical

metaphor (interpersonal grammatical metaphor) under the objective of finding out its prominent linguistic features.

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## CONTRIBUTION OF COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS TO TEFL: PRESENTING CONCEPTUAL MEANING IN PHRASAL VERBS

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the advantages of applying Cognitive Linguistics to the instruction of conceptual meaning of phrasal verbs in an Iranian EFL context. Sixty intermediate learners were randomly assigned to two equal control and experimental groups. Thirty two phrasal verbs with the particles *up*, *down*, *in* and *out* were instructed to experimental groups using the insights gleaned from Cognitive Linguistics framework. The control group received the same phrasal verbs in terms of dictionary definitions and single verb equivalents. Results of t-test analysis of pre/posttest scores for both groups confirmed the superiority of the Cognitive Linguistics based approach and revealed a strategy transfer to unrehearsed phrasal verbs as well. The findings imply the potential usefulness of applying Cognitive Linguistics to teaching phrasal verbs.

**KEYWORDS:** Phrasal verbs, Cognitive Linguistics, particles, conceptualization, spatial scene, vantage point, strategy transfer.

### INTRODUCTION

A quick glance at television programs, movies, interviews, pop music, internet exchanges and many other conversational settings reveals that phrasal verbs (hereafter PVs) are abundant in today's colloquial English. Although there is usually a single verb equivalent, native speakers opt for the PV alternative. This dominance of PVs in everyday language of English speakers has made them a crucially important part of English lexicon for EFL learners. Even mastery of PVs is assumed to be a true evidence of language proficiency (Cornell, 1985). However, PVs have a reputation of being tough and troublesome for EFL learners; witness the publication of numerous self-study textbooks (e.g., Gairns & Redman, 2011; Hart, 2009; McCarthy & O'Dell, 2007; Rudzka-Ostyn, 2003) and PV-specific dictionaries (e.g., McIntoch, 2006; Rundell, 2005).

One reason that makes learning PVs a daunting task is that there are innumerable PVs in English and EFL learners are intimidated and confounded by this diversity (Bolinger, 1971; Side, 1990). Yet, that is a secondary source of problem compared to the issue of idiomacity (i.e., unpredictability of meaning of the construction from its components) For example, in '*I'm just worn out!*' *wear* does not refer to wearing clothes in literal sense of the verb and nobody is going *out*; rather, *wear out* is an idiomatic PV which means 'to exhaust or tire'. The problems are reinforced by the way through which PVs have been traditionally presented in course books or taught by teachers (Side, 1990; Tyler & Evans, 2004). In the traditional approach PVs are given in

long lists of learn-by-heart vocabulary and memorization is suggested as the only strategy; thereby, it has been implied that PVs are unsystematic, arbitrary, and random.

The thriving field of Cognitive Linguistics (hereafter CL) challenges the assumed arbitrariness of PVs in traditional view and argues that lexicon, at least in the case of particles, is systematically motivated, or simply put; principled and rule-governed (Evans & Tyler, 2004, 2005). A CL-based approach, thus, gives the leading semantic role of the PV to the particle component and provides a promising approach to the pedagogy of PVs based on cognitive meaningful learning. According to the *embodiment principle* of CL, cognition is the conceptual representation of bodily experience in spatio-physical environment (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999). From early infancy sensory perceptions are recorded in human mind in the form of reactivations of brain (Mandler, 2004). These reactivations are technically referred to as *image-schemas* (Johnson, 1987), *simulations* (Barsalou, 1999), and *redescriptions* (Evans, 2010). CL argues that such conceptual representations of motion, space and physical relations shape and motivate the foundation of cognition and thought. In the English language, such representations are linguistically encoded in particles; hence, CL-based analysis of underlying mechanisms that stimulate such conceptualizations provides a significant way of understanding the complex behavior of particles in general and PVs in particular.

For example, regarding the particles *up* and *down*, the fact that humans have their head at the top and legs at the bottom of their bodies gives rise to top-down interpretations of entities with no real physical body. This enables English speakers to talk about 'Manchester United *climbing up* the Premier league table'. Furthermore, given that the upright posture of the body entails health and good psychological conditions and a crouched and stooped body posture implies the opposite, *up* and *down* connote positive-negative values. Thus, without even knowing the meaning of the PVs '*run down*' or '*cut down*', one can predict they convey a negative sense.

Another conceptual representation of physical experience is the notion of *containment* which is linguistically encoded by the particle *in*. Human body is bounded with its skin and all of the concrete objects the infant observes and manipulates have limited bounded shapes. Such observation gives rise to a mental representation of bounded entities in terms of containment (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999). Containment at first is a simple spatial relation for a child and reflects in expressions such as: *The toy in the box*. Gradually however, the notion of containment evolves into numerous complex abstract concepts. For example, drawing on the containment schema, a child develops the ability to make sense of sentences such as: *He is in trouble/ love/ debt*. Hence, the particle *in* entails being inside or entering a container-like entity ranging from observable things such as cars, buildings, gardens, countries to invisible abstract entities such as activities, movements, situations, relations and so forth. In the same vein, the particle *out* is conceptualized as the notion of non-containment or exteriority; analogously, many of the senses associated with *out* involve opposing inferences from those arising with *in*.

In 1980, Lakoff and Johnson proposed *the conceptual metaphor theory* suggesting that human cognition is metaphoric in nature. Later on, Johnson (1987) introduced *image-schemas* as the building block of metaphors. Many CL researchers found these insights relevant to the study of PVs and set out to investigate whether presenting the underlying image-schemas and metaphors of particles to English learners has positive effects on pedagogy of PVs (e.g., Boers, 2000;

Condon, 2008; Condon & Kelly, 2002; Dirven, 1993; Kövecses & Szabó, 1996; Kurtyka, 2001 to name but a few).

On the whole, these studies confirmed the usefulness of making the students aware of underlying image-schematic motivation of particles in PVs; however, they also revealed some areas of weakness and doubt. For example, Boers (2000) observed that “Knowledge of the conventional metaphoric themes of a given language does not guarantee mastery of its conventional linguistic instantiations” (p. 569). The most remarkable shortcoming of previous accounts of systemacity of PVs was brought to light by Condon (2008). She admitted that in her study and other existing studies by that time “a vital piece of information is missing, namely, the location of the ‘viewer’” (p.152; emphasis in original). She noted that many confounding behaviors of particles; especially the fact that contrasting pairs such as *up/down* or *in/out* appear to be synonyms in some PVs, could only be explained by taking the viewer’s vantage point into account.

The above-mentioned issue is addressed by the recent developments of CL and mostly by the work of Leonard Talmy (2000) and Vyvyan Evans and Andrea Tyler (Evans & Tyler, 2004, 2005; Tyler & Evans, 2003, 2004).

According to the findings of Gestalt psychology, human’s species-specific perceptual mechanisms change, structure, and add further complexity and details to the raw input received from sensory experience. One of the ways in which perceptual apparatus constrains and structures human’s experience of space is *figure-ground segregation* (Evans & Green, 2006). Human perception tends to automatically segregate any given scene into figure-ground organization (*figure* is highlighted or focused element of the scene, and *ground* is the background or reference object). Talmy (2000) tailored the figure-ground segregation to language suggesting that the representation of space in language encodes *spatial scenes*. Any given language provides a means of viewing the same state, situation, or event from the range of perspectives that are conventionally available to the language user. In other words, a language provides the language user with resources for viewing the same scene in multiple, and hence alternative ways or in CL-specific terms, *construals*. Shifts in construal give rise to new interpretations of the scene.

Native speakers of a language are subconsciously aware of the conceptual and construal bases of spatial scenes; however, non-native language learners who are accustomed to see the relations and events in physical world through the lens of their mother tongue are clueless about that fundamental knowledge. This leads to a *cross-linguistic mismatch*: the particles do not match up well between languages; therefore, language learners have to cope with anomalies (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). The critical issue of cross-linguistic mismatch is addressed by Evans and Tyler (2005) who submit: “rather than viewing particles from different languages as presenting different *meanings*, it is more insightful to take the view that different languages emphasize different aspects of the same (or similar) scene” (p.14).

In sum, these grounds lead to the logical assumption that giving instructions to and making EFL learners aware of the underlying principles of particles would help them learn PVs more efficiently. The present study takes this hypothesis as its point of departure and building on Evans and Tyler’s insights, examines whether presenting the conceptual bases of the particles *up*, *down*, *in* and *out* enhances a host of Iranian students’ learning of PVs. It also aims to find out if such an approach would help them develop an ability to transfer and apply their acquired knowledge to unfamiliar novel PVs.



## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To put the above-discussed hypothesis into practice, the following research questions were formulated:

- (i) To what extent does a CL-based approach to teaching phrasal verbs by presenting underlying motivations of particles yield different results from a traditional approach such as the use of dictionary definitions/ examples/ simple statements of meanings?
- (ii) To what extent do CL-instructed students and the students who received their treatment by dictionary definition and single verb equivalents differ in developing a transfer strategy to unrehearsed novel phrasal verbs?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

The participants who took part in this study were 60 young female students (aged 17-23) of a private language school in Isfahan, Iran. They all shared Persian as their mother tongue. The participants were selected from among a large population of students who had enrolled in summer program of the private language. Upon enrollment, each student was asked to take part in a placement test (OPT, 2010). Based on the results of this test, a number of students were ranked as intermediate and 60 of these students were randomly selected as the participants of the study. The study was conducted during the summer English courses of the institute and before starting the course participants were informed that they were going to receive instruction concerning a number of PVs incorporated into their regular program.

### *Materials*

The data collection procedure of the study was performed through a pretest-posttest assessment. At the beginning of the course, the participants were asked to take a written pretest. Before administering the pretest, participants were briefed about PVs; highlighting that PVs consist of a verb plus a smaller word (such as up, down, in, and out) and giving examples they had already been practically familiar with, such as get up, stand up, sit down, come in, and go out. The participants were assured that their scores on the experimental tests would have no negative effect on their end-of-term results, and then the test was distributed. The pretest was later used as the posttest at the end of the experiment. The test was designed to address the two posed research questions of the study; thus it was split up into two parts. The first part examined the taught 32 target PVs with particles *up*, *down*, *in*, and *out*. The second part took focus on 12 novel unrehearsed PVs with the same four particles.

The first part of the test had a force-choice, fill-in-the-blank format. It consisted of cloze passages in the form of short dialogs or paragraphs, each of which was missing several PVs. For each cloze passage, the participants were asked to select the most appropriate PV from a given word bank. The second part of the test consisted of 12 paraphrase items; which required replacing the italicized parts of the sentence with one of the given PVs in a word bank. The participants were

told not to worry about tenses, and that they could, if they had difficulties with tense changes, insert the PVs in the infinitive form for both parts of the test.

The criteria for choosing the target PVs of the study were two-fold: firstly, they were chosen from classifications of most frequent and useful PVs for pedagogical purposes provided by Gardner and Davies (2007). Secondly, only PVs with idiomatic meanings were selected and literal ones were excluded. The reason was that literal PVs are rather catchy and simple for EFL students but idiomatic PVs are proven to be extremely problematic for EFL learners (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Rudzka-Ostyn, 2003).

Regarding the scoring procedure, a correct answer on each test item would count as *one score* and an incorrect/no response would otherwise count as *zero*. Therefore, a total of 32 and 12 would be a complete score a participant could gain on part one and part two of the test respectively.

It is worth pointing out that in order to ensure the reliability of pre/posttest, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed using SPSS (version 20.0). The obtained alpha score for pre/posttest was high ( $\alpha > .92$ ) which indicated that the testing instrument of the study had high internal consistency and was adequately reliable.

### ***Procedure***

Using tables of random numbers, the 60 intermediate participants of the study were divided into two equal control and experimental groups. The experimental groups received their instruction of 32 target PVs through the model proposed by Tyler and Evans (2003) within the CL framework. The control group received the same PVs following a traditional approach, with no cognitive motivation and only relying on dictionary definitions and synonyms of PVs and using them in some example sentences.

The instruction of PVs was integrated into an extended general EFL program lasting over 1.5 summer months in 3 one-and-a-half-hour sessions per week (a total of 24 sessions). Owing to the bulk of content students had to cover in their program, a limited amount of time (ten minutes per session for both groups) was devoted to the instructional treatment. The course lasted for 8 weeks; each particle was allotted two weeks of instruction. Due to an odd/even schedule, both groups attended the same class at the same hour of the day and were instructed by the same teacher.

The teacher-fronted instruction for experimental group began by giving a brief explanation of particles having a related network of meanings and the notion that the central meaning for each particle designates a spatial relation between a *figure* and a *ground* element. However, to avoid the risk of overwhelming the students with technical terminologies, the dominant employed terms were (F) element or the focus of attention, and (G) or the background. The students were instructed that our understanding of space and the phenomena in our surrounding environment is organized by our brain. The brain does not perceive the world in a flat array; rather, it organizes our perception in terms of (F) and (G) elements. In an imaginary scene, (F) tends to be the smaller, more moveable element which is the focus of attention; the (G) is the larger, less moveable, locating element. The instruction was accompanied with schematic drawings (e.g., stick figures, cubes, arrows, dots, etc.) that the teacher draw on the board to illuminate the spatial scene related to each particle.

Gradually and over the 8 weeks of the experiment, the primary meaning of each particle as well as the additional senses it holds were presented to students emphasizing the roots of these meanings in everyday activities and bodily characteristics. These guidelines were adapted from Tyler and Evans' (2003) book. A noteworthy point is that Tyler and Evans model concentrates on prepositions and not PVs; therefore, some of the senses of *in/out* that only relate to their prepositional function were excluded. Table1 and Table2 summarize the basic and additional meanings of each particle accompanied with some instances of PVs.

Table1: Motivations for *up* and *down* based on Tyler and Evans' (2003) model

Particle	Basic Meaning	Additional Senses	Example
UP	Moving upwards toward the top	More	These exercises are good for <i>building up</i> leg strength.
		Better	They decided to get <i>dressed up</i> and go to a nice pub.
		Complete	The mayor has a plan for <i>cleaning up</i> waste sites.
Down	Moving downwards toward the bottom	Less	Don't offer me cigarettes; I'm trying to <i>cut down</i> .
		inferior	He is so modest; he always <i>talks</i> his success <i>down</i> .
		Complete	Pleas <i>wipe down</i> the stove after cooking!

Table 2: Motivations for *In* and *Out* based on Tyler and Evans'(2003) model

Particle	Basic Meaning	Vantage Point	Additional Meanings	Example
IN	Inside container (containment)	a inside	Enter	He <i>put</i> a lot of time <i>in</i> his research.
			Kept inside (blockage)	Never <i>hold in</i> your bed feelings.
		outside	Disappear	He finally <i>gave in</i> and admitted that his wife was right.
OUT	Outside container (exteriority)	a inside	Leave	After a three-day rest, the travellers <i>set out</i> again.
			No More	Their money <i>ran out</i> quickly.
			Complete	The research was <i>carried out</i> by students.
		outside	Prevent (exclusion) visible	Yuga will help you <i>block out</i> pain and stress.
			Known	His unique personality makes him <i>stand out</i> from the crowd.
				The birthday party <i>turned out</i> to be a disaster.

For *in* and *out*, the students were familiarized with the notion of *vantage point* and how a shift of interior/exterior vantage point gives rise to different interpretations. The students were highly recommended not to memorize the instructions but to conjure up the spatial scene relevant to each particle and try to infer the meaning from contextual clues. Another instructed point was the cases where contrasting pairs of *up/down* and *in/out* appear to be synonyms (See Appendix A for details).

As for the control group, the 32 target PVs of the study were taught under the same time schedule but through a traditional approach. The teacher wrote a target PV on the board and asked students to look it up in the dictionary. Single verb equivalent of the PV was also introduced, if any existed. Finally, the students were asked to memorize the PV and learn it by heart.

## RESULTS

The collected data from the pretest/posttest assessment were fed to SPSS (version 20.0) and were statistically analyzed by comparison of mean scores and their corresponding *p*-values through T-Test analysis.

### *Investigating the first research question*

In order to investigate whether the two instructional procedures yielded different results independent samples T-Test was performed. As Table 3 depicts, the groups' performances on pretest (part1) show a Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.394. Put statistically, there is no meaningful difference between the groups at the beginning of the experiment. ( $p > .5$ ) However, at the end of the experiment, the groups' performances on the posttest (part1) display a statistically significant difference ( $p < .005$ ). This indicates the better learning gain of experimental students in comparison with their control peers. Figure 1 portrays the outperformance of experimental groups on posttest in terms of mean scores.

Table 3: Independent samples T-Test for equality of means (pre/posttest-part1)

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pretest	.859	58	.394
Posttest	-13.699	58	.000

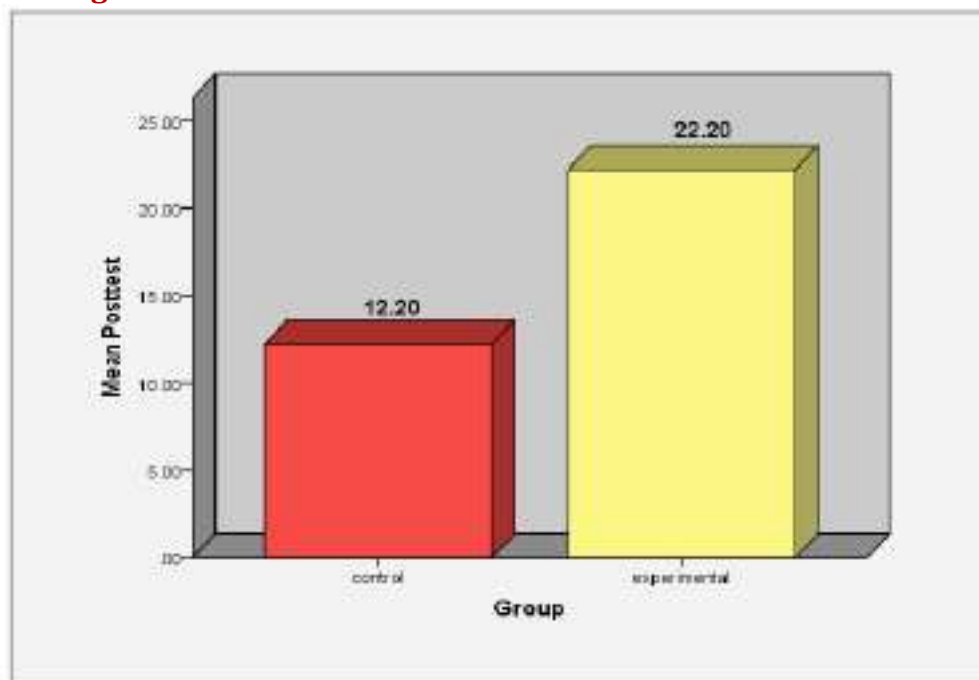


Figure 1: Graphic representation of the means (posttest-part1)

### ***Investigating the second research question***

In order to investigate whether the participants could transfer their acquired knowledge to novel PVs the scores of pretest/posttest (part2) were compared in terms of equality of means through independent samples T-Test. As illustrated in Table4, the control and experimental participants performed relatively equal on pretest ( $p > .5$ ) but after the treatment participant group significantly outperformed the control group on the posttest. ( $p < .005$ ) This superiority in strategy transfer is also evident in Figure2.

Table 4: Independent samples T-Test for equality of means (pre/posttest-part2)

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pretest	1.138	58	.260
Posttest	-11.086	58	.000

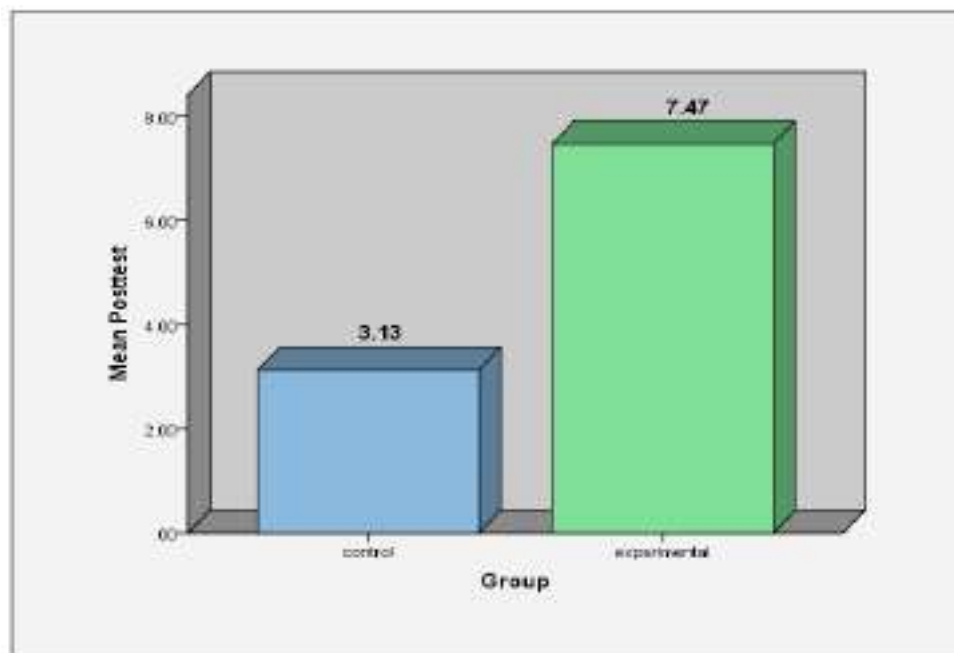


Figure 2: Graphic representation of the means (posttest-part2)

## DISCUSSION

Regarding the first research question, analysis and comparison of the results demonstrate that experimental learners significantly outperformed their control peers on the first part of the pretest/posttest, and this lends strong support to the postulation that applying CL to teaching and learning PVs is beneficial and yields better results than a traditional approach that promotes memorization. In general, these findings confirm the outcomes of previous research approving a CL-based approach to the pedagogy of PVs (e.g., Condon, 2008; Condon & Kelly, 2002; Dirven, 1993; Kövecses & Szabó, 1996; Kurtyka, 2001). But meanwhile, these results contribute novel evidence that the shortcomings of previous studies could indeed be overcome by taking a more sophisticated and detailed account of CL motivations. The previous studies showed poor results for efficiency of CL-instruction for idiomatic PVs compared to literal ones. Condon (2008) suggested that this issue roots in the fact that the metaphor awareness-raising approach underscores the embodied experiential basis of particles and is too simplified because it does not account for many details of spatial scenes such as viewer's vantage point. To address the shortcomings of previous research, the current study deliberately concentrated on idiomatic PVs and took advantage of Tyler and Evans' (2003) model where particles are presented with respect to full-fledge and sophisticated details of construal such as figure-ground profiles and vantage points. The advantage and usefulness of this CL-based approach to learning idiomatic PVs is clearly supported by the current findings.

The reason of such superiority lies in the fundamental idea behind CL motivation that was applied to this study. CL puts up that language and linguistic behavior is an integral part of cognition as a whole, and not a separate and unique faculty (Langacker, 1987), it follows that relatively general theories of cognitive processing will pertain to learning a foreign language, in particular, theories which concern memory. Two are particularly relevant: dual coding theory and levels of processing theory. In *dual coding theory* (Paivio, 1971; as cited in Sternberg, 2006) it is held that there are two ways a person could expand on learned material: verbal associations and visual imagery. Visual and verbal information are processed differently and along distinct



channels in the human mind, creating separate representations for information processed in each channel. Thus, both visual and verbal codes can be used when recalling information. Since the treatment of experimental group was a combination of teacher-fronted verbal explanations and representative drawings of spatial scenes encoded by particles from different vantage points, it can be concluded that these two distinct codes might have provided the experimental learners with a dually enhanced processing. Control participants who received neither explicit explanations nor schematic drawings did not benefit from such enhancement and not strangely showed a lower learning gain.

Another relevant theory is *levels-of-processing theory*. The key claim of this theory is that the deeper the level at which information is mentally processed, the more likely the information is to be committed to long-term memory. (Craik & Lockhart, 1972) In other words, the duration and strength of the memory trace can be promoted by (mentally) connecting a new item with ones already known, embedding the item in a meaningful scenario, and/or associating the item with a mental image. There are two levels of processing: deep processing which entails durable semantic associations in memory and meaningful learning, and shallow processing based on no traceable scenario or associative clues leading to fragile memory record which is susceptible to rapid forgetting. This theory sheds light on the results of this study and provides a plausible explanation for the lower performance of the control group: in the absence of prompts to link PVs with mental images or previous knowledge and with relying merely on memorization the instruction on PVs could only be processed at a shallow level resulting in less effective learning and recall. In contrast, CL motivations about the conceptual bases of spatial scenes and meaning extensions of particles enabled the experimental students to process the received instruction on PVs at a deeper level and in a more active manner.

These explanations bear the answer to the second posed question of the study as well. Returning to this question that addressed the knowledge transfer to unfamiliar PVs, the findings indicate a successful transfer of knowledge for the experimental group. As noted by Nation (1990) inferring the meaning of a new item on the basis of existing knowledge is an important strategy in learning a second language and this strategy directly relates to the existence of some background reference. Dealing with new unfamiliar PVs involves drawing on contextual clues to infer the meaning. In general, inference is generated from a retrieval cue which would first have to access information from the relevant knowledge in memory. The strength of an inference is a function of the strength with which the cues are encoded. Accordingly, recorded information at deeper levels of processing and coded dually by verbal explanations and imagery representation would stimulate stronger inference abilities in comparison with the information without such support at memory. That is why the CL-instructed students exhibited better inference ability and could relate their acquired knowledge to unrehearsed PVs. Previous research (Boers, 2000; Condon, 2008) reported no evidence of developing such ability in their experimental participants. Thus, satisfactorily results of the current study bear further witness to the value and advantage of the applied approach.

## CONCLUSION

The present study was an attempt to examine whether a recent CL-based approach, namely *Principled Polysemy Theory* (Tyler & Evans, 2003), could have any advantageous contribution to teaching and learning PVs in comparison with an approach in which PVs are instructed through dictionary definitions and single verb equivalents. The findings of the study lend strong support to the superiority of the CL-based approach in yielding better learning gain of PVs as well as knowledge transfer to unfamiliar PVs. This ascendancy may originate from the basic thesis of CL that particles are not arbitrary but motivated by language users' experience of their physical, social and cultural surroundings. The findings imply that such motivated systemacity offers pathways for EFL learners to attain the following benefits:

1. A more profound understanding of conceptual bases of spatial scenes of particles and becoming familiar with the ways particles are conceptualized in native speakers' mindset; a kind of knowledge that does not automatically emerge in a foreign context.
2. Learning and remembering PVs meaningfully and efficiently (owing to greater depth of processing in general and to dual coding in particular)
3. Becoming more confident and less intimidated by PVs; once the students realize that PVs are not entirely arbitrary, they opt for alternatives to blind memorization, such as relying on conjuring up the spatial scenes of particles and inferencing the meaning from available cues. This changes their previous negative attitude toward PVs and encourages them to use them more frequently.

Another implication of the study relates to pedagogues and material designers; they could benefit from these findings in designing and performing actual practices to present PVs using their underlying CL-inspired motivations that may merit explicit teaching and save considerable class time.

Finally, there are a number of limitations to the study that should be acknowledged. The most noticeable limitation is that the study took focus on only four particles; this number is too limited to broad generalizations and further research is needed to determine the transferability of findings to other particles. Another shortcoming refers to the small sample size and the short period of the experiment. With a large and varied sample and by conducting a long-term experiment, the research would have yielded more precise and transferable results. Considering these limitations, it is hoped that further investigations establish a greater degree of accuracy and deeper understanding of the subject matter of the study.

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### Appendix A

#### *The importance of construal in interpretation of particle meaning*

According to Table1, the particles *up* and *down* share a common meaning: the complete sense. However, it is important to note that this shared meaning refers to two different ways of viewing the same spatial scene. An example is the following sentences:

- (3)a. The house burned up.
- b. The house burned down.

Both the sentences in (3) describe the same event or spatial scene of ‘a burning house’ seen from two different vantage points which are depicted in Figure 3 and Figure4.



Figure 3: The house burned up.



Figure 4: The house burned down.

In figure 3, the fire is the profiled (F) element and the scene highlights the activity of burning until it is complete and accomplished. Figure 4, on the other hand, highlights a depletion and destruction activity and the (F) element is the house which continues burning until it is completely destroyed. In fact, both scenes convey a *completion* meaning; however, the completion of an activity carries a positive sense and hence is encoded in *up* and the completion/depletion which has a negative sense to it is described by *down*.

Another example of importance of vantage point and figure-ground profile is the case of *out* in these sentences:

- (4)a. The sun came out.
- b. The lights went out.

These scenes are demonstrated in Figure 5 and Figure 6.

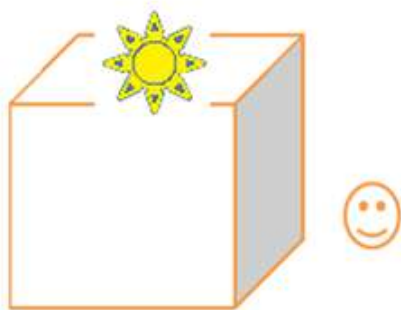


Figure 5: The sun came out.



Figure 6: The lights went out.

The particle *out* in the sentences (4.a) and (4.b) exhibits two seemingly opposite meanings; when the sun is out it becomes visible while when the lights are out they become invisible. Evidently, this controversy becomes clear once the interior/exterior vantage point is taken into account. In fact, the perceptual accessibility shifts according to the shift of vantage point giving rise to different interpretations.

# IMPLEMENTATION OF TEAM TEACHING IN AN ESP PROGRAM AND THE INVESTIGATION OF ITS EFFECTIVENESS ON STUDENTS OF COMPUTER SCIENCE ESP VOCABULARY ACHIEVEMENT

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## ABSTRACT

This paper presents an experiment concerning the contribution of team teaching to the better understanding of English as a specific purpose (ESP) terminologies. Accordingly, 40 learners majoring in computer science were selected as the participants of this study. Randomly, they were divided into two experimental and control groups. While the instructional material was the same for both groups, control group was taught through team teaching. At the end of the experiment, the findings were compared through t-test. Results after the analysis of the data indicated that who were taught through team teaching gained more ESP vocabulary than those who were taught conventionally.

**KEY WORDS:** team teaching, ESP, computer science, vocabulary achievement

## INTRODUCTION

Team teaching as a form of teacher collaboration has long been implemented in education at all levels. Sometimes synonymous with co-teaching or collaborative teaching, it features teachers' collective efforts that aim to improve teaching quality as well as students' performances. Many researchers have offered various definitions of team teaching: for example, Davis (1995) regarded team teaching as "all arrangements that include two or more faculty in some level of collaboration in the planning and delivery of a course". Not surprisingly, being amenable to different interpretations, the label of team teaching has been custom-tailored to suit diverse instructional purposes, functions, subjects, and educational settings.

The logistics of team teaching seem as simple as bringing two teachers together to work in the same classroom; yet, collaboration between two teachers is indeed a complicated phenomenon. In fact, a main focus of investigation by researchers in education has been the exploration of team teachers' interactions inside and outside the classroom. Researchers have attempted to disentangle issues that pose an impediment to team teaching so as to overcome obstacles that can damage teachers' collaborative relationships. Although a myriad of definitions of team teaching may create some confusion, which Anderson and Speck (1998) called "a cacophony of voices", the literature on team teaching has confirmed the positive effect of team teaching on student learning (Anderson & Speck, 1998) and teachers' ongoing development (Bailey, Curtis, &



Nunan, 2001; Eisen, 2000; Murata, 2002). Students taught collaboratively by two teachers have more access to teachers' assistance through a variety of teaching methods and materials, and opportunities for class participation (Anderson & Speck, 1998). Various forms of teacher collaboration can serve as an important catalyst for teachers' ongoing development and school change (Welch, 1998) because teachers engage in ongoing dialogues and interactions involved in the intense collaborative work. The social constructivist view of learning provides an explanation for the development of knowledge; rather than occurring in isolation, learning takes place in social environments and situated in social activities. Learning from colleagues is therefore one strategic approach for teachers who pursue continuous development in their careers. An effective ESP teacher must possess a relevant background in the subject field, especially on some subjects totally different from English such as science and technology, so as to offer learners a successful and beneficial course. Despite the scarcity of experts with such a cross-disciplinary training, an ESP class can be conducted alternatively by team teaching. In this study, researcher elects to collaborate in ESP teaching between an experienced English teacher trained in language teaching and an instructor specializing in computer science.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Many researchers support the positive advantages of team teaching approach and its effects on learning. Johns and Dudley-Evans (1980) were two of the EAP teachers and researchers who found team teaching extremely useful in their study. Roth et al. (2002) considered co-teaching as an effective means of achieving deep learning of science concepts while learning alternative ways to teach the same subject-matter. Co-teaching also provides opportunities for new teachers to obtain greater opportunities of learning to teach. Eisen (2000) classified team teaching into eight team types based on central purposes of team formation as interdisciplinary or multicultural education, collaborative learning, community action and co-learning, action learning, specialized delivery, professional development, research, and writing. In the context of language education, teaching teams are most often constituted by teachers from different disciplines or different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

ESP teachers are almost always teachers of English for General Purposes, and their switch into this field is sudden (Strevens, 1988). As Donna (2000) explicitly mentions, they get by with some basic guidelines and with a little help which ultimately proves inappropriate. Their task is to analyze students' needs, outline objectives, select and adapt teaching materials, design lessons, create an adult-oriented learning environment, and assess students' progress (Schleppegrell, 1991). Based on Little's (1990) typology, team teaching is at the end of the teacher collaboration continuum due to its closest interdependence among teachers, as teachers work together in the same classroom, sharing responsibilities of students' performance and implementing teaching activities together. This instructional practice is usually organized by policy makers or school leaders with different purposes. According to Eisen (2000), "no two teams are exactly alike because they operate along a continuum representing countless variations in goals, team membership, and members' relationships". Sometimes team teaching is implemented to utilize teachers' diverse expertise to complement each other in order to achieve better quality of instruction; at others, it is implemented for training purposes to improve new teachers' growth. As close interactions between team teachers in the classroom provide teachers with opportunities

to get exposed to different views and ways of teaching, team teaching is often associated with teachers' professional development in the workplace. Eisen (2000) classified team teaching into eight team types based on central purposes of team formation as interdisciplinary or multicultural education, collaborative learning, community action and co-learning, action learning, specialized delivery, professional development, research, and writing. In the context of language education, teaching teams are most often constituted by teachers from different disciplines or different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In a similar attempt to Calderón's (1995), Rueda and Monzó (2002) investigated the collaborative relationship between classroom teachers and paraeducators, who shared the same ethnicity and native language with students mostly from low-income Latino communities and who were hired to assist teachers. The study took place in two large public elementary schools located in southern California, with thirty-two bilingual, Latino paraeducators involved in the study divided into three groups according to the range of years of work experience. They were observed in eight to ten occasions when working with students, and were interviewed by the researchers. Different from those teachers in Calderón's (1995) study who were offered opportunities to improve their teaching through team teaching practice, the paraeducators in this study, as the researchers concluded, generally played three roles in the classroom: clerical support, directed teaching, and apprentice. Most of the responsibilities for the paraeducators included doing some trivial work for the teachers or providing students with lessons that had already been designed by the teachers. There were few opportunities for the paraeducators to learn teaching practice from the teachers as apprentice, and interactions between the teachers and the paraeducators were scarce. Translations from Spanish to English were the most common source of input that the paraeducators were asked to provide. The paraeducators' suggestions about teaching practice and input of students' culture were not positively valued by the teachers. Limited interactions with the teachers and unequal power relationship prevented the paraeducators from learning how to teach and pursuing teaching careers.

The researchers stressed that teachers' acknowledgement of paraeducators' cultural and community knowledge is critical to helping paraeducators make a better contribution to student learning. They also asserted that in order to promote paraeducators' professional development, schools need to encourage collaboration between paraeducators and teachers in the ways of allowing interactions and time for planning lessons by both groups. Besides, since power differences negatively affect the collaborative relationship, teachers and paraeducators should be accountable to each other with regard to their respective roles. To implement team teaching with a different purpose from those of the two studies just described, Roth, Masciotra, and Boyd's (1999) studied the collaborative practice used to facilitate teacher learning of novice teachers, in which a novice teacher's development through co-teaching with an experienced teacher in a 7th-grade science class was investigated. Grounded in hermeneutic phenomenology which is concerned with understanding lived situations of being-in-the-world, the researchers argued that co-teaching is an approach to helping the novice teacher acquire tacit dimensions of teaching. In contrast to the gap between discourse about teaching learned at universities and the experience of actually teaching a classroom which the novice teacher experienced in a teaching alone situation, Roth et al. (1999) suggested that co-teaching provided the beginning teacher with abundant opportunities to "briefly step back, take time out from the responsibilities of developing the classroom conversation, and reflect-on – but with little delay relative to the action – the questions and interactions of the master teacher". In other words, they found co-teaching to be a more preferable teaching practice than sending pre-service teachers into a classroom where the resident teachers let them work on their own.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

The following question is addressed in the present study:

1. Does team teaching, collaborative, enhance computer students' English achievement in an ESP program?

## RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

From the research question the following hypotheses were found:

1. There is a positive difference in English achievement between the control group and the experimental group under the treatment through team teaching in ESP program
2. There is negative difference in English achievement between the control group and the experimental group under the treatment through team teaching in ESP program
3. There is no significant difference in English achievement between the control group and the experimental group under the treatment through team teaching in ESP program

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

In this study, the addressed community was 40 undergraduate male and female students enrolled in the ESP course as a part of their major in computer science department at SAMA vocational and technical training school, Mahshahr branch. The department itself divided them into two intact classes. Randomly, one class was selected as an experimental group which included 20 students and the other as a control group which included 20 students. The data collected from the subjects' performance on the post-test and pretest are described in terms of mean (X), standard error of measurement (SEM), standard deviation (SD), and Levene's t-test, using the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) program.

### *Instruments*

The main instruments used in the present study were the following: The textbook which was *English for the students of computer* published in Iran. It was developed by Barani, and Rezaei and the publisher is the Rahnama Press (Barani, Gh., & Rezaei. S. H, 2011). The textbook contains twenty lessons which due to the shortage of time ten lessons were covered. The pretest worked as a proficiency test which determined the homogeneity of the students regarding the English language proficiency and an achievement test played the role of posttest to point out the would-be impact of co-teaching on the experimental group.

### *Design and Procedure*

A quasi-experimental design was exploited for the present study. Accordingly, Two intact English classes in the ESP context were used in the study. The first class comprised 20 students and was held on Tuesdays. It was the experimental class co-taught by a pair of teachers group in which an ESP teacher who taught the technical terms and an EFL teacher who instructed the general terms. The other class, considered as control group, included 20 students who came to the class on Saturdays. An EFL teacher only conducted the instruction. The language proficiency of the

control and experimental groups was assessed by a proficiency test. In the control group ESP lessons were instructed by just one teacher, EFL teacher. While in the experimental, the participants were taught by two instructors, both EFL and ESP teacher. These two teachers cooperatively co-taught the ESP lessons based on team teaching model which made the study distinguishable from the traditional view of teaching. Collaboration and consensus between co-teachers determined every issues of the teaching process. In short, these groups were worked with for 10 sessions; each session taking almost one hour and quarter.

### **Data Analysis**

The data collected from the subjects' performance on the post-test and pretest are described in terms of mean (X), standard error of measurement (SEM), standard deviation (SD), and Levene's t-test, using the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) program.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The aim of this chapter is to present the results of the quantitative analysis. Therefore, The preliminary descriptive statistics for the ESP vocabulary knowledge test (posttest) appears in the following Tables.

*Table 1: Descriptive statistics of posttest for the experimental and control groups*

Group	Test	N	Mean	SD
Experimental	posttest	20	50.8	2.37
Control	posttest	20	47.85	4.55

As displayed in Table 1, experimental group's performance in the posttest was better than those in the control group. It was also revealed that after the instructional treatment, the mean of the posttest scores for experimental group was 50.8, while for the control group it was 47.85. In the case of SD, for the experimental group, it was 2.37, whereas that of the control group was 4.55. So, the findings suggest that there was a difference between experimental and control groups after the treatment, collaborative teaching.

*Table 2: Results of t-test between Experimental groups and Control groups in Posttest*

Group	N	Mean	SD	t- value	Df	P
Experimental	20	50.8	2.37	2.56	38	0.014
Control	20	46.85	4.52			

*\*Significant at .05*

In order to compare the effectiveness of the collaborative teaching on ESP vocabulary learning , Levene's t-test demonstrated in Table 2 indicated that the mean difference between the experimental and control groups' scores measured at the time of posttest was significant ( $t = 2.56$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The mean difference between the experimental group ( $M=50.8$ ) and control group ( $M=46.85$ ) was 3.95. This indicates that the experimental group who were under the treatment at the collaborative teaching gained more ESP vocabulary than the control group. Therefore, it can be claimed that this difference is due to the kind of instructional environment where the experimental group was taught there and this gives further evidence for accepting the first hypothesis and rejecting the other two hypotheses.

1. There is a positive difference in English achievement between the control group and the experimental group under the treatment through team teaching in ESP program ( accepted)

2. There is negative difference in English achievement between the control group and the experimental group under the treatment through team teaching in ESP program (rejected)
3. There is no significant difference in English achievement between the control group and the experimental group under the treatment through team teaching in ESP program (rejected)

## **CONCLUSION**

This study aimed at investigating the effect of collaborative teaching on ESP terminologies promotion in the field of computer. To this end, the following question was under consideration: Does team teaching, collaborative, enhance computer students' English achievement in an ESP program?

To perform this research, subjects were randomly put in one control group and one experimental group and were assigned to one of the two following instructional conditions:

The experimental group was taught through the collaborative or team teaching, while Control group was taught traditionally. For data analysis, Levene's t-test was used. The calculated t-test proved that ESP vocabulary can be learnt better via collaborative teaching. The experimental group gained considerable amount of vocabulary than the control group. So, the computation and analysis of the t-test provided researcher with the judgment to reject the negative and null hypotheses of this study which stated that collaborative or team teaching would not significantly promote learners' ESP vocabulary knowledge. Results of this study indicated that teaching ESP courses through collaborative or team teaching at the university or instructional institutions might become a useful way for students to improve and facilitate their learning of ESP words. Based on the findings, one concludes that team teaching has much influence on the learning of computer ESP terminology.

In terms of the limitations of the study, the point should be highlighted that due to the shortage of the time, the researchers did not verify the pre-post tests in terms of reliability.

## **PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATION**

The current study may provide some support for the idea that collaborative teaching can have powerful effects on the learning of computer ESP terminology. Findings of this research paved the way for the acceptance of this belief. The major implication to be drawn from this research is that students need to learn technical words through the collaboration between EFL and specialized teachers.

## **SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study aimed to answer just one question: Does teaching ESP course via team teaching , collaborative teaching, enhance computer learners' ESP terminology?  
However, another question may be raised as the follow:

1. In this study, only computer students were involved. It is suggested that learners of other majors participate in further studies.

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## LITERARY COMMUNICATION AND ITS ROLE IN POETICS

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### ABSTRACT

Communication provides an opportunity for persons of different cultures to learn from each other. It is important to build skills that enhance communication. In Communication process, creating means not only using the language and dialect of the people you are serving, but also using communication vehicles that are proven to have significant value and use by the target audience. Literary communication is the contact between the author and the reader. Like other forms of art, poetry has performed the function of a communication medium. When a poet describes an object it is separated from its context in the natural world and therefore looks different to the reader. A literary text, at least in our period and culture, may be about anything. Of course, literary narrative must satisfy the basic principles of narratives, such as description of (human or anthropomorphic) action, and a schematic structure with at least a complication and a resolution. The key element in visual poetry is the visual nature as opposed to the sound the words make. Performance poetry also relies on visual and oral communication. The difference being that aspects of the poem must be seen in the poet rather than on other forms of published material.

**KEYWORDS:** communication, literary communication, pragmatic context, maxims

### INTRODUCTION

Although literary communication is a relatively new concept, yet this form of language communication has come to be characterized by so many individual traits that can be studied as a self-contained phenomenon. Sociologists claim that all culture is communication. We may state that all literature is also communication. Although literature clearly meets the specifications of language communication, it nevertheless introduces unique elements, or perhaps a different system of hierarchy, into the rules governing vernacular speech. Speech act is not only an act of communication in the narrow sense. Equally important is expression and the effect it exercises on the interlocutor. These facts also have a bearing on a literary work even though literature possesses the unique feature of placing the message in the forefront of attention. However, since the message is never transparent and since its function is not restricted to denotation, it may therefore be said that a literary work communicates itself.

This formula does not contain a tautology. In a literary communication the message does not get lost as a text and it is not transparent. That is to say, the message that is communicated in that act contains what is essentially the Work, what constitutes its structure. Its reference functions emerge on a more distant plane.

One other important consideration supports the validity of the formula which states that a literary work communicates itself. Within the sphere of the literary culture in which we live, literary communication is perceived and felt as an act of a separate, distinct and unique character. Thus conceived, it represents a specific value which is not reducible to a different value. Communication does not therefore obviate the communiqué; it loses none of its reasons for existence even when it is recognized that it has fulfilled its current communication purpose. By communicating itself, a literary work remains in constant communicative readiness.

Literary communication may be distinguished from language communication, defined in its strictest sense, in one other aspect. Knowledge of a language code, though it is a necessary condition of literary communication, however, cannot fill that purpose satisfactorily. One may understand the language of a given work perfectly but be unable to establish communication with it. In order to do this, one must be familiar with what we call literary styles. The term is used here in its broadest sense to include both period styles and the styles of particular types of discourse, and most particularly literary genres. Literary styles also cover a system of images, symbols and stereotypes which form the world the author and the reader share. It is this that makes communication between them possible.

The purpose of literature like other forms of art is to communicate and not to exhibit. The exhibitory poetry aims at pleasing the senses and is thus purely emotional in nature. It becomes subjective and it is the poet rather than the poetry that then matters. The pleasure is solely derived from the form, a composition of sounds of words. Such poetry rarely attempts to convey the unexpressed knowledge; the essential idea behind the order of the form. A poem should rather communicate effectively. It does so by using forms with right analogies and balanced ornamentation eventually to establish a harmony between the spiritual and the intellectual self and the universal truth.

Communication provides an opportunity for persons of different cultures to learn from each other. It is important to build skills that enhance communication. Be open, honest, respectful, non judgmental, and willing to listen and learn. According to Fujishin (2009, 134) In process of communication, listening and observational skills are essential. Letting people know that you are interested in what they have to say is vital to building trust. Communication strategies have to capture the attention of the audience.

## **CREATING COMMUNICATION**

In Communication process, creating means not only using the language and dialect of the people you are serving, but also using communication vehicles that are proven to have significant value and use by the target audience. Literary communication is the contact between the author and the reader. The writer sends a message through his text and the audience receives it. The text comes to life and serves its purpose only when it communicates with the reader (Dijk, 1985).

The message can take any form, from a book to a script or a poem. What is important is the constant movement between producing and receiving stays alive, and that the author and the

reader speak the same language, and thus, communicate even though it is true that the majority of literary studies focus on the analysis of the actual text and not on the literary communication between author and reader, (Beaugrande, 1997). It has also been accepted that a comprehensive literary theory needs to include both the analysis of the text and the examination of its contexts (Rahim, 2011).

Because, as important as the studying of the text might be, the text's functions and the conditions of its production and reception are equally important as they connect it to its reader, without whom the text would not achieve its purpose.

The importance of literary communication lies also in the fact that no structures are ever solely literary. Rather, it is the historical and cultural context that determines whether a text could be considered literary. Metric structures, for example, are used in poetry, song writing and advertising without, however, these types of writing are considered as literature (Wolfreys, Robbins & Womack, 2006).

With this said, the structures and the context of a text are closely connected and one cannot exist without the other. Therefore, a theory of literature can only be a theory of literary communication. (Sell, 2000)

## PSYCHOLOGY OF THE READER

The examination of the text in relation to the psychology of the reader is another important aspect of literary communication. Literary communication is achieved only through the study of the cognitive and emotive structures of literature (Ibsch, 2001).

When one considers the perceived qualities of poetry, one cannot escape facing a rather disconcerting issue. Words designate "compact" concepts; even such words as "emotion" or "sadness" are tags used to identify the mental processes; they do not convey the stream of information and its diffuse structure. Notwithstanding, some poetry at least is said to display diffuse emotion, vague moods, or varieties of mystic experiences.

## COGNITIVE STYLISTICS

According to Semino (2002), brain-research of the last few decades seems to suggest, language is a predominantly *sequential* activity, of a conspicuously *logical* character, typically associated with the left cerebral hemisphere; whereas diffuse emotional processes are typically associated with the right cerebral hemisphere.

Thus, while we can *name* emotions, language does not appear to be well suited to convey their unique *diffuse* character. Accordingly, emotional poetry, or *mystic poetry* ought to be a contradiction in terms. We know that this is not the case. But this presentation of the problem emphasizes that we have all too easily accepted what ought not to be taken for granted (Johansson, 2005).

## **SOCIAL CONTEXT**

The term social context refers to the psychological position that people react to things differently depending on their immediate environment. Literary communication is also important for the fact that it relies on the social context of the text. (Grant, 1995) Apart from the text itself and its literary structures, apart from its historical and cultural background and apart from its psychological properties, a text needs to also be examined from a sociological perspective. The text's organization, production and interpretation in a specific society, as well as the rules, the values and norms that define it, are taken into consideration when evaluating a text's ability to communicate with its audience.

## **CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE SPACES OF IMAGES AND MEANINGS**

The process of correspondence between the spaces of images and meanings may be multiple-faceted (Arana, 2008). It involves the sequence including perceptions, fragmented or primitive images, forms of images or sophisticated images, and constructing new images through restructuring perceived images. And corresponding to this sequence of image construction and reconstruction, there is the sequence of meanings: primitive or basic element of meanings, sophisticated or basic system of meanings, grand system of meanings and system complex of meanings. Logically, there is a cross-boundary feedback effect in this correspondence, and it is possible that any form or state of the construction-reconstruction of images could be mapped to multiple phases of meaning formation and correspondence.

## **POETRY AS A COMMUNICATION MEDIUM**

Like other forms of art, poetry has performed the function of a communication medium. Especially before the development of printing, verse rather than prose served as the dominant medium of literary communication, since it was easier to follow and learn by heart and readier to be combined with other genres such as song and dance (Steinberg, 2007)

In the modern society, however, the importance of verse has largely diminished, as the novel emerged as the most popular channel of communication and many subjects previously treated in verse moved over to the realm of prose. Now, the development of new spaces of communication like electronic visual media is producing yet another change. With the novel requiring to be read alone and taking much time, shorter verse which can be recited for and together with a mass audience and more easily combined with other media has regained a relatively high status. On the other hand, it is yet to be seen whether such retrieval could prevail over a larger trend of the decline of literature in general. There have also been a number of instances arguing that communication is not one of the many functions of art, but the very essence of it (Feldman, 1967).

It is well-known that the majority of literary studies, both traditional and modern, focus on the analysis of the literary text and not on the processes of literary communication.

Those views which hold that literary theory should be concerned with the "literary text" alone are unwarranted and ideological: not only the structures of the literary text are important, but also its functions, as well as the conditions of production, processing, reception, etc., as they are accounted for in psychological, sociological, anthropological, and historical studies. A pragmatic account of literature has its natural place in such a theory.

People communicate not just to convey information for businesslike practical reasons; they also convey feelings and attitudes. Pieces:

Telling a joke, passing the time in conversation and greeting old friends are some examples, and poetry is another (Thayer, 1997).

Some propositions including many involving values, emotions, feelings, attitudes and judgments can't be conveyed through communicating practical information or with scientific precision. Like science, literature (and especially poetry) uses a specialized language for the purposes of precision in matters different from science (Buddenbaum & Novak, 2001).

In ordinary life, people must deal with forms of communication that use some of the methods of poetry, including editorials, sermons, political speeches, advertisements and magazine articles. Yet when approaching poems, many people confuse practical or "scientific" kinds of communication with poetic communication, sometimes as a way of justifying their interest in poetry, and so fall into certain mistakes (Shafieyan, 2011).

One mistake is "message-hunting" looking only for a profitable statement or idea in a poem. A short prose statement can work better than a poem for communicating advice. Something else is at work in poetry.

Another mistake is thinking that poetry deals only with emotion or sensation, or even thinking that poetry can express an emotion such as grief the way tears would express it, or bring up the emotion in the reader (Vickers, 1973).

But poetry can never do that as well as real experience, the authors say, and a poem, such as Keats' Ode to a Nightingale, used as an example here, may really convey the poet's interpretation of an experience.

A third common mistake is an attempt to mechanically combine the first two, defining poetry as the "beautiful statement of some high truth", or "truth" with "decorations". This mistake can lead to thinking of poems as collections of pretty language pleasing for its associations with pleasant things. But even Shakespeare and Milton wrote fine passages bringing up unpleasant and disagreeable associations. The things represented don't themselves shape the poetic effect, which depends on the "kind of use the poet makes of them."

These mistakes look at poems in a mechanical way rather than in an organic way in which the elements (such as meter, rhyme, figurative language, along with attitude and emotion) need to be understood to be acting in a fundamental, intimate, organic way with each other.

The introduction also states (but doesn't develop the thought) that poems are inherently dramatic, with an implied speaker who reacts to a situation, scene or idea.

## **NARRATIVE POEMS**

In a "Foreword" introducing discussions of individual poems, the authors say that poetry takes the general human interest that people have in other people (expressed at other times in news articles about such things as outlaws, lovers killing lovers or other tragedies, to cite some examples) and put into a form "that preserves it" even after initial curiosity wanes (Brooks, 1976).

Poems that tell a story use the reader's natural curiosity about how a story will turn out (the most obvious way we become interested in literature), although readers or listeners who know the ending still enjoy the poems. The story element can be prominent. Narrative is a way for the poet to provoke certain emotional reactions and ideas in readers.

Using the ballad "Johnie Armstrong" as an example, the authors show how a narrative poem, far more than a novel or even a short story, will use bare "facts" in a dramatic way that gives them an emotional and intellectual meaning, whether or not the reader or listener has analyzed those or other elements. Poems are more concentrated or "closely" organized than prose in that they tend to present concentrated, sharper selected details in a concentrated, carefully arranged way, giving them more "intensity." By presenting concrete, explicit statements (as in "The Wife of Usher's Well"), the poet can convey an emotional impact as well as information, which more abstract language can't do. The reader can also be drawn into a more immediate appreciation of a poem by drawing out ideas from suggestions rather than the poet making explicit statements. Yet not every implication of a poem needs to be understood consciously for a reader to enjoy the work.

The theme of a poem can be properly described (to give a fuller understanding of the poem) without the process becoming "message hunting" if the reader understands that "the poem gives the theme its force", not the other way around (Winchell, 1996).

## **DESCRIPTIVE POEMS**

The poems in this section give readers an impression of some scene or object showing the impression they gave the poet either through his senses or imagination. Conveying fresh, vivid impressions of things is fundamental to good poetry, the authors assert. Descriptions in poetry are linked closely to our lives and our values just as narratives are (Huxley, 2002).

When a poet describes an object it is separated from its context in the natural world and therefore looks different to the reader. We feel it carries associations, emotional or intellectual or both, that the natural object doesn't. If nothing else, we know that the poet has chosen the object to describe and we wonder why.

## **EXPLORATION OF IMAGE**

The exploration of image triggering and message transition as an artistic form of communication can cause a blurring of the boundaries between poetry and art, if we can say that they in fact do have boundaries. We have created words to say this such as word art, concrete poetry, visual poetry, pattern poetry, visual riddles and puzzle poetry.

The concept of concrete poetry and word art has been around a long time although the words to define it as an art form may not. It is believed that the word "concrete poetry" began to spread as a new term in the 1950's helped by an exhibition of concrete poetry and a manifesto that was published in Brazil.



If we looked closely at some of the ancient forms of writing we might see that many have relied on the visual aspects of the written language to communicate, but more recently beginnings have been attributed to Apollinaire, who created calligrammes in 1914. In visual poetry, the juxtaposition of letters, sound and shapes may be played with (Dymoke, 2003).

The synergy of these words, letters and shapes trigger images, sounds and messages that can be called the art of the poet....making more from the sum of the parts in a visual communication. The key element in visual poetry is the visual nature as apposed to the sound the words make. Performance poetry also relies on visual and oral communication. The difference being that aspects of the poem must be seen in the poet rather than on other forms of published material (Anderson, 2009).

With the development of communication technologies, we can embed aural and visual stimuli into unique still or animated artistic expressions....what shall we call these new art forms? We already have words such as digital art and new media to talk about some art forms but do the words digital poems really communicate all that they can be? We have the technology to bring more senses into the poetry equation, touch for instance.

### **IMPRESSIVE SPEECH ACT**

There are reasons to introduce a kind of illocutionary act which involves the intention to change the attitude of the hearer with respect to the context (text, speaker, etc), especially the evaluative attitudes of the hearer (Dervin, 1984).

We might call this kind of act an "impressive" or "ritual" speech act. This provisional conclusion still leaves open the problem whether there is a specific speech act of literature. Probably this question should be answered in the negative: we should realize what the original forms and functions of "literature" were in order to understand its specific pragmatic function. It is well known that the specific notion of "literature," as such, is not very old. Indeed, our novels have their roots in everyday stories, myths, and folktales, and our poems in songs, hymns, etc. Functionally, then, our literature still belongs in the class where we also have our jokes, wise-cracks, dirty stories, etc. The differences with these kinds of communication, then, are not so much pragmatic as rather social: literature has been, we already suggested, institutionalized; it is published, authors assume a specific status, it is reviewed in specific papers and journals, it is taken up in text books, discussed, analyzed, etc. The institution also is defined by norms and values; it will be the case that there are also conditions pertaining to the structure of the utterance itself (as in any speech act). The attempt made above to sketch the problem about the pragmatic status of literature in terms of intended attitude change at the level of cognitive and/or emotive "liking" should not be seen as a reformulation of the classic principle which takes literature's function to be exclusively "esthetic." First of all, as we have already suggested, esthetic functions are based on communicative effects, and based on institutionalized norm and value systems which are socially, culturally, and historically variable. This allows for the well-known fact that some kinds of discourse, although clearly having "non-ritual" pragmatic function.

## IMPORTANCE OF LITERARY AUTHOR

Although the institution of literature is cultural rather than juridical or political, there is some sense in saying that "literary" texts are only appropriate when written by a "literary author." (Forastieri, et al, 1980).

Of course, this may seem circular, and problematic for "first" literary products, but it points to the cultural fact that there is an instance which "recognizes" the text and its author as "literary." As is also the case for a conviction by a judge, other contextual (and textual) conditions must in that case be satisfied: not everything an author says is thereby "literary," only those texts written in his "function" of a writer; the text should be made public, published in an appropriate message book, journal but usually not on the front page of a news paper), etc. All these conditions play of course a crucial role in the definition of literature in the usual sense of the term, but we do not count them among the pragmatic appropriateness conditions in a more limited sense, because they are culturally different. Of course, there are few, except theoretical, grounds to reject a broader conception of pragmatics, in which the full social, institutional and even cognitive/emotive, properties of communication are made explicit. Another aspect of the literary context is the knowledge, in both speaker and hearer, of overlapping, and ideally identical, rule systems, conventions or "codes" besides those of natural language.

Literary texts in the strict sense are such only due to other, institutional aspects of the socio-cultural context, e.g. originality with respect to the system which is a culturally and historically dependent value (Poyatos, 1988). In each communicative situation the speaker will have a certain "position" and certain attitudes with respect to denoted events, persons or the hearer in particular. That is, he will not only provide explicit evaluative statements, but also implicitly selects, describes and combines objects and events from his point of view. The same holds in literary communication, but the system of perspectives may be more complicated because besides his own point of view, the author may represent the point of view of a narrator and/or those of represented persons possibly through the point of view of the narrator. As soon as representation is involved, we no longer are at the pragmatic, but at the semantic level, although the specific aspect is that communication contexts are represented. The pragmatics of literature, then, only pertains to the perspective of the author himself, and to his relations with the readers (Teun, 1981).

That pragmatics should also specify how pragmatic function and context is systematically related to the text. In fact when we mentioned specific literary rules and conventions, being used and interpreted parallel to those of the natural language system. In which respect are these pragmatically relevant? First textual manifestations of "underlying" pragmatic structures are all kinds of announcements and titles. Much in the same way as performative verbs may denote the locutionary force of an utterance. In linguistics, a locutionary force is the performance of an utterance, and hence of a speech act. The term equally refers to the surface meaning of an utterance because, according to J. L. Austin's posthumous "How To Do Things With Words", a speech act should be analyzed as a locutionary act (i.e. the actual utterance and its ostensible meaning, comprising phonetic, phatic and rhetic acts corresponding to the verbal, syntactic and semantic aspects of any meaningful utterance), as well as an illocutionary act (the semantic 'illocutionary force' of the utterance, thus its real, intended meaning), and in certain cases a further perlocutionary act.

For example, my saying to you "Don't go into the water" (a locutionary act with distinct phonetic, syntactic and semantic features) counts as warning you not to go into the water (an illocutionary

act), and if you heed my warning I have thereby succeeded in persuading you not to go into the water (a perlocutionary act). This taxonomy of speech acts was inherited by John R. Searle, Austin's pupil at Oxford and subsequently an influential exponent of speech act theory. Cognitively these function as preparation for the adequate pragmatic interpretation of the text.

### **DEICTIC EXPRESSIONS**

A typical manifestation of semantic-pragmatic features of a context are deictic expressions (Forastieri, et al, 1980). Other pragmatic "indicators" are those of surface structure: graphical structure, and morpho-syntactic structures, even if there are other discourse types (e.g. advertisements) and similar specific rules.

At the semantic level we first of all have the condition already discussed for the pragmatic level: the text need not be true. More specifically, it need not denote properties or actions of speaker and hearer, as is often the case in other speech acts. We here obviously have the main source for the pragmatic nature of ritual illocutionary acts: as soon as the underlying proposition is (known to be) false the corresponding speech act will also assume a "spurious" character, at least at the micro-level: we have quasi-assertions and quasi-complaints. Whereas other speech acts often require a specific semantic content, e.g. an action of speaker or hearer, no such requirement seems to hold for literary communication (Forastieri, et al, 1980).

A literary text, at least in our period and culture, may be about anything. Of course, literary narrative must satisfy the basic principles of narratives, such as description of (human or anthropomorphic) action, and a schematic structure with at least a complication and a resolution. Both the semantic and the narrative structures may however show specific operations of deletion, permutation, repetition and substitution which are conventionalized for literary communication, and which need not be spelled out here. Although, as we said, the semantics of literary texts is in principle not restricted, especially in modern literature, such restrictions may well occur in specific types of literature or in different historical or cultural contexts. Whereas in other descriptions of psychical or social events, the account may have a more or less general character, or general conclusions added (as in a psychological or social report, a theoretical study, etc.), a novel may describe particular details which would not occur in other kinds of discourse, e.g. because they are irrelevant or inaccessible. On the other hand, much classical literature requires a specific "lexicon" in which the possible "themes" of a text are given.

Only recently, then, a poem could also be about a table or an egg, and only in the modern novel specific trivia of everyday life could be described in detail, whereas in classic literature "important" themes, such as life, death, nature, love and hate, power, war or pride, etc. would be preferred. This is not the place to enumerate the basic properties of literary texts. It should only be stressed that the specific ritual illocutionary force of literature may be indicated by typical textual conventions at the graphical/phonological, syntactic, stylistic, semantic and narrative levels. Maybe none of these typical structures are exclusively literary, taken in isolation, but together and given certain properties of the context already mentioned above (presentation, reading situation, etc.) they may be sufficient indications for the appropriate pragmatic interpretation of the text. Clearly, there is an interaction between text and pragmatic context: as soon as the structural properties of the text are marked (with respect to some rule, norm, expectation) the reader will also remark them, whereby the specific pragmatic nature of ritual discourse can be

brought about; and conversely: if the specific attention is not on some intention of the speaker with respect to specific beliefs, or actions of the reader, the reader is able to pay focused attention to the specific structures themselves.

### IMPORTANCE OF MAXIMS

The idea of applying Gricean Maxims to the analysis of literary texts has been developed most fully in van Dijk's *Pragmatics and Poetics* and Pratt's *Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse*. Van Dijk states that all Gricean maxims change in literary communication, that the speaker 'opts out' from the principles of ordinary conversation and that the 'Cooperative Principle' does not hold. He proposes the so-called Cooperative Principle from which the four literary counterparts of the Gricean principle are derived. Pratt (1977) also notes the conspicuous difference in communication on the levels of author-reader and hero-hero. She shares Ohmann's (1974) view on speech acts of the latter level as 'mimetic' or 'imitation speech acts' and states that what counts as a lie, a clash, an opting out, or an unintentional failure on the part of a fictional speaker (or writer) counts as flouting on the part of the real-world author. The implicature involved as the result of flouting is that the non fulfillment is in accord with the purpose of the exchange in which the reader and author are engaged.

### CONCLUSION

Communication is the exchange and flow of information and ideas from one person to another; it involves a sender transmitting an idea, information, or feeling to a receiver. Effective communication occurs only if the receiver understands the exact information or idea that the sender intended to transmit. Communication provides an opportunity for persons of different cultures to learn from each other. It is important to build skills that enhance communication. Literary communication is the interaction between the author and the reader is just one in a variety of communicative acts. Literary communication is fundamentally different from oral communication in that the addresser and the addressee in literary communication are temporally, locally and possibly culturally distanced. As a result literary communication is a one sided process with no feedback on the part of the addressee. In literary communication, there exists a strong tendency to observe the Maxims. They prove to hold good for literary as well as for oral communication. They cannot be said to be totally violated or flouted nor is there any necessity to introduce special Maxims for literary communication. The non-fulfillment of Maxims can be accounted for in terms of the goal oriented approach by the presence of a predominant goal supra ordinate to that of communicating something to the reader.

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# ISSUES TO ADAPTING WEB-BASED TRAINING DEPLOYMENT IN IRAN HIGHER EDUCATION: STUDENTS' AND PROFESSORS' PERSPECTIVE

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## ABSTRACT

E-learning efforts and experiments currently receive much attention across the globe. The availability of electronic and web-enabling technologies also dramatically influences the way we view the learning strategies of the future (Kramer, 2000; Hitz, 1995). This is a practical, non-experimental study in which questionnaire was used to collect data. The results show that the main important infrastructures are lack or shortage of designed equipment and facilities to accommodate new technologies, lack of students' access to computer and proper telecommunications, specific problems of Iran telecommunications infrastructures. The major administrative-educational barriers of e-learning development are: lack or shortage of incentives to study in an electronic way, lack of laboratory sessions through e-learning and lack of education for students in the field of instructional technology. Also, the findings show that the major human barriers are: inadequate specialized faculty members in new educational technologies,



unfamiliarity of planners and administrative officers with e-learning applications, lack of commitment of faculty members to spend time for learning via technologies. Among financial barriers in developing e-learning, the following items can be mentioned: lack of investment and funds, high cost of educational technology equipment, high cost of updating the required content.

**KEY TERMS:** Electronic learning (E-learning), higher education, IT and ICT, teaching and learning

## **INTRODUCTION**

The introduction of distance and Electronic Learning Technology (hereafter, e-learning) in teaching institutions is often complex and educators do not always accept the Information and Communication Technologies (hereafter, ICT) as expected. Removing trade/political barriers facilitates e-learning around the world, but there are significant cultural barriers to the use of Internet-based resources and computer technologies (Collins, 1999). The Internet may be a global technology but users work in local/national contexts (Li & Kirkup, 2007). In this regard, Galanouli, Murphy, and Gardner (2004) comment that resisting change is a state of mind for many educators and one of the most difficult barriers for effective ICT integration (see also Barak (2007)).

Arbaugh (2002) defined e-learning as the use of the Internet by users to learn specific content. Other researchers define e-learning as using modern Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and computers to deliver instruction, information, and learning content (Selim, 2007). The stakeholders of e-learning are learners, faculty, administrative and technical staff, and employers (Ozkan & Koseler, 2009).

The growth of information and communication technologies (ICT) has dramatically reshaped the teaching and learning processes in higher education (Pulkkinen, 2007; Wood, 1995). ICT for education is more critical today than ever before since its growing power and capabilities are triggering a change in the delivery means of education (Pajo & Wallace, 2001). The higher education institutions around the globe have increasingly adopted ICT as tools for teaching, curriculum development, staff development, and student learning (Kumpulainen, 2007; Usuel et al., 2008).

With the ongoing development of ICT and the diverse fields it affects, various theoretical models have been proposed for a better understanding concerning its diffusion, adoption, acceptance, and usage (Davis, 1989; Rogers, 2003; Scurry et al., 2005; Taylor & Todd, 1995; Venkatesh & Davis, 2000; Venkatesh et al., 2003; Yi et al., 2006). Although ICT has the potential of improving educational methods and the quality of teaching and learning, the advantages of ICT are often under-realized (Surry & Farquhar, 1997). The adoption of ICT at universities is often poorly implemented and is based on unfounded optimism (Taylor, 1998). A large numbers of faculty members are still hesitant or reluctant to adopt technology for teaching tasks (Jacobson, 1998). Research has found serious obstacles to fully integrating technology into the teaching and learning processes in higher education (Becta, 2004). In addition, there are no universal solutions to the problems as the ICT adoption is not merely a technical issue. Instead, the rate of adoption

is affected by factors such as innovation characteristics and various economic, sociological, organizational, and psychological variables (Straub, Keil, & Brenner, 1997). Straub et al. (1997) used the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in a cross-cultural study with participants from Japan, Switzerland, and the United States. They discovered that TAM exhibited fidelity for the US and Switzerland, but not in Japan, which suggested that the model may not predict technology use across all cultures Straub et al. (1997). In another intercultural study, Pelgrum (2001) reported that there was a substantial variation regarding the most significant barriers to ICT between teachers in different countries.

The existing face-to-face learning paradigm is no longer the only educational paradigm due to the advent of e-learning that makes it possible to receive education without being restricted by time and space (Hyeoncheol & Injin, 2007). Inoue (2007) indicates that “isolation and disconnectedness in the online environment may be to blame for student dropout, as well as the feeling of isolation that may lead to loss of motivation to learn” (cited from Doris, Supawan, & Christine, 2010).

The higher education centers are the applicants of the utilization of electronic education, because these educations are not limited to a special time and place. Thus, the higher education centers consider this fact as a prominent advantage (Garrison, 1999). Generally, virtual education means making the best use of electronic systems such as computers, internet, multimedia discs, electronic journals, virtual newsletters, etc. The virtual education aims are to make the learning easier, and more effective, and it can save time, cost and energy (Anderson and Elloumi, 2004). When examining the literature at the intersection of teaching and learning with information and communication technology (ICTs), one is struck by the relative lack of focus upon the potential problems and drawbacks of the incorporation of technology into educational work-life (i.e. Granger, Morbey, Lotherington, Owston, & Wideman, 2002; Hassini, 2006; Liaw, Huang, & Chen, 2007; Marbach-Ad & Sokolove, 2001; Marbach-Ad & Sokolove, 2002; Mazzolini & Maddison, 2007; Ruthven, Hennessy, & Deaney, 2005).

The present time that is considered as ‘Information Age and Information Revolution’ that has made major changes in human lifestyle and has created a new concept which is called ‘information society’. Information society is a symbol of all conventional and traditional social processes such as business, education and the like which is located in a new format by using information and communication technology (ICT). Miladi and Malek Mohamadi (2010), based on Yaghoubi’s quotation (2008), believe that broader approach towards E-learning indicates that the education and E-learning system have unique benefits and advantages for organizations and educational institutions.

Chahill (2008), based on Duderstat (2001), in this regard, stated that the higher education must meet these changes and they should invest in capacities which make the new types of learning, independent of time and place limitation, possible, in order to create a persuasive view in their future in the next millennium.

Increasingly, organizations are adopting online learning as the main delivery method to train employees (Simmons, 2002). Internet, which is located among the top ten inventions of the twentieth century, has achieved the concept of long-life learning; and, it also has driven learning out from the limitation of time and place. At the same time, educational institutions are moving toward the use of the Internet for delivery, both on campus and at a distance. Many adult education and training providers are running to get on the online learning bandwagon. Several

global groups of institutions are collaborating to promote distance education (Alley, 2001; Woudstra & Adria, 2003).

Lynch (2004), in a study entitled 'investigation of effective variables for students participation in an electronic evaluation', that was conducted by regression analysis, showed that 'computer', 'gender' and 'the experience of participating in Electronic evaluation' are of the predictor variables of the variability of the dependent variables. There is a significant relationship between the variables 'attitude toward computers and CBT' and 'psychological readiness of the learners to participate in electronic evaluation.

Oliver (2002) in a study entitled 'quality assurance of E-learning in Australian higher education' discusses the factors leading to successful adaptation and sustainable use of virtual learning in higher education in Australia.

Today, with the advent of network-based information technologies and the Internet, a new revolution has created in the teaching and learning process; and, the other traditional practices of knowledge transfer through the text, paper, exercises, etc. are less able to attract the attention of young people who are living in media-saturated world. New communications technologies (especially the Internet) have exciting capabilities to overcome learning barriers and geographical access; many higher education institutions seeks to use these capabilities and features learning, acquisition, teaching and research.

Frazeen (2004), in his final dissertation, entitled 'effective factors in quality of web-supported learning' considers the relationship and impact of several basic factors. He divided these elements in following six groups: organizational and educational factors, instructor, students, technology and educational designing.

Panitz (2008) in his study, about the advantages of electronic and participatory learning about motivating the learners, stated that working students had less interest in face to face education. Chahill (2008) in his paper entitled 'motivating factors of faculty members to participate in E-learning' refers to a significant relationship between 'vocational factors' (time, credit, career development, rewarding and high responsibility at work) and 'structural factors' (access to training materials over the course of learning, presenting different learning styles) with the implementation of E-learning courses. Gamble (2009) in his research entitled 'The learning effects in a multicultural environment' compared and investigated the impacts of an E-learning course that was held in China and the US.

The use of new technologies is very important, because, on one hand technologies related to higher education are being developed constantly and rapidly; and on the other hand, the poor quality of educational professionals and specialists is recognized as a part of global education problem. Unfortunately, in most countries, training of human resources in development projects were not the main priority; as a result, training and teaching programs was not tailored to the educational issues (Rabb, Ellis & Abdon 2002).

E-learning, which is considered as both internet use and digital technologies in teaching and learning, has always been identified as either an alternative solution or a new procedure to boost traditional approaches of education. Educational institutions apply e-learning in teaching process for the following reasons:

- IT promotion: E-learning is becoming an ideal tool for teaching and learning.
- Rich information: E-learning provides the accessibility of rich information resources every time and everywhere for both learners and teachers.
- Alternative learning approach: E-learning can give the possibility and opportunity of learning process to those who were marginalized as disable students.
- Blended learning: E-learning can complete traditional classes by releasing valuable resources and developing training of a greater number of traditional students (Spender, 2001).

Information technology has created new opportunities for education. More than 1000 institutions in 50 countries provide e-learning options (Sharma & Kitchens, 2004). E-learning is a useful tool for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. E-learning is an “innovative approach to education delivery via electronic forms of information that enhance the learner’s knowledge, skills, or other performance” (Siritongthaworn, Krairit, Dimmitt, & Paul, 2006, p. 139).

Although e-learning in developing countries had been increasingly adopted to achieve by traditional and non-traditional students, in developing countries it is still unknown and it is not used as a training approach (Abdon, Ninomiya & Rabb 2007). However, the e-learning has great facilities for solving many of the problems of education systems including education system such as limited financial resources, lack of attention to developing learners’ creativity and innovative ability, little use of distance learning technologies and the Internet, little relationship of students with the international scientific community, little relationship of education sector with the private sector, mismatch between education system and global changes, use of inappropriate teaching methods, lack of a learner-centered approach in education and lack of cross-organizational relationships (Zare & Zolali, 2006). At an institutional level there are concepts such as Christensen’s (2007) disruptive technologies, and Anderson’s (2006) long tail economy, but few frameworks as reliably and widely used in higher education as Boyer’s (1990) work. Thus, according to numerous features and capabilities of e-learning for agricultural education, the fundamental question of the present research would be “what are the obstacles of electronic learning deployment and development in Iran Higher Education?”

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

For the past few years, there has been a growing understanding of the important role of information and communication technologies (ICT) in higher education. Various new models of education are evolving in response to the new opportunities that are becoming available by integrating Web-based technologies (Barak & Rafaeli, 2004; Light, Nesbitt, Light, & White, 2000; Ward & Newlands, 1998). Though Web-based technologies are considered to be commonly used for educational purposes, the transition from traditional teaching to ICT-enhanced environments is not obvious and ought to be further investigated.

ICT can serve as a tools for designing new learning environments (Donovan & Nakhleh, 2001),

integrating virtual models (Dori, Barak, & Adir, 2003), and creating learning communities (Gordin, Gomez, Pea, & Fishman, 1997; Rafaeli, Barak, Dan-Gur, & Toch, 2004). However, not all teachers are convinced that ICT should be an integral part of their teaching strategies (Galanouli, Murphy, & Gardner, 2004). Galanouli et al. (2004) declared that resisting change is a state of mind for many teachers and one of the most difficult barriers for effective ICT integration.

With the advent of information technology in education, many researchers have focused on various aspects of this research. In many of these studies, organizational factors, infrastructures, facilities, planning and policy making for e-learning is considered. In other research, the necessary competences and skills for e-learning development in education systems is addressed. Some researchers have noted the following items: the cost of internet access, lack the proper hardware and software facilities, bandwidth limitations, low speed of internet and the delay in responding (Shea et al. 2005; Nordheim & Connars 1997; Zhang et al. 2002; Anstead et al. 2004; Murphy & Dooley 2000; Grant 2004; Liyan Song et al. 2004; Gulati 2008; Partides 2002; Wilson & Moore 2004).

The Internet information technology offered tools for developing collaboration and cooperation activities in distance learning (Jara et al., 2009; Macdonald, 2003), facilitating student interactions in a constructivist perspective linked to Vygotsky's theory (1978). Cooperation implies an engagement to peers through social interaction (Amhag & Jakobsson, 2009; Hew & Cheung, 2008) and collaboration activities delivered in the virtual social environment offered the student the possibility to develop understanding through their own constructs, becoming active learners. Chao, Saj, and Hamilton (2010) believe that collaborative course implementation is the best way to design high quality online courses.

In some studies, lack of social participation and social interaction between students and professors have been considered and their results suggested that students, in e-learning, do not possess the possibility of interacting with friends and classmates and getting help when they are faced with problems and then, probably images and texts may not be satisfying for them (the students). So, the students are deprived of the sense of community in e-learning; and, the students' sense of resentment and despair in e-learning courses is more in comparison to traditional courses (Kurtus 2000; Beneke 2001; Vonderweel 2003; Woods 2002; Lieblein 2000; Liyan Song et al. 2004).

The expansion of e-learning products is one of the fastest growing areas of education since it allows cutting down the costs and it improves the cost-effectiveness of education (Gilbert, Morton, & Rowley, 2007). Despite the proliferation of papers into distance learning in the last past decade, most research has considered technical, financial and administrative aspects and less research was focused on didactic issues. More recently, methodological issues were addressed by researchers, considering various approaches for delivering online courses (EL-Deghaidy & Nouby, 2008). The model of a training based on self-instructional materials and independent study was deeply revised and the focus of distance learning research enlarged to the application of innovative didactic methods such as cooperative learning, having the constructivist learning



theory as a reference (Amhag & Jakobsson, 2009; So & Brush, 2008; Wheeler, Yeomans, & Wheeler, 2008).

In other studies, the obstacles of e-learning development have been investigated regarding educational aspect. In these studies, the following items are addressed: the interval between faculty members and students, motivating procedure of students to begin or continue electronic courses, students' inability in understanding the goals of online courses due to lack of teachers participation, lack of computer literacy or low level of computer literacy among teachers and students, inexperience of faculty members using of technology in teaching, credit of online tutorials and the quality of its graduates, and finally lack of training for teachers in the field of educational technology (Anstead et al. 2004; Dillon & Walsh 1992; McPherson & Nunes 2000; Miller & Miller 2000; Miller 1997; Murphy & Terry 1998; Nordheim & Connars 1997; Kelsey et al. 2002; Gulati 2008).

Some researchers have referred to management issues such as student recruitment strategies, lack of standardization in the field of e-learning, inadequate salary for faculty members, shortage of teaching spaces which are equipped with new technologies, assessing methods of students, copy right and intellectual property issues of the content and course (Arabasz et al. 2003; Shea et al. 2005; Wilson 2003).

In this article, the authors try to respond to the following research question. What are the issues to adapting web-based training deployment in Iran higher education? Then, some alternative solution will be discussed regarding web-based training deployment. And, some recommendations are released at the end in order to pave the road of those who are interested in this field.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

This is a practical and non-experimental research. The population of this study consists of graduate students of Iranian University which were selected using purposeful sampling. In this sampling, the samples are selected in such a way that they represent a population which is expected to meet the research objectives (Churchill, 1991). In this study, the students were selected that continually used the mail and at least they had used an electronic registration system two times in the college.

### ***Research Instrument***

Thus, 130 students were selected as the sample. The research tool was a questionnaire consisting of two parts: "individual characteristics of the students" and "a measurement Scale for E-learning adapting Barriers" with 30 items which was measured based on five-scaled Likert range, from very low to very high. Cronbach's alpha for the barriers of web-based training was 0.89, indicating the high reliability of the research instrument.

### ***Data Analysis***

Content validity of the questionnaire was obtained through a few revision stages for education and e-learning experts. The obtained data of the questionnaire were analyzed by making the best use SPSS software.



### **Research Procedure**

To assess the reliability of the questionnaire, it was preliminarily completed using 25 students out of the sample. Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis was conducted in two parts.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **Individual characteristics**

Research findings showed that students' average age is 24 years. 55.5% of the students were male and 45.5 percent were female. The average score of 54.1 percent of the students (highest frequency) was more than 17. The average score of 37 percent of the students was between 15 and 17. And, the average score of 8.9 percent of them was less than 15. The lowest average score of the students was 12.5 and the highest was 19.25 while their computer literacy was upper intermediate.

### **Web-based training barriers**

Table 1, shows the infrastructural obstacles to the development of e-learning in higher education.

*Table 1: Infrastructure and Equipment Barriers for web-based training*

Barrier	mean	SD	Priority
Lack or shortage of designed equipment and facilities to accommodate new technologies	3.84	0.90	1
lack of Students' access to the computers and proper communication	3.80	1.22	2
Specific problems of Iran telecommunications infrastructures	3.79	1.21	3
Technical problems and the need to time spending to learn solutions	3.75	1.18	4
Old computer systems	3.71	1.17	5
Lack of administrative and technical support for e-learning equipment	3.69	1.14	6
Lack of a proper plan to prevent theft and vandalism	3.55	1.11	7
The use of computers as a means of luxury	3.43	1.18	8

According to presented mean in Table 1, the mean of all the barriers is more than 3 and it is evaluated as moderate and upper than moderate in the students, perspective. In other words, the role of infrastructure and equipment problems, which hinders the development of e-learning in higher education, is considerable. Here, lack or inadequate facilities and equipment for the use of new technologies in higher education is the most important barrier (mean = 3.80).

Table 2: Administrative – educational barriers for web-based training

Barrier	mean	SD	Priority
Lack of laboratory sessions through e-learning	3.89	1.18	1
Lack of education for students in the field of instructional technology	3.78	1.14	2
Lack or shortage of incentives to study in an electronic way	3.77	1.05	3
The nature of e-learning and lack of students' access to real people to solve their problems within their fields	3.70	1.04	4
Lack of transition of the academic culture through e-learning	3.43	1.25	5
Requiring much time to prepare students	3.40	1.09	6

In Table 2, administrative and educational challenges of e-learning development in higher education is presented. The mean of the presented items and components show that 67.5 percent of the administrative and educational issues, to a large extent, and 32.5 percent, to a moderate extent, hinder e-learning development in higher education. The main barrier is considered lack of laboratory sessions via e-learning. Regarding higher education fields and the dominant practical academic activities which is done in farms and laboratories, and also regarding the students' attendance in the farms, which is one of the requirements of academic courses, the possibility of holding sessions via e-learning is so far-fetched. The second and third barrier in the development of e-learning are: 'lack of training courses for students to learn new technologies' and 'absence or lack of incentives for them to study via e-learning'.

Another important factor in the adoption of e-learning in an organization or institution is skilled and committed workforce (Broadbent, 2001). In Table 3, the shortage or lack of skillful manpower for the e-learning development and problems of human resources are mentioned. Regarding the mean of the human resources, 64 percent of these barriers hinder e-learning development in higher education in moderate and higher level. 36 percent of these barriers hinder e-learning development in higher education in low and very low level. The most important barrier for human resources for the development of e-learning is lack of qualified faculty to use modern instructional technologies. The difference between the traditional classroom teaching and electronic learning is similar to the difference between driving a car and flying a helicopter. While some of the skills that come with cars driving may be applicable to the flight, but these skills are not sufficient by themselves. Thus, the transition from one to the other requires more skills. Also, the transition from traditional classroom learning to electronic learning involves acquiring new skills that are typical of this type of teaching and learning (Turgeon, Biase & Miller, 2000).

*Table 3: Human barriers for web-based training*

Barrier	mean	SD	Priority
Inadequate specialized faculty members in new educational technologies	3.92	1.17	1
Unfamiliarity of planners and administrative officers with e-learning applications	3.80	0.92	2
Lack of commitment of faculty members to spend time for learning via technologies	3.77	1.27	3
Stakeholders oppose to e-learning methods	3.78	1.22	4
Students' unfamiliarity with the ways of interacting with instructors	3.45	1.25	5
Lack of interest in students for e learning	3.33	1.44	6
Excessive dependency of students to computer-based teaching and neglecting the teachers' instructions	2.72	1.31	7
resistance of faculty members against changes and their fear of technologies	2.52	1.35	8
Lack of any experience of the students about e-learning and their fear of enrolling in e-learning units	2.44	1.29	9

Some think that the implementation of electronic learning facilitates the teachers' work, but this idea is not always true. Development and deployment of new types of training requires further work and attention. Planners and administrators unfamiliarity with electronic learning applications is the second human issue for the development of electronic learning domain. Lack of commitment of faculty members to spend time learning the technology is the third priority. Electronic learning development requires huge investments both in the financial and in the workforce sectors. The main issues in the e-learning costs are for buying an e-learning content, tools and related systems. The most important issue for the development of electronic learning in higher education is shortage of funds for investment and credit for electronic learning development. This issue accounts for the highest average compared with all 26 barriers are listed in Tables 1 to 4.

*Table 4: Financial barriers for web-based training*

Barrier	mean	SD	Priority
Lack of investment and funds	3.91	0.90	1
High cost of educational technology equipment	3.66	1.16	2
High cost of updating the required content	3.34	1.14	3

The high cost of purchasing equipment for college to use electronic learning and the high cost of updating the content are the second and third priorities. According to in Table 4, and regarding the average of the three credit barriers, financial problem is one of the most important concerns in the development of electronic learning in higher education.

***Factorial Analysis of E-learning Development Barriers***

To categorize the barriers of e-learning development, the exploratory factorial analysis approach was used for data summarization. The suitability of the collected data for factorial analysis was determined by making the best use of KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) and Bartlett's tests. KMO value equals to 0.816 which shows that the data for factorial analysis are appropriate. Also, Bartlett test statistic equals to 46.22 that indicates that it is significant in 0.01 level.

*Table 5: The number of extracted factors with eigenvalues, percentage of variance and cumulative percentage of variance*

factors	eigenvalues	percentage of variance of eigenvalues	cumulative percentage of variance
First	5.60	17.35	17.35
Second	4.65	14.69	32.04
Third	3.61	11.63	43.67
Fourth	3.48	10.71	54.38

In Table 5, the number of extracted factors with eigenvalues of each of them, percentage of variance and cumulative percentage of variance of each factor is observed after rotating with varimax method. As it is shown, eigenvalue of the first element is 5.6 and it has the highest influence in determining the barriers. Eigenvalue of the fourth factor is less than other factors and it would account for a smaller percentage when compared to other factors. Totally, these four factors determine 51.40 percent of total variance of e-learning development barriers; and, the other 49.60 percent of variance were the factors that had not been identified by factorial analysis. After considering the associated variables with each factor and their factor loadings, which can be seen in Table 6, barriers to the development of e-learning were named in this way: The first factor includes four barriers referring to the process of learning implementation. Thus, the first factor is named "administrative barriers" that explained 18.35% of the total variance of all obstacles. The variables in the second factor discuss more on the problems of manpower and human resources development in e-learning development.

*Table 6: Variables associated with each factor and the coefficients obtained from the matrix*

Factor s	variables	Load factor of variables
Administrative barriers	The nature of e-learning and lack of students' access to real people to solve their problems within their fields	0.738
	Specific problems of Iran telecommunications infrastructures	0.577
	Lack or shortage of incentives to study in an electronic way	0.559
	Lack or shortage of designed equipment and facilities to accommodate new technologies	0.544
	Lack of laboratory sessions through e-learning	0.541
Human barriers	Lack of interest in students for e learning	0.782
	resistance of faculty members against changes and their fear of technologies	0.725
	Excessive dependency of students to computer-based teaching and neglecting the teachers' instructions	0.719
	Inadequate specialized faculty members in new educational technologies	0.717
	Stakeholders oppose to e-learning methods	0.547
	Lack of any experience of the students about e-learning and their fear of enrolling in e-learning units	0.536
Technical	Lack of administrative and technical support for e-learning equipment	0.775
	Lack of education for students in the field of instructional technology	0.680
	The use of computers as a means of luxury	0.632
	Lack of a proper plan to prevent theft and vandalism	0.624
Financial	High cost of updating the required content	0.745
	Lack of investment and funds	0.653
	High cost of educational technology equipment	0.628

Hence, this factor is named as "human barriers" that accounts for 15.20 percent of the total variance. Administrative and human barriers account for 30.34 percent of the total variance of barriers of e-learning development. The third factor deals with technical problems and educational issues involved in the development of e-learning. Thus, the factor refers to the "Technical- educational Barriers" to the development of e-learning which 15.73% of the explained variance is dedicated to this factor. The variables of the fourth factor assets the credit and financial problems of developing e-learning; hence, this factor is named "financial barriers" in the development of e-learning in higher education that, on the whole, explains 11.91 percent of the total variance.

## **CONCLUSION**

Recent studies have shown that "the successful implementation of educational technologies depends largely on the attitudes of educators, who eventually determine how they are used" (Albarini, 2006). Indeed, understanding the intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions, and including moderating factors (specifically, the cultural dimensions) that influence educators' attitudes towards ICT and adoption in higher education is, therefore, a focal point of interest but is under-researched in recent educational studies of information-accessing behavior (see for instance, Chang and Lim (2002)). As Li and Kirkup (2007) propose, "how far culture influences people's perception of the Internet and their use of it (. . .) needs further research". As Venkatesh (2000) notes, there is a significant and growing body of research regarding the importance of the role of intrinsic motives in technology use (see for instance, Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1992; Finneran & Zhang, 2005; Sanchez-Franco & Roldan; 2005 for a review).

New information technologies are opening extraordinary abilities to change or reshape teaching and learning activities in all institutions of higher education. They also provide tools to design modern scientific environments that have never been possible before. For this reason, many universities want to establish electronic courses using the capabilities of information technology in the form of e-learning or online learning. However, the study several research of illustrates that the development of e-learning in education systems are faced with many problems. That unfamiliarity of policymakers and educational planners with them can impose heavy costs on educational institutions. This paper aims to familiarize planners, policy makers, students and faculty members with the issues facing the use of e-learning in higher education. It was found that the important steps in the development of e-learning are 'the strengthening and developing of telecommunications infrastructure in educational institutions' and 'providing access to the networks of institutions' since the effectiveness of e-learning depends on the availability and reliability of hardware and software, and lack of adequate telecommunications infrastructure severely affects the communication between the learner and the educational system. Therefore, funding for facilities and learning tools is a serious need for universities. Many researchers cited lack of the hardware and software as one of the major challenges of development of e-learning (Anstead et al., 2004, 28; Shea et al., 2005; Zhang et al., 2002; Usun, 2006).

Investment in training workforce and training of skilled manpower is another important issue in the development of e-learning. Without specialist and competent manpower the development of e-learning will fail and the resistance of the traditional system will be increased and then,

entering to higher education and information technology will be harder. Moreover, consideration of the nature of several educational courses in planning for the use of e-learning is very important. E-learning will not be replaced by traditional education and it should be focused on the fields and subjects that traditional education system is not able to respond to such problems. The use of modern technology will solve problems and lead to higher education success. Finally, we can say that universities and educational institutions cannot overcome obstacles of the e-learning development without adopting a holistic and integrated approach. And, their policies for directing and providing the necessary resources to facilitate the development of e-learning should be a long process.

The researches do not believe that web-based training is and will be the only possible way to reach such an efficient training and education. Web-based training will be best coming if it is mixed with some other types of media and training. This process leads to a better, cheaper and more effective education that entitled *blended learning*. Although some traditional teachers avoid adopting new methods and techniques web-based training and blended learning, which limits the general tendency toward applying these technologies in education, there is a growing trend for this new training types and hopefully it would be more manifest and apparent day by day.

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## THE EFFECT OF USING LEARNING LOGS AS A SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL ON THE SYNTACTIC DEVELOPMENT AMONG IRANIAN PRE-INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT

Recently, there has been focus on self-assessment and its effect on students' Learning. Many techniques have been cited for self-assessment. This research attempts to find out, if learning logs as a self-assessment tool has any significant effect on syntactic development. To this end, a standardized proficiency test was conducted on 90 pre-intermediate learners at Amin and Parsa language Institutes in Shahrood. Among them 60 learners who scored one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean were selected. Then they were randomly divided into two groups of 30. Before this research was conducted, a pretest was given to the participants and the treatment followed afterwards. After the treatment, the posttest was conducted. Finally the analysis of t-test was used to find the statistical answer for the above mentioned question and this research indicated that, the experimental group has better results and such kind of activity should be used within a curriculum during the course of study.

**KEY WORDS:** Learning log, self-assessment, syntax.

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years a debate has developed over which techniques to teaching and learning is more effective. Teacher can use these techniques and methods for measuring and understanding their students' weaknesses and strengths. One of these methods is assessment. Assessment, in broad sense, means "any method used to better understanding the current knowledge that a student possesses" (Collins & O'Brien, 2003, p.29).

Also the notion of assessment may have complicated aspects. Assessment is often divided into the following distinctions:

- 1) Formative and summative.
- 2) Objective and subjective.
- 3) Referencing (criterion-referenced, norm-referenced).
- 4) Informal and formal.

Summative assessment, or assessment of learning, and assessment for learning is formative assessment (Stiggins, 2001). In fact, summative assessment is related to assessing students' learning at a particular time, whereas formative assessment is related to further improvement of learning students, assessment of learning versus assessment for learning (Crooks, 2001).

The purpose of formative assessment is to reflect the concepts and skills the teacher emphasized in the class for judging students' performance (Guskey, 2003). The information collected through formative assessment is used to detect the strengths and weaknesses of the learners for the purpose of improving proficiency (Collins & O'Brien, 2003; Shaaban, 2005). According to Black and Wiliam (1998b) the assessment process includes all activities in the class, either by teachers to assess their students or by students to assess themselves, and according to this definition, "assessment includes teacher observation, classroom discussion, marking tests and collecting information from students themselves about their own learning; namely students' self-assessment" (Davis, 1998). Students' self-assessment can be considered as one of the most important formative assessment techniques and it can improve the quality of student's learning and it modifies teaching strategies. Therefore, if students have enough time to assess themselves in the class, they will be more confident and they can improve themselves better, (Angelo & Cross, 1993).

#### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

One of the major goals of linguistics is to identify the syntactic rules of a language; syntax is a major component of the grammar of a language. Syntax is referred the ways that words combine to form sentences and the rules which govern the formation of sentences, making some sentences possible and others not possible within a particular language (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). To communicate students must develop their syntactic ability. Yet after these many years of exclusive methods for teaching grammar, our students have not reached an acceptable level of mastery and they have many problems. Also the teachers assess their students' syntactic ability on the basis of the traditional assessment methods such as, written tests. These tests bring anxiety, fear, or disappointment to students which might negatively affect their language learning. For this reason, this research attempts to examine the effect of using learning logs as a self-assessment tool on syntactic development. So the major concern of the research is to provide appropriate techniques to expand students' attention to the self-assessment that is necessary for their learning. Nowadays teachers mainly try to prepare students for assessing themselves through different techniques. These techniques can be replaced by teachers' test, which can make anxiety for students. One of these practical techniques can be making logs by students in the class, in which they can also use grammatical structures in their logs, besides assessing themselves. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of learning log as self-assessment tools on syntactic development (conditional and passive structures) among Iranian EFL learners.

#### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY**

When this research is conducted, it is expected that a number of fruitful results would be achieved. Firstly, it will make an effective method to develop some aspects of grammar (conditional and passive forms), since it can provide an opportunity for learners to assess themselves in the class. Secondly, it will introduce a way of self assessing through learning logs. Thirdly, it will involve students' attention and increase their motivation on their own learning. In

this way, Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners can benefit the result of this study and develop their syntactic ability by employing learning log as a self-assessment tool in their process of learning.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

According to Collins (2009), syntax is related to the following means:

- 1- The branch of linguistics that refer to the grammatical arrangement of words and morphemes in the sentences of a language.
- 2- It is facts about grammatical arrangement of words in a language.
- 3- It is a systematic statement of rules governing for the grammatical arrangement of words and morphemes in a language.

According to these definitions about syntax it is important to know about it especially for EFL learners. In this research the researcher wants to study the effect of using learning logs as a self-assessment tool on syntactic development.

Self-assessment or self-evaluation

According to Richards and Schmidt (2002), self-assessment also self-evaluation is referred to check one's own performance on a language learning task after it has been completed or checking one's own success in using and learning language. They also have cited, self-evaluation or self-assessment is an example of a meta cognitive strategy in language learning.

### ***Other meanings of assessment***

In literature, the terms assessment and evaluation are sometimes used interchangeably (Collins & O'Brien, 2003). But sometimes they are used in differently. Assessment, in broad sense, means "any method used to better understand the current knowledge that a student process" (Collins & O'Brien, 2003, p.29). On the other hands assessment of students includes using a well organized system, namely tests, to make judgments about the student's achievement (Gronlund & linn, 2000). Tests may create anxiety, fear, or disappointment for students, and may have negative effect on language learning of learners. Students might suffer from spending long hours of study and preparation for tests and they might be disappointed at the fact that what they concentrate differs from what the teacher emphasizes on his/her question (Guskey, 2003).

Self-assessment is a kind of assessment that students can be involved in the teaching-learning process and it helps improve their performance (Brantmeier, 2005; Falchikov & goldfinch, 2000; Shaaban, 2005). Self-assessment does not mean that students are allowed to assess themselves in the form of grades; instead they continue feedback on their progress to help both students and teacher.

Students' self-assessment is referred to be one of the most important formative classroom assessment techniques, and one of the purposes of this technique is to improve the quality of students' learning, it can also lead to modify teaching strategies that have not met the required learning outcomes.

Students can increase their awareness of what is happening in class by assessing their own learning (Gipps, 1994). Definitely the most important factor of a successful teaching-learning process is active student's involvement (Stiggins, 2001). This needs teachers to provide their students with feedback for using it effectively for learning and consequently, students can learn how to assess themselves so that they can learn what they need to do In order to achieve success (Black & Wiliam 1998b).

### ***Assessment without test***

The following are devoted to so call alternative assessment methods, including:

- Observation
- Portfolio
- Conferences
- Dialogue
- Journals
- Journal

Journals are written conversations between students and teachers (Hold away, 1979). Dialogue journal is a written conversation between a teacher and an individual student, which is quite confidential and is an on-going thought a whole semester or school year (Froese, 1991). Dialogue journal writing supports the writing process by providing an authentic two-way written interaction between writing partners, which are usually the teacher and the student (Edelsky, 1986; Peyton & Reed, 1990; Peyton & Staton, 1993; Silva, 1990; Staton, 1988a; Urzua, 1987).

Students trust and get closed acquaintance with the reader/responder of dialogue journal writing, so they attend to specifics more and explain their ideas in more detail to meet their reader/responder needs (Alexander, 2001). Also Richards (1992) has defined number important benefits of dialogue journals that provide useful information for individualizing instruction such as:

- writing skills.
- writing strategies.
- Their interests, expectations, goals.
- Students' experience in and outside of the class.
- Learning process.
- Attitudes and feeling about themselves, their teachers.

### ***Learning log***

According to Brown (1941), a journal is a log or account of person's thought, feelings, reactions, assessments, or ideas, that usually written with little attention to structure, form, or correctness. Learners can involve their thoughts without fearing of those thoughts being judged later by teacher, and sometimes journals are represented a stream of a consciousness with no particular point, purpose, or audience (Brown,2010).According to Staton, Shuy, Peyton, and Reed (1987,cited by Brown,2010), there are some categories or purposes in journal writing such as the following:

- Language-learning logs
- self-assessment reflection
- grammar journals

- responses to reading
- acculturation logs
- diaries of attitudes, feelings, and other affective factors
- Strategies-based learning logs

### ***What is difference between journal, log and diaries?***

Learning logs, journals and diaries are terms often used interchangeably. However, the purpose of them may differ slightly (Moon, 2003). Diary is a record of the day's events, what happened, who was met with and what may have been discussed and what was decided at that time. It is general but also can be very specific and detailed but it may also refer to other source of information (Moon, 2003). Journals are free-flowing, often un-structured pieces of writing that relate to opinion and personal experience (Froes, 1991). Whereas, learning log is valuable tools that will help students make sense of their learning at school, also it is an opportunity for reflection on what you are learning, how you learned, and what you still need to learn (Moon, 2003). Learning logs are clear response to specific questions focused on the learning process, and they are objective, and factual (Richards, 2002 ).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Introduction***

As mentioned before the purpose of this study is to investigate whether using logs as a self-assessment tool have any significant effect on syntactic development or not. Also the present chapter describes the following parts: the participants, instrumentation, materials, procedure, data collection and design. The participants section details the population from which the researcher plans to select the sample. The instrumentation section deals with the instrument or data gathering devices that used in this study. The procedure section outlines the research plan. It describes what researcher did and what data was needed.

### ***Participants***

To test this null hypothesis, all the pre-intermediate level male and female EFL learners in Amin and Parsa Institutes in Shahrood aged between 15 and 20 participated in this study and they enrolled in the new course at the pre-intermediate level. In order to have two homogeneous classes, the researcher administered a proficiency test among 90 students of two institutes. Among them 60 learners who scored one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean were selected. Then she ranked students based on their performance on the test. The researcher randomly assigned one subject to the control group and another to the experimental group, to ensure the homogeneity of the control and experimental groups. Experimental group received treatment which was focusing on the learning logs as a self-assessment tool during their treatment and the control group did not receive any treatment.

### ***Instrumentations***

The researcher intended to use CELT as the proficiency test and the teacher-made test for the pre-and post-test. The comprehensive English Language Test (CELT) as a proficiency test was piloted on students who were at the same level of pre-intermediate, and acceptable Cronbach index (0.832) was obtained and so it was proven reliable and all the items were multiple-choice

items. The tests were scored by help of some scales and the results were evaluated with SPSS and EXCEL software. CELT was used as a proficiency test in order to ensure the homogeneity of the participants in terms of linguistic knowledge. The researcher with the help of SPSS and MS EXCEL 2007 software evaluated scores on proficiency tests. The teacher-made test was used for the pre-and post-test which included total structures of grammar and the researcher wanted to investigate the students' improvement in conditional and passive forms. First of all, the pre-test was piloted on 10 students who were at the same level of the experimental and control groups for standardization. Both the pre-and post-test were based on multiple choice and the participants had to answer the items on an answer sheet.

### *Procedure*

After administration of the proficiency test, 60 participants whose scores were between one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean score were selected. Then the scores were ranked and the participants were randomly assigned into two groups. It had been tried that each group contain participants of all ranks. Both of control and experimental groups after being homogenized with respect to their result of proficiency test had a four-week-course, and eighty minutes for each session. Before administration of the pre-test for the researcher to make sure of the reliability of the test, the test was administered to a group of 10 students who were at the same level of the target groups. Then the data gathered from the administration was analyzed to ensure the reliability and validity of the test.

### *Treatment*

First of all, all the pre-intermediate students in Parsa and Amin institutes were asked to change the Persian sentences in to the English sentences which were included conditional and passive forms. According to this teacher research, because of several models of these structures, students had lots of problems at theses institutes and for this reason the researcher made decision to teach these structure on the basis of the self-assessment technique instead of traditional assessment.

During 20 sessions (four weeks) of treatment, the researcher taught conditional and passive forms from Interchange and Headway books. At the beginning of treatment students were asked to make logs in the class. It was explained how students had to make logs and how to write about their feelings and thoughts in their logs. Therefore they could write about the difficulties they had in conditional and passive forms and what they could do with this structure after each unit. The students made log after each unit and they also wrote about their learning and practicing plans.

### *Experimental group*

The experimental group consisted of 30 students. The students in this group were taught by one of the researchers, using the technique of the students' self-assessment and at the beginning of the course the researcher explained about making logs. After teaching of every unit students were asked to make logs. Then at the end of each unit, they should write their thoughts, beliefs, and the difficulties they had in the forms of conditional and passive as far as possible. It was certain method to measure how well students have learned the taught material was used. All of the students in the experimental group should do this activity in the class and the researcher gave their students time to respond. The purpose of this activity was to provide both the teacher and the students with true information about the students' learning outcomes and their needs. It also gave the teacher immediate feedback about the students' learning. Therefore, after analyzing the students' feedback, if the researcher felt that the class had failed to understand a certain point; she could try to modify teaching strategy for the next class to teach that particular point again. To achieve this goal, the researcher collected the students' feedback and sorted it in order to have a clear idea of what to discuss in the next class.



This information was exchanged between the students and the teacher by logs; therefore the researcher could utilize it to improve activities and methods in the class. The Students wrote about themselves and about what they should do for improving more in their logs. According to (Richards, 2003), the students can express themselves in these following forms:

- After this unit I studied.....
- After this unit I learned.....
- My difficulties were.....
- My learning and practicing plans were.....

#### *Control group*

The control group also consisted of 30 students. The students in that group were also taught by the same researcher. In this group, students were not asked to make logs and they did not have to make log for assessing themselves. Teacher utilized only the traditional techniques of classroom assessment.

#### *Design*

According to Mackey and Gass (2005) the design of this research was a comparison group design, a subcategory of quasi-experimental design, and sampling design was intact group design. The dependant variable is syntactic development; the independent variable is the effect of learning log as a self-assessment tool, and the language proficiency level is considered as control variable.

The diagram of such a design is as follow:

G1 (control)	T1		T3
G2 (experimental)	T3	X	T4

In this research T1 and T3 refer to the pre-test before applying the treatment and T2and T4 refer to the post-test. The Post-test was administered at the end of the course.

#### *Data analysis*

For testing hypothesis, there was a t-test which was a quantitative procedure. Computer based statistical program such as SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) was conducted. According to Hatch and Farhady (1981) t-test is an excellent statistical procedure to use in comparing two means, in order to get relationship between two sets of scores and final logical answer to the research question.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### *Descriptive Analysis of CELT proficiency test score*

The researcher administered the proficiency test among students who were in 6 classes of 15 members. All of them were at the pre-intermediate level. Table 1 illustrates the descriptive statistics of CELT proficiency test.

*Table 1: Descriptive statistics of CELT proficiency test.*

		Statistic	Std. Error
scores	Mean	77.1667	2.23988
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		
	Lower Bound	72.7161	
	Upper Bound	81.6173	
	Median	83.0000	
	Variance	451.534	
	Std. Deviation	21.24932	
	Minimum	28.00	
	Maximum	100.00	

In this table the Standard deviation, mean score, and variance are 21.24, 77.16, and 451.53. Before administration of the pre-test for the researcher to make sure of the reliability of the test, the teacher-made test that was given to the both groups was administered to a group of 10 students who were at the same level of the target group. According to the Table 2 the researcher used Cronbach Alpha to investigate item facilities and difficulties. Table 2 illustrates the reliability of teacher-made test.

*Table 2: Reliability of teacher made test*

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.734	40

As can be seen in this table, the teacher-made test was administered and acceptable Cronbach Alpha index (0.734) was obtained and so it was proven reliable and the researcher could use it as the pre-and post-test between the experimental and control groups.

### ***Descriptive Analysis of the pre-and post-test scores***

As it was discussed previously, after piloting the pre-test, the subjects were given a pre-test. Before investigating the results on the scores of the pre-test, the descriptive statistics were presented in order to summarize the available data and describe the main features of the data. Table 3 shows the results of the pre-test scores in the control and experimental groups.

*Table 3: Results of the pre-test in the control and experimental groups.*

		exp group in pre test	control group in pre test
N	Valid	30	30
	Missing	0	0
Mean		78.4667	79.3667
Std. Error of Mean		1.54751	1.21909

Median	77.0000	78.5000
Mode	77.00	78.00
Std. Deviation	8.47607	6.23302
Variance	71.844	44.585
Minimum	64.00	68.00
Maximum	96.00	93.00
Sum	2354.00	2381.00

As it is observable, the mean score of control group in the pre-test is equal to 79.36 and that of the experimental group is 78.46. They are close to each other and it seems that there is not remarkably significant difference between them. Table 4 shows independent t-test comparing the control and experimental groups at the beginning of the research.

Table 4: Independent t-test comparing the control and experimental groups in the pre-test.

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
g Equal variances assumed	2.384	.128	-.457	58	.649	-.90000	1.97001	-4.84341	3.04341
o Equal variances not assumed			-.457	54.986	.650	-.90000	1.97001	-4.84802	3.04802

As the table shows the level of significance and the t-value of this test are .128 and -.457 respectively. As you can see, the significance value is far above the .05 level of significance, and the difference between the two means is not significant. In other words, there was no significant difference between the scores at the outset of the research. Therefore, it comes to be known the two groups were homogenous.

Table 5: Dependent t-test comparing the pre and post-test of the experimental group.

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 exp group in post test - exp group in pre test	3.53333	2.56949	.46912	2.57387	4.49280	7.532	29	.000

It can be seen in the table that the significance level was below 0.05 and the degree of freedom, mean, standard deviation and standard error of measurement were 29, 3.53, 2.56, and 0.46 respectively.

The sharp difference between the two means indicated that the students improved substantially. Consequently the significance value is below 0.05. Table 6 shows the pre and post-test of the control group.

*Table 6: Dependent t-test comparing the pre and post-test of the control group.*

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 control group in the post test - control group in the pre test	.40000	1.88643	.34441	-.30440	1.10440	1.161	29	.255

The difference between the means of the pre- and post-test is insignificant, which indicates the students did not improve significantly during the course. As can be seen the significance value is above 0.05 and null hypotheses has not been rejected. Thus, the results came to be insignificant. Whereas, in table 6 the significance value is below 0.05 which indicates there is sharp difference between the means of the pre-and post-test in the experimental group during the course and this improvement can be related to the treatment of the experimental group.

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

According to the result of t-test which was used to indicate the statistical significance of the difference between the means on two sets of scores, it could be concluded that the mean score of the experimental group is (82) with a standard deviation of (7.26), while the mean score of the control group is (79.76) with a standard deviation of (6.34). The results show that there is a significant difference between post-test scores of the students of the experimental group over the students of the control group after treatment due to the method of self-assessment. This indicates that the implementation of logs as a self-assessment had a positive effect on the students' performance in syntax (conditional and passive forms).

### ***Pedagogical implication***

In the section below, by making use of results obtained in the previous chapter, the research question posed in the first chapter is addressed then the researcher summarizes the findings in support the claim that due to the implementation of the self-assessment technique there was a statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the performance of the subjects of the experimental group over the period of the study compared to the mean scores of the subjects of the control group. Regarding to the research results, there is a significant relationship between use of log as a tool for detecting students' feeling and attitudes and syntactical development. As results in tables and show, the participants in experimental group who were exposed to making logs improved more significantly from pre-test to post-test in syntax than control group who were not exposed to this technique. It took students about three weeks from the first introduction of learning logs and self-assessment techniques to learn how to use them effectively to assess them.

At the beginning, many students were reluctant to express themselves through short sentences which was included their attitudes in the form of different examples of what they had taught. They wrote very few and vague comments. Sometimes they wrote that they understood when they really did not. The researcher had to spend some time with those students to explain to them that the technique aimed at helping the teacher to determine the students' problems so that she can handle them properly and to be aware of the students' strengths in order to reinforce them and to be aware of students' weakness in order to solve their problems.

The second point was that, the researcher noticed that the use of log was very useful, especially for students who were shy and reluctant to cite what they did not understand. Therefore students could express themselves, their feelings, attitudes, thoughts and their performance by writing different examples of related structures in the logs for assessing themselves and by this technique they could be aware of their strengths and weaknesses better than before. Also students' self-assessment had effect on the teacher strategies, it also gave the teacher immediate feedback about the students' learning after each units. Therefore, after analyzing the students' feedback, if the researcher felt that the class had failed to understand a certain point; she could try another teaching strategy for the next class to teach that particular point again. Because of being close relationship between teacher and students, students' self-assessment had effect on teacher's strategies and researcher could modified her strategies to teach certain point on the basis of students' needs, strengths, and weaknesses. Also, this technique of self-assessment encouraged students to participate more openly which was clear from the researcher. It directed students to write more accurate and honest answers, especially when they felt that they would not be judged

by marks. It also helped the students to direct their own effort more effectively which was clear in the paper work which they had submitted, especially towards the end of the study.

### ***Suggestion for further research***

It is believed that, this study covered a narrow scope of language learning strategies, and other researchers and interested students are recommended to carry out related studies to achieve more knowledge in this regard. It since the study was narrowed down in terms of its participants, and self-assessment technique, it seems necessary to point out some further research to done in this regard. Many factors, such as the subjects' genders and individual differences, social background were not taken in to consideration. Thus, in interpretation the results, we should consider that those factors might have affected students' ability in syntax. Also this research focused on some aspects of grammar (conditional and passive forms), while further research can be done over the other aspects of grammar. The need is felt to carry out similar experiments to investigate the long term effects of self-assessment techniques for other skills such as, writing, reading, listening, and even speaking. This research could be replicated with learners at higher and lower levels of language proficiency rather than pre-intermediate levelers were considered in the present study.

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### Appendix

This is a form of the log which the students were asked to write.

Student's Name..... Structure..... Date.....

After this unit I studied.....

After this unit I learned (write example).....

My difficulties are.....

I would like to know.....

My learning and practicing plans are (complete in the forms of conditional and passive as far as possible) .....

# CONTEXTUALIZATION VERSUS INFERENCING STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP VOCABULARY LEARNING AMONG INTERMEDIATE EFL STUDENTS

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## ABSTRACT

This study was an attempt to investigate the effect of teaching two cognitive strategies i.e. Contextualization versus Inferencing on the Iranian intermediate English as a foreign language (EFL) students vocabulary development. In this study, the researchers have employed two Contextualization and Inferencing strategies taken from Brown (2000) to teach forty intermediate words to 77 participants. The participants were intermediate students of Golestan Language Institute who were divided into two experimental and one control groups. One of the groups benefited from Contextualization, the other one received Inferencing strategies, and no specific treatment was applied for control group. Based on the definition of cognitive strategies and the two selected strategies, the researchers tried to manipulate the teaching materials in a way that the words were placed in a meaningful sequence for Contextualization, and provided some information and clues that helped participants to guess the meaning of the new words for Inferencing. The results of this study gained through t-test and Oneway ANOVA analysis, indicated that the Contextualization strategy was more helpful in development of the intended vocabulary, since the related group's results outweighed the findings of the other two groups, in other words the difference between the mean scores of Contextualization and Inferencing strategies was statistically significant. The findings of this study suggest that the teachers should take advantage of the cognitive strategies more effectively in their classes while teaching vocabulary.

**KEYWORDS:** Vocabulary development, Strategies, Contextualization, Inferencing.

## INTRODUCTION

Lexis plays a crucial role in the area of second and foreign language learning which has widely been acknowledged in vocabulary research. It is quite vital for L2 and foreign language learners to acquire an impressive command of vocabulary of that language to become successful learners. Singleton (2007) states that “the major challenge of learning and using a language –whether as L1 or L2- lies not in the area of broad syntactic principles, but in the ‘nitty-gritty’ of the lexicon.” (Singleton, as cited in Murcia 2007.) Hunt and Beglar (2005) also argue that “the heart of language comprehension and use is the lexicon.” Besides these important issues of vocabulary that has even been considered as to be the Cinderella of the field of second language acquisition research during much of the twentieth century (Levenston, 1979;

Richards, 1976), it has been neglected and undervalued throughout its varying stages and up to the present day.

Undoubtedly, all language teachers and learners believe that learning a second language requires learning a large value of vocabulary of the target language, but their most important concern is how to accomplish this task. It is important to know how vocabulary is best acquired, and what the instructor can do to develop the process of lexicon acquisition. For sure, dictionaries are the first and most reliable sources for this aim, but they are not enough since the new vocabulary is internalized well when the words are learnt in effective ways rather than just checking them in the dictionaries, and also through its later use. On the other hand, English L2 and FL learners are often criticized for using unhelpful ways when learning vocabulary. Therefore, it seems a pivotal problem which needs specific strategies to deal with.

According to Rasekh (2003) and Oxford (1994) successful learners unconsciously develop their own special traits including some behaviors and techniques which help them to boost their process of L2 acquisition. Whenden (1991) also claims that these actions, behaviors and steps that learners apply are learning strategies that would facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval and use of the input information.

Based on H. Douglas Brown (2000), learning strategies are divided into three main categories. a) Metacognitive strategies that involve planning for learning and thinking about the learning process as it is taking place. b) Cognitive strategies that are more limited to specific learning tasks and involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself. c) Socioaffective strategies that have to do with social mediating activity which interact with others. In this study, the researchers have chosen two cognitive strategies "Contextualization" and "Inferencing", the former refers to placing a word or phrase in a meaningful language sequence while the latter refers to using available information to guess the meaning of new items, predict outcomes, or fill in missing information.

The purpose of the study has been to implement these two strategies in teaching Iranian intermediate EFL students, and at the same time make a comparison between their effectiveness.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

It is generally accepted that a considerable percentage of L2 vocabulary acquisition on the part of learners occurs incidentally, in other words to make the new words learned and retained a variety of textual enhancement techniques could be applied (Robinson, 1994).

According to Arani (2005) there are a great number of researches on vocabulary and its different aspects, but the most focus is on how learners process the newly taught information and what strategies they use to comprehend and restore them. Therefore, it is worth studying the present strategies and take advantage of the best ones which suit our purpose.

Oxford (1990) is one of those who tried to present a very comprehensive taxonomy of language learning strategies. The main distinction in his classification is between direct strategies and indirect strategies. Oxford divided the direct strategies into three: memory strategies (used for storing and retrieving aspects of the target language), cognitive strategies (used for using the language and for understanding how it works), and compensation strategies (used for using the language despite gaps in knowledge). On the other hand, indirect strategies cover metacognitive strategies (used for planning, organizing, and evaluating

learning), affective strategies (used for approaching the task positively), and social strategies (used for collaborating with others for assistance).

Considering the importance of strategies, this study is based on two metacognitive strategies, Contextualization and Inferencing which were defined in chapter one. Theoretically, Contextualized vocabulary acquisition (CVA) is primarily a vocabulary learning method used in learning a second language or foreign language through the use of contextual tools. It involves inferring the meaning of words in a given context, most often a text. As opposed to de-contextualized learning, this type of vocabulary learning is incidental and depends on the context the learner is exposed to. Vocabulary here is not systematically learned for a specific purpose, even if its understanding and acquisition will become purposeful in the long run. This strategy is not suitable for beginners as it implies that the student has already acquired a certain level in L2 in order to be able to read a second language and infer meaning of particular words from the main context. It also implies more complex cognitive processes by the learner who is actively seeking meaning as opposed to mere memorization of a list of words, which conforms to its "opposite" strategy of de-contextualized vocabulary learning. CVA requires students to make more efforts to find out the meaning of words. Concentration, perseverance and reasoning are the types of skills students are bound to develop by using contextualized vocabulary acquisition extensively (Ghanbari, Kassaian & Duppenhaler, 2011).

Inferencing on the other hand, has been defined as the connections that people establish when they try to interpret texts (Brown & Yule, 1983). It is appropriately related to global understanding of longer pieces of discourse in which context may exercise an influence in enabling comprehension. Therefore, inferencing and meaning-guessing are the products of contextualization. As such, EFL learners can possibly derive the meaning of unknown words using the context in which they appear, that is, a sentence in which the word to be learned appears (Clarke & Nation, 1980; Chern, 1993; Huckin & Bloch, 1993; Rott, 1999). Lexical inferencing from information available has been recognized in recent years as an important strategy for dealing with unknown words (Buikema & Graves, 1993; Fraser, 1999; Nazmia, 2004; Parel, 2004). It involves using a variety of linguistic and nonlinguistic clues to guess meanings when the learner does not know all the words (Oxford, 1990a,b).

Inferences involve information that is not explicit in the text, but that the reader adds on the basis of the congruence between the explicit text content and his or her prior knowledge. Two main types of knowledge-based inferences in reading have been distinguished: connective inferences and elaborative inferences (Singer, 1994). The former are necessary to establish a coherent propositional representation of the successive parts of the text, thus integrating explicit information in a message. The latter serve to extend or refine the explicit content and thus help to construct a mental model of the situation described by the message. The examination of lexical inferencing also often needs to consider the following two aspects. One is using linguistic and other knowledge to infer the unknown words; the other is using the cognitive processes to infer the meaning of new words. Actually, it is difficult to separate the knowledge and process in that "although serial hypothesizing, guessing and decision-making processes seem to be governed by conscious decision making and can be followed in a think-aloud protocol, many generation and recognition activities are relatively unanalyzable, because they are unconscious and possibly parallel processes and therefore readers are not able to report them" (Roskams, 2005:71).

## RESEARCH QUESTION

Implementation of this study tries to answer the following research questions:



1. Does implementation of Contextualization and Inferencing strategies significantly affects student's vocabulary knowledge?
2. What are the statistically significant differences between the effects of these two strategies in learning and internalizing the new vocabulary?

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

In learning a second language, vocabulary has a crucial role and in order to communicate well in the real context, an adequate number of words and the knowledge of using them is required. Additionally, many scholars acknowledge the intimate relationship between the vocabulary and the four skills. Rhoder and Huerster (2002) confirm the need for language learners to have extensive vocabulary knowledge in reading and listening. Ultimately, the understanding of the student's problems in vocabulary learning and the ways we can foster this process seems to play an important role not only for teachers and material developers, but also for students themselves. If students develop their own strategies and become more independent learners as a result it can enable them to provide and design materials and activities that will enhance their lexical competence. On the other hand, awareness of strategies through strategy teaching will lead to autonomy. According to Weden (1985), the autonomy of students and learners should be aligned with teacher's goal of facilitating self-directed learning by introducing and recommending strategies to encourage the learners to discover which strategy suits them better. In this study, two cognitive strategies have been put into practice to come to a conclusion that which strategy helps students to improve and internalize the new vocabulary better.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Participants and Setting***

This study was carried out at Golestan Language Institute, the official branch of Simin Language Institute on Golestan Street, Mashhad, Iran. The participants of this study were 77 students from six intermediate classes at the Golestan Language Institute in the summer of 2012. Each of these classes consisted of eleven to fourteen male and female students with the average age of 20. One of the researchers was the teacher of these classes and by applying some changes in the syllabus that have been approved by the supervisor; he could provide adequate time to carry out the treatment.

#### ***Instrumentation***

In order to collect the required information the researchers took advantage of a Nelson proficiency test i.e. 200 A by Fowler and Coe (1976), this intermediate test contained 50 items including 36 structural single items and 14 structural continuous prose. The test was run to select homogenous groups of intermediate students based on their proficiency. And a pre-test prepared by the researchers which was used as the post-test too. It should be noted that the test was developed by the researchers since there was no valid and reliable test in the market meeting the needs of the researchers. The validity of the test was also reviewed and revised by two experts in the field. In order to check the reliability, the test was piloted on twenty similar intermediate students of Golestan Language Institute. The data was used to estimate the Cronbach's Alpha value which proved to be .816.

The pre-test contained forty vocabulary test items based on the prepared and selected vocabulary that were supposed to be taught to the participants through the use of the two contextualization and inferencing strategies.

### ***Design***

The design of the study was quasi-experimental with three groups. In this study, there were one control group and two experimental groups. The participants were from six classes. A pre-test-treatment-post-test design was employed to verify the effect of Inferencing vs. Contextualization strategies.

### ***Procedure***

This study was conducted at Golestan Language Institute in Mashhad in the summer of 2012; three intact groups from six classes of this institute who were taught by one of the researchers were selected as the participants. The researcher omitted the snapshot and perspective parts of the New Interchange book 2 that seemed easier for the students which have been approved by the supervisor, and could save fifteen minutes each session for the teaching of the intended vocabulary items. Most of the students were hard working and cooperated well with the researcher. Although based on the institute placement test all the students were at the intermediate level, the Nelson test also showed that the participants were homogeneous. After the Nelson test, the pre-test was conducted.

After analyzing the average of the obtained scores it was concluded that all the participants did not have a prior knowledge of the 78.85% of the prepared intermediate words. In the next session of the class, the researcher let the students know that they would be presented with forty additional and useful words. They were told that every other week, they would be given four words each session, and after twenty sessions a test would be conducted in order to verify how well they have learned and memorized the words. At the beginning of each session, the researcher dedicated fifteen minutes to teaching the new words and the rest of the session was spent on the normal teaching procedure of the New Interchange book 2. As mentioned above, each session four words were taught to the groups, and it took ten sessions in two months to complete the teaching process. In the control group, the method of teaching new words was similar with the method used in their own book to teach vocabulary. The words were listed on the board, and then pronounced by the teacher. The students were supposed to use their dictionaries, and when they had any problems, they asked the researcher.

In the other two groups i.e. Inferencing and Contextualization, new vocabulary were taught based on the inferencing and contextualization strategies already prepared by the researcher according to the definitions and guidelines acquired during the thesis preparation. First of all, the new words were written on the board and then the teacher asked participants to listen to the pronunciation of the words carefully. The students listened to the teacher pronunciation four or five times, and then the teacher wrote the sentences he already prepared on the board for each word. In the inferencing strategy group, each word was followed by an example that contained some clues that helped the participants to infer the meaning of the word, while in the contextualization strategy group, each word was followed by a short contextualized dialog that helped participants to guess the meaning of the new word. After the participants read the given sentences on the board they were asked to guess the meaning of the new words individually. Then, in order to make sure that the participants guessed and inferred the correct meaning, the teacher used the spot check technique. Most of the students had correct guesses and those who were not sure about the exact meaning, got the correct meaning after the spot checking. Finally, after all the students found out the meaning of the new words, the words were pronounced again by the teacher and this time the participants were asked to repeat the words after the teacher. Students were also asked to write down the words and the given Contextualization and Inferencing examples at the end of the teaching process.

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

Analysis of the data is a multi-level process in which the whole gathered information would be summarized, classified in order to provide a chance to verify and analyze the different relationships between the data to investigate the research questions. In this process the data would be analyzed both experimentally and conceptually and various statistical techniques have a vital role in conclusion and generalization. In this section, the obtained data through pre-test and post-test are analyzed by statistical techniques, and the results would answer the research questions.

In order to make sure that changes in the scores of the groups are only affected by the treatments, the participants are supposed to be as homogenous as possible. While investigating the research hypotheses it is important to determine the methods that we use to make the comparison between the control group and the experimental groups, in other words if we want to apply the classical tests we should verify the different dimensions of normality hypothesis. The normality hypothesis has been tested through One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test and its results for each group are presented below. Based on the following hypothesis, One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test shows that the observations are normally distributed.

$H_0$ : Observations distribution is normal

$H_1$ : Observations distribution is not normal

When the P-value exceeds the standard normal value i.e. 0.05 the zero hypothesis is rejected proving the fact that the observations are normally distributed. The normality hypothesis has been tested through One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test and its results for each group are presented in (Table 1).

Table 1: Results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

	Pre-test A (control)	Post-test A (control)	Pre-test B	Post-test B	Pre-test C	Post-test C
N	26	26	25	25	26	26
Normal Mean	8.4231	20.4231	8.6000	21.6800	8.3846	20.1154
Paramete Std.	3.16447	5.20133	3.8297	6.64404	4.04056	5.13285
rs <sup>a,b</sup> Deviation			1			
Most Absolute	.245	.128	.115	.102	.147	.163
Extreme Positive	.245	.118	.111	.080	.147	.163
Differenc Negative	-.173	-.128	-.115	-.102	-.100	-.080
es						
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	1.252	.654	.574	.511	.750	.831
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.087	.785	.897	.956	.628	.495

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

Results of (Table1) indicate that the obtained scores of the participants in the three groups of the study are definitely distributed normally. Therefore, the normality hypothesis of the observations would not be rejected. According to the gathered information, zero hypothesis and accepting the normality hypothesis for the observations we are allowed to employ classical tests to compare the results of the control and experimental groups. In order to compare the two samples using classical tests it is important to employ t-

student test since the variance of the society is not determined. This test is different for dependent and independent samples, in this research the samples are independent hence we employ the t-student distribution with an n-2 degree of freedom.

In order to investigate the first question after analysis of the groups and determining the unity of them we need to compare the post-test scores of group A (control) and group B (contextualization) and also the post-test scores of group A (control) and group C (inferencing) that the results of this evaluation are presented in (Table 2) and (Table 3).

*Table 2: Groups A and B Post-test Comparisons*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Upper
							Lower	
Post-test A_B	Equal variances assumed	3.90	.347	-2.194	49	.033	-6.62385	-.28999
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.187	47.337	.034	-6.63606	-.27778

The estimated absolute value of the statistics is ( $t = -2.194$ ) which exceeds the same value in t-student table which is ( $t = 1.701$ ). Considering the mentioned facts, by 95 percent confidence we conclude that the difference between the post-test scores of group A (control) and group B is significant therefore the hypothesis is accepted.

*Table 3: Groups A and C Post-test Comparisons*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Upper
							Lower	
Post-test A_C	Equal variances assumed	01.4	.529	0.679	49	.500	-1.76953	3.57568
	Equal variances not assumed			0.682	47.687	.499	-1.76043	3.56659

The estimated absolute value of the statistics is ( $t = 0.679$ ) which is less than the same value in t-student table which is ( $t = 1.701$ ). The Significance (2-tailed) value is 0.500 which is more than the significance level (0.05). Consequently, by 95 percent confidence we conclude that there is no significant difference between the post-test scores of group C and group A (control), and as the zero hypothesis is not significant the hypothesis is rejected.

Based on the above information and the obtained scores the researchers conclude that implementation of Contextualization strategy improves students' vocabulary development. On the other hand, teaching Inferencing strategy was also helpful but not as much as Contextualization and even the routine procedure of teaching in the control group.

In order to investigate the second question after analysis of the groups and determining the unity of them we need to compare the pre-test and post-test scores of group B with group C that the results of this evaluation are presented in (Table 4) and (Table 5).

Table 4: Groups B and C Pre-test Comparisons

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
						Lower	Upper	
Equal variances assumed	1.668	.203	.845	48	.402	-1.76953	2.70392	
Equal variances not assumed			.845	43.827	.403	-1.10861	2.70861	

The estimated absolute value of the statistics is ( $t = 0.845$ ) which is less than the same value in t-student table which is ( $t = 1.701$ ). The Significance (2-tailed) value is 0.402 which is less than the significance level (0.05). Therefore, by 95 percent confidence we come to this conclusion that the difference between the variables of the study is not significant. As the zero hypothesis is not significant, we conclude that the difference between the pre-test scores of group B and group C is not significant. This shows the unity of the groups before the beginning of the research.

Table 5: Groups B and C Post-test Comparisons

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
						Lower	Upper	
Equal variances assumed	2.809	.100	2.959	48	.005	1.39715	7.32285	
Equal variances not assumed			2.959	42.957	.005	1.38814	7.33186	

The estimated absolute value of the statistics is ( $t = 2.959$ ) which exceeds the same value in t-student table which is ( $t = 1.701$ ). The Significance (2-tailed) value is 0.005 which is less than the significance level (0.05). Therefore, by 95 percent confidence we conclude that the difference between the post-test scores of group B and group C is significant.

According to the above information the researchers conclude that teaching Contextualization strategy is more effective than teaching Inferencing strategy in learning and internalizing the new vocabulary.

On the other hand, by employing another test which is called Tukey test and based on ANOVA the researchers concluded that Contextualization is the most effective strategy in comparison with Inferencing strategy and the routine procedure of teaching in control group. The results of this ANOVA test are presented in (Table 6).

Table 6: Oneway ANOVA for QuestionTwo Post-test A\_B\_C

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	221.347	2	110.674	3.706	.029
Within Groups	2209.640	74	29.860		
Total	2430.987	76			

The results of this table suggest that the statistics F of research strategies calculated as  $F = (3.706)$  with a freedom degree of (2, 74) exceeds the standard F statistics that is  $F_{0.95, 1, 120} = (3.11)$ . We can see that the significance level is 0.029 ( $p = .029$ ), which is below 0.05. Therefore, the zero hypothesis is rejected and by 95 percent confidence we conclude that the difference between the means of the groups is significant. Consequently, we can state that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean of three groups using different kind of strategies to learn vocabulary.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Based on the gathered and analyzed data the researchers can conclude that, first: employing Contextualization strategy in teaching the new vocabularies was effective; second, employing Inferencing strategy in teaching the new vocabularies was not as effective as Contextualization.

At the beginning of the research, the researchers decided to take advantage of two cognitive strategies i.e. Contextualization and Inferencing in teaching forty new and unfamiliar intermediate words to the three groups of homogenous participants. In this study, group A was the control group and groups B and C were the experimental groups of the study. Group B benefited from contextualization treatment and group C received the inferencing strategy as treatment. The researchers believed that implementation of these strategies would help participants to improve their vocabulary development, so first of all a pre-test was hold to determine that the participants did not have a prior knowledge of the prepared new vocabularies. The results of the pre-test indicated that the new words were unfamiliar to the participants. In the second stage, the words were taught regarding the above mentioned strategies for the experimental groups and the control group through the routine procedure of teaching. The treatment process took four weeks, and in the final stage the post-test was conducted. The results of the post-test indicated that only the overall scores of group B which received Contextualization strategy outweighed the results of the control group. Based on the results of the analysis done through classical tests such as T-test and ANOVA the researchers concluded that teaching the Contextualization strategy was more effective in learning the unfamiliar words in comparison with the Inferencing strategy. On the other hand, although teaching the Inferencing strategy helped participants to learn the intended vocabulary, it did not result in a more effective change in



comparison with the development of the participants in control group who received no specific treatment but gained higher scores. The researchers can claim that based on the obtained post-test scores the participants in group B who were exposed to Contextualization strategy have learned and retained the vocabularies more effectively in comparison with group C and control group, but those in group C who received the Inferencing strategy did not show as much improvement in vocabulary development as the other two groups.

The results of the current study can be compared and contrasted with the related studies mentioned in the review of the literature. In the first study that was held in the Philippine (2009), on five groups with different branches of studying, the use of fifty three common vocabulary strategies was used. Correlation analysis of the study showed positive association between these vocabulary strategies and the results indicated improvement in the student's vocabulary learning. In the second study that was carried out in King Khalid University (2009), inferencing of new lexicon in context versus non-context vocabulary presentation was verified. The results showed that both direct teaching and teaching through context approaches were effective. Another issue suggested that training on contextualized meaning-guessing could help EFL students to learn the vocabularies without exact equivalents in their first language.

The third study which was done in the W. State University of New York at Buffalo (2008) on fourteen adolescents. The researcher tried to employ contextual vocabulary acquisition through authentic passages. The results of the study showed that the inferencing process was very effective and helped students to determine specific parts of the text. These findings suggest that researchers may use broader range of context in teaching vocabulary.

The results of the current study as discussed so far also showed a positive and effective influence on students' vocabulary learning while Contextualization and Inferencing strategies were employed. However, the comparison findings revealed a significant difference between Contextualization and Inferencing strategies in which Contextualization strategy was seen more effective and more helpful. Taking into account the above results from other studies and the results obtained in this study, the researchers conclude that employing vocabulary cognitive strategies is most of the time beneficial and students can take advantage of them in vocabulary acquisition.

### **PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are some pedagogical implications which can suggest and provide fruitful guidelines related to different ELT issues. Teachers can provide their students rich contexts to help them learn new words. Also, the strategies utilized in the present study can be introduced to language teachers as well as learners as effective ways to learn vocabulary. The materials designers and developers should concern more on materials with rich contexts to present words.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Based on the findings of the current study, the following suggestions may seem beneficial and merit attention. If we consider the unsuccessful process of learning the lexicon that usually does not last long then based on H. Douglas Brown (2000) we need to take advantage of some strategies which are said to be specific attacks that we make on a given problem. The interested researchers can first of all try other cognitive strategies and compare them with the two strategies (contextualization and inferencing) or with any strategy that they think might result in more improvement, and then they can try the other two categories of Brown strategies i.e. metacognitive and socioaffective strategies.

The employment of these strategies in other areas of language acquisition e.g. different parts of grammar like interlanguage pragmatics development (e.g. Koike & Pearson, 2005) and collocations (e.g. Richard Xiao & Tony Mcenery, 2006) is another line for interested researchers. This study investigated the effect of teaching Contextualization and Inferencing strategies on Iranian intermediate EFL learners vocabulary development, the interested researchers can investigate the existence of any effect on advanced learners too, whereas the employment of these strategies is not recommended for beginners and elementary learners since Ghanbari, Kassaian,&Duppenhaler(2011) state that Contextualization strategy is not suitable for beginners as it implies that the students have already acquired a certain level in L2 in order to be able to read a second language and infer meaning of particular words from the main context.

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*Appendix*

How inferencing was put into practice:

Word entry: Export: *Oil is the most important export of Iran.*

How contextualization was put into practice for the same word entry:

A: *This year there was a lot of rain.*

B: *Yes, and it was great for farmers.*

A: *So they can get more crops this year.*

B: *Yes and the government can export some of the extra crops to other countries.*



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## Length of Stay in Study Abroad Context and Development of Request and Apology Speech Acts

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### ABSTRACT

There is a common belief that learners who learn a language in its native context are more sociolinguistically and pragmatically competent than those who learn it in a traditional classroom curriculum in their home country. This longitudinal study was to assess this assumption in study abroad program that “the more is better”. Specifically, this study focused to measure the impact of duration of sojourn on the learners’ pragmatic development in request and apology speech acts. To this end, 72 Iranian study abroaders who enrolled in a six month program were selected as participants in this study. These students were already placed in the intermediate level by conducting a proficiency test and an interview by the language institutes in India (Mysore). A Discourse Completion Task (DCT) including request and apology scenarios were administered to these students in three phases. At the beginning of the course as *pre-test*, after three months as *post-test 1* and after six months as *post-test 2*. Comparing the learners’ gains in post-test 1 and post-test 2 reveals that longer duration results in more progress in these two most frequent speech acts. Consequently, this study adds support to the belief that longer study abroad programs are more beneficial to have more fluent and pragmatically proficient language learners.

**KEYWORDS:** study abroad, length of stay, pragmatics, interlanguage pragmatics, request, apology

### INTRODUCTION

There is a popular assumption that second language context is a perfect setting for learning a new language. The abundant direct exposure to the language made SL learning context conspicuously better-quality than FL context. FL setting uses formal and usually regular classes with a good deal of linguistic knowledge *about* language while little is done to present the language itself. On the other hand, SL context yields a remarkable amount of cultural and pragmatic input through a great deal of interaction with native speakers. Therefore, a combination of a sojourn (for acquiring cultural and pragmatic knowledge) with a classroom support (for acquiring linguistic knowledge) in a form of study abroad program may bring the best condition for maximizing language learning process because it enjoys both the advantages of FL and SL learning environments. Kinginger (2011) claimed that study abroad is endowed with development in different domains of language competence and social interaction abilities. Khorshidi (2013) suggested that “While regular language classes are good sources for providing linguistic knowledge, context which is study abroad program



equipped with, seems to be a flourishing source for providing cultural and pragmatic knowledge through interaction with L2 natives” (p. 62). This popular belief has become so popular that a great number of students leave their home to spend a period abroad and expect to return with a good level of proficiency in target language skills.

Research supports that study abroad provides learners with gains in all four language skills especially in oral proficiency skill (e.g., DeKeyser, 2007; DuFon & Churchill, 2006; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004) which is not manifested as much in FL context. As a matter of fact, among the language proficiency skills, learners’ pragmatic ability makes them different from FL learners because it is generally observed that even advanced FL learners with a good repertoire of linguistic knowledge, are not successful to communicate appropriately in social contexts.

### ***Pragmatics or Inter-language Pragmatics?***

Pragmatics is nothing but the study of language in context. In other words, pragmatics is “the study of those relations between language and context that are *grammaticalized*, or encoded in the structure of a language” (Levinson, 1983, p. 9). As a part of linguistics, syntax studies sentences, semantics studies propositions but pragmatics is the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed (Stalnaker, 1998). Huang (2007) states that “syntax is the most and pragmatics is the least abstract, with semantics lying somewhere in between” (p. 5). Consequently, as Recanati (2004) asserts syntax provides input to semantics and semantics provides input to pragmatics.

As a domain within L2 studies, pragmatics is usually referred to as inter-language pragmatics. Inter-language pragmatics (ILP) studies the *inter-language*, which is related to the second language acquisition research and *pragmatics* which is the study of language in context. ILP applies pragmatic theories, principles and frameworks to study how L2 or foreign language learners encode and decode meaning in their L2 or foreign language (Schauer, 2009). In simple words, ILP studies the second language acquisition in its context.

Kasper and Rose (1999) define ILP as the study of second language use, and assert that inter-language pragmatics is the study of non-native speakers’ comprehension, production and acquisition of linguistic action in L2, or put briefly, ILP investigates how to do things with words in a second language. Kasper and Rose (2002) introduce inter-language pragmatics as interdisciplinary or hybrid because inter-language pragmatics belongs to both pragmatics and SLA. Schauer (2009) holds that ILP utilizes pragmatic theories, frameworks and principles to examine how foreign/second language learners encode and decode meaning in their L2. In second language acquisition and inter-language pragmatics, pragmatic competence has been an area of immense concern over the last three decades. Pragmatics research, in applied linguistics, mostly focuses on the relationship between language use and the social and interpersonal context of interaction (Roever, 2010).

### ***Context of Learning in Study Abroad***

Context is the cornerstone of success in study abroad. If the learners are supported to make the most of it, they may acquire different aspects of linguistic and cultural features of the target language. Lafford (2006) states that the term context refers not only to the environment in which the learner is situated, but it also refers to the learner’s relationship with the environment. Using the context varies in different learners due to

their individual differences” (Khorshidi, 2013, p. 63). For instance, different personality traits behave differently in different contextual conditions. As an example extrovert learners may involve themselves in interactions more than introvert ones.

Unlike FL, whatever the SL learners receive as input in their classes, they have the chance to testify those language elements in the context to check its applicability. Previous studies support this assumption that a combination of formal classes and immersion in the native context can serve as a facilitator in L2 learning (Brecht, Davison & Ginsberg, 1993; Carrol, 1967; Freed, 1995; Huebner, 1995; Lennon, 1995; Spada, 1986). Lafford (1995, as cited in Freed, 1998) argued that study abroaders “have a far broad repertoire of communicative strategies for initiating, maintaining, expanding, and terminating a communicative situation than do those [at-home learners] whose learning has been limited to the formal language classroom” (p. 44).

Studies highlight that language acquisition is influenced by social and contextual factors (Douglas, 2004; Kramsh, 2000; Lantolf, 2000; Swain, 2000; Tarone, 2000). Studies by Carsello and Creaser (1976), Kuh (1995), and Limburg-Weber, (2000) show that study abroad affects language learning and personal development. All the above studies suggest that study abroad learners’ linguistic, sociological and pragmatic competence is bolstered during their sustained sojourn.

#### ***What Learners Acquire in Study Abroad?***

Study abroad is often considered as an ideal way for learners to be inundated with the target language skills and culture. Previous research (Felix-Brasdefer, 2004; Matsumura, 2003) supports that because of the direct exposure, learners acquire pragmatic knowledge through interaction with native speakers. Other studies (Collentine, 2004; Kinginger, 2011) also hold that study abroad learners demonstrate great gains in language skills and pragmatic competence.

Hassall (2012) presented a list of items learners acquire in study abroad (SA) context:

- ***Routines:*** pragmatic routines or formulaic expressions that are used in different speech acts (e.g., “Would you like a ...?”, “Sorry about that,” etc. ). Studies indicate that study abroad learners get a good repertoire of greeting formulaic expressions in different speech acts ((Barron, 2003; DuFon, 2000; Hoffman-Hicks, 2002; Lafford, 1995; Marriott, 1995).
- ***Informal Style:*** the informal language or colloquial words and phrases that learners pick up to use during their sojourn. This is corroborated by studies by Marriott (1995) and Kinginger (2008) in which their learners developed a plain style of language and improved to understand colloquial expressions and words.
- ***Sociopragmatics:*** according to Hassall (2012) sociopragmatics refers to the development in social “end” of pragmatics. In other words, it is the learners’ capability to assess the contextual condition based on which they decide to make an appropriate request or apology (see Barron, 2003; Felix-Brasdefer, 2004; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Kinginger, 2008; Matsumura, 2003). This kind of pragmatic competence is often achieved in the context of the target language than FL context.
- ***Modifiers:*** ‘modifiers’ are the linguistics elements that are employed to decrease or increase the illocutionary force of a request. For instance, study abroaders may learn to use downtoners like “*possibly*” to mitigate or employ intensifiers such as “*really*” to increase the impact of a request. Previous studies namely

Cohen and Shively (2007), Warga and Scholmberger (2007) and Schauer (2009) proved that context in study abroad greatly enhances learners' repertoire regarding request and apology strategies.

- **Global Sensitivity:** this refers to the learners' pragmatic awareness which enables the learners to detect pragmatic errors. Previous research studies also support that learners' pragmatic awareness increases with a long-term stay in second language context (Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei, 1998; Schauer, 2009).

### ***Factors affecting study abroad***

The advantage of study abroad over study at-home has been well attested by previous research studies. However it is often the case that, success in the language achievement depends on various variables such as individual differences in learning styles, personality dimensions, motivation and aptitude, attitude, and the amount of submersion in the L2 community. Kinginger (2011) holds that individual differences play a key role in the amount of achievement during study abroad. According to Martinsen (2010) there are factors such as *interaction*, *cultural sensitivity*, *living arrangements*, *length of stay*, and *motivation* which affect the amount of gain in study abroad. Hassall (2012) added two more items to this list namely *input* and *identity*. Among all these factors, length of stay seems to be the most important one as others can be subordinated by the duration of sojourn. Longer stay does certainly bring more interaction, input, progress in cultural sensitivity, etc. and may result in both linguistic and cultural proficiency (Medina-Lopez-Portillo, 2004; Dwyer, 2004).

Several studies have been investigated to test the benefit of longer period of stay in L2 community with adequate exposure and sufficient input. Results demonstrate that learners made a good deal of progress in pragmatic ability in conversational routines (House, 1996), employment of request strategies (Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985), and use of fewer external modifiers (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986).

Taken as a whole, research has suggested that a second language learning setting provides both quantitatively and qualitatively richer input than a foreign language learning setting and that learners tend to show gradual convergence to native speakers' pragmatic behavior as their length of residence is prolonged.

### ***Request and Apology speech Acts***

Request and apology are the most frequent speech acts in communication. While request utterances are made to ask someone for a favor, apologies are often employed to express one's regret about what happened or said. Because of their face-threatening culture specific nature, these two speech acts are very important to get mastery over by speakers. In other words, if for any reason the interlocutor rejects a request or an apology, the speaker may lose face. Therefore, mastery of making requests and apologies may be beneficial to settle a positive atmosphere for an ideal communication.

Whenever a request is made, the requester is showing power by requesting; therefore the requestee's negative face (i.e. the wish to be unimpeded) may be threatened. If the hearer refuses to carry out the required act, the speaker is eminent to lose face. The difference between a request and other speech acts such as suggestions, warnings, or pieces of advice, is the fact that this speech act totally lies in the interest of the speaker and is at the cost of the hearer (Trosborg, 1994). On the other hand, apology means an

acknowledgment expressing regret or asking pardon for a fault or offense. Therefore, it is needed for language learners to be equipped with apology strategies and also to know the appropriate strategies to use for a specific context or situation otherwise, there will be a misunderstanding which may lead to unpleasant outcomes. The speech act of apologizing is rather different from that of requesting, since apologies are generally post-event acts, while requests are always pre-event acts.

## METHODOLOGY

In this study, the investigator tested a group of 72 Iranian English language learners who enrolled to study English two in Indian language institutes as a study abroad program. The researcher investigated to see if the amount of duration affects learner's pragmatic competence in request and apology speech acts.

### *Participants*

The participants in this study were the Iranian students who enrolled in a six month study abroad program in India (Mysore). These 72 language learners were already administered a placement test and an interview and placed in intermediate level.

### *Instruments*

A Discourse Completion Task including 16 request scenarios developed by Schauer (2009) and 10 apology situations originally developed by (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984) in Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) was used to measure the amount of gains in the three phases of the learners' stay in L2 context.

### *Procedure*

The data for this study were collected by conducting the DCT in three phases:

- **Phase 1:** at the beginning of the program as pre-test in order to have a criterion for comparing the gains in post-test 1 and post-test 2.
- **Phase 2:** after three months as post-test 1 to measure the amount of gain for the first three months.
- **Phase 3:** after six months as post-test 2 to measure the total amount of gain during the study abroad program.

**Final step:** three native speaker English language teachers scored the papers based on the Speech Act Measure Rating Criteria prepared by Cohen et al. (2005). (see Appendix A)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To measure the participants' performance and the amount of their gains in the three phases the scores were submitted to SPSS to be analyzed. The output for the participants' scores is presented below.

Table 1: ANOVA

Scores	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	115.750	2	57.875	275.213	.000
Within Groups	44.792	213	.210		
Total	160.542	215			

The ANOVA test as illustrated in table 1 presented a Sig of .000 at the level of  $p = .05$ . Consequently, it demonstrates that there is a significant difference between the scores in the tests.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the scores in the tests and gains

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre_test	72	1.38	3.77	2.4771	.45162
Post_test1	72	2.13	4.72	3.4575	.52653
Post_test2	72	3.27	4.85	4.2675	.38689
Gain 1	72	.16	2.07	0.9767	.38332
Gain 2	72	.18	2.93	1.7694	.53640

Table 2 depicts the descriptive statistics regarding the amount of gains in three phases of measurement. The learners' achievement in post-test 1 (after three months) and post-test 2 (after six months) and a comparison between the amount of gain 1 and gain 2 show that the learners' pragmatic knowledge repertoire regarding request and apology speech acts increased along with lengthening their length of stay. As the data in the table above reveals, the average gain in post-test 1 was 0.97 (after three months) which increased to 1.76 in post-test 2 after six months of stay. A comparison in the means related to pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2 confirms a linear development in learners' request and apology pragmatic competence. This finding supports the findings by House (1996) and Olshtain and Blum-Kulka, (1985), and Schauer, (2009) in which their participants made a good progress in conversational routines and employment of request strategies.

Table 3: Paired Sample Test

	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	Df	Sig. (two-tailed)
			Lower	Upper			
<b>Pre-test – Post-test 1</b>	.36651	.4319	-1.06654	-.89429	-22.698	71	.000
<b>Pre-test – Post-test 2</b>	.0522616	.6201	-1.91404	-1.66678	-28.874	71	.000
<b>Pre-test 1 – Post-test 2</b>	.55389	.06583	-.94016	-.67984	-12.409	71	.000
<b>Gain1-- Gain 2</b>	0.59015	.06955	-.93146	-.65410	-11.339	71	.000

Table 3 illustrates if the differences among the tests and gains are significant. As the table demonstrates, the differences among the tests in three phases and gains are

significant at the level of  $p = .05$ . In table 3, a One-way ANOVA also supports this significance.

The results of this research through quantitative analysis suggest that learners' overall performance on the requests and apologies has been higher in the group with longer stay i.e. those who have been abroad for longer period appear to access more on inter-language pragmatics in using request and apology strategies. The results in this quantitative study suggest that the learners' overall performance in request and apology speech acts has definitely improved with longer period of sojourn.

## **CONCLUSION**

This empirical study adds support to the common belief that because of the linguistic and pragmatic competence it provides, study abroad language learning is beneficial. Among factors introduced by Martinsen (2010) and Hassall (2012) affecting study abroad success such as the amount of interaction, cultural sensitivity, living arrangements, length of stay, motivation, input, and identity, length of stay seems to be one of the most dominant ones because duration period can influence others. What differentiates study abroad from study at-home is not the amount of linguistic input. As a matter fact, exposure with native speakers gives the chance to the learners to apply what they have learned in classes and get to know the pragmatic aspects of the language as well. Through study abroad, learners also learn how to behave in different contextual conditions which are often very difficult to acquire through study at-home language learning. Therefore, getting pragmatically and communicatively competent is the most outstanding feature of language learning through study abroad. This study is in line with previous studies (House, 1996; Olshtain and Blum-Kulka, 1985; Dwyer, 2004; Roever, 2010; Schauer, 2009 ) emphasizing the effectiveness of longer stay in L2 context. Longer duration in study abroad with a classroom support means being more proficient in linguistic and pragmatic aspects of language. The amount of gains in post-test 1 and post-test 2 show that longer residency results in more proficiency in request and apology speech acts.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study investigated the development of two frequent speech acts in study abroad context without a study at-home group as a control group. The researcher couldn't include a study at-home group due to some contradictory educational regulations for PhD studies in the two countries. Other research studies can investigate the impact of length of stay in study abroad with a study at-home support.

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#### Appendix A

##### Speech Act Measure Rating Criteria (by Cohen et al. 2005)

##### Notes:

- “Respondent” refers to the research subject who completed the *Speech Act Measure* (i.e., the “You” on the instrument). “Hearer” refers to the person rating the measure, imagining that they are in the position of the interlocutor talking to the research subject.
- Do not give the respondent a lower score for grammatical errors, UNLESS those grammar errors inhibit the ability of the hearer to understand what the speaker is trying to communicate. But if you cannot understand what the speaker is trying to communicate because of grammar errors, you can give him/her a lower score.
- Do not give the respondent a lower score for spelling errors. The instrument is meant to reflect oral speech, in which case spelling errors would not be important.

#### 1. Speech Act Measure Rating Criteria: Request

##### Overall Success of the Request Item:

Please judge the overall success of the request made by the respondent. Think about whether you would want to comply with the request if you were in the position of the hearer. Please rate each answer with **1-5** based on the speaker’s responses using the criteria listed below, if you were the hearer...

5 = I would happily comply with the speaker’s request

4 = I would comply with the speaker’s request, but somewhat reluctantly

3 = I would comply with the speaker’s request, but reluctantly

2 = I would comply with the speaker’s request, but only very reluctantly

1 = I would absolutely not want to comply with the speaker’s request

**Note:** The same measure rating criteria was used for apology as well.

## AN OVERVIEW ON READING COMPREHENSION AND READING SPEED

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### ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension may be one of the most important skills which is usually investigated by language specialists in the field of second and foreign language acquisition. It is also becoming more and more significant in the new knowledge economy, and remains the most useful human activity for converting information into knowledge, be it reading on paper or from the screen. The importance of reading as a key skill and of its sub-skills is well confirmed. In the same line, the present paper is an overview over different types of reading such as extensive and intensive reading as well as the relationship between reading speed and reading comprehension.

**KEY WORDS:** reading comprehension, extensive reading, intensive reading, reading speed

### DEFINITION OF READING COMPREHENSION

Reading is the most significant one of the four fundamental skills (Carrell, 1989). Reading can also be defined as the efficiency “to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately” (Grabe & Stoller, 2002, p.09). Or it may further be defined as understanding written material that is read to us, or as the process of ‘constructing meaning’ from written material.

Miller (n. d.) defined comprehension as a crucial tool for reading in our modern age through which we: obtain meaning from the words constructed by others, gain knowledge of something new, and understand another person’s opinion.

As Alyousef (2005) proposed, reading can be considered as an “interactive” process between a reader and a passage that leads to fluent reading. In this process, the reader interacts dynamically with the text as he/she tries to extract the meaning.

Gough and Tunmer (1986) suggest a much simpler view of reading, in which reading comprehension is considered as the product of decoding. It can be considered as a useful technique for improving students’ success in receiving valuable knowledge from the text (Mayer, 2003, p. 34).

Coady (1979) mentioned that reading is mainly a ‘psycholinguistic guessing game’ (cf. Goodman, 1967). Aebbersold and Field (1997, p. 15) wrote that reading is what happens when people take a look at a text and allocate meaning to the written signs in that text. The text and the reader are two physical units essential for the reading process to commence. It is, however, the communication between the text and the reader that forms actual reading.

Therefore, we can say that reading is often considered as a hierarchy of skills, from processing of individual letters and their related sounds to word identification to text-processing competencies. Complete comprehension entails fluid communication of all these processes, beginning with the sounding out and identification of individual words to the perception of sentences in paragraphs as part of much longer texts (Pressley, 2000).

With regard to various purposes of reading, Rivers and Temperley (1978, p. 187) note that L2 learners may require or want to read: to acquire information for some purpose or because we are interested in some subject, to get instructions on how to do some task for our work or daily life, to keep in touch with friends or companies by letters, emails, or messages, to know when or where something will occur or what is accessible, to recognize what is happening or what has happened, to enjoy or be excited.

These definitions of reading comprehension can shed light on reading and reading comprehension altogether. In the following part, we turn to take a glance at various kinds of reading comprehension among EFL learners.

### **TYPES OF READING**

Most of the scholars suggest that generally we have two kinds of reading: extensive reading (ER) and intensive reading (IR). The former involves fast reading of great amount of materials or longer readings for overall understanding with the focus mainly on the meaning of what is being read than on the language (Carrell & Carson, 1997), whereas the latter is concerned with short texts with close supervision from the teacher, which helps students to gain thorough meaning from the text to develop reading skills and to improve vocabulary and grammar knowledge (Carrell & Carson, 1997; Nuttall, 1996).

Richards, et al. (1992, p.133) defined extensive reading as “reading in quantity ... in order to gain a general understanding of what is read. It is intended to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage a liking for reading.” Hafiz and Tudor (1989) state that the pedagogical value attributed to extensive reading is based on the assumption that exposing learners to large quantities of meaningful and interesting L2 material will, in the long run, produce a beneficial effect on the learners’ command of the L2.

Inspired by Krashen’s Input Hypothesis, researchers have shown new interest in extensive reading in current years. This is seen most obviously in various styles adopted by ELT Institutions. Krashen (1982, p. 164) calls ER as pleasure reading and states that pleasure reading is a significant source of comprehensible input for acquisition. Thus, students are forced to read alone by using the resources within their access (Hedge, 2003, p. 200-201). ER, with its emphasis on motivating learners to read autonomous, large quantities of meaningful language, fits well with recent principles for good second and foreign language pedagogy (Day & Bamford, 1998).



### THE READING SPEED

A broadly known problem encountered by learners throughout the ESL/EFL world is that of slow reading (Hamp-Lyons 1983; Cooper 1984). Records from Segalowitz, Poulsen, and Komoda (1991, p. 15) specified that the second language (L2) reading rate of bilingual readers is “30% (or more) slower than L1 reading rates.” These data are also held by Weber (1991), who indicates that highly skilled bilinguals naturally have a slower reading speed in a second language. Jensen (1986, p. 106) pointed out that “at the end of a reading course, even advanced ESL students may read only 100 words or less per minute.” This has often been related to classroom approach in reading lessons, mostly where such lessons concentrate on language development rather than reading *per se*.

A number of specialists have remarked on a regular practice in intensive reading lessons (Nuttall 1982; Alderson & Urquhart 1984; Bartram & Parry 1989; Hyland 1990; Susser & Robb 1990). Text comprehension research shows that readers regulate reading speed based on the difficulty or contradictions which they encounter (Haberlandt & Graesser, 1985).

Slow reading as a difficulty for learners has been described by Brown & Hirst (1983, p.140) as a “weakness independent of the purpose of reading”, concerning the processing of information at such a slow pace that the reader is not capable of holding enough detail in short-term memory to allow interpretation of the general message of the text. In this context, it should be noted that diverse reading purposes need different reading speeds, and though the development of sufficient reading speed should be given a high priority in our learning programs, we should also remember, as Nuttall (1982) does that reading speed without comprehension is useless.

It was in the 1960s that interest in reading speed got impetus from the writings of Fry (1963) and De Leeuw (1965). Fry claimed that good readers reach a speed of 350 words per minute, fair readers 250 words, and slow readers attain 150 words per minute. De Leeuw mentions 230-250 words per minute as an average primary speed.

The earliest studies conducted on native English speakers showed that fast reading was only a skimming strategy used to cover the entire reading material (Brown, Inouye, Barrus, & Hansen 1981). However, later studies indicated that readers attained not only rapid reading skills but also better comprehension when they were purposely taught rapid reading techniques (Cranney, Brown, Hansen, & Inouye 1982). Fast reading is often encouraged as a good way to understand the main ideas of a text (Haynes, 1993).

These contradictory views made the researchers to examine the relationship between reading speed and reading comprehension. While it is usually disputed that the two are closely linked (Broughton et al 1978; Berkoff 1979; Champeau de Lopez 1993), the exact nature of the relation between them has been the center of a continuing debate lasting more than half a century. What is thought clear is that a very slow reader is more apt to read with little understanding. Before he/she arrives at the end of a page, or even of a sentence, he has forgotten the beginning.

Champeau de Lopez (1993) made the helpful difference between ‘timed readings’, in which learners read at their own speed, and ‘paced readings’ where the teacher manages the time permitted. In her study, she found that students improved their reading speeds



on average from 120 to 170 words per minute (a 50% increase), after pursuing a course based on a mixture of timed and paced readings. However, she also observed a negligible drop in comprehension over the same period, from 78% to 67%. Coady's advice (1979, p. 12) on this point appears valuable "..... comprehension is achieved by reading neither too fast nor too slow".

In a study by Bell (2001) on reading speeds and comprehension in two groups of learners defined as intensive and extensive groups respectively, it was revealed that subjects exposed to extensive reading gained both significantly faster reading speeds and significantly higher scores on reading comprehension tests. The extensive group was exposed to a system of graded readers whereas the intensive group learned short texts followed by comprehension questions.

The question of how comprehension is influenced by altering the pace of reading was also considered by Poulton (1958). This study established that the amount of remembering a criterion of comprehension increased considerably when the pace of reading decreased from around 300 words/min to about 150 words/min. However, one of the conclusions of conventional studies on reading like those done by Tinker in the 1930s and 1940s (summarized in Tinker, 1963) was that the fast reader tends to grasp better. Reasons for the apparent inconsistency have been recognized and explained by Carver (1990). Both negative and positive correlations between reading speed and comprehension have been reported as these are two different types of correlations: between-individual and within-individual. When an individual raises his or her reading rate, his or her comprehension reduces (e.g. Poulton, 1958), which is a within-individual negative correlation. However, people who naturally read fast also tend to display a high level of comprehension (e.g. Jackson & McClelland, 1979), which is a between-individual positive correlation.

In view of the above, many factors such as limited perceptual duration (word-by-word reading), slow perceptual reaction time (slow recognition and response to the material), vocalization (reading aloud), faulty eye movements, regression (needless or unconscious re-reading), faulty habits of attention and concentration, lack of practice in reading, fear of losing comprehension, causing the person to intentionally read more slowly, habitual slow reading, poor evaluation of which parts are important and which are unimportant, and the attempt to remember everything rather than to remember selectively should be considered.

In the same line, one of the factors that may affect the speed of reading and reading comprehension is the difficulties which readers have in word identification or recognition (Lyon, 1995; Torgeson, Rashotte, and Alexander, 2001; Hook & Jones, 2002). Many students who try to learn to read are able to make up for primary reading problems by becoming perfect decoders, but are unsuccessful in reaching a level of adequate fluency to turn into fast and proficient readers (Hook & Jones, 2002).

Another important factor to consider in studies of reading rate is word length. There is a common finding in reading research that in skilled readers, length does not affect the reading speed for high frequent words, whereas longer pseudo words do take more time to recognize than short pseudo words (Carbonnel & Valdois, 2004; Weekes, 1997 as cited in Martens & de Jong, 2006). Field (2004, p. 12) proposed that "longer words often take the same time to read as short ones ... without loss of comprehension."

However, the converse body of research is also robust. For example, reading speed is said to slow down when words are read via the non-lexical route. In other words, “reading speed decreases with each additional letters. The larger the length of a word, the more readers rely on sub-lexical decoding strategies” (Martens & de Jong, 2006, p. 141).

Contradictory data also exist concerning the best or adequate reading rate. Some authorities propose that 180 words per minute “may be a threshold between immature and mature reading and that a speed below this is too slow for efficient comprehension or for the enjoyment of text” (Higgins & Wallace, 1989, p. 392). Dubin and Bycina (1991, p. 198) claimed that “a rate of 200 words per minute would appear to be the absolute minimum in order to read with full comprehension.” Jensen (1986, p. 106) suggested that second language readers seek to “approximate native speaker reading rates and comprehension levels in order to keep up with classmates” and recommends that 300 words per minute is the best rate. This pace is supported by Nuttall (1996, p. 56), who stated that “for an L1 speaker of English of about average education and intelligence... the reading rate is about 300 words per minute.”

However Pakhare (2007) believed that reading at the pace of 200 to 220 words per minute is measured as a normal speed of reading. For normal reading rates 75% is a satisfactory level of comprehension. This means if a child can recognize the meaning of at least 75% of the whole text, then he/she has reached suitable levels for reading comprehension.

In his article on how to increase reading speed and comprehension, Lee (2009) proposed that we have three ways to increase our reading speed: know the vocabulary in the text, read a lot of books, relate the text to your personal experience.

In the same line, Feldman (2006) introduced 9 important ways to improve reading speed, which are presented below: skimming before reading, categorizing reading materials from the most important parts to the least ones, selecting the proper environment, reading early in the day, turning headings into questions, avoiding using highlighter, previewing before reading, being flexible with your reading speed, and reading correspondence only once.

## CONCLUSION

The present paper was an attempt to highlight the importance of reading comprehension as one of the important language skills to be developed by language learners in both EFL and ESL contexts. In the same line, some of the previous studies were reviewed to highlight some of the problems that language learners encounter while trying to comprehend a text were considered. As the speed of reading is affected by many factors, language learners particularly at the low level are encouraged to skim the passage before reading, categorize reading materials from the most important parts to the least ones, turn headings into questions, and preview before reading.

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**AN INVESTIGATION AND DETERMINATION OF NECESSARY  
INFRASTRUCTURES IN E-LEARNING DEVELOPMENT AND  
APPLICATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION OF HAMEDAN AND  
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**ABSTRACT**

This study, by considering the importance of e-learning in higher education system, has the aim to identify and explore alternative solutions of the development and application of e-learning. This research has been conducted using an exploratory qualitative research methodology with two groups of respondents including both faculty members and PhD candidates in six different higher education institutions in Hamedan and Kurdistan provinces that selected randomly. Data were gathered through interviews technique. The data collection process was conducted to obtain complete and comprehensive data, and saturation was attained by 30 respondents. The results revealed that influencing factors of e-learning development and application in these provinces were: promoting cultural environment for both faculty members and the students,



supporting technical infrastructure, removing technological and economical barriers and also conducting continuous training courses and workshops.

**KEYWORDS:** E-Learning, Higher Education, Internet, Vensim's Software, Hamedan and Kurdistan Provinces, Iran

## **INTRODUCTION**

A quick review of the changes of the previous periods shows that the educational systems of each period relates to the changes of that period. In the present time, the internet network has transformed the classical and traditional educational system; and, the new educational methods and practices are extending so quickly. With the advent of internet, traditional roles in society have changed and each of these current traditional roles present a new manifestation both electronically and virtually which added new terms into the nations' culture and language (Ahmadi & Virjiniyari, 2003). The development of virtual education is one of the facilities that have created in the light of development of computers and, in the broad sense, information technology. Internet, which is located among the top ten inventions of the twentieth century, has achieved the concept of long-life learning and driven learning out from the limitation of time and place. Currently, educational institutions, research centers, government agencies, business centers and many other people are looking for the access to the internet so fast. It is clear that internet and World Wide Web have profoundly affected the society, especially universities and faculties. Thus, ICT (information and communication technology) has a major role in the guarantee the quality of higher education and this would be considered as a competitive advantage for universities. However, the development and use of communication technologies in the educational system is an infrastructure for applying changes in education which this can facilitate the presenting and receiving the training programs in different places. New technologies can alter the type of people and organization needs. Advances in technology such as computers and robots have opened new ways to create and enhance innovative teaching methods for instructors. This technological change has had a significant impact on the education, especially teaching methods. Wonderful development of electronic communication has given Distance Learning a new position and the development of these types of education has changes it to such an educational approach that employees and the people whom are not able to attend physically in classes can continue their education. In response to these demands, the distance learning organizations are trying to provide a comprehensive training system, from registration to examination, for learners. These organizations make attempt to enhance the quality, quantity and presentation methods of education and to equate these elements to developed countries (Murphy and Terry, 1998).

The higher education centers are the applicants of the utilization of electronic education, because, these educations are not limited to a special time and place. Thus, the higher education centers consider this fact as a prominent advantage (Garrison, 1999). Generally, virtual education means making the best use of electronic systems such as computers, internet, multimedia discs, electronic journals, virtual newsletters, etc. The virtual education aims are to make the learning easier, and more effective, and it can save time, cost and energy (Anderson & Elloumi, 2004).

The present time that is considered as 'Information Age and Information Revolution' has created major changes in human lifestyle and it provided a new concept which is

called 'information society'. Information society is a symbol of all conventional and traditional social processes such as business, education and the like which is located in a new format by using information and communication technology (ICT).

E-learning, which is considered as both internet use and digital technologies in teaching and learning, has always been identified as either an alternative solution or a new procedure to boost traditional approaches of education. Educational institutions apply e-learning in teaching process for the following reasons:

*IT promotion:* E-learning is becoming an ideal tool for teaching and learning.

*Rich information:* E-learning provides the accessibility of rich information resources every time and everywhere for both learners and teachers.

*Alternative learning approach:* E-learning can give the possibility and opportunity of learning process to those who were marginalized as disable students.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Miladi and Malek Mohamadi (2010), based on Yaghoubi's quotation (2008), believe that broader approach towards E-learning indicates that the education and e-learning system have unique benefits and advantages for organizations and educational institutions.

Chahill (2008), based on Duderstat (2001), in this regard, stated that the higher education must meet these changes and they should invest in capacities which make the new types of learning, independent of time and place limitation, possible, in order to create a persuasive view in their future in the next millennium (Chahill, 2008). Soltani (2004) in a study entitled 'A Survey of Affecting Factors of the Use of Information Technology in Teaching and Research Activities of Faculty Members' considered the familiarity of faculty members with the information technology, and the use and attitudes of them toward it and its relationship with the individual characteristics of the faculty members. Moreover, it was found that there is a positive and significant relationship between positive attitudes of faculty members and their proficiency in computer knowledge (Soltani, 2004). Naghavi (2007), in his study, discussed about 'the Attitudes of Faculty and Graduate Students of Agricultural Extension and Education toward Distance Learning via the Internet'. Additionally, he considered the proficiency level of Information Technology of faculty and graduate students as a necessary element of e-learning development; moreover, he investigated the barriers of the expansion of this type of education (Naghavi, 2007).

Yaghoubi (2008), in his study, entitled 'the design of E-learning systems in the field of agricultural extension and education' refers to 'educational and technical factors affecting the E-learning system' and 'E-learning program restrictions' as stimulants and inhibitors of E-courses (Yaghoubi, 2008). He also refers to the following elements as important factors affecting students' attitudes toward e-learning: the evaluation of e-learning capabilities in solving the problems, the access to the internet, the use of internet, students' overall assessment of the problems of the present system (Yaghoubi, 2008).

Mohamadi (2009) in his paper entitled 'Determination and analysis of the components of E-learning system in agricultural scientific-applied educations of Iran' investigated the following elements in e-learning system in agricultural scientific-applied educations:

incentives and the driving factors, the necessities and urgencies, the educators attitudes, the barriers and disincentives, the availability of e-learning technologies and organizational strategies of e-learning. Sadri Arhami et al. (2003), in a study entitled 'e-learning in Iran: challenges and alternative solutions in higher education' refers to the concept of e-learning and web-based studies, and he considers the issues and obstacles of its implementation.

A study entitled "Evaluation of ICT development strategies in the education system in Australia, the U.S. and India, and comparing them with Iran" have been conducted by Ghaedi (2007) and he compares 'the facilities', 'equipments', 'development methods' and 'barriers' of the mentioned countries. Jokar (2007) in an article entitled 'information resources as one of the support systems in E-learning courses' studied the students of virtual courses of Shiraz University, and he considers lack of information resources and E-learning content as the barriers of such educations.

Some, like Nasiri (2005), has studied about easier and better implementation of these educations in a virtual interactive environment. In other studies, including Farahani (2001), it has been shown that implementing e-learning would be merely successful when the courses are theoretical. In a study conducted by Salajeghe (2011), the factors that facilitate virtual education are discussed. Finally, the research by Salim Abadi (2006), and Jafari (2002), the obstacles and challenges of implementing e-learning have been investigated. There are also some researches indicating that e-learning is improper due to the following reasons: technical limitations like, lack of accessibility to telecommunications infrastructure, and the limited interaction between teacher and learner; therefore, the traditional face to face educational method is emphasized. The researches of Chizari (2010), and Ghaedi et al (2007), based on Brown's research are included in this study. There are some other researches in the field of E-learning that each of which have a particular look at it. The most important of these researches are: Salajeghe (2011), Musa Khani (2005), Martinez (1997) etc.

Lynch (1999), in a study entitled 'investigation of effective variables for students participation in an electronic evaluation', that was conducted by regression analysis, showed that 'computer', 'gender' and 'the experience of participating in Electronic evaluation' are of the predictor variables of the variability of the dependent variables. There is a significant relationship between the variables 'attitude toward computers and CBT' and 'psychological readiness of the learners to participate in electronic evaluation (Lynch, 2004).

Oliver (2002) in a study entitled 'quality assurance of E-learning in Australian higher education' discusses the factors leading to successful adaptation and sustainable use of virtual learning in higher education in Australia.

Mohamadi (2009) in his study entitled 'investigation of ICT infrastructure and human resource capacity in Liberia' concluded that the development of ICT in this country is depended on the improvement of the following factors: telecommunication infrastructure, human resources, economic, social and information-technology-based curriculum planning.

Naghavi (2007) in his researches, about Development, establishment and application of e-learning, stated that in the e-learning readiness of human resources, these items are

essential and effective: physical, cognitive, emotional, social and cultural factors. A glance at the recent changes in educational system shows that most of these changes in the phase of educational technology utilization have focused on acquiring early technology skills. This can clarify the importance of the application of technology for basic skills (Rosenberg, 2001). Frazeen (2006), in his final dissertation, entitled 'effective factors in quality of web-supported learning' stated the relationship and impact of several basic factors. He divided these elements in following six groups: organizational and educational factors, instructor, students, technology and educational designing (Frazeen, 2005).

Panitz (2008) in his study, about the advantages of electronic and participatory learning about motivating the learners, stated that working students, had less interest in face to face education (Panitz, 2008). Chahill (2008) in his paper entitled 'motivating factors of faculty members to participate in e-learning' refers to a significant relationship between 'vocational factors' (time, credit, career development, rewarding and high responsibility at work) and 'structural factors' (access to training materials over the course of learning, presenting different learning styles) with the implementation of e-learning courses (Chahill, 2008). Gamble (2009) in his research entitled 'The learning effects in a multicultural environment' compared and investigated the impacts of an E-learning course that was held in China and the US (Gamble, 2009).

In table 1, the effective factors of e-learning promotion such as infrastructure facilities, motivation factors, knowledge and skills of learners and etc. and with the other researches in this field have been briefly discussed.

*Table 1: Summary of studies in the field of e-learning in Iran and other countries*

Nr.	Effective factors in E-learning promotion	Author/ organization and date
1	infrastructure facilities: (infrastructure, designing and preparation of learning system components)	Sadri Arhami (2003), Miladi and Malak Mohamadi (2001), Chizari (2010), Ghaedi et al (2007), Chahill (2008)
2	importance and advantages	Miladi and Malek Mohamadi (2010), Farahani (2010), Panitz (2008)
3	motivational factors	Gamble (2009), Chahill (2008), Frazeen (2006), Oliver (2002)
4	technical skills and knowledge of teachers and learners	Soltani (2004), Naghavi (2007), Yaghoubi (2008), Mohamadi (2009), Murphy and Terry (1998)
5	barriers and Challenges	Salim Abadi (2006), Jafari (2007), Jokar (2007), Lynch (1999)

The main research questions, regarding the research purpose, would be:

- What are the requirements and necessary infrastructures of e-learning development?
- What are the advantages of e-learning in comparison to traditional learning?
- What are proper guidelines for the establishment and development of e-learning?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

In order to answer these research questions, a qualitative approach was used; and, in order to collect the necessary data, the meaningful and snowball sampling method were used.

### **PARTICIPANTS**

Statistical population of this study was the following groups: 1) faculty members of agricultural higher education of Hamedan and Kurdistan provinces; 2) faculty members and PhD students of electronics, telecommunications, Hamedan Jahad Daneshgahi (JD).

### **DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

It must be mentioned that, in the qualitative researches, the sample size does not matter; since, the crucial aspects are the procedure of sample selection and the quality of research process. As soon as the theoretical saturation is obtained, sampling and data collection would be finished. Totally, there were 25 respondents in this study and the interviews ended as soon as the data were saturated.

### **DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

The main approach of data collection in this study is semi-structured interviews. Since, the main purpose was, as much as possible, to collect the data from the respondents, it was tried to use the open questions.

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

The data analysis was performed by using open coding. The reason for coding is to convert the data into concepts. Therefore, at the beginning, the data were separated from each other and the phrases are categorized based on the semantic units in order to attach the codes to the data. Then, these codes were classified based on the discovered phenomena of the data, which these data are directly relevant to the research questions, and these codes were conveyed to the abstract codes and finally these codes were reported jointly and commonly. The literature review was profoundly investigated to ensure the data validity and reliability. This deep investigation was conducted for both a better understanding of the subject and an appropriate formation of the interview questions. The professors and faculty members' point of view were used in this study.

This is a dynamic study, therefore the system dynamics methodology is a suitable method for this study. The present research was analyzed conceptually by Vensim software. Using the system dynamics makes the investigation of different behaviors and their feedbacks in various times possible and it helps with the management development and appropriate policies in the case of this study. The systemic thinking is considered as a framework, procedure, rule and a rationale for recognizing the problem and it includes analytic and synthetic aspects. Table 2 indicates the faculty members' view point of the above universities.

Table 2: the respondents' view about e-learning development approaches

Topics in terms of repetition	Common topics	Conclusions/recommendations
economic infrastructures technological infrastructures human infrastructures culturalization	material and immaterial infrastructure  culturalization	The required investment for updating technical knowledge and skills as well as telecommunications infrastructure and the required equipment should be provided. Logic and proper culture of using this type of education must be institutionalized among the users.
computer and internet knowledge computer use english proficiency technical-vocational courses workshops	technical knowledge and skills of the users  presenting preliminary training	Familiarity with the English and how to use the Computer software, networks and the Internet and etc. will increase their participants' ability in this field. The learners must have passed International Computer Driving License (ICDL) and should have participated in relevant workshop

## RESULTS

In table 2, respondents view and comments, stated issues, common topics, the conclusions and recommendations were briefly discussed. As it can be seen in the table, the approaches of e-learning development includes material and immaterial appropriate infrastructure (economic, technological and human), culturalization, development and skill training and technical knowledge of the users and providing fundamental educations to the teachers and students. Generally, the content analysis of respondents' views of their questions was presented in four general areas and the investment in the mentioned sectors is considered as a development approach. For example, the following elements were taken into account in the sector of 'skill and technical knowledge of the users' which familiarity with English and proficiency of different tutorial and computer software are of those elements.

In table 3, frequency and the percentage of each of the e-learning elements, based on table 2 conclusions, were presented both individually and in association with the other elements.

Here, some comments are quoted directly:

One of the respondents commented on the advantages and barriers of e-learning in comparison to traditional teaching "the main advantages in establishment of e-learning are: flexibility, the elimination of unnecessary and costly traffic of learners, lack of limitation to a particular time and place; and, lack of access to high-speed and inexpensive internet and lack of understanding of responsible men and the audience from e-learning are the main barriers of this era".



Table 3: Infrastructures and requirements of e-learning development

Priority	Common topics	Frequency	Percentage of each element individually	Percentage of each element in association with the other elements
1	material and immaterial infrastructure (economic, technological, human infrastructures)	22	88	18.2
2	Culturalization	21	84	17.4
3	technical knowledge and skills of the users (Computer and internet knowledge, computer use, English proficiency )	19	76	15.7
4	presenting preliminary training (technical-vocational courses, workshops)	17	68	14

Another respondent said: “e-learning is not limited by time and place and the management of e-learning plans can be practicable for a large group of students.”

Regarding necessary facilities and resources, another respondent stated that: “information, knowledge and ability of learners to use computers and E-learning tools and hardware facilities, such as: computer, webcam, headset, tablet and etc. are of utmost importance.”

Regarding the skills of e-learning learners, another respondent stated that: “the learners of this system should be familiar with computer, web, network and hardware and software”; another interviewee said that “the learners of this system must attend in tutorial courses of authoritative organizations like technical-vocational organization, and they should participate in seminars and workshops in order to acquire the essential skills.”

In table 4, frequency and percentage of each of the effective elements in describing the benefits of e-learning in comparison to traditional education are discussed both individually and in association with the other elements.

As it is inferred from table 4, the four major advantages of e-learning in comparison to traditional education are: saving the costs, diversity in training (flexibility, the number of admissions), updating the data (data access, effectiveness and efficiency of training), lack of need to the physical presence of the master. Since, in the present time, the increasing pace of human life and their different roles and responsibilities in communities has caused time shortage and economic problems, therefore, e-learning utilization seems to be so essential and cost-benefit.

In table 5, frequency and the percentage of each of the elements (both individually and in association with the other elements) and necessary facilities to establish E-learning system is discussed.

Table 4: e-learning advantages in comparison to traditional education

Priority	Common topics	Frequency	Percentage of each element individually	Percentage of each element in association with the other elements
1	saving the costs	24	96	28.9
2	diversity in training (flexibility, the number of admissions)	22	88	26.5
3	updating the data (data access, effectiveness and efficiency of training)	19	76	22.9
4	lack of need to the physical presence of the master	18	72	21.7

In table 5, the essential facilities and equipments to establish e-learning system are presented in the above six major factors. The most important factor is essential and appropriate hardware and software equipments for starting up and holding e-learning courses.

Regarding the mentioned results we can conclude that the main advantages of e-learning are: Saving time and cost, expanding communication domain, expanding courses, up to dating information, having a flexible method of study, increasing interaction and increasing curiosity and initiative.

Also the main e-learning barriers would be: high costs of infrastructure creation, reduction of face to face interaction, the high initial cost of preparing materials, and lack of appropriate hardware and software, and unfamiliarity with the technology of e-learning for both teachers and learners. Of course, e-learning for different groups (e.g., teachers, students, planners, managers and executives) have different advantages and disadvantages.

Table 5: proper guidelines for the establishment and development of e-learning

Priority	Common topics	Frequency	Percentage of each element individually	Percentage of each element in association with the other elements
1	Essential hardware and software equipments	23	92	19.5
2	High-speed and inexpensive internet	22	88	27.1
3	Professional human resources (professors, managers, experts)	19	76	16.1
4	Learners' knowledge and skills	17	68	14.4
5	Holding tutorial courses for the learners	14	56	11.9
6	culturalization	13	52	11

In figure 1, dynamic relationships of essential material and immaterial infrastructure for the operation and development of e-learning system were investigated by Vensim Software.

As it is inferred from figure 1, economic, technological and human infrastructure has positive effects on necessary infrastructure for e-learning development and they are considered as approaches of e-learning development. For example, 'material and immaterial infrastructures' and 'technology infrastructures' develop 'human

infrastructures'; and, 'material and immaterial infrastructures' and 'technology and human infrastructures' promote 'economic infrastructures'. And yet, 'material and immaterial infrastructures' enhance 'economic, human and technological infrastructures'.

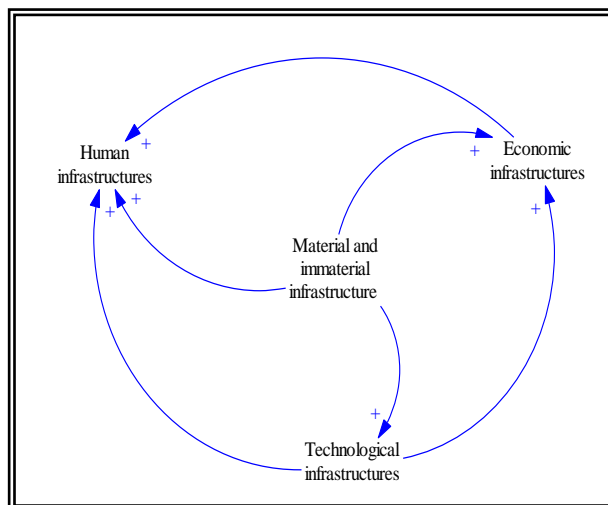


Figure 1: dynamic relationships of essential material and immaterial infrastructure

In figure 2, the dynamic relationships of the learners' skills and knowledge were considered.

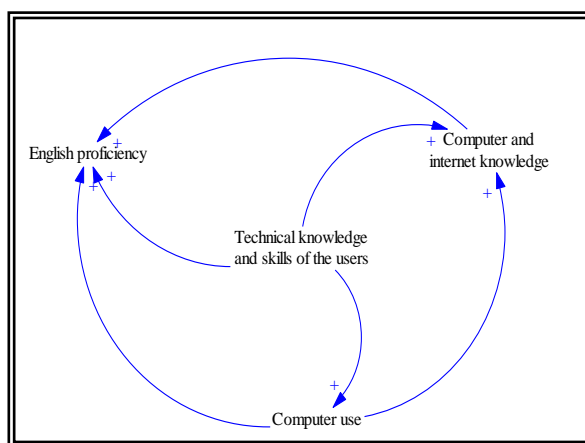


Figure 2: the dynamic relationships of the learners' skills and knowledge

In figure 2, it is shown that, the learners' skills and knowledge which includes internet and computer knowledge, English proficiency are considered as the factors that affect positively on e-learning development.

As figure 2 shows, increasing the learners' skill and knowledge enhances internet and computer knowledge, English proficiency and computer user. And, increasing level of computer user enhances computer and internet knowledge and also English proficiency. And, finally, increasing computer and internet knowledge develop English proficiency. In figure 3, the approaches of e-learning promotion is presented.

In figure 3, the approaches of e-learning development is presented with all its subcategories. As the figure clearly shows, each of the four branches of presenting preliminary training, material and immaterial infrastructure, culturalization and the

learners' skills and knowledge along with its subparts have positively and directly affected on e-learning development. Deficiency and shortage in each of the above parameters are considered as the barriers of e-learning development.

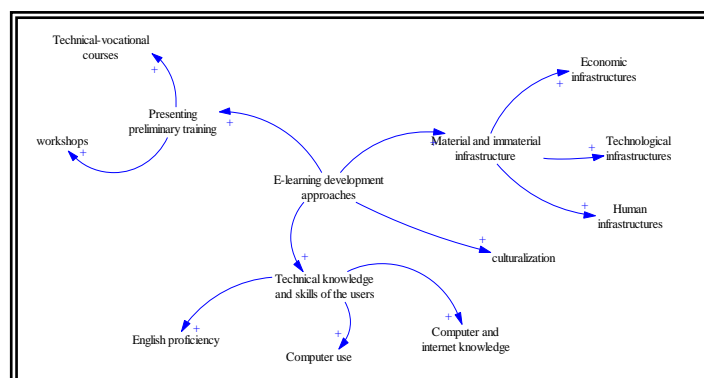


Figure 3: the approaches of e-learning development

Figure 4 represents the flowchart of the findings and conclusions of effective factors of e-learning development especially in Iranian higher education system.

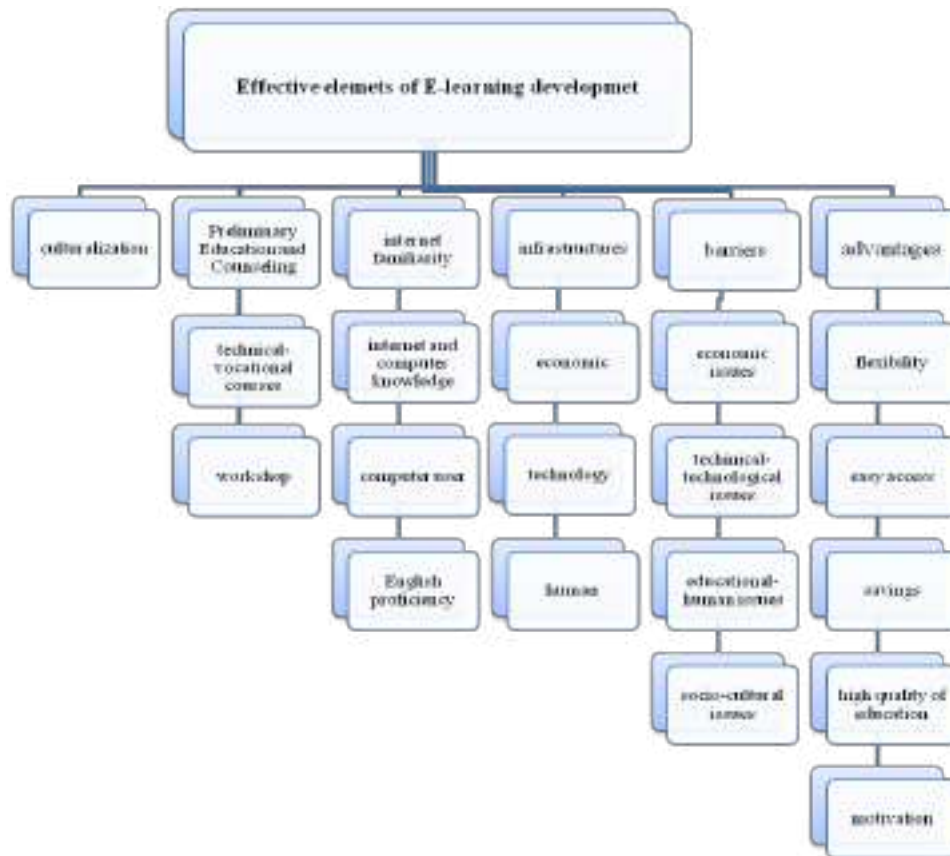


Figure 4: Effective elements of e-learning development

## DISCUSSION

New information technologies are opening extraordinary abilities to change or reshape teaching and learning activities in all institutions of higher education. They also provide tools to design modern scientific environments that have never been possible before. For this reason, many universities want to establish electronic courses using the capabilities of information technology in the form of e-learning or online learning. However, the study several research of illustrates that the development of e-learning in education systems are faced with many problems. That unfamiliarity of policymakers and educational planners with them can impose heavy costs on educational institutions.

If the government and the responsible authors invest properly in e-learning, the development and extension of economic, technological, telecommunication, electronic infrastructures and human resources would be achieved. This finding matches to Howard (2008) study in Liberia that states: “the development of ICT would be possible by reinforcement of telecommunication, human resources, economic, social infrastructures and IT-based curriculum planning.” Creating the appropriate cultural context and establishing reasonable and proper use of education cybernetic and electronic environments is a part of development and extension requirements of e-learning.

The most important skills of e-learning learners are ‘technical skill and knowledge of learners in English proficiency’, ‘software, hardware and network proficiency’ and other required potentials in e-learning. This finding accord to Yaghoubi (2008) study which asserts that: “internet and computer knowledge and the students’ interest in e-learning must be taken into account.”

It is necessary for the virtual course students to be familiar with internet skills and English proficiency. Also, they should participate in tutorial workshops.

Massive spending and investment plans in developing appropriate and essential infrastructures have a significant effect on 'the scientific growth and development of the country' and 'increasing the scientific potential of Iran universities in comparison to foreign universities.'

It seems that if it is invested on the development of infrastructures and proper physical and technical contexts of e-learning, then it will be more efficient than a situation in which huge budgets are spent for creation of educational environment.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The educational system of the country must present more comprehensive services in English education and computer skills for students.

The government and responsible people of cultural and social affairs should provide proper social and cultural contexts for developing and establishing of public use of e-learning.

Training interested and knowledgeable E-learning professors and also producing electronic content in educational syllabus is of utmost importance while lack of such a thing is felt.

Regarding that no exact and documented study in the field of 'the payment of teaching per hour' has not been done either in a traditional or electronic way, it seems that, if an exact and proper research is done in the field of investigating the technical and economic justification, then, responsible men will be convinced to invest in e-learning development.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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## MOTIVATION AMONG IRANIAN LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated 50 state high school and private institute learners in Najafabad, 25 each, to see if there was any difference between their motivation. These students were selected to answer a motivation questionnaire and the analysis of the results gained through this questionnaire. Although there was no significant difference between these two groups with regard to proficiency. The analysis of the learner's responses to the motivation questionnaire showed that the private language institute learners were more motivated to learn English than the high school learners. The findings of this study are useful for teachers to apply motivated methods to improve learners' motivation. Also, students who take responsibility for their learning enjoy freedom and power to make decisions in their learning. Knowing that learning is a product of one's own activities, a student feels more rewarded and enhances his courage to get involved in an active learning process.

**KEYWORDS:** Motivation, Private institute, Motivation questionnaire

### INTRODUCTION

Students should be active agents of their learning, not merely passive receivers of information. Learning is a product of learners' own actions and is based not only on the learners' prior skills and knowledge but also on their experience and interest. If learners have role in defining and choosing the goals, the course content, and methodology, learning will be more relevant to them (Decorte, 1993). Although many teachers admit that learners differ in terms of needs and preferences, they may not consult learners in conducting language activities. The basis for such reluctance to cooperate may be that learners are not capable to express what they need to learn and how they want to learn it.

Recent research on motivation has demonstrated that students' goals and expectancies are referred as motivational variables can have considerable influence on their academic performance, and achievement (e.g., Barker, Dowson, & McInerney, 2002; Dowson, 2001, 2003). McInerney (1992) proposed that individuals' internal motivations (such as their goals and expectancies) may promote positive academic behavior and achievement, external (or at least externally referenced) forces in students' social environments may facilitate or inhibit the translation of these internal motivations into actual behavior. There is a large body of research concerned with the impact of attitudes and motivation on second language acquisition, and much of it has demonstrated a relationship between attitudinal and motivational variables on the one

hand and proficiency in a second language on the other (Clément, 1978, 1980; Dörnyei, 1994; Gardner & Lambert, 1959; Gardner et al., 1983; Gardner et al., 1976; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995).

Furthermore, it is often suggested in the literature that L2 learning motivation is affected by specific L2 learning contexts to which L2 learners are exposed (Clément & Kruidenier, 1983; Dörnyei, 1990; Oxford, 1996; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Schmidt, Boraie, & Kassabgy, 1996). For instance, in an ESL (English as a Second Language) situation, where direct contact with native speakers of English is possible, English is mastered through direct exposure to it. In an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context, however, English learning mostly takes place in academic or formal classroom settings without regularly interacting with the English language community, thereby limiting generalization of the studies based on an ESL sample. Motivation is commonly defined as the “energization” and “direction” of behavior (Cofer & Appley, 1964; Heckhausen, 1991), that is, motivated behavior involves both the activation of motives, values, or interests by internal or external cues and the guiding of these activated motives, values, or interests toward potentially satisfying objects, outcomes, or end states.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Motivation plays a significant role in the EFL learning process, and most learners may feel disappointed if the method of teaching is not appropriate for them. Regarding language teaching in Iran, Bakhshi (1997) notes: “One of the problems is an old belief that just knowing about the language and its grammatical patterns suffice teaching English, so there are no rooms left for advancement through insight of linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and motivation” (p.14). Teachers do not use classroom activities that increase students’ commitment for learning English. This makes students feel reluctant to the task of learning. This study attempts to investigate this issue in an Iranian context. In this study, the researcher wants to compare motivation in the high school and the private language institute. In the high school teacher has the central role but in the private language institute learners have central role and in the private language institute learning English is an optional course but an obligatory one in the high school then the researcher wants to find motivation in these two settings.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The importance of motivation in educational setting necessitates the investigation of this factor involved in the process of teaching. Therefore, the present study was designed to show the difference between motivation experienced by learners. With regard to what has been presented above, the present research will address two major questions:

- 1) Is the motivation in high school different from the motivation in the private language institute?
- 2) Is the type of motivation (instrumental motivation, integrative motivation, attitude toward learning English, attitude towards English textbooks, Coercion Index, and overall achievement) different in high school and the private language institute?

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Participants***

The participants of this study ranged from 15 to 17 year-old students selected randomly from 50 high school female students and 50 female students studying English as a foreign language (EFL) in a private language institute in Najafabad. Learners in these two settings enrolled in the second grade and their major was computer. Then, a Nelson test was administered to the students to select and homogenize the intended number of students for the study. Next, 50 students, 25 from Mahjub high school and 25 from Parto private institute, whose scores on the Nelson were between one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean, were selected to take part in the study; to answer questions of a motivation questionnaire.

### *Instruments*

Data in this study were collected through using instruments as follows:

1) A Nelson test (1999). It consisted of 40 multiple-choice items on grammar and vocabulary to estimate the proficiency level of the learners. The validity of the test was established by consulting with three experts. **The validity of the test was established by consulting with my supervisor and advisor. It' reliability was measured via cronbach's alpha that was 0.72.**

2) A motivation test. It was developed by Celce Murcia (1991) and consisted of 41 questions. This questionnaire was translated into Farsi to avoid participants' confusion. According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989), one of the main problems with questionnaires in a foreign language (FL) is that participants often have problems in providing answers in FL and there is no assurance that the questions are properly understood and answered correctly. The participants were asked to rate their attitudes on a 5-point Likert scale. The researcher measured its reliability via Cronbach's alpha ( $r=0.81$ ).

### *Data Collection and Procedure*

Data were collected through the following stages: At first 100 students from the high school and the private institute, 50 each, were selected randomly. Then, via the administration of the Nelson test, 50 students (25 from the high school and 25 from the private institute) were selected as the participants of the study. Then the motivation questionnaire was distributed among the participants. They were asked to read the questions carefully and express their feeling by choosing one of the alternatives written in front of each statement.

## **THE ANALYSIS OF THE LEARNERS' RESPONSES TO THE MOTIVATION QUESTIONNAIRE**

Table 1 gives a summary of the findings for both groups, that is, the high school and the private institute learners, on the motivation questionnaire, and Figure 1 presents the graphical representation of the same results.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Two Groups on the Motivation Questionnaire

High School					Language Institute				
Min	Max	Mean	SD	Variance	Min	Max	Mean	SD	variance
99	205	183.08	20.845	434.493	153	230	195.24	18.622	346.773

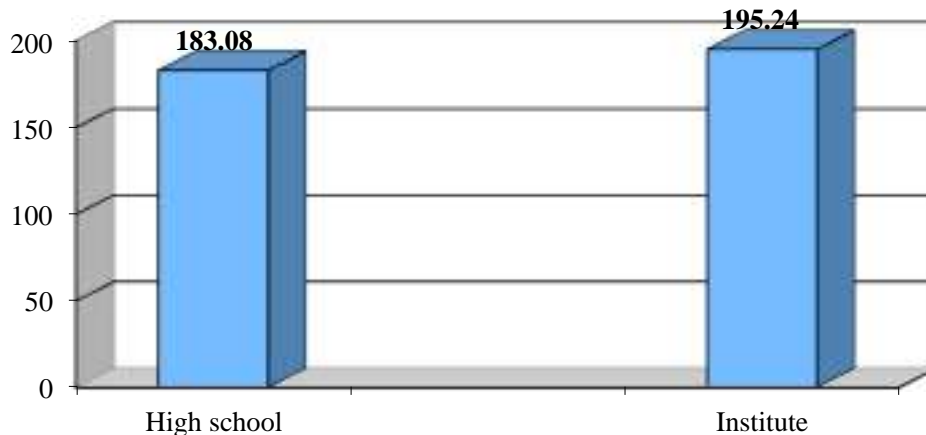


Figure 1: The graphical representation of the results for the motivation questionnaire

As Table 1 shows, the mean and the standard deviation scores of the high school students on the motivation test are respectively 183.08 and 20.84. For the language institute students the mean and the standard deviation scores are 195.24 and 18.62 respectively. In the high school group, the highest score and the lowest score are 205 and 99, but in the private language institute the highest score is 230 and the lowest score is 153. The above table shows that the mean score for the motivation obtained by the language institute students is higher than that obtained by the high school learners.

In order to find out whether or not this difference is statistically significant, a *t*-test was run. Table 2 shows the results of this *t*-test.

Table 2: The Results of the *t*-test for the Motivation Questionnaire

Group	No.	Mean	SD	SEM	df	t	P
High School	25	183.08	20.845	4.169	48	-2.229	.031
Institute	25	195.24	18.622	3.724			

Table 2 reveals that the amount of *t*-observed ( $t = -2.229$ ) is significant at the probability level of  $p = .031$ , which is smaller than .05. In other words, motivation is significantly higher for the language institute students than for the high school students.



# THE RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE LEARNERS' RESPONSES TO DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE MOTIVATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The motivation questionnaire is divided into six parts. The researcher compared the learners' responses to 4 parts in the high school and the private institute because these 4 parts are more related to this research.

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of different parts of the motivation questionnaire for each group and Figure 2 presents the graphical representation of the same results.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Different Parts of Motivation Questionnaire for Both Groups

Group	Parts of motivation	No.	Mean	SD
School	Instrumental	25	15.498	1.5831
	Integrative	25	16.212	4.0901
	Coercion index	25	14.280	4.7734
	Attitude	25	14.347	3.1979
	Textbooks	25	14.808	1.6036
	Achievement	25	14.784	4.5559
Institute	Instrumental	25	17.046	1.6848
	Integrative	25	18.480	2.2683
	Coercion index	25	10.920	3.0911
	Attitude	25	17.270	3.1531
	Textbooks	25	15.480	2.9189
	Achievement	25	17.976	4.1151

As this table shows the mean scores of the private institute in instrumental motivation, integrative motivation, attitude toward learning English, attitude towards English textbooks, and overall achievement are higher than the high school learners. The mean score of the high school learners in the coercion index is higher than the private institute.

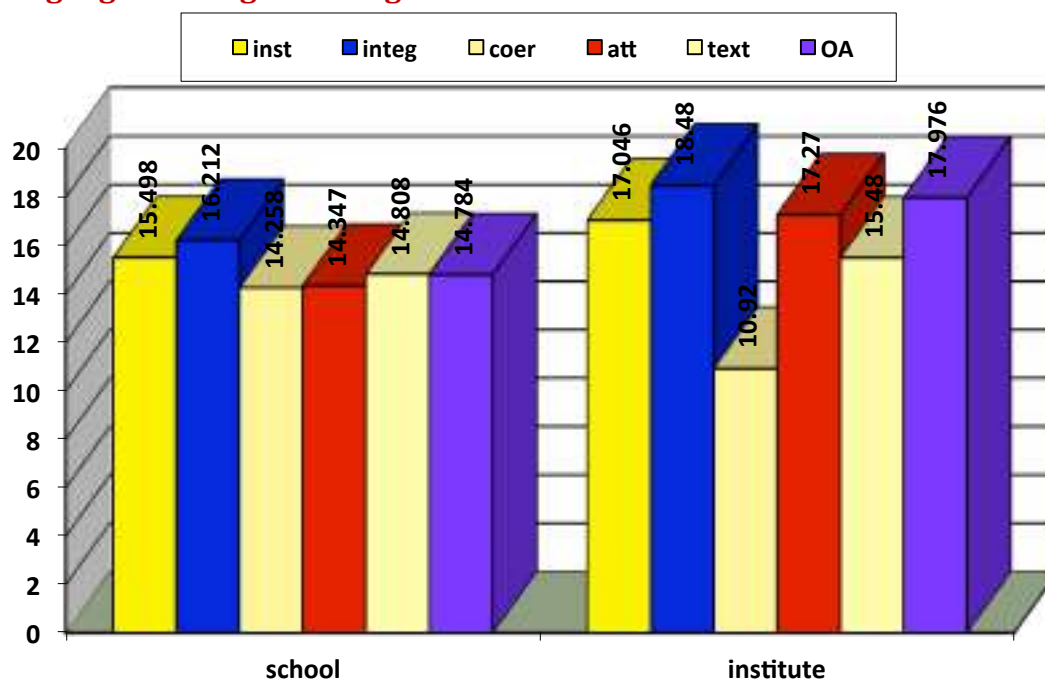


Figure 2: Graphical representation of the means in different parts of the motivation questionnaire for both groups

As figure 2 shows the mean score in each part of the motivation questionnaire for the private institute learners is higher than the high school learners except in the coercion index.

## THE RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE LEARNERS' RESPONSES TO THE FIRST PART OF THE MOTIVATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The first part of this questionnaire deals with the learners' reasons for learning English. It consisted of 8 questions: 4 items ask instrumental motivation, 2 items are about integrative motivation and 2 questions are about coercion index.

### *The Analysis of the Learners' Responses to the Instrumental Motivation Questions*

These questions of the questionnaire deal with the instrumental motivation:

1. *I think it will some day help me get a good job.*
2. *Proficiency in English is a sign of good education.*
3. *I study English to go to the university.*
4. *English is the language of progress and modernization.*

As Table 3 shows, the mean and the standard deviation of the private institute students on the instrumental motivation questions are respectively 17.04 and 1.68. The mean and the standard deviation of the high school students on the instrumental motivation questions are respectively 15.49 and 1.58. By comparing the means of the two groups shown in the table 3 it can be said that the amount of instrumental motivation is higher for the private institute learners. A *t*-test was

applied to find out if there is a significant difference between these two groups. Table 4 reveals the results of this *t*-test.

*Table 4: The Results of the t-test for the Instrumental Motivation*

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
High School	25	15.49	1.58	48	-3.348	.002
Institute	25	17.04	1.68			

It can be seen in Table 4 that the amount of *t*-observed ( $t=-3.348$ ) is significant at the probability level of  $p=.002$  which is smaller than .05. In other words, instrumental motivation in these two settings is different. The amount of instrumental motivation is higher for the private institute learners.

In order to find a correlation between test anxiety and instrumental motivation, a Pearson Correlation Test was employed.

*Table 5: The Results of the Correlation Analysis for Instrumental Motivation*

		Test Anxiety	Instrumental motivation
Test Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	1	-.446(**)
	Significance(2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	25	80
Instrumental motivation	Pearson Correlation	-.446(**)	1
	Significance(2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	25	120

\*\* Correlation at 0.01(2-tailed):...

This table depicts a significant negative correlation between the test anxiety and the instrumental motivation ( $r=-.446$ ). In other words, it can be said that the higher the test anxiety, the lower the instrumental motivation, and vice versa.

### ***The Analysis of the Learners' Responses to the Integrative Motivation Questions***

These questions of the questionnaire deal with the integrative motivation:

1. *I think it will help me to better understand English- speaking people.*
2. *I like English.*

As Table 3 shows, the mean and the standard deviation of the private institute students on the integrative motivation questions are respectively 18.48 and 2.26. The mean and the standard deviation of the high school students on the integrative motivation questions are respectively 16.21 and 4.09. By comparing the means of the two groups shown in the above table it can be said that the amount of integrative motivation is higher for the private institute learners. A *t*-test was applied to find out if there is a significant difference between these two groups. Table 6 reveals the results of this *t*-test.

Table 6: The Results of the *t*-test for the Integrative Motivation

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
High School	25	16.21	4.09	48	-2.425	.019
Institute	25	18.48	2.26			

It can clearly be seen in Table 6 that the amount of *t*-observed ( $t=-2.425$ ) is significant at the probability level of  $p=.019$  which is smaller than .05. In other words, the amount of the integrative motivation is significantly higher for the private institute students than the high school students.

### ***The Analysis of the Learners' Responses to the Coercion Index Questions***

These questions deal with the Coercion Index:

1. *It is a part of the school curriculum.*
2. *My parents want me to learn it.*

As Table 3 shows, the mean and the standard deviation of the private institute students on the coercion index questions are respectively 10.92 and 3.09. The mean and the standard deviation of the high school students on the coercion index questions are respectively 14.28 and 4.77. By comparing the means of the two groups shown in the above table it can be said that the amount of coercion index is higher for the high school learners. In other words, high school learners attend the English classes only because it is a part of the school curriculum not because of their motivation. A *t*-test was applied to find out if there is a significant difference between these two groups. Table 7 reveals the results of this *t*-test.

Table 7: The Results of the *t*-test for the Coercion Index Questions

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
High School	25	14.28	4.77	48	2.954	.005
Institute	25	10.92	3.09			

As Table 7 shows the amount of *t*-observed ( $t=2.954$ ) is significant at the probability level of  $p=.005$  which is smaller than .05. In other words, the amount of the coercion index is significantly higher for the high school students than the private institute students.

### **THE ANALYSIS OF THE LEARNERS' RESPONSES TO THE SECOND PART OF THE MOTIVATION QUESTIONNAIRE**

The second part of this questionnaire deals with the learners' attitude toward learning English and consisted of 5 questions:

1. *Studying English is an enjoyable experience.*
2. *I would study English in school even if it were not required.*
3. *I do not like to spend my time on subjects other than English.*
4. *I think learning English is the best experience in my life.*

5. *Learning subjects other than English is a waste of time.*

As Table 3 shows, the mean and the standard deviation of the private institute students on questions about learners' attitude are respectively 17.27 and 3.15. The mean and the standard deviation of the high school students on these questions are respectively 14.34 and 3.19. By comparing the means of the two groups shown in the above table it is clear that the private institute learners have positive attitude toward learning English. It can be said that learners' motivation cause positive attitude to learning English and vice versa. A *t*-test was applied to find out if there is a significant difference between these two groups. Table 8 reveals the results of this *t*-test.

Table 8: The Results of the *t*-test for Learners' Attitude toward Learning English

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
High School	25	14.34	3.19	48	-3.255	.002
Institute	25	17.27	3.15			

It can clearly be seen that the amount of *t*-observed ( $t=-3.255$ ) is significant at the probability level of  $p=.002$  which is smaller than .05. In other words, the amount of the positive attitudes toward learning English is significantly higher for the private institute students than the high school students.

### THE RESULTS OF THE LEARNERS' RESPONSES TO THE THIRD PART OF THE MOTIVATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The third part of this questionnaire deals with the learners' attitudes toward their English textbooks and consisted of 7 questions:

1. *The topics and reading texts in our English textbooks are enjoyable.*
2. *The materials and activities in our book are interesting.*
3. *Reading texts and topics encourage me to read more English.*
4. *The pictures of the book help me to understand English better.*
5. *Reading passages present an up-to-date picture of the target language people.*
6. *Reading texts and topics are in harmony with the students own needs and interests.*
7. *The reading texts are interesting.*

As Table 3 shows, the mean and the standard deviation of the private institute students on questions about the learners' attitude toward English textbooks are respectively 15.48 and 2.91. The mean and the standard deviation of the high school students on these questions are respectively 14.80 and 1.60. By comparing the means of the two groups shown in the above table it can be said that the private institute learners have positive attitude toward their English textbooks and this attitude can increase their motivation. A *t*-test was applied to find out if there is a significant difference between these two groups. Table 9 reveals the results of this *t*-test.

Table 9: Results of the *t*-test for Learners' Attitude toward English Textbooks

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
High School	25	14.80	1.60	48	-3.176	.003
Institute	25	15.48	2.91			

As Table 9 shows the amount of *t*-observed ( $t = -3.176$ ) is significant at the probability level of  $p = .003$  which is smaller than .05. In other words, the amount of the positive attitudes toward English textbooks is significantly higher for the private institute students than the high school students.

### THE RESULTS OF THE LEARNERS' RESPONSES TO THE FOURTH PART OF THE MOTIVATION QUESTIONNAIRE

This part, consisted of one question, asks learners' satisfaction with their achievement in English:

1. *I am satisfied with my achievement in English.*

As Table 3 shows, the mean and the standard deviation of the private institute students on overall achievement are respectively 17.97 and 4.11. The mean and the standard deviation of the high school students on this question are respectively 14.78 and 4.55. By comparing the means of the two groups shown in the above table, the private institute learners are more satisfied with their achievement in English. It can be said, there is a positive relationship between motivation and overall achievement. In other words, the higher the motivation, the higher the overall achievement, and vice versa. A *t*-test was applied to find out if there is a significant difference between these two groups. Table 10 reveals the results of this *t*-test.

Table 10: The Results of the *t*-test for the Satisfaction with Overall Achievement in English

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
High School	25	17.04	4.55	48	2.600	.012
Institute	25	17.97	4.11			

It can be seen in Table 10 that the amount of *t*-observed ( $t = 2.600$ ) is significant at the probability level of  $p = .012$  which is smaller than .05. In other words, satisfaction with overall achievement in English in these two settings is different. Satisfaction is higher in the private institute learners.

### DISCUSSION

***The First Research Question: Is there any difference between learners' motivation in the high school and the Private language institute?***

To answer this research question, a *t*-test was used and the results show that motivation is higher in the private language institute learners than the high school learners. Also, Boggiano *et al* (1992) found that if teachers be as facilitators in the class, use interesting materials (photographs, objects,...) and give learners an active role that learners can decide what to teach and how to teach, learners' motivation will increase.



***The Second Research Question: Is the type of motivation (instrumental motivation, integrative motivation, attitude toward learning English, attitude towards English text books, Coercion Index, and overall achievement) different in high school and the private language institute?***

To answer this research question a series of *t*-tests were used to analyze the learners' answers to the motivation questionnaire. It was clear that instrumental and integrative motivations are higher in the private institute learners. They want to learn English because they want to find a good job and learning English help them to have a better understanding of English-speaking people. Private institute learners have positive attitude toward learning English and their textbooks. Also, they were satisfied with their achievement in English. But, in the high school, learners attended the English class because it was a part of their school curriculum. They have negative attitude toward learning English because they think learning English is a dull activity and waste of time. Learners in the high school were not satisfied with their progress in English because they just want to pass their course.

A previous study by Giles and Coupland (1991) found that integrative and instrumental motivations are very useful factors to engage learners in learning process. Integrative motivation comes from the learner and it has a very strong power to move learners toward learning. Also, if learners want to have a good position and a good job in their society they are engaged in learning process. The result of Giles and Coupland's research is similar to the results of the present study.

## CONCLUSION

According to this study if learners have an active role in learning process, their motivation will increase. Then, students should take responsibility for their learning. They should ask for freedom and power to make decisions in their learning. It is also necessary for students to know that learning is a product of their own activities and it is based on their prior skill, knowledge, and interest. Therefore, it seems that the effective language learning occurs when students collaborate with teachers and textbook writers in designing useful materials by expressing their attitudes and opinions.

## LIMITATION OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

No study is complete by itself and cannot take every detail into consideration. Therefore, there are always aspects which are not accounted for. This research is no exception. There are some issues which were not controlled in this study and can be topics for further research by other researchers.

- 1) This study was done only in one city with a limited number of students. It is suggested that another study be performed with large numbers of students from more cities.
- 2) In this study data collection was done through questionnaires; some other studies can be carried out to incorporate interviews with students as well.
- 3) In this study only female students were questioned. Some other studies can be performed on both genders and see if they differ in motivation and test anxiety.
- 4) In this study, the participants were adolescents; in other studies adult language learners can be the focus of attention to see whether the same results will be obtained.

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ON DELOGOCENTRISM: A DECONSTRUCTIONIST READING OF  
TOM STOPPARD'S TWO SELECTED PLAYS; *ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN  
ARE DEAD AND ARCADIA*

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to examine a deconstructive concept of theatre as it specifically relates to the theatre of post-structuralism by investigating the works and ideas of Tom Stoppard. Accusing Western philosophy of being obsessed with binary oppositions, Jacques Derrida's deconstructive approach represents language as an instable and delogocentric system by means of which no fixed meaning can be created. Together with conceptualism and rejection of modern doctrines, Derrida's theory of post-structuralism is utilized to analyze the inner dynamics of Stoppard's two selected plays: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* and *Arcadia*.

**KEY WORDS:** Post-structuralism, Postmodernism, Deconstruction, Binary oppositions, Différance, Dissemination, Delogocentrism.

**INTRODUCTION**

The primary aim of this study was to trace deconstructionist features in Tom Stoppard's two selected plays: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* and *Arcadia*. After a very brief introduction to a post-structuralist school of criticism by Jacques Derrida called deconstruction, Tom Stoppard's dramaturgy is given a close deconstructionist reading in the selected plays.

***Deconstruction***

Deconstruction is a school of philosophy and literary criticism associated closely with French philosopher, Jacques Derrida, one of the most influential thinkers of the latter part of the twentieth century, and also the Belgian/North American literary critic Paul de Man. Derrida's deconstruction theory, basically, refers to the re-reading or breaking down of a text to show the multiple meanings at work which tries to subvert the logic of opposition within language. As Butler (2002) asserts:

The central argument for deconstruction depends on relativism, by which I mean the view that truth itself is always relative to the differing standpoints and predisposing intellectual frameworks of the judging subject. It is difficult to say, then, that deconstructors are

committed to anything as definite as a philosophical thesis. Indeed, to attempt to define deconstruction is to defy another of its main principles – which is to deny that final or true definitions are possible, because even the most plausible candidates will always invite a further defining move, or 'play', with language. For the deconstructor, the relationship of language to reality is not given, or even reliable, since all language systems are inherently unreliable cultural constructs. (16)

According to Derrida, this demands a close analysis of the basic "distinctions" and "conceptual orderings" which have been formulated by the predominant tradition of Western philosophy. In a series of discussions on philosophers as Plato, Hegel, Rousseau, Kant, Husserl, Austin, and Lévi-Strauss, Derrida embraces a strategy or reading which throws doubt on the presumptions and limitations of textual meaning by uncovering how the uncertainties and certainties a text has presented have indeed been formed through a chain of "preferences" and "repressions" which own advantaged special ideas, values and arguments above others. As Derrida (1978) puts it:

the movement of signification is possible only if each so called 'present' element, each element appearing on the scene of presence, is related to something other than itself, thereby keeping within itself the mark of the past element, and already letting itself be vitiated by the mark of its relation to the future element, this trace being related no less to what is called the future than to what is called the past, and constituting what is called the present by means of this very relation to what it is not. (32)

Derrida's idea, here, is that what has been put forward as a dichotomy (binary oppositions) in Western philosophy, such as masculine/feminine, is only a difference which has been influenced by a hierarchy. Reshaping Saussure's notion of binary oppositions, Derrida argues that, in each pair, one term is "suppressed" and one "privileged". Derrida aimed to demonstrate how the privileged term relied on the suppressed one for its meaning. Derrida's idea does not seek the information of analytic distinctions altogether, nor does he deal with a simple reversal of hierarchical oppositions. As Derrida and some of his more keen followers well known, "positing difference against identity succeeds only in falling back within the very logic of binary opposition their deconstructive enterprise tries to resist". (Payne and Barbera, 2010:79)

As an alternative, Derrida tries to substitute and recast concepts into larger and inclusive contexts. His procedure simply embodies use of the meaning and potentiality of a concept against the limits within which it has been formulated. Therefore, his doubt on the "structurality of structure", the cause of the cause, or the context of the context attempts to uncover the metaphysical termination or the limits of Western philosophy. Derridean deconstruction reveals the logic, assumption and, structure which construct the predominant tradition of Western Philosophy. Deconstructive criticism does not assert that it can clear up textual conflicts and contradictions. On the contrary, it argues that, there is something inherent to the structure of language which perplexes any attempted textual unity. Derrida's terms "différance" and

"dissemination" point out to both the possibility and the impossibility of defining a certain meaning of a text.

Différance is a pun in French, combining the meanings of "differing" (as in any set of items lined up in space differ from one another) and "deferring" (as in putting off, delaying). Since all texts contain ambiguities and can be read in different ways (la différence), exhaustive interpretation must be forever deferred (la différance).

Suspended between its two senses of differing and deferring, this neologism represents the non-originary origins of a generalized system of language that encompasses both speech and writing; where meaning is never located within the sign as a self-sufficient entity but is, rather, constituted through the differential play between an infinite number of signifiers and signified. As a result, meaning is always deferred. Thus, the 'concept' of différance represents a powerful critique of *presence* and its associated values. (Childs and Fowler, 2006:55)

Dissemination, however, suggests the process by which, in language, the meaning of any term or set of terms is distributed and diffused throughout the language system without ever coming to a final end.

Dissemination designates the idea that meaning is never stable, or fixed, but is, rather, dispersed or scattered throughout the language system. Thus, like the notion of *undecidability* (to which it is related), dissemination calls into question the possibility of definition itself. For this reason, it is best conceived of as an effect of writing. (Childs and Fowler, 2006:61)

Derrida's recognized notion of writing plays the role of a metaphor for the "absence" of both a "unified subject" and a "constant referent" in any text- it is not important if spoken or written. For him, such absences are the inescapable aftermath of using "signs" which produce and communicate meaning.

The involvement of the linguistic sign separates the "subject" and the "referent" from themselves, and it is such separations and absences which creates the possibility of textual "misinterpretations" and "misunderstandings". The desire for these systematic incoherence and unmanageable ambiguities in meaning can be regarded as the best characteristic of deconstructive criticism.

In relation to literary analysis, when beginning the interpretive process, by means of what has been defined as Différance and Dissemination, deconstructors seek to overrule their own logocentric ways of viewing a text, moving towards delogocentrism.

A deconstructive reading strategy, as Bressler (1999) represents a linear procedure in his text analysis, would follow the following steps as a simple representation, having a clearly delineated beginning, middle and end:

1. Discover the binary operations that govern the text.
2. Comment on the values, concepts and ideas behind these operations.
3. Reverse these present binary operations.
4. Dismantle previously held worldview.
5. Accept the possibility of various levels of a text based on new binary inversions.
6. Allow the meaning of the text to be undecidable (81-82)

In sum,

Derrida's philosophical enterprise claims to deconstruct pervasive shibboleths as these occur in both academic work and in the language of everyday life. Everyday language is not neutral; it bears within it the presuppositions and cultural assumptions of a whole tradition. At the same time, the critical reworking of the philosophical basis of the tradition in question results, perhaps unexpectedly, in a new emphasis on the individual autonomy and creativeness of the researcher/philosopher/reader. Maybe this anti-populist yet anti-Platonic element in grammatology is Derrida's most important contribution to the thought of the post-war era. (Lechte, 1994:124)

### ***Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead***

Beginning with his early writing career as a playwright, his writing strategy and career, Tom Stoppard, himself, believed that:

The reason why *that* idea appealed to me rather than another one is that it does have this under-structure to it. . . . The important thing about a successful work of art is not that it should communicate X to everybody but that it should run through the absolute alphabet for each 26 people. (Taylor, 2001:28)

Most embodied to the mentioned idea, one that in a metaphoric situation represents a system of meaning, all at once possible, is his most famous play: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1967). The play is not a mere 'Shakespearean pastiche'. For,

While retaining the broad context given by Shakespeare, Stoppard develops his 'borrowed' characters into his own creations speculating philosophically upon the 'reality' of a dramatic situation – the plot of *Hamlet* – which they cannot understand. This obliges Stoppard to adopt a critical view of the way in which his 'heroes' are handled by Shakespeare. (Brassell, 1985:37)

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, two dead characters from the Shakespeare's well-known play *Hamlet*, enter a new context designed by Stoppard with the writer's tendency toward lots of doubt and irony. The text's complexity encounters the reader with lack of coherency, and as a result, the existence of binary oppositions within the play.

In the course of the play, Stoppard divides all three acts of the play into two forms of the 'borrowed characters', which is the characters' "on-stage" and "off-stage" selves. While the



Shakespearean style is evident in the "on-stage" sections where passages of *Hamlet* enter directly into the play, Stoppard's art craft delivers the much longer "off-stage" sections where Rosencrantz and Guildenstern – as frightened strangers in a world somebody else seems to have made – are left on their own to make sense of the "on-stage" sections and their own relationship to these two parts. Brassell (1985) elaborates on the same idea:

In creating these "off-stage" realities, however, Stoppard does nothing to make Shakespeare's minor characters major, refusing them the complex and lavish attention that 'heroes' traditionally receive. Instead, his objective is to explore the undeveloped nature of the perpetual minion, the man constantly relegated to the furthest recesses of the stage, without the faintest understanding of the action unfolding around him. (ibid)

There are sections in the play that reflect the same ideas, where the suspended characters are in search of the "off-stage" realities, created by not Shakespeare but Stoppard, the lines that represent the characters confusion on the notions of their reality or fictionality:

**GUIL:** Why is he mad?!

**ROS:** I don't know!

*Beat.*

**PLAYER:** The old man thinks he's in love with his daughter.

**ROS** (*appalled*): Good God! We're out of our depth here.

**PLAYER:** No, no, no---he hasn't got a daughter---the old man thinks he's in love with his daughter.

**ROS:** The old man is?

**PLAYER:** Hamlet, in love with the old man's daughter, the old man thinks.

**ROS:** Ha! It's beginning to make sense!

(Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead: 49)

They never get significantly further than the chaotic affairs around them. Unable to remember their instructions or how they have arrived, they are never aware of the fact that they are participants of a perplexing drama.

**GUIL:** ... What's the first thing you remember?

**ROS:** Oh, let's see... The first thing that comes into my head, you mean?

**GUIL:** No---the first thing you remember.

**ROS:** Ah. (*Pause.*) No, it's no good, it's gone. It was a long time ago.

**GUIL** (patient but edged): You don't get my meaning. What is the first thing after all the things you've forgotten?

**ROS:** Oh I see. (*Pause.*) I've forgotten the question.

**GUIL** leaps up and paces.

**GUIL:** Are you happy?

**ROS:** What?

**GUIL:** Content? At ease?

**ROS:** I suppose so.

**GUIL:** What are you going to do now?

**ROS:** I don't know. What do You want to do?

(Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead: 11)

Although they are two dead characters in Shakespear's text, now they are present in Stoppard's one, alive, bewildered with their existence, and not sure about their perception of reality, completely aware that, with their engagement in Stoppard's new game, their fate cannot be changed and this new game cannot save them from their previously-held death.

**PLAYER:** Lying down. (*He laughs briefly and in a second has never laughed in his life.*) There's a design at work in all art surely you know that? Events must play themselves out aesthetic, moral and logical conclusion.

**GUIL:** And what' that, in this case?

**PLAYER:** It never varies---we aim at the point where everyone who is marked for death dies.

**GUIL:** Marked?

**PLAYER:** Between "just desserts" and "tragic irony" we are given quite a lot of scope for our particular talent. Generally speaking, things have gone about as far as they can possibly go when things have got about as bad as they reasonably get. (*He switches on a smile.*)

**GUIL:** Who decides?

**PLAYER** (*switching off his smile*): Decides? It is written.

*He turns away. GUIL grabs him and spins him back violently.*

(*Unflustered.*) Now if you're going to be subtle, we'll miss each other in the dark. I'm referring to oral tradition. So to speak.

**GUIL** *releases him.*

We're tragedians, you see. We follow directions---there is no choice involved. The bad end unhappily, the good unluckily. That is what tragedy means. (Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead: 80)

By eliminating the characters binary opposition of presence/absence and the condition made for the audience to experience Rosencrantz and Guildenstern "live" on the stage and at the same time "dead" off stage, Stoppards deconstructs the binaray of illusion/reality as well, suggesting that levels of reality and fictionality are not separable. The same idea is exactly mentioned in the play by The Player, who does not differentiate between the two worlds of reality and fiction when Rosencrantz is irritated by being called a "fellow artist", objecting that, "I thought we were Gentlemen" (Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead: 22). The player emphasizes that, "For some of us it is performance, for other patronage. They are two sides of the same coin" (ibid).

Not only has the existence of binary operations within the text, but also, the text's theme made the play's text delogocentric.

Tom Stoppard's play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* ... is a very funny play about death. Very funny, very brilliant, very chilling; it has the dust of thought about it and the particles glitter excitingly in the theatrical air. (Barens, 2001:231)

In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* the "Dead" of the title as a key word acknowledges the audience or the reader that the protagonists will die. Since title characters died in their off-stage deaths in Shakespeare's tragedy, as victims of a literary determinism, they must die here in Stoppard's world. This dramatic irony and their progression towards their death as they approach the end of the play provide a context for both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's musings on the nature of death:

**ROS:** We might as well be dead. Do you think death could possibly be a boat?

**GUIL:** No, no, no . . - Death is . - - not. Death isn't. You take my meaning. Death is the ultimate negative. Not-being. You can't not-be on a boat.

**ROS:** I've frequently not been on boats.

**GUIL:** No, no, no-what you've been is not on boats.

**ROS:** I wish I was dead. (*Considers the drop.*) I could jump over the side. That would put a spoke in their wheel.

(*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*: 108)

Stoppard's theme is probably best explained in Act II, when Rosencrantz makes speech about lying in a coffin. He says to Guildenstern:

Do you ever think of yourself as actually dead, lying in a box with a lid on it?

**GUIL:** No.

**ROS:** Nor do I, really... It's silly to be depressed by it. I mean one thinks of it like being alive in a box, one keeps forgetting to take into account the fact that one is dead... which should make all the difference... shouldn't it? I mean, you'd never know you were in a box, would you? It would be just like being asleep in a box. Not that I'd like to sleep in a box, mind you, not without any air- --you'd wake up dead, for a start, and then where would you be? Apart from inside a box. That's the bit I don't like, frankly. That's why I don't think of it..

**GUIL** *stirs restlessly, pulling his cloak round him.*

Because you'd be helpless, wouldn't you? Stuffed in a box like that, I mean you'd be in there forever. Even taking into account the fact that you're dead, it isn't a pleasant thought. Especially if you're dead, really... ask yourself, if I asked you straight off--- I'm going to stuff you in this box now, would you rather be alive or dead? Naturally, you'd prefer to be alive. Life in a box is better than no life at all. I expect. You'd have a chance at least. You could lie there thinking well, at least I'm not dead! In a minute someone's going to bang on the lid and tell me to come out. (*Banging the floor with his fists.*) "Hey you, whatsyername! Come out of there

**GUIL** (*jumps up savagely*): You don't have to flog it to death!  
(Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead: 70-71)

In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, the idea of discovering the nature of death and representing it stands for the demand to represent the unrepresentable. Although the same idea re-emerges several times throughout the play as a reminder that the demand has not to be forgotten, and although Stoppard's play gives the final answer at the very end to the question rises at the very beginning, that title characters as the same title announces have to die, there remains another question: *how?* Finding answer for such a question requires speculations on the different perspectives the characters represent regarding the representation of "death". But the larger question is: *when did they die?* Based on the play itself, the possible answers to that question are many. According to Vos (1977):

(1) They die at the end of the play: "Now you see me, now you . . ." . . . and disappears (126); (2) They are already dead at the opening of the play: ". . . the fingernails grow after death . . ." as Rosencrantz cuts his nails (18); (3) They die at each performance of the play; (4) They never died; they exist only in Shakespeare's and Stoppard's imagination and thus they never lived.

Paradoxically, each of the four hypotheses is accurate. The idea of death, however, can be analyzed from other perspectives. The Player dies in one way:

*The **PLAYER** stands with huge, terrible eyes, clutches at the wound as the blade withdraws: he makes small weeping sounds and falls to his knees, and then right down.* (Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead: 90)

But this is what Guildenstern had previously named "the mechanics of cheap melodrama":

**GUIL** (*tear, derision*): Actors! The mechanics of cheap melodrama! That isn't death! (*More quietly.*) You scream and choke and sink to your knees, but it doesn't bring ~ home to anyone---it doesn't catch them unawares and start the whisper in their skulls that says---"One day you are going to die." (*He straightens up.*) You die so many times; how can you expect them to believe in your death? (Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead: 83)

However, Player comments that "it is what is expected":

**PLAYER:** On the contrary, it's the only kind they do believe. They're conditioned to it. I had an actor once who was condemned to hang for stealing a sheep--- -or a lamb, I forget which---so I got permission to have him hanged in the middle of a play---had to change the plot a bit but I thought it would be effective, you know---and you wouldn't believe it, he just wasn't convincing! It was impossible to suspend one's disbelief---and what with the audience jeering and throwing peanuts, the whole thing was a disaster!---he did nothing but cry all the time---right out of character---just stood there and cried... Never again.

For Guildenstern, however, this melodramatic dying of Player is not the genuine representation of death since it only represents, in a caricatural way, its external signs. For Guildenstern, on the other hand, representation of death is something else. It results to the death of representation:

**GUIL:** No, no, no... you've got it all wrong... you can't act death. The fact of it is nothing to do with seeing it happen ---it's not gasps and blood and falling about---that isn't what makes it death. It's just a man failing to reappear, that's all ---now you see him, now you don't, that the only thing that's real: here one minute and gone the next and never coming back---an exit, unobtrusive and unannounced, a disappearance gathering weight as it goes on, until, finally, it is heavy with death. (ibid)

After that it was the time for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to die. They represent dying one's own death from the internal point of view because death is "nothingness", "the absence of presence". By disappearing from the stage they die without "the mechanics of cheap melodrama" and in this way they are no more. By the time they die they "disappear from view" and no presentation can be expected from them and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's genuine representation of death results in their death of representation. By presenting the unrepresentable, then, the theme of the play acts as a coin with two sides with one side deconstructing the other one. By presenting "death of representation" and "representation of death" at the same time, the play never provides the text's reader and the spectator, as well, with not only a definite and logocentric text, but also a decidable meaning.

This lack of determinate meaning is made by the existence of difference rather than repetition within the play. In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* the meaning is deferred – as in Stoppard's "death of representation" and "representation of death" – and the world and characters are also different – from that of Shakespear's *Hamlet*.

The characters represented are not claimed to be real or even a representation of real; they are made of words based on a text without any context. Real character is therefore an illusion; all characters are the products of the imagination of an author. Deconstructionist views of "the subject as text" could be properly applicable to the analysis of Stoppard's characters. As Kvale (1992) maintains:

The radical deconstructionist move is to constitute the subject as text (or the text as subject), making it impossible for that subject to refer to itself in any consistent way, independent of the world of signs it is enmeshed in. The text replaces the transcendental ego of Kant. In this scheme the subject is doomed to perpetual exile from itself. It is exposed to endless substitutions of meaning. "The absence of transcendental signifier ... extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely" (Derrida, 1981:278). By letting the subject be swallowed up in the text, the transformation of "essential" rational man into "relative" postmodern man is fulfilled. (124-125)

### *Arcadia*

First opened at the Royal National Theatre in London on 13 April 1993, Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*, being reviewed by the *The Times* in "Ideas Meet their Comic Match", was praised for the "perfect marriage of ideas and high comedy". Vincent Canby of *The New York Times* described the play as "Tom Stoppard's richest, most ravishing comedy to date, a play of wit, intellect, language, brio and, new for him, emotion."

*Arcadia* is set in an airy room in a large, Derbyshire country house, in the years 1809-1812 and 1993, with the scenes alternating between the two time periods, juxtaposing the activities of two modern scholars – Hannah Jervis, the author of a popular best-seller on Byron's mistress Lady Caroline Lamb, and Bernard Nightingale, a don at a modern university – and the house's current residents – Valentine, 25-30, a postgraduate biologist and mathematician, who is also an expert at computers, Chlöe, who is 18 and, Gus, who is 15 and is the silent savant who stopped speaking at the age of five – with the lives of those who lived there 180 years earlier, major among them were Thomasina Coverly, the 13-year-old (later 16-year-old) daughter of Lord and Lady Croom, Septimus Hodge, Thomasina's tutor and the academic colleague and friend of Lord Byron (an unseen but important character in the play) and, Ezra Chater, an unsuccessful poet stayed at Sidley Park, who married to a promiscuous wife. In the final scene, however, characters from both periods share the stage.

In the 1800s, in the course of the play, Thomasina, a precocious young genius with understandings of chaos theory and the principles of thermodynamics, her tutor, Septimus, working on the young girl's scientific theories until his own death, the guests and other members of the Croom household engaged in discussions about math, science, art, sex and landscape gardening. Meanwhile, in the present-day scenes, Hannah, busy with the history of the family and Bernard, investigating the possibility of his theory that Byron killed the cuckolded Chater in a duel and then fled the country, are investigating the events of the past.

Stoppard's *Arcadia* is a play shaped within a series of binary operations. Concerning a delicate balance between the past and the present *Arcadia*, deals with the contrasting ideas of order and disorder and the certainty of knowledge. As Haney II (2008) remarks, these opposing concepts and ideas are suggesting certain significance within the play. According to him:

Stoppard's *Arcadia* juxtaposes the dimensions of time and timelessness, intuition and logic, heart and mind in a way that paradoxically induces in the characters and audience a transpersonal, transrational experience of freedom even from within the boundaries of time. (83)

Through Stoppard's discussion of Chaos Theory within the play, the most prominent of these opposing concepts is the idea of chaos versus order.

Simon Jenkins (1993) seems to suggest Stoppard's motivation in using chaos theory in the course of *Arcadia*. According to him, Stoppard has simply been attracted to the beauty of fractal surfaces when he states that *Arcadia* is "the authentic post-modern play, eclectic, picturesque, devoid of



morality, glittering with [the director] Trevor Nunn's surface dazzle", and that in it Stoppard 'brushes aside' the question of lost meanings (16). In a similar vein, Wardle's review in *The Independent* on Sunday (1993: 23) emphasises the play's form over its content in a series of expressions reminiscent of a firework display ('dazzlingly elaborate', 'irregular and unforeseen', 'strikes increasingly brilliant sparks'), and praises Stoppard for finally abandoning any attempt to write about social or ethical issues.

While such interpretations forge a connection between Stoppard's work and poststructuralist and postmodernist attitudes to epistemology and ethics by ignoring some of the major thematic elements in *Arcadia*, they do draw attention to the way chaos theory informs the structure of Stoppard's play. What must be added to them, however, is the way that chaos theory functions in *Arcadia* as not just a reflection of complex form and flashy style, but as justification for much more old-fashioned concepts, such as crafted and harmonious form and the value of literary meaning. Although everything disappears into the state of chaos and entropy – as it happens in the final scene – a sense of order can be found within this chaos. According to Valentine:

**Valentine:** Lend me a finger. (*He takes her finger and presses one of the computer keys several times.*) See? In an ocean of ashes, islands of order. Patterns making themselves out of nothing. I can't show you how deep it goes. Each picture is a detail of the previous one, blown up. And so on. For ever. Pretty nice, eh? (*Arcadia*: 76)

The table which collects props from both time periods throughout the play is a strong example of the chaos/order dichotomy. Edwards (2001) explains this representation:

At the end of the play, the table has accumulated a variety of objects that, if one saw them without having seen the play, would seem completely random and disordered. Entropy is high. But if one has seen the play, one has full information about the objects and the hidden 'order' of their arrangement, brought about by the performance itself. Entropy is low; this can be proved by reflecting that tomorrow night's performance of the play will finish with the table in a virtually identical 'disorder'—which therefore cannot really be disorder at all. (181)

By contrast, in *Arcadia* the presence of those windows of order, of form in life and art, is underlined. Stoppard's aim has been to give the play shape, and in accordance with chaos theory, that shape has symmetries and reflections which weave a complex, harmonious picture.

Lady Croom and Mr. Noaks arguments on the garden's style in different periods of time and discussing the before-and-after views of the place pictured by the architect exemplify the binary of Classicism versus Romanticism in the course of the play.

**Lady Croom:** Where there is the familiar pastoral refinement of an Englishman's garden, here is an eruption of gloomy forest and towering crag, of ruins where there was never a house, of water dashing against rocks where there was neither spring nor

a stone I could not throw the length of a cricket pitch. My hyacinth dell is become a haunt for hobgoblins, my Chinese bridge ... is usurped by a fallen obelisk overgrown with briars ... (Arcadia: 12)

Lady Croom's neo-classical way of looking at nature – her assumption that its orderliness conforms to an idea of perfection defined by God – is contrasted with the new architect Richard Noakes's romantic design, which strives to convey an impression of the drama of the individual's struggle against the overpowering forces of nature. Naturally, the new design follows not only a new vision of natural law, but also one of aesthetic value.

**Lady Croom:** The trees are companionably grouped at intervals that show them to advantage. The rill is a serpentine ribbon unwound from the lake peaceably contained by meadows on which the right amount of sheep are tastefully arranged – in short, it is nature as God intended ... (ibid)

In the past, Thomasina represents Romanticism in her scientific outlook and growing affection for her tutor Septimus. She challenges the traditional notion that Newton has sorted out the mystery of universe, by the time she asks "Is God Newtonian" (Arcadia: 6). Poking holes in Newtonian science, she discovers that once having stirred jam onto her pudding, "You cannot stir things apart" (ibid). According to Thomasina, the way Septimus teaches geometry limits it to simple forms which are predictable rather than something which like an apple leaf, "which alludes both to the Eros of Eden (Romanticism) and to Newton's discovery of gravity (Enlightenment)" (Haney II, 2008:85). Although Septimus provides her with some explanations and remarks that Newton "has mastery of equations which lead into infinities where we cannot follow" (Arcadia: 49), she does not agree with him.

**Thomasina:** What a faint-heart! We must work outward from the middle of the maze. We will start with something simple. (*She picks up the apple leaf.*) I will plot this leaf and deduce its equation. You will be famous for being my tutor when Lord Byron is dead and forgotten. (ibid)

Therefore, throughout the play:

Thomasina challenges the assumptions of the Enlightenment through Romanticism in her pursuit of nonrationality and the study of irregular landscapes of nature in the wild. (Haney II, 2008:85)

On the other hand, doing research on the Coverly estate in the present, Hannah represents a neoclassical attitude based on Newtonian physics and a denial of feelings. In the course of the play she attempts to deny emotions and rejects Romanticism.

**Hannah:** The whole Romantic sham, Bernard! It's what happened to the Enlightenment, isn't it? A century of intellectual rigour turned in on itself. A mind in chaos suspected of genius. In a setting of cheap thrills and false emotion ... The decline from thinking to feeling, you see. (Arcadia: 36-37)

The two scientific positions, Thomasina and Hannah, as the play progresses, lead other characters as well as the audience and the reader, suggested by Septimus, toward a condition of unity.

**Septimus:** When we have found all the mysteries and lost all the meaning, we will be alone, on an empty shore. (*Arcadia*: 126)

This overview of the debate between classicism and romanticism in the play reveals the extent to which the two world-views dominate the play. Thematically, the debate brings out the positive and negative qualities in both, and shows how elements combined from each attitude can form a view of the world which allows for both structure and individual freedom, for both reality and representation. The solution to the contrast between the determined and the truly free is not made in the play by replacing the classical garden with the romantic version, since both are shown to be equally determined. Instead, it is found in the freedom with which the mind of the daughter of the house moves in its strictly determined surroundings.

Fleming notes that Stoppard constructs *Arcadia* through a "nonlinear bouncing between time periods [that] suggests disorder, yet lurking underneath is a tightly ordered dramatic structure" (2001:195). He also notes that the term fractal means "self-similar," as in the "Self-similarity of dialogue, situations, characters, props, costumes, and musical accompaniment" across the scenes covering two historical periods (ibid). As one shall see, in *Arcadia*;

Stoppard dramatizes how the mind undergoes a transformation through which the discovery of the mystery of life does not lead to meaning or rationality, but rather toward the transcendence of meaning in the source of thought where we can taste the boundless unity of nonpluralistic consciousness. To be alone as Septimus says, therefore, suggests undergoing a transformation beyond the Romanticism vs. Enlightenment, reason vs. emotion duality toward the unified experience of pure consciousness as opposed to the multiplicity of the mind's conscious content—the qualia or qualities of phenomenal experience. (Haney II, 2008:86)

Stoppard's *Arcadia* is also shaped in a world trapped not only in present, but also in past. The opposing insights in the fields of art and science are also traceable within the play's text. In her book, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (1989), Hutcheon proposes that:

There are other kinds of border tension in the postmodern too: the ones created by the transgression of the boundaries between genres, between disciplines or discourses, between high and mass culture, most problematically, perhaps, between practice and theory. (18)

In fact, the binary of art/science is evident from the very beginning. In fact, *Arcadia* is characterized by its emphasis on the coexistence of literary theories and science notions, which seem to be contradictory and exclusive to each other. The following argument between Valentine and Bernard remarks their conflicting ideas on scientific progress and artistic personalities:

**Valentine:** The questions you're asking don't matter, you see. It's like arguing who got there first with the calculus. The English say Newton, the Germans say Leibnitz. But it doesn't matter. What matters is the calculus. Scientific progress. Knowledge.

**Bernard:** Really? Why? Why does scientific progress matter more than personalities?

Valentine: Is he serious?

**Hannah:** No, he's trivial. Bernard –

**Valentine:** (*Interrupting, to Bernard*) Do yourself a favour, you're on a loser.

**Bernard:** Oh, you're going to zap me with penicillin and pesticides. Spare me that and I'll spare you the bomb and aerosols. But don't confuse progress with perfectibility. A great poet is always timely. A great philosopher is an urgent need. There's no rush for Isaac Newton. We were quite happy with Aristotle's cosmos. Personally, I preferred it. Fifty-five crystal spheres geared to God's crankshaft is my idea of a satisfying universe. I can't think of anything more trivial than the speed of light. Quarks, Quasars – big bangs, black holes – who gives a shit? How did you people con us out of all that status? All that money? And why are you so pleased with yourselves? (*Arcadia: 61*)

This above discourse is an example of heated arguments between Enlightenment and Romanticism in the play. Valentine who embodies notions of enlightenment subscribes to the notion that progress and knowledge matter more than personalities. Yet Bernard, who attacks him in a Romanticist's violent reaction against the Enlightenment, refuses to be limited by Valentine's devotion to scientific progress. By depicting Bernard as cynical and radical in his attack on Valentine, Stoppard reveals his opinion that the Romantic objection to the Enlightenment may be too extreme. With the conversation between Valentine and Hannah, the dissolution between art and science is finally reached upon.

**Hannah:** Is it the grouse?

**Valentine:** Oh, the grouse. The damned grouse.

**Hannah:** You mustn't give up.

**Valentine:** Why? Didn't you agree with Bernard?

**Hannah:** Oh, that. It's *all* trivial--your grouse, my hermit, Bernard's Byron. Comparing what we're looking for misses the point. It's wanting to know that makes us matter. Otherwise we're going out the way we came in. That's why you can't believe in the afterlife, Valentine. Believe in the after, by all means, but not the life. Believe in God, the soul, the spirit, the infinite, believe in angels if you like, but not in the great celestial get-together for an exchange of views. If the answers are in the back of the book I can wait, but what a drag. Better to struggle on knowing that failure is final. Oh! but how beautiful! (*Arcadia: 75*)

It is apparent that, in the course of the play, there is a clash between emotion emphasized in the free will and rationality embodied in Newton's law of motion. In Newton's theory, a general, accurate and simple analysis and prediction is featured, as Septimus reveals "everything from the furthest planet to the smallest atom of our brain acts according to Newton's law of motion" (*Arcadia: 5*). However, Thomasina has started to intuit that the world-view projected in Newton's theory is incomplete as she tells Septimus: "When you stir your rice pudding, Septimus, the

spoonful of jam spreads itself round making red trails like the picture of a meteor in my astronomical atlas. But if you stir backward, the jam will not come together again. Indeed, the pudding does not notice and continues to turn pink just as before" (ibid). Septimus, indeed, inspired by his student, Thomasina's innovative discovery of the nature, seems to be informed of the incompleteness of Newton's law of motion.

**Septimus:** A prize essay of the Scientific Academy in Paris. The author deserves your indulgence, my lady, for you are his prophet.

**Thomasina:** I? What does he write about? The waltz?

**Septimus:** Yes. He demonstrates the equation of the propagation of heat in a solid body. But in doing so he has discovered heresy – a natural contradiction of Sir Issac Newton.

**Thomasina:** Oh! – he contradicts determinism?

**Septimus:** No! ... (Arcadia: 81)

As stated by John Fleming:

Since comprehending scientific concepts can sometimes be difficult, Stoppard aids his audience's understanding by paralleling the shift in the scientific paradigm to the analogous transition from classicism to romanticism – that is, classicism metaphorically corresponds to Newtonian science and Romanticism to deterministic chaos. (2001:197)

In the following monologue, it seems that Valentine has experienced both determinism and unpredictability, both fate and free will. As he explains to Hannah, "The unpredictable and predetermined unfold together to make everything the way it is. It's how nature creates itself, on every scale, the snowflake and the snowstorm." (Arcadia: 47).

**Valentine:** If you knew the algorithm and fed it back say ten thousand times, each time there'd be a dot somewhere on the screen. You'd never know where to expect the next dot. But gradually you'd start to see this shape, because every dot will be inside the shape of this leaf. It wouldn't be a leaf, it would be a mathematical object. But yes. The unpredictable and the predetermined unfold together to make everything the way it is. It's how nature creates itself, on every scale, the snowflake and the snowstorm. It makes me so happy. People were talking about the end of physics. Relativity and quantum looked as if they were going to clean out the whole problem between them. A theory of everything. But they only explained the very big and the very small. The universe, the elementary particles. The ordinary-sized stuff which is our lives, the things people write poetry about – clouds – daffodils – waterfalls – and what happens in a cup of coffee when the cream goes in – these things are full of mystery, as mysterious to us as the heavens were to the Greeks. (Arcadia: 48)

Indeed, *Arcadia* is a play full of different theories ranging from literature, mathematics, physics, chaos theory and, landscape gardening in its structure and the play's plot. In the end, however, Thomasina is burnt to her death and she can never be brought back due to the irreversibility



notion implied in the second law of thermodynamics. In this light "it is not nonsense" (Arcadia: 36), far from which the play is an exemplifier of the employment of science theory to restore, re-construct and re-present the past in a story-telling manner. Hence, the dichotomies between art and science, emotion and ration, heart and mind are eliminated, and a world of multiple disciplines can be reshaped through scraps of memory.

As Stoppard contrasts free will and determinism, science and humanism, romantic and classical, female intuition with male dogmatism, these kinds of oppositions become numerous in the course of the play; in the same way, the play takes on a number of different meanings when looked at from different perspectives. And the existence of all these dual operations leads the play's text towards both difference and deference and meaning uncertainty.

In *Arcadia*, since the action of the play goes nowhere, the reader/audience comes to a dead end or "aporia" in Derridian terms. There are indefinite contradictory meanings or significations in the play and the reader cannot decide which one to choose or refer to as the final signified. Consequently, it can be concluded that in *Arcadia*, there is not a sufficient ground for the reader to choose among the numerous signifier or signified. Thus, attaining an accurate and exact meaning is, approximately, impossible. (Hooti and Shooshtarian, 2010: 22)

## CONCLUSION

The exploration of Tom Stoppard's two selected plays: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* and *Arcadia* in a post-structuralist framework with regard to the relevant deconstructive theories and concepts was the main concern of the study. In order to detect these elements, the definition of important key terms and the theoretical framework introduced by the school's prominent critic, Jacques Derrida, were presented first. The next step was to apply the related discussed elements to the context of Stoppard's selected plays and the present part wishes to bring the findings and conclusions of the study.

According to post-structuralism, the writer had no final authority over the text, a text was no longer thought to be a clear display of the writer's worldview, but was seen as a boundlessly perplexing subversion of the authors' prime intentions. It was a text that made a start by questioning the foundations on which texts themselves were constructed, a text which gave particular importance to the fact that it was written; and a text that did not end with a straight and definite conclusion. Therefore, while reading a text one must stop trying to discover the undiscoverable which is the absolute truth and openly affirm that what may be right for one person may not be right for another.

When such principles are applied to literary interpretation, the postmodernist realizes that no such a thing as the meaning of an aesthetic text exists. Therefore, since each reader's view of truth is different from that of other readers, for each text, then, there exist an almost infinite number of interpretations as there are readers, all possible and therefore, the final reality is undecidable – text's moves towards the notion called delogocentrism.



Regarding Stoppard's drama, the same situation that deconstruction declare about the text exists. Almost at the end of each play by Stoppard, readers become confused and perplexed. Since the text does not indicate its meaning and it is up to the reader to interpret it, the number of interpretations will not be limited and decidable.

In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* Stoppard paints a picture of a real deconstructionist condition. The existence of binary oppositions in the play reflects the text's delogocentrism. Though they are present in Stoppard's text, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are absent as a matter of their previous death in Shakespeare's text. The present/absent model of personal identity leads to their level of reality/fictionality that cannot be separated. The lack of final meaning, completely evident in the play leads to the lack of closure and which is another characteristic of deconstruction. Since there are numerous contradictory meanings or significations in the play, the responsibility of interpretation and getting the meaning depends on the reader, not on the writer who has, in fact, no authority over the text which leads to relativity of the play's text.

Consisting of two plots, one happens in the past and the other in the present, Stoppard's *Arcadia* moves around a theory on Lord Byron, however, Byron is not a major character in the play. Stoppard, then, repeats in *Arcadia* what he did in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, where he assigned minor roles to Hamlet, while moving Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to centre stage.

Stoppard's *Arcadia*, the second play which is discussed in the study, is composed of two plots, is not only a play of ideas but also a play about ideas. It resembles his *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* in a way he introduces Byron as a minor character as he assigned a minor role to Hamlet by bringing two previously dead characters, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to stage.

Antor (1998) describes *Arcadia*'s thematic pattern:

We intend to show here that Stoppard presents various modes of approaching reality and making it meaningful, both from the arts and from the sciences, and that he depicts a general development from a pre-modern or, one might even say, a classical belief in regularity, order, finite linear teleology and the existence of well-structured patterns to a postmodern and post-structuralist scepticism about these things and an awareness of irregularity, chaos, non-linearity, infinity and unstructured patternlessness or complexity. The play, in order to discuss these concepts, uses the theory of gardening and the conflict between classicism and romanticism as well as recent developments in chaos theory and thermodynamics and thereby becomes an example of isomorphisms of thought in the two cultures. (326-354)

As post-structuralist theorists are highly doubtful about endeavors to either establish or comprehend the society on the basis of fixed and universal values, binary oppositions and their blurring distinctions are of significant importance in the deconstructive age. *Arcadia* is a play shaped in a series of such dichotomies such as distinctions between thinking and feeling (binary

of reason/emotion), order and disorder (binary of order/chaos), and the Classical and the Romantic (binary of Classicism/Romanticism).

In the closing scene of *Arcadia*, there are times when the past and present characters mingle on the stage. To cite an instance, Hannah, the present-day novelist, fills Septimus's glass from the same decanter and sips from it. This visual image creates a theatrical effect bringing together the past and present, and hence, blurring their boundaries. Likewise, the closing scene of *Arcadia* is fascinating in a way that the past and present characters: Septimus and Thomasina, Hannah and Gus, are dancing together simultaneously onstage. In a way, their co-existence and simultaneity may blur the boundary between present and the past.

Thus in "Romantic vs. Postmodern Reality: An Examination of Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*", Guy Stern writes that:

In *Arcadia* Stoppard outdistances even all his previous deconstructions of reality [....]. [T]hree recondite researchers prove before our eyes that the past is unreconstructable, reading its records, intuiting its spirit, or trying to quantify it via modern mathematics inevitably leads to major distortions. (1996:155)

To solve the problems by the classical science, Stoppard introduces chaos theory. Chaos theory is only a tool to reflect the insufficiency of a single perception within the play. The abandonment of a single perspective is post-structuralism. Since deconstructivist thinkers reject the idea that there could exist an integrated world view and there are no basic principles or foundations on which to build an encompassing picture of the universe, abandoning the classical science as the basic principles and introducing chaos theory to destroy an integrated world view makes *Arcadia* as an exemplifier of post-structuralism.

In *Arcadia*, as in most of Stoppard's plays, there is no final meaning, no real authority and no transcendental signified. This feature leads to a sense of non-ending in the play. Everything is unreliable and ambiguous. The lack of final meaning results in lack of the closure force the text's meaning to be undecidable and moves the play towards an insight called delogocentrism.

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## AUTHENTIC LANGUAGE INPUT FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING IN EFL/ESL CONTEXTS

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### ABSTRACT

Various teaching materials are considered to be essential components in language learning/learning at all levels. In the same line, various textbooks accompanied with audiovisual materials which have been prepared for language learning serve as the basis for much of the language input learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom. However, various sources of audiovisual programs from different technologies also have the potential to provide the necessary language input for language learning in-and-outside the classroom setting. Various audiovisual programs are considered as sources of authentic language input if they contain genuine instances of language use as opposed to exemplars devised specifically for language teaching purposes. In view of this, the present paper was set to shed more light on the concept of authenticity of language input by considering the potential sources of authentic language input currently available in English as a foreign language (EFL) context and English as a second language (ESL) context. Moreover, it underscores the benefits of utilizing authentic language input in language learning classrooms.

**KEY WORDS:** Authentic language input, Sources of authentic language input, Audiovisual programs

### SOURCES OF LANGUAGE INPUT IN EFL/ESL CONTEXTS

Various sources of language input particularly authentic language input are available in EFL and ESL contexts. However, before the discussion on the sources of language input is started, the concepts of EFL and ESL contexts need to be considered.

An EFL context refers to an environment where English language is not the primary or secondary language spoken. According to Freed (1995), English is considered as a foreign language rather than a second language. Moreover, English language has no major role in society and is learnt in the classroom setting (Ellis, 2008). In contrast, an ESL context is an environment where English language is spoken in society as the official language or the medium of communication among people from different countries. In fact, English language plays an institutional and social role in the community in ESL context (Ellis, 2008).

Considering the sources of language input in EFL/ESL contexts, it should be mentioned that in ESL contexts, people can have interaction with other people from different countries using the English language. English is then considered as a source of language input which can facilitate and pave the way for SLA (Gass, 1997). The social interaction in ESL contexts is one of the authentic sources of language input which can help language learners acquire the language in informal setting. In contrast, in an EFL context social interaction as a source of language input in an informal language learning setting is lacking. English is not used as a medium of communication or for other purposes in society in the EFL contexts. As a matter of fact, the use of English language is mainly limited to formal setting at universities, language institutes or language classrooms. However, various audiovisual technologies have proved effective in providing the language learners with authentic language input to learn the language in-and-outside the classroom.

### **AUTHENTIC LANGUAGE INPUT**

The employment of authentic language input through authentic materials in foreign/second language learning has a long history. Henry Sweet (1899, cited in Gilmore, 2007) was one of the pioneers who utilized authentic texts in his books because he was aware of their potential advantages over contrived materials.

In order to determine the definition of authentic language input as precisely as possible, the term authenticity should be considered first. In this regard, there are a variety of definitions of this concept which relate to the foreign/second language (Gilmore, 2007; Taylor, 1994; Nunan, 1999; just to name a few). These varieties of definitions originate from the debate as to whether authentic materials in the foreign/second language are in fact authentic or not.

Considering to the concept of authentic language input, Gilmore (2007) defined authentic language input as the language carrying a real message which is created by a real speaker or writer for a real audience. Taylor's (1994) also considered authentic language input as any material in English which has not been specifically produced for the purpose of language teaching. In fact, authentic language materials are spoken or written language materials that have been produced in the course of real communication and not specifically produced for the very purpose of language teaching (Nunan, 1999).

According to Nunan (1999), authentic language input can be drawn from various sources of audio-visual mass media technologies including TV. Linguistically, authentic language input refers to the use of authentic materials from the target culture which is presented in the target language such as different programs, for example, news, movies, songs, soap opera, and comedy as audio-visual mass media materials provided by various technologies. The important point to be considered is that these materials are not initially made for language teaching purposes.

### **SOURCES OF AUTHENTIC LANGUAGE INPUT**

There are varieties of authentic teaching sources and materials available to EFL/ESL teachers to employ for different needs for various teaching situations. While social interaction as a source of

authentic language input is not available in EFL context, many other sources of authentic language input are available in both EFL and ESL contexts through various audiovisual technologies. The sources of authentic language input which are available in both EFL and ESL contexts can originally be extracted from different desktop technologies such as computers and non-desktop technologies such as TV. Accordingly, various audiovisual mass media materials can include different print materials followed by related video and audio, audiotapes and CDs with accompanying textbooks, and videotapes with textbooks.

Considering the integration of various audiovisual programs that provide authentic language input into language learning, many studies have been conducted (Martinez, 2002; Gilmore, 2007; Nunan, 1999; Gebhard, 1996; Brinton, 1991; Miché, 2002; Schön et al., 2008; among others). These studies all underscore the point that audiovisual materials are pedagogically valuable to be utilized for language teaching. According to Gebhard (1996), there are unlimited sources for authentic language materials from TV programs such as TV that language teachers and learners can utilize for the very purpose of language learning.

### **BENEFITS OF UTILIZING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS**

There is an agreement among foreign/second language instructors that authentic language input can be utilized as an essential part of second language learning. According to many scholars (Martinez, 2002; Gilmore, 2007; Nunan, 1999; Gebhard, 1996; Brinton, 1991; just to name a few), there are many advantages associated to authentic language materials which make these materials pedagogically valuable to expose language learners to the target language. In this regard, Martinez (2002) provided a number of sound advantages for using authentic language materials for language teaching. An important advantage is that authentic language materials provide a wide range of language change of the target language. For example, by listening to songs and stories in the target language, language learner will be able to hear dialectal differences of various countries that speak the target language (Martinez, 2002). This can be used for a class discussion.

According to Brinton (1991), authentic materials and media can strengthen the direct relationship between the language classroom and the outside world for students. Gebhard (1996) considered authentic materials as a way to contextualize language learning. When lessons are focused on comprehending, language learners tend to concentrate more on content and meaning rather than the language itself. This offers the language learners a valuable source of authentic language input, so that they are not exposed only to the language presented by the text and the teacher.

In the same line, Brosnan et al. (1984) put forth that by simplifying the language or changing it for teaching purposes, the task may become more difficult. According to Brosnan et al. (1984), authentic language offers language learners the opportunity to deal with a small amount language input which contains complete and meaningful messages. Moreover, authentic language materials help language learners to notice the immediate relevance of what they do in the classroom to what they need to do in the real world communication. It is essential for language learners to listen to and read different kinds of authentic language material because it helps motivate the language learners by bringing the content and the subject matter to life for them, and enable them



make the important connections between the classroom world and the real world outside the classroom setting.

Another advantage of using authentic materials is the comfortable environment that these materials create for young children. Authentic language materials are more appealing to the language learners than non-authentic language materials because of their objective to communicate a message rather than emphasize particular aspects of the target language (Gilmore, 2007). Another advantage of using authentic language material is the focus on every feature of the language (Gilmore, 2007). In contrast, the artificial language materials tend to cause continual repetition of certain grammatical constructions, certain elements of the vocabulary, or certain combinations of words.

Regarding the use of authentic language materials, some researchers have focused on the use of songs as authentic language input and language learning (Miché, 2002 & Schön et al. 2007). According to Miché (2002), songs are multipurpose resources of authentic language material for different foreign language lessons. Both communication and entertainment are combined as songs provide communication skills entangled with hobby. In addition, pronunciation skills can be strengthened through listening to different songs. Pronunciation variations are provided through authentic language input from songs as well as various dialects of the target language (Miché, 2002). Accordingly, authentic language input from songs is a great way to make language learners aware of the dialectal variations from one target language speaking country to the next. Authentic language input from different songs can provide repetition in conjunction with rhythm which leads learners to remember not only the pronunciation, but also the vocabulary (Miché, 2002).

### **DRAWBACKS OF USING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS**

In relation to the drawbacks of utilizing authentic materials, Martinez (2002) underlined the problem associated with the use of authentic language materials in the classrooms with different language proficiency levels. According to Martinez (2002) authentic language materials which are used may be too culturally biased and the vocabulary may be irrelevant to the language learners' needs. More importantly, low level language proficiency or beginner level language learners may have a hard time interpreting what they hear or read because of the mixed structures that are used. Accordingly, much of the difficulty language learners experience is related to their lack of familiarity with authentic language input and the processing strategies required for comprehending it.

In short, the majority of researchers agree on the pedagogical value of authentic language materials and the integration of such materials in language learning.

### **WHAT TYPE OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS TO SELECT?**

Access to a wide range of audiovisual mass media programs is getting very easy for all the people around the world with everlasting technological developments. In the same line, many researchers have highlighted the pedagogical values of various audiovisual mass media programs to be incorporated into language learning. Among various programs, films, cartoons, news, songs, and documentaries turn out to be effective teaching devices to develop the language

learners' language skills and stimulate their imagination simultaneously. Their capacity to arouse the learners' motivation and their potential to engage the learners in a variety of fruitful activities related to aural perception in the target language can scarcely be denied.

One of the essential factors to be considered in utilizing various audiovisual mass media programs as sources of authentic language input is the choice of the programs that should be based on some criteria that can serve the purposes of the teacher. Accordingly, some important criteria for selecting the appropriate segments of various programs can be:

1. The students' language proficiency should be considered.
2. Choose stories that are relevant to students' lives.
3. Ask the students about their preferences regarding different types of audiovisual programs.
4. Choose stories that motivate the students.
5. Use various broadcasts that provide exposure to various accents and cultures.
6. Choose stories that are proficiency-level appropriate; political and science related stories are often too difficult for many students to understand.
7. Use stories that lend themselves to many learning activities and the integration of the four skills.

### **HELPFUL TEACHING TIPS**

After outlining some of the criteria for selecting and preparing various audiovisual programs, the following several teaching tips that will help make teaching with various authentic materials easier and more enjoyable for both the teachers and the language learners should be taken into consideration:

1. Offer students a choice in the content of the materials you show in class. Take an inventory of their interest.
2. Prepare extension activities to fill the space between the first and last students' finishing an activity.
3. Get feedback from the students. It is important for teachers to get feedback from students regarding their comfort level on the various four skills assignments, processes, and procedures used in conjunction with the stories.
4. Ask your students regularly about their feelings about activities in class. You could give them a formal feedback form to fill out or ask them informally to give you a thumb up or a thumb down.
5. All four skills activities should include opportunities for students to play an active role in their own learning. When preparing for a task, help students become aware of any relevant strategy, from their own language, that might help them to perform the task successfully.

### **CONCLUSION**

Authentic materials refer to the use various materials including video and audio and other resources that are not specifically prepared for pedagogical purposes. Authentic materials may

have positive effect on learner motivation because they are intrinsically more interesting and motivating than created materials.

There are various reasons why authenticity may be regarded as important. One is that it presents learners with language exposure similar to that enjoyed by native speakers, including all the characteristics of natural language which may be necessary for the learner properly to interpret texts. In addition, there is motivational attraction for insisting on authentic texts, created as a means of communicating content and not for some pedagogic purposes.

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## Assessing ESP Learners' Beliefs about Language Learning: A Survey in an Iranian Local Context

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### ABSTRACT

Following cognitive views towards language pedagogy, this preliminary report illustrates the beliefs of a community of non-English-major university students (N=139) about learning English as-a-foreign-language (EFL) in a dominantly bilingual Kurdish-Persian academic context in Ilam, in western Iran. To recognize the beliefs, BALLI (Horwitz, 1988) as a popular survey instrument was slightly modified and administered to the participants. Adopting a descriptive approach, the findings were generally classified and discussed in terms of five components: (a) language aptitude; (b) language learning difficulty; (c) nature of language learning; (d) learning and communication strategies; and, (e) motivation and expectations. The results also revealed these ethnic learners have a broad but consistent range of conceptions about EFL similar to and different from studies reported in the current literature. Finally, as a pedagogical implication, it was suggested that EFL teachers should consider the susceptibility of learners' beliefs to change during time and develop useful strategies to relieve clashing beliefs among language learners.

**KEYWORDS:** Bilingualism, Beliefs, EFL, ESP, Language learning, Language learners, Local

### INTRODUCTION

In the domain of cognitive views, beliefs are "dynamic and situated constructs" (Ellis, 2008) which have been generally characterized as "psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are felt to be true" (Richardson, 1999, p. 103). During the last two decades, research interest in second or foreign language learning has been inclined to the examination of student-centered learning and learners' individual characteristics (Bernat and Gvozdenko, 2005) and growing studies in this line have led to a particular focus on learners' beliefs (Altan, 2006; Bernat and Lloyd, 2007). Therefore, in the context of language pedagogy, beliefs as metacognitive knowledge (Oz, 2007) have been defined as common assumptions that learners hold about themselves as learners, about the nature of language learning, the learning process, and the variables influencing their learning (Wenden, 1999).

Evidence from a growing number of published research and scholarship in the last two decades in this stream from the learners' perspective demonstrates that the belief system of language learners plays a decisive role in their success and failure in language learning (Bernat,

& Gvozdenko, 2005; Bernat, 2008). As well, such studies reveal that learners' beliefs about own capacity and personal models of their own processes are much more important than universally accepted theories of learning, and some psychometric measures or individual difference factors such intelligence or aptitude (Ellis, 2008; Bernat, 2008) and it is argued that belief systems are influential because they raise learners' consciousness and shape their attitudes towards language learning, learning strategies and policies (Buyukyazi, 2010). Therefore, understanding learner beliefs is essential, since they can have a facilitative or detrimental effect on learning and the way learners feel about, approach, and act upon a language (Bernat and Gvozdenko, 2005).

For example, learners' beliefs about the importance of grammatical accuracy or native-like pronunciation, or even the amount of time it takes to learn a language might be as a hindrance or as an incentive. Therefore, it can be concluded that an awareness of learners' beliefs is central to language pedagogy because according to Ellis (2008), beliefs shape the way learners set about language and language learning process and product. In addition, knowledge of learners' multidimensional beliefs about language and language learning that are under the influence of many variables including past positive or negative learning experiences, cultural background and context, and numerous individual differences as well as personal factors (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005; Oz, 2007) may provide language teachers and educators as well as curriculum designers with a better understanding and awareness of differing types of learners, their strategies, orientations, and expectations that will have an impact on their learning practices (Horwitz, 1988, p.283). Consequently, it is argued that teachers can make more informed choices about teaching and learning processes (Bernat, & Gvozdenko, 2005), plan appropriate language instruction (Horwitz, 1999), and adopt the best approaches and techniques for teaching English based on the belief system of learners.

Over the past two decades, many researchers have explored language learning beliefs in various studies (e.g. Altan, 2006; Bernat, 2006; Buyukyazi, 2010; Oz, 2007; Man-fat, 2008; Tanaka and Ellis, 2003; Yazici and Tan, 2010), covering varying groups of learners in different learning settings (e.g. in Turkey, China, Hungary, Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, and ....). Iran, among other English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) contexts, provides an interesting sociolinguistic setting for a study on language learning beliefs. There has still been scarcity of empirical research both internationally and locally that investigate foreign language learners' beliefs in unique contexts. Yet only a few of studies have explored Iranian non-English-major university students' beliefs (except a few recently published studies limited in scope to monolingual Persian-speaking EFL learners e.g. Abedinia, Rahimi, Zare-ee, 2011; Ghabanchi and Meidani, 2012; Ghavamnia, Kassaian and Dabaghi, 2011; Mohebi and Khodadady, Khonamri, 2009; Zare-ee, 2010).

Therefore, due to the paucity of studies on EFL learners belief system in Iran it would be interesting to explore the language learning beliefs of these Iranian students learning EFL and provide a preliminary description of commonly held learner beliefs in a predominantly ethnic bilingual region outside the circle of English world in order to complement the lines of research and studies in this regard. Accordingly, the current study is to address the following research question:

What beliefs do Iranian ethnic non-English-major university students hold about EFL in their bilingual academic context?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

To conduct this report, 139 non-English-major undergraduate university students, enrolled in various specific English courses at Bakhtar Institute of Higher Education in Ilam, were recruited on voluntary basis. The participants represented both genders with the mean age of 20.2. By ethnicity and linguistic background, all the respondents screened out for the history of bilingualism were early bilingual Kurdish-Persian speakers living in Ilam in western Iran.

### *Instrument*

The survey instrument employed was the modified version of Horwitz's (1988) BALLI (Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory), a popular self-administered 34-item Likert-type questionnaire translated for the ease of responding into Persian (the second but the formal academic language of bilingual learners in the present context) in order not to cause lack of understanding or misinterpretation. Before conducting the main study, a pilot test of the questionnaire was also administered among 10 ESP learners chosen from the same population in which the internal reliability of the Persian version of the questionnaire was found to have an alpha coefficient of 0.83.

### *Procedure*

Data were collected from participants during the last class of the second semester of the academic year. Before the inventory was passed out, the researcher guaranteed the anonymity of the participants and provided a brief overview of the nature and aim of the study. After completing the questions the students returned. As part of the procedure, data gathered were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 17). Descriptive analysis in the form of percentages was computed and the data were put into principal components and discussed in detail.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results were discussed under Horwitz's (1988) themes (i.e. language learning aptitude, language learning difficulty, the nature of language learning, learning and communication strategies, and motivations and expectations) below.

### *(a) Language learning aptitude*

Table 1. Participants' beliefs about language learning aptitude

Items	BALLI Statements	SA/A* %	N %	SDA/DA %
1	It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.	92	6	2
2	Some people have a special ability for learning foreign	73	18	9



6	languages. People from my country are good at learning foreign languages.	50	36	14
10	It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.	38	30	32
11	People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning foreign language.	9	22	69
16	I have a special ability for learning a foreign language.	52	29	19
19	Women are better than men at learning languages.	21	32	57
30	People who speak more than one language are very intelligent	72	17	11
33	Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.	87	8	5

\*SA/A=Strongly Agree/Agree, N=Neutral, SDA/DA=Strongly Disagree/Disagree

The bilingual respondents endorsed the concepts of the positive effects of early language learning, the existence of special abilities for language learning, the belief that everyone can learn to speak a foreign language, the influence of intelligence on language learning; in contrast, they were in disagreement with the effect of gender on language learning, and they did not make a distinction between an aptitude for the sciences versus an aptitude for the humanities-type subjects such as language. Half the respondents also believed that people from their country are good at learning languages. All in all, the findings suggested the perceived existence of language aptitude by the bilingual respondents and the belief that while learning a language is not impossible for anyone, the ability to master more than one foreign language indicates intelligence.

(b) Language learning difficulty

Table 2: Participants' beliefs about language learning difficulty

Items	BALLI Statements	SA/A* %	N %	SDA/DA %
3	Some languages are easier to learn than others.	74	18	8
4	English is a language that is ...	26	50	24
15	If someone spent 1 hour a day learning a language, how long would it take then to speak the language very well?	75	15	10
25	It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.	49	29	22
34	It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.	77	15	8

\*SA/A=Strongly Agree/Agree, N=Neutral, SDA/DA=Strongly Disagree/Disagree

The bilingual students believed that some languages are easier than others; however, they regarded English as a language of medium difficulty which would optimistically take one to three years to learn. The respondents also believed that it is easier to speak than to understand a foreign language, and they agreed that it is easier to read than write in a foreign language. In all, the findings suggested that the population of respondents as a whole feel that their target language is of medium difficulty, and do not perceive a difference between the difficulties of various language skills.

(c) The nature of language learning

Table 3: Participants' beliefs about the nature of language learning

Items	BALLI Statements	SA/A* %	N %	SDA/DA %
8	It is necessary to know about English speaking cultures to speak English.	85	10	5
12	It is best to learn English in an English-speaking country	16	15	69
17	The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning new words.	83	13	4
23	The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning grammar.	55	27	18
27	Learning a foreign language is different than learning other academic subjects.	68	22	10
28	The most important part of learning English is learning how to translate from my own language.	74	19	7

The respondents believed that it is necessary to know the culture of the foreign language in order to speak the language but not in an English-speaking country. The respondents believed that learning new words, grammar and translation are the most important parts of language learning. They also agreed that people who are good at academic subjects are good at foreign languages. The elicited beliefs in this stream imply that respondents lean towards believing that there are certain approaches, such as focus on learning vocabulary or grammar and translation strategies that make language learning successful.

(d) *Learning and communication strategies*

Table 4: Participants' beliefs about learning and communication strategies

Items	BALLI Statements	SA/A* %	N %	SDA/DA %
7	It is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation.	89	8	3
9	You should not say anything in English until you can say it correctly.	2	34	64
13	I enjoy practicing English with the foreigners I meet.	78	15	7
14	It is OK to guess if you don't know a word in English.	57	26	17
18	It is important to repeat and practice a lot.	96	2	2
21	I feel shy speaking English with other people.	19	12	69
22	If beginning students are allowed to make mistakes in English, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on	83	15	2
26	It's important to practice with cassettes/tapes or CD ROMs.	87	12	1

\*SA/A=Strongly Agree/Agree, N=Neutral, SDA/DA=Strongly Disagree/Disagree

The learners endorsed repetition and practice with cassettes/tapes or CD ROMs. They admitted that they will enjoy practicing English with an English-speaking individual they meet without any shyness. They favored having excellent pronunciation, guessing unknown words and saying anything grammatically incorrect just for the sake of communication, but not for beginning students. This reflects the fact that in foreign language learning contexts, the role of authentic materials is viewed as a crucial aspect of successful language learning, and learners adopt different strategies in various contexts.

(e) *Motivation and expectations*

Table 5: Participants' beliefs about motivation and expectations

Items	BALLI Statements	SA/A* %	N %	SDA/DA %
5	I believe I will learn to speak English very well.	74	20	6
20	People in my country feel that it is important to speak English.	76	14	10
24	I would like to learn English so that I can get to know the native speakers better.	78	15	7
29	If I learn English very well, I will have better job opportunities.	79	12	9
31	I want to learn to speak English well.	91	7	2
32	I would like to have foreigners as friends.	74	15	11

\*SA/A=Strongly Agree/Agree, N=Neutral, SDA/DA=Strongly Disagree/Disagree

The respondents agreed that they want to learn to speak English very well, and they believed they will eventually speak English very well to get better job opportunities and have better communications. They believed that their countrymen valued the ability to speak English highly. Respondents felt instrumentally motivated. In this category, the vast majority of responses seem to reflect the learners' desire for and optimism in achieving their language learning goals.

As a whole, the research findings elicited by BALLI in such a newly-explored bilingual context in Iran revealed that Horwitz's BALLI instrument can be considered as a suitable tool for conducting research on language learning beliefs in different sociolinguistic settings. The findings also revealed that Iranian university students in this ethnic region hold a range of beliefs, some of which would be an impediment to successful language learning and some can facilitate it.

## CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to examine Iranian ethnic non-English-major university students' overall belief system in an unexplored academic context in light of current literature in order to fill a gap in learner belief research. Analysis of the established principal belief themes shows that there are significant results that can be linked to the specificity of the participants' context. In addition, beliefs may vary based on individual learners' differences, learners' age, learning stage, language proficiency, professional status, cultural and educational background, context diversity, and several personal factors among others (Horwitz, 1999; Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005). It is argued, that it is rather the individuals' complex metacognitive structure, as affected by a number of social, cultural, contextual, cognitive, affective, and personal factors that is responsible for the shaping nature and strength of these beliefs (Bernat, 2006). Investigating the relationship of

beliefs to other factors sheds light on their stability and malleability and thus bears consequences for possible instructional intervention methods in the classroom attempting to change those beliefs, which may hinder the learning process (Bernat, 2006) and upgrade those beliefs which may facilitate the learning process.

There were several limitations in conducting the present study including the small-scale sample size, the limited survey instrument (BALLI), the ethnicity bias (bilingual Kurdish-Persian non-English-major undergraduate students living and studying in Ilam in western Iran), and the imbalance of gender among respondents.

The findings of this study can have several important pedagogical implications for both learning and teaching. The analysis of the BALLI items revealed that different students had different beliefs towards learning English as a foreign language. Iranian bilingual students in this study showed their great eagerness to learn this internationally accepted language very well and this is surely a very helpful belief that can facilitate language learning. But, maybe these good and correct beliefs cannot guarantee their learning because of the other harmful beliefs that they hold such as placing a great deal of emphasis on grammar and excellent pronunciation and believing that less than two years for learning English is enough. In this case, the students are faced with mismatching beliefs clashing with the reality of language learning and consequently frustrations and disappointments might emerge. In such cases it is required to confront erroneous beliefs with new information (Horwitz, 1988). There are some strategies that might help reduce these misbeliefs. Sometimes the source of such wrong beliefs goes back to what is known as culture or background. Therefore, culture and background of the students should also be taken into account by teachers. It seems that there is a need for teachers to devote sessions to talk with students about the real and helpful beliefs about language learning. This will help both students to become familiar with correct and realistic beliefs and teachers to get most from their classes.

Finally, although it is stated that learners' beliefs might be context-bound, learners' beliefs are also susceptible to change during time and this change may decrease or increase the level of learning. Therefore, as it is pointed out by Horwitz (1988) "it is essential to determine how student beliefs change over the course of language instruction" (p. 291).

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## The Evaluation of ‘Curriculum Planning and Development ESP Textbook’ in Higher Education, Hamedan and Kermanshah Universities, Iran: The College Professors’ Perception

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### ABSTRACT

This paper makes an attempt to review the book entitled “Curriculum Planning and Development”. The book was evaluated and scrutinized both internally and externally. In other words, the researchers investigated the book in two dimensions: *content and design*. To do this, 20 questionnaires were submitted to all specialized teachers and professors of Hamadan and Kermanshah universities in Iran. The research tool was questionnaire included both selecting and

open-ended questions, while most of the questions were based on a Likert Scale of questions with 5 choices. The reliability of the research tool was examined by making the best use of SPSS software and Cronbach's alpha test. Reliability Coefficient of the questionnaire was calculated 0.90 that indicated that the questionnaire for data analysis was ideal. Finally, the results were analyzed by making the best use of factorial analysis; and, the data were depicted in the form of tables and graphs in the rest of this study.

**KEY WORDS:** SP (English for Specific Purposes), evaluation, curriculum, textbook, book review

## **INTRODUCTION**

On a daily basis, the materials that we teach must be evaluated, but this type of evaluation is not enough. We must conduct and perform systematic evaluations if our purpose is to maximize learning (Brown, 1995; Ellis, 1997; Richards, 2001). There are large ranges of textbooks to choose from, but the process of selecting an appropriate textbook can be both time-consuming and expensive (McDonough & Shaw, 2001; Karimi, 2006). Evaluation is a 'matching process that matched the needs to available solutions' (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987 cited in Sheldon 1988: 237). SAMT organization aims at publishing ESP books in different fields and majors in Iran. This paper aims to evaluate one of the ESP books in the field of 'Curriculum Planning and Development'.

The emergence and spread and distribution of English as the language of international relationship, asserting of knowledge ideas, and culture is well attested. It is a fact that English language teaching is obviously subject to developmental trends, and of the main prominent trends of recent years has been that of English for Specific Purposes. English is by far the most important and acceptable language of scientific and scholarly conferences, workshops and debates. As a matter of fact, no one can deny the fact that for the past few decades there has been a growing need to use the English language for the expression of information within specific professional fields. In response to this need, the teaching of ESP has become a major concern mainly in the countries that English is taught as a foreign language (Gatehouse, 2001).

Definitions of ESP are numerous but they all reflect the emphasis on how ESP teaching develops appropriate procedures to learners whose main goal is learning English for a purpose other than just language learning. That purpose may be educational, or professional, and ESP seeks to justify how well it prepares learners to achieve the required goals.

In defining ESP, Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p.19) posit "ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning."

Accordingly, ESP can be defined as English instruction based on actual and immediate needs of learners who have to successfully perform real-life tasks unrelated to merely passing an English course or exam (Smoak, 1996). So, the issue of focusing on learners' needs becomes equally

paramount as the methods utilized to spread linguistic knowledge. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) believe that any language must be included as a defining feature of ESP but the main concerns of ESP are needs analysis, text analysis, and preparing learners to communicate in an effective way in any required situations.

Another thing which is of utmost importance is that the experts of curriculum design believe that the breaking down of curriculum into components and sub-processes is a vital issue, since it simplifies and organizes such a complex process as the curriculum design is (Hutchinson & Waters, 1984, Nunan, 1991).

The organization for researching and composing university textbooks in the humanities (SAMT), whose aim is Cultural Revolution, tries to develop a fundamental change in the procedure and content of university textbooks, particularly in humanities. So, the organization for researching and composing university textbooks in the humanities, SAMT, were established to consider the issue (Merhmohammadi, 2006).

SAMT has published a variety of ESP books in various scientific fields. The main objective of these publications is to teach English in a specialized familiar context in order to motivate the students to use specialized English sources and texts in target situation. Thus, it will help the students strengthen their ability to use particular sources and improve their exploitation skills. Since gaining such skills is necessary to develop one's own knowledge in a specialized field, it should be esteemed and appreciated as a key professional accomplishment (Merhmohammadi, 2006).

This organization tries to codify educational English textbooks relevant to the students' needs in public, semi-professional and professional situation (Koosha, 2002). The book has been compiled for the students Curriculum Development in B.A. level.

Although, curriculum development been around for a while, it is generating some problems due to the lack of a proper course book. Nowadays, the course "Curriculum Development" is concerned too much as an academic course than before.

Mahmud Mehrmohammadi, Gholam Reza Kiany and Maryam KhezriNejad (see Appendix C) have tried to fulfill the educational needs of the students of this course. Since the students' needs regarding this course must be satisfied, such an English course for the college students is of utmost importance. This opportunity opens new gates of modern "Curriculum Development and Planning" for the students to do more research in this field.

The authors of the book have also designed other English books associated with this one. Some of these books are: "English for the students of Tourism and Hotel Management", "Curriculum Theories", "Scientific Fundamentals for the Art of Teaching", "Curriculum: attitudes, outlooks and perspectives", "Rethinking of teaching - learning process and teacher training", "Research queries in education and training", "Comparative analysis of the fundamental aspects of the German education system and comparing it with the Islamic Republic of Iran", "Art education:

whatness, whyness and howness”, and the present book, and “10 effective principles”, and “Effectiveness Strategies” (See Appendix C).

The syllabus of this course, which has been published in Ministry of Culture and Higher education, has not mentioned the source that must make the learners familiar with the purpose of the students’ development in order to make the best use of specific and technical courses of this academic course. These educational goals would not have been come true just by introducing this specialized ESP book.

This course book, by itself, cannot cover the students’ needs for studying the English sources like papers, articles, e-books and etc. The syllabus of this course as translated in Appendix A shows that in order to obtain the amount of needed English knowledge for students to make them enough capable to read the English papers of these English and foreign sources, a stronger and heavier course book is required. Therefore, it can be concluded that, book size is not sufficient for this purpose.

To provide a comprehensive book review it is needed to answer the following questions about the book “English for the students of Curriculum Development” (See Appendix C).

#### **1. What is this book?**

This is an English book which is written for the students of ‘curriculum development’ focusing on their reading comprehension.

#### **2. For what purpose is this book designed?**

This book is designed for the students of ‘Curriculum Development’ to improve their reading ability for comprehending the English sources and textbooks, and also the texts which are written in foreign countries, in ‘Curriculum Development’ field of study. This book is useful for those who are interested in curriculum and the ways of developing and planning it.

This book tries to reflect the realities which are happening in the world concerning this field of study. This book aims, mainly, to increase the students’ knowledge in curriculum development course. And finally, the secondary purpose of this book is to train some curriculum developers.

#### **3. In what situation is this book compiled?**

This 1<sup>st</sup> edition of this book is compiled in the fall of 2004 / 1382; and, the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition was presented in 2006 / 1385. Since then, this book had never been published again.

#### **4. Who are the authors of this book? How are they qualified to write this book?**

- Mahmud Mehrmohammadi, Associate Professor in Curriculum Development, TarbiatModarres University, Tehran, Iran
- Gholam Reza Kiany, Assistant Professor in Applied Linguistics / TEFL, TarbiatModarres University, Tehran, Iran

- Maryam KhezriNejad, Lecturer in TEFL, Islamic Azad University, Islamshahr Branch

### **5. To what extent is this book implemented for certain and reliable scientific facts?**

Since 'Curriculum Development' is originally an American course, the passages which are used in this book are adopted from the U.S. authors. In order to judge about its scientific basis, a very brief overview of the origin of 'Curriculum Development' is needed.

Curriculum planning as a strategic educational process for the improvement of learning first appeared in the educational literature of the post-World War I era (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1988). Since that time, curriculum planners have utilized several different approaches in designing curricula to improve teaching and learning in light of changing societal factors (Hyman, 1973; Brandt, 2000).

Research conducted at Niagara University and Buffalo State College, New York, commencing in 1992, with a sample of two hundred and seventy- nine (279) educators, reconfirmed the significance of the five personal needs and the significance of the six professional needs (Polka, 1994). However, change in education is a process, not an event, and it is accomplished first by individuals (Hord, et al., 1987).

### **6. To what extent are writing principles and linguistic rules observed?**

The passages are chosen from the books of authentic sources. Therefore, I can consider these passages highly reliable; because, the authors are all native speakers of English. The writers and authors are the experts of 'Curriculum Development'. These experts are Kilebard, H. M. (1975), Klein, M. F. (1980), Eisner, E. W. (1983), Ackerman, D. B. (1989) and Postlewaite, N. and T. Husen (1999), whom are knowledgeable enough to present scientific opinions about the mentioned field.

### **7. How much is this book acceptable among students?**

Answer of this question is to some extent informal and optional. Students are not qualified enough to judge about the quality of the book. But, the feedback that I personally received from the students of Hamedan Jahad Daneshgahi University, Bu Ali University, Alvand University, shows that, in comparison to the other books, somehow acceptable.

### **8. Are novel and new features included in the book?**

Yes, this book has four novel features: **a)** all the vocabularies, at the beginning of each unit are explained by English definition, while some examples and sentences are included in each definition; **b)** the other novel feature is about grammar. In this book, at least, one exercise of grammar is mentioned in which word formations are included; while, word formations are an essential part of promoting reading comprehension; **c)** the other novel feature is the variety of the exercises. Many various exercises are in each unit that the other books of the same publication exclude such features. The book includes the following exercises: Comprehension Questions, Multiple Choice Items of Vocabulary, Oral Questions, Fill in the Blanks, Matching Items, Grammar, Word Order, and Sentence Writing. But this book lacks the translation exercises; and,

d) it has a phonetic guide at the beginning of the book; while most of the other books of the same publication lack such a feature. And all the new vocabularies are presented with the phonetic signs.

**9. To what extent are the book materials and contents compatible?**

It is a little difficult to judge about this question. The content and materials of the book are exactly copied from the following books: “Intellectual and Practical Criteria for Successful Curriculum Integration”, “The Kind of School We Need”, “Curriculum Design”, “Reappraisal: The Tyler Rationale”, and “The International Encyclopedia of Education” (see appendix C). This can be regarded both as a positive and negative point. It can be positive, because the authors are native speakers of English, and it can make the text to a reliable one. It can be negative, because the book writers fail to add anything to the texts and content as long as the texts are copied from the original books which are mentioned above.

**10. To what extent the book title and headlines are related to the content and material?**

The passages of the book are chosen from some parts and chapters of the book. So, the titles and headlines of each chapter and unit are highly interrelated with the content and materials of each chapter.

Before starting the technical book review, it must be mentioned that there are some very important criteria in the scope of criticism. Here, I decided to mention some of these criteria about criticism. The following criteria must be considered about this Book Review:

**The 1st Criteria:** The issues of the book:

The authors of this book compiled some materials that are not researchable. These materials are mostly theoretical and they cannot be discussed from practical point of view. The book mentioned some very general ideas about this course and the content usually is driven from personal ideas of the experts.

**The 2nd Criteria:** The chosen method of the authors:

Since this book is a reading comprehension one, it includes both passages and comprehension exercises. To me, the authors do not add anything by their knowledge to the book except the exercises. The authors just copied the exact sentences of the “Intellectual and Practical Criteria for Successful Curriculum Integration”, “The Kind of School We Need”, “Curriculum Design”, “Reappraisal: The Tyler Rationale”, and “The International Encyclopedia of Education” books in the present book, while they had just controlled the arrangement of the materials. And, the authors haven’t checked the transposition of the materials; because, in all units earlier units were started with lower pages and later units were started with higher units. For example, first passage was chosen from page 1163 till 1164; and, the next passage is chosen from 1164 till 1166; and, third passage is chosen from 1166 till 1167. So, transposition, or which passage comes first and which one comes next, is not observed; because the materials were used in a single file.

**The 3rd Criteria:** Writing Style



Since this is a native-speaker-written book, the expressions and words are clear. This book lacks any kind of vague idiom and expression. Punctuation, lack of unnecessary repetition, and rhetoric language are considered as some strong points of the book.

#### **The 4th Criteria:** Codification of Book Content

Since the materials and book content are copied from the source books, the logical relevance and its transposition is observed. But each unit lacks a proper introduction and appropriate conclusion. Moreover, the order of easiness of the units is not observed. 2<sup>nd</sup> unit of the book include more new vocabulary items than that of unit 6. Additionally, fifteen units do not support the students to become a fluent reader. Additionally, it seems that 20 units fail the students to be able to read the relevant passages comprehensively. In this case, I do believe that for such a purpose at least 20 units would be more appropriate.

#### **The 5th Criteria:** References

Hunter (2003) believes that citation is important because it is the basis of academics, that is, the pursuit of knowledge. In the academic endeavor, individuals look at evidence and reason about that evidence in their own individual ways. That is, taking what is already known, established, or thought, they use their reasoning power to create new knowledge. In assessing a book, considering its references is of utmost importance. The author mentioned the references at page 143 - at the end of the book. These references are primary sources and the authors used them directly. But, there are numerous secondary sources that the authors used them indirectly, while they are not included in the references of the book. It must be noted that the authors had applied reliable and valid sources, and the book references are interrelated with the materials and content and passages.

Variety of used reference in this book is rather low. It has five references written at the end of the book. Since, 'Curriculum Development' is a modern course in universities, and it needed to be updated evermore, the used references are already too old, and they must be updated right away. The newest reference of the book is for 13 years ago, while the others are for 23, 29, 31, and 36 years ago. Moreover, during this very long period of time, 'Curriculum Development' was affected by lots of considerable changes for sure.

#### **The 6th Criteria:** authors' understanding and interpretation of the facts and evidences

The authors don't follow a researchable principle which is based on a theory. They even don't state an issue based on logical and reasonable comments. These theoretical view points and judgments pictures the authors' intellectual power and work. Since, in this book there are no author-made theoretical points, it fails to reflect the authors' critical and theoretical points.

Formally, this technical book review is split into two different parts of, a) formal criticism and evaluation, and, b) content criticism and evaluation.

### A) Formal Criticism and Evaluation

Generally, the anatomy of all books is made of three parts:

#### 1- The Pretext

- The first element which must be taken into consideration in analyzing pretext is about the page title. It is made of two subparts of (I) publishing features, and (II) book profile. (I) The page title is totally standard and it has all the necessity information including: full name of the main author (Mahmud Mehr Mohammadi), his/her date of birth (1958), the English and Persian title of the book (English for the Students of the Curriculum Development), the address of the publication (SAMT Publication – Tehran – Iran), ISBN or the International Standard Book Number which is a unique numeric commercial book identifier based upon the 9-digit Standard Book Numbering (SBN) code (ISBN: 964-459-763), price (10500 Rials), the number of the pages (143), date of publications (first publication on 2004 and third publication on 2006), full name and date of birth of the other authors if any existed, and the title of the book.

- (II) the book profile includes the following factors:

The logo of SAMT publication, (see Appendix D), Authors, Edition team (The editorial Staff of SAMT), Print Run (5000 Rls.), Price (10500 Rls.), Typesetting and Lithography (SAMT), Text Printing (Printing and Publishing Organization, Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance), address and phone number.

In the case of interpretation of SAMT Publication logo, it must be noted that, based on an interview with Mohammad Reza Yaghoubi (see Appendix C), there is a logo at the top of the first page of the book which is the symbol of publication relating to book and publishing affairs. There are 12 tulips around the book for two reasons: first, tulip flower is the symbol of flourishing of science; second, they are 12, and it is a holy figure standing for 12 Imams whom are considered as religious beliefs in Islamic countries. The next point in this logo is that, there are tips of the pens between the tulips. These pen tips show that SAMT organization is doing cultural works.

- The other element in pretext analysis is table of content. This table is arranged base on FIPA (The Foundation for Intelligent Physical Agents). There are six parts in this book, and these 15 lessons and 4 extra texts are embedded inside these parts. Part one has four lessons; part two has 3 lessons; part three has 4 lessons; each of part four and part five have 2 lessons; and part six has 4 lessons, while the last part includes just 4 passages without any exercises in them.
- The next element is foreword and preface in which the authors have introduced the SAMT publication and the present book, and they mentioned their main aim of compiling such a book. But, this book lacks an introduction part.

#### 2- Main Text

a) The logic and method of book editing:

- Parts and subparts: There are 6 parts and 19 subparts.
- Subject unity: The passages were chosen from 5 books. These passages were presented one after another, and they follow one topic and it discusses about the curriculum field of study.
- Text paragraph: In this book the paragraphs of the passages were arranged standard.
- Punctuation of the main passages: Since the passages were copied from valid and reliable curriculum textbooks, the punctuation standards of the main passages were perfectly observed.

b) Correctness of prose and syntax:

- The passages were highly authentic and it lacks any sort of self-made and non-standard expressions and grammatical rules and vocabularies. As a matter of fact, these features make the passages more reliable.

### 3- Post main Text

a) Appendices and enclosures

- It seems that the book lacks such features.

b) Indexing

- None of the index types were used at the end of the book. Neither alphabetical nor numerical indices were applied.

The following factors are categorized in Formal Criticism and Evaluation:

a) Print accuracy:

- In some pages of the book there are some shadows behind and around the printed words.
- The quality of the printing is not the same. Some pages are pale, while some other is chromatic.
- The size of the letters match the book format and passage. There is no irrelevant font size in the book. The font size of the passages is 12. The font size of the titles is 14, and the font size for the title of the whole chapter is 22. They are all printed in black color.
- I hardly found any kind of printing mistakes.
- Totally, the paper quality is acceptable. But, it is a little thin.

b) Binding Problems:

- It sounds that the book headband was, already, in a good quality.
- No binding problems were found in binding of the book, and this feature among SAMT publication books is universal.
- There were no binding mistakes, and all the pages were ordered numerically from the first page to the last one.

c) Referral system and footnotes:

- It seems that there are no footnotes in the book.

- There is no extra information which is driven from translated books, especially complementary materials which is related to the present book.

d) Book format:

- Length and width of the book is  $160 \times 240$  millimeters.

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### B) Content Criticism and Evaluation

It is aimed at a “systematic introduction” to the issues and practices dealing with “developing, managing, and evaluating” an effective program. The authors emphasize that curriculum development” as used in this book refers to “the range of planning and implementation processes involved in developing or renewing a curriculum. These processes focus on needs analysis, situational analysis, planning learning outcomes, course organization, selecting and preparing teaching materials, providing for effective teaching, and evaluation. Moreover, the book also concentrates on methodological issues that most likely to have a significant impact on language curriculum practices.

This book consists of 6 parts and 20 lessons, each of which provides essential elements of curriculum development that experts need to have a clear understanding. Nunan (1984) has justified a curriculum development as “a set of process and procedures which are both systematic and interrelated” (p.18). This set had been “professional-oriented” and comprises these elements: “need analysis, [materials], and objectives setting [to address the learners need], content, methodology and evaluation” (Nunan, 1984, p.18). **Part one** deals with the origin of curriculum development relating to historical background. The term ‘Curriculum Design’, ‘subject matter’ and some reforms are discussed in part one. The role of learners and teachers and, also, types of activities use in learning and the role of community and some curriculum approaches are discussed in part one. **Part two** considers a model of curriculum, and this part talks about curriculum improvement and the conception of curriculum in the experts’ point of view. **Part three** provides a basic assumption of curriculum development based on an analysis of Reappraisal of Tyler Rationale. In this part subject matter are considered as a source of objectives. And then, the learners’ needs and studies of contemporary life were introduced as the source of objectives. **Part four**, which seems the shortest part of the book, relates to intellectual criteria for curriculum interaction. Ackerman (1989) considers the role of validity within curriculum development as an essential element and states some requirements for the validity within and for the disciplines. **Part five** focuses on the procedures for using the information collected from previous stages for developing program that result in learning objectives. It considers the prerequisite knowledge in curriculum. **Part six** includes some sole units that concentrate on intellectual independence, problem formulation and critical thinking methods.

### Methodology

#### *Research Method*

This research is a functional one which is carried out by making the use of a survey method.

#### *Participants*

This research includes 20 participants who are all English experts. The researchers have chosen them among the university professors of Jahad Daneshgahi, Azad University of Hamedan, Azad university of Kermanshah, Bu Ali University and Non-governmental Educational Institution of Alvand. The research tool was the questionnaire including open and close questions, while most of the questions were based on a Likert Scale of questions with 5 choices.

#### ***Data Collection Instrument***

The questionnaire is presented at Appendix B. The data collection methods are library studies and standard questionnaire. The reliability of the research tool was examined by making the best use of SPSS software and Cronbach's alpha test. Regarding utilization of standardized questionnaire, the Reliability Coefficient of the questionnaire was calculated 0.90 that indicates the ideal situation of the questionnaire for data analysis.

#### ***Data Collection Method***

The data collection method was carried out by utilizing *semi-structured interviews*. This type of interview, first, investigates the conceptual background of the subject, and based on this, it defines some main points as research questions, and then, interview questions guide would be clarified. Data collection and face to face interviews with individual interviews was carried out after clarification of *interview questions guide*. At the beginning, the number of the participants was not clear; but, as soon as the interview started, the method of *Snow Ball Sampling* was used and the rest of the important samples were clarified; and the process of data collection continued until the *Theoretical Saturation* of the samples. Then, when 20 people were interviewed, the Theoretical Saturation was obtained and interview process stopped right here.

#### ***Data Analysis***

For data analysis, two statistical methods of descriptive and analytic were used. In this research, also, qualitative method was utilized as well which was carried out by case study approach. A criterion was considered in order to choose the participants: familiarity with the topic; and, the participants were all among the English experts of universities. Experience (Polkinghorne, 1989) and familiarity with the phenomenon (Wrets & van Zuuren, 1987) are considered the most important criteria in qualitative researches.

Analysis of qualitative data from interviews was conducted using content analysis. For this purpose, first, the data were written, then, the topics and subjects were coded individually in the form of concepts, then, they were summarized and finally, they were reported in the form of shared topics and subjects. The number of samples is 20, regarding this and according to research (DIIA, 2007), the shared topics and subjects can be expressed as frequency and percentage. Therefore, in this study, the shared topics and subjects were reported as frequency and percentage.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **I. Prioritizing the respondents' ideas on book review**

In Table 1, the status of each of the related items of respondents' ideas on book review is prioritized based on the coefficient of variation (CV).

According to table 1, the amount of book correspondence to the society needs and realities (average rate = 4.20, and SD = 0.69), the amount of book correspondence to the students mood (average rate = 3.35, and SD = 0.58), and the amount of book relatedness of examples with the content of the book (average rate = 4.00, and SD = 0.72), are the most important priorities. The above items, from the respondents' point of view, are the strengths of the book.

Some poor or weak points of the book, in respondents' pint of view are: non-understandability of book concepts (average rate = 2.85 and SD = 1.34), not having an updated content (average rate = 2.70 and SD = 1.34), and releasing low levels of opportunity for students to discover the facts (average rate = 2.80 and SD = 1.43).

*TABLE (1): Prioritizing the respondents' ideas on book review*

Priorit y	Index	Average rate	SD (Standard Deviation)	CV(Coeffici ent of variation)
1	The correspondence of the book content with the community needs and realities	4.20	0.69	0.16
2	The book correspondence with the students' mood	3.35	0.58	0.17
3	Relevance of the examples with the book content and concept	4.00	0.72	0.18
4	The quality of the book materials	4.00	0.72	0.18
5	The appropriateness of book language, editing method, and words difficulty regarded to students knowledge	3.35	0.74	0.22
6	The amount of book unity and coherence in book content	3.30	0.80	0.24
7	Agreement with universal changes in the book	3.45	0.99	0.28
8	Effectiveness of workbook in teaching process	3.10	1.16	0.37
9	The suitability of the material based on educational goals	2.90	1.11	0.38
10	Appropriateness of teaching time for covering the book content	3.30	1.34	0.40
11	Relatedness of the book tables, figures and charts to the book content	3.15	1.30	0.41
12	The attractiveness of the book content for the students	2.90	1.20	0.41
13	Tediousness of the book for the students	2.60	1.09	0.41
14	The variety of exercises and questions	2.60	1.09	0.41
15	Appropriateness of the book content for the students	2.65	1.13	0.42
16	The book effectiveness in increasing students' academic knowledge	2.95	1.31	0.44
17	The systematic nature of the book questions	3.05	1.39	0.45
18	Understandability of the book content	2.85	1.34	0.47
19	The up-datedness of the book content	2.70	1.34	0.49
20	Amount of opportunities for students to discover the facts by the book	2.80	1.43	0.51
—	Average	3.16	—	—

Scales: at all (1), little (2), somehow (3), very (4), extremely (5)



## **II. The open questions of the questionnaire**

The participants were asked to mention their ideas about 12 questions of the book review which were asked openly. The questions were generally analyzed through *content analysis*. Totally, various opinions were collected. During the analysis, some items were obtained which is shown in table 2. The respondents were asked to answer to the questions which are shown in the appendix B.

<b>Positive points</b>	<b>Negative Points</b>
<b>Knowledgeable authors</b>	Poor syllabus of the course
<b>Relevant texts</b>	Authentic texts
<b>Authentic texts</b>	Copy- paste content
<b>Vocabulary explanation</b>	Non-researchable issues
<b>Grammar exercises</b>	Low number of units
<b>Various exercises</b>	Low number of sources
<b>Phonetic guide</b>	Lack of incite references at the end
<b>Interrelated content</b>	Theoretical (not practical) views
<b>Native speaker authors</b>	Out of datedness
<b>Valid sources</b>	Unable to present new ideas
<b>Good price</b>	Unable to promote students' knowledge
<b>Unit organizations</b>	Non-understandability of the book questions
<b>Subject unity</b>	Lack of coordination between chapters
<b>Text paragraphs</b>	Unsystematic nature of questions
<b>Punctuation</b>	Boring content
<b>Paper quality</b>	Lack of book attractiveness
<b>Prose &amp; syntax correctness</b>	Lack of workbook
<b>Printing accuracy</b>	Lack of charts and graphs
<b>Binding quality</b>	
<b>Title appropriateness</b>	
<b>Standard letter size</b>	
<b>Book unity and coherence</b>	

As shown in table 2, appropriateness of the size of the book letters and suitability of the book price are the main priorities in the respondents' point of view; and, monetary incentives and promoting students' knowledge are the least important priorities. Chart 1 illustrates the respondents' opinion on the book review.

TABLE (2): Prioritizing the respondents' ideas on book review

Priority	Shared subjects and topics	Frequency	Percent of the each of the items separately	Percent of the each of the items related to the others
1	Appropriateness of the size of book letters	20	100	11.2
2	Appropriateness of the book price	20	100	11.2
3	Non-understandability of the book questions	19	95	10.7
4	Out of datedness of the content	19	95	10.7
5	The title appropriateness	19	95	10.7
6	Usability in new courses	18	90	10.1
7	Quick understanding of the content	17	85	9.6
8	Lack of coordination between the book chapters	14	70	7.9
9	Presenting new ideas and comments	12	60	6.7
10	Book price and monetary incentives	11	55	6.2
11	Promoting students' knowledge	9	45	5.1

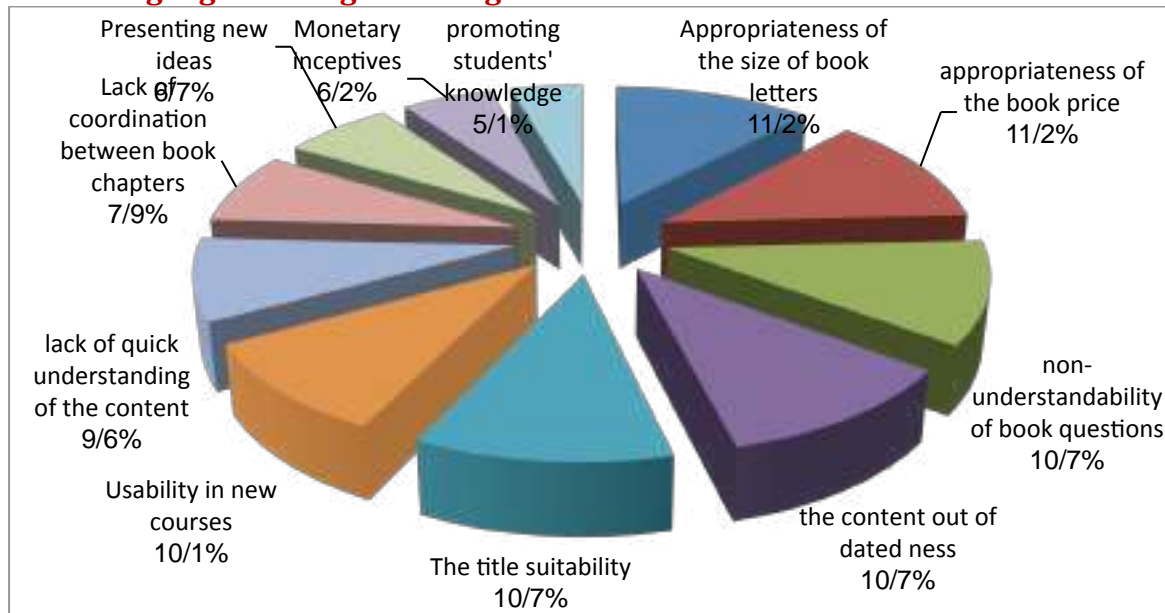


CHART 1: Respondents' ideas and opinions on the book review

### Book Review in one Look

### SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

More research and study on this book review is definitely needed. The researchers had tried to provide their critical ideas on this book review; but, this book review could be more comprehensive by the work of the other scholars as well.

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*Appendix A*

*(The Syllabus of Curriculum Planning and Development in Ministry of Culture and Higher Education)*

The syllabus of “English in Curriculum Planning and Development” according to the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education is presented here.

Type of the course:           Theoretical

Number of Credits:           2

Prerequisite:                    –

Course Number:               58

This course aims to:

Present the vocabulary, expressions and texts which are driven from current sources of curriculum development and planning which aims to improve the students’ knowledge who want to study the English sources in their mentioned field.

The syllabus course:

It includes the expressions and vocabulary by making the use of the passages which are related to “Curriculum Development”.

*Appendix B*

*(Questionnaire of Book Review)*

Number	Questions	Extremely	Very	Somehow	Little	At all
1	Are the books effective in promoting the students knowledge?					
2	Is the book content up to date?					
3	To what extent are the book materials attractive for students?					
4	Are the curriculum hours enough for covering the book content?					
5	Are the graphs, tables, charts, if there are any, related to the book content?					
6	To what extent the examples are related to book concept?					
7	To what extent are the book concepts understandable for students?					
8	To what extent cohesion and unity is observed in book content?					
9	To what extent the book content meets the society needs and realities?					
10	To what extent high-quality materials are used for book printing?					
11	To what extent the book exercises meet the students’ mental circumstances?					
12	Do you agree with the universal changes in the present book?					
13	Is the order of the material based on the educational aims?					
14	Are the book language, editing procedure and the used words proper to					

4	basic understandings and the students' prior knowledge and experience?					
1	Are the book questions systematic and proper for students' technical					
5	needs?					
1	Does the book provide an opportunity for students to discover the facts?					
6						
1	Are there various kinds of questions included in the book?					
7						
1	To what extent workbook helps your teaching?					
8						
1	To what extent are the materials useful for the students?					
9						
2	To what extent are the materials boring for the students?					
0						

### **(Open Questions)**

1. What is your opinion about the letter size?
2. What is your opinion about the amount of content?
3. What is your opinion about the book price?
4. What is your opinion about the difficulty level of the book questions?
5. Do you use this book in the next courses? If no, what books you would introduce?
6. What are the problems of the book? If you were the author, how would you solve them?
7. What was the author's purpose or purposes in writing this book?
8. What did the title have to do with the book?
9. Did this book give you any new ideas about this course?
10. What do you think the author was trying to accomplish with this book?
11. Did you find this book a quick read? Why or why not?
12. What are your concerns about this book?

If there is any point that is excluded from the above questionnaire, you can mention it here. Thanks in advance.

### **Appendix C**

- 1) Mahmud Mehrmohammadi: Associate Professor in Curriculum Development, TarbiatModarres University
- 2) Gholam Reza Kiany: Assistant Professor in Applied Linguistics / TEFL, TarbiatModarres University
- 3) Maryam KhezriNejad: Lecturer in TEFL, Islamshahr Azad University
- 4) Curriculum Theories: Maryam KhezriNejad, 2003
- 5) Scientific Fundamentals for the Art of Teaching: Mahmud Mehrmohammadi, 2000
- 6) Curriculum: attitudes, outlooks and perspectives: Mahmud Mehrmohammadi, 1989
- 7) Research queries in education and training: Mahmud Mehrmohammadi, 2002
- 8) Rethinking of teaching - learning process and teacher training: Mahmud Mehrmohammadi, 2000
- 9) English for the students of Tourism and Hotel Management: Mahmud Mehrmohammadi, 1999



- 10) Effectiveness Strategies Mahmud Mehrmohammadi, 1996
- 11) 10 effective principles Mahmud Mehrmohammadi, 2004
- 12) Art education: whatness, whyness and howness: Gholam Reza Kiani, 2000
- 13) Comparative analysis of the fundamental aspects of the German education system and comparing it with the Islamic Republic of Iran: Gholam Reza Kiani, 2002
- 14) This format is taken from book review work shop of Dr. Mahdi Afzali.
- 15) Intellectual and Practical Criteria for Successful Curriculum Integration: Ackerman, D. B. (1989)
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- 17) Curriculum Design: Klein, M. F. (1980)
- 18) Reappraisal: The Tyler Rationale: Kilebard, H. M. (1975)
- 19) The publication manager of SAMT. E-mail: info @samt .ac .ir

## **Appendix D**



The logo of SAMT Publication

## LOCAL EFL TEACHERS' BELIEFS: A PRELIMINARY REPORT IN IRAN

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### ABSTRACT

The study of teachers' beliefs is a contemporary inclination in language pedagogy and teacher education research with an outstanding outcome highlighting the influential role of teachers' beliefs in determining their professional behavior. Given the paucity of studies on language teachers' beliefs in unexplored EFL contexts particularly in Iran, this preliminary study examines the impacts of English and TEFL invoking the elicited real-life beliefs of 25 Kurdish EFL teachers of private language institutes in Ilam, in western Iran. A self-designed open-ended questionnaire along with an interview was administered to encourage teachers to spell out their beliefs and to obtain the required data. In light of qualitative-interpretative data analysis, the EFL teachers' beliefs boiled down to six main groupings including (1) "My ways of communication" (2) "My personality" (3) "My native language, culture and identity" (4) "My worldview beliefs" (5) "My lifestyle" and (6) "Other". These categories were illustrated and discussed to form a general agenda of Kurdish EFL teachers' belief system. There were also recommendations for further studies exclusively for the design and development of EFL teacher education programs and courses in the region, in Iran and in a globalized context.

**KEYWORDS:** beliefs; language teacher; EFL; TEFL; Iran; Kurdish

### BACKGROUND

Teaching a language is a multifaceted endeavor that involves educational, linguistic, personal, as well as social and cognitive dimensions (Moini, 2009). Due to a rise in the cognitive and social views towards teaching languages in recent years (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 56; Moini, 2009) and the highlighted complex relationships between what teachers do and what they know and believe (Borg, 2009), Pajares (1992) among others proposes that "teachers' beliefs can and should become an important focus of educational inquiry" (p. 307). The main reason behind such a suggestion is that "teachers are highly influenced by their beliefs" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 56) and also teachers are no longer viewed as "mechanical implementers of external prescriptions, but as active, thinking decision-makers" (Borg, 2009, p. 2). The definition, operationalization, and study of teachers' beliefs are not easy to do (Moini, 2009); nevertheless, beliefs have been considered by many scholars, among them Borg (2001), as conscious or

unconscious, in other terms; implicit or explicit (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 57) understandings and propositions held and endorsed by individuals to be true or false (Phipps & Borg, 2009).

Since the 1990s (Borg, 2003, 2009; Zheng, 2009), research on language pedagogy and language teacher education has put an emphasis on the significance of language teachers' beliefs. From this decade onwards, as Borg (2009) points out, there has been a rapid and steady increase in the volume of research examining various aspects of what language teachers know, believe and think and of the relationships of these constructs to what teachers do i.e. teachers' beliefs about the subject matter i.e. the language, teaching, learning, learners, role of teachers, various approaches and methods of teaching a language, and the impact they might have on teaching practices, activities, and learning outcomes, classroom behaviors and practices, relationship between language teachers' beliefs and teacher education programs or vice versa, relationship between language teachers' prior language learning experience and their beliefs, comparison of teachers' beliefs and their learners' beliefs; and the likely factors or sources leading to teachers' belief system (see e.g. Tercanlioglu, 2005; Zeng & Murphy, 2007; Al-Alawi, 2008; Cabaroglu & Denicolo, 2008; Song, 2009; Al-Musallam, 2009; Buyukyazi, 2010; Kuzborska, 2011).

There are several reasons why such studies on language teachers' theoretical and pedagogic beliefs, particularly here EFL (English-as-a-Foreign-Language) teachers, as the invisible dimensions of teaching (Borg, 2001; 2009) have been of paramount importance in local and global contexts. To elaborate, beliefs are of use in understanding language teachers' personal attitudes, thought processes, pedagogic concerns, professional development (Pajares, 1992; Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 62; Agnes, 2006), language teachers' definitions of the world and themselves as well as their instructional practices, choices, planning, decision-making and teaching behavior in the classroom (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 63) and the language institute or school they work for, and more significantly addressing teaching objectives, designing lessons, selecting tasks and activities, and assessing language learners performance (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 57; Borg, 2001; Zheng, 2009; Kuzborska, 2011). Moreover, due to the unobservable features of EFL teachers' beliefs (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 57), teachers may not be aware of the dynamic nature of their ideas, behavior, and instructional practices (Borg, 2009; Farrell & Kun, 2007; Erkmene, 2010). In this case, it is important to make the dominant beliefs influencing their profession clear so as to give them awareness, to help them weigh up their ideas and their fellow teachers' stand, to think and practice better, to find answers to their questions and concerns, to assess their professional development, and to reconstruct some aspects if necessary (Freeman, 1991; Agnes, 2006; Zheng, 2009; Kuzborska, 2011).

Additionally, encouraging teachers to reflect on their existing beliefs and behaviors could help them become more receptive to alternative perspectives, reflect if their current beliefs and teaching practices are worth maintaining and be prepared to modify or adjust their knowledge and work in ways that are consistent with their developing views and research-based standards throughout the world (Kuzborska, 2011; Qbeita, 2011). In all, if teachers' beliefs can be elicited, there is a better chance for teacher education programs and courses to suit teachers' needs (Cheng, Yi & Tsai, 2009; Bigelow & Walker, 2003).

Although such studies are into favor in the line of research in many English and non-English-speaking countries, they are open to be conducted in more unexplored contexts especially EFL

ones. Despite such an emphasis on language teachers' beliefs, there are a few studies in pertinent research on EFL environments and nonnative-speaking EFL teachers, who teach in these unique and particular contexts. There are for example not many studies focusing on limited number of EFL teachers such as Greek, Chinese, Saudi Arabian, Hungarian, Turkish, Omani, as well as Taiwanese EFL teachers (see recent studies e.g. Mattheoudakis, 2007; Chan, 2008; Al-Alawi, 2008; Nishino, 2008; Cabaroglu & Denicolo, 2008; Al-Musallam, 2009; Song, 2009; Lihua, 2010; Caner, Subasi & Kara, 2010; Qbeita, 2011). In the same way, when the available literature was reviewed, it was observed that there was not sufficient number of empirical studies on this subject in Iran as well, with several recently published exceptions reduced to EFL teachers' beliefs in Farsi-speaking regions; for instance, studies on Iranian EFL teachers' beliefs about the role of a language teacher (Torghabeh, Elahi & Khanalipour, 2009); the role of grammar in TEFL (Baleghizadeh & Farshchi, 2009); grammar and teaching grammar (Moini, 2009); EFL methodologies and materials as well as instructional experience (Atai & Gheitanchian, 2009); relationship between teachers' beliefs and gender (Estalkhi, Mohammadi, Bashiri & Kamali, 2011), reading strategies and several practical teaching activities (Khonamri & Salimi, 2010); and language learning (Ganjabi, 2011). No reported study to date, to our best knowledge, has been focused and published on Kurdish-speaking EFL teachers' beliefs in the related literature across the world and in Iran and sources are nonexistent in this regard. Additionally, Kurdish EFL teachers in Iran who speak the Kurdish language as their mother tongue, Farsi as their second formal language and English as a foreign language are interesting cases to voice their beliefs on the English language and TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) in a particular context. Thus, this study complements other studies and adds to the body of knowledge of beliefs in general, but more specifically, beliefs of that particular ethnic group which to date have remained unexplored, i.e. Kurdish EFL teachers beliefs.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Bearing in mind what Williams and Burden (1997) propose as "beliefs tend to be culturally bound" (p. 56) and given the need for the improvement of teacher education programs, the importance of language teachers' beliefs in teacher education, and largely the growing increase of the globalization of English across the world and the role of teachers as the driving force of this international language, the purpose of conducting this preliminary case study, as the first tentative attempt in this area, is to explore the impacts of English and TEFL on a group of EFL teachers in Ilam, a dominantly Kurdish-speaking city, in western Iran in order to help to specify the mainstream belief system and the main themes emerging from these beliefs of these EFL teachers and the likely role of these beliefs in promoting EFL teacher education courses and programs in this region, in Iran, and even in a globalized context in the future.

Accordingly, the study was to address the following research question based on a qualitative-interpretative approach:

- What are Kurdish EFL teachers' beliefs about the English language and TEFL under their particular context?

## METHODOLOGY

### *The context of study*

The context of the present study is Ilam, a city located in western Iran, where the Kurdish language is predominantly spoken as the first language. Like all other non-Farsi cities in Iran, Ilam has a situation wherein two distinct codes which function separately are spoken, the official and national language is Farsi which is used in academic and formal interactions but the spoken first language is Kurdish, in better terms Southern Kurdish or Ilami Kurdish (viz. a Western Indo-Iranian language subgroup of the Proto-Indo-European language family) which is used in some local media and newspapers and also as a vernacular for interactions (Haig & Matras, 2002). In addition to the Kurdish-Farsi situation in Ilam, many Kurdish individuals like other Iranians are learning EFL at schools, universities and private language institutes. Aside from typical Kurdish EFL learners, there are Kurdish EFL teachers who do not get enough exposure to English like many other people around the world but at schools, private language institutes, media, or occasional tourists.

With their different cultural and trilingual background, Kurdish EFL teachers have to cope with more challenges in language learning and teaching as well as language use in a unique context. They tend to teach English to Kurdish English learners in Farsi or in little English or even in Kurdish. In this sense, Kurdish EFL teachers, influenced by their own culture and languages, bring to their local contexts; particular beliefs, norms and expectations concerning the English language and TEFL. As a result, given the need for the improvement of teacher education programs in the region and in Iran, the importance of language teachers' beliefs in teacher education programs and courses, and largely the growing increase of the globalization of English across the world and the role of teachers as the driving force of this international language (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 56), in line with the aim of the present study, Kurdish EFL teachers' beliefs were an interesting case to study.

### *Participants*

To unravel the beliefs as the main concern of the present study, 25 Kurdish EFL teachers from private language institutes in Ilam, Iran, were randomly selected using convenience sampling (Bryman, 2004) and were asked to participate with their consent in the study. They were told that their participation was entirely voluntary and that their responses would remain anonymous and that confidentiality would be maintained. Versions of the questionnaire were handed out to 30 teachers; 25 were returned after one week, a response rate of about 84 percent. Of the 25 EFL teachers, 16 teachers (64 percent) were female and 9 teachers (36 percent) were male with the mean age of 25. All the teachers' second languages were Farsi. All the teachers had been teaching EFL to different levels and age groups of Kurdish learners for about three years at the time of the data collection ( 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2011) and they held Bachelor's in English language and literature. None of the teachers, however, possessed specific language teaching qualifications.

### *Instruments and Procedure*

Using a natural qualitative-interpretative inquiry, a self-designed open-ended questionnaire was administered to elicit data on Kurdish EFL teachers' beliefs about the English language and TEFL following Caner *et al.* (2010) and Kuzborska (2011) in an unexplored setting where

English is taught as the only foreign language. The questionnaire (see the Appendix) composed of two parts.

The first part focused on background personal information about teachers (such as gender, age, languages, educational background, major, and English teaching experience, teacher training programs or courses).

The second part was an open-ended question eliciting teachers' beliefs towards English and TEFL. The main reason behind using the type of question was giving opportunities to the participants to develop their responses and beliefs in ways which the researchers might not foresee (Phipps & Borg, 2009). The questionnaire was piloted with four randomly selected Kurdish EFL teachers from this region one week prior to its administration.

In addition to the questionnaire, one-on-one semi-structured interviews (Peacock, 1998) were conducted with each participant teacher because they were essential in facilitating validation, providing qualitative information about the Kurdish EFL teachers' beliefs, gaining more in-depth responses from the participants, and learning about the participants' underlying reasons for their beliefs they offered in written self-report questionnaires (Peacock, 1998; Erkmene, 2010). Audio-recorded interviews started with questions about biographical information and led to the main open-ended question of the study. This type of open-ended question and one-on-one interviews gave EFL teachers a different context in which to make their beliefs explicit and reconstruct them (Cheng *et al.*, 2009) about English and TEFL in a Kurdish context and also maintain their own personal voice. 25 Kurdish EFL teachers (84 percent) provided the required answers, returned the questionnaire, participated in the interviews and completed the study. 5 participants (16 percent) out of the randomly selected teachers left the study during the research process.

To probe into the collected data, EFL teachers' beliefs in light of their responses and reflections to the open-ended questions and the transcribed individual interviews were analyzed and organized qualitatively into categories in terms of their content i.e. the main themes and important shared concepts posed by Kurdish EFL teachers for further discussions. Analysis and review then involved focusing on each individual case using the sentence as the unit of analysis and coding (following Zeng & Murphy, 2007; Cheng *et al.*, 2009; Phipps & Borg, 2009).

### ***Elicited Teachers' Beliefs***

The findings presented a diversity of beliefs. In spite of the diversity, common concepts were evident both within each individual case as well as across cases. Based on the qualitative-interpretative content analysis of the data elicited by the open-ended questionnaire and individual interviews, several coherent themes were identified both across cases, despite their diversity, to illustrate the Kurdish EFL teachers' belief system under an untouched unique context.

In the following discussion of the categories, direct quotes were mainly from Kurdish EFL teachers, since we had their written text to work from and also their transcribed interviews. We attempted, as far as possible, to use the words of the participants in the discussion as well as to interpret underlying intentions. In other words, our aim was to let the Kurdish EFL teachers speak for themselves and have a voice. The six categories are presented in order of salience based on the number of mentions in the data or other indications of priority for the category as follows:



Table 1: A general agenda of Kurdish EFL teachers' beliefs system

## RESULTS AND PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

“What are Kurdish EFL teachers' beliefs about the English language and TEFL under their particular context?” was the main research question that led to the present preliminary report. This case study in a newly explored setting, i.e. Ilam, as a dominantly Kurdish-speaking city in Iran, shed light on our understanding of a diversity of beliefs and

Categories	Beliefs	Number of teachers	Percentage
A	My ways of communication	18	72%
B	My personality	14	56%
C	My native language, culture and identity	10	40%
D	My worldview beliefs	7	28%
E	My lifestyle	4	16%
F	Other	2	8%

reflections by Kurdish EFL teachers in terms of the impact of English and TEFL on different aspects of their professional and personal lives. In spite of this diversity or even complexity, common concepts were evident across all the participants. Among the outstanding common concepts posed by Kurdish EFL teachers were the headings as follows:

### (A) “My ways of communication”

The first category of responses that was of pragmatic nature was “My ways of communication”. Of the 25 participant Kurdish EFL teachers, 18 teachers (72 percent) voiced their beliefs in this respect. These participant teachers unanimously confirmed in their beliefs that learning English as a valuable means of communication across the world beside TEFL gave them a hand to become directly aware of a great deal of information and knowledge and have access to up-to-date everyday data. For instance, a female Kurdish EFL teacher stated:

*English helped me to change the means of communication I used to stick to. I think more logically and I believe that my communication habits have improved thanks to the English language and TEFL. (Teacher No. 12)*

A similar response was by a male Kurdish EFL teacher who said:

*More and more communications with different individuals from different social classes and age groups in my hometown as well as in Iran and even throughout*

*the world were the main impacts of learning and teaching English. (Teacher No. 8)*

Of the key words highlighted in this category were “communication”, “interaction”, “familiar”, “awareness” and “knowledge”. These words point out that the EFL Kurdish teachers believed that the English language and TEFL have given a better chance to communicate and interact with different individuals and characters in local and global contexts. They felt their way of communicating in their first and second languages have become logical because of the fact that they have learned and taught English. It is argued that the position of English as the world's prestigious language seems to place demands on Kurdish EFL teachers to be able to communicate with people from different parts of the world. Explicitly stated in Kurdish EFL teachers' beliefs, it was argued that learning and teaching English helped them to meet people with different tastes and personality traits, increased their communication skills locally and globally, aided in mutual interactions with others not only in the outside English world, but also in their local closed settings. As a whole, English learning and teaching were taken into account as a positive factor which led to finding out some weaknesses in the ways of communication of Kurdish EFL teachers, and were valued as integral parts of interaction in the globalized world of today. This was according to Norton and Toohey (2002, p. 113) that learning and practicing a language is learning and practicing a diverse set of sociocultural practices including interaction-related ones.

#### (B) “My personality”

The second category out of the six categories derived was a psychology-related category entitled here “My personality” with 56 percent of the total participant beliefs (14 teachers). In this category, learning English and TEFL were considered as a personality enhancer, i.e. learning English and TEFL were considered helpful in positive changes in the personality-related aspects of Kurdish EFL teachers in this context. A comment made by a female Kurdish EFL teacher is typical of the responses elicited from participants:

*English as an international language and practicing TEFL helped me to be more and more talkative, positive, and outgoing. I feel happy now. (Teacher No. 11)*

Shyness, impatience, lack of confidence, lack of motivation and even concentration were described as the major personality traits of Kurdish EFL teachers which were set aside by learning English and TEFL. Another Kurdish EFL teacher recounted:

*Learning this language like leaning other skills made positive changes in me and it could help me to think better and have a prestigious social class. I am more self-confident, and I feel free and comfortable. (Teacher No. 3)*

The noticeable keywords in this category involved the words “positive”, “sociable”, “open-minded” and “self-confidence”. Many of the teachers have become less shy and much more positive thanks to English and particularly TEFL. Additionally, what some teachers described here was a case of a personality shift. Kurdish EFL teachers considered communication in English easier and more comfortable, because they could overcome their shyness and become more positive and self-confident in comparison to the time when they speak in Kurdish or Farsi. They approved the positive changes noticeable in their personality by highlighting the importance of learning English and TEFL in giving them positive personality traits such as flexibility, patience, broad-mindedness, punctuality and even commitment. This was in line with such

an idea that learning and knowing a foreign language leads to lots of positive changes and makes the person open-minded and tolerant (Caner et al., 2010). It should be mentioned that this category was somehow related to the first one “My ways of communication”. Because it is argued that those individuals who try to communicate with others have more positive personality traits. And this was in agreement with Gardner’s comment (2002, p. 160) that learning and practicing a language involves taking on patterns of behaviors, personality traits, personal conduct and so on.

**(C) “My native language, culture and identity”**

The next popular category ranking the third was “My native language, culture and identity” and included the responses that mentioned the relationships between English and TEFL and the native language, culture, and identity of Kurdish EFL teachers in this unexplored context. About 10 teachers (40 percent) of Kurdish EFL teachers recounted and believed that English and ELT did not have any effects on their mother tongues (Kurdish) and their second languages (Farsi). They confirmed that they have enjoyed positive impacts due to learning and teaching EFL. For example, a female Kurdish EFL teacher wrote:

*Learning English and practicing TEFL helped me to think better. They pushed me to evaluate my mother tongue, my second language, my culture and identity. Because of reading in English, I tried to have a weblog in English and explain my native language, my country and hometown, lots of customs and practices, all in English, to the world. I think English paved the way. (Teacher No. 18)*

In a similar fashion, a male Kurdish EFL teacher noted:

*English and TEFL gave me directions on comparing my own culture and all the things related with other cultures especially the Western or English culture. Not only I learned a lot about other cultures and tried to make others particularly EFL learners and many people worldwide aware of them, I found out lots of values and forgotten points in my own culture. (Teacher No. 5)*

The most important key words in this category were the words “positive”, “improve” and “explain”. It is argued that according to the themes under this category, learning English and TEFL were both positive factors which play important roles in forming Kurdish EFL teachers’ views towards their native languages, culture and even identity. This positive change triggered by the English language and TEFL that pushed Kurdish EFL teachers to looking at their own native languages, culture and identity in an objective or critical manner, to know them better by themselves and even explain them in English to the rest of the world or to convey and use them in teaching procedures and their lives.

It could be argued that this category of analytically interpreting native languages, culture and identity in English is the side effect of the first category. This might be due to the contact and interactions with others that usually leads to a reevaluation of ourselves and our possessions, here i.e. our languages, culture and identity. Additionally, several teachers pointed out the impact of English and TEFL on their literacy in their own native language or formal language. So, learning English and practicing TEFL provides opportunities for Kurdish EFL teachers to come into contact with native and non-native English speakers and often have great times explaining things Kurdish or Farsi to them in English. This might force Kurdish EFL teachers to view their culture and their own languages objectively. In addition, they not only do not

assume English and TEFL as threats to their languages, culture and identity, but also they usually know it as a facilitator or improver. In all, according to this category, languages, cultures and identities are inseparable and even they have lots of interrelationships particularly, in this study, positive ones. There might be other reasons behind looking at learning and practicing EFL very positively, in this regard a male Kurdish EFL teacher believed that:

*I think due to the traditional context of this region such an effect is not too predominant. However, sometimes I use English words instead of some words and combinations in my L1 or L2 just because they are more fashionable. (Teacher No. 12)*

As a whole, it is maintained that language learning and practicing engage many aspects of an individual's world such as their identity, culture and their possessions. This is because of the fact that language is a complex social practice (Norton & Toohey, 2002, p. 113).

#### **(D) "My worldview beliefs"**

Another category, "My worldview beliefs", included the Kurdish EFL teachers' beliefs about the effect of English and TEFL on their own worldviews, as well as the world they live in. They generally stated that the English language and TEFL have broadened their worldviews and that have led them to become more interested in the outside world. This was the category where 7 Kurdish EFL teachers (28 percent) pointed to the impact of the English language and TEFL on their worldviews. Considering the importance of communications nowadays, Kurdish EFL teachers in their limited context believed that learning and practicing English or any other languages opens a window to the outside world and surroundings, to more contacts with different cultures and thoughts, and more mutual understanding and acceptance and as a result a better life. To illustrate this category, a typical example is a comment by a female Kurdish EFL teacher. She wrote:

*Learning English and TEFL are helping me to broaden my knowledge, change my outlook and see the world better. It is just because I have learned a global language for communication. (Teacher No. 1)*

Similarly, to illustrate this change of outlook, a male Kurdish EFL teacher gave such an account:

*Through learning English as an international language, I could expand my worldview and become familiar with a wide variety of ideas, beliefs, and viewpoints. (Teacher No. 7)*

The outstanding key terms which were so apparent in this category of beliefs, were "world", "broaden", and "international" as well as the remark that "Learning and teaching the English language was like entering a new world with lots of benefits" which might represent the beliefs of the Kurdish EFL teachers classified in this category. This gives the impression somewhat related to some type of convergence among those who learn English. These beliefs that have been attributed to English and TEFL are probably a result of some images and terms which are of dimensions of global and cultural flows.

It should be noted that although a person who lives in a country or even a city far from the world of English such as an EFL context, here Ilam in Iran, would not be able to imagine such a change or have such a worldview, the “My worldview beliefs” category is of interest in this preliminary report. Therefore, the results are in agreement with such a comment that learning and knowing a foreign language, here the English language as an international language for communication, bring new insights into an individual’s worldview (Caner *et al.*, 2010). This category also proved Wardhaugh’s comment (1990, p. 214) that languages can control your worldviews.

#### (E) “My lifestyle”

The penultimate derived category of significance was entitled “My lifestyle”. Just 4 Kurdish EFL teachers (16 percent) were classified in this category. Several key words in this category such as “lifestyle”, “life”, “motivation”, and “change” were highlighted among a diversity of beliefs and reflections. One belief that fell into this category was a comment made by a female Kurdish EFL teacher:

*Learning and teaching English was of great help. I am more disciplined and I got used to planning for my life at present and in the future. I schedule my life routines better than the past. I act better and feel happy.* (Teacher No. 24)

In such beliefs, English and TEFL are considered as significant factors that have led to positive changes in the participant teachers’ lives. They are free from running a monotonous and dull life, they feel cheerful and energetic, they have gained the best motivating sources i.e. English and TEFL, and more importantly a trace of determinism and feeling of life destiny is highlighted in their beliefs. For example, a female Kurdish EFL teacher mentioned:

*Via English and TEFL, I became familiar with the lifestyle of many other individuals all over the world, and such a familiarity directed me to the best.* (Teacher No.20)

Additionally, a western lifestyle as the impact of English and TEFL is of importance. For example, a comment was made by a Kurdish EFL teacher as follows:

*I think, making some changes in the way of dressing, decorating the house, cooking some foods especially English desserts, and taking care of pets were the impacts of learning and teaching English.* (Teacher No. 11)

In general, it is argued that learning English and TEFL are the most significant encouragements for the Kurdish EFL teachers, and like other categories, they look up to English and TEFL. This category was in line with the belief that language is influential in predisposing speakers towards adopting a particular view to everything including their lives and get through the task of daily living (Wardhaugh, 1990, p. 212).

#### (F) “Other”

Among the other sparingly detected categories were “My benefits” which included responses related to some type of advantages such as job, money and ability as a result of learning and using English and TEFL. For example, a female Kurdish EFL teacher gave such a comment:



*I have gained more job opportunities just due to learning English and gaining experience in TEFL. I teach English in many language schools and I am bale to translate different articles and everything in English. (Teacher No.3)*

Similarly, a belief spelt out by a Kurdish EFL teacher was:

*English and TEFL have improved my performance generally and also my skills and abilities to tackle the problems, to earn money and to be known as a capable person.*

Such a category was in agreement with Caner *et al.* (2010) who believe that it is a global fact that learning and knowing a foreign language fulfill a person's personal and occupational needs.

Or "My interests in English" which was composed of the interests of Kurdish EFL teachers in English culture and media just because of learning English and TEFL or thanks to globalization. One comment from this category that represented this belief was aired by a male Kurdish EFL teacher:

*Watching English movies and series, listening to original clips and music tracks in English as well as reading novels and stories and all the stuff in English were my favorites which became more and more by improving my English. (Teacher No. 10)*

A key word in this category of responses was "enjoy", as demonstrated by a female Kurdish EFL teacher:

*Learning English has helped me to make the best use of English media and enjoy time better than those who are not familiar with this international language. Using a computer and some software is easy these days just due to learning English. I enjoy reading some masterpieces and literary works in English as well as watching some original movies. I enjoy surfing the Net. (Teacher No. 14)*

This inclination towards English culture and media that is music, movies, books, magazines, websites, blogs, chat rooms, an the like can be though as a result of images created by the media power and the capability to disseminate these images as well as the capabilities gained via learning the English language and TEFL.

There were also other categories which could not be classified into any of the categories described above.

In all, the consistent general agenda of Kurdish EFL teachers' beliefs reveals that their reflections and beliefs about the positive impacts of English and TEFL have much in common. Kurdish EFL teachers in this newly explored setting, i.e. Ilam, as a dominantly Kurdish-speaking city in Iran, helped us to shed light on our understanding of a diversity of beliefs and reflections by Kurdish



EFL teachers in terms of the impact of English and TEFL on different aspects of their professional and personal lives. In spite of this diversity or even complexity, common concepts were evident across all the participants. They have positive viewpoints towards English and TEFL as advantageous and valuable means in improving their ways of communications; personality traits; native languages, culture and identity; worldviews; lifestyles; and even their benefits and interests. However, given the paucity of studies on Kurdish EFL teachers' beliefs in Iran, there is a dire need to conduct such studies and know how much the elicited beliefs in this region are culturally bound. More studies will help language education programs and courses in the region and in Iran, because the limited present study was just a preliminary report and tried to open a window to the world of research on ethnic EFL teachers in one of the Unexplored contexts i.e. Ilam in Iran.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Although the current study helped in presenting a particular image of Kurdish EFL teachers, further studies may provide better understandings by examining other aspects of teachers' beliefs in larger-scale studies from qualitative or even quantitative perspectives. All the findings of this study have to be understood within the limitations of participant size and the research context. For this reason, we cannot assume or infer that the experiences or beliefs of a limited group of Kurdish EFL teachers are typical of the beliefs of other EFL teachers in Kurdish regions in Iran. Additionally, the self-designed questionnaire and interviews did not generate as much data as we had expected. Consequently, the information we collected about Kurdish EFL teachers' beliefs was not detailed and could not give a complete picture of Kurdish EFL teachers. The study also does not account for the interplay of age, gender, educational background, university degree, life and professional experience, personality traits and socio-economic status and teachers' beliefs which are of paramount importance according to Tercanlioglu (2005). Although no generalizations could be made from this single case study as a preliminary report and there is a need to conduct longitudinal studies with well-designed elicitation procedures, it does reveal the variety of teachers' beliefs about the impacts of English and TEFL in a newly explored context. However, further studies are required to complement the present preliminary report as the first tentative attempt in the literature of EFL teachers' belief system in the region, in Iran and in a global setting.

The main clear implications of this study, like other studies on language teachers' belief system, concern EFL teachers and particularly here Kurdish EFL teachers as well as language pedagogy and teacher education (Phipps & Borg, 2009). It is concluded that EFL Kurdish teachers should be trained to acknowledge their beliefs and become familiar with some likely context-specific factors that contribute to their streams of beliefs according to Phipps and Borg (2009). In fact, perhaps by making Kurdish EFL teachers aware of their implicit or explicit beliefs, we can take a step towards helping them to address how to improve their practices and become more effective teachers. In addition to conducting studies on language teacher's beliefs, there are other ways to do to empower teachers in this regard such as allowing them to establish their own professional development agenda of beliefs by holding workshops at a regular basis wherein they voice their ideas and beliefs as well as setting teacher education courses and programs which are endowed with teachers' beliefs components, designing websites and blogs and communication groups

wherein they feel free to spell out and share their beliefs or establish a coherent system of beliefs, and the like (Zheng, 2009; Kuzborska, 2011). Of course, it should be mentioned here that these strategies might not result in developing more efficient teachers, but at least they may help reduce discrepancy and unawareness. By working with an awareness of their own beliefs, teachers have an effective means to help them gain insights into their own teaching, into how they give meaning to what they do and the reasons that underlie their practice. As a whole, these orientations, i.e. the belief system as presented here, can offer a useful tool in teacher education programs and courses in this region, Ilam, or even nationally in other parts of Iran, and positively all over the world.

However, it should be argued that it is not enough for studies on EFL teachers' beliefs to explore just a general agenda of beliefs; rather we need to consider the list of possible sources for teachers' beliefs like age, gender, educational background, university degree, life and professional experience, personality traits and socio-economic status and so on (Tercanlioglu, 2005); try out different elicitation strategies such as classroom observations and diaries beside open-ended questionnaires and interviews to identify the probable relationships between teachers' beliefs and their practices; to explore, acknowledge and understand the underlying reasons behind such beliefs (Phipps & Borg, 2009); to explore the stability of beliefs over time; as well as weigh up the matches between EFL teachers' beliefs and EFL learners' tendencies in the same context, in order to enable researchers, teacher educators and curriculum developers to better understand the process of teaching, recognize teachers' needs, identify problem areas, and design and develop one-of-the-kind teacher education courses and programs and publish guidelines for would-be and practicing EFL teachers on teaching sufficiently, effectively and systematically (Farrell & Kun, 2007; Erkmene, 2010; Al-Nofaei, 2010; Agnes, 2006). All things considered, we should take two pieces of advice in the stream of language teachers' belief system. Firstly, according to Borg (2009), there is uniqueness of different educational contexts and particularly the uniqueness of teachers and learners as human beings, therefore what teachers believe in is associated with the educational context they are involved in; and secondly, "beliefs tend to be culturally bound" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 56) although the influence of English as the global language of today is something tangible in any part of the world.

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## APPENDIX

Dear Teacher,

This is a questionnaire for academic study about Kurdish-speaking English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) teachers in Ilam, Iran. The purpose of this study is to understand your beliefs about the impacts of English and English Language Teaching (ELT). Your answers to this questionnaire are very valuable and important. They will be used exclusively for the academic study. The information you provide will be confidential and anonymous.

The questionnaire is composed of two parts. Part I requires appropriate answer based on your own personal situations. Part II is an open-ended question as the leading question of the present study. You are free to write your answer in this part without any limitations and cover all the topics and concepts you like.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance

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### Part I. Background Information (Please mark your answer in the appropriate box.)

1. **Gender:** Male ☐ Female ☐

2. **Age:** .....years old

3. **Languages:** First language: ..... Second language: ..... Other languages: .....

4. **Educational background (Please indicate the highest education level completed)**

Junior college ☐ Undergraduate ☐ Master's degree ☐ Doctorate ☐

5. **Major:** .....

6. **English teaching experience:** less than 1 year ☐ 1–2 years ☐ 3–5 years ☐ 6–10 years ☐

7. **Have you ever taken a teacher training program or course?** Yes ☐ No ☐

### Part II. Your beliefs (An Open-ended Question) (Please write your responses on the blank sheets attached)

*What have been the impacts of learning English and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) on you?*

## THE COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF ACCOUNTABILITY STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS IN GILAN PROVINCE

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### ABSTRACT

This study emphasized the value of teacher accountability as the means to help them to be aware of accountability standards in education and also it is conducted in an effort to investigate the role of gender, age, degree and teaching experience, average working hours, in teachers' perception of accountability in language teaching career in an Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) context. In the process of empirical research, 71 male/female EFL teachers teaching in English language institutes and schools in Gilan province with different academic degrees and different experience were provided with questionnaires of teacher accountability designed and administered to tap their perception toward the mentioned constructs. The collected data was then fed into SPSS to find the relationship between accountability and teachers' gender, age, degree, experience, average working hours. It was revealed that there is no significant difference between teacher accountability and the variables under the study.

**KEYWORDS:** Accountability, teacher education.

### INTRODUCTION

Research on teacher education especially teacher accountability has become the most-recent watchword in education. The quality of teacher development practices has become a major concern in recent educational discourse, with a growing emphasis on a teacher accountability suggesting that quality should be assessed with reference to students' achievement. Whether and to what extent practices meet this goal is, however, often unclear. Although the quality of teacher development practices cannot be defined in absolute terms, provisional definitions are worth pursuing as long as both teachers and teacher educators acknowledge their usefulness in the regulation of professional empowerment processes. They should serve both to provide a direction to practices and to establish a framework for the assessment of those practices.

Accountability is an important dimension of professionalism. This dimension highlights that the teacher is morally responsive to the student's and parents' needs, as well as responsive to the



public through the mechanism of the state. In moral terms accountability can be seen as keeping to ethical standards held by teachers as a group and as individuals. There is no doubt that organizational commitment is an important characteristic of a good and effective teacher which results from very deep faith and loyalty to the institution. Moreover, it's also important for student academic achievement.

Teaching in general, includes teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) or teaching English as a second language (TESOL) depending primarily on three major elements: the curriculum, the student, the teacher, and on many secondary issues.

It is believed that the learner is the most important element in the educational process. Celep (2001) stated that in any educational institution, a human being is the most important element because s/he participates in any position of the input-output process circle of the educational institutions.

According to Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp (1991), effective teachers need high level of organizational commitment. This suggests that high level of student's achievement requires dedicated teachers who contribute effectively. There is no doubt that high level of student's achievement is strongly related to high level of organizational commitment.

According to McNeil et al (1986), commitment has been defined as "The tendency to be involved in positive activities rather than feeling purposeless .In addition, those who are characterized as being committed usually have the ability to set goals for themselves and recognize their own personal value system.

Singh and Billinnsley (1989) stated that low level of teacher's commitment reduces students' achievement, increases teacher absenteeism and increases teacher turnover, too (move from teaching to another job).

The success of any organization depends primarily on the staff's level of commitment (Oberholster & Taylor, 1999). They added that teachers with low levels of commitment are less faithful to the organization, see themselves as outsiders, do only what enables them to get by, and seem to be more concerned with personal success than with the success of the organization as a whole. In contrast, teachers with high levels of commitment see themselves as an integral part of the organization, what threatens the organization endangers them as well, do their best to perform their duties better, and work for the organization as if it belonged to them. So, there is no doubt that students' level of achievement will be influenced by the teachers' level of commitment. "In order to achieve its goals, any organization needs knowledgeable and experienced people, facilities and financial instruments as well as other factor including trust, commitment and accountability" (Chalbi, 1996, P.147).

In educational institutions, a number of institutional factors have been found to correspond with faculty commitment. For example, Harshbarger (1989) concluded that the congruence of faculty university value was one of the principal factors affecting faculty commitment. Allen (1992), Armon (1995), Graham (1996), and Kawakubo (1988) stated that communication satisfaction,

sense of autonomy, and internal locus of control seem to take part in the organizational commitment, while external locus of control apparently plays a negative role. In other educational institutions, positive factors include reduced role ambiguity (Campisano, 1992; Cintavey, 1995), teacher empowerment (Homung, 1995; Wu, 1994), clear organizational mission Varona (1991), and encouragement of innovation, continual professional development, and shared decision making (Veitenheimer, 1993).

On the other hand, some personal factors have been found to influence negatively the organizational commitment of teachers. These include nonalignment of personal and organizational goals and values Menzies (1995), lack of communication and trust Varona (1991), high levels of interpersonal conflict Booker (1990), and imposing or withdrawing conflict resolution style on the part of principals (Hajzus, 1990). So the level of organizational commitment can be enhanced by maximizing the positive factors such as, administrative support, empowerment, collegiality, and a collaborative climate, and minimizing the negative factors such as nonalignment of personal and school goals and values, lack of communication and trust, high level of interpersonal conflict.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study seeks answers to these questions:

RQ: Are there any statistically significant relationships between the measures of teacher accountability and participants' age, university degree, work experience, average working hours and gender?

In order to investigate the above-mentioned research question empirically, the following null hypothesis was put forth:

N0: There are no statistically significant relationships between the measures of teacher accountability and participants' age, university degree, work experience, working hours and gender.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

To accomplish the purpose of the study, the target population for this study consisted of 71 male and female EFL teachers with different work experience teaching in 11 English institutes and 3 high schools in Gilan province. 23 of the participants were male and the rest 48 were female with different age, working experience, working hours and employment type. According to the teachers' responses to the questionnaires, of the total subjects having participated in the research study, there were 21 MA holders, 27 MA student, and 23 BA holders.

### ***Instrumentation***

Considering the subjects of the study, the following instrumentation was developed: Teacher accountability measuring scale developed by researcher herself and was arranged according to

the specifications of related factors. This instrument has a six-point from 1 (agree) to 6 (completely don't agree) that has been devised based on eleven factors (elements): self-acceptance, self-actualization, self-transcendence, job performance, affective teacher commitment, continuance teacher commitment, normative teacher commitment, autonomy, fairness, organizational support and general questions.

This measure is the only instrument developed for measuring the construct of teacher accountability, and in order to examine the psychometric characteristics of teacher accountability questionnaire, the data gathered from the participants was analyzed using SPSS software. The analyses included first running corrected item-total correlation as a measure of item discrimination. Corrected item-total correlation is actually an equivalent measure of point-biserial correlation or classical item discrimination measures; however, corrected item-total correlation is specifically used for Likert-scale type items scored on several categories rather than dichotomously scored items.

The SPSS software provides the effect of removing items with particular discrimination values on the internal consistency of the scale. In the data analysis here, these values were checked, and those items with low discrimination index were removed. Following the removal of malfunctioning items, Pearson correlation coefficient was computed between the subscales of the questionnaire to see if there are any statistically significant relationships between eleven measures of teacher accountability as a measure of teacher quality. Since these subscales were added to the questionnaire by the researcher herself, high correlation between the subscales would be indicative of the fact that these subscales together are correctly chosen to be considered as different facets of the construct teacher accountability.

All the subscales of teacher accountability questionnaire were analyzed at the item level and scale level and some items were removed. The reliability of questionnaires was computed through Cronbach's Aalpha (= .79) which indicates a high reliability.

### ***Procedure***

To ensure full demographic and grade-level representation, 11 English institutes in different cities in Gilan province and 3 high schools were selected for data collection. Each teacher answered the questionnaire. There are a total of 5 variables in the research which are the independent variables of gender, age, teaching experience, degree and average working hours. The answers to the questionnaire provided by teachers were compared with each other with regards to the independent variables of gender, degree, average working hours, experience.

### ***Research Design***

In the present study, because of the nature and necessities of the work, 'survey method' was considered best to capture the proposed objectives. Based on the literature, a "survey" can be any kind of instrument from a short paper-and-pencil feedback form to a comprehensive and detailed one-on-one in depth interview (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989; Ary, Jacobs, & Rezavieh, 1996; Howitt & Cramer, 2000). In this paper, the survey used is a questionnaire.

## RESULTS

In order to investigate whether there is any statistically significant relationship between the measure of teacher accountability and participants' demographic information, some statistical analyses were employed as reported under the following headings.

### Age

Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics on participants' teacher accountability score, obtained by administering 11 measures of teacher accountability in the form of one questionnaire, across different age categories.

Table 1: Study population by age

	AGE		Statistic
Teacher accountability	20-30	Mean	284.0732
		N	41
		Std. Deviation	31.77530
		Minimum	229.00
		Maximum	383.00
		Range	154.00
		Skewness	1.019
	31-40	Mean	281.2105
		N	19
		Std. Deviation	20.02936
		Minimum	224.00
		Maximum	327.00
		Range	103.00
		Skewness	-.649
	41-50	Mean	3
		N	3
		Std. Deviation	39.52636
		Minimum	208.00
		Maximum	287.00
		Range	79.00
		Skewness	-.189

In order to see whether participants from different age categories have statistically different levels of teacher accountability, Kruskal Wallis test as a non-parametric mean comparison statistic was employed. The reason for choosing this statistic rather than one-way ANOVA was that not all the skewness values provided in Table 1 are within the acceptable range (i.e. between -1 and 1) to meet the normality assumption for parametric tests like one-way ANOVA.

Tables 2 and 3 present the mean ranks and the main Kruskal Wallis test results, respectively. Evidently, only two age categories (i.e. 20-30 and 31-40) have been compared since the other age category is too small in sample size to be included in the analysis. As Table 3 demonstrates,

there is no significant difference between the two age categories in terms of their mean teacher accountability scores; Chi-Square = .006,  $p = .936$

Table 2: Ranks

	AGE		Mean Rank
Teacher accountability	20-30	4	32.63
	31-40	0	32.23
	Total	4	

Table 3: Chi-square Test Statistics (a,b)

	Teacher accountability
Chi-Square	.006
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.936

a Kruskal Wallis Testb Grouping Variable: AGE

### University degree

Table 4 provides the descriptive statistics on participants' teacher accountability score, obtained by administering 11 measures of teacher accountability in the form of one questionnaire, across different education degree categories.

Table 4: Study population by university degree

	EDUCATION		Statistic
Teacher accountability	BA	Mean	271.6957
		N	23
		Std. Deviation	25.46376
		Minimum	208.00
		Maximum	327.00
		Range	119.00
		Skewness	-.704
	MA student	Mean	290.6250
		N	24
		Std. Deviation	35.74890
		Minimum	230.00
		Maximum	383.00
		Range	153.00
		Skewness	.956
	MA	Mean	281.4706
		N	17
		Std. Deviation	20.14670
		Minimum	247.00
		Maximum	320.00
		Range	73.00
		Skewness	-.274

In order to see whether participants from different age categories have statistically different levels of teacher accountability, one-way ANOVA test as a parametric mean comparison statistic was employed.

The reason for choosing this statistic rather than Kruskal-Wallis test was that all the skewness values provided in Table 4 are within the acceptable range (i.e. between -1 and 1) to meet the normality assumption for parametric tests like one-way ANOVA.

Table 5 presents the main ANOVA results. Evidently, there is no significant difference between the education degree categories in terms of their mean teacher accountability scores;  $F(3-65) = .541, p > .05$ .

*Table 5: ANOVA*

	Sum of Squares	f	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2562.899		854.300	541	656
Within Groups	102601.536	5	1578.485		
Total	105164.435	8			

### ***Gender***

Table 6 provides the descriptive statistics on participants' teacher accountability score, obtained by administering 11 measures of teacher accountability in the form of one questionnaire, across the two genders.

*Table 6: Study population by gender*

	GENDER		Statistic
Teacher accountability	Male	Mean	283.8696
		N	23
		Std. Deviation	34.95101
		Minimum	224.00
		Maximum	383.00
		Range	159.00
		Skewness	1.058
	Female	Mean	280.0000
		N	41
		Std. Deviation	26.10843
		Minimum	208.00
		Maximum	352.00
		Range	144.00
		Skewness	.090



In order to see whether participants from different age categories have statistically different levels of teacher accountability, Mann Whitney test as a non-parametric mean comparison statistic was employed. The reason for choosing this statistic rather than one-way ANOVA or independent samples t test was that not all the skewness values provided in Table 6 are within the acceptable range (i.e. between -1 and 1) to meet the normality assumption for parametric tests.

Tables 7 and 8 present the mean ranks and the main Mann Whitney test results, respectively. As Table 8 demonstrates, there is no significant difference between the two genders in terms of their mean teacher accountability scores; Mann Whitney = 491.00,  $p > .05$ .

Table 7: Ranks

	GENDER	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Teacher accountability	Male	23	37.65	866.00
	Female	47	34.45	1619.00
	Total	70		

Table 8: Mann –whitney test Statistics (a)

	Teacher accountability
Mann-Whitney U	491.000
Wilcoxon W	1619.000
Z	-.619
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.536

a Grouping Variable: GENDER

### Work experience

Table 9 provides the descriptive statistics on participants' teacher accountability score, obtained by administering 11 measures of teacher accountability in the form of one questionnaire, across different experience categories.

Table 9: Study population by work experience

	EXPERIENCE		Statistic
Teacher accountability	0-10	Mean	282.3148
		N	54
		Std. Deviation	31.41735
		Minimum	208.00
		Maximum	383.00
		Range	175.00
		Interquartile Range	32.5000
		Skewness	.598
	11-20	Mean	279.0000
		N	7
		Std. Deviation	12.17922
		Minimum	264.00
		Maximum	298.00
		Range	34.00
		Interquartile Range	21.0000
		Skewness	.143
	over 20	Mean	270.3333
		N	3
		Std. Deviation	18.77054
		Minimum	250.00
		Maximum	287.00
		Range	37.00
		Interquartile Range	.
		Skewness	.845

In order to see whether participants from different experience categories have statistically different levels of teacher accountability, one-way ANOVA test as a parametric mean comparison statistic was employed.

The reason for choosing this statistic rather than Kruskal-Wallis test was that all the skewness values provided in Table 9 are within the acceptable range (i.e. between -1 and 1) to meet the normality assumption for parametric tests like one-way ANOVA.

Table 10 presents the main ANOVA results. Evidently, there is no significant difference between the experience categories in terms of their mean teacher accountability scores;  $F(2-65) = .243$ ,  $p > .05$ .

Table 10: ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	f	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	413.811	5	206.90	243	.785
Within Groups	2 55280.82	5	850.474		
Total	2 55694.63	7			

### Average working hours

Table 11 provides the descriptive statistics on participants' teacher accountability score, obtained by administering 11 measures of teacher accountability in the form of one questionnaire, across different work hour's categories.

Table 11: Study population by working hours

	HOURS		Statistic
Teacher accountability	0-10	Mean	284.8000
		N	20
		Std. Deviation	26.62725
		Minimum	229.00
		Maximum	351.00
		Range	122.00
		Skewness	.250
	11-20	Mean	287.1176
		N	17
		Std. Deviation	32.12064
		Minimum	224.00
		Maximum	352.00
		Range	128.00
		Skewness	.311
	21-30	Mean	272.6316
		N	19
		Std. Deviation	20.76378
		Minimum	208.00
		Maximum	297.00
		Range	89.00
		Skewness	-1.732
	over 30	Mean	281.5000
		N	8
		Std. Deviation	45.31477
		Minimum	230.00
		Maximum	383.00
		Range	153.00
		Skewness	1.771

In order to see whether participants from different work hour's categories have statistically different levels of teacher accountability, Kruskal Wallis test as a non-parametric mean comparison statistic was employed. The reason for choosing this statistic rather than one-way ANOVA was that not all the skewness values provided in Table 11 are within the acceptable range (i.e. between -1 and 1) to meet the normality assumption for parametric tests like one-way ANOVA.

Tables 12 and 13 present the mean ranks and the main Kruskal Wallis test results, respectively. As Table 13 demonstrates, there is no significant difference between the work hours categories in terms of their mean teacher accountability scores; Chi-Square = 2.580,  $p > .05$ .

Table 12: Ranks

	HOURS		Mean Rank
Teacher accountability	0-10	0	38.03
	11-20	8	36.00
	21-30	0	28.65
	over 30		32.94
	Total	7	

Table 13: Chi-square test Statistics (a,b)

	Teacher accountability
Chi-Square	2.580
Df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.461

a Kruskal Wallis Test

b Grouping Variable: HOURS

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are in agreement with those previously mentioned in the review of literature. For example, as to first research questions involving the relationships between the measure of teacher accountability and participants' gender. The findings of this study contradicted those concluded by Spencer and others (1989); Reyes (1992); Pennington (1995). The later studies suggested that female teachers were more committed than male ones. They attributed their findings to the differences in teachers' motivation, efficacy and satisfaction. They argued that female teachers were more motivated, effective, and satisfied than male teachers. As to second research question involving the relationships between the measure of teacher accountability and participants' age, the trend of our result agreed with that of Oberholster and Taylor V (1999) who found a positive relationship between commitment and age in favor of those who were 50 years old and more. This may be explained by the fact that older teachers tend

to be stable in their jobs all over the world and to love their job, thus to commit themselves to it. As to third research question involving the relationships, this study agreed with Reyes (1992) who indicated that years of experience correlate negatively with organizational commitment. But it disagreed with those of Cheng (1990) and Oberholster and Taylor-V (1999) who found that the length of teaching experience relates to organizational commitment. As to forth research questions the relationships between the measure of teacher accountability and participants' university degree. These findings contradicted with those of Oberholster and TaylorV (1999) who reported that doctoral degree holders were more committed than lower degree holders (M.A, B.A, or less) because doctoral degree holders were more aware of their work and they felt more satisfied than lower degree holders.

### **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

Teaching is complex and demanding work and there is a daily need for teachers to fully engage in that work with not only their heads, but also their hearts (Day, 2004; Elliott & Crosswell, 2001; Fried, 1995; Nias, 1996). It appears to be a professional necessity for teachers to be emotionally committed to their work, for without this emotional connection teachers face the constant danger of burn-out in an increasingly intensified work environment (Nias, 1996).

In so doing, the present study was conducted to explore the likely effect of teachers' experience, gender, age, degree, average working hours, on the way they are disposed toward accountability.

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that teachers' commitment were not affected by the respondents' gender, age, degree, average working hours, experience. The findings show that EFL teachers' degree, teaching experience, gender, age, working hours, does not have any significant effect on their accountability. This implies that teachers' perception of accountability generalizes across degree and teaching experience, gender, age, degree, average working hours. As a result, the researcher believes that EFL institutions and schools authorities can implement their educational programs regardless of, teaching experience, gender, age, degree, average working hours, of their teachers as far as they are concerned with the teachers' accountability. Associated to this are immediate calls for the inclusion of this factor in any teacher preparation program. These programs should become more devoted to fostering this constructs in the academic contexts.

Because of profound differences in participants, context of the study, research design, and instructional methods, it is far from possible to strongly support any generalizations. As always, further research is needed to give more comprehensive answers to questions about teacher accountability in language teaching. The following suggestions may be provocative for interested readers and research

The first suggestion for further research calls for considering teachers with different English language backgrounds. The participants in this study were all except one EFL speakers while there is a possibility to conduct this study with ESL speakers as teachers of English and also with native speakers of English.

The present study was conducted in the private EFL institutes, and high school contexts. Future studies can focus on just one of the mentioned contexts or other academic contexts. It is also suggested that further study is conducted based on the relativity of teachers' majors to the EFL i.e. the independent variable of degree can be categorized based on English and non-English majors.

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- 5 The problem comes, I get confused easily.
- 6 Comprehensive cover of my dreams has priority over everything.
- 7 Often do not recognize that I have a lot of choices in any situation.
- 8 I'm living in dull conditions.
- 9 There are many things I have to do it, which have been doing a bit of attention.
- 10 I do a lot of things that prefer do not them.

**Self-actualization**

- 1 I feel completely free .
- 2 I feel inner peace, even at busy time.
- 3 I do things that I have accepted it and I accept them.
- 4 I open myself to the unpleasant decisions without having to think about them too much.
- 5 I get distracted easily, even when I am doing something that I enjoy.
- 6 I have many good ways to deal with my own.
- 7 I'm not in any position to make the right decision./
- 8 I do most of the work that I have to do them.
- 9 I do not have to decide when to rely on feelings.
- 10 It is difficult to start anything because I do not know the consequences.
- 11 I have the feeling of freedom.
- 12 Feel free to have a problem when I have no choice.
- 13 Usually, I do not know what is important in various situations.

**Self-transcendence**

- 1 I believe that there is a reason to live.
- 2 Personally, I feel that I have benefited from the work that I do.
- 3 There is nothing good in my life.
- 4 There is nothing in my life that I really committed myself to it.
- 5 My life is a good life for no reason.
- 6 I can barely understand it, what are the things that concerns me is my life.
- 7 Always eager to know what the future will bring for me.
- 8 Life has betrayed me because of my desire not to be feasible.
- 9 It is very hard for me to imagine myself anywhere else.
- 10 I wish I did not exist.
- 11 I cannot establish connection with the things I need to do.
- 12 When I'm sick, I do not know what I do.
- 13 I think that my life has meaning premier of my personal interests.
- 14 I know there are things in the world that is beyond my understanding.

**Job Performance Questionnaire**

- 1 I accepted the job, responsibility, and I know the consequences for their.
- 2 Unsupervised superior (manager) would work honestly.
- 3 I would be respectful with students and try to fix their problems.
- 4 I've been working on for the achievement of results and confident I follow.
- 5 I am in earnest, it is worth keeping, and I try to work on problems.
- 6 I am sympathetic towards my job and I try to give it the desired quality.
- 7 Emergency arises, or when human issues are discussed, from the point of sacrifice.
- 8 I strive to increase my professional knowledge.
- 9 Accept my mistakes.
- 10 I respect my colleagues and to respect their rights and to have a sense of cooperation.
- 11 I'm trying to pass on information on my career.
- 12 I refrain useless waste of time and tasks in the classroom
- 13 Means of work and care in their use would save.
- 14 I follow orders, and administrative regulations.

**Affective Teacher Commitment**

- 1 I do not feel like part of a family at school.
- 2 I feel emotionally attached to school.
- 3 Working at school has a great deal of personal meaning for me.
- 4 I feel a strong sense of belonging to school.
- 5 School does not deserve my loyalty.
- 6 I am proud to tell others that I work at school.
- 7 I would be happy to work at school until I retire.
- 8 I really feel that any problems faced by school are also my problems.
- 9 I enjoy discussing school with people outside of it.

**Continuance Teacher Commitment**

- 1 I am not concerned about what might happen if I left (name of school) without having another position lined up.
- 2 It would be very hard for me to leave (name of school) right now, even if I wanted to.
- 3 Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave (name of school) now.
- 4 It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave (name of school) now.
- 5 Right now, staying with (name of school) is a matter of necessity as much as desire.
- 6 One of the few, serious consequences of leaving (name of school) would be the scarcity of available alternatives.
- 7 One of the reasons I continue to work for (name of school) is that leaving would require considerable sacrifice—another organization may not match the overall benefits I have here.

**Normative Teacher Commitment**

- 1 I do not feel any obligation to remain with (name of school).
- 2 Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave (name of school) now.
- 3 I would feel guilty if I left (name of school) now.
- 4 (Name of school) deserves my loyalty.
- 5 It would be wrong to leave (name of school) right now because of my obligation to the people in it.
- 6 I owe a great deal to (name of school).

**Autonomy**

- 1 Within the bounds of any applicable school board policy and applicable laws, I have freedom to act on student issues.
- 2 I have reasonable freedom to make decisions about instructional issues in the school in which I am employed.
- 3 I have reasonable freedom to manage the fiscal affairs of my school.
- 4 I have freedom to direct student activities in the school in which I am employed.

**Fairness**

- 1 I believe that rules and procedures are administered fairly by school district leaders.
- 2 District resources are allocated without favoritism.
- 3 I trust my school district to make decisions on my behalf.

**Organizational Support**

- 1 I receive support from my school district when I have to make tough, unpopular decisions.
- 2 My school district shows concern for the needs which I express regarding the school at which I work.
- 3 My school district appreciates any extra time and effort that I spend to do efficient and effective work
- 4 School / institution values my contributions to its well-being
- 5 School / institution really trying to improve my life.
- 6 School / Institute notice to my satisfaction in the work environment.
- 7 School / institution admire my achievements.

General question

- 1 Usually do not think too deeply about things.
- 2 I often don't feel satisfaction, even after a lot of work to do.
- 3 I always controlled by the expectations of others.
- 4 I do not have enough time for the things that are important.
- 5 Rarely do I have to do I prioritize.
- 6 I rarely think about the consequences before doing my job.
- 7 I haven't ever known my main tasks.
- 8 There are times when I feel completely helpless.
- 9 I do a lot of things without knowing enough about them.
- 10 Sense of fragmentation (pressure) because I'm getting a lot of work to do in that department.
- 11 Even when important work I do, I do not have the perseverance to finish it.
- 12 I do not want to do a lot of things actually.

**CLASSROOM OBSERVATION AND IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS' SKILLS AND STRATEGIES**

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**ABSTRACT**

The paper describes the processes used to examine the effectiveness of less experienced teachers' participation in experienced teachers' classes on English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' skills and strategies. For this purpose, 21 EFL teachers teaching Elementary and Pre-intermediate courses were selected according to available sampling in KISH Language School in Bojnurd, a city in the Northeast of Iran. Data analysis and statistical calculations through Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that less-experienced teachers' participation in experienced teachers' classes had a significant effect on EFL teachers' skills and strategies used in their classroom and made them reflect on their own teaching.

**INTRODUCTION**

It is believed that teaching can be considered as the most rewarding profession there is – and it can be. We can all give examples of the pleasure of helping a child grow in knowledge and understanding, and achieve their potential, but what about the teacher? They shouldn't be excluded from the benefits of lifelong learning because of their workload and desire to give. Growth and change are part of all our personal and professional lives, and teachers need to embrace them; not just to do a better job, but to enjoy doing it. Supporting teachers in their development – trainees, newly or recently qualified, in their first three, ten or twenty years, and whether they're wonderful or struggling – is vital in improving the quality of teaching and learning in our schools (Bubb, 2005). Teachers need to have wider professional effectiveness to cross the threshold, taking 'responsibility for their professional development and use the outcomes to improve their teaching and pupils' learning, and make an active contribution to the policies and aspirations of the school' (DfES, 2004). In recent times there has been call for change in teacher education in ways that will promote teachers being much more reflective in their practice (Jones, 1998; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999; Ball, 2000; Wise & Leibbrand, 2001). Korthagen and Kessels (1999, p. 4) argue that teacher education programs need to link theory and practice and "to integrate the two in such a way that it leads to integration within the teacher". Similarly, Ball (2000, p. 244) maintains "We must understand better the work that teachers do and analyze the role played by content knowledge in that work" (Townsend, Raton & Bates, 2007). The best way for teachers to improve what they do is for them to reflect on their practice

and work with other teachers to help them understand what is needed for high achievement." (Townsend, Raton & Bates, 2007).

Pachier and Field (1997) suggest that being a successful foreign language teacher involves a commitment to stay beside the developments in the field and an enthusiasm to engage in constant professional development. Moreover, English language teachers should be able to gratify the expectations of regularly increasing number of students by using up-to-date teaching methodologies performed expertly with commitment and enthusiasm (Coskuner, 2001). The increasing awareness of the new approaches in teaching training has made the researchers interested in the notion of classroom observation which is one of the professional development activities as a tool which less-experienced teachers can use to develop as effective teachers. Therefore this study will investigate how observation can influence professional configuration and teacher development and whether it makes teachers rethink any of their own teaching methods and strategies.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Generally in EFL, as in other areas of education, it is common to talk about training new teachers. According to Borg (2009), helping teachers become more successful, teacher education courses can be arranged and structured in certain ways. For instance, they can include awareness-raising activities and opportunities for the participating teachers to put ideas into practice, set their own goals, and assess their own development. Additionally, with adequate space and time, participating teachers may more easily develop their ideas. The research on training of teachers shows that it is an integrated activity in the process of which language teachers are taught to teach (Freeman, 1989; Kagan, 1992; Kennedy, 1993; Strevens, 1974; Swan, 1993; Wallace, 1991). This, of course, is not a new idea. The process has long been viewed as "*a highly complex activity which requires knowledge, understanding, practice and experience before it can be carried out in a fully professional and effective manner*" (Strevens, 1974, p.26). Teacher development has been differently termed and differentiated from teacher training, teacher education, and personal development in the ELT over the last three decades. Within ELT the term 'development' has been applied to a broad range of activities including skills training, curriculum development, materials development, classroom research, management training, job switching, and continuing professional development (CPD). It has also been applied to the kind of personal development viewpoints that follow from the view that the way you are and how you go about things influences your teaching as much as any training, embodied for example in the well-known saying 'You teach who you are' (Postman and Weingartner, 1969).

Throughout the past ten years several articles published in Teaching and Teacher Education have reported on research and involvements designed for teachers, with teachers and by teachers tried at their professional learning, with an eye on their impact on teacher and student changes. They cover different geographical districts and different research and development methods. Professional development is basically '*a solitary journey*'; but, almost all teachers need help and support during that journey from colleagues or supervisors to improve their own development, by which they can achieve an inside view on other teachers' experiences and increase their awareness by the use of reflecting on their own situation (As cited in Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992,



p.81). According to Edge (Cited in Bailey et.al., 2001) working alone doesn't help teachers to improve and subjective experience that is not shared with anyone cannot contribute to their progress, however ,through the quality collaboration, teachers have an opportunity to escape from subjectivity and draw some conclusions regarding their experiences and opinions. Bowman and McCormick (2000, p. 256) mentioned that collaboration among teachers is a valued and often necessary factor for effective schooling because it fosters expert instruction (As cited inVo and Nguyen 2011).

A professional development (PD) model is defined as a pattern or plan used to conduct the designing of a program (Joyce & Weil, 1972).

Drago-Severson (2002), Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989) and Marczely (1996) in their broad reviews of the research have found out that seven different PD models are used for teachers: (1) in-service training, (2) observation/assessment, (3) development/improvement process, (4) study groups, (5) inquiry/action research, (6) individually guided activities, and (7) mentoring and coaching.

People often only think of professional development as referring to courses, yet the range of on-the-job, off-the-job, and close-to-the-job professional development opportunities is huge. Fault at being away from the classroom, a lack of information about course quality and supporting shortages are stopping many teachers from updating their subject knowledge and skills in the job (Gray, 2005). More recently, Harris and Sass (2007) recognized what they call the "*lagged effect of professional development*" that is, the larger effect of teachers' professional development on student outcomes not becoming noticeable until three years after the teachers had completed their course.

Integral to the idea of teacher development is the process whereby teachers are encouraged to question and analyze their own practice. However, teacher development is not a concept that one comes across in the state sector of education. In-service training is largely based on the transmission model of education and consists of the diffusion of new teaching techniques. The same is true of the very large continuing education sector.

Observation/assessment is one of model of PD that involves colleagues who give feedback based on observations about the performance of colleague educators. It is a powerful tool for assessing and monitoring a teacher's progress. Used well, it can also be a way to support teachers, because observation gives such a detailed picture and enables very specific objectives to be set. Observing someone teach gives a really detailed picture and is an opportunity to stimulate some really useful reflection on teaching and learning.

Both the observers and the observed learn from the process of observation. The most common form of teacher evaluation is classroom observation and differs broadly in how they are performed and what they evaluate. They can be conducted by a school administrator or another assessor. They can evaluate general teaching practices or subject specific techniques. They can be formally planned or unannounced and can occur once or several times per year or term. The type of observation method adopted, its focus, and its frequency should depend on what the

administration would like to learn from the process (Little, Goe & Abaell, 2009). Observation is regarded as the process of capturing the events of the classroom. It is an essential part of any teacher training program, whether pre-service or in-service (Maingay, 1988; Sheal, 1989; Wajnryb, 1992; Williams, 1989). As it is crucial to make sure the least interference in the classroom, a fundamental issue of observation concerns the requirement of non-involvement (Gebhard, 1999).

Roberson (As cited in Garcia, 2011), found that, classroom observation is one of the first data collection methods available to those interested in teaching behavior. The use of classroom observation instruments in evaluating teacher performance is a widely accepted practice in teacher education for evaluating instructional effectiveness (Chism, 1999; Griffiee, 2005).

Additionally, according to a research done by Vo and Nguyen (2011), In addition to positive feelings about their experience they had for class observation, the participants held the same belief that through observation and discussion, they had learnt about and adopted some of the others' instructional techniques. The evidence also showed that they adjusted their own techniques to improve the teaching of a particular class.

When evaluating teacher success through classroom observations, valid and appropriate instruments are essential. If observations are used thoughtfully, they can offer important, useful, information about a teacher's practice but districts must take great care to control them in ways that decrease rater bias and other measurement concerns (Little, Goe & Abaell, 2009).

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

Generally speaking, teachers play a key role in changes to teaching methodology and contribute to improvements in the quality of education, especially EFL teachers who have to meet the needs and standards of English as an international language. The newest wave of education reform is the transformation of teacher education programs into professional partnerships, such as professional development schools (PDSs) (Hammond, 1994; Levine, 1992). One issue related to professionalism of the teaching force refers to the necessity to bridge the gap between knowledge acquired during formal pre-service studies and further developments accruing while teachers are employed (Nir & Bogler, 2007). On-the-job professional development programs effort to bridge this gap by allowing teachers to develop new idea that will improve their teaching experience (Mtetwa & Thompson, 2000), increase and renew their teaching skills and practices (Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002), change their thoughts, beliefs and perceptions (Guskey, 2002) and bring about improvements in their teaching (Blandford, 2000).

The important point motivating a work in this area is the position of teachers observation in many countries like Iran where teachers' observation has not occupied the place it merits, whether in second language class, in school or in different EFL institutes (Akbari & Ghafar Samar and Tajik, 2007). Also, as far as observation during the period of teaching practice is concerned, it can be seen as a method for current training and learning (Wajnryb, 1992).

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is required to be recognized that teachers are at the heart of any improvement within national education systems and, hence, that they and the sources of contexts in which they work need to be studied to notify the innovation behavior process (Hayes, 2011). Teacher education is currently facing a number of tensions as pressures have come from many quarters in the last decade, with perhaps the most intense focus being on the issue of teacher quality. This call for an improvement in the quality of teachers is welcomed by many, but there are inherent dangers too. (hand book) . Teacher education is presently facing a number of anxieties as pressures have come from many parts in the last decades, with perhaps the most powerful focus being on the issue of teacher quality (Tony & Richard, 2001). Researches show constantly that teacher quality is the crucial factor in student learning, the frequent problem is to identify the important characteristics of teacher quality and help teachers to develop these characteristics, though (Hammond, 1999; Wenglinsky, 2000).

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following two research questions are posed for the purpose of this study:

1. Does experienced teachers' classroom observation foster the development of teaching skills?
2. Does experienced teachers' classroom observation make teachers rethink any of their own teaching methods?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

The participants of the present research were 21 teachers including seven males and 14 females. To carry out the experiment, one group was selected as experienced teachers (5) teaching Elementary and Pre-intermediate levels in English having university education (Bachelor or Master degree) with minimum of 5 years of teaching. . Also a group of teachers was selected as less experienced, novice ones teaching at Elementary (8) and Pre intermediate (8) levels having educational degree in English, though.

### *Instruments*

To investigate the effect of classroom observation on teachers' skills, three instruments were employed by the researchers.

A sample of TOEFL test was used to assess the teachers' proficiency in English. It was selected from Longman Complete Course for the TOEFL test book published by Addison-Wesley Longman, Inc (2001). The number of questions were 60 multiple items, divided into grammar (30 items), vocabulary (20 items) and reading (10 items) sections. The TOEFL sample was piloted on (n=22) EFL teachers to determine the reliability of the test. Analyzing the result of the study using SPSS (Ver.18), the reliability was estimated through Cronbach's Alpha as 0.732.

The second instrument used in this study was a Peer Observation of Teaching questionnaire containing several sections. The questionnaire included focus on a particular issue, for example use of visual aids, question techniques, pace and timing, interaction patterns with / between students.

Before observation the questionnaire was administered to participants to assess their initial knowledge, attitudes and skills in teaching. A similar questionnaire was given to participants to evaluate the impact of the treatment. A sample of the questionnaire is provided in appendix 1, p. 11

Finally teachers were interviewed to find out more information on their responses about the process they were involved, which was not possible in observation questionnaire. A sample of the interview is provided in appendix 2, p. 15.

### ***Procedure***

Prior to the experiment, the participants were given a sample of TOEFL test to evaluate their language proficiency in English. Among teachers with higher scores some were considered as less-experienced and some were selected as experienced teachers based on the years they have taught English in language schools. A group of less-experienced EFL teachers who had targeted treatment (classroom observation) was chosen to determine the effect of treatment on less-experienced teachers' skills and methods. This study required at least 10 sessions with less-experienced teachers attendance in experienced teachers' classes. Teachers observed a class on an area particularly relevant to their own area of teaching. And they were supposed to fill the mentioned observation checklist at least twice during the observation sessions first before starting observation sessions and the second one after ending observation in order to choose the focused areas of observations according to teachers' needs and particular teaching situations. Also to check how effective classroom observation was teachers had to prepare a written report of whatever happened during the class. The participants discussed what they had learnt from experienced teachers' teaching performance, and what they thought should be improved, as well as how.

Data was collected through reports of each class observation. The purpose of this study was to help not only less-experienced and experienced teachers to improve their teaching methods and skills, but also students' performance as well.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In this study teachers were supposed to fill in a lesson observation criteria twice before and after treatment. The questionnaire includes different sections and each part includes various questions. The results estimated for lesson observation criteria 1 (before treatment) are observable in table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statics before Treatment

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	variance
	statistic	statistic	statistic	statistic	Std.Error	statistic	statistic
Preparation and planning	16	1.00	1.80	1.3500	.06455	.25820	.067
Start of the session	16	1.00	1.75	1.2656	.06237	.24948	.062
Explanation of the	16	1.00	2.00	1.4167	.06804	.27217	.074
subject	16	1.00	1.50	1.2292	.04781	.19124	.037
Presentation of the	16	1.00	1.75	1.2969	.05337	.21348	.046
session	16	1.00	1.60	1.2000	.04830	.19322	.037
During the session	16	1.00	2.33	1.3542	.10305	.41220	.170
Finishing the session	16	1.00	2.40	1.4000	.09661	.38644	.149
Evaluating							
Learners' behavior							

According to this table sixteen teachers answered the questions that are related to different parts of questionnaire. According to this table Mean and Std Deviation for each part Preparation and planning, Start of the session, Explanation of the subject, Presentation of the session, During the session, Finishing the session and Evaluating Learners' behavior are (M: 1.3500/1.2656/1.4167/1.2292/1.2969/1.2000/1.3542/1.4000;SD:.06455/.06237/.06804/.04781/.05337/.04830/.10305/.09661) respectively which shows that teachers are not really satisfied with their performance during their classrooms. Table 2 illustrates the results estimated for lesson observation criteria 2 (after treatment).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics after Treatment

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	variance
	statistic	statistic	statistic	statistic	Std.Error	statistic	statistic
Preparation and planning	16	2.60	3.80	3.0625	.07004	.28018	.079
Start of the session	16	2.00	3.75	2.9687	.12474	.49896	.249
Explanation of the	16	2.17	4.00	2.9896	.10371	.41486	.172
subject	16	2.50	3.50	2.9479	.07564	.30257	.092
Presentation of the	16	2.13	3.50	2.8984	.08707	.34827	.121
session	16	2.20	3.60	2.9000	.11255	.45019	.203
During the session	16	2.00	3.67	3.0417	.14554	.58214	.339
Finishing the session	16	2.00	3.40	3.0125	.09741	.38966	.152
Evaluating							
Learners' behavior							

The evidence shows that overall, teachers reported high satisfaction with the processes in which they were involved since, Mean and Std Deviation for each part including: Preparation and planning, Start of the session, Explanation of the subject, Presentation of the session, During the session, Finishing the session, Evaluating, Learners' behavior are (M:3.0625/2.9687/2.9896/2.9479/2.8984/2.9000/3.0417, SD:.28018/.49896/.41486/.30257/.34827/.45019/.58214/.38966/3.0125) respectively. These findings indicate that less-experienced teachers who participated in experienced teachers classes reported greater satisfaction with the programs compared to their colleagues who didn't receive treatment.

Table 3: Descriptive Statics of all Questions

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	variance
	statistic	statistic	statistic	statistic	Std.Error	statistic	statistic
Lesson observation criterial	16	1.17	1.43	1.3125	.02161	.08645	.007
Lesson observation criteria2	16	2.62	3.31	2.9688	.04521	.18085	.033

The findings show that Mean and Std Deviation of lesson observation criteria 2 (M: 2.9688, SD: .04521) is higher than Mean and Std Deviation of lesson observation criteria 1 (M: 1.3125, SD: .02161) which shows the great impact of class observation on Iranian EFL teachers' skills and strategies.

## DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of observing experienced teachers' classes on less-experienced EFL teachers and how observing can help less experienced teachers to foster and develop their teaching skills and strategies. Data analysis through Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that less-experienced teachers' participation in experienced teachers' classes had a significant effect on their skills and strategies and helped them to rethink their own teaching methods.

Following in the study, teachers were interviewed to reveal their specific ideas regarding the effect of experienced teachers' class observation on their professional development. All teachers reported high satisfaction with their participation in experienced teachers' classes and processes in which they were involved. They had become more creative in enlarging their teaching in order to make their lessons more interesting. The participants said that they have become more motivated in teaching as a result of observation. The fact of observing teachers in many different settings will likely suggest variations they can try to improve their strategy. In other words, as they observe teachers implementing a strategy in different ways, they, too, can gain the ability to see and act more flexibly in their own teaching. The interview with experienced teachers showed that less experienced teachers' participation in their classes was beneficial for them too. They mentioned that it offered them an opportunity to exchange their ideas, learn from each other, and help each other to professionally develop, all in a relaxed manner. It also helped them to build up good work relationships and a sense of professional community. In response to the question whether they will want to participate in more professional activities in future, almost all participants gave a firm yes because they believe that it could lead to the improvement of teacher performance and students' outcomes as well as a good sense of professional community.

## CONCLUSION

Professional development processes are aimed towards developing teachers' proficiency. On-the-job training processes are intended to bridge the constantly expanding gap between teachers' previous studies and the developments taking place in the educational realm. For many teachers, these processes provide a major channel that enables them to keep their professional knowledge



and teaching techniques updated. Therefore, the greater teachers' willingness to participate in professional development activities and their satisfaction with these processes the, more likely they will acquire new knowledge and skills that will improve their professional. Based on the findings of the present study and studies that have already been done, we can conclude, experienced teachers' class observation is acceptable for EFL less experienced teachers and its introduction is beneficial for both teachers and students.

### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In addition to the small sample size and its short duration, several limitations were presented in this study. Variables such as gender, age and personal variables were not taken into account due to the limited number of the available participants. Another restriction in this study was related to experienced teachers since some did not have a positive attitude toward their classroom being observed by their colleagues. Also the number of the years teaching may not be a good measurement to recognize experienced from non-experienced teachers.

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### Appendix

#### Lesson observation criteria

Level:

Teacher:

Observer:

Date:

#### Preparation and planning

Did the teacher.....	Entirely/ Always	Partly/ sometimes	Rarely/ hardly ever	Not at all/ never
1. Identify key learning outcomes in terms of knowledge and skills?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Place the session in context ( e.g within the degree program or the module?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Clearly explain learning objectives to the class?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Pitch the content at an appropriate level?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Hold attention and respect of students, practice effective classroom management?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Start of the session

Did the teacher.....	Entirely/ Always	Partly/ sometime	Rarely/ hardly ever	Not at all/ never
1. Begin class promptly and in a well-organized way?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Secure attention of the students?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Make the aims and learning outcomes of the Session clear to the students?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Link the subject to previous session?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Explanation of the subject

Did the teacher.....	Entirely/ Always	Partly/ sometime	Rarely/ hardly ever	Not at all/ never
1. Demonstrate a firm grasp of the subject area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Adopt a logical, structured approach?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Move clearly from stage to stage?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Emphasize key points?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Provide alternative explanations of difficult points?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Make good use of audio-visual materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Presentation of the session

Did the teacher.....	Entirely/ Always	Partly/ sometime	Rarely/ hardly ever	Not at all never
1. Show enthusiasm?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Control the pace of delivery?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Control the timing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Speak clearly and concisely?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Maintain an appropriate level of class control and discipline?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Communicate at the level of all students in class?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### During the session

Did the teacher.....	Entirely/ Always	Partly/ sometime	Rarely/ hardly ever	Not at all never
1. Use interactive and learning strategies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Provide many concrete, real life, practical examples?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Effectively use teaching and learning activities in order to give all children access to the lesson?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Draw inferences from examples  models and use analogies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Check students understanding regularly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Have effective use of praise, criticism and behavior management' strategies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Teach at an appropriately fast pace, stopping to check students' understanding and engagement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Use nonverbal behavior, such gestures, walking around, and eye contact to reinforce his  her comment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Finishing the session

Did the teacher.....	Entirely/ Always	Partly/ sometime	Rarely/ hardly ever	Not at all never
1. Identify how well the learning outcomes had been achieved?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Reiterate and summarize key point?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Identify links with following session?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. End the session positively and clearly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Provide clear, specific expectation for assignments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Evaluating

Did the teacher.....	Entirely/ Always	Partly/ sometime	Rarely/ hardly ever	Not at all never
1. Make quick, accurate assessments of class progress?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Ask differentiated questions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Provide frequent feedback to students on their performance, praise students answers and use probing questions to clarify answers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Learners' behavior

1. Arrive on time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Pay proper attention?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Respond to the teachers questions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Fully understand the task and were enthusiastic to complete?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Assess their own learning and tracking each group attainment during the lesson?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Sample of interview

*I believe that it is necessary for novice teachers to observe experienced teachers' classes. I personally have learned a lot from the observation and have applied them in my teaching. It provides opportunities for teachers to build their knowledge and skills. It also helps teachers to develop their expertise in planning, preparation and assessment. Experienced teachers' classroom observation helped me to improve my teaching practice including those on capability procedure.*

## THE EFFECT OF USING MODEL ESSAYS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF WRITING PROFICIENCY OF IRANIAN PRE-INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to investigate the effect of using model essays on the development of writing proficiency of Iranian Pre-Intermediate EFL learners. To fulfill the purpose of the study, 55 pre- intermediate learners of Parsa Language institute were chosen by means of administering proficiency test. Based on the results of the pretest, two matched groups, one as the experimental group and the other as the control group were formed. These learners were pre tested through a writing task. Each participant was asked to write about a topic. Then, participants in the experimental group studied a model essay about the writing task and they underlined or took notes about those aspects of language that they noticed in the model essay written about the same topic. It means that, model essays were accompanied by the teacher's explanations. After seven sessions of treatment, the two groups were post tested through a writing task, the same as pretest. The scores of the participants demonstrated that the experimental group outperformed the control group. After running a t-test for comparing the mean score of two groups, it was concluded that using model essays has a significant effect on the development of writing proficiency.

**KEY WORDS:** Output, Noticing, and Model essays

### INTRODUCTION

The necessity of linguistic communication has highlighted the importance of writing proficiency in today's ever more global community. Writing proficiency is considered as an important component of educational cycles, business endeavors and personal experiences. Writing is recognized as a key factor in students' academic development, and it is the primary means by which students transform from passive recipients of knowledge to active participants in their own education (Harvard's Expository Writing Program, 2003). Foreign language education has always been greatly dependent on English writing instruction as an important player in the learning process. Discussions in the realm of L2 writing research have been very much concerned with the role of output and noticing. Swain, in her output hypothesis, has discussed the role of output in second language learning (1985, 1993, 1995, 1998 & 2005). She claims that output has three



functions: noticing, hypothesis testing and metalinguistic awareness. According to Swain's hypothesis, the importance of noticing in writing can be investigated and underpinned (1985, 1993, 1995, 1998 & 2005). She firmly believes that through output procedures such as writing, L2 learners are familiarized with linguistic problems. Swain and Lapkin (1995) have used noticing coincidentally alongside the same notions used by Schmidt and Frota (1986), who state that by noticed; they all mean "the normal sense of the word, that is consciously" (p. 311). Swain (1995), while arguing the promotion of noticing via output, claims that "in producing the target language (TL), learners may encounter a linguistic problem leading them to notice what they do not know, or know only partially" (p. 129). This means that output provides L2 learners with the opportunity to notice a gap, prevalent between their inter-language (IL) and (TL), which will be helpful in learners' conscious recognition of their language problems.

Some more practical studies have proved that noticing is promoted by output. Within the framework of Noticing Hypothesis, model essays can be applied as one of the effective ways of improving learner's writing techniques. Qi and Lapkin (2002) conducted some studies in this regard and hence, suggested that 'the positive modeling of native-like writing may be more helpful to the learner than error correction' (p.286), even though the role of native speaker modeling has been investigated in a few other studies and has proven to be not contingent on learner output. Some L2 writing researchers argue that the implementation of model essays should be promoted among L2 learners for improvement of their writing skills in terms of the relationship between reading and writing. Echholz (1980) states that L2 learners reading experience directly affect their writing and thus, they can improve their L2 writing proficiency by reading. Furthermore, Smagorinsky (1992) argues that model essays would be the most effective tool provided that L2 writers possess adequate knowledge on the content. . In this research, the teacher's task is to comprehend how writing relates to the other language skills and how reading can be integrated with writing by using model essays. Model essays can provide enough input for EFL learners to improve their writing skill. Escholz (1980) points out, "what L2 learners write depends on what they read" (p.5). Some researchers emphasize the necessity of a model text illustrated in an academic writing textbook, which enables L2 writers to pay attention to the various aspects of TL (e.g., Hyland, 2003).

## **REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE**

According to Swain (1995), three functions of output have been proposed that relate more to accuracy than to fluency in second language learning. They are noticing, testing hypothesis and metalinguistic function. Swain states that under certain circumstances, output promotes noticing (Swain, 1995). One important aspect of noticing research has concerned the role of output in promoting noticing. Swain (1995, 1998, and 2005) has proposed four functions of output, one of which is noticing/triggering function. It is claimed that, through output activities such as speaking and writing, L2 learners become aware that they cannot say what they want to say in the target language. Swain and Lapkin (1995) reported that their students consciously recognized linguistic problems through the act of writing and modified their output. However, Lapkin et al. (2002) argues that more L2 noticing studies are needed to provide direct empirical evidence that noticing leads to learning. Shehadeh (2002) also points out that while past research has focused on the occurrence of modified output; more research is needed to investigate how producing output can

lead to acquisition. While some studies (e.g. Izumi, 2002; Morgan- Short and Bowden, 2006) have addressed this issue and shown the positive effects of output, relatively few studies have been conducted in the context of L2 writing. Qi and Lapkin suggested that the positive modeling of native- like writing may be more helpful to the learner than error correction (p.286). However, few studies have explored in this context the role of native speaker modeling which is not contingent on learner output. The role of noticing in effecting inter-language development has been a central issue in SLA for about two decades. It has been claimed that noticing plays a key role in triggering learners' inter-language change (e.g., Ellis, 1995; Robinson, 1995; Schmidt, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1995, 2001; Schmidt & Frota, 1986; Skehan, 1998). The significance of investigating learner noticing in writing can be argued for on the basis of the output hypothesis by Swain (1985, 1993, 1998, and 2005). She has identified at least four functions of output, one of which is the noticing/ triggering function. She argued that L2 learners become aware of linguistic problems through output activities including writing. Swain & Lapkin (1995), for instance, reported that their students, through the act of writing, consciously recognized that linguistic problems and modified their output. How much noticing affects the learners' subsequent processing of input or feedback remains an important question to be investigated (Shehadeh, 2002; Izumi, 2003, for theoretical arguments for the output hypothesis).

Models and reformulations may play qualitatively different roles in promoting learner's noticing. While, reformulation involves "having a native writer of the target language rewrite the learner's essay, preserving the entire learner's ideas, making it sound as native like as possible"(Cohen, 1983, P.4), the models used in this study are written by native speakers independently of learners' texts. One important advantage of reformulation may be that L2 writers can easily engage in a cognitive comparison of their text with reformulated writing because by definition reformulation is based on their texts. However, reformulation may fail to address some problematic elements that L2 writers wanted to include in their original texts, because of their limited linguistic resources. The role of output in second language learning has been discussed mainly by Swain (1985, 1993, 1995, 1998, and 2005) in her output hypothesis, which maintains that output has three major functions: Noticing, hypothesis\_ testing and metalinguistic awareness. One of these, also known as the 'noticing/ triggering function', has been claimed to play an important role for SLA. Swain (1995) claims that output promotes noticing and "in producing the target language (TL), learners may encounter a linguistic problem leading them to notice what they do not know or know only partially" (p. 129). In other words, output allows L2 learners to notice a gap existing between their inter-language (IL) and TL, which may lead to learner's conscious recognition of their language problems. Some empirical studies have demonstrated that output promotes noticing. Izumi (2002) study, for instance, demonstrates that visual input enhancement is not enough for acquiring the form of L2 learner's IL; and that output facilitates noticing formal elements in the TL. Testing Hypothesis, in other words, trying out how the TL works is also an important function of output. In the recent SLA researches, much emphasis has been placed on the role of attention, awareness, and noticing, which have been viewed as key issues in L2 learning by many researchers (e.g. Ellis, 1993; Robinson, 1995; Schmidt, 1990, 1995, 2001; Schmidt & Frota, 1986; Swain, 1985, 1995; Swain & Lapkin, 1995). In his noticing hypothesis Schmidt (1990) claims that noticing plays an essential role in SLA and that L2 learners must become 'aware' of certain aspects of language, mainly the meaning. Some L2 writing researchers argue that L2 learners should be encouraged to use a model essay for

improving their writing skills in term of the relationship between reading and writing. Ferries and Hedgcock (1998) argue that L2 writers have to be exposed to various types of reading material since it is difficult to acquire L2 writing skills by only writing. Eschholz (1980) point that what L2 learners write depends on what they read and they can improve their L2 writing skills by reading. He also argues that given the opportunities to learn rhetorical modes, L2 learners can eventually apply their knowledge about those modes; L2 learners can eventually apply their knowledge about those modes to their writing. Based on (Cumming's (1995) empirical study, which demonstrates the significance of rhetorical aspects of texts in model essays, Smagorinsky (1992) discusses that model essays are the most helpful tool if L2 writers have a sufficient amount of current knowledge. Thus, some researchers emphasizes the necessity of a model text illustrated in an academic writing textbook, which enables L2 writers to pay attention to the various aspects of TL (e.g. Hyland, 2003).

However there are also several objections to using model essays in an L2 writing context. Murray (1980) points out that the process of making meaning in L2 cannot be achieved by referring to written texts. In addition, Gobby (1997) asserted that model essays prevent L2 learners from having creativity, which she believes in one of the important aspects of writing skills. Writing instruction with model essays has also been criticized by other researchers (Collins & Genter, 1982; Judy, 1980) for lying emphasize not on content but on form. They insist that language form and the content of composition are inseparable. Even among researchers who claim that model essays is important but not totally sufficient (Ferries and Hedgcock, 1998; Hyland, 2003). However, there has been little empirical research to explore the role of model essays in l2 writing pedagogy. The field of second language (L2) writing has come of age. Research on L2 writing has grown exponentially over the last 40 years and, during the late 1980s, and the early 1990s, second language writing began to evolve into an interdisciplinary field of inquiry with its own disciplinary infrastructure- replete with a journal monographs. Researchers in recent years have stressed the need for ESL writing instruction to move to a process approach that would teach students not only how to edit but also to develop strategies to generate ideas, compose multiple drafts, deal with feedback, and revise their written work on all levels (Chenowith, 1987; Raimes, 1985, 1987). Improvement in writing has been linked to reading development (Saddler, 2004). Reading supports writing across all the levels of instruction and can be used throughout the writing process. For example, students might read a text to help them generate ideas for their writing. They might do research to provide background information of writing. During the revision process, students read and give feedback on a partner's writing to help them the writer revise, and they may also do peer editing. During the editing process, students might read a form or style guide or instructions for publishing to help themselves and their peers. Process writing emphasizes the role of the reader as audience and, through development of multiple drafts, often creates a context for communication. Improved reading and writing skills are complementary instructional goals within the process writing framework.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Taking a look at the above - mentioned problems and requirements for writing instruction makes one ponder over the questions which probably arise as fallow:

1. Does using model essays have any significant effect on the development of writing proficiency of Iranian Pre-Intermediate EFL learners?
2. What aspects of language do EFL learners notice by comparing their own writing with the model essays (native speaker writing)?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

To test this null hypothesis, all pre-intermediate level male and female adult EFL learners in Parsa Language Institute in Shahrood participated in this study. The participants were 55 EFL learners consisting of, 15 males and 40 females, ranging from 18 to 30 years of age. All participants were enrolled in the Interchange Course at the pre-intermediate level. In order to have homogeneous classes the researcher administered a language proficiency test to 87 EFL learners. In the next stage, 55 out of 87 participants who scored one standard deviation above and below the mean were chosen.

### *Instruments*

In order to have reliable and valid results in this research, these instruments were used:

1. Comprehensive English Language Test, an objective placement test, was used in order to determine the learner's level of proficiency in grammar. It included 75 grammar questions. The subjects' scores were out of 100. The test takers were selected and placed into two nearly homogenous groups, experimental and control group.
2. Student's first paragraph writing assignment, as a pre- test.
3. Writing tasks and models essays were chosen for this research project from the book 'Paragraph Development'.
4. Student's final paragraph writing assignment, as a post- test.

### *Procedure*

In order to come up with reasonable answers to the research questions, the procedures below were followed:

The data collection was conducted in Parsa English Language Institute in Shahrood. The communication task developed for the purpose of this study was 'paragraph writing'. The selection of this task was motivated by the assumption that it encouraged learner output. The data collection procedure in both groups consisted of three stages. The researcher gave the "CELT" language proficiency test to 87 EFL learners. There were 75 multiple choice grammar tests with 60 minutes for the participants to complete the test. 55 out of 87 participants who scored one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected.

In the first stage, a pre- test, consisting of a writing task, was administrated to both control and experimental groups. Each participant was asked to write about a topic within approximately 45 minutes. As time on task was not controlled in this study, the participants were allowed to spend

more than 45 minutes, if necessary, to complete the task. The pretests were corrected by two raters. Treatment was done during three stages:

In the second stage, every session, participants in the experimental group studied a model essay about the writing task and they underlined or took notes about those aspects of language that they noticed in the model essay written about the same topic. It means that, model essays were accompanied by the teacher's explanations. To prevent the possibility of the researcher's bias, two other raters scored the students' papers. The two raters scored each paper independently. The raters were required to score each paper individually and blind to the scores given by the other rater. The control group did not receive any model essay and during one session, they just wrote about the predetermined topic. The following rating scale (J. B. HEATON) was considered by two raters:

*Content*

30- 27 EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: knowledgeable- substantive- etc.  
26- 22 GOOD TO AVERAGE: some knowledge of subject- adequate range.  
21- 17 FAIR TO POOR: limited knowledge of subject- little substance- etc.  
16-13 VERY POOR: does not show knowledge of subject- non- substantive.

*Organization*

20- 18 EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: fluent expression- ideas clearly stated.  
17- 14 GOOD TO AVERAGE: somewhat choppy- loosely organized but main ideas stand out- etc.  
13- 10 FAIR TO POOR: non- fluent- ideas confused or disconnected- etc.  
VERY POOR: does not communicate- no organization- etc.

*Vocabulary*

20- 18 EXCELLENT TO VERY POOR: sophisticated range- effective word/ idiom choice and usage- etc.  
17-14 GOOD TO AVERAGE: adequate range occasional errors of word/ idiom form, choice, usage but meaning not obscured.  
13- 10 FAIR TO POOR: limited range- frequent errors of word/ idiom form, choice, usage- etc.  
9-7 VERY POOR: essentially translation- little knowledge of English vocabulary.

*Language use*

25- 22 EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: effective complex constructions- etc.  
21-19 GOOD TO AVERAGE: effective but simple constructions- etc.  
17- 11 FAIR TO POOR: major problems in simple/ complex constructions- etc.  
10- 5 VERY POOR: virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules- etc.

*Mechanics*

EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: demonstrates mastery of conventions- etc.  
4 GOOD TO AVERAGE: occasional errors of spelling, punctuation- etc.  
3 FAIR TO POOR: major problems in simple/ complex constructions- etc.



2 VERY POOR: no mastery of conventions- dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing- etc.

In the last stage, at the end of seven-week program, the participants in both groups were post tested. The post testing procedures were exactly the same as pretesting. However, the participants were not allowed to use dictionaries since one of the aims of the study was to investigate the effect of using model essay on learners' progress in writing proficiency, without any other aids.

## **RESULTS**

### **A. Results of the Proficiency Test**

To ensure the homogeneity of the participants, the CELT Placement Test was administered. The descriptive statistics of the participants' scores on this test are set forth in Table 1. As it is clear, 87 participants were selected as homogeneous participants for this study with the mean score of 63.61. The minimum score obtained by participants on CELT is 39 and the maximum score is 85. In order to figure out whether the data is normally distributed, we used Kolmlgrov-Smirnoff non-parametric test. The P-value is .181 based on the data, which indicates that the scores are normally distributed. Table 2 shows the results of the normality test.

*Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of CELT Placement Test*

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Oxford Placement Test	87	46	39	85	63.61	10.647	113.357
Valid N (listwise)	87						

To test the normality of the groups Shapiro-Wilk was used. The null-hypothesis of the test of normality is that the distribution of the groups' scores is normal. Therefore, the distribution of the scores is not normal if the P-value (sig.) is less than .05. The results are depicted in the following table.

*Table 2: Test of Normality of CELT*

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
CELT	.979	87	.181

The distribution of the scores of the CELT is normal because P-value (sig.) which is .18, is higher than .05.



### Pretest-Content

The results of comparing pre-test content between control and experimental groups that are laid out in Table 3 reveals that P-value, which is .22, is more than .05. Therefore, it does not show a significant difference. Therefore, we can safely claim that there is no significant

Table 3: Descriptive data and Independent Sample Data for Pre-test Scores of Content in two Groups

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Pretest (Content)	Equal variances assumed	.870	.355	1.231	53	.224	.987	.802	-.622	2.597
	Equal variances not assumed			1.229	52.062	.225	.987	.804	-.625	2.600

### Post-test Content

The results of comparing post-test content between control and experimental groups that are laid out in Table 4 reveals that P-value, which is .020, is less than .05. It can be claimed that there is significant difference between the two mean content scores of two groups at post-test. Thus, the Null hypothesis of no significant effect of using model essays of the participants on the development of content of writing proficiency at posttest is rejected. In other words, model essays had a significant impact on the performance of the participants on the posttest. Therefore, we can claim that using model essays affects the development of content of writing proficiency of Iranian Pre- Intermediate EFL learners.

Table 4: Descriptive data and Independent Sample Data for Post-test Scores of Content in two Group

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Posttest (Content)	Equal variances assumed	1.043	.312	-2.398	53	.020	-1.634	.682	-3.001	-.267

Table 4: Descriptive data and Independent Sample Data for Post-test Scores of Content in two Group

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Posttest (Content)	Equal variances assumed	1.043	.312	-2.398	53	.020	-1.634	.682	-3.001	-.267
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.392	51.509	.020	-1.634	.683	-3.006	-.263

### Pre-test – Organization

The results of comparing pre-test organization between control and experimental groups that are laid out in Table 5 reveals that P-value which is .37, is more than .05. Therefore, we can safely claim that there is no significant difference between the means of the two groups' organization scores at pretest.

Table 5: Descriptive Data and Independent Sample Data for Pre-test Scores of Organization in two Groups

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Pretest (Organization)	Equal variances assumed	.196	.660	-.901	53	.372	-.431	.478	-1.389	.528
	Equal variances not assumed			-.899	51.912	.373	-.431	.479	-1.392	.531

### Post-test – Organization

The results of comparing post-test organization between control and experimental groups that are laid out in Table 6 reveals that P-value, which is .00, is less than .05. Thus, the Null hypothesis of no significant effect of using model essays on the development of organization of writing proficiency at posttest is rejected. In other words, model essays had a significant impact on the performance of the participants on the posttest. Therefore, we can claim that using model essays affects the development of organization of Iranian Pre-Intermediate EFL learners' writing.

Table 6: Descriptive Data and Independent Sample Data for Post-test Scores of Organization in two Groups

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Posttest (Organization)	Equal variances assumed	1.165	.285	-3.834	53	.000	-1.479	.386	-2.252	-.705
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.819	49.99	.000	-1.479	.387	-2.257	-.701

### Pre-test -Vocabulary

The results of the two groups' vocabulary pre-test results that are laid out in Table 7 reveals that P-value, which is .21, is more than .05. Therefore, it does not show a significant difference. Therefore, we can safely claim that there is no significant difference between the two mean vocabulary scores of two groups at pretest.

Table 7: Descriptive Data and Independent Sample Data for Pre-test Scores of Vocabulary in two Groups

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Pretest (Vocabulary)	Equal variances assumed	.334	.566	1.258	53	.214	.617	.490	-.367	1.601
	Equal variances not assumed			1.262	52.159	.213	.617	.489	-.364	1.598

### Post-test – Vocabulary

The results of comparing vocabulary post-test results between control and experimental that are laid out in Table 8 reveals that P-value, which is .01, is less than .05; therefore, it shows significant difference. Thus, the Null hypothesis of no significant effect of using model essays of the participants on the development of vocabulary of writing proficiency at posttest is rejected. Therefore, we can claim that using model essays affects the development of vocabulary of writing proficiency of Iranian Pre-Intermediate EFL learners.

Table 8: Descriptive Data and Independent Sample Data for Post-test Scores of Vocabulary in two Groups

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Posttest (Vocabulary)	Equal variances assumed	1.280	.263	-2.562	53	.013	-1.028	.401	-1.834	-.223
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.551	49.075	.014	-1.028	.403	-1.839	-.218

### Pre-test\_ Language Use

The results of comparing language use pre-test between control and experimental that are laid out in Table 9 reveals that P-value, which is .75, is more than .05. Therefore, it does not show any significant difference. Therefore, we can safely claim that there is no significant difference between the two mean language use scores of two groups at pretest.

Table 9: Descriptive data and Independent Sample Data for Pre-test Scores of Language Use in two Groups

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Pretest (Language use)	Equal variances assumed	.190	.664	-.310	53	.758	-.228	.734	-1.699	1.244
	Equal variances not assumed			-.309	50.361	.759	-.228	.736	-1.706	1.251

### Post-test – Language Use

The results of comparing post-test language use results between control and experimental that are laid out in Table 10 reveals that P-value, which is .02, is less than .05. Thus, the Null hypothesis of no significant effect of using model essays of the participants on the development of language use of writing proficiency at posttest is rejected. In other words, model essays had a significant impact on the performance of the participants on the posttest. Therefore, we can claim that using model essays affects the development of language use of writing proficiency of Iranian Pre-Intermediate EFL learners.

Table 10: Descriptive data and Independent Sample Data for Post-test Scores of Language Use in two Groups

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Posttest (Language use)	Equal variances assumed	.498	.484	-2.384	53	.021	-1.786	.749	-3.289	-.284
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.377	51.184	.021	-1.786	.751	-3.295	-.278

### Pre-test - Mechanics

The results of comparing pre-test mechanics between control and experimental that are laid out in Table 11 reveals that P-value, which is .60, is more than .05. Therefore, it does not show significant difference. Therefore, we can safely claim that there is no significant difference between the two mean mechanics scores of two groups at pre-test.

Table 11: Descriptive data and Independent Sample Data for Pre-test Scores of Mechanics in two Groups

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Pretest (Mechanics)	Equal variances assumed	.011	.918	-.518	53	.607	-.087	.167	-.422	.249
	Equal variances not assumed			-.518	52.972	.607	-.087	.167	-.422	.249

### Post-test – Mechanics

The results of comparing post-test mechanics results between control and experimental that are laid out in Table 12 reveals that P-value, which is .003, is less than .05. Thus, the Null hypothesis as no significant effect of using model essays of the participants on the development of mechanics of writing proficiency at post-test is rejected. In other words, model essays had a significant impact on the performance of the participants on the post-test. Therefore, we can claim that using model essays affects the development of mechanics of writing proficiency of Iranian Pre-Intermediate EFL learners.

Table 12: Descriptive data and Independent Sample Data for Post-test Scores of Mechanics in two Groups

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Posttest (Mechanics)	Equal variances assumed	.000	.989	-3.139	53	.003	-.554	.177	-.908	-.200
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.139	52.888	.003	-.554	.177	-.908	-.200

### Total Writing- Pretest

As it is shown in table 13 the hypothesis of equal of variances is proved because the P-value (sig) is .87 which is higher than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . P-value which is .63, is more than .05. So it does not show significant difference. Therefore, we can safely claim that the control and experimental groups are not significantly different in pre-test.

Table 13: Descriptive Data and Independent Sample Data for Total Writing Scores in Pre-test in Two Groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Total Writing in Pretest	.027	.871	.479	53	.634	.85979	1.79358	-2.73768	4.45726

### Total Writing Post-test

As it is shown in table 14 the hypothesis of equal of variances is proved because the P-value is .52 which is higher than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Table 4.24 provides enough criteria for the rejection of the first null hypothesis of this study, because P-value which is .00 is less than .05. So it shows a



significant difference. Therefore, we can safely claim that the control and experimental groups are significantly different in posttest (after the treatment).

*Table 14: Descriptive Data and Independent Sample Data for Total Writing in Post-test Scores in Two Groups*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Differenc e	Std. Error Differenc e	Lower	Upper
Total Writi ng in Postt est	.406	.527	-5.302	53	.000	-6.48214	1.22249	-8.93414	-4.03014

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of using model essays on the development of writing proficiency of the Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners and to explore if it is feasible to apply it in the teaching of writing in EFL educational settings in Iran. Considering the review of the literature and what happens in real language classes, contradictory findings and ideas were observed. In order to test the null hypothesis, the researcher gave the "CELT" language proficiency test to 87 EFL learners. Out of the 87 participants, 55 were selected.

In the first stage, a pre-test, consisting of a writing task, was administrated to both control and experimental groups.

In the second stage, every session, participants in the experimental group studied a model essay about the writing task and they underlined sections or took notes about those aspects of language that they noticed in the model essay written about the same topic. Model essays were accompanied by the teacher's explanations. To prevent the possibility of the researcher's bias, two other raters scored the students' papers. The control group did not receive any model essays and during a session, they just wrote about the predetermined topic. In the last stage, at the end of the seven-week program, the participants in both groups were post-tested. The post testing procedures were the same as pretesting.

The statistical analysis of written pre-test data showed that there were not any significant differences between the two groups in the pre-test. After the instruction, the post-test was administered to the participants and the results showed a significant difference between the two groups' mean scores. Finally, the descriptive statistics of students' noticing showed that model essays help students to notice content and vocabulary more than other categories. The results were satisfactory for the experimental group and it shows that model essays can draw learners'

attention to certain linguistic forms in the output and increase “noticing” and improve EFL writing. One major limitation of this study was that subjects could not be homogenized. Language institutes are usually the place where learners of different ages participate. Because of this, the ranges of their ages were different. The researcher could not control the variable “sex” and the groups had mixed gender. Participants were Iranian, so the results cannot be generalized to speakers of other languages. Only seven sessions were going to be spent on the treatment, so time allocated has been limited. Furthermore, as the design of the study was intact group, pre-test- post- test it was not possible to have random selection.

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## PERCEIVED PROBLEMS IN USING COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT) BY EFL IRANIAN TEACHERS

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### ABSTRACT

According to Harmer (2001:86) CLT is prejudiced in favor of native-speaker teachers by demanding a relatively uncontrolled range of language use on the part of the students, and thus expecting the teachers by demanding them to be able to respond to any and every language problem which may come up. In this paper thus, it was tended to find out whether Iranian EFL high school teachers are at ease when using CLT in their classes or not. That is, whether Iranian teachers are capable of utilizing comprehensive approach named CLT in their classes to achieve its ultimate goal, communication in real context. 50 participant teachers teaching English at high school were given a questionnaire to express their view points about the probable difficulties they might encounter when using CLT. In addition to the questionnaire, each teacher was interviewed for about 5 minutes so they might express their ideas live on the probable constraints in applying CLT in their genuine classes. Then the data collected by means of the interview and the questionnaires were analyzed. It was concluded that the main sources of problems in CLT implementation by the Iranian EFL teachers are: problems caused by the teachers, difficulties coming from the students, pitfalls created by the educational system, and hurdles caused by the CLT approach itself.

**KEY WORDS:** Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

### INTRODUCTION

The history of language teaching has been characterized by a search for more effective ways of teaching second or foreign languages. For more than a hundred years, debate and discussion



within the teaching profession have often centered on issues such as roles of grammar in language curriculum, the development of accuracy and fluency in teaching, teaching productive or receptive skills, motivating learners and the role of materials and technology (to name only a few hotly debated issues). Based on many debates and discussions raised about the nature of language learning and teaching over the years one can obviously perceive the complex nature of language learning and teaching in turn.

One good indication of this is the emergence of different "isms" over nearly each one or two decades in the history of language learning and teaching. To cut it short so far researchers can not propose a method of language teaching as the mere panacea to solve all the problems in the field. However, the most comprehensive language teaching approach is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Based on Richards (2001:155) both American and British proponents now see it as the most comprehensive approach and a method that aims to (a) make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and (b) develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication. Its comprehensiveness thus makes it different in scope and status from any of the other approaches or methods known so far.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), also known as the Communicative Approach, emerged in Europe and the USA in the 1970s. In the late twentieth century, it became the dominant paradigm within Western ELT and applied linguistics, so much so, in fact, that to admit to a disbelief in CLT would be regarded as 'heresy' (Brown, 2007). It has as most readers will be aware, been 'exported' and promoted around the world in a variety of cultural and educational contexts and with greater and lesser degrees of success.

The origins of CLT are generally traced to a changing view of language, away from language structures towards language functions and communication, philosophically, the focus on learners as individuals, which we have seen previously within the Direct Method and Humanistic language teaching (Crookes, 2009). CLT also emerged in a period when more people than ever were crossing international borders for work, and had immediate functional language needs.

CLT is in some ways problematic as the term means different things to different people and everyday classroom practices can appear to be quite different when CLT principles are applied in different social and educational contexts. Thus, CLT can be seen as an umbrella term that describes a change in thinking about the goals and processes of classroom language learning (Savignon, 2004) with a number of interpretations of how this might be realized in practice. Key to all strands of CLT, however, is the move from teaching language as individual linguistics structures to teaching people how to use language effectively when communicating, in effect a move from teaching linguistic competence to communicative competence.

Communicative competence essentially suggests that teaching learners to form grammatically correct sentences is not enough, Learners also need to be able to use language appropriately in a variety of contexts (Hymes, 1972). Hence, in essence, the goal of CLT is to teach 'real-life' language.

The communicative approach—or Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)—is the name which was given to a set of beliefs including not only an examination of what aspects of language to teach, but also a shift in emphasis in how to teach. The "how to teach aspect" of CLT approach

based on Harmer (2001:85) is closely related to the idea that language learning will take care of itself and that plentiful exposure to language in use and plenty of opportunities to use it are vitally important for a student's development of knowledge and skill. But this is always easier said than done. Since despite the fact that CLT have now become a generalized "umbrella" term to describe learning sequences which aim to improve the students' abilities to communicate, it has come under severe attack from many fronts.

As it was mentioned, CLT starts with a theory of language as communication, and its ultimate goal is to develop learners' communicative competence. Based on Hewings (2001:150) in CLT, meaning is paramount. According to Larsen- Freeman (2003:131) the most obvious characteristics of CLT is that, almost all that is done with a communicative intent. A number of reports in the literature deal with CLT innovations in EFL contexts. Many have proposed that most EFL teachers have found it difficult to use CLT. For instance, Burnaby and Sun (1989) reported that teachers in China found it difficult to deploy CLT. The constraints cited include the context of the wider curriculum, traditional teaching methods, class size and schedules, resources and equipment, the low status of teachers who teach communicative rather than analytical skills, and English teachers deficiencies in oral English and sociolinguistic and strategic competence. Many other studies and researches have shown that it is not that much easy for the teachers specially the EFL teachers to utilize CLT as an asset to reach the final goal of language teaching in their context with their students. Based on a study that assessed the attitudes of Hong Kong educators toward using CLT in the local context, Chau and Chung (1987) reported that teachers used CLT only sparingly because it required too much preparation time. Since the emergence of CLT the only group of people having difficulty using it are not the teachers. Students are also to be taken into account in this case. Sano et al (1984) point out that the Japanese students studied generally did not feel pressing need to use English, therefore the goal of communicative competence seemed too distant for them. A study conducted in Vietnam identified class size, grammar-based examinations, and lack of exposure to authentic language as constraints on using CLT (Ellis; 1994). As this brief review indicates because of many problems CLT as the most known comprehensive approach in language teaching has proved difficult to be implemented on the part of teachers of English as a Foreign Language.

It has been suggested that many communicative activities are not, in fact, any more 'genuine' than activities out forward by other methods. For example, asking someone to give directions while working in a classroom pair-work activity does not serve any authentic communicative and language are removed from their original context outside the classroom into a learning context, they may become inherently artificial (Widdowson, 1998). Similarly, an over-emphasis on the exchange of messages-any messages- within the classroom may lead to the entail for English language teachers' professional status (Pennycook, 1990: V. Cook, 2008). Last, but by no means least, it has been suggested that CLT is not appropriate for all cultures and contexts (Bax2006), for example where learner autonomy, pair and group-work and less obvious teacher intervention is not part of the educational tradition.

Despite this criticism, however, CLT seems to offer teachers significant alternatives for their everyday teaching practices. Undoubtedly, its conception of language as communicative

competence strikes a chord with many teachers and applied linguists, even if the process for achieving this is at time potentially problematic.

Based on the above mentioned facts about CLT, its scope and status CLT has proved difficult to implement in EFL classrooms. For this reason I undertook a case study of Iranian high school English teachers understanding of the uptake of CLT.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

The participants in this study were 50 high school English teachers. 32 male and 18 female subjects ranged from 32 to 48 years in age. Their experience in English teaching varied from 6 to 22 years with an average of over 10 years. At the time of the study, 18 female participants were teaching the high school students in different high- schools in various grades. This was also the case for the male teachers. The group of teachers filling out the questionnaire were participating in an intact in-service program. So they were not randomly selected, but it was assumed that based on their experience in teaching English as an EFL, they could be representative sample of the EFL teachers teaching in the same context. Based on the researchers' familiarity with most of these teachers were mostly among the more successful teachers in their classes.

### ***Instruments***

In order to tap these teachers' personal view points about the probable problems they might have experienced using CLT in their real classes first a written questionnaire was used. This questionnaire (see the appendix 2) included both open-ended questions and questions with fixed alternatives. Each participant was required to give his personal ideas in the form of responses to the open-ended questions and choose either "yes" or "no" for the fixed response questions. The participants were also required to be interviewed on the part of the researcher. The questionnaire used in the study has been developed and pilot studied for issues of reliability and validity on the part of Defeng Li (2001). The interviews were conducted in a systematic and consistent order but letting researchers as the interviewers have sufficient freedom to digress and probe far beyond the answers to the prepared and standardized questions in the questionnaire.

### ***Data collection procedure***

To collect the empirical data necessary for this study a questionnaire was distributed among the 50 teachers participating in the research. They provided both open answers and alternative answers to the open ended and "yes", "no" questions respectively. Then, to hear their personal views the researcher asked each one to have a 5 minute interview with him.

The data obtained both from the written questionnaires and the oral interviews were carefully analyzed. Since data analysis is not a simple description of the data collected but a process by which the researcher can bring interpretation to the data, the themes and coding categories in this study emerged from an examination of the data rather than been determined before hand and imposed on the data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

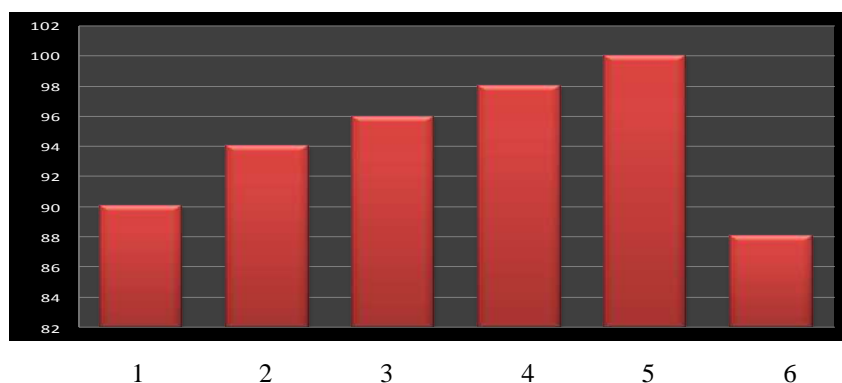
The problems in using CLT reported by participant teachers in this study fall into four types: Some may be caused by the teacher. Some others may be created by the students. The third class may come on the part of the educational system. The last but not the least problems might probably be caused by CLT itself.

### *Problems on the part of CLT teacher*

#### *Lack of training in CLT.*

- Misconceptions about CLT.
- Deficiency in spoken English.
- Few chances for retraining in CLT.
- Deficiency in sociolinguistic and strategic competence.
- Lack of enough time for materials development for communicative class

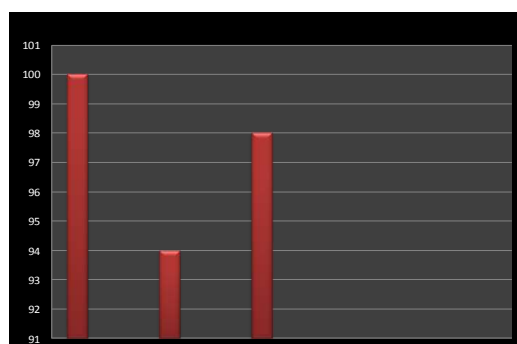
Figure 1: The percentage of teachers' views on problems raised on the part of Iranian EFL Teachers in using CLT in their real classes mentioned above



### *Problems caused by the students*

- Low English proficiency.
- Resistance to class participation.
- Lack of motivation for communication.

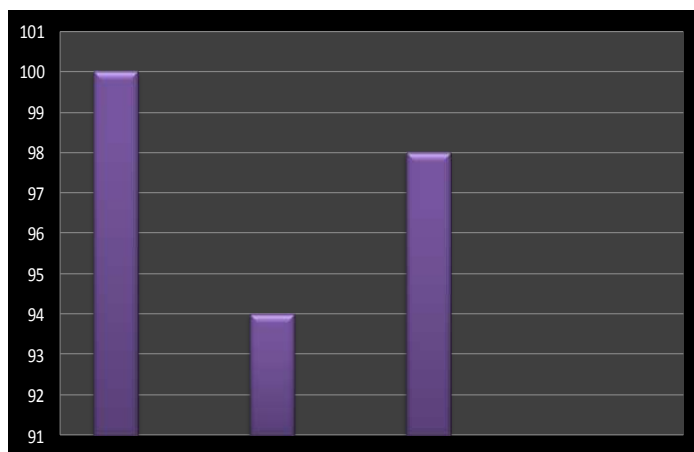
Figure 2: The percentage of teachers' views on problems caused by the students when Iranian EFL Teachers tend to use CLT in their classes



### ***Educational problems***

- Lack of budget.
- Crowded classes.
- Insufficiency of support.
- Grammar-focused exams.

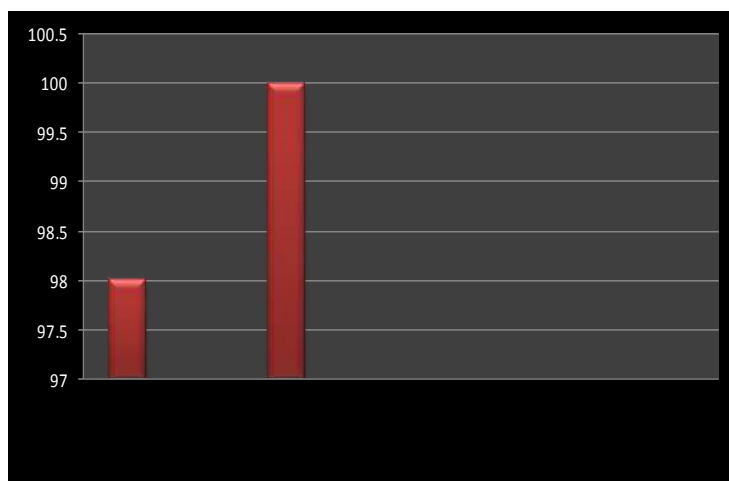
*Figure 3: The percentage of teachers' views on Educational problems when Iranian EFL Teachers tend to utilize CLT in their actual classes*



### ***Created problems by CLT***

- Lack of efficient assessment instruments.
- Inadequate account of EFL teaching in CLT.

*Figure 4: The percentage of teachers' views on created problems by CLT itself when Iranian EFL Teachers are going to apply CLT*



The number of times the research subjects reoffered to a theme in either the questionnaire or the interview as a limitation in CLT implementation in their own classes is to be taken into account. The maximum number of mentions possible for each of the themes involved in the four main types of problems is 48 out of 50 participants considered that their own deficiency in oral English constrained them in using CLT in their classes. Generally, it seems that one of the important requirements on the part of the teachers intending to use CLT is a good command of spoken

English. Although the teachers felt that they were highly proficient in English grammar, writing, and reading, almost all of them reported that their inadequate abilities in spoken English did not let them conduct the communicative classes essentially involved in CLT.

All participants reported that their insufficient strategic and sociolinguistic competence in using English for real communication to achieve genuine purposes in real context would inhibit their use of CLT. This is because of the fact that in CLT classes greater emphasis is given to strategic and sociolinguistic competence than in traditional grammar or structure focused classes. That is to say; being capable enough in application of these two communicative competences is a must to be able to communicate in real context for real purposes.

45 out of 50 subjects also reported that one of the main problems in utilizing CLT on the part of them is lack of enough training in CLT. Most of them told that they had heard only the name of CLT and few of them reported that they have studied some chapters on CLT but that is only in the books. It seems that this lack of systematic training in CLT led to a sketchy and fragmental understanding of CLT and made it unsafe for the instructors, to leave the security of the traditional methods and take the risk of trying a new unfamiliar method.

47 respondents referred to teacher's misconceptions about CLT as one of the principal roadblocks. A usual misunderstanding was that by focusing on appropriateness and fluency, CLT does not teach form at all and thus neglects accuracy. But based on many experts in the field of language teaching in CLT both fluency and accuracy receive emphasis. From among all these Larsen–freeman's conception worth mentioning as she points out that a CLT teacher evaluates not only the students' accuracy but also their fluency (Freeman; 2003:132). Many teachers probably think that CLT does not teach grammar and only teaches speaking. Such misunderstanding led teachers to believe that CLT contradicted their beliefs about language learning and did not allow them to prepare students for the various exams that are of crucial importance to their future careers.

Almost all English textbooks available (before the publication of the new series of text books accompanying publications of the communicative curricula) had been developed under the influence of the grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods. So teachers had to write their own materials and design their own activities if they wanted to use CLT. Iranian teachers and textbooks are not also exceptions. 44 out of 50 underpaid and over worked teachers as participants of this study complained about the lack of time and expertise in designing communicative activities.

All 50 teachers reported that one main problem preventing them from applying Communicative Language Teaching was their students' low proficiency in English. Iranian students do not start learning English until after the five years period of elementary school (Grade one junior high school), and they have only one or two 90 minute English classes per week and this makes progress slow. They usually suffer from their small English vocabulary and little command of English structures. Since Iranian students do not often have the necessary proficiency in English, all participant teachers found it difficult to do any oral communicative activities with them.



For this most participants expressed their view points as such; because the average secondary school students have a very small English vocabulary, and they know limited number of English structures, they have great difficulty expressing themselves in English when they are required to participate in genuine communicative exchanges. Gradually they lose interest in trying to speak English and become too discouraged to speak English any more.

Nineteen out of twenty teachers recognized the lack of motivation on the part of the students to work on their communicative competence as a great hindrance. Though a large number of people including students in our country have a great inclination to learn to express themselves in oral English, most of the participants reported that since their students' goal is to enter the university, they prefer to work on English grammar and vocabulary. This might be the case because in the national university Entrance Exam in Iran the part dealing with English is heavily based on grammar and lexis. "Because of the fact that grammar and lexis in isolation (in the form of discrete multiple choice test items) still play a decisive role in all English examinations in our country, teachers who teach communicative competence are not liked as well as those who teach grammar and lexis in isolation".(The idea was expressed by one of the participant teachers in this study).

47 out of 50 respondents believed that the students' resistance to class participation was one of the primary constraints in trying to use CLT. Believe it or not almost all of us are the product of traditional classroom structures; that is, we have mostly been brought up in teacher fronted classes. That is why; it proves a bit difficult to bring up our students while giving them ample opportunities to be active participants in real communicative activities. "Well, paragraphs, pages, chapters and even books have been written down on the importance of student centered classes but it seems that we teachers are still the class dictators" one of the respondents said. However; one main feature of CLT according to Richards (2001:168) is that it requires teachers to acquire less teacher-centered classroom management skills.

Communicative Language Teaching has proved to be more successful in small classes. That is why people like Richards (2001:168) also clearly state that there must at most be 12 students in a CLT class. This might be necessary to give every one in the class more time and opportunities to participate in real communication activities. Unfortunately, no one of the participant teachers claimed to have English classes with less than 25 students in. And this they believed makes the job even thornier.

As it was previously mentioned most of our English examinations are grammar and lexis based. The biggest of these life procedure determinant exams is the National University Exam given to the students each year. Based on this fact most of the subjects (48 out of 50) believed that, they are under the pressure to make their pupils do well on such tests, often devoting valuable class time to teaching test-taking skills and drilling students on multiple-choice items. Based on the above mentioned fact the reader can judge how our teachers are under sever constraints in CLT application.

Lack of enough funding was also mentioned as a great limitation in CLT utilization (44 out of 50 teachers reported this). Obviously CLT needs ideal classes with as less students as possible. It also needs some equipment including a TV set, a computer, and so many other things not to be mentioned here. Some of the teachers believed that it is always more difficult to apply CLT because of the lack of money which is not always there. So "it's much harder than you plan and imagine." one of the respondents said.

We teachers are not also supported by each other. 43 respondents also proposed the lack of support as an important limitation to the teachers in CLT application. Teachers generally found this lack of professional, administrative, and collegial support discouraging. That is why they mainly lose hope in dealing with the challenges of introducing CLT in their classes.

CLT does not give a sufficient account of EFL teaching though its initial growth in foreign language teaching accounted for that (Hewing; 2001:160). Obviously EFL is different from ESL. Yes, many people tend to confuse them and often ignore the special elements of EFL. One of the participants in this study rightly said that "because EFL and ESL teaching are different we often find Western language teaching methods difficult to use". The significant difference that almost all the teachers saw between EFL and ESL included the goal of learning English, contextual situation, teachers' command of English proficiency, and the availability of authentic English materials.

Another problem cited on the part of 49 participants in this study as a constraint in using CLT is its lack of effective assessment instruments. Larsen–Freeman (2003:132) when dealing with the evaluation of the CLT students points out that the student who has the most control of the structures and vocabulary is not always the best communicator. That is why she proposes that a teacher can informally evaluate his students' performance in his role as an advisor or co–communicator. She further explains that in order to assess students writing skill, for instance, a teacher might ask them to write a letter to a friend. However, it seems not to be easy to evaluate our students when we use CLT to teach by.

Based on the above mentioned facts one can see the difficulty and the lack of clear cut assessment procedures in CLT. Imagine you are teaching 6 (sometimes more) classes a week. Then you have to be busy enough during the week. If you are so optimistic there might be at least 200 students in your classes. If you are going to follow the procedures of CLT to evaluate your pupils efficiently, it seems hard job, right? One other major difficulty is the fact that most our standard tests emphasize the objectivity nature of our scoring and evaluation procedures. Something that does not seem to be very reasonable in CLT.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The aim of the present study was to see if EFL teachers in general and Iranian EFL teachers in particular can apply CLT procedures in their EFL teaching context successfully. Based on the findings of this study one can speculate about the perceived difficulties in utilizing CLT demands and what the EFL situation in many countries allows. This contradiction must be resolved before EFL teaching in these countries can benefit from CLT. One good way to do this is that the delivery of EFL methods courses in education programs should change. In this regard, Hewing (2001:161) obviously points out that CLT should not be lectured about but demonstrated. Novice nonnative teachers of English then should have opportunities to go hands–on experience with and gain confidence in using Communicative Language Teaching. In addition despite its initial claim to be appropriate an approach for EFL situation, CLT seems to be more suitable for ESL situations.

To indicate this fact Edge (1996:18) points out that it seems necessary that rather than relying on expertise, methodology, and materials controlled and dispensed by Western ESL countries, EFL countries should strive to establish their own research contingents and encourage method specialists and classroom teachers to develop language teaching methods that take into account the political, economic, social, and cultural factors' and most important of all, the EFL situations in their countries. They should also devise teaching methods, appropriate to their learners, their colleagues, and their societies. As it is the case with almost all studies done in the field of teaching English as a foreign language, this study is not free of limitations. That is to say, because of the eluding nature of CLT which is defined differently by different people one cannot claim to provide all inclusive criteria to list the problems with which EFL teachers wish to come to a conclusion in evaluating CLT as an approach in EFL contexts. Therefore, the authors of this paper have not intended to come to an absolute conclusion about the perceived problems with which EFL teachers might face in using CLT in their real classes. ALL in all, it is hoped that this survey be of use for all colleagues. All defects of this paper are of ours. That is, no fault is to the participant teachers in this study.

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*Appendix 1*

**Table one:** A summary of the number and the percentage of the major perceived problems mentioned on the part of the participants in this study.

Sources of Perceived Problems in Using CLT	No. of Mentions Out of 50	Percentage
<b><i>1. Problems on the part of CLT teacher</i></b>		
1.1 lack of training in CLT	45	90%
1.2 misconceptions about CLT	47	94%
1.3 deficiency in spoken English	48	96%
1.4 few chances for retraining in CLT	49	98%
1.5 deficiency in sociolinguistic and strategic competence	50	100%
1.6 lack of enough time for materials development for communicative classes	44	88%
<b><i>2. Problems caused by the students</i></b>		
2.1 low English proficiency	50	100%
2.2 resistance to class participation	47	94%
2.3 lack of motivation for communication	49	98%
<b><i>3. Educational problems</i></b>		
3.1 lack of budget	44	88%
3.2 crowded classes	50	100%
3.3 insufficiency of support	43	86%
3.4 grammar-focused exams	48	96%
<b><i>4. Created problems by CLT</i></b>		
4.1 lack of efficient assessment instruments	49	98%
4.2 inadequate account of EFL teaching in CLT	50	100%

## Appendix 2

### *The questionnaire used in this study*

*Please complete the following questions as appropriate.*

1. Age.....
2. Sex.....
3. How many years have you been a teacher of English?
4. Are you teaching in a middle school or high school?  
Middle School                                  High School
5. Which grade(s) are you teaching? .....
6. Are you teaching in an urban or rural middle/high School?  
Urban    Rural
7. Are you concerned about the methods you use in teaching English?  
YES     NO
8. What methods are you using now?
9. Have you tried Communicative language Teaching (CLT)?  
YES     NO
10. Why did you or why didn't you try CLT?
11. How did you like using CLT in your classroom?

**The following are some difficulties that other EFL teachers had in adopting CLT.**

Did you come across these difficulties or do you think they might be difficulties for you in adopting CLT?

- |   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Teachers' deficiency in spoken English?                                      | YES | NO |
| 2. Teachers' deficiency in strategic and sociolinguistic competence in English? | YES | NO |
| 3. Teachers' having little time to write communicative materials?               | YES | NO |
| 4. Students' low English proficiency?   | YES | NO |
| 5. Students' passive style of learning?   | YES | NO |
| 6. Lack of authentic teaching materials?  | YES | NO |
| 7. Grammar-based examinations?  | YES | NO |
| 8. Large classes?   | YES | NO |
| 9. The differences between EFL and ESL?   | YES | NO |

## METAPHOR AND METONYMY IN INTERACTION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF BODY-PART EXPRESSIONS IN ENGLISH AND CHINESE

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### ABSTRACT

Within the framework of Contemporary cognition, metaphor and metonymy are both viewed as a way of thinking rather than only a matter of language. In this paper, non-literal senses of “gut” in both Chinese and English are studied quantitatively and qualitatively with the aid of corpora under the guidance of cognitive theories. The findings show that non-literal uses of “gut” across two languages account for a substantial proportion of its corpus citations; the metonymic expressions of “gut” in both languages are more than metaphoric ones, and a number of non-literal notions of “gut” are generated by conceptual interplay between metonymy and metaphor; universal bodily experience can motivate equivalent expressions across two languages, but gut is hardly observed as an internal organ, and the cognitive process is complex, which will result in different expressions of gut for cultural and linguistic reasons.

**KEY WORDS:** Non-literal, corpus, conceptual interaction, metonymy, metaphor

### INTRODUCTION

The study of metaphor has attracted the attention of many scholars in cognitive linguistics. Metaphor is viewed as a way of thinking rather than only a matter of language by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). They proposed “conceptual metaphor theory” which underlies distinct semantic fields can share many of the same words and expressions. Conceptual metaphor theory also claims that most central metaphors are grounded in bodily experience which plays an important role in motivating features of language. Human is likely to cognize the world on the basis of body parts and organs as body seems to be the most familiar part to know and perceive. Compared to the lexes from the field of head and limbs, such as eye, mouth, hand, leg, etc., the conceptual process of viscera lexes is more complex and attracts less attention, and more comprehensive researches on the uses of viscera expressions (except for “heart”) are needed .

This paper intends to conduct a systematic and in-depth corpus study on “gut” expressions in English and Chinese under the guidance of cognitive linguistic theories and the metaphor–metonymy interaction. It discusses to answer the following questions:

- (1) What is the frequency of non-literal senses of “gut” expressions in corpora?
- (2) What is the conceptual process of “gut” expressions?
- (3) What are the similarities and differences of the uses of “gut” expressions motivated by universal bodily experience and cultural knowledge across the two languages?



## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Metaphor , Metonymy and their conceptional interaction*

Metaphor and metonymy are both viewed as a way of thinking rather than only a matter of language from cognitive perspective. A great number of researchers have provided insightful observations on the conceptual processes of metonymy and metaphor. Lakoff (1987) regarded metonymy and metaphor both as the types of ICM (idealised cognitive models). “An ICM is a cognitive structure, which is idealised for the purpose of understanding and reasoning, and whose function is to represent reality from a certain perspective” (Ruiz de Mendoza, 1997). Furthermore, Lakoff & Johnson (1999) assumed that metaphor is the result of the combination of primary metaphors. The idea had also been studied by Grady (1997, 1998), who coined the term “primary metaphors” to refer to those mappings “which arise directly from correlations in our experience and which work together with other metaphors to give rise to compound metaphors.” Turner & Fauconnier (1995) have proposed the “blending theory” of metaphor and conceptual projection to refine Lakoff’s two-domain model, thus the interpretation of metaphor requires the activation of minimum four mental spaces: two input spaces, a source and a target, and two middle spaces, a generic space and a blended space or blend.

As to metonymy, the discussions have focused on “the demarcation of metonymy in its own right and in relation to metaphor”. (Marisol Velasco-Sacristán, 2010). From the view of cognitive semantics, there are two broad perspectives to demarcate metonymy: the domain-related approach (Kövecses and Radden, 1998; Barcelona, 2000, 2003; Croft, 2003; Kövecses, 2003) and the prototype-related approach (Riemer, 2003; Dirven, 2003), along with recent refinements to both approaches: the domain-refined approach (Ruiz de Mendoza, 2002; Dirven, 2002; Ruiz de Mendoza and Díez Velasco, 2003 ) and the contiguity-refined approach (Peirsman and Geeraerts, 2006). On the one hand, the scholars of the prototype-related approach considered metonymy as a prototypically structured concept, and the relations that lie at the basis of metonymic shifts of meaning are not just objectively given, but rely on a process of construal (Dirven, 2002); On the other hand, metonymy is usually regarded as a shift of meaning within a single conceptual domain in the domain-related approach. The notion of conceptual domain is crucial to defining and distinguishing metaphor and metonymy. Croft (2002) proposed replacing “domain” with “domain matrix”, a refined concept of domain to illustrate “more than one domain joining together in a given entity”, thus metonymy defined as “a metonymic mapping which occurs within a single domain matrix, not across domains (or domains matrices)” (Croft, 2002). Ruiz de Mendoza (2002, 2003) refined the domain-related approach, treating metonymy with three parameters: domain inclusion, domain expansion and reduction, and domain highlighting. Thus we have a whole domain, called matrix domain, which stands for one of its subdomains, and a subdomain stands for its corresponding matrix domain. The former is regarded as target-in-source metonymy, the latter source-in-target metonymy (Ruiz de Mendoza and Díez Velasco, 2000), which are diagrammed in Figure 1 and Figure 2. Domain and the prototype approaches can be complementary rather than incompatible. Therefore, Marisol Velasco-Sacristán (2010) claimed that the domain matrix, the conceptually associative relations within these domains and the pragmatic features of inference and relevance are equally important and necessary for demarcating metonymy. “In this sense, metonymy has to be considered as a fundamental type of cognitive model (i.e., an intra-domain mapping), based on a conceptually contiguous relationship between two referents that can be used for immediate pragmatic purposes.” Marisol Velasco-Sacristán (2010).

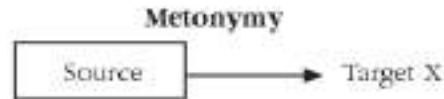


Figure 1: source-in-target metonymy

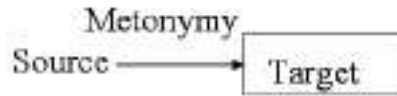


Figure 2: target-in-source metonymy

A number of linguists believe that there is no clear boundary between metonymy and metaphor with fuzzy cases between these categories. The interplay between metonymy and metaphor that may result from their combination is complex and interests many scholars. A metonymy-metaphor continuum by Taylor (1995) led Radden and Barcelona (2000, 2003) to the intermediate notion of metonymy-based metaphor. Goossens (2003) proposed “metaphonymy”, by studying several ways in which metaphor and metonymy interact. Ruiz de Mendoza and Díez Velasco (2000, 2003) stated several interactional patterns between metaphor and metonymy under the guidance of Turner and Fauconnier’s conceptual blending theory (2000). Ruiz de Mendoza argued against Goossens’s typology of interactional patterns (2003) that two distinct domains of a metaphor cannot be included within the single domain of a metonymy. He proposed that the typology of interactional patterns is based on two main criteria: the place where the metonymic mapping develops and the scope of the metonymy. Thus Ruiz de Mendoza and Díez Velasco came up with six kinds of interplay that may result from the combination of metonymy and metaphor: metonymic expansion of a metaphoric source, metonymic expansion of a metaphoric target, metonymic reduction of one of the correspondences of a metaphoric target, metonymic reduction of one of the correspondences of a metaphoric source, metonymic expansion of one of the correspondences of a metaphoric source, metonymic expansion of one of the correspondences of a metaphoric target. In their research, the interactional possibility is frequently exploited by body part metonymies that express feeling.

### *Cognitive linguistic studies on body-part term*

There have been a great number of mono-linguistics and cross-linguistics studies on the human body part terms. Some scholars noted the conceptual process of body-part terms, such as Lakoff (1993) and Kövecses (2000). Lakoff (1993) claimed that the most central metaphors are grounded in our human physical experience, thus different languages can have the same conceptual metaphors. Kövecses (2000) studied the semantics of emotion language, and brought up the idea that “emotions are largely understood metaphorically. Physiological reactions of emotion are metonymically related to these emotions”. Mono-linguistic researches on some body part terms were conducted to support certain cognitive linguistic theories. For example, Niemeier (2000) illustrated one certain body part, i.e. heart which is the site of emotions to argue that many metaphors have a metonymy basis. Comparative Researches on body-part terms in different languages were also done by many scholars. Deignan (2004) did a cross-linguistic research on a few body part lexes to argue that most central metaphors are grounded in universal bodily experience and thus are shared by different languages, and a large number of expressions are

generated by a combination of metaphor and metonymy. Qi (2007) studied “heart” expressions in English and Chinese, and forwarded a cognitive model of “heart” expressions from a cognitive perspective with six metonymic models and two metaphoric models. Bai (2009) studied the metaphoric behavior of viscera lexes in Chinese and English, especially from the perspective of cultural difference. Zhao (2010) offered a systematic and comprehensive study on meaning transference of body-part terms in English and Chinese from cognitive and comparative perspectives.

However, most studies on body part terms incorporated metonymy into metaphor and the conceptual interaction between metaphor and metonymy was neglected, thus the classification was ambiguous and rash; some body part terms, especially those of the head and limbs, are frequently addressed (Gao, 2006; Li, 2007; Qi, 2007; Luo, 2010; Liu, 2008; Niemeier, 2000), while others have received less attention from the scholars, such as viscera (with “heart” excluded); most studies are conducted qualitatively, while a quantitative study aided by corpus is needed as a complement.

## METHODOLOGY

The study is to offer an adequate description of observed features of language in use quantitatively and qualitatively based on corpora by investigating the language use of patterns for body part lexis, the prevalence of different words co-occurs with body part terms, and the percentages of cognitive model of the chosen body part expressions. The body part lexis “gut” is chosen for investigation for its extensive metaphorical uses in English and Chinese. All derived and inflected forms of the items are also studied. The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) and Center for Chinese Linguistics PKU (CCL) are adopted for research of English and Chinese items respectively. COCA is the largest freely-available corpus of English which contains more than 450 million words of text from 1990 to 2012. CCL is a Chinese corpus for linguistic study which contains 447 million words of text updated until 2009. Thus the two language online corpora are with similar word capacity, and both contain written and spoken form of language, but the English corpus is better updated.

Corpus data are analyzed as follows: the words we study generate many thousands of citations, and the senses of citations of each item are identified aided by dictionaries of each language; in order to analyze the metaphoric meaning of “gut” expressions, the main collocates with high frequency of each lexeme are identified automatically for the English data, and manually for the Chinese; the meaning of each fixed expression is examined in terms of dictionaries and context of the citation; The metonymic and metaphoric uses of non-literal meaning are identified. The conceptual modes proposed by Ruiz de Mendoza and Díez Velasco (2000, 2003) are adopted to analyze the non-literal uses of “gut”.

## RESULTS

### *“Gut” expressions in the corpora: frequency and fixedness*

In this section, results of the data from the corpora are presented and processed. In English corpus, the foreign languages, acronym, name of a person are opted out, and the verb forms of “gut” are also beyond this research. Thus, the literal expressions include leaky gut, bacteria in the gut, fish guts and so on, meaning “the lower part of the alimentary canal”, “the entire

alimentary canal”, “the bowels or entrails, especially of an animal”. In Chinese corpus, the proper names like “香肠” and “火腿肠” (kinds of sausage) are excluded, and the literal expressions includes “肠癌”(intestinal cancer), “肠炎”(enteritis) and so on. Table 1 and Table 2 show the frequency of the literal and non-literal senses of “gut”. Non-literal senses of the word “gut” in both Chinese and English accounts for a substantial proportion of the corpus citations, which is consistent with Deignan’s corpus research on several body lexis and the conclusion she had drawn. (Deignan, 2004). About 87.1% of citations of gut in English and about 43.4% citations of gut in Chinese are non-literal.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF “GUT” IN ENGLISH CORPUS

Number of citations	Uses	Example
272	Proper Noun, foreign language, which is beyond our research	" Das ist gut ", sagte ich nach einem Weilchen, " es ist gut,
1243	gut as a verb, which is not discussed in our research	gut the fish
897	literal meaning	leaky gut
4746	non-literal meaning	gut feeling
Total	7158	

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF “GUT” IN CHINESE CORPUS

Number of citations	Uses	Example
905	Proper Noun, name of a person, which is beyond our research	香肠,火腿肠,鱼肠剑等
3472	literal meaning	肠癌
3354	non-literal meaning	愁肠
Total	7731	

It is also observed from the data that a large proportion of “gut” expressions have some degree of fixedness, and particular senses exist with particular collocates. For example, disease and bacteria are associated with the literal meaning of “gut” in a large sense, and “feeling” with a non-literal sense. Moreover, a great number of metonymies and metaphors appear in the fixed and semi-fixed expressions, such as *gut feeling* or *to have the guts*. Table 3 and Table 4 show the number of citations of “gut” expressions with its frequent collocates, in descending order of number.

TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF COLLATIONS WITH "GUT" IN ENGLISH CORPUS (NON-LITERAL)

Number of citations	Collocation	Example
477	Freely combining	Most of the weight had gone to his gut, which hung over beltless Oshkosh jeans.
871	in (the/one's) gut(s)	...experience a feeling so strong, they might as well have been swatted in the gut by a 43- ounce, white-ash bat of baseball's
698	to have the/no guts to	...It's fundamentally time for somebody to have the guts to stand up and say enough lying about the Middle East.
452	gut feeling(s)	...to come back with solid evidence that rules them out, not just a gut feeling.
189	to take (a lot of) guts	...That had to take a lot of guts and I think that you have to realize that many of our Western Allies have...
174	gut instinct(s)	...To stick with your gut instinct...
171	the guts of	...sucking them into the guts of 55 Water Street...
158	gut tell(s)	...My gut tells me that our story probably rang true for most everybody...
147	to get the guts to do that...	...It took a long time for me to get the guts

146	to hate one's guts	...you're going to hate each other's guts by the time you get there....
136 call me...	gut reaction(s)	...whose gut reaction to everything is to
128	to spill the/one's guts	...And commercial stockyards and slaughterhou ses have learned better than to spill their bloody guts in public...
76 gut...	punch someone in the gut	...It hit him like a punch in the
74	blood and guts	...in Reza's mouth when she gave one of her windy laughs, blood and guts...
67	into one's/ the gut	...to move through it into the gut itself...
57	trust one's gut	...So you'll have to trust your gut, FAIL, which failed you here...
55	to go with one's gut	But where do Republicans go with their gut and their brains? If they see one guy is ready...
49 guts here...	to show one's guts	...People want someone to show some
48	gut check	... I don't have a gut check for this...
48	kick in the gut(s)	...Elvis held him back by the shoulders and kicked Conrad in the gut...
43 gut...	feeling in the gut	...a sinking feeling puddled in Marianna's
42	pain in the gut(s)	...Something in the prisoner's cry of pain struck deep into his gut....
40	gut(s) twist(s)	...Mandy's gut twisted as memories of the wrenching



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			grief she felt when her parents died washed over....
39	suck in one's gut(s)	...You're there trying to suck in your	
gut...			
36	beer gut	He was tall, middle-aged, and had a fair-sized beer gut on him.	
33	gut level	...has been involved at the gut level of racing longer than anyone....	
33	gut wrenching	...gut wrenching sobs, so heavy she could hardly breathe between them....	
33	gut(s) tighten(s)	...His gut tightened as he stared at his	
sleeping daughter...			
31	to puke one's guts	Except, of course, that at the moment, he was puking his guts out. Sister Angel held the basin...	
31	gut(s) clenched	Ben's gut clenched in sympathy...	
28	gut churn(s)	...her gut churning with demon fire as if the beast inside was trying to burn...	
27	follow one's gut	Giving herself permission to follow her gut -- be it with work or her personal style	
26	no guts, no glory/ guts and glory	...INSPIRATION: You epitomize the phrase " No guts, no glory." TAURUS April 20 to May 20 LOVE: Your obsessions...	
24	lack guts	... who he believes lack the guts to make unpopular	

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			spending cuts and
24	bust a gut (laughing)	...To my surprise, he did not bust a gut	
	over that one...		
19	gut ache(s)	... Johnson felt his gut ache. ...	
16	gut course(s)/job	...It was all gut courses...	
14	gut string	The San of southwest Africa plucked the gut	strings of their wooden hunting bows.
12	to admire one's guts	...you have to admire their guts (and if	you don't agree with their politics, make your own sign...
10	gut issue(s)	...avoidance of the gut issue, the blood	fact....
Total		4746	

TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF COLLATIONS WITH "GUT" IN CHINESE CORPUS (NON-LITERAL)

Number of citations	English expression	Example
55		Freely combining
		...我这个人一根肠子通到底，受不了这样拖拖拉拉.
1357	心肠	...许多人认为他作为教练心肠软...
251		羊肠小路（道等）
		...其间是非常狭窄泥泞的羊肠小路...
221	(荡气\九曲)回肠	...最后一枪令人荡气回肠...
220		饥肠
		...结果被饥肠辘辘的牛当做美食吞入肚中...
192		牵肠(挂肚)
		...让为之牵肠挂肚的美国宇航局科学家喜出望外...
167		(互诉)衷肠
		...互诉衷肠早就成为伊宁人的婚庆传统...
128	断肠	...夕阳西下，断肠人在天涯...
117		肝肠(寸断)
		...她的是死是活定然叫双亲肝肠寸断...

94	热肠	...小模小样，热心热肠...	
92	愁肠	...都将一副愁肠，换成一副笑脸...	
89			柔肠
	...昆仑女则是真正侠骨柔肠的军中女杰...		
71	搜索枯肠	...任凭秀才苦思冥想，搜索枯肠....	
66	肠断	...也酿造了多少催人肠断的幕幕悲剧...	
44	肚肠	...唱累了，肚肠也不免有些辘辘...	
44			搜肠刮肚
	...陈平原搜肠刮肚半天，也找不出一个...		
38			(小肚) 鸡肠
	...侠肝义胆的英雄成为小肚鸡肠利欲熏心的政客...		
31	脑满肠肥	...更不能只追求脑满肠肥珠光宝气...	
27			穿肠
	...酒是穿肠毒药，留下来总是害人的...		
21	翻肠倒胃(肚)	...逐觉翻肠倒胃的恶心....	
20			直肠子、直肠直肚
	...心想许多人都说他是直肠子存不住话...		
13	花花肠子	...咱实在没那弯弯绕的花花肠子...	
Total		3354	

## DICUSSION

### *Types of the “gut” expressions*

The different types of non-literal expressions in corpus citations are presented and analyzed. The non-literal expressions of “gut” are divided into metonymy, metaphor, and the interaction between metonymy and metaphor, under the guidance of Goossens (1990), Radden and Barcelona (2000), Ruiz de Mendoza and Díez Velasco (2000,2003)

#### *Metaphor*

As Lakoff and Johnson(1993, 1999) has postulated that metaphor is an ontological mapping from the source domain to the target domain. Metaphor is not only a matter of language but also a way of thinking, the way we conceptualize the world. “Gut” is a visceral organ inside human body which cannot be directly observed by people, so its morphology and function are rarely metaphorically exploited.

A few cases of metaphors are found in “gut” expressions. For instances, the metaphorical uses of “gut” in English are usually post-modified, such as the guts of the computer or the guts of the problem, in which the plural form “guts” means the essential components or inner working parts. In Chinese corpus, “羊肠小道” (a narrow winding trail) is a typical metaphoric expression, which characterizes the road in terms of our knowledge of the gut of the sheep.

#### *Metonymy*

The metonymy of “gut” expressions falls into two categories proposed by Ruiz de Mendoza (2002): target-in-source metonymy (a “domain reduction” metonymy) or source-in-target

metonymy (a “domain expansion” metonymy). On the one hand, as Kövecses (2000, 2002) has proposed, the physical reactions of the emotions and the emotional experience could be regarded as parts of the same domain. For example, when a person is becoming pale or shaking, we can infer that he or she is frightened. In English corpus “gut” can refer to innermost emotional or visceral response, such as “feeling in the gut” and courage in “to have the guts”. “Gut” as “intuition” is a special meaning and occupies a large proportion in English corpus, such as “gut feeling” and “gut instinct”. In Chinese cases, items like “柔肠” (the tender emotion) and “愁肠” (the upset emotion) are used to express a seat of emotion. “肠” also metonymically infers to human characters, such as “心肠”( heart; intention). “饥肠” (hunger) is part of a situation in which a person’s gut is rumbling due to the hunger. The type of all the above expressions is target-in-source metonymies, which can be diagrammed in Figure 2. Taken GUT FOR INTUITION as an example, the essentials of the conceptual process are as presented in Figure 3:

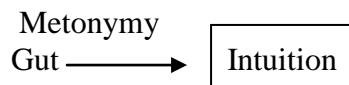


Figure 3: GUT FOR INTUITION

On the other hand, “Gut” metonymically refers to “the belly, abdomen” in “beer gut”, “suck in one’s gut” and “to kick someone in the gut”, which typically is a “domain expansion” metonymy (Ruiz de Mendoza, 2002). “Beer gut” means a fat belly because of too much beer drinking. In this expression, “gut” refers to the region of the body (i.e. a vertebrate between the thorax and the pelvis), instead of its literal meaning of the part of the alimentary canal between the stomach and the anus which is situated inside the body.

### Interaction

The typology of the conceptual interaction between metonymy and metaphor is under the guidance of Ruiz de Mendoza (2000) and Díez Velasco (2000). The expressions of gut examined in this paper fall into three categories of six types proposed by them.

Consider the expression “to have the guts”, a case of conceptual interplay between the metaphor QUALITIES ARE POSSESSIONS and metonymy GUTS FOR COURAGE. “Courage” is regarded as a physical entity with its associated properties, that is, it can be processed, and thus an abstract concept is characterized in terms of a physical entity. The metonymy GUTS FOR COURAGE is part of cultural knowledge that is experientially grounded in the sensations in human’s guts when facing danger or challenges. The conceptual process is shown in Figure 3. The conceptual interplay of metaphor and metonymy is also evidenced in expressions like to take (a lot of) guts, to get the guts, to lack guts, to show one’s guts, which are all consistent with the conceptual mode by Ruiz de Mendoza and Díez Velasco (2000, 2003): the metonymic reduction of one of the correspondences of a metaphoric target, as Figure 4 shows.

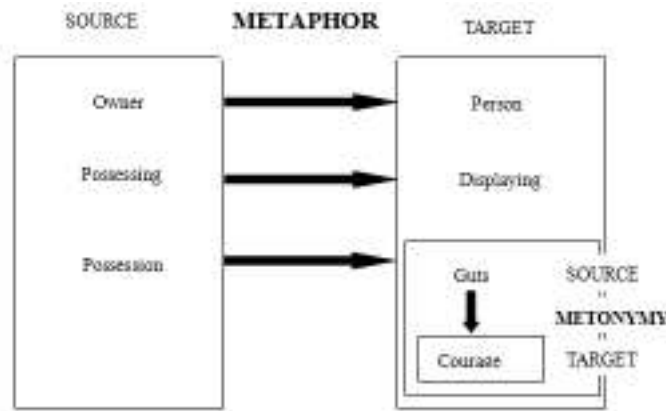


Figure 4: to have the guts

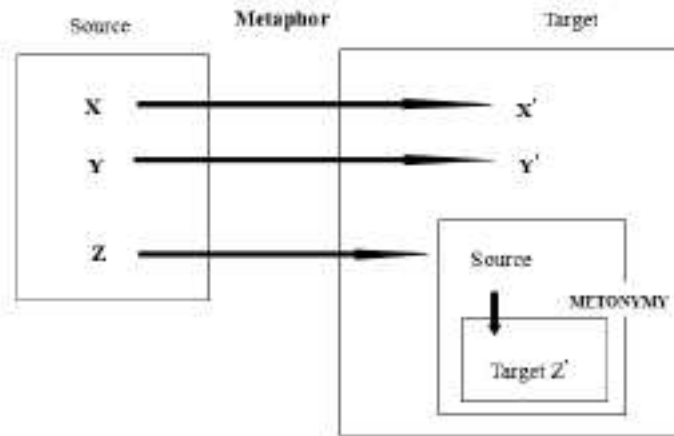


Figure 5: a metonymic reduction of one of the correspondences of a metaphoric target

In English corpus, there are a great number of verbs or the noun form of those verbs to express human feelings, such as gut churns, to churn in one's gut. Consider the expression "Anger churns in his gut", which is used to describe that people feel anger in their gut like fluid churns in a container. In this semantic construction, the metonymy is built into the target of the metaphor. Furthermore, the metonymy, whose source domain is a subdomain of its target, helps determine the interpretation of the metaphoric mapping: "Anger churns in his gut" is part of a situation in which human body reacts to anger. The essentials of this process are presented in Figure 5.

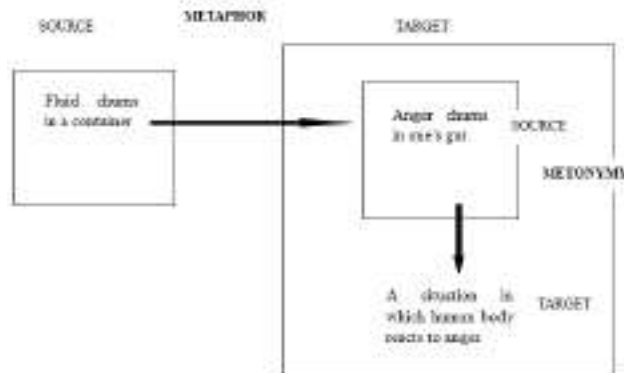


Figure 6: Anger churns in his gut.

Additionally, the complete understanding of this process requires the activation of our knowledge

of the logic of the CONTAINER schema. Therefore, the gut is understood as a three-dimensional entity that can hold things inside, that is, the gut is metaphorically understood as a container and emotions as its contents. The full interpretation of the expression “Anger churns in his gut” applies metaphoric, metonymic and image-schematic principles. Some other expressions such as “to twist in one’s gut”, “to clutch (at) one’s gut” also work in this mode, i.e. a metonymic expansion of a metaphoric target, as presented in Figure 6:

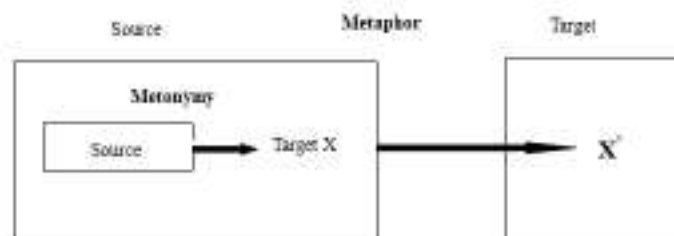


Figure 7: a metonymic expansion of a metaphoric source

As to another metaphorical expression “She feels like she gets punched in the gut”, this presents a different interaction between metonymy and metaphor to “Anger churns in his gut”. In order to analyze the way the interplay works, we select a context in corpus data, in which Jane feels sorrow every time when she reminds of her brother’s death. So she feels like she gets punched in the gut at the thought of his brother’s death. In the metaphor, the source domain is a person’s physical reaction to sorrow, and the target has a person that expresses such emotions (without actually being punched in the gut). The metonymy, which serves as the basis for the metaphoric mapping, is from a situation where a person gets punched in the gut to one in which a person shows sorrow. Thus, the source of the metonymy is built in its target. The essentials of the interaction process are shown in Figure 7. The conceptual process mode-a metonymic expansion of a metaphoric target- shown in Figure 8, can be applied to expressions like “to get kicked in the gut” and “肝肠寸断”(a Chinese phrase, literally meaning ‘liver and gut are cut into inches’, metaphorically meaning ‘overwhelmed by grief’)

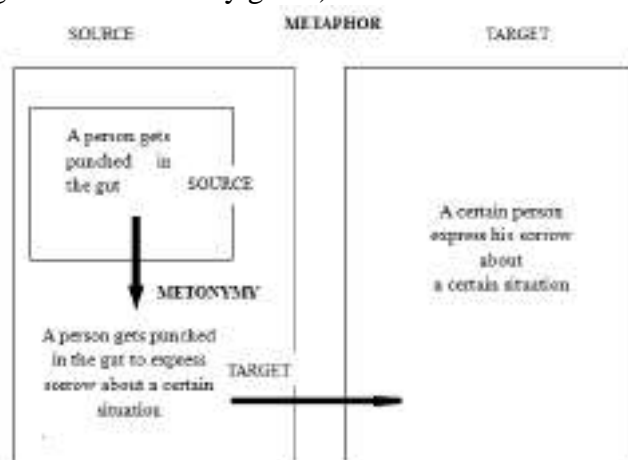


Figure 8: to get punched in the gut



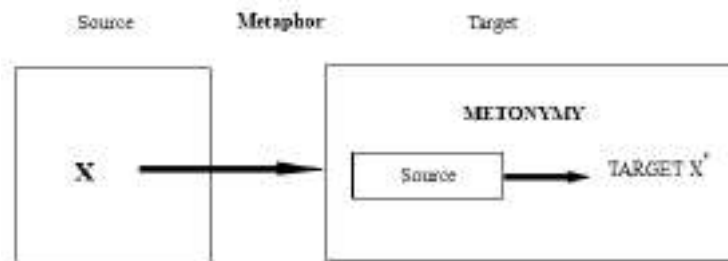


Figure 9: a metonymic expansion of a metaphoric target

A new typology is found in this paper, which is exploited by Chinese expressions like “蛇蝎心肠”(to have a murderous heart, literally meaning ‘have a heart and gut as malicious as snakes and scorpions’), “铁石心肠” (heart of stone, literally meaning have a heart and gut as hard as steel and stone). The equation of the expressions is “modifier + gut”. Figure 10 shows the conceptual process of this type of expression:

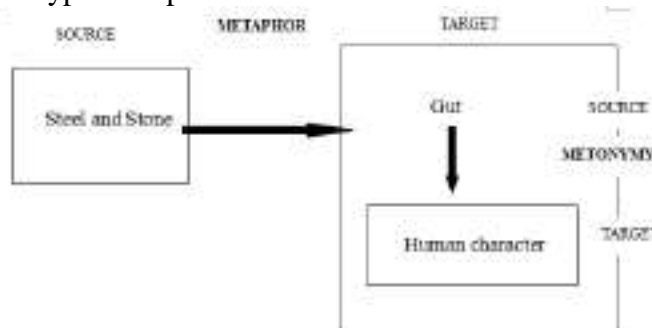


Figure 10: 铁石心肠

The new conceptual process mode is “a metonymic reduction of a metaphoric target” as Table 11 shows:

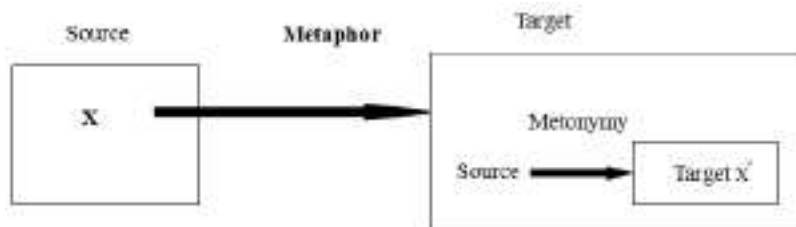


Figure 11: a metonymic reduction of a metaphoric target

### Meaning of GUT expressions in English and Chinese

In this section, we compare the metaphorical uses of “gut” expressions in English and Chinese according to the corpus data we have analyzed above. Moreover, the non-literal meanings of “gut” expressions are also compared across two languages, to distinguish which are motivated by universal bodily experience, or shared metaphors from those cultural- specific.

*Cognitive operation of “gut” expressions by two languages*

According to our classification and analysis above, a substantial proportion of non-literal expressions of “gut” in both languages are metonymic rather than metaphoric. A few senses of “gut” and “肠” expressions are metaphoric. The metaphorical use of “gut” in English refers to the essential components or inner working parts of machines or some abstract word like problem. In Chinese corpus, “羊肠小道”(a narrow winding trail) is a typical metaphoric expression, which characterizes the road in terms of our knowledge of the gut of the sheep (i.e. narrow and winding).

There is a great number of “gut” and “肠” are metonymically used with two-fold role: on the one hand, it refers to the abstract concepts: a seat of emotions, such as “gut wrenching” for “extreme upset”, “愁肠” for depression and sadness, “柔肠” for “tender heart”, etc; personal qualities, such as, “guts” for “courage”, “gut feeling” for “instinct”, “直肠子” for “straightforwardness”, “花花肠子” for “cunning”. On the other hand, it refers to “the belly, abdomen”, such as “beer gut”, “suck in one’s gut”, “elbow into one’s gut”, “to punch someone in the gut”.

As it is analyzed above, a number of high-frequent collocations of “gut” conform with the interactional patterns between metonymy and metaphor proposed by Ruiz de Mendoza and Díez Velasco (2000,2003). They generally fall into three categories by Ruiz de Mendoza: A metonymic reduction of one of the correspondences of a metaphoric target, such as “to have guts”, “to take (a lot of) guts”, “to get the guts”, “to lack guts”, “to show one’s guts”; A metonymic expansion of a metaphoric target, such as “to churn in one’s gut” “to twist in one’s gut”, “to clutch (at) one’s gut”; A metonymic expansion of a metaphoric target, such as “to get punched in the gut”, “to get kicked in the gut”.

*Shared meanings grounded in bodily experience*

From the above classification, we have found that there are shared non-literal meanings by the two languages regardless of minor differences. In many cases, the shared meanings seem to be motivated by bodily experience. First, physiological reactions of emotion are metonymically related to these emotions. A substantial number of “gut” and “肠” with their collocates refer to various kind of human emotions, and generally speaking, those emotions are negative, such as anger, depression, worry, etc., as in the following citations:

“...But the strongest romances give the reader the emotional impact of gut-wrenching internal conflicts that make it look like these people can't possibly end up happy together.”

“。。。你去体会当父母看到儿子生病时那种忧心忡忡、愁肠百结的心境。” (You will have a gut-wrenching experience as parents seeing their son is ill.)

*Differences in non-literal meaning*

Differences in non-literal meaning across two languages are no less than their similarities. In English corpus, “Intuition” meaning of “gut” takes a relative large proportion, such as “gut feeling”, “gut instinct”, etc. The notion of “gut” as “intuition” is ancient, and probably explains expressions such as gut reaction, gut feeling, and so on. Some version of explanation can be

traced back to the transcripts of Hebrew Bible. The term “bowels” in the Hebrew Bible refers to the center of the body from which the “whole” of human emotions were believed to originate. The examples are as follows:

“My gut feeling is the fact that Conrad was present during his death, there's a lot of questions to be answered.”

“Her gut instinct proved right: Johnson's charged performance as Lennon has won raves from critics and...”

In English, “guts” can refer to “courage”, a human character, in citations such as the following:

“I want to say, Congresswoman, you are my new hero for having the guts to talk about this.”

“Mark had finally gotten the guts to ask, and he'd done so in a place where...”

Additionally, in Chinese, the notion of “肠” as human characters is relatively more frequent and various, such as “直肠子” for “straightforwardness”, “花花肠子” for “cunning”, “蛇蝎心肠” for “ruthless” and so on, and the word before “肠” identify the kind of personality to some extent. The examples are as follows:

“老杨是个直肠子, 心里存不住话。” (Mr. Yang is straightforward and outspoken.)

“...这就说明她是个蛇蝎心肠的女人, 难道不是吗?” (She has a murderous heart cruel, doesn't she?)

Moreover, many idioms with “gut” are frequently used, such as “to hate a person's guts” (to dislike a person very strongly), sweat or work one's guts out (to work very hard), “to spill one's guts” (to tell all; to confess), “to bust a gut” (to work very hard or to make a big effort to achieve something), “to bust a gut laughing” (to laugh a lot), “a gut course” (a course that is easily passed). Most of these idioms date back long ago, and we can hardly find their origin of the notion of “gut”.

In Chinese, two viscera lexes are usually combined to form the fixed items due to their closely connection to each other, and the concept of viewing the world as a whole. For example, the expressions like “心肠” (heart; intention) contains heart and gut, “肝肠寸断” (deep sorrow) liver and gut, “牵肠挂肚” (be very worried about; be deeply concerned) gut and belly. However, this situation rarely happens in English. “Gut” can metonymically stands for belly or stomach, such as “beer gut”, which can also be expressed as “beer belly” or “beer stomach” with the same meaning. But “gut” and “belly” won't appeared together in an expression. In Chinese, the morphology of gut is metaphorically used with the notion as “narrowness and winding”, such as “羊肠小道” (a narrow winding trail), “九曲回肠” (gut-wrenching; twists and turns of rivers).

## CONCLUSION

In the course of the quantitatively and qualitatively study of the “gut” expression across two languages, this paper brought out the following points: first, non-literal senses of “gut” expressions in two languages both accounts for the majority of the total uses; second, there are vastly more metonymic expressions than metaphoric ones. Some frequent “gut” collocations fall

into the categories of interactional patterns between metonymy and metaphor proposed by Ruiz de Mendoza and Díez Velasco (2000,2003), and an additional pattern- a metonymic reduction of a metaphoric target- is found in Chinese expressions of “gut”; third, the two languages share some similarities in conceptual interactions and non-literal senses motivated by universal bodily experience, but the differences are quite a few: the specific non-literal senses of each language and the combination of two Chinese viscera lexes to express emotions or human characters.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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# **ANALYTICAL STUDY OF DISCOURSE STRATEGIES IN INTERNET BEGGING RELATING TO FINANCIAL INCAPACITY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Internet begging is a relatively new discourse genre. It is the online version of traditional begging, which is asking strangers for money to meet immediate and other needs such as money, food, and shelter. E-begging employs various discourse strategies which may appear vague or inexplicit. Correct interpretation of begging texts may evade the readers who do not understand the particular socio-cultural environment. The data for this study which comprised of sixty internet beggars' texts from two very popular internet begging websites were carefully selected. Thirty begging texts relating to financial incapability were selected from each of the websites. The texts were posted by the beggars between December, 2012 and February, 2013. This study adopted both the Pragma-Rhetorical theory and Critical Discourse Analysis approaches (see Watson and Hill (1993:146), Kennedy (1998) and Babatunde (2000:150)). Many internet beggars register on the sites with different socio-economic problems, different linguistic appealing modes etc. The words 'need' and 'help' signify a kind of logical use of language by beggars in distress or desperation to draw the attention of the audience to their situation through their language prowess. It was discovered that the proposition of five speech acts of the expressives, the commissives, the assertives or representatives, the directives and the declaratives by Searle (1969) was effectively employed by the e-beggars. Various discursive strategies of communicative strategies like persuasive strategies, politeness strategies and storytelling strategies were also employed in the e-begging texts. The internet beggars' used every available rhetorical strategy in the communicative process as well as to create intended effects. This paper recommends that e-beggars should try to avoid using the speech acts of the directives. Also, website owners should device means of educating prospective e-beggars on appropriate language skills and discursive strategies.

**KEY WORDS:** Discourse strategies, internet begging, financial incapacity

## **INTRODUCTION**

In linguistics, a relatively new discourse genre is Internet begging (see Freeman and Medway 1994:1). Internet begging, cyber-begging, or Internet panhandling according to Wikipedia (2013:1) is the online version of traditional begging, which is asking strangers for money to meet immediate and other needs such as money, food, and shelter. It has a notable advantage over street begging as it is practiced with relative anonymity, consequently eliminating or reducing the shame and disgrace associated with begging in public.

The internet is a global network of computer networks used for sending messages from one place to another. Several opportunities like websites development and management, e-mail, networking and programming activities e.t.c. are available on the internet.

### **DISCOURSE SPACES ON THE INTERNET**

There are several discourse spaces available on the internet. The following fields of research are the discourse spaces. They include: the virtual conference forums and seminars, listservs, the internet as an informal learning environment for English as a second language, then the internet as a discursive space where identities are formed and social relationships are negotiated, and as a space where the intermingling of the global and the local rise to hybrid language varieties, e.t.c. (See Davis & Brewer, 1997; Mitra & Watts, 2002, pp. 486-488).

### **THE CONCEPT OF E-BEGGING**

Internet begging is a new way of begging with a new generation of beggars who use the internet medium to beg for money, food, shelter, e.t.c. According to Wikipedia (2013,3-7), during the early days of the Internet, cyber-begging occurred in the form of personal advertisements for assistance on local bulletin board systems (BBS). As a result of the development of personal websites, certain persons began advertising their needs, using the features available through website authoring. Many Internet service providers (ISPs) later offered a free homepage along with the basic dial-up connection service to the Internet. Internet begging gained notoriety and momentum after June 2002 when Karyn Bosnak started SaveKaryn.com as an attempt to have the Internet public help pay her credit card debt.

E-begging, a computer mediated communication, as Atima (2012, pp 8-9) opines, has become a regular part of our internet experience where beggars beg online in order to get out of problems or debt either by necessity or choice. Beggars may publish their own sites where they ask for money or operate on community sites or forums and may place addresses on their sites called e-bay. They are people who are sick, jobless, or are experiencing home foreclosures and bank failures who turn to begging with their heart touching tales targeted at the internet audience to request for money.

### **NOTABLE CONTEXTUAL FEATURES OF E-BEGGING DISCOURSE**

Internet begging exhibits its own peculiar contextual features. E-begging texts bear titles or headings. They may have greetings followed by the introduction and then the requests or problems of the beggars in a polite manner (See Atima, 2012, p. 9). They employ the use of appeals to pity, an undisguised appeal to greed, trust, fallacies, e.t.c. as well as persuasion techniques which aim their target audience in a very logical way. The language of e-begging is uniquely different and resourceful. It is the background of the beggar that shapes his language, which is usually more on business tone, deliberately trying to manipulate or persuade his audience for his selfish goals. The internet medium, the background of the beggars, and the knowledge of the audience are the three notable contextual features of e-begging discourses.

## **DISCOURSE**

Discourse is viewed from different angles by different scholars. For example, Stubbs (1983:1) views discourse as language above the sentence or above the clause. Fairclough (1992:28) sees it is more than just language use but as a type of social practice.

In a nutshell, discourse occurs as one expressing oneself employing words. It is a common way of knowing, valuing and experiencing our world. It can be used for an assertion of power and knowledge, and also for resistance and critique (See Atima, 2012, p. 30). Basic features of discourse that can be found in texts are: repetitions, informative, additives, causative, adversatives and so on. Since, beggars' texts observe the features of discourse, just like every other speaker or writer whose texts are considered discourse, then begging discourse is uniquely distinct.

## **DISCOURSE STRATEGIES**

The techniques or approaches that manifest in a particular language use are called discourse strategies. They exist at both written and spoken language texts. It is to be noted that a given discourse or text may be analysed employing different theories of language as discourse strategies are ways by which a particular genre of discourse may be analysed by appreciating the language in use in different situations e.g. discourse in the media, business, politics, and education etc. Internet begging belongs to the class of internet discourse which is a kind of computer mediated communication.

Shi, Mishra, Bonk, Tan, and Zhao (2006, pp. 19-38) analyse discourse strategies and identifies the behaviour of multitasking. Hara, Bank and Angeli (2000, pp. 115-152) and Gerosa, Pimental, Fuks, and Lucena (2004, pp. 262-272), (2005, pp. 160-169) show for asynchronous discussion forums that the analysis of beggars discourse (strategies) structure provides important information that can be used to understand and support communicating participants.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The data for this study which comprised of sixty internet beggars' texts two internet begging websites were carefully selected. The choice of the two sites was predicated on the fact that they are very popular begging websites on the internet. The two currently very popular/host sites selected for this study are <https://begslist.org> and <http://www.ebeggars.com>. Many internet beggars register on these sites with different socio-economic problems, different linguistic appealing modes etc. Thirty begging texts relating to financial incapability were selected from each of the websites. The texts were posted by the beggars between December, 2012 and February, 2013.

To carry out this study, both the Pragma-Rhetorical theory and Critical Discourse Analysis approaches were adopted. According to Watson and Hill (1993:146) and Babatunde (2000:150), Pragma-Rhetorical theory investigates the totality of the speakers' use of every available rhetorical strategy in a communicative process and the intended effects on the participants in a given context.

For this study, the adoption of Pragma-Rhetoric theory is highly relevant as it allows for analysis texts are characterized by pragmatic tact and rhetoric like the language situation of internet beggars' texts. Watson and Hill (1993) notes that pragmatics studies language especially as it affects the user e.g. the choices she/he makes, the constraints she/he meets with in using language and the effects the use has on the communication system.

Also, Critical Discourse Analyses is capable of describing various issues present in the internet begging texts. Since internet beggars struggle to gain economic power and as such do this by their words, CDA framework will be able to succinctly capture the social and ideological forces that constrain their manipulative utterances (See van Dijk, 2006). In addition, insights from the method of three tenets or stages as presented by Fairclough (2000) would be applied. Both CDA and Pragma-Rhetorics relate the notion of discourse to micro and macro-discourse.

### ***Pragma-Rhetoric Model***

The pragma-rhetoric model as cited in Babatunde (2000, p. 150) and presented below is relevant to the study of the discourse of e-begging.

#### ***Resources of Pragma- Rhetoric Model***

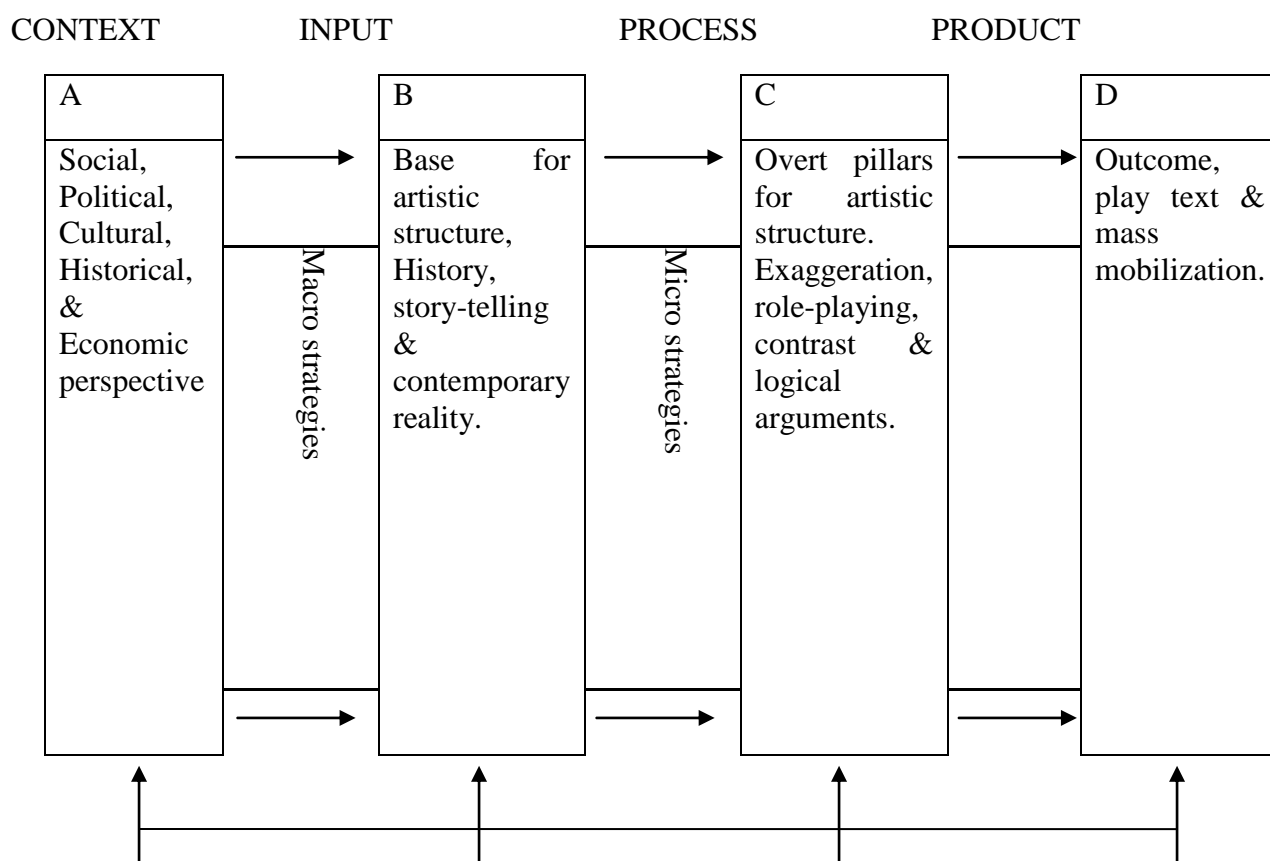


Fig 1: Framework of Rhetorical Analysis as presented in Babatunde (2000) based on the e-begging discourse genre by (Dasal and Gross, 1999).

The above model presents a four-stage model: context, input, process and product. It is applicable to pragmatics as well as e-begging discourse. In this connection, the various elements of Pragma-Rhetoric theory such as contexts, intention, world knowledge, speech acts, affective elements and structure of speech would be applied (See Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969; Grice, 1975).

### ***Critical Discourse Analysis***

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) originated from classical rhetoric, text linguistics and sociolinguistics, applied linguistics and pragmatics (See Wodak & Mayer, 2001; Fairclough, 2003; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Fowler, 1981).

CDA stresses a kind of interdisciplinary work in order to achieve a proper understanding of how language functions in constituting knowledge, in organizing social institution or in exercising power (Van Dijk, 2006). Atima (2012, p. 39) submits that CDA is useful in disclosing the discursive nature of much contemporary social and cultural changes. Particularly, the language of the mass media is scrutinised as a site of power, of struggle and also as a site where language is often apparently transparent.

### **INTERNET BEGGING DISCOURSE RELATING TO FINANCIAL INCAPABILITY**

Atima (2012) categorises internet begging texts into five distinct areas. They are: the physical disability group, the financial incapacity group, the people begging for educational needs, the sickness group and the homelessness group. This study, however, focuses on and analyses internet begging discourse relating to financial incapability group only.

A fundamental aspect of the internet discourse relating to financial incapacity centres on the financial constraints of the different internet beggars. Each beggar, therefore, adduces reasons for the e-begging experience. Notice must be accorded some of the titles of texts with the key words italicised.

#### ***Titles of Internet Begging Discourse Relating to Financial Incapability***

The following are examples presented in alpha-numeric order:

TL...1 *Hard Times*

TL ...2 *Money needed*

TL ...3 Please help *save* our home

TL ...4 Struggling to *clear debt*

TL ...5 *Need money* for *food* and *bills*

From texts TL...1 to TL...5, it is safe to conclude that the statements of the beggars reflect their basic constraints. The texts portray them as people in need. For example, text TL...1 tends to suggest someone who needs help consequent upon societal economic downturn. The beggar is possibly an adult male adversely affected by the economy. All the texts present needs for money to solve various financial problems like: food to eat, payment of bills, debts, e.t.c. Among other lexical features peculiar to e-begging for financial incapacity are: “fallen”, “hard times”, “need help”, “in debt”, “pay for some bills”, “in desperate need”, “financial help,” e.t.c. It must be noted that the words “need” and “help” make e-begging for financial incapacity distinct and selective for componential analyses as indicated below.

Need	help
+ assistance	+ distress
+ lack	+ poverty
+ scarcity	+ want
- plenty	- adequacy
-sufficiency	- sufficiency

The words analysed are embedded with meanings as they equally depict the subject matter of e-begging for financial incapacity. The words ‘need’ and ‘help’ signify a kind of logical use of language by beggars in distress or desperation to draw the attention of the audience to their situation through their language prowess. The word ‘need’ may not project the actual help required as in texts TL...1 TL...3 and TL ...4 while texts TL...2 and TL ...5 state specific needs for money and food.

### ***Analysis of the Pragmatic Acts and the Discursive Strategies in the Texts***

In order to analyse the pragmatics and the discourse strategies of the selected internet begging texts, J.R. Searle’s (1969, 1979) classification of speech acts shall be applied. Searle (1969) proposes five acts which are: the expressives, the commissives, the assertives or representatives, the directives and the declaratives. They are all employed in e-begging discourse and shall be adopted for the data analyses of this work.

#### ***Expressive Acts***

The expressive acts usually show the psychological state of the speaker with reference to the proposition. It is very important to note that e-beggars state their feelings and attitudes to situations and conditions via expressive acts (paradigm case: thanking, apologising, welcoming, congratulating, e.t.c.). Expressive acts express emotions, disguise, sympathy, e.t.c. Such acts are common in the selected internet begging texts, examples of which are presented in alpha-numeric order with specific lexical items revealing the acts italicised:

- EA...1 Any contribution would be greatly *appreciated*.  
EA...2 *Thank* you for taking the time to read and *God bless*.  
EA...3 Again, *thank* you so much for your time!  
EA...4 *Thank* you in advance for your kindness!  
EA...5 Any donations would be tremendously *appreciated*.

#### ***Commissive Acts***

The commissives tend to commit the speaker to some future course of action (paradigm cases: promising, threatening offering, vowing, challenging, swearing, e.t.c.) through the use of performative verbs like promise, swear, vow, e.t.c. Their examples are presented in alpha-numeric order as indicated below:

- CA...1 I *will return* the generosity as soon as I recover from surgery.  
CA...2 I *will* even take job offers that are legitimate and honest work.



CA...3 I *will give* every donator back -if he wishes a video that i will sing the Christmas carol and thank you personally

CA...4 As things improve, your donations *will be paid* forward to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, TN.

CA...5 I want some money as a loan which *i'll re-pay* within a span of 1 year.

Texts CA...1, CA...2 and CA...5 are promises while texts CA...3 and CA...4 are vows.

#### *Assertive/Representative Acts*

Assertives do commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition (paradigm cases: asserts, conducts, claims, indications, reports, predictions, e.t.c.). Their examples are presented in alpha-numeric order as indicated below:

AR...1 We really *need* the bill paid

AR...2 I *need* my spirits brought back up

AR...3 I was *robbed* at gunpoint on my way to work at 6:30a.m.

AR...4 Recently, one of my metal caps *popped off* and splice right through the filling underneath.

AR...5 I was *laid off*, discovered my boyfriend had been cheating on me, *got very sick*, and now I'm being *threatened* with an eviction during the Holidays.

Performative verbs are always associated with assertive acts which are “claiming, saying, stating, asserting, e.t.c. In text AR...1 the speaker says “We really *need* the bill paid” while texts AR...3 and 4 are just reports. Text AR...5 claims “I was laid off” and then text AR...2 asserts that “I *need* my spirits brought back up.”

#### *Directive Acts*

Directive acts which may be questions, commands, requests, pleadings persuade the addressee to carry out some instructions or perform some physical actions. Examples of such acts presented in alphanumeric order as shown below:

DR...1 Please help me pay for the paperwork so my wife can be declared a permanent citizen and also be allowed to work

DR...2 I am making a request for help with paying for new tires and a four wheel alignment for my car, a 2010 Subaru Legacy sedan.

DR...3 Please help me pay my bills and get back up on my feet!

DR...4 Please help save our home

DR...5 Please help us!

Texts DR...1, 3, 4 and 5 employ “pleas” while text DR...2 uses a different mode of “request.”

#### *Declarative Acts*

Such acts affect immediate changes in the institutional state of affairs which tend to rely on elements of extra-linguistic institutions (paradigm cases: excommunicating, declaring war, christening etc.). Examples of such acts presented in alpha-numeric order below:

DL...1 I would like the money to *pay* for the test which is 40 dollars.

DL...2 Now I am trying to start over and raise some money to *get* a place and *pay* off all my bills.

DL...3 but this was *my last resort*.

DL...4 I'm the *only chance* this family has

DL...5 The *ONE thing* I want to give him this year *is* not going back to living in my car.

Declarative acts are not common features of e-begging as the verbs that characterise the acts are “decide and declare” Texts DL...1, 2 and 5 declare intentions of how he wants to use the money, while texts DL...2 and 3 presents decisions occasioning the begging acts.

### ***Discursive Strategies in the Texts***

Various discursive strategies are employed in the e-begging texts. They are: communicative strategies, persuasive strategies, politeness strategies and storytelling strategies.

#### ***Communicative Strategies***

If communicative strategies are conventional, they follow the normal natural order but if they are conversational they are actions and reactions. Observable at this juncture is Grice’s (1975:45) cooperative principles in conversation of quantity, quality, relevance and manner. Examples of communicative strategies are presented in alpha-numeric order below:

- CS...1 Just a determination to keep going and move forward.  
CS...2 No sob stories (I've already cried).  
CS...3 I am seeking help in order to place a down payment on a vehicle.  
CS...4 YES I AM CRYING OUT LOUD.  
CS...5 No money for us.

In the texts CS...1 to 5, it is clear that what is central to them is to pass across messages that the audience must understand, even though in different styles or strategies. Texts CS...1, 2 and 5 do not begin with normal sentence pattern. The encoder just tries to communicate and observes the cooperative principle due to the system, or medium of passing this message. Texts CS...3 and 4 are different but have been so that the addressee can understand the persons who are in need.

#### ***Persuasive Strategies***

These are strategies beggars employ to persuade, and appeal to the audience as they beg. Several of such texts begin with “please,” some begin with greetings, while others are mild tone to beg with the intention is to win addressee’s heart. The sentences that persuade may either be at the beginning, middle or end of the text. Some examples of persuasive strategies are presented in alpha-numeric order below:

- PS...1 Any help someone could spare would be amazing.  
PS...2 If there is anyone who would be willing to help even a little please let me know!!  
PS...3 If anyone can help me in anyway I would be most grateful.  
PS...4 If you can relate to my situation please make a donation today  
PS...5 If you are in a position to help us, even if it’s just a little, my family would be very grateful!

Texts PS...1 to 5 are persuasive in nature as they appeal to the audience in a mild tone.

Internet beggars appeal to the emotions of the audience as they use powerful and effective pathos to achieve their goals.

### *Politeness Strategies*

E-beggars always use polite words as they appeal to the internet public with the intention of receiving help. Some examples of politeness strategies are presented in alpha-numeric order as shown below:

PL...1 WE ALL ENCOUNTER DIFFICULTIES THROUGH SOME EDGES OF LIFE.

PL...2 I would greatly appreciate all the help I can get.

PL...3 We are having a rough time

PL...4 My wife and I have fallen on some hard times just recently

PL...5 Please help us!

Texts PL...1 to 5 employ a level of politeness as they woo people with the use of the exclusive “we” and the use of “please” also.

### *Story Telling Strategy*

Many e-beggars tell stories about themselves while others make reference to their experiences to attempt to convince their audience about their plight since they understand the socio-cultural concepts of their environment and exploit such to gain sympathy. Examples of storytelling strategies are presented in alpha-numeric order below:

ST...1 I'll just begin my story...here is how it all started....

ST...2 I don't know what to say.

ST...3 Hello, my name is Angelina. I would like to tell my situation.

ST...4 Once upon a time, there lived a group of young adults who came to find one another through catastrophic circumstances and a helping hand from their Creator.

ST...5 I know everyone has a story and I would truly appreciate a minute of your time to read mine.

Texts ST...1 to 5 tell their stories in order to win sympathy of the audience which is not just narration but includes aspects of description.

## **SUMMARY AND DISCUSSIONS**

This paper attempts to show the essence of pragmatics in rhetorical communication. It has investigated e-beggars begging spree on the internet via the use of pragma-rhetorical theory which has been quite relevant in analysing discourse. The selected texts analysed in this paper present several interesting features of discourse which ordinarily may not have been deemed to be a very serious academic adventure.

## **CONCLUSION**

The pragma-rhetorical theory studies the speaker's use of every available rhetorical strategy in the communicative process as well as the intended effects. In essence, this theory makes it possible to blend both pragmatics and rhetorics of the internet begging texts.

## **FINDINGS**

It was discovered that the words ‘need’ and ‘help’ signify a kind of logical use of language by beggars in distress or desperation to draw the attention of the audience to their situation through their language prowess. It was discovered that the proposition of five speech acts of the expressives, the commissives, the assertives or representatives, the directives and the declaratives

by Searle (1969) was effectively employed by the e-beggars. Various discursive strategies of communicative strategies like persuasive strategies, politeness strategies and storytelling strategies were also employed in the e-begging texts. The internet beggars' used every available rhetorical strategy in the communicative process as well as to create intended effects.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper recommends as stated below:

E-beggars should try to avoid using the speech act of the directives. Also, website owners should device means of educating prospective e-beggars on appropriate language skills and discursive strategies.

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## THE EFFECT OF WORD REPETITION PRIOR TO READING ON SKIMMING

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### ABSTRACT

The present research examined the effect of word repetition prior to reading on skimming of Iranian EFL learners. Initially, a sample of 108 sophomore EFL learners majoring in English translation was selected based on systematic random sampling from Dorud Islamic Azad University. Then, based on an ECCE proficiency test, 62 participants were chosen and divided into two homogeneous groups of 31. One group had exposure to repetition practice and the other did not have any chance for repetition practice of reading materials. After thirteen academic sessions, the results of the paired t-test regarding the pre-tests and post-tests of the two group means showed that both differences (group one: -2.83 and group two: 1.22) were significant at 0.05 levels ( $P < 0.05$ ). These findings suggest that repetition practice prior to reading, could improve EFL learners reading comprehension; however, repetition practice could demonstrate greater improvements on skimming than EFL learners' reading comprehension.

**KEYWORDS:** Reading Comprehension, Skimming, Repetition practice, EFL

### INTRODUCTION

The term *repetition* reminds most educators and scholars of the era of Audio-lingualism in the 1950s when *behaviorism* and *structuralism* were the dominant notion of most language learning.



Years later a variation on Audio-lingualism in British-based teaching and elsewhere, introduces the procedure most often referred to as PPP, which stands for **P**resentation, **P**ractice, and **P**roduction. In this procedure the teacher introduces a situation which contextualizes the language to be taught. The language, too, is then presented. The students now practice the language using accurate reproduction techniques such as *choral repetition* (where the students repeat a word, phrase, or sentence all together with the teacher 'conducting'), *individual repetition* (where individual students repeat a word, phrase, or sentence at the teacher's urging), and cue-response drill (Harmer, 2001 p. 80). *Repetition* also reminds us of other interrelated concepts as rote learning, memorization and imitation. O'Malley *et al.* (1985b) in discussion of learning strategies introduce repetition as a cognitive strategy in imitating a language model, including overt practice and silent rehearsal.

For long *repetition* has been playing a very significant role not only in subject matter learning and learning in general but also in language learning in particular. Although *repetition* has been an obvious dominant feature of the 1950s and 1960s in audio-lingual and other methods, it has been under severe criticism by scholars in the 70s and 80s. Basically they believed that it is not *repetition* and rote learning that leads to language learning/acquisition but rather it is meaningful learning. This criticism has made a shift from *repetition* to meaningful learning in meaningful context. It means that repetition must be contextualized in a meaningful way (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Nevertheless, nowadays many teachers still use *repetition* in language classes that only covers a small portion of their teaching plan.

The approach taken in this study toward *repetition* is different from that of rote learning and meaningful learning. This pre-reading technique is used in early stages of leaning elementary or intermediate level where students have a fuss over the meaning of new words that hinder them from general understanding. The merits of this technique are to prepare our students to deal with authentic reading materials not only in class but also out of class. It is believed that in the early stages of learning l2 there is too much fuss and anxiety over new words in reading. This technique is devised to help students pass this phase/stage and will not be useful for real reading in later stages. However, it can be employed wherever or whenever you feel students have the problem of dealing with new vocabulary.

Our perspective first deals with the psycholinguistic aspect of repetition in linguistics on native language acquisition then it goes on to argue how to devise an artificial technique to bridge the gap between the problem of new vocabularies and reading comprehension students have when they skim for gist or main idea. The argument of this technique draws on the morphological (eye-familiarity) and phonological (ear-familiarity) effect of repeating new words prior to reading where the focus is on skimming for gist and main idea. These two issues will be discussed further later in this paper. From Psycholinguistics point of view, O'Grady *et al.* (1996) have studied the way our mind processes the new and repeated words. They have also experimented the way our mind treats repeated words by what they call frequency effect, priming effect, garden path effect, and eye movement. The relationship and implication of each of these terms in EFL/ESL will be discussed further later throughout this paper.

A common paradox in reading lessons is that while teachers are encouraging students to read for general understanding, without worrying about the meaning of every single words, students, on the other hand, are desperate to know what each individual word means (Chastain, 1988; Brown, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Harmer, 2001; Ellis 2004; Davidson, 2005). Given half a chance, many of them would rather tackle a reading passage with a dictionary (electronic or

otherwise) in one hand and a pen in the other to write translation all over the page (Harmer, 2001)! What we suggest in this paper is a technique that not only takes the students' attention away from new words that are believed to hinder students from reading for general understanding but also increases their speed of reading comprehension. When asked to skim a text for general understanding, most students worry about new words and their meaning. Some even stop when faced with a new word and try to find its meaning; they waste a lot of time on working out the meaning of every single word. Although students are likely to encounter new grammatical structures, idioms, or expression, and pronunciation problem in reading, we attempt to resolve their prime concern, that is, dealing with new vocabulary on the assumption that repetition of new words prior to skimming develops not only speed of reading comprehension but also pronunciation. When we read we pronounce the words on the text that meet our eyes either loudly or silently. So one tool to reading comprehension that speeds up our rate of reading is the pronunciation of new words. This objective is best achieved through this technique where students practice repetition of new words and phrases prior to skimming.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

We will now review the role of new vocabulary (words) and repetition on skimming in previous literature chronologically. The role of each one is either cited separately or together.

Chastain (1988) contends that students do not need to know all the *vocabulary* and grammar to comprehend a major portion of the text and to recreate the author's meaning. They can learn to read at a much higher level of proficiency than in the past when the preoccupation with the grammar deprived them of the opportunity to read for meaning. On skimming he advocates the idea that readers can comprehend without concentrating on every word, and that they can take the same approach in the second language that they do subconsciously in the native language.

Grellet (1981 cited in Chastain, 1988) also maintains that proficient readers do not concentrate on sentences and words. Instead they start with global understanding and then work toward comprehension of detailed aspects of the reading. Aspatore (1984 cited in Chastain, 1988) discusses the way we can help students overcome vocabulary problem, she suggest that teachers ask students to read and underline unknown words without looking up the meaning in the dictionary; to use contextual clues to guess the general meaning; to skip unknown words; and to focus on cognates, roots, prefixes, and suffixes. Krashen and Terrell (1983 cited in Chastain, 1988) outline the following communicative strategy: 1. Read for meaning. 2. Don't look up every word. 3. Predict meaning. 4. Use context.

Brown (2000) touches on the issue of vocabulary and repetition in first and second language learning from the perspective of imitation and frequency of occurrence in first language learning and rote learning as well as meaningful learning in second or foreign language learning. He goes on to argue that rote learning of vocabulary repetition is obsolete and is replaced by meaningful learning in meaningful context. Brown and Hanlon (1970 cited in Brown, 2000), for example, found that the frequency of occurrence of a linguistic item in the speech of mothers was an overwhelmingly strong predictor of the order of emergence of those items in their children's speech.

Harmer (2001) contends that where reading for general understanding is emphasized, good readers are able to take in a stream of discourse and understand the **gist** of it without worrying too much about the details. Reading for such 'general' comprehension means not stopping for every word, not analyzing everything that the writer or speaker includes in the text. Elsewhere he points out that because students are worried about new words in reading even when they are asked to skim he proposes that we pre-teach vocabulary that is in the reading text. This removes at least some of the barriers to understanding which they are likely to encounter. However, if we want to give students practice in what it is like to tackle authentic reading texts for general understanding then getting past words they do not understand is one of the skills they need to develop. By giving them some or all of those words we deny them that chance. We need a common-sense solution to this dilemma: where students are likely to be held back unnecessarily for three or four words, it makes sense to teach them first. Where they should be able to comprehend the text despite some unknown words, we can leave vocabulary work till later.

Ellis (2004) compares the role of repetition in stereotypical classroom processes in traditional form-focused pedagogy, echoing, i.e. the teacher repeats what a student has said for the benefit of the class; and task-based pedagogy, repetition, i.e. a student elects to repeat something another student or the teacher has said as private speech or to establish intersubjectivity. Elsewhere in his book Lantolf (1995 cited in Ellis, 2004) sees repetition as a form of language play that is important for language acquisition. His learners repeat items and structures that lay within their zone of proximal development.

Davidson (2005) deals with vocabulary issues under the title of lexical knowledge. He points out that it is clear that as the number of unknown lexical items in a reading passage increases, the more difficult it is for students to read it with comprehension. He argues that at the beginning stages and perhaps at the intermediate levels, it may be advisable to maintain a minimum of new vocabulary items. For more efficient readers, a higher percentage of new lexical items could be included in the reading passage, since efficient readers, by definition, have learned either to guess the meaning of unknown words or to ignore them. Finally, it might be difficult to find authentic texts in which the quantity of unknown lexical items is very small. Thus, the number of unknown vocabulary items in a reading passage is affected by the students reading ability, the goal of the reading course, and the objective of the particular lesson.

All the literature cited above tells us about the role of new words in reading and how they might hinder our readers from general understanding. Most of the body of this literature encourages the reader not to stop for new words when skimming. And the majority of the scholars believe that repetition and rote learning is obsolete and must be replaced by meaningful learning in context. Nothing is pointed out about the role of vocabulary repetition prior to skimming. What is lacking in the body of this literature is that where they believe that students should simply not worry about every new word when skimming, they do point out how we can remove this problem. Apparently when we tell our students to do so, we know that they are still worried about those new words and are desperately seeking their meaning. They will not stop until their need is satisfied. The pre-reading technique proposed here is thought to satisfy their needs.

## **CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

To fully understand the merits of this pre-reading technique it is advisable to consider the way our mind processes new words and the way it is affected by repeated vocabulary. Psycholinguistics has a great contribution to the study of language processing in the mind. Thus

we heavily draw on psycholinguistics from linguistics point of view and skimming from teaching point of view. These two areas of study will be the main focus of this research.

O'Grady *et al.* (1996) have studied in their experiment the effect of lexical decision process on the mind. In the lexical decision paradigm, the experimental subject is seated in front of a computer screen. A word appears in the middle of the screen and the subject must judge as quickly as possible whether or not the word is a real English word by pressing a button labeled 'yes' or 'no'. They have found in many experiments, for example, that subjects take about half a second (500 milliseconds) to press the 'yes' button for frequently used words such as *free* but almost three-quarters of a second to press the 'yes' button for less common words such as *fret*. This finding has been called **frequency effect**. Assuming that longer response time reflect processing that is more difficult or complex, this finding suggest that our mental dictionaries are organized so that words we typically need more often (the frequent words) are more easily and quickly available to us. It also suggests that some aspects of phonology are automatically activated during word reading (although in the lexical decision task, the subject never has to pronounce the word). In other experiment on **priming paradigm** O'Grady *et al.* (1996) found that the response time to words that have been heard or seen before is faster than it otherwise would have been. This is called **priming effect**. On **eye movement** experiment their technique has revealed that fixation times are typically longer for less frequent words, and the point of fixation are typically centered on content words such as nouns and verbs rather than on function words such as determiners and conjunctions. Difficult sentence structures create longer fixation times as well as many more regressive (backwards) saccades. **Regressive saccades** are backward jumps in a sentence and are usually associated with mis-parsing or miscomprehension. On average, backward saccades make up 10 to 15 percent of the saccades in sentence reading, but syntactically complex sentences and semantically anomalous sentences (e.g., *The pizza was too hot to drink*) create many more regressive saccades. It has also been found that poor readers jump back and forth through sentences much more often than good readers do. In another part they introduce **garden path sentences** where readers have to reconstruct or back-track a sentence because of unknown words, ambiguity of the sentence or the structure. Consider the garden path in this sentence: *Since Keith always walks a mile seems like a short distance to him.*

The backtracking readers experience in their reading shows up significantly in eye-movement studies in which it is found that subjects show more regressive saccades sentences as well as longer fixation times (O'Grady *et al.*, 1996).

From linguistics point of view, Falk (1978) talks about native/first language acquisition where it is generally believed that children acquire those linguistic elements or items that are most frequently occurring around them or they most frequently encounter. It means the more exposure to the most frequent language item the more likely for that language item to be acquired. However, there are some language items with less frequency that are exposed to the child through adults/family talk, TV, or radio which are not addressed directly to the child but are presented around him. In this stage s/he does/can not use them but these items form his/her later passive repertoire though they are not used now. He is phonologically familiar with these terms but not semantically. Gradually every one of these phonological terms find their semantic counterparts in the right time and place. The point I am trying to make here is parents or adults underestimate the

ability children have about language acquisition. Although their language repertoire is not complete children can understand a large part of our language, much more than we think and surprisingly those parts they do not understand they save or store them for later analysis. Brown and Hanlon (1970), for example, found that the frequency of occurrence of a linguistic item in the speech of mothers was an overwhelmingly strong predictor of the order of emergence of those items in their children's speech. Though they are not familiar with the meaning of the new words they are familiar with its phonological structure. They are familiar to their ears, or in later stages, even to their eyes though no meaning is retrieved. In acquiring new items, those items that their phonological structures have occurred to the child before are believed to be learnt sooner or better than those he has not heard them before. This theory is also true about second language learners.

Now considering all the above findings from psycholinguistics to child first language acquisition in linguistics and relating them to reading for general understanding in ESL/EFL, we first attempt to find the connection between each of these terms and their implication in teaching skimming. As pointed out previously what *frequency effect*, *priming paradigm*, *priming effect*, *eye movement*, *regressive saccades*, and *garden path sentences* tell us in general suggest that readers spend more amount of time on unfamiliar words and less time on familiar words that are heard or seen before. And some of the regressive saccades or backtracking our eyes make during skimming are the result of those unknown words.

In acquiring new items, those items that their phonological structures have occurred to the child before are believed to be learnt sooner or better than those he has not heard them before. This theory is also true about second language learners. The implication of the phonological familiarity is well manifested in our pre-reading technique. *The theoretical framework suggested here is that when readers meet and hear the new words by choral repetition prior to their skimming, a network of eye and ear familiarity is established in their short term memory when they plunge into the text.* When we read we pronounce the words on the text that meet our eyes either loudly or silently. So one tool to reading comprehension that speeds up our rate of reading is the pronunciation of new words. This objective is best achieved through this technique where students practice repetition of new words and phrases prior to skimming. When readers are familiar with the morphological symbol and sing of the new words, that is, the superficial form of the new words (not their root, suffix, or prefix); as well as their phonological realization through our technique they are thought to have a faster eye movement, over new words and less regressive saccades or backtracking. Priming and frequency effect is also enhanced and garden path effect is thought to be reduced. The repetition technique activates the phonological and morphological representation of the new words in the students' short term memory while the new words will be introduced to their repertoire though no meaning is retrieved. The activation and effect of this short term retention facilitates the speed of skimming and eye movement students experience when they read those new words.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is hoped that the current study, although sketchy, will shed some light on foreign language teaching/learning in general and skimming for general understanding in particular. The attempt made here is to dispel the fuss and anxiety both teachers and learners have over new words when the focus is on reading for general understanding. This study can also give the teachers an alternative toward handling the paradox in reading when students worry about new words. It has been observed that when teachers ask students to read a text and tell them about the main idea or gist of it their first complain and anxiety is about meaning of new words as well as time limit.



Remember that when we ask students to skim a time limit must be made so that students be encouraged to read for general understanding and not for detail.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main questions to be perused in this study are as follows:

- 1) To what extent does repetition of new words prior to skimming for general understanding have a positive effect on students' reading comprehension?
- 2) To what extent does repetition of new words prior to skimming for general understanding negative have a negative effect on students' reading comprehension?

## RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

**The H1 hypothesis** is that repetition of new words prior to skimming for general understanding will have a significant positive effect on students reading comprehension.

**The H2 hypothesis** is that repetition of new words prior to skimming for general understanding will have a negative effect on students reading comprehension.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

In the present research, the participants were chosen from BA students of Islamic Azad University of Abadan. They were studying English translation in their fourth semester. The population was 108 male and female students. The 62 homogeneous participants drawn from this sample were randomly divided into two experimental groups of 30. There were 27 females and 4 males in group one who had no chance of repetition practice; and there were 26 females and 5 males in group two who had a chance of repetition practice. In group one, the average age was 25.29 ranging from 19 to 46. There were 17 bilinguals with Arabic-Persian backgrounds, 1 Turkish- Persian bilingual, 3 Kurdish-Persian bilingual, and the rest were Persian monolinguals. In Group two, the average age was 24.61 ranging from 19 to 39. There were 12 bilinguals with Arabic-Persian backgrounds, 1 Kurdish-Persian bilingual, and the rest were Persian monolinguals. Note that learners' bilingualism, age, and gender were not considered as variables and are presented here only to describe the participants.

### *Instrumentation*

A proficiency *Michigan Examination for the Certificate of Competency in English* (ECCE) Mennen (2005), multiple-choice reading comprehension test of 60 items was first administered to 10 fourth semester EFL subjects. When the reliability was assured, this test was administered to 108 EFL populations in order to select the homogeneous subjects. The other instrument was a 20-item multiple-choice reading comprehension Examination for the Certificate of Competency in



English (ECCE) test that served as pre-test and post-test for both experimental groups. The reliability of the test before administration of the pretest was calculated by the correlation between the means of test and retest by two weeks interval between the test and retest. The reliability coefficients was calculated based on correlation coefficient and it was met as  $r = 0.87$ . It is worth noting that group one was not exposed to repetition practice; and group two had chance of repetition practice. Assignments given to both groups also included out of class activities alongside class activities. Participants were permitted to work in groups to check the correct pronunciation.

### ***Procedures***

A 60-item language proficiency test of ECCE Michigan, whose reliability coefficient was met, was prepared and administered to 108 EFL subjects from Islamic Azad University of Dorud, Lorestan Province and after an interval of two weeks the same test was administered to the same 10 subjects and the reliability of the test and the retest was calculated as  $r = 0.83$ . Then, for the purpose of selecting the homogeneous participants, those who scored one standard deviation below and above the mean which was 14.4586 were called for the next phase of the study. After that, they were randomly divided into two experimental groups of 31 participants. Their classes were held once a week for 90 minutes for thirteen sessions.

Before any treatment, a different reading test of ECCE was administered to measure the participants' reading comprehension; in fact, this reading test of 20 multiple choice items designed for pre-intermediate to intermediate EFL level functioned as both pre-test and post-test for both groups. It is a reading test. In order to make sure of the reliability of the pre-test, it was administered to 10 fourth semester EFL majoring BA translation students twice within two weeks intervals. The reliability of the pre-test obtained by the coefficient correlation between the test and retest was  $r = 0.87$ . After the reliability of the pretest was assured, it was administered to both experimental groups to measure their reading comprehension knowledge.

It is important to note that some in-class and out of-class reading activities were worked out in groups. Sometimes assignments included internet extracted texts of their own materials. However, in order to avoid taboos in these texts, the socio-cultural appropriateness of materials was checked with the subjects before they were brought into the classroom.

### ***Teaching:***

This pre-reading technique is used for early stages of learning, for example, an elementary or intermediate level where students have a fuss over the meaning of new words that hinder them from general understanding. The merits of this technique are to prepare our students to deal with authentic reading materials not only in class but also out of class. It is believed that in the early stages of learning there is too much fuss and anxiety over new words in reading. This technique is devised to help students pass this phase/stage and will not be useful for real reading in later stages. However, it can be employed wherever or whenever you feel students have the problem of dealing with new vocabulary.

Once the reading text has been specified the teacher is required to extract the new words and phrases out of it. Determining what words are new and must be listed out prior to a reading task is a difficult decision to make. For what might be new to one student might not be new to another. There are books which list their new vocabularies either at the beginning, throughout the lesson, or at the end of it. In case they're listed at the beginning you do not need to bother to determine the new words and can benefit from that. In cases where new vocabularies are not

specified and it is up to the reader to extract the new words, there seems to lie the hard decision of determining what words are new to our readers. Based on the English level of our students, experienced teachers know how to identify which words are to practice prior to a reading task. Therefore, for carrying out this technique teachers need to prepare a list of new vocabularies or phrases in case there isn't any. Once you have prepared the list of the new words and phrases, write them on the board or ask the students to write them on their notebook or a piece of paper (when we write the new words retention will be longer). Now ask your students to listen to you carefully and attentively; then read the list out loud with normal speed to the students. Next on the second round read every word or phrase slowly and separately. On the third round have students repeat every word or phrase after you for two or three times. The number of the word repetition depends on the students' difficulty with the words and the feedback the teacher gets from the students. Teachers must be careful that words be pronounced correctly. It does not matter if they do not know the meaning of the new words because the purpose of this activity is word recognition and eye (morphological) and ear (phonological) familiarity with the new words prior to extensive reading. Then you can give a time limit of, say, five minutes for skimming the text for general understanding or main idea. Students must be encouraged to read as fast as they can and not to stop for new words. Remember that the purpose is to teach the students to kick the habit of stopping or wasting time on new words.

#### ***Testing the hypothesis:***

Two groups of 31 intermediate students at the fourth semester from Dorud Islamic Azad University were selected. One group will be the control group where we gave them a reading text and ask them to read the text in 6 minutes and answer the questions at the end. This group received no repetition practice.

The experimental group, on the other hand, had the chance of receiving the repetition practice and are asked to skim the text in 5 minutes.

We hypothesize that our experimental group which has received repetition practice will score higher on general understanding test. A paired sample *t*-test (Hatch & Farhady, 1981) will best serve our purpose here to compare the mean score of these two groups.

## **RESULTS**

The performance of group one (no repetition practice) on the pretest and the posttest produced a difference between their scores. **Table 1** below shows the participants' performance on the 20 item multiple-choice reading comprehension Pre-post tests. This was followed by paired *t*-test as depicted in **Table 2**. The significance value for the *t* test indicates that there is a significant difference between the Pre- post tests. The difference was also significant even at 0.001 level. Performance of the participants in group two, who had exposure to repetition practice, on multiple-choice reading comprehension test also revealed that there existed a difference between the means of Pre-post tests (see **Table 3**). Once the raw scores were obtained, paired *t*-test was calculated. **Table 4** illustrates the comparison of these two means. Comparison of the pre-post tests means indicated a significant improvement over learners' reading comprehension.

*The Effect of Speech Rate on Listening Comprehension of EFL learners***Table 1: Descriptive statistics of group one's pretest and posttest**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Group 1 pre-test	31	10.74194	3.306234
Group 1 post-test	31	13.58065	2.486955

**Table 2: Group 1 paired t-test**

Paired differences							
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. error mean	95% confidence interval of the difference		t	df
Sig				Lower	upper		(2-
tailed)							
Pair 1 pre-posttest :	-2.838710	2.517893	0.452227	-3.762280	-1.915139	-6.277	30

0.000  
Level of significance = 0.05 Sig = 0.000 t observed = - 6.277 t critical = 2.000

**Table 3: Descriptive statistics: pre-test and post-test results of group two**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Group2 pre-test	31	11.35484	2.763432
Group 2 post-test	31	12.58065	2.202638

**Table 4: Group 1 paired t-test**

Paired differences							
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. error mean	95% confidence interval of the difference		t	df
Sig				Lower	upper		(2-
tailed)							
Pair 2 pre-posttest :	-1.22581	3.007875	0.540230	-2.32910	-1.22509	-2.269	30

0.031  
t observed = -2.269 level of significance = 0.031 at 0.05

**Table 5: Paired t-test of G1 & G2 pre-and posttests**

Paired differences							
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. error mean	95% confidence interval of the difference		t	df
Sig				Lower	upper		(2-
tailed)							
Pair 1 pre-posttest :	-2.838710	2.517893	0.452227	-3.762280	-1.915139	-6.277	30
0.000							
Pair 2 pre-posttest :	-1.22581	3.007875	0.540230	-2.32910	-1.22509	-2.269	30
0.031							

Pre-post tests of group one was higher compared to that of group two. Statistically, differences found in group one are simply more significant than those of group two (See **Table 5**). As indicated in **Table 5**, there is enough significant difference in t-observed and t-critical as well as level of significance of group one to reject H01 not only at 0.05 level but also at 0.001 level. It is worth mentioning that the level of significance for rejecting the null hypothesis was set at the 0.05 level of significance for both hypotheses (H01 and H02).

**DISCUSSION**

In the following, the research questions are respectively discussed and answered.

1) *To what extent does repetition of new words prior to skimming for general understanding have a positive effect on students' reading comprehension?*

Table 5 shows that participants' performance on the pretest is much different from their performance on the posttest. Results suggest that participants' exposure to repetition practice had a significant effect on the improvement of their reading comprehension. The results related to the first hypothesis are in agreement with Rivers (1981), Chastain (1988). In the same line, Rivers (1981) believes that learners should be exposed to speech repetition and when speech is mechanically repeated it is not desirable; and learners can understand natural speech even in the early stages of language learning.

2) *To what extent does repetition of new words prior to skimming for general understanding negative have a negative effect on students' reading comprehension?*

A comparison between the means of pretest (11.35) and posttest (12.58) of group two showed a difference. Group two performances on the reading comprehension posttest showed that although they had only exposure to repetition practice, their performance had an improvement which was not comparable to that of group one. However, the difference (0.031) was large enough at 0.05 level of significance to reject the null hypothesis. It implies that listening comprehension is affected by fast or slow speech but exposure to slow speech rate is constructive and formative as well. Although the degree of its formativeness and construction is not obviously so clear, it demonstrated a degree of improvement.

There are a lot of intervening factors that might change the results of research or the results one gains might not be because of the treatment. Repetition practice in reading comprehension cannot be easily studied if other factors are not taken into account. Repetition practice whether slow or fast is strongly affected by other factors such as formality and informality of the speech, the situation type, the relationship between speaker and listener, level of technicality of that speech or its jargon, learners background and world knowledge and many other factors Rivers (1981). However, this research could somehow imply that participants' exposure to repetition practice made a better improvement over those who did not expose to repetition practice. What is important to note is that this research can partially imply that in designing any reading material, imposing repetition practice exercises do make a difference but what makes the biggest difference is the *naturalness* of both material and exercise. Therefore, mechanical repetition speech practice is not a long term objective in teaching and learning reading comprehension. On the other hand, repetition practice might be used for the same purpose but in EFL / ESL reading comprehension in general and speech repetition in particular that may suggest a different sense.

Researchers have to guard against the idea that comprehending of skimming not an end but rather a short path practice to comprehend natural texts. EFL / ESL listeners do not usually go around asking their interlocutors to repeat their speech; rather repetition in speech may happen rarely when the global features of communication are broken down. It means, in real life experience in L1 as well as L2, naturalness is more marked or prominent than unnaturalness. It might also be true about EFL / ESL skimming in reading comprehension. Students had better practice to deal with skimming, although they might have started with slow speech repetition.

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of the two experiments presented in this research focused on the effect of word repetition on Iranian EFL learners' skimming and reading comprehension. The assumption to use word repetition practice was motivated by the fact that reading comprehension constitutes a large input in academic language comprehension, and on the other hand, there are limitations for learners to comprehend this natural input in EFL / ESL context; therefore, word repetition practice before skimming has been another compensation for the learners' limitations to be investigated. The results of the two experiments conducted in the present study provided positive answers to our hypotheses and research questions. That is, skimming or exposure to repetition practice made a significant improvement in learners' reading comprehension. This improvement was manifested in their post test compared to their pretest. On the other hand, learners' exposure repetition practice also demonstrated an improvement. However, the significance of the improvement in exposure word repetition practice was greater than those who did not have any chance to word repetition practice. What is clear in this research is that word repetition practice before reading has some features that can be beneficial to the readers.

Although others might have come to different conclusions on the issue of word repetition prior to reading on skimming and reading comprehension, the word repetition practice counted better in this research. In teaching and learning reading comprehension, word repetition cannot be overlooked. But the decision to use what materials is vital to the whole concept of teaching and learning reading comprehension. Although the results of this research implied that word repetition prior to reading made improvement in skimming and reading comprehension. Teachers and learners should take into account features of word repetition practice has some advantages and disadvantages. But if comprehending the passages and texts is the optimal objective, therefore, the attention and focus should be given to word repetition practice before reading. However, the researchers do not claim the results obtained from this study are absolutely conclusive. Put it another way, as people come to learn a new language in a foreign context, not only their skills practice influence their performance in general and their reading comprehension in particular but also many other factors including sub skills practices for the language proficiency they are going to obtain, the context in which they are going to master the new language are extremely influential in this regard. Of course, the researchers believe that to know more about the role of word repetition prior to reading on skimming in EFL contexts more studies are needed. It is suggested that further more future studies take the limitations of this study into consideration and investigate the characteristics of other pre-reading exercises, and their influences on the reading comprehension in academic and non-academic situations.

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## ON THE NATURE OF L2 PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE

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### ABSTRACT

The paper is to explore the nature of pragmatic competence in a second language (L2). In this context, “pragmatic competence” refers to a speaker-hearer’s tacit knowledge of the conditions governing the appropriate use of language (Botha 1995:123). The paper begins by Thomas’s (1983) two division of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic components of pragmatic competence in an L2. Then, the two types of pragmatic failure in communication and their differences by Blum-Kulka (1982) and Thomas (1983) are discussed. Following this, Blum-Kulka’s (2002) argument that certain aspects of pragmatic competence in an L2 are universal is discussed. Finally, the paper summarizes components of pragmatic competence in an L2.

**KEY WORDS:** Pragmatic, Competence, Second language

### INTRODUCTION

It is widely accepted that second language (L2) learners differ in their pragmatic competence. According to Thomas (1983), a speaker’s pragmatic competence in an L2 would be made up of pragmalinguistic competence and sociopragmatic competence. Thomas claims that a speaker, in order to be pragmalinguistically competent in an L2, should have grammatical knowledge about that language, i.e. abstract or decontextualized knowledge of intonation, phonology, syntax, semantics, etc. Lack of such knowledge may result in multiply ambiguous sentences such as in (1), where the ambiguity is caused by lack of semantic knowledge, since the verb *miss* in (1) has at least three senses, i.e. *fail to catch*, *discover loss* and *avoid from*. *She* and *it* are an indefinite number of possible referents.

(1) She missed it. (Thomas 1983:92)

In addition to this, Thomas argues that a speaker should also have social pragmatic principles in order to be sociopragmatically competent in an L2. According to Thomas, the social pragmatic principles include knowledge about cross-cultural beliefs of using language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context. One example of this is as in (2), where the social determined pragmatic principles allow English first language (L1) speakers to determine that *she* refers to *Elsie*, *it* refers to *the earlier train*; and *missed* has the sense *failed to catch*. Lack of the knowledge may result in L2 pragmatic failure in communication to be discussed as follows.

(2) A: Why didn’t Elsie come on the earlier train?

B: She missed it.

(Thomas 1983:93)

## PRAGMALINGUISTIC AND SOCIOPRAGMATIC FAILURE IN L2

There are two types of pragmatic failure argued by Thomas (1983), i.e. pragmalinguistic failure and sociopragmatic failure in an L2. Pragmalinguistic failure occurs when the pragmatic force mapped by speakers onto a given utterance is systematically different from the force most frequently assigned to it by native speakers of the target language (Thomas 1983:99). Pragmalinguistic failure may be caused by differences in the linguistic encoding of illocutionary force. Illocutionary force, according to Finegan and Besnier (1989:329), is concerned with a speaker's intention in making an utterance in a given context. For example, the illocutionary force of an utterance such as *Do you have the time?* may be a request for information about the time of the day or a yes/no question (*Do you have the time [to help me]?*). In the utterance, should a difference in the linguistic encoding of illocutionary force exists, such as the conventionalized understanding of the word *time*, pragmalinguistic failure may occur, as in (2), where the native speaker requests for information about the time of the day, the non-native speaker misunderstands the native speaker's intended meaning of *time* as a yes/no question (*Do you have the time [to help me]?*).

(2) Native: Do you have the time?

Non-native: I have to go home.

(Flowerdew 1988:69)

Sociopragmatic failure in L2 is related to "the social conditions placed on language in use" (Thomas 1983:99). Sociopragmatic failure may take place when there are cross-cultural differences in what constitutes appropriate linguistic behavior (Thomas 1983:99). Appropriate linguistic behavior, according to Bachman (1990), involves knowledge of the sociolinguistic conventions for performing language functions appropriately in a given context. For example, the phrase *I'm asking you to ...* might in a suitable situation be taken by a native English speaker to be command, as when a teacher says to a student *I'm asking you to stop talking*. In Russian, the literal equivalent *proshu vas* is not considered as a command, but merely a device for *going on record*. Thus, if a Russian student of English says something to his or her teacher like *I'm asking you to look at my work*, which in an appropriate situation might well be perceived by the native English speakers as face-threatening and domineering. In such a case, sociopragmatic failure is caused by different social beliefs of the appropriate linguistic behavior in request between English and Russian.

As can be seen from the above illustration, one of the differences between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic failure in an L2 is that pragmalinguistic failure concerns one's linguistic knowledge or grammatical conventionalized rules of an L2, while sociopragmatic failure involves one's sociolinguistic knowledge or social conventionalized beliefs of language usage in an L2 (Thomas 1983). Another difference is that pragmalinguistic failure may be caused by differences in the linguistic encoding of pragmatic force in an L2, while sociopragmatic failure stems from cross-culturally different perceptions of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behavior in an L2 (Thomas 1983).

## THE ROLE OF INDIRECT SPEECH ACTS

Essentially in agreement with Thomas, Blum-Kulka (1982) claims that pragmatic competence involves realizing indirect speech acts necessarily in an L2. Indirect speech acts involve cases in which the speaker says one thing and means that, but also means something else. One example of indirect speech acts is as the utterance *It is cold in here*, a speaker may mean that the physical atmosphere in a room, as a warning not to bring the baby in, he or she may also mean a request to turn on the heater.

Blum-Kulka claims that learning to realize indirect speech acts in an L2 necessarily involves learning new strategies for realizing indirect acts, as well as new social attitudes about the appropriate and effective use of these and other strategies in context.

An evidence to support Blum-Kulka's claim comes from the different strategies of indirect speech acts performed in different languages. Take the conventional strategies of making indirect requests as example, say, in Hebrew and English. A conventional standard for making indirect requests in Hebrew, as in (4), is by questioning whether there is a possibility in the future for the act to be performed. While the same case in English is represented in (5), where *can you do (such and such)* is a standard way of indirectly making a request.

(4) Ulay telex lišon? (Perhaps you'll go to bed?)

(5) Can you go to bed?

(Blum-Kulka 1982:34)

Another evidence in favor of Blum-Kulka's claim is from different social attitudes about the appropriate and effective use of the same strategies in a given context. One example is the strategy used for asking for the salt at a dinner table in Israel. The speaker of Hebrew who wants the salt passed can use an expression which is a literal translation of an English as *can you pass me the salt?*. However, the most appropriate and effective expression of the social attitudes used at dinner tables in Israel is *Elšar leqable at hamelax? (Is it possible to get the salt?)*.

From the evidences provided above, one can see the different strategies of making indirect requests between languages such as Hebrew and English. Consider that a native English L2 learner of Hebrew, if he/she does not learn the new strategies of making indirect request in Hebrew, i.e. by questioning whether there is a possibility in the future for the act to be performed as *Ulay telex lišon? (Perhaps you'll go to bed?)*, he/she may fail to realize the indirect speech acts in Hebrew. Hence, for native English L2 learners of Hebrew, they might have to learn new strategies of making indirect requests in Hebrew which are different from his/her native strategies. Likewise, the speakers of Hebrew in Israel also need to learn the new social attitudes about appropriate and effective use of some strategies in context, which might be quite different from that of their native norms such as *Elšar leqable at hamelax? (Is it possible to get the salt?)* etc.

## THE ROLE OF UNIVERSAL PRAGMATIC KNOWLEDGE

In spite of the fact that there are new strategies and appropriate social attitudes of indirect speech acts that L2 learners have to learn, certain features of indirect speech acts may be shared by L1 and L2, and can be transferred from L1 to L2, as such, these shared features will play its basic role in the acquisition of pragmatic competence in an L2 (Blum-Kulka 1982, 2002). According to Blum-Kulka, certain aspects of pragmatic knowledge of L2 are based on universal

principles, and these universal principle based knowledge will help L2 learners in acquiring the basic ability to interpret and realize indirect speech acts in an L2.

One evidence supporting Blum-Kulka's claim can be found from learners of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, mainly from their interlanguage production or comprehension of requests, suggestions, invitations, refusals, corrections, complaints, apologies, compliments and indirect answers (Ellis 2002). For example, in Hebrew, the general question about direction of driving is a request for a lift, as in (6), where the question of the Hebrew may be different from that of the native English speakers'. However, the native English speaker can understand the meaning of the Hebrew and make an answer to it, i.e. *No, we are unable to go with you.*

- (6) A (the Hebrew) Are you going our way?  
B (native English speaker) Yes, but I'm afraid the car is full.  
(Kasper 1992: 212)

Another evidence is from the cross-culturally shared conversational rules, as in (7), the non-native speaker begins his answer to the question *Is he not very nice?* by another question *Not nice? I think he's great.* According to the survey of Blum-Kulka's (1982:44), 90% of native speakers agree with the answer *Not nice? I think he's great*, which is compatible with the answer of the L2 learners with 85% agreement.

- (7) Non-native: What do you think of our new boss?  
Native: Not very nice.  
Non-native: Not nice? I think he's great.  
(Blum-Kulka 2002:57)

In the example of (6), albeit not always in the same way as native English speakers make a request, the Hebrew manages to get the information that is needed from the native English speakers. In such a case, one can see that there is universal principle pragmatic knowledge shared by English and Hebrew, which operates in the specific sets of realizing different strategies in the context. Likewise, from the answer agreement in (7) between the native speakers and the L2 learners, one can see that the ability to draw conversational implications may come from the universal pragmatic knowledge shared by L1 and L2. Hence, it may be the transfer of the universal principle pragmatic knowledge from L1 to L2 that enables L2 learners to acquire the basic ability to interpret and realize indirect speech acts in an L2. Recently researchers tried to explain L2 learners' performance in terms of universal processing mechanism or its relationship with the grammar (e.g. Felser and Roberts 2007), although the results are still in debate (Shin and Christianson 2012).

## CONCLUSION

In sum, L2 pragmatic competence consists of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge. Pragmalinguistic knowledge entails grammatical rules about an L2, lack of such knowledge may result in pragmalinguistic failure. Sociopragmatic knowledge involves sociolinguistic perceptions of an appropriate linguistic behavior in an L2, lack of this knowledge may cause sociopragmatic

failure. The nature of pragmatic competence in an L2 involves learning new strategies for realizing indirect acts, as well as new social attitudes about the appropriate and effective use of these and other strategies in context. The basic ability to interpret and realize indirect speech acts in an L2 is acquired from the universal knowledge of indirect speech acts shared by both L1 and L2.

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## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INNOVATED WRITING PROCESS APPROACH (IWP)

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### ABSTRACT

The Innovated Writing Process (IWP) approach was designed as a program for teaching writing, and was implemented in the classroom settings, to investigate the impact of Revising and Redrafting on improving Arab Learners of English written accuracy (Mourssi, 2013a). The IWP approach focuses on the role of both the teacher and the learner and gives detailed guidelines for instructors to follow. It is an attempt to apply Sociocultural Theory in the classroom settings (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006), and how the input can be well reprocessed which, in turn, develops the Second language learners' internalized grammatical system. In other words, based on the shortcomings found in previous methods of teaching writing - product writing/ process writing - and following recent works in applied linguistics and second language acquisition on form-focused instruction, ex-implicit teaching and learning (Mourssi, 2013b), and types of feedback, the Innovated Writing Process approach was designed. Finally, implementing the IWP approach indicates that corrective feedback does help L2 learners in the SLA, and also indicates the metalinguistic feedback may be one of the most suitable feedback types which help L2 learners acquiring second language linguistic items.

**KEY WORDS:** *Form-focused instruction, interaction, metalinguistic feedback, revising, redrafting and SLA.*

### INTRODUCTION

In designing the IWP, a variety of teaching methods were integrated bearing in mind the L2 learners' level and the types of error/mistake which emerge as they prepare their written work. Corrective feedback is provided to the learners by analyzing their errors/mistakes and explaining the nature of the errors/mistakes produced during writing, and how L2 learners managed to produce the target-like forms themselves after receiving metalinguistic feedback (Mourssi, 2012b).

The reader should be reminded that the Innovated Writing Process approach (IWP) is one of the findings of an empirical study in the context of Arab learners of English (Mourssi, 2013a). This paper consists of six main parts which are: introduction, literature review, theories of language and language learning in the IWP approach, the design, the procedures, conclusion and the references. In the following is the literature review.



## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Research on Process Writing (1980s-1990s)*

There is an assumption suggesting that, when teachers teach students how to write target-like forms, the process helps the latter to learn the underlying structures of the language as well. Raimes (1983, p.3) posits that the use of writing as a medium for communication reinforces grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary. Thus, teaching writing provides a unique way to reinforce learning.

According to Reid (1993, p. 21), in the 1970s, many ESL composition teachers in intensive language programs used writing mainly as a support skill in language learning. Some of the activities in writing included: doing grammar exercises, answering reading comprehension questions, and writing dictation. Furthermore, writing was viewed as one technique used to add interest to a lesson or even perhaps, as a testing device to diagnose grammar or comprehension errors. In the 1980s, linguists and teachers of EFL/ESL observed that traditional writing exercises were “product” orientated, meaning that they were more concerned with the final result than with the process of learning which can occur through the writing activity.

Richards et al. (1999, p. 290) defined process writing as an approach that puts emphasis on the composing process, wherein the writer makes use of tools such as planning, drafting and revising. These tools are used to help students improve their writing skills and possibly achieve target-like procedures in composing. Sometimes, process writing is comparable with the product approach or the prose model approach that focuses on producing different kinds of written products by imitating model paragraphs or essays.

Pennington et al. (1996) conducted a study on the introduction of process writing among secondary school students in Hong Kong. The outcome of the survey suggests the presence of a complex pattern of cause and effect relationships between students' attitudes and teachers' behaviours. The results also revealed that the student group that had positive experiences with process writing are those who demonstrated positive attitudes at the beginning of the project. This group was supervised by a teacher who integrated elements of process writing into his/her teaching routine. On the other hand, the group that evaluated the experience negatively was taught by a teacher who focused on traditional language exercises and grammatical accuracy, and did so with very little integration of elements of process writing. These findings underline the importance of the role of the teacher in teaching writing processes inside the classroom.

Fulcher (1997, p. 17) maintains that the process approach often emphasizes the development of thinking skills along with the writing process. Raimes (1983, p. 3) also underscored the strong relationship between writing and thinking that makes writing a valuable part of any language course. Therefore, it can be surmised that writing holds an important role in the development of language skills. The stages of process writing will be presented in the following section.

### *Stages of Process Writing*

A number of recent works support the use of process approaches in teaching writing and these are reviewed below:

Hedge (1997, p. 21) explains that the process of writing contains a number of stages as represented in the following Table.

Table 1: Stages of Process Writing

being motivated ► to write	getting ideas ► Together	Planning and ► Outlining	making notes ►	Making a first ► Draft	revising Re-planning ► redrafting	editing and getting ready ► for publication
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To emphasize clearly the importance of the teacher's role during the writing class, Nunan (1989, p. 13) asserts that English as Second Language (ESL) courses must be carefully planned for each class is a single piece of a complex design. Likewise, teachers should determine the materials in order to arrive at a specific performance level by setting some goals that a teacher aspires to achieve (2012d).

Reid (1993, p. 73) argues if the ESL writing class is one of the areas in a writing program, it is necessary to know not only the performance objectives of a single course but also the overall goals of a writing program involving other classes. Teachers may also experience difficulties in teaching speaking, listening and reading. But more often, it is more difficult to teach writing because it requires greater effort and a larger amount of time from both teachers and students (Hedge, 2005).

Pressley and Yokoi (1997) examined certain instructional practices and procedures in teaching writing developed by fifth-grade teachers, nominated as outstanding teachers in the U.S. An analysis of the survey returns shows that these teachers have prioritized the development of word-level comprehension, and critical thinking skills. As they believed that the development of background knowledge is essential to the process, students were consistently reminded about the importance of planning, drafting, and revising. In the following, I will talk about research on writing processes in the 21st century.

### ***Research on Writing Processes in the 21st Century***

Due to the dramatic changes in the process of teaching writing in the 1990s, there has been an increasing awareness amongst L2 writing researchers and teachers that classroom-based instruction plays a significant role in helping L2 learners improve the accuracy of their written texts (Bitchener, 2005; Ferris, 2002, 2004). To ensure improvements in writing skills, additional exercises now include discussions and exercises in marking strategies encompassing further activities such as revision in the planning and drafting stages (Hedge, 2005, p. 5). These exercises are expected to increase teachers' interest to find intervening measures using feedback in a variety of ways. That is what the author seeks to achieve with Arab learners and teachers of English.

Concerning difficulties and challenges in the teaching process of writing, Hedge (2005, p. 7) argues that compared to speech, effective writing requires a number of things, such as: (1) a high degree of organization in the development of information; (2) ideas or arguments; (3) a high degree of accuracy; (4) the use of complex grammatical devices for focus and emphasis; and (5) a careful choice of vocabulary, grammatical patterns and sentence structures. These five items may explain why writing can be a difficult task for most ESL/L2 students. From this point of view, the author is trying to activate the writing sub-processes which are drafting, revising and

redrafting and increasing the role of the teacher inside the classroom in teaching writing skills. The approach integrates noticing, active interaction, feedback and error analysis aiming at improving foreign learners' writing as well as speaking. The framework of the IWP is presented in Figure 1.

Hedge (2005, p. 10-15) developed several assumptions which could motivate students and teachers. Four of these assumptions are as follows: (1) students need opportunities to practise various forms and functions of writing, and from within these develop different skills; (2) the need to encourage students to go through the processes of planning, organizing, composing, and revising; (3) the process of marking needs constant review and modification, and (4) giving students more time in the classroom to generate discussions and activities that encourage effective writing processes.

Shin (2008, p. 3) made a critical review of the usefulness of grammar correction in second language writing. The author concluded with a discussion on the necessity and importance of proper grammar correction for L2 writers. Similarly, Rahimi (2009) has investigated the impact of feedback which includes reference to the students' L1. Both indirect feedback and no feedback approaches were studied. He concluded that feedback is effective.

O'Brien (2000, p. 40) sets out four principles which presumably govern the teaching of writing. These are: (a) teachers should be aware of the difficulties involved in writing and should take into account the assessment methods they use; (b) teachers should expose students to a variety of models of effective writing; (c) teachers should be careful in selecting topics; and (d) teachers should bear in mind that the production of the whole text must be encouraged otherwise the teacher will lose the opportunity to proceed with the teaching of the sub-processes. Students in most of the Arab countries in many cases are asked to write a final draft of their work from the beginning not only in secondary schools, but in the foundation course provided to Higher Education Students in many different universities. Qatar University EFL Students are typical of university students from the Gulf countries which are considered as the richest countries in the Arab world. These students need to use modern technology and methods in teaching as well as in the business and banking fields. In order to examine the effects of this practice, Al-Buainain, (2006) conducted survey of language instructors at the Department of Foreign Languages in the University of Qatar. The majority were in agreement that most EFL students were weak in three writing courses namely: writing 1, writing 2 and advanced writing. With this finding, Al-Buainain (2006) recommended further research that will investigate this problem and develop remedial procedures that will help students overcome their weakness and therefore lessen the number of them failing every semester.

Al-Buainian (2006) enquired whether it was possible to acquire syntax through writing. In a similar vein, Weissberg (1998) tested the hypothesis that SL learners may acquire syntax in part by writing in class and the result indicates that classroom writing has a positive effect in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). On the other hand, Liu (2000, p. 33) argues that "insufficient use of lexical cohesive ties by ESL students contributes to the lack of cohesion in their writing". In Iran, Kiany and Khazrineshed (2001) carried out a study to explore the relationship between English proficiency, writing ability and the use of conjunctions. Part of the conclusion the authors were able to draw suggests the creation of innovative materials since these can insert particular types of conjunctions for every level.

Due to the need to improve high school students' writing, De la Paz, et al. (2002) made a study on the writing instruction used in middle school classrooms and developed an experiment requiring the development of a variety of cognitive resources. De la Paz et al. (2002) concluded that the students in the experimental group wrote longer essays containing more mature vocabulary and were qualitatively better than those in the non-target groups.

The literature on process writing has guided the researcher to concentrate on group work, noticing, interaction, feedback, error analysis and motivating teachers as well as learners to be involved in writing processes and consider writing as a starting point to improve their other language skills. In other words, there are a number of potentially conflicting issues; students need grammar rules in order to be accurate, but traditional grammar teaching has proved to be demotivating for them. Each method and approach has its own theory of language and theory of language learning. In what follows the theory of language on which the IWP approach is based.

## **THEORIES OF LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE LEARNING IN THE IWP APPROACH**

### ***Theory of Language in the IWP Approach***

The IWP approach is based on integrating three different theoretical views of language. The first one is the *structural view* where language is considered as a system of structurally related elements for the coding of meaning. The mastery of these elements in this system is the target of language learning. The elements of this system are defined as: phonological units, grammatical units, grammatical operations and lexical items.

The second view is the *functional view* where language is viewed as a vehicle for the expression of functional meaning, and where the emphasis is on semantic and communicative dimension rather than on grammatical characteristics of language teaching content by categories of meaning and function rather than elements of grammar and structure.

The third view is the *interactional view* where language is seen as a tool for the creation and maintenance of social relations. This view has been added since "interaction" has been central to theories of second/foreign language learning and pedagogy for more than thirty years, when Rivers (1987) defines the interactive perspective in language education:

"Students achieve facility in using a language when their attention is focused on conveying and receiving authentic messages that contain information of interest to both speaker and listener in a situation of importance to both" (p.4). In other words, the IWP approach can represent implications of the Sociocultural Theory in SLA (2012d).

### ***Theory of Language Learning in the IWP Approach***

In general, the IWP approach is derived from adapting three common and well known theories in the field of SLA, aiming at changing the theoretical frameworks of these theories into a pedagogical framework to be implemented and activated inside the classroom context. In particular, the IWP approach is based on integrating three well known theoretical approaches in

explaining second language learning namely: Behaviourism, Innatism, and Interactionism, which reflect the theory of language of the IWP approach. In detail, *Behaviourism* states that language learning is the result of imitation, practice and feedback, while Innatism gives priority to learners' innate characteristics (which Chomsky calls "Innatism Position"), and Interactionism focuses on the role the linguistic environment in interaction with the learner's innate capacities.

To be more specific, theory of language learning in the IWP approach matches with the Behaviourism theory which believes that learners receive linguistic input from speakers in their environment and which also outlines that language learners start off with the habits formed in L1 as they linked the second language learning with Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH). CAH claims that when there are similarities between L1 and L2, the learners will acquire the Target Language with ease, but when there are differences, the learners will have more difficulties (Cook, 2001). This is what happens with Arab Learners of English due to significant differences between Arabic and English, and the crosslinguistic influence of L1 in the acquisition of L2 is indicated in the current empirical study. From this point, one part of the teacher's and of the learners' role is formed in the IWP approach.

The second theory on which the IWP approach is based is *Innatism*, which states that language learning is based on L1 acquisition not L2 acquisition, and that the Universal Grammar (UG) is based on language competence in the target language. According to the IWP approach the UG should be available to second/foreign language learners and at the same time language competence should not be practical without language performance in which foreign/second language learners transform their knowledge of the language into use of the language. Other linguists termed these changes as changing the declarative knowledge *that* into procedural knowledge *how* through practice (Anderson, 1995; De Keyser, 1998, 2003). In other words, the IWP approach is basically associated with the kind of learning which takes place in the classroom environment, where rules learning must be followed by practice, and when practice is not enough to get reasonable output, input should be reprocessed to be more understandable and more comprehensible until such time when the learners become able to use the target rules. From this point, another part of the teacher's and of the learners' role in the IWP approach is formed. Pica (2008) concludes that the more time is spent in treating the form, the more form is retained in learners' mind.

The third theory on which the IWP approach is based is the *Interactionism*. This theory is based on the first two theories mentioned above where the first one states that learning is based on receiving the linguistic input from the speakers in the learners' environment, while the second one states that learning is based on increasing the comprehensive input. The researcher thinks that these two theories cannot be performed or implemented without interaction. The interaction comes in the form of negotiation which will not concentrate on one aspect only whilst ignoring the other, but it will be negotiation of both *form* and *meaning* in the form of metalinguistic feedback following the processes of error analysis and contrastive analysis based on the type of learners' errors/mistakes.

Gass and Selinker (2008) claim that the interaction approach accounts through input *exposure to language*, production of language *output*, and *feedback* that comes as a result of interaction. They add that negotiation, recasts and feedback are items that involve in interaction. They also add that negotiation serves as catalyst for change because of its focus on non-target-like forms, by providing learners with information about non-target-like forms; negotiation enables learners to



search for additional confirmatory evidence (p.331). The negotiation is termed in the current method as metalinguistic feedback.

In conclusion, the theory of language learning in the IWP approach includes both *process-oriented theories* which are built on learning process, and *condition-oriented theories* which emphasizes the nature of learners and the environment where language learning takes place. We as researchers, have to have in mind the principle that to predict or to analyze the learners' errors may provide the teacher and the learners with many opportunities to interact, negotiate, and with valuable information in the areas of difficulties that learners may encounter. This might help learners develop their interlanguage grammar and, in turn, help them develop their internalized grammatical system. What links theory with practice or approach/method with procedures is what is called "Design". In what follows the design of the IWP method is discussed.

## **THE DESIGN OF THE IWP APPROACH**

The design of the IWP approach includes: the objectives of the method, the content of the method, the syllabus, followed by the role of the teacher and the learners, and finally the role of the instructional materials.

### ***The Objectives of the IWP Approach***

As the IWP approach is based on process-oriented theories and condition-oriented theories, the objectives of the IWP approach are linguistically oriented, having in consideration the nature of the ALEs and the educational environment where language learning takes place. The objectives of the IWP approach are as follows:

- to improve learners' accuracy and fluency reflected in improving their speaking as well as writing;
- to present explicit grammar in a stimulating and motivating way using suitable teaching materials which attract the learners attention, e.g. picture-story writing;
- to increase awareness of contrastive aspects between L1 and L2 and to internalize these features as part of their L2 grammar;
- to transfer the explicit knowledge to learners' speaking abilities as well as their written work;
- to teach students how to notice their mistakes by interacting while speaking as well as writing.

Sets of picture-story writing can be selected as the basis on which the students are asked to write an essay; these writing tasks should be related to the learners' environment. These tasks could be designated as the teaching materials.

### ***The Content of the IWP Approach***

The IWP approach consists of seven main stages which involve the speaking process as well as the writing process. In what follows the stages of the suggested framework of the innovated writing process are described Figure 1.



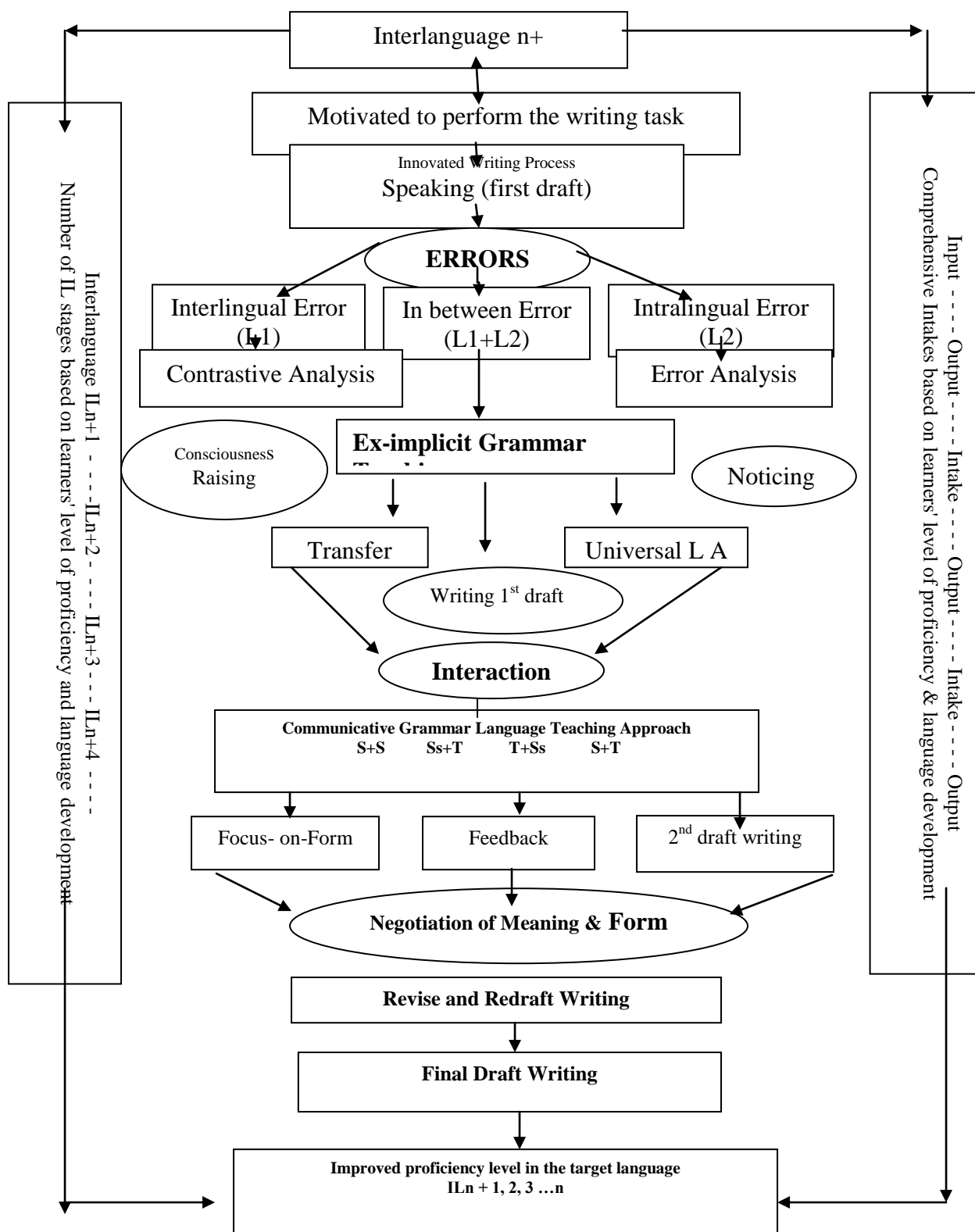


Figure 1: Framework of the Innovated Writing Process

*The Main Seven Stages in the IWP Approach*

*Stage One (Discussion)*

This stage includes open discussion inside the classroom; it can be in the form of small groups of four students or in pairs. The discussion is followed by brainstorming and making notes in addition to asking questions and suggesting ideas and sequences related to the target topic. The most important factor here is that the teacher should motivate all the students to participate in the activity/task; however, he/she should organize/control the discussion in order to avoid the drawbacks of the communicative approach (one of the drawbacks of Communicative approach is giving the opportunity to the learners to talk without control or correcting their mistakes).

*Stage Two (Oral Feedback on Discussion and Analyzing Spoken Mistakes)*

The teacher's role here is to render oral feedback on the speaking abilities of the students, explaining the mistakes that students made while speaking. The teacher starts analyzing the mistakes on the board following the Grammar Translation Method. The students are then asked to speak again about the same topic paying attention to the mistakes they had made previously. The teacher can interrupt students if they make the same mistakes in order to give his/her metalinguistic feedback on the non-target-like forms following the procedures of Communicative Language Teaching method (CLT) and Task-Based approach (TB). Although CLT and TB do not generally focus on mistakes, they might suggest ways in which mistakes can be highlighted and corrected through repetition and correction.

*Stage Three (Planning)*

Students are to select ideas individually, arrange the information and structure the text, followed by self-evaluation and participation in group-evaluation while planning the initial draft. The teacher's role is to give his/her oral/written feedback on planning for each group depending on the learners' output.

*Stage Four (First Draft)*

Following the first three stages, students are asked to write the first draft asking the teacher for help when it is required. If they are not able to finish the first draft during class time, they are allowed to complete it when after school. The teacher should ask students not to get help from others in performing this task: the first draft must be written by students themselves in order to find out what the gaps are.

*Stage Five (Oral/Written Feedback on the First Draft)*

The teacher asks students to have group/peer evaluation. The role of the teacher at this point is to give his/her general written feedback, based on the students' writing following the procedures and carrying out the role of the teacher and the role of the learners while performing the Task-Based approach in explaining and correcting the mistakes (Nunan, 2009, p. 66-67). It is suggested that oral feedback may be better in which the teacher presents the metalinguistic

feedback for all the students, however, some students prefer to get written feedback. It is the role of the teacher to keep the individual differences in mind.

#### *Stage Six (Analyzing Written Mistakes and Writing up Second Draft)*

After providing the feedback on the first draft, the teacher presents and explains the written mistakes on the board to all the students. The students are then asked to write their second draft based on the previous input they have already gained from the previous stages. This stage is an attempt to re-process the input for low/high level learners.

#### *Stage Seven (Final Written and Spoken Draft)*

If the students still make mistakes in their writing, the teacher should hold individual discussions during which he/she explains the mistakes to weaker student/s individually. After all students finish their final draft, they are asked to read their writing to all students. The teacher should ask students to comment on each piece of writing in a communicative and confident way. The researcher thinks that including the audience who are to listen to the speaker student in evaluation might motivate the ALEs to get more interest in interacting with the teacher and in turn to revise and redraft their writing whenever they feel they need to. Here they become aware of what they do and feel that they have to spend more time revising and redrafting their writing in order to produce a good piece of writing.

In what follows the learners' different settings in the IWP approach, the theories of SLA and proposals used in implementing the IWP approach and finally the integrated ELT methods and approaches followed in the IWP approach are discussed.

#### *Learners' Settings in the IWP Approach*

To discuss the learners' settings in the IWP approach, first it needs to be agreed that learning foreign/second language naturally is different from instructionally learned languages. In other words, learning from natural situations is different from learning in a classroom; and therefore, acquiring is different from learning with respect to Krashen's (1982) classification. Based on the drawbacks of different situations and different learning settings, the IWP approach exemplifies the advantages of the three different settings inside the classroom, aiming at creating a variety of settings to cover the different attitudes and the individual differences of the students inside the classroom. These settings are: natural setting, instructional setting and finally the communicative setting. In what follows the characteristics of each setting are described.

##### *Natural Setting*

This is the first setting followed in the IWP approach, where learners have their freedom to interact as if they were outside of the classroom. They should feel free to interact with each other. Following this setting, they will be exposed to a variety of vocabulary and structures. Each learner should interact using the foreign language to their best ability. The main goal of this setting is to improve learners' fluency and get rid of any anxiety.

*Structure – Based Instructional Setting*

In this setting, learners learn linguistic items one by one. The teacher presents the simple ones followed by more difficult ones. The learners' errors must be analyzed in order to improve their accuracy. To be more practical, the teacher asks questions which students answer, the teacher then evaluates the learners' answers – this is called Initiation/ Response/ Evaluations (IRE) exchange (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 112). This setting is essential in terms of the teacher's analysis of learners' errors following ex-implicit grammar teaching and giving the corrective feedback in the form of recast feedback, metalinguistic feedback and finally elicitation feedback. The weaker learners get the opportunity to participate actively in the writing task.

*Communicative Instructional Setting*

The third setting is a result of the first two settings, which both aim at improving learners' fluency and accuracy. The third setting aims at re-processing the input to be more comprehensive and understandable. It is considered to be the most important for learners in order to get the chance to interact effectively, correct their errors, arrange their ideas and produce appropriate piece of writing based on the outcome of the previous two settings. In this setting, the teacher focuses on meaning negotiation having ensured that learners have learnt the target structures related to the task in the previous settings.

*Theories of SLA and Proposals Implemented in the IWP Approach*

The four proposals in the IWP approach see Figure 2, have been suggested in order to develop and implement SLA theories inside the classroom. These four proposals match with the learners' settings mentioned previously and with the ELT methods and approaches which will be discussed later on. The four proposals are:

*Let's Talk*

This proposal emphasises the importance of access to both comprehensible input and conversational interactions between the teacher and the learners (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 150).

*Get It Right from the Beginning*

This proposal is selected because of the nature of the ALEs whose previous language learning experience was in grammar translation classes. Lightbown and Spada (2006) claim that teachers avoid giving opportunities for learners to speak freely because this would allow them to make errors (p.139). It is therefore better to give feedback directly and give the chance for learners to produce target-like language from the beginning. This will help learners to make fewer errors while using the language.

### *Teach What is Teachable*

This proposal is the practical interpretation of Pienemann's (2005) developmental features and process ability theory explaining that some things can be taught successfully whereas other things seem to remain un-acquired. In other words, teachers should realize the stages through which learners may pass in learning linguistic items. It will be useless to try to teach a forward stage before a previous one, so in the IWP approach teachers should start with what is teachable and what is learnable first.

### *Get It Right in the End*

This proposal is suggested in order to practically interpret both theories of SLA, namely: Form-Focused Instruction (FFI) and Meaning-Focused Instruction (MFI) as well as their importance in the IWP approach. It is also proposed in order to ensure and agree with the previous proposal "Teach what is teachable" which states that if teaching fails to take the learners' readiness into account, some things cannot be taught. This proposal also emphasizes that some aspects of language must be taught explicitly (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p.166).

### *The ELT Methods and Approaches Followed in the IWP Approach*

In general, the IWP approach is designed to be followed and implemented in teaching writing; it aims at improving learners' fluency and accuracy. The IWP approach is the main outcome and the basic finding concluded from my own empirical study (Mourssi, 2012a). Therefore, the IWP approach is based on a systematic integration of four well known and common ELT approaches.

### *Audio-Lingual Approach*

In the Audio-Lingual approach, following the opportunity for the learners to interact in the form of dialogues, specific grammatical patterns in the dialogues are selected based on the pictures provided and become the focus of various kinds of drill and pattern-practice exercises (Richards & Rodgers, 2006, p. 59). This supports Lightbown and Spada's (2006) theory which states that in Audio-Lingual approach there is little use of the first language, and learners are expected to learn mainly through repetition and habit formation: Audiolingualism is based on communicative approach where implicit learning is used (p.112).

### *Grammar-Translation Method (GTM)*

The second method is the Grammar Translation Method (GTM). It integrates performing certain stages in the IWP method in explaining learners' errors. The main principle of the GTM is that the sentence is the basic unit of teaching and language practice. Richards & Rodgers (2006) mention that GTM is still widely practised; it has no advocates although it is a method for which there is no theory (p.7). While implementing the IWP method with ALEs, it is concluded that ALEs become highly motivated and participate effectively while following the GTM in analyzing and correcting their errors as GTM is based on grammar rules where explicit grammar learning is used.

### *Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT)*

The third approach is communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT). It is integrated with the previous approaches based on the characteristics of communicative view of language which

has theoretical base: where language is thought as a system for the expression of meaning, the basic and primary function of language is to allow interaction and communication, and finally the structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses (Richards & Rodgers, 2006, p. 161). These concepts are implemented and performed in the IWP approach following the suggested stages one by one shifting between the different methods mentioned above. Having in consideration communicative approach, it is proposed that learning a language can be through implicit and explicit learning.

#### *Task-Based Approach*

The last approach which comes at the end of the IWP approach is Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). The TBLT is selected to be integrated in performing the IWP approach, based on its assumptions assumed by Feez (1998, p. 17). Some of the assumptions are: the focus of the TBLT is on the process rather than product; the activities and tasks can be either those which learners might need to achieve in real life or those which have a specific pedagogical purpose, and finally the taught activities are sequenced according to the degree of difficulty and the previous experience of the learners, beside the complexity of the task, and finally the language required to undertake the task.

#### *The Syllabus of the IWP Approach*

The IWP method has no specific syllabus since it is a process-based method. Richards & Rodgers (2006) mention that term syllabus is less frequently used in process-based methods, in which consideration of language content are often secondary (p.26). However, the teacher's activities and the learners' activities can be formed as follows:

#### *The Teacher's Activities*

The teacher motivates, presents, evaluates, explains, and analyzes the errors, giving oral, written, direct feedback (giving the target-like form), indirect feedback (using recasting for example), and metalinguistic feedback in which the teacher explains the nature of the mistakes without providing the target-like forms for the learners.

#### *The Learners' Tasks*

Students revise and redraft their speaking in a speaking process (having space from the teacher to prepare and reformulate their speech before answering the target task) as well as writing in a writing process, notice their mistakes and interact with the teacher to fill in the gaps in their knowledge of L2.

#### *The Roles of the Teacher and the Roles of the Learners in the IWP Approach*

The role of the teacher and the role of the learners in the IW P approach are presented in Appendix 1.



### *The Role of Instructional Materials*

Picture-story is one of the main forms of teaching materials in the IWP approach for the following reasons:

- pictures can motivate the students to pay attention;
- pictures can motivate the students to take part in the story;
- pictures can contribute to the context in which the language is being used;
- pictures can bring the outside world into the classroom;
- pictures can be used in many different ways;
- pictures can cue responses to questions;
- pictures can cue substitutions through controlled practice;
- pictures can provide information to be referred to in conversation and discussion (which serve improving speaking as well as writing).

Where the teacher is a stimulator/ pictures will be stimulating/ learners will be stimulated / teaching writing will be a kind of stimulation which tame and persuade learners to participate efficiently. However, the teacher can apply the IWP approach to other types of writing, e.g. general/academic writing.

## **PROCEDURES OF THE IWP APPROACH**

The Procedures Focus on Presenting, Practice and Feedback (PPF)

### *Presenting*

The teacher presents the target linguistic data through the task, e.g. the simple past tense forms is better presented by the picture-story writing.

### *Practice*

Students practise speaking process and writing process following revising and redrafting in performing the task.

### *Feedback*

Teacher follows the process of error analysis as well as contrastive analysis process by implementing the different types of feedback based on the type of the non-target-like forms produced and the level of the learners. The researcher can declare that implementing the IWP participates analyzing and investigates how how ALEs acquire the simple past tense, (Mourssi, 2012a, 2012c).

## **CONCLUSION**

The interactional process, whether it is negotiated interaction, interactional feedback, noticing gaps in knowledge by learners as well as by the teacher, while speaking or while writing, can direct the learners' attention to many things which might have been stored in their memory (implicit knowledge) but that they have temporarily forgotten. The teacher's role is to activate this knowledge which can relate to lexical items, grammatical constructions, phrasal verbs,

prepositions, collocations, and so on. Different types of interaction promote development and lead to an actual improvement in learners' knowledge in the long term.

The IWP was presented (including ex-implicit grammar learning/teaching, feedback, negotiation, and interaction) as a form of Form-focused-Instruction which integrates a strong interactional component. This provides a rationale for the IWP and the Communicative Grammar Language Teaching Approach and how they can help improve the ALEs' written accuracy and fluency as well.

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*Appendix A: The Roles of the Teacher and the Roles of the Learners in the IWP Approach*

Teacher's Role in the IWP approach	Students' Role in the IWP approach
Getting the SS motivated to the task	SS get ready for the picture-story writing task, receive the question paper and think individually about how to perform the task, listen to the teacher's instructions, brainstorm and get ready to participate effectively in performing the task and ask questions based on the pictures
Teacher answers all students' questions related to the story in turn	SS write one or two verbs under each picture to be used expressing the events of the story, (in the simple past form) and define the subject
Teacher elicits and writes down students' mistakes while talking about the picture-story	SS ask questions related to the verbs used and the new vocabulary used in their writing
Teacher explains the students' mistakes following Grammar Translation Method, showing the differences between English and Arabic sentences (as an oral feedback on students' mistakes while speaking about the picture-story)	SS take notes about the unclear points; arrange their ideas and the sequence of the story events
Teacher asks students to revise and redraft their speaking based on target-like forms of the simple past tense and on the target-like forms of the English sentence which is different from the Arabic form	SS notice their mistakes related to the simple past form and the target-like structure of the English sentences
Teacher asks students to speak about the picture-story, revise and redraft their speaking together in pairs or in groups	SS revise and redraft their speaking after correcting their mistakes based on feedback received, and speak about the story
Teacher asks students to write the first written draft and gives his/her written feedback for each student	SS speak about their story after revising and drafting their story
Teacher analyses the students' errors following the intensive interaction with the students following communicative approach (after marking the first draft)	SS receive the teacher's written feedback and rewrite after revising and correcting
Teacher holds individual discussions with weaker students (whenever it is possible)	SS interact with the teacher and ask for clarification if they do not understand the feedback given
Teacher asks students to write the final draft individually and read their writing in front of the class; then other students are asked to give their feedback in a communicative way	Students write the final draft
Teacher gives the final grade for each student and asks them to write down their weak points to be considered in the following writing lesson	SS read the final draft loudly at the front of the class

## CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: THE REPRESENTATION OF SOCIAL ACTORS IN *SUMMIT* SERIES

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the representation of social actors in *Summit* series from critical discourse analysis point of view. In order to do the analysis, van Leeuwen's (1996, 2008) framework is used and the textbooks in question are textually analyzed with an emphasis on *deletion*, *role allocation*, and *substitution*. The findings of this study indicate that the social actors are represented differently with respect to some discursive features. Males are portrayed as more included, prominent, active, and independent social actors than females. Considering jobs, however, both genders are represented as having high-status and ordinary ones. All in all, a female subordination can be implicitly understood from the textbooks.

**KEYWORDS:** Critical Discourse Analysis, Ideology, Representation, Social Actors, Discursive Features.

### INTRODUCTION

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that views language as a form of social practice and focuses on the ways social and political domination are reproduced in text and talk (Fairclough, 1989: 20). Also, Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 275) state that one of the central objectives of CDA is to consider the linguistic choices a text producer makes as a potential medium through which the ideological import of a particular discourse situation can be reproduced.

According to van Dijk (1998a), CDA is a field that is concerned with studying and analyzing written and spoken texts to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias. It examines how these discursive sources are maintained and reproduced within specific social, political and historical contexts. In the same line, Fairclough (1992: 35) simply states that "CDA aims at making transparent the connections between discourse practices, social practices, and social structures, connections that might be opaque to the layperson."

The main assumption of CDA that makes the approach different from other approaches to text analysis is that it stresses not only the decoding of propositional meaning of a text, but also its ideological assumptions. Advocates of CDA are interested in how a text may influence and manipulate its readers by the use of presuppositions that stem from the author's own, particular view of the world and circumstances of a text production. Thus, the text interpretation should include a close analysis of context which is not represented only by: "the immediate environment in which a text is produced and interpreted, but also the larger societal context including its relevant cultural, political, social and other facets" (Huckin, 1997:79).

Regarding language learning, as Karimaghahi and Kasmani (2013: 27) mention, this ideological assumption is not directly imposed by curriculum to the learners; rather it is carried out through



the underlying “hidden agenda” which resides within the text. In other words, the dominant cultural group controls, classifies, produces, and transmits what kind of knowledge is to be learnt and what values and attitudes are acceptable in that society. This results in accepting a particular attitude and value as something normal and natural by learners.

In the context of learning a language, here English, as a foreign language (EFL) the norms of conduct, ideology, etc. are usually disseminated without the learner even being aware of being exposed to such norms. That is, s/he is exposed to a hidden curriculum (Skelton, 1997). Evans and Davis (2000) assert that though researchers and publishers have agreed upon using positive characteristics of different genders in their textbooks, the achievements have not been so significant. CDA takes language as a means of addressing problems of social change. In other words, without any exception, the language used in any text including EFL textbooks can be ideologically loaded although at first glance they may seem innocent. For instance, as Davatgarzadeh and Sahragard (2010: 69) state, studies of the portrayal of women in most EFL textbooks have shown that the stereotypical role of women as mothers and homemakers is still being perpetuated in many current language textbooks.

With regard to the effects of textbooks on learner’s attitudes and ideologies, the present study examines the ways in which social actors are represented in *Summit* series (2006) to uncover the hidden discursive structures. Hence, attempts are made to clarify the ways male and female social actors are represented in the *Summit* series (2006). The study draws on the work of van Leeuwen (1996, 2008) to formulate a framework which utilizes a socio-semantic inventory, in a systematic way. Specifically, the study seeks the answers to the following research questions:

1. Are social actors (men and women) represented differently in the textbooks and, if so, how is this achieved linguistically?
2. What ideological assumptions account for the differences?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Data Collection***

The data selected for this study came from four English textbooks used in many English language institutes in Iran for intermediate levels. The *Summit* series includes four books, 1A, 1B, 2A, and 2B, written by Joan Saslow and Allen Ascher and were published in the United States of America by Pearson Longman Incorporation in 2006. Each book includes five units and each unit includes two conversations and one reading comprehension passage. In the present study, all the sentences in conversations and texts were extracted and analyzed through CDA, or more specifically, van Leeuwen’s (1996, 2008) framework.

### ***Procedures***

In this study, all the sentences in reading passages and conversations have been critically analyzed, focusing on each phrase, clause, and sentence separately and in conjunction with the neighboring phrases, clauses, and sentences. Van Leeuwen’s (1996, 2008) framework is used as



basis for the analysis of the textbooks under investigation to identify whether the features found in the abovementioned data follow an ideologically charged pattern and if so, what the nature of this ideological move can be. Also, to investigate the data statistically, chi-square tests have been used to determine whether the differences are significant.

Van Leeuwen's (1996, 2008) social actors are influenced by the policies and decisions of powerful organizations which either include or exclude them from the centers of power. He explains the principal ways in which social actors can be represented in discourse. In his view, CDA is the impact of power structures on the production of knowledge and the effect of this produced knowledge on identity and subjectivity of the members of the community. His (1996, 2008) framework consists of the following sections presented schematically in Figure 1 below:

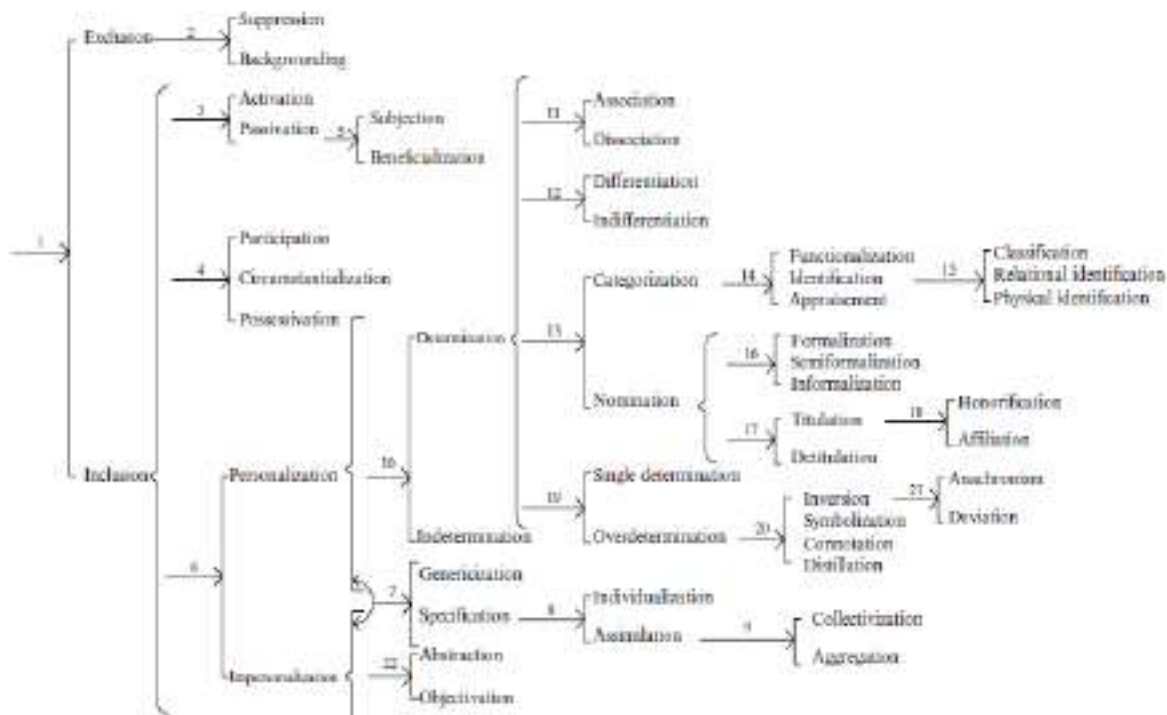


Figure 1: Social Actor Network

As can be seen in the “network”, van Leeuwen (1996, 2008) proposes three main types of transformation; deletion, rearrangement, and substitution. As Karimagahei and Kasmani (2013: 29) explain, “the ‘network’ shows whether the social actors were excluded or included; whether through rearrangements different roles were assigned to different social actors; and whether any substitutions were used in their representation.”

As one type of discourse (here an EFL textbook) does not include all the categories and modes of representation, for practical purposes, the following elements of van Leeuwen's framework (1996, 2008) are considered to function as the criterion for the analysis: *Exclusion*, *Inclusion*, *Activation*, *Subjection*, *Beneficialization*, *Functionalization*, *Classification*, *Relational Identification*, *Formalization*, *Semiformalization*, *Informalization*, *Indetermination*, *Abstraction*, *Objectivation*, *Genericization*, *Individualization*, *Collectivization*, and *Aggregation*. Van Leeuwen (1996: 32-69) and (2008: 23-54) define these elements as the following:

**EXCLUSION/INCLUSION:** Social actors are sometimes omitted or backgrounded to serve certain purposes.

**ACTIVATION/PASSIVATION:** Social actors can be activated, i.e. represented as the active, dynamic forces in an activity, or passivated, i.e. represented as undergoing an activity or as being the recipient. Passivation necessitates a further distinction: the passivated social actor can be *subjected* or *beneficialized*. Subjected social actors are treated as objects in the representation. Beneficialized social actors form a third party which, positively or negatively, benefits from the action.

**FUNCTIONALIZATION:** Functionalization occurs when social actors are referred to in terms of an activity, in terms of something they do, for instance, an occupation or role.

**Classification:** In the case of classification, social actors are referred to in terms of the major categories by means of which a given society or institution differentiates between classes of people.

**RELATIONAL IDENTIFICATION:** Relational identification represents social actors in terms of their personal, kinship, or work relations to each other, and it is realized by a closed set of nouns denoting such relations: “friend,” “aunt,” “colleague,” etc.

**NOMINATION:** Nomination is typically realized by proper nouns, which can be *formalization* (surname only, with or without honorifics), *semi-formalization* (given name and surname), or *informalization* (given name only).

**INDETERMINATION:** Indetermination occurs when social actors are represented as unspecified, anonymous individuals or groups.

**ABSTRACTION AND OBJECTIVATION:** The former occurs when social actors are represented by means of a quality assigned to them. The latter occurs when social actors are represented by means of reference to a place or thing closely associated either with their person or with the activity they are represented as being engaged in.

**GENERICIZATION:** Genericization occurs when social actors are represented as classes.

**Individualization:** Individualization occurs when social actors are referred to as individuals.

**Collectivization:** Collectivization occurs when social actors are referred to as groups which are realized by plurality, by a mass noun or a noun denoting a group of people but not treated as statistics.

**AGGREGATION:** It quantifies groups of participants by treating them as statistics. These elements will be dealt with in the next section.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Deletion

The process of exclusion/inclusion, categorized under deletion, is a central concern for CDA. According to van Leeuwen (2008: 28) “representations include or exclude social actors to suit their interests and purposes in relation to the readers for whom they are intended.” Some exclusion may be “innocent”, details which readers assume to know already or which are deemed irrelevant to them; others tie in closely to certain ideologies which should be considered. Table 1, below, summarizes the inclusion and exclusion of males and females in *Summit* series:

*Table 1: Inclusion and Exclusion of Male and Female Social Actors*

Inclusion / Exclusion	Male (No. =393)	Female (No. =211)	X <sup>2</sup>	Significancy
Inclusion	387 (98.47%)	203 (96.20%)	34.082	.000
Exclusion	6 (1.53%)	8 (3.80%)	.061	0.704

As Table 1 shows, male social actors are included with considerably more frequency than female ones and, on the other hand, female social actors are excluded more frequently. In the case of inclusion, as the statistics reveal, the difference is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, this difference is not statistically significant regarding exclusion ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Out of 20 units analyzed, only 4 texts have been allocated to successful and famous women including Helen Keller, Jane Goodall, Dr. Janice Perlman, and Donna Paxton while more texts have been considered to introduce successful and famous men such as Paul Newman, Beethoven, Freud, Dr. Robert Ballard, etc. Furthermore, the series mostly reflect positive attitude toward males and negative toward females. In a conversation in Book 2A page 39 a female social actor is included as a grumbler:

*Example 1. Meg: Oh, Carla's always ticked off about something or other.*

In another conversation in the same book, on page 40, the authors have provided female characters to describe their *shortcomings*. But, in another conversation in Book 2B page 75 a male social actor is introduced as someone who turned his life around successfully:

*Example 2. Olivia: That's the one. Well, he's apparently turned his life around. I just heard he's the CEO of MegaStar Foods.*

With regard to the exclusion as an important factor of CDA, *Summit* excluded male and female actors in some texts:

*Example 3. Newman was told that the salad dressing would sell only if his face were on the label. (Book 1A: 34)*

*Example 4. B: Well, everyone says she's bad news. (Book 1A: 6)*

In most cases of exclusion, however, both male and female actors have been excluded. It is a common phenomenon in newspaper texts and political speech. In this way, both social actors and their activities are excluded. The following examples make the point clear:

*Example 5. Maintaining a hopeful, positive, yet realistic perspective in the face of hard times can be a real challenge. (Book 1A: 8)*

Example 6. It is estimated that as few as 1600 giant pandas remain in the wild today. (Book 1B: 70)

### Role Allocation

In this section, the roles that social actors are given to play in representations are considered. In van Leeuwen's words (2008: 32-33), "representations can relocate roles or rearrange the social relations between the participants." He further points out that representations can endow social actors with either active or passive roles. As van Leeuwen puts it:

"Activation occurs when social actors are represented as the active, dynamic forces in an activity, passivation when they are represented as 'undergoing' the activity, or as being 'at the receiving end of it'." (2008: 33)

In this respect, the current study examines the representation of the two social actors with regard to their actions since they are inextricably related, especially considering the nature of actions in relation to which social actors are activated or passivated. The findings of the analysis are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: Role Allocation of Male and Female Social Actors

Role Allocation	Activation	Passivation		Total
		Subjected	Beneficialized	
Male	314 (96.02%)	9 (2.75%)	4 (1.23%)	327
Female	184 (95.33%)	6 (3.10%)	3 (1.57%)	193

As Table 2 indicates in the textbooks both male and female social actors are mostly activated in activities (96.02% and 95.33% respectively) and in a few cases passivated (3.98% and 4.67% respectively). This much more activation of both social actors rather than passivation in *Summit* series may be due to the fact that the books are prepared for EFL learners whose knowledge of English is not supposed to be high.

Table 3: Chi-square Results for Male and Female Role Allocation

Role Allocation	Male	Female	X <sup>2</sup>	Significancy
Activation (Total = 498)	314 (63.05%)	184 (36.95%)	22.434	.000
Subjection (Total = 15)	9 (60%)	6 (40%)	4.895	.018
Beneficialization (Total = 7)	4 (57.15%)	3 (42.85%)	1.857	.154

As can be seen in Table 3, the activation of male social actors is greater than that of females (63.05% and 36.95% respectively) and, also, the difference is statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that *Summit* series represent males as active and dynamic actors in their social context. The following examples show male and female activation in the textbooks:

Example 7. Max: I want to get out and see the world. (Male Activation; Book 2A: 3)

Example 8. Olga: I think you're wrong. (Female Activation; Book 2B: 99)

In regards with passivation, i.e. subjection and beneficialization, both male and female social actors are passivated only in a few cases and as can be seen in Table 3, the difference between

male and female actors is not significant ( $p>0.05$ ). As stated before, this might be due to the fact that these textbooks are compiled for intermediate EFL students.

### ***Substitution***

Social actors are represented through different discursive features under substitution. They are personalization (*functionalization, classification, relational identification, formalization, semiformalization, informalization, and indetermination*), impersonalization (*abstraction and objectivation*), genericization, and specification (*individualization, collectivization and aggregation*).

Social actors can be either represented as personalized actors or impersonalized ones. In the former, they are represented as human beings but not in the latter. Table 4, below, indicates male and female actors personalization and impersonalization in *Summit* series.

*Table 4: Personalization and Impersonalization of Male and Female Social Actors*

Personalization/ Impersonalization		Male (Total= 396)	Female (Total=340)	X <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Personalization	Functionalization	41 (10.35%)	34 (10%)	0.652	0.398
	Classification	45 (11.38%)	30 (8.82%)	2.01	0.076
	Relational Identification	36 (9.09%)	14 (4.12%)	9.431	0.001
	Formalization	38 (9.59%)	25 (7.37%)	2.667	0.102
	Semiformalization	124 (31.31%)	113 (33.23%)	0.018	0.805
	Informalization	83 (20.97%)	91 (26.77%)	5.470	0.008
	Indetermination	25 (6.31%)	27 (7.94%)	0.059	0.689
Impersonalization	Abstraction	3 (0.75%)	4 (1.17%)	0.00	1.000
	Objectivation	1 (0.25%)	2 (0.58%)	7.691	0.006

As can be seen in the table, in the texts under analysis male and female social actors are almost always personalized. Only in 10 cases males and females are impersonalized, i.e. abstracted or objectivated:

*Example 9. Studies of time spent on instant messaging services would probably show staggering use. (Book 1B: 116)*

*Example 10. New Surveys suggest that the technological tools we use to make our lives easier are killing our leisure time. (Book 1B: 116)*

Moreover, both social actors are frequently determined through functionalization, classification, relational identification, formalization, semiformalization, and informalization, males 92.69% and females 90.31%. Also, as Table 4 indicates, personalization is mostly realized by semiformalization (males 31.31% and females 33.23%) followed by informalization (males 20.97% and females 26.77%).

Concerning functionalization and classification as two types of categorization, males and females are almost equally functionalized (10.35% and 10% respectively) and classified (11.38% and 8.82% respectively). Also, qualitative analysis indicates that in *Summit* series both male and female actors are represented by both high-status and ordinary jobs. Moreover, they both are mostly classified in terms of their age and provenance. Chi-square test results, also, indicate that the difference between male and female social actors regarding functionalization and

classification is not statistically significant ( $0.398 > 0.05$  and  $0.076 > 0.05$  respectively). Here are some examples:

*Example 11. Irish writer James Joyce spoke thirteen languages. (Book 2B: 76)*

*Example 12. Isabel Carter is a talented portrait painter. (Book 2A: 12)*

*Example 13. Rachel Kelsey, 34, and Jeremy Colenso, 33, both experienced climbers, had checked the weather forecast for a week before they set out. (Book 2A: 28)*

*Example 14. The lines above are from the song "Not Pretty Enough", written and performed by Kasey Chambers, an Australian folk-rock singer and song writer. (Book 1A: 46)*

Considering relational identification in terms of their kinship and personal relations, male social actors are more identified in terms of their relations to other human beings than female ones. Also, Chi-square test results show that this difference is statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, in 11 cases females are identified in terms of their relations (kinship or personal) to a male, while in only 4 cases males are introduced in terms of their relations with females. Thus, the textbooks under analysis tend to represent males as more independent actors.

*Example 15. He and his wife both work overtime, putting in long hours in order to make ends meet. (Book 1B: 95)*

*Example 16. Paxton realized that she would have to make a choice between having more money and having more time- time to spend with her two daughters, to contribute to her community, and to relax.*

Nomination is one of the important factors employed to represent social actors. As Table 4 indicates, out of 463 instances of nomination, 245 cases (including 38 formal, 124 semiformal, and 83 informal) refer to males and 218 cases (including 25 formal, 113 semiformal, and 91 informal) refer to females. Considering the three instances of nomination, i.e. formalization, semiformalization, and informalization, female social actors are more frequently referred to informally than male ones. In fact, out of 174 cases of informalization, 47.70% of the total refers to males and 52.30% of the total refers to females. Chi-square test results, also, show that the difference is statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). This shows that the textbooks may tend to represent male actors as more important people and show more respect toward them by using more formalization and semiformalization.

Genericization and specification are two other factors used to represent social actors. Genericization is achieved by representing social actors as classes; however, specification is achieved by representing them as specific, identifiable individuals. Regarding specification, the social actors are either individualized or assimilated (collectivized or aggregated).



Table 5: Genericization and Specification of Male and Female Social Actors

Genericization / Specification		Male (Total=464)	Female (Total=316)	X <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
Genericization		10 (2.15%)	15 (4.75%)	1.333	0.284
Specification	Individualization	431 (92.89%)	285 (90.18%)	43.364	0.000
	Collectivization	15 (3.23%)	10 (3.17%)	3.232	0.134
	Aggregation	8 (1.73%)	6 (1.90%)	2.341	0.148

As Table 5 indicates, both male and female social actors are most frequently represented through specification and are mostly individualized (males 92.89% and females 90.18%). Also, male social actors are individualized more than female ones and this distinction is statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). According to van Leeuwen (2008: 35) individualization is of primary significance in CDA. In *Summit* series male actors are more frequently represented as specific, identifiable individuals than female actors. In other words, individuality of males has been emphasized and it can be concluded that males are depicted as more independent individuals than females.

Concerning assimilation, finally, both social actors are represented by collectivization and aggregation. The latter treats social actors as statistics, but the former does not. Here are some examples of collectivization and aggregation:

*Example 17. According to Chinese tradition, the elderly have always been honored and respected by the young.*  
(Book 1B: 94)

*Example 18. But today an increasing number of single young adults face the difficult situation of caring for both their parents and their grandparents.* (Book 1B: 94)

## CONCLUSION

One of the important issues contributing to gender-role differentiation and gender inequality is the ways social actors are represented in the media including textbooks. Textbooks as a crucial tool in constructing social members' identities are used apparently to convey certain types of knowledge to the learners. However, in addition to transferring knowledge they may be used as influential tools to impose certain normative outlooks and identities on the members. Since at first sight the norms and values which underlie texts cannot be understood, it is the aim of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to make these ideological systems and representations clear and display their relations to the broader social order.

Among different approaches to CDA, van Leeuwen's framework (1996, 2008) was utilized to analyze *Summit 1A*, *1B*, *2A*, and *2B* textbooks. The employed model consists of various discursive features to analyze and determine the ways social actors are represented through the texts. Based on the analysis, the discursive structures such as deletion, role allocation, and substitution provided a distinct representation and depiction of social actors in the textbooks. Concerning "deletion", the books used 'inclusion' extensively for both genders. However, male social actors were more frequently included than female ones and the difference was also statistically significant. On the other hand, females were more 'excluded' than males. This may

reveal a male oriented ideology present throughout the textbooks. With regard to “role allocation”, the texts mostly tended to use ‘activation’ rather than ‘passivation’. Also, male social actors were more frequently activated than female actors and the difference was statistically significant. This use of activation might be due to the fact that the textbooks are designed for intermediate EFL students whose knowledge of English may not be high. In regards with “substitution”, both male and female actors were almost always ‘personalized’ and rarely ‘impersonalized’. Concerning ‘functionalization’ and ‘classification’, both actors were represented by high-status and ordinary jobs; hence, depicting a rather neutral attitude toward both genders. However, under both ‘relational identification’ and ‘individualization’ category, males were represented as more independent actors and in both cases the difference between males and females was statistically significant. Regarding ‘nomination’, finally, female actors were represented more frequently through ‘informalization’ while male actors were mostly depicted by ‘formalization’ and ‘semiformalization’. This shows that the textbooks show more respect males and considers them more important.

All in all, the present study tried to depict the power relations and its inherent ideology regarding the representation of male and female social actors in *Summit* series. Such analyses can provide a wealth of additional information, including insights into both the curriculum developer and the teachers to interpret and respond to the propositional content of discourse. As Karimaghaei and Kasmani (2013: 36) put it, in this way learners find out how to read critically and understand the underlying ideological structures of the texts and comprehend better.

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## THE DISCRIMINATION OF 'BLACK': A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF OPERA'S INTERVIEW WITH BARAK OBAMA

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### ABSTRACT

A critical discourse analysis was applied to a short interview to reveal the hidden goals behinds these simple questions and replies. Both Opera and Obama were successful in including direct and indirect strategies in their turns. Van Valin's model was used as a model for finding out these ideologies used. Blackness, whiteness, racism, race discrimination, and racialization were focused on whether Clinton or Obama is regarded black enough than the other since 'black' is usually used out of the context of colour reference. The ideology of change evidently focused on his two subsequent campaigns, Obama covered both changes local and international, with their different senses and domains.

**KEYWORDS:** *Critical discourse analysis, Obama, the ideology of change, blackness, race discrimination*

### INTRODUCTION

The US racial or ethnic classification 'black' refers to people with all possible kinds of skin pigmentation from the darkest through to the very lightest skin colors, including albinos, if they are believed by others to have African ancestry, or to exhibit cultural traits associated with being "African American". As a result, in the United States the term "black people" is not an indicator of skin color but of socially based racial classification. Relatively dark-skinned people can be classified as white if they fulfill other social criteria of "whiteness" and relatively light-skinned people can be classified as black if they fulfill the social criteria for "blackness" in a particular setting.

The notion of blackness can also be extended to non-black people. Hansen (2012) states clearly that Toni Morrison once described Bill Clinton as the first black president, because of his warm relations with African Americans, his poor upbringing and also because he is a jazz musician. Christopher Hitchens was offended by the notion of Clinton as the first black president, noting, "we can still define blackness by the following symptoms: alcoholic mothers, under-the-bridge

habits...the tendency to sexual predation and shameless perjury about the same". Some black activists were also offended, claiming Clinton used his knowledge of black culture to exploit black people for political gain as no other president had before, while not serving black interests. They note his lack of action during the Rwanda genocide and his welfare reform, which Larry Roberts said had led to the worst child poverty since the 1960s. Others noted that the number of black people in jail increased during his administration. The question of blackness also arose in the Democrat Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign. Commentators have questioned whether Obama, who was elected the first black President of the United States, is black enough, contending that his background is not typical, as his mother was white American, and his father was a black Kenyan immigrant. Obama chose to identify as black and African-American (ibid.).

The present paper is a critical discourse analysis of a short interview of Barak Obama, the first black American President. Racism and race discrimination, the Black and the White in USA are examined as the ethnic basis for this study. Shedding light on CDA and its tenets, and Van Dijk's approach is in the second section. A brief CDA is done in the third section.

### **RACISM AND RACE DISCRIMINATION**

"Racism", as stated by Wodak and Reisigl (2001:372) is a stigmatizing headword and political "fighting word" that seems to be on almost everyone's lips today. Perhaps this is because the meaning of "racism" has become extraordinarily expanded and evasive. There is talk of a "genetic," "biological," "cultural," "ethnopluralist", "institutional," and "everyday racism," of a "racism at the top," of an "elite racism," of a "racism in the midst," of an "old" and a "new" or "neo-racism," of a "positive racism," and of an "inegalitarian" and a "differentialist racism." Racism involves the use of essentialist and biological understandings of people under the banner of race to limit, 'other,' or disenfranchise them. The power of 'science' in its attempts to explain and categorize human variation has continued to allow such biologically and physiologically essentialized understandings to endure in discourses of race (Henry & Tator, 2002:119f). He explains that this occurs because science provides a cultural and social "guarantee" of measurable and absolute difference among people that carry the same amount of authority as other systems of knowledge do. Further, though overt assertions of biological hierarchy in relation to race are now considered 'racist' in the Western world, *"the genetic, biological, and physiological definitions of race are alive and well in the common-sense discourse is for us all. The biological, physiological, or genetic definition, having been shown out the front door, tends to slide around the veranda and climb in the back through the window"* (ibid.). Consequently, common-sense continually relies on these biological and physiological understandings of race as 'science' even if these understandings have been largely assumed to be absent in everyday discourse, continuing the assumptions as race being related to essentialized understandings of bodies.

Democratic racism as racist discourse begins in the families that nurture people; in the communities that help socialize them; in the schools and universities that educate them; in the media that communicate ideas and images to them; and in the popular culture that entertains them. People learn this discourse at the very sites where every other form of learning is provided. Racisms also involve varying registers and have developed from overt forms of racial oppression to more subtle ones. Parker and Roberts (2005:75) argue, *"while classical racism has subsided, everyday racism has remained alive. This type of racism can be characterized as those mundane practices and events that are infused with varying degrees of racism"*. Racism is therefore not as outwardly prevalent in contemporary culture, but has developed to become more within the everyday practices, understandings, and the knowledge people use towards others, which are

contextually based. Furthermore, Henry and Tator (2002:121) explain that racist discourses in contemporary Western culture operate in a coexistence with democratic beliefs in justice and fairness, while simultaneously exhibiting negative beliefs and feelings about "*minority groups and discrimination against them*" which they term "*democratic racism*" (p.23f). These conflicting and coexisting discourses of democracy and discrimination are produced and reproduced in different sites of learning, considered 'official sites' and 'casual sites':

Racisms are therefore not simply personal, involving personal prejudices, as has been assumed in the past (see Hill, 2008), but are structural and contextual in nature. They rely on large social structures of domination and subordination and are continually enacted by all people, particularly the dominant (Leonardo, 2004). It is therefore vital to understand how such discourses of democratic racism are activated, favoured and perpetuated in all sites of learning, not simply those sites considered traditional or formal sites like institutions. The power of 'unofficial' sites of learning to influence and evolve these discourses must not be ignored. They are important sites of analysis for understanding how racisms continue to be enacted in contemporary culture. It is within these sites and structures of domination that essentialist discourses get enacted onto bodies, making them racialized. This process of becoming raced is known as *racialization*.

The process of racialization relies on ideologies and essentialism to position people and categorize them into particular groups related to assumed common traits (whether they be physical or social) that are considered concrete and distinguishable from other groups (Murji & Solomos, 2005). As Murji and Solomos state in their book on the theories and practices of racialization, racialization acts as a means of understanding as well as ideological and cultural or political practices and process through which race is given significance. Culture and political practices, they assert, have "*become the basis for the broader conception of racialization as expressing the ways in which social structures and ideologies become imbued with 'racial' meanings, so that social and political issues are conceived along racial lines*" (ibid.:11). However, how such practices actually engage race is not always clear as they can refer to processes of enacting 'race' in varying levels, degrees, and registers, whether it be very specific biological distinctions, processes of cultural differentiation or "*a code in which the idea or language of race*" is enacted (Murji & Solomos, 2005: 4). Further, as explained above between race and ethnicity, racialization is able to enact many different social and cultural divisions and 'classifications' to work on its behalf, these include "culture, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, ability, religion and, of course, race and skin colour as ways of distinguishing groups for differential and unequal treatment. This process of racialization allows dominant bodies to suppress and dominate others" (ibid.). What is clear is the power infused within processes of racialization as they involve a practice of classification that is largely enacted by the dominant upon the dominated.

Therefore in reality, the social categories of race are complex, interrelated and changing social constructions. Race is not a single, fixed and deterministic category of identity and representation, but rather something that is enacted, placed upon bodies, and used to ensure social and political divisions through a process of racialization. Consequently scholarly analysis working with notions of race and racialization needs to pay particular attention to the social construction of race and its underlying power relations within subjugated knowledge as well as



the way race works discursively, as a language of understanding people (Rashidi, 2012:4ff). As racialization works within systems of domination and oppression to describe peoples within racial understandings, there is also a hierarchy within racialized understandings that provides some racialized groups more power than others. In the Western World, racialized whites are often afforded this dominant position (see also Schäffner & Wenden, 1995 56).

### **THE BLACK AND THE WHITE IN USA**

Discrimination in the USA is by gradation. Whites discriminate against blacks and people of color. Men discriminate against women irrespective of color. Latinos (people from Latin America who see their near white pigmentation as a sign of superiority over blacks) discriminate against blacks. Black Americans, who are direct descendants of black slaves in America, discriminate against blacks from other parts of the world - especially those from Africa. And they discriminate against so called black people who are black by circumstance that they look every inch, white, but have a little black blood running through their veins. At the height of discrimination in America, blacks were openly stoned to death on flimsy reasons. At the peak of it, a black man could be lynched just for making a pass at a white lady, proven or not. How does a lynched dead, prove he did not have eye contact with a sacred white lady, you may wonder. He could also be shown the way out of an eatery simply because he strolled past an area reserved for people of superior color (see Rashidi, 2012).

Within definitions of race, and processes of racialization, a particularly interesting and elusive category is that of the white race. "White" was not initially considered a race, as it was the norm from which all 'other races' were understood. Whiteness consequently came to define itself largely through the negative of what it is not – it is *not the Other*. This definition is from a legacy of colonialism, where racial classification and understanding is rooted; where the colonizers, understood to be 'white,' were the sign post from which race was defined, therefore creating the discourse of white as *not* race, *not* Other (Johnson & Enomoto, 2007:78ff). Because of this 'non-race' beginning, whiteness has developed as a position of power, as the norm and at times invisible in relation to 'other races' as it is the center from which 'other' races are measured and defined (Frankenberg, 1993b). White does remain a race and therefore comes to have its own particular as well as common attributes of definitions of race (Frankenberg, 2004).

Whiteness is therefore particular because it is defined through its advantages and its privileges (ibid.), not through its disadvantages or lack of norms, as whiteness does not only incur disadvantage to racialized others by being the 'norm' it also allows those defined as white to have and gain advantages because of their racialization. Furthermore, whiteness has developed in conjunction with concepts of race, especially since the civil rights movements of the 1960s, to see itself within a conflicted ideology. Johnson and Enomoto (2007:5) explain that "*from the late 1960s on, white identity has been reinterpreted, rearticulated in a dualistic fashion: on the one hand egalitarian, on the other hand privileged; on the one hand individualistic and 'color-blind,' on the other hand 'normalized' and white*". Their characterization of white identity is an important one to understand how whiteness functions and is perpetuated as a racialized identity in popular culture. These dualistic characteristics of whiteness are important points of questioning and contention within the discourses of racialized popular culture.

The project of whiteness as a racial category in the North American context is therefore particularly interested in continuing to define itself through ideologies of fairness, egalitarian ideals and democratic understandings, but in order to do so, it engages in intricate policing of its

definitions and relations of power in relation to racialized others. How these dualistic characteristics play out reveal important registers of whiteness that enact differing levels of dominance, privilege, and democratic ideologies.

As Rashidi (2012) explains whiteness as a category is also measured in its comparison to blackness: Whiteness “*in the United States is measured not just of the melanin content in one’s skin but of one’s social distance from black-ness*”. What this means is that performances of whiteness by some people who can ‘pass’ as white allows them ‘white’ status, where the abstract (though understood as fixed and obvious) borders of ‘white’ and ‘black’ remain intact and racialized ‘in-betweens’ are required to perform their identities within these borders in a sort of third space of racial ambivalence and in-betweenness. This uncertainty is felt largely by Latinos (ibid.) but also by Jews (as the blog discussions make clear), which will be explained below. Performances of ‘race’ through representation occur through a variety of means and at a variety of degrees.

### **CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) as its names suggests first, is critical device. Although it is not attached to any special theory and philosophy, it calls itself merely as a method of analyzing the text. It mainly deals with the questions of inequality and power, power institutes and the relation of language and power so it is natural to conclude that it has a political attitude (Stubbe et al, 2003). Fairclough defines it as:

*...relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony (1993:135).*

Wodak (2006) describes it as an interdisciplinary knowledge and heterogeneous mass that cannot be put in one category. It is called interdisciplinary because it is located somewhere between sociology and linguistics and some linguists believe that a correct understanding of the relations between society and discourse is impossible unless linguistics and sociology approaches are totally combined. Van Dijk (2001:352) states that “*Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context.*”

Using the word of discourse in the title of this method means that there are many ways for discussing the social inequalities but the way that CDA proposes is based on the role of discourse in producing power, abusing it, and finally creating the inequality. Power which is produced by the elites, institutes or groups results in dominance and discourses reproduce this dominance or challenge it; in this condition an analyst examines the structures, strategies and other properties of the text or discourse to see how they work and (re)produce this dominance (Van Dijk, 1993b).

## THE TENETS OF CDA

Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 271-280) summarize the main tenets of CDA as follows:

1. CDA addresses social problems
2. Power relations are discursive
3. Discourse constitutes society and culture
4. Discourse does ideological work
5. Discourse is historical
6. The link between text and society is mediated
7. Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory
8. Discourse is a form of social action.

Furthermore, McKenna (2004:10-14) generally mentions eight characteristics for CDA as they follow:

### ***Teleology***

According to this feature, CDA has a teleological view to the questions of power, dominance, justice, fairness, etc. McKenna believes that “CDA claims, sometimes implicitly, sometimes explicitly, that its practice provides demystifying and emancipator effects” (2004:12). Although she asserts the quotation as a criticism about CDA, but it reflect the truth about the teleological aspect of CDA that tends to correct the affairs to turn onto the fair way. In this way, it is different from the other discourse analysis methods like conversational analysis, which mostly pays attention to the communication and dialogue in real situations. Through unifying theory and practice, it tries to bring about real social changes in the frame of that teleological attitude to the positive notion of society.

### ***Theory of discourse***

Marxian theories have placed a lot of concentration on the notion of discourse. The Marxian and neo-Marxian critical discourse approaches have been challenged by the Foucaultian poststructuralist ideas even to a point that they seemed to meet their end (ibid.: 11). CDA is a proper field for both of them to appear and simultaneously help each other to construct a better vision of the discourse and distinct it from other similar methods.

### ***Materialism***

The perception of the discourse, which is largely presented by CDA, is based on materialist conception even to that extent that “social context relates to textual production”. As a notion which is taken from a Marxian theory, Bakhtinian language theory, and Foucaultian discourse theories, Foucault – one the main figures who have had a great influence on the theoretical frame of the CDA (Van Dijk, 2001) – believes that language and context are interwoven concepts. In other words, language acquires life in real and concrete communicational environment not in an abstract linguistic system of language or in the speakers’ mentality. The main specialty of discourse which separates it from a simple speech act is that as Van Dijk says it takes place within a more extended frame of social practice. It is something which takes place “*within a framework of understanding, communication and interaction which is in turn part of broader sociocultural structures and processes*” (1997:21).

### ***Historicity***

Spatio-temporality of any textual production is provided by the historicity of the discourse. A discourse is not something that merely happens in the present time but it contains many ideas and

memories from the past and the groups, which have been involved in that discourse, too. Overall, it can be said that CDA looks at discourse as a diachronic process as much as it deals with the synchronic aspect of it. This idea finds its climax in discourse historical method of Wodak (2006) and intertextuality notion of Fairclough et al. (2006:87).

### ***Constructionism and constructivism***

The constructionism of discourse means that like what Wittgenstein means by the idea of “meaning is use”; there are different possible meanings for a word depending on the context in which the word is used. Although, sometimes, it has wrongly been understood as McKenna pointing to such misunderstandings writes, sometimes the conclusion has been drawn like that, “*we are free to construct any meaning we like.*” By the other side, constructivism means that, at the same time that language can reflect the reality it can produce reality. CDA believes that language can represents different layers of meaning dependent on the discourse in which it is acting and beside that one of the most important characteristics of language which appears in a discourse is the ability of it to represent and create realities ( 2004: 13).

### ***Theories of subject***

Because of the relation between subject as a concept with agency and constructedness, this notion is very important in CDA. McKenna believes that individuals should be counted as the agents of ideology by constructing of their subjectivities. Despite the Marxian who only daresay to the external subject, Foucault believed that there are two internal and external subjects (ibid.). The conclusion of that discussion would be this fact that the process of power as political technology is accomplished through making subjective and productive bodies. Because some of the main issues that CDA is going to investigate are the questions of power and ideology, the usage of power and its mutual relation with ideology, the speaker production of text or other interaction forms will be very important because through this production, they can be the agent of ideology.

### ***Ideology***

As already mentioned, individuals through construction of their subjectivity are the agents of ideology. According to that, social practices, during which individuals construct their subjectivity, represent the ideology that is constructed discursively. In this relation, many definitions and explanations have been given; for example, a definition of ideology by Bourdieu and Eagleton who believe that it is a “*spontaneous belief or opinion [that] . . . would seem unquestionable and natural*”( 1992 :112) or “*things people accept without knowing*”(p.114) . By other side, Hodge and Kress define it as “*systemic body of ideas, organized from a particular point of view. Ideology so is subsuming category which includes science and metaphysics*” (1993: 6). All of these cases can be the reflex of this fact that how much the question of ideology is important for CDA. Generally, we can say that the ideology governing a discourse is responsible for a major part of the circumstances taking place in that discourse. It determines the attitude of participants and adjusts the nature of the relation, which is between them. It is also responsible for other involving factors within the discourse that have an unconscious impact on the participants. It is obvious that one of the main elements that every discursive analysis should pay attention to is the ideology behind the discourse. Just because of these, Rahimi and Sahragard (2007:12) believe that “*any theory of language which is serious about social functions must take it into consideration*”

### **Power**

There is a tight link between discourse and power and in the same way between power and knowledge. Foucault rejects the structuralist Marxian ideas about power and their notion of state apparatus and ideological state apparatus while he cannot present a clear theory about power; despite this fact there are three points, which CDA has borrowed from his discussion about power: Discourse has the same capability to produce positive or negative outcomes. Power and power relations are produced in a system of social networks. There are certain criteria for any entity, which want to enter and influence the discourse (McKenna,14).

Fairclough categorizes the relation of power and discourse in two classes of *power in discourse* and *power behind discourse* which alludes to the power of institutes or groups which are apparent within the text as the power in discourse and those which exist but their presence is not touchable and it is hidden (1993). Power is one of the basic notions of CDA and originally the very reason that justifies the existence of CDA is its tend to survey the power relationship and the dominance, which can result in inequality, injustice and abuse.

### **THE SELECTED APPROACH: VAN DIJK AND SOCIO-COGNITIVE MODEL**

Van Dijk is one of the most recognized figures of CDA and his ideas seem to be very important to this discipline since if not in all but in most of the resources used for preparing this study there are some references to his works and probably elaborating on his works will define the features of the socio-cognitive direction of CDA. He has done remarkable works regarding the racism in the news, representation of minorities and defining the notion of *Us* and *Other* or *ingroups* and *outgroups* when he explains the models in ideologies which will be elaborated below. The most signalized characteristic of his works is that he has elevated the analysis of discourse to something more than the mere analysis of structures and determining the possible interpretations of the text – by the structural analysis of text, we mean the analysis of the grammatical component of the text. Rather he has dealt with the production and reception process of the news (Boyd-Barrett, 1994). Production process deals with the elements, which mostly are influential in the process of producing news like the financial or economic and social practices. Van Dijk believes that “Discourse is not simply an isolated textual or dialogic structure. Rather it is a complex communicative event that also embodies a social context, featuring participants (and their properties) as well as production and reception processes.”(1988a: 2).

These practices are taken-for-granted to be not only influential on the process of making news but also determinative for the major policies of the institute, which produces news. Reception process refers to the way that news is comprehended and understood by the addressee. As the result of what has been said, we can say that Van Dijk has proposed three levels of analysis, structure, production and reception and comprehension. He tries to tie these levels together and make smooth criteria for analyzing the text. These relationships according to him take place in two levels of microstructure and macrostructure levels. The earlier relates to the semantic relations of grammatical components of text which make it coherent and the other one deals with rhetoric elements such quotation, direct and indirect reporting, which make it to seem factual. However, macrostructure is the only level that Van Dijk pays more attention to it because it is relevant to the thematic/topic structure of news stories and their overall schemata. Van Dijk defines schemata as a pattern that contains a headline, story and consequences. This last one is the final comment and conclusions that exists within the news and regarding this part he thinks that headlines and lead paragraphs more or less contain the most general information and addressee memorizes them better (1988b:14ff).



The other major notion that Van Dijk has investigated so much is the notion of ideology and analyzing the discourse analysis as ideology analysis. As Van Dijk says ideologies are produced and reproduced in discourses and communications and even the non-verbal semiotic texts like pictures and so on can have an impact in this (re)production (1995: 17). Consequently, he proposes three levels of analysis for analyzing the ideologies within the text. Two of these analytical levels, including the social analysis and discourse analysis are the same with the traditional system of interpreting the text, in the sense that the social analysis is adopted to context analysis and discourse analysis is adopted to the text analysis in the traditional method (1995:18; 2006b:161; 2006c:115). However, the new gift of Van Dijk to CDA is the third level of analysis, the cognitive analysis. The sociocognition, which by itself is divided into social and individual cognition, is something between other two levels. He defines cognition as “the system of mental representations and processes of group members” (1995:18) following his definition of cognition, he defines ideologies as “systems” (Van Dijk, 2006c:166) that “indirectly influence the personal cognition of group members” (1995: 19).

The notions of ideology and context bring about the notion of *model*. Mental representation of individuals within a social action or interaction is called model. Defining the meaning of cognitive model he writes “*The meaning or 'contera' of discourse is controlled by subjective interpretations of language users of the situation or events the discourse is about, that is by their mental models*” (2006c:121). These models are so important in analyzing the role of ideologies within the society. They determine the norms within the society and the way that individuals think, behave and move. One of immediate results caused by recognition of individuals’ mental representation within the society is the possibility that helps to categorize the two major groups of Us versus Them where the participant or speaker generally tends to present oneself or one’s group in the positive terms and other groups in negative terms (Van Dijk, 1995: 22).

The way that CDA works is a top-down method that despite the fact that power relations are bilateral, it only pays attention to those aspects of power abusing and dominance which are imposed from top to down e.g. from institutes or elites to the society or from majority to minority, etc. Besides, CDA is macro-level discourse analysis methods, which means that instead of paying attention to the grammatical aspect of the text within the text, as a separated unit, it deals with those aspects of text, which are in relation with the discursive definition of it. Although more modern version of CDA try to decrease the distance between these two features of the text and make a kind of combination and unity between them in a way that they act as complementary instruments to give to hand a better vision of the discourse and what is going on there. In other words as Van Dijk believes these micro- level notions can direct the text to macro-level implications that helps to gain wider vision of the circumstance of power (re)production and other related subjects. Van Dijk states:

*...it is theoretically essential to understand that there is no other way to relate macro-level notions such as group dominance and inequality with micro-level notions as text, talk, meaning and understanding. Indeed, the crucial notion of reproduction, needed to explain how discourse plays a role in the reproduction of dominance, presupposes an account that relates discourse structures to social cognitions, and social cognitions to social structures (1993, p.280).*



It is obvious that text analysis can take place in two distinct levels of macro or micro. Micro level deals with the participants of the text or the conditions, issues or people that directly are related to the text within the context while macro level deals with more prominent and major issues that can be related to context in higher level and beyond the actual condition of the text. For example, in normal social behavior, the analysis devoted to the people involved in the behavior, the place and time of the behavior and physical description of that behaviour consists the micro level of the analysis while in a higher level describing and investigating the power relations among the people and groups or studying the possible ideology which exists behind the text is related to macro level of the analysis (Van Dijk, 2006c; Van Dijk, 2007).

In another view, maybe it is possible to say that macro level of analysis mostly is in relation with the groups, societies and the thinking and ideological bases that provide the groups and societies with intellectual resources and to a large extent it deals with the power relationships in these groups. At least, at one place, macro level analysis has been categorized to models of traditional and new macro analysis, which the first one is more based on the power relations, overall, seems to be more theoretical, and so farther than the micro level but, the later one is more in relation with the micro level and its components. In this sort of new macro analysis, the main emphasis is on the notion of interaction, which implies a stress on the relations between people within the context and their performances within the context. At the same time, from the viewpoint of the power relationships between the people as the participants of the context, the new macro method can determine which performances should be chosen for a specific situation. Regarding this point, Van Dijk writes,

*Obviously, this formulation is in terms of traditional macro-level categories, such as the power of groups, organizations and institutions. Especially relevant for discourse analysis [,] is of course also the more local, situated micro-level of social structure, that of interaction (2006a:364).*

## THE CDA OF THE INTERVIEW

### *The Interview*

The interview is held with Barack Obama:

The president-elect (then Illinois state senator), who first brought the house down back in 2004 at the Democratic National Convention, takes a rare break from his 16-hour workday to tell Oprah about his multicultural upbringing, political plans and priorities, and loving family.

Note: This interview appeared in the November 2004 issue of O, The Oprah Magazine. It's a speech I'll never forget: Barack Obama, the Illinois state senator from Chicago, addressing the nation at the 2004 Democratic National Convention. "I stand here knowing that my story is part of the larger American story, that I owe a debt to all of those who came before me, and that in no other country on earth is my story even possible," he said with a fervor that could be felt through the airwaves. "Tonight we gather to affirm the greatness of our nation, not because of the height of our skyscrapers or the power of our military or the size of our economy," he continued. "***Our pride is based on a very simple premise, summed up in a declaration made over 200 years ago: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.'***"

Oprah: There's a line in *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* [a 1974 TV movie based on Ernest J. Gaines's novel] when Jane is holding a baby and asking, "***Will you be the One?***" While

you were speaking, I was alone in my sitting room cheering and saying, "*I think this is the One.*"

Barack: That's so nice. I think *I'm one of the ones. I fight against the notion that blacks can have only one leader at a time. We're caught in that messiah mentality.* As a consequence, a competition is set up. Who's the leader of the Korean-American community or the Irish-American community? The reason we don't know the answer is that they've got a collective leadership—people contributing in business, culture, politics. *That's the model I want to encourage. I want to be part of many voices that help the entire country rise up.*

Oprah: How do you define yourself as a leader?

Barack: Though *I'm clearly a political leader now, I didn't start as one.* I was skeptical of electoral politics. *I thought it was corrupting, and that real change would happen in the grass roots.* I came to Chicago [after college graduation] *to work with churches organizing job-training programs. I thought the way to have an impact was through changing people's hearts and minds, not through some government program. So I did that for three and a half years, went to law school to become a civil rights attorney, and then wrote a book.*

Oprah: You were so young when you wrote *Dreams from My Father*. Why did you decide to write a memoir at 33?

Barack: I had the opportunity. When I was elected president of the Harvard Law Review, people were willing to give me money to write. That's a huge luxury. *I thought I had something interesting to say about how our cultures collide as the world shrinks. My family's story captures some of the tensions and evolution and crosscurrents of race, both in this country and around the globe. One of the contributions I thought I could make was to show how I came to terms with these divergent cultures—and that would speak to how we all can live together, finding shared values and common stories.* Writing the book was a great exercise for me because *it solidified where I'd been and set the stage for where I was going.*

Oprah: *When did you first realize that you were a little black kid? Was it the incident you wrote about, in the seventh grade, when someone called you "coon"?*

Barack: Because I grew up in Hawaii and then lived in Indonesia for a while, *I understood my affiliation to Africa and black people from an early age, but only in positive terms.* I became aware of the cesspool of stereotypes when I was 8 or 9. *I saw a story in Life magazine about people who were using skin bleach to make themselves white. I was really disturbed by that.* Why would somebody want to do that? *My mother had always complimented me: "You have such pretty brown skin."* (bold and italic are mine for the purpose of analysis).

### ***Structure of the Interview***

This interview is divided into the following parts:

*Preliminaries:* Opera mentioned some previous events related to electing Obama as Illinois state senate .Opera presented her expected ambitions in this senate. Setting was specified. Both, Opera

and Obama shared their dreams in the greatest of their nation , neither in the height of skyscrapers, nor the power of military , nor the size of economy; but in 200-years ago declaration

*Opera:* presented her old dream: finding out **The One! The One** who will save Jane Pittman, Opera, and many other blacks from racism and discrimination.

*Barak:* accepted these thanking statements of Opera, declaring the shared responsibility of the whole America to fight black discrimination.

*Opera:* certain questions related to the political and social life of Obama.

*Barak:* certain examples that prove his vitality and personality as both a writer and a leader.

### ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEW

Since CDA deals with power, domination and social inequality, it tends to focus on groups, organizations and institutions, and thus requires an analysis of the social cognition – or the social representations – shared by these collectivities. Most important, according to Van Dijk, are knowledge (personal, group and cultural), attitudes (socially shared opinions) and ideologies (basic social representations of social groups) (Van Dijk 2001: 113f). To find out how language users exercise power in or by their discourse, one needs to examine those properties that can vary as a function of social power. Hence, Van Dijk suggests one should concentrate upon the following linguistic markers: stress and intonation; word order; lexical style; coherence; local semantic moves such as disclaimers (local meaning, lexical meaning, meaning of words, as well as the structures of propositions, coherence, implications, presuppositions, allusions and vagueness); topic choice (global meaning of the discourse, semantic macrostructures); speech acts; schematic organization; rhetorical figures; syntactic structures; propositional structures; turn takings; repairs; and hesitation (Van Dijk 2001: 99). According to Meyer (2001: 26), Van Dijk puts forth a six step-strategy on how to conduct the actual analysis (see also Van Dijk 2001: 101-08 for an example of how he uses this analysis). At any rate, Meyer's (2001: 26) summary is found below:

1. Analysis of semantic macrostructures: topics and macropropositions
2. Analysis of local meanings, where the many forms of implicit or indirect meanings, such as implications, presuppositions, allusions, vagueness, omissions and polarizations are especially interesting
3. Analysis of 'subtle' formal structures: here most of the linguistic markers mentioned are analyzed
4. Analysis of global and local discourse forms or formats
5. Analysis of specific linguistic realizations, for example, hyperbolas, litotes
6. Analysis of context

### VAN DIJK'S SIX STEPS OF ANALYSIS

To be practical, these six steps are reflected in this interview as follows:

#### ***1. Macrosemantic structures: Topics and Macropropositions***

- Memories (Opera's first four lines before the interview)
- America is the greatest nation (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> lines before the interview,
- Opera quoting Obama at the 2004 Democratic National Convention.

- American Dependence Declaration, 200 years ago, and Obama's pride of it ( 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> lines before the interview)
- Opera is quoting a very famous 1974 TV movie, based on a novel by Gaines: "*Will you be the One?*"
- Obama's Fighting black discrimination and racism
- A question by Opera concerning his leading personality
- Obama's considerations of America's election system
- Opera's question concerning his political status as a leader
- Opera's questioning about his decision to write a memoir
- Obama's response with details concerning major and minor themes like race
- Obama's concluding about his nation and family.

## 2- Microsemantic structures

**Setting:** after 16 hour-workday at the Democratic Convention

**Interaction time:** a rare break from a long day

**Location:** no clear mentioning, even two cities are mentioned: Illinois and Chicago.

**Participants:** two people Opera and Barak Obama

**Identities:** two very famous blacks: Opera and Obama

**Roles:** question –answer procedure to clarify Obama's concepts

**Relations:** personal powers, US President and famous TV presenter

**Aims:** to thank, praise, and then understand his ideology of Change (social and political)

**Personal knowledge:** both are highly educated, having charisma to influence others

**Actions:** both cited authentic resources like US Human Rights Declaration, a novel, and an autobiography to convince others

## 3- Formal structure

Simple sentences, complex sentences, Anaphora especially *One*, Definiteness, Passive structures

## 4- Local and Global discourse

The local discourse is related to themes of personal change to nation's and definiteness.

Global is related to themes like change, and fighting black discrimination

## 5- Specific linguistic realization

As in affirming, definiteness and the metaphor of Change and its multiple references and meanings.

## 6- Context

It is plausibly supplied by highly literary works, even with personal, as Obama's book *Dreams of My Father : A Story of Race Inheritance* (published in July 1995) and *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* (1971). Both heroes of these two stories are calling for change of their society as a whole

## THE INTERVIEW BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

**1-Action:** This discourse (interview) is observed is to clarify, and then identify the ideology of change, from the self to the whole society. This is the 'inner' form of change. Obama, as perceived by the researcher, aims to move the society to be more flourished, economically, health, education, salaries, etc. It is a change from Bush's eight years of bad America to a nation full of prosperity and control. This is represented in the first decisions taken by Obama and his team.

**2-Context:** Even short, but this interview reflected clearly the dream of the other side of America; The Black who have old dreams to be represented in the whole aspects of the American society. Only some had farther dreams, like Obama's father, Opera, and Obama. Thus, the background, situation, conditions, and all actual and other participants (his father as a source of realistic potentials, and social-changing atmosphere as represented by his white mother) were existent positively.

**3-History:** this is very clear in all the active and other participants. Opera's dreams and ambitions, Obama's family and its history are actual records of the Black in America.

**4-5-Power and ideology:** The ideology of power is so evident in Obama's words: *change* and *fight*, encourage, want to be the model and *one of the ones*. This power is also reflected in his book, since moved from being an observer to an active critic and then a reformer.

## THE IDEOLOGY OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Does this interview reflect Obama's ideology of change, as reflected in his slogans: "Change we believe in" or "We believe in Change"? This interview clearly reflects this policy or ideology by his first reply: *I think I'm one of the ones. I fight against the notion that blacks can have only one leader at a time. We're caught in that messiah mentality.* This ideology of change, in Obama's concept, is the responsibility of the society "I'm the one of the ones". This responsibility needs fighting these old notions in both behavior and mind. In other words, Obama declared his strategy of social reform, before being with political reference. The basic points to be inferred concerning this ideology from doing CDA for this interview are the following:

- i- Obama's first reply also has that sense of urgency in doing the action now.
- ii- Being aware that he was a black from the early years helped him positively to be determinant and productive.
- iii- Early instances lead him to be positive to his own personality, family, siblings, and then his nation.
- iv- His policy of change is inherent; to be the first American black president is a unique representation of his presidency slogan.
- v- This confidence was early postulated; his continuous encouragement from his mother led him to reject those attempts of his peers to be white.
- vi- Till now, his mother is a source of support and encouragement.

- vii- The title of the book reflects the unity of his family especially in being in direct touch with his father and then being a direct observer.
- viii- Opera was biased in her interview especially when she focused on those points that can reflect the developed mentality of that black one, moved to her confidence in being the one, her support of his slogan 'change'. Furthermore, she moved the interview to be a propaganda for the president's only positive sides.
- ix- Particular emphasis was on 'the one'. Even 'one' is a marker of indefiniteness, but being preceded by the definite article it is used as if Opera, and other blacks were really waiting that one. We notice the capitalization of 'O' in one for doubling its emphasis.
- x- It is so clear that Africa and Indonesia are more familiar with the other one, unlike America. Therefore, Obama wanted that one concept in Africa and Indonesia to be in America.
- xi- He criticized the routine of elections.

#### **VAN DIJK'S SEQUENCE MODEL**

Overall, Opera and Obama follow the sequence of situation – problem – solution scheme in this interview, which is presumably culturally and morally inspired Opera herself. Using this scheme, this is how this interview moves:

**Situationx:** Opera and Obama express their greetings and desire to find out possible solutions to their everlasting problem: black racism.

**Problem:** Opera and Obama carry similar heritage of racism, discrimination.

**Solution:** Dependency and Human Rights Declaration ,Obama's book ,Gaines's novel ,and then being elected as the first Black American President ,all present a local ideology of change and influence. Obama develops this ideology to have other forms like power, equality and dominance, to actualize his ideology of change. In his book, for example, in this lyrical, unsentimental, and compelling memoir, the son of a black African father and a white American mother searches for a workable meaning to his life as a black American. It begins in New York, where Barack Obama learns that his father -- a figure he knows more as a myth than as a man -- has been killed in a car accident. This sudden death inspires an emotional odyssey -- first to a small town in Kansas, from which he retraces the migration of his mother's family to Hawaii, and then to Kenya, where he meets the African side of his family, confronts the bitter truth of his father's life, and at last reconciles his divided inheritance. Opera cited the story of Jane Pittman as an example of those black ladies carrying from their early days the dream of change; a change that gives them some aspect of humanity. Opera herself was one of those, especially her early years were very dramatic since being raped before completing her eleventh. Thus, Opera found her and all her black nation's everlasting dream comes true, and finally her GODOT arrived, and



no more waiting. Moreover, Obama was very successful in this especially in his lexical selection. The best example is the choice of “I fight the notion”; a phrase repeated many times on the tongue of both Jane Pittman and Opera herself. The interesting thing here is that both Opera and Obama himself are under the influence of this novel and its adopted film (1974) which nominated to BAFTA AWARD and got nine EMMY Awards. Moreover, after Obama’s elect, this novel was reprinted in 2009, and about 3 million copies were sold.

### **INSTANCE OF BLACK DISCRIMINATION**

The instances of black discrimination in this interview are the following:

- i- Opera who herself carries sad and dramatic discriminative reflections from early childhood.
- ii- Obama’s book which is memories of race and inheritance.
- iii- Obama’s personal experience
- iv- The incident mentioned by Obama concerning those peers looking for changing their skins; the famous pop singer Michael Jackson is one of them , for reasons related of employment , girls, and away-from discrimination.
- v- The novel mentioned by Opera concerning Jane Pittmon, who really suffered from both her black husband and white neighbours.

### ***The Ideology of Political Change***

As different as the notion of the founding documents are the concepts of *freedom* and *justice*. *Freedom* is a principle the American liberalism built on the *classical liberalism*, where it meant individualism and the notion of choice the individual has that is not restrained by tradition (Micklewait, 2005: 343). According to Taylor, the liberal *freedom* is defined largely in terms of the social and political rights of individuals as “immunity from interference by others in his life, either by state or church or by other individuals”. *Justice*, on the other hand, is “understood in terms of equality and the end of oppression in the social world – ‘fair play’.”

The American Revolution is seen as a fresh start for mankind to create a “better world”. The Democratic Party became the advocate for all the inequalities in the society, whether it is segregation and racial prejudice, women rights, gay rights or simply economic disparities stemming from unrestricted capitalism. The capitalism is, however, venerated in the liberal vision because it creates wealth, but it has to be regulated in order to serve the common good. “Progressive social change and an active role by the government are important, and initiatives such as the New Deal and the Civil Rights Movement are positive forces that improve society. Increasing wealth creates new opportunities to achieve fairness and justice.” (Morris 2004: 56) Therefore, the *American Dream* has also a different interpretation; in the view of liberalism it means equal opportunity for success for anyone.

According to Lakoff (2002: 108), the liberal model is a reflection of *the nurturant parent morality* model, where the government builds on mutual respect rather than on control, and where the “compassion” and “caring” are the keywords. In order to end the inequalities in the society, the government has to play a significant role in the lives of the people. Taxation is required for the common good of the society and in implication, a big governmental apparatus has to be

formed for a fair distribution of wealth. Schooling and welfare systems are the governmental responsibilities as well. The problem of liberal ideology is the concept *equality* that especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century became linked with Marxist theories and their implementation after the Second World War. The Democratic Party therefore struggles to form a new narrative that would stress the differences with Marx, but at the same time, will be consistent with the Democratic Party's role of the correcting force in the course of American history (desegregation, civil rights, women rights, New Deal etc.).

## CONCLUSIONS

Even the interview was very short ,no more than ten or eleven turns for both , but the critical discourse analysis specified many interesting points like sharing personal experiences ,the mentalities and how are being represented , and procedures to be followed by the first black American President to fight this typical racism in the American society. As a political personality, Barak Obama tried to shed some light on these negative factors in his society, believing that these negative points can be easily recovered by keeping America to its Anti-Discrimination Declaration, or also called American Human Rights Declaration, 200 years ago. Opera herself shed light on two forms of black racism by citing Jane Pittman, a young black slave, who, like Opera herself, suffered from rape in her early years, and being discriminated by her black husband and white neighbours. Finally, CDA is again proved a very useful tool and then mechanism to understand what is hidden between lines.

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**THE EFFECTS OF STATEMENTS, IMPERATIVES, AND QUESTIONS AS TEACHER'S COMMENTS  
ON THE REVISION OF COMPOSITION OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study determined the effects of three types of comments on the content and organization of Iranian EFL learners' compositions. They were in the forms of Statement, Imperative, and Question. Totally, 250 changes were traced. The resulting 250 changes were analyzed based on the degree to which the students utilized each teacher's comment in the revision process. The results showed that Imperative comments were more influential on revisions than Statements or Questions and they helped students to have more substantial positive revisions. Moreover, it was observed that nearly 60 percent of all the three kind of comments led to positive changes in the final drafts and only 17 percent had negative effects on the revisions. These outcomes may imply that teachers should be more careful in selecting the type of the comments on the students' revision and try to use more imperative comments than questions or statements when giving comments.

**INTRODUCTION**

Providing feedback to students, whether in the form of written commentary, error correction, teacher student conference, or peer discussion, has come to be recognized as one of the ESL writing teacher's most important tasks, offering the kind of individualized attention that is otherwise rarely possible under normal classroom condition. Teachers are now very conscious of the potential feedback has for helping to create a supportive teaching environment, for conveying and modeling ideas about good writing, for developing the ways student talk about writing, and for mediating the relationship between students' wider cultural and social worlds and their growing familiarities with new literacy practices. However some other researches such as Truscott (1996) takes the strong position that error correction in L2 writing is useless and should be abundant. Because he believes that language acquisition is a gradual developmental process that is impossible to become errorless by any transfer of explicit suggestions, hence, he rejected error corrections. On the contrary to Truscott's strong belief against error correction, Ferris (1999) claimed that Truscott's arguments were premature and overly strong. In addition, Ferris maintained that there were equally strong reasons for teachers to continue giving feedback, not the least of which is the belief that students have regarding its value. Generally, evidence on support of Ferris is more than that of Truscott (Ashwell, 2000; Cradelle & Corno, 1981). Today most of the writing teachers believe that at least some kinds of feedback is needed on the student's paper if they want to have a better result in their teaching and also students feel satisfied that their works have been read. Commentary is one kind of feedback that is given on the mechanics, content, organization, and so on. As the literature about feedback is reviewed, rarely can you find enough evidence concerning giving feedback in the form of comments on the content of written materials. Ferris (1997) for example tried to probe the effects of different kinds of comments on the revision process of compositions. Moreover, most of the studies in the literature have spent their time on the mechanics of writing and error correction. Hence, this study seeks to investigate the effects of different kind of comments on the content of compositions and to see whether there is any difference between the efficiency of these comment on the revisions or not.

***Objectives and significance of the study***

In the present study, the focus is on different types of comments on the content and organization of ideas in EFL composition writing. In fact few studies have been previously done regarding comparing different types of comments with each other. Ferris (1997) studied the influence of teacher commentary on students' revisions. She made a model for teacher commentary in which comment length, comment types, use of hedges, and text specific comments were included and investigated on native speakers of English. The present study seeks to investigate and compare different types of text specific comments, in forms of statements, imperative, and questions on Iranian EFL learners.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### *Error correction and teaching writing*

Error correction research has focused mostly on whether teachers should correct errors in student writing and how they should do it. The reason why teachers should correct errors and how they should do it is topic of constant debate, although there are researches that suggest error correction is ineffective as a means of imploring student writing (Cohen & Robbins, 1976; Robb, Rose & Shortreed, 1986). Writing teachers know well that students are not satisfied with not giving one feedback on their written errors. However, there is enough evidence to believe that students benefit from these feedbacks (Zamel, 1985; Ferris, 1997). The matter of the kind of feedback is still source of concern for many teachers. Teachers' commentary on the revision of the composition is one kind of feedback that EFL instructors can apply for giving feedback to the students' writer.

### *The process writing*

The process approach is an approach to teaching writing that places more emphasis on the stages of the writing process than on the final product. It is interpretational, learner-centered and not specifically related to examinations. Writing in process approaches is seen predominantly to do with linguistic skills, such as planning and drafting, and there is much less emphasis on linguistic knowledge, such as knowledge about grammar and text structure. In the approach, students are taught planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing strategies at each stage of the writing process to help them to write freely and arrive at a product of good quality (Zamel, 1985:79). Moreover, since writers do not seem to know beforehand what it is they will say, writing is considered to be a process through which meaning is created. Hence, it implies that revision should become the main component of the instruction, which writing teachers should intervene throughout the process, and that students should learn to view their writing critically (Zamel, 1982:195). Revision is making any change at any time in the writing processes that involves identifying discrepancies between intended and instantiated text, deciding what could or should be changed in the text and how to make desired changes (Fitzgerald, 1987:484). He also maintained that changes may be made in the writer's mind before being instantiated in written text, at the time text is first written or after that.

### *Responding to students errors in writing*

The first thing that a teacher should realize about teacher response is that it is not something that happens at the end of a writing task, but that it is something that happens continuously throughout the teaching and writing processes. For many teachers, responding to student writing has become a mechanical activity, an activity that takes place in the natural course of events in a writing class (Vengadasamy, 2002:2). Moreover, there are some other points still to be mentioned about responding to students writing. For example the teacher can motivate students in the writing class through the type of feedback he or she provides to students written works and students feel better motivated to engage in writing activities when they perceive their teachers to be more interested in what they have to say than in their language accuracy. However, too many error corrections can be discouraging to the learner writer. It supports the notion that teacher response should focus mainly on content (Vengadasamy, 2002:5).

### *Commentary as a feedback*

With the exception of a few articles published in the mid to late 1980s, research on written commentary really did not get much attention until the 1990s. Thus, many issues inherent in commentary have yet to be addressed or adequately addressed in the research literature. Students need some form of feedback that helps them see how others are reading their writing and what revisions might strengthen their writing. Students need to learn that the words they inscribe on paper are not static and that meaning resides not only in these words but also in what the audience brings to the reading of these words. This can only be understood if students get feedback from readers, feedback that shows the writer where what they have intended has been achieved and where their texts may have fallen short of their intentions and goals (Goldstein, 2004:64-65).

Often, one of the first question teachers will ask is what form their commentary should take. Should they ask questions? Should they tell students exactly what to do? Should they show their students exactly how to make a particular revision? Coupled with this, teachers ask where they should put their commentary: in the margins next to what is being commented on, in the beginning of the students' papers, in an endnote, or perhaps some combination of approaches. There is no research that addresses the relative effectiveness of end versus marginal versus initial commentary. Ferris and Hedgcock (1998) suggested that marginal commentary has immediacy, appearing right next to the place where revision is needed; as well, marginal commentary leaves no doubt to what the comment applies and it is physically easier to read the text and the corresponding comment together. On the other hand, end

commentary can be summative, bringing together major themes to educate the writer about particular types of content or rhetorical issues and corresponding strategies for revision.

### ***The extent of error feedback***

Many error corrections advocates have advised against comprehensive error feedback because of the risk of exhausting teachers and overwhelming students (Ferris, 2002:50). Moreover, it is suggested that error correction may be most effective when it focuses on patterns of error, allowing teachers and students to attend to three major error types at a time, rather than dozens of disparate errors (Ferris, 2002:50). Also Zamel (1985) suggested that in error feedback, the teachers should prioritize what they want to correct and grade. They should not focus only on grammar because students may think that grammar is the only thing that counts in writing. Most teachers react primarily to surface errors, treating the composition as if it is a series of separate sentences or even clauses, rather than as a whole unit of discourse (Zamel, 1985:86). Writing teachers spend a great deal of time responding to their student's paper. It may take at least 20 minutes to comment on an individual paper (Zamel, 1985:80). Hence, one should be very careful in delivering any comment on the students' paper as Zamel (1985:94) mentioned that the teachers need to change their responding behavior so that students can better understand how to revise their writing. They must recognize that students may not be able to use comments and markings, for the teachers comments may represent very complex reactions that the students are incapable of applying to their text. Moreover, certain types of commentary may be more problematic for students than others. Ferris (1997:330) in her study of the influence of teacher commentary on student revision concluded that marginal requests for information, request (regardless of syntactic form) and summary comments on grammar appeared to lead to the most substantive revisions. Also Ferris (1995:43) when exploring the students opinion to describe their strategies for addressing their teachers feedback, found that on early drafts, many of the students reported going to an outside source (instructor, tutor, friends, grammar books, dictionaries) for help in understanding or responding to their teacher's comments. Thus, written comments on content should be consistent. Teachers must use a set of clear and direct comments and questions, and also should familiarize students with these comments. These comments must address the strategies required to improve the essay and not just indicate what the teacher found lacking or interesting.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study, therefore, seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Is there any difference between the effects of comments in forms of statements, imperatives, and questions on the students' revisions of compositions?
2. Do the feedbacks make positive or negative changes in the final drafts?

However, it is crucial to maintain that this research is aimed to seek the effect of different kinds of comments on the content of writing and is not concerned with the mechanics of writing

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

In the initial stage, 265 participants between the ages of 20 to 30 were selected from the male and female Iranian EFL students (sophomores and juniors) enrolled at Azad university of Dezful who were majoring in English translation in 2006/2007. All the participants had passed basic courses of grammar and writing in the previous semesters. To be sure of the homogeneity, a proficiency test from Longman Preparation Course for TOEFL (second edition) was given to them. A total of 265 students between the ages of 20 to 30 participated in the test. On the basis of the participants' scores on the test, that ranged from 25 to 86, nearly 90 students scored from 70 to 86. Hence, it became clear that these 90 participants were more proficient and suitable for this study.

### ***Design***

#### ***Samples***

To address the issue already outlined and to testify the amount of the efficiency of each type of the above mentioned comments i.e. questions, statements, and imperatives on the revision of the compositions of the EFL students, the participants were given a composition assignment; "Write your opinion about a social or environmental problem". They were required to write two drafts for the assignment. The participants had different activities such as brainstorming, organizing their ideas, writing the first draft, revising, and second drafting. At first the students were

required to write their first drafts in 45 minutes to 1 hour, and then their first drafts were collected. The week after, at the beginning of the class the students were instructed about the way they should treat the comments on their papers, the time allocated to the task and etc. Then the first drafts, while they had been treated with three kinds of comments were given back to the participants so that they could revise their first drafts according to the feedbacks supplied. The time allocated to the revision was 45 minutes to 1 hour. Finally, the first and the second drafts were collected while they were attached to each other, and considered to be the samples of the study.

#### *Feedback procedure*

In the present study, three types of teacher comments were used: statements, imperatives, and questions. This study, however, tried to apply all the three kinds of comments under study to each draft so as to assess the impact of comment types on the revisions. Moreover, the teacher's commentary was restricted to a fixed number of expressions according to their functions. In obtaining data, more objective evidence of the responses to the written comments was extracted. Students in this study were instructed to use a problem-solving pattern of organization in a way that they were required to follow the comments for that specific, underlined part in their compositions. For example one part of the compositions was underlined, and then the teacher provides a comment for that special subject. Next week, before the papers were given back, the teacher would instruct participants to revise just that specific part of their compositions and not to make substantial revision. In terms of the problem-solving, it was tried to address the function of content feedback:

- (1) Providing details to explain the problem or solution (Providing)
- (2) Describing why the problem is serious (Describing)
- (3) Adding new ideas or more specific support or examples (Adding)

The expressions used as teacher comments in this study are given below.

#### **1. Providing**

Statement: It's very confusing. / It's not clear.

Imperative: Explain it more clearly. / Explain that a bit.

Question: What does this mean? / What do you mean?

#### **2. Describing**

Statement: The reason is not clear.

Imperative: Give a reason for it.

Question: What is the problem, and why?

#### **3. Adding**

Statement: This part is too general. / It is difficult to understand.

Imperative: Give a specific example. / Make it easier to understand.

Question: Is it supported with specific details?

Having received these feedbacks on the compositions, the students were required to revise their first drafts according to the type of the feedback they received.

#### *Rating process*

At this point, the main part of the teacher, the evaluation of the papers, began. Ferris (1997) made a comprehensive research and examined the effects of different types of feedback on ESL compositions and designed a rating scale for revisions according to which the changes were traced in the student's revision of the compositions. The rating is as follows:

1. No change
2. Minimal change/ negative effects
3. Minimal change/ positive effects
4. Substantive change/ negative effects
5. Substantive change/ positive effects
6. Deletion

Taking the term *Content* to represent what a student writer is trying to generate or express, the researcher of the present study focused on meaning or development of idea and provided commentary for helping students explain, describe, or add details. Such a feedback procedure makes it possible to define the word "*minimal*" as partial or unchanged in original thought or meaning, whereas the word "*substantive*" is defined as total, or total change in original thought or meaning. The example of teacher comments and student revisions are shown in the Appendix.

#### Data collection procedure

The data for this study were collected over one semester at Azad university of Dezful. At first, the students were instructed to follow the comments on the content of the compositions when they received their first drafts to revise them. Then, they were required to write about a social, cultural or environmental problem so that the participants were free to choose one of the confirmed topics as their own option. In this way, the first drafts were collected. Then by the feedback procedure which was explained in section 3.2.2 above, the researcher implemented the comments on the first drafts. Each draft received at least 2 or 3 comments from all types of comments under observation. It means that every draft was treated with all kinds of comments. For instance, the researcher would underline a statement in the composition and would write an imperative or question comment beside the underlined part so that in each draft 2 or 3 types of comments from all the three kinds of the comments under observation were exerted. In all, 250 comments were implemented, 90 imperatives, 80 statements, and 80 questions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

In this part the results of statements, imperatives, and questions on the compositions are shown. Table 1, 2 and 3 presents the sums of frequency and percentages of the statements, imperative, and questions as the comments under observation.

Table 1: The frequency table and percentage

#### statements

	Frequency	Percent
no change	16	17.8
minimal change( negative effects)	7	7.8
minimal change( positive effects)	15	16.7
substantive change(negative effects)	7	7.8
substantive change(positive effects)	38	42.2
deletion	7	7.8
total	90	100.0

Table 2: The frequency table and percentage

#### imperatives

	Frequency	Percent
no change	4	5.0
minimal change( negative effects)	11	13.8
minimal change( positive effects)	18	22.5
substantive change(negative effects)	4	5.0
substantive change(positive effects)	40	50.0
deletion	3	3.8
total	80	100.0

Table 3: The frequency table and percentage  
questions

	Frequency	Percent
no change	17	21.3
minimal change( negative effects)	7	8.8
minimal change( positive effects)	17	21.3
substantive change(negative effects)	5	6.3
substantive change(positive effects)	19	23.8
deletion	15	18.8
total	80	100.0

### Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of teachers' comment types on students' revisions and the students' drafts that had received teacher commentary and subsequent revisions of these drafts. The first question considered whether the teacher's comments types have an apparent influence on students' revisions. Based on the above tables, it is apparent that the teacher's imperative comments are the most effective. When the researcher provided the imperative comments, the substantive positive changes were clearly much more likely to occur in the students revisions (50 percent). When questions were used, such changes were unlikely to occur ( 23.8percent). Finally, when statements were analyzed, 42.2 percent of the comments led to substantive positive effects. In summary; then, these results show that the comment types have an apparent influence on students' revisions. It is also fair to say that the teachers' imperative comments are more influential than questions or statements on the degree to which changes are made. The second question of the research asked whether comments make positive or negative changes in the final drafts. By analyzing tables 1, 2, 3, it was observed that nearly 17 percent of the imperatives, questions, and statements led to negative changes and nearly 60 percent of the all the comments had positive effects on the revisions.

### *Do the student revisions influenced by teacher feedback lead to overall improvement in students' papers?*

Generally, the change (whether minimal or substantial) were overwhelmingly tended to improve the students' papers. Not so much of the changes, (17%), were rated as being negative. Students may either respond very effectively to teacher commentary or ignore it altogether. This awareness should both encourage teachers in their often burdensome role of providing written commentary on students' drafts and alert them that some students whether because of laziness or lack of understanding of the teachers' feedback or effective revision strategies may not utilize their feedback successfully for revision. The teachers should therefore be careful (a) in their own responding strategies , (b) in explaining those strategies to their students , and (c) in helping students learn to revise and holding them accountable for considering feedback they have received in doing so (Ferris , 1997).

### Cultural issues

All learning situations are unique and highly variable. The diversity of student population, the L2 proficiency of the students, their distinct cultural dispositions and instructional socialization, as well as their own beliefs about writing, may lead to different results (Hyland and Hyland, 2006:42). But culture, as one of the main issues in language learning has always been a source of concern in educational settings. Jin and Cortazzi (1998:749) have defined culture of learning as follow:

...socially transmitted expectations, beliefs, and values about what good learning is. This concept draws attention to the usually taken- for- granted cultural ideas about the roles and relations of teachers and learners, and about appropriate teaching and learning styles and methods, and I general, about what constitute good work in classrooms.

In the present study, however, considering the cultural background of Iranian EFL learners, it is realized that the students have been flourished in an educational setting that the teacher is the dominant power in the classroom and everyone should follow the teacher's instructions. The teacher presents the lesson, acts as a model, gives assignment,



asks questions, and in general, he is the authority in the class; therefore, the students expect the teacher to give them commands for the fulfillment of the tasks which are given to them about how to solve the problem. This assumption can be an affective factor in justifying the reason for occurrences of more substantive positive changes in implementing the imperative comments in Iranian EFL compositions. However, this issue in other cultures may have quite different regulation that needs further investigation.

#### ***Making comments helpful and meaningful***

Comments should not entail correcting a student's writing. In order to foster independent writers, you can provide summary comments that instruct students to look for problems and correct them on their own (Sokolik, cited in Nunan, 2003:93). If we write comments on students' paper, make sure they understand the vocabulary or symbols you use. Take time to discuss them in class. Be cautious about the tone of your comments when writing short comments, we tend to leave out the words that soften our message while you may think, "I'm not sure I understand your point here," the limited space may cause you to write simply, "nuclear" or just "?" students can see comments such as these unkind and unhelpful. Moreover, respond to grammar should not be as the primary concern in early drafts. When you do respond to grammar, highlight the categories of error you consider most serious (Flaxman, 2006:6).

### **CONCLUSION**

#### ***Summary***

This study was intended to investigate the efficiency of imperatives, statements, and questions, as comments, on the revisions of compositions of Iranian EFL learners. These feedbacks were implemented on the content of the compositions and aimed to develop and organize the compositions in a better way so that the students could progress more in the unity and coherence of their written products. In order to probe the resulting changes after implementing the feedbacks, the rating scale that was designed in 1997 by Danna Ferris was used. In this way, six kinds of changes in the second drafts of the students were traced. The changes were minimal positive, minimal negative, substantive positive, substantive negative, no change, and deletion. By this method, it was revealed that between the three types of comments, the imperatives had a better effect on the revisions and generally they had more substantive positive changes on the compositions. Besides, the data analyses showed that 50% of the imperatives, 42% statements, and 23.8% questions were rated to have positive substantive effects on the revisions. However, the overall results showed that 70% of the comments led to minimal and substantive positive changes. Also, according to the results of this study, the relationship between the comment type and revision type in all kinds of the comments were meaningful, the residuals were close to zero in all types of comments. This showed that a strong relationship between comment type and revision type was obtained that can lead us to think more about the use of commentary in our writing classes.

#### ***Implications for L2 writing instructions***

Writing is a productive skill that is very important for the process of learning a foreign language, however this skill has not been focused upon as it really deserves. Feedback, as one of the crucial facts in writing instruction, is of paramount importance and the usefulness of giving feedback to students' drafts was explained in the section 2 of the present study. In this study; however, the focus was on the clarification and comparison of the effects of three kinds of feedbacks on content development which are called comments and resulting changes that might have occurred during the revision process. The comments were imperatives, statements, and questions. Generally it was observed that over 70% of the three kinds of comments led to a positive change on the revisions, whether minimal or substantial, but imperatives had greater substantive positive changes on the revisions, comparing with the other two kinds of comments. Therefore, in applying different kind of comments a great attention is needed so as to guide students to have more positive changes in the subsequent drafts. In this study; however, the comments on content of the students' compositions, helped them to organize their ideas better and have a better unity and coherence in the process of writing. Moreover, it should be mentioned that, if we consider writing as a productive communicative activity, we should not hinder the conveying of the message by over-correction of the grammatical points. This is what the students are afraid of, and mostly the only thing that bring about for the students is the feeling of frustration and distress, and this feeling may cause students to avoid writing in general in subsequent sessions.

### **Implication for further research**

The present study surveyed statement, question, and imperative as teacher's comments on the Iranian EFL learners in spite of the fact that there are other kinds of comments in the form of request or exclamation that need to be studied as well. Moreover, some other factors can affect the revision process that in this study were not taken into consideration. First, because this study looked at over 250 comments and 180 papers, it did not examine the differences in student's ability and personality, nor did it look at individual progress across writing topics. Second, the analyses took only the teacher's comments into consideration not all possible sources of student's revision. The students most likely receive input from peers, tutors, and others outside the class. Clearly, further analyses examining variations across instructions would be helpful. Other important analyses would involve contrasting groups of L1 and L2 students in order to investigate the degree to which L2 students have cultural, rhetorical, and linguistic schemata that teachers need to consider when providing feedback.

### **LIMITATIONS AND DIFFICULTIES**

On one hand, implementing that large number of feedbacks was a huge and burdensome task. Besides, collecting all that students to participate in the proficiency test was extremely difficult in a way that the test was given to different groups of the students in their own classes so as not to be forced to administer the test at the same time and place. On the other hand, explanation and training of the students to make them familiar with that forms of specific feedback and how to react to that comments was also extremely difficult and the reaction of the students when they faced with that comments was so strange that their papers were not regarded as a sample either.

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### *Appendix*

Examples of teacher comments and student revisions

#### **1. Statements**

**1. Student original:** Trash problem is important in our society.

**Teacher comment:** It's very confusing.

**Student revision:** Trash problem is important in our society.

(No change)

**2. Student original:** The reason is that many people think that it is troublesome.

**Teacher comment:** The reason is not clear.

**Student revision:** The reason is that many people think that it is troublesome job to put the cigarette end into the ashtray.

(Substantive positive change)

#### **2. Imperatives**

**1. Student original:** The third solution to this problem is the educational role by the government.

**Teacher comment:** Explain it more clearly.

**Student revision:** The third solution to this problem is that the government should take the educational role so that the students will be interested in global warming and start to think about it. As a result, many people will improve their life style and global warming will also improve.

(Substantive change)

**2. Student original:** It is obvious that developing countries have more problems than developed countries.

**Teacher comment:** Explain it more clearly.

**Student revision:** It is obvious that developing countries have more problems than developed countries.

(No change)

#### **3. Questions**

**1. Student original:** The second solution is that we recognize that it is dangerous.

**Teacher comment:** What does this mean?

**Student revision:** The second solution is that we recognize that smoking is dangerous.

(Minimal positive Change)

**2. Student original:** The first reason is that abnormal weather occurs all over the world.

**Teacher comment:** Is it supported with specific details?

**Student revision:** The first reason is that we have abnormal weather, such as concentrated heavy rains, tornadoes and drought conditions all over the world.

(Substantive positive change)

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY  
OF ADJECTIVE-NOUN COLLOCATIONS FROM ENGLISH INTO PERSIAN  
IN JANE EYRE BY CHARLOTTE BRONTE**

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**ABSTRACT**

Translation both commercial and literary is an activity that is growing phenomenally in today's globalized world (Hatim & Munday, 2004). It provides the interaction between people who have different languages. One of the significant challenges of translation is rendering collocations. In transferring message from one language to another, the translator faces different problems and to make amends for these problems s/he uses different strategies. This study tried to study the translation of Adjective-Noun collocations from English into Persian. It investigated two different translations of collocations of the famous novel, *Jane Eyre*, from English into Persian to find the adopted strategies and differences that exist between English and Persian in translating them. For this purpose forty Adjective-Noun collocations were selected and compared with corresponding part in Persian. The results showed that Employed procedures in both translations are Equivalence, Literal Translation, Modulation, and Transposition. Equivalence emerged as the most conspicuous procedure in Afshar's translation and literal translation was the most frequent one in Bahrami's translation.

**KEY WORDS:** Collocations, Equivalence, Literal Translation, Modulation, and Transposition

**INTRODUCTION**

Translation has an effective and undeniable role in today's world. Raffle stated, "as long as the need to know (other culture) is great; the need for translation will be great" (as cited in Golestany, 2009). Many researchers have analyzed the act of translation based on different theories. They have taken into account different issues such as the cultural aspects of the source language and target language or linguistic-based criteria. "Translation is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text" (Newmark, 1988). Translation has many challenges, one of which is the problem of translating collocations. Collocations play an important role in transferring the meaning from the ST to TT. Most of the time it is impossible to predict the meaning of a collocation from the meaning of its parts.

Munday (2009) defines collocations as "the phenomenon of co-occurrence of two lexical items. (e.g. *held our breath, human being, in winter wage war*); this is a major building block of lexical and syntactic structure" (p. 172). He also point out that "incorrect or unusual collocation often occurs in the speech of language learners and may be a feature of translationese" (p. 171).

The present study focused on the translation of the Adjective-Noun collocations. It intends to compare two different translations of collocations of *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte from English into Persian to find the differences that exist between English and Persian in translating collocations. This study tries to investigate different strategies applied in translating collocations according to Vinay and Darbelnet's model of translation.

**REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE**

***Collocation***

Studies on collocations started 2,300 years ago in Greece. The Greek Stoics related collocations to semantics and used the concept of collocation to study the meaning relationships between words. According to these ancient scholars, words "do not exist in isolation, and they may differ according to the collocation in which they are used" (Robins, 1967, p. 21). Traditionally, collocation was defined as: "a sequence of one or more consecutive words that

has characteristics of a syntactic and semantic unit, and whose exact and unambiguous meaning or connotation cannot be derived directly from the meaning or connotation of its components” (Christopher & Schütze, 2000). Baldwin et al. (2003) call collocations “simple decomposable multiword expressions”.

Widdowson (2007) stated that:

Certain items tend to keep company, or **collocate**, with others: there is, at it were, a kind of mutual attraction that draws them together. So the word *unforeseen* will attract the word *circumstances*, *foregone* will attract *conclusion*, *crying* will attract *shame* and *pious* will attract *hope*, and so on. But collocation goes beyond the relationship between two lexical items in a noun phrase to include many other recurring combinations in phrases like: *as a matter of fact*, *all things considered*... (pp. 79-80)

Hoey (2005) defines collocation as words apart and evidences by their occurrence together in corpora more often than is explicable in terms of random distribution (as cited in Munday, 2009). Based on Naixing’s (2002) definition, “a collocation is a conventional syntagmatic association of a string of lexical items, which co-occur, in a grammatical construct with mutual expectancy greater than chance as realization of non-idiomatic meaning in texts” (p. 100).

For Mitchell (1965) collocation is an association of roots or potential lexical meanings rather than actual words; further:

A linguistic item or class of items is meaningful not because of inherit properties of its own but because of the contrastive or differential relationships it develops with other items or classes. Meaning is much less in the name than in the network of relevant differential relationship. (as cited in Nofal, 2012).

Regarding collocation, Howarth (1996) pointed out the following characteristics:

- Collocation words are common examples occupying an important role in language production.
- One of the reasons for collocation is that these combinations are employed as lexical units.
- In general, lexical collocation is referred to as juxtaposition of two or more words, so that native speakers utilize them as commonly as other language components (as cited in Nosratzadeh & Jalilzadeh, 2011).

Smadja (1993) stated the characteristics of collocations as “arbitrary, language- (and dialect-) specific, recurrent in context, and common in technical language” (p. 3). He added “Arbitrariness refers to the fact that substituting a synonym for one of the words in a collocational word pair may result in an infelicitous lexical combination. Thus, for example, a phrase such as *make an effort* is acceptable, but *make an exertion* is not” (as cited in McKeown & Radev, 2000, p. 3-4).

### ***Classifications of Collocations***

Collocations have variety of forms. They come in a large variety of forms. The number of words involved as well as the way they are involved can vary a great deal. Some collocations are very rigid, whereas others are very flexible. For example, a collocation such as the one linking “to make” and “decision” can appear as “to make a decision”, “decisions to be made”, “made an important decision”, etc. In contrast, a collocation such as “The New York Stock Exchange” can only appear under one form; it is a very rigid collocation, a fixed expression (Smadja, 1993). Different classification of collocations will be proposed in this part.

#### ***Classification of Collocations based on the traditional perspective***

Based on the traditional perspective, collocations can be divided into two major groups:

1. Verbal: such as, breaching, cancel the appointment, eating.
2. Nonverbal: such as, flawless flower, last memories, Islam prophet, Islamic revolution, fast cooker.

Each of these two groups divided in to two subgroups: Open collocations and Free collocations (as cited in Nosratzadeh & Jalilzadeh, 2011). Howarth (1996) proposes three categories of free collocation:

- collocations used to satisfy an immediate requirement
- predictable collocations making language system
- entrenched idioms not restricted by semantic and collocation characteristics.

#### *Classification of Collocations by Cowie and Mackin*

Cowie and Mackin (1975) classified idioms and collocations into four categories based on idiomaticity from most to least fixed: pure idioms, figurative idioms, restricted collocations, and open collocations. Cowie (1981) has another important classification of collocations. In this classification, collocations divided into two parts: restricted and open collocations (as cited in Darvishi, 2011). Restricted collocations refer to clusters that are fixed or like idioms e.g. kick the bucket, rain cats and dogs, etc. Open collocations refer to nodes that can cluster with a wide range of other words e.g. a red car, a small car, an expensive car, etc. (Falahi & Moinsadeh, 2012).

#### *Classification of Collocations by Palmer*

Palmer (1981) classified collocations based on the restrictions on words and proposed three kinds of collocational restrictions as follows:

- 1) Some restrictions are fully based on the meaning of the item such as green cow
- 2) Some restrictions are based on range-a word may be used with a whole set of words that have some semantic features in common. This explains the unlikeliness of the pretty boy (pretty being used with words denoting females).
- 3) Some are collocational in the strictest sense, involving neither meaning nor range, as added with eggs and brains (p. 79).

#### *Translating Collocations*

While the previous sections deals with collocations, their definitions and types, this part focuses on their translation. As mentioned, collocations play a vital role in translation. Some problems may occur in the translation of English collocations into Persian. According to McKeown and Radev (2000), "a concept expressed by way of a collocation in one language will use a collocation in another language" (P. 12). The British scholar Firth (1957) who is the father of collocational studied in modern times stated, "You shall know a word by the company it keeps" (p. 12). Therefore, collocation is a mode of expressing meaning: Meaning by collocation is an abstraction at the syntagmatic level and is not directly concerned with the conceptual approach to the meaning of words. One of the meanings of night is its collocability with dark, and of dark, of course, collocates with night (Firth, 1975, p. 196). Based on Machali (2000) translators and learners of English should be aware of the fact that some collocations maybe register specific, for example while 'tolerable' and 'error' would normally not go together, they can be an acceptable collocation in Statistics. Failure to identify them in a text may cause a distortion of meaning.

Therefore, collocations play important role in translation and translators should find suitable collocations in the process of translation to have a proper translation, which is natural and familiar. In translation, the aim is to transfer a message from one language to another. Many experts propose some methods and techniques of translation or translation strategies. Translation strategy has been used by several scholars but each of them defined it differently. Loescher (1991) defines translation strategy as "a potentially conscious procedure for solving a problem faced in translating a text, or any segment of it" (p. 8). Based on Venuti (1998) translation strategies "involve the basic tasks of choosing the foreign text to be translated and developing a method to translate it" (p. 240).

#### *Vinay and Darbelnet's Model of Translation*

Scholars proposed different models of translation. One of these categories is Vinay and Darbelnet's model of translation. This model is a very popular and comprehensive classification among scholars. For this reason, it has chosen as the theoretical basis of this study. This model contains two methods covering seven procedures as follows:

##### **1. Direct translation,** which covers:

- 1.1. **Borrowing:** Borrowing is "a form of direct translation" which "involves the transference of the ST word into the TT, e.g. *tequila* or *tortilla* from Mexican Spanish or the case of DVD, CD-ROM, etc. in information technology internationally. This may either be to fill a lacuna or to exoticize the TT (Munday, 2009, p.170). The direct transfer of words like *computer*, *television*, *mobile*, etc. from English to Persian are some examples of borrowing.



- 1.2. **Calque:** Calque is “a special kind of borrowing whereby a language borrows an expression from another, but then translates literally each of its elements” (Vinay&Darbelnet, as cited in Munday, 2009, p.171). For example, English “*sky scraper*” to Persian “*سکراپتر*”.
- 1.3. **Literal translation:** literal translation is “a word-for-word rendering which uses the same number of TL words in the form of established equivalents as well as the same word order and word classes, e.g. English *my cat is hungry*→ German *meine Katze ist hungrig*” (Munday, 2009, p. 182), and English “*Slow down a bit*→ Persian “*آهسته تر برو*” (Eftekhari, 2008).
2. **Oblique translation**, which covers:
  - 2.1. **Transposition:** Transposition “concerns grammatical shift such as word class changes” (Munday, 2009, p. 212). For instance, English *made a gesture*→ Persian *آهسته تر برو*
  - 2.2. **Modulation:** This procedure entails a “variation of the form of the message, obtained by a change in the point of view” (Venuti, 2000, p. 89). “This change can be justified when, although a literal, or even transposed, translation results in a grammatically correct utterance, it is considered unsuitable, unidiomatic, or awkward in the TL” (Hatim & Munday, 2004, p. 150).
  - 2.3. **Equivalence:** “Equivalence refers to cases where languages describe the same situation by different stylistic or structural means” (Munday, 2001, p. 58). For example, French cry of pain would be transcribed as ‘Aie!’, but in English, this would be interpreted as ‘Ouch!’ (Hatim&Munday, 2004), and English *true to life*→ Persian *نزدیک به واقعیت*.
  - 2.4. **Adaptation:** Adaptation is “changing the cultural reference when a situation in the source culture does not exist in the target culture” (Munday, 2001, p. 58). For example, “the traditional turkey dinners served by British at Christmas are still largely unknown to most Germans” (Munday, 2009, p. 212) or *offering* → *پیشکش* (Eftekhari, 2008).

### Related empirical studies

Collocation has become one of the primary concerns in translation. In the world there have been some researches undertaken, that is related specifically to collocations.

Some of the researchers worked on methods for retrieving and identifying collocations. For example, Smadja (1993) described a set of techniques based on statistical methods for retrieving and identifying collocations from large textual corpora. These techniques produce a wide range of collocations and are based on some original filtering methods that allow the production of richer and higher-precision output. Wu and Zhou (2003) proposed a novel method to automatically extract synonymous collocations by using translation information. LÜ and ZHOU (2004) presented a new method for acquiring collocation translations by making use of monolingual corpora and linguistic knowledge.

Some of the studies have examined the importance of collocations in teaching and learning. For instance, Sadeghi (2009) compared Persian and English collocations with respect to lexis and grammar on 76 participants who sat a 60-item Persian-English test of collocations. The results of the study indicated that learners are most likely to face great obstacles in cases where they negatively transfer their linguistic knowledge of the L1 to an L2 context. The findings of this study had some immediate implications for both language learners and teachers of EFL/ESL, as well as for writers of materials. Gorgis and Al-Kharabsheh (2009) compared the output of two translation tasks to find out the extent to which students of translation can translate Arabic contextualized collocations into English properly. Webb and Kagimoto (2010) investigated the effects of three factors (the number of collocates per node word, the position of the node word, synonymy) on learning collocations. The results showed that more collocations were learned as the number of collocates per node word increased, the position of the node word did not affect learning, and synonymy had a negative effect on learning.

Some other investigations were allocated to translation of collocations. For example, Nofal (2012) analyzed collocation in both English and Arabic. He believed that collocation in both English and Arabic and its relation to lexicography, translation, and interpretation in addition to teaching/learning process gained little or even no attention from specialists and scholars. The paper concluded with some remarks and recommendations that could enhance the process of translation and interpretation as well as teaching/learning process. He stated that, these remarks, findings, and recommendation, if best employed, could enhance the quality of teaching, learning, and interpreting collocations. Maurer-Stroh (2004) endeavored to demonstrate the need for a bilingual collocation dictionary. This

study focused on the lexicographical treatment of the translation of adjective-noun collocations from English into German. The applicability of such a dictionary tested along with the hypothesis as to the expansion possibility of the adjective-noun dictionary to other collocational structures. Bzour (2006) had studied the use of collocations as a measure of translation quality and of the translator's competence. He concluded that the optimum translation is the one that uses more collocations that accurately reflect ST meanings and the remarkable character of the ST (elevated, rhetorical and expressive language).

## METHODOLOGY

The famous novel, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë two Persian translations by Mohammad Taghi Bahrami Haran and Mehdi Afshar were selected for the current research. The beginning parts of the novel were selected for study and was analyzed for the collocations. To begin with, the text was carefully read in order to identify collocations of the chosen type with the help of software, Oxford Collocation Dictionary, to make sure that the selected part is certainly a collocation. Forty Adjective-Noun collocations were selected and compared with corresponding parts in Persian versions.

Vinay and Darbelnet's model of translation was utilized as the main theoretical model and as one of the most comprehensive one. This model was selected to produce quantifiable data, which could be processed statistically. All cases were examined to determine different strategies used in translating collocations based on the mentioned model. As mentioned, this model contains two methods and seven procedures.

### Data analysis

Some of the data obtained from the novel, *Jane Eyre*, by Charlotte Brontë and two Persian translations belong to Mohammad Taghi Bahrami Haran and Mehdi Afshar are presented in this part. The collocations and their translations were distinguished in bold face in the in the following table and the applied procedure for each collocation is also determined based on Vinay and Darbelnet's model of translation.

Table 1: Collocations of *Jane Eyre*

Source Text	Col Type	Bahrami's Translation	Applied Procedure	Afshar's Translation	Applied Procedure
yet there were certain <b>introductory pages</b> that, child as I was, I could not pass quite as a blank.	Adj+N	در عین حال، از صفحات مقدماتی آن، با اینکه بچه بودم و اطلاعات چندانی نداشتم نمی توانستم به سادگی بگذرم.	Literal	سرگرم ورق زدن صفحات نخستین کتاب شدم و با آن که کوچک بودم ولی خالی از ذهن نبودم.	Literal
added Bessie, in <b>no harsh voice</b>	Adj+N	بسی هم با لحنی که دیگر خشونت آمیز نبود.	Literal	بسی با صدای ملایمی اضافه کرد.	Modulation
To review the contents of a certain <b>secret drawer</b> in the wardrobe	Adj+N	تا محتویات یک کشوی مخفی در کمد لباسها را واری کند.	Literal	برای سرکشی به کشوی مخفی که در جالباسی جاسازی شده بود.	Literal
A miniature of her <b>deceased husband</b>	Adj+N	یک تصویر مینیاتور از "شوهر فقیدش"	Equivalence	مینیاتوری از شوهر فوت شده اش	Literal
but it was not yet her hour for <b>complete victory</b>	Adj+N	اما هنوز ساعت چیرگی کامل آنها برمن فرانسیده بود.	Literal	اما هنوز احساس پیروزی بر آن پسر وجودم را گرم می داشت.	Equivalence
a wretchedness which kept drawing from me <b>silent tears</b> ;	Adj+N	ضعفی که دائما باعث ریزش اشکهای بیصدای من می شد.	Literal	آن چنان افسردگی که مرا بی صدا به گریستن وامی داشت.	Transposition
Bessie had a <b>sweet voice</b>	Adj+N	بسی صدای خوبی داشت.	Literal	بسی صدایی شیرین و لطیف داشت.	Equivalence
Lee must, I think, have been a girl of good <b>natural capacity</b> ,	Adj+N	بسی لی، به گمانم، طبیعتا استعداد خوب بودن را داشت.	Transposition	بسی می بایست طبیعت خوبی داشته باشد.	Equivalence
my <b>ready</b> and orthodox <b>answer</b>	Adj+N	جواب قراردادی را که آماده داشتم.	Transposition	پاسخ آماده من به این سوال که از اعتقادات مذهبی ام ریشه می گرفت.	Literal

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Employed procedures in this study include Equivalence, Literal Translation, Modulation, and Transposition. Equivalence emerged as the most conspicuous procedure in translating collocations in Afshar's translation and literal translation was the most frequent one in Bahrami's translation. Borrowing, adaptation and Calque had no place in translating Adjective-Noun collocations from English into Persian. In the table below, the frequency and the percentage of each adopted procedure by Persian translators are referred:

Table 2: The frequency and percentage of Translation Procedures

Collocation Type	Bahrami		Afshar	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Equivalence	14	35	21	52.5
Transposition	5	12.5	3	7.5
Modulation	3	7.5	4	10
Literal translation	18	45	12	30

The following figures show the frequency of applied procedures in each translator's work:

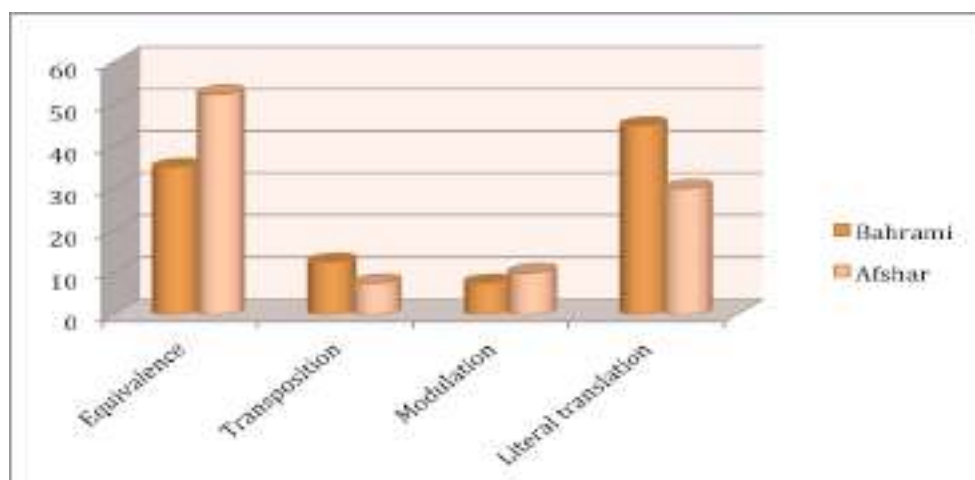


Figure 1: The Percentage of Applied Procedures

This study tried to investigate the translation of Adjective-Noun collocations of the mentioned novel and two parallel Persian translations based on Vinay and Darbelnet's model. The purposes for current study were to compare the differences that exist between English Adjective-Noun collocations and their Persian translations and to find applied strategies in translating collocations of the novel in each translator's work and to investigate strategies in translating Adjective-Noun collocations that transfer the meaning properly from the original text to the target language and to see whether they could have the same effect on target audience.

Comparing and analyzing data revealed that there are many differences between English and Persian in translating Adjective-Noun collocations and this is because of different natures of the two language and differences that exist among them. As in the current study, Rabeh's (2009,2010) study that was based on two tasks of the test, concluded that students facing problems in translating different collocations from and into their mother tongue because of the specificity and the variability of the collocation in the two languages.

In addition, this study found that the translator forces to deviate from the source text and change the form or s/he compelled to translate a collocation of one type to a collocation of another type or it may be translated to a statement that is not a collocation. These observations support the findings of Al-Sughair's (2011) study that investigated collocations from English to Arabic. He found that "collocations are also modified in translation and therefore both marked and unmarked collocations have unmarked translations. In some cases, collocations end up as non-collocations in the target text" (P. iii). Similar to Heylen and Kerry's (1994) and Hwas and Shalbak's (2012) study that revealed Literal translation could cause some problems in translating Adjective-Noun collocations, contrasting Adjective-Noun collocations between English and Persian in this research showed that Direct (literal) translation is not suitable method in translating collocations and cannot create an acceptable, natural and familiar translation that could have the same effect as the original on target audience.

## CONCLUSION

Comparing and analyzing data revealed that there are many differences between English and Persian in translating collocations. Employed procedures in this study included Equivalence, Literal Translation, Modulation, and Transposition. Equivalence emerged as the most conspicuous procedure in translating collocations in Afshar's translation (52.5%) and literal translation was the most frequent one in Bahrami's translation (45%). Borrowing, adaptation and Calque had no place in translating Adjective-Noun collocations from English into Persian. The analysis of data and contrasting the two Persian versions revealed that Afshar's translation provides a more appropriate and natural translation in general that can produce the same effect as the original. Moreover, the results revealed that the procedure of Equivalence can be influential and be considered as an effective solution for the problem of collocation translation. This procedure could produce the same context as the original in target language if used properly. It further revealed that literal translation is not a proper procedure and cannot create a natural and familiar translation.

Finally, this study concludes that often, unavoidable changes occur in translating collocations from SL into TL. Changing the form of the original text in the translation of collocations is inevitable in some places during the translation process and this is because of different natures of languages and differences that exist among them. Therefore, the translator forces to deviate from the source text and change the form or he compelled to translate a collocation of one type to a collocation of another type or it can be translated to a statement that is not a collocation. It also revealed that translators faced difficulties with collocations and sometimes they do not distinguish them and thus translate them as usual sequences of words.

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## CRITICAL THINKING AND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated 100 university students expected to think critically. So they can keep up with the new technological innovations. Since language is used for acquiring knowledge, it is important to gain points into the nature of the critical thinking ability of learners and its connection to their language proficiency. This study examined the critical thinking ability of Iranian undergraduates and its relationship to language proficiency. The Cornell Critical Thinking Test (CCTT) was administered to 100 undergraduates. The findings showed that the critical thinking ability of the undergraduates was low. However, significant relationships were found between their critical thinking ability and English language proficiency.

**KEYWORDS:** Critical thinking, language proficiency, Cornell Critical Thinking Test

### INTRODUCTION

Critical thinking and critical analysis are terms which are consistently used by academics in explanations of what is required by students in their university work as well as in feedback about what is lacking in student assignments. But what is critical thinking/critical analysis? It's very hard to define. It can be thought of as better, more rigorous thinking. It has also been described as "the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generalized by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning or communication, as a guide to belief or action (Norton & Toohey, 2009, p.12). The difficulty in defining it is partly because what critical thinking/analysis is differs in relation to the context, the situation and the material to which it is applied.

The technical age has created great demands for workers and graduates. However, complaints have been made by employers in many parts of the world such as America (Curry, 2003), United Kingdom and Europe (Joldersma., 2006) regarding their confusion in the school, college or university systems of being able to prepare future workers who could meet the demands of the global job market. It seems that there is a mismatch between the skills required by the employers and those acquired by the graduates. Included in this mismatch is critical thinking, a skill which has been claimed to be lacking among the graduates.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Critical thinking is a way of deciding whether a claim is true, partially true, or false. Critical thinking is a process that leads to skills that can be learned, mastered and used. Critical thinking is a tool by which one can come about reasoned conclusions based on a reasoned process. This process incorporates passion and creativity, but guides it with discipline, practicality and common sense. While critical thinking is something we all engage in to manage our day to day lives, the word 'critical' is commonly thought to have a quite negative meaning, for example finding fault with someone or something. At university, however, 'critical' has a broader meaning: being critical involves making judgments and evaluations. Making judgments can involve distinguishing between fact and opinion or evaluating the validity of information sources or the validity of particular theories and/ or their application to particular situations. These judgments need to be well grounded in research, wide reading, and include consideration of all possible viewpoints. Critical thinking in this sense is based on a synthesis of a number of factors, and is not just uninformed personal opinion. Critical thinking is integral to academia generally because this is the main way that knowledge is added to a field. While academics in a particular field may agree with the conclusions of a particular piece of research, these conclusions may open up other questions which need to be answered.



Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. In its exemplary form, it is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness.

Critical thinking ability has been identified as one of the constructs which has been proven to be a good predictor of academic performance (Tsui, 1998; Elias., 2005; Freire, 2007). Hence, it is important for relevant university authorities to be informed of the critical thinking ability level of their undergraduates. Relevant information on the matter will, beyond doubt, help the university authority to both improve the academic performance of the students and better prepare them for future work. Critical thinking is also claimed to be important in the acquisition of language skills particularly writing and reading (Krunzel, 2005; Kabilan, 2004; Okazaki, 2002; Stapleton, 2001; Freire, 2007), two indispensable language skills that can help undergraduates secure their academic success. However, studies on the relationship between critical thinking and these two language skills, especially those which use second language learners as the sample are still not sufficient. Similarly, there are not many studies conducted on the relationship of the aforementioned construct with general language proficiency.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The present correlational study was conducted to ascertain the critical thinking level of Iranian undergraduates and determine whether the students' prior ability in English language influences their scores on a test which measures their general critical thinking ability.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Participants***

The participants of this study ranged from 20 to 25 year-old students selected randomly from Azad University of Najafabad. This group was chosen based on the assumption that they had undergone at least three semesters of university education which was deemed as an adequate period to have had the students exposed to the kind of learning at the tertiary level which promotes the development of critical thinking. The participants of the present study were 100 undergraduates of four different English proficiency levels: Excellent (N=10), Good (N=25), Fair (N=30) and Poor (N=35). A Nelson test was administered to the students to select them based on their grades. The rather small number of undergraduates in the Excellent group compared to that in the Poor proficiency group reflects that majority of the undergraduates at the university were not highly proficient in English.

#### ***Instruments***

1) *A Nelson test Dadkhah (2002)*: It consisted of 40 multiple-choice items on grammar and vocabulary to estimate the proficiency level of the learners. The validity of the test was established by consulting with three experts. Its reliability was measured via cronbach's alpha that was 0.75.

2) *Cornell Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST)*: This test has 71 multiple choice items that must be completed within 50 minutes. Each test item has three alternative response choices, A, B, and C, respectively. The test is divided into four parts: Induction (23 items), Credibility (24 items), Deduction (14 items) and Assumption Identification (10 items). Each of the test items that are correctly answered is given a score of 1. In this study, the individual undergraduate's total score obtained on the CCTT was used as a measure of his or her general critical thinking ability; that is, a higher score on the test indicates a better critical thinking ability. It is a standardized test developed by Ennis, Millman, and Tomko (2002) and is based on the developers' conceptual definition of critical thinking. It is claimed by its developers to be a general critical thinking test which attempts to measure critical thinking skills as a whole (1985, p.1). So, it was used as an instrument to measure the critical thinking ability of the undergraduates involved in the present study. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to examine internal consistency reliability for the items within each of the CCTT parts that was .80. According to Atkinson (2003), one of the main problems with tests in a foreign language (FL) is that participants often have problems in providing answers in FL and there is no assurance that the questions are properly understood and answered correctly. Therefore, this questionnaire was used in Farsi, the native language of the participants.

## PROCEDURE AND DATA ANALYSIS

The Farsi version of the CCTT was administered to 100 undergraduates. The students took not more than 50 minutes to complete the test. They were told nothing about the aim of the study to avoid halo effect. Also, it was optional for the students to write their names at the top of the papers. The selected students were tested in terms of the relationship between critical thinking ability and language proficiency. Correlational and structural equation modelling (SEM) analyses were performed on the data to find this relationship. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to determine if significant differences in the mean of the CCTT scores exist between the four proficiency groups.

## RESULTS

The results of the Nelson test indicate that the majority of the sample were from the two low proficiency groups. Reliability for the items was measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient that was about .80.

This alpha coefficient is within the range of reliability estimates reported in the CCTT test manual (i.e., .67-.90).

Table 1: Reliability coefficients for the CCTT

Scale	No. of items	<u>M</u>	SD	$\alpha$
Induction	23	12.67	3.24	.56
Credibility	24	12.33	3.08	.57
Note: N=100				
Deduction	14	9.12	2.50	.58
Assumption	10	4.07	1.71	.34
Identification				
CCTT				

The computed mean (M) for the total score on the CCTT obtained was 30.17 (SD= 6.05).

Table 2 shows correlations between the variables. The high scores on the CCTT are correlated with the score of language proficiency. So, the CCTT was significantly correlated to all measures of language proficiency. This indicated that high scores on the CCTT were associated with high scores on proficiency. Nevertheless, the computed coefficients were within the small range (suggesting that the relationships between the variables studied were not that strong).

Table 2: Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Between CCTT and Measures of Language Proficiency

	1	2	3
(1) MUET	1.000		
(2) SPM English	.623	1.000	
(3) CCTT	.238	.288	1.000

A structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis was also performed on data of the study through the employment of AMOS 7.0 (Moore & Parker, 2007) to test the fit of the hypothesized structural model for the entire sample. The scores on each of the four sub-scales of the CCTT were used as the indicators which were regarded as measured variables of the critical thinking construct since the use of the total scale on the CCTT together with scores on the Nelson test, as measured variables of language proficiency, could not generate the text output of model fitness

for any interpretation to be made. The results of this analysis are to be interpreted with care since the researcher has stated earlier that the four sub-scales of the CCTT would not be taken as distinct dimensions of the CCTT.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the CCTT scores obtained by the four different English language proficiency groups to determine whether there were significant differences in the mean scores across the groups. Levene's test was not significant,  $F(1,27) = .974$ ,  $p > .05$  indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variances had not been violated. The results showed a statistically significant difference in the mean scores for the four groups,  $F(1,271) = 8.156$ ,  $p < .05$ . The effect size, which was computed by using eta square, was .8. A post-hoc test performed on the data yielded results which indicated that the mean score for the Excellent group ( $M = 40.80$ ,  $SD = 5.32$ ) was significantly different from the other three groups, Good ( $M = 30.62$ ,  $SD = 7.17$ ), Fair ( $M = 30.92$ ,  $SD = 6.53$ ) and Poor ( $M = 30.65$ ,  $SD = 6.05$ ). Nevertheless, the mean scores of the three lower proficiency groups were not found to differ significantly from each other.

## DISCUSSION

Results of the CCTT measure the general critical thinking ability of learners. The test developers of the CCTT have stated in the test manual that many of the test items can be assigned to more than one of the four proposed aspects of critical thinking. This is argued because critical thinking is a complex construct. Since measuring a specific aspect of critical thinking is difficult, the test developers recommend that the CCTT be used as a general critical thinking ability test. This provides explanation for the use of the CCTT total score instead of the four sub-scale scores in the analysis of the data gathered in the present study. The present researcher relies on the test developers' claim that the CCTT is construct valid based on its content validity and correlations with other cognitive tests as presented in the test manual. The present study provides valuable information about critical thinking. As the results show learners by different level of proficiency use critical thinking. A previous study by Giles and Coupland (1991) found similar findings. They studied the development of critical thinking skills in writing classes and they found that learners by different level of language ability use critical thinking in different levels. When the means were added by the researchers, a mean for the total score on the CCTT was obtained for both the experimental (25.02 before the intervention and 30.15 after the intervention) and control group (16.84 prior to treatment and 19.90 after the treatment). These means were found to be much lower than those presented in this study. Another study by Canagarajah, (2005) revealed the similar results as the present study.

The present study also provides evidence for improving the undergraduates' English language proficiency. As showed by the results, proficiency in English is positively related to critical thinking ability implying that if the undergraduates are proficient in English, their critical thinking ability will also be heightened. Furthermore, the two different competencies can be acquired independently of each other; that is, there are undergraduates who are proficient in English but poor in their ability to exercise critical thinking skills. The rather weak correlations between language proficiency and critical thinking established in this study lend support to the weaker interpretation of Whorf's theory of linguistic relativity (1941) argued by Burbules and Berk (2006), which proposes that language is not solely responsible for determining one's thought but functions instead as one of the elements that helps to shape one's thought. Thus, the small correlation coefficients computed in this study indicated that proficiency in English partly contributed to undergraduates' ability to think critically. The valuable contribution that language proficiency may make to the undergraduates' critical thinking ability is further reinforced by the results produced through the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedure which showed that students of the highest English proficiency level also obtained high scores on the CCTT. The actual difference in the mean scores of the four proficiency groups (i.e., eta square = .10) was approaching Robertson (2000) large effect size coefficient (eta square = .14) indicating a rather substantial practical importance of the difference between the most proficient group and the other three less proficient ones.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of the present study imply that more work needs to be done towards upgrading the standard of English language and critical thinking ability among undergraduates. The observed facts that the undergraduates did

not have critical thinking ability level equivalent to that of their western counterparts and that the majority of them were not highly proficient in English are consistent with the findings of a study done by Jones et al., (1999). The study revealed that students had problems not only because they had poor critical thinking skills but also due to the fact that their English language skills were poor and that they relied heavily on rote-learning. So, the university must dare take the challenges of bringing about real changes that will eventually improve the standard of English among the undergraduates and enhance their critical thinking ability and more serious attempts should be made towards creating an educational system that promotes life-long learning.

#### **LIMITATION OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

No study is complete by itself and cannot take every detail into consideration. Therefore, there are always aspects which are not accounted for. This research is no exception. There are some issues which were not controlled in this study and can be topics for further research by other researchers.

- 1) This study was done only in one city with a limited number of students. It is suggested that another study be performed with large numbers of students from more cities.
- 2) In this study, the participants were adults; in other studies other language learners can be the focus of attention to see whether the same results will be obtained.

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**THE EXCLUSION STRATEGIES OF THE REPRESENTATION OF SOCIAL ACTORS IN THE CASE  
OF FPI'S REJECTION TO LADY GAGA'S PERFORMANCE IN INDONESIA  
ON THE JAKARTA POST NEWSPAPER HEADLINES  
(A CDA APPROACH)**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study determined the exclusion strategies used by one of English language newspapers in Indonesia, The Jakarta Post Newspaper, in representing the social actors in the case of FPI's rejection to Lady Gaga's performance in Indonesia. Exclusion strategies which are strategies of discourse used by mass media are the process of omitting social actors from the news. These strategies are a part of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) tools in analyzing representation of social actors which is a theory put forward by Theo van Leeuwen. According to Theo van Leeuwen (2008:29) there are two kinds of exclusion, suppression and backgrounding. Suppression is the exclusion that leaves no traces in the representation, excluding both the social actors and their activities, whereas backgrounding is the exclusion that leaves traces in the representation. Suppression might be linguistically realized by passive agent deletion, nominalization and process of nouns, and non-finite clauses. Backgrounding might be realized by simple ellipses in nonfinite clauses with *-ing* and *-ed* participles, in infinitival clauses with *to*, and in paratactic clauses. The results of the study show that the exclusion strategies mostly used are suppressions; there are 95% of suppressions. The suppressions are linguistically realized by passive agent deletion which is 10%, 80% by nominalization and process Nouns, and 5% by non-finite clauses. The Jakarta Post Newspaper only used 5% of backgrounding in the news. Almost 90% of exclusion strategies go to the pro social actors of this case. The Pro group is excluded because The Jakarta Post Newspaper wants to drive the readers' attention to the other actor (the victim) which here is Lady Gaga and her supporters as the Con group.

**KEYWORDS:** Exclusion, representation, actors, suppression, backgrounding

**INTRODUCTION**

Mass media is media used as a means of communication; it is specifically designed to reach a very wide public; it is made for people as the audiences who need the information brought. In another word, mass media is a tool used for delivering messages or information from the source (the newsmaker and the media producer) to the audience (public) by using mechanical means of communication, such as newspapers, magazines, films, radio, television, and Internet.

One of the mass media types that is static and prioritizes in visual-written messages is printed media. The examples of this type of media are such as newspaper, magazine, tabloid, and newsletter. However, in this study, we choose newspaper as the media to analyze; the only reason is because newspaper is considered as the most popular printed media in the world. Also, newspaper is considered more up-to-date in presenting the news to be delivered to the audience than the other media. Newspaper is published in the form of sheets containing news, essays and advertisements printed, published, and sold regularly and periodically to the public. Newspaper can be read again and again, and reach a wide audience because the price is relatively cheap.

As one of the mass media types, newspaper also has function to give people information about daily phenomena. The phenomena that always occur every day can be the phenomena of social, cultural, economic, and many other things including the phenomena related to politics and government. In presenting the phenomena, a newspaper



must have some important parts that are always issued in every edition; the parts are: headlines, editorial, news article, feature article, and news in specific section (such as: sports, business, national, and international sections).

Headlines become the data source of this study. The reason why to choose headlines is because headlines are the most important part of a newspaper. Headlines are the words printed in large type across the top of a newspaper article. Headlines are printed so because headlines have function to catch the reader's attention; it means headlines must be the first thing to see by the reader who wants to buy a newspaper. Besides, headlines are printed on the front page because the information issued is considered important by the owner and the people behind the newspaper. Headlines are also called the essence of news. Therefore, their function is not only to attract readers to read the news but also to cause a certain effect on the readers. Thus, headings strategy (News title making) becomes very important to achieve all of that. Headings strategy used in headlines has function to choose the theme both news issued and the newspaper on that edition. Perspective is also built through the making of headlines. Here, headlines serve as a thematization effort. The effort becomes the starting point of the development of the information which is relevant to the news, and also becomes the starting point of limiting meaning interpretation of the information developed in the news content. In another word, by only reading headlines, it will instantly build readers' perspectives and thoughts about the important news on that edition.

In addition, we used headlines as the data source since they are issued in the form of text. Of course, there is a tight relation between text and discourse; therefore, in analyzing it, it cannot be separated to discourse. McCarthy states as follows:

"Discourse analysts study language in use: written texts of all kinds, and spoken data, from conversation to highly institutionalized forms of talk." (2000:5)

Besides the quotation above, Fairclough (1995:74) also states that discourse is as a complex of three elements: social practice, discursive practice (text production, distribution, and consumption), and text, and the analysis of a specific discourse calls for analysis in each of these three dimensions and their interrelations. Both of the quotations show a tight relation between text and discourse. Since text is a written language, it becomes a part of discourse, and of course text can be analyzed by discourse analysis.

Fairclough (1995:97) defines a discourse analysis as an analysis method which includes linguistic description of the language text, interpretation of the relationship between the (productive and interpretative) discursive processes and the text, and explanation of the relationship between the discursive processes and the social processes. In addition, Mc Carthy (2000:5) states that discourse analysis is concerned with the study of the relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used. In other words, the focus of discourse analysis is not only on the pattern of language but it is also considering the context of text. Paltridge (2006, in Mahritta 2012:9) states that the terminology of context of text can be related to the social and political situation where the text is produced or the particular goal tried to reach by the text producers. Moreover, the context influences the text producer when producing text. It can affect the producer's way in using the grammar, the words choice, and even the intention in performing particular way of language use in the discourse; those things are called as the discourse strategies.

Related to this study, as the analysis will focus on how discourse strategies are used in terms of critical or what we have already known as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), it is really important to explain in short about CDA itself. According to Wodak and Meyer, CDA regards language as social practise, and takes consideration of the context of language use to be crucial. CDA takes a particular interest in the relation between language and power (2001:1). In addition, Wodak and Meyer also states as follows:

CDA may be defined as fundamentally concerned with analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. In other words, CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signaled, constituted, legitimized, and so on by language use (or in discourse) (2001:2).

Furthermore, as this study attempted by using CDA approach, it is absolutely right to analyze the discourse strategies used by media in presenting and publishing their news (articles). The way of media presents the news

about one, group, opinion, and perception is called representation. Thus, as stated before, the theory of CDA that relates to the representation in discourse asserted by van Leeuwen (2008) is chosen as an appropriate theory to be applied in this study. The theory involving an analysis model is used since it will analyze how the social actors are presented in the news, especially in headlines articles. In addition, the van Leeuwen's model is used in this study since it tries to disclose the use of language and critically analyze the relation of language use and the power held by the discourse producer in making particular action.

All the background above really encourages us to conduct a study and to do the analysis by using van Leeuwen's theory (2008) on discourse strategies of representation of social actor on The Jakarta Post Newspaper headlines. Since headlines become the data source of this study, we also limit the topic of the headlines. We choose the case of FPI's rejection to Lady Gaga's performance in Indonesia as the topic. The description about the headlines topic will be explained in the next section below.

### ***Problems identification***

The problem chosen as the topic of this study is about the case of FPI's rejection to Lady Gaga's performance in Indonesia. This case has ever blown up in Indonesia and even in the world around the year of 2012; in addition, this case still gives impact to Indonesian until now. There are so many parties and people in Indonesia still questioning why the concert is cancelled and what factual reasons behind the police's decision is. Moreover, the question also rises along with an issue of the decision making because there is a rejection of the concert from the hardline Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) at that time. The questions raise big question: 'Is the police fear of the power of FPI?' The big question still remains in people's memory even though the concert has been cancelled so far from today.

The case was begun from the plan of Lady Gaga to hold a concert in Indonesia on June 2012. Indonesia was a country among the first stops on Lady Gaga's "Born This Way Ball" world tour. Since the plan first arose in January 2012, there was a wave of rejection from the hardline Islamic Defenders Front (FPI). However, the promoter of the concert still gave effort to prepare the concert; more than 50,000 tickets had been sold since selling opened on March 10, 2012. Seeing this, the FPI's rejection rose into a threat; FPI threatened violence if the concert went ahead. According to FPI, they rejected Lady Gaga because Lady Gaga's song was considered no moral values and her outlandish clothes and provocative dance moves would corrupt Indonesia's youth. FPI told that Lady Gaga is bringing the faith of Satan to Indonesian and thus will destroy the nation's morals.

The peak point of this case was when finally the national police did not issue the permit of the concert. Many people and parties in Indonesia considered that the decision was affected by the FPI's action; the fact still becomes a big question that cannot be answered briefly by the police until now. Also, many parties considered the show's cancellation would be a backward step in efforts to develop a more open Indonesia and bad news for business. All the fact of the description above really encourages us to raise this topic in this study. Thus, the analysis of exclusion strategies involving the social actors in this case on the headlines of The Jakarta Post Newspaper is attempted; in addition, The Jakarta Post Newspaper is chosen as the mass media to be analyzed since it appears in English language. It also can be read by people all over the world since it is also published in online version.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### ***Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)***

According to Fairclough, CDA is a critical approach of Discourse Analysis. Here, discourse analysis can be defined as an analysis on language used; it means the analysis cannot be limited to the description of language form without any bonding with aim and function designed in human's business. Therefore, we can simply define CDA as an analysis of how language is used through critical perspective.

Van Dijk (1995:253) in Post (2009:14) also states that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a multidisciplinary approach to language that strives to highlight the nature of social power and dominance by substantiating the intricate relationship between text, talk, social cognition, power, society, and culture. Here, multidiscipline can consist of many discipline studies, such as: history, anthropology, social, politics, communication, and also the language itself. In addition, van Dijk also defines CDA as follows:

“Critical Discourse Analysis is a type of discourse analytical study that primarily studies the way social power abuses, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context.” (van Dijk, 2008: 85)

In the quotation above, van Dijk points that the focus of CDA is actually to criticize how power is abused; he also highlights dominance and inequality that can be meant as to elevate someone or group that have the power (a dominant group), and the other side to position someone or group that have no power in an inappropriate position.

#### ***Theo Van Leeuwen CDA Model***

According to van Leeuwen in Suganda (2007:13), language is a reflection of an ideology. By studying language reflected in a text or a discourse, the ideology can be dismantled. Van Leeuwen’s model can be used in detecting and investigating how someone’s or a group’s position is marginalized in a text or a discourse.

In his book *Discourse and Practice*, van Leeuwen (2008) introduces two CDA analysis models. He names his model by Representing Social Actors and Representing Social Action. The term ‘representing’ can also be meant as ‘representation’. Related to this term, he states that “the term of representation itself is directed to how one, a group, perception, or opinion is presented in the news.” (2008: 4).

The explanation above shows that the main problem in representation is how the reality is presented in the news reported. If we talk in terms of media that must involve author (media producer) and the reader, the use of words, sentences, and grammatical aspects have the certain meaning when they are received by the reader. Those things in the media producer’s perspective are commonly called as discourse strategies. Therefore, in this study, we will try to analyze the discourse strategies used by media in terms of van Leeuwen’s representing of social actor.

#### ***Representing of Social Actors***

As having explained that representing of social actors is associated with how actors (one or group) are represented in the news. In addition, this model is concerned with how a side is positioned in an inappropriate position and the other side in higher position. For that reason, there will be two strategies appeared in the framework of the theories point; they are exclusion and inclusion. Van Leeuwen (2008:28) states that representations include or exclude social actors to suit their interests and purposes in relation to the readers for whom they are intended. Exclusion means omitting actors of a social action by some linguistic mechanisms; inclusion means putting the actors in the center of attention and being presented in the text clearly.

As this study focuses on exclusion, at the next section we will only explain about exclusion and the strategies how to use it. The only reason to choose only exclusion in this study is because as van Leeuwen states that exclusion has rightly been an important aspect of critical discourse analysis (2008:28). Thus, to analyze exclusion is more interesting.

#### ***Exclusion Strategies***

Exclusion is the process of omitting actors by some linguistic mechanisms. It has two main subdivisions: suppression and backgrounding. The main difference between suppression and backgrounding is the point that they leave trace or not within representation (van Leeuwen, 2008:29). The description about both subdivisions will be explained below.

#### ***Suppression***

Suppression is the exclusion that leaves no traces in the representation, excluding both the social actors and their activities. Van Leeuwen calls this kind of exclusion as radical exclusion (2008:29). The linguistic realization of suppression can be realized in some ways as follows:

- a. Passive agent deletion. Some CDA analysts call this linguistic realization as passivization. This realization is used to exclude social actor(s) from the representation/news discourse. The function of this realization is to omit or delete the real actor(s). By omitting the actor(s), the sentence producer tries to drive the readers’ attention into the other one (victim). Below is the example: ‘The robber was shot yesterday.’

The focus in this sentence is the victim, 'the robber'. The sentence producer uses passivization instead of active sentence, for example: 'A police shot the robber.' If we compare both examples above, by presenting the active sentence, the actor "a police" is clearly existed. Otherwise, by using passivization, the actor "a police" is deleted. The only function of this realization is to drive the reader's attention to be concerned with the victim "the robber" and to pay no attention to the actor "A police".

- b. Non-finite clauses (e. g., infinitival clauses). According to van Leeuwen, suppression also can be realized through non-finite clauses that function as a grammatical participant. Below is the example: 'To maintain the policy is hard'.

The clause 'to maintain the policy' allows the social actor(s) who are responsible for maintaining the policy to be excluded.

- c. Nominalizations and process nouns. Rashidi and Rasti (2012:2) gives example as follows: 'Financial support came to us'.

From the example above, the noun 'support' is nominalised from excluding the doer of the activity.

### **Backgrounding**

Backgrounding is the exclusion that leaves traces in the representation. Here, the excluded social actors in a specific activity pop up later in another part of the clause, sentence or text. According to van Leeuwen (2008:30-31) the linguistic realization of backgrounding can be existed from simple ellipses in nonfinite clauses with *-ing* and *-ed* participles, in infinitival clauses with *to*, and in paratactic clauses. In all of these cases, the excluded social actor is *included* elsewhere in the same clause or clause complex. It can also be realized in the same way as suppression, but with respect to social actors who *are* included elsewhere in the text. The two realizations background social actors to different degrees, but both play a part in reducing the number of times specific social actors are explicitly referred to. The examples of backgrounding are as follows:

- a) Clearing the case, police set up the evidence. (*using infinite clause -ing*)
- b) To maintain the policy, government has invited some experts. (*Infinitival clause with to-*)
- c) John invited them to the party, but the wilsons didn't show up. (*Paratactic clauses*)

The first example uses infinite clause with *-ing* and the second uses infinitival clause with *to*. The social actors 'police' and 'government' are backgrounded or found at the rest of the sentence. The third example uses paratactic clauses. Here, the reader will know exactly the specific actor 'the wilsons' in the second clause.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In this study, we try to analyze and describe the exclusion strategies represented in the headlines of The Jakarta Post Newspaper in the case of of *FPI*'s rejection to Lady Gaga's performance in Indonesia from Critical Discourse Analysis point of view. Considering that, there are three issues discussed in this study: (1) What exclusion strategies are used by The Jakarta Post in representing the actors that involve in the texts?; (2) What linguistic realizations are used as the tools in revealing the exclusion strategies?; and (3)What are the functions of using those strategies?

## **THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study seeks to investigate the exclusion strategies used by one of English language newspapers in Indonesia, The Jakarta Post Newspaper, in representing the social actors in the case of *FPI*'s rejection to Lady Gaga's performance in Indonesia. In this study, the focus is on determining the type of exclusion strategies used by The Jakarta Post Newspaper, the linguistic realizations of the exclusion types, and the function of using those. This study gives a comprehensive analysis on how the social actors are excluded in the representation of the case in the news by the Jakarta Post Newspaper.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **The Method**

The method applied in this research is qualitative. Bogdan and Biklin (1992:29) state that qualitative research at least has five features as follows: (a) Qualitative research takes place in a natural setting; (b) Qualitative research is descriptive. The data collected is in the form of words rather than numbers; (c) Qualitative researchers are concerned

with process rather than with products; (d) Qualitative researchers analyse their data logically; (e) Meaning is an essential concern to the qualitative approach.

Since the features show how a qualitative method is used in a research, we give some attempts to implement them in this research. One of the attempts is by deciding the conceptual model or the object of this research. As this research will raise the representation of social actors, the object of this research is the actors involved in the case of FPI's Rejection to Lady Gaga's Performance in Indonesia. Since the actors are represented in The Jakarta Post headlines, the object of this research can be seen through words, phrases, clauses, and sentences which present or describe the actors.

Related to the object of this research above, another attempt that we must do is to conduct specific strategies in implementing the formulation of study and also the objectives of study. The strategies are stated below.

First, in implementing the first objective which is to analyze the discourse strategies used to represent the actors in the text, we use specific discourse strategies of representation of social actors put forward by van Leeuwen (2008). The process will be as follows: (1) understanding the clauses meaning comprehensively, and then, (2) choosing the data by categorizing them into specific discourse strategies (inclusion or exclusion). Second, in implementing the second objective which is to describe the linguistic realizations used as the tools in revealing the discourse strategies, we also use specific linguistic realization on discourse strategies of representation of social actors put forward by van Leeuwen (2008:23-54). Van Leeuwen states (2008:23) that every discourse strategy has its own linguistic realization, such as: transitivity, paratactic analysis, nominalization, passivation, and many other elses. Last, in implementing the third objective which is to formulate the functions of using those strategies, we use van Leeuwen's theory (2008) as well. In the theory, van Leeuwen has given some detail examples of his analysis on representation of social actors. Thus, the van Leeuwen's analysis will be our guidance in conducting the analysis.

### ***The Technique of Data Collecting***

Data collecting is an underlying thing that is necessarily attempted to conduct a research. The aim of the data collecting is to get valid and accurate data. In collecting the data, there are several applicable methods, i.e. library research, field research, and laboratory research. In this research, we only conduct library research since this research needs many references. Library research is the most appropriate method for this kind of research. In collecting the data, I implement several procedures as follows:

1. Choosing the data source  
In conducting this research, data source is needed to get accurately valid data. Eventually, a newspaper is chosen as the data source. Here, we collect the headlines about the case of FPI's rejection of Lady Gaga's performance in Indonesia from The Jakarta Post newspaper.
2. Reading the whole articles carefully and thoroughly  
The whole headlines articles about the case from The Jakarta Post newspaper are read carefully and thoroughly to comprehend the content of the articles.
3. Choosing the data  
In this process, the data chosen are the clauses and sentences related to the representation of social actors as the topic of this research. They consist both of discourse strategies: exclusions and inclusions, however, in this study we only focus on the exclusions.
4. Analyzing the data  
After choosing the data, we will analyze them based on the strategies used to represent the actors in the text, and then, we will analyze the linguistic realizations used as tools in revealing those strategies. Finally, we will describe the functions of using those strategies.

### ***Data Source***

The data source of this research are taken from 6 (six) headlines articles from The Jakarta Post Newspaper. The articles are: (1) 'Little Monsters' growl over threats to Gaga (*May 09, 2012*), (2) No Permit for Gaga: Jakarta Cops (*May 15, 2012*), (3) Gag is Not The End To Gaga Concert (*May 16, 2012*) (4) Gaga Concert – To Be or Not To be (*May 23, 2012*), (5) Extremists Win The Lady Gaga Saga (*May 28, 2012*), (6) Fans Mourn The Concert That Never Was (*June 04, 2012*).

### *Theoretical Outline*

In this research, there are several applied theories used in analyzing the data. To find the exclusion strategies represented by the media in this research, we will use Theo Van Leeuwen's theory (2008). In addition, in order to accommodate the analysis of this research, we use not only Theo van Leeuwen's theory of linguistic realization (2008) but also Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) put forward by Halliday & Matthiessen (2004) and Gerot & Wignell (1995) as the tools of analysis.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### *Results*

As this research will focus on the representation of social actors, the first thing to do is to classify the actors who are involved in the case. The case that we raise in this research is about FPI's Rejection to Lady Gaga's Performance in Indonesia. It is simply classified that the main actors involved in the case is Lady Gaga and FPI. However, we also have to consider the other actors involved; therefore, we will divide two main groups as the pros of the case and the cons. We name the pros as **the pro-rejection actors** and the cons as **the anti-rejection actors**.

The pro-rejection actors in this case are as follows:

1. FPI (*Front Pembela Islam*), or in the articles it is named by Islam Defender Front.
2. The National Police.
3. The rejection supporters. Those are people (public) who support the rejection, but are not FPI members.

The anti-rejection actors in this case are as follows:

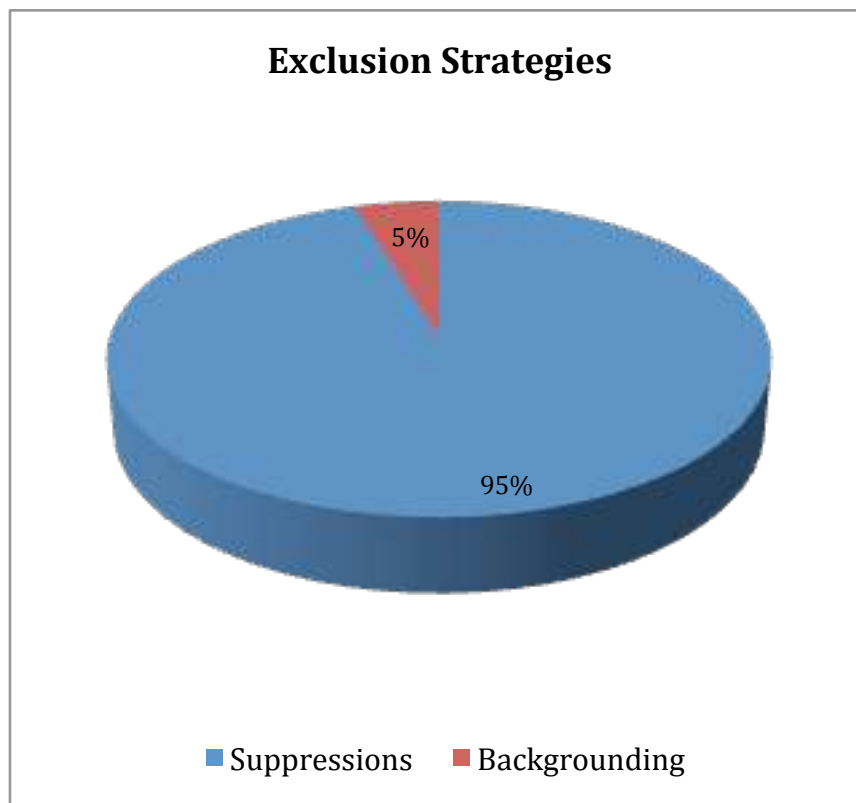
1. Lady Gaga herself.
2. Big Daddy Entertainment as the Promoter of the concert
3. Lady Gaga fans who are known as Little Monsters.
4. The anti-rejection supporters. Those are people who are not Lady Gaga fans.

The results of the study can be seen in the table below:

*Table 1: The frequency of the exclusion strategies found in the headlines*

<b>Actors</b>	<b>Suppression Frequency</b>	<b>Backgrounding Frequency</b>
<b>Pro-Rejection</b>	19	-
<b>Anti-Rejection</b>	1	1





*Figure 1: The percentage of exclusion strategies found in the headlines*

As stated before, there are three linguistic realizations in suppressions, the results are shown in the table below:

*Table 2: The frequency of the linguistic realizations in suppressions*

Actors	Passive Agent Deletion	Nominalization and process Nouns	Non-finite Clause
Pro-Rejection	2	16	1
Anti-Rejection	-	1	-

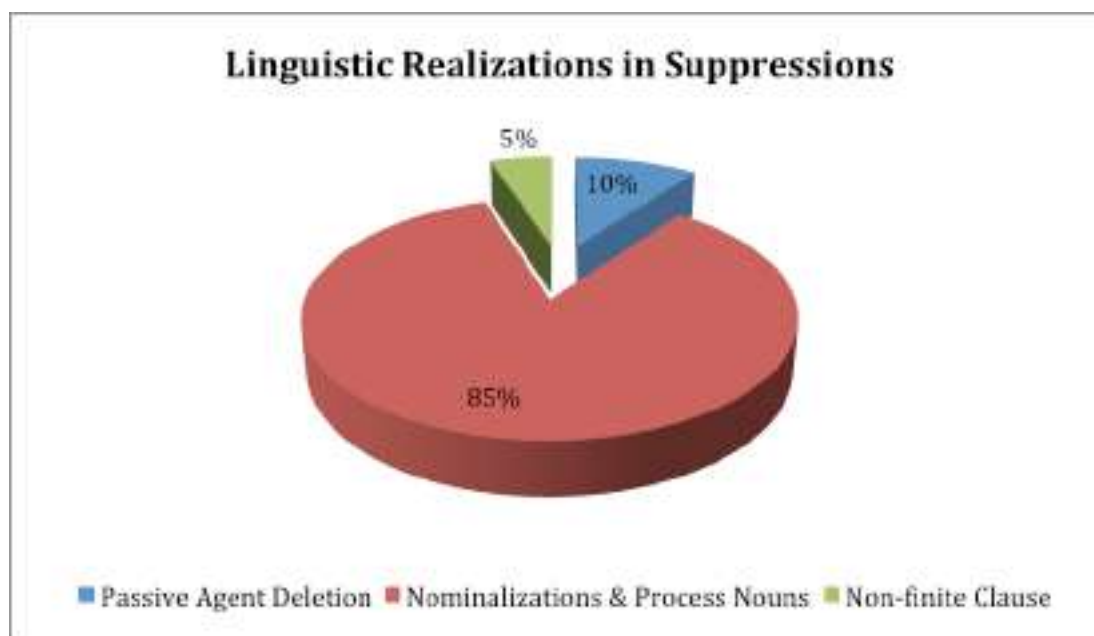


Figure 2: The percentage of the linguistic realizations in suppressions

All of the detail results can be seen in the table below:

Table 2: The analysis results of exclusion strategies

No.	Data	Headlines	Excluded Actors	Types of Exclusion
1.	'Little Monsters' growl over <u>threats</u> to Gaga.	'Little Monsters' growl over threats to Gaga ( <i>May 09, 2012</i> )	FPI	Suppression
2.	<u>preventing</u> the singer from performing in Indonesia "will not make gay people turn straight"		FPI	Suppression
3.	there's a very slim chance <u>the permit</u> will be issued	No Permit for Gaga: Jakarta Cops ( <i>May 15, 2012</i> )	Police	Suppression
4.	<u>the decision</u> was based on input received from groups who said Lady Gaga, famous for her hit singles "Poker Face" and "Bad Romance", was not suitable for local audiences.		Police	Suppression
5.	<u>after clearing</u> those bureaucratic hurdles, promoters in Jakarta had to submit several additional permit requests to the National Police		promoters	Backgrounding
6.	<u>The battle</u> to hold a concert for American pop diva Lady Gaga in Jakarta reached new heights Tuesday	Gag is Not The End To Gaga Concert ( <i>May 16, 2012</i> )	FPI	Suppression
7.	<u>This decision</u> is an obvious reflection of the police's inability to control the FPI.		Police	Suppression

8.	The show's cancellation would be a backward step in efforts to develop a more open Indonesia and bad news for business.		Police	Suppression
9.	She has finally broken her silence on the prolonged drama over her planned Jakarta concert	Gaga Concert – To Be or Not To be (May 23, 2012)	FPI,	Suppression
10.	making notes of censorship concerns and <u>threats of violence</u> against her on Twitter		Police	
11.	There will be no concert if the <u>permit is not issued</u>		FPI	Suppression
12.	The Lady Gaga concert in Jakarta was <u>canceled</u>		Police	Suppression
13.	The law can only be applied to those who used <u>violence</u> to reject Lady Gaga, and the police have not done anything	Extremists Win The Lady Gaga Saga (May 28, 2012)	FPI	Suppression
14.	<u>the gig's cancellation</u> reflected a <u>government that was weak in the face of intolerant political groups</u>		Police	Suppression
15.	Big Daddy Entertainment said that the 26-year-old singer's management decided to cancel the planned concert due to " <u>security concerns</u> "		FPI,	Suppression
16.	all 52,000 tickets that <u>had been purchased</u> for the show <u>would be refunded</u>		Police	
17.	that <u>the show's cancellation</u> would not prompt other foreign performers to have second thoughts about performing here		Promoter	Suppression
18.	Alhamdulillah [praise the Lord] that <u>the concert was canceled</u>		Police	Suppression
19.	the bitter end of weeks of <u>controversy</u> over the gig was a huge loss not only for Gaga fans but also for every citizen who believed in freedom.		Police	Suppression
20.	They also stamped their handprints with colorful paint on a large poster of Gaga, which stated "Little Monsters' tribute to diversity"		FPI,	Suppression
			Police	

21.	Their fears were unfounded as around 3,000 members of the FPI prayed together at their headquarters on Jl. Petamburan III, Central Jakarta, to celebrate <u>the concert cancellation</u>		Police	Suppression
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### Discussion

Some of representative data will be analyzed as follows:

**Datum 1:** The Lady Gaga concert in Jakarta was canceled (*TJP: Extremists Win The Lady Gaga Saga: May 28, 2012*)

The datum above consists of exclusion strategy since there is actor excluded in the datum.

To get the detail analysis, the Functional Grammar tool is used as follows:

The Lady Gaga concert in Jakarta	was canceled
Theme	Rheme

In addition, to complete the analysis, we also use the transitivity analysis as follows:

The Lady Gaga concert in Jakarta	was canceled
Goal	Process: Material

Here, the datum is a passive clause. By using theme and rheme analysis, it shows that the focus of message is the Subject of the clause 'the Lady Gaga concert in Jakarta'. In addition, since the transitivity analysis shows that there is no actor in the clause, the process becomes the same important as the Goal. Thus, the analysis will be more interesting to analyze since there is actor deleted.

The strategy of passive without existing the actor is called passive agent deletion. This strategy is categorized as suppression strategy. By using this strategy, the text producer tries to drive the readers' attention to the goal. Thus, the producer wants to show that the goal is more important than the actor who executes the action (cancellation). Here, as we know the actor is 'the police'. 'The police' has been hidden; the only reason the producer does it is to protect 'the police' from the case. Then, the readers who read this article has unconsciously been driven to be concerned with the goal that is "the Lady Gaga concert" and to pay no attention to the actor "the police".

**Datum 2:** She regretted the cancellation (*TJP: Fans Mourn The Concert That Never Was: June 04, 2012*)

The datum above consists of exclusion strategy since there is actor excluded in the datum. To get the detail analysis, the Functional Grammar tool is used as follows:

She	regretted	the cancellation
Senser	Process: Mental	Phenomenon

Here, the datum is an active clause involving mental process. By using the transitivity analysis, it shows that the focus of message is the Subject of the clause or as the senser of the process 'she (Lady Gaga)' and the Object or the phenomenon of the process 'the cancellation'. Here, the social actor, Lady Gaga, is included; however, there is

another actor who is excluded. This is realized by the presence of the Noun ‘cancellation’. The Noun has proposition ‘someone cancels something (the concert)’. Thus, it is definitely there is actor excluded from the clause.

The strategy above is categorized as the process Nouns which is a type of suppressions. By using this strategy, the text producer tries to hide the other actor and to drive the readers’ attention to the sener (subject of the clause). Thus, the producer wants to show that the sener is more important than the actor who executes the action (cancellation). Here, as we know the actor is ‘the police’. ‘The police’ has been hidden; the only reason the producer does it is to protect ‘the police’ from the case. Then, the readers who read this article has unconsciously been driven to be concerned with the sener that is ‘she (Lady Gaga)’ and to pay no attention to the other actor “the police”.

**Datum 3:** Preventing the singer from performing in Indonesia will not make gay people turn straight. (*TJP: ‘Little Monster’ growl over threats to Gaga: May 09, 2012*)

The datum above consists of exclusion strategy since there is actor excluded in the datum. To get the detail analysis, the Functional Grammar tool is used as follows:

<u>Preventing</u> the singer from performing in Indonesia	will not make gay people turn straight
Theme	Rheme

Here, the datum is an active clause. By using theme and rheme analysis, it shows that the focus of message is the Subject of the clause ‘Preventing the singer from performing in Indonesia’. The main Subject of the clause is ‘Preventing the singer’. Here, the social actor, the singer (Lady Gaga), is included; however, there is another actor who is excluded. This is realized by the presence of the Noun ‘preventing’. The Noun has proposition ‘someone prevents someone (the singer)’. Thus, it is definitely there is actor excluded from the clause.

The strategy above is categorized as nominalization which is a type of suppressions. Nominalization is the process of changing verb into Noun. Here, the Verb ‘prevent’ is nominalized by adding ‘-ing’, or in English it is usually called as gerund. By using this strategy, the text producer tries to hide the other actor and to drive the readers’ attention to the included actor ‘the singer (Lady Gaga)’. Thus, the actor who executes the action (preventing) is hidden. Here, the hidden actor is ‘FPI’ since FPI gives the effort to prevent Lady Gaga to perform in Indonesia. ‘FPI’ has been hidden; the only reason the producer does it is to get the readers who read this article more pay attention to ‘the singer (Lady Gaga)’ as the victim actor.

**Datum 4:** After clearing those bureaucratic hurdles, promoters in Jakarta had to submit several additional permit requests to the National Police. (*TJP: No permit for Gaga: Jakarta cops: May 15, 2012*)

The datum above consists of exclusion strategy since there is actor excluded in the datum at the first clause. To get the detail analysis, the Functional Grammar tool is used as follows:

After clearing those bureaucratic hurdles,	<u>promoters</u> in Jakarta had to submit several additional permit requests to the National Police.
x $\beta$	$\alpha$

Here, the datum is a sentence. By using clause complex analysis, it shows that the focus of message is in the first clause ‘After clearing those bureaucratic hurdles’. In the clause, there is an actor excluded, but the actor ‘promoters’ is presented in the second clause. This exclusion strategy is categorized as backgrounding.

By using this strategy, the text producer tries to drive the readers' attention to the activity or the action in the first clause. Thus, the the readers who read this article more pay attention to the action than the social actor.

## CONCLUSION

As the results of the study show that the exclusion strategies mostly used are suppressions (95%), we can conclude that The Jakarta Post newspaper uses radical way in representing the actors in this case. As stated by van Leeuwen that suppressions are kind of exclusion which is called as radical exclusion (2008:29). The results also show that Almost 90% of exclusion strategies go to the pro social actors of this case. The Jakarta Post newspaper does this for some reasons: first, to hide the excluded social actors; second, to protect the social actors; Third, to drive the readers' attention to the other actor (the victim) which here is Lady Gaga and her supporters as the Con group. Based on CDA perspective, we also can conclude that the results show that the discourse used by The Jakarta Post Newspaper is not neutral enough in presenting actors of this case. Actually, this is absolutely fair for mass media (which here is The Jakarta Post newspaper) to play its role as the medium of power. Thus, CDA can be used to disclose the media ideology (side) in presenting the news. The fact is also in line with van Dijk viewpoints that the focus of CDA is actually to criticize how power is abused; he also highlights dominance and inequality that can be meant as to elevate someone or group that have the power (a dominant group), and the other side to position someone or group that have no power in an inappropriate position. Therefore, this study can be useful to increase the readers' awareness in viewing news presented by media.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on analyzing the representation of social actors from the headlines of a media mass. The term 'representation' is related to how something is presented in a text. Besides, according to van Leeuwen (2008:23), "the representation of social actor is related to how the participants of social practices can be represented in English discourse. This study implements a CDA model analysis put forward by Theo van Leeuwen (2008). According to van Leeuwen, there are two strategies in representing social actors in a text or in a news of media: inclusion and exclusion strategies. Exclusion means omitting actors of a social action by some linguistic mechanisms; whereas inclusion means putting the actors in the center of attention and being presented in the text clearly. However, in this study, the focus is only on investigating the exclusion strategies. According to Theo van Leeuwen (2008:29) there are two kinds of exclusion, suppression and backgrounding. Suppression is the exclusion that leaves no traces in the representation, excluding both the social actors and their activities, whereas backgrounding is the exclusion that leaves traces in the representation. Suppression might be linguistically realized by passive agent deletion, nominalization and process of nouns, and non-finite clauses. Backgrounding might be realized by simple ellipses in nonfinite clauses with *-ing* and *-ed* participles, in infinitival clauses with *to*, and in paratactic clauses. The theory above is implemented in the analysis of this study. Thus, the exclusion strategies will be the only focus of this study as this will also be the limitation of this study.

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## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

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### ABSTRACT

Various studies on the application of new technologies and advances stated that new improvements in communication should be included in language teaching curriculum. It is also emphasized that separation of new technologies from language classed will lead to failure in teaching and learning. The literature also argue that new technologies and advances should be integrated with traditional approaches to language learning, but this implementation of technologies in conventional classes needs strong and detailed analysis.

**KEYWORDS:** Information technology, Second language learning, Teacher training, Conventional teaching methods

### INTRODUCTION

New technologies and Internet has influenced all aspects of human life. Language, language learning, and teaching as one of the most important and inseparable parts of social life is not an exception. Language learning has always been affected by changes in the world we are living in. Advances in multimedia technology and computer-aided language learning (CALL) have changed traditional methods and approaches to teaching in order to help language learners and teachers (Ehsani & Knodt, 1998). Development of technologies and integrating them into conventional classrooms have changed many aspects in language learning environment. Therefore, Language teachers and curriculum developers have always been trying to integrate their teaching materials with the most recent technologies to help learners enhancing language learning.

### HISTORY OF USING TECHNOLOGIES IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

During the history of language teaching, every method or approach had its own technologies to support. Grammar-translation method relied on blackboard, one of the most common technologies as a one-way transmitter of information (Warschauer & Meskill, 2000). In the 1970s and 80s, audio tape was the medium in audio-lingual method, and in the 1980s and 90s, cognitive approach benefited from meaningful contexts to help learners (ibid 1) . ICT, electronic mail, multimedia, collaborative platforms, and computers have helped language learners in socio-cognitive approach to build meaning (Kalnina & Kangro, 2007).

### THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN LANGUEGES LEARNING AROUND THE WORLD

Place, frequency, and use of information technology (IT) in high schools and language institutes have always been a concern for researchers. In a study conducted in Iran, Shahamat (2009) investigated the role of ICT in Shiraz highschoools and language classes. For this purpose, 700 EFL female students were chosen to answer a questionnaire about the frequency of technology use in their school or language institute. Outcome of the study showed that most of the students in public schools of Shiraz never or hardly ever used technologies like e-mail, making web, power point, word processing, personal computers, digital cameras, laptops, overheads, printers, slide projectors, scanners, and recorders. On the other hand, in private institutes more means of educational technologies were used, except for computers, E-mails, making web, digital cameras, language labs, laptop computers, slide projectors, virtual classes and visualizers, but in public schools the percentages of use of technologies were very low, except for audio, sound recorder, video, and Xerox. The study also revealed that there were differences in using educational technology in different proficiency levels in private institutes. As for CD, electronic devices, Internet, word processing, the differences between elementary and intermediate, and elementary and, advanced levels were significant. As for overhead projection device, all cases are significant except for the difference between intermediate & advanced levels. Finally, concerning scanners, the only observable significant difference was between elementary and intermediate levels.

On the basis of outcomes of this study, it was discussed that teachers' avoidance of new technology may be a result of teachers' lack of up to date knowledge of using new technologies. For that, it was suggested to train teachers, so they will be able to adapt themselves to the changing world and using technologies for new learning and teaching

contexts. It was also pointed out that not using technologies is not always teachers' fault, it could be due to the top-down approach from administrators and school or government authorities; therefore, authorities should provide training courses, seminars, workshops and discussion groups, so that teachers can develop their teaching pedagogy. Finally, it is recommended that students should be able to use new technologies, too. They need training to be able to learn about and use technologies to be more independent learners, and also apply them in doing their homework in a way to fill the gaps present in the conventional teacher student method.

In a similar research, Kalnina and Kangro (2007) investigated the role of ICT in language curriculum in Bucharest University. The outcome of their study showed that vast majority of students in Bucharest study at schools where school principals want teachers to use the modern IT in the teaching-learning process. In Bucharest, students have used ICT to learn English or to master other foreign languages, some in history, geography, mathematics, and Latvian language (Kalnina & Kangro, 2007). It was also concluded that for achieving better results in implementation of ICT in education, it is not enough to equip schools with up-to-date hard wares, but pre-service and in-service training of teachers for the pedagogical integration of ICT in the teaching and learning process plays an important role. They had an experience of pre-service and in-service for teachers, and the result of these services showed that training makes teachers to be more curious, creative, and innovative in using new technologies themselves and in their teachings. Findings in Latvia University and students' reports on how they have learned at university, confirmed Shahamat (2009)'s research conclusion that integrating ICT into language curriculum is needed.

ICT can also have an engaging role. It can make materials more interesting and have learners take a more active part in class which contribute to better language learning. Bartram (2006) investigated German and English pupils' perspectives on learning a foreign language. English students' in the study believed that being aware of what they are exactly going to do next, as in traditional books and board classed, will make lessons boring for them and they lose their interest to follow the courses. Findings showed that ICT can increase learners' interests for continuing the lesson and, as students reported, it can make lessons more enjoyable for them.

ICT and new technologies can help development in learning of individual skills of learners that may seem more difficult with traditional and conventional methods. Shen and Suwanthep (2011) stated that in China, speaking is the most difficult skill to be learnt by language learners, so to find an effective solution to this issue, they studied the role of implementing constructive role plays via E-learning on Chinese EFL learners' speaking in college English classes. Researchers added new technologies like new laboratories, in which learners could use the Internet and chat, to their curriculum for 18 weeks, and results of their study showed that e-learning had positive effects on improving students' speaking, in terms of language quality and language production. In their new experience, students expressed positive opinions towards the implementation of e-learning constructive role plays and the process of learning was more enjoyable for them than the conventional laboratories and classes (Shen & Suwanthep, 2011). They also believe that appropriate integration of CALL and internet technology is essential to teach speaking and to teach and motivates learners to participate in learning process.

Ming (2009) in a recent more research in China examined the effectiveness of web-based instruction of on students who learned English for specific purposes. The researcher intended to find out if a one- semester network-based course of English could change attitudes and beliefs of language learners toward the development of their English skills and the use of Internet technology. For this purpose, freshman undergraduate students majoring in computer science in South China were asked to participate in a Chinese online learning programme called WebNing. WebNing provided two major instructional tools: a content tool which delivered course materials and the other is a communication tool which allowed users to interact with each other in cyberspace using a forum and blogs. Ming (2009) used this program to make sure that all the students interact with course materials outside the lecture time, and to increase student-teacher and student-student interaction in the web-based instructional environments. To improve writing skill of students, they were required to write an essay to answer open-ended questions, which were on topics related to the course textbooks or daily life every week. Students posted their completed assignments in blogs; therefore, other students could comment on their essays in the blogs, and the instructor then corrected the essays by writing comments and giving elaborative feedbacks in the form of hints about the incorrect answers. Students responded to the instructor's feedbacks and corrected their errors, and afterward they replaced the new revised writing with the previous one. Along with writing practice, students also had an opportunity to freely express

their opinions and to exchange ideas in small groups through informal social interaction on the assigned topics in an asynchronous forum board every two weeks, and their instructor frequently accessed the discussion forums, posted comments, and answered the questions. After two weeks of completion of the projects, all students were required to complete a 18 statements questionnaire and short-answer questions posted on WebNing (online website that students used) about their views in perspectives on web-based instructional environments, the effect of web-based-instruction on learning subject matter and skills, the effect of WBI on their interest, and the effect of WBI on their confidence as learners, their technical skills, and their performance on course assessments. According to the results, most of the students enjoyed using WBIs. Most of the learners reported they had more interaction and communication with the instructor, as well as with their classmates, and more than half said they felt free to ask questions from the instructor. Vast majority of the learners felt they learned more language skills than they had learned in regular classes, more than half stated their writing skills have been improved. For asynchronous discussion, students' comments were overwhelmingly positive. In addition to the mid-course questionnaire, students had an interview with instructor about their experiences and attitude toward WBI at the end of the semester. Majority of students regarded WBI as beneficial to their language development. Researcher believed that WBI helps students to improve learner-autonomy. Students using this WBI believed that they learned how to organize their work by retrieving documents from the blogs and placing them into their pages on time, to answer questions, and to discuss with others on the discussion board.

Ming (2009) in his study made an "asynchronous discussion group" and asked students to have discussion on interesting subjects with pre-modified rules and limiting time. For the reasons mentioned, his experience was successful in developing learners' language ability, interest, and motivation. Chen (2005), in a two-year exploratory study of two large university EFL content-based classes in where asynchronous discussion forums were set up for experience-based language learning, studied the effectiveness of peer exchanges in the asynchronous discussion forums. Outcomes of the study conducted by Chen (2005), like Ming (2009), showed that most of the participants had positive views on CMC learning activities, and their reflectiveness in asynchronous discussions was found to be affected more by peer interaction than by the instructor's participation. Also, students with higher participation level had more positive attitude toward CMC.

In a bit different internet based instruction, Blake (2005) studied the progress of a typical first-year language student as she interacts with the course instructor synchronously. His research showed that the learner remained engaged in the language-learning process, actively participated in negotiation of meaning, repaired her language errors, and was able to satisfy her own language-learning needs. Blake (2005) stated that in CMC, against the convention of the normal face- to face classes that a teacher is in the centre of the class and students less have less active role, in on-line learning system, there teacher and learner have the same power, and affective filters such as embarrassment are lower than face-to-face classes. Blake (2005) believed that although CMC classes are entertaining and make students more motivated, this technology without the support of a teacher can never be effective, and students constantly need immediate feedback from their teachers.

Liang (2010) in a rather the same study in Taiwan, investigated the role of synchronous online interaction on writing of undergraduate EFL learners. It was found that synchronous web technology was a valuable tool for facilitating group interaction while there are possible reasons why synchronous online peer response groups might be fun, but not very effective. Liang's (2010) analysis indicated that "the relationships among different types of online interactions and their connections with subsequent writings and revisions are complex and depend on group make up and dynamics. Findings suggested that such complex activity may not guarantee revision. Writing instructors may need to proactively model, scaffold and support revision-related online discourse if it is to be of benefit".

Lucas (2010) in a study on motivations of Philippines' students of Manila for learning foreign languages found that due to the increase of foreign media, computer mediated activities and reading materials in that country, reading has become one of the linguistic skills that students are intrinsically motivated in. So, it can be concluded that computers, Internet and new technologies will have effects on different aspects of language learning whether they are directly a part of our instruction or not. Also, it could be very useful for language teachers to add these technologies to their classes specially for less motivated learners.

## **TEACHERS AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES**

With the developments in technology and its application in second language learning and teaching methods, every teaching system needs teachers who are familiar with the latest developments and know how to apply them to help

student promote their learning. Although there are some controversies in the literature, some believe that technologies should only be a help in learning and others say they have to have more roles in learning contexts, nearly all researchers have stated teachers play essential role in E-learning environment. Teachers who do not have enough experience or familiarity with computers and new technologies may just make the process of learning more difficult for learners. As a result, in addition to integrating ICT to the conventional classes, teacher training programs and courses are needed to help teachers overcome this difficulty (Arnold & Ducate, 2006).

The findings of nearly all studies in language learning area confirm that integration of ICT and new technology into classroom are essential, but the role of teachers with the knowledge, skills, and attitude for designing, adapting, and applying technology in the classroom, appropriate to context is the part without which it is impossible to benefit from these technologies in classrooms (Warschauer, 2002). No computerized class or learning system can work on its own and be effective (Blake 2005, Ming 2009, Lucas 2010). Therefore, teachers need to be more prepared and have more information about the developments to be able to design language learning courses in new methods. Internet and computers also can be great help in preparing situation to discuss pedagogical problems and new ways of solving them with other colleagues. For this problem, Richards (2005) suggested teachers to stay up to date and be active and innovative "designers" of ICT.

### **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND CONVENTIONAL METHODS**

Padurean and Margan (2009) classified different roles of computers and ICT in second language classes, as a teacher, tester, communication facilitator, and data source. They state that ICT can have advantages over conventional classes, like the capacity to control presentations, novelty and creativity, feedback, and adaptability. It is also mentioned that although ICT may have benefits over traditional methods, they cannot replace them, and can be used to make changes in traditional classes and class activities. They conclude that the use of computers makes classes more interesting and beneficial for learners.

Murphy (2007) in an on-line research combined new technologies to his conventional classes. He asked students to work on online readings in pairs on a single computer system and have interactions with each other to find the answers. The students then were compared with students doing readings alone on-line. Out comes showed that interaction helped learners to do better on reading comprehension tests. Therefore, as students in Ming's (2009) research said, learning a language could be facilitated by both interaction with teacher or other class mates along with new on-line materials.

Warschauer (2002) also emphasizes that the use of ICT and technologies should develop self autonomy, both in learners and teacher. He argues that "Students not only should be able to use today's search engines but should also have the right analytic framework to select and make use of new search engines as they emerge, and also teachers not only should be able to use today's CALL software but should also have successful strategies for evaluating and adapting the new waves of software that will surely come."

### **ICT IN LANGUAGE CLASSES AND CULTURAL AWARENESS**

One of the very important parts of every language learning or language teaching environments is culture. Language and culture are definitely inseparable and it is believed that learners may face troubles learning a language without knowing having necessary information about the target culture. In teaching language through ICT, teachers and educators need to put culture into account. Liaw (2006) design a project "to foster the growth of tertiary level EFL students' intercultural competence via English language development". In Liaw's (2006) project, in a web-based reading and writing environment for EFL and culture learning, students read articles on topics of their own culture and communicate their responses with speakers of another culture. By using web, students exchanged information about their cultures, and at the same time tried to use the foreign language; therefore, as a result of negotiation with another person in another culture, they learnt new information about the other culture and tried to be fluent to tell others about their own cultures. The findings of Liaw's (2006) project showed that all EFL participants were able to communicate fluently in the target language without much help from the corpora-based e-referencing tools provided in the system and the use of the online dictionary decreased after the first two readings. Findings of the project demonstrated the benefits of using computer technology for intercultural learning, and remind educators and curriculum developer that in any kind of language learning plan, culture is an essential element.

## CONCLUSION

The new and modern technologies are now inevitable parts of learning and teaching. Studies on the use of IT around the world have shown the positive and helpful impact of this technology on language learning. This application of modern communication devices needs changes in curriculum development and teacher education, they should help language teaching systems to be compatible with the advances in new technologies. On the other side, it discussed that this development cannot help learning and teaching without the assistance of the conventional teaching methods. Therefore, both new and traditional methods of teaching should be blended and complement each other for successful teaching and learning.

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**HEARER'S DISAGREEMENTS: THE FAILURE OF POLITENESS STRATEGIES**

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**ABSTRACT**

Speakers goals in social interaction when use politeness strategies may face problem such as disagreement. In this paper, I build a research which shows the politeness strategies can also fail in the end by facing disagreement from the hearers. Besides to minimize the face-threatening acts, politeness strategies stand as instrument to succeed the speaker's purpose, but not always good as expected. The disagreements, somehow, will become the hearer's responses. I categorize the hearer's disagreements towards the speaker's politeness strategies as the politeness failure. This qualitative descriptive research explores the politeness strategies seminal work by Brown and Levinson (1987). The data are taken from the movie *The Iron Lady*. The study suggests that the failure happens in all politeness strategies dealing with face-threatening acts, i.e: the negative politeness strategies (quotative particle 'it is said, beg forgiveness, give deference, state FTA as general rule) are more frequently used among the colleagues, especially by those who have less power than the hearers; positive politeness strategies (be optimistic, exaggerate, assume or assert reciprocity, address forms), bald on record (case of non-minimization face threat) and off record (be vague) are more frequently used among the family members and used by the speakers who have more intimacy with the hearers.

**KEYWORDS:** Politeness Strategies, Failure, Disagreement, Hearer, Speaker.

**INTRODUCTION**

Brown and Levinson politeness strategies (1987) have influenced many aspect of communication and inspired many researchers to conduct politeness publication. The most salient factors is due to the familiarity of politeness in everyday life. The study of politeness is about to find the motive behind choosing a less straightforward courses action in language. Pinker (2007) argues that people are not just in the business of downloading information into each other's head but are social animals concerned with the impressions they make. It means that: as the speakers, all efforts will be done in order to gain a successful result when delivering their utterances.

Talking about politeness strategies is also talking about face. Because this Brown and Levinson's politeness concept born after 'face'. The notion of 'face' derived from Goffman (1967:5) which refers to the "positive social value a person effectively claims for himself". Brown and Levinson divide "face" into two: negative face, positive face. Negative face deals with the desire not to be imposed while positive face deals with the desire to be claimed, to be liked and to be affirmed. Politeness becomes strategies to soften the face-threatening acts that threaten both of faces. It becomes essential due to the everyday interactional activity. In accordance with Janney and Arndt (2003) that maintaining relationship and avoiding conflicts are rooted in the human need by doing the politeness. In line with Ungureanu (2004) who argues that we are usually trying to avoid damaging face, by adjust our choice of words in order to protect the interlocutors from unease. Brown and Levinson (1987) also state that P (power), D (distance), R, (rank of imposition) are crucial in determining the level of politeness that will be used by the speaker. The greater the FTA, the higher level of politeness will be used by the speaker.

It means, the use of politeness strategies is expected to minimize the face threatening acts and succeed the purpose of speaker's utterances. However, politeness strategies are not always success in both of them. As what Coulmas (2005:86) says that "the notion of 'politeness' is a broad and complicated one with numerous theories and approaches, and it is socially determined. It is linked with social differentiations, with making appropriate choices which are not the same for all interlocutors". It can be inferred that somehow, the failure of politeness strategies will occur. Although we are trying to gain our purpose by using these strategies, still, the hearer will make the probability response to disagree with our utterances. That is why, the hearer's disagreement becomes challenge for the speaker. I call this situation as politeness strategies' failure. As Pomerantz (1984) says that disagreeing with one another is uncomfortable, difficult, risking threat, insult or offence, whereas agreeing with one another is comfortable, supportive, reinforcing, and perhaps sociable, since it demonstrates that interlocutors are like-minded.

This study conducted to figure out the types of politeness strategies which fail then causing disagreement from the hearer's responses in *The Iron Lady* movie. The speaker's utterances meant by the writer are those which containing politeness strategies and persuading the hearers to agree or to follow the speaker's view but fail due to the hearer's responses: disagreements.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Hearer's disagreement as the result of speaker's politeness strategies should be mitigated or avoided. As Brown and Levinson (1978 & 1987) in Leech (1983) say that disagreement is seen to verge on impoliteness and should thus be avoided in the interest of interlocutors 'face'. When the speaker tries to seek the hearer's agreement by using politeness, but the hearer's response is disagreement, it can be categorized as politeness strategies' failure. The speaker should make an extra effort in avoiding the disagreement. As Coulmas says (2005:84) "speakers makes many choices when speaking including the politeness level of their utterances". What Coulmas says is about to succeed the speaker's purpose in the utterances by means of some strategies. Gaining the purpose without disagreement result is the most important in interaction. Once the hearer refuses with disagreement, any bad probabilities of communication could happen, e.g: conflict; disappointment, etc. As what Waldron and Applegate, 1994 (quoted in Locher, 2004:94) define disagreement as "a form of conflict....taxing communication events".

The failure of politeness strategies, therefore existing the disagreements, may be caused by some factors: the speaker's wrong choices of politeness strategies and the traits of the politeness strategies. Pinker (2007) in his work "The evolutionary social psychology of off-record indirect speech act" says that "a final problem for politeness theory is the built-in dilemma in its treatment of off-record requests. If an implicature is too much of treasure hunt, the speaker will have missed on opportunity". It means that the trait of one of the politeness strategies (off record) is ambiguous, make the hearer should interpret the speaker purpose carefully. Still in Pinker (2007) that also says about off-record politeness strategy, in same cases, it can be downright rude, like: "Didn't I tell you yesterday to pick up your room?", or, "Shouldn't you tell me who is coming to the party?". But theoretically, off-record indirect speech acts should express the most politeness which suitable for the biggest threats. His arguments tell us to use politeness strategy appropriately. If we do the mistake in choosing some strategies the probability of unexpected result will happen.

Rees-Miller (2000) investigates the act of disagreement in terms of the factors of power, severity and context in University courses and academic talks in the United states of America. It reveals that professors use more positive politeness strategies when disagreeing with students than do peers disagreeing with each other or students disagreeing with professors.

Sifianou (2012) in her paper "Disagreements, face and politeness" suggests that disagreements are complex, multidirectional and multifunctional acts. She argues that inter- and intra- cultural variation depending on various contextual parameters. Disagreements can be put as face threatening acts or face saving acts, due to the interlocutors' personal traits and relational histories.

The study about disagreement strategies for politeness between American English and Mandarin Chinese conducted by Guodong and Jing (2005) reveals that Chinese students when diasagreeing with the superior employ more politeness strategies and address forms than the American students do. In the case of peers, both the American and Chinese students apply less politeness strategies. Female students behave more sensitive to politeness and use more politeness strategies than male students do.

Damopolii, Mahdi and Sujatna (2013) in their article “The strategies of conveying speaker and hearer as cooperators in conversation class: sociopragmatic analysis” investigate the strategies used by the speakers in the conversation class and examine the perlocutionary effects caused by the strategy used by the speaker to the hearer. They find three strategies of positive politeness used by the speaker: strategy of asserting or presupposing speaker’s knowledge and concern for hearer’s wants, the strategy of including both speaker and hearer in the activity, the strategy of giving (or asking) reasons. The speakers use those strategies to motivate the students in speaking English, to share the student’s idea and experiences, to make the students confident. The students’ perlocutionary effects as hearers are being motivated, being confident to use English, feeling accepted and being enthusiastic to figure out new things from the others.

Cheung (2009) in her article “politeness strategies of Chinese and American speakers” investigates the different interpretations of the notion of politeness by different cultures, in particular Chinese and American cultures, which are generally perceived to be representing two extremes with the former one being more conservative and the later being more open. The analysis is carried out by comparing a scene from the movie “The Joy Luck Club” with the literature. It is found that since their attitudes and values towards face are different, what is considered to be able to preserve one’s face in one culture may often be interpreted as face damaging in another. That is, even when people from these two distinctive cultures have good intent of demonstrating politeness and attempt to save other’s face during the interaction, the consequences may not turn out to be as pleasant as expected. Cheung also says that misunderstanding may arise with both parties having the impression of being threaten impolitely, and at the same time lacking a realization that their politeness strategies are considered inappropriate by members from the other culture.

Many studies about politeness strategies and disagreements in communication, but a little are known that politeness strategies could also fail in communication by causing the hearer’s disagreements.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The present study is undertaken to examine utterances by the speakers in the movie The Iron Lady which contain politeness strategies but fail in the end by receiving the hearer’s disagreements response. The present study, therefore, seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What types of politeness strategies which fail in The Iron Lady movie?
2. What types of sub strategies in each politeness which fail in The Iron Lady movie?

## **METHODOLOGY**

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative approach is concerned with the process of certain phenomenon (Fanani, 2010). This method focuses on words and description rather than numbers (Maxwell, 2000). Descriptive research method has the purposes: making a description arrange systematically, knowing the characteristics and relationships among phenomena investigated.

The data are taken from the utterances in The Iron Lady movie (2011) directed by Phillida Llayd. The movie is written by Abi Morgan. It is British biographical film based on the life of Margaret Thatcher, the longest-serving Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of the twentieth century.

The focus of this study is to find the utterances containing politeness strategies and replying by the hearer’s disagreement. Brown and Levinson politeness strategies (1987) are used: bald-on-record politeness strategies, positive politeness strategies, negative politeness strategies, off record politeness strategies. The fifth politeness strategies which is not doing FTAs politeness strategies will not be applied on this study. This study concerns with the utterances containing FTAs, so that the fifth strategy of Brown and Levinson is not involved in this study.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The eleven conversations selected are investigated and then reviewed to identify its politeness strategies used with disagreements responses. All politeness strategies dealing with FTAs usage are apparent. All failed-strategies found in the data: most of the speakers use negative politeness strategies, i.e: quotative particle ‘it is said’, beg forgiveness, give deference, state FTA as general rule. The positive politeness strategies are also used, i.e: be optimistic, exaggerate, assume or assert reciprocity, address forms. The use of bald-on-record politeness strategy is found only in one conversation by using cases of non-minimization of face threat. The last strategy, off-record politeness strategy is found only in one conversation by using strategy ‘be vague’.

*Table 1: Politeness strategies and its sub strategies failure*

Negative politeness	Positive politeness	Bald-on record politeness	Off-record politeness
The quotative particle ‘it is said’	Be optimistic	Cases of non-Minimization of the face threat	Be vague
Beg forgiveness	Exaggerate		
Give deference	Assume or assert reciprocity		
State FTA as general rule	Address forms		

Here are the explanation of the result: the symbol **(1st)** refers to the speaker’s politeness strategy while the symbol **(2nd)** refers to the hearer’s disagreement response.

#### *Negative politeness strategy*

This strategy consists of redressive action addressed to the addressee’s negative face; addresses the hearer’s desire that her actions and her attention be unimpeded (Brown and Levinson, 1987). In my data, there are five conversations using negative politeness. Such strategies as quotative particle ‘it is said’, beg forgiveness, give deference and state FTA as general rule are used by the speaker and failed by receiving the disagreements as the responses.

#### *The quotative particle ‘it is said’*

By using this strategy, speakers avoid responsibility for believing in the truth of the utterances. The participants in the conversation: Prior (the speaker labelled by the writer), PYM, Margaret (the hearer labelled by the writer).

(1) Margaret stands, swathed in a glittering long dinner dress. A Bank of Minister, including Heseltine, PYM, Prior, Howe and Gilmour, gather before her.

*Prior : **There’s** a perception, Margaret, rightly or wrongly, that we are now completely out of touch with the country. (1st)*

*Margaret : Really. How much is a pack of Lurpak?*

*PYM : Lurpak?*

*Margaret : Butter, Francis. Forty two pence. Anchor butter is forty pence. Flora Margarine, still the cheapest, is thirty eight pence. **I can assure you I am not out of touch. (2nd)***

In (1), Prior, the speaker, wants to inform Margaret about bad assumption towards Margaret policies. He hopes a changing from Margaret as the Prime Minister to make it stable. Prior uses quotative particle ‘it is said’ to inform Margaret what happening outside and to persuade Margaret to change her unpopular policies. However, Margaret has a different view. She disagrees with Prior. She describes the price of Lurpak, showing that she is not out of touch with the country and will run her policies. The first bold-utterances shows the speaker politeness strategies, the second one shows the hearer disagreement and make the speaker’s politeness fail.

#### *Beg forgiveness*

This strategy shows that speaker may beg hearer’s forgiveness, or at least ask for ‘acquittal’-that is, that hearer should cancel the debt implicit in the FTA. The participants in conversations: General Haig (the speaker labelled by the writer), Margaret (the hearer labelled by the writer).

(2) The situation is when Falkland Islands, which belong to British, attacked by Argentina. Before the British ships reaching the Islands, the British are not give up on trying to find a diplomatic solution. The U.S. Secretary of State (General Haig) comes to negotiate with British Prime Minister.

*General Haig : So you are proposing to go to war over these Islands. They're thousands of miles away, a handful of citizens, politically and economically...insignificant, if you'll excuse me...*

*Margaret : Just like Hawaii, I imagine.*

*General Haig : I'm sorry?*

*Margaret : 1941, when Japan attacked Pearl Harbour. Did America go capin hand and ask Tojo for a peaceful negotiation of terms? Did she turn her back on her own citizens there because the islands were thousands of miles from mainland United States? No, no, no! We will stand on principle or we shall not stand at all.*

*General Haig : **But Margaret with all due respect**, when one has been to war... (1st)*

*Margaret : **With all due respect, Sir, I have done battle every single day of my life, and many men have underestimated me before.** This lot seem bound to do the same but they will rue the day. (2nd)*

In (2), the speaker, General Haig, comes to London due to the negotiation with British Prime Minister about Falkland Islands. He wants Margaret to re think about war against Argentina, because it will involve a lot of victims. The first bold-utterances shows the speaker strategy by using 'beg forgiveness', but fail because Margaret disagrees with his purpose (the second bold-utterances) and will run her plan.

#### *Give deference*

Give deference shows the speaker humbles and abases himself; and shows speaker raises hearer (satisfies hearer's want to be treated as superior). In the data, the writer finds two conversations containing this strategy. In first conversation, the participant are Admiral Fieldhouse, PYM, John Nott (the speaker labelled by the writer), Leach, Minister (the speaker labelled by the writer), Margaret (the hearer labelled by the writer).

(3) In this situation, they stand surrounding a map of South Georgia and the Falkland Islands. Margaret starring at the map. A whispered message to one of the Attaches. He moves a model boat on the map a few inches, leading a fleet of smaller model boats.

*Margaret : Is this ship a threat?*

*Admiral Fieldhouse : Both of these ships are carrying Exocet misiles, Prime Minister. Just yesterday they launched-then aborted-an attack inside the exclusion zone. There is a risk they could try it again.*

*PYM : The Belgrano is sailing directly away from the islands. Can it really be regarded as a threat?*

*Admiral Fieldhouse : She's been changing course continually. There's a strong possibility that they're attempting a pincer movement on carrier group. I advise that we engange them: hit the Belgrano as warning to the others. Send them all back to port.*

*PYM : It'll play badly internationally. We'll be seen as aggressors.*

*John Nott : This will be an ascalation, **Prime Minister.** (1st)*

*Leach : If there is to be an escalation, it's better that we started it.*

*Minister : It is streaming away, **Prime Minister.** (1st)*

*Margaret : **Sink it.** (2nd)*

In (3), the speakers, John Nott and Minister, try to prevent Margaret to attack the ship of Argentinian. It is known that the escalation will be apparent if Margaret attacks the ship. In the other hand, Margaret gives an order to attack ship by shinking it. The first bold-utterances indicates that the speakers fail in persuading Margaret by using strategies 'give deference'. The disagreement from Margaret come in the end and can be seen in the second bold-utterances.

The second examples of using strategy 'give deference' in the data involving participants: PYM (the speaker labelled by the writer), Margaret (the hearer labelled by the writer).

(4) PYM : *The point is, **Prime Minister**, I don't think we can sell the idea of a tax that asks everyone to pay the same. (1st)*

Margaret : *Our policies may be unpopular, **but they are right policies**. (2nd)*

In (4), the speaker, PYM, has a different view with Margaret about the tax policies. The idea of a tax that should be paid equally by everyone is not good idea. He wants Margaret to cancel her tax policies. According to him, it is nonsense if the poor should pay the same amount of tax as a multi-millionaire. PYM uses strategy 'give deference' to assure Margaret, as we can see in the first bold-utterances. However, Margaret has another view. She thinks that despite unpopular, it is the right policies (the second bold-utterances). The speaker fails in assuring Margaret and fails in gaining his purpose about cancelling Margaret's tax policies.

#### *State FTA as general rule*

Speaker may use this strategy if does not want to impinge but is merely forced to be circumstances, is to state the FTA as an instance of some general social rule, regulations or obligations. The participants: John Nott (the speaker labelled by the writer), Margaret (the hearer labelled by the writer).

(5) In this situation, while war happening, John Nott tells Margaret about the peace plan comes from President Reagan and President Bellaunde.

John Nott : ***President Reagan and President Bellaunde of Peru** have some new proposals for the peace plan- (1st)*

Margaret : *The peace plan? **there will be no appeasement**. This is a war. A war they started and by God, we will finish. Shall I tell you what I'm going to write to every single one of these families? I am going to tell them that no British soldier will die in vain for the Falklands. (2nd)*

In (5), the speaker, John Nott informs Margaret about the peace plan. He carries the peace plan came from President Reagan and President Bellaunde. The speaker fails in using strategy 'state FTA as general rule'. He fails in persuading Margaret. Margaret seems to be furious indeed.

#### *Positive politeness strategy*

Positive politeness strategies are used to enhance positive face. Brown and Levinson say that the use of positive politeness has a purpose to respect hearer's positive face and to make intimacy one another. In my data, there are some strategies of positive politeness found: be optimistic, exaggerate, assume or assert reciprocity, address forms. These strategies are unsuccessful in its usage by receiving the disagreements from the hearer.

#### *Be optimistic*

This strategy gives a sharp distinction with the negative politeness strategy (be pessimistic). The participants in conversation: Margaret (the speaker labelled by the writer), while Male guest, Hostess and Partly host are the hearer labelled by the writer.

(6) The situation is in dinning room, Dartford (a 1950's drinks party).

Male guest : *I'm not sure a home economics lesson is quite what the Dartford constituents need. They see industry being nationalized, the unions on the up, the pound on the slide...whoever can sort that lot out-he's my man.*

Margaret : ***Or woman?** (1st)*

Hostess : ***Ladies shall we?** (2nd)*

Portly host : ***Miss Roberts, do join the ladies.** (2nd)*

In (6), the speaker, Margaret, delivers her face-threatening acts by using positive politeness strategy, be optimistic. Margaret who hoping to be chosen as candidate for parliament, optimistically assure the other with question 'or woman?'. The males in the room give signal "get them out of here". In the end, the men rise and the Hostess says "Ladies shall we?", in order to move Margaret to another room. Margaret fails using strategy 'be optimistic'. The answer from others is disagreement towards Margaret view.

#### *Exaggerate*

Speaker may use this strategy to give interest, approval, sympathy with hearer. The participants in conversation are Howe (the speaker labelled by the writer), Margaret (the hearer labelled by the writer).



(7) The Falkland Islands, the British Colony in the South Atlantic, has fallen. Argentina claims its marines went ashore this morning as a spearhead to capture key targets, including the capital, Port Stanley.

*Howe* : Margaret, the cost of sending 28,000 men and a hundred ships twelve thousand miles, almost to Argentina, will be **absolutely crippling**. (1st)

*Margaret* : **I don't think** we should worrying about money at this point. (2nd)

In (7), the speaker, Howe, wants to stop Margaret's plan on sending 28,000 men and a hundred ships twelve thousand miles because it causing crippling. But Margaret still on her plan to do it. The speaker fails in persuading Margaret by using strategy 'exaggerate'. Although he informs Margaret confidently, Margaret disagrees with him.

#### *Assume or assert reciprocity*

By using this strategy, speaker may soften his FTA by negating the debt aspect and/or the face-threatening aspect of speech acts such as criticisms and complaints. It makes an effect 'I'll do X for you if you do Y for me'. This effect is found in the data. The participants in conversation are Shadow Minister (the speaker labelled by the writer), Margaret (the hearer labelled by the writer).

(8) The situation: Margaret now secretary of state for education, fighting hard in her speech against the opposition labour benches.

*Shadow Minister* : Me thinks the Right Honourable Lady doth screech too much. **If she wants us to take her seriously she must learn to calm down**. (1st)

*Margaret* : **If the Right Honourable Gentleman could perhaps attend more closely to what I am saying, rather than how I am saying it, he may receive a valuable education in spite of himself**. (2nd)

In (8), the speaker, Shadow Minister criticizes Margaret. He tells Margaret to change the way of her speak. It is better for Margaret to calm down and to reduce her screech voice. Margaret disagrees with that. She convinces the speaker to attend more to what she is saying, rather than how she is saying it. The speaker fails in criticizing Margaret by using strategy 'assume or assert reciprocity'. Indeed, Margaret criticizes him back to concern to the material of speaking rather than the way in delivering it.

#### *Address forms*

According to Brown and Levinson, this strategy is used to convey such in-group membership include generic names and terms address, like: Mac, Mate, buddy, pal, honey, dear, duckie, luv, babe, Mom, blonde, brother, sister, cutie, sweet-heart, guys, fellas. The participants in conversation are Denis (the speaker labelled by the writer), Margaret (the hearer labelled by the writer).

(9) *Denis* : The Prime Minister has been very loyal to you, **MT**. (1st)

*Margaret* : **But he's weak, and he's weakened the party**. One must know when to go. (2nd)

In (9), the speaker, Denis, wants to make Margaret cancelling her planning to become the leader of party. He says that Prime Minister is very loyal to Margaret. The speaker uses MT as Margaret Thatcher to persuade her. But Margaret still want to run for the leader of party. The speaker fails to make Margaret changes her planning.

#### *Bald-on-record politeness strategy*

Bald-on-record politeness strategy is the usage of FTA directly without redressive action. The prime reason for bald-on-record usage may be stated 'simply' in general, whenever speaker wants to do the face threatening acts with maximum efficiency more than he wants to satisfy hearer's face, even to any degree, he will choose the bald-on-record strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987). There is one conversation in the data. Strategy 'cases of non-minimization of face threat (in sympathetic advice or warning)' is used by the speaker.

*Cases of non-minimization of the face threat: in sympathetic advice or warning*

Based on Brown and Levinson explanation, the use of this strategy is where maximum efficiency is very important, and this is mutually known to both S and H, no face redress is necessary. The participants in conversation: Margaret (the speaker labelled by the writer), Denis (the hearer labelled by the writer).

(10) The situation: Margaret sits at breakfast with her husband Denis, sipping tea. Denis butters his toast. Margaret shakes her head.

*Margaret : Too much. Much too much butter. (1st)*

*Denis : I like butter. (2nd)*

In (10), the speaker, Margaret, without redressing her face-threatening acts, gives warning/advice to her husband. Margaret wants her husband to not buttering too much his toast. In the other hand, Denis disagrees with her. He likes butter, so no problem with that. The speaker fails in using strategy 'cases of non-minimization of the face threat in sympathetic advice or warning. The fact is, disagreement from her husband, Denis comes in the end.

### **Off-record politeness strategy**

If a speaker wants to do an FTA, but wants to avoid the responsibility for doing it, he can do it off record and leave it up to the addressee to decide how to interpret it (Brown and Levinson, 1987). One expression of this strategy found in the data. Strategy 'be vague' was used by the speaker.

### **Be vague**

By using this strategy, speaker may go off record with an FTA by being vague about who the object of the FTA is, or what the offence is. The participants in conversation: Margaret (the speaker labelled by the writer), Denis (the hearer labelled by the writer).

(11) *Denis : You're insufferable, Margaret, do you know that?*

*Margaret : Denis, you married someone who is committed to public service, you knew that. And it is my duty. (1st)*

*Denis : Don't call it duty. It's ambition which has got you this far. Ambition. And the rest of us, me, the children, we can all go to hell. (2nd)*

In (11), the speaker, Margaret, wants to assure Denis about her job. It is her duty to service the public. So that Margaret wants to run her plan to become the leader of party. Denis disagrees with that. He argues that it cannot be called a duty, but can be called an ambition. The speaker fails in assuring the hearer by using strategy 'be vague'. The hearer considers what the speaker meant by the duty as the ambition.

## **CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this study is to figure out politeness strategies used by the speaker to succeed his/her purpose, but fail in the end. The failure can be seen by the hearer's responses: disagreements.

The findings indicate firstly, most of the speakers use negative politeness strategies and fail in succeeding their purposes by receiving the hearer's disagreements. Strategies such as quotative particle 'it is said', beg forgiveness, give deference and state FTA as general rule are found and used by the speaker. Secondly, referring to the study, there are four strategies of positive politeness used by the speaker and then fail in the end, i.e: be optimistic, exaggerate, assume or assert reciprocity, address forms. Thirdly, only one strategy of bald-on-record politeness used by the speaker and then also fails: cases of non-minimization of the face threat. Lastly, same as bald-on-record, it is found one strategy for the usage of off record: be vague.

The study suggests that negative politeness are more frequently used among the colleagues, especially by those who have less power than the hearers. While positive politeness, bald-on record and off record are more frequently used among the family members. Moreover, positive politeness, it is also used among colleagues but for those who have more intimacy with the hearer.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study is about to find the utterances in The Iron Lady movie containing politeness strategies produced by the speaker but fail in its usage by receiving disagreements from the hearer. Brown and Levinson (1987) politeness

strategy concept is applied on this study. Five strategies are postulated, i.e: bald-on record politeness; positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record politeness; do not do the FTA politeness.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), bald-on record politeness is used when the speaker wants to make efficiency of his/her utterances. This strategy shows that efficiency is more important than the hearer's satisfaction face. Positive politeness is used when the speaker wants to do the FTA then delivers his/her utterances with redressive action. The redressive action in positive politeness strategy can be delivered by making the speaker more intimacy with the hearer. Negative politeness is used same as situation with the positive politeness. But the difference is in the redressive action. In negative politeness, the speaker keeps the distance with the hearer to satisfy hearer's negative face: do not want to be imposed or disturbed. Off-record politeness is used when the speaker wants to do the higher level of face-threatening acts to the hearer. The speaker can do it by off record. The last strategy, do not do the FTA politeness is used when the speaker knows the bad effect of his/her utterances to the hearer, he/she as the speaker will choose the last strategy by not doing the face-threatening act at all.

Those strategies deal with face-threatening acts except the last strategy: do not do the FTA politeness. This study, therefore, focuses on the politeness strategies deal with face-threatening acts. So, the last strategy will not be applied on this study. This study also conducted to figure out the sub strategy of each politeness strategy in The Iron Lady movie.

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## AN EXPLORATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AUTONOMY AND VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES

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**ABSTRACT**

Vocabulary learning is incredibly noteworthy to English language acquisition. It is unfeasible for a learner to communicate without the required vocabulary. In high educational levels, learners are habitually forced to become autonomous and make conscious effort to learn vocabulary outside of the classroom. Consequently, the autonomy of the learners plays an important role in developing and enhancing their vocabulary. This study investigates the relationship between English as foreign language (EFL) learners' autonomy and vocabulary learning strategies, with major emphasis on predicting learners' autonomy through their vocabulary learning strategies. To meet the above purpose, a total number of 144 male and female students, between 20-25 years old, studying English Language Teaching and English Language Literature at Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran, Iran were randomly selected and given Learner autonomy and vocabulary learning strategies questionnaires. Pearson Product Correlation results revealed a statistically significant relationship between EFL learners' autonomy and vocabulary learning strategies ( $P < 0.01$ ). Also, the results of multiple regressions indicated that social strategy was the best predictor and predicted about 23.8 percent of learner autonomy. Moreover, the memory strategy was the second best predictor, which increased the predictive power to 30.9 percent ( $R = .55$ ,  $R^2 = .309$ ). The findings of this study may lead students' attention to the awareness of the determining role of language learning strategies and learning autonomy as contributing factors to their success in the process of learning a target language, and point out the need for the implementation of autonomy in relation to vocabulary achievement.

**KEYWORDS:** learner autonomy, vocabulary learning strategies, learner independence

**INTRODUCTION**

According to Gee (2004), traditional school systems have been criticized for emphasizing information and skills disconnected from students' real lives, which can discourage some from learning at school. Some teachers believe a considerable number of junior high and high school students confessed that they dislike studying English (Seyed Rezaei, Karbalaeei, Afraz, 2013). However, according to Benson (2003), Dickinson (1992), and Little (1991) and students who think and work strategically are more motivated to learn and have a higher sense of self-efficacy or confidence in their own learning ability.

Under these circumstances, the concept of "autonomy" has attracted attention as an alternative approach to language learning (Benson, 2001; Gremmo & Riley, 1995). Benson (1996) defines autonomy as "the capacity to take control of one's learning" (p. 25). According to Scharle and Szabo (2000), the process of autonomy essentially involves three phases, which are: raising awareness, changing attitudes and transferring roles to learners.

As vocabulary is one of the main problems encountered in developing language proficiency, it is therefore imperative that learners develop a sense of autonomy in learning lexical items. Thus, in vocabulary learning, the qualities aspired of a good language learner when learning lexical items would involve being able to take advantage of potentially useful learning situations, and if necessary create them. In this regard, there is a need to draw a line between "learning the meanings of specific words" and "learning strategies to become independent word learners" (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2000, p. 505), that is, learners should not only learn how to acquire new words for themselves per se, but also learn to be responsible for their own vocabulary development.

## **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

### ***Learner Autonomy***

There are many educators and thinkers who tried their best in defining learner autonomy and writing down its principles. For example David Little (1991) defines it by saying that "autonomy is a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action. It presupposes, but also entails that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning" (Little, 1991). Holec (1981) defines learner autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning", which he then specifies as "to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning". According to Holec (1981) there are varying degrees of self-direction in learning, which may be connected to varying degrees of autonomy. He outlines the following components as an entirely self-directed process of learning:

- Fixing the objectives;
- Defining the content and progressions;
- Selecting the methods and techniques to be used;
- Monitoring the acquisition procedure; &
- Evaluating what has been acquired.

In other words, a learner who wants to learn autonomously must follow specific steps when learning a subject as deciding what his objectives in learning are, selecting the most suitable techniques, monitoring his acquisition, and evaluating his experience.

### ***Vocabulary Learning Strategies***

As stressed by Nation (2001), "no matter what the teacher does or what the course book presents, ultimately it is the learner who does the learning" (p. 394). In other words, it is mostly the learner factor that seems to underpin the problem of low lexicon because it is ultimately the goals set by the language learner that would determine the extent of success of his or her learning process.

Foreign language learners may then use various strategies to acquire the target language word knowledge. Vocabulary learning strategies are "any set of techniques or learning behaviors, which language learners reported using in order to discover the meaning of a new words, to retain the knowledge of newly learned words, and to expand their knowledge of vocabulary" (Intaraprasert, 2005, p. 165). A comprehensive inventory of vocabulary learning strategies was developed by Schmitt (1997). He distinguishes the strategies into two groups: the ones to determine the meaning of new words when encountered for the first time, and the ones to consolidate meaning when encountered again. The former contains determination and social strategies and the latter contains cognitive, metacognitive, memory and social strategies. Schmitt includes social strategies in both categories since they can be used for both purposes.

In sum, learning how to learn vocabulary autonomously and taking particular strategies is a very crucial component. Strategies provide exposure to the target language and contribute indirectly to learning since they do not lead directly to the obtaining, storing, retrieving, and using of language.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The aim of this study is to investigate two research questions:

- 1) Is there any significant relationship between EFL learners' autonomy and vocabulary learning strategies?
- 2) Is there any significant difference in the predictability of EFL learners' autonomy in terms of predicting their use of vocabulary learning strategies?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

To fulfill the objectives of this research, 144 junior and senior students between 20-25 years old, majoring in English Language Teaching and English Language Literature at Islamic Azad University, Central-Tehran, Iran were randomly selected. Participants' of the study consisted of 92 females (64%) and 52 males (36%). During the study,

26 students were excluded from data analysis due to missing questionnaire responses, or disagreement to answer certain questionnaire.

### ***Instrumentation***

The following instruments were used to gather data at this study:

1. *Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire*: In order to determine the degree of participants' use of vocabulary learning strategies, Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies, which consists of 60 statements, was used. Schmitt's Taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (1997) contains five categories that are, metacognitive, cognitive, memory, determination, and social. The participants were asked to rate the frequency of each category they use on a five-point Likert-scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). As a result, the scores could range within 60 to 300 and the high score indicated students' use of more vocabulary learning strategies.

2. *Learner Autonomy Questionnaire*: To evaluate the participants' level of autonomy, a questionnaire of autonomy, developed by Spratt, Humphreys, and Chan (2002), including 52 items was administered. The instrument has four sections. The first section (13 items) focuses on examining the students' views of their responsibilities and those of their teachers'; the second section (11 items) explores the students' confidence in their ability to operate autonomously; the third section (1 item) aims to measure the levels of student motivation to learn English. Finally, the fourth section (27 items) investigates the students' practice of autonomous learning in the form of both inside and outside class activities.

### ***Procedure***

A brief introductory session with students studying at Islamic Azad University was arranged. Students were informed that their performance on the test is voluntary and will not affect their final course results and they were assured for the confidentiality of the data gathering procedure. After giving an oral instruction of how to perform on the questionnaires each participant received a package of research instruments containing the Vocabulary Learning Strategies questionnaire and Learner Autonomy appraisal along with the written instructions for each form. The students were asked to fill the questionnaires and return the results on the same or next session at the same class. Also it is worth mentioning that the researcher computed the reliability index of the learner autonomy and Schmitt's questionnaire and questionnaires' reliability were sequentially 0.87 and 0.80 in Cronbach alpha.

## **RESULTS**

### ***Descriptive Statistics of Learner Autonomy***

One of the instruments used in this study was the learner Autonomy questionnaire. The descriptive statistics of the participants' autonomy scores is given in Table 1.

*Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire*

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
Learner Autonomy	144	122.0	111.0	233.0	164.35	1.7879	21.454	460.284
Valid N (listwise)	144							

As it is shown above, the maximum and minimum scores obtained by the participants were 111.0 and 233.0, respectively. The mean was 164.35 and the standard deviation was 21.454.

### ***Descriptive Statistics of Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire***

The second instrument used in this study was vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire (Schmitt, 1997). The descriptive statistics of the participants' score is presented in Table 2.

*Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire*



	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
Vocabulary Learning Strategies Valid N (listwise)	144 144	149.0	88.0	237.0	154.083	2.7319	32.7823	1074.678

In addition, descriptive statistics related to the subcategories of vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire also appears below in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for the Subcategories of the Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
Metacognitive	144	17.0	8.0	25.0	15.264	.3388	4.0659	16.531
Cognitive	144	33.0	9.0	42.0	23.417	.5952	7.1424	51.014
Memory	144	69.0	42.0	111.0	73.000	1.4202	17.0429	290.462
Determination	144	28.0	9.0	37.0	24.965	.3946	4.7355	22.425
Social	144	24.0	8.0	32.0	17.438	.4428	5.3136	28.234
Valid N (listwise)	144							

Based on the obtained results, memory-strategies enjoys the highest mean (73.000) indicating the point that they are the most favorable strategies used by the students. Determination Strategies stand on the second rank and Cognitive Strategies and Social Strategies are the followings ranks; and the least favorite strategies are Metacognitive Strategies with the mean of 15.264.

#### Checking the Assumptions of Correlation

Three assumptions of interval data, independence of subjects, and normality were met before running parametric tests to probe research questions (Field, 2009). As displayed in Table 4 the values of skewness and kurtosis were within the range of  $\pm 2$  (Bachman, 2005). The assumption of normality was also met.

Table 4: Testing Normality Assumption

	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Learner Autonomy	144	.088	.202	.073	.401
Metacognitive	144	.521	.202	-.598	.401
Cognitive	144	.498	.202	-.231	.401
Memory	144	.264	.202	-.508	.401
Determination	144	-.138	.202	.528	.401
Social	144	.856	.202	.175	.401
Vocabulary Learning Strategies (Total)	144	.298	.202	-.196	.401

#### Correlation between Autonomy and Vocabulary Learning Strategies

In order to investigate the relationship between variables, the researchers utilized Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient as is displayed in Table 5:

Table 5: Pearson Correlations between Learner Autonomy and Choice of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

		Learner Autonomy
Metacognitive	Pearson Correlation	.450**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	144
Cognitive	Pearson Correlation	.450**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	144
Memory	Pearson Correlation	.483**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	144
Determination	Pearson Correlation	.420**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	144
Social	Pearson Correlation	.488**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	144
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).		

As it is shown in Table 5, EFL learners' autonomy showed significant correlations with the five components of vocabulary learning strategies.

#### ***Predictability of Vocabulary Learning Strategies through Learners' Autonomy***

A multiple regression was run to probe the power of autonomy in predicting EFL learners' vocabulary learning strategies. Based on the results displayed in Table 6, it can be concluded that the social strategy was the best predictor of learner autonomy ( $R = .48$ ,  $R^2 = .238$ ). Social strategy predicted about 23.8 percent of learner autonomy. The memory strategy was the second best predictor, which increased the predictive power to 30.9 percent ( $R = .55$ ,  $R^2 = .309$ ).

*Table 6: Model Summary Statistics Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Learner Autonomy*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.488 <sup>a</sup>	.238	.232	18.7965
2	.556 <sup>b</sup>	.309	.299	17.9572
a. Predictors: (Constant), Social				
b. Predictors: (Constant), Social, Memory				
c. Dependent Variable: Learner Autonomy				

The results of the ANOVA test of significance of the regression model ( $F(1, 142) = 44.29$ ,  $P .000 < .05$ ) for the first step and ( $F(2, 141) = 31.56$ ,  $P .000 < .05$ ) for the second step, indicated the components of vocabulary learning strategies significantly predict learner autonomy as shown in Table 7.

*Table 7: ANOVA Test of Significance of Regression Model Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Learner Autonomy*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15650.667	1	15650.667	44.297	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	50169.972	142	353.310		
	Total	65820.639	143			

2	Regression	20353.883	2	10176.941	31.560	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Residual	45466.756	141	322.459		
	Total	65820.639	143			
a. Dependent Variable: Learner Autonomy						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Social						
c. Predictors: (Constant), Social, Memory						

The Normal Probability-Probability (P-P) Plot depicted in Figure 1 shows the assumption of linearity was met. All of the dots fall almost on diagonal.

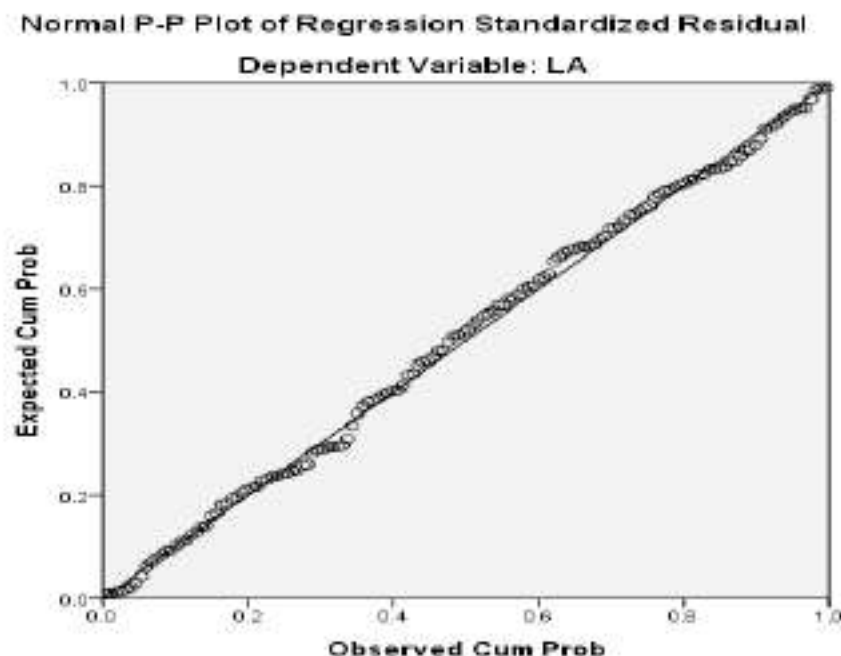


Figure 1: Normal P-P Plot for Linearity of Regression Model Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Learner Autonomy (LA)

## DISCUSSIONS

The research described is one of the few empirical studies of language learning and learner independence in which it has been possible to obtain results about vocabulary learning strategies and autonomy from university students. The data obtained in this research were developed from 144 students. This instills some confidence in the comprehensiveness of the database and the relationships that were assessed in this research. This study investigated the relationship between vocabulary learning strategies and autonomy of EFL learners with major emphasis on predictability of vocabulary strategy use of learners through their autonomy.

The findings revealed that there was a significant correlation between EFL learners' autonomy and vocabulary learning strategies, and autonomy could significantly predict EFL learners' vocabulary learning strategies. These findings were also in line with the findings of Baradaran, Azimi, and Abadi (2013). Also, many researchers reported that learner autonomy promoted higher-order thinking and problem-solving abilities in students (Brown, 2002; Palincsar & Herrenkol, 2002). Moreover, many researchers found that the use of cooperative learning produced gains in enhancing autonomy. Some researchers reported findings similar to the present study, in which the use of cooperative learning as a way for enhancing autonomy increased student achievement measurably more than traditional strategies (Riley & Anderson, 2006; Stevens 2003).

In this regard, one can infer that no student is thoroughly without a sense of autonomy and vocabulary learning strategies use. This statement is consistent with Scharle and Szabo's (2000) notion that no student is completely without a sense of responsibility and we are not to face with an ideal responsible student, either. Scharle and Szabo (2000) express learning strategies as one of the most important building blocks of responsibility and autonomy. However, preferred learning style, cultural attitudes, and personality traits; may set limit to the development of autonomy.

## CONCLUSIONS

Aoki (2008) states that the strategies learners use in self-instruction context and the degree of autonomy they exercise would help them develop foreign language skills without the help of a teacher or language group(s). Based on the importance of these two factors in developing language skills, this study was conducted to investigate the relationship between EFL learners' vocabulary learning strategies and autonomy, with a major emphasis on predicting learners' vocabulary learning strategy use through their autonomy. The findings of this study may lead students' attention to the awareness of the determining role of language learning strategies and learning autonomy as contributing factors to their success in the process of learning a target language. Moreover, teachers can focus on strategy-based instruction for more effective learning and also find faster and less time-consuming ways to teach based on learners' autonomy levels. At the end, it is important to stress that any conclusion should be interpreted in the light of the many limitations and delimitations that the researcher had in conducting the research. Also, no significant relationship may be found in some parts, which might be attributed partly to the nature of the instruments used for data collection. A difficulty with the use of questionnaires is the fact that some participants might have not reported what they actually do due to either personal or educational reasons (Hatch & Farhadi, 1982).

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**TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD INTEGRATING INTERNET TECHNOLOGY IN ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE CLASSES**

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## ABSTRACT

Today, integrating computer and internet technology in classrooms has had a great influence on educational environments. Based on presence of information technology in the education system of Malaysia, the present study was designed to explore the attitudes of Malaysian English as a second language (ESL) teachers toward integrating the internet technology in English language classes. In addition, it aimed to find out motivating and preventing factors that led these teachers to use or not to use technology in their teaching process. Five Malaysian ESL teachers were selected randomly to take part in the study. In order to get in-depth information, a semi-structured interview was conducted. The analysis of data gathered from interviewing with teachers revealed that Malaysian teachers showed positive attitudes toward internet usage in general, but because of some reasons they utilized it rarely in their teaching. Lack of internet access and computer facilities, insufficient computer skills, and lack of time was reported as obstacles to integrate internet in the classrooms. These findings suggested some implications for policy-makers to help teachers to integrate internet technology in their classrooms.

**KEYWORDS:** Teachers' attitudes, Internet use, English language classrooms, motivating factors, preventing factors, ESL, Malaysian

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, integrating computers and internet technology in teaching and learning process changed the way in which instruction was delivered to students. The internet plays a great role in second/foreign language teaching and learning. According to Yang and Chen (2007), learners have access to many English language resources if they use computers and internet in language classes. They can improve their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills through real-world situation. Lots of various activities in the internet can produce more fun and excitement for the learners. There are some reasons for using computer and internet technology in classes: a) Technology helps teachers to make the instruction individual through permitting students to learn in an environment which they feel more secure; b) It can provide stimulating learning experiences for learners; c) It helps students to have access to different learning sources not only at school, but also outside of it (Peck and Domcott, 1994, cited in, Al-Zaidiyeen, Mei, Fook, 2010). Hence, integrating computers and internet technology in learning environments modified the type of interaction between teachers and students (Kern, 1995) and make the learning process more student-centered. According to Jaber (1997), utilizing computers and internet in student-centered classes enable students to collaborate, use critical thinking, and work together to find solutions to the problems that they face. Therefore, it is expected that language teachers develop useful resources in their teaching process to assist learners' learning more efficiently. In this kind of technology-enhanced classrooms, learners are capable of assembling information themselves, making decision, and become more independent (Lam & Lawrence, 2002).

Because of the widespread use of computers and internet in educational settings, language teachers are motivated to implement this technology in their classes in order to facilitate language teaching and learning process. Educators are the real representatives of utilizing technologies in language learning (Albirini, 2004). One important factor which influences the use of educational technology in classes is the attitudes of teachers toward integrating internet in their language classes. Teachers' attitudes toward technology use can be concerned as a facilitating or hindering factor which give them more comfort or obstacle to utilize technology in their educational environments (Kim, 2002). Computers and internet technology are the most effective tools among various existing technological aids in teaching and learning language. Integrating and applying computers and the internet in a learning environment can strengthen the way that students acquire a foreign language effectively. Hence, teachers' attitudes have a fundamental role in the real utilization of technologies in classrooms.

Attitude specifies different definitions to itself. It is an opinion that one has about someone or something. It can reflect a favorable, unfavorable, or neutral judgment. According to Albarracin, Johnson, Kumkale, and Zanna (2005), attitude is a kind of psychological disposition to see a special thing or behavior with a degree of like or dislike. In an educational setting such as classrooms, teachers' attitudes like students' attitudes play a significant role in the attainment of educational goals. Lam (2000) stated that the personal beliefs of teachers about the benefits of technology utilization in teaching of language affect their decision in using technology. Therefore, enough time should be given to teachers in order to become more familiar with the new presented technologies. Incorporating training programs will also be helpful in motivating teachers to utilize technology in their classes. Some researchers



such as Yildirim (2000) and Oh and French (2007) mentioned that in their study of teacher training programs, teachers obtained more abilities and more confidence with technologies which promoted their attitudes toward technology positively.

Having positive attitudes toward internet use, help teachers to increase learning to utilize this technology in the teaching and learning process. It means that positive attitudes of teachers should be motivated and developed. In fact, having positive attitudes can stimulate teachers to learn the required skills which are essential for applying technology-based exercises and activities in classes. In a study by Mcalister, Dunn, and Quinn (2005), teachers showed positive attitudes toward using technology, although they did not have enough experience about technology utilization. The researchers concluded that more time, training, and value should be given to teachers who are as a model for students. The accessibility to suitable softwares and teachers' tendency to utilize that softwares have a positive influence on the attitudes of teachers toward the acceptance of technology in their classes (Sepehr & Harris, 1995). Kersaint, Horton, Stohl, and Garofalo (2003) stated that positive attitudes of teachers have an effect on the use of technology. They feel more confident and comfortable with technologies and integrate it in their teaching process. Teachers who have access to enough computers and the required instructional technology at schools possess more positive attitudes toward integrating technology in their classes (Becker & Riel, 1999).

On the other hand, teachers' negative attitudes towards technology could affect negatively on students' perceptions of computer technology (Weil, Rosen, & Wugalter, 1990). If teachers show negative attitudes to the change of traditional instructional practices, the new curriculum will not be successful. For the use of technology in the educational environment, the change encompasses both the learning of new proposed technology skills and pedagogies (Woodrow, 1987; Saye, 1998). In a study on pre-service teachers by Erdemir, Bakirci, and Eyduran (2009), they found that teachers feel themselves inadequate for utilizing computer and internet technology for the aim of teaching. Hence, negative attitudes of teachers lead to negative effects on the implementation of technology in classrooms.

There are some factors which prevent teachers from utilizing internet technology in their classes. One of those factors is teachers' anxieties in relation to technologies (Dawes & Selwyn, 1999). They are afraid of having less knowledge about technologies than their students. Teachers feel fear of having no more control on the activity of their students through utilizing technologies in classes. The feeling of anxiety causes negative attitudes which affect the teaching and learning process. Other factors such as financial problems, fixed curriculum, lack of materials, and insufficient internet access can be also effective. In a study by Gulbahar (2008), the lack of technological facilities and inadequate training programs showed an important impact on the teachers' tendency toward technology use. Based on the findings of a study by Mohd Yunus (2007), which is related to the perception of Malaysian ESL teachers toward challenges into the integration of ICT in schools, he found that "ICT integration in teaching is dependent upon adequate access, adequate computer resources, teacher development opportunities, and on-site support – all of which require funding, thought, planning and support" (93). Having just positive attitudes does not mean that teachers are capable of using internet technology in classes. Kim (2002) conducted a study on teachers' attitudes toward technology use and obtained that although teachers had positive attitudes and interest toward utilizing technology, but they use web-based lessons rarely. The reasons for such behavior were lack of time, insufficient knowledge, confidence deficiency, and some other factors.

Based on Vision 2020, which was stated by Dr. Mahathir Mohamad -Malaysian prime minister- Malaysia aims to become a total developed country by the year 2020 (The Malaysian Dream: Vision 2020). In order to obtain Vision 2020, the Malaysian government planed different national policies. One of those formulated policies was named the Smart School Policy which was designed to present the information technology (IT) into the education system. According to Ya'acob, Mohd Nor and Azman (2005), in recent years, lots of Malaysian teachers have been instructed in utilizing computers in teaching English language. Therefore, because of the growth of information technology in the education system of Malaysia, teachers are supposed to have enough ability and the right attitude toward applying computer and internet technology in their classes. However, there are some studies such as: Chong, Sharaf, and Jacob (2005) and Yusof, Taib, and Adnan (2010) which demonstrated that Malaysian teachers are not sufficiently ready to utilize technology in educational environments. According to Woodrow (1992), having positive attitudes of teachers toward internet use in English language classes is not obvious yet.

Moreover, there are many studies such as Johns and Torrez (2001) that mentioned how technology increases the motivation of ESL students to learn. But according to Lam (2000), a few numbers of studies had been conducted to investigate the teachers' point of view toward integrating internet technology in language instruction. Positive attitudes of teachers toward technology may lead to more achievement in teaching and learning process (Simonson, 1995). In addition, the previous studies investigated teachers' attitudes mainly quantitatively (through obtaining mean, standard deviation, frequency, and correlations), but this study aims to explore the attitudes of teachers qualitatively, in order to know the teachers' viewpoints about technology use deeply. Accordingly, the significance of teachers' attitudes toward integrating internet in English language classes warrants the need for the researchers to conduct a study on this issue.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the overall attitude of Malaysian ESL teachers toward integrating the internet technology in English language classes?
2. What factors lead Malaysian ESL teachers to integrate the internet technology in their classes?
3. Which factors hinder Malaysian ESL teachers from using the internet technology in their English language classes?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Research Design*

In order to obtain the goals of this study, a qualitative research design was used. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), a qualitative research can provide a very thorough insight about the feelings and thoughts of participants.

### *Participants*

Five Malaysian ESL teachers with different levels of experience were selected randomly to take part in the interview. All of them had at least a bachelor degree in TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language). The age of participants ranged from 23 to 35 years old. This study was conducted at a public university in Malaysia. Simple random sampling was used to choose the participants.

### *Instruments*

This research was based on a semi-structured interview with six open-ended questions. The interview questions were developed by the researchers based on the objectives of the study. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (1999), a semi-structured interview is a verbal questionnaire which includes a set of questions in order to achieve special answers by the interviewee. In a semi-structured interview, the researcher can change the order of questions or give explanations about the questions. It is the flexible type of interview. Through applying an interview, the researcher allows the participants to express their opinions and experiences freely. In this study, the interviews had been conducted in order to obtain in-depth information about the attitudes of Malaysian ESL teachers toward integrating the internet technology in their teaching classes.

### *Procedure*

The interview questions were sent to the emails of the five participants at a pre-arranged times. Before sending the interview questions, the interviewees had been informed about the goal of this research. With the permission of them, all of the five interviews were transcribed. After receiving the responses, the researchers sent other questions to the participants in order to clarify or get additional information. The interviewees could answer the questions freely and openly until the researchers made sure getting the in-depth information on what they were researching. Data gathered from interviews (interviewees' responses) were coded and classified for the purpose of categorizing the responses of the participants. The major questions of the interview are as follows:

1. Do you use the internet technology in your language classes?
2. What do you think about using internet technology in ESL classes?
3. What is your opinion about the advantages and disadvantages of utilizing internet technology in English language classes?
4. What factors do you think encourages you to use internet technology in your teaching process?

5. What factors do you think hinders you use internet technology in your classes?
6. Do you believe that using internet technology in English language classes improve language learning of students?

Before applying the semi-structured interview, two experts (one Post-Doc student and one PhD candidate in TESL) evaluated the content validity of the interview questions in order to check and verify the relevance of questions to the objectives of the study.

## **FINDINGS**

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, all of the five interviews were analyzed carefully. The analysis of data gathered from interviews produced five major themes related to the objectives of the study. The themes are : i) using internet in ESL classes, ii) advantages and disadvantages of using internet in ESL classes, iii) Students' language learning improvement, iv) motivating factors, and v) preventing factors. In order to support the findings, the genuine quotations of participants' answers are provided.

### ***Using Internet in ESL Classes***

All of the five participants mentioned that they utilized internet technology inside of their classes to somewhat. For example, Magi stated that

"I use it [internet technology], but not very frequently. It's very useful and interesting as students enjoy it."

Farah replied that

"I will go online during class only sometimes if when I want to find information that I cannot get from the textbooks and dictionaries. But I use power point every time during class to show notes to the students. I will also e-mail the regarding notes to the students after the class. They also receive their assigned tasks via e-mail."

Izzati keep that

"I use it [internet] in my classes to some extent. I think that it is a very helpful technology."

Tan maintained that

"I use it [internet technology] to find materials/ videos that will entertain students during class, but I don't use it much."

Attirah said that

"I think it's really good, especially for adult learners as they can be independent learners who are capable of searching for information on their own. It's good to promote lifelong learning as well."

According to aforementioned data, these Malaysian teachers believed internet technology as a useful tool in teaching and learning process, but they used it rarely in their classes.

### ***Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Internet in ESL classes***

Two of the teachers believed that using internet made learning process interesting and enjoyable for students. Atirah remarked some advantages of utilizing internet technology as follow:

"It promotes independent, lifelong learning. Students can gain extra information, gain interesting materials, audio and visual stimulants which make learning enjoyable for them."

Magi stated that

"Through using internet, students become interested and adventurous in trying something new. They [students] will not get bored easily."

Three teachers referred to internet facilities. They expressed that teachers and students could communicate with each other through using internet. For example:

Izzati claimed that

“The internet technology facilities are available almost at every corner in the world, students could be able to connect to the internet wherever they are. So, teachers will be able to give out assignments and return them back anywhere they [students] are. Moreover, students can also access to the resources the teachers have provided on the internet anytime and anywhere.”

Farah commented that

“Home work and assignments can be done at home without forgetting to give them in the class. Teachers can e-mail the notes and tasks with the internet facilities. Students can also submit the work via e-mail.”

Beside mentioning advantages of internet usage, all teachers complained about some negative aspects of it. Two of them pointed out the internet connection as a problem in classes. For example, Izzati mentioned that

“The internet connection would sometimes be unreliable at the time we need it [internet] the most.”

Atirah claimed that

“Poor internet connection can be problematic in our classes, because we don’t have laptops or special language labs.”

They also believed that supervising the students can be difficult when they use internet technology in classes. Izzati expressed that

“Teachers have to be extra in control as the students might be using the internet for other purposes during class.

Farah pointed out that

“Not all students can focus only to the lessons when they have an internet connection. Teachers must be alert towards every student when he or she wants to use technology facilities in the classroom.”

Magi remarked that

“The students intend to explore many new things without teachers' knowledge.”

As another negative aspect of utilizing internet technology in ESL classes, two of teachers referred to the new information that comes to the internet every day. They claimed that it would be difficult for teachers that check the internet all the times for becoming aware of new things. For instance, Tan emphasized that

“Teachers cannot control the continuous changes in the applications/ softwares related to internet. In doing this, they have to update with the latest information every day.”

### ***Students' Language Learning Improvement***

All five teachers revealed their willingness in using internet technology in their classes as a good tool for developing language learning of students. For example, Atirah stated that

“It improves students' language learning since they can learn English through audio and visual medium provided in internet. Moreover, they can search for several of information which will train them to think critically and wisely.”

They mentioned that through using internet, students can access to authentic English materials. Izzati reported that

“Students will be exposed to authentic English materials though teachers still need to guide the students to choose the best suitable materials.”

Atirah explained that

“Students will be exposed to real life and interesting materials that can motivate them to learn better. For example through using social networks such as facebook, they can communicate with other people in the target language.”

### ***Motivating Factors***

Based on analysis of data gathered from interviews, all teachers saw some value in using internet technology that provoked them to integrate it in their classes. For example, Tan stated that

“Through using internet, teachers have a wide range of selection. We can choose lots of images, videos, clips, activities, and everything that will be helpful for our students to improve their language learning.”

Other teachers considered the motivation of students. They claimed that using internet made the classes more appealing for students. izzati said that

“It [internet] will make the class more interesting for the students; also it can encourage independence in learning through opening up a vast amount of possibilities of learning materials for the students.”

Farah pointed out that

“I use technology in my class because it is easier and more interesting than just depending on text books for classroom lessons. I can display my notes to the students with the use of fascinating power points which increase students’ motivation to learn better.”

Atirah also mentioned some factors that stimulate her to utilize the internet in her classes such as:

“Easy accessibility to sources, interesting materials from websites and YouTube, save my time as I don’t have to browse for information in books anymore.”

Furthermore, Magi believed that through internet use she could access to novel teaching methods,

“Through searching on the internet, new teaching methods and materials can be found easily.”

### ***Preventing Factors***

Teachers mentioned some factors which lead them not to integrate internet technology in their classes. The most important preventing factor that they were concerned about was the lack of computer and internet facilities in their classes. For instance, Atirah pointed out that

“No equipment such as laptop, LCD, and also no internet connection discourage teachers to use internet in their classes.”

Farah reported that

“Sometimes, we lose the electricity or the internet connection which makes it hard for me to show the notes to the students. I can only depend on the text books or white board, which make it slower for me to finish all in one lesson because I need to write down notes on the board or I need to read the notes to the students.”

Magi remarked that

“Lack of number of classrooms prevents us to use the internet, because schools are only provided with 2 computer rooms and can’t accommodate many classes. Students are only allowed due to the availability of the rooms.”

Two of the teachers claimed that lack of computer skills and lack of time may affect the utilization of internet. For instance, Izzati mentioned that “Some teachers may have not been exposed to use the internet enough, so they have difficulty in using computer and internet and need more training. This took up class time.”

## **DISCUSSION**

### ***Teachers’ attitudes toward integrating internet technology in English language classes***

Based on the findings of this study, these Malaysian ESL teachers showed generally positive attitudes toward integrating internet in classrooms. What is surprising is that besides mentioning some advantages of internet use, they revealed that they integrate internet technology rarely for teaching English in their classes. The findings of the current study concur with some empirical research studies such as Darus and Luin (2008) that investigated the attitudes of Malaysian teachers toward teaching English utilizing computer technology. In their study which was conducted through questionnaires, Malaysian teachers displayed that they use computer technology rarely for teaching English.

Almost all of the teachers believed that integrating internet in English language classes will increase the motivation of students and make learning process more interesting for them. They tended to describe technology as a useful source for communicating with other people around the world in the target language. Moreover, they pointed out that through integrating technology, students will be able to access many authentic language materials which can stimulate them to learn better. These findings further support the idea of Lam (2000) who stated that teachers take into consideration technology as a supporting tool in teaching and learning process.

Although they believed that using technology is appealing for students, but some of them complained that making control of students becomes difficult when they use the internet in their classes. According to Shin and Son (2007), the source of this problem could be associated with insufficient pedagogical training of teachers in conducting

technology in classes. In order to integrate technology in classrooms and develop the quality of the classes, teachers should be aware of different approaches and methods which are necessary to know for applying technology in educational environments.

#### ***Factors leading teachers to integrate internet technology in classes***

All teachers mentioned some factors that motivated them to integrate internet technology in their classes. The present results seem to be consistent with other research such as Park and Son (2009) in which teachers accepted the usefulness of technology in classes.

Teachers believed that through using internet technology they will be able to access to a wide range of information and learning materials which can develop language learning of students. Some of them stated that they could make classes more engaging for students if they use different language websites. Moreover, one of the teachers claimed that internet-assisted language teaching help teachers to become familiar to new teaching methods and materials. These findings are in agreement with Bordbar's (1999) findings who found some factors as motivating ones for teachers to use technology in English language classes.

#### ***Factors hindering teachers from utilizing internet technology in classes***

Besides mentioning usefulness of internet technology, all teachers reported that the existence of some obstacles discouraged them from integrating internet and caused they use it infrequently in classes. Lack of internet access, lack of computer and internet facilities, insufficient computer skills, and lack of time were the barriers that expressed by these teachers. These findings corroborate some factors that had been recognized by previous studies on factors preventing teachers from using technology in classes (e.g., Egbert, Paulis, & Nakamichi, 2002; Shin & Son, 2007; Park & Son, 2009; Bordbar, 2010).

Teachers claimed that lack of computer and internet facilities was an influential barrier to utilize internet technology in classrooms. A few number of language labs restrained them to integrate internet during the teaching process. Sometimes the low internet connection produced some problems for them. They should waste lots of time for further connections. Researchers such as Gibson and Oberg (2004) and Martins, Steil, and Todesco (2004) related the infrequent use of internet by teachers to lack of internet access.

In addition, two of the teachers mentioned insufficient computer skills of teachers as another important hindering factor which discourages them to use technology. They believed that teachers' lack of computer skills takes time of class, because they need more time for finding materials from the internet. According to Al-Oteawi (2002), lack of knowledge and skills about technology cause that most of the teachers revealed negative or neutral attitudes toward ICT usage in classes.

### **CONCLUSION**

The present study was designed to explore the attitudes of Malaysian ESL teachers toward integrating internet technology in English language classes. It also aimed to find out motivating and preventing factors that lead these teachers to use or not to use technology in their teaching. Through analyzing data gathered from interviewing with five Malaysian teachers, this study has found that Malaysian ESL teachers showed positive attitudes toward internet usage in general, but because of some reasons they utilized it rarely in their classes.

All the teachers believed in some value of integrating internet technology which could help them to teach in a more interesting environment. Besides this, they were concerned about the lack of internet access, lack of computer and internet facilities, insufficient computer skills, and lack of time which discourage them to utilize the internet in their classrooms.

Albirini (2004) stated that for helping teachers to use technology in classes, decision-makers should uncover the obstacles remarked by teachers. Based on findings of this study, in order to integrate information technology in the education system of Malaysia's schools which is one of the national policies of Vision 2020, policy-makers of Ministry of Education in Malaysia should support and equip all schools with enough language resource rooms including sufficient computers and easy access to the internet. They should also equip teachers with on-going training programs to develop the practical skills of teachers through doing necessary practices related to computer skills.



### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

According to Creswell (2003), limitations of the study are the potential weaknesses of it which are not controllable by the researcher, but may affect the results of the study. There are some limitations for this study that should be mentioned as follow:

1. The number of participants was relatively small and with a small sample size, caution must be applied, as the findings might not be generalized to other Malaysian ESL teachers. Hence, further work needs to be done with more participants to get more reliable results.
2. This study considered the attitudes of teachers who are majoring in TESL and it will not be generalized to the teachers who are majoring in other fields of studies.
3. The interview questions are limited to questions developed by the researchers based on the analysis of literature reviewed.

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**THE EFFECT OF EFL TEACHERS' LANGUAGE AWARENESS AND GENDER ON THEIR  
REFLECTIVITY**

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**ABSTRACT**

The role of language teachers' ongoing reflection while practicing inside the classrooms and after it has been widely recognized as a crucial factor in their professional development. This study is therefore an attempt to investigate the effect of EFL teachers' language awareness (TLA) and gender on their reflective behavior. In so doing, a language awareness test and a reflectivity questionnaire were administered to fifty teachers busy teaching English in language institutes in Shiraz, Iran. The statistical results confirmed that TLA significantly affects EFL teachers' reflective

behavior. The statistical results however were not found to be significant for the effect of gender on teachers' reflectivity. The findings of the current study depicts that reflection and language awareness are two complementary tools for practicing teachers to enhance their professional developments.

**KEYWORDS:** teacher language awareness, EFL, teacher reflectivity, subject-matter knowledge

## INTRODUCTION

There has been a growing attention to the concept of teacher language awareness (TLA) since 1990s. TLA has become an increasingly important component of the professional standards expected of the L2 teacher. Thornbury (1997) describes TLA as the knowledge that teachers have of the underlying systems of the language that enables them to teach effectively. According to such a view, TLA is essentially concerned with subject-matter knowledge and its impact upon teaching. In other words, according to (Edge, 1988), it relates to the L2 teacher's need to be able to function effectively as an analyst of the language, with the ability to talk about the language itself, to analyse it, to understand how it works and to make it judgments about acceptability in doubtful cases. According to Andrews and McNeil (2005), the teacher language awareness of good language teachers is to willingness and ability to engage with language-related issues; self-awareness (with particular reference to awareness of the extent of their own subject-matter knowledge) accompanied by a desire for continuing self-improvement of their teacher language awareness. Hales's (1997) definition shows a similar focus on subject-matter knowledge: language awareness could be glossed as a sensitivity to grammatical, lexical, or phonological features, and the effect on meaning brought about by the use of different forms.

As far as the concern in this article is towards the subject-matter knowledge of grammar and it deals with explicit knowledge of the grammatical issues, the explicit/implicit distinction need to be elaborated for better understanding.

In the L2 context, explicit knowledge is defined by Ellis (2004) as declarative knowledge of the phonological, lexical, grammatical, pragmatic and socio-critical features of an L2. According to Ellis, such knowledge is held consciously and is learnable and verbalisable. Implicit knowledge, by contrast is procedural, is held unconsciously and can only be verbalized if it is made explicit. Implicit knowledge is also agreed to be the type of knowledge that enables a language user to communicate fluently. The nature of the relationship between these two types of knowledge/awareness has also been a long-standing concern of those interested in language awareness (see, e.g., Little, 1997).

The contrast between explicit and implicit knowledge is closely relevant to the distinction between declarative and procedural knowledge. Anderson (1983) claims that separate systems are responsible for declarative (factual) knowledge and procedural knowledge of how to apply factual knowledge during skilled performance. According to Anderson (1983), declarative knowledge is explicit knowledge that we can report and of which we are consciously aware. Procedural knowledge is knowledge of how to do things, and it is often implicit. On the whole, the distinction between on the one hand applying rules of grammar successfully in production and comprehension, and on the other hand being able to explain those rules is of considerable significance for the L2 teacher. Conventional wisdom would suggest that both types of knowledge are essential parts of the L2 teacher's TLA.

Reflection in its simplest form means thinking about something. Loughran (2002) noted that it is a well-defined and crafted practice that carries very specific meaning and associated action (p.33). reflective teaching at a general term involves thinking about one's teaching and the cognition involved can take place before the event of teaching and manifest itself as planning, after the event as evaluation and simultaneous to the teaching as reflection in action involving adjustments to or accommodation of some of the contingencies with arise (Parker, 1997, p.8). Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) view reflection as 'intellectual and affective abilities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to achieve new insights and understandings. Hubball, Collins and Pratt (2005) define reflective practice as 'the thoughtful consideration of what we do, what works and what doesn't, and logics underline our teaching and that of others'. Minott (2009), defines reflection as careful consideration or thought; it is a process of disciplined intellectual criticism combining research; knowledge of context, and balanced judgment (critical thinking) about previous, present, and future actions, events or decisions.

There are a lot of reasons for the rising of reflectivity in the scope of teaching pedagogy. One of them is that reflective teaching was introduced to mitigate the clash between theoreticians and practitioners in the eclectic approach that was put forth by practitioners and reflective teaching promised to be the solution to the predicament (Akbari, 2007). Also according to Kumaravadivelu (2001), the post-method era questioned the traditional customs about the teachers and theorist and encourage teachers to become critical thinkers and theorize what they practice and practice what they theorize constantly. Also reflective teaching has emerged as a response to the problems of teachers in coping with their practical problems (Richards and Lockhart, 1999). As Gimenez (1999) noted that the efflorescence of reflectivity was the 90's and it continues to be dominant so that today nobody can ignore its prominent role in this field. Reflection has been a great importance in teacher's educational development in recent years and is an outstanding component of teacher development (Clarke & Otaky, 2006; Jay & Johnson, 2002; Vieira & Marques, 2002; Griffiths, 2000). "Reflection has become an integral part of teacher education" (Jay & Johnson, 2002, p.73), and as Tabachnick and Zeichner (2002) put it, "there is not a single teacher educator who would say that he or she is not concerned about preparing teachers who are reflective" (p.13). Teacher's reflectivity has gained in popularity in almost all facets of teacher education encompassing adult and vocational education (Cornford, 2002).

### **RELATED LITERATURE**

Language awareness is a kind of teacher's knowledge which testifies what teachers know about language systems (Wright & Bolitho 1993; James 1999; Hawkins 1999). The need for language sensitivity among teachers has given rise to the language awareness movement (Brumfit 1997), which places emphasis on the knowledge about language for teachers and cognition. Language awareness emerged as a movement in the UK in the beginning of the 1980s, as a reaction to theories about language learning based on behaviourist and also against who favoured the Direct hypothesis theory. Hawkin's (1984) proposals of language awareness are very pragmatic and became an inspirational factor in the LA movement.

The National Council in the UK for Language in Education (N.C.L.E) which supported research on language awareness gave the following definition in 1985: language awareness is a person's sensitivity to and conscious awareness of the nature of the language and its role in human life. Also the Association of language awareness (ALA) gives the following definition: language awareness can be defined as explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use (ALA website). Language awareness is a holistic view. James and Garrett (1991) divide it into five domains: The affective, social, power, cognitive and performance domain. From a teacher's perspective these domains could serve to facilitate the language awareness work in the classroom as the scope covers many relevant aspects of language (Prtic Soons, 2008). According to Carter (1994), language awareness involves awareness of a) some of the properties of language, b) the embedding of language within culture, c) the greater self-conscious about the forms of the language we use and d) the close relationship between language and ideology.

In the case of teachers, it is assumed that an understanding of the language they teach and the ability to analyse it will contribute directly to teaching effectiveness. Wright (2002) pointed out that language awareness for teachers contains an awareness of learner's developing interlanguage, and awareness of how subject-matters cause problems for learners. Edge (1988) noted that knowledge about language and language learning still has a central role to play in English language teacher training for speakers of other languages. The language awareness development activities in Bolitho and Tomlinson (1980; 1995), Wright (1994) and Thornbury (1997) reflect such an assumption. Recent research such as Andrews (1999b) and McNeill (1999) suggests that TLA does have the potential to exert a powerful effect upon teaching effectiveness, at least as far as L2 teachers are concerned. Wright and Bolitho (1993) noted that TLA may have a significant positive impact on preparing lessons, evaluating and adapting materials, interpreting and designing syllabuses and also assessing learner's performance. Also regarding TLA and students' achievement, there exist a lot of researches in the literature. A study conducted by Strauss and Sawyer (1986), also discussed by Bransford, Darling-Hammond and LePage (2005a:15), revealed that awareness and quality of teacher has a major impact on student learning.

John Dewy's (1983) definition of reflective teaching is fundamental to the conception of professional development through reflection (Pollard, 2002, p.4). In his view, reflective teaching is applied in a cyclical process, in which teachers monitor, evaluate and revise their practice continuously and thereby creatively mediate developed



frameworks for teaching and learning ( cited in Pollard et al., pp. 14 & 15). According to Reiman (1999), practitioners, through reflective teaching, demonstrate the ability to analyze the process of what they are doing, while at the same time make judgments to modify their practice so that they can best match the needs of students.

In language teacher education, reflective teaching has been put forward as a way out of the teacher's dilemma and as a counteraction against the influences of "centralization and control" in which "teachers are seen simply as deliverers of a fixed curriculum" and are not valued as professionals who test out their interpretations and solutions about problems (Johnstone, 2006, p.661). Osterman and Kottkamp (2004) as cited in (Hung, 2008) define reflection as a professional development strategy that brings opportunities for professionals to explore, articulate and represent their own ideas and knowledge. Bartlett (1990) points out that becoming a reflective teacher involves moving beyond a primary concern with instructional techniques and "how to" questions and asking "what" and "why" questions that regard instructions and managerial techniques not as ends in themselves, but as part of broader educational purpose. According to McAlpine, Weston, Berhiau and Fairbank (2004), teachers generally reflect on their teaching and students' learning, how effective their instructional decisions are, approaches to teaching, improving practice and cognitive awareness of their reflective process. Also Ronald Schon's conceptions about reflection pave the way for further improvement and have an undeniable role. (Farrell, 2004; Stanley, 1998; Zeichner & Liston, 1996).

Also there is a wide range of models regarding the reflectivity of teachers in the literature. Maybe one of the best known models is belong to Schon. According to Schon (1987), reflection is a way of coping with difficulties of practice after and during the teaching process. He distinguishes between two types of reflection. The first one called "reflection in action" and deals with the mental analysis of events after the teaching process and the second type called "reflection in action" which takes place during the teaching act and deals with analyzing and providing solutions to the complex situations in the class.

Another model is the one provided by Van manen (1991) that have much in common with Schon's model regarding reflection in and on action and further it contains "reflection for action" that allows a teacher decide a course of action and anticipate further consequences of actions. Zeichner and Liston (1996) provides a five-dimensional model. The first phase is likely to be somehow personal and occurs during teaching action. The second phase repair and is reflection-in-action but with a stop for further thought. The third is review is interpersonal and can occur anytime the teaching process. The fourth phase is research in which teacher's observations becomes narrow down to specific matters. And finally the last phase, retheorizing phase, which is more abstract in contrast to other phases. Pachecho (2005) provides five critical reflection based on Schon's framework. It deals with a) identifying a problem, b) coping with the problem by comparing it with other similar contexts, c) evaluating the problem to find appropriate solution, d) testing the consequences of the solution and finally e) reevaluating the solution by defining whether the consequences are acceptable or not. The other model is belongs to Farrell (2004) and so initiative. It contains five levels. 1) Teachers can approach reflective teaching by observing other teacher's classrooms, keeping diaries and portfolios. 2) Each activity in teaching process should be based upon a systematic regulation that could serve all learners. 3) Planning for four time phases during reflective practice. 4) Teachers should not be exclusively have an individual reflection practice, but also should keep themselves update about what is going on in the real teaching practice and finally 5) considering the major role of the group discussion and provide a sedative atmosphere for discussion.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The very first shortcoming of what of much has been done on the subject is that all of them has tended to concentrate in the main on methods of promoting TLA, as, for example in the works of Bolitho and Tomlinson (1980; 1995) and also Thornbury (1997). Another pitfall of previous researches is that there has been relatively little research into the nature of TLA, also core of TLA, subject-matter knowledge. Meanwhile, in L2 education, as noted above attention seems to have centered mainly on ways of helping teachers to develop that knowledge and enhance their language awareness, rather than on investigating the nature of TLA or its impact on pedagogical practice or its relationship with other teaching issues like reflectivity. Also as Andrews (2007) noted, since the concept of TLA is a contextualized issue, I believe that investigating the relationship between TLA and reflectivity in Iranian EFL context will broaden our understanding of the efficacy of both TLA and reflectivity.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS



1. Does EFL teachers' TLA significantly affect their reflective behavior?
2. Does EFL teachers' gender significantly affect their reflective behavior?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

The participants are 50 (28 male and 22 female) Iranian English language teachers from three language learning institutes in Shiraz, Iran. All the teachers are non-native English teachers and have B.A or M.A degree in English language Teaching and English language Translation and all of them have at least one year experience in teaching language.

### *Instruments*

Two instruments are used in this study. The first one is the language awareness test or LA test developed by Alderson, Clapham, and Steel (1996) to measure the subject-matter knowledge of teachers regarding grammatical issues, and the other is the questionnaire developed by Akbari, Behzadpour, and Dadvan for measuring teacher's reflectivity.

### *Data collection and data analysis procedures*

All participants were introduced to the purpose of the study prior to administering the instruments. Having the teachers familiarized with the tests and provided some guidance on how to complete them, the researchers administered the tests to them. At first, the LA test was given to the teachers. It contains 15 questions for metalanguage production and takes 30 minutes to answer them. Then the reflectivity questionnaire was given to them. It contains 29 items and there is no time limit for answering them. The LA test as mentioned above contains 15 questions and 2 points were allocated to each question, so the total point would be 30. The reflectivity questionnaire contains 29 items and the participants must read the statements and decided whether they 'never', 'rarely', 'sometimes', 'often', or 'always' does the asked matters in each statement. Each answer has its point ranging from 1 to 5. So the total range would be from 29 to 145. In order to analyze the data, SPSS software was used to assess descriptive and inferential statistics. A set of correlations was carried on to recognize different relationships. For this purpose, Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used for both hypotheses. Also an independent sample t-test was used to investigate the Gender differences.

## RESULTS

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics conducted to examine the mean scores of reflectivity questionnaire and awareness test for the whole group. The mean scores for the awareness test was 108.96 out of 145 and the mean scores for the reflectivity questionnaire was 23.29 out of 30 for the whole group.

*Table 1: Descriptive statistics for questionnaire and awareness test for the whole group*

Test	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Questionnaire	50	69	131	108.96	17.834
Awareness	50	16	30	23.29	3.655

Table 2 indicates the correlation between the awareness test and reflectivity questionnaire. Using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient, we intended to determine whether the teachers' reflectivity is affected by their language awareness. As it can be seen from the table below, the correlation is .900 which is high. The results reveal that there was a significant and direct relationship between the two variables.

*Table 2: Correlations For the whole group*

Test	Questionnaire	Awareness
Questionnaire	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1 .900** .000

N	50	50
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Table 3 indicates the descriptive statistics conducted to compare the mean scores of awareness test and reflectivity questionnaire for both male and female group. The mean scores of awareness test for male and female group are 106.46 and 112.14, respectively. Also the mean scores of reflectivity questionnaire for male and female group are 22.50 and 24.29, respectively.

*Table 3: Descriptive statistics for male and female and for questionnaire and for awareness test*

Gender	Test	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Male	Questionnaire	28	69	131	106.46	18.775
	Awareness	28	16	30	22.50	3.949
Female	Questionnaire	22	79	131	112.14	16.433
	Awareness	22	18	30	24.29	3.042

To find out whether there was a significant difference between male and female groups regarding reflectivity questionnaire and awareness test, an independent sample t-test was conducted. Table 4 indicates that there was not a significant difference between male and female groups regarding reflectivity questionnaire. The significant value (.269) was above the p-value (.000) which is insignificant.

*Table 4: Independent Samples Test for male and female groups individually*

Variable	t-test for Equality of Means		
Reflectivity	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Questionnaire	1/119	48	.269

Table 5 below also indicates that there was not a significant relationship between Gender and awareness test for male and female groups. The significant value (.483) was again above the p-value (.000) which is insignificant.

*Table 5: Independent Samples Test for male and female groups individually*

Variable	t-test for Equality of Means		
Awareness test	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	0/707	48	.483

## DISCUSSION

This study provides a definition of teacher language awareness and teacher's reflectivity and addresses the question of whether these two variables have a significant relationship or not. Language awareness and reflectivity are two indispensable part of each teacher's teaching process which can be enhanced and developed through different ways and strategies. These two variables contribute significantly to teachers' effective practice inside the classrooms. Language awareness is a crucial tool for reflection on ones' own teaching behaviors and practices.

Based on the results of the current study it was proved that teacher the language awareness regarding subject-matter knowledge has a direct and significant relationship with teacher's reflectivity. At the first glance, it may seem that being aware of subject-matter knowledge regarding grammatical terms lonely cannot have a prominent relationship with being reflective in teaching. As I mentioned earlier, teacher language awareness contains both declarative and procedural knowledge, both the subject-matter knowledge and the knowledge to and ability to draw upon it for communicative purposes. But the results of this study reveals that even being aware of subject-matter knowledge has a notable relationship with reflection in teaching and it accentuates the incontestable role of awareness in language education. The findings are also in line with the works done in the literature regarding these two variables. The importance of both having awareness and reflection in post-method era is supported by many scholars (kumaravadivelu, 2003b; Richards & Renandya, 2002).

Also the findings are in direct path with the work by Andrews and McNeill (2005), which beautifully elaborate that attempting to foster an active awareness of content issues, we do not need to isolate teacher language awareness from broader aspects of teacher thinking and teacher reflectivity. The development of teacher language awareness could be promoted as part of an endeavor to encourage reflection across the broad spectrum of pedagogical concerns.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study was to investigate two features of teaching pedagogy and the relationship between them. The findings revealed that language awareness and reflectivity has a direct and significant relationship with each other. According to Kumaravadivelu (2006), the postmethod teacher must not only know how to develop reflective approach, but also need to be aware of all aspects of teaching practice. The findings accentuate the importance of knowledge of subject-matter regarding grammatical rules, as the results shows that even being aware of subject-matter knowledge can apparently enhance and develop reflectivity of the teachers. Because little to no research has specifically investigated the relationship between teacher language awareness of subject matter knowledge and other pedagogical practice in the Iranian EFL context, the findings of this study are valuable. The findings can help the teachers and practitioners to take the awareness and reflectivity much more seriously.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Given the fact that the field has much to study about teachers' ways of knowing how to teach more effectively in response the particularities of learning contexts, the findings of the current study could trigger interested researchers to conduct further studies on reflection on/in teaching. Needless to point out that reflection on actual practices inside the classrooms is key to teachers' creativity and autonomy. So, some limitations of this study are highlighted here to leave the door open for further projects:

1. The instruments used in this study enjoy high levels of reliability and validity as claimed by the developers however the researchers did not reassess these two values for the particular participants cooperated in this study.
2. Reflectivity questionnaire was the only instrument used to detect teachers' reflective behavior. The participants were not available to conduct interviews for data collection triangulation purposes.
3. Time limit Considerations led the researchers to select a LA test with 15 items. The interested researchers can use tests with more items to measure individuals' metalanguage ability more confidently.

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## **A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE ENGLISH SECTION OF UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAMS BASED ON BLOOM'S REVISED TAXONOMY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The objective of this study was to analyze University Entrance Exam (UEE) items, in terms of Bloom's revised taxonomy, to find out which levels of this taxonomy were more reflected in these items. To this end, UEE items in three years, 1380, 1385, and 1390, in three fields, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Humanities, and in two Universities, State, and Azad, were codified based on the coding scheme designed by Razmjoo and Kazempourfard (2012). The frequencies and percentages of the data were calculated and since the data appeared in frequencies, Chi-Square was used to estimate the significance of differences between the frequencies of different levels of thinking

The results indicated that Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) were more considered in UEE items. Also the results showed the complete absence of “Creating” which is the highest level of thinking in the mentioned taxonomy. Accordingly, UEE in Iran cannot make learners critical thinkers.

**KEY WORDS:** Content analysis, Bloom's Taxonomy, Bloom's Revised Taxonomy, University Entrance Exams

## INTRODUCTION

Many researchers have paid due attention to the significance of tests and also University Entrance Exams (UEE). For instance, Chastain (1988) asserted that “Testing is an aspect of learning that enables learners to grasp what they have missed previously and the teacher to comprehend what can be done in subsequent lessons to improve learning” (p.381). Furthermore, Bachman (1995) believed that the primary aim of educational testing is to gain knowledge for decision making. Razmjoo (2004) stated that “the main objective of the UEE is to select and place the students with a high academic aptitude in the higher education institution of their choice” (p. 57). Moreover, Mohammad Pour and Abdul Ghafar (2009) believed that UEE in Iran has enormous effects on learners’ and their families’ feelings and future fate.

### *Bloom’s Original Taxonomy*

The framework of this study is Bloom’s revised taxonomy. For this reason first an introduction to Bloom’s original taxonomy is presented and then Bloom’s revised taxonomy will be completely described.

The idea for making a taxonomy which was at first regarded as a classification came up in 1948 at the “American Psychological Association Convention” in Boston. This “theoretical framework” represented the main concern of the taxonomy construction which is “facilitating communication” among test takers (Bloom, Engelhart, Frust, Hill, Krathwohl, 1956). They thought that this classification may encourage changing beliefs about testing. Moreover it may be useful for evaluating the connection between examination and education. After some years in 1956 it was published under the title of Bloom’s taxonomy. This taxonomy has three domains: “cognitive”, “affective”, and “psychomotor”. (Bloom, et al., p. 7). They argued that constructing taxonomy is a way for enhancing the transfer of ideas and materials among test developers, also among those involved in educational studies. The intention of taxonomy is to categorize the aims of education system; it would help lots of people involved in the design of the curriculum and also evaluation. One goal in the Bloom’s original taxonomy is to show in what way MC tests (Multiple Choice tests); can be used in order to examine the different categories of the taxonomy (Airasian & Miranda, 2002). Taxonomy is defined as a “classification of items into classes and subclasses” (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 541). They also added that Bloom’s taxonomy mainly represents the cognitive domain. Furthermore, “the taxonomy of EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES is a framework for classifying statements of what we expect or intend students to learn as a result of instruction” (Krathwohl, 2002, p. 212). He mentioned that Bloom’s original taxonomy shows a “cumulative hierarchy”, it means that reaching higher levels needs first acquisition of lower levels of thinking. This taxonomy is organized based on a hierarchy of concrete to abstract levels. In addition, he believed that this taxonomy was mainly used for the categorization of syllabus objectives and test items.

According to Richards and Schmidt (2002) Bloom’s original taxonomy has six levels, ordered from “Knowledge” “which focuses on reproduction of facts” to “Evaluation” “which represents higher level thinking” (p. 56). So, the order and names of Bloom’s original taxonomy are as follows: “Knowledge”, “Comprehension”, “Application”, “Analysis”, “Synthesis”, and “Evaluation”.

### *Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy*

Contrary to the original taxonomy, the revised Bloom’s taxonomy has two dimensions. The horizontal dimension resembles Bloom’s original taxonomy (cognitive dimension) with a difference that in Bloom’s original taxonomy the names of the categories are nouns, but in the revised one they are verbs. In fact the names of “Application”, “Analysis”, and “Evaluation” have been changed in a sense that they are converted into verbs. Also “Knowledge” altered to “Remember”, “Comprehension” to “Understand”, and “Synthesis” to “Create”. So the order and names of categories in Bloom’s revised taxonomies are: “Remember”, “Understand”, “Apply”, “Analyze”, “Evaluate”, and “Create” (Figure2). Furthermore, the vertical dimension has four levels: “Factual Knowledge”, “Conceptual Knowledge”, “Procedural Knowledge” and “Metacognitive Knowledge” (Anderson, 2005; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; krathwohl, 2002). Figure 1 shows the framework of this taxonomy.





Figure 1: The Order of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Adopted from Churches, 2007)

Pintrich (2002) stated that regarding knowledge dimension, the original taxonomy contains all these three types of knowledge expect "Metacognitive Knowledge". Having two dimensions for conducting the procedures of explaining the goals besides planning and directing instruction results in a more obvious evaluation and a better correlation of evaluation with objectives and instructions. Therefore, taxonomy is a valuable means for evaluating and developing this correlation (Airasian & Miranda, 2002). They also believed that Bloom's revised taxonomy with its two dimensions concentrates on the need for evaluation to extend the isolated bits of knowledge and single cognitive procedures in order to concentrate on more complicated dimensions of learning. Moreover, Su, Osisek, and Starnes (2004) mentioned that categorizing "educational objectives" in this way, (in two dimensions), meaning relating knowledge dimension to the cognitive dimension brings researchers a clearer understanding of learning and will help them through constructing more reliable instructions.

What is more, Forehand (2005) stated that like the original taxonomy, the revised version took some years for revision, and eventually was published in 2001. In comparison with the original taxonomy, the revised one has some changes mainly in three classes: "terminology", "structure", and "emphasis". And finally Valcke, Dewever, Zhu, and Deed (2009) believed that the update of Bloom's original taxonomy shows that it is currently usable not only for analyzing learning outcomes but also for analyzing the cognitive processes which are used by learners to finish a work.

The Knowledge Dimension	The Cognitive Processes Dimension					
	Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyze	Evaluate	Create
Factual Knowledge						
Conceptual Knowledge						
Procedural Knowledge						
Metacognitive Knowledge						

Figure 2: The Framework of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Studies Done on University Entrance Examination in Iran*

Razmjoo (2004) analyzed the effect of the English section of University Entrance Examination on the way pre-university teachers teach English, from the standpoints of both teachers and learners in Shiraz. Furthermore, he

compared the attitudes of teachers and learners. The outcomes of his study revealed that teachers paid more attention to reading skills, translation from English into the native language, grammar and also vocabulary, and less to speaking, listening and pronunciation skills, because they attempted to focus on skills which were crucial in UEE. Moreover, there existed a significant difference between teachers and learners' attitudes with regard to what to teach and how to teach. Eventually the researcher claimed that the method of teaching in pre-university English classes resembled Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), while mostly nowadays the emphasis is on Communicative Language Teaching and Testing.

Fazilatfar and Barzegar (2009) constructed a test which comprised 30 "conceptual" items as a comparison with TEFL M.A. University Entrance Exam in Iran. They supposed that TEFL M.A. Entrance Exam consists of items that test insignificant or even memory-based items, and also it is so lengthy. The findings of this study can be interpreted from different views. Since Iranian learners are adapted to memory-based items, their performance on the newly developed test was so poor. As a solution to this problem, the researchers offered that learners can have 3-4 years tutorial period in order to feel ready for exams that comprise "conceptual" items. Moreover the findings of this study showed that participants of M.A. entrance exam, who were B. A. TEFL students at Tehran University, did better on the entrance exam, because most of their professors were test developers of entrance exams, and so they were familiar with the content of the exam. And finally the researchers suggested that the sources for B. A. TEFL learners should be the same all over the country, in order to make similar conditions for them when they want to take part in TEFL M.A. Entrance Exam.

Barati and Ahmadi (2010) investigated the "differential item functioning" (DIF) on the "Special English Test of the Iranian National University Entrance Exam" (INUEE). Moreover, they considered the impact of gender and also subject-matter. The results of the study confirmed the existence of DIF on the test. The Cloze test section of the test showed the lowest DIF while the highest DIF was found in the language function section. Furthermore, the findings of this study revealed the presence of gender DIF samples in the subject matter. While females liked the grammar, language function, and cloze test parts, males liked the sections of vocabulary and also word order. With regard to the reading comprehension, it was found to be favoured by both genders. Most important of all, this study indicated that not only in determining DIF, the forms of items are important but also the subject matter plays an important role.

Razmjoo and Heydari Tabrizi (2010) analyzed the TEFL MAEE (M.A. Entrance Examinations) administered in 2007 in Iran. They scrutinized the basis of testing and also test structures. In this study they had two goals. First, they wanted to see if there exist any principles in constructing such exams. Second, they aimed to construe the problems existing in these exams and suggest some solutions. To this end, they developed a coding scheme which comprises a checklist of the probable content classifications. The results indicated that due to the irregular arrangement of the content classifications, the exam did not have high validity. Moreover, they indicated that the exam was not standard, because the required principles of constructing exams did not match. As a solution they offered to have experienced test developers in developing such exams.

Comparable to the results of Razmjoo's study (2004), Yunus, Salehi, and Kashefian Naeeni (2011) investigated the effects of high-stakes University Entrance Examination, which is a multiple choice in Iran, on high school English teachers. The results revealed that EEU ("Entrance Exam of the Universities") has a negative effect in the way English teachers teach in the classrooms. Most teachers use the native language in the classrooms because they want to transfer the meaning to learners more clearly and in this way prepare them for EEU. Also since speaking, listening, and writing are not tested in EEU, teachers do not pay attention to them in the classrooms. Despite the fact that EEU affected teaching negatively, the researchers of this study proposed that it not still possible to omit EEU, instead EEU items should be revised in a sense that they affect teaching and learning positively during high school years.

Salehi and Yunus (2012) studied the wash back effect of University Entrance Examination in Iran. Wash back means "the positive or negative impact of a test on classroom teaching or learning" (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p.586). The researchers believed that UEE in Iran affects many people involved in it such as learners, teachers, parents, etc in one way or another. Therefore, in this study they aimed to consider the wash back effect of UEE on English teachers especially high school teachers, learners and their parents. As a result, they offered two suggestions for replacing entrance examination in Iran. These two are as follows: first, considering the GPA of the last four years of educating as a criterion for entering universities. And second, let learners to enter universities more easily but

make harder laws for graduating from universities.

#### ***Studies Done on University Entrance Examination outside Iran***

Each year many college and also university applicants who have learning disabilities (LD) provide grades from standardized exam as a step of admission to higher education. Lots of these grades are from tests managed with non-standard processes because of applicants' LD. To this end, Zurcher and Bryant (2001) used a case of college learners who had LD and a case that did not to analyze the criterion validity of grades on the "Miller Analogies Test", of course the situations necessary for learners with LD were met. The grades for learners with LD were comparable to those without LD, although they were not comparable with a GPA of learners without LD. The outcome of this study confirmed that, to the contrary, grades for learners with LD on non-standard tests are comparable to grades of learners without LD, they do not have desirable validity.

Tansel and Bircan (2005) scrutinized the impact of private teaching on university entrance exam success in Turkey. Since entering university plays an important role in the lives of young people in Turkey, it becomes a competitive type of exam. And parents spend large amounts of money on private teaching of their children. The findings of their research confirmed that learners who attended private classes gained better scores in University Entrance Exam and entered universities more successfully.

Azar (2010) investigated the discrepancies between academic achievement in the selection and placement entrance examination of participants' with high critical thinking and those with low critical thinking, and if this discrepancy is related to their gender, degree level and field in Turkey. For assessing participants' critical thinking dispositions, the "Critical Thinking Disposition Scale" (CTDS) was used in this study. Based on the participants' grades on the CTDS, they were classed into sub-classes. The first class belonged to participants with high critical thinking and the second group to participants with low critical thinking. From the results of his study, it can be concluded that no significant difference exists between participants' success and critical thinking dispositions. Furthermore, critical thinking dispositions did not have any relationship with gender, degree level, and their fields.

Besoluk (2011) probed into the relationship between morningness-eveningness preference and performance in University Entrance Exam in Turkey. By using a questionnaire labelled as "Morningness-Eveningness Questionnaire" (MEQ) he recognized four groups of participants: "moderately morning type", "moderately evening type", "definitely evening type", and those who did not belong to any of these groups. It is clear that no "definitely morning type" existed. The results of this study depicted that learners who belonged to the morning type performed better in UEE, since most entrance examinations are administered at this time.

Like Barati and Ahmadi (2010) in Iran, Kalaycioglu and Beberoglu (2011) detected differential item functioning (DIF) in science and mathematics items regarding gender classes, the content of item, and also they studied the impact of DIF item in the University Entrance Exam (UEE) in Turkey. The cause of DIF items in the UEE arises from the subject area, cognitive skills estimated, and features of item format. It is clear that higher levels of cognitive skills and graphical images in the item content are those that cause DIF and are liked by males, while the routine algorithmic estimation can cause DIF against males. Among all the factors mentioned, cognitive skills evaluated by items are the most important factors in producing gender DIF. "However DIF items do not create a threat to the criterion-related validity of the quantitative section of the UEE" (p. 467). Furthermore, considering gender differences in the selection of items for the purpose of assessing is crucial.

In (2012), Myskow and Gordon explored the kind of audience engagement strategies that a Japanese learner used in order to be prepared for impromptu writing assignment on the entrance exam of university. This study was based on the appraisal theory. This study also dealt with the instructional methodologies used by the teachers in order to help learners become familiar with the expectations of university admission officers. The results showed that learners performed better in the post-test than the pre-test since they become more engaged in the amount of engagement strategies they used.

#### ***Studies Based on Bloom's Original Taxonomy***

Betts (2008) used Bloom's taxonomy as guidance for designing graduate courses. Graduate learners often hope to use their experience to be involved in high level of discussions and also participate in advanced use of the course

subjects. To this end, he tried to design a course, which is advanced from concrete concepts to abstract ones within one semester. His attempt appeared in a course material which considered both the lower levels of thinking in Bloom's taxonomy such as "Knowledge" and "Understanding" and higher level of thinking like "Synthesis" and "evaluation".

Wang and Farmer (2008) applied Bloom's taxonomy to find out whether adult teaching techniques in China follow the first three levels of Bloom's taxonomy or the last three ones. They applied an instrument which was called as "Lower-Order Thinking Skills and Higher-Order Thinking Skills" ("LOTSHOTS"). The results of the study revealed that Chinese teachers of adults paid more attention to lower-levels of thinking regarding Bloom's taxonomy in their teaching. The researchers suggested that teaching higher- levels of thinking in Chinese adults may bring good outcomes for them in their learning.

Riazi and Mosalanejad (2010) used Bloom's original taxonomy to examine the senior high school and also pre-university English textbooks in Iran in terms of learning objectives. Four textbooks were included in this study, three high school textbooks and one pre-university textbook. A coding scheme was developed to codify the learning objectives in these textbooks. It is worth mentioning that the data in this study were gathered through analyzing the exercises and tasks of the textbooks. The results of this research revealed that in all the four textbooks lower-orders of thinking were more apparent, meaning that in these textbooks more attention is paid to lower-levels of thinking such as "Knowledge", "Comprehension", and "Application". Moreover, the results revealed that there existed no significant change between the high school textbooks and pre-university textbook in terms of higher-orders of thinking.

Due to the shift in ELT from teacher-centred classes to learner-centred ones, instructors and also researchers pay more attention to learners and all the things that lead them to function in the classes such as classroom activities. For this purpose, Alavian (2011) used Bloom's taxonomy to identify the kind of thinking that Iranian EFL teachers like to use in their classes. To this end, he mailed some questionnaires to instructors of different universities. Moreover, to become sure about the answers of instructors to each item in the questionnaire and their real performance in their classes, he observed some of their classes. The results of his study presented an inconsistency between instructors' answers and their real performance. Also it was shown that gender, experience, and the degree of education had a direct impact on the results.

Liu and Yang (2012) created an online information ethic course in terms of Bloom's taxonomy and Bird's 3C model. They wanted to have a better perception of how the learners' cognitive discourse is revealed in their learning. The content which was surveyed consisted of the learners' message posts, the quality of the conversation and scaffolding strategies for teaching. The results indicated that the quality of discourse was affected by hard scaffolding.

#### ***Studies Based on Bloom's Revised Taxonomy***

In a multi-institutional study, Whalley, *et al.*, (2006) investigated the reading skills of beginner programmers. In doing so, they used Bloom's revised taxonomy and also SOLO taxonomies. From this study it can be concluded that applying Bloom's revised taxonomy for classifying programming MCQ's brings some challenges. They can be due to some deficiencies in the taxonomy or the authors did not know exactly how to use it. Moreover, it is obvious that estimating programming is a difficult task. On the other hand, learners' performances using SOLO taxonomy resulted in more consistency, since less proficient learners did not reach higher levels in the taxonomy, whereas more proficient learners showed a tendency toward higher levels of the taxonomy.

Razmjoo and Kazempourfard (2012) evaluated *Interchange* textbook series (2005) based on Bloom's revised taxonomy. They aimed to investigate which levels of the taxonomy were mentioned more in these textbooks. For this every reason, they codified the content of these textbooks using the coding scheme developed by them. The findings of their study depicted that Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS), the first three levels in this taxonomy were the most frequent levels considered in these textbooks. Furthermore, a significant difference existed among the textbooks in considering diverse levels of Bloom's revised taxonomy. Also it was claimed that these textbooks lack metacognitive knowledge.

#### ***The Application of Bloom's Original Taxonomy in Entrance Examinations and other Types of Exams***

Written exam is a usual tool for assessing learners' performances on a given exam, especially where the cognitive ability of learners are determined through learning outcomes. Written exams are able to evaluate learners' ability, if

they comprise appropriate questions. Of course, required skills for reasoning and problem solving should be attained through useful training. Teachers can support this training by considering all types of questions such as higher, intermediate and lower order cognitive skills in their exams. Accordingly, an acceptable exam should consider all these types of questions. Jones, Harland, Reid, and Bartlett (2009) studied the degree of difficulty of every question in the written exam with regard to the key words existing in those questions based on Bloom's taxonomy. Moreover, they considered the performance of learners, required cognitive skills, and the learning outcomes. They concluded that a relationship exists between written exam items, learning outcomes, and the performance of learners; also they provided some implications for changes in order to have better evaluation strategies.

Item templates not only include usual true and false, multiple choice, completion and short answer items, but also they comprise items such as link, match, classification, and order. Because all these kinds of items have their confinement in testing all types of knowledge, difficulty always happens in constructing test items. For this purpose, Koong, Wu, and Chiu (2010) clarified what type of item templates are suitable for measuring specific kinds of knowledge based on Bloom's taxonomy. The findings revealed that 1) Link template is suitable for measuring remembering knowledge. 2) Match template is applicable for understanding and applying knowledge. Furthermore 3) Link and match templates together can measure analysing type of knowledge.

Evaluation has a significant role in the teaching-learning procedure. Learners' learning can be estimated by various processes. Veeravagu, Muthusang, Marimuthu, and Subrayan (2010) used Bloom's taxonomy to study the relationship between procedures of thinking levels in reading comprehension tests and the performance of learners in Malaysia. It is worth noting that higher levels of thinking happens when learners search beyond the content they are reading, to find out the answer or achieve comprehension. Predicting, concluding, inferring are instances of reading comprehension strategies that evoke higher levels of thinking. From the results they implied that the level of items developed based on Bloom's taxonomy affect the performance of learners in answering reading comprehension items. What is more, it can be understood that a relationship exists between the level of thinking procedures required and the learners' ability to answer the item properly.

Bloom's taxonomy is often used as a coding scheme to show diverse levels of cognitive orders. CBT (computer-based testing) has always been described as a tool for testing lower order of thinking in Bloom's taxonomy. In other words, it was believed that it enhanced rote learning, because it was claimed that it is difficult to construct tests based on the higher orders of thinking. With regard to this point, Bruyn, Mostert, and Schoor (2011) carried out a study in the "Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Pretoria" to find out the conception of learners and teachers toward the CBT in terms of testing higher levels of thinking, based on Bloom's taxonomy. Their study indicated different results from what has been previously thought about CBT, because the results indicated that CBT can test various levels of cognitive skills.

Demir and Eryaman (2012) analyzed the teachers' exam items at the "Primary Education Department" based on the exam's duration, the perception of teachers, cognitive level, and the applicability to the critical thinking. The results indicated that the exam items were mostly at the Knowledge level based on the cognitive domain and they were not applicable to critical thinking.

### ***The Application of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy in Entrance Examinations and other Types of Exams***

Good test items are those items that can assess the performance of learners effectively. Chang and Chen (2009) developed an automatic inference system in terms of Bloom's revised taxonomy to analyze the quality of test items. They aimed not only to retrieve the knowledge dimension of test items but also the cognitive dimension of them. For doing so, they analyzed the "verbs" and the "question words" of test items. From the results they concluded that the inference system is able to automatically analyze test items' quality and paves the way for constructing good test items.

Lan and Chern (2010) used Bloom's revised taxonomy to investigate the English reading comprehension questions of college entrance exams in Taiwan, administered from 2002 to 2006. They considered both the cognitive dimension and also knowledge dimension. It is worth mentioning that in college entrance exam in Taiwan two tests are administered per years: SAET ("Scholastic Achievement English Test") and DRET ("Department Required English Test"). In the first step of analysis which is SAET, learners who have shown the qualifications needed for a



specific university are introduced to that university by their high schools. On the other hand, in the next step, that is DRET, the aim is to recognize learners who have aptitude in specific subject matters needed by a peculiar university. For this reason, DRET is more difficult than SAET because it is meant to distinguish among learners who have more proficiency in English. Therefore, the aim of this study was to compare and contrast between the content and cognitive skills of these two exams, to see in which one higher orders of thinking in Bloom's revised taxonomy are considered more. The results indicated that in both tests four types of cognitive dimension ("Remember, Understand, Apply, and Analyze") and three types of the knowledge dimension ("Factual, Conceptual, and Procedural") had the highest frequency. So it is clear that in both of them lower orders of thinking were considered more. Moreover, the results of this study may bring positive wash back effect for EFL teachers in high schools.

As the literature review indicates there is a lack of analysis of University Entrance Examination (UEE) based on Bloom's revised taxonomy. Hence it is necessary to do this research in order to find both the weak and the strong points of entrance exam items in Iran regarding Bloom's revised taxonomy, and also see whether entrance examination in Iran makes students critical thinkers or not.

### ***Statement of the Problem***

The topic of this research is related to the nature of thinking according to Bloom's revised taxonomy, and how the items of English section of the State and Azad University Entrance Exams (UEE) in the fields of Mathematics, Humanities and Natural sciences in the years, 1380, 1385, and 1390 (based on Iranian solar calendar), reflect these levels of thinking.

### ***Significance of the Study***

The results of this study will help entrance exam test developers and also high school teachers to pay more attention to higher levels of thinking regarding Bloom's revised taxonomy, in developing and constructing entrance exam tests and also teacher made tests. Moreover, the results of the current study can provide useful suggestions for writing high school textbooks, and also for material developers.

### ***The Objective of Study and Research Questions***

In this research, the researchers intend to investigate which levels of Bloom's revised taxonomy are reflected more in entrance examinations. A comparison will be made among different years (1380, 1385, and 1390), different fields of study (Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Humanities) and also between State and Azad University Entrance Exams, to see in which field, in which year, and also in which university attention is paid more to higher levels of thinking.

In line with the objectives of the study the following research questions are raised:

1. Is Bloom's revised taxonomy reflected in entrance examinations in Iran or not?
2. In which field or fields, higher levels of thinking are considered more?
3. Can any changes be observed in University Entrance Exam items regarding Bloom's revised taxonomy in different years?
4. In which exam, State or Azad Universities are higher levels of thinking reflected more?

### **DESIGN AND METHODS OF THE STUDY**

This research is a mixed research which means that it is both qualitative and quantitative. A coding scheme developed by Razmjoo and Kazempourfard (2012) is used for conducting this research. All the questions and choices (here choices mean correct responses) are codified and also the frequency of occurrence of each coded item is estimated. Because this study is in terms of frequencies, Chi-Square is used to estimate the significance of differences between the frequencies of different levels of thinking based on Bloom's revised taxonomy.

### ***Materials***

Materials of this research are the English section of State and Azad Universities **in Iran** in all the fields, and years mentioned below:

The English section of State and Azad University entrance exam (UEE) items in Mathematics, Humanities, and Natural Sciences fields, in years 1380 (2001), 1385 (2006), 1390 (2011).

### ***Instrument***



The instrument for this research is a coding scheme developed by Razmjoo and Kazempourfard (2012). They developed this coding scheme for analyzing *Interchange* textbook series. This coding scheme which is developed based on Bloom's revised taxonomy has two dimensions: Knowledge Dimension and Cognitive Dimension. The Knowledge dimension represents four types of knowledge which are "Factual Knowledge", "Conceptual Knowledge", "Procedural Knowledge", and "Metacognitive Knowledge". On the other hand the Cognitive Dimension comprises the names of categories which are "Remember", "Understand", "Apply", "Analyze", "Evaluate", and "Create". Moreover, it shows "Generic Skills", "Sample Verbs" and also "Sample Questions". The cognitive dimension of this coding scheme starts from Lower-Orders of Thinking (LOTS) or concrete levels, and moves toward Higher-Orders of Thinking (HOTS) or abstract levels. The following tables present this coding scheme.

*Table 1: The Coding Scheme Developed Based on Bloom's Revised Taxonomy Adopted from Kazempourfard (2011, p. 47)*

The Knowledge Dimension	The Cognitive Process Dimension					
	A. Remember	B. Understand	C. Apply	D. Analyze	E. Evaluate	F. Create
1.Factual Knowledge	A1	B1	C1	D0	E0	F0
2.Conceptual Knowledge	A2	B2	C2			
3.Procedural Knowledge	A3	B3	C3			
4.Metacognitive Knowledge	A4	B4	C4	D4	E4	F4

*Table 2: The Description of Codes Based on Bloom's Revised Taxonomy Adopted from Kazempourfard (2011, p. 48)*

The Knowledge Dimension	The Cognitive Process Dimension					
	A. Remember	B. Understand	C. Apply	D. Analyze	E. Evaluate	F. Create
1.Factual Knowledge	Remember Facts: Recalling, restating and remembering terminology, specific details and elements	Understand Facts: Interpreting and translating terminology and specific details and elements	Apply Facts: Applying and adapting terminology and specific details and elements	Analyze using Facts, Concepts, Principles	Evaluate using Facts, Concepts, Principles	Create using Facts, Concepts, Principles
2.Conceptual Knowledge	Recalling, restating and remembering classifications	Interpreting and translating classifications and categories,	Applying and adapting classifications and categories,	and Procedures	and Procedures	and Procedures

	and categories, principles and generalizations, theories, models and structures	principles and generalizations, theories, models and structures	principles and generalizations, theories, models and structures			
<b>3.Procedural Knowledge</b>	Recalling, restating and remembering subject specific skills, techniques and methods, Recalling criteria for determining when to use appropriate procedures	Interpreting and translating subject specific skills, techniques and methods, Interpreting criteria for determining when to use appropriate procedures	Applying and adapting subject specific skills, techniques and methods, Applying criteria for determining when to use appropriate procedures			
<b>4. Meta cognitive Knowledge</b>	Recalling, restating strategic knowledge, knowledge about cognitive tasks, including appropriate contextual and conditional knowledge	Interpreting and translating strategic knowledge, knowledge about cognitive tasks, including appropriate contextual and conditional knowledge	Applying and adapting strategic knowledge, knowledge about cognitive tasks, including appropriate contextual and conditional knowledge	Analyzing strategic knowledge, knowledge about cognitive tasks, including appropriate contextual and conditional knowledge	Appraising and assessing strategic knowledge, knowledge about cognitive tasks, including appropriate contextual and conditional knowledge	Developing and creating strategic knowledge, knowledge about cognitive tasks, including appropriate contextual and conditional knowledge

*Table 3: The Compilation of Ideas Based on Bloom's Revised Taxonomy  
Adopted From Kazempourfard (2011, p. 49)*

<b>Code Name</b>	<b>Code Meaning</b>
<b>A1</b>	Remember Factual Knowledge
<b>A2</b>	Remember Conceptual Knowledge
<b>A3</b>	Remember Procedural Knowledge
<b>A4</b>	Remember Metacognitive Knowledge
<b>B1</b>	Understand Factual Knowledge
<b>B2</b>	Understand Conceptual Knowledge
<b>B3</b>	Understand Procedural Knowledge
<b>B4</b>	Understand Metacognitive Knowledge
<b>C1</b>	Apply Factual Knowledge
<b>C2</b>	Apply Conceptual Knowledge
<b>C3</b>	Apply Procedural Knowledge
<b>C4</b>	Apply Metacognitive Knowledge
<b>D0</b>	Analyze using Facts, Concepts, Principles and Procedures
<b>D4</b>	Analyze Metacognitive Knowledge
<b>E0</b>	Evaluate using Facts, Concepts, Principles and Procedures

<b>E4</b>	Evaluate Metacognitive Knowledge
<b>F0</b>	Create using Facts, Concepts, Principles and Procedures
<b>F4</b>	Create Metacognitive Knowledge

*Table 4: The Coding Scheme for the Cognitive Dimension of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy  
 Adopted from Kazempourfard (2011, p. 50)  
 (With Some Changes)*

Category	Generic Skills	Sample Verbs	Sample Questions
<b>Remembering Recalling information</b>	The learner is able to recall, restate and remember learned Information.	Choose, Cite, Enumerate, Group, Label, List, Listen, Locate, Match, Memorize, Name, Quote, Read, Recall, Recite, Record, Relate, Remember, Repeat, Reproduce, Review, Select, Show, Sort, State, Underline	What happened after...? How many...? What is...? Who was it that...? Can you name...? Find the meaning of... Describe what happened after...Who spoke to...? Which is true or false...?
<b>Understanding Explaining ideas or concepts</b>	The learner sizes the meaning of information by interpreting and translating what has been learned.	Account for, Annotate, Associate, Classify, Convert, Define, Describe, Discuss, Estimate, Explain, Empress, Identify, Indicate, Interpret, Observe, Outline, Recognize, Reorganize, Report, Research, Restate, Retell, Translate, Understand	Can you write in your own words? How would you explain...? Can you write a brief outline...? What do you think could have happened next...? Who do you think...? What was the main idea...? Can you clarify? Can you illustrate? Does everyone act in the way that...?
<b>Applying Using information in another familiar situation</b>	The learner makes use of information in a new situation from the one in which it was learned.	Adapt, Apply, Calculate, Change, Collect, Compute, Construct, Demonstrate, Dramatize, Draw, Exhibit, Generalize, Illustrate, Interview, Make, Manipulate, Operate, Paint, Practice, Sequence, Sketch, Solve	Do you know of another instance where...? Can you group by characteristics such as...? Which factors would you change if...? What questions would you ask of...? From the information given, can you develop a set of instructions about...?
<b>Analyzing (Critical Thinking) Breaking information into parts to explore understandings and relationships</b>	The learner breaks learned information in to its parts to best understand that information in an attempt to identify evidence for a conclusion.	Analyze, Appraise, Arrange, Calculate, Categorize, Compare, Contrast, Criticize, Debate, Detect, Diagram, Discriminate, Dissect, Distinguish, Examine, Experiment,	Which events could not have happened...? If...happened, what might the ending have been? How is...similar to...? What do you see as other possible outcomes? Why did...change occur? Can you explain what

		Inquire, Inspect, Investigate, Order, Probe, Question, Relate, Research, Scrutinize, Separate, Sift, Subdivide, Summarize, Survey, Test	must have happened when...? What are some Or the problems of...? Can you distinguish between...? What were some of the motives behind...? What was the turning point? What was the problem With...?
<b>Evaluating (Critical Thinking) Justifying a Decision or Course of actions</b>	The learner makes decisions based on in-depth reflection, criticism and assessment.	Argue, Assess, Choose, Compare, Conclude, Criticize, Critique, Decide, Deduce, Defend, Determine, Differentiate, Discriminate, Evaluate, Infer, Judge, Justify, Measure, Predict, Prioritize, Probe, Rank, Rate, Recommend, Revise, Score, Select, Validate, Value	Is there a better solution to...? Judge the value of... What do you think about...? Can you defend your position about...? Do you think...is a good or bad thing? How would you have handled...? What changes to...would you recommend? Do you believe...? How would you feel if...? How effective are...? What are the consequences...? What influence will... have on your lives? What are the pros and cons of...? Why is.... of value? What are the alternatives? Who will gain& who will lose?
<b>Creating (Critical Thinking) Generating new ideas, Products, or ways of viewing things</b>	The learner creates New ideas and Information using what Has been previously Learned.	Act, Assemble, Blend, Combine, Compile, Compose, Concoct, Construct, Create, Design, Develop, Devise, Formulate, Forecast, Generate, Hypothesize, Imagine, Invent, Organize, Originate, Predict, Plan, Prepare, Propose,	Can you design a...to...? Can you see a possible solution to...? If you had access to all recourses, how would you deal with...? Why don't you devise your own way to...? What would happen if...? How many ways can you...? Can you create new and unusual uses for...? Can you develop a proposal which would...?

***Procedures of Data Collection and Data Analysis***

The data for this research were gathered through the English section of university entrance exams in the fields, years, and universities mentioned before. All these UEE items were coded according to the coding scheme.

Moreover the frequencies of occurrence of each coded item was estimated, and through Chi-square the significance of the differences between the frequencies of the different levels of thinking based on Bloom's revised taxonomy were estimated. The reliability of the coding scheme was also estimated through SPSS 16. For this reason 5.55% of the whole data was chosen. The intra-coder reliability equalled 99.2%, and the inter-coder reliability equalled 98%.

#### ***A Sample of UEE Items as an Illustration***

In order to show how the data were codified and analyzed, some part of the total data was chosen as an illustration. For this reason, some items of the English section of State University in the Humanities field and in the year 1385 are presented as an example.

76. The teacher asked the students.....while he was teaching.  
 1) not be talking      2) not to talk      3) not talking      4) don't talk

The correct choice is number 2. Since the learners deal with structure in this question, and because they are asked to apply grammar this question is codified as C2 ("Applying and adapting classifications and categories, principles and generalizations, theories, models and structures").

83. Child labour is also a growing concern in Eastern Europe. "Concern" means.....  
 1) aspect      2) habit      3) reason      4) worry

The correct choice is number 4. Answering this question does not need higher orders of thinking because this question only needs remembering a definition of a simple word, so it is codified as A1 ("Remember facts: recalling, restating and remembering terminology, specific details and elements").

#### **Cloze Test:**

*Persian has an old and fun literature. Two great poets of the 11<sup>th</sup> century were Omar Khayam and Ferdousi. The beauty of old Persian art is..... (91) .....famous. This art..... (92) .....it's most perfect..... (93) ..... in books. They were written in..... (94) .....handwritings, and decorated with brightly coloured miniature paintings. They used different colours..... (95) .....blue ones, for decoration on walls and floors both inside and outside.*

91)  
 1) also      2) as well      3) too      4) the same

The correct choice is number 1. Since it is related to applying structure, it is codified as C2.

#### **Reading Passage:**

*Peter Pan, the boy who never grew up, became known to the world in the play Peter Pan by the Scottish writer Sir James Barrie. The play was first acted in 1904 and is nowadays put on the stage nearly every year at Christmas. One of Sir James Barrie's friends had five small sons, and the story of Peter Pan's adventures grew out of the long series of games that the author and the boys played together.*

*According to the play, all children when they are little would like never to have to grow up, but to be children for ever in an imaginary land of adventure. This was just what Peter Pan was able to do, for he had escaped from*

ordinary life and lived in the Never Never Land. Sometimes Peter would come to the real world and take real children back with him to the Never Never Land, and in the play it was the Darling family....Wendy, John, and Micheal...who went with him and shared his adventures. With Peter too were a number of Lost Boys who had no mothers and could not get back to the ordinary world. During her visit Wendy Darling looked after them and became a mother of them.

Peter was very sure of himself and very brave in danger. When he thought in one adventures that he was going to be drowned, he did not let himself be afraid, but just said, "To die will be an awfully big adventure". He was saved, however, and together with the children managed to destroy Captain Hook. The Darling family went back to their home and their parents, but Peter returned to the Never Never Land to live as a boy for ever.

96) All the following are some of the people in the play Peter pan EXPECT.....

- 1) Lost Boys
- 2) Wendy Darling
- 3) John and Micheal
- 4) five small sons of Barrie's friend

The correct choice is number 4. For answering this question, the learners have to grasp the meaning by translating and interpreting, so it is codified as B1.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Learning Objectives in UEE Items Based on Bloom's Revised Taxonomy*

In what follows the learning objectives based on Bloom's revised taxonomy for different fields, years, and universities are analyzed. To this end, table 5 is designed which shows the frequencies and percentages of the learning objectives.

Table 5: Learning Objectives in UEE Items

Learning Objectives for UEE Items		A. Remember				B. Understand				C. Apply				D. Analyze		E. Evaluate		F. Create	
Codes		A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	B4	C1	C2	C3	C4	D0	D4	E0	E4	F0	F4
Mathematics, State, 1380 (2001),25	Frequency & Percentage	1 4%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	16 64%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	7 28%	0 0%	0 0%	1 4%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Mathematics, State, 1385 (2006),25	Frequency & Percentage	2 8%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	12 48%	1 4%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	6 24%	0 0%	0 0%	4 16%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Mathematics, State, 1390 (2011),25	Frequency & Percentage	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	12 48%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	5 20%	0 0%	0 0%	6 24%	2 8%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Natural Sciences, State, 1380 (2001),25	Frequency & Percentage	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	16 64%	3 12%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	5 20%	0 0%	0 0%	1 4%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Natural	Frequency	1	0	0	0	16	1	0	0	0	5	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0



Sciences, State, 1385 (2006),25	y& Percentag e	4%	0 %	0 %	0 %	64%	4 %	0%	0 %	0 %	20 %	0 %	0 %	8%	0 %	0%	0 %	0%	0%
Natural Sciences, State, 1390 (2011),25	Frequenc y& Percentag e	2 8%	0 0 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	11 44%	1 4 %	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0 %	3 12 %	1 4 %	0 0 %	4 16 %	0 0 %	1 4%	2 8 %	0 0%	0 0%
Humanitie s, State, 1380 (2001),25	Frequenc y& Percentag e	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	16 64%	1 4 %	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0 %	6 24 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	2 8%	0 0 %	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0%	0 0%
Humanitie s, State, 1385 (2006),25	Frequenc y& Percentag e	2 8%	0 0 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	12 48%	1 4 %	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0 %	5 20 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	4 16 %	0 0 %	0 0%	1 4 %	0 0%	0 0%
Humanitie s, State, 1390 (2011),25	Frequenc y& Percentag e	1 4%	0 0 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	13 52%	0 0 %	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0 %	6 24 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	3 12 %	1 4 %	1 4%	0 0 %	0 0%	0 0%
Mathemat ics, Azad, 1380 (2001),30	Frequenc y& Percentag e	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	14 46.6 7%	1 3. 33 %	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0 %	8 26. 67 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	7 23. 33 %	0 0 %	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0%	0 0%
Mathemat ics, Azad, 1385 (2006),25	Frequenc y& Percentag e	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	14 56%	1 4 %	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0 %	2 8%	0 0 %	0 0 %	2 8%	6 24 %	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0%	0 0%
Mathemat ics, Azad, 1390 (2011),20	Frequenc y& Percentag e	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	10 50%	0 0 %	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0 %	4 20 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	5 25 %	1 5 %	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0%	0 0%
Natural Sciences, Azad, 1380 (2001),30	Frequenc y& Percentag e	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	14 46.6 7%	1 3. 33 %	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0 %	7 23. 33 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	8 26. 67 %	0 0 %	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0%	0 0%
Natural Sciences, Azad, 1385 (2006),25	Frequenc y& Percentag e	1 4%	0 0 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	16 64%	1 4 %	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0 %	2 8%	0 0 %	0 0 %	2 8%	3 12 %	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0%	0 0%
Natural Sciences, Azad, 1390 (2011),20	Frequenc y& Percentag e	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	9 45%	1 5 %	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0 %	4 20 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	6 30 %	0 0 %	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0%	0 0%
Humanitie s, Azad, 1380 (2001),30	Frequenc y& Percentag e	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	17 56.6 7%	0 0 %	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0 %	7 23. 33 %	2 6. 67 %	0 0 %	4 13. 33 %	0 0 %	0 0%	0 0 %	0 0%	0 0%

Humanities, Azad, 1385 (2006),25	Frequency & Percentage	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	15 60%	1 4%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 8%	0 0%	0 0%	6 24%	1 4%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Humanities, Azad, 1390 (2011),20	Frequency & Percentage	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	12 60%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	5 25%	0 0%	0 0%	3 15%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Average	Frequency & Percentage	2.22 %	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	54.5 0%	3. 10%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	19. 70%	0. 60%	0 0%	15. 62%	3. 16%	0.6 6%	0. 44%	0 0%	0 0%

In the Mathematics field, State University and the year 1380 (2001), B1 has the highest percentage, and it equals 64%. The order of learning objectives after B1 from the highest one to the lowest is as follows: C2 (28%), A1 and D0 (4%). The order of learning objectives for the Mathematics field, State University and the year 1385 (2006) is: B1 (48%), C2 (24%), D0 (16%), A1 (8%), and B2 (4%). And considering the year 1390 (2011), State University and the Mathematics field the order of learning objectives is, B1 (48%), D0 (24%), C2 (20%), and D4 (8%).

The fourth, fifth and sixth rows indicate the learning objectives of Natural sciences field in the years 1380 (2001), 1385 (2006), and 1390 (2011), and for the State University. In the year 1380 the order of learning objectives is: B1 (64%), C2 (20%), B2 (12%), and D0 (4%). In the year 1385, this order exists for learning objectives: B1 (64%), C2 (20%), D0 (8%), and A1 and B2 (4%). Moreover in the year 1390, B1, has the highest percentage. The order of learning objectives based on their percentage is as follows: B1 (44%), D0 (16%), C2 (12%), A1 and E4 (8%), and B2 and E0 (4%).

The next three rows show the frequencies and percentages for the Humanities field, State University, and the mentioned years. In the year 1380 (2001), the order of learning objectives with regard to their percentages is as follows. B1 (64%), C2 (24%), D0 (8%), and B2 (4%). In the year 1385 (2006), the order of learning objectives is: B1 (48%), C2 (20%), D0 (16%), A1 (8%), and B2, and E0 (4%). What is more in the year 1390 (2011) the order of learning objectives is as follows: B1 (52%), C2 (24%), D0 (12%), and A1, D4, and E0 (4%).

In the field Mathematics, Azad University and the year 1380 (2001), B1 is a learning objective which has the highest percentage among others. The percentage of it equals 46.66. After B1, C2 (26.67%), D0 (23.33%), and B2 (3.33%), have the highest percentages. In the year 1385 (2006), in the same field and university the order of learning objectives from the highest one to the lowest is: B1 (56%), D4 (24%), C2 and D0 (8%), and B2 (4%). Moreover in the year 1390 (2011), B1 with the percentage of 50% is more frequent. After it the order of learning objectives is: D0 (25%), C2 (20%), and D4 (5%).

In the year 1380 (2001), Natural sciences field and Azad University the learning objectives which are considered are as follows: B1 (46.67%), D0 (26.67%), C2 (23.33%), and B2 (3.33%). And in the year 1385 (2006), the order of learning objectives is: B1 (64%), D4 (12%), C2, and D0 (8%), and A1, and B2 (4%). Moreover, in the year 1390 (2011), B1 has the highest percentage. So the order of learning objectives for this exam is: B1 (45%), D0 (30%), C2 (20%), and B2 (5%).

In the year 1380 (2001), Humanities field and Azad University as the results indicate, B1 is a learning objective which has the highest frequency and percentage. Its percentage equals 56.67. After it, C2 (23.33%), D0 (13.33%), and C3 (6.67%), have the highest percentages. Moreover in the year 1385 (2006), in the mentioned field and university the order of learning objectives is: B1 (60%), D0 (24%), C2 (8%), and B2, and D4 (4%). Furthermore, in the year 1390 (2011), like all the previous years, B1 has the highest percentage. The order of learning objectives in this exam is: B1 (60%), C2 (25%), and D0 (15%).

Eventually the last row in table 5 indicates the total average of UEE items in all the fields, years, and in both universities mentioned before. For the purpose of this paper, the results are also analyzed for different fields, years and universities in terms of HOTS and LOTS. Generally speaking the first year in considering more HOTS is the year 1390 (2011), since HOTS=25.85% and LOTS= 74.15%, so in the year 1385 (2006), HOTS= 20.67%, and

LOTS= 79.33%, finally in the year 1380 (2001), HOTS= 13.22% and LOTS= 86.78%. Different years are also compared together in both universities, the order of years in State University regarding considering more HOTS is 1390 (2011) (HOTS=26.67%, and LOTS= 73.33%), 1385 (2006) (HOTS= 14.67%, and LOTS= 85.33%), and 1380 (2001) (HOTS= 5.33%, and LOTS= 94.67%). But in Azad University the order of years is like this: 1385 (2006) (HOTS=26.67%, and LOTS= 73.33%), 1390 (2011) (HOTS= 25%, and LOTS= 75%), and 1380 (2001) (HOTS= 21.11%, LOTS= 78.89%). Moreover the first field in considering more HOTS is the field Mathematics because HOTS= 22.89%, and LOTS= 77.11%, after it more attention is paid to HOTS in the Natural Sciences field, since HOTS=19.45, and LOTS= 80.55%, eventually Humanities field is the last field in considering HOTS, in this field HOTS= 19.05%, and LOTS= 80.95%. However, when these fields are compared together in the two universities some contradictions appear. The first field in considering HOTS in both universities is the field Mathematics, but the second field in Azad University is Natural Sciences field, while in the State University Humanities is the second field. Moreover, the third field in Azad University is Humanities, whereas Natural Sciences is the third field in the State University. Furthermore, in Azad University more attention is paid to HOTS, because HOTS=24.25%, and LOTS= 75.75%, but in State University, HOTS= 15.56%, and LOTS= 84.44%.

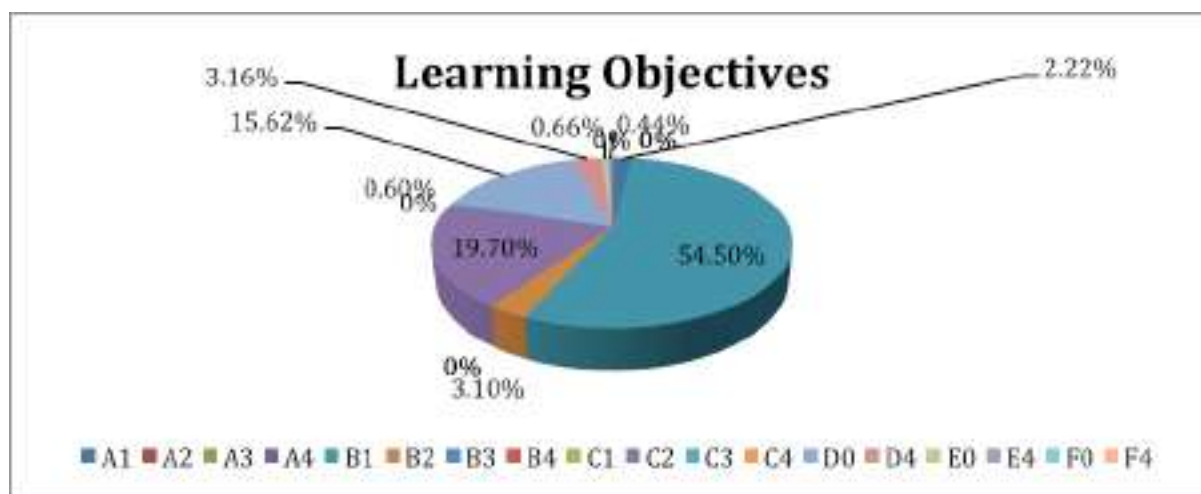


Figure 3: Total Average of UEE Items in the years 1380, 1385, & 1390

Since the data in this study are in terms of frequencies, and because frequencies are non-parametric, Chi-square is used to estimate the significance of differences between the frequencies of the different levels of thinking based on Bloom's revised taxonomy.

Table 6: Chi-Square Test for Azad and State Universities in Terms of Learning Objectives

Universities	Azad University	State University
Chi-Square	1.465E2 <sup>a</sup>	2.379E2 <sup>a</sup>
df	3	4
Asymp.sig	.000	.000

Table 7: Chi-Square Test for Years in Terms of Learning Objectives

Years	1380 (2001)	1385 (2006)	1390 (2011)
Chi-Square	1.282E2 <sup>a</sup>	1.734E2 <sup>a</sup>	1.069E2 <sup>a</sup>
df	3	4	4
Asymp.sig	.000	.000	.000

Table 8: Chi-Square Test for Fields in Terms of Learning Objectives

Fields	Mathematics	Natural Sciences	Humanities
Chi-Square	83.333 <sup>a</sup>	1.677E2 <sup>a</sup>	164.067 <sup>a</sup>
df	3	4	4

Asymp.sig	.000	.000	.000
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As the tables (3, 4, 5) illustrate the differences between universities, years and fields are significant (Sig=.000). It means that the differences between the frequencies of the different levels of thinking in UEE items are significant. Thereby, in University Entrance Examination, learning objectives occur by chance and are random.

### **Discussion**

As the results of this study shows, in the year 1390 (2011), more attention is paid to HOTS, after it is the year 1385 (2006) and finally the year 1380 (2001). Although an improvement is seen among years toward considering more HOTS in UEE items, but the consideration of higher levels of thinking in UEE items are still not satisfactorily, since LOTS are considered more in UEE items, even in the year 1390 (2011). And regarding different fields, HOTS are considered more in Mathematics field, then Natural Sciences field and at last Humanities field. Moreover when the universities are compared together it is obvious that more attention is paid to HOTS in Azad University.

To recast, the last row in Table 5 provides the total average of learning objectives in UEE items based on Bloom's revised taxonomy. In all the years, fields, and in both universities, B1 always had the highest percentage. So here again, it has the highest percentage (54.50%). In this sense, after B1 which belongs to the lower levels of thinking, the order of learning objectives is as follows: C2 (19.70%), D0 (15.62%), D4 (3.16%), B2 (3.1%), A1 (2.22%), E0 (0.66%), C3 (0.60%), and E4 (0.44%). So, generally speaking, HOTS=19.88%, and LOTS=80.12%. Therefore, these learning objectives, A1, B1, B2, C2, C3, D0, D4, E0, and E4, are considered in UEE items, while these are not included: A2, A3, A4, B3, B4, C1, C4, F0, and F4. Consequently, only considering the cognitive dimension, one can easily see that all the levels are considered more or less, except "Creating". In other words, no attention is paid to "Creating" which is the highest level of thinking in Bloom's revised taxonomy. (Figure 4).

Accordingly, based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) are the main concern of UEE items. Hence, University Entrance Examination in Iran cannot make learners critical thinkers. Furthermore, it is clear that those crucial principles necessary for constructing good items are not met in UEE items in Iran.

The results of this study are similar to, Fazilatfar and Barzegar (2009), Razmjoo and Heydari Tabrizi (2010), Karamustafaoglu, Sevim, Karamustafaoglu, and Cepini (2010) Swart (2010), Lan and Chern (2010), and Demir and Eryaman (2012).

### **CONCLUSION**

In this part the research questions are answered one by one.

#### ***Is Bloom's revised taxonomy reflected in entrance examinations in Iran or not?***

The results of this study indicates the presence of all levels of thinking in University Entrance Exam (UEE) items in Iran, expect "Creating" which is the highest level of thinking in Bloom's revised taxonomy. Paying attention to more details, it is obvious that B1, among all levels of thinking has the highest percentage; its percentage equals 54.50%. Accordingly, the order of thinking levels for UEE items from the one with the highest percentage, toward the lowest one is as follows: B1 (54.50%), C2 (19.70%), D0 (15.62%), D4 (3.16%), B2 (3.10%), A1 (2.22%), E0 (0.66%), C3 (0.60%), and E4 (0.44%). On the other hand, these levels of thinking are absent in UEE items: A2, A3, A4, B3, B4, C1, C4, F0, and F4.

#### ***In which field or fields, higher levels of thinking are considered more?***

The results of the study show that the Mathematics field is the first field in considering higher levels of thinking. In this field, the percentage of HOTS=22.89 %, and LOTS=77.11 %. The second field is Natural Sciences because HOTS=19.45%, and LOTS=80.55 %. Eventually the last field is Humanities, in this field HOTS=19.05%, and LOTS=80.95%. But, when Azad and State Universities are compared together in terms of different fields some contradictions appear. While in both universities the Mathematics field is the first field, the second field in Azad University is Natural Sciences, and in the State University Humanities is the second field. Accordingly, in Azad University the third field is Humanities, and in the State University, Natural Sciences is the third field, in considering higher levels of thinking based on Bloom's revised taxonomy.

#### ***Can any changes be observed in University Entrance Exam items regarding Bloom's revised taxonomy in***

*different years?*

In the year 1380, the percentage of HOTS equals 13.22, and the percentage of LOTS equals 86.78. While in the year 1385, HOTS=20.67%, and LOTS=79.33%, and finally in the year 1390, HOTS=25.85%, and LOTS=74.15%. Hence, it is obvious that an improvement exists among these years toward considering more HOTS although in University Entrance Exams in Iran more attention is still paid to LOTS. Moreover, when State and Azad universities are compared together regarding various fields it becomes clear that in State University in the year 1390, more attention is paid to HOTS, while in Azad University in the year 1385, more attention is paid to HOTS.

***In which exam, State or Azad Universities are higher levels of thinking reflected more?***

In the Azad University higher levels of thinking are considered more, since in the mentioned fields the percentage of HOTS equals 24.25, whereas in the State University it equals 15.56%.

***Pedagogical Implications***

The results of this study indicated that in the University Entrance Exams in Iran more attention is paid to Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS). Accordingly, based on the results of this study some pedagogical implications can be reached.

1. "Once prospective teachers graduate from their programs without attaining high-level cognitive questions during their education, they do not prefer to assess their students' progress with high-level questions as a teacher" (Demir & Eryaman, 2012, p. 60). So, teachers, specifically high school teachers should be made aware of Bloom's revised taxonomy in order to engage higher levels of thinking in their teaching.
2. High school textbooks should also be designed in line with the mentioned taxonomy in order to contain all levels of thinking, specifically the higher ones.
3. Since high school textbooks are directly influenced by the University Entrance Exams, more attention should be paid in constructing and developing UEE items.
4. Moreover, high school teachers should use the exam items that encourage higher levels of thinking in their students since "the questions given in the exams by the instructors reflect the objectives, goals, outputs and the methodologies that the instructors apply in their teaching" (Demir & Eryaman, 2012, p.60).
5. And, eventually, and maybe most important of all is the point that University Entrance Exam test developers should be trained in the right way to consider all types of questions in these exams. It means that they should consider not only Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS), but they should also focus on Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS).

***Recommendations for Further Studies***

1. Future studies can be done comparing all the five fields. It means that future studies can compare all the fields Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Humanities, Art, and Foreign languages together.
2. Since university entrance examination has a direct impact on the way high school teachers teach in their classes, a study can be conducted in order to observe to what extent these teachers consider higher levels of thinking based on Bloom's revised taxonomy in their teaching.
3. Similar to the above mentioned point, also it is good to conduct a study to analyze the English textbooks of high schools which play a role in UEE in terms of Bloom's revised taxonomy.
4. Moreover, a study can be done to analyze the items of textbooks which are prepared to help learners become ready for the actual entrance examination.
5. And finally as this study compared Azad and State Universities, future studies can include Payame Noor Entrance Exam items.

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## THE ROLE OF TEXT FAMILIARITY AND IQ IN READING COMPREHENSION AND RECALL PROCESS OF A GROUP OF IRANIAN ADVANCE STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

This study is designed to find more evidence of the role of background knowledge as well as intelligence quotient (IQ) in reading comprehension and recall of students in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) situations. The study was conducted in three succeeding phases. First, 90 subjects took the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) test. The results enabled the researcher to select 20 subjects in advance level for the study. In the second phase, an IQ test was administered to measure the intelligence level of the subjects. In the third phase, a questionnaire and four reading comprehension texts were administered. The students were supposed to read the questions on the questionnaire and answer them to decide their level of familiarity with the texts. Then, based on their answers two texts were considered familiar and two unfamiliar. The subjects were supposed to read the texts and write their recalls on a separate sheet of paper. Finally, the recall protocols were analyzed. The result of the t-tests showed that background knowledge did not have effects on reading comprehension and the recall of the texts. The correlation procedures further showed that IQ and recall were correlated but it was not significant. Based on the results it can be inferred that in advance level other factors such as reading strategies can play a role in comprehension.

**KEYWORDS:** Background knowledge, Reading comprehension, Recall process, IQ

### INTRODUCTION

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Reading as the most important skill in EFL/ESL situations, particularly in advanced level occupies the most class time to achieve different goals. Thus, an important prerequisite to advanced proficiency English is the ability to read and comprehend well. Quite simply, without having reading proficiency, second language learners are not capable of performing well communicatively. As a result, researchers attempt to find new approaches to meet these educational needs.

There have been some views to second language reading over the past years. The first one holds a passive, bottom-up view of second language reading. This view assumes that the reader first recognizes the printed letters and words and then builds up meaning from the smallest units in the text or at the “bottom” to larger units at the “top” and then reconstructs the whole intended meaning.

It was about 1970 that background knowledge was recognized to have a great role in second language reading. Especially the lack of cultural familiarity with reading texts influences negatively the total comprehension. According to Fries (in Patricia L. Carrell, 1988), a failure to relate the linguistic meaning of reading passages to culture factors would result in deficiency in comprehension. This is culture-specific knowledge which is known as “schemata”.

The second view on second language reading, which emerged about some decades ago, is a psycholinguistic model of reading which has a strong influence on reading comprehension. According to this model, the reader predicts meaning and then confirms the predictions by relating them to his past experiences and knowledge of the language. This is in line with what schema theory has suggested.

The crucial role of background knowledge in comprehension and recall of text has been investigated and shown in different studies. In relation to comprehension and retrieval of a text, Orasana (1986) states that “the knowledge a reader brings to a text is a principle determiner of how that text will be comprehended, and what may be learned

and remembered” (P. 32). He also mentions that “schema theory would predict that propositions which are rated as important in light of the schema are more likely to be learned and remembered” (P. 41). Anderson et al. (1983) concluded “a schema influences learning and memory when activated before reading and retrieval when accessed after reading” (P. 43). Hammadou (1991) reported “readers with more knowledge about the topic showed more logical (correct) inferences based on the text and fewer illogical (incorrect) inferences” (P: 178).

One of the procedures to measure the amount of comprehension of texts and recall of them is to use recall protocols. Recall protocol is a technique by which the amount of comprehension is measured by analyzing the idea units retrieved from the text. Bernhardt (1983, 1991) and Swaffar et al. (1991), among others (Carrell, 1983, 1984a, 1984b; Wells, 1986), suggest the use of recall protocols as a measure of holistic or overall reading comprehension.

This study has been designed to find further evidence on the effect of background knowledge and IQ on reading comprehension and recall of the texts. Although a number of studies have been carried out with reference to the processes and factors which affect reading comprehension among which is the role background knowledge in retrieval of the text, the role of background knowledge and IQ in retrieving expected information is not yet known to the best knowledge of present researcher. So, it can become a significant research topic to be investigated through this study. So many students especially at university levels have comprehension problems. More studies regarding the comprehension problems are needed to provide both the teacher and learners with a good understanding of the nature of the problem and factors involved with it. So to serve this purpose and also due to few studies in relation to the effect of schema theory and IQ on recall of the text in Iran, this study has been carried out.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. Do students comprehend and remember the familiar texts better than unfamiliar ones?
2. Does IQ have any relationship with comprehension and recall of the texts?

The positive finding related to the effect of background knowledge on reading comprehension and retrieval of the texts led the researcher to consider one main positive directive hypotheses and one subsidiary hypothesis for this study.

H: There is a positive relationship between background knowledge and recall of the text in advance learners.

H: There is a positive relationship between IQ and recall of the texts in advance learners.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

The subjects for this study were 90 EFL students at Iran Language Institute (ILI). These students have been studying English as a foreign language for at least three years. On the basis of a sample TOFEL proficiency test (Barron's 1986) 20 subjects with the score above 525 (total 650) were considered at advance level. Both sexes – about 50 girls and 40 boys- took part in this study. To have a check over probable intertwining variables, only subjects whose native language was Persian and their age level was between 18 to 30 were selected.

### ***Instrumentations***

**In this study, the following tests have been used.**

### ***TOFEL TEST***

The experimental TOFEL published by Barrons ((1986) was used to determine the proficiency level. The statistical features of the test relating to reliability and validity have been reported by the publisher and it is claimed to be highly valid and reliable. This test was administered to decide the level of subjects for this study and on the base of this test the subjects were considered advance learners. The score on this test has been calculated based on the method available in the BARRONS TOFEL book available in the market. It includes three sections; listening comprehension (50 questions), vocabulary and structure (40 questions), and reading comprehension and vocabulary (60 questions). The total time is 120 minutes. All three sections of the test were administered simultaneously.

***IQ TEST***

The Advanced Progressive Matrices Sets one and two (or APM) was used as a measure of IQ level. It is constructed in 1943 and in 1947 a revision was prepared for general use. In 1962 edition, twelve problems have been taken out so the total scores on the revised set advanced from 0 to 36. These 36 problems increase in difficulty more steadily and become considerably more complex.

The test showed a high retest reliability of 0.91 with adults of more than average intellectual capacity and above 18. This test is also quite suitable for eliciting the higher intellectual functions and for assessing superior intellectual efficiency, as the publisher declares (Test Manual, 1962).

***FOUR READING COMPREHENSION TEXTS***

These texts were chosen from some reading comprehension books available in the market. The length and the readability of these texts are almost the same (see table 1. below). Many factors have been established to measure the readability but in fact their aim, construction and validity are not very different (Alderson & Urquhart, 1987). A typical readability is the Fog Index which is used in this study.

$$\frac{\text{No. word}}{\text{No. sentences}} + \frac{\text{no. 3syllable words}}{\text{no. words}} \times \frac{100}{1} \times 0.4$$

And the result is interpreted as 12- = easy, 13-16 = undergraduate, 16+ = postgraduate. This formula is based on the number of words in a sentence.

These texts were to be read and recalled by the students. Two of these texts –Robin Hood (RH) and Family Size and Economic Development (FSED)- were hypothesized to be familiar and the other two –Professional Sport (PS) and Earth Day (ED)- were hypothesized to be unfamiliar.

*Table 1: The readability and length of the texts*

Texts	Text length	Readability
ROBBIN HOOD	330 Words	22.7
FAMILY SIZE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	319	21.5
PROFESSIONAL SPORTS	321	20.3
EARTH DAY	322	20

***A Questionnaire***

To determine the amount of familiarity of subjects with the texts, the researcher gave a questionnaire with 10 questions on the reading passages –three questions on Robin Hood, three questions on Professional Sports, two questions on Earth Day, and two questions on Family Size And Economic Development- was used. The results were used to once again divide them into homogeneous groups in relation to familiarity and unfamiliarity with the texts.

***Procedure***

In the first phase of the study, a TOFEL exam was given to about ninety students at the ILI. Before the exam, the students were provided with enough information about the test. Based on the results 20 students with the score above 525 were considered advance learners.

In the second phase of this study which was held on a separate session, these twenty subjects took an IQ test. The subjects were briefed on the content and the way to answer the questions. The time limit was announced and the results were collected. This test was corrected based on the number of correct answers as suggested by the test developers. The range of scores was between zeros to 36.

In the third phase of this study which was also held on a separate day, first a questionnaire was given to each subject and they were told to answer the questions on the paper. They were also told that they can easily leave blank any questions they did not know. The purpose of this was to determine how familiar the subjects had been with the text. After completing this questionnaire, they were supplied with the first reading text. An empty sheet was also given to them to write their recalls on it. They were already informed of what they were supposed to do. The subjects were asked to consider the following points when writing the recalls.

- (1) The students should not read the text longer than ten minutes and they should not go back to the text while they are writing the recalls.
- (2) The subjects should write their recalls on a separate sheet.
- (3) They should write their recalls in full sentences.
- (4) They should write their recalls in English.
- (5) They should write whatever they remember about the text.
- (6) They have enough time to write their recalls.
- (7) Grammatical and spelling mistakes are not important.

The same procedure was followed for the rest of the texts. Then, the questionnaires and the recall protocols were collected. The questionnaires were rated. The score above 50 was considered familiar and below that unfamiliar. The two texts –Robin Hood and Family Size and Economic Development were proved to be familiar as it was hypothesized and the other two texts –Earth Day and Professional Sports- were also proved to be unfamiliar.

As put forward by Alderson (1984), the idea unit is the unit of text analysis and widely used in reading comprehension oriented research. Thus, as a test of comprehension students can be asked to write a recall protocol of a text they have read which in turn is scored in terms of the number of idea unit it contains. So in order to correct the recall protocols, each text was parsed into idea units. For the ease of scoring, an effort was made to establish a unit in which there was only one bit of information expected to be significant for the analysis as recommended by Alderson (1984). It was also set that every parallel or paraphrased sentence are to be accepted. So all recall protocols were analyzed and graded based on these idea units. In RH text which was 330 words in length, there were 36 idea units; in FSED text which was 319 words in length, there were 28 idea units; in PS text which was 321 words in length, there were 30 idea units; in ED text which was 322 words in length, there were 28 idea units (see Table 2). These idea units were verified by two independent judges.

*Table 2: The number of Idea Units in Each Text*

Texts	Length	Number of Idea Units
RH	330	36
FSED	319	28
PS	321	30
ED	322	28

*Table 3: Examples of idea units are given as follows.*

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Robin Hood text (2 idea units)

Robin Hood is a legendary hero/ who lived in Sherwood Forest, in Nottingham, with his band of followers. / (As illustrated above the sentence contains 2 idea units as separated off by two virgules.)

Family Size and Economic Development (1 idea unit)

Poor people often have larger families than middle class and upper class people./

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Based on this criterion, any sentence presented in this way was given a point. For example one of the students recalled the first idea unit in Robin Hood this way; "*Robin Hood was a hero and he lived in Nottingham with his friends.*" Or for the second text one wrote; "*there are more children in poor families than high- class families*". Both of these students got a point for their recall. Two scorers scored the recall protocols and using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, the inter-rater reliability was found to be .85.

### Data analysis

The data gathered were analyzed using the SPSS statistical software. At first, descriptive data for the IQ and recall protocols were computed. As stated already, the main aim of this study was to confirm that the background knowledge of the subjects had a role on their reading comprehension and recall protocols. The design of the study made the application of one matched t-test necessary. The aim was to compare the means of two familiar and unfamiliar texts. The value of the t-observed for the comparisons of means and that of t-critical were calculated and tested for the significance of the comparisons. The alpha for achieving significance was set at 0.05. Finally, correlation procedures were used to examine the direction and magnitude of the relationship between IQ and the recall protocols.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

To investigate the probable effect of background knowledge on reading comprehension and recall of the Iranian EFL students, four reading texts were selected- two familiar and two unfamiliar.

Table 3. indicates the mean score for two familiar and unfamiliar texts which turned out to be 13.3 with standard deviation of 3.9. The observed-t is 1.136 with degree freedom of 19 which is not greater than the t-critical.

Table 3: The result of t-tests for Familiar and Unfamiliar texts in advance group

<i>Group</i>	<i>N</i>	$\overline{X}$	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<b>d.f.</b>
Advance	20	13.3	3.9	1.136	19

Table 4. illustrates the correlation matrix for IQ and recall protocols. As it is shown in the table, the correlation between IQ and recall of the familiar texts is 0.4745 and 0.42. and the correlation between IQ and recall of the unfamiliar ones are 0.3781 and 0.27 respectively.

Table 4: Correlations between IO and recall protocols

RECALL	RH	FSED	PS	ED
IQ	0.4745	0.42	0.3781	0.27

The result of t-test indicates that the observed  $-t$  1.136 is not significant at 0.05 level. In other words, advanced students did not comprehend and remember the familiar texts better than unfamiliar ones. This finding is not in line with what previously mentioned regarding the role of background knowledge in reading comprehension and retrieval of texts. Orasana (1986), Anderson et al. (1983), Hammadou (1991), Fries (in Patricia L. Carrell, 1988) all reported that the knowledge a reader brings to the text while reading helps him understand and remember the text better. However, it seems that other factors besides background knowledge have affected subjects' performance here.

By taking a look at the correlation results taken in the second table, one can infer that although there exist a correlation between IQ and recall protocols but the relationship is not very strong and significant. IQ –as it is expected- did not have any effect on their comprehension and recall of the texts. This finding again is not in line with what previously found. Jacobsons (1996) found that the children with low average IQ scores are much behind in reading comprehension.



## **CONCLUSIONS**

As it can be seen in the fourth table, the observed  $t$  is 1.136 with the d.f. of 19 is not significant at 0.05 level; therefore this hypothesis is rejected. The advance students did not remember the familiar texts better than the unfamiliar ones. This finding is not in line with the previous findings regarding the role of background knowledge in reading comprehension and their recall of the texts. The researcher believes that one probable explanation for this rather strange result may be due to the advance level of the subjects. In other words, advance learners are capable of using other skills such as reading comprehension strategies for better comprehension of the texts and therefore better recalling. According to (Baker & Brown, 1984; Garner, 1987) good readers possess a number of flexible, adaptable strategies that they use before, during, and after reading to maximize their comprehension. Furthermore, strategy use increases students' awareness of their own performance as they read (Garner, 1987; Pressley et al., 1989; Pressley et al., 1992). When confronting the unfamiliar texts, advance learners attempt to use other skills other than their background knowledge they are familiar with to comprehend and recall the texts. This can be a good explanation to the reason that their recall of the unfamiliar texts were not that much different from familiar ones.

In addition, the researcher found an additional result. As it is indicated in table 5, the correlation between IQ and recall are to some extent interesting and a bit strange since no significant relation is shown. In other words, the subjects' intelligence has no role or effect on comprehension and recall of the texts. This finding is not in line with previous findings. Jacobsons (1996) gave a series of IQ and achievement tests to 212 children. The children with low average IQ scores are likely to be at least two years behind in reading comprehension. The researcher believes that there can be three main reasons for this finding: the first reason is the number of the subjects; with a greater population of subjects the result can be more reliable. Better results can be obtained in correlation with a population above 30. The second reason can be the unfamiliarity of the subjects with the test. This lack of subjects' familiarity with the test format can also affect their performance to a great extent and therefore, on their performance on IQ test. The third reason can be the time limitations. The subjects were supposed to take the test in forty minutes. According to test developers, this can be considered as a kind of speed test of measuring intelligence. If more time had been given to the subjects, the results could have been different.

### ***Pedagogical Implications***

The findings of this study may have some implication for teachers, syllabus designers and evaluators. Teachers may find it useful to assess student comprehension with free recall method. Since it is argued that recall protocol is an attentive for testing reading and listening comprehension. Each student's verbal report might tell the teacher how the individual approaches the reading comprehension task and what aspects of the particular text seem to cause comprehension difficulties. Similarly, each student's recall protocol might indicate common linguistic and conceptual difficulties experienced through the reading or those which are specific to the individual. Thus, teachers can gain insights in the nature of their student's comprehension and therefore can meet their student's needs effectively.

Material designers can also take advantage of these findings too. The learner's background knowledge (linguistic and non-linguistic) should be taken into consideration in material selection. As indicated in this study, both linguistic and extra-linguistic knowledge can influence the speed and success in EFL reading comprehension. Thus, syllabus designers and material developers may make careful provision in moving in line with meeting the readers' extra-linguistic knowledge when designing some materials for them.

The results can also be useful in material designs especially for ESP courses whose aims are to make students familiar with the texts in their specialization. The closer the material is to the students' fields of specialty, the more familiar they are with the texts and consequently the better their understanding will be. Therefore, syllabus and material designers should make the texts compatible with the student's specialization as much as possible.

On the level of classroom practice, the results clearly provide support to the use of previewing activities, indicating that if such activities are appropriately structured and sufficiently be learner sensitive they can play a significant role in aiding learners to comprehend the materials better.

### ***Limitations of Study***

This study is only a scratch on the surface of the role of background knowledge in comprehension and student's recall. Of course further studies can be done related to the present hypothesis. Here are some suggestions. In this study we examined how much information was remembered. We must also examine how much of what kind of information is remembered, and what kind of information is further created from the repeated reading.

In the present study, students were above eighteen years old and of different ages. Other studies can be done regarding the age of the students to see whether the factor of age has any roles in recall protocols of students. The subjects in this study wrote whatever they recalled in English. This can affect their recalls. It is quite possible that subjects could recall more but unable to express it in English. So, it seems a good idea to do the same research allowing the students to write their recalls in their native language. There can be different and noticeable results.

In the present study, the readability and content familiarity were considered, still we do not know if formal schemata has had any effects on recalls or not. Further research can be carried out regarding the role of formal schemata in reading comprehension and recall protocols.

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**THE IMPACT OF IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS' REFLECTION ON THEIR INCORPORATION OF  
STRATEGY-BASED INSTRUCTION**

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**ABSTRACT**

What teachers can actually do to increase their students' learning and develop their creativity is still in need of more focus in second/foreign language education research. Needless to point out that reflection on actual practices inside the classrooms is key to teachers' creativity and professional development (Aghaii & Jadidi, 2013). The present study is therefore an attempt to find out the relationship between Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers reflection and strategy-based instruction. Two Likert-scaled questionnaires – one on teachers' reflection and another on teachers' views on language learning strategies – were administered to a group of 50 EFL teachers. Both questionnaires were based on five-likert scale ranging. The participants were both males and females with 5-8 years of experiences. The results from Pearson product-moment correlation revealed a high, positive correlation between teachers' reflection and their views regarding the incorporation of language learning strategies in instruction. The findings of the current study is in line with the general consensus in the field that practicing teachers should be equipped with reflective skills to be able to deal with contextual instructional challenges.

**KEYWORDS:** Language Learning Strategies, Strategy-Based Instruction, Reflection

**INTRODUCTION**

The role of teachers' reflection in making an effective strategy-based instruction is often neglected in second/foreign language instruction. Reflective thinking is a specific way of thinking that is distinguished by an individual's mental and emotional association in the thinking process. Reflective teaching means looking at what teachers do in the classroom, thinking about why they do it and thinking about if it works – a process of self-observation and self-evaluation. By gathering information about what happens in their classrooms and by considering and assessing this information, they recognize and investigate their own practices and basic beliefs. This may then cause shifts and enhancements in their teaching. Reflective teaching is therefore a means of efficient development which starts in our classroom (Submitted by TE Editor, 2011).

In fact, teacher reflection is a significant part of teacher growth and should be a part of their career. Reflection let teachers look at themselves, accept what they have done, and sometimes decide to change it. Akbari, Behzadpoor and Dadvand (2010) asserted that reflective teacher is:

“one who critically examines his/her practices, comes up with some idea as how to improve his/her performance to enhance students' learning, and puts those ideas into practice”.

Having recognized the importance of teacher reflectivity, teacher education programmers also sought to develop a reflective approach to teaching aim to develop the skills of considering the teaching processes thoughtfully, analytically and objectively, as a way of improving practices. According to Kelly (2012), there are some methods that teachers can follow them to benefit from reflection:

Daily Reflection - All teachers should spend a few times to debrief on the day's events. Typically, this only takes a very short time and during time the information can be quite valuable. Some teachers have daily journals while others simply write quickly notes about problems that they had in class.

End of Term Reflection - At the end of each term, looking back over the student's marks and referring back to their daily and unit reflection notes, teachers attempt and make a broad conclusion about things that are positive and things that require change and improvement.

End of Year Reflection – At the end of the year, read their notes and write down what they are most satisfied with along with things that require enhancement. Then, they should move on to the next step of the process: performing changes based on what they have learned.

Recent emphases on language learners' autonomy and their active participation in the learning contexts had practitioners try to implement strategy-based instruction (SBI). Brown (2007) defines strategies-based instruction as teaching learners with an emphasis on the strategic options that are available for learning; usually implying the teacher's facilitating awareness of those options in the learner and encouraging strategic action. Cohen, Weaver, and Li (1996) state that strategies-based instruction is a learner-centered approach to teaching that has two major parts: 1) students are explicitly taught how, when, and why strategies can be used to help language learning and language tasks, and 2) strategies are combined into every class materials, and may be explicitly or implicitly present into the language tasks. The objective of Strategy-Based Instruction is therefore to help learners become more responsible for their attempts to learn and use the target language. It also aims to help them become more active learners by allowing them to individualize the language learning experience (Cohen, 2000). It helps second language learners become more conscious of the ways in which they can learn most effectively, ways in which they can increase their own comprehension and production of the target language, and ways in which they can learn after leaving the classroom (Andrew D. Cohen, 1996).

During SBI students themselves should choose the strategies they want to apply not the strategies imposed on them. So learners should be taught not only the language but also guided toward strategies to heighten more useful learning (Rubin, Uhl Chamot, Harris, & Anderson, 2008). Teachers who have used this approach claim their students become more competent in completing classroom language tasks, take more responsibility for managing their own learning outside classroom, and get more self-assurance in their ability to learn and use the target language (Cohen, 2000). Common to all the models of SBI is an arrangement of four steps: 1. increasing consciousnesses of the strategies learners are already using 2. Teacher present strategies and act as models so that students become increasingly aware of their own thinking and learning processes 3. Preparing opportunities for students to help them move towards independent use of the strategies through slow removal of the scaffolding 4. Self assessment of the effectiveness of the strategies used and transfer of strategies to new situations.

SBI is not a mechanistic practice, neither for the learner nor the teacher, but needs reflection and assessment. Hence it is affected by the learning context, the quality of the task, and each learner's style, goals and past knowledge (Rubin, Uhl Chamot, Harris, & Anderson, 2008). The significance of helping students to become effective and autonomous learners has been noticed by a lot of second language teachers and researchers recently. It is also the goal of language learning instruction (Oxford 1990; Oxford & Leaver 1996; Wenden 1991). Learners should be taught not only the language but also skills and strategies needed to become autonomous learners who are more responsible for their own learning.

Language learning strategies are specific actions, behaviors, steps, tactics, or techniques that language learners use to improve their learning of the target language. All language learners use language learning strategies in the learning process. In fact, language learning strategies are used for all strategies that language learners use in learning the target language. Because there is a lot of information to be processed by learners in language classroom, learners use various language learning strategies to do tasks and process new input. Language learning strategies provide valuable information about how students evaluate the situation, plan, select appropriate skills in order to understand, learn, or remember new input they face in language classroom. According to Fedderholdth (1997), the language learner who is able to use a wide variety of language learning strategies appropriately can improve his language skills in a better way. Oxford (1990) maintained that students use L2 learning strategies as specific behaviors or thought processes to enhance their own learning.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Foster (2012) once noted that “learning strategies and the factors that influence their use have received much attention in recent years since it became widely accepted that learning is a process and the role of the teacher is to facilitate that process”. According to his findings, language teachers are aware of language learning strategies and they also realize that language learning strategies facilitate the learning of the target language.

According to Dabaghi (2012), the social and cultural capitals played a significant role in EFL learners’ language learning strategies. Therefore, not considering social and cultural capitals may accumulate to EFL students’ inability to get excellence in academic achievement.

Expert teachers adjust their thinking to accommodate the level of reflection a situation calls for. Their teaching is characterized by an intentional competence that enables them to identify and replicate best practice, refine serendipitous practice, and avoid inferior practice. Because of their ability to reflect, great teachers know not only *what* to do, but also *why*. Research (Constantino & De Lorenzo, 2001; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Glickman, 2002; Lambert, 2003) substantiates the role of reflection in teachers’ professional growth. A disposition toward reflection—and a good sense of when the teacher needs to step back and think deeply—should be part of all teachers’ knowledge base.

Brown (2007) states, “it has been found that students will benefit from SBI if they( 1) understand the strategy itself, (2) perceive it to be effective, and (3) do not consider its implementation to be overly difficult” (p.140). Therefore our efforts to teach students some technical know-how about how to tackle a language are well advised. He also asserted that, “the effective implementation of SBI in language classroom involves several steps and considerations: (1) identifying learners’ styles and potential strategies, (2) incorporating SBI in communicative language courses and classrooms, (3) providing extra-class assistance for learners (p.141).

Investigating whether or not there is any relationship between SBI and students’ listening comprehension, Li & Liu (2008) conduct a study and they conclude that if the instructors systematically introduce and reinforce strategies that can help students to improve listening competence and that are specially designed for any given test, their students may well improve the performance on language tasks.

In another study by Fu Yao (2012) the researcher tries to find if strategies-based instruction influences reading comprehension. It is found that SBI emphasizes skills for text comprehension, which makes reading more efficient. For many learners the formats have remained implicit and reading strategies makes these formats explicit. According to him the strategies-based reading instruction has not only exerted positive influence but also made a positive change in attitudes in terms of reading in English and teaching reading strategies can work in helping college students improve their reading in both proficiency and attitude.

Reflective practice helps teachers to be free from both impulsive and routine behavior. Additionally, reflection provides the means for teachers to build their daily experiences, allows them to act in a deliberate critical and intentional manner, raises their awareness about teaching, enables deeper understanding, and causes positive change (Farrell, 2003). Reflective thinking is necessary for teachers to control their teaching and become influential decision makers (Cole & Knowles, 2000; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004; York-Barr, Sommers, Ghore & Montie, 2001). Some of the scholars believe that it is only through teachers’ reflections of their own teaching that they become more professional and efficient practitioners who are able to describe their function in the context of educational objective (Michener & Liston, 1996). Larrivee(2006) believes that by taking part in systematic reflection about their work, teachers can be powerful decision makers who can act as change agents.

In a study Akbari and Karimiallvar (2010) investigate the relationship between three teacher-related variables – teaching style, teachers’ sense of efficacy, and teacher reflectivity – and students’ achievement in an English language teaching. They conclude that there is a high correlation between teacher reflectivity and students’ achievement outcomes. According to them, reflection is a teacher’s passionate desire to change problematic classroom conditions into a safe environment for students to learn and grow.

Schon (1998) speaks about two types of reflection. The first one is “reflection in action” which refers to the teacher’s ability to interpret and analyze and find solutions to the complex situations in the classroom while they are happening. During this time teacher relies on his past experiences. The second one is “reflection on action” which

takes place after the event has happened. It lets teachers think and analyze the actions and events that have taken place in the classroom and try to find solutions or decide to change their methods and ways of teaching. According to Schon both types of reflection are essential to become an effective teacher. Teachers can develop their teaching process through reflecting on their strengths and weaknesses. Being reflective means being self-critical with the purpose of improving one's teaching practices. Christodoulou (2012) states:

“naturally, each teacher is a part of a school and each school is a part of a community so even if a teacher concentrates basically only on his/her teaching in his/her reflection, its effects can influence primarily the pupils in the class he/she teaches and secondarily the school and the society both the pupils and the teacher are parts of”(p.).

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study attempts to investigate the effect of Iranian EFL teachers' reflection on their incorporation of Strategy-Based Instruction principles. There have been few researches on the effect of teacher reflection on strategy-based instruction. Abandoning from traditional transmission models of language teaching, current pedagogic environment has recently emphasized on the significant role of the teachers in creating learning contexts in which learners are taught to learn how to learn namely effective SBI. In fact, more studies need to be conducted in this area for us to develop true understanding of the factors which affect teachers' application of SBI inside the classrooms.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

Is there any relationship between teachers' reflection and their use of strategy-based instruction principles?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

A group of 50 teachers teaching in 10 institutes located in Marvdasht city in Iran was selected to participate in this study. The managers of these institutes were asked about the number of their teachers and then 5 teachers from each institute were randomly selected and asked to complete the questionnaires. 6 of them were not complete and 9 were not given back. So, we conduct a study with 35 participants. Participating teachers were both males and females with five to eight years of experience. All of them had Bachelor of Arts (BA) or master of arts (MA) degrees in English Literature, English Translation and English language teaching.

### *Instruments*

The above mentioned instruments were used to elicit information from the participants in this study:

- 1) Teacher reflectivity questionnaire. The teacher reflectivity questionnaire used in this study was developed by Akbari, Behzadpour, and Dadvand (2010). The questionnaire includes 29 items on a 5-point Likert format ranging from 1 = never to 5 = always. The questionnaire enjoys high reliability and validity as an instrument for measuring teacher reflectivity (Akbari, et al., 2010).
- 2) A questionnaire for teachers' perspectives on language learning strategies. Siriruck Thijittang Foster (2012) used this questionnaire in his study. This questionnaire contained 23 items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. It was designed to determine EFL teachers' views about language learning strategies.

### *Procedures*

#### *Data collection procedures*

The above mentioned questionnaires were typed in English. First, teachers were explained about the purpose of the study and about the problems related to this study. And also they were asked to complete the questionnaires carefully and honestly because their answers would be kept confidential and would be used just for research purposes. They were thanked in advance. After that, the first questionnaire (teachers' views on reflection) was distributed among them and they were asked to take them with themselves and give them back after three days. Then, the same teachers received the second questionnaire (teachers' perspective on language learning strategies). Again they were required to take them home and give them back after three days. Each questionnaire was coded in order to have a pair of questionnaires for each teacher.



#### Data analysis procedures

The above mentioned instruments were distributed to the teachers. As it was stated before, those questionnaires which were not complete and not given back were removed from the study. The data collected from the two questionnaires were analyzed and processed by SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistics (table 1) were reported in order to explore the teachers' views on their reflection and language learning strategies. To investigate the impact of teachers reflection on language learning strategies, Pearson product-moment correlation (table 2) was applied to the data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first table indicates the descriptive statistics on two variables under study. To study the nature of the distribution, this table was applied. Table 1 summarizes the descriptive results of the two instruments –teachers' reflection questionnaire and language learning strategies questionnaire. This table presents the descriptive statistics related to the teachers' reflection and their awareness of language learning strategies.

Table1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.	Variance
Teachers 'Reflectivity	35	47	79	126	106.86	12.866	165.538
Learning Strategy	35	42	80	122	100.31	8.491	72.104
Awareness							
Valid N (list wise)	35						

To investigate the existence of relationship between teachers' reflection and their views towards incorporating language learning strategies, Pearson product-moment correlation was employed. Table 2 clearly shows that there is a high positive correlation between the two variables. The correlation is (.000 < .05) and it is statistically significant.

Table 2: Correlation between teachers reflection and their SBI incorporation

		Teachers' Reflectivity	SBI
Teachers 'Reflectivity	Pearson Correlation	1	.211
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	35	35
Learning Strategy	Pearson Correlation	.211	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	35	35

The findings of the current study confirm the importance of both teachers' reflection and strategy-based instruction. In order to have pleasant classroom and acceptable teaching experiences, teachers need to be reflective. Lana M. Danielson (2009) mentioned that great teachers know when to make decisions quickly and when to step back and reflect. Implicit in SBI is teachers' autonomy without which they cannot make strategic decisions in response to the contextual demands of particular learning contexts. Teachers with low reflective skills cannot act autonomously. So, the results of the study clearly depict that we need to develop a reflective approach in our teacher education systems if SBI is intended to be accurately and effectively applied by practicing teachers. The fact however is that teachers' reflective behaviors and their effect on the quality of language education are so complex that one cannot easily and confidently generalize the findings from a single study to actual and real learning and teaching situations.

The major point therefore is that care must be taken not to oversimplify the issue by thinking of SBI as a pre-determined readymade package waiting for the teachers to be implemented in the classrooms. As Kumaravadivelu (2006) rightfully stated, in each learning context there are particular teachers teaching particular learners who pursue

particular objectives and teachers utilizing their teaching competences need to make context-specific decisions about the whatness and howness of SBI. This, of course, seems not realizable for teachers with low reflective skills. Thus, it sounds plausible to revise SBI and call it strategy-based reflective instruction (SBRI) as we believe that reflection is central in the sense that Without reflective skills one cannot expect learning strategies to be adequately embedded in language instruction.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' reflection and strategy-based instruction. The findings indicated that there is a high positive correlation between the two variables. Reflection is considered to be an important part of learning in teacher progress and is often the core of teacher progress activities (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). The findings of this study showed that Iranian EFL teachers are aware of the crucial role of their reflection. They realize that by being a reflective teacher they can improve their teaching. Studies on learning strategies indicate that a teacher's orientation and expertise in language learning strategies play a critical role in successful learner strategy instruction (Thompson & Rubin, 1996). The results of this study also indicated that Iranian EFL teachers are cognizant of the importance of strategy-based instruction. They know that language learning strategies are a learning tool for students and help learners learn the target language better.

## Limitations of the Study

There were some limitations in relation to this study: 1. A small number of the participants cooperated with the researcher in this study. 2. The instruments used in this study enjoy high levels of reliability and validity as claimed by the developers however the researchers did not reassess these two values for the particular participants cooperated in this study. 3. Because of the limited number of the participants the researchers did not control for the possible effect of teachers' experience on the relationship of the two variables investigated in this study.

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## THE MANIFESTATION OF LOTUS IN POEMS OF SOHRAB SEPEHRI

Nahid Zarindast

### ABSTRACT

As a contemporary poet, Sohrab Sepehri has influenced a wide range of poems. He is a representative for a new era. He fearlessly represents the domination and influences of religions in his poems. The reason of emersion of different religions is to meet and satisfy the spiritual needs of man in their own ways. Based on the religious beliefs of each person, he or she- in deep sense- can put beauty on his or her mind. There are numerous researches which has been conducted about Sohrab Sepehri and among them we can mention "the other Sohrab" by Ziyaodin Torabi which is quite a valuable piece in this relation. However, the emphasis on this paper is the influence of Buddhism on Sohrab's poetry and we cannot see a considerable research on this topic except a brief reference in the book of "Sohrab's utopia" by Mohsen Maghami. analyzing the foundation of Buddhism through the symbol of Lotus is the aim of this research. The Strong presence of eastern thought and footsteps of live religions in the works of this modernist invite us to have more and extensive research in this issue.

**KEYWORDS:** Sohrab Sepehri, Lotus, Budhha

### INTRODUCTION

Sohrab Sepehri was a ultra-religious poet which means he worshiped and praised what is beyond religion and that doesn't mean he wasn't a religious person but he felt himself more close to God.as an evidence to such claim we can refer to his forth Book which is "East of Sorrow" (1961). Sohrab went through this process gradually in which he ultimately gained a ultra-religious belief in religion. However, it has to be mentioned that his re-birth and consistency of thought and personality started with his "Water's Footfall" (1965), in this period he become a sentient, deep and wise poet.

*According to Sohrab, by reason we cannot know God and only by heart we should begin to know God. Essentially, when we want to study and analyze his insights and thoughts we shouldn't underestimates the influence of principles and beliefs of Zen Buddhism on him but this influence is not in a way that the poet absorbed in Zen Buddhism. (Niksefat, 2004:15)*

About the issue of supernaturalism, Sohrab attracted to Buddhism More than any other school. For him Buddha as a way to reach to metaphysics was the best path to choose. By the use of the symbols which is presented in Buddhism, Sohrab has brought a new feature to contemporary Persian poetry. Just like Buddhism, by the use of symbols Sohrab created a poetry in which the readers were invited to think in order to decoding. Along being a poet, Sohrab has numerous paintings which has been exhibited in the art galleries of around word both after and before his death .the main approach of this paper is the symbolism of Lutos in Sepehri's poetry by the use of ..... and Yoga Ritual.

### LITRATURE REVIEW

#### *Lotus*

*In my dreams I see*

*A Buddha in Lotus*

*Wherever benediction flowers grow, I pick them*

*I have a bouquet... (Sepehri,2001:68)*

In Sohrab Sepehri's poetry there is always a news about Lotus and this point becomes more interesting when we find out that Buddha considered himself as a Lotus which is came from the muddy waters of the universe .in another poem Sepehri says:

*At the edge of muddy waters,*

*I saw your smile on black mud,*

*I prayed.*

*In a thorn, your memory was hidden, I picked it up, I sprayed it to world ... (Ibid: 137)*

Also in the book of “Motahedin” it has mentioned that:

*In deep down of darkness, a Lotus grew from the ground and Buddha walked inside it in order to not stare to ten points of space (Motahedin,1976:525).*

*After birth wherever he went, from his footstep a Lotus grew. He saw gods and humans who honored him. He took seven steps to north and by each step a Lotus grew.(Ibid:182)*

This issue continued in “Motahedin” as following:

*Then as his first Avatar, he emerged as a young man called “Mage”. On his way to see the city of “Dipe Vetì” he talked with a girl who had seven Lotus in her hands. Buddha asked her that for whom is these flowers? And she told him that she want to give these flowers to “Dipnokeh” as a present. The girl had bought five of them with the value of five hundred coins and the other two had been given to her by a friend. “Mage” who is happy about the intents of this girl, asked her to sell five of them to him with value of five hundred coins. But she will accept this condition only if he marries her. After met with ancient Buddha “Dipnokeh” and listening to his preachings, he decide to become a “Buddhisto”. (Ibid:244)*

In Sepehri’s poetry “Lotus” has a mystery but this mystery is connected with its arrival in another land. The seed of this “Lotus” has come to the land of his dream and therefore changed his existence.

*Roof of Porch collapses*

*And Lotus stalk wraps around all the columns*

*Which reckless wind*

*Brings the seed of this Lotus to the dream land? (Ibid:205)*

Buddhism shows lots of respects for Lotus. There are numerous sculptures which display Buddha while he has a Lotus in his hand or he is sitting on a Lotus.

Regarding this issue, we can also mention the ideas of Rabindranath Tagore who was Indian poet, dramatis, thinker and also the winner of Nobel Prize. He has influential works such as “The Sacrifice”. He had a mystic and gnostic personality and his ideas were very close to Sohrab Sepehri’s ideas in Persian literature. Rabindranath Tagore has a poem about Lotus in which he says:

*Lotus hand,  
 Lotus place,  
 Lotus winter,  
 Lotus of light,  
 Lotus tear,  
 Lotus cycle,  
 Lotus foot,  
 Lotus fire,  
 Lotus dream*

....

*For Tagore this flower is a symbol of re-birth and awakening of man and also the perfection of man’s thought. (Tagore ,1975: ?)*

As we can see in the poem of Tagore, he talks about a Lotusian code or mystery which can be also found in Sohrab’s poetry. What Tagore mean by a mystery of Lotus is a simile of Lotus in which Lotus opening is compared to man’s evolution. Such a viewpoint goes back to Indian mythology.

*Based on the Indian mythological history “from earth, Lotus appeared (which has eight petals) which is the eight direction of the universe. In the flower someone was found which called him free”(Tagore,1975:10-11)*

About this issue In Buddhism it has been mentioned that in the center of the land of happiness in which “there is no hardship and darkness and every hours passes like a song” there is a lake “with clear and bright water which patting the gold sand of that beach very calmly.

*Big Lotuses, as big as chariot wheels and in different colors and lights, are everywhere. A blue color shines from the blue Lotus, a yellow color shines from the yellow one, a red color shines from the red Lotus and a white color shines from the white flower. The scent of flowers occupies the space. In Buddhist texts, it has been severally mentioned that Lotus grows in and comes out of water but it looks upwards so it couldn't be tainted. (Rajabzadeh, 1999:125-126)*

With above explanations, now we can take a look at this Indian poem.

*Lotus grew  
Its stalk entered through the crack of my dream  
I was dreaming  
The wake flood came  
I will open my eyes in ruins  
Lotus was wrapped around all my life. (Ibid: 364)*

In the first edition of his first book "Downpour of Sunshine" (1958) he wrote this sentence:

In order to understand this sentence completely, we should take a look at Indian mysticism of Yaga in which we can clearly see the philosophy of Brahman. The main source of this mysticism is "Upanishads" or gnosis of "Vedanta". In this philosophy Brahman is the unchanging reality amidst and beyond the world and he is the ultimate essence of material phenomena. As there is no difference between the seabed and sea itself so in this way of thinking there is also no difference between universe and Brahma. Along with Brahman there is also an inner principle, the true self of an individual beyond identification with phenomena or the essence of an individual, which is called Atman.

Hinduists believes that Atman and Brahman are the same and what is in the man's essence is identical with the transcendent self but what is important here –which Sepehri also mentioned on the introduction of his book- is man's liberation from the apparent separation which is between human and Brahman which is also the biggest misery of human. The solution is the existence through physical appearances and continuous passing through reincarnations which is called "Samhara" and by this passing the man's spirit-as an Hindu mystic who says the man's spirit in this situation is like a frog which is trapped in a hole of a well- becomes free and will reach to salvation which is called "Mokshha".

Sohrab wrote:

*May be our job is  
Between Lotus and century  
Looks for the song of truth (Ibid: 277)*

Here, by Lotus Sohrab means the short time which human beings have during their lives.

*By century he means the long time and then he says that in such a short time of our lives ,the best we can do is to listening the song of truth and do not be distracted by other things for example who sang the song or from where this song is coming (Pourebrahim ,2000:245).*

In Hasht Ketab (eighth books) he said :

*I was passing the border of my dream  
The dark shadow of a Lotus  
Was on all these ruins  
Which reckless wind  
Brought the seed of this Lotus to my dream land?(Ibid:308)*

In this poem, Sohrab passes the border of the dream and explains to us what has happened in his dream. Now what is in his dream? The answer is definitely the Lotus which mystery and code for maturity and blooming. The blooming of a seed of a Lotus which came to the dream world by the wind and caused the passage through the border of dream, is in a way as if it is the passing of Lotus in Sohrab's dream which has transformed himself too.

There is a point in the world "Karma" in Persian language which I find it interesting and that is in Persian with a little change in pronunciation "Karma" would mean "our action". In Buddhism "Karma" is a principle in which the



results of man's actions would come back to him during his life or his future lives and each one of us should pay the penalties of our actions in our continuous lives until they become refined.

Lotus is the symbol of mysticism; it grows in muddy waters but it has no signs of mud on itself. Lotus is like a mystic person which is born in this world but he will not be tainted by this world. Lotus stays in the muddy waters but it will not get wet and because of this it is the symbol of cessation. Maybe that's why people who practice Yoga are trained to sit in a Lotus position. Some believe that in this position internal energies go to brain through spine and will be blossomed and flourished there because Lotus's petals come out from the darkness of water and move towards light in order to be blossomed. Lotus has the elegance of a classic world in which whenever we look there is still the scent of a new in contrast to nowadays which is the century of worshipping metals. As Chamisa said: *"this century is the century of technology and industry; the era of ascension of steel and metal friction"* (Shamisa, 1995:122)

Buddha said that: "as Lotus comes from muddy waters but it never gets tainted, I, myself, have come from this world and I passed this world without being tainted"

By the comparison of this sentence of Buddha with Sohrab's poetry (especially those which are related to Lotus) we can understand the intellectual influence of Buddha on Sohrab.

An important issue which should be considered here is the issue of Lotus in Sohrab's poetry which has a mystic essence.

According to Hinduism, Lotus grows from a firm world which is symbolized by "water" and has an inactive mode. Brahman who is one of the three important gods in Hinduism comes from a Lotus too. Brahma's existence is emerging from Vishnu's navel (another Hindu god). By these explanations we can understand then in Hinduism Lotus is a symbol for divine throne.

*"basically in Hinduism we encounter with a kind of divine throne which has a lion-like feature which is a symbol for defeated universal forces and a Lotus feature (padmasanga) which conveys the harmony and impressionable effect of universe"* (Burckhardt, 1988:118)

Lotus as the divine throne situated in first waters; "in some of Buddhist images, the Tathagata comes from a lake". Just like the birth of Agni from first waters, Lotus next to Buddha is the main content of Buddhist art. In other words, this art is completely located between these two extremes; the shape of Lotus is an expression, in a direct and impersonal mode, of what Buddha as a human image represents in a more complicated and personal mode. But the symmetry and perfection of human form of Buddha is very close to shape of Lotus and that's one of the names of Buddha is "manipadma" meaning "a jewel in lotus". In Hinduism as an inactive symbol is like the fly of manifestation of god while in Buddhism Lotus is the juice of first plant which had a dark and shapeless form (mud and water) and after being blown it attracted the light of "Bodhi" and became the myth of fire. Sohrab Sepehri used this viewpoint in the following poem:

*It was a moment, doors were open.  
No leaf, no branch, the garden was ruined  
Birds were silent, silence everywhere  
What was happening: sheep was next to wolf  
Sound was fading ....  
Beauty became alone  
Every river, every sea  
Every existence had become a Buddha (Sepehri, 1997:213)*

In this poem Sohrab mentioned that everything is Buddha. He compared Buddha to river and sea. In Sohrab's viewpoint, universe is Buddha. Now we should take another look to Lotus. Here we should compare "spirit" and "universe" together. In a Buddhist viewpoint, universe and spirit have a close connection. Lotus which is a key element

in Buddhist art is a cycle of universe and spirit and also the symbol of those two (mandala). About the moving of Buddha around four direction, Burckhardt said :

*“when Sakyamuni Buddha who lived 25 century before in India went up from under the Bodhi tree ,after a long time of contemplation which liberated him from the slavery of life and death ,very strange lotuses rose from under his feet .after rising from Bodhi tree , Sakyamuni Buddha went to for direction of space”*

Now we can analyze and study the same issue-which explained in above- in Sohrab’s poetry:

*I was passing the border of my dream  
The dark shadow of a Lotus  
Was on all these ruins  
Which reckless wind  
Brought the seed of this Lotus to my dream land?  
Beyond the glass window of dreams  
In muddy water,without any mirrors  
Any where that one of my part was dead  
A lotus grew  
As if it was pouring in my hollow self  
And me in the sound of its blossoming  
Dying every second  
Roof of Porch collapses  
and Lotus stalk wraps around all the columns  
Which reckless wind  
Brings the seed of this Lotus to the dream land? (Sepehri,1997:73 )*

In “Lotus” poem which is one of the most beautiful poems in his second book “The Life of Dreams” (1953).”the dark shadow of a lotus” was on the ruins of poet and he who was dead in “muddy waters, without mirrors” -or anywhere else- and living beyond the glass doors of dreams, he feels that the essence of Lotus was penetrated in his whole existence .this interpretation that the essence of lotus became the his essence, “lotus” can be mean mysteries that will change the Sepehri’s life so the seed of “lotus” grows and poet’s eyes will open to “ruins” of his dream.

*“Lotus penetrates in all aspects of poet’s life and his existence becomes intertwined with essence of lotus .in this poem lotus can be a symbol for prosperity and awakening. we can understand that poet is not hopeless and there are lots of hopes in his heart as big as a lotus .an hope for reaching to complete salvation in order to become free from thinking about profits and losses of today’s life” (Meghdadi, 1998:84).*

“Bodi” poem

In poem of “Bodhi” Sohrab refers to Buddhism ideas. “Bodhi”roots from “Budh” meaning awakening .

*It was a moment, doors were open.  
No leaf, no branch, the garden was ruined  
Silence here ,silence there ,silence every where  
(Sepehri, 1997:59)*

In this poem when Sohrab says “doors were open” he means that he has reached to Nirvana or “silence”In Veda we read that “you, the Righteous, this is the truth of relieving pain which is the silence of desire and hunger by killing all desires and this silence is like a light which consume oil”. The above sentence from Veda is comparable with this verse of the poem which says “silence everywhere”

*Beauty became alone  
Every river, every sea  
Every existence had become a Buddha (Ibid: 213)*

As we can see in above, Sohrab has compared and interpreted this silence to “beauty” and then “Buddha”.

The place of gods in Lotus

In symbolization of celestial heaven and perfect human (Budhha), Lotus has a very important role.

*"Celestial heaven of Vishnu and Ikanta is located in Marv Mountain and in many myths this is the place of Indra. Ikontra consists of five lagoons in which blue, red and white lotuses grow there and the place of Vishnu and his wife Lakshmi is between white lotuses where they shine like two sun"(Rajabzadeh, 1999:118).*

In Buddhist art the image of Buddha sited in a lotus is the sign complete peace of soul which reached to light. For more understanding in this regard let's take a look to explanations of Miguel Serano about Loutus position in Yoga:

*"it is usual in Yoga that individuals sit in a Lotus position and such a position has some points: one of them is that Lotus comes from muddy waters but it is not tainted at all and is free from any infection, also the petals of lotus come out of dark muddy waters and move towards light and blossom on the water"(Miguel Serano, 1995;12).*

In Yoga the petals of lotus and Chakras (centers of life force (prana), or vital energy) are symbolic aspects of soul features. In Tantra Yoga, the lotus with 1000 petals (Sahasara) is the seventh and last stop and by reaching to this point one can gain ultimate freedom and knowledge. Exercising Yoga in Lotus-position will bring inner energies to brain through spin and they will be blossomed in brain.

In "Lotus" poem, Sohrab pinpoint the release on these inner energies very gently:

*Anywhere that one my part was dead  
A lotus grew (Sepehri, 1997:78)*

When Sohrab give us an example of one of his part which is dead, he means that Chakra that usually will mentioned in Yoga. Nozar Parang, a Persian contemporary poet has also a poem with similar content:

*I had no choice, only  
Like lotus lean to water so rise from earth (Parang, 1997: 178).*

Such a viewpoint in poems of Parang and Sepehri shows us two things: the use of Buddhism elements and use of Yoga teachings so we can conclude that some parts of contemporary Persian poetry is under the influences of Indian mysticism.

#### ***The reason of mystic name of lotus***

Lotus was the first mystic pretext .the reason for attention of Buddhism to this flower is that lotus grows in muddy waters but never be tainted .from the viewpoint of Buddha, human being should be like lotus because this world is like a muddy water and human being is a lotus who shouldn't be infected and upon his death he should leave everything behind easily. Buddha said that: "as Lotus come from muddy waters but it never be tainted, I, myself has come from this world and I passed this world without be tainted". He also said: "you ,my followers! They cared me very much .... In my father's home I was maid with pools full of lotuses ,one pool with blue lotus ,the others from red lotus and white lotus" the first poem of Sohrab which refers to this mystic issue is mirror flower from his "Downpour of Sunshine" (Hojat,1997:70-72).

#### ***Mirror flower***

*It's frosting moonlight  
The plain is full of blue lotus vapor  
On the ground, a formless mirror shines  
The border slide through my hand  
Where I have slide in dream?*

*My Desperate look in calm night of mirror  
In this muddy waters there is not leaf image*

in the collection of "The Life of Dreams" 1953 there is a poem called "Lotus" in which Sephri brings some images of Budhhist thinking .he has mentioned in that poem that:

*Which reckless wind  
Brought the seed of this Lotus to my dream land?  
Lotus was wrapped around all my life...*

The above mentioned sentences have a direct reference to Buddha and his ideas. For the poet, lotus is a means for liberating himself from life's obligations. "The reckless wind" is a way that Sohrab choose for reaching to his mystic thoughts. Lotus essence become intertwined with all aspect of poet's existence. Lotus in the love and passion of poet towards Buddhism. Lotus is the symbol of truth (Hojat,1974:78).

*Lotus grew  
Its stalk entered through the crack of my dream  
I was dreaming  
The wake flood came  
I will open my eyes in ruins  
Lotus was wrapped around all my life  
In its vessels it was me who flows there  
Its essence is in my roots  
It was all me  
Which reckless wind  
Brought the seed of this Lotus to my dream land? (Ibid:186)*

As Hojat said, for Sohrab lotus is an aspect of truth which we can in Buddha too. One an important point which we should pay attention is the essence which wrapped in Sohrab's root. When Sohrab finishes his poem with an question- like a post-modern movie- he put the responsibility on reader shoulder in order to finish the poem .Sohrab questions his own existence in which lotus has an important role. Now we as readers -with paying attention to the truth which is lies in lotus of Sohrab's poem- should answer his question. Tthe reckless wind which brings the seed of lotus to Sohrab's dream is the ideas and teachings of Buddha. The ideas which Sohrab gained by years of journey around the world and selecting Buddhism as best choice. This choice brings a hidden joy and happiness for Sohrab.

#### *Happiness*

Another poem in which Sepehri talks about lotus and Budda joyfully is "my passion" from the book of "East of Sorrow" 1961.

I am an instrument  
I run, I wrap, I slide, I'm destroy

.....

This poem remind us of happiness ritual in Buddhism. In this poem Sohrab consider himself as an instrument in hands of his beloved. He is joyful and happy because the true happiness will be gained by being happy with the happiness of others, when we see that somebody is happy, we can create this happiness in ourselves too.

The followers of Buddha and also this poem is a person who will be happy by the happiness of someone who is neither his enemy nor his dear. Because making some one happy, whoever he is, the follower will gain happiness too.

Micheal Kiriders, the famous Buddalogist, mentioned 11 advantages of "happiness" of followers in his book:

When a follower can make someone happy he will gain 11 advantages: 1. Calm sleep 2. He will walk with no trouble 3. He will be dear for human and non-humans 4. No bad dreams 5. Gods will protect him 6. Fire, poison and weapon will have no effect on him 7. He will gain empathy easily. 8. He will have a calm and nice face 9. He will gain complete thinking 10. He will die in relief. I if couldn't reach to higher level than in his eleventh advantage he will born again in Brahma world.it should be also noted that the inner enemy of this happiness is jealousy (Kiriders: 1992:135).

Lotus which Buddha sits on it is also an important feature in Hinduism and maybe that's why in some interpretations lotus with eight petals substitutes itself with Ribas plant.the reason of such thing is a kind of necessity for poetry and manifestation of plants, flowers and tree. The symbol of lotus was also seen in the art of Aryans for example in tiles which is found in Syalk or in silver utensils from Lorestan. In these images display Ahura Mazda and lotus with eight petals .about lotus and sohrab, Hosseini said:

According to special logic of poetry and manifestation of tree,plants and flower ,we can say that the image of two Ribas in India will represent itself as lotus with eight petals in tiles of Syalk in Iran ....so by blending different

element of plants, tree, flower and garden, Sohrab connects the mythological history to religion (Hosseini,1991: 24-25).

## CONCLUSION

Lotus has an important role in "eight book" (or Hasht Ketab). It is also a fundamental idea in Hinduism.

"In Yoga it is usual in Yoga that individuals sit in a Lotus position and such a position has some points: one of them is that Lotus comes from muddy waters but it is not tainted at all and is free from any infection, also the petals of lotus come out of dark muddy waters and move towards light and blossom on the water"(Miguel Serano, 1995;106). The world of lotus has been mentioned in eight books for twenty two times .in the poems of "lotus" and "mirror flower" this word mentioned respectively seven and six times. I think it is better to end this paper with following poem :

Still It needs some time to burn the snow on the ground  
 Still it needs some time so these butterfly-like lotuses become close (Ibid: 76)

For Sepehri lotus is a very special flower because among all these beautiful flowers in the nature ,only lotus is a medium for oprning the doors of heaven (Vazirnia, 19999:106-107).

We can say that Sohrab Sepehri is one the Persian influential poets who could create a new poetry in Persian petty by the use of Buddhist notions ,therefore ; it had and has lots of influences on the poets of his next generation

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## **ABSTRACT**

Numerous studies have been carried out to find the relation between neighborhood effect and retention of lexical items. This study was an attempt to find such a relationship among Iranian English as foreign language (EFL) learners. The participants, advanced second English learners, were chosen based on the Oxford Placement Test. The participants completed a lexical decision task that was designed and performed by computer software. The results of this study support the idea that English language learners use the same strategies of lexical item retentions as native speakers. The results also support Interactive Activation and Competition (IAC) and Dual Route Cascade (DRC) model of word recognition.

**KEYWORDS:** neighborhood effect, retention, lexical items

## **INTRODUCTION**

The concept of N-metric was first introduced by Landauer and Streeter (1973) to refer to the number of words that can be created by changing a single letter of a target word. One of the first studies in this area was conducted by Coltheart, Davelaar, Jonasson, and Besner (1977) who reported that classification of high-N non-words (high number of neighborhoods for non-words) is slower than that of low-N non-words (low number of neighborhoods for non-words). Coltheart (1977) called these as orthographic neighborhoods.

A more recent term, 'neighborhood' closely related to frequency has received attention. Landauer and Streeter (1973) first defined neighborhood of a word as the number of orthographically related words or non-words that can be created by changing a single letter of the target word. Coltheart (1977) called this neighborhood size or metric (N-size/N-metric). Orthographic neighborhood has two features: first, the number of orthographic neighbors (the orthographic neighborhood density or size) (Samson & Pillon, 2004), commonly defined as the number of words that sound similar to a target word (Ziegler, Muneaux & Grainger, 2003) and second, the number of orthographic neighbors of higher frequency than the target stimulus (the orthographic neighborhood frequency). In simplified language, orthographic neighborhood is the number of the neighbors of a word and the frequencies of the neighbors (Snodgrass & Mintzer, 1993). Beside orthographic neighbors, there are five other kinds of neighbors: phonographic neighbors, phonological neighbors, body neighbors, lead neighbors and consonant neighbors (Peereman, 1997). The literature on neighborhood effect, however, is not without contradictory results. For example, Andrews, (1989) reported that high-N results in a better performance in lexical decision and naming tasks while Grainger, O'Regan, Jacobs and Segui (1989) reported that high-N results in slower classification than low-N. However, few studies have actually measured neighborhood effect on foreign language learners' lexical retention. The aim of this study is to move beyond first language and test current lexical retention models and methods on second language learners' lexical retrieval.

Word frequency effect is based on the idea that words that frequently occur in the printed language are easy to recognize. Whaley (1978) reported that the most important factor in lexical decision tasks (LDT) is frequency. Research has reported that by using lexical decision task (LDT) high neighborhood non-words were classified more slowly than non-words with few word neighbors and there was no relationship between performance of words and N (Coltheart, Davelaar, Jonasson, & Besner, 1977). In 1989 two papers were published which were contradictory in their conclusions. Andrews (1989) reported that high neighborhood resulted in better performance in LDT and naming task. However, Grainger, O'Regan, and Segui (1989) reported that words with high-N are classified more slowly and Lexical Decision Task (LDT) and eye fixation duration are longer in words with at least one high frequency neighbor. These contradictory results opened the flood gate of research in this field which attempted to evaluate current models of word recognition. A very comprehensive review of these papers was published by Andrews (1997).

Ziegler and Perry (1998) examined the role of body neighbors (BN) in facilitation or inhibition of LDT. They state that the relation between N and BN is in such a way that BN is facilitative provided that words are matched for N. However, N has a tendency to inhibition. Also it must be considered that BN has no inhibitory effect on non-word retentions. Research also has emerged examining neighborhood effect among mental patients. A study by Gordon (2002) on aphasic speech errors concluded that both lexical frequency and neighborhood density exert a facilitative effect on the accurate retrieval of words in aphasic speech production, just as they do in normal speech production. Westbury, Buchanan and Brown (2002) moved beyond orthographic level providing a new insight into phonological neighborhood effect and phonological lexical organization. Westbury, et al (2002, p.639) suggested that lexical activation moves through whole-word and sub-word units. They implied that there is time delays that sub-word phonological components may remain active. This activation could affect text comprehension, because it may create conjunction errors. However, they believed that there is solution to this as semantic restrictions are entangled with the phonological/orthographic complexity of a text or discourse.

Research shows that bilingual speakers try to keep interference of both languages at minimal level. The fact is, however, that interference is inevitable in both languages (Walter, et al., 1998). Their experiments provide evidence for parallel activation of words in an integrated Dutch/English lexicon. On the whole, their findings support the Bilingual Interactive Activation model (BIA).

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Regarding the foregoing discussion, the study aims at answering the following research questions:

- 1) Does lexical neighborhood have any effect on retention of vocabulary items by Iranian advanced EFL learners?
- 2) Is there any relationship between orthographic neighborhood effect and retention of vocabulary items by Iranian advanced EFL learners?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

Twenty-eight (N = 28) bilingual males and females aged from 16 to 23 who were advanced EFL learners and whose native language was Farsi were recruited in this study. These students had passed OPT (Oxford Placement Test) and were graded as advanced EFL learners. Participants were randomly selected using simple random sampling from within participants who successfully passed OPT.

### *Instruments*

In this study, the following instruments were utilized:

The Oxford Online Placement Test is a standardized test which places students into the appropriate level for a language course. It can be also used as a quick measure of a student's general language ability. It contains two sections for listening and grammar with each section of 100 questions and total grade of 200. This research used participants who were all passed Oxford placement test and were graded as advance learners.

### *Materials*

In English the number of words which have many orthographic neighbors and few body neighbors is limited. Furthermore, another problem is the number of words with many body neighbors but few orthographic neighbors is limited. Therefore, a perfectly orthogonal design of neighbors and body neighbors cannot be obtained in English. Thus, we had to limit our study to the ideal orthogonal design. Professor Conrad Perry kindly helped us in the materials and permitted us to use his method in this study. Thus, we used the design and items he had used in his studies (Ziegler & Perry, 1998). We manipulated body neighbors in two different approaches. In the first one we manipulated BN while keeping N constant and manipulated N while keeping BN constant in the second one. Words and non-words were manipulated in this way. Items were selected from computerized databases. The stimulus collection of this study consisted of 160 items, 80 words and 80 non-words. Half of the items were five letters long and the other half were four letters long. According to the word frequency count that was established by Kucera and Francis (1967), all of the selected words were considered as low frequency. In the Body Neighbors (BN) manipulation, 20 words had few body neighbors ( $BN < 3$ ) and 20 words had many body neighbors ( $BN > 14$ ). For these 40 words N was kept constant and both groups were matched for word frequency and word length. In the N

manipulation, 20 words had few orthographic neighbors ( $N < 3$ ) and 20 words had many orthographic neighbors ( $N > 5$ ). For these 40 words, BN was held constant. The non-word manipulation was done like word manipulation. In BN manipulation 20 non-words with few body neighbors and 20 with many body neighbors were used while keeping N constant. In N manipulation 20 non-words with few orthographic neighbors and 20 with many orthographic neighbors were used while keeping BN constant. Pseudo words were used as primes. Pseudo words have been suggested as stimuli because they prevent semantic priming effects in the course of experience (Harley, 2008).

### **Procedure**

Participants (Twenty-eight ( $N = 28$ ) bilingual males and females aged from 16 to 23) were randomly selected using simple random sampling from within participants who successfully passed OPT.

Participants were given a trial section in order to get familiar with the procedure. Participants were seated in front of an Asus Eee PC laptop computer screen (10 inches) and were given verbal instructions. This experiment used 15 trial items and 160 experimental items. The experimental and trial were presented in random order for each participant. The trial began with the presentation of an item at the center of the screen. After 1500ms the item in the case of no response was replaced with the next stimulus that remained on the screen until a response was given. Participants knew that they had to indicate as rapidly as possible whether that stimulus was a word or a non-word. When a participant was ready s/he pushed a button (Right SHIFT for words and Left SHIFT for non-words). Then the prime was removed. Participants did not receive any feedback. Reaction times were measured by the computer between the onset of the stimulus and each participant's response. After the experiment some participants reported that they saw a word several times, while the software was designed to show each word and pseudo-word just once.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results show that large body neighbors had an inhibitory effect on word recognition because when N is constant and BN is manipulated, mean word RTs for small BN is negative (-37), which means that participants made more errors. On the other hand, when N was manipulated, the effect is facilitative for BN Constant/Many N, which means that large N has a facilitative effect. It must be mentioned that these results are obtained based on orthographic neighborhood effect. Consistency of these results over other kinds of neighborhoods must be measured and could be subjects of other studies. The following table shows the mean correct response time (RT) latency of body neighbor (BN) and neighbor (N) manipulation of this study.

*Table 1: Mean Correct RTs of BN and N manipulation*

BN Constant/ Few N	Mean	84.1114
	Median	415.7550
	Variance	658282.053
	Std. Deviation	811.34583
BN Constant/ Many N	Mean	3.0846
	Median	341.1750
	Variance	669194.869
	Std. Deviation	818.04332
N Constant/ Few BN	Mean	-37.4853
	Median	-272.7100
	Variance	692099.362
	Std. Deviation	831.92509
N Constant/ Many BN	Mean	96.4196
	Median	425.9850
	Variance	653767.239
	Std. Deviation	808.55874

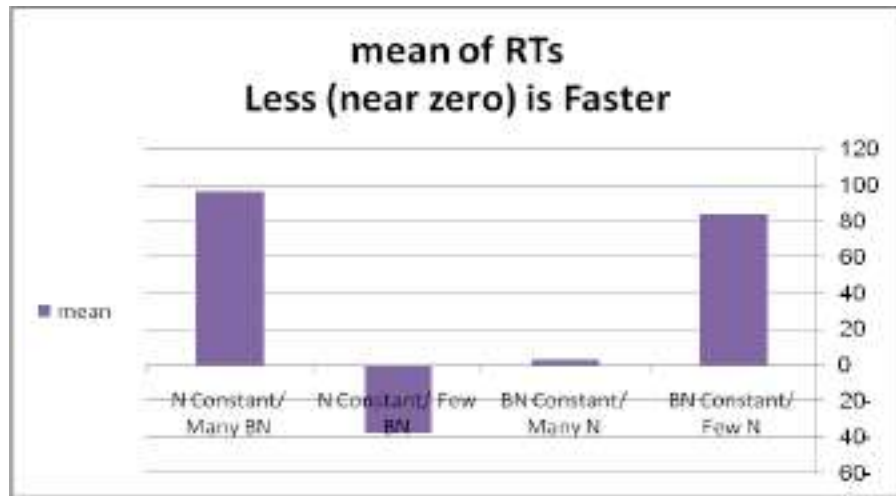


Figure 1: Mean of RTs

The results reveal that Iranian advanced second language English learners are more confident with words with fixed BN and large N (~3.08ms) and that this has a facilitative effect on word recognition. On the whole, participants showed difficulty in the cases of "N Constant/Few BN" (~ -37). In the case of "BN Constant/Few N" and "N Constant/Many BN", it seems the effect is "NULL" because for both of these groups inhibitory effect plays the same role and has the same effect.

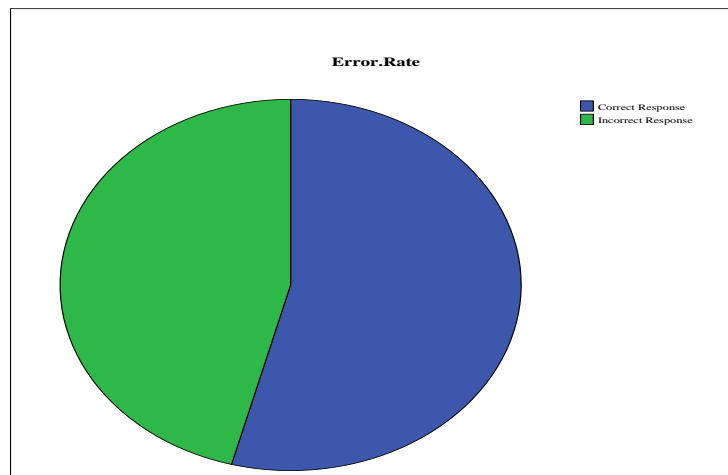


Figure 2: Correct/Incorrect Response ERROR RATE

The figure illustrates error rates for correct and incorrect responses in four categories of N and BN manipulation. Overall, as it is obvious that correct responses are slightly larger in number than incorrect responses.

Table 2: T-Test (word/non-word)

**Group Statistics**

	Word.nonword	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
RTs	word	2240	95.8481	801.51256	16.93504
	non-word	2240	-22.7830	832.36960	17.58702

*Table 3: Levene's Test*

**Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
RTs	Equal variances assumed	13.864	.000	4.859	4478	.000	118.63109	24.41514	70.76536	166.49682
	Equal variances not assumed			4.859	4471.625	.000	118.63109	24.41514	70.76534	166.49683

Table 3 illustrates level of meaningful result calculated from F (Levene's test) is less than .05 or 5%, as equal variances for both groups (word and non-word) are not assumed. The results the t-test reveal that there is a significant difference (sig. is less than 5%) between word and non-word groups with confidence level of 95% in terms of establishing RTs.

*Table 4: T-Test (Correct/Incorrect)*

**Group Statistics**

	Error.Rate	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
RTs	Correct Response	2425	727.7371	283.82063	5.76352
	Incorrect Response	2055	-779.1223	372.10140	8.20834

*Table 5: Levene's Test*

**Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
RTs	Equal variances assumed	203.424	.000	153.558	4478	.000	1506.85938	9.81299	1487.62107	1526.09769
	Equal variances not assumed			150.240	3796.616	.000	1506.85938	10.02971	1487.19524	1526.52352

The results of the t-test revealed that there is a significant difference (sig. is less than 5%) between correct and incorrect response groups with confidence level of 95% in terms of establishing RTs. Given that the significance of the Levene's test is greater than 0.05, the variances are equal in all four groups.

Table 6: ANOVA

**ANOVA**

RTs

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	(Combined)	13941332.680	3	4647110.893	6.953	.000
	Linear Term	744.127	1	744.127	.001	.973
	Contrast					
	Deviation	13940588.553	2	6970294.277	10.429	.000
Within Groups		2991471402.075	4476	668335.881		
Total		3005412734.755	4479			

Given that the sig. < .05, between RTs and groups, there is a significant difference with a confidence level of 95%.

Table 7: the mean differences between groups.

**Multiple Comparisons**

Dependent Variable: RTs

Scheffe

		Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
(I) BN.N.Manipulation	(J) BN.N.Manipulation				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
BN Constant/Few N	BN Constant/Few N					
	BN Constant/Many N	81.02679	34.54645	.139	-15.5840	177.6376
	N Constant/Few BN	121.59672*	34.54645	.006	24.9859	218.2075
	N Constant/Many BN	-12.30822	34.54645	.988	-108.9190	84.3026
BN Constant/Many N	BN Constant/Few N	-81.02679	34.54645	.139	-177.6376	15.5840
	BN Constant/Many N					
	N Constant/Few BN	40.56994	34.54645	.710	-56.0408	137.1807
	N Constant/Many BN	-93.33501	34.54645	.063	-189.9458	3.2758
N Constant/Few BN	BN Constant/Few N	-121.59672*	34.54645	.006	-218.2075	-24.9859
	BN Constant/Many N	-40.56994	34.54645	.710	-137.1807	56.0408
	N Constant/Few BN					
	N Constant/Many BN	-133.90495*	34.54645	.002	-230.5157	-37.2942
N Constant/Many BN	BN Constant/Few N	12.30822	34.54645	.988	-84.3026	108.9190
	BN Constant/Many N	93.33501	34.54645	.063	-3.2758	189.9458
	N Constant/Few BN	133.90495*	34.54645	.002	37.2942	230.5157
	N Constant/Many BN					

\*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table 8: Homogeneous Test

**RTs**Scheffe<sup>a</sup>

BN.N.Manipulation	N	Subset for alpha = .05	
		1	2
N Constant/Few BN	1120	-37.4853	
BN Constant/Many N	1120	3.0846	3.0846
BN Constant/Few N	1120		84.1114
N Constant/Many BN	1120		96.4196
Sig.		.710	.063

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 1120.000.

As indicated in the first column (sig.> .05), "N Constant /Few N" and "BN Constant/Many N" are not significantly different (homogeneous). And the second column (sig.> .05) shows "BN Constant/Many N" and "BN Constant/ Few



N" and "N Constant/Many BN" do not differ significantly. The highest mean is related to "N Constant/Many BN" and the minimum mean is related to "N Constant/Few BN".

### **Discussion**

Our study of advanced Iranian Second language learners revealed that when BN is constant and N is manipulated, mean word RTs for large N are faster than large BN. This means that large neighbors have a facilitative effect on word recognition. On the other hand, the results showed that when we manipulate BN and keep N constant, the effect is inhibitive for few BN (i.e., Mean RTs are negative) which means that participants made more errors. For two categories of BN Constant/Few N and N Constant/Many BN the effect is Null, because the inhibitive effect played the same role for both of them. Coltheart, et al (1977) found the same Null effect by manipulating the number of word's neighbors (N). They found that N does not have any effect on lexical decision task. They reported that there is no relationship between performance of words and N showing that high N had an inhibitory effect and low N had facilitative effect.

Other studies (e.g., Andrews, 1997; Snodgrass & Minzer, 1993; Carreiras et al., 1997; Coltheart et al., 1977) found the same Null relationship between N numbers and retention. However, this study showed that large N has a facilitative effect on word recognition. Ziegler, et al (1998) reported that body neighbor manipulation has a facilitative effect on participants' word recognition. On the other hand, when N is manipulated, it has an inhibitory effect. They believe that these findings might be consistent in various studies because English has many body neighbors (BN). However, our study showed that small number of BNs has inhibitory effect and large N has a facilitative effect. The reason why some studies reported that BN manipulation has a facilitative effect and N manipulation an inhibitory effect on words may be related to the body/time feature of English language. Andrews (1997) believed that this feature provides a link between orthography and phonology of words. During reading, this feature helps readers to disambiguate word phonology during reading. Our findings for Iranian advanced second language learners do not support this idea.

Words with high BN may speed up lexical access, because they look familiar to the participants and at the same time high BN reduces ambiguity. On the other hand there is an inhibitory effect when N is manipulated, because N manipulation increases competition between orthographically similar words. Andrews (1989) reported that N effect occurs for low frequency words in lexical decision tasks. This is contrary to our findings. The pattern for non-words recognition is different. Both BN and N manipulation show an inhibitory pattern over RTs. Mean RTs for non-words are high probably because people have a tendency to find the evidence of wordiness; if we do not find any evidence of wordiness, we would reject it, and this takes much longer for the mind to process. On the other hand, it may seem that the reason for this inhibition comes from the number of N and BN, because simply when the number of N and BN increases, the likeness of pseudo-words to words increases making them harder to reject.

The contribution of the results to models of word recognition is that at first spot Serial Search Model (Forster 1976, 1979) does not account for our results because it suggests that words are categorized in mind by orthographic and phonological features into several bins. The Serial Search Model predicts that words with a high frequency are easier to recognize. However, as we saw in our results frequency has a facilitative (at least for N manipulation) rather than inhibitory effect. Another model of word recognition, the Interactive Activation and Competition (IAC) model (McClelland & Rumelhart, 1981; Rumelhart & McClelland, 1982), consists of three levels: input level with visual feature units, intermediate level where units are individual letters, output level where each unit is a word. Units within the same level are connected with each other through inhibitory connections; therefore, they compete with each other in the case of recognition. English has a body/rime feature that IAC model does not support. On the other hand, based on predictions of this model it must be in such a way that words with high BN must be recognized slowly. As our results show BN has an inhibitory effect. Therefore, this model explains why BN has an inhibitive effect. Also, our results are in harmony with DRC model which predicts that BN manipulation must have an inhibitory effect. The results of our study, in line with the predictions of this model, show that similar words share common sublexical nodes with each other and these nodes become activated during word reading and recognition. Therefore, words with many letters shared with a target word are more active than words with an overlap (Plaut, McClelland, & Seidenberg, 1996).

The parallel distributing model (Seidenberg & McClelland, 1989) is not capable of explaining why the present study found that BN has an inhibitory effect. This failure comes from the fact that parallel distributing model predicts that words with the most shared letters are more active than others, and thus are more easily recognized. It is necessary to mention that our results are obtained based on orthographic neighborhood effect. The generalizability of these results to other kinds of neighborhoods must be examined by future research.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the information was gathered from Iranian advanced English learners, it showed that neighborhood effect had two sides based on different situation. The results of this study showed that small body neighbors had an effect on word recognition. The nature of this relationship is inhibitory in word recognition process for advanced Iranian English learners. Furthermore the nature of this relationship for more frequent orthographic neighbors is facilitatory.

The results supported IAC and DRC models of word recognition. These models are able to explain why N has facilitative effect. They also predict that words with the most shared letters are more active than others, and thus are more inhibited.

This was a first attempt to study English second language learners' vocabulary retention in Iran with Persian native language. As far as our results suggest, on the whole orthographic neighbors have facilitative effect on word retention and recognition. Therefore, we can theorize that for teaching words, it is better to find texts that are somehow rhythmic or using songs. We can use songs to enhance vocabulary learning. There is evidence that using songs in the classroom is a great help to learning and retention of lexical items (Zhang, Wu, Wei, & Wang, 2011; Salcedo, 2002). Attempts in Iran about finding the relationship between songs and word learning and retention showed that this relation is facilitative and learners acknowledge that they prefer this kind of learning, and they are more motivated and relaxed in the classroom (Gorjian, Alipour, & Saffarian, 2012; Alipour, Gorjian, & Zafari, 2012).

## Implications

The implication of the results is that for teaching words, it is better to find texts that are somehow rhythmic or using songs. We can use songs to enhance neighborhood effect and increase the rate of vocabulary learning. There is evidence that using songs in the classroom is a great help to learning and retention of lexical items (Zhang, Wu, Wei, & Wang, 2011; Salcedo, 2002).

## Limitations of the study

It is necessary to mention that these results are obtained based on orthographic neighborhood effect. Consistency of these results over other kinds of neighborhoods must be measured and could be subjects of other studies.

There is not a perfect Persian lexicon to repeat this experience on Persian native speakers. The results of this study cannot be generalized into Persian native speakers because the study was conducted with EFL Persian learners. This study did not have an intention to separate females and males. Therefore, there is a chance for other studies to separate these categories to find out if there is a difference or not. This study was based on Oxford Placement Test; other studies can base their studies on other proficiency criteria.

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## INNOVATIONAL AND COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES OF TEACHING RUSSIAN LANGUAGE FOR IRANIAN STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

In our informational era, when the informational flow has increased in many ways, it is not a simple task to make the young people to sit before the text-books. Innovations and computer technologies have given an opportunity to optimize the process of mastering non-native languages. Russian language has its own complexities, which can be handled by new programs easily which are not easily accessible in Iran. In other hand, a student in Iran cannot hear the Russian speech and communicate in Russian language anywhere except in the University, and then these conditions together obligate us to enhance the environment for Iranian learners. Technical training aids give an opportunity to realize modern tendencies in educational systems of teaching. To learn a foreign language can be so important in a human life as it can change the method of life or job ant etc. So the availability of a foreign culture learning environment is very necessary for all learners; this condition obligates us to provide the requirements.

**KEYWORDS:** Russian Language, Iran, Education, new methods.

### INTRODUCTION

Many different methods of teaching foreign languages have appeared in the past. The so-called «memo-methodology» is among them, where the major is the attraction of three main principles in education system: vision, hearing and contact sensations, which allow our memory to remember foreign words on a deep level, quickly and without extra efforts to use further the foreign language easily.

Russian language has its own complexities in which student face with difficulties but thanks to internet and other modern technologies these issues are easily solved. In iran unfortunately these programs or other necessities like enough institutions are not now considered. So The Russian language is not in the line of poggess in the view point of learners. This condition makes us to pay attention to the structures to handle the Russian language learning in iran and make it easier.

### NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

The great assistant in the work of institutes' teachers, who teach their pupils Russian language far away from Russia, is Internet (Arkadieva, 1998).

A student in Iran cannot hear Russian speech and communicate on Russian language anywhere except in the University, because of that it is considered that it is necessary to create for Iranian students learning Russian language environment where they can listen to and speak on Russian language. Russian literature was taken off from the preparatory faculty while language existence and learning without literature is impossible (Polat, 1998).

Computerization of educational process has been implemented in Iran at present time, but Internet for most Iranian teachers and students is still not accessible enough. A modern Iranian youth can poorly imagine a Russian life. Reading the works of Russian writers and poets, they know a little about the Russian culture and history. A lot of TV serials and commercials have little value and do not allow the Iranian youth to grow accustomed to the rich Russian culture and to get the scientific knowledge. Internet has taken this educational function. Thus we should note that unfortunately it includes a lot of unnecessary and sometimes harmful information, there are not such a lot

of serious portals where we can find an illustrative and meaningful material on different fields of Russian science and culture (Polat, 2003).

Computer programs give an opportunity for Iranian students to study independently not only at auditoria practical lessons but also at home.

We can find internet voiced tales, poems and songs. But every teacher knows how it is important to listen often to a standard Russian speech for the development of verbal skills of the learners: schoolboys, students, listeners of Russian language courses. Tales, voiced by well-known artists, who have a good Russian speech and a standard pronunciation, can help the Russian language teachers in distant regions of the republic.

There are some programs on Russian languages in internet. They are:

1. «Vladimir». A course of Russian language oriented to the improvement of verbal skills mastering. The submitted material is oriented on students of different preparation (3 levels).
2. «Voices», the third edition. A voiced program consists of the voiced alphabet, situational dialogues, which we may listen and record for further use on the lessons of Russian language and for an independent work of students and pupils.
3. «Ruslang» is a program, where you can not only find some exercises, but also listen to songs and poems.

Besides the following programs may be useful: Privet.ru; Languageguide.org; Mentor.ru. In portal «Gramota.ru» we can find a comprehensive electronic referential literature: different dictionaries on Russian language, articles on different sections of linguistics and many others.

Therefore during the process of teaching the highest quality of memorizing the material is achieved with the direct combination of the teacher's word and a showed by learner picture. Computer programs just let us better use the opportunities of visual and auditory analyzers of the learners (Shvedova, 1983).

At those places, where Internet is not still connected for its users, it is obligatory to use computer programs on Russian language. Every program is good by itself; each of them takes into account the level of students' preparation. Their distinguishing feature is in entering the complicated material in a light playing mode, which is well absorbed at required frequency of execution.

The most known and popular among them are:

1. «1C: Tutor» (audio dictations and another variety of tasks allow you not only to improve spelling skills, but also pronunciation and expand linguistic horizons).
2. «Family mentor – Russian language 5, 6, 7 classes» (it may be used not only by schoolchildren and teachers, but also by students and tutors in institutes). There are a lot of tasks on different language sections and different forms of control. One of them is the most attractive. When you answer correct a virtual candy or a diploma with a sound effect appears. There are some other virtual prizes.
3. Program «Doctor Higgins» is also interested and may be used on the lessons of Russian language during preparation to them and at first learning the phonetics of Russian language.
4. Program «Talk Russian now!» is differed with its unusual way of presenting the material: colourfulness, entertaining, sound accompaniment, promoting the development of the correct pronunciation and many others that allow successfully use the program when teaching foreigners to Russian language.

All mentioned programs have an informational material and tests, passing over which you can increase your literacy in a playing mode, without a tedious grind, what surely will increase the motivation of pupils/students in mastering the complicated for many foreigners Russian language(Rogova, 1984).

Due to Internet and computer the teachers in distant regions could enrich their teaching and informational base with a large illustrated material. This would let to improve the relations between the teacher and the pupil, because «the teacher, who uses a computer during the educational process (the more the better), is accepted by pupils as a closer and more modern person. This, in its turn, also positively affects on the speed of the establishment of interpersonal relations and as a result on the educational effectiveness(Dmitrieva, 1998).



Internet became a large helper in work for the teachers educating their pupils to Russian language far away from Russia. The global network contains the models of the lessons of leading specialists and innovators, lesson-by-lesson plans and many other useful things for the educational process. In Internet you can also upgrade your qualification.

«Zlatoust» educational and publishing center, for example, invites to pass over the qualification upgrading course on the program of «Methodological subscription: new educational technologies and Russian language teaching».

When computer was created for the first time, nobody imagined that he would be able to sit in front of the computer and study without entering the auditorium classes in university, pass exams and even get diplomas. Computer technologies today give a lot of opportunities to receive education. And we can even say bravely that today a man would not be able to continue his valuable life without a computer.

Modern students from their childhood grow used to understand that television solves many issues on social inequality and receipt of professional education. They study unconsciously when spend much time watching the programs for children and teenagers. The more interesting and various programs are the more pleasures they get from.

A new generation of people, but Iranians are exclusive in this case, grows up used to computer from the childhood. Different entertaining computer games programs are developed for them. They are not tired from computer. Now we can confidently confirm that a computer has a great influence on education. As we already know the mastering of language is improved with the assistance of vision and hearing.

Russian physiologist I.P. Pavlov has opened an orientating reflex, which was named «What is it?» reflex: if any object enters the field of a person's view, a person involuntarily begins to look at closely to understand what it is. Even having heard a sound, a man tries to find its source with his eyes that makes easy the perception of sound information.

Therefore, during the educational process the highest quality of the material memorizing is achieved at spontaneous combination of the teacher's word and the picture showed by a pupil. And computer programs just let us use visual and auditory analyzers of the learners in full.

The technology of interactive education to foreign languages and culture as the aim of the modern educational process itself considers the interaction between the teacher and learner as a key activity that defines the meaning of interactivity of today lesson of a foreign language (Shvedova, 1983).

### **DIFFICULTIES IN TEACHING RUSSIAN**

Teaching Iranian students to Russian language is very difficult, because first, there is a big difference between Russian and Persian letters, and second most Russian grammatical rules are absent in Persian language, including characteristics of the nouns in Russian language and also gender and case as well as the declination of the adjectives, pronouns and ordinal numbers.

Consequently, learning Russian language by Iranian students is very difficult, especially in a foreign language speaking environment, and mastering Russian language requires a great will, enough time and special efforts.

By this computer programs can facilitate the educational process. Teachers, applying to the habit of students to watch television, use MP-3 and a computer, can easily arrange the educational materials in the form of entertaining and various computer programs and games. (Games can successfully be combined with different psychological and pedagogical trainings on the development of communicative skills). Technical training aids give a chance to realize modern tendencies in educational systems of many countries of the world.

These are the world tendencies in education. Unfortunately, there are none computer programs for Iranians learning Russian language, and we hope that after we define the role of these programs in Russian language teaching the specialists will create such programs.



Computer programs like «MOYES SOFT WORD» and «ROSSETA STONE (dynamic immersion) language learning success» 2009 and «Kirill and Mefodiy 2002» are of great interest from the view of their high educational potential. They are coloured and musical, it is interesting to submit letters of the Russian alphabet with spelling and correct pronunciation. Though these programs are created not for Iranians, but Persian speaking students will easily learn Russian letters by means of the named above computer programs(Fokina, 2003).

Students in Iran got used to write in English with Latin letters, but the letters in Russian language are written in another way with Cyrillic. Like letters (B) in English and (М) in Russian and many others. However, watching programs only is not enough. The teacher should teach the students to write correct in notebooks with a pencil and certainly correct their mistakes. Then it becomes clear, what a big role in teaching the spelling and correct pronunciation of letters the teacher plays.

Phonetics is not a less important than graphics and orthoepic part in teaching a foreign language, because when we know phonetic rules we pronounce and write the words correctly. A stress in Persian language usually falls on the last syllable. That is why Iranian students should listen to and repeat Russian words a lot to remember their stress. Computer programs help them in this case too. Explaining the phonetic rules, including the assimilation of voiced and breath consonants or the pronunciation of the vowels *o, a, e* under stress and others, computer programs help students perceive more by ear and see Russian words repeating phonetic rules of these words' pronunciation. For example, «ROSETTA STONE» 2009 computer program in case when a student pronounces a word wrong corrects his mistakes pronouncing such words correct. Thus to learn with an assistance of a computer is much more interesting than to learn phonetic and grammatical rules and laws of Russian language without it. For example, in «dragon» computer program you may type a text and the program will read and show the stress of the words.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is exclusively interesting for students that declination of words in Russian language; a stress in the word can change its position because the Russian stress as we know is mobile and multi-located. For an Iranian student as well as for any foreigner, who learns Russian language, it is difficult but due to such a computer program it becomes easier to define the correct stress in words. That is the «dragon» program affiliates to the development of the skills of the correct positioning of the word stress. A student in Iran cannot hear the Russian speech and communicate on Russian language anywhere except in the University. That is why we consider that it is necessary to create for Iranian students learning Russian language more available.

Based on the believes of modern century, the students have rights to select what to learn, so the structures respondent to this selection should be available and accessible for all students. Learning a foreign language can be as important in a human life as it can change the destiny, job and an important of life.

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## **ANXIETY AS A DETERRING ELEMENT IN LEARNING ENGLISH FOR ORAL COMMUNICATION AMONG EFL STUDENTS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The present study was designed to investigate the effects of anxiety on English language oral performance. In so doing, one hundred undergraduate students doing English in Islamic Azad University — located in Abadan, Iran — participated voluntarily in the experiment of this research and were asked to answer a Horwitz-based 33-item questionnaire. Analyses of the data revealed that foreign language anxiety remarkably impinges upon learners' English speaking. Likewise, the main sources of anxiety were identified as: appearing in front of the audience, making mistakes, losing face, inability to express oneself, fear of failure, teachers as class authorities, and fear of not achieving up to the expectations. Further findings also suggested that anxiety can originate from learners' own feelings, language learning and language speaking difficulties, and fear of being negatively evaluated. The above findings along with a few more, such as the lack of motivation and interest, helped to conclude that teachers can dispel students' feelings of anxiety through establishing a friendly learning environment in class filled with care and mutual respect as well as sense of direction and fun.

**KEYWORDS:** Anxiety, English as a Foreign Language, Speaking Skill, Communicative Competence, Communication Apprehension.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The role of anxiety is one major topic which has increasingly drawn the attention of those involved in the study of foreign language leaning and speaking. A rich body of research and literature has been presented related to EFL learners when asked to perform oral tasks in their English learning classes. This paper will attempt to address this issue in an effort to dig up the reasons that cause foreign language communication anxiety and explain how learners would be best off by taming this mood which very often has a debilitating impact on learning and performing a foreign language.

A large number of learners express their inability and sometimes even acknowledge their failure in learning to speak a second/foreign language. These learners may be good at learning other skills but, when it comes to learning to speak another language, they claim to have a 'mental block' against it (Horwitz et al., 1986: 125). What, then, hinders them to succeed in learning a second/foreign language? In many cases, students' feeling of stress, anxiety or nervousness may impede their language learning and performance abilities. Theorists and second language acquisition (SLA) researchers have frequently demonstrated that these feelings of anxiety are specifically associated with learning and speaking a second/foreign language, which distinguishes L2/FL learning from learning other skills or subjects. Both teachers and students are aware and generally have a strong feeling that anxiety is a major hurdle to be overcome when learning to speak another language. Learning a language itself is "a profoundly unsettling psychological proposition" because it directly threatens an individual's 'self-concept' and world-view (Guiora, 1983 cited in Horwitz et al., 1986: 28).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Anxiety: Definition***

Darwin (1872) thought of anxiety as an emotional reaction that is aroused when an organism feels physiologically under threat. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Freud (1925) thought that anxiety was akin to 'fear' or 'fright'. He stated, "I avoid entering upon the discussion as to whether our language means the same or distinct things by the word anxiety, fear or fright. I think anxiety is used in connection with a condition regardless of any objective, while fear is essentially directed toward an object. (p. 343)

Later in the following decades, anxiety was seen as a state of "apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object" (Scovel, 1975, p. 134). Rholes, Riskind, and Neville (1985) submitted that anxiety may originate when physical peril is expected, and while both anxiety and depression may arise following a loss, anxiety on its own appears when a loss is anticipated. May (1977) saw it as "an emotional response to threat to some value that the individual holds essential to his existence as a personality" (p. 205).

### ***Types of Anxiety***

#### *State Anxiety versus Trait Anxiety*

There are several kinds of anxiety the two most well-known of which are state anxiety and trait anxiety. State anxiety, on one hand, is fleeting and not an enduring characteristic of an individual's personality. It is a "transitory state or condition of the organism that varies in intensity and fluctuates over time" (Spielberger, 1966, p. 12). Spielberger (1983) gives as an example of state anxiety the apprehension experienced before taking an examination.

Trait anxiety, on the other hand, has been referred to as "a constant condition without a time limitation" (Levitt, 1980, p. 11), and is a stable feature of personality, referring to an "acquired behavioral disposition that predisposes an individual to perceive a wide range of objectively non-dangerous circumstances as threatening" (Spielberger, 1966, p. 16).

#### *Situation-Specific Anxiety*

The ideas and discussions over state anxiety and trait anxiety which were dealt with in the previous section gave rise to the notion of so-called 'situation-specific' anxiety. The latter can be "considered to be the probability of becoming anxious in a particular type of situation, such as during tests (labeled as 'test anxiety'), when solving mathematics problems (math anxiety) or when speaking a second language (language anxiety)". (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994b, p. 2). The author Oh (1990) thought of foreign language anxiety as a "situation-specific anxiety that students experience in the classroom which is characterized by self-centered thoughts, feelings of inadequacy, fear of failure, and emotional reactions in the language classroom" (p. 56). MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) put forward the idea that situation-specific anxiety solidifies (p. 272) in a language learner as a result of suffering state anxiety on several occasions.

#### *Facilitating Anxiety and Debilitating Anxiety*

A distinction has been made between facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety by other approaches (Alpert & Haber, 1960; Kleinmann, 1977; Scovel, 1978). Facilitating anxiety, as the name suggests, is thought to be a kind of anxiety that improves learning and performance.

Early research suggested that different quantities of facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety may be present in the same individual at the same time: Alpert and Haber (1960) asserted that "an individual may possess a large amount of both anxieties, or of one but not the other, or of none of either" (p. 213). It has been proposed that facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety may function together (Scovel, 1978).

#### *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety*

Various studies comparing students' levels of anxiety in their foreign language class to their other classes (e.g. math, history, etc.) indicate that students experience considerably more anxiety in their foreign language classes (Muchnik & Wolfe, 1982; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). The concept of 'foreign language anxiety' is still in its infancy, thus second language research has not yet adequately defined it in precise terms (Horwitz et al., 1986). Further, there are many varying degrees of intensity, which seemingly make it difficult to apply boundaries towards a set definition (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Doyon, 2000). Some generalizations can, however, be made. Gardner and MacIntyre (1993: 5) define language anxiety as "the apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of a second language with which the individual is not fully proficient". Some of the symptoms include nervousness, tension, apprehension, and introversion.

Arising out of discussions with beginner foreign language students about anxiety experiences at the Learning Skills Center at the University of Texas, Horwitz and her colleagues (1986) described the physiological and psychological symptoms of this phenomenon, many of which occur in anxious states in general: "tenseness, trembling, perspiring, palpitations, and sleep disturbances" (p. 129).

Anxiety was also observed in language learners in such symptoms as 'freezing' in class, 'going blank' before exams, and feeling reticence about entering the classroom (Horwitz, 1986, p. 128). They researchers noted how these learners experience apprehension, worry, even dread. They have difficulty concentrating, become forgetful, sweat, and have palpitations. They exhibit avoidance behavior such as missing class and postponing homework (p.126).

These observations and discussions led the authors to put forward a definition for foreign language classroom anxiety as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (Horwitz, 1986, p. 128).

### ***Effects of anxiety on Learning***

Much of the early research (Chastain, 1975; Kleinmann, 1977; Scovel, 1978) devoted to anxiety and language learning was difficult to interpret because of its contradictory results. Part of the reason for this has been attributed to the general measurement employed. Some of the early research suggests that a certain amount of anxiety can actually help learners’ performance in the classroom (Scovel, 1978). For example, Kleinmann (1977) reports positive correlations between facilitating anxiety and the use of more difficult linguistic structures. However, as Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) have suggested, this may have more to do with the general measures taken in the studies. More recent studies, using a more specific approach to measurement, support the widespread view that anxiety generally has a debilitating effect on L2 performance (Gardner et al., 1976; Horwitz et al., 1986; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993).

Some studies have shown that anxiety influences the communication strategies learners employ in a language class. Ely (1986), for instance, reports that anxious learners were less likely to take risks in the language class. Similarly, Steinberg and Horwitz (1986) found that anxious learners produced less interpretive and more concrete messages than relaxed learners. The results found in these studies are consistent with research on other types of specific communication anxiety, which states that anxious learners generally speak, write, and participate less in the language classroom than relaxed students (Spolsky, 1989).

### ***Causes of Language Anxiety***

Horwitz et al. (1986) theorize that foreign language anxiety in the classroom can be attributed to three performance anxieties: communication apprehension, social evaluation, and test anxiety. First, communication apprehension may be defined as the fear over the real or anticipated act of speaking. It is this type of anxiety that teachers find most prevalent in oral EFL classes in Japan. Second, social evaluation may be defined as the worry over how one’s actions will be perceived by others in the social setting. It is this type of anxiety that Zimbardo (1977) reports to be predominant in Japanese society. Lastly, test anxiety may be defined as the fear of failure, especially when skills are being measured formally as in exams. This theory is largely based on clinical experience and anecdotal evidence; however, it has received large support in terms of research activity and validating evidence is accumulating. The components receiving the strongest support seem to be communication apprehension and social evaluation, while the importance of test anxiety remains inconclusive (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991).

Other studies have also helped us in understanding the causes of language anxiety. For instance, Bailey’s study (1983) in which she analyzed learners’ diaries found that learners’ competitive natures can act as a source of anxiety. In addition, some researchers have claimed that students may suffer language anxiety due to cultural inhibitions. Oxford (1992) likens this to the concept known as culture shock. Learners may fear the experience of losing their identities in the target culture (Ellis 1994).

### ***Previous Research***

The academic literature has offered a somewhat confusing account of language anxiety. Researchers have been unable to draw a clear picture of how anxiety affects language learning and performance. Some researchers reported a negative relationship between language anxiety and achievement, e.g. the higher the anxiety, the lower the performance, (Clement, Gardner, & Smythe, 1977, 1980: cited in Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999: 218). Others reported no relationship, or a positive relationship (Pimsleur, Mosberg, & Morrison, 1962; Backman, 1976; Scovel, 1978: cited in 1999:218). More recently, Horwitz (2001:121) has reiterated that the issue of understanding the relationship between anxiety and achievement is unresolved. The reason for these mixed results is perhaps, as stated by Philip (cited in Shams, 2006: 8), that “a comparison of the experimental research examining the relationship between anxiety and second language learning is, to a degree, perplexing, presenting some conflicting evidence and illustrating that anxiety is a complex, multi-faceted construct.”

In addition to the negative effects of anxiety on language learning and performance, anxiety has occasionally been found to facilitate language learning. Anxiety, in its debilitating and facilitating forms, serves simultaneously to motivate and to warn the learner. Facilitating anxiety “motivates the learner to “fight” the new learning task; it gears

the learner emotionally for approach behavior” (Scovel, 1991:22). Debilitating anxiety, in contrast, “motivates the learner to “flee” the new learning task; it stimulates the individual emotionally to adopt avoidance behavior” (1991:22).

### ***Language Anxiety in the Speaking Skill***

For many years it has been the common concern of EFL teachers to observe students’ apprehension during oral activities and especially during oral tests. Therefore, it will be interesting to read about how other researchers had delved into this issue. The literature suggests that the speaking skill is extremely anxiety-provoking in many language learners and that it is often seen to arouse more anxiety than the other skills. Indeed, Daly (1991, cited in Von Worde, (2003) reported that in some individuals “fear of giving a speech in public exceeded such phobias as fear of snakes, elevators, and heights” (p. 3).

Anxiety reactions suffered by many students when speaking or when being asked by the teacher to speak in the foreign language classroom include “distortion of sounds, inability to reproduce the intonation and rhythm of the language, ‘freezing up’ when called on to perform, and forgetting words or phrases just learned or simply refusing to speak and remaining silent” (Young, 1991, p. 430).

Horwitz et al. (1986) found that in counseling sessions at the Learning Skills Center at the University of Texas students said that they had most problems in the listening and speaking skills, with “difficulty in speaking in class [being] probably the most frequently cited concern of the anxious foreign language students” (p. 126). Learners said that they had time to plan their spoken interventions, but would “freeze” (p. 126) if they had to speak spontaneously.

### **RESEARCH QUESTION**

What elements constitute the sources of anxiety in foreign language learners when they try to speak in the new language?

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Participants***

The participants in this study were recruited from the English Department in Abadan Islamic Azad University (Khoozestan, Iran). A total of 100 students volunteered for this research survey. Within the sample, 31 (N = 100) of the participants were male and 69 (N = 100) of them were female (Table 1 in Appendix 1). All of the experiment subjects had attended standardized English classes in guidance school and high school before entering university. On average, the students had 10 years of English learning experience from guidance school, secondary schools, and the university. In actuality, the participants were taught in the context of learning English as a foreign language. Thus, they all have a similar background in learning English.

#### ***Instruments***

The major instrument used in this study for data collection was that of Horwitz et al’s (1986). To put it narrowly, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale abbreviated to FLCAS (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) was used to measure the participants’ English language anxiety. This scale comprises 33 items. Each item is accompanied by a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree. Though the subjects were required to answer all the 33 items in the FLCAS scale, only the items which tended to address the students’ speaking capability were considered as worth mentioning in the “data analysis” section.

This scale was chosen for this study because of its effectiveness in identifying respondents’ perception of foreign language anxiety. Preliminary evidence (Horwitz et al., 1986) indicated adequate test-retest reliability over a period of 8 weeks, yielding  $r = .83$  ( $p < .001$ ), and acceptable internal consistency  $.93$  ( $N = 75$ ). Saito, Horwitz, and Garza (1999) also reported this instrument has a reliability coefficient of  $.94$  (Cronbach alpha,  $N = 383$ ).

#### ***Procedures***



Volunteers were recruited in the fall semester of 2012. Fliers containing the relevant information regarding this research were made available to the students of the English Department. Afterwards, those who wished to participate in the experiment of the current research referred to the researcher and got enrolled. To encourage students' participation rate, they were told this research was important and would provide insights and guidelines for teaching approach and curriculum planning in the future. Students then completed a questionnaire containing their background information. In response to the statements on the FLCAS, students were asked to think about their experiences in their English courses in the spring semester of 1391 and the preceding ones. Therefore, students' FLCAS scores reflected their anxiety in the English classrooms they had been ever since they had entered university. In order to encourage honest answers, students were ensured that they were not required to provide their names and a coding system was utilized on their particular questionnaires. In this way, data did not contain any identifiable names. A number of codes were used throughout data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Any identifying information was kept separate and confidential.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As was formerly stated, the samples are the students of the English Faculty with a population of 100 students. The questionnaire was developed based on the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FCLAS). However, this study attempts to identify potential sources of anxiety relevant to the students' affective needs or concerns in an institution of higher learning through the use of an in-depth qualitative questionnaire. As the pre-administered questionnaire findings indicate, the differences in the level of language anxiety exhibited by the participants seem to vary by a few factors which will be dealt with in due course.

Moreover, since this study tries to explore the anxiety which comes about among male and female students while speaking English as a second language, the researcher treated the scale selectively. That is to say, emphasis has been put on those scale items which are, one way or another, more relevant to the subjects' oral production proficiency. They are listed and analyzed as follows:

### **Statement 1: I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.**

This statement was chosen to analyze whether the students felt confident when they were speaking in class and to identify which gender has more self-confidence. As it can be seen in table 2 (see appendix 1), 19% of students who were male along with 60% who were female, with a total of 79%, agreed with the statement. The amount is big enough to clearly indicate that most students, regardless of their gender, lacked self-confidence in terms of expressing themselves in English.

### **Statement 3: I tremble when I'm going to be called on in language class.**

It is not uncommon to think that language learners find themselves more or less trembling when speaking a new language. This feeling becomes even more acute if they have to do it in front of an audience and particularly teachers, who may as academically important authorities, negatively affect the students' performance. A glance at table 2 (Appendix 1) reveals the fact that 64% of respondents agreed with the above statement. Out of this amount, 10% accounts for males and 54% for females. This means that the idea of being called on by the teacher in class is fearful for many students. It can also be concluded that, in this study, the majority of the male students are less anxious compared to female students.

### **Statement 9: I start to panic when I have to speak English without preparation in language class.**

The results suggest that, when it comes to speaking English without preparation, a rather large number of students experience anxiety. Based on the statistics available in this research, 81% of all students — 22% male and 59% female students — subscribed to statement 9.

### **Statement 12: In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.**

With reference to table 2 (see appendix 1), 64% of the participants find it annoying to forget to say things they know. This feeling of anxiety is observed in males and females comprising respectively 13% and 51% of all the respondents. As the figures show, female participants undergo more nervousness compared to male participants.

### **Statement 13: It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.**



Table 2 in appendix 1 reveals that 53% of respondents agree they feel embarrassed when they want to volunteer answers in their language class. Among them, 9% are male and 44% are female. One other remarkable implication here is that, in contrast with female students, male students volunteer answers more willingly in a language class. This might be indicative of the male students being more confident than female students as well.

**Statement 16: Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.**

Through this statement, the researcher intended to determine whether the students were still nervous if they had prepared to speak in English (i.e.; during presentations, interviews, etc.). Drawing on the figures put forth in table 2 (Appendix 1), 56% of the respondents in total agreed with the above statement. This indicates that even preparation for speaking will not fully rob language learners of anxiety. Further analysis of table 2 suggests that female respondents are more anxious compared to males.

**Statement 19: I'm afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.**

As for this statement, 42% of the all participants confirmed that their language teacher corrections frighten them. Out of this figure, 14% were male and 28% female. The statistics related to this statement also indicate that more female students were afraid that their lecturers would correct their mistakes in class. This is because they fear being embarrassed as a result of teacher's correcting them in front of others.

**Statement 23: I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.**

The total percentage of those who agreed with this statement is 59% out of which 14% were male and 45% female students. Two major implications can be made here. First, more than half of the respondents were anxious that their classmates would do better in the foreign language speaking. Second, female respondents had higher anxiety levels compared to male respondents. The underlying reason might be sought in self-confidence, i.e., male students usually develop a positive attitude in a situation like this, and hence tend to show more confidence in their ability (here, speaking) compared to female students.

**Statement 24: I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.**

One of the key stressors of speaking English is perception of others. In the findings, it can be analyzed that students have a tendency to keep thinking about the perceptions of others with 67% agreeing that they are afraid of others' perceptions. Of all those who agreed, 22% were male and 47% female. This suggests the superiority of male students over female ones as far as confidence is concerned, because, according to the figures, male participants proved to be less anxious.

**Statement 30: I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.**

The complaints made by foreign language learners about knowing and applying many rules to speak a new language seem to be never-ending. The reason is not too far to seek. It could be argued that speaking a foreign language (here, English) is a multi-faceted and extremely complicated task. Since, learners have to take into account a number of aspects such as; grammar, pronunciation, accent, choosing appropriate words to express the intended meanings and putting them into a proper order, self-monitoring, self-correcting, being worried about what other people around them would think of their oral performance, and etc. All these might provide one with compelling reasons not to be surprised by the fact that a total of 68% of all students agreed with the above statement with 17% being male and 51% being female.

***Discussions***

The findings of this study seem to be mostly supporting the findings offered by the previous research on language anxiety, though not agreeing with every detail. No significant difference was found between students' perceptions on the anxiety-evoking factors, though they differ in their interpretations of these factors according to their experience and level in ESL/EFL learning process. In spite of high correspondence of the findings to the existing research, the study also found some differences and discrepancies compared to some previous studies on language anxiety.

***Anxiety-evoking Factors***

The remainder of this chapter will be dealing with the anxiety-producing factors found in this study. These factors could range from psycholinguistic to socio-linguistic ones. Psycholinguistic factors, on one hand, refer to the

learners' cognition, that is to say their psychological or cognitive process of learning and using a language. The socio-cultural aspect of L2/FL learning, on the other, refers to learners' culture, social environment, status and power relations, gender, etc. Learners' manifestations of anxiety and the strategies to cope with language anxiety have also been discussed toward the end of the chapter.

#### *Psycholinguistic Elements*

How learners' perceive the language learning process, their perceptions about themselves and how they should be performing in any communicative event, and the linguistic obstacles they encounter while communicating in English have been found to be strongly linked with language anxiety. Such psychological and linguistic factors that may cause language anxiety for EFL/ESL learners are as follows: a) Formal classroom instruction. b) Class presentation. c) Fear of being negatively evaluated by others. d) Teachers presence in class. e) Pronunciation. f) Grammar. g) Vocabulary.

#### *Socio-cultural Elements*

In addition to psycholinguistic factors which can cause anxiety in speaking a new language as was formerly discussed, there are social several socio-cultural factors that are likely to bring about anxiety in a foreign language speaking context. Among them are; culture discrepancy, social status, learners' own sense of foreignness while speaking a language other than L1, gender, etc. All these have been found to be linked with L2/FL anxiety. Some participants of this study even remarked that social factors are a more important cause of language anxiety than linguistic factors.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Although the existing research has provided a valuable insight into language anxiety from both statistical and descriptive aspects, the phenomenon, because of its complicated and multi-faceted nature, requires further exploration from a variety of perspectives and approaches. The results of this study clearly indicate that the most anxiety provoking skill in L2/FL (English) learning is speaking skill. Almost all research subjects acknowledged that people feel anxious and nervous while speaking English in front of others.

What seems to distinguish speaking is the public nature of the skill; this poses a threat to peoples' self-concept, self-identity, and ego, which they have formed in their first language as reasonable and intelligent individuals. Every factor or situation that creates possibilities or enhances the chances of exposing their deficiencies and language imperfections in front of others is likely to cause language anxiety for ESL/EFL learners. This situation could be either classroom interaction in the form of open class forum, group participation or class presentation, or giving a short talk in any public event is likely to challenge learners' communicative abilities.

However, for effective alleviation of language anxiety, the comparison of the results obtained in this study with those of the past studies suggests that there do not seem to be any specific remedies for language anxiety. Language anxiety, more than anything else, does demand the careful attitude of the language teachers in order to understand and to effectively diagnose this phenomenon in the learners. Then, it requires the application of modern approaches that lay emphasis on enhancing learning opportunities in an environment that is conducive to learning.

The problem of learners' language anxiety remains one of the greatest obstacles teachers have to overcome in language classrooms. I hope to have shed some light on this complex phenomenon, which teachers can only deal with successfully if they are properly informed. The research to date has contributed to our understanding of language anxiety, and provides useful insights to teachers as they consider classroom methods and practices. Nonetheless, there is much we do not yet know about language anxiety — especially, about its relationship with other factors such as motivation, personality, and self-confidence — hence, more research in this area would be urgently helpful.

There are limitations to this study that are worth being mentioned. The sample of the subjects who had willingly enrolled to participate in the research experiment was fairly small in size. Also, in order to investigate the complex issue of language anxiety, it was difficult to arrange that subjects would attend the experiments at the same time. This was basically due to the fact that they came from different levels and classes in their four year course of English study. Furthermore, the role played by individual experiences was difficult to evaluate from the questionnaire results, because the participants were not ethnically and culturally homogeneous. They varied in

language learning experiences, as well. It is also equally possible that the subjects might not have touched on some of the anxiety-producing factors, but rather having tried to relate some of their experiences with anxiety, which they may not otherwise have felt to be contributing to anxiety.

And finally, due to time shortages as well as administrative limitations, no proficiency test was held. Hence, the participants' homogeneity in terms of language proficiency level was based on the years they had been studying English as a foreign language both in school and university.

### ***Implications for pedagogy***

It is commonly believed that language anxiety can exert detrimental influence on second/foreign language learning and communication in the target language. Accordingly, the language instructors should recognize that anxiety is a major cause of students' lack of success in L2/FL communication and do anything they can to assist them to overcome their feelings of unease and discomfort. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations might be proposed.

The first thing is to recognize your own feelings of second language anxiety. It is vital to identify your own feelings, because in the process we will be able to recognize the causes of our anxiety. People sometimes happen to be nervous, however it shouldn't make one believe that they will perform poorly. Nervousness sometimes will help in enhancing the vitality and enthusiasm brought to the situation. The next important suggestion is to share your feelings with others. It is helpful knowing that you are not suffering those feelings alone. Even professionals such as artists or experienced speakers may feel some sort of anxiety when they have to speak in public. Thus, having a slight feeling of anxiety is normal as it is experienced by many.

It should be borne in mind by language learners that nobody is aware of their fright except if there are outward signs of nervousness. However, nervousness can be controlled. Students must focus on getting their message across to the audience and not be afraid to make mistakes. Most of the time, mistakes are signs of learning and progress. Many native English speakers do not speak a second language, so the fact that the students are able to converse in a second language should mean a lot. Innovative approaches should be adopted by universities to minimize apprehension and maximize students' achievement. Instructors must encourage the students to express themselves in English and help them reduce their anxiety by giving them support. Teachers might also use quick relaxation techniques such as tensing the body for a count of 10 and then breathing deeply in and out to a count of four for a period of three to five minutes. This is especially effective after a tension-producing event. The most important thing is, in order to increase the level of efficiency in the English language, we need to practice. Practice will make perfect. Practice speaking with friends or family, or even text messaging them in English which will also help to increase the level of proficiency in English and all these in turn would reduce the level of second language anxiety.

It is also highly recommended that for active participation in the classroom discussion, students should be provided with amicable, informal and learning-supportive environments. This can be done by teachers' friendly, helpful and cooperative behavior, making students feel comfortable when speaking in the class. A sense of fun is also indispensable to create a relaxed learning environment and sustain motivation. Caring and sharing activities can create a sense of fun which would eventually result in reducing the effect of social and status differences between students and teachers to a remarkable extent.

The above-mentioned recommendations and suggestions are not posited to be comprehensive covering all the instructional contexts. However, they are apt to drastically curtail the impact of anxiety in the process of foreign language learning, in general, and foreign language speaking, in particular.

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### Appendix 1

Table 1: Participants of the research.

Gender	Academic level			Total
	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	
Male	4	17	10	31
Female	12	33	24	69
Total	16	50	34	100

Table 2: Participants' choice distribution.

Level Item	Agreed						Neutral						Disagreed						Total
	Male			Female			Male			Female			Male			Female			
	So.	J.	S.	So.	J.	S.	So.	J.	S.	So.	J.	S.	So.	J.	S.	So.	J.	S.	
1	2	12	5	11	29	20	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	3	5	1	6	4	100
	19%			60%			0%			0%			10%			11%			100%
3	1	3	6	10	25	19	1	—	—	—	—	—	3	12	4	1	10	5	100
	10%			54%			1%			0%			19%			16%			100%
9	3	11	8	11	30	18	—	—	—	—	2	—	1	4	2	1	3	6	100
	22%			59%			0%			2%			7%			10%			100%
12	2	7	4	10	25	16	—	1	—	—	1	—	2	6	6	2	9	8	100
	13%			51%			1%			1%			14%			19%			100%
13	1	5	3	9	22	13	—	—	—	—	1	—	3	10	7	3	12	11	100
	9%			44%			0%			1%			20%			26%			100%
16	1	9	6	7	19	14	—	—	1	—	—	—	3	6	3	5	16	10	100
	16%			40%			1%			0%			12%			31%			100%
19	3	6	5	5	12	11	—	—	—	1	1	—	1	9	5	6	22	13	100
	14%			28%			0%			2%			15%			41%			100%
23	2	5	7	10	26	9	—	—	—	—	3	1	2	10	3	2	6	14	100
	14%			45%			0%			4%			15%			22%			100%
24	3	11	8	8	24	15	—	—	—	—	2	—	1	4	2	4	9	9	100
	22%			47%			0%			2%			7%			22%			100%
30	3	6	8	10	23	18	—	1	—	—	1	—	1	8	2	2	11	6	100
	17%			51%			1%			1%			11%			19%			100%
Totals	21	75	60	91	235	153	1	2	1	1	11	1	20	72	39	27	104	86	
	156			479			4			13			131			217			
	635						17						348						
	1000																		

#### Notes on table 2:

A) 'Neutral' corresponds to 'neither agree nor disagree'. B) 'So.' is short for sophomore, 'J.' for Junior, and 'S.' for senior. C) To save space and have a more compact table, choices 'strongly agree' and 'agree' are fused together as the general concept of 'agreement'; likewise, 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' as that of 'disagreement'.



## Appendix 2

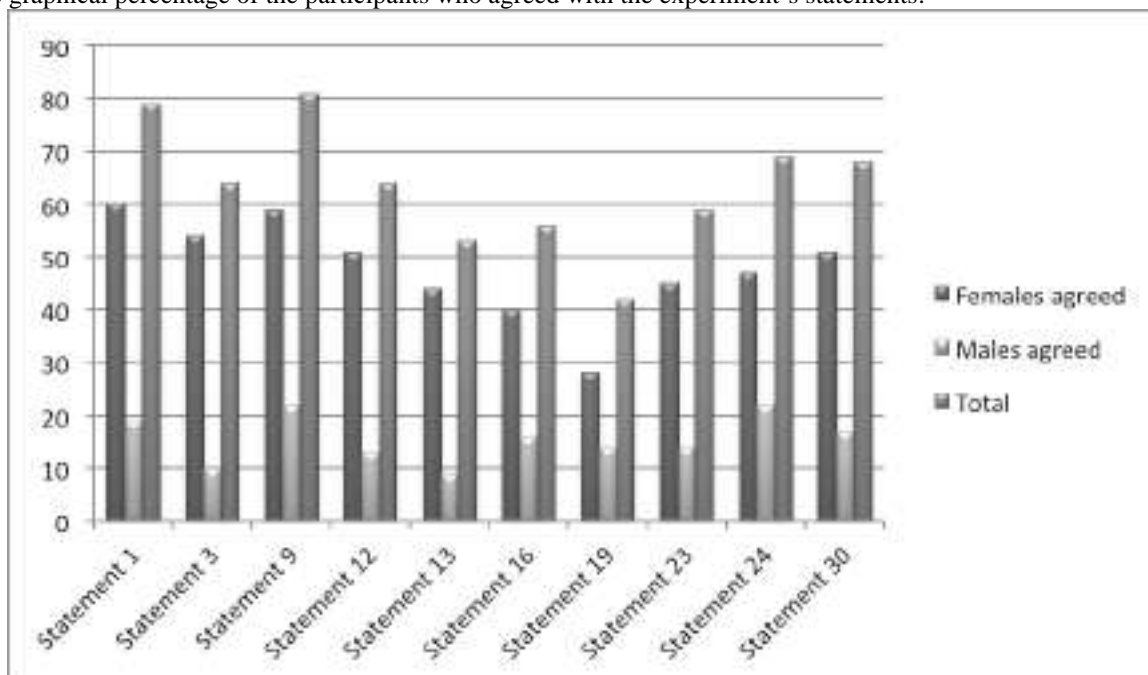
### Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al, 1986)

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
2. I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
6. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
8. I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
10. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
12. In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
14. I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
16. Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
17. I often feel like not going to my language class.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
18. I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
19. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
21. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
23. I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do. Strongly agree    Agree  
 Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
25. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree    Strongly disagree
26. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.				
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
28. When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.				
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.				
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.				
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.				
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.				
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.				
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

### Appendix 3

The graphical percentage of the participants who agreed with the experiment's statements:



## THE EFFECT OF TASK COMPLEXITY AND SALIENCE ON ADVANCED EFL LEARNERS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION

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## ABSTRACT

This study focused on the effect of two factors of complexity and salience and the mixture of both on listening comprehension. Advanced learners were divided into four separate groups (complex-salience-mixture-control) and each group was tested by different listening tests. Each group received a pre-test, 10 sessions of during-test instructions and a final post-test. In complex group, students experienced lack of time for checking the questions, lack of familiarity with the topic of listening, increasing the number of questions and the absence of background knowledge. In the mix group, beside the above mentioned items learners were deprived of looking at the questions in advance which made the task vague to (lack of saliency). In salience group, learners had some information about listening except what questions they are supposed to answer and in control group no changes was imposed in the task and questions. The results revealed that the mix group (complex and salience together) which had two factors of complexity and salience in their tests showed a significant change in their performance from pre to posttest. The difference between the scores of post-test for the *complex* and *salience* groups was somehow significant compared with their pre-test scores, but these scores of the two mentioned groups were not as much significant as were the scores of the *Mix* group. Applying the suggested method of practicing listening tasks for learners can somehow increase their concentration on the task and surging their quality of listening comprehension.

**KEYWORDS:** *task complexity, salience, listening comprehension*

## INTRODUCTION

Listening is an important language skill to be developed in second language acquisition (SLA) (Dunkel, 1991; Rost, 2001; Vandergrift, 2007). Rost (2001) maintains that "a key difference between more successful and less successful acquirers relates largely to their ability to use listening as a means of acquisition" (p. 94). A considerable body of research has been conducted on listening comprehension tasks in EFL contexts. According to Kurita (2012), numerous studies have been done on cognitive and linguistic factors, as well as on affective factors on listening comprehension. Although there are a variety of techniques to teach L2 listening comprehension this Cinderella skill (Nunan, 1997) is often treated as a passive and receptive skill and mere exposure to the spoken language is considered to be enough for learners to develop their listening skills automatically (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). Using different tasks and changing the difficulty and clarity of listening activity for language learners may have an effect on mastering this skill (Nunan, 1997). Task based learning is based on the idea that if students just listen and do nothing, there will be no guarantee to learning, while having a task in all three stages of doing the listening, (pre/whilst and post listening activities) can give this confidence to students to believe that they have acquired the language. This study seeks to focus on the second stage of listening, which is "*while listening*". We aim to examine to what extent changing the complexity of the task given to the learners can affect their listening comprehension ability. Moreover, *salience* which refers to clearness of the listening activity and the presence or the lack of background knowledge about the targeted listening task will be scrutinized.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A few studies have been conducted on using tasks to make listening more objective. Giving different activities to learners before they start listening or in the middle of it can boost the amount of understanding (Nunan, 2003).

For a long time, the role of listening comprehension in English teaching programs was neglected. According to Richards (2002), before 1970s listening was hardly appeared in journals. However, this ignored condition of listening changed after Krashen (1985) theorized that comprehensible input which was very fundamental in starting language development. The importance of listening was highlighted with the introduction of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

Over the last 20 years, tasks have become a unit of design in a communicative curriculum. They are made to engage learners in realistic communication on the assumption that engagement in communicating meaning leads to implicit learning (Crabbe, 2007). Research on task design attempts to find variables in task design that will lead to second language acquisition processes such as negotiation or noticing (Bygate et al., 2001; Ellis, 2003). Tasks and their components, characteristics, types, and implementation conditions have been the focus of much research (Albert & Kormos, 2004).

The great advantage of tasks is that they let learners engagement in realizing the communicative aims of the semantic resource (Widdowson, 2003) and the most important role for a language task is to allow learners to deal with certain language problems in completing the task (Long, 1985). Nunan (2003) pointed out that task-based language teaching is an approach to design language courses in which the point of departure is not an ordered list of linguistic items, but a collection of tasks. It potentially shows the experiential and humanistic traditions as well as the changing conceptions of language itself.

A study by Mahmudi investigated the impact of the type of syllabus (structure-based vs. task-based) on the listening comprehension of two homogeneous classes. The subject of the structure-based group was American Kernel Lesson: (O'Neil et al., 1978), and the second group was taught based on Expanding Tactics for Listening: intermediate (Richards, 2005). Contrary to the structure-based group, the task-based one showed considerable improvement in the post-test performance.

A present-day listening lesson is likely to have these stages, Albert and Kormos, (2004). It has pre-listening for context and motivation, extensive reading to design the situation, pre-set questions and tasks, extensive listening, reviewing the questions and finally inferring new vocabularies and testing new grammars. Yet, the method, complexity and salience of these stages have not been studied and more investigation is needed to find ways to improve listening comprehension. These changes have made 3 developments in listening skill; firstly, listening is a skill which has priority over the details of language content. Secondly, one is that it has tried to match the listening which students get in a class to the listening activities in the real world. Thirdly, learners' motivation has found its place in listening task to encourage them to develop expectation about what they will hear. Although teaching listening has become more sensitive to learners' need, it still follows the same procedure for the content and form. In order to get a good result in listening, it is necessary to provide micro-listening exercises which can be presented as a task in different level of complexity and salience (Field, 1983).

A few studies have been done in the field of listening proficiency about using task to make them more objective. Giving different activities to learners to do before they start listening or in the middle of it can boost the amount of understanding and producing language speeches. Complexity of the listening task and its clarity and salience is the matter which should be tested to find a clear answer to the question that how much difficulty in activities of listening and clearness of them can have an effect in elevating and fortifying learners listening comprehension.

#### ***Related researches on task complexity***

Foster and Skehan (1999) conducted a study on the effect of source of planning and its effect on task-based performance. Their study showed that the teacher can have significant effects on accuracy while planning can lead to more complexity, fluency. Group-based planning did not make performance different from that of the control group. Finally, there was little effect on performance as a result of the language versus content planning condition. Planning and on-line planning was equally grammatically complex. Moreover, the on-line planning led to more accurate language than pre-task planning.

Iwashita, (2001) made an attempt to find out that whether characteristics and performance conditions (involving different levels of cognitive demand) have any connection with different levels of fluency, complexity, or accuracy in students' responses. They were required to produce oral narratives from picturestrips that had been designed to differ in their cognitive demands. These four dimensions of task were considered: adequacy, immediacy, perspective and planning time. No significant effect for any of the measures (accuracy, fluency and complexity) was found, except an effect for accuracy in the immediacy dimension.

Yuan and Ellis (2003) operationalized planning at three levels: no planning, pre-task planning in which the students had 10 minutes to plan, and on-line planning where they had enough time to narrate the story. The results showed that pre-task planning fortified grammatical complexity, lexical variation and fluency while on-line

planning positively influenced accuracy and complexity of grammar. However, pre-task planning led to more fluent and lexically diverse language than on-line planning.

Ishikawa (2006) tested the effect of task complexity and language proficiency on speaking performance. Task complexity was performed along here-and-now / there-and-then dimension. The results indicated that increasing task complexity for advance learners had positive effects on accuracy, structural complexity and fluency, had negative effects on lexical complexity. Increasing task complexity for intermediate learners had positive effects on complexity of lexicon and structure, accuracy and fluency. He also investigated the effects of manipulating task demands of intentional reasoning on L2 speech performance. Three types of tasks were used: simple reasoning task, complex reasoning task, and no reasoning task. The results indicated that intentional reasoning had positive effects on syntactic as well as lexical complexity and accuracy, but it had a negative effect on fluency.

Gilbert (2007) studied the effects of performing cognitive complexity of L2 oral tasks on self-repair behavior during monologic production. Using three different types of tasks, the narrative task was manipulated along here-and-now / there-and-then, an instruction task was performed along few elements / many element and decision-making task was manipulated along with / without reasoning demands. The results showed the effect of task complexity on behavior based on the type of the task, with different behaviors among the three task types. In this study similar behavior was observed based on simple and complex performance. In performing simple tasks students made more errors and corrected more frequently. Besides, learners made a large proportion of errors in the oral task than in instruction-giving task and decision-making task. So, the narrative task produced the highest amount of self-repair.

Kuiken and Vedder (2007) studied the effects of cognitive task complexity on written production for accuracy and lexical variation by implementing specific measures of writing proficiency considering the type of errors the students made and the frequency of the words used by them. Task complexity was manipulated along errors and words frequency. The results indicated that both students of Italian and French had fewer errors in the complex task of lexicon. However, the students of French made more errors in complex tasks than in simple tasks. Also, the Italian students used more words with high frequency in complex task while the French students used more infrequent words in complex task.

Michel, et al. (2007) studied the impact of changes in task complexity, few elements, many elements, and task condition on L2 oral performance. The results showed that increasing task complexity promoted accuracy but had a negative effect on fluency and linguistic complexity to some extent. Dialogic tasks were more accurate and fluent but less complex output. Besides, in the monologic condition task complexity increased accuracy.

Rahimpour (2007) found that there-and-then task (complex task) made more accuracy while here-and-now task (simple task) caused more complexity. In terms of fluency simple tasks led to more fluency than the complex task.

Gilabert, et al (2009) studied the effects of using cognitive complexity on different task types and its impact on learners' interaction during oral performance. The result of the study based on decision-making tasks showed no clear differences between accuracy of the learners' performance on the two tasks. Gilabert and his colleagues used the result for the nature of the decision-making task types.

Kim (2009) conducted a study on the effects of task complexity on learner-learner interaction of students in different levels of proficiency. Task complexity was held along with / without reasoning demands and few / many elements. Tasks were two-way ones which need interaction among participants. The findings of the study clarified that task types and learner proficiency are important factors which have an effect on task complexity in L2 learning opportunities.

Yousefi (2009) tested the effect of task complexity on L2 learners' uptake. Two versions of simple and complex tasks were used as a decision-making type. The results of the study showed that the rate and achieved success in complex task were higher than its simpler version comparatively.

Ong and Zhang (2010) investigated the effects of task complexity on fluency and lexical complexity of 108 EFL students for writing. Task complexity was performed using three factors of time planning, ideas provision and, and



the availability of drafts. The results of the study manifested that: 1.increasing task complexity based on planning time made greater fluency. 2. Task complexity increasing through the provision of ideas produced higher lexical complexity without any effects on fluency. 3.increasing task complexity through the draft availability makes no clear differences in fluency, and lexical complexity.

Ahmadian and Tavakoli (2011) studied the effects of using online planning and task repetition simultaneously on oral performance of L2 learners as a matter of three linguistic areas of accuracy, fluency, and complexity. It was indicated that students in online planning groups spent more task completion than in control groups, and the differences were significant. This study provides more evidence on the limited and selective nature of attention capacity in which L2 learners using more time for task completion have produced more accurate language than those performing the task under time limitation. Moreover, the findings of the study also showed a high level of positive effect on complexity in EFL oral production.

Blau (1990) did a study on the effect of simplifying syntax or inserting surface clues for more complex sentences on L2 listening comprehension but found no effect. These results show that changing sentence structure (in terms of simplifying syntax and including cues) of aural scripts does not have an effect on second language learners' listening comprehension. Pica Young and Doughty (1987) investigated the effect of modifying syntax on listening comprehension. The results show that participants listening to scripts with lower syntactic complexity did not perform better than those who were given unmodified scripts and the opportunity to interact with the speaker.

From a psycholinguistic point of view, the ability to comprehend a language is known as a complex and active skill which consists many different mental processes (Taylor, 1981). According to Byrnes (1984, p. 318), listening comprehension can be considered as a "highly-complex problem-solving activity" which consists of a set of different sub-skills. While task-based activities in language provide nice opportunities for L2 learners, simultaneously they aim to create the conditions for acquisition and further L2 learning. Listening consists of real-time processing without going back to previous sections that the listener may have missed (Buck, 2001; Flowerdew, 1994). Moreover, as most listening involves full control of receiving speech, control over the speed of delivery for listeners varies much more widely (Osada, 2004). Besides, in spoken language comprehension, word boundaries must be inferred from a large number of lexical and phonological cues (e.g., Cutler, Dahan, & Van Donselaar, 1997). These factors are basic qualities of listening. However, there are other factors which are effective such as a fast speech rate, presence of infrequent vocabulary, task complexity, and task salience. In the late 1960s and early 1970s listening comprehension lessons had a consistent format. It included: pre-teaching new vocabularies, extensive listening which is questions about general context, intensive listening which are detailed questions, testing vocabularies and grammar and use of a play and repeat or recall words. Over the past 25 years there have been some advances in revising and modifying the method and stages of doing listening tasks for learners.

Among three aspects of task-based pedagogy, to Robinson (2001a) a task complexity is the task dependent and proactively manipulated cognitive demand of tasks. Robinson (2001) believes different criteria for task complexity; provide a basis for deciding about sequencing tasks in a task-based syllabus as well as a framework for considering the effects of increasing L2 task complexity on production, comprehension and learning. In this study an attempt has been made to study the effect of difficulty and salience of tasks on listening comprehension of advance English learners.

Several studies have investigated the effect of task complexity on different aspects of linguistic performance at different levels of L2 proficiency (e.g., Robinson, 1995; Robinson, 2001; Skehan & Foster, 1999; Rahimpour, 1997; Yuan & Ellis, 2003; Gilabert, 2005). One dimension of the present study attempted to examine the effects of task complexity on advanced EFL learners' listening comprehension. A well-known model of task complexity was put to the test, i.e. the 'Triadic componential Framework' known as 'Cognition Hypothesis' proposed by Robinson (2001). Cognition hypothesis claims that if dimensions of cognitive task complexity belong to different attentional resource pools (e.g., memory and attention), increases task complexity along the so-called resource directing variables (e.g., +/- few elements, +/- Here and Now, +/- reasoning demand) lead to higher complexity and greater accuracy of learner's output.

The two most influential models of task complexity are the Limited Attentional Capacity Model (Skehan, 1998; Skehan & Foster, 1999, 2001) and Triadic Componential Framework (Robinson 2001a, 2001b, 2003). The Limited Attentional Capacity Model is that attentional resources are limited and that increasing the complexity of tasks reduces a pool of general available attentional capacity and also it's notion founded on theories of 'working



memory'. The major claim of this model is that an increase in cognitive task complexity will make learners pay primary attention to the content of the task. In this model three dimensions of 'task complexity are distinguished (Skehan, 1998, Skehan & Foster, 1999, 2001): 'code complexity' which concerned with the linguistic of task,' cognitive complexity' concerns to task content, and 'communicative stress' refers to performance conditions.

Robinson (1996, 2001a, 2001b, 2003) proposes that input may be processed more deeply and elaborately if there are increases in the cognitive demands of tasks. This model distinguishing three dimensions: task complexity refers to two types of cognitive task features, resource-directing and resource-dispersing variables according to Skehan and Foster, task conditions refer to communicative stress category, and task difficulty a dimension which is lacking in the Limited Attentional Capacity Model, comprises learners' perceptions of the demands made by the task and is determined by the abilities (intelligence, working memory, language aptitude) and affective responses (anxiety, motivation, confidence) that learners bring to the task. In the following some criteria of task complexity by Robinson, Prabhu and Skehan are listed in tables.

*Table 1: CRITERIA SUGGESTED BY PRABHU (1987) TO DETERMINE TASK COMPLEXITY*

Degree of difficulty		
–		+
<i>Few elements</i>	AMOUNT OF INFORMATION	<i>Many elements</i>
<i>Few steps</i>	AMOUNT OF REASONING	<i>Many</i>
<i>Precise terms not needed</i>	DEGREE OF PRECISION	<i>Precise</i>
<i>terms needed</i>		
<i>Unfamiliar</i>	DEGREE OF FAMILIARITY	
<i>Familiar</i>		
<i>Objects and actions</i>	DEGREE OF ABSTRACTNESS	
<i>Concepts</i>		

Robinson (2001) has presented some factors which have an influence on the complexity of tasks from cognitive, interactive and difficulty point of view. In case of task complexity he is in agreement with Prabhu (1987).

*Table 2: ROBINSON'S MODEL OF TASK COMPLEXITY, BASED ON ROBINSON (2001A; 2001B; 2003A)*

Cognitive factors	Interactive factors	Difficulty factors

<b>Task complexity</b> a) Resource directing e.g., +/- few elements +/- Here-and-Now +/- No reasoning demand b) Resource dispersing e.g., +/- planning +/- Single task +/- Prior knowledge	<b>Task conditions</b> a) participation variables e.g., one way/two way convergent/divergent Open/closed b) participant variables e.g., gender Familiarity Power/solidarity	<b>Task difficulty</b> a) affective variables e.g., motivation anxiety confidence b) ability variables e.g., aptitude proficiency intelligence
--	---	--

The following table elaborates the criteria for task complexity, mentioned by Robinson (2001) and clarifies how different factors can cause the task to get complex.

*Table 3: TASK COMPLEXITY CONDITIONS ADAPTED FROM SKEHAN (1996; 1998) AND ROBINSON (2001A5) MODELS OF TASK COMPLEXITY*

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Complex/+</b>	<b>Simple/-</b>
<b>Planning time</b>	Not having time to look at the listening items before listening to the tasks	Having time to look at the listening items before listening to the tasks
<b>Perspective</b>	Answering the task items after listening to task with third person point of view	Answering the task items after listening to task with first person point of view
<b>Prior knowledge</b>	Listening to the task and answering the task items without prior knowledge	Reading related written prior knowledge before listening and answering the task

The following table describes the stages of learning process from task demands to performance based on resource directing. it shows the relationship between cognitive sources and learning mechanisms and their effects on performance.

*TABLE 4: TASK COMPLEXITY AND LANGUAGE LEARNING ALONG RESOURCE-DIRECTING (NOT RESOURCE DISPERSING) DIMENSIONS (FROM ROBINSON, 2001A)*

<b>Task demands</b>	<b>Cognitive resources</b>	<b>Learning mechanisms</b>	<b>Performance effects</b>
more cognitively —> input demanding tasks output, output salient	more attention—>  to input /output  and noticing/  rehears in memory	more rule and —>  instance learning/  stage shifts/  proceduralization/ cue strengthening	more incorporation of  more modification of  i.e., more uptake of  input, more stretching syntacticization of interlanguage

*Related researches on task Salience*

Salience depends on the accessibility of a category within a person's cognitive repertoire and on the fit of the category to the situation (Oakes, 1987). A category is more likely to be salient if the individual is predisposed to perceive that category as relevant (accessibility) and if both the category and the situation match the individual's expectations and if reality matches these expectations (Oakes et al., 1991). Accessibility describes the perceiver's readiness to accept a category (Oakes, 1987). Fit refers to the match between category specifications and the stimulus reality (Turner, 1999). Salience can be increased for example if a category is especially mentioned (Hogg & Turner, 1985), if the category is set into a context of relevant and other categories (Turner et al., 1987, p. 112ff), and especially if the category is contextualized by conflict with other groups (Wagner & Ward, 1993).

In one study, the literal salience assumption was tested in a Cross-modal lexical priming experiment on advanced Polish learners of English. The experiment focused on visual aims related to literal meanings of idioms constituent words than on targets which are related to the metaphoric interpretation of the idiomatic phrase. This effect clarifies if the stimulus sentence contained a literal or metaphorical idiom.

Based on salience, the meanings will be comprehended as the meanings which are activated strongly in the course of language processing, because their representations in the mental lexicon are much more strongly encoded as a matter of length of storage and completeness of representation than those of the less salient meanings. Salience is a psycho-perceptual impact which is related to a number of psycho-perceptual properties. First prosodic prominence which are the words perceptually salient, have been noticed by the listener. Words which are important are, perceptually salient. Not all words will be assumed as being prosodically prominent. In an abstract representation called *Information Structure*. Information Structure can be merged into a set of assumptions about the sentences process in discourse, and memory functions. Information Structure is, therefore, a grammatical system with significant processing impacts, called the psycho-perceptual effect of finding some part of an utterance salient

The salience of an event is also defined as its distance from a null-event. This semantic distortion can be shown to be equal to the relative entropy between the distributions of the output actions. The salience of an event is then the unique positive measure of how much information that event supplies about the variable of suitable machine responses. Salience refers to the most probable interpretations of a word unit. The most salient meaning of special word, expression or sentence is prototypical interpretation or the most determined, familiar and frequent word which happens. Salience is based on previous knowledge and experience; so, it is a function of degree of familiarity. Salience is active and ready to change if environments, society, use and speakers change. Different salience is the result of different experiences, and second language acquisition differs from first language one. As a result, whatever salient for one person who belongs to the target language community will not essentially be salient for the 'newcomers of second language'. When using another language, learners do two activities. First, they focus on previous knowledge which is the knowledge of the first language and the socio-cultural background knowledge which language 1 is based on. Second, they also give priority to certain meanings they face in the target language. So, the meaning appeared in the mind of a second language learner as the most salient meaning of a word unit is the result of experience with two languages and cultures. Therefore, it may considerably differ from what the native speakers of that language think of as the most salient meaning of that special lexical item or expression. This might cause misunderstanding in communication.

What gets salient in the mind depends on, familiarity, frequency and conventions of encounters (Giora, 2003), e.g. linguistic and socio-cultural experience. Salient meaning refers to standard context in which the lexical item occurs repeatedly, so, we build our expectations about what may happen, and our ability to understand and predict how the world around us works (Violi, 2000). The more we confront with this meaning, the more familiar the situation it occurs becomes. Factors like frequency or familiarity play a critical role in shaping the status of probable meanings and determine which one gets the most important possible meanings of a lexical unit. The most salient meaning is not always the literal meaning. Giora (2003: 33) defines 'literal meaning' as what is denoted by each single word, as well as to what is said by the compositional meaning of the sentence made up of these words intended non figuratively. The most salient meaning(s) of a lexical unit can be either literal or idiomatic or sometimes both.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

There are three research questions which this study tried to answer.

- 1) Does task complexity affect listening comprehension of Advanced EFL learners?
- 2) Does task salience affect the listening comprehension of Advanced EFL learners?
- 3) Does implementing task complexity and saliency together simultaneously affect the listening comprehension of Advanced EFL learners?

## METHODOLOGY

### *The Participants of the study*

In this study, 60 male and female advanced English as foreign language (EFL) learners aged between 17 and 30 who have studied English for nearly six years were recruited. There are 34 boys and 26 girls in this research who study English in Tehran Institute of Technology (MFT) in **Tehran** and **Hamadan**, Iran. The place of running this study was the Language institute where students were studying English language. Selection was based on a pass score of an OPT (Oxford Placement Test) exam (80 out of 100) and justification of institutes which certified the advance level for them based on the advanced level of the book. **OPT** exam involves two sections of Listening and Grammar questions which some countries like England and the USA use it as the exam of placing and clarifying the academic level of learners English knowledge. All these learners studied English at least for 3 years and experienced different language classes. Along with the OPT (Oxford Placement Test), it has been attempted to consider all necessary factors to make them homogenous as much as possible in their listening, speaking and grammar proficiency and knowledge. They were divided into 4 groups of control, complex, salience and mix with different tasks and tests.

### *Materials and Instruments*

Participants were tested in 4 different groups (one control and three experimental ones) and two types of listening tests were implemented. *Multiple choice* and *sentence completion* listening questions were chosen from two books, *TOEFL Test Preparation Kit* by Educational Testing Service (ETS) (2003) and *Advance listening and Speaking/CAE* by Kathy Gude (1999).. The tests involved one pre-test at the beginning of the semester and one post-test at the end . Both pre and posttests had two types of questions. The 10 other *while* tests were also chosen from the mentioned books to test students during the semester to see the effect of giving these types of listening tests on task complexity and salience. In multiple-choice tests, both control and experimental groups had eight questions, but in sentence completion tests, the experimental group had ten questions, while the control one had eight questions. This study focused on advanced learners of English language. In order to make the participants homogeneous, Selecting the participants from advanced language learners of Tehran institute of technology was accompanied with the OPT (Oxford Placement Test) which was given to them to increase homogeneity in participants' level.

### *Procedure*

All participants were assigned to four groups. One control group received standard questions and three experimental ones were given modified questions. The data were collected in advanced English classes of Tehran Institute of Technology (FMT). Data collection was done during twelve sessions. All the four groups of participants had pretest, ten main tests and a final posttest for both types of multiple-choice and sentence-completion questions. In order to qualify students as an advanced learners, the OPT (Oxford Placement Test) exam was run. Besides, the participants were selected from advanced classes of the MFT institutes in **Tehran** and **Hamadan**, Iran. After doing a level adaptation and confirming all participants as advanced learners, they were divided into 4 groups. In the pretest exam, all students were exposed to the same questions, (multiple choice and sentence completion). *TOEFL Test Preparation Kit* and *Advance listening and Speaking/CAE* books were used which are credited as the reliable sources of advanced books of English language and the listening tests of these books are considered as the advanced level listening exams. They answered eight multiple choice and eight sentence completion questions. Then, these four groups were given ten multiple choice and sentence completion tests, but in different conditions with different methods of performance. The multiple-choice and sentence completion questions for the first group called (**Control**) were exactly standard questions without any changes.

In the second group (**Complex**) just the focus of the study was only on task complexity in which the background knowledge, time, number of items, critical words and familiarity with the topic of the listening were targeted. Contrary to the Mix group in which student did not even see the questions until the listening was over, here the questions were given to the testers just a few seconds before the listening started, but they still had no time to check the questions in advance, furthermore; they did not know the meaning of difficult words and had no background

knowledge about the topic of the listening. The task was salient since they knew what they were asked to do and the required information was clear and salient.

In sentence completion questions, the condition was similar to the multiple-choice one. The students received the questions just before the listening started, but the task was complex because of the mentioned factors of task complexity. The summary was deleted and there were twelve gaps to fill. In addition, students were not familiar with the topic of the listening and had no time to check the questions. But, as they had the questions while listening, it was salient for them what missing information they were required to listen.

The third group of participants (*salient*) also experienced the different method of performing the task of listening. In multiple-choice questions, in order to removing salience from the task, students were not supposed to see the questions until the end of playing the listening. But for this group the task was not complex as the teacher gave students a summary of the topic of listening some minutes before the listening started. In addition, the teacher wrote some critical words related to the listening on the board and elaborated on their meaning. Students also got some background information about the listening task. But contrary to the *complex* group, who received the questions in advance before the listening, here the participants of the *Salience* group did not have a chance to see the questions and get to know what they must do about the listening activity. It was not salient for them what they had to do after the listening finished.

In Sentence-completion questions, the exact activities related to removing the complexity of the task were done such as giving the participants a brief summary, plus the meaning of unknown words and making them familiar with the topic. But still they had no idea what gaps they had to fill, and what information they were required to present by the sentences.

In the fourth group (*Mix*), the condition was different. Both task complexity and salience features were inserted. The questions were not given to the participants, they were asked to listen and take notes on a piece of paper, they had no idea what the listening was about, they were not given time to do anything, they had no background knowledge about the listening, the task was not salient for them and they did not know what they would be asked to do after the listening, so they had no prior information, no time, no familiarity with the task and no idea what to do after the listening. In addition, after the listening was played, the questions were given to the students, but they only had the options not the stem of the questions, then the speaker read the questions and students spontaneously understood what answers they were expected to present. The task was *complex* as they had no knowledge, time and familiarity about the topic of the listening and it was not *salient* as they did not know what activities they were supposed to do about the listening task and what question from what part of that listening they would be asked.

In sentence-completion questions, the same procedure followed in complex and salience groups was implemented here all together. After administrating the pretest and ten sessions of while tests for both multiple-choice and sentence-completion tests, the posttest questions were given to the participants. In posttest, the standard tests with mediocre level of complexity and salience were given to the testees. All different forms of task complexity and salience which were implemented for the three experimental groups changed into their original standard forms which were routine in most listening activities. Then the results of participants' performance were analyzed.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first step to answer the research questions was to calculate the descriptive statistics for the related conditions, and the second step was to submit the data to repeated measures ANOVAs to determine if there were any significant differences between the conditions specified for each of these hypotheses. The following represents the steps of screening the data against each null hypothesis. In this study one pre-test, ten while-tests or treatment and one final post-test were given to every of the 60 participants. After giving the tests and correcting them, the true answers of each participant in their own group was calculated. The data collected from all four groups (Complex-Salience-Mix-Control) were computed by SPSS software. One-way ANOVA was used in order to analyze the variance of these four groups. Factors which were chosen were complexity-saliency-mix and control. The one-way ANOVA was measured for the pre-tests of the four groups of participants and the result was as follows.

## Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
2.000	3	56	.086

## ANOVA

preComplexSalienceMixControl

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.000	3	2.000	2.000	.088
Within Groups	58.000	56	1.052		
Total	66.000	59			

A one way ANOVA was conducted to explore the impact of complexity and salience and the mixture of them on advanced learners' listening comprehension. Subjects were divided into four groups. There was no significant difference in the scores for the four groups. There was absolutely no difference in mean scores between the groups. As the significance of both, the test of homogeneity of variance and ANOVA was more than 0.05 which showed that there was no significant difference among the four groups in the pre-test stage.

Test of homogeneity of variance was held and no significant difference was seen. As all participants were advanced language learners and their proficiency in listening skill was tested by the oxford placement test (OPT) and all of them had the mean score between 70 and 80 from the whole score of 100, so, no significant difference was expected to be observed among the variance of these four groups of subjects in the pre-test.

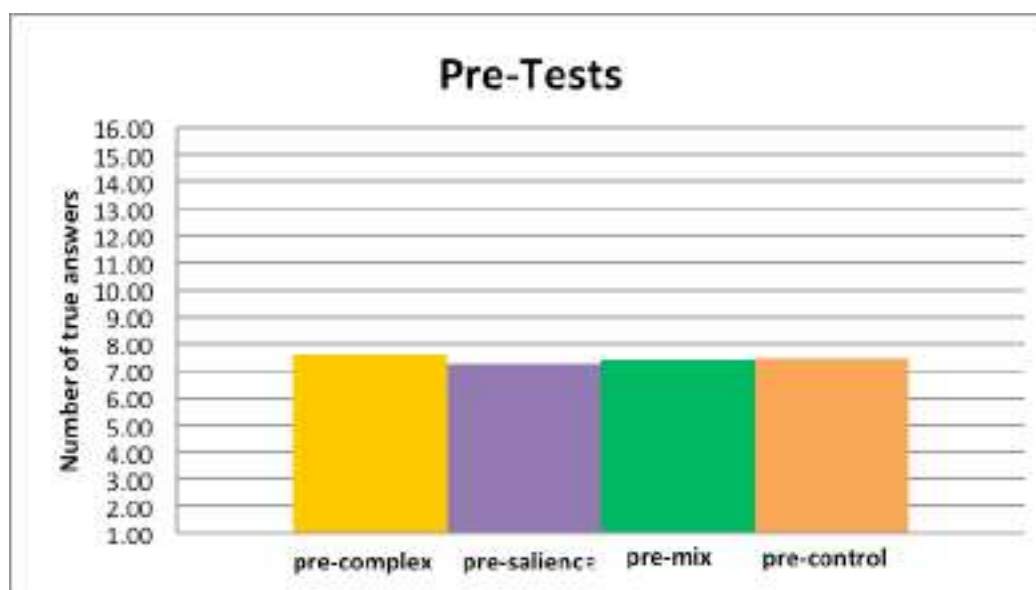


FIGURE 1: BAR GRAPH VARIANCE OF PRE-TESTS

Based on the information gathered in pre-tests these two bar and line graphs to show the differences among four tests in detail according to the number of correct answers and the homogeneity which was obvious among four groups of participants. The difference among them is not significant.



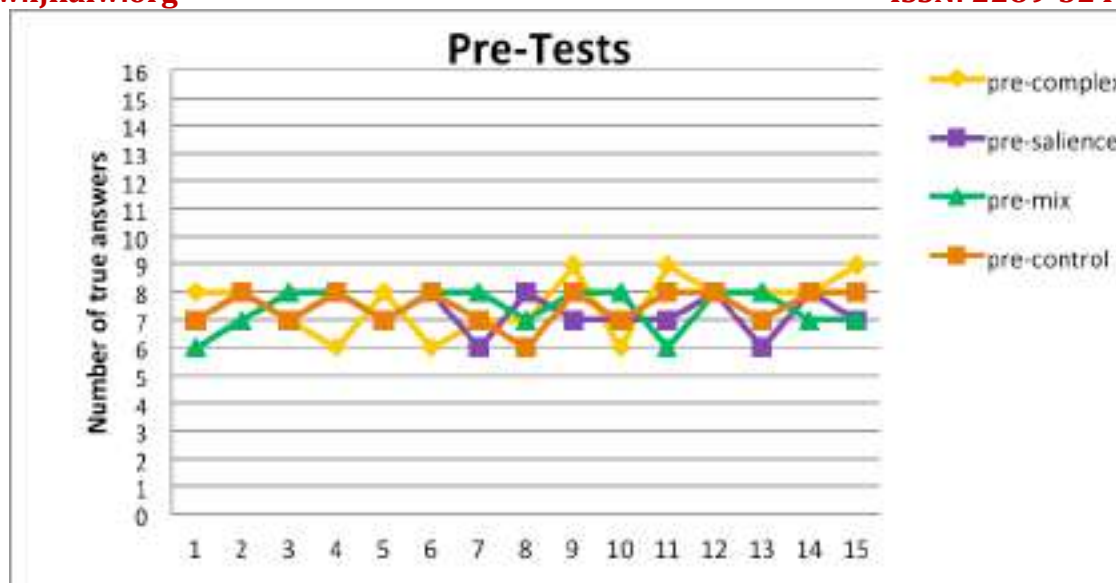


FIGURE 2: LINE GRAPH VARIANCE OF PRE-TESTS

The line graph above illustrates the homogeneity in the correct answers among four groups of participants in the pre-test listening questions. As the figure shows, all the sixty participants in four groups have answered the questions almost equally, as they were selected based on the result of OPT exam. After getting sure about the homogeneity of participants proven by the one-way ANOVA in pre-test, the data resulted in post-tests were analyzed. Like pre-test, participants were examined by the same test which was similar to pre-test. The format, planning and the number of questions in this test were similar to pre-test exam. The result of their tests was analyzed and like the pre-test, the one-way ANOVA was done over the four groups results in the post-test exam.

#### Null hypothesis number 1

The first research question of this study focused on whether there is a relation between changing the level of task complexity in listening activities and improving or weakening the listening proficiency of advanced EFL learners. The hypothesis stated that changing the complexity of the listening task may improve the listening skills of advanced learners.

By complexity it has been tried to involve some factors in the format of the test to see if they can have an impact on the listening comprehension of the learners. Based on Robinson's (2001), and Skehan's(1996), model of task complexity, the criteria considered to make the task complex were time planning in which students were not given any time to check the questions at first, background knowledge that was not given to students about the topic of the listening, so students could not activate their background knowledge about the listening task, and the number of elements which had changed to make the task more complex. The One-way ANOVA was performed on the post-test results of the four groups of *Complex, salience, mix* and *control*.

ANOVA					
POST TEST (complex-salience-mix-control)					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	142.000	3	47.000	12.000	.000
Within Groups	212.000	56	3.000		
Total	354.000	59			

Tests of homogeneity of variances and Equality of Means were performed for all four groups of subjects. Between groups mean square of 47.000 with F 12.000 showed significant difference between groups .Sig .000 showed that

there was somehow significant relation between the complexity and changing listening comprehension condition. Therefore, the first null hypothesis was admitted.

### ***Null hypothesis number 2***

The second null hypothesis of this study tested the effect of saliency (removing the clarity of the task) on the performance of learners and their listening Proficiency. Like the complexity hypothesis, there was a significant difference in inserting the factor of saliency in the task given to the participants. The salience group showed difference in comparison with the pre-test after running the one-way ANOVA and the mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level with two other groups of Complex and Control, so the second null hypothesis was admitted as well, because the relation between the salience and Mix group was significant as the mean difference was -3.00000.

### ***Null hypothesis number 3***

The third null hypothesis claimed that mixing both factors of complexity and salience in the listening task will lead to increasing listening comprehension and proficiency. Making the task complex and salience simultaneously was the third hypothesis which was tested on the last group of participants. One way analysis of variance was conducted among four groups of participants with three independent variables (complexity, salience and the mixture of both variables) to explore the impact of mixing complexity and salience features of the task on advanced EFL learners' listening comprehension. Participants were divided into four groups (complex-salience-Mix-control). There was statistically a significant difference at the  $p < .05$  level in scores of the Mix group with 3 other groups. Despite reaching statistical significance, the actual difference in mean scores between the groups was quite small. The effect size, calculated using eta squared (Eta squared = sum of squares between groups divided by the Total sum of square) was .03. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for group *mix* was significantly different from group *complex*, *salience* and *control*. The difference in mean score of Mix group is significant with all three other groups mean scores, special control group with the significance of .03. Post-hoc comparisons using the Games- Howell indicated that the mean score for group mix is different from the other three groups and the mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level. The following is the graphs which have been designed to show the exact difference in the outcome of the posttests of all four groups. As the graph illustrates, the answers of the Mix group among the other three groups of participants were more than eleven questions which had been answered by learners in average.

## **Post Hoc Tests**

Dependent Variable: postComplexSalienceMixControl **Multiple Comparisons**

	(I) factor	(J) factor	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Tukey HSD	Complex	salience	.00000	.00000	.000	-2.0842	1.0000
		mix	-3.00000*	.00000	.000	-5.0000	-1.0000
		control	-1.00000	.00000	.000	-3.0000	.0000
	Salience	complex	.00000	.00000	.000	-1.0000	2.0842
		mix	-3.00000*	.00000	.000	-5.0000	-1.0000
		control	-1.06667	.00000	.000	-2.0000	.0000
	Mix	complex	3.00000*	.00000	.000	1.0000	5.0000
		salience	3.00000*	.00000	.000	1.0000	5.0000
		control	2.00000*	.00000	.003	.0000	4.0000
	Control	complex	1.00000	.00000	.000	.0000	3.0000
		salience	1.06667	.00000	.000	.0000	2.0000
		mix	-2.00000*	.00000	.003	-4.0000	.0000

Games- Howell	Complex	salience	.00000	.00000	.000	-2.0000	2.0000
		mix	-3.00000*	.00000	.000	-6.0084	-1.0000
		control	-1.00000	.00000	.000	-3.0000	.0000
	Salience	complex	.00000	.00000	.000	-2.0000	2.0000
		mix	-3.00000*	.00000	.000	-5.0000	-1.0000
		control	-1.06667	.00000	.000	-2.0000	.0000
	Mix	complex	3.00000*	.00000	.000	1.0000	6.0084
		salience	3.00000*	.00000	.000	1.0000	5.0000
		control	2.00000*	.00000	.000	1.0000	3.0000
	Control	complex	1.00000	.00000	.000	.0000	3.0000
		salience	1.06667	.00000	.000	.0000	2.0000
		mix	-2.00000*	.00000	.000	-3.0000	-1.0000

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Generally, among all four groups of subjects, the scores of Mix group which their questions had the features of both complexity and saliency showed a significant difference with all three other groups. It seemed a little peculiar for the learners to listen to something without having any background knowledge, time, familiarity with the topic of the listening or any knowledge about the type of the questions or the task which they are asked to answer. But repeating the tests during the treatment period helped the participants to find mastery over conducting this type of listening activity. As nothing was given to the subjects beforehand and they just had a permission to listen and take notes, they found it more helpful in concentrating on the task and listening comparing to other groups who were exposed to the listening text and questions in advance.

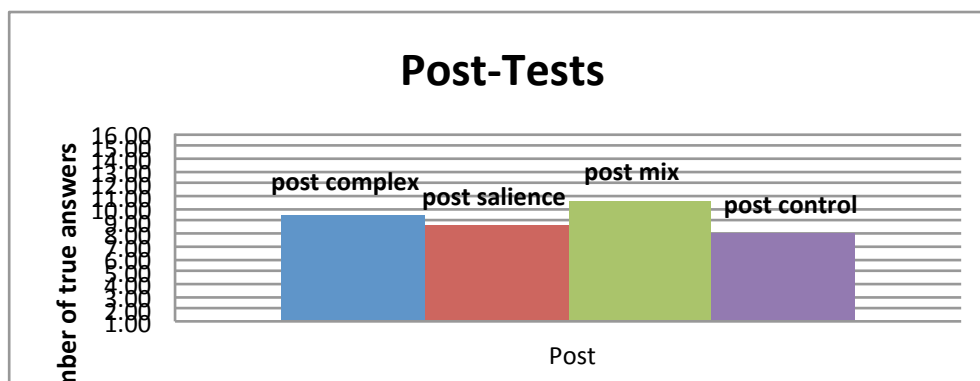


FIGURE 3: BAR GRAPH VARIANCE OF POST-TESTS

The answers to the post-test questions between the complex and the salience groups were nearly the same and the average number of correct responses is between eight and nine. The Mix group which experienced the combination of complexity and saliency factors had the highest average number of true answers which is nearly 11 correct answers.

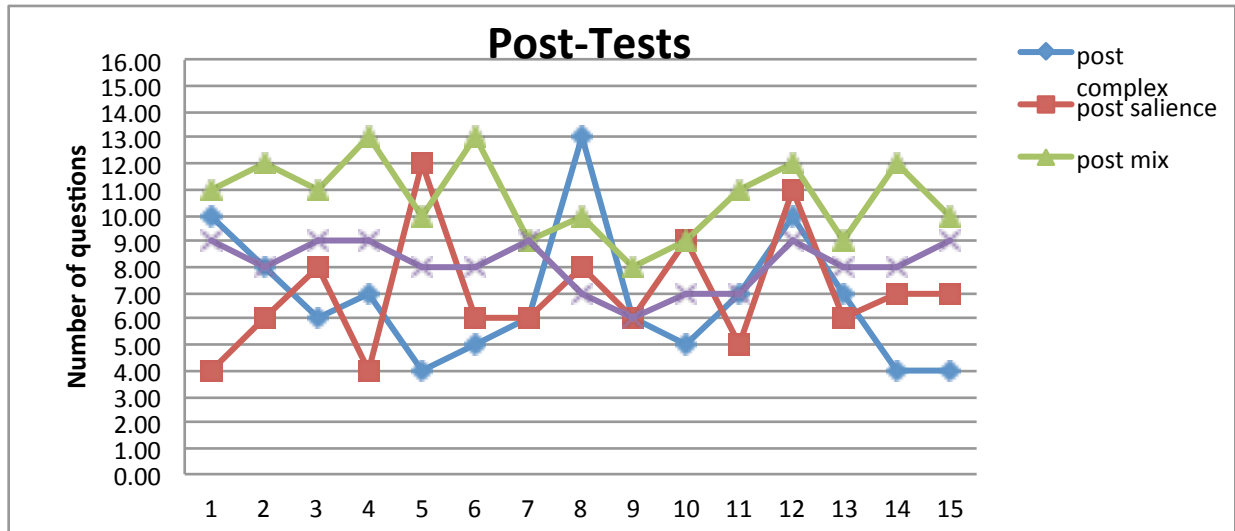


FIGURE 4: LINE GRAPH VARIANCE OF POST-TEST

In this line graph the procedure of answering the questions by the four groups is illustrated. All four groups experience a state of fluctuation in giving the correct answers to the given questions. As it is clear, the Mix group is above the other three groups by the fluctuation of correct answers from 8 to 13 correct answers.

As the result of computing a One-way ANOVA shows, after subtracting the scores of each group in pre-tests from the acquired scores in Post-tests, it was observed that there was a significant difference in the mean score of the Mix group. As the sig ANOVA is less than 0.05, so it proves that the significance is meaningful.

ANOVA  
DiffComplexSalienceMixControl

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	159.000	3	53.000	12.000	.000
Within Groups	232.000	56	4.000		
Total	392.000	59			

#### Post Hoc Tests

Difference (complex, salience, mix, control) Multiple Comparisons

	(I) factor	(J) factor	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Tukey HSD	complex	salience	.00000	.00000	.000	-2.0000	1.0000
		mix	-4.06667*	.00000	.000	-6.0358	-2.0976
		control	.00000	.00000	.000	-2.0000	1.0000
	salience	complex	.00000	.00000	.000	-1.0000	2.0000
		mix	-3.00000*	.00000	.000	-5.0000	-1.0000
		control	.00000	.00000	.000	-2.0000	1.0000
	mix	complex	4.06667*	.00000	.000	2.0976	6.0358
		salience	3.00000*	.00000	.000	1.0000	5.0000
		control	3.00000*	.00000	.000	1.0000	5.0000
	control	complex	.00000	.00000	.000	-1.0000	2.0000
		salience	.00000	.00000	.000	-1.0000	2.0000
		mix	-3.00000*	.00000	.000	-5.0000	-1.0000
Games-Howell	complex	salience	.00000	.00000	.000	-2.0000	2.0000
		mix	-4.06667*	.00000	.000	-6.0000	-1.0000
		control	.00000	.00000	.000	-3.0000	1.0000
	salience	complex	.00000	.00000	.000	-2.0000	2.0000
		mix	-3.00000*	.00000	.000	-5.0000	-1.0000
		control	.00000	.00000	.000	-2.0000	1.0000
	mix	complex	4.06667*	.00000	.000	1.0000	6.0000
		salience	3.00000*	.00000	.000	1.0000	5.0000
		control	3.00000*	.00000	.000	2.0237	4.0000
	control	complex	.00000	.00000	.000	-1.0000	3.0000
		salience	.00000	.00000	.000	-1.0000	2.0000
		mix	-3.00000*	.00000	.000	-4.0000	-2.0237

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The difference between posttest and pre-test was computed and the one-way ANOVA was calculated .the scores of all four groups of pre-tests were subtracted from the scores of four groups of posttests. The result was put in to one-way ANOVA and the post-Hoc results were analyzed. As the different score of Mix group was higher than other groups, so there was a significant difference variance of four groups.

The difference in mean score of Mix group is significant with all three other groups mean scores, special control group with the significance of .000. Post-hoc comparisons using the Games- Howell indicated that the mean score for group mix is different from the other three groups and the mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

## CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of this study was to find out if making the listening task complex, salience or both together has any effects on listening comprehension of advanced learner. Comparing the differences of the scores provided by the pre and posttest and analyzing their variance by the one-way ANOVA revealed some difference in the listening comprehension ability of the language learners exposed to complex questions and tasks. Changing the structure of the sentences and making them more complex had a small effect on the performance of the learners; it also caused them to focus more on the task.

The second hypothesis concentrated on the effect of task saliency on learners' listening comprehension. No effective and extensive research has been performed to see what will happen if students don't know what activities they are asked to do about the listening task. Saliency has been performed in language learning about the degree in which the activity is getting vague. What gets salient in the mind depends on, familiarity frequency and conventions of encounters (Giora, 2003).Saliency in language learning focuses on the familiarity of the targeted language that the listeners are exposed to, so it can be noticed effective in achieving the listening objectives. The efficacy of language can be influenced by so many different factors, and the saliency of the listening task can be one of them.

The third research question in this study analyzed the impact of making the task mix, (complex and salience).considering the mentioned procedure for this group, based on the result of the given test and posttest as well, the subjects have been able to answer majority of questions correctly. Talking with the participants of the Mix group, they believed that just taking notes while listening and not looking at the questions simultaneously cause them to focus on the content of the listening more carefully .They found looking at the questions and accessing them while listening as the case of distraction. Doing a survey among participants and interpreting the result of the test show that exposing participants to the questions of listening and giving them background knowledge or letting them to know what task and activity they will be asked to do has no significant effect on their performance of the task and on their listening comprehension skills as well. Making the listening task both complex and vague will increase the concentration of the learners and as a result better listening comprehension.

### *Implications of the study and suggestions for further research*

Conducting the investigation on the effect of task complexity and salience on advanced EFL learners' listening comprehension provides implications and suggestions for further research. There could be more complete and extensive research by changing the dependent and independent variables based on different aspects of listening comprehension and a vast range of participants. The results of this study could be extended by investigating whether implementing the factor of anxiety which is caused because of lack of knowledge and information about the task can have an effect on the result of the study. There was a possibility of checking the effect of gender (male/female) on the performance of the participants based on comparing their mind mapping.

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## ACQUISITION OF PRENOMINAL AND POSTNOMINAL GENITIVES BY IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the acquisition of prenominal and postnominal genitives by Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) learner. Two variables were considered: possessive categories and language proficiency. We considered the influence of possessive categories such as lexical modifier, semantic relationship, and weight and syntactic complexity on genitive alternations by Iranian EFL learners. Also, we examined whether the learners' different levels of language proficiency have any effect on the acquisition of the prenominal and postnominal genitives. To do this, 120 male and female students at BA and MA levels in English translation and teaching major with ages between 23 and 28 were selected. After administering a proficiency test, they were divided into two groups: high (58 students) and low (62 students). The results indicated that possessive categories including lexical modifier, semantic relationship and weight and syntactic complexity improved the students' acquisition. Also, there existed a positive correlation between the students' mastery level in English and the acquisition of prenominal and postnominal genitives.

**KEYWORDS:** Genitive Case, Prenominal Genitive, Pronominal genitive, Postnominal genitive.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Language speakers have the knowledge to perceive the component morphemes of a word since their mental grammar includes a mental lexicon of morphemes and the morphological rules for their combination (Hellar, 2002). There are a number of morphological and syntactic properties which differentiate subjects from complements. In English, subjects generally precede predicates and complements follow them. Moreover, subjects give various case properties to complements.

According to Lardiere (1998), case is a grammatical category specified by the syntactic or semantic function of a noun or pronoun, like many languages, English case markers are grammatical morphemes added to nouns to indicate whether the noun is subject, object, possessor or some other grammatical role. Also, he claims that case is a grammatical category in accordance with nouns and adjectives and also demonstratives, articles and other determiners. Also, he believes that cases are mostly marked by verbs, but not always. Within a sentence, case is narrowly associated with syntactic functions. Such as:

- Subject function is performed by a noun or NP in nominative.
- Direct Object function is conducted by a noun or NP in accusative.

Different case forms of typical pronoun and noun expressions include: nominative (as subject), accusative (as direct object), dative (as indirect object which is nearly lost or inactive in English language), locative (as location), vocative (as respect), and genitive (as possession). Kreyer (2003) states that the most commonly used term in describing the grammar of various languages is genitive case; genitive forms are used to mark ownership. In a broad sense, possessive form is a word or construction used to display a relationship of possession. Nouns or pronouns taking the form of a possessive are sometimes described as being in the possessive case; however, this usually denotes case with a broader range of function than just producing possessive forms. Therefore, it can be concluded that genitive case is part of a system in which relationships between noun and other parts of the sentence are signaled by inflection (Hinrichs & Szmrecsanyi, 2007).

Genitive case has three different types: 1) prenominal possessor used for animated entities (e.g. Peter's book) (Szmrecsanyi & Hinrichs, 2008). 2) pronominal possessors which are classified into two forms (a) possessive pronouns (mine, yours, his, hers, ours, yours, their) which are used nouns (Suda, 2007). (b) possessive adjectives (my, your, his, her, its, our, your, their) are inserted into sentences before noun as adjectives (Suda, 2007). 3)

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postnominal possessor used for entities that do not indicate any traits of personality (e.g. the roof of the house) (Kreyer, 2003).

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Both in speech and writing, possession is a significant subject in grammar. Language learners bump into the usage of possession marker specially prenominal and postnominal genitives (so-called s-genitive and of-genitive, respectively). The English possessive marker 's is generally recognized as a clitic. Even though the term 'clitic' is used to identify a wide variety of elements, it can be said that it is an element which does not have the independence of a word (prosodically) (Scott, Denison & Börjars, 2007).

English nominal constructed with the morpheme -s as a so-called possessive marker may have an indefinitely large number of interpretations depending on the context of utterance. From a meaning-based viewpoint, possessive constructions are interesting largely due to the indeterminate number of interpretations to which they are subject. A simple nominal such as *Peter's shirt* might refer to the shirt owned by Peter, the shirt worn by Peter, the shirt Peter designed, the shirt he painted, or photographed, or has stolen.

Certainly the possessive morpheme is either extremely polysemous, or the encoded content it brings with it into the nominal is adequately abstract to be compatible with a very wide range of meanings (Aitken, 2009). According to Kreyer (2003), there exist many situations of overlap where both prenominal and postnominal genitives are appropriate option although in particular contexts the s-genitive ('N1's N2') can be substituted by the of-genitive ('the N2 of N1'), and vice versa. In these areas, both constructions are not a free variation since a number of possessive categories, linguistic as well as extra-linguistic specified an appropriate one (Altenberg, 1982).

Basically, prenominal possessive construction is a construction in which the possessor phrase precedes the head of the possessed phrase. In the s-possessive construction, the possessor phrase is followed by the morpheme s, which is traditionally considered as a genitive case marker that is an inflectional suffix on the head noun of the possessor phrase (Strunk, 2004).

Stefanowitsch (2003) states that a modifier with the possessive clitic -'s that precedes the head noun can produce prenominal genitive and if the modifier is syntactically marked by the preposition "of" and also possessor phrase follows the head of the possessed phrase, it makes postnominal construction that is a possessive construction.

According to Biber (2003), tendency of written genres to be more closely similar to spoken registers cause variation in written styles; colloquialization indicates progressing genitive variations in writing which prefer to use spoken styles as well. The clear evidence for this alternation is accepting more conversational writing styles, newspapers and news magazines which have been using styles that more nearly parallel patterns in speech. However, certain publications such as academic and technical journals, which like to involve more formal, passage with intricate grammatical structures and larger, more particular vocabularies do not confirmed colloquialization (Biber, 2003). Biber (2003) claims that in particular written genres (e.g newspaper reportage) an informational explosion has created pressure to communicate information as economically as possible. The s-genitive is naturally encouraged in these compressed contexts (Szmrecsányi & Hinrichs, 2008).

In written English, the of-genitive has been the more frequent construction, while in speech, s-genitive are more frequent than of-genitive (Szmrecsányi & Hinrichs, 2008; Tagliamonte & Jarmasz, 2008). The s-genitive is comparatively frequent in both spoken English and contemporary journalistic English. The s-genitive is, on the whole, more frequent in spoken data than in written data (Hinrichs & Szmrecsanyi, 2007). Raab-Fischer (1995) claims that the s-genitive has become importantly more frequent in press language in the period between the 1960s and the 1990s, with respect to genitive frequencies, press language has over time become more similar to spoken varieties of English.

Hinrichs and Szmrecsányi (2007) state that there existed a high frequency of s-genitive between 1960 and 1990. They claim that in modern English, the tendency of s-genitive usage has kept on through modern English. The of-genitive form is often considered as having formal limitations (Rosenbach 2002; Tagliamonte & Jarmasz 2008). The relationship between formality and the of-genitive guides the hypotheses that women, who have been found in

sociolinguistic studies to make use of formal structures more frequently than men, are more likely to utilize the *of*-genitive constructions and that people with higher education utilize more *of*-genitive (Shih, Grafmiller, Futrell & Bresnan, 2009).

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The present study was an attempt to find answers to the following research questions:

- 1) Do possessive categories such as lexical class of the modifier, semantic relationship, weight and syntactic complexity affect the acquisition of prenominal and postnominal genitives by Iranian EFL learners ?
- 2) Does learners' language proficiency have a significant effect on the acquisition of prenominal and postnominal genitives ?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

The participants of this study included 120 males and females. They were Persian native speakers who were studying English at Islamic Azad University of Takestan, Shahre- ghods, Tehran Research and Science in Iran both at BA and MA levels in English translation and teaching major. In order to assess the participants' language proficiency, a Michigan proficiency test was used. After the proficiency test, based on their scores, they were divided into two groups: low and high. Both groups had to take a multiple choice test related to prenominal and postnominal genitives. We aimed to find out whether there existed any relationship between students' proficiency level and correct choice in the genitive test. From among 120 participants, 58 high and 62 low proficiency students were employed to fulfil the aim of this study.

### ***Materials***

The materials employed in this study fall into two types. First, Michigan ECCE practice tests by Jain Cook (2001) as a proficiency test. Actually, it contains 100 items: 40 items on grammar, 40 items on vocabulary, 20 items on reading comprehension (Appendix 1). Second, a genitive test which was developed by Kreyer (2003) consists of 25 items: 9 items were related to lexical class of modifier (proper name, common noun, collective noun, higher animal noun, lower animal noun, personified noun, semi-collective noun, time & measure, non-personal), 10 items were related to semantic relationship (origin, attribute, time & space, disposal, objective, subjective, partitive, possessive, kinship, descriptive), 6 items were related to weight and syntactic complexity (N<sub>2</sub>+finite clause, N<sub>2</sub>+non-finite clause, N<sub>2</sub>+prepositional phrase, N<sub>1</sub>+finite clause, N<sub>1</sub>+non-finite clause, N<sub>1</sub>+prepositional phrase). These items were selected from English Grammar in Use book (N<sub>1</sub>=modifier, N<sub>2</sub>=head noun).

### ***Procedures***

A proficiency test (Michigan test) was first administered to measure participants' general English proficiency. Then, they were divided into two groups: high proficiency and low proficiency. At last, genitive test was presented which was associated with prenominal and postnominal constructions. Each item of this test was related to lexical class of modifier, semantic relationship, weight and syntactic complexity.

## **RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

In order to analyze the data to investigate the research question one, first the participants' performances on the prenominal and postnominal genitives in three different possessive category types, i.e. lexical class of modifier, semantic relationship, and weight and syntactic complexity were assessed. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics.



Table 1: Descriptive statistics for Participants' Performances on Three Possessive Category Types

Possessive Category Types	N	Range	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Variance
Semantic relationship	120	1.00	.702	.800	.80	.199	.040
Lexical modifier	120	.78	.556	.555	.56	.170	.029
Weight & syntactic complexity	120	.83	.468	.500	.50	.199	.040

Figure 1 below provides a graphical representation of the results.

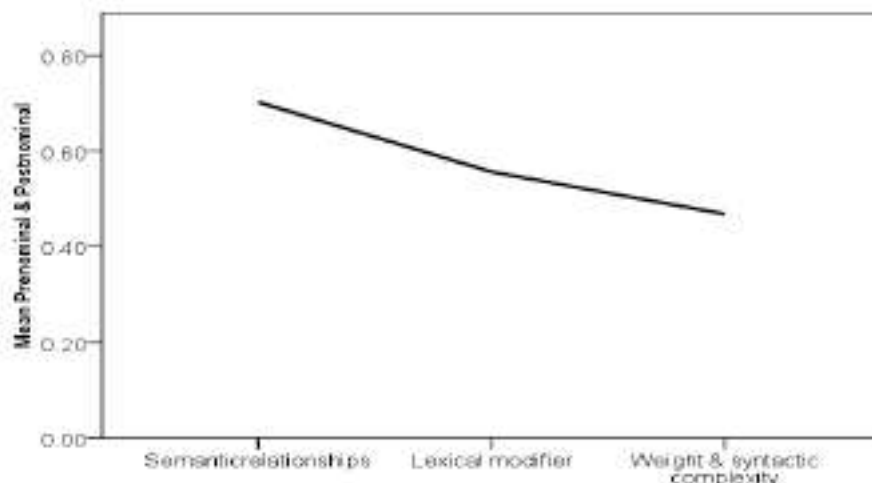


Figure 1: Prenominal and Postnominal Results for Three Possessive Categories

Repeated Measures ANOVA was used with possessive category types as the within-subject variable to compare the participants' performances on three possessive category types.

Table 2: Multivariate Tests of Repeated Measures ANOVA for the Effects of Possessive Categories on Prenominal and Postnominal Genitives

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta
Possessive Category Type	.575	43.666	2.000	118.000	.000	.425	

ANOVA detected a statistically significant effect for possessive category, which is the within-subject factor ( $F_{(2, 118)} = 43.66$ ;  $p = .000$ ,  $p < .05$ ); as a result, we did not find a statistically significant difference between the possessive category types (lexical class of modifier, semantic relationship, and weight and syntactic complexity) in the acquisition of prenominal and postnominal genitives by Iranian EFL learners.

Also, the interaction between possessive category type and proficiency level was not significant ( $F = .26$ ;  $p = .76$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Since we have obtained a statistically significant result from the previous analysis, this suggests that there is a difference somewhere among our factors. Post-hoc Pairwise Comparisons were run to compare each pair of possessive category types. Table 3 below displays the results.

Table 3: Post-hoc Pairwise Comparisons for Three Possessive Categories



Possessive types	Possess. Types	Mean Diff.	Std. Error	Sig.
1. Semantic relationship	2	.146 <sup>*</sup>	.021	.000
	3	.234 <sup>*</sup>	.026	.000
2. Lexical modifier	3	.088 <sup>*</sup>	.022	.000
3. Weight & syntactic complexity	2	-.088 <sup>*</sup>	.022	.000

The results of Post-hoc Pairwise comparisons showed significant differences ( $p = .000$ ) for all possible pairs; Semantic relationship gained the largest value ( $M = .70$ ,  $SD = 19$ ), lexical modifier the second ( $M = .55$ ,  $SD = 17$ ), and weight and syntactic complexity the third ( $M = .46$ ,  $SD = 19$ ).

In order to put the participants into two low and high proficiency levels, the Michigan Proficiency Test was administered. Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Michigan Test

N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Variance
120	22	62	84	73.31	73	73	6.383	40.732

Those ( $N = 62$ ) students whose scores were equal to or lower than the mean were considered as low proficiency students, and those ( $N = 58$ ) students who scored higher than the mean were assigned to high group. The participants' raw scores on Michigan proficiency test are shown in Table 5. The performances of possessive category types in two low and high language proficiency levels were assessed. Table 6 presents the related descriptive statistics.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics for Participants' Performances on Three Possessive Categories and Two Proficiency Levels

Possessive Category	Proficiency Level	Mean	SD	N
Semantic relationship	Low	.6500	.21033	62
	High	.7550	.17508	58
	Total	.7025	.19977	120
Lexical modifier	Low	.5167	.17094	62
	High	.5963	.16104	58
	Total	.5565	.17013	120
Weight & syntactic complexity	Low	.4333	.19456	62
	High	.5028	.20003	58
	Total	.4681	.19955	120

Figure 2 below provides a graphical representation of the results.

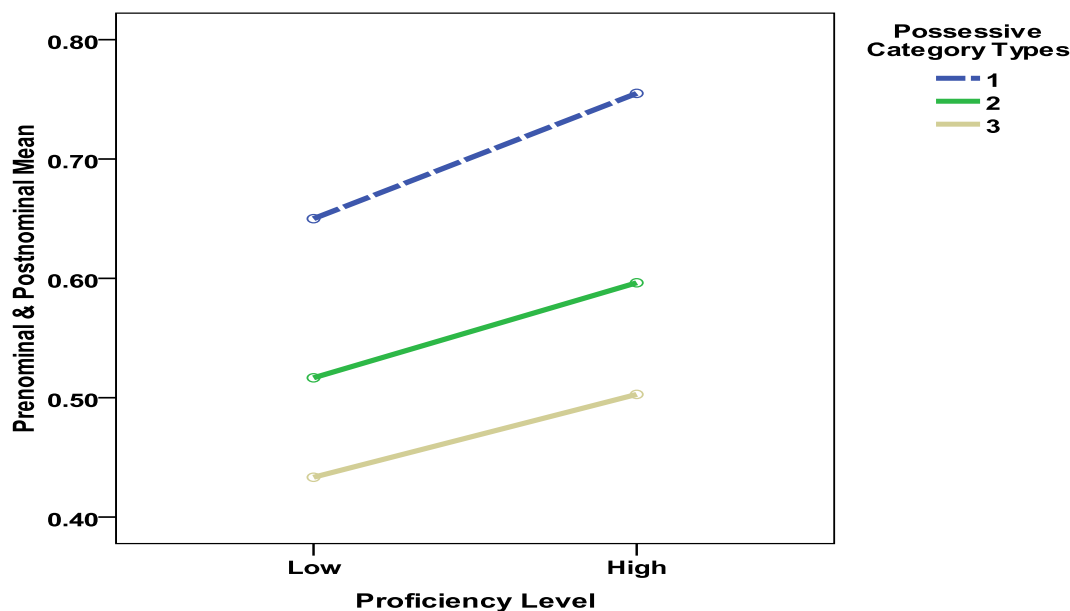


Figure 2: Prenominal and Postnominal Results for Three Possessive Categories and Two Proficiency Levels

To see whether learner's language proficiency has any statistically significant effect on acquisition of prenominal and postnominal genitives, Repeated Measures ANOVA was used with possessive category type as the within-subject variable and proficiency level as between-subject variable.

Table 7: Tests of Between-Subjects Effect of Repeated Measures ANOVA for the Effect of Proficiency Level on Prenominal and Postnominal Genitives

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta
Intercept	119.306	1	119.306	2969.017	.000	.962	
Level	.646	1	.646	16.065	.000	.121	
Error	4.742	118	.040				

ANOVA results showed a statistically significant effect for level of proficiency as the between-subject variable ( $F = 16.06$ ;  $p = .000$ ,  $p < .05$ ); The purpose of this study was to investigate the acquisition of prenominal and postnominal genitives. This was approached by raising two research questions. The first research question of the present study enquired about whether the lexical class of modifier, semantic relationship, weight and syntactic complexity affect the acquisition of prenominal and postnominal genitives by Iranian EFL learners. The participants' mean score on semantic relationship condition turned out to be .70, lexical class of modifier .55, and weight and syntactic complexity .46. These results suggest that these possessive categories influence the learning of prenominal and postnominal genitives. Therefore, semantic relationship gained the largest value ( $M = .70$ ,  $SD = 19$ ), lexical class of modifier the second ( $M = .55$ ,  $SD = 17$ ), and weight and syntactic complexity the third ( $M = .46$ ,  $SD = 19$ ).

Descriptive statistics for participants' performances on three possessive categories and two proficiency levels indicated that by comparing high and low students' performance on semantic relationship, lexical class of modifier, and weight and syntactic complexity, there existed a significant difference between the mean score of two groups. Since the results showed a statistically significant effect for level of proficiency as the between-subject variable ( $F = 16.06$ ;  $p = .000$ ,  $p < .05$ ) it can be claimed that learners' language proficiency has a significant effect on the acquisition of prenominal and postnominal genitives.

Our study lends support to Kreyer's (2003) finding that examined the effect of lexical modifier, semantic relationship, and weight and syntactic complexity on the choice between prenominal and postnominal genitives. He concluded that *of*-genitive is associated with entities that do not show any traits of personality, whereas *s*-genitive is usually used with modifiers that designate animate entities. Therefore, the result of this study supports Kreyer' (2003) idea that the choice depends on the degree of personality assigned to the modifier or on the degree to which the modifier tends towards human reference. Thus, the *s*-genitive is favored with nouns which denote human beings whereas the *of*-genitive is, apart from some exceptions, usually regarded as the only choice with concrete or abstract inanimate nouns.

The results of a study by Szmrecsányi and Hinrichs (2008) agree with the findings of this research in that among the possessive categories, lexical class of the possessor is a crucial possessive category for predicting genitive variation choice. Hence, the more human and animate a possessor, or the more it conveys the idea of animate things and human activity, the more likely it is to take the *s*-genitive.

The findings of the present paper support Gragmiller's (2010) idea that possessors with final sibilants are much more likely to be used in the *of*-genitive than possessors without a final sibilant. However, he has different ideas about the Animacy as he believes that speakers are much more likely to use the *s*-genitive with animate possessors in speech than in writing, suggesting that the influence of animacy is significantly weaker in writing than in speech particularly noteworthy is the influence of animacy, which is quite strong in speech, slightly weaker in most written genres, and substantially diminished in newspaper texts. It appears that journalists' genitives and genitives of conversational speech are not at all affected by animacy to the same degree.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The results of this study suggested that the trend of the acquisition of prenominal and postnominal genitives was discouraging because there was a remarkable overgeneralization in the acquisition of prenominal and postnominal genitives. Szmrecsanyi and Hinrichs (2008) argue that there is no doubt the instruction of possessive categories such as lexical class of modifier, semantic relationship, weight and syntactic complexity can have a positive influence on the acquisition of them independently. With respect to those three main possessive categories which include lexical class of modifier (proper name, common noun, collective noun, higher animal noun, lower animal noun, personified noun, semi-collective noun, time & measure, non-personal), second, semantic relationship (origin, attribute, time & space, disposal, objective, subjective, partitive, possessive, kinship, descriptive), the last category is weight and syntactic complexity (N2+finite clause, N2+non-finite clause, N2+prepositional phrase, N1+finite clause, N1+non-finite clause, N1+prepositional phrase (N1 =modifier, N2=head noun) impact on students' correct choice directly. The second result of this study is the positive correlation between language proficiency and acquisition of prenominal and postnominal genitives. The higher the students' proficiency, the more correct the choices.

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#### ACQUISITION OF GRAMMATICAL ASPECT BY IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the acquisition of grammatical aspect by Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) learners. The main question addressed in this study was whether Iranian EFL learners could distinguish conditions under which they must use either the perfective aspect or imperfective aspect. A group of 110 adult, Persian-Speaking learners of English both at BA and MA levels in English teaching major Took a Michigan test based on which they were assigned to two levels of proficiency namely, low and high were selected. A test of Grammatical Aspect was then administered to detect the factors which affect their choice of perfective and imperfective aspects. The results showed that temporal-linguistic and knowledge based semantic factors affected the learners understanding of perfective and imperfective aspects. They also showed that proficiency level affect learners to understand different types of grammatical aspects. Telic, Transitive, and Inanimate features are the best combination for determining the temporal grammatical perfective aspect. As for imperfective aspect, Atelic, Intransitive, and Animate temporal features are the best combination for understanding grammatical imperfective aspect.

**KEYWORDS:** Tense, Lexical aspect, Grammatical aspect, Perfective aspect, imperfective aspect

## INTRODUCTION

Tense and aspect have long been the focus of language pedagogy. In the study of the acquisition of temporal systems, three concepts are necessary: tense, grammatical aspect and lexical aspect. Tense refers to a situation on a time line. Grammatical aspect states the internal temporal constituency of a situation. Finally, lexical aspect refers to the characteristics inherent in the lexical items that define the situation (Fan, 2005).

Aspect gives importance to other temporal information like duration, completion or frequency and states the temporal flow of time. Different from tense which shows the relationship of a situation at different time periods, aspect shows a single situation as being ongoing or completed. Generally, there are two types of aspect: grammatical aspect and lexical aspect. Aspect should be distinguished from tense which is primarily concerned with location in time rather than its duration. Tense refers to *temporally when* while aspect refers to *temporally how* (Olbishevskaya, 2004). Grammatical aspect is expressed through grammatical markers, linguistic devices such as auxiliary and verb inflection. It is a grammatical category that shows temporal flow in a given action or states the point of view of the speaker.

English has two aspects that combine freely with tense and mood: the perfective (e.g. I have/had read the book), and progressive (*I am/was reading the book*). According to Durich (2005), the perfective aspect states a position outside of the situation so the writer or speaker views an eventuality as an entity. Conversely, the imperfective aspect views eventualities from inside and emphasizes the internal temporal structure of the situation. The imperfective is a grammatical aspect which demonstrates a situation considered as internal structure, such as ongoing, whether that situation happens in the past, present, or future. The perfective aspect is a grammatical aspect which demonstrates a simple whole situation, whether that situation occurs in the past, present, or future.

Anderson, Matlock and Spivey (2008) explain that aspect has obtained appreciable attention over the past 40 years. Aspect shows aspectual classes of verbs and the mixture of the verb with its arguments and adverbial phrases or to morphological aspectual markers, such as inflectional or derivational morphemes marked on the verb. Aspect shows two related processes: the ability of verbs and other lexical items to delineate how a condition progresses or holds in time (Lexical Aspect) and verbal auxiliaries and affixes show the result of a situation at a given time (Grammatical Aspect). In sum, aspect emphasizes situation, action, state and event.

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Another parameter used for identifying grammatical aspect is morphological inflection. Comrie (1976) postulates that the perfective aspect considers a situation beyond the writer/ speaker's views as an eventuality. Conversely, the imperfective aspect emphasizes eventualities from inside and considers internal temporal structure of the situation, since it can both look backwards towards the start of the condition, and forwards towards the end of the situation, considering that the situation is persistent and continues, without any beginning and end. The imperfective aspect concentrates on a certain point of time inside a situation, not regarding the beginning or the end of a situation. Comrie argues that the meaning of the perfective aspect does not show that conditions are not durative, but that it just views a situation from the outside. Regarding the lack of reference to the internal temporal structure of a situation of the perfective aspect, the imperfective aspect refers to the internal temporal structuring of a situation. However, the differences between perfective and imperfective aspect should not disguise the identical specifications between the two, as they both happen within the same verb phrase (VP) and not reject each other. Additionally the semantic features of imperfective and perfective aspect complete each other.

Olbishevskia (2004) believes that the main aspectual topic in Grammatical Aspect is that of perfectivity and imperfectivity. The semantic part of the perfective is shown as a function that shows contingency to a 'total event'. Hence, the perfective shows events that constitute wholes. Stoicescu (2009) states that grammatical aspect or viewpoint aspect constitutes the differentiations between the perfective and imperfective viewpoints. Regarding perfective viewpoint, the speaker assumes the event externally and views it as finished or completed. Perfective aspect morphology shows completion with an endpoint (telic event) or termination for event without natural endpoint (atelic event). An imperfective viewpoint shows the incompleteness of the condition and its ongoing nature.

Durich (2005) demonstrates that the semantic features of the perfective aspect is shown by short duration, but imperfective aspect is shown in a longer period of a situation due to its atelic specification and limited duration and the perfective is telic, inchoative and resultative, since the perfective often refers to either the beginning or the end of a situation.

According to Jabbari (1998) Grammatical Aspect is the way speakers look at part of a situation (i.e. incompleteness or imperfective). Different forms of grammatical aspects cannot change inherent lexical aspect:

- 1) A. John paints a picture. (grammatical aspect = perfective, inherent aspect = accomplishment)
- 2) B. John is painting a picture. (grammatical aspect = imperfective = inherent aspect accomplishment)
- 3) C. John has painted a picture (grammatical aspect = perfective, inherent aspect = accomplishment)
- 4) D. John has been painting a picture (grammatical aspect = perfective = inherent aspect = accomplishment)
- 5) E. John has painted a picture (grammatical aspect = perfective inherent aspect = accomplishment)
- 6) F. John has been painting a picture. John has been painting a picture(grammatical aspect = imperfective, inherent aspect = accomplishment)
- 7) G. John will paint a picture (grammatical aspect = perfective, inherent aspect = accomplishment)
- 8) H. John will be painting a picture. John has been painting a picture (grammatical aspect = imperfective, inherent aspect = accomplishment)
- 9) I. John will have paint a picture (grammatical aspect = perfective, inherent aspect = accomplishment)
- 10) J. John will have been painting a picture. John has been painting a picture (grammatical aspect = imperfective, inherent aspect = accomplishment)

Verbs can be divided into four aspectual categories using three universal aspectual values:[punctual][telic] and [dynamic]. Achievements are [+punctual] and [+telic], accomplishments are [-punctual] and [+telic], activities are [-telic] and [+dynamic] and stative are [-dynamic].

According to Fedder (2012), there are three types of cues to grammatical aspect. The first cue is a temporal-linguistic which specifies if an event has an endpoint. Atelic predicates prefer imperfective aspect, while telic predicates prefer perfective aspect. The second set of cues are knowledge-based semantic cues, which focuses on subject animacy, presence/absence of a patient and presence/absence of locative information. Here we assumed that the sentences with animate subjects, no patients, and locative information would prefer imperfective aspect, while sentences with inanimate subjects, patients, and no locative information would prefer perfective aspect. The third type of cue is discourse cue, which shows a narrative introduction to each sentence, and the order in which locative information is presented. In light of the foregoing discussion, the present study aimed to answer the following research questions:



## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- 1) Do temporal-linguistic and semantic factors affect Iranian EFL learners' understanding of perfective and imperfective aspect?
- 2) Does proficiency level affect Iranian EFL learners' understanding of different types of grammatical aspect?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

A group of 110 male and female participants were randomly selected from among the Iranian adult students of English at Islamic Azad University of Takestan, Shahreghods and Tehran Research and Science Center both at BA and MA levels with ages between 20 and 30.

### ***Materials***

Two tests were used. One of the tests was devised based on English Michigan ECCE practice test for checking students' proficiency level. They had 40 multiple choice grammar items, 40 multiple choice vocabulary items, and 20 multiple choice reading comprehension items. The total score was 100 based on which the participants were ranked. Then a test was administered extracted from Fedder (2012) to check potential factors which may affect students' understanding of perfective and imperfective aspects. There were 8 factors: 4 factors related to perfective aspect and other 4 other factors related to imperfective aspect.

### ***Procedure***

We first aimed to find out if proficiency level affects Iranian EFL learners' ability in distinguishing different types of grammatical aspect. To select homogenous participants and put them into two low and high proficiency levels, the Michigan Proficiency Test was administered. Fifty six students whose scores were equal or lower than the mean were considered as low proficiency students, and 54 students who scored higher than the mean were regarded as high group. Our main test was given to determine factors which influence the use of perfective and imperfective aspects.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The first research question addressed if temporal-linguistic and knowledge based semantic factors affect Iranian EFL learners' understanding of perfective and imperfective aspects. Following Fedder (2012), first the descriptive statistics for perfective aspect related to four temporal-linguistic and knowledge based semantic factors were assessed. Table 1 represents the related descriptive statistics.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Temporal-linguistic and knowledge based semantic Factors related to Perfective Aspect

Factors	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1. Telic Transitive Animate	2.59	1.383	110
2. Telic Transitive Inanimate	2.87	1.434	110
3. Telic Intransitive Inanimate	2.38	1.585	110
4. Atelic Transitive Inanimate	2.15	1.551	110

Figure 1 below displays the graphical representation of the results.

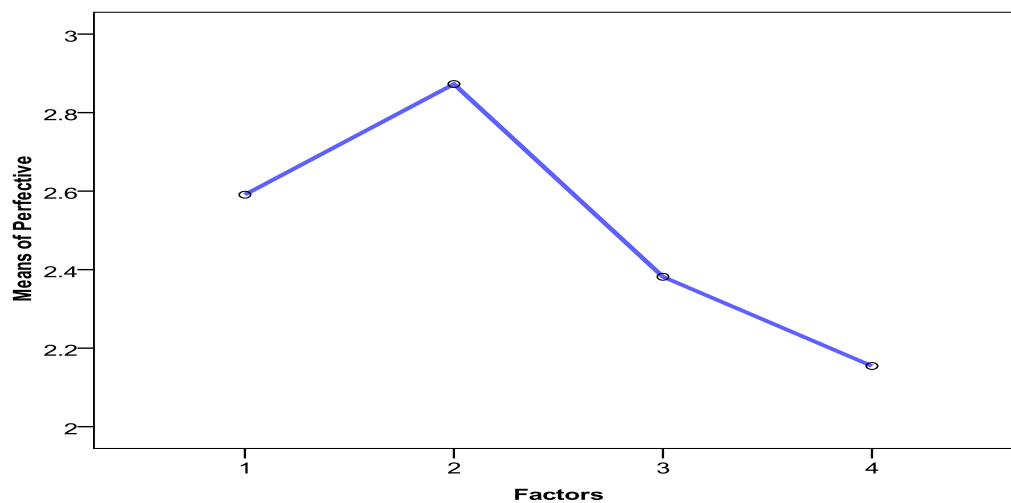


Figure 1: Perfective Results of Four Temporal linguistic and knowledge based semantic Factors

Repeated Measures ANOVA was carried out to compare the mean score of 110 participants on four temporal-linguistic factors to see whether there is a significant difference between them. The results of ANOVA are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Multivariate Tests of Repeated Measures ANOVA for the Effects of Temporal-linguistic and knowledge based semantic Factors related to Perfective Aspect

Effect	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Effect size
Temporal Factors	12.091	3.000	107.000	.000	.253

ANOVA found statistically significant effects for temporal-linguistic and knowledge based semantic factors, which is the within-subject factor ( $F_{(3, 107)} = 12.09; p = .000, p < .05$ ). However, the interaction between within-subject and between-subject factors, i.e. temporal and knowledge based factors and proficiency level was not significant ( $F = 1.74; p = .16, p > .05$ ). Besides, the interaction effect between factors and level of proficiency was not significant ( $F_{(3, 106)} = 1.74; p = .16, p > .05$ ).

Because we have gained a statistically significant result from the preceding analysis, this implies that there is a difference somewhere among our factors. As a result, Post-hoc Pair wise Comparisons were applied for perfective aspect. Table 3 presents the results.

*Table 3: Post-hoc Pair wise Comparisons between each two Temporal-linguistic and knowledge based semantic Factors in Perfective Aspect*

(I) Factor	(J) Factor	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
1. Telic Transitive Animate	2	-.282	.121	.127
	3	.209	.143	.884
	4	.436*	.141	.015
2. Telic Transitive Inanimate	3	.491*	.134	.002
3. Telic Intransitive Inanimate	4	.227	.147	.751
4. Atelic Transitive Inanimate	2	-.718*	.123	.000

Post-hoc Pair wise comparisons showed that there was a statistically significant difference between factor1 and 4 ( $p = .01, p < .05$ ) and between factor 2 and 4 (.000,  $p < .05$ ). In conclusion, factor 2 (Telic Transitive Inanimate) has the highest mean ( $M = 2.87, SD = 1.43$ ). Then the descriptive statistics for temporal-linguistic and knowledge based semantic factors related to imperfective aspect were assessed. Table 4 represents the related descriptive statistics.

*Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Temporal-linguistic and knowledge based semantic Factors related to Imperfective Aspect*

Temporal Factors	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1. Telic Intransitive Animate	1.77	1.450	110
2. Atelic Transitive Animate	2.20	1.393	110
3. Atelic Intransitive Animate	2.71	1.546	110
4. Atelic Intransitive Inanimate	2.34	1.467	110

Figure 2 below displays the graphical representation of the results.

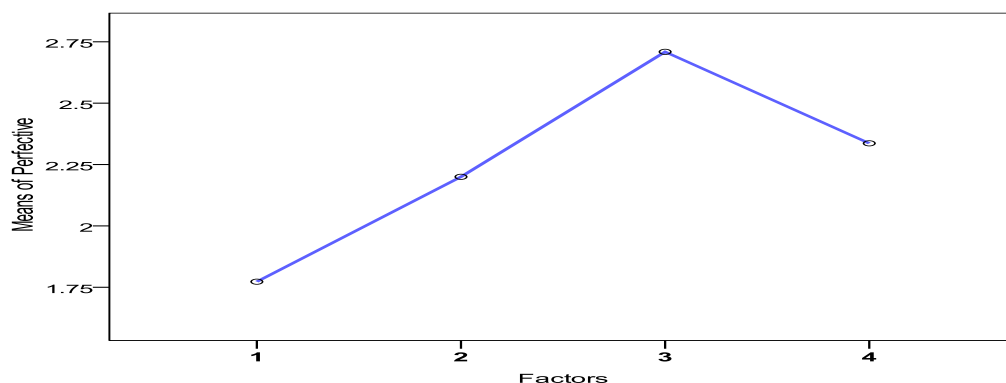


Figure 2: Imperfective Results on Four Temporal-linguistic and knowledge based semantic Factors

Repeated Measures ANOVA was used to compare the mean temporal factors in imperfective aspect. The results of ANOVA are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Test of Within-Subject Effects for the Effects of Temporal-linguistic and knowledge based semantic Factors on Imperfective Aspects

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Temporal-linguistic Factors	Greenhouse-Geisser	49.327	2.393	20.61	12.132	.000	.100

ANOVA results revealed significant effect for temporal-linguistic and knowledge based semantic factors based on Greenhouse-Geisser ( $F = 12.32$ ;  $p = .000$ ). Therefore the first null hypothesis was rejected. In addition, the interaction effect between factors and level of proficiency was significant ( $F_{(3, 106)} = 6.27$ ;  $p = .001$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

ANOVA shows the difference somewhere among our factors. It does not tell you which factors differ from each other. Consequently, Post-hoc Pair wise comparisons was used. Table 6 represents the relate results.

Table 6: Post-hoc Pair wise Comparisons between each two Temporal-linguistic and knowledge based semantic Factors on Imperfective Aspect

(I) Factor	(J) Factor	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
1. Telic Intransitive Animate	2	-.427	.175	.099
	3	-.936*	.187	.000
	4	-.564*	.184	.016
2. Atelic Transitive Animate	3	-.509*	.122	.000
3. Atelic Intransitive Animate	4	.373*	.124	.019
4. Atelic Intransitive Inanimate	2	.136	.135	1.000

Post-hoc showed that there was statistically significant difference between all possible pair of factors except for the difference between factor 1 and 2 ( $p = .09$ ,  $p > .05$ ) and between factor 2 and 4 ( $p = 1.00$ ,  $p > .05$ ). To sum, factor 3 (Atelic Intransitive Animate) has the highest mean ( $M = 2.71$ ,  $SD = 1.54$ ). The second research question was raised to see whether students' proficiency level has any effect on their understanding perfective aspect and imperfective one.

To put the participants into two low and high proficiency levels, the Michigan Proficiency Test was administered. Table 7 represents the descriptive statistics for results of this homogeneity test.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics for Michigan Test

N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Variance
110	22	57	79	68.16	68.00	67	6.420	41.221

The mean score of Michigan test was 68.16, median was 68, and the mode was 67, which are to a large extent the same. However, mode is a little smaller. From the participants, those (N = 56) students whose scores were equal or lower than the mean were considered as low proficiency students, and those (N =54) who scored higher than the mean were regarded as high group. The participants' raw scores on Michigan proficiency test are represented in Table 8. In order to test this null hypothesis, the between-subject ANOVA was utilized first for perfective and then imperfective aspects. Table 9 presents the descriptive statistics for perfective.

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics for Temporal-linguistic and knowledge based Factors on Perfective Aspect

Temporal factors	Proficiency Level	Mean	SD	N
1. Telic Transitive Animate	Low	1.77	1.293	56
	High	3.44	.861	54
	Total	2.59	1.383	110
2. Telic Transitive Inanimate	Low	1.84	1.345	56
	High	3.94	.231	54
	Total	2.87	1.434	110
3. Telic Intransitive Inanimate	Low	1.29	1.217	56
	High	3.52	1.023	54
	Total	2.38	1.585	110
4. Atelic Transitive Inanimate	Low	1.23	1.221	56
	High	3.11	1.254	54
	Total	2.15	1.551	110

Figure 3.below provides a graphical representation of the results for perfective.

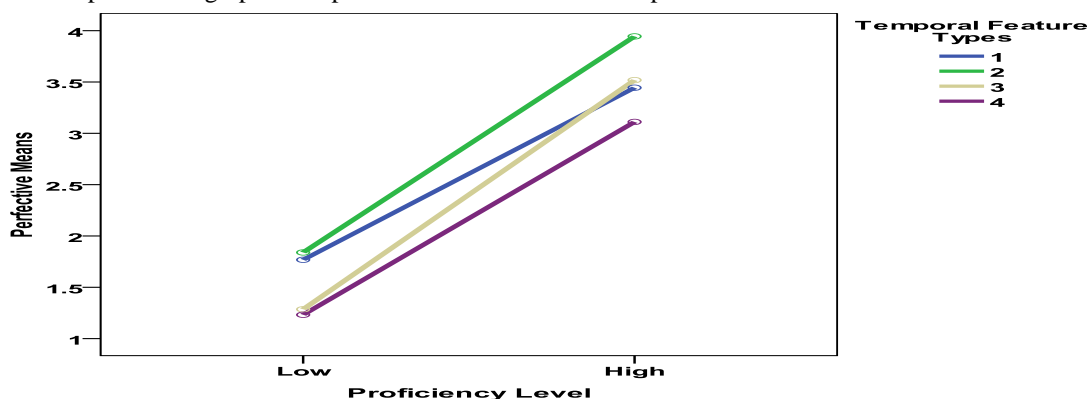


Figure 3: Perfective Results for Temporal-linguistic and knowledge based semantic factors in Two Proficiency Levels

Table 10 below shows the results of Between-subject ANOVA for the perfective aspect.

*Table 10: Tests of Between-Subjects Effect of ANOVA for the Effect Proficiency Level on Perfective Aspect*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	2788.687	1	2788.687	1422.150	.000	.929
Level	428.223	1	428.223	218.382	.000	.669
Error	211.777	108	1.961			

ANOVA detected a statistically significant effect for level of proficiency as the between-subject variable on perfective aspect ( $F = 218.38$ ;  $p = .000$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Then another between-subject ANOVA was used for testing the effect of level of proficiency on imperfective aspect. Table 11 shows the related descriptive statistics for imperfective.

*Table 11: Descriptive Statistics for Temporal-linguistic and knowledge based semantic Factors on Imperfective Aspect*

Temporal factors	Proficiency Level	Mean	SD	N
1. Telic Intransitive Animate	Low	1.41	1.108	56
	High	2.15	1.664	54
	Total	1.77	1.450	110
2. Atelic Transitive Animate	Low	1.32	1.162	56
	High	3.11	.965	54
	Total	2.20	1.393	110
3. Atelic Intransitive Animate	Low	1.61	1.448	56
	High	3.85	.359	54
	Total	2.71	1.546	110
4. Atelic Intransitive Inanimate	Low	1.37	1.259	56
	High	3.33	.890	54
	Total	2.34	1.467	110

Figure 4 below is a graphical demonstration of the descriptive statistics for imperfective.



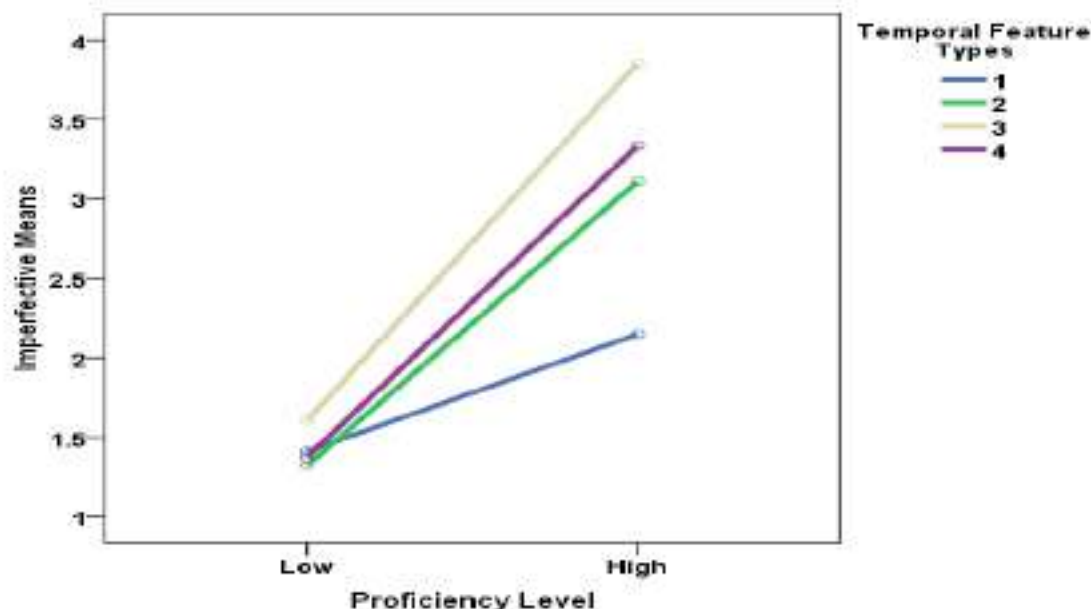


Figure 4: Imperfective Results on Temporal-linguistic and knowledge based semantic Factors and Proficiency levels

Table 12 below manifests the ANOVA results for imperfective.

Table 12: Tests of Between-Subjects Effect of ANOVA for the Effect Proficiency Level on Imperfective Aspect

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	2266.210	1	2266.210	1347.075	.000	.926
Level	311.300	1	311.300	185.042	.000	.631
Error	181.690	108	1.682			

ANOVA results showed a statistically significant effect for the level of proficiency ( $F = 185.04$ ;  $p = .000$ ,  $p < .05$ ) on imperfective and as mentioned in Table 6 ( $F = 218.38$ ;  $p = .000$ ,  $p < .05$ ) on imperfective aspect.

## DISCUSSION

The main concern of the study was to see whether temporal linguistic and knowledge based semantic factors affect Iranian EFL learners understanding of perfective and imperfective aspects. The results show that the factor 2 (Telic Transitive Inanimate) was the only factor in perfective aspect that was considerably more effective than three other factors. In fact, the results showed that Telic, Transitive, and Inanimate features are the main clues used for determining the temporal grammatical perfective aspect.

Moreover, the results showed that in imperfective aspect, Factor 3 (Atelic Intransitive Animate) was the only factor in imperfective aspect that was considerably more effective than three other factors. In fact, the mean value for Factor 4 (Atelic Intransitive Inanimate) was 2.34 with standard deviation 1.367. The mean for factor 2 (Atelic

Transitive Animate) is 2.20 with standard deviation 1.393. Also the mean for factor 1 (Telic Intransitive Animate) was 1.77 with the standard deviation of 1.450. Thus, it can be inferred that Factor 3 with Atelic, Intransitive, and Animate temporal features are the best combination for understanding grammatical imperfective aspect. So, it was found that Atelic, Intransitive, and Animate features are the main clues used for understanding the temporal-linguistic and knowledge based semantic grammatical imperfective aspect.

The second purpose of the present study was to examine the effect of language proficiency level on the Iranian EFL learner's ability to understand different types of grammatical aspect. The results obtained from the participants showed that proficiency level had a significant impact on the learner's ability to understand different types of grammatical aspect. So it can be said that the students with high proficiency level distinguish better than the students with low proficiency level both in perfective and imperfective aspects.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study suggested that temporal-linguistic and knowledge based semantic factors affected the learners' understanding of perfective and imperfective aspects. They also showed that proficiency level affects learners' understanding of different types of grammatical aspects. This is in line with the findings of Fedder (2012) who claims that three factors are effective in grammatical aspects understanding: 1. Temporal-Linguistic Cues to Grammatical Aspect, 2. Knowledge-Based Semantic Cues to Aspect, 3. Discourse Cues to Grammatical Aspect. The results showed that Telic, Transitive, and Inanimate features are the best combination for determining the temporal grammatical perfective aspect. As for imperfective aspect, Atelic, Intransitive, and Animate temporal features are the best combination for understanding grammatical imperfective aspect.

## Limitation of the study

Factors such as the types of material, participants, personal interest in the topic, and some other factors influence the outcome of the study.

- Because of the lack of a well-known valid test, the validity of the proficiency test and our main test is in question.
- The results of the study cannot be generalized to all second language learners because the study was run in Iranian EFL context.
- The sample employed in the current study was limited to 120 students. Therefore, similar experiments with greater numbers of subjects are required to support the findings of this study.
- The study was conducted with university students and research could be done with all students in institute and other places.

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## APPLICATION OF READER RESPONSE THEORY IN IRANIAN TERTIARY-LEVEL READING CLASSES: A 'PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATION' STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

In many of the Iranian universities, currently there seems to exist a huge lacuna in the way practitioners of the two fields of English Literature and Teaching English as a foreign language (both enjoying the same departmental or collegiate residency) are involved, if any, in a give and take of their ideas and practices. The present study sets out to show how some analytic tools at the literary critic's disposal can be put into practice in language classes at large. One such notable tool, instantiated practically by the investigation, in vogue internationally (Carlisle, 2000, Elliot, 1990, Hirvela, 1996), but apparently still not in the limelight in the Iranian context, relates to the use of Reader Response Theory in reinterpreting the role of the reader and the mode through which they make sense of L2 reading texts. This study aims at sketching the theoretical and practical implications of employing the said literary tool in L2 classrooms.

**KEYWORDS:** literature, L2 teaching, Iran, Reader Response Theory, reading skills

### INTRODUCTION

In Iranian universities and higher education institutes, the two fields of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (henceforth TEFL) and English Language and Literature have been enjoying the same departmental or collegiate residency for some decades now (the two fields of Theoretical Linguistics and Translation Studies are rather new arrivals in the arena). All the same, there seems to be a widening gulf in the way academicians of both sides are involved, if any, in the give and take of their theories and practices. In fact, they seem to occupy their own ivory towers as far as cooperative or collaborative research undertakings are concerned. The situation is very much akin to the one in the U.S. at university level, where observers have spoken of and, for that matter, witnessed "the institutionalized dichotomy between literary studies and language training" (Kramsch & Nolden, 1994, as cited in Paran, 2008, p. 466). By adopting such an unfortunate division of labor (especially) in tertiary education, we are bound to miss many valuable opportunities for enriching the way we go about teaching languages *as well as* literature(s). In Iran, English Language and Literature is considered a far cry from TEFL in the academe – a conception running deep in related departments and colleges across the country. Currently, to the best of the knowledge of the present researchers, there has not been much serious attempt by professors of English literature at delving into the way literature should be taught. It seems that there is a tacit consensus between literary figures in Iran as to how literature is to be taught or learnt. No empirical studies have ever been conducted or reported on the mechanisms for teaching and/or learning English literature in the Iranian context by such literary academicians.

A number of factors are at work for this apparent dearth of proper empirical investigations on how to go about teaching various aspects of (English) literature, especially, to foreign language learners and students. For one thing, literature professors' research methodological tools and the way they conceive of research, even the language they use in their research reports, are totally (or for the most part) different from what holds sway in the field of TEFL. At this point, there is a perceived research gap this same study attempts, among other things, to draw investigators of both sides' attention to. It seems that annual joint conferences (e.g., TELLSI International Conference hosted annually in a different geographical region of the country and some other sporadic colloquia) are far from being adequate to do justice to this important issue. In fact, the results of studies on the interface between literature teaching and foreign language teaching, if any, fall short of having any practical realization in colleges and departments.

Another justification for the undue attention given to the afore-mentioned issue, itself being touched upon by the present research, is the lack of common ground between the two fields at graduate levels. Few, if any, departments offer courses to students of English Literature on Discourse Analysis (a sub-branch of Applied Linguistics) and related disciplines, to wit, Pragmatics, Semantics, etc. On the other hand, few, if any, departments offer to students of TEFL courses in Literature teaching and literary criticism – itself a must for developing students' critical thinking skills at graduate levels. In the past, several Iranian universities (e.g., Shahid Chamran University located in South West of Iran and University of Tehran) used to offer optional courses in English Literature (teaching, criticism, etc.) to PhD students of TEFL but the trend has apparently ceased to continue in recent years.

Several TEFL researchers, on the other hand, have made some sporadic references to the role of literature as a "bone of contention" in foreign language education (Bagherkazemi & Alemi, 2010) drawing specifically practitioners' attention to the "payoffs" of integrating literature into language education currently underway in the country (See also Aghagolzadeh & Tajabadi, 2012; Alemi, 2011; Khatib, Rezaee, & Derakhshan, 2011). It is unfortunate that much of the said research, (mostly in the fashion of review papers, or, at most, "practical demonstration" types) has been reinventing the wheel in the sense that some themes including the arguments for or against the use of literature in EFL/ESL classes (Amer, 2003; Ghosn, 2002), the (in)attention literature has historically received in some ELT methodologies, etc. have been gleaned from the relevant literature and synthesized into synoptic articles. Rarely has such research - universal in nature - tapped into the possibility of localized concerted efforts by the practitioners of the two neighboring disciplines at academic give-and-take encounters in Iran.

Far from making any originality claims, the present study, sets out to further the issue a step or two by pointing to the possibility of a contributory trade-off between the instructors of the two camps in the Iranian context. Specifically, it aims at showing, in a practical fashion, how some analytic tools can be employed and deployed by academicians of both sides instantiated by putting some form of Reader Response Theory into practice in teaching foreign language skills, most notably among them, the reading skills. As such, following a very brief historical review of the relevant literature, we set out to elaborate on the implications and applications of integrating some form of Reader Response Theory (henceforth RRT) into the foreign language curricular content area.

## **STATUS OF LITERATURE TEACHING IN ESL/EFL TEACHING METHODOLOGY: TO BE OR NOT TO BE?**

This section, consisting of two parts, deals initially with the 'pendulous' role of literature in various ELT methodologies popular at given times and then takes up the discussion with a report on the positive taken-on-board feelings directed by ELT researchers and practitioners at the inclusion of literature into the language education curriculum.

Hall (2005) mentions three, at times, diverging approaches to literature integration into foreign language curriculum, to wit:

*Traditional approaches*, deriving heavily from nineteenth-century notions of the canon and a moral agenda for literature, with at best a little New Criticism or elementary sentence-based stylistics study thrown in, but with linguistic dimensions often neglected or assumed. Typically found in 'foreign language' and higher academic contexts ('humanism').

- Approaches typically deriving from or prompted by *communicative language teaching approaches* (clt) [sig], in which literature is viewed as discourse, and literary texts on more equal terms with the other texts comprising a culture ...
- The productive consonances of *clt* [sig] and 'theory' as reader response or poststructuralist ideas of the inevitability of different responses to texts by different readers, according to background, gender, race, nationality, etc., or in general the contexts of reading (critical reading; 'culture') feed into 'sociocultural' approaches to language teaching and learning ... (p. 49).

To cut a long story short, the *traditional* approaches, being represented in effect by Grammar-Translation method of foreign language teaching, make a case for teaching a second language through literary texts. Literature is the means as well as the end of mastery of the (written) system of a given language. Some well-known specialist textbooks dealing with a historical progression of ELT methods and teaching models have addressed the issue of the salience of the role of literature in Grammar-translation view of language teaching/learning (see specifically Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

The *Communicative* approaches to language teaching see literature, at the most, as a resource or as materials for language teaching. Some advocates of communicative approaches have welcomed integration of literature into the act of language teaching (e.g., Widdowson, 1975), whereas some other figures have frowned upon or, looked suspiciously at the part it can play at furthering students' linguistic competencies.

The *sociocultural* approaches see literature at the service of self-actualization of learners' linguistic as well as other cognitive needs. This final view of the role of literature within language curriculum has opened promising avenues for conducting empirical research into the said interface between literature and language teaching.

With regards to the perceived value of inclusion of literature into language classes, Hall (2005) synoptically points to three arguments in favor of it, to wit

- affective arguments (pleasurable, motivating, personalising);
- cultural arguments (cultural knowledge, intercultural experience);
- psycholinguistic arguments ('focus on form', discourse processing skills – inferencing, processing of non-literal language, tolerance of ambiguity and others) (p. 48).

The problem with such a conception of the role of literature in language education is that the above claims "have too often been taken on trust, and typically need to be framed more empirically and precisely for any useful investigation to be possible, to be researched, in short" (ibid).

## READER RESPONSE THEORY

Reader response theory (or, it makes more sense to talk of *theories*) is an umbrella term referring to a number of approaches towards literary text analysis all shifting the undue emphasis on the author or the text to a focus on the reader's interactions or transactions *with* the text. As such, the theory considers "a concern for the reader" (Bressler, 2007, p. 80) to be at the heart of any analytical journey through literary artifacts:

Believing that a literary work's interpretation is created when a reader and a text interact or transact, ... (Reader Response Theory) critics assert that the proper study of textual analysis must consider both the reader and the text, not simply a text in isolation. For these critics,

Reader + Text = ... Meaning

Only in context, with a reader actively involved in the reading process with the text, can meaning *emerge* [italics added]. (ibid)

The above quotation by Bressler aptly (though mostly in a tacit way) captures the distinctive features of RRT as well as the theory's ontological and epistemological takes. For one thing, from an ontological vantage point, we can maintain that we have multiple realities, not one single monolithic reality, waiting to be discovered. Secondly (from an epistemological viewpoint), meanings are not discovered. Rather, they are constructed in an active engagement of the individual with semiosis (in the broad sense of the word). Such a view of the (individual) reader and the semiotic artifact are quite in keeping with (as mentioned previously) the sociocultural or ecological perspectives – approaches which are currently household words in both general as well as language teaching education.



Similarly, through taking an RRT perspective to reading texts (literary or nonliterary), readers come to not only *transact* with the text but also *interact* with it (not to be confused with Brown & Yule's (1983) typology of *transactional* and *interactional* functions of discourse which is stark opposite of what RRT critics mean by them. For Brown & Yule, the former has to do with "the efficient transference of information. Language used in such a situation is primarily 'message oriented'". The latter is related to the interpersonal as well as emotional side of human beings.). According to Rosenblatt (1978), as readers we are engaged either in *efferent* or *esthetic* reading types or both:

When we read for information-for example, when we read the directions for heating a can of soup-we are engaging in **efferent reading** ... During this process, we are interested only in newly gained information that we can "carry away" from the text, not in the actual words as words themselves. When we read efferently, we are motivated by specific needs to acquire information. When we engage in **aesthetic reading**, we experience the text. We note its every word, its sounds, its patterns, and so on. In essence, we live through the transactional experience of creating the [work] ... Rosenblatt adds, however, that at any given moment in the reading process, a reader may shift back and forth along a continuum between an efferent and aesthetic mode of reading (Bressler, p. 79).

Alongside with what was said, the present study sets out to lay bare the implications and applications of use of one such literary analytical tool for the classroom language teacher. The aim is to spark off empirical investigations of the applications of literary analytical tools in language education – a research phenomenon which is sadly missing in the current state of affairs in our country. At this point, in the study, we aim at proposing a model of L2 reading based on RRT principles and assumptions. A note is in order here. The theory has been employed and deployed globally by some researchers (see, in particular, Ali, 1993; Carlisle, 2000; Elliot, 1990; Hirvela, 1996). In the domestic context, however, it seems that it is not as yet tested and tried.

#### A MODEL OF TEACHING L2 LITERARY SHORT READINGS BASED ON RRT

The following is a set of techniques proposed for implementing an RRT approach towards teaching especially short literary extracts. The techniques and procedures will be instantiated by their application on the opening page(s) of Dickens' *Hard Times* (see Appendix). The said techniques are supposed to fit in well with the three-phase interactive model of reading, to wit, *pre-reading* tasks, *while-reading* tasks, and *post-reading* tasks. Having followed the selection criteria as mentioned by Ghosn (2002, p. 174) (i.e., universal theme(s), a clear and appealing storyline, (a bit of) literary language, and illustrations), we can proceed with the first phase, which is dealing with pre-reading activities.

I. Pre-reading phase. The purpose of this part is activating the class' mental schemata of their lived experiences and activating the relevant vocabulary. There are a host of techniques which can be employed in this phase. We will, however, confine our discussion of this section to two procedures we have tried our hands at various points in our reading classes. They include *brainstorming* and *group work/discussions*.

- *brainstorming*. Ask students (intermediate or above) to brainstorm on words or phrases pertinent to the general theme(s) of the novel such as 'school', 'being a student', 'the socially desirable behavior at school', etc. The idea is that students give full vent to their perceptions, attitudes, personalized responses, worries, etc. aroused by the literary stimulus i.e., excerpts. Tell students that they can either come up with their own off-the-cuff responses and comments, or build upon what their classmates mentioned. Having done that, a general discussion on the themes developed can be taken up by the class with the instructor orchestrating it.

- *group work*. Having already formed several groups, ask them to make a list of characteristics of 'good' and 'bad' school environments in their *own views*.

II. While-reading phase. In this phase students are actively engaged in the *process* of reading the text and the subsequent sense-making of it. Again, this phase can take on a variety of forms to deliver and reinforce the reading materials. We recommend what we have specifically experimented with in our own classes, to wit: (what we have termed) *dialogizing*, *reflexivity* and *vicarious identification*.

- *dialogizing*. This technique, exacting as it may be at first blush for the teacher, brings much pay-off if done properly. The teacher, having already familiarized himself/herself with the extract, reads the rather short excerpt to the class and adapts the main character's (harsh and domineering) tone of voice as best as they can while students are listening.

- *reflexivity*. Tell the class to read the first two pages of the novel silently in a given allocated time and, while engaged in the act of reading, think of the situation being described with the one they have formerly gone through or probably are going through i.e., schooling. Ask them to write in black and white or make a mental note of any feelings the situation described arouses in them. At the end of the time allocated to reading, students embark on a 'think-aloud' statement of their sentiments.

- *vicarious identification*. After the class is done with the act of reading, ask them who they identified with more and why. Also, urge them to talk about the character(s) they hated more. Ask them to give their reasons. Encourage them to personalize their replies by thinking about any similar experiences they have undergone.

III. Post-reading phase. This section can be conducted by the teacher in a number of ways. Again our proposed courses of action are what we are most comfortable with and we have found to be useful as a result of experimenting with it. Two specifically beneficial techniques that can be implemented are *predicting* and *ending the story* (the extract covered in the class).

- *predicting*. As a strategy belonging in teaching the final phase of reading (non)literary texts, students can be encouraged to anticipate what will happen in the course of the story. It can be about the storyline or it can encompass the fate of given characters e.g., Bitzer or Sissy Jupe, in regard to Dickens' opening page(s) of the novel.

- *ending the extract*. Students can also be called on to tell how the story is going to come to an end.

## CONCLUSION

RRT is far from being a unified and coherent theory of literary appreciation or analytic tool. Studies aiming at implementation of the theory have at the most come up with some techniques and procedure in realizing it. Techniques as varied as role play and newspaper articles (Elliott, 1990), reading logs (Carlisle, 2000), rewriting narratives from another character's point of view (1989), and critical questioning procedures (probst, 1994) have been employed by international researchers to show the efficacy and efficiency of integrating an RRT procedures into the language curriculum.

The present research, being of a "practical demonstration" (Maley, 2001, p. 183) type, all its perceived shortcomings notwithstanding, is predicated upon our real-life practices with some techniques of teaching (non)literary passages gleaned from the assumptions of RRT. We have tried to include in it a set of practical procedures at teaching L2 texts, especially literary ones to show the applicability of the analytic tools at the literary critic's disposal and to show heightened awareness of the role of literature in language education curriculum. We have also had in mind the possibility of academic give and take of ideas and practices between the neighboring fields of English Language and Literature and TEFL, both enjoying the same departmental or collegiate residency in Iranian universities.

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### **Appendix**

#### **The opening page of Dickens' *Hard Times***

'NOW, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to the principle, Facts, sir!'

The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a school-room, and the speaker's square forefinger emphasized his observations by underscoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster's sleeve. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for its base, while his eyes found commodious cellars in two dark caves, overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's mouth, which was wide, thin, and hard set. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's voice, which was inflexible, dry, and dictatorial. The emphasis

was helped by the speaker's hair, which bristled on the skirts of his bald head, a plantation of firs to keep the wind from its shining surface, all covered with knobs, like the crust of a plum pie, as if the head had scarcely warehouse-room for the hard facts stored inside. The speaker's obstinate carriage, square coat, square legs, square shoulders, - nay, his very neckcloth, trained to take him by the throat with an unaccommodating grasp, like a stubborn fact, as it was, - all helped the emphasis.

'In this life, we want nothing but Facts, sir; nothing but Facts!'

The speaker, and the schoolmaster, and the third grown person present, all backed a little, and swept with their eyes the inclined plane of little vessels then and there arranged in order, ready to have imperial gallons of facts poured into them until they were full to the brim.

THOMAS GRADGRIND, sir. A man of realities. A man of facts and calculations. A man who proceeds upon the principle that two and two are four, and nothing over, and who is not to be talked into allowing for anything over. Thomas Gradgrind, sir - peremptorily Thomas - Thomas Gradgrind. With a rule and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in his pocket, sir, ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature, and tell you exactly what it comes to. It is a mere question of figures, a case of simple arithmetic. You might hope to get some other nonsensical belief into the head of George Gradgrind, or Augustus Gradgrind, or John Gradgrind, or Joseph Gradgrind (all supposititious, non-existent persons), but into the head of Thomas Gradgrind - no, sir!

**THE EFFECT OF COLLOCATION AWARENESS-RAISING ON THE EAP LEARNERS'  
ACHIEVEMENT OF ACADEMIC COLLOCATIONS THROUGH WRITING TASKS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The effect of collocation awareness-raising plays an important role on achievement of academic collocations by English for academic purposes (EAP) learners. In order to provide a developmental inquiry into raising learners' awareness to achieve academic collocations through writing tasks, this study examined a sample of 38 English language learners in two groups: one group with teaching academic collocations through underlining, as a measure of noticing, and the other group with explicit teaching of academic collocations within a six-week semester. The participants' collocational competence was tested running a pretest of academic collocations prior to teaching and a posttest of academic collocations following six sessions of teaching the collocations in question. The results demonstrated that the learners who learnt academic collocations through Collocation Awareness Raising (CAR) showed a constant increase in success rate, the number of collocations learnt, and making use of collocations to make more fluent and correct English sentences instead of creating incorrect, long and inappropriate phrases and utterances. Pedagogical implications of these findings are discussed in terms of training effect.

**KEYWORDS:** Collocation, Academic Collocations, Collocation-Awareness Raising, Noticing

**INTRODUCTION**

Knowledge of academic vocabulary is crucial for students studying at an English-speaking university, particularly for reading and writing fluently in an academic context, including but not limited to essays, articles, texts and even giving lectures in English. The bigger the range of vocabulary, the more English as a foreign language (EFL) learners can cope with reading and writing skills. In the past decade, there has been increasing interest in the nature of vocabulary acquisition. One growing area of research focuses on vocabularies and collocations but there are different views as regards vocabulary acquisition process, the importance of contextualization of collocations acquisition, and strategies used by students to learn vocabulary during their English life. It has been suggested that learners learn vocabularies through exposure to language such as reading as well as linguistic contexts in which the words occur (e.g. Gray & Holmes, 1938; Werner & Kaplan, 1950; Sternberg & Powell, 1983; Jenkins, 1984; Nagy, 1987).

Specifically speaking, many researchers have conducted research on second language acquisition and pedagogy over the two past decades; to them the core point of their research was focused on whether learners acquire an L2 language consciously or subconsciously, and whether consciousness learning is necessary condition to internal information. Introducing Acquisition Hypothesis, Krashen (1983) viewed acquisition as a subconscious process. Contrary to Krashen's Acquisition Hypothesis is Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis, which as Schmidt (1994) claims acquisition is largely a conscious process (cf. Izumi/Bigelow 2000: 240). Tomlin/Villa (1994) is among other scholars who claim that acquisition is partly conscious and partly subconscious (cf. Hulstijn/Schmidt 1994: 7). However attention has constituted the core part of many researches in recent years (Sharwood Smith 1993; Long 1991; Ellis 1994; Schmidt 1994).

EFL learners need learning academic collocations which are necessary for gaining a native-like fluency in an academic context. There are several studies that point at second Language learners' incomplete knowledge of second language vocabulary, but there are no studies that follow the development of this incomplete knowledge into a native-speaker-like meaning. Since at advanced levels, students really need to be aware of collocation if they are to be effective in English, and since at higher levels, it is possible that students find useful word partnerships themselves, rather than focusing on grammar, they need to be looking at patterns in a more generalizable sense.

Texts are a great way in noticing collocations. When learners engage in reading text enriched with academic collocations they encounter such collocations as such their attention will draw to them. Noticing as viewed by Schmidt is a tool for conscious attention that aid learners to change input into intake.

Taking into consideration the above points, the primary objective of this study was to reduce this gap by providing a qualitative inquiry into the development of L2 academic collocations to speak and write fluently in an academic context, which is deemed as an area of research that is extremely vital for instruction. In this research, noticing is deemed as a major tool to draw learners' attention on learning academic collocations to promote the quality of learning. However there were some inconsistencies among the findings of applied linguistics as regards the effect of Collocation Awareness-Raising (CAR) on the EAP Learners' Achievement of Academic Collocations. To bridge the gap and to understand the importance of selecting appropriate tasks to promote learners' awareness of such collocations, it is necessary to conduct more studies in the field.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Since vocabulary is an important part of learning a second language researchers have been interested for years to explore the impact of learning collocations, type of teaching collocations and the importance of context on learning collocations, in general. Knowledge of vocabulary has constituted the core part of many research conducted in recent years. In order to read and write successfully, EFL learners need to be able to recognize as many words as possible in their textbooks and use as many academic vocabularies as possible in writing essays, articles, texts and even giving lectures in English. The bigger the range of vocabulary, the more EFL learners can cope with reading and writing skills. Although many researchers have conducted research on vocabulary acquisition (e. g., Haastrup, 1991; Mondria & Witde- Boer, 1991; Wang, Thomas, Inzana & Primicerio, 1993), but there are different views as regards vocabulary acquisition process, the importance of contextualization of collocations acquisition, and strategies used by students to learn vocabulary during their English life.

### *Vocabulary in language learning and Strategies to Learn Vocabularies*

Vocabulary is a component of language learning such as other language skills as reading or speaking but having a sufficient range of vocabulary, however, does not yield fluency in language skills. On the one hand, researchers believe that context is important in vocabulary acquisition and comprehension but since learning words from context is a slow process, the contexts of use must be encountered before mastering a new word, as a result, extensive reading is required to acquire an extensive range of vocabularies. Collocations however illustrate the importance of context. For instance, "fair" has several meanings and so does "way" but when they occur near each other to make a collocation all the probable meanings fail to be established. The context in which a word is used is an important aspect in considering the word's meaning. Contextualization shall be considered a ground for removing any ambiguities as regards work knowledge (Miller, 1996).

Learners of English language make use of many strategies to acquire vocabulary such as consulting a dictionary to check on a guess made in the initial reading, writing the word's meaning in the margin of the text, adding the word to a personal word list, or perhaps entering the word and its meanings into a card system of the kind recommended by Mondria and Mondria-de Vries (1994). The more effectively the vocabulary is elaborated during acquisition, the more readily it will be recalled by learners (Mayer, 1992; Wittrock, 1992).

There are many studies, on the other hand, emphasizing on the importance of learning vocabularies independently through learners' own experience and strategies. Among these studies are those carried out by McCarthy and Nation (McCarthy & Nation, 1990). Keyword method, as an example, is a strategy used by high school-level students. Levin (1979) carried out a study on high-school Spanish students and concluded that about half of them used strategies involving cognates, phoneme correspondences, and some other mnemonic tricks. Nation (1999) proposes types of *word knowledge*, which are necessary to be able to use a word in a wide variety of language situations that one comes across. These include: the meaning(s) of the word, the written form of the word, the spoken form of the word, the grammatical behavior of the word, the collocations of the word, the register of the word, the associations of the word and the frequency of the word. Therefore, it was concluded that only a fraction of words are likely to be acquired through formal study and others will have to be acquired through simple exposure to the language such as reading a text or hearing a conversation.

### *Definitions and Types of Collocations*



A number of studies have investigated the meaning and types of collocations (Firth, 1968; Hoey, 1991; Jones & Sinclair, 1974; Peters, 1983; Lewis, 1993). The technical term of collocation, linguistically, implies rather more than mere placing words side by side but, according to Firth (1968), it is the habitual juxtaposition or association of words with each other or group of words together. Firth believes that: "You shall know a word by the company it keeps" (1968, p. 179). By words' meaning he does not mean the exact meaning of the words which are put near each other but rather the broader sense of 'meaning' characterized by Wittgenstein's statement as "the meaning of words lies in their use" (Firth, 1968). According to Jones and Sinclair (1974), collocations are words which occur near each other with a random frequency than is expected. Sinclair (1991) believes that "words which stand in such a relationship can be said to 'predict' one another because the presence of one makes the presence of the other more likely than it would otherwise be (Sinclair, 1991)."

Many terms are used by second language researchers to refer to collocations as fixed lexical units including *speech formulate* (Peters, 1983), *lexicalized stems* (Pawley & Syder, 1983), *lexical phrases* (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Schmitt, 2000) and, above all, *prefabricate chunks* (Lewis, 1993). Collocation is a term used for advanced learners who try to write in an academic context like a native-like speaker.

Researchers define collocations from two points of view as semantic and non-semantic. Firth (1968), on the one hand, believes that collocation concerns meaning, and he gives priority to the term as regards lexicon study. Sinclair (1966), considers the term in view of memory and argues that grammar can be described by structures and systems, while the former refers to language rules the latter to lexical items collocating with one another. On the other hand, some researchers regard collocations from non-semantic point of view. Among them is McCarthy (1988) who considered the notion of collocation as a kind of cohesive device. In his view, collocation is co-occurring lexical items but non-semantically (McCarthy, 1988).

Other researchers, for instance, Nattinger & DeCarrico (1992) describe collocations as 'chunks' of language of varying lengths, such as *on the other hand*. Lexical phrases, in their view, are conventional form/function formations that go together more frequently having an idiomatic meaning as they occur more frequently near each other. Lewis (1997) believes that "collocations are those combinations of words which occur naturally with greater than random frequency".

In the light of making benefits of the term "collocation" in many linguistic areas, many researchers classified collocations from different perspectives such as semantics, phraseology, corpus linguistics and systematic linguistics, pure idioms, figurative idioms, restricted collocations, and open collocations (Cowie & Mackin, 1975; Wood, 1981; Howarth, 1993).

Collocations and phrases are of paramount importance in the light of assisting EFL learners to gain a native-like fluency in an academic context. "Collocational Competence" as Lewis (2000) asserts is a characteristic of advanced learners which assist them to produce accurate, fluent and correct English sentences, while lacking such a knowledge yield creation of incorrect, long and inappropriate phrases and utterances impeding them from expressing the exact idea they are trying to say. Research on collocation has recently absorbed many attentions but little work is done as regards collocation as well as contrasting the collocational behavior in different languages (Xiao & McEnery, 2006).

#### ***Role of Noticing in Learning Academic Collocations***

In fact, awareness or noticing concept has been considered mainly from cognitive psychological point of view. Many scholars in this view believe that language learning is the same as other types of learning. Noticing, as considered by psychologists, is a means which links input to memory system. There are challenging views as regards noticing and awareness. Noticing is considered an important tool in learning foreign language as some scholars (Schmidt, 1990; Ellis, 1999; Swain, 1995; Long, 1983, 1985; McLaughlin, 1987) believe that no acquisition takes place without awareness or noticing; while others, such as Truscott (1998) view noticing only as a means for the acquisition of metalinguistic knowledge.

To Schmidt, (Schmidt, 1990, 1994) Noticing, is a conscious or subconscious process to change input into intake; this input, however includes lexicon, grammatical form, pragmatics, etc (Schmidt, 1990), which in his view once

learners attend to these kinds of input it becomes intake. Therefore, he considers noticing as a necessary and sufficient condition for language acquisition. In Schmidt's view (1994), consciousness is defined as awareness, intention and knowledge. Different levels and degrees of awareness as Schmidt (1990) claims include noticing and understanding. Among those who consider noticing as both conscious and subconscious process are Smith and McLaughlin (Sharwood Smith, 1981; McLaughlin, 1987).

Schmidt's view of Noticing hypothesis is a strong form of changing input into intake. The weak form of noticing as viewed by researchers has also a helpful but not a necessary role in language learning. To Robinson (1995) memorizing linguistic forms such as reading, repeating etc. can aid learners to attend consciously to linguistic form for changing input into intake. This definition of noticing, as viewed by Robinson (1995) is termed as detection plus rehearsal, which is a significant tool to assist transferring linguistic features to their short-term memory.

Many researchers put an emphasis on the role of noticing in cognitive approaches to second language acquisition (Gass, 1988, 1991; Schmidt, 1990, 1992, 1993; Schmidt & Frota, 1986). Assisting learners notice the forms and focus their attention on the contrasts between their interlanguage and the target language has constituted the core point of many research carried out in EFL context (e.g. Ellis, 1997, 1999; Sharwood Smith, 1981, 1991; Swain, 1995; Swain & Lapkin, 1995; VanPatten & Cadierni, 1993a, 1993b).

Many researches have been carried out concerning learning English structures, forms and vocabularies through raising students' awareness (Alanen, 1992; Lynch, 2001; Fotos, 1993). Although these studies are not directly related to development of raising students' awareness of academic collocation through noticing, their findings are useful in understanding raising L2 learners' awareness of academic collocations in general. In short, findings are mixed. For instance, major researches in this arena are conducted by Schmidt and Frota (1986). To assess Noticing Schmidt conducted a research on a native speaker who noticed a diary prepared by Schmidt; his interaction was recorded by Schmidt (1986). Schmidt (1986) found a connection between recorded noticing in the form of diary entries and linguistic forms used by him.

However, the missing part in the previous studies is the importance of academic collocations and the effect of noticing academic collocations in an English language context. As a whole, the aim of this research is to assess the effect of noticing and awareness raising on learning academic collocations and the effects of learning academic collocations to be a fluent writer in English context. Researchers now understand the worth of academic collocations in English context especially to be a fluent writer or lecturer during their English life.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To identify the relations, contradictions, and gaps in the literature, the following research questions were formulated to check the aim of the study:

**Question 1:** Do Iranian EAP learners learn academic collocations by noticing them in an academic context?

**Question 2:** Does EFL/ ESL learners pay attention to academic collocations through writing tasks such as noticing?

These questions are concerned with whether paying EAP learners' attention to academic collocations results in a change in learning academic collocations behavior, specifically, focusing on noticing and raising their awareness.

Taking these questions into account, the following hypotheses were formulated:

**Hypothesis 1:** Collocation awareness-raising does not lead to the noticing of academic collocations by Iranian EAP learners in an academic context.

**Hypothesis 2:** Collocation awareness-raising has no significant effect on the achievement of academic collocations by Iranian EAP learners.

## METHODOLOGY

This quasi-experimental research drew preliminary on Schmidt Noticing Hypothesis which was a foundation for investigating the impact of raising learners' awareness on learning academic collocations in an EFL context.

### ***Participants***

For the purpose of the present study, there were 38 participants (9 males and 29 females). The participants ranged from early 23 to 35 years of age. All study participants were L1 Persian speakers studying English as a Foreign Language enrolled in Islamic Azad University (North Tehran Branch, Iran). An obligatory writing course entitled "Advanced Writing" was selected for the purpose of the study, because this level was intended for those with basic skills but struggle in academic writing and speaking. Placement of the subjects into the classes was based on the enrollment procedures of the university and students' passing the preparatory grammar courses.

In order to measure their current knowledge level of academic collocations, a critical factor in academic contexts, the participants were asked to take an Academic Collocations Test as a pretest to be selected to serve as participants of this study. To acquire desirable result, it was necessary that all of the students in the two available classes present in all phases of the experiment: for the pretest, the instructional treatment, and the posttest session.

### ***Materials and Data Collection***

To collect data four types of materials were used for the purpose of the study:

#### ***Testing materials***

In order to evaluate learners' collocational competence, two tests were used by the researchers: a pretest of academic collocations for checking learners' knowledge level of academic collocation, and a posttest with the aim of measuring and comparing acquiring collocational competence of the two groups after treatment.

To assess level of the students' knowledge of academic collocations, participants in both groups were given an Academic Collocations Test as a pretest prior to treatment and the same test as a posttest following treatment. *Academic Vocabulary in Use* by Michael McCarthy and Felicity O'Dell (2007) was taken benefit as a source and guidance to plan the tests. The pretest consisted in 45 and the posttest in 34 multiple-choice items on the English structure testing academic collocations. The reliability of both tests was determined by administering the test on a group out of the two groups in question with the same college level as the two groups in question.

Attempts were made to plan the tests on academic collocations which appeared to be more beneficial in academic contexts such as giving lectures, writing articles, papers and thesis. The questions were designed as multiple-choice items so that students had four choices to select the correct answer. Having used the Kuder-Richardson formula 21, the reliability score of the pretest was estimated to be 0.86 and of the posttest to be 0.89. Following estimation of reliability, the tests were administered as a pretest and a posttest on the two groups in question to determine level of the students' knowledge of collocations prior and after treatment. The rationale behind administration of the test was to ensure the knowledge of the test takers on the items in question, to obtain good facility values and discrimination and to have enough items as Crocker and Algina (1986) found the following:

Whenever a test is administered, the test user would like some assurance that the results could be replicated if the same individuals were tested again under similar circumstances. This desired consistency (or reproducibility) of test scores is called reliability. (p. 105)

#### ***The model paragraph***

A model paragraph containing academic collocations to be underlined by the subjects was used per session. The model paragraph was a paragraph enriched with ten beneficial academic collocations chosen from *Academic Vocabulary in Use* by Michael McCarthy and Felicity O'Dell (2007). The significance of the academic vocabulary items focused on in this book is verified by the Cambridge International Corpus of written and spoken English and also the Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English (CANCODE) corpus of spoken English developed at the University of Nottingham in association with Cambridge University Press. These corpora include large collocations of written and spoken academic text so that it includes the language which is distinctive for academic contexts.

Topics were selected in conformity with the aim of the study which was teaching typical academic collocations with the specifications of enjoying topic for writing in an academic context and enrichment with academic collocations of the most frequency to be used for academic purposes. In each sentence of the paragraph would learners notice and underline academic collocations. Therefore the model paragraph seemed to be consistent with the aims of the study in line with Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis.

#### *A list of academic collocations*

For each session, a list of ten academic collocations was prepared with examples and comments on them (including but not limited on key nouns, key verbs, key academic expression and terms, key phrasal verbs and key quantifying expressions). Since the purpose of the research was to aid EFL learners to speak and write fluently in an academic contexts attempts were made to choose the academic collocations which intended to be of paramount importance in giving lectures and writing theses, dissertations, papers as well as articles in an academic contexts. The list in question included ten beneficial academic collocations chosen from *Academic Vocabulary in Use* by Michael McCarthy and Felicity O'Dell (2007). The significance of the academic vocabulary items focused on in this book is verified by lexicography and computational team at Cambridge University Press which has build up Cambridge International Corpus to provide evidence about language use that assists to better enhancement of teaching materials.

#### *Matching exercises*

As an assignment seven to ten matching exercises was designed so that the participants should try on them at home to master the academic collocations they have been taught per session.

#### **Research Design and Procedure**

To examine the research hypotheses, two groups were established: one comparison group and one noticing group. The groups were two classes which were selected randomly; their homogeneity was verified utilizing the pretest of academic collocations.

All the participants in the comparison group one and noticing group were thoroughly informed of the procedures to be followed throughout the study prior to the tasks. A weekly reading and noticing academic collocation session was administered for 6 weeks. A text enriched with the most beneficial and useful academic collocations which assumed to be of paramount importance in assisting learners to write and speak in academic contexts was presented and taught to the participants per session.

#### *Noticing Group*

The maximum length of experimentation time for each group participating in the study was around 20 minutes. For the passage reading and underlining, in order to have the participants focus on the activity of reading and noticing academic collocations, they were instructed to read the passage at a comfortable speed and to focus on overall passage to raise their awareness of academic collocations. Underlining was used as a measure of noticing as the participants were requested to underline academic collocations they come across within the text in question. All of the participants underlining the collocations in question exhibited a basic understanding of them (within a time limit of 5 minutes in average). After reading and underlining the researcher handed out a paper including ten academic collocations in form of sentences and taught them to participants emphasizing on their synonyms and comments. The maximum time allotted to complete the task was 5 minutes.

Following checking their awareness of collocations, the researcher handed over a passage of ten academic collocations as a quiz to the participants to check their understanding of academic collocations which they had learnt in previous session. The participants in the noticing group were told to read the paragraph carefully and underline the collocations acting as the input to help them in writing attempt. They were required to underline all and every academic collocation available in the paragraph. Underlining such collocations they showed their promotion level of collocational competence. The participants completed the task in approximately 5 minutes in average. Such quiz-papers were collected for assigning a mark to each participant to announce them their level of promotion.

In the third phase of the treatment, the students were required to receive feedback on the quiz administered in the previous session. However, such quiz was an opportunity to motivate them to challenge on learning academic collocations. In approximately 3 minutes in average, the task was accomplished. The remaining hour of the class time was allotted to give them feedback on matching exercises which they were requested to do at home as an assignment (approximately 2 minutes).

#### *Comparison Group One*

Following research conducted by Carter (1998) concerning explicit instruction of collocations, the comparison group one received academic collocations just through teaching them in context explicitly. Teaching collocations explicitly is important in the light of Carter's (1998) claim that "collocational mismatches are frequent in the language production of second-language learners since learners never encounter a word or combinations of words with sufficient frequency" (pp. 73-74). Therefore, the comparison group one received no treatment to acquire academic collocations. They were given a paper of ten academic collocations per session the same as noticing group and a paper of matching exercises including 7 to 10 sentences of previously-learned academic collocations as an assignment.

### **5. Data Analysis**

To examine the research hypotheses, the data were collected using a three-fold instrumentation procedure: the pretest of academic collocations prior to treatment, underlining academic collocations during the treatment and the posttest of academic collocations following the treatment. For the purpose of this study, since the researcher focused on the acquisition of academic collocations included in paragraphs with the theme written for academic purposes, underlining was used as a measure of noticing constructs in question. In the present study, underlining academic collocations was indicative of their learning the academic collocations. The data obtained from 45 multiple-choice items as pretest and 34 multiple-choice items as posttest concerning academic collocations were analyzed as well. The reliability coefficient of both tests was estimated through the Kuder-Richardson Formula 21 (KR-21). The rationale behind administration of the tests was to ensure the knowledge of the test takers on the items in question, to obtain good facility values and discrimination and to have enough items as Crocker and Algina (1986) found that test scores shall have desire consistency (or reproducibility), i.e. the results could be replicated if the same individuals were tested again under similar circumstances. The mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of the scores were calculated. Corresponding to the research hypothesis, the data analyzed herein are of two types: a) the noticing, b) the effect of noticing on achievement of collocations.

The descriptive statistics such as measure of tendency as the mean, mode and median as well as measures of dispersion like the range, variance and standard deviation was run to summarize the participants' characteristics. The normality tests were run to examine the distribution of data. To test the research hypotheses various statistical tests were used.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

To probe the research questions raised in this study a number of different statistical analyses were employed. The first and foremost of all is the testing of the assumptions of research hypotheses. However, the nature of the study permitted the researcher to employ parametric tests. The main research questions are analyzed through independent and paired-sample t-tests. These are followed by relevant graphs and descriptive statistics. The first step to test any research hypothesis is to determine the distribution of the scores obtained. For this purpose, the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variances were tested empirically. To prove normality of the data, the ratios of skewness over their respective standard errors should be more than .05. For this purpose, the Kolomogorov-Smirnov Test was conducted as regards posttest of both groups in question. The ratio of Kolomogorov-Smirnov Test for both groups (comparison group one and the noticing group) are displayed in table 1. As displayed in the table 1, the ratio of Kolomogorov-Smirnov Test for comparison group one is .802, i.e.  $.802 > 0.05$ ., and the same ratio obtained for noticing group in pretest is .574, i.e.  $.574 > 0.05$ . That is to say the students' scores on the pretest enjoy normal distribution. However the students' score in posttest for comparison group one is .508, i.e.  $.508 > 0.05$ , while the

same ratio for noticing group is .629, i.e.  $.629 > 0.05$ , indicating that the data obtained for both groups in question is normal.

*Table 1: One-Sample Kolomgorov-Smirnov Test of Groups Under Study*

Pretest (Comparison Group One)	Posttest (Comparison Group One)	Pretest (Noticing Group)	Posttest (Noticing Group)
.802	.508	.574	.629

### ***Hypothesis 1***

In response to the first question of the present research, hypothesis 1 predicted that collocation awareness-raising does not lead to the noticing of academic collocations by Iranian EAP learners in an academic context. Following the Noticing Hypothesis, if the learners were asked to notice the academic collocations in the model text, a good effect could be achieved. In other words, awareness raising task could make the learners' performance in learning academic collocations more appropriate than those did in another group (comparison group 1). The participants underlining of the model passage was analyzed to address the noticing issue as an on-line measure. Therefore, the results obtained from both pretest and posttest of the noticing group supports Schmidt's (1993) noticing hypothesis in relation to the fact that noticing could direct to understanding and understanding to a good learning effect. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of pretest and posttest of noticing group.

*Table 2: Descriptive Statistics, Pretest and Posttest of Noticing Group*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest	23	6.4609	2.18429
Posttest	23	13.0000	3.54837

The mean score obtained by the students on pretest is 6.4609 while the same mean score on posttest obtained by them is 13.00. Consequently, there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the noticing group on the pretest and posttest. Therefore, it can be concluded that the first hypothesis as "collocation awareness-raising does not lead to the noticing of academic collocations by Iranian EAP learners in an academic context" is rejected.

The main supposition based on hypothesis 1 was whether underlining as a measure to raise learners' awareness lead to acquisition of academic collocations. Table 3 shows a paired- samples *t-test* to compare the noticing groups' means scores on the pretest and posttest of noticing. As is displayed in the table 3, the t-observed value is -10.96 (df=22,  $p=.000 < .05$ ) (Table 3).

*Table 3: Paired Samples Test of the Noticing Group*

Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Lower	Upper			
-6.53913	2.86090	.59654	-7.77628	-5.30198	-10.962	22	.000

Based on the results obtained it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the noticing group on the pretest and posttest. As displayed in Table 2, the students in noticing group outperformed on the posttest in comparison to pretest with a mean score of 13.00. The statistics showed that a significant difference emerged between the scores obtained by the noticing group in pretest and posttest of academic collocations.

### ***Hypothesis 2***

According to hypothesis 2, collocation awareness-raising has no significant effect on the achievement of academic collocations by Iranian EAP learners. In other words, the prediction based on the second hypothesis was: having raised learners' awareness in terms of academic collocations does not impact on the acquisition of academic collocations by Iranian EAP learners. In this case the participants in noticing group were presented with a paragraph enriched with ten academic collocations per session, and they were requested to underline the academic collocations in the text. Underlining therefore was used as a measure of noticing.



As Table 4 shows, the mean score for the Noticing participants (Mean = 13.00) exceeded that of the comparison participants (Mean = 10.23). The t-test was applied to find whether any statistically significant difference existed between the scores obtained on posttest of academic collocation by both groups in question. (see Table 4).

*Table 4: t-test (Comparison Group One vs. Noticing Group)*

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. error Mean
Comparison Group One	10.3214	14	2.83933	.75884
Noticing Group	13.0000	23	3.54837	.73989

An Independent Sample Test was applied to find the assumption of homogeneity of variances (see Table 5). As table 5 displays, Levene's F of homogeneity of variances obtained was 2.054. Since the probability associated with this F-value, i.e. .161, is higher than the significance level of .05, it can be concluded that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is met. In addition, referring to the results, it can be claimed that there is a significant difference between the score obtained by the comparison group one and that of the noticing group.

*Table 5: Independent Samples Test*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
VAR00004	Equal variances assumed	2.054	.161	-2.392	35	.022	-2.67857	1.11959	-4.95146	-.40568

### **Discussion**

The main research question motivating this study was to investigate whether or not collocation awareness-raising has a significant effect on the achievement of academic collocations by Iranian EAP learners. To this end, the participants were divided into two groups: Comparison group One and Noticing Group. Table 1 displays the normal distribution of the scores obtained by the two groups participating in the study.

The first research hypothesis investigated whether collocation awareness-raising does lead to the noticing of academic collocations by Iranian EAP learners in an academic context or not. To this end, the noticing group's score on pretest was compared with the same scores obtained by them in posttest. Table 2 displays that the mean score obtained by the noticing group on pretest (6.4609) is much less than the same mean score on posttest obtained by them (13.00).

The results of the *parametric paired- samples t-test* for learners' performance on the posttest after noticing academic collocations gives support for positive answer to this critical research question. A significant difference was found between the noticing groups' means scores on the pretest and posttest of noticing. As is displayed in the table 3, the t-observed value is -10.96 (df=22, p=.000 < .05) (see Table 3 for details). The result might be used to imply that the differing experimental conditions of the noticing group show significant difference of the extent of attention paid by the learners to and noticing the target academic collocations. In fact, as a result of noticing the academic collocations as input, the learners' awareness to such input was raised and they probably noticed the input to change it into intake. The finding of the first research hypothesis might be used to confirm Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis for the noticing function, which is deemed as a necessary and sufficient condition for language acquisition. Schmidt however introducing the noticing hypothesis asserts that having attend to input, the learners change input into intake (Schmidt, 1990).

The second research hypothesis examined whether collocation awareness-raising has significant effect on the achievement of academic collocations by Iranian EAP learners or not. In fact, the prediction was that raising learners' awareness of academic collocations does not lead to acquiring collocations in question. To this end, the

results of parametric t-test for two related samples revealed a significant difference between the scores obtained on posttest of academic collocation by both groups in question. The mean score for the Noticing participants (Mean = 13.00) exceeded that of the comparison participants (Mean = 10.23) (see Table 4 for more details). The results showed that the noticing group outperformed in posttest in comparison with the comparison group one. The result indicates that individual variation in terms of noticing the collocations in question for the comparison group was considerably less than that of the noticing group. In other words, it reveals that the comparison group's attention was paid to the collocations much less than the noticing group. Taking the noticing function of input into account, it might be claimed that the participants output of noticing group acted as noticing promoter, and consequently it resulted to draw the learners' attention to the target collocations. In fact, as a result of their reaction to the task of underlining as a measure of noticing, the learners bridged the gap found and noticed the input they received.

To test the related hypothesis, an independent sample test was run, too, to compare the mean scores of the comparison group one and the noticing group. Before discussing the results of the independent sample test, the assumption of homogeneity of variances was probed. The Levene's F of homogeneity of variances obtained was 2.054 (Table 5). The probability associated with this F-value, i.e. .161, is higher than the significance level of .05. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is met. As displayed in Table 4, the noticing group with a mean score of 13.00 outperformed the comparison group one with a mean score of 10.32. Thus the second null-hypothesis as "collocation awareness-raising has no significant effect on the achievement of academic collocations by Iranian EAP learners" is rejected.

## CONCLUSION

This study made an attempt to explore a significant aspect in language learning, the impact of academic collocations to be a fluent-writer or speaker in an academic context, which is disregarded by language teachers in writing classes especially at college level. This research, also, was carried out to provide beneficial teaching techniques in language classrooms to improve students' range of vocabularies to increase their ability to access communicative competence for expressing themselves in English language context. In this study, noticing is deemed as a necessary condition to raise learner's awareness of academic collocations so that assisting them to gain native-like fluency. The main focus of this study was on providing input activities to assist learners to change input into intake through raising their awareness of such constructs. The findings of this study, however, support Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis.

To attain such objective, raising learners' awareness of language elements, underlining parts of input was used by the researcher as a writing task. Underlining, as a measure of noticing, has been subject to some criticisms by scholars for its precision and accuracy, therefore, taking into account the shortcomings, results obtained from conduction of this research should be interpreted cautiously. Also, in the light of logistic considerations, the maximum length of experimentation time for each of the groups participating in the study was around 20 minutes. It appears that within such time limit for applying experimentation and treatment, participants might be restricted to perform at their utmost ability to attain desirable outcomes. In addition, selection of participants and insufficient number of the participants were among other things as problems to affect negatively on the validity of the results; consequently, care must be taken in generalization of the research results.

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THE IMPACT OF LEXICAL COLLOCATION INSTRUCTION ON DEVELOPING WRITING SKILL  
AMONG IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to measure up the impact of lexical collocation instruction on pre-intermediate Iranian language learners' writing proficiency. For the purpose of this study, 50 male and female Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) learners studying at Ahvaz Islamic Azad University in Iran majoring in teaching English as a foreign language were selected through non-random convenient sampling procedure. The results of the proficiency test underlined the homogeneity of the groups. Then they were randomly divided into experimental and control groups. The control group was taught based on conventional methods of writing instruction and the experimental group received treatment based on lexical collocation instruction in writing one paragraph essays. The design of the research was based on pre and post-test method. Pre-test was a lexical collocation test included 35 items focusing on collocations proposed in McCarthy and O'Dell (2005). Pre-test was administered before the treatment period to make the researchers sure that the groups' homogeneity on lexical knowledge in writing paragraphs. During the treatment period five topics were administered to the students to write one paragraph essay for each topic. Having done the treatment, the researchers administered a post-test on lexical collocation consisting of 35 items of multiple-choice, matching, and cloze task dealing with lexical collocations acquired through the treatment. Then, the results of the tests were analyzed through statistical analysis of Independent Samples t-test. The results showed that there was a significant difference between the scores of the participants in the control and experimental groups. In addition, all the one paragraph essays of the study were analyzed through analyzing the components of writing including grammar, vocabulary, fluency, relevance and mechanics based on the checklist extracted from Heaton (1990). The results also showed that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of control and experimental groups in writing these components ( $p < 0.05$ ). Lexical collocation instruction developed the writing components of vocabulary and mechanics rather than grammar, relevance, and fluency in writing one paragraph essays.

**KEYWORDS:** lexical collocation, instruction, writing skill, EFL learners

**INTRODUCTION**

Many applied linguists (e.g., Zahedi & Mirzadeh, 2010) have emphasized the importance of drawing second language learners' attention to standard multiword expressions such as collocations and idioms. Lewis (2000) claimed that the mental lexicon of a learner is larger than previously recognized and that it mainly consists of multi-word items rather than individual words. Hyland (2008) argued that multi-word structures are components of fluent linguistic production and key factors in language learning. Lewis (2008a) states language includes grammaticalized lexis rather than lexicalized grammar (p. 89). Bahns (1993) also noted that lexical items and grammar are inseparable.

According to Lewis (2008b), lexical approach is based on the idea that language consists of meaningful chunks that combined, produce continuous coherent text. Lewis (2008a) believes that, it is the repertoire of 'chunks' which forms the raw data by which learners start to perceive patterns, morphology and other linguistic features. Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) explain that language is not stored as individual words but in chunks that may take the form of multi-word items, sentence heads and fully institutionalized sentences. According to Ghonsooli, Pishghadam, and Mahjoobi (2008), Iranian English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners may have a good knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary but serious problems with acquiring the ability to use English language in a collective way. Bahns and Eldaw (1993) cite while students may have acquired a huge of vocabulary, they still lack collocational



knowledge. Also, Siik (2006) stated that students who suffer from the lack of collocational knowledge may have a store of “good vocabulary” but still produces unnatural language. Martynska (2004) claimed that collocations remain difficult to define. According to Koosha and Jafarpour (2006), although phonological transfer is most common in Second Language Acquisition, lexical and collocational transfer seems to be major cause of poor proficiency. Bahns (1993) reports that learners may rely on a first language transfer in which majority of collocational errors could be found. McCarthy (1990) believed that collocational knowledge is a part of native speakers’ linguistic competence, and can make problems for learners who are using second language in communication. However, the collocational studies point to the impact of lexical collocation instruction on other specific aspects of general English proficiency (e. g. Hsu, 2010; Mounya, 2010).

Even though several studies have been done in the area of grammar, lexis and collocation, very few of them have investigated the relationship between teaching lexical collocation and EFL learners’ writing proficiency (Ghonsooli et al., 2008; Mounya, 2010). This study tries to fill this gap, thus the present study investigated the effect of lexical collocation instruction (i.e., noticing, highlighting, and consciousness-raising) on learning lexical collocations and the impact of lexical collocation instruction on developing writing proficiency of EFL learners.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

The research questions were:

1. Does lexical collocation instruction (i.e., noticing, highlighting, and consciousness-raising) have any significant affect on learning lexical collocations?
2. To what extent does lexical collocation instruction affect students’ writing proficiency?

The focus of the study was not on the teaching and learning of vocabulary items, but on a pairing of the lexis combined in lexical collocations. Research on the individual vocabulary items is very extensive (Hunt and Beglar, 2005; Nation, 2005) but studies in lexical collocations are very much lacking. Also, this study may show the relationship between lexical collocation instruction and students’ writing proficiency. Accordingly, the teaching of vocabulary has not been in its rightful status, vocabulary errors would be treated as trivial. On the other hand, Taiwo (2004) regarded lexical errors as equally important as grammatical errors. However, Lewis (2008b) noted that fluency can be acquired through the acquisition of a several fabricated items. The current study attempted to show that the relationship between teaching lexical collocations and the learners’ writing proficiency and the role of lexical collocation instruction (i.e., noticing, highlighting, and consciousness-raising) in learning lexical collocations. Since recent studies on collocations are set in a foreign environment (Hsu, 2010; Hsu & Chui, 2008; Mounya, 2010), this study serves to add on to the list of research on collocations already carried out. So, this study may help those practitioners who are dealing with foreign language teaching, such as textbook designers, syllabus designers, test developers, teachers, learners, translators and the like.

## METHODOLOGY

### Design

This study was conducted based on an experimental design which involved control and experimental groups, a pre-test, a post-test, and a treatment with experimental group. Each group was taught the same materials with different methods of teaching. The participants of experimental group received 10 sessions treatment. To teach the participants of the experimental group lexical collocation instruction (i.e., noticing, highlighting, and consciousness-raising) was applied. Furthermore, five topics were administered to students of two groups to measure the effect of lexical collocation instruction on developing writing proficiency of students at the end of study.

### Participants

The participants of this study were fifty male and female students of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz (including twenty two male and twenty nine female). They were majoring in Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL) and their age ranged from 20 to 30 years old. They were studying writing courses in English at the third semester. They were selected through non-random convenient sampling procedure. In order to find out whether they were homogenous, a simulated proficiency test of English extracted from *Nelson English language tests. Book 1 elementary* developed by Fowler and Coe (1976) was administered. No absolutely difference was found between the participants. Then they were divided into experimental and control groups (i.e. each included 25 participants) based on systematic random sampling method through which learners were given odd and even numbers from 1 to 50. Students' odd numbers were classified in experimental group and the students' even numbers were put in control group.



### **Instrumentation**

Initially, the subjects took the simulated proficiency test extracted from *Nelson English language tests. Book 1 elementary* developed by Fowler and Coe (1976) to ensure the homogeneity of the groups at the very beginning of the course. The test included seventy five multiple-choice items. The reliability of the instrument was estimated through KR-21 approach and the obtained reliability index as (0.77) which seemed to be an acceptable reliability value.

The second instrument was a pre-test that contained thirty five items of cloze task and matching task from *English Collocations in Use* and *English Vocabulary in Use* developed by McCarthy and O'Dell (2005) and *Oxford Collocations Dictionary* (2009) was administered to measure the learners' actual knowledge at the beginning of treatment. The reliability of the test was measured through Cronbach Alpha as ( $\alpha = 0.85$ ). Finally, a post-test including thirty five items of cloze task and matching task and multiple-choice administered to determine the effectiveness of experimental and control groups' lexical collocation instruction. The reliability of the test was calculated through Cronbach Alpha as ( $\alpha = 0.93$ ). In addition, 5 topics were being selected to write one paragraph essay including one hundred and fifty words and the analytic method of scoring was being employed. Heaton's (1990) rating scale was used to assess grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency, and relevance of the essays; moreover, the researchers allocated 1.40 points to each of these components in order to correct the learners' writings analytically. Also, the students' writings were corrected holistically (on a scale from zero to 7) and were scored by two raters. Inter-rater reliability was run to examine the reliability of scoring the essays. The inter-rater reliability of control group's scores on the essays was estimated through Cronbach Alpha as ( $\alpha = 0.747$ ). The inter-rater reliability of experimental group's scores was estimated through Cronbach Alpha as ( $\alpha = 0.873$ ).

### **Procedure**

A simulated proficiency test of written English extracted from *Nelson English language tests: Book 1 elementary* (1976) by Fowler and Coe administered to determine the homogeneity level of the participants. Then a pre-test was being run to ascertain both groups' knowledge on collocational elements at the initial stages of the study. Then, the explicit instruction was being occurred during one academic semester including 10 sessions. The *English Collocation in Use* and *English Vocabulary in Use* developed by McCarthy and O'Dell (2005) were being effectively used for teaching lexical collocations in each session. Since one of the obstacles to teaching collocations as pointed out by Bahns (1993) is that we deal with samples of collocations here. In experimental group first, we restricted our examples to verb + noun mis-collocations. For instance, the first sentence was: *I have to make my homework*. This is an extremely common *verb + noun* mis-collocation in which the verbs *make* and *do* are used with inappropriate nouns, so "make and do" collocations provide a useful starting point for introducing the notion of collocation to learners. An effective platform for raising awareness of collocation is to focus on a selection of students' mis-collocations (Lewis, 2000).

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### **Data Analysis**

To analyse the data quantitatively, descriptive statistics and Independent Samples of *t-test* for comparing the performance of the two groups at the pre-test and post-test were being employed. Also, the students' writings were being scored analytically based on the checklist provided by Heaton (1990). To analyse the subjects' process of learning and to explore the possible effects of collocational teaching, the mean scores of different writing

components on each topic (five topics in total) for both groups were being analysed. Essays were scored by two raters. Inter-rater reliability coefficients were calculated to meet the reliable scoring on the essays. Then an Independent Sample *t*-test was run to calculate any significant difference between the means gained by experimental and control groups in five topics as well as in pre and post-tests at the level of significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

## RESULTS

Descriptive statistics including minimums, maximums, means, and then standard deviations of pre-test and post-test

Groups	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test(Control)	25	5.0	28.00	18.28	7.021
Post-test (Control)	25	7.00	32.00	23.2400	6.46323
Pre-test (Experimental)	25	9.00	29.00	20.4400	4.66440
Post-test (Experimental)	25	20.00	33.00	26.8000	3.87298
Valid N (list wise)	25				

of all groups were computed. They are presented in Table 1.

*Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Control and Experimental Pre-test and Post-test*

Results indicated that the mean score of control group which had been 18.28 in pre-test exam promoted to 23.2400 in post-test exam. It also indicated that the mean score of experimental group which had been 20.4400 in pre-test exam promoted to 26.8000 in post-test exam.

### Pre-test

As there were one dependent variable and one independent variable, a *t*-test was run; the results are shown in the following table.

*Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Experimental vs. Control (Pre-test)*

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre- test(control)	25	18.28	7.021	1.404
Experimental)	25	20.44	4.664	.933

Table 2 Indicates the observed  $t$  ( $t_o = -1.281$ ) is less than the critical  $t$  ( $t_c = 2.044$ ) with df (48); therefore, the difference between the two groups is not significant at the level ( $p < 0.05$ ). This shows the groups' homogeneity at the beginning of the experiment.

*Table 3. Independent Samples t-test (Pre-test)*

Experimental vs. Control (Pre-test)	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
	-1.281	48	.206	-2.160	1.686

### Post-test

After there were one dependent variable and one independent variable, a *t*-test was run; the results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Control vs. Experimental (Post-test)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Control vs.	25	20.4400	4.66440	.93288
Experimental	25	26.8000	3.87298	.77460

Table 5. Independent Samples t-test (Post-test)

Experimental vs.					
Control (Post-test)	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
	- 5.245	48	.000	-6.36000	1.21255

Since the observed  $t$  ( $t_o = -5.245$ ) is greater than the critical  $t$  ( $t_c = 2.044$ ) with df (48), the difference between the two groups is significant at the level ( $p < 0.05$ ). In other words, the treatment of lexical collocation has been effective in developing participants' knowledge of lexical collocation. Thus it indicates that students' knowledge of lexical collocation in experimental group improved significantly.

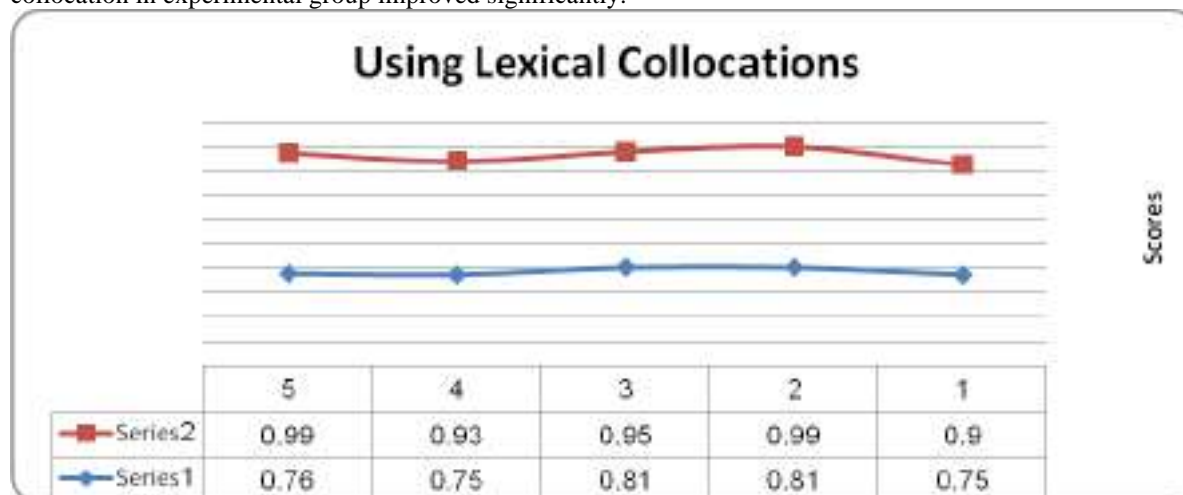


Figure 1. Using lexical collocations in writing essays

Figure 1 indicates that the subjects' learning process for vocabulary and mechanics components develops quite significantly while this process regarding relevance and fluency takes place to a lesser extent. This learning process develops to a small extent with regard to grammar component. A comparison of the experimental group curve for the whole treatment period would reveal the process of experimental subjects' writings improvement by the type of instruction. In sum, the polygon shows the positive effect of lexical collocation instruction on vocabulary and mechanics components of writing. The comparison of vocabulary and mechanics lines on the graph shows that the mean of vocabulary and mechanics was greater than the other components of writing.

## DISCUSSION

Regarding research question one, results showed the positive effect of lexical collocation instruction on experimental students' post- test was significant compared to control group. The results of Independent Samples t-test analysis showed that there was a significant difference between control and experimental groups in terms of lexical collocation knowledge ( $p < 0.05$ ). By the comparison of mean scores of participants, the instructional method of lexical collocation appeared much more beneficial to experimental group rather than to the control one. The post-lexical collocation test scores indicated that the lexical collocation knowledge has been positively gained by the experimental group. The post-test scores of the experimental group indicated that the group had better retention rate compared to the control one. Participants received instructional method of lexical collocations in the paragraphs included noticing, highlighting, consciousness-raising, translation activities, and dictionary use to increase their knowledge of lexical collocations. Therefore, lexical collocation instruction had positive effects on learning collocational elements. This finding is consistent with Lewis (2008a) who suggests that encouraging learners to notice language, especially collocations, is central to any methodology connected to a lexical view of language. Lexical collocation instruction is a method to help students notice these lexical chunks through using them in writing process.

Results dealing with the second research questions showed the experimental group outperformed the control group. Descriptive statistics also showed that the mean scores of the experimental group were greater than that of control group in each topic.

The effect on students' grammar failed to be of great significance. One possible justification for this is the fact that the experiment was conducted on 10 teaching sessions and learners required more time to be able to extract the grammar themselves. Also, just five topics were given to the learners during the treatments. So, the participants had not received enough exposure and feedback to develop their grammar themselves.

In addition, the analysis of paragraph writings showed that the subjects' learning process for vocabulary and mechanics components (i.e. spelling, punctuation, and capitalization) developed quite significantly while this developmental process regarding relevance and fluency takes place to a lesser extent. Therefore, there was a positive effect of lexical collocation instruction on vocabulary and mechanics components of writing skill. Exposure and feedbacks received by teacher may have the positive impacts on vocabulary and mechanics of writing skill. In addition, exposure to language materials (e.g. dictionary) was an influential factor for EFL learners to develop their vocabulary knowledge.

The results of the present study are; therefore, in line with the findings of studies conducted by some scholars (e.g., Bahardoust, 2012; Bahardoust, 2013; Mounya, 2010). According to these results, collocational knowledge is a source of fluency in written communication among students. The commonality of these studies is that instruction on lexical collocation should be encouraged to replace conventional single-item vocabulary instruction for the purpose of enhancing EFL learners' writing abilities. Therefore, in line with the above mentioned studies and the present study, it could be strongly argued that lexical collocation instruction can significantly influence EFL pre-intermediate language learners' developing writing proficiency.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study was an attempt to investigate whether lexical collocation instruction had any impact on writing proficiency of Iranian pre-intermediate language learners. It also sought to find out whether lexical collocation instruction (i.e., noticing, highlighting, and consciousness-raising) had any significant affect on learning lexical collocations by Iranian pre-intermediate learners of English as a foreign language. In doing so, two groups were selected; one group was taught on the basis of traditional approach. The other group was taught through noticing, highlighting, consciousness-raising, translation activities, and dictionary use to teach lexical collocations in each paragraph. Then five topics were administered to write one paragraph essay by students. Next, each paragraph was scored and the result was analysed through specific statistical analysis Independent Samples t-test. The results showed that there was a significant difference between the scores of the participants on traditional approach and their scores on the other approach. Students have used lexical collocations in their paragraphs of the examination because they have become aware of the fact that using lexical collocations can improve their writing and make it more natural. There was a positive impact of the method on students' mechanics and vocabulary components of writing. That is, lexical collocation instruction can significantly influence EFL pre-intermediate language learners' writing proficiency. Therefore, it could be claimed that lexical collocation instruction should be included in the writing syllabus at the university so that collocational competence could be developed in order to enhance students' communicative competence.

The results also indicated lexical collocation instruction (i.e., noticing, highlighting, and consciousness-raising) had significant effect on students' learning lexical collocations. The results obtained by experimental group were compared with the mean score of control group which was taught on the basis of traditional approach. The results of

Independent Samples *t*-test analysis showed that there was a significant difference between the mean score of experimental group and mean score of control group. The descriptive statistics also showed that the mean scores of the experimental group were greater than that of control group. On the basis of the results of the present study, teaching lexical collocations is the major endeavour to reach proficiency in writing. They are taught explicitly through highlighting, noticing, consciousness-raising. Teaching individual words come in the second position, and it is useful only if these words are taught in context. Feedback on mis-collocations is very important because it will raise learners' collocational competence and consequently communicative competence (Jeremie, 2013). Exposure to language materials (e.g., collocation dictionaries and concordancing) are influential factors for EFL learners. Therefore, activities that enhance students' knowledge and use of lexical collocations are required. In addition, compared to vocabulary, grammar has a minor role in raising writing proficiency. So, lexical collocation should be included in the criteria of evaluating compositions.

Many Iranian EFL learners have serious problems with collocations. Instruction on collocation should be encouraged to replace conventional single-item vocabulary instruction for the purpose of enhancing EFL learners' writing abilities. Besides, collocation instruction is what most EFL students would prefer and believe to be useful in enhancing their writings. Future investigations may again look into the role of knowledge of collocations and writing, by stretching the study to a long period of time instead of 10 sessions and involving more participants. In addition, the study can be wider in scope, to include all the possible lexical collocations and going beyond the two-word collocations so that the data could be more representative of the participants' knowledge of collocations. Another area of improvement over the present study could be the selection of texts within which the phrases could be found. Future research should also consider grammatical collocations and similarly its effectiveness in improving written fluency.

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**THE EFFECTS OF ANXIETY ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE ON FINAL  
ACHIEVEMENT TEST IN ENGLISH CLASSES OF HIGH SCHOOLS**

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**ABSTRACT**

Anxiety as an affective variable has been shown to be negatively correlated with performance in learning a language as a foreign language. So many researches have been conducted about anxiety for college student. This survey, however, focuses on the high school students. This study was an attempt to study the effect of anxiety on the English learners in Andimeshk city, Iran. Subjects included 120 students from a high school in Iran. Two instruments were employed for this study: a questionnaire assessing students' anxiety level and an Oxford Placement Test. It was a Standard English language test which was administered to check the final English achievement level of students. It was administered to determine the proficiency level of the students. The findings indicated that students experienced some degree of anxiety in English classes. From the results of the study, the sources and the amount of anxiety were as follows respectively: second language deficits, fear of negative evaluation, and perfectionism. Finally, some suggestions are offered to teachers in dealing with this phenomenon in language classes especially those conducted communicatively

**KEYWORDS:** learning anxiety, English achievement

**INTRODUCTION**

When asked to participate in classroom activities, high school students flounder and hesitate to come up with an answer even the wrong one. They often complain that they have got the palpitations and feel embarrassed to take part in class activities. The worst thing is that teachers ignore this fact in their classes and make no attempt to deal with it. As an affective variable, Anxiety is assumed to influence second language acquisition. Much research (e.g., Bailey, 1983; Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Young, 1991), has been carried out to find the correlation between anxiety and achievement in learning a second language. Most studies (e.g., Horwitz, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994) found that anxiety and achievement are negatively correlated. In Iran, similar survey has also been conducted with different groups of people. In this survey, the author attempted to rescue this group of learners who have been fallen into oblivion by teachers in English classes.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

The concept of anxiety plays a major role in second language acquisition. Spielberger (1983, p.1) defines anxiety as the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system. Anxiety usually falls into two types: one is trait anxiety that is a more permanent predilection or to be anxious about everything (Scovel, 1978) and the other state anxiety, experienced when performing a particular task or activity in a particular situation such as giving a lecture in front of the class (Brown, 2001). Trait anxiety, because of its global and ambiguous nature has not proved to be helpful in predicting second language achievement.

Accordingly, the present study on language anxiety focuses on the situational nature of state anxiety (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993).

With the shifting of research focus from teachers to learners in SLA (Second Language Acquisition), affective factors, such as attitudes and motivation, were thought to account a lot for language learning outcomes. Anxiety, as a very important affective factor, has been considered very important, and many studies have been undertaken to explore it since the 1970s.

The major concern of the earlier studies was the causes of language anxiety. As early as 1983, Bailey, through the analysis of the diaries of 11 learners, had found that competitiveness can lead to anxiety. Besides, he (1983) found that tests and learners' perceived relationship with their teachers also contributed to learners' anxiety. These three aspects that Bailey identified were supported in subsequent studies, especially in Young's study. According to Young (1991), there are six potential causes of language anxiety which include personal and interpersonal, learner beliefs about language learning, instructor beliefs about language teaching, instructor-learner interactions, classroom procedures and language tests. From this list we can see that Young, in fact, identified the causes from three aspects, that is, the aspects of learners, teachers and instructional practice, to which Bailey's findings also complied. Research findings by Horwitz and Horwitz and Cope (1986) cast some light on nature of language anxiety. Building on these studies, three causes of language anxiety have been identified. (a) communication apprehension, arising from learners' inability to air their thoughts and feelings. (b) test anxiety due to academic evaluation, and (c) fear of negative evaluation, growing out of a learner's need to make a positive social impression on others.. Based on these three components they also designed a Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale including thirty-three items. This scale was later widely used by researchers to measure foreign language learners' anxiety and examine the effect of anxiety on learning in different contexts.

Another important insight can be gained from the distinction between debilitating and facilitative ramification of anxiety on learning (Alpert & Haber, 1960). Most studies, to date, indicate a negative relationship between anxiety and language achievement. To put another way, anxiety is a debilitating in language learning. Krashen (1985) in his affective filter hypothesis maintains that high anxiety will prevent input that learners receive in the classroom from reaching the language acquisition device. Horwitz (1986) also states that language anxiety can cause students to postpone language study indefinitely or to change majors. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994), based on a study of 97 college students that learn French, concluded that compared with more relaxed learners, those with anxiety find it more difficult to express their own views and tend to underestimate their own abilities. They also found that in the three stages of language acquisition, that is, input, processing and output, anxiety and learning achievement are negatively correlated. Moreover, there have also been some studies conducted to find the negative correlation between anxiety and four aspects of language learning, especially speaking and listening. For example, Macintyre and Gardner (1991) found that speaking is by far the main agent of anxiety-arousal, and that students with high anxiety perform worse than those with low anxiety. However, there have been some studies which found neutral and positive relationships between anxiety and second language achievement. Bailey's (1983) investigated the relationship between competitiveness and anxiety and found that facilitative anxiety was one of the keys to success, and closely related to competitiveness. The results from a study into English learners in Taiwan (Zhang Baoyans, 1996) indicated that there was no relationship between anxiety and learning achievement. Therefore, drawing from these studies, it can be seen that the relationship between anxiety and achievement is probably not a simple linear one. It may be influenced by some other factors, such as culture and learners' proficiency in the second language. Some researchers (Sparks, Ganschow, & Javorsky, 2000) ascribe the cause of anxiety in second or foreign language classes to deficits in the first language codes (i.e., phonological, syntactic, lexical, semantic features.) and maintain that anxiety is a product of poor performance in first language. They have attempted to prove the case by examining what they call the Linguistic Deficit Coding Hypothesis (LCDH).

This study was an attempt to examine the general situation of high school students' foreign language anxiety and the effects of anxiety on FL (Foreign Language) learning. As well, a comparison of male and female students' language anxiety was examined.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

The aim of the present study is to investigate the effects of anxiety on Iranian EFL Learners' performance on final Achievement Test in English classes of High schools, So the following research question is addressed:

Does anxiety has any effect on Iranian EFL Learners' performance on final Achievement Test in English classes of High schools?

## METHODOLOGY

### *participants*

The subjects in the study were 120 four-year high school students (60 males and 60 females) from Khuzestan province, Andimeshk city. Their major fields of study were mathematics, Humanities and their age was between 17 and 19 years old. They all had 7 years of learning English as second language learners in Iranian public schools

### *Instruments*

Two instruments were employed for this study: a questionnaire assessing students' anxiety level and an Oxford Placement Test.

The first instrument was a questionnaire which was made up of two parts. The first was intended to collect personal information about the participants, such as their age, name, gender, etc. The other was the Persian version of FLCAS that was designed by Horwitz (1986). This questionnaire comprised of 33 statements, of which 8 items were for communication anxiety (1, 9, 14, 18, 24, 27, 29, 32), 9 items for fear of negative evaluation (3, 7, 13, 15, 20, 23, 25, 31, 33) and 5 items for test anxiety (2, 8, 10, 19, 21). As to the remaining 11 items, they were placed under the rubric which was labeled as anxiety of English classes. The participants were asked to rate each item on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strong disagreement") to 5 ("strong agreement").

The next instrument was OPT. It was a Standard English language test which was administered to check the final English achievement level of students. It was administered to determine the proficiency level of the students. The reliability of the test was calculated afterwards which happened to be 0.89. All the students were administered the proficiency test in a single testing session. The 30 items test included grammatical questions about conditional sentences.

### *Data Collection*

The questionnaire was administered to 60 science students and 60 arts students. 120 copies were collected back and 116 replies were found statistically valid. Only the students from the science class supplied their English scores of the final exam.

### *Data Analysis*

SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solutions) 13.0 was employed to analyze the data. First, descriptive analysis was performed to calculate the means and standard deviations for each item and each kind of anxiety to see the general situation of high school students' anxiety in English classrooms. Second, t-tests (t distribution tests) were employed to see whether there were any differences in language anxiety between male students and female students. Then correlational analysis and t-tests were conducted to find out the effects of anxiety on achievement in English.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The descriptive analyses of the results revealed that there were 15 items whose means were above 3.25. Amongst the statements the 11th had the highest index of 3.5671. The mean of the anxiety indices of all the participants in English classrooms, as Table 1 shows, was 2.8432 which indicated that high school students suffered from a feeling of anxiety in English classes. Besides, by computing the means and standard deviations of each kind of anxiety, it was revealed that students' fear of negative evaluation, with a mean of 3.7581, was worth considering. Among the 15 items whose mean values were greater than 3.00 8 statements related to it, especially item 3, with a mean of 3.6579.

*Table 1: General High School Students' Anxiety in the English Classes*

Anxiety Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Communication Apprehension	2.8865	.48557
Fear of Negative Evaluation	3.7581	.76055
Test Anxiety	2.7737	.71570
Anxiety of English Classes	2.7412	.66185
English Classroom Anxiety	2.9310	.60911

***The comparison of anxiety between males and females English classes***

Table 2 shows that means of males' were always higher than females, which signified that males may experience more anxiety than females in English classes. However, the results of t-tests indicated that there were no significant differences between males and females in most anxiety variables except that of English classes ( $p=0.025<0.04$ ).

*Table 2: Males and Females' English Classroom Anxiety*

Anxiety Variables	Gender	Mean	Standard Deviation
Communication Apprehension	Male	4.1791	.62023
	Female	4.0277	.67788
Fear of Negative Evaluation	Male	4.4439	.84691
	Female	4.1747	.69737
Test Anxiety	Male	3.8022	.70588
	Female	3.5511	.72789
Anxiety in English Classes	Male	3.8734	.67983
	Female	3.7033	.65544
English Classroom Anxiety	Male	4.0117	.66634
	Female	3.7932	.61445

*Table 3: The Comparison of Males and Females*

Anxiety Variables	t-value	Significance of t-value ( $p<0.03$ )
Communication Apprehension	1.231	0.255
Fear of Negative Evaluation	0.407	0.675
Test Anxiety	1.930	0.056
Anxiety of English Classes	2.251	0.026*
English Classroom Anxiety	1.235	0.216

***The relationship between anxiety and English achievements***

The results of the correlation analysis indicated that anxiety and English achievement were only correlated in terms of test anxiety. And they were negatively correlated ( $-.277$ ,  $p=0.039<0.05$ ). It was noted that the coefficient of anxiety for English classes was  $-0.232$  which approached the significant level of  $-0.25$ . Therefore, the students from the science class were divided into two groups according to their English scores in the final exam. A t-test was then employed to see if there were any significant differences in the anxiety of English classes between these two groups. The results of the analysis supported the hypothesis that was proposed above. It was found that anxiety of English classes indeed affects high school students' English achievement ( $p=0.037<0.05$ ).

*Table 4: The Correlation of Anxiety and English Achievement*

Anxiety Variables	Correlation Coefficient	p-value ( $<0.05$ )
Communication Apprehension	-.103	0.458
Fear of Negative Evaluation	-.098	0.566
Test Anxiety	-.287*	0.041
Anxiety of English Classes	-.242	0.078
English Classroom Anxiety	-.236	0.103

***Discussion***

The present study revealed that high school students suffer considerable feeling of anxiety in their English classes that needs to be addressed by English teachers. And they experienced more fear of negative evaluation. There are two possible sources for anxiety in language classes. One can be associated to the high school students themselves. The other may emanate from some external factor. Regarding students themselves, the presence of anxiety, during

language related activities, could be associated to their English proficiency, which was not adequate to enable them to participate in class activities, cooperate with their partners, or come up with the right answer to the questions posed by the teacher or classmates. Thus, high school students are more apprehended during communicative activities given their low proficiency in the second language in English classrooms. The other can be attributed to their cultural background. In a collective society like Iran peoples' face is lost if they are criticized or scolded in front of others. So in order not to make a mistake they prefer to sit on the fence in order not to receive negative evaluations. That is why they endure grater fear of negative evaluation comparing to any other kind of anxiety. The stress of the nation-wide entrance examination and the ruthless competition among students can prevent candidates from demonstrating their true abilities and perform less satisfactory than usual. One striking finding, during careful examinations of items on the test, was that some students with grater language ability answered the easier questions wrongly. This may have its root in the fact that such students set quixotic goals and are perfectionist and are too meticulous about trivialities on the test. To put another way, they cannot see the wood for the trees.

The reasons for external anxiety can originate from the setting of English learning in Iran. Research has shown that contact with the people and culture of the target language could reduce anxiety (Tang, 2005).Iranian learners have no direct access to native speakers or especially designed English programs for the purpose of teaching English to learners of English. They also find little opportunities to test their inter language hypotheses through communication and remove inaccuracies in their output. What is worse is that the purpose of teaching English as a foreign language in Iran is not to foster communication but to help students grow intellectually though reading and instruction on grammar points. There is no emphasis on listening and speaking. Reading and teaching grammar take up most of the class time. There are little opportunities for students to practice speaking or voice their opinions in English. Writing, like speaking, has plunged into oblivion and it is at the service of teaching grammatical structures such as transformation or expansion drills. Moreover, most Iranian teachers themselves are not proficient speakers of English thus they tend to avoid teaching speaking in their classes and emphasize grammar points. The type of exercises included in textbooks attempt to prepare students for the Nationwide College Admission Examination. Therefore, teachers make special efforts to teach to testing and familiarize students to those of tests confronted on this test by learners. Another matter that is worth consideration is that English classes in Iran are teacher-fronted. Teachers are deemed as the source of knowledge and dominate the class activities and learners dot have the right to challenge teachers and are silent during class activities. Teachers disfavor pair or group work due to the large size of classes. It is clear that Iranian learners of English, as the present study indicated, undergo substantial amount of anxiety during communicative activities and are afraid of making mistakes in front of teachers or their peers.

Generally speaking, females are better in language learning than males. Female students usually perform better than male students on achievement exams. Thus one can posits that females show greater confidence in their abilities to learn a new language. As soon as they gain faith in their capabilities, they will be more willing to "tackle with threatening situations" (Dörnyei, 2001) in English classes. In contrast, males who have repeated failures in learning a second language tend to attribute their poor performance in English classes to their low capabilities and are more anxious about English classes.

To enter college in Iran, students must take a compulsory test and reach the necessary standard. Therefore they make every effort to study English as a subject of study. Although, males are less gifted for English than females, they compensate for this by allocating more time and energy into their English. However, the gap between males and females is not very large now. In many English tests the highest scores were attained by some male students. That is the reason why no significant differences were found between them, though males' means were a little higher than females.

#### ***Anxiety has a debilitating role in language learning.***

The results from the present study showed that test anxiety and anxiety of English classes were significantly correlated with high school students' English achievement. In terms of the other factors, although the relationship was insignificant, the coefficients were all negative. Thus, it can be said that anxiety plays somewhat a debilitating role in language learning.

Many previous studies have reported the negative role of anxiety in language classes. e.g., Horwitz (1986), MacIntyre and Gardner (1994), Tang (2005).High anxiety can be a hindrance to learners and a source of

discouragement. The ramification is that they give up easily and shirk their duty in participating in class activities. Therefore, learners with higher anxiety often fail to demonstrate their true abilities in classes.

Another striking finding in the study was the significant correlation between English achievement and test anxiety, anxiety of English classes. In Iran, high school students, compared to, college students, take more tests. For this reason, Therefore, some students with poor English achievement were anxious about and even felt disheartened by English classes and tests.

## CONCLUSION

This study cast some light on the nature and the source of high school students' anxiety in Iranian EFL classroom. It was found that most students experienced a feeling of trepidation and fear in classes. Above all the fear of negative evaluation. Male learners were found to have greater anxiety than females in English classes. What is more, it was revealed that anxiety is an obstacle to language learning, especially anxiety of tests and English classes.

Now that it has been recognized that anxiety is prevalent in Iranian high school English classes, teachers must pay special attention to it. Moreover, teachers should take the students' affective factors into account during teaching and learning activities. (Zhang & Chang, 2004). For one thing, they should strive at creating a relaxed atmosphere for students to air their grievances and views freely. Secondly, teachers should eschew negative evaluation about learners in front of peers and point out positive points about them. Thirdly, teachers would be better to take a criterion-referenced approach toward testing and shun ranking students on a scale. Unfortunately, some teachers compare students based on their performance on exams and fail to realize that this can be a source of anxiety and a feeling of shyness in language classes. Teachers can free learners' minds from the fear of getting higher scores. In short, much research indicates that judicious anxiety plays a positive role and can motivate students to maintain their efforts on learning. Therefore, the teachers' real job is to help students keep adequate anxiety, neither too high nor too low.

## Limitations of the study

The story of second language acquisition is interestingly comparable to the story of the elephant which was supposed to be described by a group of people in a dark room. And they all came to different descriptions of the whole body because they just touched parts of the body. The same story still is the case for SLA. As it is the case with almost all studies done in the field of teaching English as a foreign language, this study is not free of limitations. That is to say, because of the eluding nature of anxiety which is defined differently by different people one cannot claim to provide all inclusive criteria to list the problems with which EFL teachers wish to come to a conclusion in evaluating anxiety as an approach in EFL contexts. Therefore, the authors of this paper have not intended to come to an absolute conclusion about the perceived problems with which EFL teachers might face in using anxiety measurement in their real classes. ALL in all, it is hoped that this survey be of use for all colleagues. All defects of this paper are of ours. That is, no fault is to the participants in this study.

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## THE EFFECTS OF TEACHER-PARENT RELATIONSHIPS ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

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### ABSTRACT

Various studies focusing on the effectiveness of teacher-parents relationship emphasize the positive effects of parents' involvement in education. This study aimed to examine the effects of teacher-parents relationship on Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' language proficiency at elementary level. It also aimed to find how this relationship may influence parents' motivation and attitude with regard to their role in education. In this study a permanent relationship with parents was created through writing weekly letters to them. By these letters parents were informed about absence or presence of their children, quality of doing assignments, children's behavioral problems, children's scores in class quizzes, etc. The results showed that permanent teacher-parents relationship can increase students' language proficiency and parents' motivation.

**KEYWORDS:** parents, parents' involvement, teacher-parent relationship, motivation, students' success

### INTRODUCTION

Traditionally parents think that teachers and schools are the only responsible agents for their children's education and training. As teachers try to make a relationship with parents in order to involve them in their children's education, parents may perceive teachers as being incompetent. The teacher must enlighten the parents on the physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional development of the child. Therefore, the teacher should display the activity of the child to the parents, for example, through films documenting the child's developmental stages, books, handiwork, and drawings made by the child (Tos, 2001). These reports should be shared so that each parent can view them and use them as examples. The parents wish to feel reassured that the teacher values the child and is concerned about him/her, and that the teacher needs their support for the successful performance of the child at school. The parents do not want to perceive the teacher as someone who accuses, judges, or influences their children. It is very important to communicate properly with the child, expecting responsible behavior from him/her at home and at school, and consistently ensure that he/she abides by the rules. Parents have the knowledge, skills, and ability required for nourishing, nurturing, and supporting their children (Humphreys, 2000). Parents and teachers should make efforts to create a suitable learning environment for children. The first learning experience acquired by the child at home should support the efforts to learn at school. This would increase the success rate of the teacher in his/her class applications (Burns, Roe & Ross, 1992).

Consistent parent involvement dramatically increases the expectancy that suitable learning will occur in the classroom and at home. Parents play such a crucial role in their children's academic, physical, social, and moral development that we, as teachers, make a huge mistake if we view them as anything other than indispensable collaborators. It is not enough to keep parents pleased, appeased, or out of our hair. If we are committed to bringing the best out of our students and teaching the whole child, we need to build and maintain long-term relationships of loyalty, trust, and respect with their parents. Investing the time and effort to work closely with parents throughout the year maximizes our chances of fulfilling our mission and achieving our goals.

The following points provide a strong rationale as to why teachers should make parent involvement a top priority (Reifman, 2011): 1. Parents are their children's first and most important teachers. Though not all teachers are parents, all parents are teachers. As such, they have the greatest impact on a student's motivation to learn. Parents are usually eager to play a significant role in their children's education, but they often don't know how. By establishing caring relationships with parents, we can help them help their children. 2. Consistent communication

between the home and school enables parents to reinforce the skills, knowledge, habits, and priorities that we emphasize in class. This fact is especially true in situations where our teaching methods and approaches may differ from the norm and require parent follow-up on a regular basis. 3. It is important that teachers are aware of students' strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, areas of special sensitivity, and any factors at home that are affecting school performance. Parents are in the best position to provide this information and are usually glad to do so when asked. 4. Students act, behave, and perform differently when they know that their parents and teachers communicate frequently. 5. Frequent communication earns parents' confidence, trust, and respect. With open lines of communication, it is unlikely that feelings of uncertainty, mistrust, and alienation will ever arise. The favorable impression that we create makes problems easier to solve when they occur. 6. When teachers and parents communicate in a respectful manner, we model positive adult interactions for the kids. These occasions serve a pro-social function because many children, unfortunately, do not often have the opportunity to observe this type of relationship. 7. Parents can become our biggest supporters and most loyal allies. Should a colleague or supervisor ever doubt our methods or question our approach to teaching, these allies will be there to come to our defense. 8. Parents are often valuable classroom resources. The better we know parents, the more we will be aware of the various ways in which they can assist the class. This assistance may come in such forms as classroom volunteering, donations of supplies and other materials, technology support, and arranging for special field trips. 9. Forming trusting relationships with parents can reduce the feelings of isolation that so many teachers, especially newer ones, often experience.

Parents may not know how to be involved in their child's school (Feldman, 2003). They may be unsure of their role or what the school or teacher expects of them, which may keep them from becoming involved in the schools or may lead to a perception that they are not involved. Studies show that poor and minority parents are less likely to be involved in their child's education in the ways that schools would like them to be involved (Shannon, 1996). This does not necessarily mean that parents are not involved, but, rather, that the school does not acknowledge the type of help that parents are demonstrating. Both teacher and parents have the interest of the child in mind; however, their ideas of how to help the child with regard to school may differ (Howe, 2005). For example, some schools may expect parents to be involved in helping their child do homework and in reading to their child every night while other schools may interpret involvement as attendance at parent-teacher committee meetings and helping in the classroom. If a parent is helping with homework and the school expects them to be in the classroom, the school may report that the parent is not involved. Parents, too, may have a completely different view than the school about what role they are expected to play (Young & Westernoff, 1996). They may feel that they can best help their child by providing food and a loving environment, and that in this manner they are involved in the child's learning. Such differences in the interpretation of what constitutes parental involvement may lead to perceptions that parents are not involved. There are also teachers who believe that parents' lack of education is a reason why parents are not involved in their child's education (Shannon, 1996). There is significant research, nationally and internationally, to suggest that parental involvement in children's learning is positively related to achievement. Cotton and Wiklund (1989) in their study on parental involvement in education propose that the more intensely parents are involved in their children's learning; the more beneficial are the effects on pupil achievement. Moreover, they state that this holds true for all types of parental involvement in children's learning and for all types and ages of pupils.

According to Gould (1999) the research all shows that children do better in school when their parents are involved. He found that parents are involved in school in four ways. The first two are widely accepted: parents serve as teachers of their children at home and also serve as volunteers and supporters at school. The next two include parents becoming advocates for their children and decision-makers in school in such areas as school policy, hiring, and budget. It is easy to understand that not all administration and faculty would be comfortable with these last two. Hickman (1999) cited research which focused on secondary school level. These research findings provide seven types of parent involvement: (a) parent as communicator, (b) parent as supporter of activities, (c) parent as learner, (d) parent as advocate, (e) parent as decision maker, (f) parent as volunteer/professional, and (g) parent as home activities teacher.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

One of the problems that teachers face at the end of the term in Iran is that parents usually complaint about being unaware of what their children do during the term. At the end of the term parents find that the children have many

behavioral problems, low scores, repeated absence from school and a lot of incomplete assignments. Parents say that when the term is finished there is no time to compensate children's weakness and solve their possible problems. Teachers also expect parents to pursue the children performance during the term. Both of teachers and parents expectancies are right. The problem is the lack of a means of communication. Teachers and parents need to have a permanent relationship during the term to improve the children language development. The purpose of this study, as such, is to determine how teacher-parent relationship affects the Iranian EFL learners' language proficiency. It examines the extent to which this relationship can influence parent's motivation. It also shows how teacher-parent relationship influences the parents' attitude and perception of language learning.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The researcher in this study tried to find the answers of these questions:

1. Do the scores of students in the experimental group significantly differ from the pre-test to the post-test?
2. Do the scores of students in the control group significantly differ from the pre-test to the post-test?
3. Do the attitude and motivation of the parents of the participants in the experimental group significantly differ from the first questionnaire to the second one?

In the following parts the researcher investigated the answers of these questions in detail.

## METHODOLOGY

As it was mentioned before this study was an attempt to investigate the effects of teacher-parent relationship on students' achievement in the English language learning. This section will describe the subjects under study and how they were selected for inclusion in this study. In addition, the instrument being used to collect information will be discussed as to its content. Data collection and analysis procedures will then be presented.

### *Participants*

This study was conducted with the participation of fifty male elementary-level English language learners at Nikan Elementary School. The proficiency level of the learners was determined by a placement test, a multiple-choice exam, at the beginning of the term. The participants were between twelve to fourteen years old. They were at the pre-intermediate level who had studied English through Top Notch series (Saslow, J. & Ascher, A., 2006). They were grouped into two groups, control group and experimental group. Both groups have the same English teacher but each group has its own classroom. They learn English through similar materials but in different times in a week.

### *Instruments*

The researchers utilized four sets of instruments for doing this research. The first instrument was a general proficiency test to make sure of learners' language ability and homogeneity of their levels. This test was adopted from Top Notch placement test (Saslow & Ascher, 2006). The second instrument was an attitude and motivation questionnaire which was administered before and after the treatment. As the third instrument, a series of letters were sent to the learners' parents to inform them weekly. These letters contained information about what learners do during a week, their participation in the classroom activities, the quality of doing homework, learners' scores in different skills and activities such as speaking, listening, spelling, and handwriting. The fourth instrument was the school final test trying to measure the course achievement. This test was administered to both groups then the scores of students in this test, as post-test, compared with the scores of students in the pre-test. Cronbach' Alpha test was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire which proved the questionnaire very reliable (Cronbach' Alpha = 0.71).

### *Procedure*

As the first step Top Notch Achievement Test (Saslow & Ascher, 2006) was used as the pre-test to determine the homogeneity of participants and their level of language proficiency. As a result of this test participants divided into two twenty-five-student groups, experimental group and control group. The researcher, the teacher of the classroom, tried to put the participants of each group into equal level of the language proficiency. So participants in both groups were at the same level of the language proficiency. Then both groups received a four-month term of treatment. The parents of the participants in the experimental group received a questionnaire through which they represented their opinions and attitudes about being involved at school, participating in education, being in contact with teachers, and being responsible for the children's language learning. Parents were informed about their responsibility and their role in the research in detail. They became more aware of learning strategies. Then parents in the experimental group received weekly and sometimes daily reports in which they found information about the students. These letters informed parents of their children absence or presence in the classroom, the quality of their homework, scores,

behavior, etc. Through these letters parents could be given advice, suggestions, and strategies to treat properly with their children. Parents also could communicate their opinions, suggestions and possible problems to the teacher through these letters. For example a letter might include: "Please control Ali's sleeping time. He looks very sleepy in the classroom during this week. He gets low scores in spelling. He needs to practice unit 2 new words every day during this week" or a teacher might receive a response involving: "Ali had flu this week. He could not finish his homework". Finally at the end of the term parents in the experimental group received a questionnaire to indicate how they thought about the effect of parent-teacher relationship, parents' involvement, and their ideas about language learning. Once the instruction period was over, the researcher conducted the post-test among the control and the experimental group to check whether there existed any statistically meaningful difference between the participants in the two groups due to the treatment.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First, independent-samples t-test was used to compare the results of the pre-test in order to find out whether there were any statistically significant differences between the control and the experimental group at the beginning of the study. To analyze the results of the post-tests again independent-samples t-tests were run at the end of the study. The gain scores of the post-tests of each group were also calculated to find out if any significant improvements happened inside of each group or not. Another independent-samples t-test was used to compare the result of questionnaire which was given to the parents at the beginning and at the end of the term in order to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences between first and second questionnaire or not.

This research was an investigation to see the effects of teacher-parents relationship on EFL learner language proficiency. It was an attempt to answer these questions: Does teacher-parent relationship have any significant effect on Iranians EFL learners' language proficiency? Does teacher-parent relationship have any significant effect on parents' attitude, perception of language learning and motivation?

As the first step the proficiency level of the learners was determined by a placement test at the beginning of the term. Twenty-five students were assigned to the control group and a class of twenty-five students was chosen as the experimental group. At the end of the term students' final examination scores in both groups were compared to determine the effects of the teacher-parents relationship on the students' language proficiency. As the second step at the beginning of the term parents in the experimental group were given a questionnaire in order to test their motivation and attitude toward teacher-parents relationship and parental involvement. For the second time parents answered the items of this questionnaire at the end of the term when the study was finished. Then the parents' answers to sixteen questions of these questionnaires were compared.

In the following sections the results of each test will be put under investigation one by one to find out if there were any significant differences between the results of the control group and the experimental groups' tests or not and if there were any significant differences between the parents' motivation at the beginning of the term and at the end of the term or not.

### *Investigation of the first research question*

Do the scores of students in experimental group significantly differ from pre-test to the post-test?

Table1 shows the results of paired sample t-test through which the experimental group scores in the first and second tests were compared. By considering the mean of the first test which is 14.26 and the mean of the second test which is 18.75 we can come to the conclusion that there is a significant improvement in the scores of the experimental group. Table 2 shows that scores of students in the experimental group significantly differs from the first test at the beginning of the term to the second test at the end of the term. This shows that teacher-parent relationship has improved students' language proficiency.

*Table1: Comparison of pre-test and post-test (experimental group)*

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
sum of scores (1 <sup>st</sup> Test)	14.2600	25	.64542	.12908

sum of scores (2 <sup>nd</sup> Test)	18.7500	25	.69970	.13994
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Table 2: Paired Samples Statistics t-test for the experimental group

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> test	4.49000	.90133	.18027	-4.86205	-4.11795	-24.908	24	.0001

According to the above *T-Test Table*, Sig equals 0.0001 and it is smaller than 0.05. So we can conclude that students' scores on the second test in the experimental group are significantly different from their scores on the first test. According to the results students in experimental group have got better and higher scores in second test than on the first test.

#### Investigation of the second research question

Do the scores of students in control group significantly differ from pre-test to the post-test?

Table 3 shows the results of paired sample t-test through which the control group scores in the first and second tests were compared. The mean of 14.36 for the first test and 14.88 for the second test also reveal the fact that the difference between the scores on the pre-test and the post-test was insignificant and that no improvements were achieved for the participants in the control group. *Table 4* shows that scores of students in the control group do not significantly differ from the first test at the beginning of the term to the second test at the end of the term.

Table 3: Comparison of pre-test and post-test (control group)

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
sum of scores (1 <sup>st</sup> Test)	14.3600	25	.73272	.14654
sum of scores (2 <sup>nd</sup> Test)	14.8800	25	1.04176	.20835

Table 4: Paired Samples Statistics t-test for the control group

	Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> test	.52000	.70589	.14118	-.81138	-.22862	-3.683	24	.622

According to the above *T-Test Table*, Sig equals 0.62 and it is greater than 0.05. So we can conclude that students' scores in the second test in the control group are not significantly different from their scores in the first test. *Table 3* and *Table 4* indicate that students in the control group have got higher scores on the second test but it is not a significant difference.

#### Investigation of the third research question

Do the attitude and motivation of the parents of the participants in the experimental group significantly differ from the first questionnaire to the second one?

Table 5 shows that parents' motivation and attitude toward teacher-parents relationship and parents' involvement changed from the first questionnaire to the second one. The mean of 39.96 for the first questionnaire and 59.88 for the second questionnaire also reveal the fact that the difference between the score on the first and the second questionnaire was significant. Thus, teacher-parent relationship positively influenced the parents' motivation in the experimental group.



*Table 5: Comparison of parents' motivation through first and second questionnaire*

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1 <sup>st</sup> questionnaire	39.9600	25	5.83438	1.16688
2 <sup>nd</sup> questionnaire	59.8800	25	2.60320	.52064

*Table 6: Paired Samples T-Test (Parents' motivation)*

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed )
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
1 <sup>st</sup> questionnaire and 2 <sup>nd</sup> questionnaire	19.92000	5.92256	1.18451	-22.36471	-17.47529	-16.817	24	.000

According to *Table 6*, Sig equals 0.0001 and it is smaller than 0.05 so we can conclude that parents scores in the second questionnaire in experimental group are significantly different from their scores in the first questionnaire. So *Table 5* and *Table 6* show parents in experimental group have got better and higher scores in second questionnaire than the first questionnaire.

## CONCLUSION

Thus, the following findings were attained. Research indicates that students and parents consider homework and home learning to be an important part of education. This relationship makes a positive attitude towards homework. The evidence further confirms that parents play an important role encouraging their children to spend time on home work and eliminating distractions such as watching television. Teacher parents relationship results in enhancing confidence, self-esteem, awareness that learning is a normal activity throughout life, pleasure from collaborative learning, parents increased confidence in contacts with school, teacher and education system, leading better relationships with children, and understanding the strategies that can be used to help children to learn. By the end of the research parents increased their contact with their children's school and the number of parents actively involved in their children's school increased significantly.

We found that mothers were more likely to say that they were very involved than fathers. Parents found that they had an equal responsibility with the school for their children's education. The continuity of family involvement at home appears to have a protective effect on children as they progress through education system. The more families support their children's learning and educational progress, the more the children tend to do well in school and continue their education. Students act, behave, and perform differently when they know that their parents and teachers communicate frequently. Taking the time to send out notes to parents throughout the school year – the notes must focus on both the positives and the negatives of the student in the classroom and must not be sent just to complain to parents about their child.

The research indicates that teacher-parent relationship decrease students behavioral problems in the classroom. Parents whose children have behavioral problems were invited to observe their children in the classroom and to attend in counseling sessions. They represented that their children problems have been solved after these treatments. After the study most parents were likely to have special program to check and control their children's education. Parents represented that they were interested to spend more time with their children after school time to talk about what happened in the classroom. In this study parents much preferred weekly letters to the other means of communication such as phone calls, e-mail messages, voice mail, and face to face meetings.

## Limitations of the study

There are some limitations and delimitations in this study which may influence the generalizability of the findings.

In running this research, the researcher confronted with some limitations. First of all, negotiation with parents was not an easy endeavor because all of the parents were not very cooperative. Second, students did not like their parents be informed weekly from their learning qualification. Third, writing weekly letters and responding to them could be too time-consuming for teacher and parents. Finally, parents felt embarrassed unsupported, misunderstood, and overwhelmed by the demands placed on them.

### ***Delimitations***

This research was confined to just male learners. This was a small group, about 50 students from an elementary school. It was also conducted only in one of Tehran Elementary schools and did not consider other levels, schools or cities. It only investigated the pre-intermediate-level learners. Another limitation of this study was the length of the treatment for both groups. The period of the treatment was a semester. Maybe this length of time was not long enough to improve the effects of teacher-parent communication on the student language proficiency.

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## **ABSTRACT**

That a paradigm directs educational practices to pursue its basic assumptions is undeniable. Nevertheless, curriculum development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has probably reached the edge of maturity. Now is the time to cynically reconceptualize the existing curriculum to raise new knowledge. In fact, to the present writers, the emergence of a new paradigm shift in curriculum development is not an ad hoc process. For a paradigm to shift, several factors get involved. In this regard, the paper with a cynical look on what happened in curriculum development intends to elicit the factors in charge of the shift in paradigms and cast light on our perceptions in the third millennium.

**KEY WORDS:** doubt, incommensurability, paradigm shift, progressivism, reconstructionism

## **INTRODUCTION**

Curriculum development is seen as an ongoing process, rather than as an ad hoc event. The new millennium marks a moment when it is appropriate to think about what we have done, where we are now, and how we should plan for the future (Littlejohn, 1998). As Pring (2004) contends, we live in a time of change, and change, undeniably, affects the content of curriculum. However, new paradigms cannot keep coming forever (Craig, 1993). Furthermore, as Craig puts forth no change will occur if a paradigm in curriculum development is fully consistent with reality. In other words, if all educators in the related fields agree on the epistemology of an existing paradigm, no shift in paradigm is felt necessary. Accordingly, Craig asserts, to Khun (1970), a paradigm can only shift if it is *wrong* (not fully consistent with reality); if it is wrong, it *will* shift, as reality eventually will prove inconsistent with it. Thus, a paradigm which is fundamentally right cannot be shifted, only refined, as reality cannot fundamentally contradict it (Craig, 1993). Henceforth, to the present writers, a real paradigm is hard to grasp at the onset. From the first time that Einstein's theory of relativity, for instance, was proposed, and it was hard to grasp, to the present time that nobody is found to provide solid evidence to reject it, Einstein's theory becomes an indicator of the fact that a real paradigm shift never occurs in a vacuum.

In the history of curriculum development, many paradigms have emerged, but, from a relativist look, none can be compared with one another. Inspired by Kuhn's (1970) incommensurability thesis, Antley (2010) puts forth that theories from different paradigms cannot be directly compared with one another because the conflicting assumptions underlying the paradigms are different. Still, the proponents of paradigm shifts are supposed to agree that at least one paradigm is indeed true: *the paradigm of paradigm shifts*. Nevertheless, the future is always uncertain (Rodgers, 2001), and it is not plausible to anticipate a paradigm shift in curriculum development. In this regard, Kuhn (1970) asserts that the direction of science is caused by doubt. Most change initiatives fail not because of a lack of vision but because people cannot come to an accurate and insightful view of reality. Rinpoche (cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2001) asserts that "our contemporary education, then, indoctrinates us in the glorification of doubt...; we have to be seen to doubt everything, to always point to what's wrong and rarely to ask what is right or good" (pp. 5-6). This paper, from one side, concerning the philosophy of doubt, has a critical look at the nature of change in curriculum development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. From another perspective, the paper is an attempt to investigate what makes a change in curriculum development, in particular, and in paradigms, in general. In sum, to the present writers, casting doubt upon the existing paradigms is not respected as an obstacle, but, as Rinpoche (2002) asserts, "a door to realization, and whenever doubt appeared in the mind, a seeker would welcome it as a means of going deeper into the truth" (p. 129).

## NATURE OF CHANGE IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Change seems to be an undisputable constant in curriculum development. The shift from second to third millennium thinking, as traced by Felix (2005), identifies a tangible shift from instructivist to constructivist pedagogy. Hadley (1998) holds that in the third millennium, “it is expected that the dominant ELT syllabus design will have returned full circle” (p. 67). That is, instead of offering new syllabi, it is predicted that scholars pondering on the available syllabi attempt to generate new knowledge.

There is no doubt that education is the most contested sector in any country. Both Platonist and anti-Platonist perspectives in education have undergone changes. For philosophers on the Platonist side who take a metaphysical approach, the pursuit of truth is vital, whereas for anti-Platonists who are non-metaphysical/materialist per se, there exist hidden desires for spiritual perfection. Furthermore, anti-Platonists share the view with materialists in that they are dependent upon bodies for their existence.

Along the same vein, there are a variety of factors that trace the shift from Platonism to anti-Platonism, but what is plausible is that power and politics often dictate which path in education will hold sway at any point in time in any part of the world. In this regard, in dissatisfaction with traditional education, constructivists/progressivists focus on the students’ interests and experiences rather than on the predetermined bodies of knowledge. What makes progressivists distinct from perennialists is that from progressivists’ perspective knowledge is not static, but dynamic, and student’s interests and needs are as important as the content to be learned. For Dewey (1933), a prominent figure in progressivism, the primary purpose of education is to get people ready for a democratic life. In a democratic life, doubt and democracy are part and parcel of each other; henceforth, the absence of doubt diminishes the possibility of democracy (Hiley, 2006). In this way, as Hiley asserts, it can be claimed that progressivism relies on the tenets that doubt about traditional beliefs and distrust of authority were the foes of dogmatism and tyranny.

Similarly, dissatisfied with the progressive educationalists, radical educationalists, who stand on two camps of *reconstructionists* and *critical theorists*, claim that education should do more than prepare students for participatory democratic citizenship; to them education should also prepare students for deliberative citizenship. More specifically, to reconstructionists (e.g., Brameld, 1950), societal change can be achieved through education (Kilgour, 1995). In brief, dialogic democracy results in liberal democracy. Central to reconstructionists is the conviction that progressivists are too slow or too soft to lead to change in the existing social order. As to Uys and Gwele (2005), two distinct groups in the reconstructionist school of thought are the *ideological* and the *methodological*. Ideological reconstructionism places emphasis on theory development and advances reconstructionism as a philosophy of action in education. Methodological reconstructionists, in contrast, focus on advancing the application of research-based strategies for effecting social change in education. In sum, according to reconstructionists’ perspective, the purpose of education is to reconstruct society through students’ acquisition of problem-solving skills applied to real life. In the same line, students must be equipped with tools to do the process of reconstructing. In fact, a conscientizing and liberating curriculum, according to Uys and Gwele, is seen as most worthy of ensuring that education fulfils its purpose of changing the social order. Put another way, a utopian future, according to reconstructionists, is a realist wish and genuine possibility for human beings if we learn how to direct change and innovation.

In contrast, to the advocates of critical theorists (e.g., Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1988; Hooks, 1994), as Uys and Gwele (2005) conceive, the purpose of education is to enable students to become transformers of society. Transforming the society towards equality for all human beings will be achieved if the members of the given society are actively participating (Giroux, 1988; Hooks, 1994). With the transformation, a very different conception of privacy develops. Privacy becomes the place of individuality; the place where individuals are free to conduct their lives in their own ways; the survival of such individuality entails doubts. “Doubt about the validity of one’s convictions breeds relativism” (Hiley, 2007, p. 102). In fact, as Goldfarb (cited in Hiley, 2007) puts forth, “cynicism has its philosophical basis in relativism. When we no longer know that our way of life is the best way, [not only] we learn to respect others, but we also begin to doubt ourselves” (p. 24).

The movement from traditionalism to progressivism has not occurred as a step-by-step, additive process. In effect, the process of paradigm shifts is not a simple, mechanistic process. Instead, new paradigms emerge as a result of tradition shattering revolutions in the thinking of a particular professional community (Kuhn, 1970). Nevertheless, to Brown (2001), “the introduction of a new paradigm into an intellectual arena [is] similar to the diffusion of an innovation into a particular setting” (p. 109). The term diffusion refers to “the percentage of adopters who implement an innovation over a given period of time” (Kogers, cited in Markee, 2001, p. 122). Moreover, paradigms are chosen by those who use them rather than by those who produce them. In this regard, Patton (1975) asserts that “paradigms are deeply embedded in the socialization of adherents and practitioners telling them what is important, what is legitimate, what is reasonable” (p. 9). Nevertheless, what obsessed our mind in this paper is to answer such questions

as what factors cause such shifts in curriculum development, which shift is better, and was there a time without a paradigm shift?

### **THE REASONS FOR A PARADIGM SHIFT**

Generally what causes a paradigm shift is the pressure of new evidence. But the question is how this evidence is manifested? The fact that reality emanates such evidence is not valid (Craig, 1993). Craig maintains that reality is inconsistent with theory. In other words, a theory cannot shift the fact of reality. Thus, scholars (e.g., Kuhn, 1970) appeal to doubt rather than reality. In effect, Kuhnian paradigm shifts are shifts inside the main body of science, and do not change life very much unless life itself becomes scientific, rational, etc.

Central to the tenets of Kuhnian paradigm shift, it can be asserted that when a paradigm in curriculum development is replaced by a new one, albeit through a complex social process, the new one is always better, not just different (Kuhn, 1970). This contention led to one of the most controversial themes raised by Kuhn—his thesis of incommensurability. That is, there is limiting communication between the competing theories since they lack a common measure and use different concepts and methods to address different problems. Still, in Kuhn's philosophy, as Chen (1997) claims, there is an implicit incomparability between paradigms. To avoid criticism of relativism, Kuhn (1983) uses the term *untranslatability* rather than *incommensurability*. On elaborating his argument of untranslatability, Kuhn maintains that "most of the terms common to the two theories function the same way in both; their translation is simply homophonic. Only for a small subgroup of (usually interdefined) terms and for sentences containing them do problems of translatability arise" (pp. 670-71). "Incommensurability [, thus,] becomes untranslatability caused by the meaning change of a small group of terms" (Chen, 1997, p. 258).

Most attempts in the realm of curriculum development are complementary rather than contradictory by nature. There is not much space in this paper to discuss Kuhn's thesis of incommensurability except to say, according to Kuhn (1970), paradigm shift is a sort of *metamorphosis*—a transformation. This transformation takes place not at the expense of losing the significance of old paradigms. Nevertheless, the most important reason for accepting a new paradigm is that it solves the anomalies that the old paradigm could not (Kuhn, 1970). In other words, as a normal science develops, a set of anomalies emerges that the existing paradigm fails to solve. Henceforth, the emergence of a new paradigm appears to be contradictory in respect to that given anomaly. In fact, the new paradigm, though better, has a complementary look at the previous paradigm.

Brown (2001), comparing the emergence of a new paradigm to the diffusion of innovation, refers to Rogers (1983) who examines variables affecting the rate at which innovations are adopted. In fact, diffusion is a type of communication "in which participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding" (Rogers, 1983, p. 5). Furthermore, to Rogers, there are five elements that contribute to the diffusion of innovation: *compatibility*, *relative advantage*, *complexity*, *observability*, and *trialability*. Rogers holds that compatibility of a new idea with current ideas or paradigms and with client needs (in this case, teacher and student needs) affects whether the new idea is adopted or not. Moreover, the compatibility of a new idea is in line with the relative advantage of that new idea, whether the new idea is better than the previous ones. The term complexity is self-explanatory, but paradoxical. From one side, complexity can be interpreted as the interconnectivity among the elements of a system (Larsen-Freeman, 1997). In a sense, the effectiveness of a system depends upon how well different parts of the system interconnect (Maftoon & Shakouri, 2013). From another perspective, it is the opposite of simplicity. Complexity, to Rogers (1983), means that if an idea is seen as being too complicated, it will not be adopted. Likewise, if an innovation is too complicated, its degree of visibility decreases; henceforth, another factor, to Rogers, that is conducive to the perception of innovation is observability, referring to how visible an innovation is. Also, consideration needs to be given to the trialability of innovation. Trialability, to Rogers (1983), is the degree to which an innovation may be experimented with on a limited basis. In sum, adoption becomes much easier if farmers, for instance, can try an innovation on a small scale. Likewise, Brown (2001) contends that if researchers can work with a new idea on a trial basis, they may be more likely to adopt it.

Nevertheless, the term innovation in theory construction may make no sense since theories, as to Kuhn (1970), are not commensurate. Still, what "the diffusion of innovation emphasizes [is] the flow [and integration] of information [...]" (Cooper, 1989, p.70). Newtonian physics, for example, is not comparable with Einstein's physics, but Einstein's physics findings can be integrated with Newton's physics ones. In effect, the integration of flow of



information can provide sufficient conditions for the emergence of a new paradigm. In a nutshell, although theories are not commensurate, innovations need to be integrated consistently to increase the performance capability of a new paradigm.

According to Kuhn (1970), paradigms are developed in an open-ended way that has nothing to do with rational choice or even awareness of progress. That is, there are no rational reasons for preferring one theory over another. To him, “aesthetic or subjective factors play an important role in a paradigm shift, since the new paradigm only solves a few but critical anomalies” (p. 74). In fact, theories compete rather than contradict one another. Those who decide to advocate a particular theory are not those who have made the theory, rather than those who use it. Henceforth, it seems implausible to claim that a new theory always emerges at the expense of marginalizing the findings of other theories. A multitude of theories can coexist. Each theory makes an endeavor to show reality from its own lens. Schumann (cited in Maftoon & Shakouri, 2012a), comparing two competing theories which can exist co-productively, asserts that SLA theories, including Krashen’s and McLaughlin’s, “can coexist as two different paintings of the language learning experience” (p.28). To Schumann, the two theories are respected as the reflection of reality, while symbolized in two different ways. Whether viewers have inclination towards Krashen’s theory or McLaughlin’s is quite aesthetic. That is, viewers interpret the paintings based on their *Weltanschauungs*; no one can claim which position is true as they are simply alternative representatives of reality.

Any history, per se, is subjective (Littlejohn, 2012), and the history of curriculum development is not an exception. It is a truism that in any subjective understanding of the world, there is a high amount of uncertainty and unpredictability. Thus, due to the uncertain nature of curriculum development, prediction is highly perilous. In this regard, Littlejohn (1998) asserts “predicting the future is always a hazardous business” (p. 3). In fact, innovations in the field of technologies and increasing global links turn the future into a much more uncertain and dynamic condition than ever before. In a sense, as Kozulin (2010) asserts, “educational systems are facing a paradoxical task of preparing students for future activities whose parameters are still unknown as the student is learning” (p. 384). Henceforth, it is plausible to claim that facing an uncertain period entails casting doubt on the ongoing practices so that curriculum developers can exert positive effects on the educational systems (Schechter, 2004).

#### **ATTEMPT TO DISCARD CONFORMITY IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM**

In the history of language curriculum, we face two contrasting views: *curriculum as facts* and *curriculum as practice* (Young, 1998). In the former view, knowledge is considered as property that should be transmitted to an individual from an authority (Maftoon & Shakouri, 2012b). In contrast, the basic premise of the view of curriculum as practice centers on “how knowledge is produced by people acting collectively” (Young, 1998, p. 27). In fact, curriculum developers in the third millennium are not in favor of transmitting a set of facts to the students. Henceforth, postmodernist educators, as Marsh (2005) claims, insist that teachers and students should reflect upon events of the present and how they provide access to the future.

In fact, as Felix (2005) maintains, success is based on how well students learn as individuals and work together as a team. For this to occur, it is a felt need that curriculum developers should make an attempt towards cooperative learning founded on constructivist epistemology. According to Hassaskhah (2005), two critical features of such an epistemology are *positive interdependence* and *individual accountability*. These two features of constructivist epistemology are mutually intertwined. Felix believes that there are three ways to increase the sense of accountability among students: (1) *materials interdependence*, i.e., providing materials that could be shared, (2) *task interdependence*, i.e., fostering group cohesion by assigning different members of a team a piece of material that could be shared, and (3) *goal interdependence*—assigning a small part of each student’s course grade improves the students’ performance.

Interdependency will not be achieved until one does not base his/her perspective on conformity. Conformity is the extent to which human beings are willing to adhere to behavior pattern of a particular group (Asch, 1955). However, as Chernus (1992) insists, supporting mindless conformity can put an end to diversity. Chernus further asserts that if we impose our experience on others in order to achieve conformity, we certainly close our eyes to many new experiences and become narrow-minded. Thus, when interdependency becomes possible, conformity diminishes. Postmodernism argues that the image of totality observed in modernism is not simply false but dangerous since it results in conformity. In this regard, Hadely (1998) asserts that instead of searching for the latest teaching techniques or the most recent discoveries, we should be aware of the cyclic trends taking place and reflects upon our own beliefs as educators. What postmodernists claim is that human beings are free from the pressure for conformity; they are more in touch with the way things really are (Chernus, 1992).



However, achieving conformity among human beings about what to do in order to achieve a goal is appreciated. Along the same line, it can be suggested that it is important to re-describe inquiry (Reason, 2003). Re-describing, according to Rorty (cited in Reason, 2003), refers to “a talent for speaking differently, rather than for arguing well as the chief instrument for cultural change” (p. 105). In fact, as to Rorty, the goal of inquiry is not seeking for truth. Instead, the purpose of inquiry is to achieve unanimity among human beings about what to do in order to achieve a goal. Hence, great importance should be attached to developing a talent for speaking differently and articulating what should be done with new metaphors. In effect, as Cavagnini (2012) declares, according to Rorty, inspired by Kuhn’s thesis of incommensurability, any revolution in theory construction is simply a matter of changing the terminology. To Cavagnini, confining oneself to a fixed, predetermined category leads to intellectual, cultural, and personal stagnation. What scholars, therefore, should do in the third millennium is re-describing vocabularies.

Inspired by Klein (cited in Ortega, 2013) who claims that second language acquisition has reached maturity in the 25 years of disciplinary existence, we see a shift in the inclination of scholars (e.g., Ortega, 2013) in the 21<sup>st</sup> century towards transdisciplinarity. In this regard, it can be claimed that in line with Reason (2003), who insists inquiry has to be redescribed, it is time to ponder on disciplinary achievement that might be conducive to raising new knowledge. By re-describing, we do not mean that the same terminologies employed by our predecessors to be used in our argument; however, to achieve agreement it is indispensable to have a complementary look on what is suggested. This complementary look entails that scholars should avoid proposing syncretistic recollection of old vocabulary. Furthermore, success in transdisciplinarity is deeply rooted in cynical attitudes towards disciplinary achievement because progress will not achieve if we move in line with solid reality. As Goldfarb (cited in Hiley, 2006) argues, “cynicism in our world is a form of legitimization through disbelief” (p. 30). Moreover, the notion of cynicism needs to be revisited; a cynic should not be viewed as one refuting “facts without evidence” (Mihailidis, 2008, p. 171). However, sowing seeds of reasonable doubt about the value-systems of our education is worthy of attention. In this regard, Sim (2006) claims that societies get healthy when doubt is an integral part of their value-systems. Doubt, as a value of society, should be celebrated since cynicism contributes to the reliability of our beliefs system (Hiley, 2006). In sum, cynicism resonates with our belief that shifting in a paradigm entails casting doubts on the contemporary issues, in general, and disciplinary achievement, in particular.

## CONCLUSION

The wry observation made by the great British scientist—Huxley (1870): “the great tragedy of science: the slaying of a beautiful theory by an ugly fact” (cited in Lashway, 2001, p. 1) applies plausibly to the thesis of the present paper that the emergence of a new paradigm shift is not an ad hoc process; furthermore, if any available paradigm in a system is consistent with reality, no paradigm shift occurs. In a sense, when our beliefs system appears to cast doubts on the existing paradigm, the emergence of a new paradigm can be expected. However, it is irrational to reject any new fact simply because it is not integrated with our past knowledge.

Shifting paradigms in curriculum development is a difficult task. As Brown (2001) claims, individuals who have completed their own professional preparation under one paradigm may not see a reason to shift. Even if they wish a shift in their ideology, they face several limitations on their way. Accordingly, Brown claims that there are at least five possible impediments to any paradigm shift or curricular innovation: amount of time, background schemata, text availability and level of difficulty, material availability, and workshop availability for methods instructors. Tollefson (cited in Brown, 2001), also, puts forth that the intellectual beliefs system an individual might adhere to is often not seen as a set of lenses; that is, individuals may hold to particular ideologies without even recognizing that there is something subjective about these ideologies. Thus, before any shift in ideologies comes about, the first step must be to recognize and name the paradigm to which one has been intellectually socialized. However, in a context (e.g., China) that people are greatly influenced and socialized by their cultural ideologies (e.g., Confucian tradition in China), shifts on the trends of old paradigm appear impossible (Reid, 2002, cited in Yan, 2006). Thus, a paradigm shift does not occur cumulatively, and very occasionally, the dominant paradigm is overturned, but when a paradigm shift comes up, the new paradigm shift will dictate the re-conceptualization of everything that had come before.

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## INCREASING DEPTH OF VOCABULARY: A HIDDEN ASPECT OF VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE

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### ABSTRACT

Based on most researchers learning vocabulary is central to mastery of a language. There are many degrees of knowing about a word. This study mainly intends to show increase in depth of vocabulary knowledge of different proficiency groups by the intervention of memory strategies. 310 pre-university Indian female with different proficiency levels (high, mid, low) served as control and experimental groups. The result of t-tests between control and experimental groups after teaching through memory strategies indicated that although groups were homogeneous before treatment, teaching through memory strategies increased depth of vocabulary knowledge of experimental group significantly. Patterns of movements of vocabulary knowledge from unknown to known were also shown by vocabulary knowledge scale (VKS). The significant of the study lies in the fact that the importance of vocabulary learning strategies in enhancing depth of vocabulary knowledge of the students was shown.

**KEYWORDS:** vocabulary, depth of vocabulary, size of vocabulary, vocabulary knowledge scale

### INTRODUCTION

Research has highlighted vocabulary as an indication of how well a learner can comprehend text and communicate effectively. Therefore, one thing that all the researchers can all agree upon is that learning vocabulary is an essential part of mastering a second language (Schmitt, 2008). In all methods and approaches vocabulary learning was not given prominence, as it lacked a profound idea of how to teach vocabulary and for the first time it was in reading method that vocabulary teaching received particular attention. Meara initially noted in 1987 (and which has since become something of a cliché) that vocabulary studies is now a neglected area and largely ignored by most researchers, a situation that, in some respects, has not significantly changed today. However, recently there has been a surge of interest in vocabulary learning strategies (Najar, 1998). This can be seen in the number of textbooks and teacher prepared materials that are being developed promoting strategy as a key approach to L2 [second language] learning instruction (Oxford, 1990).

#### *Lexical Knowledge*

Researchers and theoreticians have pointed to the fact that vocabulary knowledge is multi-faceted (Harley, 1996). Lexical knowledge, that is, the question of what it actually means for a language learner to know a word, is not only about knowing the simple form and meaning of the word, but also demands the learner to recognize, understand and produce a word together with scores of other words in different contexts and situations that are acceptable in the language. As Laufer and Paribakht (1998) observe, no clear and unequivocal consensus exists as to the nature of lexical knowledge apart from the general agreement that it should be constructed as some sort of continuum of several levels/dimensions rather than all or nothing phenomenon.

Words are not isolated units of language, but fit into many interlocking systems and levels. There are many things to know about a particular word and many degrees of knowing (Nation, 2001). The lexical knowledge are as follows:

#### *Breath of vocabulary knowledge*

Breadth or size of vocabulary knowledge has been taken up to refer to the quantity or number of words learners know at a particular level of language proficiency (Nation, 2001).

#### *Depth of vocabulary knowledge*

Breath can be opposed to depth of vocabulary or the quantitative aspects of knowing a word, Nation (1990) believed that knowing a word means being familiar with the 'spoken' form, 'written' form, 'grammatical' pattern, 'collocations', 'frequency', 'appropriateness', 'meaning', 'concept' and 'association' of that particular word in terms of 'receptive' and

'productive' aspects. In other words, it has been used to refer to the quality of lexical knowledge, or how well the learner knows a word (Meara, 1996).

According to Ur (2000) another piece of information about the new words, which may be worth teaching, is collocation — a factor that makes a particular combination sound right or wrong. Different aspects of meaning namely, denotation, connotation and appropriateness are also other aspects of meaning that need to be taught especially connotation which is a less obvious component of teaching. For example, the word 'dog' as understood by most British people has positive connotations of friendship and loyalty whereas the equivalent in Arabic countries has negative association of dirt and inferiority. Meaning relationships such as synonym, antonym, hyponyms, coordinates, subordinates, and even translation are all sub-parts of aspects of meaning which can be exploited in teaching to clarify the meaning of new items. The last point to be taught, as mentioned by Ur (2000) was 'word formation', alongside teaching prefixes and suffixes and so on.

In researching into the depth of vocabulary knowledge, it is important to be able to measure the changes of word knowledge in subjects in order to establish whether vocabulary knowledge had been deepened as a result of treatments provided to the subjects.

#### ***Receptive and productive mastery***

Regarding vocabulary knowledge still another point should be considered which deals with 'receptive' and 'productive' vocabulary or 'passive' and 'active' as they are often called. Usually, these two terms are defined in relation to the language skills of reading, listening, speaking and writing. An individual's active vocabulary includes words which are used in speech and writing. Contrarily, one's passive vocabulary embodies those which are understood as they occur in reading materials or while hearing something.

#### ***Memory strategies***

The history of learning strategies goes back to Rubin (1975) who pioneered much of the work in the field of strategies. From then, different classification and taxonomies came into vogue (Cohen, 1990; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). From among those researchers tackled language learning strategies Oxford's (1990) classification is the most comprehensive detailed system embodying direct and indirect strategies.

Oxford (1990) classifications embodied direct and indirect strategies with 6 categories, 19 strategies and 62 sub-strategies. Direct strategies consist of 'memory', 'cognitive' and 'compensation' strategies. Indirect strategies support and manage language learning without directly involving the target language hence, they underpin the business of language learning and include 'metacognitive', 'affective' and 'social' strategies.

With the emergence of the concept of language learning strategies scholars have attempted to link these strategies to other aspects of language such as vocabulary as well. Studies such as O'Malley and Chamot (1990) confirmed that most language learning strategies are used for vocabulary tasks too. In the same vein, all memory strategies based on Oxford taxonomy can be used for vocabulary learning tasks the effect of which has been a motive to conduct the present research on vocabulary retention. Memory strategies that are the main concern of this article fall into four sets of 'creating mental linkage', 'applying image and sound', 'reviewing well', and 'employing actions'. Other researchers dealt with systematic reviewing and different types of mnemonic strategies (Nemati, 2008).

In this study from among the four sets of memory strategies classified by Oxford (1990), the three sub-strategies of 'grouping', 'making acronyms' and 'using imagery' were selected. Grouping refers to classifying language material into meaningful context to make the material easy to remember by reducing the number of discrete elements. Based on Oxford (1990) using acronyms is a kind of placing new words into a context in order to remember them better. Relating new language information to concepts in memory by means of meaningful visual imagery, either in the mind or in the actual drawing is called using imagery.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In this study 3 research questions were posed as follows:

- 1) Does teaching memory VLSs to experimental groups impact learners' depth of vocabulary in comparison to control groups?
  - 2) Does teaching memory VLSs to experimental groups impact different proficiency (low/intermediate/high) learners' depth of vocabulary knowledge in comparison to control groups?
  - 3) Is vocabulary gain that reflected in depth of vocabulary knowledge for control and experimental groups the same?
- Thus the following null hypotheses were formulated to be answered:

- 1) Teaching memory VLSs to experimental groups does not impact learners' depth of vocabulary in comparison to control groups.
- 2) Teaching memory VLSs to experimental groups does not impact different proficiency (low/intermediate/high) learners' depth of vocabulary knowledge in comparison to control groups.
- 3) The vocabulary gain as reflected in depth of knowledge of given words for control and experimental groups are the same.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

The overall sampling method employed in this study was multi-stage random sampling. The subjects of this study comprise 310 female Pre-University (PUC) students from an all-female governmental school in Mysore (Karnataka State, India). Their age range was from 16 to 18. After dividing the students to control and experimental group randomly 140 students were in control group and 170 in experimental group (Table 1). A standard proficiency questionnaire (Nelson Test 400B) was distributed amongst the students of control and experimental groups to divide the participants into 3 levels (high, intermediate and low) of proficiency. The participants with 0.5 SD below and above the mean were grouped as 'intermediate' and those below and above 0.5 SD were considered as 'low' and 'high' proficiency levels respectively. The total number of participants left in each proficiency group has been shown in Table 1.

*Table 1: The number of participants in 'control' and 'experimental' groups*

<i>Level</i>	<i>Control</i>	<i>Experimental</i>
Low	42	63
Intermediate	60	58
High	38	49
Total	140	170

### *Instrument*

#### *Nelson Proficiency Test*

An already available standard proficiency test (NELSON Series 400B) was utilized to divide the participants into high, intermediate and low proficiency levels. This instrument, in the form of multiple choice questions, consisted of one cloze comprehension passage as well as vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation sections.

#### *Treatment material*

The treatment handout prepared by the researcher included 9 unknown vocabulary items (for each strategy of grouping, making acronyms and imagery 3 vocabularies) to be taught by memory strategies in the experimental groups. The treatment material started with a general definition of vocabulary learning strategy and continued with an elaboration and exemplification of each strategy and some exercises all in the form of a handout to be used by participants in the experimental groups. The full information regarding memory strategies and the prepared handout is published in another article by Nemati (2009).

#### *Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS)*

One of the most commonly accepted views of vocabulary acquisition maintains that it occurs along a continuum of development (Waring, 2002). The simplest continuum view of vocabulary is from less knowledge of words to more knowledge of words. In the present study the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) developed by Paribakht and Wesche (1993) was utilized to measure depth of vocabulary knowledge. The purpose of VKS was to track the early development of knowledge of specific words in an instructional or experimental situation.



This VKS differs from the other scales since it requires the verification of evidence of knowledge held at higher levels. Their scale is thus a control scale of how well words are known and what type of control one has over them. The basic idea of this scale is to measure progressive degree of word knowledge.

It consists in effect of two scales, one for eliciting responses and one for scoring responses. The first scale is presented to the students with each word on the top. The scale has five steps or categories. Students are asked to decide which category best represents how well they know the word. Category I means that the word is not recognized at all, while in category II the word is recognized but the meaning is not known. These first two categories rely on honest reporting whereas at the three higher levels they are required to give some verifiable evidence for their response (Read, 2001). The distinction between categories III and IV also involves an element of judgment by the test-takers as to how sure they are of what the word means, but in either case they have to demonstrate their understanding by means of a synonym or translation equivalent. Category V moves from receptive knowledge to production, in that the test takers need to show they can use the word in a sentence.

Subjects are presented with a target word in written form and required to indicate their self-perceived knowledge of the item in question by completing one or more of five self-report categories. These range from total unfamiliarity with the word to knowledge of how to use it in grammatically and semantically correct ways in a sentence.

### **Procedure**

The main study was carried out in three steps. Both control and experimental groups experienced the three steps of pre-test with VKS, training and post-test with VKS. Training for control group involved different modes of vocabulary presentation such as a) presentation of the words in isolation; b) giving pronunciation of the words orally; c) writing those words on the board; d) giving a short explanation about their parts of speech; e) elaboration of the meaning of each word through introducing synonyms (and antonyms if needed), and f) using minimal contexts, that is, some meaningful sentence. While for the experimental group training consisted of a) strategy awareness, b) explanation and example of each memory strategies in handout.

### **Data analysis**

To check the homogeneity of control and experimental groups, independent sample t-tests were computed in pre-test.

*Table 2: independent sample t-test in pre-test*

Strategy	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
<b>Memory</b>	Cont.	140	13.02	2.79	.68	308	.496(NS)
	Exp.	170	12.84	1.69			

In Table 2 it is indicated that there was no significant difference between the pre-test scores of control and experimental groups. Findings showed the homogeneity of control and experimental groups at the starting point.

*Table 3: Descriptive statistics for memory strategies*

Memory Strategies	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<b>Control</b>	13.05	2.78	23.85	3.99
<b>Experimental</b>	12.87	1.59	28.47	4.66
<b>Total</b>	12.94	2.20	26.39	4.94

To work out the better performance of the experimental group the mean scores tabulated in Table 3 were taken advantage of. Based on the table, the pre-test mean score of the control group was 13.05, which increased to 23.85 in post-test, while the mean score of experimental group increased to 28.47 in post-test which was more.

*Table 4: independent sample t-test in post-test*

Strategy	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
<b>Memory</b>	Cont.	140	23.85	3.99	5.32	308	.000(HS)

	Exp.	170	28.47	4.66			
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Based on the results of the t-test in Table 4, the change in performance resulting from the teaching phase was highly significant ( $t=5.35$ ,  $P < .000$ ).

The next tables will answer the second hypothesis concerning the impact of teaching memory strategies to different proficiency groups of experimental group comparing control group. First homogeneity of groups before training was tackled with.

*Table 5: independent sample t-tests for proficiency groups in pre-test*

Level	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
Low	Cont.	42	30.33	5.64	0.61	103	.544 (NS)
	Exp.	63	29.74	3.23			
Mid	Cont.	60	29.20	5.62	0..89	116	.374 (NS)
	Exp.	58	29.91	2.54			
High	Cont.	38	30.44	5.27	1.85	85	.070 (NS)
	Exp.	49	28.73	2.43			

As indicated in Table 5, control and experimental participants at each proficiency level were homogeneous in pre-test phase since no significant difference was observed between any of the pairs compared.

*Table 6: Independent sample t-tests for proficiency groups in post-test*

Strategy	Level	Groups	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
Memory Post-test	Low	Cont.	23.47	3.83	7.12	.000(HS)
		Exp.	29.34	4.54		
	Mid	Cont.	24.38	3.62	3.88	.000(HS)
		Exp.	27.37	4.67		
	High	Cont.	23.44	4.63	5.19	.000(HS)
		Exp.	28.65	4.65		

Table 6 illustrated that all the independent sample t-tests between control and experimental groups at each proficiency level were highly significant at the .01 level. The low, intermediate and high proficiency students of the experimental group outperformed low, intermediate and high proficiency students in control group in post-test. This means that teaching 'memory' strategies was a contributing factor in improving depth of vocabulary knowledge amongst participants. Therefore, the null hypothesis could be rejected at the .01 level.

In the section below, the distribution of unknown and known vocabulary items as obtained by control and experimental groups in pre-test as well in post-test has been analyzed. The main objective here was to show what percentage of the words had moved from the unknown (scores 1 and 2) to known (scores 3-5) as a result of the teaching phase.

*Table 7: Distribution scores in pre, and post-test*

	Time	1	2	3	4	5
		(1,2 not known)		(3,4,5 known)		
Control	Pre	57.5%	41.6%	.6%	.2%	.1%
	Post 1	12.7%	21.3%	59.3%	3.8%	2.9%
Experimental	Pre	61%	37.8%	.9%	.3%	.1
	Post 1	6.9%	8.1%	65.0%	10.7%	9.3%

*Note: 1 = I don't remember having seen this word before, 2 = I have seen this word before, but I don't know what it means, 3 = I have seen this word before and I think it means-----, 4 = I know this word. It means -----, and 5 = I can use this word in a sentence -----.*

The same information is shown graphically for the ease of understanding where umbers 1-5 show depth of vocabulary knowledge.

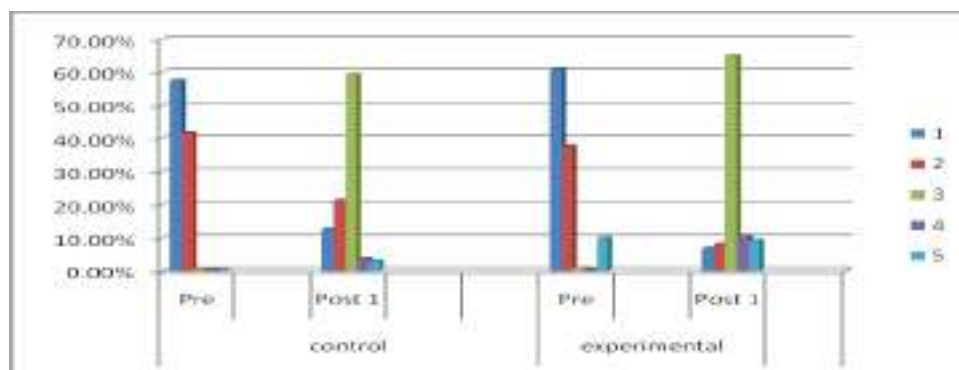


Figure 1: Distribution of depth of vocabulary knowledge

Quantitatively, the comparison of the scores of control and experimental groups in post-test 1 showed that more vocabulary items remained in unknown state in the control group (34%); whereas, in the experimental group more vocabulary items moved to known category (85%) and less remained in the unknown one (15%). This proved that students of experimental group learnt more due to treatment than the control group.

Patterns of movement in Table 7 and Figure 1 illustrated that after treatment, in the control group, more vocabulary items remained in category 1 'I have never seen this word before' and category 2 'I have seen this word before but I cannot remember its meaning' in comparison to the experimental group. Regarding category 3 and in post-test 2 students of the experimental group provided synonyms for more vocabulary items (65%) compared to the control group with less than 59%. In addition, the percentages of grammatically incorrect but semantically correct sentences produced (category 4) and both semantically and grammatically correct sentences (category 5) were higher for the experimental group than the control group.

## CONCLUSIONS

Although the scores of the control and experimental groups were not statistically significant in the pre-test phase, the difference between the two groups was highly significant. This implied that memory strategies can boost learning and retention of vocabulary items if embedded in the teaching method. The importance of memory strategies can be justified by the following theory and discussion. In 1975, Craik and Tulving introduced a theory called the 'depth of processing' or 'levels of processing' framework. According to this theory, how well information is remembered is not a function of how long a person is exposed to that information, but instead depends on the nature of the cognitive processes that are employed to process that information.

The second hypothesis tackled with different proficiency groups. Findings of the study may help English teachers to overcome the challenge of teaching heterogeneous groups since memory strategies were effective for all proficiency groups. As regards qualitative analysis there was a dramatic decrease after treatment for control and experimental groups of both environments from category 1 (word never seen) to other categories. This decrease for the experimental group was more showing that more vocabulary items were moved to the higher categories.

After the teaching phase, in control and experimental groups some of the words moved to category 2 (recognition level, 'I have seen this word before but I don't know what it means') in both post-tests. This implied that in both methods of teaching, students improved, and this improvement was more of course for the experimental group that had undergone the strategy enriched treatment. More vocabulary items moved to higher categories of knowledge (3, 4, 5, or known) after treatment in both groups and both countries. The move into the known category (3 to 5) was more in the experimental group. In other words, the experimental learners achieved greater depth in their knowledge of these words compare to the control groups. The implementation of VKS in pre-test and post-test instead of a multiple-choice test, was an issue that added to the value of the present study. A standard multiple-choice item consists of two basic parts viz., a problem which is called 'stem' and a list of suggested solutions or 'alternatives' which contains one correct or best alternative as 'correct answer' and a number of incorrect or inferior alternatives

called 'distractors'. Writing a plausible multiple-choice item is usually difficult. Hence, most poorly written multiple-choice items have the weaknesses of word ambiguity and contain clues to correct answers.

Despite having good advantages, such as, being appropriate for use in many different subject matter areas, measuring a great variety of educational objectives, or being amenable to rapid scoring and item analysis, multiple-choice items have some major drawbacks the reliability of multiple-choice items is susceptible because of the presence of the guessing factor which reduces its reliability. For example, if the test includes a section with only two multiple-choice items of 4 alternatives each (a, b, c, d), you can expect 1 out of 16 of your students to correctly answer both items by blindly guessing. It is possible to answer correctly without knowing much or doing any real thinking because the answers are in front of the students, some people call these tests 'multiple-guess'.

In sum, multiple-choice items are inexpensive and efficient ways to check on factual (declarative) knowledge and routine procedures. However, they are not useful for assessing critical or higher order thinking in a subject, the ability to write, or the ability to apply knowledge or solve problems. Thus, by highlighting the shortcomings of multiple-choice questions in this research, the vocabulary knowledge scale (VKS) was used as a substitute the characteristics of which have been explained in detail in Chapter three. This study is significant since it shows the importance of vocabulary learning strategies in enhancing depth of vocabulary knowledge of the students.

### Limitations

Each study is not without its limitations. In this study the participants were just among pre-university students. Furthermore, they were all female from an ESL environment like India. Other researchers can do the same with other participants in EFL environments like Iran.

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## SEMANTIC PROSODY OF NEAR SYNONYMS FROM A CROSS-LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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### ABSTRACT

Semantic prosody, which is a brand new concept in the field of linguistics, describes the way in which certain seemingly neutral words can be perceived with positive or negative associations through frequent occurrences with particular collocations. This concept was introduced to the discipline by Bill Louw in 1993. This paper explored the semantic prosody behavior of close Persian equivalents of two near synonym groups “*cause* and *bring about*” and “*result*, *outcome*, *aftermath* and *consequence*” from a cross-linguistic perspective. These search-words were separately compared with their close translation equivalents to identify how similar or different they are in their semantic prosodies. To realize the semantic prosody behavior of Persian words, a specialized monolingual corpus was compiled. The results showed that Persian exhibits features of semantic prosody as English does. The comparative analysis presented that *cause* and its near Persian equivalent, *baes shodan*, display a very similar semantic prosody behavior. This analysis also showed that semantic prosodies of the *result*-words are quite similar in English and Persian.

**KEYWORDS:** Semantic Prosody, Collocation, Denotative Meaning, Connotative meaning, Corpus-based Study

### INTRODUCTION

Corpus linguists analyze discourses or texts for finding what people intend to mean by the texts they produce, and what they are interpreted as meaning. When texts are analyzed, many language patterns and concepts such as collocations, phrasal verbs, denotations and connotation concepts are extracted. One of the brand new concepts is semantic prosody.

Have you ever noticed why a *problem* is *caused* but a *solution* is *brought about*? A glance at a concordance, which displays all the occurrences of a particular word in the lines of a text so one can see where co-textual combinations recur, will show that the verb *cause* collocates with unfavorable things such as *pain*, *disease*, *distress*, *disruption* while its synonym, the phrasal verb *bring about* collocates with favorable words like *improvement*, *cure*, *solution* and *success*. Therefore, it can be said that *cause* has a negative semantic prosody and its near synonym *bring about* has a positive semantic prosody (Widdowson, 2007, p. 81).

According to Louw (2000), “A semantic prosody refers to a form of meaning which is established through the proximity of a consistent series of collocates, often characterisable as positive or negative...” (p. 50). Sinclair and Stubbs mentioned that semantic prosody is affective meaning of a given node or collocation’s key word with its typical collocates (as cited in Xiao & McEnry, 2006, p. 105). In other words, they observed that there are always semantic relations between node and collocates, and among collocates themselves.

This research studied the concept of semantic prosody cross-linguistically. In fact, it investigated the collocations of Persian equivalents of English search-words and identified their semantic prosody behavior. These search-words were separately compared with their close translation equivalents to identify how similar or different they are in their semantic prosodies.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This part intends to present definition of semantic prosody and concepts related to this phenomenon such as collocation, connotation and denotation. Corpus definitions and types will be also reviewed in the following.

### *Collocation*

Collocation has been studied for at least around five decades. Firth was the first person to use the word collocation as a technical term in 1957. He said “I propose to bring forward as a technical term, meaning by collocation, and apply the test of collocability” (Firth, 1957, p.194). According to him, collocations of a given word are statements of the habitual or customary places of that word (Xiao & McEnery, 2006, p.105). Firth’s notion of collocation is essentially quantitative. It can be noted that there is a connection among certain patterns of co-occurrence which recur quite regularly. On the other hand, certain items tend to keep company, or collocate, with others. In fact there is a kind of mutual attraction that draws them together. For example, the word *unforeseen* will attract the word *circumstances* and *foregone, crying* and *pious* will attract *conclusion, shame* and *hope* in sequence (Widdowson, 2007, p. 79).

### *Denotative and Connotative Meanings*

Lexicographers fill dictionaries with words and their meanings. Most dictionaries include the referential meaning of a word or expression which is called denotative meaning (Fromkin et al, 2003, p.481). The basic meaning of senses can be favorable or unfavorable which traditionally is labeled as complimentary or pejorative words in sequence (Ping-fang & Jing-chun, 2009, p.21).

A word has not only a linguistic denotative meaning but also a connotative meaning that reflects the evocative or affective meaning associated with a word. Synonyms may have the same denotative meaning but different connotations (Fromkin et al, 2003, p.578). Lexicographers attempt to mark connotations by usage labels such as informal, derogatory, offensive and ironic in dictionaries.

Semantic prosody is similar to denotative meaning in that, there appears to be parallelism between favorable prosody and complimentary words and also unfavorable prosody and pejorative ones. But the difference is that denotative meaning is overt and static while semantic prosody can’t be found without a linear combination; therefore, it is covert and dynamic (Ping-fang & Jing-chun, 2009, p.21).

Leech (1974) defined connotation as “the communicative value that an expression has by virtue of what it refers to, over and above its conceptual content” (p.12). Based on this definition, there is a relation between connotation and semantic prosody. They both endow an evaluation by collocates in a linear micro-context.

Different opinions are in existence, regarding whether or not semantic prosody is a type of connotative meaning. Partington (1998, p. 68), Stubbs (2001a, p. 449) and Hunston (2002, p. 142) appear to take it for granted that semantic prosody is connotational, while Louw (2000, pp. 49–50) clearly argues that ‘semantic prosodies are not merely connotational’ as ‘the force behind SPs [semantic prosodies] is more strongly collocational than the schematic aspects of connotation’ (as cited in Xiao & McEnry, 2006, p.107). It can be concluded that connotation can be collocational or noncollocational whereas semantic prosody can only be collocational

### *Semantic Prosody*

Stewart (2009) defined the most common interpretation of semantic prosody as “the way in which a word such as *cause* co-occurs regularly with words that share a given meaning(s) and then acquires a positive or negative meaning of these words, this acquired meaning called semantic prosody” (p. 1).

The aforementioned definition is explained through the well-known example of this concept. *Cause*, studied by Stubbs is mostly used with negative words like *accident, catastrophe, disease, distress* and so on which denote disagreeable things. It is therefore said, to have a negative semantic prosody. While its synonym, the phrasal verb *bring about* has positive semantic prosody. It usually collocates with *cure, success, solution*, etc. which denote agreeable things. Thus it can be said that a *problem* is *caused* but a *solution* is *brought about* (Widdowson, 2007, p.81). Whitsitt (2005) mentioned three distinctly different definitions of semantic prosody in his article. One is Bill Louw’s, contributed in 1993, as follows: if several different words all sharing the same semantic trait are frequently used with another word, meaning will be passed, over time, from that group of words to the other word. Then there is that of Sinclair’s (1996) which is:



Semantic prosody . . . is attitudinal, and on the pragmatic side of the semantics/ pragmatics continuum. It is thus capable of a wide range of realization, because in pragmatic expressions the normal semantic values of the words are not necessarily relevant. But once noticed among the variety of expression, it is immediately clear that the semantic prosody has a leading role to play in the integration of an item with its surroundings.

And the third definition which has no definite author, treats semantic prosody as if it were a synonym of connotation. About this definition, Janet Cotterill writes that semantic prosody is involved in “revealing ‘words [which] occur in characteristic collocations, showing the associations and connotations they have and therefore the assumptions which they embody” (pp. 283-85).

### ***Corpus***

To be defined roughly, a corpus is a collection of naturally occurring examples of language. Corpora, in Sinclair (1996) terms, are parts of language, chosen and organized based on explicit language criteria, so that they can be criticized and as Johnson (1998) contended, help to choose and set together the texts "in a principled way" (as cited in Estaki 2012, p.8). The intended use of the corpus determines the criteria used to compile a corpus. In fact, depending on the purpose and the form, different types of corpora may be distinguished such as General Corpus, Specialized Corpus, Monitor Corpus, Comparable Corpus, Parallel Corpus, Pedagogic Corpus, Learner Corpus, Historic or Diachronic Corpus, Spoken Corpus and Evaluation Corpus.

### **THE STUDY**

The subject of this article revolves around exploring the semantic prosody behavior of Persian equivalents of some English words. A specialized monolingual corpus was made for this purpose.

### ***Specialized Monolingual Corpus and Data Collocation***

English words, which are used in this article, are *cause*-words and *result*-words. These words were chosen because scholars had conducted in-depth examinations on them and realized their semantic prosodic features.

The researcher compiled a specialized monolingual (Persian) corpus for analyzing the semantic prosody behavior of Persian equivalents of these search-words. The texts of this corpus were selected from “Parseek”, “Tabnak” and “Magiran” which all are Persian news websites. Since the texts of this corpus were collected from Persian news websites, it is named a specialized monolingual corpus. There is, in addition, one further point that, the selection of texts is based on the Persian equivalents of search words, identifying by using two bilingual dictionaries. These words were typed on the search icon and all texts including them were extracted. This corpus contains approximately 2,000,000 words. For finding all occurrences of the search words under each other, as a concordance<sup>3</sup>, sentences including the words were extracted from the corpus and pasted on a new Microsoft word file. In this way, sentences are shown below the other and words are displayed with a span of co-text to the left and right, as in figure 1.

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<sup>3</sup> A concordance provides lines of text one below the other, with the search word along the central axis.



Figure 1: Displaying of a word along the sentence

This is the first stage. In the next stage, the researcher should identify the collocations and semantic preferences and then translate these into semantic prosody. On the other hand, it is time to change the data into evidence.

### Data Analysis

In this research, the researcher tried to identify semantic prosody behavior of Persian equivalents of search-words by investigating their collocations. Then according to collocates of the node word, semantic prosody was classified into positive, negative or neutral. If the collocates that a neutral word, i.e. node word, attracts are mostly negative semantic characteristic, the node word bears a negative prosody. If the collocates are mainly positive words, then the node word is endowed with a positive prosody. And finally if both positive and negative collocates exist, it can be said to bears a neutral prosody. This classification of semantic prosody was proposed by Stubbs (1996); that is some words have a predominantly negative prosody, a few have a positive prosody, and many words are neutral in this respect.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The semantic prosodic features of English words are presented in table 1.

Table 1: The semantic prosody of search-words

Search-words	Scholars	Semantic prosody behavior
<i>Cause</i>	Stubbs, Sinclair, Bublitz	negative
<i>bring about</i>	Xiao and McEnry	positive
<i>Result</i>	Xiao and McEnry	Positive
<i>Outcome</i>	Xiao and McEnry	positive
<i>aftermath</i>	Xiao and McEnry	negative
<i>consequence</i>	Xiao and McEnry	negative

### CAUSE-words

#### English Data

English speakers use *cause* and *bring about* in their speech to mean “make something happen”. These near synonyms have a very similar denotative meaning but they are different in their collocational behavior and semantic prosody. In contrast to *cause* having negative semantic prosody, *bring about* has positive semantic prosody. It should be mentioned that these verbs are seemingly neutral words but their frequent occurring with negative and positive words produces negative and positive semantic prosodic feature for them. These two word forms and their Persian equivalents are subtly discussed below.

Stubbs (1995) analyzed the semantic prosody of the word *cause*. He observed that this verb was almost always followed by something negative such as *problems*, *pain*, *disease*, *distress*, *trouble* etc. Figure 2 shows a random selection of instances of the verb *cause* (as cited in Hunston, 2007, p. 251). In each line, the words indicating what is caused are highlighted in bold.

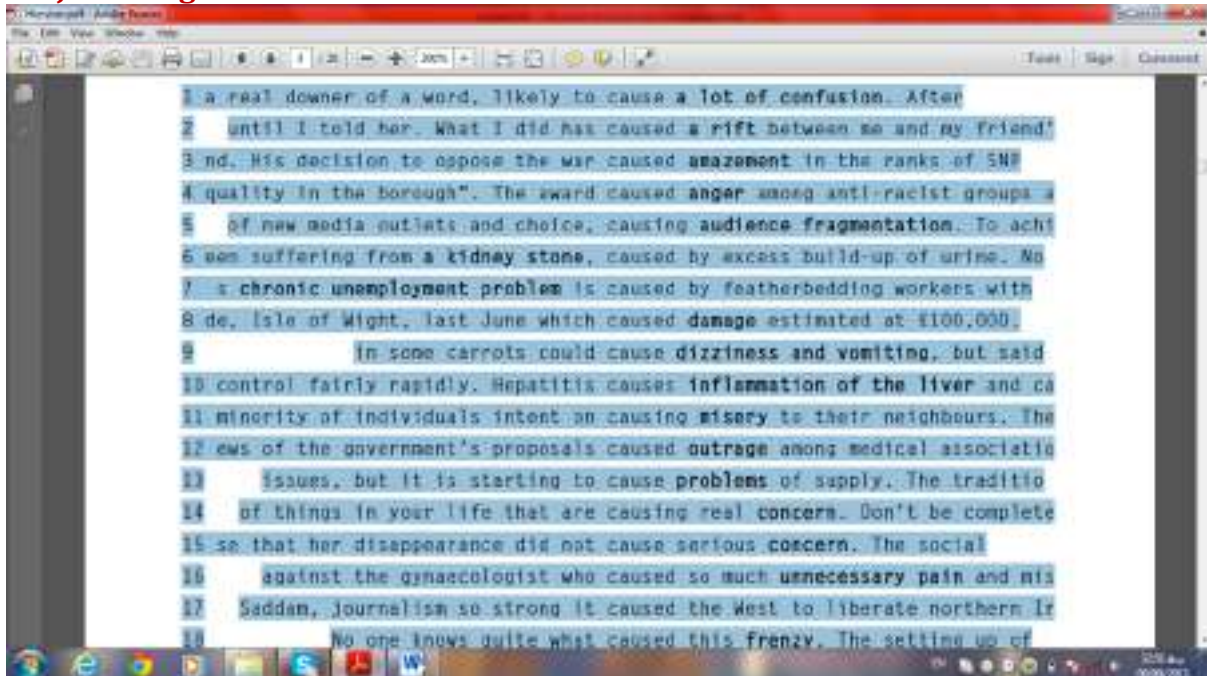


Figure 2: Examples of cause

Xiao and McEnry (2006) utilized the FLOB and Frown corpora to study the semantic prosody of near synonyms, *cause* and *bring about*. In these corpora, there are 287 examples of *cause* of which 223 occurrences have an unfavorable prosody, 56 are neutral while 8 cases are positive. This corpus search shows that this verb has an overwhelmingly negative prosody (p.114). Some of its nominal collocates are:

*serious illness, death, damage, blood, concern, degradation, events, harm, land, number, people, pollution, suffering, anxiety, condition, decision, fear, heart, human, stress, surprise, symptoms, time, water, women, years, cancer, crisis, accident, delay, pleasure, some easing of the confusion, some tumors to shrink or disappear*

The last three underlined expressions show that the typical and central negative prosody of *cause* doesn't prevent it from co-occurring with words indicating positive results (Xiao & McEnry, 2006, p. 115). Related to this issue Stubbs (1995) wrote;

CAUSE is near the stage where the word itself, out of context, has negative connotations. The selection restrictions on CAUSE are not (yet?) categorical: it is not (yet?) ungrammatical to collocate CAUSE with explicitly positive words. But it is easy to see how an increase in frequency of use can tip the balance and change the system (p.50).

His last sentence indicates that more than 90% of collocates of this verb are negative. Thus it could be said something can *cause* death and *bring about* happiness.

Contrary to this verb with strongly negative semantic prosody, its phrasal verb synonym *bring about* mostly collocates with desirable objects such as *improvements, revolution, happiness, and growth*. According to Xiao and McEnry's study (2006), in FLOB and Frown corpora, there are 37 occurrences of this phrasal verb, of which 17 are positive and 14 are negative, with the remaining six being neutral (p.115). Some other collocations of this phrasal verb are:

*increase, order, government, situation, action, policy, reduction, result, state, death, downfall, war*

Of these collocates, the three underlined words are negative, others are positive or neutral. Therefore a *problem* is *caused* but a *solution* is *brought about*.

There are a number of other phrasal verbs in English which share similar meaning but vary in semantic prosody. Xiao and McEnry (2006) studied the semantic behavior of *result in/from*, *lead to*, *arouse* and *give rise to*. *Result in* and *result from* are different in frequency and syntax but are quite similar in affective meanings. They are used less frequently than *cause* to show a negative affective meaning and less frequently than *bring about*, to show a positive evaluation. *Lead to* is strikingly similar to *result in/from* in affective meanings. *Arouse* and *give rise to* are relatively infrequent. They draw a table for the semantic prosody of the *cause* words.

Table 2: Distribution of CAUSE-words in English (Xiao &amp; McEnry, 2006, p. 117)

Synonyms	Negative	Positive	Neutral	Total
<i>Cause</i>	223 (78%)	8 (3%)	56 (19%)	287
<i>Arouse</i>	45 (65%)	10 (15%)	14 (20%)	69
<i>lead to</i>	141 (49%)	65 (22%)	85 (29%)	291
<i>result in/from</i>	84 (47%)	49 (27%)	47 (26%)	180
<i>give rise to</i>	27 (46%)	8 (13%)	24 (41%)	59
<i>bring about</i>	14 (38%)	17 (46%)	6 (16%)	37

#### Persian Data

By considering the results of scholars' analyses on semantic behavior of *cause* and its near synonym *bring about* in English, we tried to analyze the semantic prosody of their Persian equivalents. The Persian equivalents of these near synonyms are extracted from three bilingual dictionaries. Among them, those which appeared the most common were selected to be studied including, باعث شدن, موجب شدن, and سبب شدن. Table 3 shows these entries and their Persian equivalents.

Table 3: Persian equivalents of Cause and Bring about

English synonyms	Persian equivalents	Dictionaries
<i>cause something</i>	علت...بودن، باعث...شدن، موجب...شدن، برانگیختن، پدیدآوردن، به وجودآوردن	هزاره Millennium
	سبب شدن، موجب شدن، باعث شدن، فراهم آوردن، واداشتن، وادارکردن	حییم Haim
	علت(چیزی)بودن، موجب شدن، باعث شدن، ایجاد کردن، به وجود آوردن	پویا Living
<i>bring something about</i>	باعث شدن، موجب شدن، پدیدآوردن	هزاره Millennium
	فراهم آوردن، بوقوع رساندن	حییم Haim
	به وجودآوردن، ایجادکردن، باعث(چیزی)شدن، موجب(چیزی)شدن	پویا Living

#### A. باعث شدن

The words or phrases collocating with this verb are adjectives, nouns or noun phrases. The collocations of this verb are listed below (in descending order of frequency of co-occurrences). Following is a table including some sample sentences of this verb. In each line, the words collocating with this verb are in bold.

**منفی:** ازدست دادن هویت، حاشیه رفتن اولویت‌ها، التهاب جامعه، باخت، تکدرو تالم خاطر، وسوسه، پسرفت، تخریب، طلاق، حمله قلبی، بی‌انگیزگی و بی‌اعتمادی، وخیم شدن، سرشکستگی، بحرانی شدن اوضاع، اخراج، تلف شدن، هتک حرمت، ضعیف شدن، کشته و زخمی شدن، نفرت از دین، وحشت مردم، سوختگی، سرطان، نابینایی و فلج شدن، غفلت، تشنج و درگیری، مزاحمت، پیری زودرس، افسردگی، فلج عضلانی، ناراحتی و نگرانی، دلخوری، ائتلاف، آبروریزی، چالش، تهی شدن از هویت

**مثبت:** افزایش خدمت‌رسانی، توسعه فناوری اطلاعات و ارتباطات، خوشحالی مردم، فخر، پیشرفت، ایجاد دوستی، افزایش امید، اعتبار، کارآمدی و رشد، سلامتی، موفقیت، خودباوری در تولید، صرفه‌جویی در زمان، عاقبت بخیری، پیروزی، عزت و سربلندی، غرور و افتخار

**خنثی:** تصمیم‌گیری، معطوف شدن نگاه، وابستگی، نگهداری افراد، شناسایی، نقل داستان، بازی کردن، تغییرنگاه، اتفاق، تشکیل دادگاه، انتقال

Table 4: Examples of شدن...باعث

No	Examples
1	محقق نشدن وعده ها باعث بی انگیزگی و بی اعتمادی پرستاران شده است.
2	ورزش نکردن باعث تقویت نشدن عضلات و ابتلا به بیماری های استخوانی می شود.
3	مشروبات الکلی باعث طولانی تر شدن اثر خاطرات دردناک می شود.
4	نزدیک شدن بیش از حد به تلویزیون باعث ایجاد اختلالات بینایی می شود.
5	بازی های کامپیوتری باعث چاق شدن کودکان می شود.
6	کاهش کیفیت آب رودخانه کارون باعث تلف شدن ماهی های گرمابی شده است.
7	تحقق حماسه اقتصادی باعث شکوفا شدن ظرفیت ها و رشد اقتصادی می شود.
8	رائش زمین باعث مدفون شدن 83 معدنچی در تبت شد.
9	ملی پوشان با ارائه بازی های ضعیف و دور از انتظار باعث سرشکستگی فوتبال ملی شدند.
10	سازمان ملل متحد: نیروهای آمریکایی باعث تخریب باغ های معلق بابل شدند.
11	تعامل میان معاونان فرهنگی و دانشجویی، باعث پرشور تر شدن فضای انتخابات در دانشگاه ها می شود.
12	مجسمه های خیابانی که باعث وحشت مردم شدند.
13	ایجاد پل ارتباطی بین نخبگان و مدیران باعث متحول شدن استان می شود.
14	عواملی که باعث زرد شدن دندان ها می شوند.
15	لنزهای آلوده باعث سوراخ شدن قرنیه می شوند.
16	یکی از معجزات قرآن باعث مسلمان شدن یک تیم تحقیقاتی ژاپنی می شود.
17	حمایت از صنعت و معدن استان باعث کاهش بیکاری شده است.
18	عدم حضور شرکت های خارجی باعث دیده شدن شرکت های داخلی می شود.
19	ثبات، باعث موفقیت کشتی می شود.
20	دود قلیان باعث پیری زودرس پوست می شود.

In our specialized monolingual corpus, there are 220 instances of collocations of شدن باعث used as a verb. Of these, 130 occurrences have unfavorable prosody, 59 favorable while 31 cases have neutral meaning. As the number of occurrences of this verb shows, it tends to collocate with words denoting unfavorable things such as

as  
 مدفون شدن، پیری، زودرس، وحشت انگیزگی و بی اعتمادی، پیری، مدفون شدن  
 therefore, this verb can acquire a negative semantic prosody.

#### A. موجب شدن

A random selection of instances of this verb is shown in table 5. Highlighted words or expressions indicate collocations of this verb imbuing their meaning to it. Significant collocates of this verb include:

**مثبت:** عملکرد مناسب بازار، قوی تر شدن سپاه، متحول شدن رفتار، رشد شکوفایی، همدلی، صنعتی شدن استان، درخشندگی، زنده شدن نام، تقرب به خالق، شادابی و پویایی، سلامتی، استقلال و آزادی، سرزندگی و قدرت، بهبود بیماری روانی، پایداری در تولید، پیشرفت، خوشبختی، ارتقای دانش، رشد اقتصاد ملی، توفیق، نفع و سود، خرسندی، عزت و افتخار، دلگرمی، تقویت اعتماد، آرامش، خنده و شادی

**منفی:** بسته شدن عروق، بدرنگ شدن دندانها، تنبل شدن ذهن، پوکی استخوان، شیوع بیماری، خدشه دار شدن دین، زخمی شدن، سردرگمی، سلب اعتماد، تلف شدن، خشم مردم، مجروح شدن، افسردگی، ناباروری، کمبود مواد غذایی، بدطعم شدن ماهی، صدمه و آسیب، بروز مشکلات، تغییرات خلقی، کشته شدن، التهاب، سوراخ شدن آپاندیس، سکنه قلبی، افزایش تورم، هلاک، بحران مالی، تباهی، تجاوز، هتک حیثیت، آزار و اذیت، تسمخه همگان، اختلاف، متزلزل شدن، سوءاستفاده، ترس و ناامیدی، نارضایتی، عزل، ازکارافتادن

**خنثی:** توزیع شیر، معرفی، آشنایی، شکل گیری، انتقال، تولید افکار، کوچ،



Table 5: Examples of شدن...موجب

No	Examples
1	سرما موجب فعال شدن ویروس های بیماری را در بینی می شود.
2	تزییق بوتاکس در مواردی موجب نامتوازن شدن چهره بیمار می شود.
3	ضربه و مصرف بیش از حد فلوراید موجب بدرنگ شدن دندان می شود.
4	واقعی شدن قیمت ها موجب افزایش کیفیت خدمات پستی می شود.
5	بازی های یارانه ای موجب تنبیل شدن ذهن می شوند.
6	گرم شدن جهان و پدیده های آب و هوایی شدید موجب شیوع وسیع بیماری ها می شود.
7	رئیس شورای عالی حوزه علمیه: اقدامات افراطی موجب خدشه دار شدن دین اسلام می شود.
8	جرايم اينترنتی موجب از هم پاشیده شدن خانواده ها می شود.
9	فعالیت های فرهنگی موجب متحول شدن رفتار مددجویان زندان می شود.
10	توجه به ورزش موجب برطرف شدن ناهنجاری های اجتماعی و اخلاقی می شود.
11	حضور مردم در انتخابات موجب همبستگی و خنثی شدن اهداف شوم دشمنان می شود.
12	حمله شهرک نشینان صهیونیست موجب زخمی شدن هشت دانش آموز دختر فلسطینی شد.
13	وزیر نفت: اجرایی شدن انتقال گاز موجب رشد و شکوفایی ایران و پاکستان میشود.
14	امام جمعه بیله سوار: نهادینه شدن عطف در جامعه موجب افزایش همدلی می شود.
15	بی بی سی: کشته شدن اسیر فلسطینی در زندان رژیم صهیونیستی موجب خشم گسترده مردم شده است.
16	پیروزی انقلاب موجب برچیده شدن بساط ظلم و زور از کشور شد.
17	افسردگی موجب سکنه ی قلبی می شود.
18	توسعه کشت های گلخانه ای موجب صرفه جویی در مصرف آب کشاورزی می شود.
19	اجرایی کشاورزی حفاظتی، موجب پایداری در تولید و امنیت غذایی می شود.
20	آیا درست است که از دواج موجب بهبود بیماری روانی می شود؟

There are 210 instances of collocations of شدن موجب in our corpus, which are distributed as follow: positive 77, neutral 30 and negative 103. Some sentences include words or expressions which refer to undesirable things such as زخمی شدن، تنبیل شدن etc.

همدلی، پیشرفت، etc. Some other collocations of this verb refer to desirable things for example شیوع بیماری، خشم etc. خوشبختی

## B. سبب شدن

Some collocations of سبب شدن are listed below and its table, including examples, is followed.

**مثبت:** غرور هواداران، بازگشت آرامش، تحول و توسعه، خیر، رشد تعالی، تحول بزرگ، خشنودی، امنیت، افتخار، نشاط و پویایی، افزایش خودباوری و عزت نفس، رونق اقتصادی، تنوع حضور، گرایش به قرآن، کرامت، زوده شدن گناه، خوب شدن خلق و خوی، براق شدن موها، موفقیت، انگیزش جوانان، خلق حماسه، بهرهمندی، وحدت، اقدام موثر، زندگی آرام و راحت، خوداتکایی، برتری

**منفی:** تشدید تنش، افزایش نگرانی، اعتراض خشونت آمیز، لغو تمرین، جان باختن، انحرافات جنسی، ناآرامی، نقض حریم، سقوط، حمله، ترافیک، صدمه زدن، فاجعه، ریزش، خونریزی، تخریب، طغیان رودخانه، کشته شدن، خودکشی، ابتلا به بیماری، جاری شدن سیل، نقض رشد، ترس مردم، انفجار، به هم خوردن وحدت، مشکوک شدن، سلب اعتماد، حاشیه رفتن نیروی کار، به زندان افتادن

**خنثی:** گرایش، افزایش اقامت، خوردن غذا، خرید، نامیده شدن، شناسایی، رویداد، مطرح کردن

Table 6: Examples of سبب شدن...



Examples	No
تصمیمات بانکی قبرس سبب افزایش نگرانی مردم شده است.	1
صدور حکم دیوان عالی کنیا سبب بازگشت نسبی آرامش شد.	2
احداث شهرک پتروشیمی در چابهار سبب ایجاد تحول و توسعه اشتغال میشود.	3
بحران بودجه آمریکا، سبب لغو یک تمرین نظامی ارتش این کشور شد.	4
استاندار اصفهان: پیام نروزی رهبر فرزانه انقلاب سبب رشد و تعالی کشور می شود.	5
بحران مالی قبرس، سبب شکل گیری چالش بانکی در این کشور شده است.	6
مصرف مواد غذایی پرچرب در زنان باردار سبب ایجاد نفخ و اختلال در خواب شبانه می شود.	7
تمرینات ورزشی منظم سبب بهبود عملکرد مغز در میانسالی می شود.	8
اختلاف و تفرقه میان اصولگرایان سبب خشنودی جریان فتنه می شود.	9
کاهش بودجه دولت آمریکا سبب تاخیر گسترده پروازها شد.	10
حضور حداکثری در انتخابات سبب خلق حماسه سیاسی می شود.	11
بمب گذاری بوستن آمریکا سبب امنیتی شدن مارتن لندن شده است.	12
لاوروف: اقدام اتحادیه عرب ممکن است سبب استعفای ابراهیمی شود.	13
گودیداری غیراصولی در تهران سبب ریزش یک ساختمان مسکونی شد.	14
باران شدید سبب طغیان رودخانه ها و آب گرفتگی معابر درکنگان بوشهر شد.	15
معاون فرماندار بوکان: سفرهای استانی سبب نزدیک شدن مردم و دولت شده است.	16
غنی کردن اوقات فراغت گردشگران سبب افزایش اقامت در آذربایجان شرقی شده است.	17
اختلال در شبکه رایانه ای سبب اختلال در حرکت قطارها در تایوان شد.	18
با درمان موش ها بواسطه پادتنی که سبب توقف و خنثی نمودن این آنزیم می شود، کاهش در اثرات بیماری در مغز و نخاع مانند میلین زدایی، مشاهده شد.	19
خوردن شکلات سبب لاغر شدن افراد می شود.	20

In our specialized monolingual corpus, 187 occurrences of collocations of this verb are found. Of these, 90 instances are negative, 80 positive and 9 neutral. The number of instances of this verb, including negative and positive collocations is very close.

#### Discussion about the Persian Equivalents of Cause-Words

The Persian equivalents of the English words which mean “make something happen” such as *cause* and *bring about* are سبب شدن، باعث شدن، موجب شدن. They have 210, 220 and 187 instances in our corpus, respectively. Table 7 and figure 3 present these near synonyms’ semantic prosody behavior.

Table 7: Distribution of CAUSE- words across meaning categories in Persian

Synonyms	Negative	Positive	Neutral	Total
باعث ..شدن	130(59%)	59 (26%)	31(14%)	220
سبب...شدن	94 (50%)	60 (32%)	33(17%)	187
موجب...شدن	103(49%)	77 (36%)	33(17%)	213

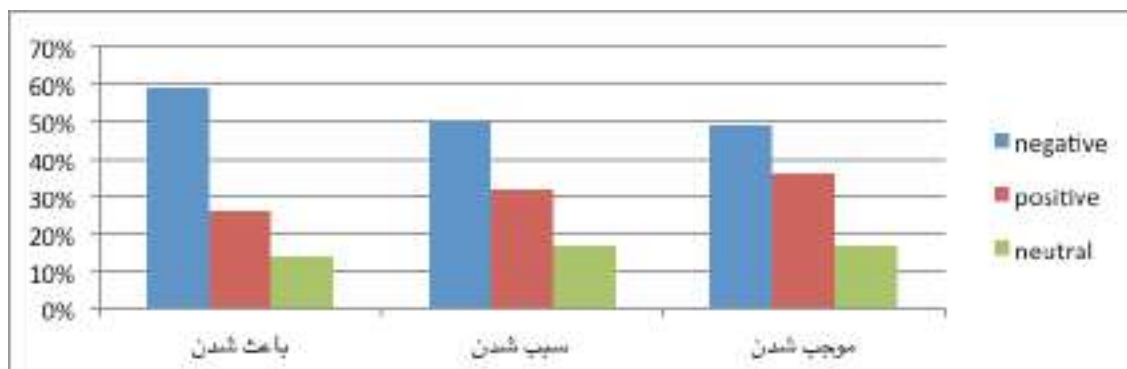


Figure 3: Semantic prosody of synonymous cause-words in Persian

This chart reveals some columns indicating the semantic prosody behavior of three near Persian synonyms meaning “make something happen”. As it can be clearly seen, باعث...شدن has the highest percentage of the negativity and the lowest of positivity. Therefore, it can be said that it has overwhelmingly a negative semantic prosody as its co-occurrences are unfavorable words or expressions. Regarding the chart, the synonyms of باعث شدن, سبب شدن and موجب شدن have also more tendencies toward collocating with negative words. It can be proved by their high negative percentage. In general, although باعث شدن has the highest negative percentage, the result of the Chi-square (a) test demonstrated that statistically there is no significant difference among the negative percentages of these three close synonyms. The result of the test is presented in the table below.

Table 8: Test Statistics

	percent
Chi-Square(a)	1.152
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.562

$$(\chi^2(2, 0/05) = 1/15, p=0/56)$$

Overall, in contrast to English synonyms *cause* and *bring about* which differ in semantic prosody, their Persian equivalents are not so different while باعث شدن strongly tends to collocates with words with unfavorable meanings. It is considered that it has a negative semantic prosody.

### RESULT-words

#### English Data

Some words in English which mean “anything that is due to something already done” are *result*, *outcome*, *consequence* and *aftermath*. Most dictionaries only focus on the denotative meaning of these near synonyms and some of them such as Longman Synonym Dictionary simply list them as the synonym. They don’t distinguish the differences between these near synonyms in their affective meaning. Studies show that these four near synonyms can be arranged from positive to negative, on a semantic continuum as follows: *outcome/result*; *consequence*, and *aftermath* (Zhang, 2007, p.5).

Examples of *consequence* in the FLOB/Frown corpora show that fixed expressions such as “as a consequence” and “in consequence of” can be negative, positive or neutral, depending on their context while *consequence* and its plural form *consequences* strongly tend towards a negative semantic prosody. When *consequence* means *result*, its typical collocates refer to something unpleasant such as *serious*, *disastrous*, *adverse*, *demanding*, *negative*, *unfortunate*, *tragic* and *fatal* (Xiao & McEnry, 2006, p.109).

Fourteen occurrences of *aftermath* which are mostly in the expression “in the aftermath of”, in the FLOB/Frown corpora show that the tendency of this word is strongly toward negative prosody. The significant collocate of this word is *war/wars* (Xiao & McEnry, 2006, p.110).

*Result* and *outcome* are the other two synonyms. *Result* is more common than *outcome*. It appears that these words collocate with pleasant or favorable affective meaning words, e.g. *an excellent result*, *a brilliant result*, *a successful outcome*, *a great result* and etc. Their significant collocates, ranking by co-occurrence frequency are;

Result: *better*, *different*, *early*, *end*, *final*, *similar*, *direct*, *empirical*, *likely*, *experimental*, *good*, *negative*, *desired*  
 Outcome: *likely*, *positive*, *successful*

A close attention to the collocations show that negative also appears on the collocation list of *result*.

#### Persian Data

As for the semantic prosody behavior of Persian equivalents of these near synonyms, their Persian equivalents were extracted from Millennium and Living English to Persian dictionaries, presented in the table 9.

Table 9: Persian equivalents of result-words

Synonyms	Persian equivalents from Millennium	Persian equivalents from Living
<i>Result</i>	نتیجه، اثر، حاصل، ثمره، فایده، بارویر	نتیجه، ثمره، حاصل
<i>Outcome</i>	نتیجه، حاصل، پیامد، بازده	نتیجه، حاصل، پیامد
<i>Consequence</i>	نتیجه، پیامد، اثر، حاصل، عواقب	نتیجه، پیامد
<i>Aftermath</i>	نتیجه، عواقب، پیامد	نتیجه، پیامد، عواقب

Among the Persian equivalents of these synonyms, *natijeh* is seen as an equivalent of all these words. In addition to this, another equivalent for *result* is *hasel*. *Payamad* and *hasel* are equivalents of *outcome* beside *natijeh*. Equivalents of *consequence* are these all words plus *avagheb*. *Natijeh*, *avagheb* and *payamad* are mentioned as *aftermath* equivalents. This part explored the collocational behavior and semantic prosody of these near Persian synonyms. These near synonyms differ in their semantic prosody behavior.

#### A. حاصل

Significant collocates of this word are:

حاصل: فعالیت، کار، تولید، زحمات، وحدت و همدلی، تلاش، عملکرد خوب، عدالت، وجود نظام اسلامی، شهامت، خودباوری، آزادسازی، تجربه، مبانی دینی، مقاومت، علمگرایی، اعتماد، ازدواج، نیات صادقانه، تجلی تفکر، پیوند، استقامت، مطالعات، رقابت، آزمایش، بررسی، روابط، قرارداد، مسابقه، زلزله، اشتباهات، تملق، درگیری، حوادث، دوری از ادبیات، تعارض

Of all these nominal collocates, with the exception of the underlined items which are neutral and negative, the other ones show the tendency of this word toward a positive semantic prosody. Some sentences including positive collocates of this word were selected and came in table below.

Table 10: Examples of حاصل

Examples	No
هنرمندان حاصل ۳ سال فعالیتشان را به موزه هنرهای معاصر می‌برند.	1
پیروزی و 10 شکست حاصل کار نمایندگان ایران در تنیس روی میز قهرمانی جهان است.	2
درآمدهای حاصل از هدفمندی یارانه‌ها امروز در مجلس بررسی می‌شود.	3
تاجری: افتخارات و لاسکو حاصل زحمات مربیان قبلی است.	4
یک طلا و یک برنز حاصل تلاش دوومیدانی کاران در مرحله اول جایزه بزرگ آسیا است.	5
خوشحالم که عیدی اول را ما به مردم دادیم، این تیم حاصل شهامت مربیان لیگ برتری است.	6
جماران حاصل خودباوری است.	7
رشد 2 برابری درآمدهای حاصل از آزادسازی حامل‌های انرژی در اجرای هدفمندی...	8
اسلامی کردن دانشگاه حاصل هزار سال مبانی دینی است.	9
عقب نشینی غرب در مذاکرات آلمانی حاصل مقاومت ملت و رهبری بود.	10

In our specialized monolingual corpus, there are 106 instances of the word *hasel* which 40 contain positive collocations of this word, 34 neutral and 32 negative.

#### B. نتیجه

Some collocates of this word are:

نتیجه: ارتباط مطلوب، صلاحیت، پیروزی، تفکر، میانجیگری، موافقت، تحقیق و تفحص، خدمت رسانی، رایزنی، دانش، آزادسازی، حمایت و مدیریت، بی احتیاطی، تبانی، هتک حرمت، بی‌تفاوتی، بمب اتمی، تحریم علمی، معکوس، بی‌توجهی، انحراف، قهر، رسوایی، سوء استفاده، ناامیدی، سهل‌انگاری، دخالت، واگذاری، تداوم بحران، استرس، ممنوعیت واردات، وقوع خشکسالی، مساوی، بررسی، بازی، درمان

Except the underlined words which are neutral, other items have neither positive nor negative meaning. The Following table includes some instances of both negative and positive collocates of this word.

Table 11: Examples of نتیجه

Examples	N0
محصول محوری، نتیجه ارتباط مطلوب صنعت و دانشگاه می‌باشد.	1
نتیجه صلاحیت نامزدهای انتخاباتی شهر و روستا، 28 اردیبهشت ماه ابلاغ می‌شود.	2
دمشق: پیشرفت در مذاکرات سیاسی بین‌المللی نتیجه پیروزی‌های ارتش سوریه است.	3
استاد هندی: انتخابات آزاد در ایران، نتیجه نظام مردمسالار است.	4
نتیجه موافقت قطعی قطب‌های علمی تا اوایل شهریور اعلام می‌شود.	5
سردار نقدی: علم بدون معنویت نتیجه‌اش پمپ اتمی است.	6
تاج: لیگ سیزدهم قطعاً 16 تیمی است، نتیجه تبانی تایپان هفته اعلام می‌شود.	7
باهنر: از تشکلهای حامی کاندیداتوری عذرخواهی می‌کنم، به نتیجه ائتلاف پایبندم.	8
اتحاد مسلمانان نتیجه هتک حرمت به ساحت مقدس صحابه پیامبر (ص) است.	9
فغانی: ناهنجاری و بداخلاقی در فوتبال نتیجه بی‌تفاوتی مسئولان است.	10

Ninety occurrences of this word were found in our specialized monolingual corpus, including 35 negative collocations, 33 positive and 22 neutral.

### C. پیامد

The collocations of this word are:

پیامد: عدم حمایت، تجاوز، برخورد کشتی با صخره، مصرف خودسرانه، خطرناک، منفی، مداخله، جبران ناپذیر، فاجعه‌بار، بحران، گردوغبار، درگیری، سقوط، استعفا، تهدید، تحریم، پیش‌بینی نشده، جنگ، ورشکستگی، محدودیت، مخرب، اشغالگری، غفلت، ناگوار، بیکاری، تشدید تنش، شوک، وخیم، بدرفتاری، تلخ، مصرف مواد مخدر، ناامنی، ترور، بازداشت، اهانت، حوادث، اعتراض، تورم، بیماری، مخاطره‌آمیز، تشنج، ناخوابسته، مناقشه، توافق، تکنولوژی، فعالیت، اتخاذ تدابیر فوق العاده

Most of collocates of this word are negative. Some of them are adjectives such as خطرناک، جبران‌ناپذیر، فاجعه‌بار، مخاطره‌آمیز and some others are nouns or noun phrases except the underlined items indicating that it still collocates with positive words. In our corpus, there are a number of obviously negative collocates of this word. Some instances existed in table below.

Table 12: Examples of پیامد

Examples	No
انگلیس درباره پیامدهای <u>عدم حمایت</u> از بازسازی سومالی هشدار داد.	1
مجلس شورای مصر پیامدهای <u>تجاوز</u> اسرائیل به سوریه را بررسی می‌کند.	2
دمپسی: ایجاد منطقه ممنوع پرواز در سوریه پیامدهای <u>منفی</u> زیادی برای منافع امریکا دارد.	3
استفاده ابزاری از آژانس پیامدهای <u>جدی همچون یأس</u> و خروج از معاهده را در پی دارد.	4
امیر عبداللهیان: حمله به سوریه پیامدهای <u>خطرناکی</u> دارد.	5
دخالت احتمالی و اشنگتن در سوریه با پیامدهای <u>جبران ناپذیری</u> همراه خواهد بود.	6
نماینده روسیه در ناتو: توسل به زور در سوریه پیامدهای <u>فاجعه باری</u> خواهد داشت.	7
یک تشکل سیاسی مخالف نظام سوریه نسبت به پیامدهای <u>استعفای</u> اخضر ابراهیمی هشدار داد.	8
پوتین درباره پیامدهای <u>بحران</u> اقتصادی جهانی برای اقتصاد روسیه هشدار داد.	9
شکست مادورو، پیامدهای <u>پیش بینی نشده</u> ای متوجه ونزوئلا خواهد کرد.	10

Of the 98 instances containing پیامد in our corpus, 54 occurrences have negative collocations of this word, 26 neutral and 17 positive, being the least instances.

### D. عاقبت

Significant collocations of this word are:

عاقبت: غرور، دزدی، ورود اشتباه، مظنونان، تلخ بدحجابی، شوم توجیه گناه، زورگیری، چاقوکش، فرار از مالیات، پناهجویان غیرقانونی، تشخیص اشتباه، بیکاری، خیانت، دروغگو، نزاع، بی‌فکری، سیم‌کارت‌های بلاتکلیف، وزرای برکنار شده، جوگیر شدن، اخراج، متجاوزان، مزاحمت، فرو ریختن، جدال، درگیری، خودنمایی، مستی، جلد، قاتلان، لاجبت، اسراف، گران‌فروشی، شخص متخلف، لشکرکشی، جنایت سیاه، بازجویی، آتش‌زدن، دوستی در زندان، حقه بازی، حرص و طمع، پرحرفی، هکرها، فرار از مکتب، فرقه انحرافی، حرف دروغ، تندروی، ناراستی، طاغوت، عشق، ایمان، ایستادگی، تلاش، مهربانی و انصاف، خوش

This word rarely collocates with words with favorable meaning such as the underlined words. Words or phrases which come with this word mostly have unfavorable meaning as the listed and following table show.

Table 13: Examples of عاقبت

Examples	No
عاقبت وحشتناک مردی که اتوبوس دولتی را دزدید!	1
عاقبت وزیری که از مالیات فرار می‌کرد.	2
رئیس اداره پناهندگان وزارت خارجه: عاقبت پناهجویان غیرقانونی، زیان مالی و جانی برای آن‌هاست.	3
افروغ: کسانی که از اهرم تهمت و افترا استفاده کردند امروز روز خوشی ندارند و عاقبت بدتری هم سراغشان خواهد آمد.	4
عاقبت اکثر روابط اینترنتی داستان‌های تلخ اما واقعی است.	5
شکایت از رئیس جمهور به قوه قضاییه و استیضاح؛ عاقبت پاسخهای غیراقتناعی رئیس جمهور خواهد شد.	6
عاقبت مستی، فراموشی است.	7
... "نسبه نمی‌دهیم، حتی به شما" و هیچ کاسبی نقاشی عاقبت گران فروشی و عاقبت نسبه فروشی را به پیشانی مغازه‌اش نصب نمی‌کرد.	8
قصاص، اعدام در ملاء عام، 3 سال حبس و 74 ضربه شلاق عاقبت متهمی است که پس از تجاوز به منشی مطب دندانپزشکی او را با روسری خفه کرد.	9
اگر کارکرد بمب هسته‌ای آنطور که ابرقدرت‌ها مدعی هستند بازدارندگی است یعنی ترساندن نیروی بیگانه از عاقبت تجاوز به کشور و می‌خواهند دشمن را بترسانند تا آنها حمله نکنند.	10

There are 118 instances of this word in the corpus which 66 are negative, 31 neutral and 21 positive.

As mentioned before, these Persian synonyms are different in their semantic prosody behavior. For making this statement more clarified, these synonyms' occurrences are presented in percentage in the table 14 and figure 4 in next part.

#### Discussion about the Persian Equivalents of Result-Words

Table 14: Distribution of RESULT-words across meaning categories in Persian

Synonyms	Negative	Positive	Neutral	Total
عاقبت	66 (56%)	21 (17%)	31 (26%)	118
پیامد	54 (55%)	17 (17%)	27 (27%)	98
نتیجه	35 (38%)	33 (36%)	22 (24%)	90
حاصل	32 (30%)	40 (37%)	34 (32%)	106

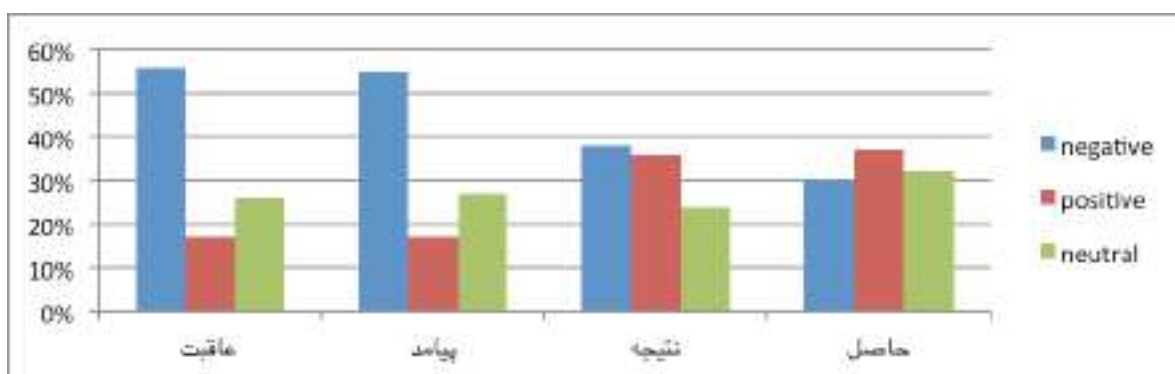


Figure 4: Semantic prosody of synonymous result-words in Persian

In conclusion, like the synonyms of *result* in English, the three near synonyms of نتیجه in Persian can be arranged on a semantic continuum, from positive to negative as follows: حاصل، نتیجه، پیامد، عاقبت. There are both similarities and differences in the distribution of RESULT - words and their Persian equivalents across meaning categories. Like its English equivalents aftermath and consequence, عاقبت typically does not express a positive affective meaning. This word co-occurs with unfavorable words transferring their negative meaning to it, it is therefore said this word has negative semantic prosody. This analysis is the same about پیامد. The semantic prosody of نتیجه depends on its

collocates. It can be concluded that نتیجه as the same equivalent for all English RESULT- words, collocates with both negative and positive words. It can get a neutral semantic prosody. حاصل which is the Persian equivalent of *result* and *outcome*, like them has a positive semantic prosody because it co-occurs with favorable words. It has overwhelmingly positive semantic prosody. For further proof, a Chi-square (a) test was taken. It comes to appear in table below.

Table 15: Test Statistics

	Percent
Chi-Square(a)	9.448
Df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.024

$$(x^2 (3,0/05)= 9/44, P=0.024)$$

This test supports the hypothesis that عاقبت and پیامد have negative semantic prosodies but حاصل a positive semantic prosody.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has explored semantic prosody behavior of some Persian words which are close translation equivalents of search-words, “*cause* and *bring about*” and “*consequence, result, outcome* and *aftermath*”. The researcher tried to realize the semantic prosody of Persian equivalents of the search-words by means of a specialized monolingual corpus and corpus investigation methodology. Then a contrastive analysis between English and Persian words on their semantic prosody behavior has done. According to our contrastive analysis, it could be concluded that, semantic prosody is as observable in Persian as it is in English.

While the semantic prosody of near synonyms, *cause* and *bring about* are different, the semantic prosody of their Persian close translation equivalents, *baes shodan*, *sabab shodan* and *mojeb shodan* (موجب شدن) are not. Among them باعث شدن has overwhelmingly a strong semantic prosody. In English these near synonyms are not interchangeable; even though, it is not ungrammatical to use them interchangeably. But in Persian, they can be used interchangeably and it is not ungrammatical.

While English and Persian are quite unrelated, the semantic prosody of the RESULT-words are quite similar in either language. Among these near synonyms, *result* and *outcome* have a positive semantic prosody *consequence* and *aftermath* a negative semantic prosody. This classification of semantic prosody behavior of these near synonyms happens to their close Persian equivalents which are *hasel*, *natijeh*, *payamad*, and *aghebat*. Of these near Persian synonyms *hasel* has strongly positive semantic prosody, *natijeh* may get a neutral semantic prosody and *payamad* and *aghebat* have overwhelmingly a negative semantic prosody. By studying Persian sentences including these near synonyms in English and their translations, it can be said that they are normally not interchangeable in both languages as they show different semantic prosody.

The discussion of these search-words and their close Persian equivalents suggest that Persian exhibits features of semantic prosody as English does.

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## Appendix 1

Distribution of *cause*-words and *result*-words across meaning categories in Persian

Synonyms	Negative	Positive	Neutral	Total
baes shodan(باعث شدن)	130(59%)	59(26%)	31(14%)	220
sabab shodan(سبب شدن)	94(50%)	60(32%)	33(17%)	187
mojeb shodan(موجب شدن)	103(49%)	77(36%)	33(17%)	213
aghebat(عاقبت)	66(56%)	21(17%)	31(26%)	118
payamad(پيامد)	54(55%)	17(17%)	27(27%)	98
natije(نتيجه)	35(38%)	33(36%)	22(24%)	90
hasel(حاصل)	32(30%)	40(37%)	34(32%)	106

Appendix 2

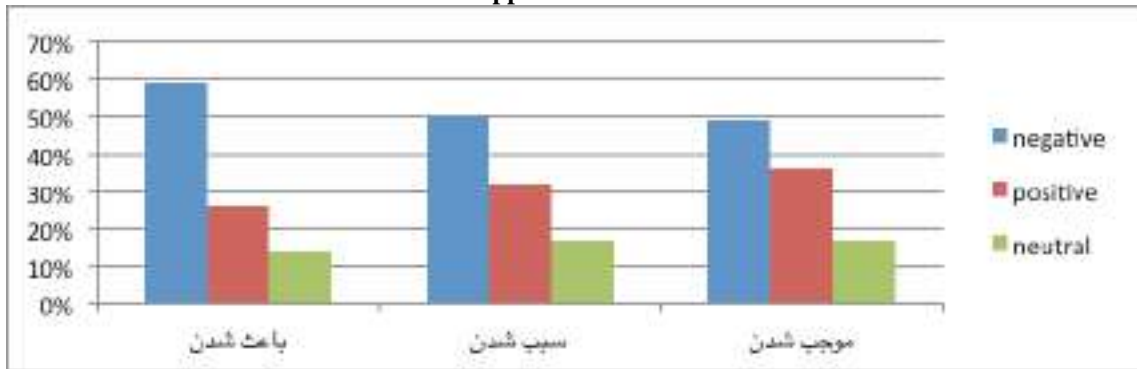


Fig. A: Semantic prosody of synonymous *cause*-words in Persian

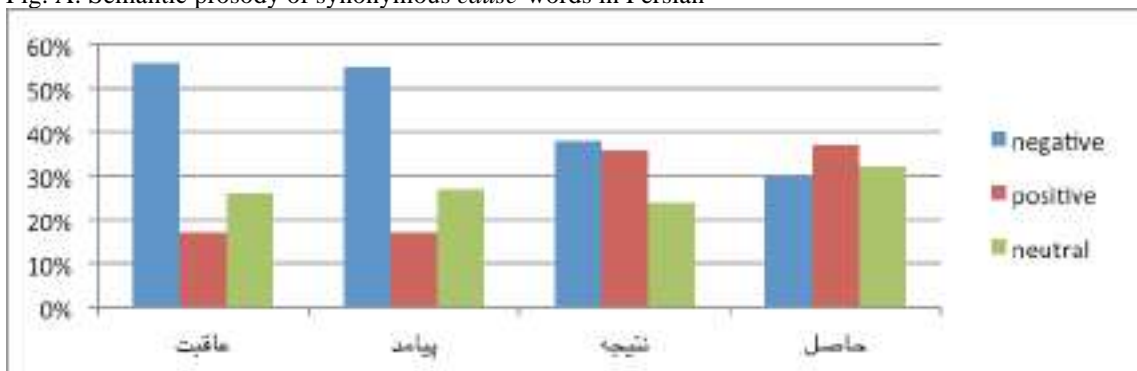


Fig. B: Semantic prosody of synonymous *result*-words in Persian

**THE COMPARATIVE IMPACT OF CONCEPT MAPPING AND LEXICAL INFERENCE ON EFL LEARNERS' RETENTION OF PHRASAL VERBS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The present study is an attempt to investigate the comparative effects of "concept mapping" and "lexical inferencing" strategies on English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners' retention of phrasal verbs. For this purpose, 90 intermediate female learners, between 17 and 31 years old, attending the Iran-Mehr Language School in Tehran took a piloted sample Preliminary English Test (PET), 60 of whom were selected as homogenous learners. They were randomly divided into two experimental groups -one learning phrasal verbs through "concept mapping" strategy and the other with the "lexical inferencing" strategy. They were given a piloted researchers-made pretest on phrasal verbs to ensure that the participants had no prior knowledge of the target phrasal verbs. Then all participants in both groups were taught using the same material and received the same amount of instruction. The only difference was that one experimental group was taught through the concept mapping strategy while the other one through the lexical inferencing strategy. After conducting the treatment, a piloted researchers-made post-test was administered to both groups, in order to measure the students' ability on the retention of the phrasal verbs taught through concept mapping and lexical inferencing strategies. The post-test was conducted after a two-week interval. The analysis of the test scores using *t*-test revealed that both strategies had significant effects on retention of the phrasal verbs. It was also concluded that there was no significant difference between the performances of both groups on retention of the phrasal verbs.

**KEYWORDS:** CONCEPT MAP, LEXICAL INFERENCE, VOCABULARY RETENTION, PHRASAL VERBS

**INTRODUCTION**

Language learners are likely to come up with new words and vocabulary items when learning a second language. Many argue that vocabulary is one of the most important components of any language to teach and learn (Gess & Selinker, 1994, p. 270). According to Nation (2001) acquiring vocabulary of a language affects the process of learning that language and highly enhances communication in that language.

Vocabulary has different types and subcategories such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and also multiword expressions like idioms, fixed expressions and phrasal verbs (Moon, 1997; Wray, 2002). Phrasal verbs are usually found in vocabulary textbooks and grammar courses in the EFL curriculum. A phrasal verb is a type of verb, which consists of a sequence of a lexical element in combination with a particle, the meaning of which is different from the meanings of its separate parts (Koprowski, 2005). Since they are composed of the content word (verb) and the function word (particle), they can be dealt with either in vocabulary as multiword expressions, or in grammar, with regard to the transitivity and the separability. The nature of phrasal verbs can be difficult at best to comprehend and memorize, because their meaning is uninterpretable due to the idiomaticity, which makes phrasal verbs a particular

problem (Schmitt, 2000). One of the practical factors in facilitating retention and comprehension of phrasal verbs is the use of learning strategies. Strategies are those specific attacks that individuals make on a given problem, and that vary considerably within each individual. Park (1995) defines learning strategies as "the mental activities that people use when they study to help themselves acquire, organize, or remember incoming knowledge more efficiently" (p. 35).

O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Kupper, and Russo (1985, p. 285-296) categorized learning strategies under three main groups: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies. Among these strategies, metacognitive strategies are considered as the most essential ones in developing learners' skills (Anderson, 1991). There are a number of metacognitive learning strategies that can help students to become more sophisticated learners such as concept mapping and making lexical inference.

### ***Concept mapping***

The quest for exploring the relationship between knowledge and graphic representation of concepts has become an interesting field of investigation in the study of skill acquisition (Dormer, 2005). In fact, when knowledge is organized and represented through graphical means we are on the voyage to concept maps (Novak, 1977). A concept map, as a learning strategy, is defined as a visual representation of an individual's knowledge structure on a particular topic as constructed by the individual (Zimmaro & Cawley, 1998). With the visual representation of key words, students can identify main issues of a text and organize these key issues in a meaningful way.

The process of creating and modifying a concept map involves making decisions about the different ways concepts are related to one another, leading the individual to reflect on prior knowledge as it relates to new material (McAleese, 1998), as well as engaging in "control" processes of planning, monitoring progress, and evaluating goal attainment as the map is constructed (Brown, 1987). Although the literature on concept mapping has been primarily concerned with its application in L1 context, its benefits in L2 context has been recently explored (Ghanizadeh, 2007). Concept mapping is used in different areas of L2 research covering language skills. As a proper alternative to pre and post reading activities, the technique was used by Carrell, Pharis and Liberto (1989) in enhancing L2 reading. Examining its impact on L2 listening comprehension, Fahim and Hiedari (2006) reported a positive influence of concept mapping on the learners' listening comprehension. Moreover, in a study by Pishghadam and Ghanizadeh (2006) on the effect of concept mapping on EFL writing ability of a group of Iranian students, it was found that the technique resulted in quantitative and qualitative improvement of students' writing ability. As an assessment device, concept mapping has already been employed in L1 research (e.g., Kinchin, 2000; Reese, 2004). As of recent, the technique was used by Ghanizadeh (2007) as an assessment tool in L2 reading comprehension. Liu and Chen (2008) examined the effect of computer-based concept mapping on reading strategies of a group of Taiwanese students learning English as a foreign language. The analysis of variance showed that this effect has more reading benefit on the high-level group than on the low-level one. Recently, Marriott and Torres (2008) examined the use of concept mapping in developing a student's reading, writing and oral skills.

### ***Lexical Inference***

Inference refers to "the process, in language learning, of arriving at a hypothesis, idea, or judgment on the basis of other knowledge, ideas, or judgments, that is, the process of making inference or inferring" (Richards & Platt and Platt, 2000). In foreign language learning, inference is intended to refer to a process of identifying unfamiliar stimuli, concerned with the acquisition of new morphemes and vocabularies in natural context. In inferring, attributes and contexts that are familiar are utilized in recognizing what is unfamiliar.

Language learners are likely to come up with new words and vocabulary items in their interaction with a text. Not knowing the meaning of the new words, they are advised to employ some compensation strategies and utilize familiar contexts and attributes to tackle the problem.

As evident from the definition, to generate inference, one has to rely on certain knowledge sources. Various researchers have put forth different sources of knowledge one may resort to in constructing lexical inference. Haastrup (as cited in Soria, 2001) suggested three sources, namely, contextual, intralingual, and interlingual, that readers may use in making lexical inference.

Making inferences can be used in many subjects, particularly reading and encourages learners to construct meaning by reading between the lines. It is a skill that all learners need in order to comprehend texts.

Thus, based on the above-mentioned points, concept mapping and making lexical inference may both be powerful strategies in teaching and learning vocabulary. Hence, this study investigated the comparative impact of lexical

inference and use of concept map strategy on retention of phrasal verbs. The results of this study may shed light on problems of learning phrasal verbs.

### **RESEARCH QUESTION**

To fulfill the purpose of this study, the following research question was posed:

Is there any statistically significant difference between the impact of using concept map and making lexical inference on EFL learners' retention of phrasal verbs?

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Participants***

The participants of this study included 60 students, majoring at English language literature and English language translation. Prior to the study, 90 candidates took Preliminary English Test (PET). In order to choose a homogeneous sample from among them 60 students whose scores fell between one standard deviation below or above the mean were selected and randomly assigned to two groups. Experimental group 1 consisted of 30 students, practicing concept mapping, and experimental group 2, practicing word inference.

#### ***Instruments***

To fulfill the purpose of the study the following instruments were used:

*PET Language Proficiency Test:* The first testing instrument was PET (2004) consisted of 67 items including three sections of reading (35 items), writing (7 items), and listening (25 items). The allotted time for this test was an hour and thirty minutes. The test includes skills of grammar and structure, reading and vocabulary, and writing. The Cronbach alpha formula was employed to estimate the reliability of PET and an acceptable reliability of .91 was obtained.

*American English File 2:* The learners' course book was "American English File 2", by Olive Oxenden, Chridtina Latham-Koenig, and Paul Seligson; Oxford publication (2008). Six units should have been covered during 8 weeks, and also some tasks of work book regarding the units including multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blanks, matching, and true- false have been used for both groups.

*Two Researchers-made Tests of Phrasal Verbs:* A researchers-made test of phrasal verbs was administered to the participants as the pretest. Also, at the end of the treatment, a parallel researchers-made test with the same nature and characteristics as the phrasal verb post-test was administered to the participants. Before the administration, these two tests were piloted with 30 subjects with almost similar characteristics to the target sample. The two tests were composed of 25 items each in multiple-choice format. The time allocated for each test was 20 minutes.

#### ***Procedure***

To accomplish the purpose of the study the following procedure was pursued: The PET, phrasal verbs pre and post-tests were standardized by piloting them among a group of 30 students with almost similar characteristics of the representative sample.

Then the three characteristics of individual items (Item Facility, Item Discrimination, and Choice Distribution) were calculated in order to omit the malfunctioning items. The writing part of PET was rated, according to the rating scale provided by Cambridge for PET, by two of the researchers. In order to make sure that the researchers had the same understanding of it a few papers were rated by them. Since it was shown that there was consistency between the papers they rated, the researchers moved to the actual practice. Later on, the inter-rater reliability was calculated on the basis of the ratings done by the researchers for the pilot test of PET. Since there was an acceptable consistency between them, the researchers went through the same procedure for the main participants. It should be mentioned that the speaking part of PET was not administered because of not having permission from institute officials to perform this part.

An already piloted PET was given to 90 intermediate level students of Iran-Mehr Language School (in Tehran, Iran) who were selected non-randomly and 60 students whose score fall between one standard deviation above and below the mean were chosen.

The 60 subjects were divided randomly into two experimental groups, one class of 30 as the concept mapping group and one class of 30 as the lexical inferencing group.

Then, all of the students in two groups participated in the phrasal verb pretest in order to make sure that there was no significant difference between the two groups regarding this variable before the treatment and to make sure that participants are not familiar with these phrasal verbs. All the participants were taught using the same material and they received the same amount of instruction. The only difference lay in the teaching of concept mapping strategy, which was included in one experimental group and lexical inferencing strategy in another experimental group.

Both classes were instructed by the same teacher (one of the researchers). The course consisted of 20 sessions of 90 minutes spanning over a period of approximately two month. In this study only six files out of nine files of the text book (American English File 2) were taught.

#### *Concept Mapping Group*

The students in this experimental group received the instruction for concept mapping strategy. The strategy being taught was based on Harris and Graham procedure of strategy instruction (1996). The procedure consists of five stages as follows:

- (1) Strategy description;
- (2) Discussion of goals and purposes;
- (3) Modeling of the strategy;
- (4) Student mastery of strategy; &
- (5) Guided practice and feedback.

The descriptions of the above-mentioned stages are as follows:

*1. Strategy description.* As an introduction, students were told that they were going to learn about the strategy of concept mapping. Concept mapping was described as a strategy that could be used to categorize information in a graphic form through drawing.

*2. Discussion of goals and purpose of strategy.* Concept mapping was described as a strategy that could help learners with vocabulary development and reading comprehension.

For the purpose of this study, the teacher discussed the students about the significance and benefits of using the concept mapping strategy in learning and retention of vocabulary especially phrasal verbs. Students were asked two questions:

- (a) How do you think the strategy of concept mapping might help you to learn and retain vocabulary better?
- (b) How could this strategy help you with different types of vocabulary especially phrasal verbs?

To reinforce students' participation as collaborators in the learning process, goals and Purposes that students generated were written on the white board.

*3. Modeling the strategy.* In this stage the step-by-step instruction for creating a concept map was described, as follow:

#### ***Step 1:***

The teacher introduces a concept (a verb, from the reading passage) that was familiar to all students, such as "call". Then, the teacher draws a square in the center of the board and writes the verb (Call) on it.

#### ***Step 2:***

The students had to say different prepositions which could be associated with that verb, such as "up", "off", "in", "back", "on". The teacher drew lines from the square for each of the prepositions involved. After that, she drew a circle at the end of each of the lines, and wrote each preposition in one circle.

#### ***Step 3:***

The teacher chose one of the prepositions associated with that verb (such as call up) and explained the meaning of it in one word verb (to telephone) and wrote it in the other circle in the same line.

#### ***Step 4:***

The teacher gave some examples to show "separability" and "inseparability" status of the phrasal verbs and wrote them in the board:



"Call up" as an example for "separability":

"Call up" means "To telephone" and is "separable", for example:

I called up Mary last night.

I called Mary up last night.

I called her up last night.

Or

"Call on" as an example for "inseparability":

"Call on" means, "To visit" and is "inseparable":

I called on Mary in the hospital.

I called Mary on in the hospital.

**Step 5:**

The teacher gave students enough time to say other examples and wrote them in the proper circles in the same manner.

4. *Student mastery of strategy.* During this stage, the teacher encouraged students to draw another parts of the concept map using the remaining prepositions such as "off", "in", "back", "on". The teacher selected several students to show their maps to their classmates.

5. *Guided practice and Feedback.* In this stage, the teacher collected the students' concept maps and after reviewing them and correcting mistakes, returned the corrected concept maps to the students.

It should be mentioned that, due to the students' unfamiliarity with the strategy of concept mapping, in the three first sessions the teacher using the approach of "expert-constructed concept maps", explained some complete forms of concept maps. Next she provided students with uncompleted forms of concept mapping while the learners had to complete them using "Fill in the Map Model". Finally the learners were required to construct concept maps based on the "Hierarchy Model of Concept Mapping" and the above-mentioned procedures.

All of the concept maps were based on the phrasal verbs of the texts in "American English File 2" (six files). It should be mentioned that, from 50 phrasal verbs used in this study twenty of them were taken from reading passages of "American English File 2", and as for the remained phrasal verbs, the researchers selected one word verbs through the reading passages of the book and used their corresponding phrasal verbs.

***Lexical Inferencing Group***

The teacher started the first session of instruction by defining the concept of lexical inferencing as follows:

Lexical inferencing is making "informed guesses" about the meaning of unknown words based on the available cues in the text. Guessing is a compensation strategy, which involves using a wide variety of clues to guess the meaning when the learner does not know the meaning of a word. Good language learners, when confronted with unknown words, make educated guesses. On the other hand, less adapted language learners try to look up every unfamiliar word, which impedes progress toward proficiency.

To make the above-mentioned points more tangible, the teacher gave the picture of a tent falling down to each of the participants and asked them to think about the reason of falling down the tent. She explained that each person has different experiences and different background knowledge that makes her/his has different inferences from the same matter. Each student comes with a variety of personal experiences. These personal experiences and cultural differences can affect one's ability to infer. As Immanuel Kant stated (cited in Carrell and Eisterhold 1988, p. 81) "new information, new concepts, and new ideas can have meaning only when they can be related to something the individual already knows."

Then, she asked them to tell their reasons. All of the reasons for different types of inferences can be categorized into fifteen categories according to Haastrup's (1991) taxonomy of knowledge sources for lexical inferencing (Table 1).

Table 1: Taxonomy of Knowledge Sources for Lexical Inferencing  
Based on Haastrup (1991)

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Textual knowledge	Co-text	Local co-text	Semantics 1
			Paralinguistics
		Global co-text	Semantics 2 (specific words)
			Semantics 3 (overall co-text)
	Target word	Phonology	
		Word class	
		Morphology	
Extra-textual knowledge			

In this taxonomy for the distinctions among the different types of inferences, three conditions are established in terms of contextual clues:

- Condition 1: Words with local co-text clues.
- Condition 2: Words with global co-text clues.
- Condition 3: Words with extra-textual clues.

All of the above conditions were explained to the students with examples as follows:

**Local co-text clues:** are clues found in the sentence in which the target word occurs. The clues may be realized through cohesive ties, coherence relations, or both. For the purpose of this study, cohesive ties refer to synonyms, antonyms, super-ordinates, and collocations (Halliday and Hasan, 1976), whereas coherence relation is the relationship between propositions, such as causal relation, consequential relation, contrastive relation and others (Sanders, Spoorena and Noordman, 1992).

**Global co-text:** refers to the case where successful understanding of the target word calls for an overall understanding of the text by means of integrating information throughout the text. No specific part of the text provides direct clues for the word.

The use of an **extra-textual clue** refers to the case where the text does not provide direct clues for the word meaning and one has to fall back on background knowledge or experience to infer its meaning.

To gather data about learners' lexical inferencing strategies each session the students were presented with a handout containing five reading passage in which 5 targeted phrasal verbs were included. The reading passages selected were developed by Haastrup (1991) in a study on lexical inferencing with Danish learners of English or extracted from the course book (American English File 2).

Following the suggestion of Haastrup (1991), each text contained a local co-text clues, global co-text clues, or words with extra-textual clues, which helps learners to identify the meaning of targeted phrasal verbs. Then the students had time to guess the meanings of phrasal verbs.

Different researches show that successful inferencing depends heavily on the ability to comprehend the text as a whole and most of the words in it (Hirsh & Nation, 1992; Laufer, 1988; Liu & Nation, 1985). So, before being used in the present study, the reading passages were piloted with a group of students having almost similar characteristics to the participants in the study. The pilot study revealed that the students had a good overall comprehension of the text (mean of comprehension: 6.6/10). It also showed that the percentage of unknown words in the passage ranged from 4.27% to 2.67%, derived by dividing the total number of the words reported as unknown by the total number of words in the passage and multiplying the results by 100 (based on Haastrup, 1991).

The students were asked to read the text for comprehension and to try to infer the meanings of the unknown phrasal verbs. The students had 30 minutes to guess the meanings of those five phrasal verbs within the 5 texts. The participants were allowed to work in pairs and share ideas with their peers since Nation (2001, p. 261) claimed that when teaching students the strategy of lexical inferencing, it is better for students to work together, with the teacher, in groups, in pairs and then individually. Then, the instructor checked their guesses and wrote the meaning of each phrasal verb on the board with the help of the students.

As homework for the next session, the students besides of working out the text book exercises were supposed to write five sentences with those phrasal verbs that had been presented at that session.

At the beginning of each session the teacher checked their assignment of the previous session. After teaching different parts of the specified unit the teacher gave them a new handout including five new phrasal verbs and the participants had enough time to share their guesses and ideas. Finally they should share their guesses with the teacher and she wrote the meaning of each phrasal verb on the board with the help of the students. Then again as homework the participants were asked to write five extra sentences with those phrasal verbs taught at that session. This procedure was followed up to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> session.

Two weeks after the end of the instruction, a piloted researcher-made post-test consisted of 30 multiple-choice item based on those 50 phrasal verbs presented during the instruction was administered to investigate the participants' retention of phrasal verbs. The time allocated to this test was 15 minutes and the range of scores was from 0 to 30.

The data obtained from the post-test were analyzed in order to study the impact of two strategies -concept mapping and lexical inferencing- on retention of phrasal verbs.

## RESULTS

### *Descriptive Statistics of the PET Proficiency Test Piloting*

The PET consisted of 67 items including three sections of reading (35 items), writing (7 items), and listening (25 items). The test was administered to a group of 30 intermediate-level EFL learners at the Iran-Mehr Language School bearing almost the same characteristics as the target sample. All items went through an item analysis procedure and two items were discarded due to their malfunctioning characteristics.

Following the piloting of the test, the mean and standard deviation of the raw scores and the reliability were calculated. The mean and the standard deviation of this administration were found to be 70.22 and 8.16 respectively. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the PET in the pilot phase.

*Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the PET Piloting Descriptive Statistics*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
VAR00006	30	35.00	60.00	70.2200	8.16899	83.288
Valid N (listwise)	30					

Table 3 shows the reliability of the test scores gained from the participants in the PET piloting phase. The Cronbach alpha formula was employed for this purpose and an acceptable reliability of .91 was obtained.

Table 3: Reliability of the PET Piloting before Deletion of Malfunctioning Items

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
.915	67

After deletion of the 2 malfunctioning items, the reliability of the test shifted to .95. Table 4 shows the reliability of the test scores gained after the deletion.

Table 4: Reliability of the PET Piloting after Deletion of 2 Items

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
.954	65

There were two writing tasks in the test rated by two qualified raters (Two of the researchers) using the predetermined PET rating scale. The rating scale used in this study was the official Cambridge General Mark Schemes for Writing. The rating was done on the basis of the criteria stated in the rating scale including the range of scores from 0 to 5.

In order to calculate the inter-rater reliability between the raters, the researcher used the Pearson correlation coefficient. The results showed that there was a significant correlation between the two raters. Therefore, this gave assurance to the researcher that the same raters can be used for the actual administration of the test (the results are shown in Table 5 and Table 6).

Table 5: Inter-rater Reliability of the Two Raters in the Piloting of Writing Part 2

Correlations		VAR00001	VAR00002
VAR00001	Pearson Correlation	1	.834**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	30	30
VAR00002	Pearson Correlation	.877**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	30	30

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6: Inter-rater Reliability of the Two Raters in the Piloting of Writing Part 3

		VAR00003	VAR00004
VAR00003	Pearson Correlation	1	.813**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	30	30
VAR00004	Pearson Correlation	.723**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	30	30

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

#### ***Descriptive Statistics of the PET Proficiency Test Administration***

After the procedure of piloting the PET test, it became an instrument to homogenize the students for this study. On the whole, 90 students participated in the test administration. After the administration of the test, descriptive statistics

were conducted just as was done in the piloting phase. Table 7 shows these statistics with the mean of 73.32 and the standard deviation of 8.22.

*Table 7: Descriptive Statistics of the PET Administration*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
VAR00005	90	59.00	89.00	73.3281	8.22463
Valid N (listwise)	90				

The reliability of the PET in this actual administration for homogenization of the subjects was calculated too (Table 8). An index of .91 reassured the researcher of the reliability of this test.

*Table 8: Reliability of the PET Administration*

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
.912	65

### ***Descriptive Statistics of the Phrasal Verbs Tests Piloting***

#### ***Phrasal Verb Pretest***

As it was already stated, the pretest was administered in order to make sure that the participant had no prior knowledge of the target phrasal verbs. The test was already piloted with a group of 30 subjects with almost the same characteristics as the target group of the main study. According to the results, there were no malfunctioning items. The results of the pretest revealed that the participants were unfamiliar with 50 phrasal verbs that were taught to them through these strategies (Table 9).

#### ***Phrasal Verb Post-test***

After conducting the treatment sessions, in order to measure the students' ability on the retention of the phrasal verbs taught a post-test was conducted at the interval of two weeks.

Before administration, the test piloted with a group of 30 subjects with almost the same characteristics as the target group. According to the results, there were no malfunctioning items. The results are shown in table 9.

*Table 9: Descriptive Statistics of the Phrasal Verb Tests Piloting*

Phrasal verb Tests	Participants	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pretest	30	30	4.66	5.33	4	30
Post-test	30	30	4.73	5.49	5	30

### ***Descriptive Statistics of the Phrasal Verbs Tests Administration***

#### ***Phrasal Verb Pre-test***

Before starting the treatment, a pretest which was a phrasal verbs pretest, was administered by the researchers in order to make sure that the participants in both groups had no prior knowledge of the target phrasal verbs.

As displayed in Table 10 and 11 the mean scores for lexical inferencing and concept mapping groups on Pretest of Phrasal Verbs are 4.38 and 4.86 respectively.

Table 10: Descriptive Statistics of the Pretest of Phrasal Verbs,  
Lexical Inferencing Group

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
V1 Valid N (listwise)	30 30	2	7	4.38	.701	2.060	4.2436	.898	.383

Table 11: Descriptive Statistics of the Pretest of Phrasal Verbs Concept Mapping Group

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
V1 Valid N (listwise)	30 30	1	6	4.86	.701	2.263	5.1211	.898	.420

#### Phrasal Verb Post-test

The target phrasal verbs were taught to the two experimental groups during a 20 session treatment. At the end of the treatment a post-test was administered to both groups with an interval of two weeks in order to test the retention of the phrasal verbs by two experimental groups. As displayed in Tables 12 and 13 the mean scores for lexical inferencing and concept mapping groups on Pretest of Phrasal Verbs are 23.93 and 25.97 respectively.

Table 12: Descriptive Statistics of the Lexical Inferencing group Post-test Administration

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
V1 Valid (listwise)	30 30	17	30	23.93	.616	3.373	11.375



Table 13: Descriptive Statistics of The Concept Mapping Group Post-test Administration

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
		Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
V1 Valid (listwise)	30 30	20	30	25.97	.526	2.883	8.309

The reliability of the tests was calculated afterwards using Cronbach Alpha formula (Table 14).

Table 14: Reliability of the Lexical Inference and Concept Map Phrasal Verb Post-test Administration  
Reliability Statistics

Cronbach Alpha		Number of Items
Lexical Inferencing post-test	0.79	30
Concept Mapping Post-test	0.81	30

Figures 1 and 2 also show the results.

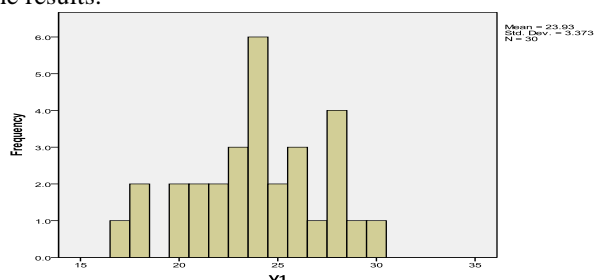


Figure 1: Phrasal verb post-test Scores of the Lexical Inference Group

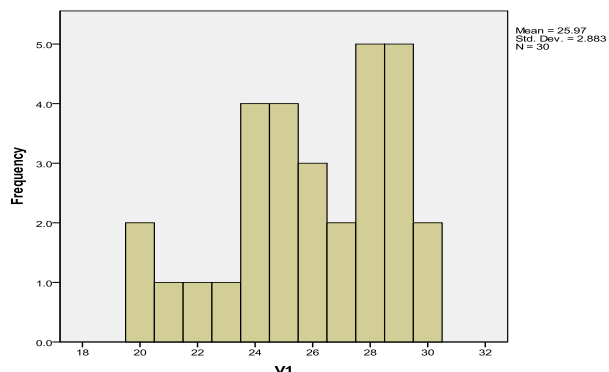


Figure 2: Phrasal verb Post-test Scores of the Concept Mapping Group

### Checking the Normality

Four assumptions should be met before one decides to run parametric tests;

- 1) The data should be measured on an interval scale;

- 2) The subjects should be independent that is to say none of them participates in more than one group;
- 3) The data should enjoy normal distribution; and
- 4) The groups should have homogeneous variances (Field; 2009).

The present data are measured on an interval scale and none of the subjects participate in more than one group. The assumption of normality is also met. As displayed in Table 15 the ratios of skewness and kurtosis over their respective standard errors are within the ranges of +/- 2.

Table 15: Normality Table

GROUP		N	Skewness			Kurtosis		
		Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Normality	Statistic	Std. Error	Normality
Lexical INFERENCING	PET	29	-0.35	0.43	-0.80	-1.25	0.85	-1.48
	PRETEST	29	0.13	0.43	0.31	-1.17	0.85	-1.39
	POSTTEST	29	-0.18	0.43	-0.41	-1.01	0.85	-1.20
CONCEPT MAPPING	PET	29	0.08	0.43	0.19	-1.32	0.85	-1.56
	PRETEST	29	-0.06	0.43	-0.13	-1.05	0.85	-1.24
	POST-TEST	29	-0.58	0.43	-1.33	-0.57	0.85	-0.67

The assumption of homogeneity of variances will be discussed when reporting the results of the independent *t*-test.

#### Pretest of Phrasal Verbs

##### Comparing Lexical Inferencing and Concept Mapping Groups' Mean scores on Phrasal Verbs Pretest

An independent *t*-test is run to compare the lexical inferencing and concept mapping groups' mean scores on phrasal verbs pretest in order to prove that the two groups enjoyed the same level of knowledge on phrasal verbs prior to the main study. As displayed in Table 16 the mean scores for lexical inference and concept mapping groups on phrasal verbs pretest are 4.38 and 4.86 respectively.

Table 16: Descriptive Statistics of Phrasal Verbs Pretest  
(Lexical Inferencing and Concept Mapping Groups)

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
INFERENCE	29	4.38	2.060	.383
CONCEPT MAPPING	29	4.86	2.263	.420

The results of the independent *t*-test ( $t(56) = .84, P = .39 > .05, r = .11$ ) it represents a weak effect size) indicate that there was not any significant difference between lexical inferencing and concept mapping groups on the pretest of phrasal verbs. Thus, it can be concluded that the two groups enjoyed the same level of knowledge on phrasal verbs prior to the study. The results are shown in table 17.

Table 17: Independent *t*-test of Phrasal Verbs Pretest  
(Lexical Inferencing and Concept Mapping Groups)

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.398	.531	.849	56	.399	.483	.568	-.656	1.621
Equal variances not assumed			.849	55.511	.399	.483	.568	-.656	1.621

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is met (Levene's  $F = .39, P = .53 > .05$ ). That is why the first row of Table 17, i.e. "Equal variances assumed" is reported.

Figure 3 also shows the results.

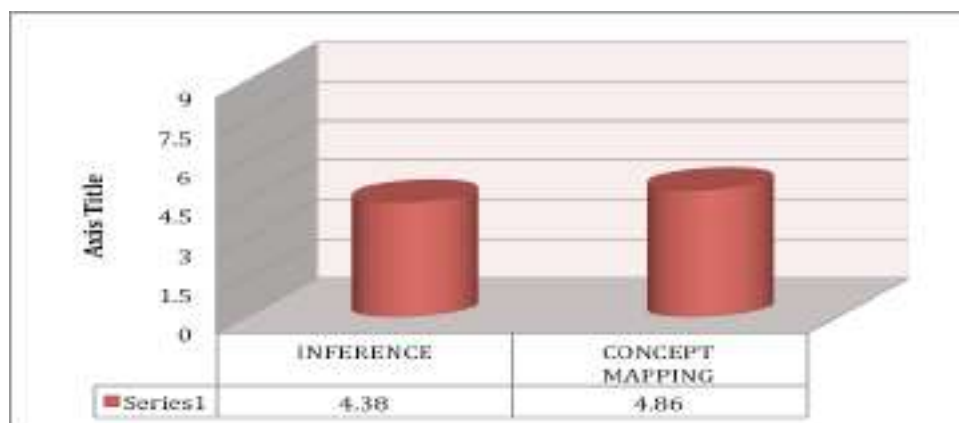


Figure 3: Phrasal Verbs Pretest of Lexical Inferencing and Concept Mapping Groups

#### Post-test of Phrasal Verbs

#### Comparing Lexical Inferencing and Concept Mapping Groups' mean scores on Phrasal verbs Post-test

An independent *t*-test is run to compare the lexical inference and concept mapping groups' mean scores on phrasal verbs post-test in order to probe any significant difference between the impact of using concept mapping and lexical inference on EFL learners' retention of phrasal verbs. As displayed in Table 18 the mean scores for lexical inference and concept mapping groups on Phrasal Verbs Post-test are 25.34 and 26 respectively.

Table 18: Descriptive Statistics of Phrasal Verbs Post-test  
(Lexical Inferencing and Concept Mapping Groups)

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
INFERENCE	29	25.34	2.755	.512
CONCEPT MAPPING	29	26.00	2.928	.544

The results of the independent *t*-test ( $t(56) = .87, P = .38 > .05, r = .11$  it represents a weak effect size) indicate that there is not any significant difference between lexical inferencing and concept mapping groups on the phrasal verbs Post-test (Table 19).

Table 19: Independent *t*-test Post-test of Phrasal Verbs Inference and Concept Groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.022	.884	.878	56	.384	.655	.747	-.840	2.151
Equal variances not assumed			.878	55.795	.384	.655	.747	-.840	2.151

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is met (Levene's  $F = .02, P = .88 > .05$ ). That is why the first row of Table 19, i.e. "Equal variances assumed" is reported.

Figure 4 also shows the results.

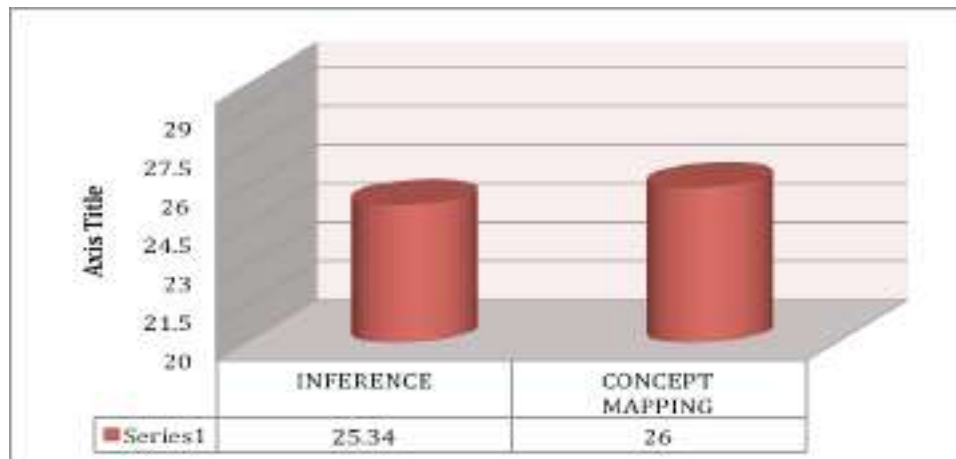


Figure 4: Comparing Lexical Inferencing and Concept Mapping Groups' Mean Scores on Phrasal Verbs Post-test

### Construct Validity

A factor analysis through varimax rotation is carried out to underlying construct of the PET, pretest and post-test. The SPSS extracted two factors as the underlying construct of the three tests employed in this study. This two-factor solution accounts for 90.68 percent of the total variance (Table 20).

Table 20: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.655	55.154	55.154	1.655	55.154	55.154	1.652	55.070	55.070
2	1.066	35.532	90.686	1.066	35.532	90.686	1.068	35.617	90.686
3	.279	9.314	100.000						

As displayed in Table 20 the pretest and post-test of phrasal verbs load on the first factor indicating that they are tapping on the same underlying construct. In other words, they are measuring the same underlying construct. These results indicate that the tests developed to measure the phrasal verbs enjoy construct validity.

The PET general language proficiency test loads on the second factor which due to the nature of the PET test can be labeled as general language proficiency factor.

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

According to the results it has been revealed that lexical inferencing and concept-mapping strategies help the learners to retain the target phrasal verbs. The results of the post-tests of both groups indicated that these two strategies can significantly enhance the retention of phrasal verbs.

Furthermore, based on the statistical analysis, which has been done in order to compare the results of the two post-tests, there was no significant difference between the effects of these two strategies on retention of the target phrasal verbs. This outcome is in line with the findings of Kalaa (2012). She studied the effects of the "word association" and the "lexical inferencing" strategies on EFL learners' phrasal verbs learning and retention. The findings indicated that both of the word association and lexical inferencing strategies helped the learners to learn and recall the target phrasal verbs. The results of the phrasal verb post-tests strongly indicated that learning the phrasal verbs through these strategies was effective and efficient. Furthermore, the participants who were exposed to these strategies exhibited enhanced retention of the phrasal verbs.

Similarly, regarding the results of statistical analysis, it can be concluded that there was not any significant difference between two groups on learning and retention of the target phrasal verbs. This result also corroborates the findings of Cooper (1999). His study showed that successful learners use lexical inferencing strategies to learn idioms.

Hence, applying suitable strategies such as concept mapping or lexical inference (guessing meaning of words in their natural context) involves learners in learning process, which can be more helpful than presenting them long lists of words and their meanings to memorize. Also, incorporation of strategies in course books and curriculum may result in intellectual analytical learners that through using strategies can overcome their learning difficulties.

At the end, it is worth mentioning that like any study, this research faced a limitation, which has to be taken into consideration while attempting to generalize its findings. The researcher did not have any control over the age of the participants and they were only adults with age range of 17 to 31. Therefore, the findings of the study may not be generalizable to other age groups.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The following are suggested for further studies:

1. In this study, the whole procedure from the test of homogeneity to the post-test lasted about two months. The results of the study might have been influenced by the lack of time to more practice. Besides, teachers may need to spend more time in teaching students to take risks in guessing phrasal verbs from the context or practicing concept mapping in their learning. Therefore, future research can be carried out by lengthening the training time.
2. In this study only hand-made concept maps were used while nowadays there is a growing interest in using computer-assisted concept maps which seems be less time-consuming. So, further research can be conducted using computer-assisted concept maps to investigate the results.
3. The focus of the present study was exclusively on the effect of concept mapping and lexical inferencing strategies on retention of phrasal verbs. So, further research can be conducted on the result of teaching other types of vocabularies through these two strategies.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Corrective move has been considered the most vital element in the instructed second language learning process (Panova & Lyster, 2002). This study investigated teachers' corrective moves (CMs) on learners' oral errors and its effects on their uptake in terms of repair in English as foreign language (EFL) classrooms at the Payam Noor University (PNU) in Iran. To meet this end, four conversation classrooms were selected. The data were drawn from the transcripts of audio recorded classroom activities and discussions. Then the errors were coded as grammatical, lexical, or phonological using the coding categories identified by Lyster and Ranta's (1997) model of CMs in response to the students' three types of erroneous utterances. During a whole semester, EFL learners' listening and speaking classrooms discussions were analyzed. The statistical analysis used included frequency of occurrence of students' errors. Second, teachers' six types of CMs follow students' errors were listed in frequency and percentage for each session. Third, a series of general Loglinear analyses of multi-way frequency tables were performed to examine the existence of relationship between more than two categorical variables. The results indicated certain CMs had significant impact on the level of learners' uptake. Regarding the type of errors, certain CM was more effective for correcting students' errors. The findings of the current study offer certain implications for EFL teachers, learners, teacher training programs, syllabus designers and material developers.

**KEYWORDS:** Corrective Moves, EFL Classrooms, Error Types, Learners' Uptake, Repair, Need Repair

## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the present study is to test the prediction whether EFL students will improve their uptake, if provided with helpful opportunities to notice their errors during the classroom interaction through the provision of different types of teachers' CM. Most of studies on the different CM types and learner uptake (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Panova & Lyster, 2002) have been conducted in immersion settings or adult ESL contexts, and not many studies have focused on EFL classrooms.

It seems that there is a gap in learners' performance in EFL classes that makes language learning unsuccessful in terms of learners' uptake, typically, when the learners make linguistic errors and teachers' CM are needed to correct learners' errors. There have been few studies, if any, that have directly investigated CM in relation to learners' uptake, repair in immediate, or rarely over a long period for the purpose of students' uptake in different communicative EFL classroom settings especially in PNU context.

### ***Corrective Moves in L2/FL Classrooms***

One of the areas studied inside SLA is corrective feedback, which has been defined by Ellis (2008) as teacher's response to learner's erroneous utterances. CM occurs when a student produces an oral error, or an incorrect utterance of some sort. This erroneous response or answer usually follows a teacher's CM type. Furthermore, after the CM from the teacher, the student may show signs of learning or understanding which might imply that the student has reacted to the teacher's feedback. However, this uptake move is not always visible in the exchange, since it is a complex and difficult matter to investigate and determine.

In addition to the numerous studies investigating CF moves efficacy, many descriptive studies have taken place in the L2 classroom and have investigated the types of feedback that occur (e.g., Ammar, 2008; Lyster & Mori, 2006; Sheen, 2004). Overall, these studies have found recasts to be the most popular type of feedback used in L2

classrooms (e.g., Lyster & Mori, 2006; Sheen, 2004; Yoshida, 2008), although recasts have also often been found to be the least effective type of feedback in the classroom when compared with more explicit techniques (Ammar, 2008; Ammar & Spada, 2006; Ellis, 2007; Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Havranek, 2002; Lyster, 2004; Panova & Lyster, 2002; Sheen, 2006), at least when measured by uptake. However, as the studies took place in a range of instructional (communicative and grammar-focused) as well as linguistic contexts (both L2 and EFL contexts), with minimal attention to additional external and internal factors, more research is needed to isolate and understand how feedback type mediates SLA.

Corrective moves in EFL settings have also been found to be more beneficial than feedback in L2 settings (Li, 2010; Mackey & Goo, 2007). This is believed to be the case for several reasons: studies have shown that learners in FL settings have a more positive view of error correction (Loewen & Philp 2006), perhaps playing a role in the efficacy of feedback. Some have found that more feedback (in the form of recasts) is provided and used by learners in EFL settings when compared to L2 classes (Liu, 2007; Sheen, 2004, as cited in Li, 2010). More research is needed to investigate if and how the amount of feedback or student views of error correction relate to feedback efficacy, especially considering that Lyster and Saito (2010) found no significant differences between feedback in FL and second language (SL) classrooms.

The growing interest in CM was indicated by the publication of several meta-analysis studies between 2006 and 2010 (Russell & Spada, 2006; Mackey & Goo, 2007; Li, 2010; Lyster & Saito, 2010). These studies together provide strong support for the effectiveness of CM. One of the factors found to mediate the effectiveness of feedback is the length of the treatment or intervention. In Lyster and Saito (2010) meta-analysis of oral feedback in classroom studies, the finding showed that longer treatment was significantly more effective than short-to-medium treatments.

### ***Theoretical Perspectives to the Benefits of CM***

In the field of SLA, there are many theories about the most valuable way for language learners to acquire new language forms during their classroom interactions. Long (1996, 2006) *Interaction Hypothesis* states providing negative evidence is of utmost importance in SLA particularly for young adults and adult learners. He asserts that L2 learners may get negative feedback during the course of their interaction with peers and teachers. Negative evidence (feedback) is information about ungrammaticality. Learners need negative evidence in the form of either feedback on error or explicit instruction when they are not able to discover through exposure alone.

Following a series of research on CM in ESL situations, Lyster and Mori (2006) presented the *Counterbalance Hypothesis*. It refers to class activities that are distinct from teaching routine and CM that usually dominate the communicative language classroom. Compared to *interaction hypothesis* which relies on students' active involvement of L2 learners in class activities with the necessary attention shift in focus, the *Counterbalance Hypothesis* is based on the role of attention in learning. This shift in focus is supposed to enhance links between changes in long-term memory and real use of language.

According to the sociocultural theory, CM provides learners with dialogically negotiated support as they move from other-regulation towards self-regulation (e.g., Nassaji & Swain, 2000; Sato & Ballinger, 2012, as cited in Lyster, Saito, & Sato, 2013). In this relation, Vygotsky's (1978) notion of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) suggests that learning occurs with support from those more competent, in the zone of proximal developments. So the crucial role of teacher, her/his interaction with learners provides a scaffold to allow for communication to proceed while giving the students access to linguistic data. Lyster, Saito, and Sato (2013) stated that scaffolding is a process through which a teacher or more knowledgeable person helps the student in his or her ZPD as necessary.

### ***Types of CMs in the Classes***

Lyster (2002) categorizes feedback moves as one of three groups including prompts, explicit correction, and recasts. explicit correction, recasts, and prompts. The first two types provide the learners with a kind of L2 rephrasing of their incorrect form. In these cases the instructor provides the correct language and clearly shows that the language learners' uptake was wrong. A brief survey of each CMs studies is shown below:

#### ***Prompts***

According to Lyster and Mori (2006), prompts "include a variety of signals—other than alternative reformulations that push learners to self-repair" (p. 271). They maintained that by using the prompts, the learners are encouraged to self-repair. In some other cases these moves are called negotiation of form (Lyster, 1998b, Lyster & Ranta, 1997) and sometimes form negotiation (Lyster, 2002). Prompts consist of a range of feedback sub-categories that include:

(a) Elicitation, in which a rephrasing from the learner is elicited by the teacher;

(b) Metalinguistic clues, in which some comments or questions are provided by the instructor which are related to the correctness of the learner's sentences;

(c) Clarification requests, in which the instructor uses certain phrases like "Excuse me?" and "I didn't get it" after the problematic sentences by the learners to show them that something needs to be modified or corrected; and

(d) Repetition, in which the faulty sentence is repeated by the teacher having a certain intonation to mark the error.

All these CMs which can be used individually or in combination with other moves cover a wide range of CM. They give a chance to the students to self-correct by producing their own modified sentence.

#### *Explicit Correction*

It refers to the feedback that provides the learner with the correct form while at the same time demonstrating that an error was committed (Ellis, 2008). The degree of explicitness of feedback move needed to promote noticing without detracting from the communicative focus of instruction has been and remains a core theme of corrective feedback research (Russell & Spada, 2006). Different types of feedback are most often described theoretically on a continuum of explicitness, rather than as a dichotomy of implicit/explicit (Ellis, 2008; Mackey & Goo, 2007), though they are most often discussed and empirically tested as dichotomous variables. The most explicit types of feedback are overt corrections, metalinguistic information, and elicitations (Ellis, 2008). On the less explicit end of the feedback continuum (most often referred to as "implicit feedback") are recasts, confirmation and comprehension checks, clarification requests, elaborations, simplifications, repetitions, and negotiations (Gass & Mackey, 2007).

One recent meta-analysis found that explicit feedback tends to be more effective than implicit feedback (Li, 2010), at least immediately and shortly after feedback provision, and others reported inconclusive results comparing explicit and implicit feedback (Lyster & Saito, 2010; Mackey & Goo, 2007; Russell & Spada, 2006). The effects of implicit feedback are believed to increase after treatment, at times even bypassing the beneficial effects of explicit feedback (Li, 2010).

#### *Recast*

As Lyster and Mori (2006) state, the teacher "implicitly reformulates all or part of the student's utterance" (p. 271). Long (1996, 2006) posits that when communication in a meaning focused classroom breaks down, negotiation for meaning and recasts can facilitate L2 development precisely at the moment when learners notice the gap (Schmidt & Frota, 1986) between their erroneous production and the correct target language form. Lyster (1998a) discusses the pedagogical implications of his research on CM, and he suggests that recasts do not lead to learner-generated repair because students perceive them as a confirmation of meaning rather than as a correction. Critics of Lyster point out that his studies only take place in immersion classrooms, and that his results have not been obtained in other instructional settings.

Leeman (2003) describes recasts are complex discourse structures that can serve as both implicit positive and negative evidence. Leeman suggests that the negative evidence component of recasts may not be a critical factor. Further, she asserts that the beneficial effect of recasts is at least partially derived from the increased salience of positive evidence they provide to learners. Several research studies found that recasts facilitate language learning (Han, 2002; Havranek, 2002; Iwashita, 2003; Leeman, 2003; Philp, 2003); however, these studies have only been able to demonstrate a positive effect on short-term learning.

Philp (2003) concludes that learners may effectively use recasts when developmental level and feedback correspond. Further, she found that learners did not always notice recasts. Philp suggests that learners' noticing of recasts may have been constrained by the following factors: limitations in working memory, unfamiliar input, multiple corrections, complex changes in the recast, learner level, and grammatical forms in the recast that were beyond the learner's interlanguage grammar. Despite these differing viewpoints, there is general agreement among SLA researchers that recasts are the most common form of oral CM employed by teachers in EFL and L2 classrooms.

#### ***Relationship between Teachers' CMs and Students' Error Type***

Lyster (1998a) examined for the relationship among error types, feedback types, and repair. He found lexical errors were responded to the negotiation moves: elicitation, metalinguistic clues, clarification requests, and repetition without the provision of the target form, while grammatical and phonological errors were recast. As far as repair was concerned, negotiation was generally more effective than correction, particularly for lexical and grammatical errors. In contrast, recasts resulted in phonological repairs.

In his 1998b study, Lyster used the data from Lyster and Ranta (1997) to examine the relationship between error type and feedback type. He found that teachers preferred to use the negotiation of form to correct lexical errors, and recasts to correct phonological and grammatical errors. The researcher also found that the negotiation of form led to greater learner repair for grammatical and lexical errors while recasts led to greater learner repair for phonological errors. Lyster's study also revealed that, in general, teachers had a low tolerance for lexical and phonological errors. Additionally, he found that teachers tended not to correct as many grammatical errors, but when they did, they usually opted to correct them with a recast rather than through the negotiation of form. However, Lyster (1998a, 1998b) asserts that teachers should use the negotiation of form rather than recasts to correct learners' grammatical errors because the negotiation of form pushes learners to produce output (Swain, 1985), which serves as an internal priming device that may encourage learners to notice the gap (Schmidt & Frota, 1986) between their non-target utterances and the correct TL forms.

Following Lyster and Ranta (1997) and Lyster (1998b), research by Panova and Lyster (2002) and Lyster (2004) appear to support the claim that recasts are ambiguous to L2 learners. In his 2004 study, Lyster compared recasts to prompts for the acquisition of grammatical gender in French. Prompts, which were formerly known as the negotiation of form (Lyster, 1998a, 1998b), were defined as instances where students were prompted to use more correct grammatical forms. Lyster found that when combined with form-focused instruction, prompts were more useful than recasts for learners' acquisition of rule-based representations of grammatical gender. Similarly, Panova and Lyster (2002) found that students who received prompts achieved greater accuracy in following language processing than those who received recasts. The researchers concluded that the students who received recasts did not reveal subsequent gains in their L2 accuracy because they had difficulty noticing their own morphosyntactic errors and because they were uncertain about how to interpret recasts.

Studies have investigated if feedback is more facilitative in alerting learners to certain types of errors (such as morphosyntax) compared to others (such as lexis). Researchers have found evidence that learners' perceive implicit feedback (recasts) when phonological and lexical errors are targeted more than morphosyntax (Carpenter, Jeon, MacGregor, & Mackey, 2006; Han, 2008; Sheen, 2006). However, while some studies have found immediate significant differences for feedback targeting lexis, they also reveal that the benefits of feedback targeting morphosyntax (grammar) increase over time (Mackey & Goo, 2007). Thus, as with the delayed benefits of implicit feedback, perhaps learners need to process feedback targeting more complex grammatical features for a longer period of time, rather than benefiting from it immediately as they do from explicit feedback or feedback targeting lexis.

### ***Learner Uptake and Repair***

Uptake was defined by Lyster and Ranta (1997) as a student's immediate response to the teacher's feedback that "constitutes a reaction in some way to the teacher's intention to draw attention to some aspect of the student's initial utterance" (p. 49). The notion of uptake in classroom studies provides an effective tool for identifying patterns in teacher-student interaction that include a wide range of learner responses following teacher feedback, thus allowing for an operationalization of pushed output in classroom settings (Swain, 1988). Lyster and Ranta (1997) distinguished two types of uptake: 'repair' and 'need repair'. "Repair refers to uptake that leads to a correction of the error that the teacher has treated, while 'needs repair' consists of uptake where the error is not corrected (p. 49). According to Lyster (1997, 2002, 2004), though uptake is an important and clear resource for understanding the effect of the feedback (e.g., the feedback is noticed as correction), it does not indicate that long-term learning has occurred.

In the context of adult EFL, McDonough (2005) found that self-repair moves that followed prompts in the form of clarification requests were significant predictors of L2 development. Similarly, Havranek and Cesnik (2001) found repair that followed prompts to be the most effective feedback combination in a range of EFL classrooms. In contrast to self-repair that follows prompts, uptake that involves repetition of a recast does not engage learners in a similarly deep level of processing, nor does it necessitate any reanalysis. Panova and Lyster (2002) suggested that uptake that consists of a repetition might not have much to contribute to L2 development because of its redundancy in an error treatment sequence in which the repair is both initiated and completed by the teacher within a single move. Although an increasing agreement that uptake "may create the conditions for language acquisition to occur" and "may be *facilitative* of acquisition" (Ellis, 2001, p. 287), there is an equally strong consensus that uptake alone does not represent an instance of learning. Instead, the effect of CM and learner repair on longer term L2 development needs to be investigated in carefully designed quasi-experimental studies.

Studies by Oliver and Mackey (2003) and Sheen (2004) confirm Lyster and Ranta's (1997) findings that recasts are the most common form of error correction employed by language teachers. However, these researchers found that the discourse situation of the FL classroom plays an important role in whether or not a recast results in the learner's uptake of the correction. Sheen (2004) claims that the instructional setting is also a factor that contributes to whether or not recasts result in learner uptake. The researcher found that the rates for uptake and repair were greater in some contexts than others. For example, she found that EFL learners in Korea and L2 learners in New Zealand confirmed greater uptake of recasts than French immersion and ESL learners in Canada even though all four settings ascribed to communicative approaches. Long (2006) asserts that EFL and L2 teachers should not reject the use of recasts in their classrooms simply because they have been found to be ambiguous in some immersion class-room settings. Further, he points out that the immediate uptake of recasts cannot be equated with L2 learning. Therefore, there are different results obtained for the effectiveness of CM in the learners' uptake, specially, when it relates to the effectiveness of prompts or explicit correction.

There have been few studies, if any, that have systematically investigated CM in relation to learners' error types and uptake, repair over a long period in EFL classroom settings especially in PNU context. It seems that there is a gap in learners' performance in EFL classes that makes language learning unsuccessful during classroom activities in terms of learners' uptake.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study aimed to answer the following two research questions and in order to find answer to the research questions, the following hypotheses were tested.

1. Does CM have any significant effect on students' uptake in terms of repair in EFL classrooms?
2. Is there any significant relationship between the teachers' CMs and learners' error types?

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Participants***

The students who took part in the research project were members of four intact classes, originally 79 English Translation freshmen in PNU Tehran and Varamin Branches during the first semester of 2011- 2012 academic year. Despite the fact that in general PNU is a distance education system that reduces the necessity of the subjects' attendance in classrooms; students in this project were informed to participate in all classes due to the obligatory nature of such courses in PNU speaking and listening courses. They were both male and female students but gender was not a variable in the present study. The students were asked to give some information about their age level and their English background and experiences. Their age range was from 20 to 38 ( $M = 24.77$ ,  $SD = 1.66$ ), with 49 female and 15 male.

#### ***Materials***

Materials for this research were composed of two textbooks and 4 tests in the form of a pretest and three question worksheets. They will be elaborated on respectively below.

*Textbooks.* The course materials for both experimental and control groups were the students' regular curriculum textbooks including the second and third volumes of the EFL series, *Interchange* Third Edition for the students of EFL Speaking and Listening courses 2. The textbooks were updated versions of the popular series by Richards, Hull, and Proctor (2005), student's books 2 and 3. For such courses, students study the book for the purposes of improving their listening and speaking skills, vocabulary, and grammatical structure and to a lesser extent reading and writing skills. The instructional materials of students' textbooks represent a more communicative orientation.

*Tests.* The researcher used an adapted test as a pretest and developed some tests during the course of this study which are described below.

*Pretest.* At the beginning of the course, a test of homogeneity was administered in both experimental and control groups. It was chosen from Nelson's Proficiency Test intermediate level (level 3), written by Fowler and Coe (1993). It consisted of 50 multiple choice items on structure, reading comprehension, vocabulary, and pronunciation items and the estimated time for answering the questions was 45 minutes. The readability of the homogeneous test was



measured with respect to the students' Reading Comprehension course I, using the Readability formula of Fog. The reliability of the Nelson Proficiency Test was ( $r = .80$ ) expressive of a relatively high reliability index. Regarding the validity of the Nelson Proficiency Test, it has already been validated for testing learners' intermediate level of language ability.

*Progress Test.* There were also some progress tests which were developed by the researcher during the academic term. These included 3 tests. They had subsections on structure, and vocabulary, and pronunciation. Each had 30 items in multiple choice format. They were basically developed based on the written transcriptions of the students' audio-recorded frequent erroneous utterances in the classes throughout the sessions. These tests were edited by two researcher assistants who held Master degrees in EFL with a range of 7 to 10 teaching experiences.

In order to have reliable progress tests scores, the selected sentences of students' errors were edited and rechecked by the same researcher's assistants. The researcher and three trained raters analyzed the data examined in the study and consistency in assigned scores within and between raters examined too. Interraters' agreement was further statistically established via a Pearson's correlation coefficient test of inter-rater reliability. The findings indicated that the consistency was appropriate enough to take the next steps. Regarding the validity, the current study was limited in terms of external validity. The reason was that the current study just focused on two intact classes in two EFL educational centers at Payam Noor University (PNU), and the result of this study may affect the generalizability of the findings to other EFL contexts outside the PNU classes. With regard to the practical limitation, the researcher pretested students' proficiency level through Nelson's Proficiency Test to check EFL students' homogeneity prior to the onset of the project. Although the purpose of the current study was to study the students' oral uptake in terms of repair, the pretest was limited to multiple test items. The reason was due to some constraints regarding selection of three interviewers, availability and willingness of PNU students to participate in at least three interviews and the subjectivity of the interviewer's scoring rubric. This might have led to some damage to internal validity of the whole work, but the main purpose of the test was finding about the homogeneity of the groups involved.

#### **Coding scheme**

For analysis teachers' CMs in classrooms settings, Lyster and Ranta (1997) developed an analytic model to code error treatment sequences in terms of CM types and learner's uptake. Specifically, they identified six types of CM. Example of each type of CM is shown below.

##### **1. Explicit correction**

- |                           |                                  |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| T: OK. Did you study it?  | [Elicitation]                    |
| St: Yes, yes, I study it. | [Need-repair- Grammatical error] |
| St: Yes, I studied it.    | [Uptake -Self-repair]            |

##### **2. Recast:**

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| T: Well, you want to tell us something? | [Feedback- elicitation] |
| St: Eh..... Japan tradition.            | [Grammatical error]     |
| T: Japanese tradition.                  | [Uptake-Self- repair]   |

##### **3. Clarification requests:**

- |                                      |                                   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| St: I want practice today.....today. | [Grammatical error]               |
| T: I'm sorry? (Clarification)        | [Feedback- clarification request] |

##### **4. Metalinguistic feedback:**

- |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| St: There are influence person who.....       | [Grammatical error]              |
| T: influential is an adjective.               | [Feedback- Metalinguistic clues] |
| St: Influential person- because of his power. | [Uptake-Self-repair]             |

##### **5. Elicitation:**

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| T: "When do you bring excuses?               | [Feedback- Elicitation] |
| St: "When I do something....."               | [Lexical error]         |
| St: "No, when I do something wrong, I accept | [Uptake- Self-repair]   |

##### **6. Repetition:**

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| St: "It is good to be neat/net/, clean, and dress up." | [Phonological error]  |
| T: "It is good to be neat/net/?"                       | [Feedback-Repetition] |
| St: "So your appearance is important."                 | [Topic continuation]  |

Based on the Lyster and Ranta's (1997) descriptions of the error types are presented briefly.

#### **Grammatical errors:**

Errors in the use of wrong determiners, prepositions, pronouns, grammatical genders in



tense, verbs, auxiliaries, negations, and etc...

*Lexical errors:*

Errors in the use of wrong lexical items, prefixes and suffixes.

*Phonological errors:*

Errors in the use of mispronunciations, pronunciations of silent letters, etc....

***Data collection procedures***

This study implemented in four intact classrooms during the first semester in 2011. During the time, verbal data were collected. The steps taken in the current study will follow in the following subsections.

*Holding Workshops:* Prior to the study a workshop was held for participating teachers in the experimental groups. Teachers were provided with a teachers' guide, explaining what the CMs are and how they would be used during classroom interaction and discussion in response to the learners' errors, approximately a few days prior to the onset of the instructional treatment. During this time, the researcher provided some examples to illustrate each type of CM from previous classroom observation studies. This consciousness-raising was continued after each three sessions for the purpose of refreshing the experimental group teachers' mind of becoming aware to take more benefit of using CM in their classes for the correction of students' erroneous utterances. After each session, experimental groups' teachers were required to write one or two examples of different types of CMs she used during their classes on a teachers' checklist developed by the researcher (Appendix A).

The teachers in this study were four EFL teachers working in PNU as guest instructors. They had masters degree in TEFL with a teaching experience of five to nine years. In order to minimize the Hawthorne effect, the workshop was only held for the teachers in the experimental groups' classrooms.

*Choosing the Sample, Pretesting and Recording Teaching Sessions:* In order to find the homogeneity of the subjects of this study regarding their general language proficiency, they were pretested through an intermediate level of Nelson's Proficiency Test. The test contained 50 multiple choice items on structure, reading comprehension, vocabulary, and pronunciation items. Though the test is an already valid test, the reliability of the Nelson Proficiency Test was tested by a pilot study. It was carried out on 25 students in Varamin PNU. The internal consistency of the test was calculated by Kuder- Richardson Formula ( $KR-21$ ), the result turned out to be ( $r = .76$ ) representing a relatively high reliability index. After the administration of the Nelson proficiency test, 64 subjects were selected by the researcher. The criterion for the selection of the subjects was the mean and the standard deviation of the subjects' pretest scores ( $M = 65.01$ ,  $SD = .44$ ). The scores between one standard deviation above and below the mean score of Nelson Proficiency Test were selected.

Subsequently, the researcher randomly assigned the subjects into four intact classes, 32 of whom was in the experimental groups, the other 32 in the control groups. These students were attending a 4 credit 12 session course entitled Conversation 2 during the implementation of this research. The experimental groups were received teacher's systematic CMs in response to their errors, while the control groups continued with their regular curriculum without receiving any systematic CMs treatment.

Due to the nature of this research, it was required to choose certain courses in which oral feedback was provided for the learners. Ultimately, Conversation 2 was opted since it met both criteria of verbal feedback and sample size. Altogether, the subjects for the study were selected based on the availability principle. A pretest was administered at this stage to balance the both groups in terms of their language proficiency. As mentioned before, it was found that the difference between the means of students' performance in two groups were not significant. The performance of student's oral interaction was audio- recorded during regular class time over a period of one semester. Each class was held once a week for four hours, but with a 30 minutes break interval. The length of session ranged from 100 to 110 minutes.

*Preparing Transcriptions and Coding the Data:* All the audio-recorded classroom interaction and discussion data along with the teachers' error treatment were fully identified and transcribed by the researcher. To determine the frequency of students' uptake along with their types of errors and teachers' different CMs, Lyster and Ranta's (1997) coding scheme was used. Then the data were coded in terms of teachers' CM types, learners' uptake, and subsequent

'repair'. The transcription of error treatment sequences were reexamined by two researcher's assistants who held Master degree in EFL. A third assistant re-analyzed 20% of the coded data.

### Data Analysis

*The Design of the Study:* This is a quasi-experimental study based on the observational classroom interaction data which utilizes a combination of both descriptive and quantitative methods. A kind of institutional randomization naturally happens in PNU setting since students just register for courses and they are assigned to different classes with different teachers through mere chance.

*Initial Data Analysis in Descriptive Form:* The statistical analysis used included frequency of occurrence of students' errors in terms of phonological, lexical, grammatical erroneous utterances. Then teacher's CMs following students' errors were listed in frequency and percentage. Regarding the descriptive statistical analyses, there were comparisons between both groups for detecting the similarities and differences; the sources of significance; the correlation between the teachers' CF and learners' errors; the students' uptake which led to repair and need-repair in their immediate uptake.

*Quantitative Analyses:* The quantitative statistical analysis took benefit of certain methods which are elaborated next. First, a Pearson Correlation Coefficient was computed to find the inter-rater reliability of the three raters' six CMs, learners' uptake (repairs and need repair), and three error types. Second, a series of general log- linear analyses of multi-way frequency tables were performed. Loglinear analysis is a statistical procedure used to examine the existence of relationship between more than two categorical variables.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Calculating Inter-Rater Reliabilities

Since there might be possible subjectivity associated with the raters scores, the consistency in assigned scores (scorer reliability) within and between raters were examined. In order to assure consistency within inter-rater reliability, each rater scored each six CM, learners' uptake, repaired, need-repair, and types of errors in terms of grammatical, lexical, and phonological errors and decided on the final score. All the final scores assigned by the three raters were calculated using Pearson product moment correlation ( $r$ ) formula.

The computed Pearson correlation coefficient for coding the six CMs, *elicitation*, *metalinguistic clues*, *clarification requests*, *repetition*, *recast*, and *explicit correction* were .80, .82, .79, .78, .75, and .77 respectively, and inter-rater reliabilities for coding the students' *uptake*, *repaired*, *need-repair* were .83, .84, and .81, respectively. As the results show, there is a high positive relationship among the scores rated by the three raters.

### Descriptive Data

*Frequency of CMs:* The frequency of CM in both groups is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Frequency of CM in both Experimental and Control Groups

	Elicitation	Metalinguistic feedback	Explicit Correction	Clarification Requests	Repetition	Recast	Total
Experimental Group	1668 49%	803 24%	84 2%	486 14%	134 4%	215 6%	3390 99%
Control Group	1622 50%	425 13%	308 9%	168 5%	111 3%	640 20%	3274 100%

The results of Table 1 showed the frequency, distribution, and percentages of the CM, used by teacher in response to errors committed by learners in both groups. The most frequent CMs are elicitation, metalinguistic clues, clarification requests, and recast and the least frequent CMs are repetition and explicit correction.

*The Distribution of Errors in the Experimental Group:* Of the 887 students' turns with errors, 829 were followed by students' error types, coded as grammatical (444), lexical (226), or phonological (159). The remaining 58 students' turns with error were immediately followed by topic continuation. Table 2 is shown this distribution.

Table 2: Number of Errors (N=829) by Error Type in Experimental Group

Grammar	444
Lexical	226
Lexical	156

Table 2 show that the most frequent errors are grammatical and the least ones are phonological. The 829 CMs following initial errors were distributed across the six CMs and they are shown in Table 3.

*Table 3: Distribution of Errors Receiving CMs in the Experimental Group*

Types of Feedback:	Grammatical (N=444)	Lexical (N=226)	Phonological (N=159)
Elicitation	143	68	39
Metalinguistic Feedback	115	61	46
Clarification Requests	82	45	24
Recasts	55	27	32
Explicit Correction	14	9	10
Repetition	35	16	8

Of the 444 students' turns with grammatical errors, 143 were followed by a teachers' turn containing the most frequent CMs, 143 were elicitation, then metalinguistic clues with 115 frequencies, and the least interactional moves were explicit correction 14 and repetition 35. With regard to the lexical errors, the most frequent errors were 68 elicitations, 61 metalinguistic clues, and the least ones were explicit correction and repetition. Of the 159 students' turns with phonological errors, 46 were followed by a teachers' turn containing metalinguistic clues, 39 were followed by a teachers' turn containing elicitation and the least CMs were explicit correction 10 and repetition 8.

*The Distribution of Errors in the Control Group:* Of the 1220 turns with errors, 336 were followed by a teacher's CMs, coded as elicitation, metalinguistic clues, explicit correction, clarification request, repetition and recast. The remaining 884 students' errors were immediately followed by topic continuation. These distributions are shown in Table 4.

*Table 4: Number of Errors (N=336) by Error Type in Control Group*

Grammar	173
Lexical	111
Phonological	52

Of the 336 errors receiving teacher's CMs in the entire database, 173 were grammatical, 111 were lexical and 52 were phonological. The 336 CMs following initial errors were distributed across the six CMs are shown in Table 5.

*Table 5: Distribution of Errors Receiving CMs in the Control Group*

	Grammatical	Lexical	Phonological
Types of CM:			
Elicitation	37	10	2
Metalinguistic clues	18	10	3
Clarification request	16	8	5
Recast	48	41	29
Explicit Correction	44	37	10
Repetition	10	5	3

Of the 336 students' turns in control group, the grammatical errors were 173 followed by a teacher's turn containing the most frequent CMs, 48 were recast, then explicit correction with 44 frequencies, and the least CMs were clarification requests 16 and repetition 10. With regard to the lexical errors in the control group, the most frequent CMs were 41 recast, 37 explicit corrections, and the least ones were 8 clarifications and 5 repetitions. Of the 52

students' turns with phonological errors, 29 were followed by a teachers' turn containing recast, 10 were followed by a teachers' turn containing explicit corrections and the least CMs were 2 elicitations, 3 metalinguistic clues, and 2 repetitions.

*Research Question 1: Teacher's CMs and Learners' Uptake:* To investigate if the CM had any significant effect on the students' uptake in terms of repair and need- repair in EFL classrooms, four general Loglinear analyses were run. Loglinear analysis is a statistical procedure used to examine the existence of relationship between more than two categorical variables. These analyses were based on a 2 x 6 x 2 contingency table which includes two levels for group (experimental and control), 6 levels for the six CMs and 2 levels for uptake, repaired and need-repair (NR). The results are reported in Tables 6 to 9.

*Table 6: Loglinear Analysis for the Effect of CMs on the Repair (Experimental Group)*

Effect	Sig. Level	Parameter Estimation
Elicitation	.01	.771
Metalinguistic F.	.02	.91
Elicitation* Metalinguistic F.	.03	.63

\* Interaction Effect

Based on the results in Table 6, it turned out that in the case of repaired errors for experimental group elicitation (.771), and metalinguistic clues (.91) as individual factors and the interaction of these two(.63) had the most significant effect on the frequency of uptake as NR. It is notable that the level of significance was in all cases well below .05 which is the usual acceptable alpha level in the field. They were respectively .01, .02, and .03. Due to the effects of some of the CMS on the learners' uptake in terms of repair and NR, the null hypothesis was rejected partially.

*Table 7: Loglinear Analysis for the Effect of CMs on the Level of Repair (Control Group)*

Effect	Sig. Level	Parameter Estimation
Elicitation	.00	.91
Metalinguistic feedback	.00	.77
Recast	.005	.68
Elicitation*Metalinguistic	.04	.14
Elicitation*Recast	.03	.17

\*CM Effect

As for the repaired errors in control group, a number of CMs and their interactions had significant effects on the uptake level. They included elicitation (.91), metalinguistic clues (.77), recast (.68), as well as the interactions of elicitation/metalinguistic clues, and elicitation/recast (Table 7). Due to the effects of some of the CF on students' uptake, the null- hypothesis was partially rejected.

*Table 8: Loglinear Analysis for the Effect of CM on the Level of NR (Experimental Group)*

Effect	Sig. Level	Parameter Estimation
Elicitation	.003	.321
Metalinguistic clues	.001	.064
Repetition	.004	.053
Elicitation*Metalinguisticclues	.000	.039
Elicitation*Repetition	.01	.028

\* Interaction Effect

In the case of need-repair errors in experimental group (Table 4.8), the CMs with most significant impact consisted of elicitation (.321), metalinguistic clues (.064), repetition (.053), and the interactions of elicitation/metalinguistic clues (.039) and elicitation/repetition(.028). Due to the effects of some of the CMs on students' uptake, the null hypothesis was partially rejected.

*Table 9: Loglinear Analysis for the Effect of CM on the Level of NR (Control Group)*

Effect	Sig. Level	Parameter Estimation
--------	------------	----------------------

Elicitation	.000	.62
Metalinguistic feedback	.020	.29
Repetition	.021	.063
Recast	.030	.058
Elicitation*Recast	.042	.076
Elicitation*Repetition	.031	.054

\* Interaction Effect

The results of Loglinear analysis for the NR errors in control group (Table 9) showed a number of CMs with significant effects including elicitation (.62), metalinguistic clues (.29), repetition (.063), recast (.058), along with the interactions of elicitation/recast (.076) and metalinguistic clues/recast (.054). Due to the effects of some of the CMs on students' uptake, the first null hypothesis was partially rejected.

*Research Question 2: Teacher's CM and Students' Error Types:* The second research question investigated the relationship between teacher's six CM and students' error types committed by EFL students. A series of linear regressions exploring the potential relationship between these two sets of variables CM and error types yielded the results which are demonstrated in Tables 10 to 15.

*Table 10: Regression Analysis for the Effect of CMs on Grammatical Errors (Model Summary)*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.781 <sup>b</sup>	.610	.583	4.61783

a. Predictors: (Constant), clarification - b. Predictors: (Constant), clarification, repetition

The regression analysis for grammatical errors indicated that CM can describe the effect of the correction of grammatical errors quite significantly (.61). Table 10 has shown that the obtained value of Adjusted R Square (linear regression) is .58. It means that 58% of changes of grammatical error are determined by two predictors including clarification requests and repetition. The CMs with significant coefficients are demonstrated in Table 11.

*Table 11: CM with Significant Coefficients*

Model 1	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
(Constant)	39.626	2.350		16.859	.000
Clarification	-.368	.077	-.618	-4.807	.000
Repetition	.177	.081	.279	2.171	.038

a. Dependent Variable: grammar

The results of CM with significant coefficients have shown that clarification and repetition have the significant coefficients out of all the other CMs. The magnitude of Beta coefficient which indicates the degree of the impact of CF on the grammatical errors correction was mainly shared with coefficients of clarification and repetition, respectively .618 and .279. The Linear Regression Model 1 and its equation derived from the above results are shown in the following

Model 1:

Grammatical Error = -.618(Clarification requests) + .279 (Repetition)

Grammatical Error = 39.62-.368 (Clarification request) +.177(Repetition)

*Table 12: Regression Analysis for the Effect of CF on Lexical Errors (Model Summary)*

Model 2	R	R Square	Adjusted R. Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.960 <sup>a</sup>	.921	.910	1.57213

- a. Predictors: (Constant), explicit, recast, metalinguistic clues, repetition

The regression analysis for lexical errors indicated that CM can describe the effect of the correction of lexical errors quite significantly (.92). Table 4.12 has shown the obtained value of Adjusted R Square (linear regression) is .91. It means that 91% of changes of lexical errors are determined by four predictors including explicit correction, recast, metalinguistic clues, and repetition. The CMs with significant coefficients are shown in Table 13.

Table 13: CF with Significant Coefficients

Model 2	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.2962	.7041		.219	.233
Explicit	.549	.101	.707	5.422	.000
Recast	.207	.045	.8324	.590	.000
Metalinguistic	.151	.044	.397	3.446	.002
Repetition	-.173	.067	-.373	-2.597	.015

- a. Dependent Variable: vocabulary

The results showed that in Linear Regression Model 2, the CM such as explicit correction, recast, metalinguistic clues, and repetition have meaningful relation with lexical errors. The CMs with significant coefficients have shown that the correction of a major chunk of lexical errors (.921) can be described by CF moves. The Beta magnitude in this case was mainly due to significant coefficients of explicit correction (.707), recast (.832), metalinguistic clues (.397), and repetition (-.373). The Linear Regression Model 2 and its equation derived from the above results are shown in the following Model:

Model 2:

Lexical Error = .71(Explicit C.) + .83 (Recast) +4 (Metalinguistic F. -.37(Repetition)

Lexical Error= 3.296 + .549 (Explicit C.) +.207 (Recast) +.151 (Metalinguistic F.) +.173

(Repetition)

Table 14: Regression Analysis for the Effect of CMs on Phonological Errors (Model Summary)

Model 3	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.856 <sup>a</sup>	.733	.715	1.17251

- a. Predictors: (Constant), explicit, recast

Finally, the results of regression analysis indicate that phonological errors regressed quite significantly (.733) on CMs. Table 14 has shown the obtained value of Adjusted R Square (linear regression) is .71. It means that 71% of changes of phonological errors are determined by two predictors including explicit correction and recast. The CMs with significant coefficients are shown in Table 15.

Table 15: CM with Significant Coefficient

Model 3	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta.		
(Constant)	9.791	.427		22.919	.000
Explicit Correction	.326	.038	.999	8.673	.000
Recast	-.037	.012	-.350	-3.041	.005

Dependent Variable: Pronunciation



The results have shown that explicit correction and recast have the significant coefficients out of all the other CMs. The magnitude of Beta coefficient indicates the degree of the impact of CMs on the phonological errors correction. The CMs with significant effect include explicit correction and recast with 0.999 and 0.350 Beta index. The Linear Regression Model 3 and its equation derived from the above results are shown in the following Model:

Model 3:

Phonological Errors = .999 (Explicit) -.350 (Recast)

Phonological Errors = 9.791 + 326 (Explicit) - 0.37 (Recast)

The results of the above tables showed that the second null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is significant relation between the teacher's CMs and the learners' error types.

### **Discussion**

A closer look at the results of this study as they pertain to the first hypothesis reveals a general pattern. It seems that in both groups the CM which was singled out in terms of impact was metalinguistic clues (explicit feedback). It was followed by elicitation, recast, repetition (all three cases are types of (implicit feedback), or an interaction impact. Lyster and Saito (2010) attempted to group along CMs a continuum that ranges from implicit to explicit and according to the dichotomous distinction between reformulations and prompts. Although recasts are placed toward the implicit end of the continuum, it is done so in relation to explicit correction for the purpose of distinguishing these two types of reformulation while acknowledging that recasts themselves range from more implicit to more explicit (Loewen & Philp, 2006; Sheen, 2006).

To classify prompts as implicit or explicit, the researcher followed suggestion by Lyster, (2002) state that clarification requests and repetition are more implicit than elicitation and metalinguistic clues. It is remarkable that one single CM had a great contribution in terms of impact on uptake level in both groups. The fact that the learners in this study were all adults may be linked to the major impact of one single CM or its interactions with other CM types.

As Panova and Lyster (2002) point out via a number of studies, learners may require negative evidence (i.e., information about ungrammaticality) in the form of either feedback on error or explicit instruction in order to improve their interlanguage. They further state that CM can empower learners to notice the gap between their interlanguage forms and target language forms.

Finally, due to the Vygotsky (1978) sociocultural perspective, as learners are assisted by others in the social environment, they learn what they are developmentally prepared for and this 'development involves movement from other to self-regulation' (Ellis, 2007). Ellis (2007) adds, quite correctly, that a teacher needs considerable skill to determine the appropriate feedback needed as the acquisition process develops. Scaffolding then, in terms of L2 acquisition, could be seen as CM (in total) in the zone of proximal development.

With regards to the second hypothesis, the results of some successive regression analyses displayed that systematic CM can significantly describe different types of errors made by the EFL learners in this study. The null hypothesis is, therefore, rejected. It is true that all of the regression analyses output were significant. Nevertheless, in terms of magnitude, the order was as follows: lexical errors, phonological errors, and grammatical errors. The fact that CM could largely describe lexical errors may be largely due to the nature of such errors. At the intermediate level, EFL learners do not have a very substantial array of lexical resources at their disposal. Therefore, they may tend to rely heavily on instructor's feedback once they commit such errors. The instructors also seem to be aware of this regular scenario. That may be one of the reasons behind the large share for direct CM of explicit correction and metalinguistic clues. In other words, the teachers frequently use these direct CMs for setting the vocabulary errors straight knowing by experience that other moves may not produce desirable outcomes. The use of recast for correcting errors, based on the researcher's observations, was mostly in the case of vocabulary items or combinations which were manageable for the learners based on context or topic of the discussion issue or listening extract.

As for the phonological errors, a similar explanation may apply. For one thing, phonological errors are not as straightforward to deal with as lexical, or grammatical. It seems that in reaction to students' phonological errors, the teachers provided some metalinguistic clues, usually addressed to the whole class. In other words, for basic issues

the teacher preferred less explicit feedback, but for the new aspect or less common ones which were important in that situation they preferred more explicit moves such as metalinguistic clues.

Grammatical errors were the ones that regressed the least on CMs. Nonetheless, its coefficient was significant. The distinctive feature here, however, is that in the case of grammatical errors, less explicit moves had the major contribution to regression magnitude. The reason behind this may lie in the fact that basically in Iranian educational system, students are no stranger to grammatical issues, and often times even the exceptions to the rules are fully explained.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study established that a strong positive relationship existed between the teacher's CM and learners' uptake in terms of repair and need repair within the framework provided by Lyster and Ranta's (1997) analytic model. In other words, in the case of this study, the process of correcting and re-correcting led to a fixed learning attainment model. Perhaps the most important factor was the comprehensive workshop and the follow-up sessions that helped the formation of a stable teaching program for teachers in the treatment group. The results show that the frequency of learners' repair increased gradually and continued by the provision of teacher's CM in response to the students' diverse types of errors over time.

Another factor found to mediate the effectiveness of feedback was the duration of the treatment for intervention. Lyster and Saito's (2010) meta-analysis of oral feedback in educational studies revealed that longer treatments were significantly more effective than short-to-medium treatments. The findings of the current study confirmed the Lyster and Saito's (2010) meta-analysis of oral feedback in classroom studies. Therefore, the length of treatment certainly affects additional factors surrounding the value of feedback provision, including the explicitness of the feedback provided.

The results of this study compared with many previously mentioned studies resulting feedback in FL settings has also been found to be more valuable than feedback in L2 settings (Li, 2010; Mackey & Goo, 2007). This is believed to be the case for several reasons: studies have shown that learners in EFL settings have a more positive view of error correction, perhaps playing a role in the effectiveness of feedback. Some have found that more feedback (in the form of recasts) is provided and used by teachers in FL settings when compared to L2 classes (Liu, 2007; Sheen, 2004, as cited in Li, 2010).

From a logical point of view, students of EFL settings, as the case is for Iran, only receive feedback from teachers in schools and institutes. As a result, it is natural that EFL teachers and students are more careful about errors and feedbacks and sometimes they ask for feedback willingly. In addition, what are needed are different types of research design that will each provide a missing piece of the puzzle. Researchers need designs that address different issues and control as many variables as possible.

It seems obligatory that EFL teachers should provide feedback for the students. But it should be kept in mind that there is no fixed recipe for feedback. The success or failure of CM will depend on the classroom context, the type of errors students make, their proficiency level, the type of oral task they are asked to do, and a collection of other variables that may be context specific.

The findings of this study offer certain implication for the field. Before the teachers plan CM practices for their classrooms, they need to reflect on the context in which student language use and errors take place. As EFL teachers are well responsive, students in the early stages of cognitive development and language acquisition need to be encouraged to produce language that communicates meaning; error correction techniques that require students' reflection on language structures or vocabulary are not suitable for learners in those early stages. The types of CM techniques that elicit student-generated repairs are clearly more appropriate for the more cognitively grown-up and proficient learners. It is important to let the learner self-correct. If they allow time and provide appropriate cues for the learner to self-repair, more often than not the student will come through. The least effective technique for correcting a student's incorrect language use is to simply give them the answer.

The results of this study can be of some benefit for TTC courses. Teacher trainees can gain awareness about language learner's interlanguage episodes and the type of errors they commit. They can further discuss how to deal with these errors through alternative CM. Course book developers and teachers can develop course books that include tasks and exercises to encourage a variety of activities that are drawn from the results of CM studies. Such

materials are especially important for local situations that have their own points of strength and weakness. These can be compared with international textbooks that do not always reflect the local needs of EFL learners.

In addition to the impact of length of study, proficiency as a relevant variable affecting CM is reflected in individual differences. A closer look at teacher CM behavior seems to be required, taking into consideration teachers' perspectives on how to best utilize CM in their overall instructional scheme and what they hope to accomplish by it. Further research could be done with a higher number of subjects. With a mainly quantitative research study, the results become more valid with more data to analyze. A more focused approach which is perhaps more manageable and at the same time can provide richer data with a larger number of variables to investigate the effect of different types of CM in written or oral context.

### ***Limitations of the study***

This study was limited in some ways. First, the subjects to whom the researcher had access during the research period were limited to some EFL classes of speaking and listening courses at Varamin and Tehran educational centers of Payam Noor University (PNU) in Iran. Because when this study was conducted during the first semester of 2011, the researcher had not any other access to more classes of speaking and listening courses due to the unwillingness of the instructors to participate in their study. The researcher tried her best to handle the first limitation by including the maximum possible number of classes available to her in PNU.

Time span of the study was another factor that restrained the project. As for the second limitation, the researcher made sure that all the sessions were held fully. In the case of cancellation of some sessions, make-up sessions were arranged which was not difficult to manage due to the part-time nature of education in PNU. Practical limitation regarding the administration of pre-test was another factor that limited the current study. The researcher pretested students' proficiency through Nelson's Proficiency Test to check EFL students' homogeneity prior to the onset of the project. Although the purpose of the current dissertation was to study the students' oral output, the pretest was limited to multiple choice items. The reason was due to some constraints regarding selection of three interviewers; availability and willingness of PNU students to participate in at least three interviews, and the subjectivity of the interviewer's scoring rubric. Based on the assumption that all four language skills are somehow related to each other, and scores in one language skill show more or less the ability of students in other skills, the selection of Nelson's proficiency test may be justified. This might have led to some damage to internal validity of the whole work, but the main purpose of the test was finding about the homogeneity of the groups involved

This study was limited in terms of external validity. The reason was that this dissertation just focused on four intact group classes in two PNU EFL contexts at Payam Noor University (PNU) educational centers in Iran, and the result of this study may affect the generalizability of the findings to other EFL contexts outside the PNU EFL classes.

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## Appendix A

### Classroom Checklist for Teachers' Use of CF Moves

**Teacher: S      Session: Eleven      Study Center: Varamin**

**Instruction:** Please write one or two example for the types of corrective feedback you used in response to your students' types of errors.

#### 1. Explicit correction:

- T: What the land field is? [Feedback—Elicitation]  
 St: It is a place where garbage drown there. [Lexical Error]  
 T: It is an open area where the garbage is taken. [Feedback- Explicit correction]

#### 2. Recast:

- St: There are a lot of people wait for you to serve. [Grammatical Error]  
 T: There are a lot of people waiting for you to serve. [Feedback-Recast]

#### 3. Clarification request:

- T: Can you say some of the activities a producer usually does? [Feedback-Clarification]  
 St: He has to be ready to make quick decision, to control the budget. [Uptake- Repair]

#### 4. Metalinguistic clues:

- T: what can we do to learn new vocabularies? [Feedback- Elicitation]  
 St: ...by looking it up in dictionary. [Grammatical Error]  
 T: By looking up the meaning of the new words in a dictionary. [Feedback- Metalinguistic.F]

#### 5. Elicitation:

- T: Asia ,Africa, America,.... are.....? [Feedback- elicitation]  
 St: Yeah.....continents [Uptake- Repair]

#### 6. Repetition

- St: One of their friends forgot the party last night. [Grammatical Error]  
 T: ....forgot the party! [Feedback- Repetition]

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**HOW MUCH A NAME REALLY MATTERS? INVESTIGATION OF THE STEREOTYPICAL  
EVALUATION OF PERSONAL NAMES IN IRAN**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The present study investigated how people may evaluate others' personality by noticing their names in an Iranian community. Before initiating the study, the effective facets based on which names are chosen in Iran including religious belief, historical tendencies and newly fashionable names, were sought. Two hundred students in Ilam University filled out the questionnaire in which 30 names, and 30 attributes, from the three above-mentioned groups were represented. Having analyzed the data, the researchers found out that the participants' attitudes towards each category were so close to each other. They proposed approximately the same attributes to each group in general and each name in particular. Analysis of the data suggests that people in the given context often shape mental attitudes towards one's personality by considering his/her name. It was also revealed that stereotypical characters significantly affect the participants' attitude toward others names.

**KEY WORDS:** Personal Names, Religious Names, Historical Names, Newly Fashionable Names, Iranian Names.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Personal names have always been important means for human being to be known and introduced, and are vehicles for establishing and maintaining communications (Ansu-Kyermeh, 2000). Moreover, it is important in a way that each person usually lives with his/her name for a long life. Thus, choosing a name bears significant consequence for parents.

Various facets play roles in choosing names in different cultures. Among the influential facets on choosing names in Iran, one can refer to religious belief, social status, the place of residence, parents' personality, special events, historical tendencies, literal stories, poems, nationality, fashionably new fads and the like. Closer examination of Iranian names calls for special attention to be paid to the powerful role of *religion, history, and novelty*.

Iran is a religious country and the majority of its people are Muslims. Therefore, lots of Iranian names have roots in their religious belief. Ten top names in the recent decade that are registered at National Organization for Civil Registration fervently support this claim. The statistics are available at [www.sabteahval.ir](http://www.sabteahval.ir) and show that the most frequent names in Iran, at least in the last decade, are religious names like Mohammad, Ali, Abolfazl and the like. For instance, 33084 parents chose Amir Ali, the most frequent male name, for their son, and 52049 parents chose Fatemeh, the most frequent female name, for their daughter in the Iranian calendar year, starting in March 20, 2010 to March 19, 2011. The ten top names for boys are Amir Ali, Abolfazl, Amir Hossein, Ali, Mohammad, Amir Mohammad, Mahdi, Hossein, Mohammad Mehdi and Mohammad Reza. The ten top girls' names are Fatemeh, Zahra, Setayesh, Hasti, Zeinab, Nazanin Zahra, Reihaneh, Maryam, Mobina and Narges. Iran is also a historical country carrying extensive and voluminous literature in background. Historical inclinations as well as tendencies toward historical characters affect peoples' choice of names. Kourosh, Darioush and such other personal names gotten from Iranian kings names that are very common nowadays, reveal people's tendency toward history as well. Furthermore, the influence that Persian literature has on people's belief is undeniable in Iran. Names of popular national heroes, figures of art, scholars, and literary figures (e.g. Sohrab, Ramin, Soudabeh, and Arash), are common these days. National names (e.g. Mitra and Sarah) are also among popular names today. This group of names, including all mentioned above, are called historical group henceforth.

The third group consists of newly fashionable names. This group of names includes ones that have just been used in recent decades like Atena, Elina or Arian. They are either recently revived or totally novel. The former refers to those names that root in religion or history, like Mobina and Arian respectively, but they have just recently become fad. The latter are those that have recently come into existence, like Atena, Pedram or Helia. Atena that is originally a Greek name (central intelligence agency, 2007) has recently become popular among Iranians. Helia is also another popular Greek name, that is, as is mentioned in [www.sootak.ir](http://www.sootak.ir), the daughter of the sun. The newly fashionable names may be used because they are up-to-date and in fashion and accordingly, some parents prefer choosing novel names to religious or historical ones. Parents' tendency toward one or the other option motivated the authors to investigate if personal name affect people attitudes toward ones' personality.

## **REVIEW OF THE RELATED STUDIES**

The psychological impact of one's name on shaping personality has been a domain for previous studies. In an early study the relationship between names and mental illness was probed by Ellis and Beechley (1954). They found that kids with unusual and uncommon first names suffered illness more than kids with more usual names. They further reported that this tendency was weaker among girls and women than boys and men. The researchers concluded that others' attitudes might have affected their personality. This could be traced back to the parents since it is plausible that they behave differently and strangely with strange-name kids. Another justification might go to the society; people may have bothered them because of their unusual names.

Figlio (2007) also suggested that boys with names traditionally given to girls are more likely to misbehave than boys with masculine names. In elementary school, boys named Ashley and Shannon, for instance, behaved just like their more masculine-named classmates named Brian and other boyish names. "But, as they enter middle school...boys with names associated with girls may begin to misbehave in school at a disproportionate rate" (Figlio, 2007, p. 3). Attitudes towards personal names motivated the researchers and economists to investigate the relationship between personal names and one's earning during years. Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004) found that employers with African-American names were paid significantly lower than those with "White" names. Figlio (2005) found that "children with names associated with low socio-economic status" achieve lower scores in reading and mathematics exams comparing with their brothers or sisters with "less race or class-identifiable names" (p. 22). The researcher continued that these students are less likely to be considered as gifted and talented learners. Moreover, Arai and Thoursie (2007) investigated the impact of immigrants' surname change to "Swedish-sounding or neutrals" on their earnings. They concluded "that changing a foreign name of Slavic, Asian or African origin to a Swedish-sounding or neutral name is associated with a substantial increase in labor earnings" (p. 15). In another study, Aura and Hess (2010) reported that individual names "have a great deal of predictive power about their lifetime outcomes such as income and social status, educational, and attainment" (p. 16). In contrast to all these findings, Fryer and Levitt (2004) found that one's personal name does not affect his/her outcome.

Influential facets in choosing names, in different cultures, have also been discussed in previous qualitative studies (e.g. Jayaraman, 2005; Guma, 2001). Lyons (1977, p. 222) and Ryme (1996, p. 231) claimed that personal names are both synchronically and diachronically motivated. Katakami (1997) reported the customs of a tribe in Kenya, namely Mbeere, on choosing personal names. The researcher noted that a personal name reflect its sex, place, and generation-sets. However, the basic principle of naming a newborn is to name him or her after another, e.g. grandparents. Following these principles, one may have up to five names as he/she grows up. Agyekum (2006) investigated influential factors in choosing personal names among Akans in Ghana. The researcher found day names, family names, circumstance names, and kinship and so forth, as important facets on personal naming. This is because of adding to or dropping from original names. Mandende (2009) asserted that Vhavenḡa people choose different names for a person in different stages of life. That is, they diachronically change the child name. These naming include names given by birth, school/Christian names, initial school names, marriage names, traditional leaders' names, and Teknonymy.

Exploring the influential facets on naming newborns has been a call for studies. Finch and Mason (2000) referred to using the name of people in naming newborns as a regular custom in the UK. They believe that this usually occurs to keep the memory of lovely late people alive (pp. 145-61). Hanks and Hodges (2003) contended that lots of people in southern India have their father's names beside their personal names. They also use their village names after them (p. 30). Finch (2007) also posited that personal names can be thought of as a means to display "family-like" relationship. However, Finch (2008) maintained that this is to appreciate the value of kinship, and to develop "kin network...in a way which focuses on particular relationship" (p. 13). As mentioned before some research has been conducted to investigate the relationship between name and personality, name and earnings, strange name and mental illness, and important facets on choosing personal names. However, by the best knowledge of the researchers, no research has investigated the extent to which personal names really direct others attitudes in the Iranian context. In other words, it remained unclear whether people evaluate names stereotypically or not. Such an issue, thus, created a relatively strong motivation for research in this social aspect of life in Iran. More specifically, the major intent in conducting the present study is to explore how they affected others' attitudes.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

The present study seeks answer for the following research question:

Does one's name affect attitudes toward his/her personality?

## METHODOLOGY

### ***Design***

This study was conducted quantitatively through survey research. To collecting necessary information regarding the content of the questionnaire for the survey, two pilot studies were conducted. The first pilot study was conducted in order to select frequent and representative names from the three above-mentioned groups, namely religious, historical, and fashionably new ones. The aim of the second pilot was to find the appropriate and frequent attributes for the suggested names to be presented in the actual questionnaire.

### ***Participants***

The participants were students in Ilam State University. Two hundred students randomly filled in the questionnaires. They were majoring in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, English Literature, Persian Literature, Agriculture, Marketing Management and so forth. It should be noted that the Master of Art (MA)/Master of Science (MS) as well as the Bachelor of Art (BA)/Bachelor of Science (BS) students participated in the study. The major reason for selecting university students as participants of the study was their representativeness. They were from different cities, races and tribes in Iran with different backgrounds and cultures. Furthermore, as educated people, university students are more likely to be familiar with the meanings of personal names and were expected to be more sensitive to the issue. Yet, another reason for their selection was their availability and convenience of administration.

### ***Instrument***

A questionnaire including 30 names, written in rows, and 30 attributes, written in columns, was prepared, and 200 copies of which were distributed through Ilam University. Special care was taken so as to maintaining a balance between the categories of names so far attended. Every 10 names belong to one of the three above-mentioned groups: religious, historical and newly fashionable names. The 30 attributes were selected from the most frequently suggested attributes during the pilot studies. Then the names were written in rows, b.1 to b.30, and the attributes were written in the columns, a.1 to a.30. Finally, the participants were asked to select 10 of the most probable attributes each name invoked in their minds. It must be noted that the names and attributes were randomly written in the questionnaire in order not to direct participant's answers.

### ***Procedure***

Having recognized the most important factors in choosing a name, the researchers conducted two pilot studies to find names from the three above-mentioned groups of names, and to determine attributes for them. In the first pilot study, the researchers asked the participants to write contemporary common names that they considered as religious, historical and newly fashionable in an open-ended questionnaire (see appendix 1). The most frequently suggested names were used as the representatives of the names of each group. After the first pilot study, thirty six frequently suggested names were written in an open-ended questionnaire (see appendix 2). The suggested religious names including male and female were Mohammad, Fatemeh, Ali, Hossein, Mahdi, Zahra, Zeinab, Mostafa, Reza, Abolfazl, Mahdieh, Ahmad and Rasoul. It is noted that these names are highly frequent among Iranians.

The most frequently suggested historical names, used in the questionnaire, were Kourosh, Dariush, Jamshid, Ramin, Arash, Soudabeh, Sohrab, Sara, and Mitra. It is worth noting that the three first names were the names of three of the most powerful and famous Iranian kings. The fourth to the seventh names are from Persian literature, and the last two are Iranian national names. All of these names are frequent names in Iran. The last group included newly fashionable names. Sepideh, Pedram, Mobina, Elina, Atena, Matin, Arian, Shayan, Arman, Helia, and Radmehr were the suggested names by participants. In order not to direct the participants' answers, the selected names were randomly written in the questionnaire. In the second pilot study, these open-ended questionnaires were, again, passed to some students to suggest attributes for them. The researcher asked the participants to write whatever each name invoked in their minds. The most frequent proposed attributes were used in the final questionnaire. To check the reliability of the questionnaire, the researchers asked the participants to propose attributes for the suggested names two weeks later. Having ensured of the reliability of the researchers-made questionnaire, the researchers decided to distribute it among university students in Ilam, Iran.

Two hundred copies of the final questionnaire, in which 30 names were written in columns and 30 attributes in rows, were distributed among students in Ilam University. The researchers asked the participants to check the probable attributes that each name invoked in their minds. Having the data collected, the researchers transferred them into

Microsoft Office Excel sheet to record the frequency of attributes for each name. The most frequently suggested attributes for each name were considered of as the attributes of the name.

## RESULTS

Table.1 reveals the number of times each attribute has been marked for names. The number of times each attribute was marked for each name is written in the related rows and under the related column. For instance, number 18 in a.1, b.1 shows that 18 participants marked Mohammad (name b.1) as trustee (a.1). It should be added that only highly frequent attributes that were considered as representatives were presented in Table 1. Furthermore, the number of times each attribute has been marked for names is presented in the last row of the table. The analysis of the data is presented in the following sections.



Table 1: The number of times each name was marked by the participants

	a.1. Trustee	a.2. Powerful	a.3. Sissy	a.4. Kind	a.5. Magnanimous	a.6. Spoiled	a.7. Traditional	Calm a.8	a.9. Pretty / Beautiful	a.10. Strong	a.11. Trustful	a.12. Naughty	a.13. Attractive	a.14. Noble	a.15. Faithful
b.1. Mohammad	18			18				8			9				3
b.2. Koroush		15			25		14			14					
b.3. Pedram			12			13									
b.4. Ali		7		14											
b.5. Jamshid		26		5						18					
b.6. Mobina				8		14						14			
b.7. Fatemeh				12										17	
b.8. Matin			3			6		16							
b.9. Darioush		21					14			9			6		
b.10. Arian				2		14			8						
b.11. Soudabeh				14										8	
b.12. Zahra				15				9							9
b.13. Shayan						9						7			
b.14. Hossein				7				5			6			5	10
b.15. Ramin			8			11									
b.16. Radmehr			12	3		16						14			
b.17. Mahdi				9							7				8
b.18. Sara				12			8	5							
b.19. Arman												7			
b.20. Zeinab														9	
b.21. Mitra			4	12		5			14						
b.22. Sepideh						13			12						
b.23. Mostafa	13			4				7							13
b.24. Sohrab		13								9					
b.25. Elina			10	4		23			8						
b.26. Reza				8											
b.27. Atena						6									
b.28. Arash															
b.29. Abolfazl	5	14								12					8
b.30. Helia			5	6		14		6	7						
Total	36	96	63	156	25	144	36	56	49	62	22	50	14	31	51

Table 1 continued...

	a.16. Prestigious	a.17. Warrior	a.18. Innocent	a.19. Lovely	a.20. Courageous	a.21. Good-tempered	a.22. Chick	a.23. Religious	a.24. Serene	a.25. Poetic	a.26. Proud	a.27. Submissive	a.28. Elegant	a.29. Patient	a.30. Fair
b.1. Mohammad								2	6						
b.2. Koroush															
b.3. Pedram	11					5							6		
b.4. Ali					19	5		3	9						12
b.5. Jamshid															
b.6. Mobina				12											
b.7. Fatemeh			8						16			11		5	
b.8. Matin									32						
b.9. Darioush						12									
b.10. Arian	6			8											
b.11. Soudabeh															
b.12. Zahra			9					4	21						
b.13. Shayan													4		
b.14. Hossein												17		12	
b.15. Ramin											7				
b.16. Radmehr	3														
b.17. Mahdi								14							
b.18. Sara	15						5				7				
b.19. Arman															
b.20. Zeinab												14		18	
b.21. Mitra											7				
b.22. Sepideh											11				
b.23. Mostafa						5			11						
b.24. Sohrab										16					
b.25. Elina	12						10						8		
b.26. Reza						5		8			4			5	
b.27. Atena	4										8		8		
b.28. Arash		17			8		4								
b.29. Abolfazl					12			13							
b.30. Helia							11						15		
Total	51	17	17	12	39	32	35	44	95	16	44	42	41	40	12

## DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The ultimate goal of the present study was to see to what extent one's name affects others' attitudes toward him/her. Very wonderful results were found from data analysis. It was revealed that some attributes were used to describe only one or two groups and not the others. In the following paragraphs these group-specific attitudes are discussed thoroughly. Moreover, the respondents' suggested attributes for each one of the selected names is presented.

Seven attributes, i.e. *trustee*, *trustful*, *faithful*, *innocent*, *religious*, *submissive*, and *patient* have been selected by participants only for religious names. Put it another way, neither historical nor fashionably new names were thought of as possessors of these attributes, from the participants perspective. *Trustee*, column a.1, was chosen 36 times to introduce religious names; Mohammad, row b.1, was selected by 18, Mostafa, row b.23, by 13, and Abolfazl, row b.29, by 5 participants as the possessors of this attribute. *Trustful*, column a.11, is another attribute that was suggested solely for religious names. Mohammad, Mahdi, and Hossein, rows b.1, b.17, and b. 14, are three religious male names that were thought of as being *trustful*. They were chosen by 9, 7, and 6 participants respectively. The attribute in column a.14, *noble*, was marked 17 times for Fatemeh, row b.7, 9 times for Zeinab, row b. 20, and 5 times for Hossein, written in the row b.14.

*Faithful*, column a.15, was another religious-specific attribute merely suggested for religious names. Thirteen participants considered Mostafa, 10 Hossein, 9 Zahra, 8 Mahdi, 8 Abolfazl, and 3 Mohammad as *faithful* people. Column a.18 asked for the attribute *innocent*. Nine participants marked this column for Zahra and 8 for Fatemeh. These two names are religious female names. The next attribute suggested, just, for religious names was *religious*. The number of attributes for each name is as follows: 13 for Abolfazl, 14 for Mahdi, 8 for Reza, 4 for Zahra, 3 for Ali, and 2 for Mohammad. Column a. 27 asked participants to mark the names that they considered *submissive*. Hossein, Zeinab, and Fatemeh are the names who were thought of as the possessors of this attribute. They were marked 17, 14, and 11 times respectively. Fatemeh, Hossein, Zeinab, and Reza, four male and female religious names, were the names that were considered *patient*, column a.27.

*Traditional* and *attractive* were two attributes that had been chosen, just, for historical names. *Traditional* was marked, by 14 participants, for Kourosh, row b.2, by 14 for Darioush, row b. 9, and by 4 for Sara, row b.18. The first two names are historical male names, and the last one is a national female name. Therefore, participants think of this attribute as a historical one. Besides, neither religious nor new names are anticipated to carry traditional ideas. Only 8 participants expected Soudabeh, row b.11, and 6 expected Darioush as *attractive*, column a.13. This is an attribute that the least of participants marked for names.

The third group of names includes newly fashionable names. Four attributes, *spoiled*, *naughty*, *lovely*, and *elegant* were attributed only to these names. One interpretation that can be offered is that the majority of people with these names are kids and probably no more than 20 years old. Therefore hearing such names reflect a baby in the mind, who might be *spoiled*, *naughty*, *lovely*, and *elegant*. *Spoiled*, column a.6 was selected 141 times, merely, for newly fashionable names. Almost all the fashionable names in the questionnaire had been marked in this column. Column a. 12 asked for the attribute of *naughty*. Fourteen participants considered Mobina, row b.6, 14 Radmehr, row b.16, 8 Arman, row b.19, and 7 Shayan, row b. 13, as *naughty*. All of these names are fashionable male names. Another attribute that was only selected for fashionable names was *lovely*, column a.19. Mobina was selected by 12, and Arian by 8 participants as a lovely person. These two names are fashionable for female and male individuals respectively. Column a.28 asked for the attribute of *elegant*. The expressed ideas for this attribute are as follows: Helia, row b.30, was selected by 15 participants, Atena, row b.27, by 8, Elina, row b.25, by 8, Pedram, row b.3, by 6, Shayan, row b.13, by 4 respondents. All of these names are newly fashionable ones. These names are minorities compared to the religious and historical names and are to some extent universal and less respected by the majority.

Three attributes, *kind*, *calm*, and *proud*, were selected for all the names in all three groups. *Kind* was selected 156 times, *calm* 56 times and *proud* 44 times by participants. *Kind*, column a.4, has been marked the most among all columns. Mostafa, Mohammad, Ali, Fatemeh, Zahra, Hossein, Mahdi, Reza, Jamshid, Soudabeh, Sara, Mitra, Mobina, Arian, Radmehr, Elina, and Helia were the names that were considered as *kind*. The first eight names are religious, the ninth to the twelfth names are historical and the others are new names. Column a.8 asked for *calmness*. Mohammad, Zahra, Hossein, Mostafa, Matin, Helia and Sara are expected to be calm. The first four names are religious names. The fifth and the sixth names are fashionable, and the last one is a historical female name. Religious names are considered as *calm* more than the other two groups. *Proud*, column a.26 was suggested for Ramin, Sara, Sepideh, Mostafa, Reza, and Atena. It indicates that these attributes are generally used and would not differentiate between names in different groups. In other words people with different names could be thought of as *proud*, *calm*, and *kind*.

Three attributes of *courageous*, *strong*, and *powerful*, were selected for two groups. *Courageous*, column a.20, for example, is used to describe two religious names, Ali, row b.4, and Abolfazl, row b.29, and one historical name, Arash, row b.28. The former names are the names of two religious characters in Islam who are known for their courage among Muslims. Ali was chosen by 19 and Abolfazl by 12 participants. Furthermore, there is one character in Iranian folklores, called Arash, who is famous for his courage among Iranians. This name was selected by 8 participants. These three characters directed the participants to mark the attribute *courage* on the related rows. It reveals that neither female names nor newly fashionable names were attributed as courageous people.

Two other attributes, *strong*, column a.10, and *powerful*, column a.2, were also common among these two groups to wit religious and historical names. *Powerful* was chosen by 96 participants, 14 times for Abolfazl, a religious name, and 82 times for historical male names. Historical male characters are known for their power in ancient Iran; moreover, a person called Abolfazl is known as a *powerful* person among Shia, Muslims. This is also true about the attribute of *strong*. It was chosen 62 times, 12 of which went to Abolfazl, and 50 times to four historical names, Kourosh, Jamshid, Darioush, and Sohrab. It reveals that these attributes are used to describe historical male names. However, there is also a religious character that is known as a *powerful* and *strong* person.

The only attribute which was common between religious and fashionable names was *serene* which is the meaning of the name Matin (Hamira (2001, p.416). It has been selected 96 times, 32 times for Matin and the rest for other religious names: 21 participants marked Zahra, 16 for Fatemeh, 11 for Mostafa, and 9 for Ali, and 9 for Mohammad. All these names, except Matin, are religious names. Thus, it can be interpreted as a religious attribute. Perhaps the literal meaning of the name “Matin” accounts for why 32 participants marked this column for the same name.

*Sissy*, *prestigious* and *chick* were three attributes that were common between historical and fashionable names. Seven names were attributed as *sissies*, column a.3, six of them are fashionable and only one, Mitra, is a historical female name. It was marked, by 12 participants as an attribute to describe a person called Pedram. The number of times the same attribute was marked by participants for other names is as follows: 12 times for Radmahe, 10 for Elina, 5 for Helia, 3 for Matin 8 for Ramin, and 4 times for Mitra. The first six names are newly fashionable, but the last two are historical. Thus, participants, mostly, considered people with new names as *sissy*. Perhaps the reason for selecting the last two names is that they are totally common among newborns. Four of these names are male and three of them are female names, thus there is no difference between boys and girls in this attribute.

*Prestigious*, column a.16 was selected for 6 names, 4 of them are new and only 2 are historical names. Eleven participants considered Pedram as a prestigious person; 15 considered Sara, 12 Elina, 6 Arian, 4 Atena, and 3 Radmehr, as prestigious people. Except Sara, all these names are fashionable names. No religious name was regarded as *prestigious*. Fashionable male names were not thought to be *prestigious*, either. The last common attribute between these two groups was *chick*, column a.22. It was determined for two fashionable names, Helia 11 times, and Elina 10 times, and two historical names, Sara 5 times and Arash 4 times. No name from the religious group was checked for the attribute *chick*.

A very eye-catching finding is that each one of the 4 of the attributes of *magnanimous*, *warrior*, *poetic*, and *justice* were selected only for one particular name. *Magnanimous* was attributed, 25 times, only to a historical male name, Kourosh. This name, row b.2, is gotten from the name of “the Cyrus the Great” who was the first person who presented human rights cylinder. It should be noted that this name is the name of well-known kings in ancient Iran (Rastgar Fassai (2000, p. 801); Mo'in (1992, p. 1622). *Warrior*, column a.17, has been selected for Arash, row b.28. This name is taken from the name of an Iranian national hero, “Arash the Archer” also known as “Arash the warrior” (Dehkhoda (1993, p. 67); Rastgar Fassai (2000, p. 9); Hamida (2001, p.27)). It is highly plausible that this character directed the participants’ thought. Moreover, *poetic*, column a.25, was selected just for Sohrab, row b.24. Sohrab is the name of a famous contemporary poet. It is likely that participants considered Sohrab as a *poetic* person because of him. Ali, row b.4, was attributed 12 times as being *justice*. It is noted that Imam Ali is known for his fairness among Shia; perhaps the same character led the participants’ ideas in marking this attribute for Ali.

Furthermore, 8 attributes have only been chosen for either male or female names. Three attributes i.e. *courageous*, *strong* and *good tempered* have been selected just for male names. It shows that these attributes represented male characteristics, in participants’ perspective. On the other hand, 5 attributes of *kind*, *beautiful* and *pretty*, *attractive* as well as *innocent* have been thought to represent female attributes only. Put it another way, these attributes reflected a female in the participants’ minds.

Generally speaking, it can be concluded from the findings that to Iranians, names are more than a common means of identification. They account for a whole variety of family, social, religious, political and ideological values at work

in the society. Iranians are aware of and pay particular attention to these values the names invoke. The findings also revealed that Iranian names are thought to mirror and reflect social and cultural attitudes and this is why parents are so concerned about choosing a name for their newborn child.

Furthermore, the present investigation verified that people have pre-determined opinions and evaluation about each of the above-mentioned group of names which confirms Hagström (2012) claim that “based on our preconceived notions about other people’s names we draw conclusions about their gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, social positions, and maybe even religious beliefs.” (p. 83).

Although exploring the reasons behind such stereotype is not the major purpose of this paper, some plausible reasons are presented below. An explanation for such stereotyping may refer to the impact of the media including press, TV, radio, Islamic books, Islamic belief and so on. Religious names are used with positive attributes on television or radio. Newspapers and magazines’ headlines and titles address the prophet and Imams’ names using attributes like *trustee*, *courageous*, *serene*, and *kind*. For instance, Mohammad, the holy prophet of Islam, is introduced as a *trustful* and *trustee* person; Zeinab as a *patient* person, and Imam Hossein, the third Imam in Shia, as *submissive* in media. Lots of movie actors and actresses with religious names are shown as good and respectful characters. Historical and literary books try to show historical characters as *powerful*, *strong*, and *great*, having *traditional* ideas. Exploring the probable reasons of stereotypical attitudes can be a rich ground for new studies. Findings of the study thus suggest parents to devote particular attention to choosing name for a newborn hence this is a means by which people are evaluated.

#### **SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

Relevant to the purpose started earlier, the evaluation of participants’ answers was investigated in this research and the probable reason or reasons behind their evaluation were beyond the scope of the current study. They can, thus, be investigated in new research works. People’s tendency toward each one of these names or the reason of this kind of evaluation can be a call for further studies. Furthermore, factors that affect people’s attitudes and tendency can be studied in the future. Moreover, investigating how much social planning can direct or restrict one’s tendency can be topics of further research. Still, as noted earlier, study of the factors which are at work in parents decision on choosing one name or another is an additional avenue open to further research.

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#### APPENDIX 1

*The open-ended questionnaire asked the participants to suggest religious, historical, and newly fashionable names.*

Write 13 personal names for each of the following group of names, namely religious, historical and newly fashionable names.

Religious	Historical	Newly Fashionable
.....	.....	.....
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## APPENDIX 2

*The open-ended questionnaire asked the participants to suggest attributes for the suggested names.*

What personalities do you think people with following names might have? Write one or two attributes for each.		
Mohammad .....	13. Sepideh.....	25. Abolfazl.....
Kourosh .....	14. Elina.....	26. Asma.....
Sepchr.....	15. Zeinab.....	27. Arman.....
Fatemeh.....	16. Jamshid.....	28. Helia.....
Pedram.....	17. Atena.....	29. Mahdiah.....
Ali.....	18. Matin.....	30. Radmehr.....
Mobina.....	19. Mostafa.....	31. Sohrab.....
Ramin.....	20. Mitra.....	32. Ahmad.....
Hossein.....	21. Arash.....	33. Darioush.....
Mehdi.....	22. Arian.....	34. Rasoul.....
Sarah.....	23. Reza.....	35. Soudabeh.....
Zahra.....	24. Shayan.....	36. Negar.....

## LEXICAL ANALYSIS OF GENERAL ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS IN IRANIAN UNIVERSITIES

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### ABSTRACT

Currently, immediate and academic needs of the learners have gained much importance in the evaluation of learning materials. In so doing, this study aimed at comparing a number of General English (GE) reading textbooks used in universities in Iran in terms of their vocabulary size, vocabulary levels and text coverage. Coxhead's (2000) Academic Word List (AWL) containing 570 word families, the BNC 14,000 high-frequency English word lists, and the 2000 English words required by Iran's Ministry of Education were chosen as the base word lists. The results showed that a General English textbook can contribute to learning 47–407 interdisciplinary academic words. Beyond the 2,000-word level, a GE textbook can supply students with 158–2001 new word families. Syllabus designers and materials producers can take advantage of the findings of the study through needs analysis for the specification and sequencing of the lexical items in general English textbooks.

**KEY WORDS:** General English Textbooks, Vocabulary Level

### INTRODUCTION

English education in Iran starts officially in the first year of guidance school, though some private schools may begin English programs as early as in the first grade. During primary and secondary education (Grades 1–12), English courses aim to familiarize learners with basic English sentence structures and the most commonly used words. The content of English texts is broadly humanities-based and teaching is geared towards the general interest of students rather than to specific purposes.

The 2,000 basic English word list published by West's (1953) General Service List (GSL) of English has served as a curricular standard for the English course design for elementary and high schools. By and large, the 2,000 lexical items are presumed to be the minimum vocabulary of EFL high school graduates entering university.

At the university level, English is a required language subject. English courses for general purposes are offered to non-English majors two to three hours per week in the freshman and sophomore years respectively. The curriculum design of General English is expected to broaden students' horizon so that they can meaningfully relate their academic study to other realms of understanding. Crucial to this goal is providing students with versatile academic content covering topics such as culture, nature, business, medicine, science and technology to achieve an all-encompassing development of knowledge.

In Iran, English is not an official language. After taking required English courses in the first two years of college, one may learn new English words at a decreasing rate and may even almost stop learning. As far as non-English majors are concerned, GE courses may be regarded as a transition between senior high school and college English proficiency benchmarks. As students continue to take English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses in the third or fourth years, then GE courses may also be viewed as a launch pad for further English programs. GE textbooks and materials used in the freshman and sophomore years may therefore play an important role in enhancing English abilities.

In light of the potential role of English for General Purposes courses in the current EFL context, vocabulary goals should be considered first in choosing and preparing teaching materials. Breadth of vocabulary has been identified as one of the most important indicators of reading proficiency and language abilities (Hu & Nation, 2000; Qian, 2002), since a rich vocabulary makes the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing easier to perform. The limited vocabulary of EFL learners is a major source of difficulty in reading an English text.

West (1926) considered "one unknown word in every fifty words" to be the minimum threshold necessary for the adequate comprehension of a text (cited in Chujo, 2004, p. 231). Some other researchers (Read, 2000; Schmitt &

McCarthy, 1997) believe that if more than one word is unknown in every twenty words (95%), learners would need to look up new words on and off, which means as the density of unknown words increases, reading comprehension drops. So, it can be inferred that, learners depend on vocabulary as their first resource and if 95–98% coverage of a text is needed for unassisted comprehension, vocabulary size may be one of the predictors of test scores and this assumption should be applied to English language testing, since learners cannot resort to dictionaries or consult teachers while doing a test. As such, what is the optimum vocabulary needed for a graduating college EFL student?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The majority of research carried out in L2 vocabulary studies has focused on developing measures to assess proficiency or the size of a learner's vocabulary. For example, Laufer and Nation (1995) analyzed students' written texts by comparing them to three frequency lists: one containing the 1000 most frequent word families in the English language, one containing the 2000 most frequent word families in the English language, and a third list containing 500 academic words used at university. Word family within the authors' study is represented by a "head word" and all "derived forms" as in the example: push: pushed, pushes, pushing. The authors argued that their results indicate that the use of frequently occurring words reflects a smaller vocabulary while the use of low-frequency words is an indicator of vocabulary richness. This measure does not identify whether a learner can produce a certain word when prompted to do so, but rather how much lexical variety he uses in his writing (Laufer, 2005).

Past studies have shown that the minimal vocabulary size needed for reading authentic texts starts at a low of 5,000 words and ranges up to 10,000 words for reading university textbooks (Hirsh & Nation, 1992; Laufer, 1989, 1997).

According to Nation (2001), words in non-fiction texts can be divided into four categories:

1. High-frequency or general service vocabulary: those basic general service English words which constitute the majority of all the running words in all types of writing. The most well-known general service vocabulary is West's (1953) General Service List of English Words (GSL).
2. Academic vocabulary (also called sub-technical or semi-technical vocabulary): vocabulary with medium-frequency of occurrence across texts of various disciplines that have some rhetorical functions and communicative purposes. Acquiring these words seems to be essential when learners are preparing for EAP or ESP.
3. Technical vocabulary: are the ones used in a specialized field and are considerably different from subject to subject. In an academic setting, ESP students do not see technical terms as a problem because these terms are usually the focus of discussion in class or in the specialist textbooks.
4. Low-frequency vocabulary: words that are rarely used.

Coxhead (2000) compiled a corpus of around 3.5 million running words from university textbooks and materials from four different academic areas (law, arts, commerce as well as science), and identified 570 academic word families, which were claimed to cover almost 10% of the total words in a general academic text. Her research suggested that for learners with academic goals, the academic word list contains the next set of vocabulary to learn after the top 2,000-word level. To put it concretely, after the top 2,000 word families on a frequency list, greater text coverage is gained by moving on to the 570 academic words (10% coverage) than by continuing to learn the next 1,000 words ("3–5%" coverage for the 3rd 1,000; Nation, 2006, p. 79).

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The present study was undertaken to examine the vocabulary of General English textbooks used in universities in Iran. How can the goal of increasing vocabulary size to a particular target level be achieved in the classroom under real class conditions? What interdisciplinary academic vocabulary can freshman and sophomore English courses for general purposes provide through diverse and versatile content? What additional vocabulary is required for students under the assumption that 95% text comprehension is the threshold for passing an English proficiency

test? If college GE textbooks fall short of the targets above, English instructors must then provide supplementary materials to bridge the gap. By lexically comparing textbooks, this research sought to answer the following questions:

R.Q.1. What percentage of the words in a General English reading textbook does Coxhead's (2000) Academic Word List cover? How many interdisciplinary academic words may one learn from a GE textbook?

R.Q.2. how many new words may a university student learn from a GE textbook?

R.Q.3. What is the vocabulary level of a GE textbook?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Textbook selection criteria*

The criteria for the selection of the GE reading textbooks widely used in universities in Iran were based on the popularity of GE textbooks frequency of use in 10 Azad universities in Iran. In total, six textbooks were chosen, two low-intermediate, two intermediate, and two upper intermediate. Excluding exercises the main articles in each book chosen were scanned into six separate computer files. As proper nouns are not in the list of the most frequent 2,000 words and various types of text may contain different percentages of proper nouns, they were separated from the counting of normal words. After removing proper nouns, the resulting corpus contained in total 74,912 tokens (running words), as Table 1 shows.

*Table 1: The corpus of General English Reading textbooks*

GE Textbook 2	Book Level	Number of Texts	Tokens
Reading Challenge	Low-intermediate	20	6,709
Access Reading 3	Low-intermediate	20	8,541
Active Skills for Reading 3	intermediate	32	18,798
Concepts & Comments-reading 4	high-intermediate	20	15,383
Select Readings-intermediate	intermediate	14	10,204
Select Readings upper-intermediate	high-intermediate	12	15,277
			74,912

### *Instrumentation*

Developed by Paul Nation for research purposes, the Range software can be used to compare a text against certain base word lists to see what words in the text are and are not in the lists, how many words from a word list are in a text, create word lists based on frequency and range, and discover shared and unique vocabulary in different pieces of writing. In particular, it can also be used to compare the vocabulary of many text files at a time to see how much of the same vocabulary they use (i.e. range) and the frequency of occurrence of the words in total and in each file.

To compare GE textbooks, the following three categories of word lists were used:

1. The BNC 14,000 high-frequency English word lists.
2. Coxhead's (2000) Academic Word List (AWL) containing 570 word families.
3. The 2,000 basic English words announced by the Ministry of Education.

The 14,000 high-frequency word families were divided into fourteen base word lists, each containing exactly 1,000 word families. Apart from the BNC 1<sup>st</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> 1,000 word lists, some proper nouns and Roman numerals as well as spoken interjections and exclamations were also incorporated in the RANGE program, however, they were beyond the research focus and were hence not factored in.

Coxhead's (2000) 570 academic word-family list has also been included in the RANGE program. This list was adopted for the present study to measure how frequently the academic words across disciplinary domains occur in

a GE textbook and to compare the extent to which a GE textbook can prepare a learner for reading professional texts.

Word families are regarded as an important counting unit because comprehending regularly inflected or derived members of a word family does not require much effort, if learners know the base word and basic word building processes (Bauer & Nation, 1993). The notion is useful when we are concerned with vocabulary size in a reading textbook. The 2,000 most frequent words on the BNC HFWL include 2,000 base forms, their inflected forms and derivatives, thereby making a total of 11,941 different words (types). Finally, to assess the vocabulary levels of the six GE textbooks, the RANGE computing program was run each time against one of the following three base word lists, using the same counting units, word types and word families: (1) AWL 570, (2) BNC HFWL 1<sup>st</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> 1000, and (3) the basic words by the Ministry of Education.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Coxhead (2000), the 570 academic word families account for approximately 10% of the tokens in academic texts. The middle column in Table 2, which shows the AWL occurrence in tokens and in percentage, addresses the first research question, “What percentage of the words in a General English reading textbook does Coxhead’s (2000) Academic Word List cover?”

The top textbooks of higher AWL coverage were Active Skills for Reading 3 (5.32% in tokens; 12.47 % in types), and Select Readings high-intermediate (4.63% in tokens; 12.29% in types). These two books were labeled by the publishers as suitable for high-intermediate and advanced EFL learners. Access Reading 3 for low-intermediate learners had the lowest AWL coverage, with 2.32% coverage counted in tokens and 4.82% in types. It was observed that the higher AWL coverage and the higher-level GE textbooks bore some relationship to each other, which can be justified as advanced textbooks are meant to teach advanced vocabulary and to expand students’ vocabulary breadth. Similarly, it is not disappointing to find that basic GE textbook contained little academic vocabulary since lower-level books serve other purposes in language learning.

*Table 2: The AWL coverage of GE textbooks*

General English Textbooks	Number of words	AWL occurrence in tokens/ %	AWL occurrence in types/ %	AWL occurrence in families
Active Skills for Reading 3	18,798	1000/ 5.32%	444/ 12.47%	270
Select Reading high intermediate	15,277	472/4.63%	280/ 12.29%	266
Select Readings-intermediate	10,204	609/ 3.99%	371/ 11.00%	211
Concepts & Comments- reading 4	15,383	607/ 3.95%	303/ 10.85%	202
Reading Challenge 2	8,541	298/ 3.69%	118/ 7.20%	91
Access Reading 3	6,209	237/ 2.32%	102/ 4.82%	69

Given the assumption that the 570 interdisciplinary academic words are all new to college freshmen, Table 3 demonstrates that the academic lexical items that can be learnt by using one of the six GE textbooks range from as little as 49 to as much as 415 word families. This result produces an overall picture of the amount of academic vocabulary a student will be equipped with after taking a GE course for one year.

Coxhead (2000) suggested that the Academic Word List containing 570 word families could be used to set vocabulary learning goals for GE courses as a launch pad for further English for academic purposes programs. For instance, if 50% of the headwords in the AWL are expected to be taught within an academic year, then a GE

textbook should ideally include at least 285 predominantly academic words. If properly selected or managed, a GE textbook can contribute to the goal of academic vocabulary learning.

To answer Research Question 2 it was decided that the 2000 word list can serve as the computing basis for analysis, since it represents the average level of a college freshman's vocabulary capacity in accordance to the requirement of Iran's Ministry of Education.

*Table 3: Text coverage by the 2000 word list*

Level	GE Textbooks	2000 word list %coverage (in tokens)
high intermediate	Active Skills for Reading 3	85.70 %
high intermediate	Select Readings-high intermediate	85.54 %
intermediate	Select Readings-intermediate	89.10 %
intermediate	Concepts & Comments 4	90.18 %
low-intermediate	Reading Challenge 2	88.67 %
low-intermediate	Access Reading 3	91.21 %

The table shows that how much of the vocabulary in a GE textbook will be familiar to the learner and how many words the learner may not know.

*Table 4: Text coverage by TBEWL 2000 across GE textbooks*

GE Textbook	2000 word list		Not in the 2000 word list		Total	
	tokens/ %	types/ %	tokens/ %	types/ %	tokens	types
Active Skills for Reading 3	16110/ 85.70	1999/ 56.15	2688/ 14.30	1561/ 43.85	18798	3560
Select Readings high intermediate	13068/ 85.54	1848/ 54.77	2209/ 14.46	1526/ 45.23	15277	3374
Concepts & Comments4	13059/ 84.89	1671/ 59.83	2324/ 15.11	1122/ 40.17	15383	2793
Select Readings intermediate	9092/ 89.10	1487/ 65.28	1112/ 10.90	791/ 34.72	10204	2278
Access Reading 3	7790/ 91.21	1172/ 78.34	751/ 8.97	324/ 21.66	8541	1496
Reading Challenge 2	5949/ 88.67	1226/ 74.85	760/ 11.33	412/ 25.15	6709	1638

For example, 7,790 of the running words in Access Reading 3 were in the 2000 word list, while 751 tokens were not. These 751 occurrences involving 324 different words (types) could possibly be college freshmen's new words. By and large, if a college student reads all the texts of a GE course book within an academic year, he/she would come across 324-4,003 new words beyond the 2,000-word level, appearing in different types. This implies that the vocabulary learning goals subject to the selection of a GE textbook are quite wide-ranging. By learning vocabulary at the rate of 162 new headwords (and hence their family members) per academic year over the college course of four years, it does not seem likely that students can achieve the 5,000-word threshold level as proposed by Laufer (1997).

If Nation's (2001) estimate that native speakers read about 10-12 books per year to acquire 1,000 words is correct, then setting the vocabulary goal 2001 new words for one GE textbook, to be learnt within one year, would be akin to 'building castles in the air'. In view of this, the vocabulary size of a textbook cannot be ignored and should be taken into account from the start, at the onset of syllabus design.

#### ***The vocabulary level of a GE textbook***

Vocabulary levels were defined as the number of words counted from the top of BNC HFWL accounting for 95% of the running words in that textbook if we accept the assumption of 95% text coverage as the minimum for successfully guessing meanings from context and gaining reasonable comprehension. As mentioned previously, there are fourteen 1,000-word bands created from the British National Corpus in the RANGE program. Thus, the



BNC HFWL was used to identify the division among the diverse vocabulary levels contained within the GE textbooks. The text coverage of each 1,000-word band in the target textbook was calculated by counting the number of 1,000-word bands needed until the total coverage reached 95%.

*Table 5: Vocabulary levels of the GE Textbooks measured by the BNC HFWL 1<sup>st</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> 1000 at the accumulated text coverage reaching 95%*

GE Textbook	Book Level	Vocabulary Level
Active Skills for Reading 3	high-intermediate	3,000-3,500
Select Readings high intermediate	high-intermediate	4,000-4,500
Select Readings-intermediate	Intermediate	2,500-3,000
Concepts & Comments 4	Intermediate	4,000
Reading Challenge 2	low-intermediate	3,000-3,500
Access Reading 3	low-intermediate	2,500-3,000

There are two apparent exceptions in Table 5 with regard to the book level claimed by the publishers and the vocabulary level measured by the BNC HFWL 1<sup>st</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> 1,000. The intermediate GE textbook, Select Readings-intermediate, had a vocabulary level of 2500-3000 words which is counter to the general expectations on the range of the number of words in intermediate books and so low. This book at the intermediate level actually had more middle- and low-frequency English words. By contrast, the advanced Active Skills for Reading 3 had a denser distribution of words, 3,000-3,500. This shows that it is possible to select an advanced-level GE textbook with a lower vocabulary level. The discrepancies in vocabulary levels among GE textbooks imply that textbook authors may not apply the same standard in their selection of words while writing their teaching materials for the publishers. It can also be ascribed to the fact that articles in textbooks for different reading purposes may involve different levels of difficulty. Some low-frequency words appear more frequently in a certain genre or subject matter and can function as technical words in certain fields. This echoes Nation's (2001) remark that "one person's technical vocabulary is another person's low-frequency word" (p. 20). By the same token, some vocabulary presumed difficult by some authors may be considered easy by others.

## CONCLUSION

General English textbooks are supposed to play roles in vocabulary learning in a number of ways. The present corpus-based study is a try to discuss the roles in question. To sum up, Coxhead's (2000) 570 academic word families account for 1.3% – 6.54% of the total words in a General English textbook, and up to 407 interdisciplinary academic words can be learnt from a GE reading textbook. GE textbook containing more readings for academic purposes are suggested in cases that academic vocabulary learning is the goal.. The other very important factor to consider, when choosing college GE textbooks, is the appropriateness of book levels. If a learner's vocabulary is small, s/he may not enjoy reading due to the enormous vocabulary load. The opposite case is also true, in that, if a learner has large vocabulary knowledge, as learning gains may be small due to the few number of new words available in the text, the task of reading would become so boring to them. As a consequence, more thought should be given to the selection of a GE textbook. Not knowing students' vocabulary capacity in advance, a college professor may choose GE textbooks based on their intuition or publishers' claims, which might lead to the above mentioned problems. So, it seems necessary that the students be placed in the proper class level by an appropriate proficiency placement test so that it would become possible for the teachers to select an English textbook for general purposes with an appropriate level of reading difficulty. In relation to the topics and articles they contain, GE textbooks offer texts of varying vocabulary levels. In the present research, the book levels claimed by the publishers did not seem to coincide with their vocabulary levels in a few instances. This finding may be helpful in raising teachers' awareness of the importance of considering the vocabulary level when choosing an English textbook. They should treat the book level claimed by the publishers with caution. Apart from this awareness, it is also crucial to set vocabulary goals at a reasonable size and level for the course of study.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although this research focused on the vocabulary component of the General English textbooks, by no means does it imply that vocabulary size, levels and lexical coverage are exclusive factors in selecting a GE book for class use and vocabulary is not the only component of an English course. Other parameters such as syntax and content area knowledge may be worth investigating but were beyond the focus of the current study. For the purpose of data triangulation, further research might achieve further findings through a qualitative analysis of students' perception toward language textbooks in relation to vocabulary load and reading difficulty. It would also be interesting to examine how a textbook can be used and how books within one series may provide a pathway for language development.

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**ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS AND CULTURAL ATTITUDES OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS:  
INVESTIGATING A RELATIONSHIP**

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**ABSTRACT**

The present study aimed at examining the relationship between English Textbooks and the cultural attitudes of Iranian EFL (English as a foreign language) learners whose English proficiency was intermediate and above. To this end, Top Notch and Interchange series were selected as two of the widely used English textbooks in Iran as an EFL context. The afore- mentioned textbooks were analyzed to extract all the possible cultural issues embedded within the units. The questionnaire which was employed in this study was a test of cultural attitudes by Ashraf, Motallebzadeh and Kafi (2013) which checked the cultural attitudes of Iranian EFL learners. This test was validated by two experts in the field, also its reliability, using Cronbach's Alpha, was estimated to be (.870). The questionnaire was administered to 210 EFL learners of English. Afterwards the relation between these learners' English proficiency and the extent to which their cultural attitudes had changed was also investigated. For measuring the probable relation, Chi Square test as well as cross tabulation were run for analysis of the obtained data. The results exhibited a significant relation between English textbooks and the cultural attitudes of Iranian EFL learners.

**KEY WORDS:** Textbooks, Cultural Attitudes, EFL Learners

**INTRODUCTION**

Generally speaking, there seems to be a widespread attention and research done regarding textbooks including their contents and effects. Generally Speaking, nearly all students seem to refer to and use the ideas they come across in their course books within their daily lives. Actually, it sounds that learners are under the influence of the textbooks they study during each school year and as a matter of fact they learn many issues e.g. social, religious, and cultural as well as linguistic ones. Therefore, it is asserted that the totality of language learning comprises three integrated components: linguistic, cultural, and attitudinal (Wilkes, 1983).

There have also been interesting ideas and beliefs regarding the relevance of culture and cognitive ability by some scientists including Tylor (1874). He has made an assumption that has won general acceptance and that is the fact that there is an intimate connection between socio-cultural progress and mental progress.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

***The Role of Culture in Intercultural Competence***

This section discusses some of the arguments posited in support of developing second language learners' intercultural competence. This is in line with globalization where second language learners are increasingly exposed to the global community in which English plays a role as an international bridge.

Puente (1997) asserts that "language reflects and affects culture" forming a "dynamic relation" or intrinsic link. In relation to this, Iranian English language learners need to learn about the target language culture together with

Persian culture in order to communicate effectively, achieving communicative competence. Communicative competence is not possibly achieved without cultural understanding, as it is the core of language acquisition. A learner then avoids all the pitfalls of cultural misunderstanding or ignorance which leads to the breakdown of communication. In addition to communication, learners who are said to have acquired a language are those who are able to align themselves with the culture of the target language. They can also think in the target language thus enabling them to identify with the language by capturing the essence of the language (Tang, 1999).

### ***Culture and ELT***

As Prodromou (1992; as cited in Sardi, 2002) states, the learner's attitude toward the target culture has an impact upon the acquisition of the language. A positive attitude toward the target language culture, i.e. respecting other people and their way of life, is a factor in language learning that leads to cross cultural understanding. Before students can learn about culture they must be receptive to the concept of learning about cultures other than their own. According to Karimpour (2000), negative attitude, i.e. viewing everything through the eyes of our own culture and its values, usually emerges either through false stereotyping or undue ethnocentrism. English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' negative attitudes toward second language (L2) culture may lead to decreased motivation and interaction, and because of decreased L2 input and interaction it may lead to unsuccessful attainment of L2 proficiency.

Lado (1988) has divided unhealthy attitudes into two groups: 1) "pedantic cultural attitude" 2) "quaint nativism attitude" (Tsai Yu-Hsin, 2001, p.7). He believes that these two phenomena are commonly found among students encountering a foreign culture. According to this author, those who have pedantic culture attitudes consider the second or foreign language as the only correct or prestigious way to view the world and differences between this culture (L2 culture), and another language and culture are indicators that the other is incorrect or inferior. On the other hand, those who have adopted a "quaint nativism attitude" consider everything in native culture as more beautiful, interesting, desirable and correct than in second or foreign culture. Both of these attitudes are neither proper nor healthy and can result in cultural misunderstanding (Tsai Yu-Hsin, 2001).

Consequently, what seems to be of great importance is the fact that the study of different cultures aids students in getting to know different people. This knowledge is necessary for understanding and respecting other nations and their ways of life. Kincheloe and Staley (1985) highlight the significance of cultural awareness: first, cultural awareness makes students less fearful and prepares them to deal with different people and places. Second, it allows for the possibility of increased tolerance. Third, as students see themselves and their own cultures more objectively, feelings of ethnocentrism and self-righteousness are decreased or avoided.

### ***Opposing Views on the Cultural Content of EFL Courses***

There are indications that some ELT course books focusing on the target culture have an alienating effect on students who do not want to be culturally assimilated and, as a consequence, give up learning the language (Gray, 2000). On the other hand, it is not uncommon for many students to become alienated from their own social and cultural settings as they become adjusted to the value system of the Anglo-American world. Many educators in Asian and African countries have expressed their concern for the status of their native culture and language in relation to the cultural content of ELT materials developed for global use (ibid.).

These problems with the cultural influence of English on other societies have led to the suggestion that an ideologically, politically and culturally neutral form of English should be promoted in ELT. It is argued that English, as an international language utilized for communication purposes would make it possible for nonnative speakers to retain their own cultural characteristics as much as possible (Jenkins, 2000). Another suggestion is that, instead of focusing entirely on the culture of the target language, it is more beneficial to take a cross-cultural approach to EFL teaching. According to Prodromou (1992), for example, the development of students' cross-cultural awareness is of vital importance because in this way they will become more sensitive to the world's many cultural systems and will care more about the world they live in.

### ***Textbooks and Culture***

A discussion on textbooks is inevitable in light of the arguments advocating the infusion of culture in EFL education. The significance of textbooks is seen in the many roles textbooks play in facilitating the second language teaching and learning process in the classroom. Textbooks across the world are of different cultural orientations; whether they are based on source cultures, target culture or international target cultures. Source cultures refer to learners' own culture, target culture is the culture in which the target language is used as a first language while international target

cultures refer to various cultures in English, or non-English-speaking countries which use English as an international language. (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; as cited in Norhana & Sanda, 2011).

### ***Related Studies***

There have been similar studies carried out with regard to both or one of the variables. For example, Ashraf, Motallebzadeh, & Kafi (2013), investigated the EFL learners' attitudes through the analysis of Interchange and American file series. They also checked these EFL learners' attitudes towards using localized textbooks instead of the original ones. The results indicated that EFL learners prefer using original English textbooks instead of the localized ones. Moreover, all these learners' cultural attitudes have been affected by the mentioned textbooks. Rajabi and Ketabi (2012) investigated the aspects of cultural elements in prominent English textbooks for EFL setting. The results indicated that the pragmatic (sociolinguistic) occurrences are quite predominant probably because the forms and functions of language such as, to offer, to clarify and to request are included in almost all the chapters.

Abdollahzadeh and Baniasad (2010) also conducted a research on ideologies in the imported English textbooks: EFL learners and teachers' awareness and attitude. Studying the results and from the total frequencies, it can be concluded that *Spectrum VI* (total frequency: 58) has the most ideologies. Comparing frequencies, one can observe that the higher the level of a textbook, the more frequent the ideologies. Further consumerism and sexism were found to be the most common ideological prompts across all these imported textbook series.

Making a comparison between the students' native culture and foreign language culture is a new issue in the field of language teaching. Some writers (Kramersch, 1993; Baker, 2003; Valdes, 1986) consider both cultures to be closely related to each other. They state that mother language culture plays a role that promotes better understanding of the foreign culture. For instance, Kramersch (1993) argues that in a foreign culture, we construe events by contrast and analogy with our own culture, as well as by contrast and analogy with the foreign culture. She reveals that: "by constructing both their own and the foreign values, by organizing and extending the range of convenience of these constructs, students can find bridges to other culture, anticipate foreign events and discover alternatives to their own cultural patterns" (p.437). She also suggests that before we make L2 students understand the attitudes and values of a foreign culture, we have to make them aware of their own attitudes and values in interpreting a foreign event.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

It seems that textbooks are at the heart of crucial innovations occurring within the educational systems, therefore, they need to be studied thoroughly in order to inform any further changes the stakeholders may deem useful and needed. Besides, their impact in the EFL context should be investigated through more researches because for the EFL learners, the textbook becomes the major source of contact they have with the language apart from the input provided by the teacher.

Consequently, it has repeatedly been emphasized by many researchers and scientists including Hutchinson and Torres (1994) that textbooks are universal elements of English language teaching and that it seems no teaching learning situation is complete unless the relevant textbook is provided. Moreover, it seems that there is an opposing view regarding the cultural content of EFL courses (Widdowson, 1990; as cited in Sardi, 2002). He stated that English teaching should be carried out independently of its cultural context. Instead, familiar contexts seem more suitable to be inserted within the textbooks. It is obvious that every language has a setting in which people who speak it belongs to a race or races and "language doesn't exist apart from culture" (Sapir, 1970).

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

To address the above mentioned problem, the researchers tried to answer the following questions:

Q1. Is there any significant relationship between studying English textbooks and probable changes in cultural attitudes of Iranian EFL learners?

Q2. Is there any significant relationship between English Proficiency and the cultural attitudes of Iranian EFL learners?



## RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

To avoid subjectivity the researchers propose the following null hypothesis:

HO1. There is not any significant relationship between English textbooks and the cultural attitudes of Iranian EFL learners.

HO2. There is not any significant relationship between English proficiency and the cultural attitudes of Iranian EFL learners.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

An important point motivating a work in this area is the status of English textbooks in Iran and particularly among English teachers and the vast community of students. In other words, so many budgets are allocated to buying and providing the useful English commercial textbooks in the market. Therefore, getting to know about the attitude and the outlook these teachers and students might have towards the English textbooks which are widely used in Iran, would be of great benefit for teachers in finding the appropriate teaching materials as well as textbook writers and curriculum developers.

Many teachers and school authorities believe that there are different factors involved in the Iranian students' achievement in English language (Azizifar, Koosha & Lotfi, 2010). One of these factors may refer to the culture which is directly mentioned or implied in the various exercises included in the textbooks which results in the probable change in the EFL learners' attitudes towards a foreign language. Moreover, if we look meaningfully at what culture means, we would come up with the fact that culture is an inseparable part of societal life that cannot be ignored easily (Alptekin, 1993; as cited in Sardi, 2002).

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

In order to collect the required data, a sample of 210 intermediate and above intermediate male (89) and female (121) EFL students who had recently finished studying these levels at language schools in Iran participated in this study. The majority of the participants (106) had an age range of 21 to 30 years old and the rest were under 20 and half of the participants (50%) had B.A. degree. The majority of the participants had studied Interchange series or Top Notch series as the main required textbook at the institute. In order to control the probable effects of other factors on the learners' cultural attitudes, two control questions were included to the end of the first section of the questionnaire, to which 15 learners had answered positively and as a result they were excluded from the study at first place. All these intermediate learners had spent a minimum amount of two years studying English.

### *Instrumentation*

The elicited instrument used in this study was a researcher made questionnaire i.e. an Acculturation test by Ashraf, Motallebzadeh and Kafi (2013).

### *Acculturation Test*

The questionnaire which was employed in this study was a test of cultural attitudes by Ashraf, Motallebzadeh and Kafi (2013) which checked the cultural attitudes of Iranian EFL learners towards the cultural elements embedded within the English textbooks. In order to design the questionnaire, the researchers had analyzed some prominent English textbooks with regard to the cultural issues. The result was the exclusion of 65 cultural elements from the mentioned textbooks. In order to validate the questionnaire, two experts in the field were asked to check and give comments on the items included in the questionnaire, and as a result 15 items were excluded from the total amount of questions. As for the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha was run through SPSS and the estimated reliability turned out to be 0.870. The questionnaire consisted of 44 items and was a five-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) "strongly agree" to (5) "no idea". The time allotted for answering the questionnaire was estimated to be 15 minutes. The questionnaire included items, which measured the cultural attitudes such as; I like western music more than Iranian ones, I enjoy it if some information about western celebrities be included in textbooks or In my free time, I prefer to do other kinds of entertainments including music, rather than reading books. The questionnaire is included in the appendix.

### *Procedure*

In this study, the researchers investigated the probable relationship between English textbooks and the cultural attitudes of EFL learners. To this end, the date and time were arranged with the institutes in order to be able to administer the questionnaire to intermediate or above intermediate EFL learners. Prior to administering the questionnaire in intermediate classes, the researchers made sure about the English background of participants and



their level of proficiency by checking the placement test they had taken when entering the institute. This placement test was a validated test designed and used by the institute in order to specify the learners' level of proficiency. The institute requires all the learners to take this test prior to registration and beginning the language course. Finally, an interview was run in order to check the EFL learners' attitudes towards studying English and its probable effects on their cultural attitudes.

Data collection started in March 2013 and finished in May 2013. When data collection was over, the results were analyzed using SPSS, Correlation, Cross tabulation and Chi square test, and then they were discussed in the teaching and learning context e.g. what is the probable effect of English textbooks and what could be its probable implications in the EFL context.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Considering the first research question i.e. is there any significant relationship between English textbooks and the cultural attitudes of Iranian EFL learners, Cross tabulation, and Chi square test were employed to check whether learners' cultural attitudes have changed or not. The results of the analysis are shown in table 1.

*Table 1: Books \* Sum Ranks Cross tabulation*

			Sum Ranks				Total
			Strongly Affected	Affected	Lees Affected	Not Affected	
books	Interchange	Count	24	79	20	0	123
		% within books	19.5%	64.2%	16.3%	.0%	100.0%
		% within Sum Ranks	60.0%	61.2%	50.0%	.0%	58.6%
		% of Total	11.4%	37.6%	9.5%	.0%	58.6%
	Top Notch	Count	16	50	20	1	87
		% within books	18.4%	57.5%	23.0%	1.1%	100.0%
		% within Sum	40.0%	38.8%	50.0%	100.0%	41.4%
		Ranks					
		% of Total	7.6%	23.8%	9.5%	.5%	41.4%
	Total	Count	40	129	40	1	210
		% within books	19.0%	61.4%	19.0%	.5%	100.0%
		% within Sum	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		Ranks					
		% of Total	19.0%	61.4%	19.0%	.5%	100.0%

The way data is explained according to the Cross tabulation table, is based on the differences in the scores participants have gained on the questionnaire, which put them under four different categories which moved from "Strongly Affected to Not Affected".

Table 1 exhibits that 123 (58.6 percent) of the total participants of this research had studied Interchange series in their process of language learning, out of which 24 (19.5%) were 'strongly affected' by Interchange books, 79 (64.2%) were 'affected', 20 (16.3%) were 'less affected' and there were no results found in the last group. This indicates that all and all, Interchange series 'affect' the EFL learners' cultural attitudes.

The second part of the table focuses on the results obtained from those participants (87 = 41.4 %) who had studied Top Notch series as their major English textbook. Out of the mentioned participants 16 (18.4%) were 'strongly affected' by Top Notch books, 50 (57.5%) were 'affected', 20 (23%) were 'less affected' and there was only one person who was not affected by the American File series (1.1%). Once again the results show that English textbooks affect learners' cultural attitudes. And it is also revealed that Interchange series had greater popularity as well as influence on the learners' cultural attitudes.

To check whether the results were significant or not Chi Square test was run and the results are exhibited in table 2.

Table 2: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.037 <sup>a</sup>	3	.386
Likelihood Ratio	3.371	3	.338
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.306	1	.253
N of Valid Cases	210		

According to Chi-Square table, the Pearson Chi-Square value is 3.037. Its Asymp. Sig (two-sided) is .386 which is smaller than 0.05. Thus, there is a significant relationship between English textbooks and the cultural attitudes of EFL learners.

To sum up, as the analysis of the result exhibited, the null hypothesis i.e. there is not any significant relation between English textbooks and the cultural attitudes of EFL learners was rejected. And it was found that both these books have had a significant impact on EFL learners' cultural attitudes. In a similar study carried out by Csilla Sárdi (2002), the researcher came up with the idea that learners have got a positive view point towards learning English and also the fact that the cultural issues of English as foreign language is conveyed into its textbooks (Interchange series) were also previously proved by another study by Zarei and Khalessi (2011). To answer the second research question, i.e. whether there is a significant relation between English proficiency and the cultural attitudes of EFL learners, Chi square test as well as cross-tabulation were used. The results are shown in table 3.

Table 3: English Proficiency \* Sum Ranks Cross tabulation

			Sum Ranks				Total
			Strongly Affected	Affected	Lees Affected	Not Affected	
English Proficiency	excellent	Count	9	13	1	1	24
		% within English Proficiency	37.5%	54.2%	4.2%	4.2%	100.0%
		% within Sum Ranks	22.5%	10.1%	2.5%	100.0%	11.4%
		% of Total	4.3%	6.2%	.5%	.5%	11.4%
	very good	Count	15	32	8	0	55
		% within English Proficiency	27.3%	58.2%	14.5%	.0%	100.0%
		% within Sum Ranks	37.5%	24.8%	20.0%	.0%	26.2%
		% of Total	7.1%	15.2%	3.8%	.0%	26.2%
	good	Count	15	47	17	0	79
		% within English Proficiency	19.0%	59.5%	21.5%	.0%	100.0%
		% within Sum Ranks	37.5%	36.4%	42.5%	.0%	37.6%
		% of Total	7.1%	22.4%	8.1%	.0%	37.6%
	average	Count	0	33	11	0	44
		% within English Proficiency	.0%	75.0%	25.0%	.0%	100.0%
		% within Sum Ranks	.0%	25.6%	27.5%	.0%	21.0%
		% of Total	.0%	15.7%	5.2%	.0%	21.0%
	weak	Count	1	4	2	0	7
		% within English Proficiency	14.3%	57.1%	28.6%	.0%	100.0%
		% within Sum Ranks	2.5%	3.1%	5.0%	.0%	3.3%
		% of Total	.5%	1.9%	1.0%	.0%	3.3%
	too weak	Count	0	0	1	0	1
		% within English Proficiency	.0%	.0%	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
		% within Sum Ranks	.0%	.0%	2.5%	.0%	.5%
		% of Total	.0%	.0%	.5%	.0%	5%
Total			Count	40	129	40	210
			% within English Proficiency	19.0%	61.4%	19.0%	.5%
			% within Sum Ranks	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
			% of Total	19.0%	61.4%	19.0%	.5%

As the cross tabulation table exhibits, the EFL learners' English proficiency was categorized based on six groups ranging from "excellent to too weak". The researchers discussed three groups which contained the most number of participants. Based on table 6, 24 (11.4%) of the participants had an 'excellent' English proficiency out of which 13 (54.2%) were placed in the second group i.e. 'affected' by the afore-mentioned textbooks. Those whose English proficiency was 'very good' were about 55 (26.2%) out of which 32 participants (58.2%) were 'affected' by the cultural attitudes embedded in the textbooks. Finally, the group which included the most number of participants was the third 'good' which numbered around 79 (37.6%). Among these learners, 47 (59.5%) were 'affected' by the English textbooks. Finally, In order to check the significance of the results, Chi Square test was run and the results are depicted in table 4.

*Table 4: Chi-Square Tests*

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	33.173 <sup>a</sup>	15	.004
Likelihood Ratio	37.185	15	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	13.948	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	210		

As the results in table 4 depicts, the Chi Square value was 33.173 Which was bigger than the P. value (.004) , so there was a meaningful and significant relation between English proficiency and the change in cultural attitudes. To sum up, as the analysis of the results indicate, the second null hypothesis i.e. there is not any significant relation between English textbooks and the English proficiency of EFL learners is rejected. Finally we can assume that English textbooks bring about the change in the cultural attitudes of EFL learners in general and those who possess a good English proficiency in particular.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Based on what the researchers could shed light on during the data analysis phase of the study, it was proved that English textbooks, Interchange and Top Notch series, have had a significant impact on learners' cultural attitudes. Besides, it was also stated that EFL learners were more in favor of Interchange series rather than American File series.

Moreover, those who had a good English proficiency were more affected than those whose English proficiency was about average, weak or even too weak. This is an indicating factor that those EFL learners who have a good mastery over English and can go beyond the linguistic features of a foreign language i.e. the cultural elements, possessed a more significant change in attitudes compared to those who did not. Fairclough (1989; as cited in Zarei & Khalessi, 2011) believes that "language is not an independent construct but a social institution that creates and is created by certain forces and structures forming our functions in the society. Thus, learning a foreign language is a particular way of assimilating into a complex system of categorized experiences, thoughts, behaviors, and modes of interaction of certain people".

Above all, through the analysis of the Interchange and Top Notch series in this study, overall, the results indicate that textbooks are artifacts, which are strongly grounded in cultural assumptions and biases. This is partly because English language has gained a world-wide lingua franca status, whose non-native speakers already outnumber native speakers. Following this line of thought, McKay (2004) and Kachru (1986; as cited in Zarei & Khalessi, 2011) suggest that English as an International Language needs to describe one's own culture and concerns to others rather than being linked to the culture of those who speak it.

To sum up, exposing students to aspects of any foreign language is not as harmful as what Iranians believe in. The researchers came up with some cases in which the learners' cultural attitudes have changed for the better not for the worse. Moreover, this cultural awareness helps learners decide and grow a thorough outlook towards people in other communities and afterwards decide upon the best cultural features of each. All and all, the results of this study could

be of great benefit for ministry of education as well as all those who have a role in providing the foundation and basis for learning English as a foreign language. They can think of developing textbooks in which a mixture of both native and target culture are depicted so that a balance between the two are maintained. Moreover, textbook writers, practitioners as well as curriculum developers should bear in mind the crucial role textbooks play in an EFL teaching learning context. Careful attention and awareness is also deemed necessary on the part of those EFL teachers as the ones who have the responsibility of carrying over the linguistic as well as non-linguistic features of a textbook (in this context the cultural elements).

Other studies are also suggested to investigate the role of English teachers in an EFL context along with the textbooks. Besides, in this study, those who watched original English movies more than six hours per week and also the ones who chatted with a native speaker were excluded from the available data, thus another research can be done to compare the effects of media on cultural attitudes with the effect of textbooks.

#### (DE)LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Like any other researches, some inevitable (De)limitations, which may raise new questions for further researches in the same field in the future, will be imposed on. First of all, variables such as age and personal variables are not taken into account. However, the most important restriction in this study is the fact that nearly all words, pictures and sentences that seemed to be against the cultural values of Iran were censored at first place. Consequently, we would doubt about the extent English textbooks may influence the cultural attitudes of Iranian learners in the absence of all those illustrations and wordings which seem to be related to western cultural issues.

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## THE ANALYSIS OF THE DISCOURSE LAYERS: THE CASE OF THE ROTTEN FENCE

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### ABSTRACT

This paper aimed to scrutinize discourse layers in a written narrative. The narrative selected for the sake of discourse layers analysis was *The Rotten Fence* by PL, which was randomly selected from the database in Hatch and Hawkins (1991). Having been selected, the narrative was analyzed through the use of the proposed methods for classification of discourse layers including Mann and Thompson's (1989) rhetorical structure theory, Schank and Abelson's (1977) script theory, Labov's (1972) evaluation components, Tannen's (1985) and Chafe's (1982) involvement features, Schegloff and Sack's (1973) conversational analysis, Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesive devices, Goffman's (1976) universal system components as well as Labov and Waletzky's (1967) narrative structure components. In this analysis, the discourse was investigated by the application of such categories as linguistic and cognitive processes, social, linguistic, and cognitive processes, and linguistic and cognitive templates, respectively. The findings of the study revealed that in this discourse as well as many other discourses there are multilayers of discourse features superficially not evident. The findings also proved that some elements are absent in some discourses while some are clear and more colorful. Looking at the narrative analyzed, it would undoubtedly be apparent that language is a structured social, cognitive, and linguistic enterprise by the application of layered analysis.

**KEYWORDS:** Discourse Layers, Narrative, Ideational Functions, Interpersonal Functions, Textual Functions.

### INTRODUCTION

Generally speaking, Cameron (2001) defines discourse analysis as the study of language looked at communicatively and/or of communication looked at linguistically, involving reference to concepts of language in use, language above or beyond the sentence level, language as meaning in interaction, and finally language in situational and cultural context.

He argued that when one analyzes the layers of a given narrative, one particularly contributes to this activity consciously, systematically, deliberately, and, to some extent, objectively so as to generate descriptions, interpretations, and explanations of what his/her analysis has unraveled.

As far as discourse analysis is concerned, because of its diverse use in many disciplines and the work of different scholars, it can be assumed to be a multidisciplinary field with a wide range of interests. The reason why discourse analysis has such a vital role in applied linguistics and also the reason why the bulk of the work recently done on the development of theory and practice of discourse analysis may be traced back to this fact that the study of language in use is considered to be a goal and means of education and an instrument of social control and change, which, in turn, is the principal concern of applied linguists. In addition to applied linguists, some scholars of other fields such as sociology, psychology, and psychotherapy, have contributed to do research on this issue.

To scratch beneath the surface of discourse layers in any written or spoken narrative, linguists deploy three categories of methods which are, in turn, subdivided into smaller categories. These three main groups embrace: (a) The category which is demonstrative of structure as evolving from socially and cooperatively built communication, (b) The category that is a testimony to text structure to be the result of speakers' or writers' intents or goals, and finally (c) The category that clarifies the structure as properties of the text. The analysis of layers of discourse intends to make clear the connections between discourse practices and social practices and structures, connections abstruse to greenhorns. Some practitioners consider language in use as concurrently functioning ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions. While the first refers to the background knowledge of the speakers or writers about the surroundings and the phenomena happening there, the second epitomizes the speakers or writers' own attitudes and evaluations about the phenomena under investigation and, thus, creates a relationship between speakers and listeners or writers and readers. Textual function of language, influential to the two earlier functions, enables



speakers or writers to articulate spoken or written texts assimilable by listeners and readers. It empowers people to connect discourse to the co-text (linguistic text) and context (physical and social environment) in which it occurs.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

There is a considerable bulk of literature on system in discourse by which different aspects of discourse were triangulated by the application of various methods. Following one of the methods, adopting the units and processes illuminated by that method, would inevitably lead to one specific picture of what discourse is as well as what layers reside the discourse under investigation. Applying various methods would certainly call forth differing pictures since the units and processes had been changed in accordance with the implemented method, each of which adds a new layer to the total picture of discourse in such a way that language users may look at the methods by the eye of doing the same thing although from different perspectives. Neither the intended methods coincide exactly on the other methods, nor does the one seem to be more or less correct than the others. Each of the methods has their own purposes, merits, qualities, and limitations and focuses on different aspects of the discourse under investigation. Some focus on the writer's or speaker's goal of producing such discourse, others on more abstract notions of how discourse and language might be modeled or mapped as a cognitive system, and even others on template or component forms.

To illustrate that the case is true for any given discourse, the various methods were divided into three subcategories encompassing: (a) The first subcategory that would embrace such analyses as Mann and Thompson's (1989) rhetorical structure theory and Schank's (1975) and Schank and Abelson's (1977) script theory. These analyses would depict structures in which they are looked at as something arising out of what writers and speakers select when they write or utter a piece of discourse to meet their intended objectives, (b) The second subcategory would include methods such as Schegloff's (1968, 1979), Labov's (1972) evaluation components, Tannen's (1985) involvement features, Schegloff and Sack's (1973) conversational analysis. In this subcategory, the produced discourse is believed to be what is cooperatively built among and between participants of the interaction, and (c) In the third subcategory, the structures are seen as properties of the text itself. Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesive devices, Goffman's (1976) universal system components as well as Labov and Waletzky's (1967) narrative structure components would all fall into this last category. The following might best illustrate this three-way classification:

- A. Linguistic and cognitive processes (In which text structure results from selection/activation based on speakers and writers' goals and intents.)
  1. Mann and Thompson's (1989) rhetorical structure analysis
  2. Pragmatics of speech acts
  3. Celce-Murcia's (1980) contextual analysis
  4. Participant cohesion
  5. Schank and Abelson's (1977) script analysis
- B. Social, linguistic, and cognitive processes (In which text structure evolves from socially built communication.)
  1. Labov's (1972) evaluation components
  2. Schegloff and Sack's (1973) conversational analysis
  3. Goffman's (1981) ritual constraints; the playing of 'self'
  4. Speech event analysis
  5. Tannen's (1985) and Chafe's (1982) involvement features
- C. Linguistic and cognitive templates (text characteristics)
  1. Labov and Waletzky's (1967) narrative structure components versus Mandler's (1978) and Rumelhart's (1975) narrative structure components
  2. Analysis of differences in features across modes
  3. Goffman's (1976) universal system components
  4. Levinson's (1983) deictic expressions and Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesive ties
  5. Speech act analysis

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Material***

To do a layered discourse analysis, a written narrative had been randomly selected from the database in

Hatch and Hawkin's (1991), a study of 64 spoken and written narratives, which is by chance the one offered as a practice in the book *Discourse and Language Education* written by Hatch (1992). This story is directly taken from the written stories that are the final, edited versions appearing in a book of short stories produced by the children's Writing Laboratory. The only change to the story was assigning sentence number to the sentences orderly from the first (1) to the last (21). Each sentence starts with a capital letter and ends in a period, exclamation mark, or question mark. It should be reminded that the letter 'e' was added to the word 'bite' to correct the grammatical or typographic mistake (See Appendix A).

### ***Procedure***

Through any analysis of discourse layers, each type of analyses has its own goals and can be used for reaching various intents. Throughout this study, different theoretical frameworks had been applied to analyze the narrative under investigation while considering the implications for teaching, cross-cultural understanding, and research. Although, all the theoretical frameworks had not been applied in sequence to the narrative, in this analysis, you might think of what alternative methods of analysis is applicable.

In this study, the researchers used various methods to do the analysis of the written narrative with respect to its layers. In some cases, three PhD candidates expert in discourse analysis were recruited to review and scrutinize the selected narrative. The experts individually analyzed and decided what is/are the function(s) of every specific intended word or stretch of words. Then, cases on which the three experts reached a consensus were considered to be the correct function for the word or stretch of words. While, cases in which the function(s) of every specific intended word or stretch of words could not attract a unanimous agreement were discarded or ignored. But in other cases, the 'word count' facility of Microsoft Office word processor software was used to count exactly how many times one specific word with the intended meaning and/or function occurred.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The following analyses are not complete but simply brief lists of findings relevant to the points raised by each method of discourse analysis. Since the data is from a monologue, some of the analyses will be less revealing than others and each gives valuable information about the data. Let us begin with analyses that fit into the first category – those that describe linguistic and cognitive processes (text structure results from selection/activation based on speakers and writers' goals and intents):

### ***Linguistic and Cognitive Processes***

In this group of analysis, text structure results from selection and/or activation of forms based on the speakers or writers' goals and intents.

#### ***Rhetorical Structure Analysis***

Rhetorical structure analysis as a primarily cognitive processing model, attempts to show what the speaker may reasonably be expected to have had in mind in relating spans of the text. Doing a partial analysis, just looking at this story using Mann and Thompson's (1989) rhetorical structure theory analysis, offers some interesting results. Let us look at how sentences numbered 8 to 10 and their relation to sentence number 7, which briefly discussed the reason why the fence on which the storyteller and his brother sat collapsed. In the first part of the sentence number 7 and second part of the sentence number 17, the reason why *dogs started barking* was stated. There is a relationship between sentence number 11 and 13, the latter is the cause of what happened in the former. Finally the cause of what stated in the sentence number 20 was traced back in sentences number 11 and 12.

#### ***Process Cohesion – Participant Tracking***

Here, such cohesive ties as pronouns will be looked at in a slightly different way. To answer the question, "*Who is this story about?*", the reference will be traced back. To do this, the ways the storyteller places focus on the major and minor protagonists necessarily should be scrutinized. One way is in the series of temporally ordered clauses. The major protagonist (hero) of the story is usually conceived of as a person who carries out the actions in the foreground; also supposed to have *high agency*. By a brief look at the clauses that occur in the foreground, you will easily find those that have highest transitivity (Hopper & Thompson, 1980), belong to the storyteller (*I*, in this story). In this story, the first person singular (*italic* in the text) is the storyteller and also the story is about the person. *I* want to tell this story; *I* felt when something scary happened to *me*; *I* was five years old; *I* was very scared; then something happened that changed *my* fear to happiness; *I* was mad at him because he left *me* sitting there crying and wouldn't

help *me*; *I* got scared because the dogs were coming across the fence toward *me*; They had their mouths open as if they were going to bite *me*; *I* was really scared now; *I* relaxed and became happy; The dogs didn't want to bite *me*; *I* felt good because *I* knew everything would be all right and that *I* had two new friends; *my* brother came outside and started laughing at *me*; *I* hit him because *I* was still mad at him for not helping *me*; *I* was mad, scared, and happy.

A quick glance at the first and second sentences would inevitably unravel the fact that the hero here, *I*, has the high agency. Also the fact that the storyteller started the story about himself by first mentioning that *I want to tell this story because this is how I felt when something scary happened to me when I was five years old*. And nowhere in the story, Julian's actions were emphasized. Another way of establishing agency is to count the number of times the major and minor protagonists are mentioned and whether they have agent or patient status (i.e., whether they are the more powerful actors in subject slots or whether they are relatively weak receivers of actions in object slots). In this story, *I* was mentioned as an agent 12 times and as patient 8 times; and *Julian* appeared 2 times as agent along with the pronoun *I* and *He* came 2 times as agent and *him* appeared 3 times in the second half of the story, the appearance of *He* in the second half of the story shows some degree of low agency. Finally it should be mentioned that the pronoun *we* occurred 5 times in the story.

Look at the starting sentences of the story in which the storyteller focused on his role and stated that the story is about his feeling and what happened to him as he was 5 years old and what happened and how his feelings had changed putting himself in the subject slot and Julian in the object slot in the remaining parts of the story.

#### *Script Analysis*

The communication that arises from speaker goals and intents was to be modeled by the script analysis. The script form can be clarified by the text that results as the speaker develops plans to meet goals. What scripts would be needed for understanding the storyteller's story, here, *I*? What scripts would we need to program if we wanted a computer to be able to display understanding of the story? At least five scripts would be needed: the home script, the store script, the brotherhood script, neighbor script, dogs' attack script. Some of the components for each are outlined very roughly as follows:

**Home script:** home has qualities and parts (neighbors, wall, fence, buildings, door, etc.) and also has living things inside (brother, dogs, etc.).

**Store script:** store sell goods, people buy needed things from the stores, etc.

**Brotherhood script:** has an emotional relationship, brothers should be loyal to each other, brother should not leave his brother alone in emergency, etc.

**Neighbor script:** neighbor home has an owner, neighbor has 2 dogs, neighbor's home has a fence, fence should be firm to impede interference to the other side of the fence, etc.

**Dogs' attack script:** dogs attack to bite or injure people, dogs never lick ice cream, dogs attacked and Julian left the scene, etc.

The cohesive and deictic devices that appear in the text can best be accounted for by the application of these scripts. The ties are seen as arising from the speaker's goals and intents as the storyteller, here *I*, tells the story, rather than as characteristics of the text itself. For example, once the storyteller, *I*, activates and uses the five scripts, his choice of definite and indefinite articles comes from the script. We are not surprised to see definite articles used, for example, 16 times in sentences number 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, and 17. Since some neighbors have dogs, their home has fences and yard, and houses also have doors, a definite article can be used before such words as *fence* in sentences number 5 to 9 and also in sentence number 13; *yard* twice in sentence number 5 once with the possessive adjective *our*; *dogs* in sentences number 7, 13, 17; and *house* and *door* once in sentence number 11. The script of neighbors were also such familiar to the listeners that the storyteller used the noun phrases such as the next door neighbor's yard, the neighbors' side of the fence, the dogs, the house, the fence, and the door. Although everyone expects the attacking dogs to bite or injure people, the dogs did not hurt the storyteller and they did something unusual, licking the ice creams that the storyteller and Julian had bought.

In this script analysis, the storyteller's reason or goal for selecting and telling the story is somewhat apparent. The first goal, maybe, was to complete a task set by the teacher and to show himself as a competent storyteller. A more important goal is for the storyteller to establish himself within his social group by telling a story that involves him in the role of a miserable and the lucky person who first fell into the trap of two dogs attacking him and then finding the two dogs as new friends. *The fence fell down* in line 9 presupposes that the fence was heavy, decayed, and badly-located in the ground. In the sentence number 11, *locked the door*, it was presupposed that the door had lock and key to lock and unlock it.

### ***Social, Linguistic, and Cognitive Processes***

In this group of analysis, text structure is described as evolving from socially built communication.

#### ***Conversational Analysis***

In addition to selecting a personal topic, the storyteller used the intonation and the power of the dogs' attack scene rather than evaluation to involve his listeners. The text is amazingly free of repetition, sound effects, direct quotations, stress, and direct evaluation comments. Why the storyteller did not use such devices to entertain and involve his audience is not clear at this point. Given their volubility in responses to many of the other stories, the audience seemed a bit stunned.

In this story, neither general characteristics such as turn-taking or sequence structure nor specific qualities such as asking questions or delivering and receiving news, assessments, or complaints was present. This case of conversational analysis is the institutional encounter where the participants accomplish their institutional tasks through their interaction. This story includes openings and closings of conversations and the general ways in which sequences of action are built, but does not include such features as agreement, disagreement, assessments, storytelling, complaints, questioning and answering practices in cross-examinations, news interviews and press conferences, diagnosis and advice in medical and pedagogical settings, turn-taking, repair (i.e., the ways of dealing with problems of hearing, speaking, or understanding), and the ways in which the participants of interaction manage their relation to the utterances through gaze and body posture. There is not any example of adjacency pairs such as question-answer, greeting-greeting, request-grant/refusal, and invitation-acceptance/declination.

#### ***Ritual Constraints and Self***

In communication analysis, researchers examine the ways in which the system is manipulated to smooth social interaction and the ways in which deference and demeanor are handled. In narratives, the storyteller's major theme is that of portraying or establishing self in Goffman's (1981, p.573) definition of that term, that is, "not an entity half concealed behind events, but a changeable formula for managing oneself during them". Storytelling may be one of our favorite universal activities, because it allows us to pretend that there is a half-concealed self behind events that we narrate while it also allows us to display self as we manage ourselves in the telling of our thoughts and actions.

Goffman's (1981) ritual constraints as far as they relate to deference and demeanor were discussed. It might be concluded that the storyteller wants to show two half-concealed entities, successively characterizing himself as the helpless person who caught in trouble with the attacking dogs in the opposite side of the rotten and fallen fence and as a lucky person who found two friends when his brother left him in such a bad situation. The storyteller depicted the picture of himself as what narrated in the story. Simultaneously, the storyteller, tried to illustrate that every cloud has a silver lining and some good may come out of any gloomy situation. In the analysis of the storyteller's portrayal of himself as a half-hidden entity, we can see that there are many different storytellers, *I's*, that the storyteller wish to show:

The storyteller as a hapless boy

The storyteller as a lucky person

The storyteller as an angry boy

When you read this story for the first time, it seemed that fitting at least one of these portraits was the storyteller's goal or intent in telling this story. However, given our analysis to this point, none of these seem right. In terms of the storyteller, he chose a story, caught in trouble, which seems to be an unlikely source of entertainment for the audience.

#### ***Speech Event Analysis***

To determine its speech act function, if you concentrate on each utterance in the narrative, you will undoubtedly conclude that it primarily consists of representative speech acts. That is, each gives information that has truth value in the world the storyteller is telling you about. There were a few expressions that give *emotional values* information

(e.g., *I was mad at him because he left me sitting there crying and wouldn't help me* in sentence number 12, *Then I felt good because I knew everything would be all right and that I had two new friends* in sentence number 18, and *I hit him because I was still mad at him for not helping me* in sentence number 20). There are not any directives (commands) in the narrative. And pragmatics of many of speech acts is clear.

It is difficult to determine a speech event structure within the story. If we believe that the storyteller's goal is to complain, or gripe, or share his troubles and joys, it is difficult to see how his story fits the structure that usually results from such events. Complaints are addressed to the trouble source, to persons responsible for the trouble, and a remedy is negotiated. Gripes are brief complaints addressed to persons not responsible for the trouble and sympathetic to the complainer's point of view. The listener is expected to offer sympathy and encouragement or perhaps to reciprocate with similar stories of trouble. At this point, there is little in our analysis of the story that allows us to make a successful match with these three types of *complaint speech events*.

A second possibility is that this is a *dog's attack* speech event. We could look for similarities with *peoples' attack* on each other such as in sports, war, or animals' fight in wild life. The storyteller does indeed use metaphors from fight scripts, and he does show surprising indifferent behavior of his brother Julian. In fact, as the one involved in the trouble of attacking dogs, his intent to play the reporter role seems in doubt.

### ***Linguistic and Cognitive Templates***

In the third and last group of analysis, the main concern is clarifying the structure as a template that belongs to, or is the characteristic of the text.

#### ***Goffman's (1976) Universal System Components***

Goffman's (1976) universal system component analysis encompasses the signals of each of the components which he thinks of them to be universal in the communication, forming the overall template of the communication in total.

#### ***Opening and/or Closing Signals***

The two following sentences are the opening and closing signaling sentences respectively. "I want to tell this story because this is how I felt when something scary happened to me when I was five years old.", "So in one afternoon, I was mad, scared, and happy." Because in the former sentence, the storyteller signals what he would be going to do and in the latter sentence he concludes his story by using the word "so".

#### ***Backchannel, Preempt, and Turn-taking Signals***

There is not any case of backchannel, preempt, and turn-taking signals in the narrative cited above because in this story only one person narrated the story and the other participant of the story (Julian) was absent and anyone had interrupted the flow of the story.

#### ***Acoustically Adequate and Intelligible Messages***

The storyteller did not any repair work to make his message clearer. Also, any clarification questions were not asked by the teacher or students listening to the narrative. So, it can be concluded that the message was clear and assimilable enough for all.

#### ***Grice's Conversational (1975) Maxims***

The four Grice's (1975) conversational maxims were cleverly met through the flow of the story, from relevancy of the details narrated to quality, quantity, and manner. Since to the best of researchers' knowledge, the storyteller only mentioned details so as to convince listeners.

#### ***Cohesion Analysis – Deixis and Cohesive Ties***

In linguistics, deixis refers to the phenomenon wherein understanding the meaning of certain words and phrases in an utterance requires contextual information. In this analysis, to clarify how deictic terms and cohesive ties promote coherence, the written narrative by PL would be scrutinized. Deixis is closely related to anaphora, which refers back, and sometimes to cataphora, which refers forward. Although this article deals primarily with deixis in written language, the concept can apply to spoken language, gestures, and communication media as well. While this article



draws examples primarily from English, deixis is believed to be a feature of all natural languages (in a varying range). Possibly the most common categories of contextual information referred to by deixis are those of person, place, and time.

#### *Personal Deixis*

Person deixis concerns itself with the grammatical persons involved in an utterance: (a) those directly involved (e.g., the speaker, the addressee), (b) those not directly involved (e.g., over-hearers—those who hear the utterance but who are not being directly addressed), and (c) those mentioned in the utterance. In every written or spoken narration, words, phrases, or pronouns are always used to refer back (anaphoric phrases or words) and forward (cataphoric words). In this narrative story, pronouns as cohesive ties refer back and forward to the characters (I, this, me in sentence number 1; I and my in sentence number 2; my, Julian, and I in sentence number 3; we in sentence number 4; we and our in sentence number 5; two mean looking bulldogs no personal deixis in sentence number 6; we, the dogs, and us in sentence number 7; no personal deixis in sentence number 8; we and it in sentence number 9; Julian and I in sentence number 10; he in sentence number 11; I, him, he, and me in sentence number 12; I, the dogs, and me in sentence number 13; they, their, and me in sentence number 14; I in sentence number 15; I in sentence number 16; the dogs, me, they, and my in sentence number 17; I in sentence number 18; it, my, and me in sentence number 19; I, him, and me in sentence number 20; and finally I in sentence number 21). Throughout the narration there is no case of misunderstanding or reference problem because all the reference words had been used properly to refer their referent.

#### *Temporal Deixis*

Time, or temporal, deixis concerns itself with the various times involved in and referred to in an utterance. This includes time adverbs like soon, after, now, then, etc., and also different tenses. A good example is the word *tomorrow*, *today*, which denotes the consecutive next day before and after every day. It was found to be such cases of temporal deixis in the narrative under investigation as: Time clauses and phrases such as (*when* something scary happened to me) and (*when* I was five years old) in sentence number 1; (*then* something happened that ...) in sentence number 2; (*when* my brother, Julian, and I decided ...) in sentence number 3; (*After* we bought the ice cream sundaes, ...) in sentence number 4; (*When* we sat on the fence, ...) in sentence number 7; (*Before* we knew it, ...) in sentence number 9; (*Then* I got scared ...) in sentence number 13; (I was really scared *now*) in sentence number 15; (*Then* I felt good because ...) in sentence number 18; (*When* it was all over, ...) in sentence number 19; (... I was *still* mad at him ...) in sentence number 20; (So *in one afternoon*, ...) in sentence number 21 are all signs of time and the change of time through the narration process. In sentence number 12, the phrase *while I was* is omitted before the phrase (sitting there crying and wouldn't help me). *All of a sudden* meaning suddenly has a connotation of time in sentences number 8 and 16. It should be reminded that verb tense and aspect also depict the order of actions within which the narration happened with regard to the time when the story was narrated.

#### *Spatial Deixis*

Place deixis, also known as space deixis, concerns with the spatial locations relevant to an utterance. Like person deixis, the space deixis may be either those of the speaker and addressee or those of persons or objects being referred to. The most salient English examples are here, there, this, and that. In this narrative, the following are cases of place deixis: (... go to *Thrifty's* ...) meaning the place where ice cream was sold belonging to Thrifty in sentence number 3; (... we went *back home*.) in sentence number 4; (We sat *on the fence* that divided our yard *from the next door neighbor's yard*) in sentence number 5; (...*on the neighbors' side of the fence*.) in sentence number 6; (When we sat *on the fence*, ...) and the dogs started barking *at us* in sentence number 7; (... the fence fell *down*.) in sentence number 9; (Julian and I both fell *down* hard.) in sentence number 10; (He quickly got *up* and ran *into the house* ...) in sentence number 11; (... he left me sitting *there* crying and ...) in sentence number 12; (... the dogs were coming *across the fence*) and (*toward me*.) in sentence number 13; (... my brother came *outside*...) in sentence number 19. (All of a sudden the fence started *moving*.) in sentence number 8 has a connotation of direction, moving from one place to another. In phrases such as (When we sat on the fence, the dogs started barking *at us*.) in sentence number 7 and (When it was all over, my brother came outside and started laughing *at me*.) in sentence number 19 connote the word *at* connotes a slight meaning of up to down direction along with the action done by the main verbs, that is, bark and laugh respectively.

#### *Discourse Deixis*

Discourse deixis, also referred to as text deixis, refers to the use of expressions within an utterance to refer to parts of the discourse that contains the utterance — including the utterance itself. For example, in the sentence: *This* is a great story. The word *this* refers to an upcoming portion of the discourse, and in the sentence: *That* was an amazing day. The word *that* refers to a prior portion of the discourse. Here are some cases of discourse deixis used in the narrative:



(I want to tell this story *because* ...) in sentence number 1; (I was mad at him *because* ...) in sentence number 12; (Then I got scared *because* ...) in sentence number 13; (Then I felt good *because* ...) in sentence number 18; (I hit him *because* ...) in sentence number 20. But there are other signs of reasons which are implicit such as the reason why (... changed my fear to happiness.) in sentence number 2 implicit in sentence number 2; the reason why (Julian, and I decided to go to Thrifty's ...) in sentence number 3 implicit in sentence number 3; the reason why (... the dogs started barking at us.) in sentence number 7 implicit in sentence number 7; the reason why (Julian and I both fell down hard.) in sentence number 10 implicit in sentences number 8 and 9; the reason why (I was really scared now!) in sentence number 15 implicit in sentences number 13 and 14; the reason why (... I relaxed and became happy.) in sentence number 16 implicit in sentence number 17; (So in one afternoon, I was mad, scared, and happy.) in sentence number 21 implicit in sentences number 1 to 20.

#### *Social Deixis*

Social deixis concerns the social information that is encoded within various expressions, such as relative social status and familiarity. Two major forms of it are the so-called T-V distinctions and honorifics. Julian is referred to by the family relation with which holds to the storyteller. Although Julian is not the main character in this story, since their relation was not known by the audience, it was once told at the beginning of the story.

#### *Rhetorical Genre Analysis*

The first thing which might be called into question is the fact of distinguishing description from narrative. According to narrative category proposed by Shaughnessy (1977), this story can be considered to be an example of narrative which described what happened in a period of specified time and location to some people (here, storyteller and his brother Julian). In accordance with Shaughnessy's (1977) narrative category, this story is composed of the following four components:

**Abstract:** the abstract is identified to be the first sentence, that is, *I want to tell this story because this is how I felt when something scary happened to me when I was five years old.*

**Orientation:** The two protagonists, the storyteller as major and Julian as minor, were introduced in the first and third sentence, respectively.

**Resolution:** *The fence fell down; Julian and I both fell down hard; and The dogs didn't want to bit me; they only wanted to lick my ice cream sundae.* Based on what went through the preceding sentences, it can be assumed that the resolution was not brought about by the storyteller and his brother Julian but it happened by chance, what is not usual, at least in ordinary life.

**Coda:** This story lacks coda because nowhere in the story the storyteller brought the listeners including teacher and students out of the story time to here and present.

#### CONCLUSION

Language is considered to be a system of arbitrary symbols used for human communication and this study aimed at discovering the system in the ways people apply language for the sake of communication in social contexts. The system that comes out of the obtained data revealed that communication is an interlocking social, cognitive, and linguistic enterprise. Although it is common to discuss system in linguistic descriptions of semantics, syntax, and phonology, looking for such a system at the discourse, written or spoken, is still burgeoning. In this study, system in discourse is found to be at hierarchically arranged levels, higher levels including some smaller subcategories. The structures serve to be flexible templates that could be applied to accomplish communicative functions in any given social context.

#### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

With respect to the analysis of the discourse layers, although this research would shed light on the issue, such limitations as lack of good sources available, time limit, and costs would affect the reliability of the data, so these limitations did not allow the researcher to make the ground level in providing a great deal of necessary quantitative and qualitative theoretical and experimental surveys. The data were collected only within a short period of time putting only one written discourse under the microscope, while investigating more written and/or oral discourse(s) might produce delicate results since in such cases especially in oral discourses the researcher(s) would be able to

critically dissect such suprasegmental features as stress, intonation, pauses and so forth. Additionally, it was impossible to conduct more repeated analysis by different experts, while repeated and different analyses would have certainly a more detailed picture of actual situation.

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## Appendix A:

The Rotten Fence

By PL

- 1) I want to tell this story because this is how I felt when something scary happened to me when I was five years old.
- 2) Actually, I was very scared, but then something happened that changed my fear to happiness.
- 3) The story began when my brother, Julian, and I decided to go to Thrifty's and buy an ice cream sundae.
- 4) After we bought the ice cream sundaes, we went back home.
- 5) We sat on the fence that divided our yard from the next door neighbor's yard.
- 6) There were two mean looking bulldogs on the neighbors' side of the fence.
- 7) When we sat on the fence, the dogs started barking at us.
- 8) All of a sudden the fence started moving.
- 9) Before we knew it, the fence fell down.
- 10) Julian and I both fell down hard.
- 11) He quickly got up and ran into the house and locked the door.
- 12) I was mad at him because he left me sitting there crying and wouldn't help me.
- 13) Then I got scared because the dogs were coming across the fence toward me.
- 14) They had their mouths open as if they were going to bite me.
- 15) I was really scared now!
- 16) But all of a sudden, I relaxed and became happy.
- 17) The dogs didn't want to bite [the letter 'e' added here] me; they only wanted to lick my ice cream sundae.
- 18) Then I felt good because I knew everything would be all right and that I had two new friends.
- 19) When it was all over, my brother came outside and started laughing at me.
- 20) I hit him because I was still mad at him for not helping me.
- 21) So in one afternoon, I was mad, scared, and happy.

**THE EFFECT OF USING MALL ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' VOCABULARY LEARNING**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study focused on the impact of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) on Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' vocabulary learning. To carry out the research, 60 Iranian EFL learners, who participated in an international English language testing system (IELTS) preparation course, were selected as the participants of the study. Afterward they were randomly assigned into experimental and comparison groups. A vocabulary test was given to both groups as the pretest. The participants in the experimental group received 150 vocabularies of the General vocabulary for the IELTS book, their definitions and example sentences on a regular basis three times a week via SMS. The participants of the comparison group were provided with the same vocabularies and were asked to learn them with dictionary by themselves. After ten weeks, a vocabulary posttest was administered to both groups. The result indicated that the experimental group outperformed the comparison group leading to the conclusion that the use of MALL had a significantly more effective impact on learners' vocabulary learning.

**KEY WORDS:** MALL, vocabulary learning, vocabulary teaching

**INTRODUCTION**

Learning new vocabularies is an important part of learning a new language. According to Nation (2006) learners should know at least 5000 lexical items to understand non-technical English texts. Because of the limited class hours, students do not have the opportunity to speak and use all of the vocabularies in class. This leads to some problems for language teachers and learners. The problem faced a language teacher is how to teach this large number of vocabulary during the limited time of the class. Nation (2005) believed that teachers can teach individual words explicitly, but deliberately teaching vocabulary is one of the least efficient ways of developing learners' vocabulary knowledge. Also learners face a lot of difficulty in the language learning process. They should memorize and learn the large amount of words of the language they are learning. This urges language teachers and researchers to look for alternative ways to traditional classroom teaching of vocabulary and to change vocabulary learning into a lifelong learning which is not limited to the classroom and adapt it to the needs of learners. They should make learning interesting for students and make them responsible for their own learning. One of the ways that can help teachers in teaching vocabulary is using different technologies available to students. Cognitive and socio-cognitive approaches have implication of how to integrate technology in teaching in the communicative trend (Laufer, 1998).

One of the technologies that can be used to help learners in learning a foreign language is mobile phones which are dominant in most students' life. They are not just communication devices anymore. They are useful computers that fit into students' pockets, are always with them and nearly always on, and can be used in any kind of learning (Prensky, 2005). This technology has brought about a new type of language learning called Mobile Assisted Language Learning. As with other forms of technology, mobile assisted language learning (MALL) is a branch of technology-enhanced learning which can be implemented in numerous forms including face-to face, distant or on-line modes. However, different scholars in the field have underscored that MALL should be implemented in the classroom, taking the presence of learners as a paramount factor into consideration. As Colpaert (2004) has rightly argued, before using mobile technologies a learning environment should be fostered. Likewise, Salaberry (2001) has argued against "technology- driven pedagogy" emphasizing the fact that despite their considerable benefits nothing to date has proved that any type of technology can necessarily act better than traditional forms of teaching. Finally, as Beatty (2003) has asserted, "Teachers need to be concerned about investigating time and money in unproven

technology” (p.72). All in all, using any kind of technological device should be accompanied by developing an efficacious type of methodology because these devices are not instructors but rather instructional tools. In a study in Japan Thomson and Houser (2005) examined the use of cell phones in education. In this study students were surveyed regarding their use of mobile phones. English vocabulary lessons were sent to the learners' mobile phones using short text messages and a website was developed to explain the English idioms which students surfed using the 3G phones. The findings revealed that mobile phones are ubiquitous among students and learners were ready to read small texts on mobile screens. It was noted that mobile phones can effectively serve to educate a foreign language learner and short text messages is very useful in teaching vocabulary.

In a recent study, Sole, Calic, and Neijmann (2010) showed that mobiles can allow learners to express themselves in a variety of scenarios. This study included two case studies and was conducted over two years in one of the UK universities. Students were required to report on their work with mobile devices outside the classroom. It was shown that using mobile devices help learners have a better engagement with learning and to have a better interaction. The results also showed that mobile devices also facilitate contextual learning and they resultantly allow the information to be captured in learner's own location in a way as to be resonant with students' needs. Lu (2008) used a counter balanced design to investigate the usefulness of short message service (SMS) on 30 vocational high school students, vocabulary retention. In the first week of the experiment, one group received 14 target words via SMS and the other group received the same material on paper. In the second week the two groups changed their media; that is mobile group became paper group and the paper group became mobile group. At the end of each week, an immediate post test, and three weeks later a delayed post test was conducted. The results of the tests showed that both groups regardless of the medium had improved compared to the pretest. But generally mobile group scores were significantly better than the paper group. It's worth mentioning that their scores diminished in the delayed post test. This result underscores the effect of regular reading of vocabularies and it urges to find a way to investigate whether learners read frequently the lessons provided them via short messeging system (SMS). A comparison of students' scores on mobile phone and paper showed that there is a positive relation between reading frequency and vocabulary gain. Also at the end of the experiment the participants were interviewed to find their attitude towards mobile assisted language learning. The information gained by interview showed that generally students had positive attitudes towards mobile vocabulary learning and liked to continue learning vocabulary with the aid of mobile. Finally, at the University of Lancaster, Mitchell, Race, McCaffery, Bryson, and Cai's (2006) study involved using short text messages as a way to make communications between teachers and students possible. They found that text messaging is a cost effective mechanism to convey the personalized information to learners' mobile phones in a trendy fashion.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

Given the importance of the vocabulary learning in learning a new language and the opportunities that MALL provides, the present study addresses the following question:

“ Does using MALL have any significant effect on EFL students' vocabulary learning?”

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

The subjects of this study were 60 male and female EFL learners who were studying English at the advance level in a language school in Mashhad, Iran. They were between 23 and 28 years old.

### *Instrumentation*

The following instruments were used to gather data at different stages of this study:

1. A language proficiency test, a modified version of IELTS, consisting of 25 listening questions, 50 reading questions. The time limit for answering the test was 75 minutes.
2. A vocabulary pretest, it was composed of 50 multiple choice items which were taken from Focus on Vocabulary 2: Mastering the Academic Word List (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2001).
3. A vocabulary posttest, which was similar to the pretest.

### *Material*

The General vocabulary for the IELTS book was the main material of this study. This book has been written for students who are planning to sit either the general training or the academic modules of the IELTS exam. It covers

some of the main vocabulary points that learners will need for, or come across in, the listening, reading, writing and speaking sections of the exam.

### ***Procedure***

The procedure will be reported in the following stages:

#### ***Participants Selection and Homogenization***

In order to homogenize the participants upon their level of proficiency, first an IELTS (described in full earlier) was administered to all the 60 available students. They were then randomly divided into experimental and comparison groups. The comparison group consisted of 30 students, 10 males and 20 females, and the experimental group consisted of 30 students, 15 males and 15 females.

#### ***Adminstrating the Vocabulary Pre-test***

As it was mentioned earlier, the experimental and comparison groups, were selected from among a population of students whose proficiency level was examined to be at the same. However, since the study concentrated on vocabulary, a vocabulary test, taken from Focus on Vocabulary 2 (described in full earlier), was administered to both groups to ensure that they were also homogenous in terms of vocabulary knowledge.

#### ***Intervention***

During the instruction, the participants in the experimental group received 150 vocabularies of the General vocabulary for the IELTS book, their definitions and example sentences on a regular basis three times a week via SMS. In addition, they were assessed each session by the instructor in class, to see how they learned the vocabularies. The participants of the comparison group were provided with the same vocabularies and were asked to learn them with dictionary by themselves. In addition, like the experimental group they were assessed by the instructor in class.

#### ***Adminstrating the vocabulary Posttest***

After ten weeks of teaching, a vocabulary posttest, similar to that of pretest was administered to both groups in their final examination. It is worth mentioning that the vocabulary posttest was different from the vocabulary pretest.

## **RESULTS**

After administrating the IELTS to 60 students, descriptive statistics was obtained. Table 1 demonstrates the descriptive statistics of the language proficiency test that was used for the homogenization of the participants. The mean and the standard deviation equaled 52.58 and 11.41, respectively. They were then randomly divided into experimental and comparison groups.

*Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Homogeneity Test*

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis		
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>52.58</b>	<b>11.413</b>	<b>130.267</b>	<b>.912</b>	<b>.309</b>	<b>.103</b>	<b>.608</b>
<b>Valid</b>	<b>60</b>										
<b>N</b>											

Since the study concentrated on vocabulary learning, and to check the homogeneity of the experimental and comparison groups at the beginning of the experimentation, a vocabulary test was administered to both groups as a pre-test, and an independent *t*-test was performed on the two groups test scores. Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistics.



Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the Two Groups on the Vocabulary Pre-test

Group		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	Comparison	30	48.75	15.91
	Experimental	30	50.11	16.51

Regarding the mean scores of two groups there was no significance difference, but in order to be sure of close homogeneity of two groups, a *t*-test was run. It showed that there was no significant difference between the experimental and comparison groups in terms of their vocabulary knowledge. Table 3 manifests the results.

Table 3: Comparison between Variances and Means of the Two Groups on the Vocabulary Pre-test

			Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
			F	Sig.	t	df	t critical	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
										Lower Upper
Pre-test	Equal variances assumed		11.39	.001	1.002	58	2.02	0.850	3.095	6.16 7.74

As it has been shown in table 3, the *t*-observed value for the comparison of the means of two groups was 1.002 at 58 degrees of freedom, which was lower than the *t*-critical of 2.02. Thus it could be claimed that the two groups were not significantly different in terms of vocabulary before undergoing the treatment.

After ten weeks of instruction, both groups were given a similar post-test. Table 4 summarizes the descriptive statistics:

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of the two Groups on the Vocabulary Post-test

Group		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Post-test	Comparison	30	52.97	10.63
	Experimental	30	68.45	9.25

To see whether the treatment was effective or not, the means of two groups were compared through a *t*-test. As it has been shown in table 5, the *t*-observed value was 5.56 at 58 degrees of freedom which was higher than the *t*-critical of 2.02. Thus, it was concluded that the students' performance in the experimental group was significantly greater than that of the comparison group.

Table 5: Comparison between variances and Means of the Two Groups on the Vocabulary Post-test

			Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
			F	sig	t	df	t critical	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
										Lower Upper
Post-test	Equal variances assumed		15.36	0.000	5.56	58	2.02	0.230	5.430	-6.94 3.46

## DISCUSSION

Vocabulary has a central role in language learning, and Language learners should know a large number of words to be successful in their learning or to have a successful communication in it. Hence this study aimed to investigate the effect of using MALL on EFL students' vocabulary learning. The findings approved the usefulness of SMS in this regard. The participants in the experimental group improved significantly in the post test and outperformed the comparison group in the post test. This study indicated that using Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) offered interesting advantages to the experimental group as compared with the comparison group. Learning vocabulary via SMS helped the participants in the experimental group to enhance their vocabulary knowledge in the post test. Studies analyzing the mobile technology's use in the different aspects of language learning have supported the idea that mobile technology can enhance learners' second and foreign language acquisition. Learners' attitudes towards technologies, their intention to use it, and the various actual uses of mobile technology integrated in their second and foreign language learning is a dominating research focus (Chang & Hsu, 2011). The result of this study was in line with Derakhshan and Kavianpanah (2011) who assessed the effectiveness of SMS on university students' vocabulary learning. They concluded that those who were exposed to SMS had more vocabulary gain and retention.



## CONCLUSION

This paper was generally an attempt to assess the effectiveness of using mobile phones in vocabulary learning of a group of Iranian EFL students. The first part of the article dealt with reviewing the related literature on using technology and mobile phones in the classroom. The second part was an attempt to elaborate on the experiment and the results. It was finally concluded that due to the significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups, the treatment had been a successful one in fostering the vocabulary knowledge of the students. Generally speaking, this study had a number of implications. First, this study showed that mobile phones can play a crucial part in learning vocabularies of a language. Another aspect worth mentioning is that this study was an attempt to help teachers, especially English teachers in developing countries who do not have enough opportunity to use sophisticated technologies in their classes. The technique offered in this study could be used by teachers in large classes. Finally, Like teachers, students can also take advantage of mobile learning. It can help them to learn and retain the large number of the foreign language vocabularies they are learning. Since the students are used to using their mobiles and sending and receiving SMS, they can use it as a complementary device to face to face instruction and assessment. In this way they can move toward a learner centered classroom and make students responsible for their own learning. Because the result of the present study confirmed the positive effect of SMS on learning of vocabularies. It goes without saying that every study faces a number of limitations which can not be avoided. Since the researchers used a modified version of IELTS as the proficiency test, it was not verified in terms of reliability, the same is true about the vocabulary pre and post- tests. Another limitation of this study refers to the term generalizability. Since the researchers had access to a limited number of participants, which may decrease the generalizability of the findings. The number of characters allowed in a short message was considered as a limitation. Due to this limitation, only a limited number of words could be sent in each attempt. Also the example sentences were chosen based on this limitation. Though many researches have been carried out towards MALL technology as a growing field of study in language learning and teaching, there are still so many works left to be done. Moreover, the methods with the help of which mobile device technology can be used to provide a more robust learning environment have to be further improved. More research is needed to explore that whether learning academic words via SMS can help learners to employ those words in extended discourse.

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## IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS' SELF-EFFICACY AND TEACHERS' BURNOUT: A CASE OF COMPARISON

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### ABSTRACT

In any foreign language setting, there are some variables that play an essential role in teachers' and consequently learners performances. Two of these important social psychological variables in teaching and educational context are self-Efficacy and burnout. This study has been conducted as a qualitative dominant mixed research design to explore the correlation between self-efficacy of Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers and their reports of burnout comparing two big provinces of Tehran and Khorasan Razavi. The data were gathered through the application of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach & Jackson 1981, 1986) and a researchers-made questionnaire of self-efficacy was designed by Motallebzadeh, Ashraf and Tabatabaee Yazdi (2013) which checked Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy. The participants were as 326 professional experienced teachers having university education. They were from both genders and different age groups. After obtaining the raw data, the SPSS software (version 16) was used to change the data into numerical interpretable form, using correlational analysis to determine any significant relationship between self-efficacy and teachers' burnout. The result showed that the participants' self-efficacy has a reverse relationship with their burnout. In addition, a significant relationship was observed between teachers' age, gender, years of experiences and reports of burnout.

**KEYWORDS:** Burnout, Self-Efficacy, ELT Teachers

### INTRODUCTION

The current decades seems to be known as the years of stress and intension. Studies revealed these two features as the most challenging and influential factors in human's life, for all contexts and work places. It is assumed that if people do not feel stressed for a few days or weeks; they suffer from a chronic stress condition that causes a feel of frustration and fatigue. They come across not only with emotional but also with physical problems. This condition has been called burnout by psychologists.

As cited in Skaalvik and Skaalvik, (2010) burnout is defined as a result of long-term occupational stress, especially among human service workers such as teachers (Jennett, Harris, Mesibov, 2003). Many teachers around the world may experience stress in their work (Jennett et al., 2003). Although most teachers cope successfully with such stress, burnout may be the endpoint of coping unsuccessfully with stress (Jennett et al., 2003).

As cited in Martin, Sass, and Schmitt, 2012, teacher intended-to-leave is very harmful to the profession. In the United States almost about one quarter of novice educators are not willing to continue their job after three years and by the fifth year this increases to 40%. (Milner & Woolfolk Hoy, 2003; National Center for Education Statistics, 2004; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003). Self-efficacy is known as an another influential factor in any job and life success, and defined as people beliefs about their own abilities to think, plan, monitor, organize, and perform activities needed in educational settings (Bandura, 1997, 2006).

This study was going to investigate the extent to which Iranian EFL teachers participating in their teaching classes leads to teacher burnout. Furthermore, the link between EFL teachers' self-efficacy and their burnout were examined with regard to demographics.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Understanding of teachers' perception of self-efficacy and the impressions of this knowledge play an essential role in teachers' decision-making and their action and methodologies that they use in the class (Pajares, 1992).

A question may be raised here why some teachers could tolerate the high level of stress and succeed in their job while some others cannot. This study aimed at investigating the role of teachers' self-efficacy and burnout as the two important reasons of this question.

#### ***Teachers' burnout***

Teaching is among those occupations with the highest levels of job stress (Chaplain, 2008; Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). Many studies have been done to investigate causes of stress and its consequences (e.g., Kokkinos, 2007; Kyriacou, 2001; Liu & Ramsey, 2008; Travers & Cooper, 1996). One of these consequences that is very important is teacher turnover (e.g., Harrison, Newman, & Roth, 2006; Perrachione, Rosser, & Petersen, 2008).

In any profession, turnover may lead to many straight costs (e.g., replacement costs, training costs). Turnover can be so influential because teacher turnover is related to many severe educational problems such as decreasing quality of education for the students (Levy, Fields, & Jablonski, 2006).

Teacher turnover refers to a teacher's readiness to leave the teaching profession. Researchers in field of education have recognized that work tension is positively related to turnover and negatively related to job satisfaction (e.g., Chen, 2007). For instance, Wright and Cropanzano (1998) noted that emotional exhaustion, which is a primary indicator of work stress and burnout, is a major predictor of voluntary turnover.

Decreasing of school effectiveness (Ingersoll, 2001; Shaw, Gupta, & Delery, 2005), productivity, and motivation (Tett & Meyer, 1993) can be the result of teachers' turn over. As cited in Devos, Dupriez & Paquay, 2012, the first years of teaching are a problematic era. Novice teachers come into a unique world; meet new things, unexpected condition and challenges. They are going to encounter dissimilar types of difficulties and problems, such as controlling classroom discipline, assessing learners' work, motivating learners (Britt, 1997; Ganser, 1999; Melnick & Meister, 2008; Veenman, 1984). Still, while this initial stage is frightening for some, it is a satisfying experience for others (Hebert & Worthy, 2001). How could this be clarified?

Besides the individual characteristics of the inexperienced teachers, the social working conditions (e.g. relationships with colleagues...) is a key for understanding how teachers cope with this era. Pyhältö, Pietarinen, and Salmela-Aro (2011) revealed the following:

"The teachers reported a range of different kinds of events and episodes causing destructive frictions and negative experiences in their work. The teachers perceived social interactions as being the most challenging and problematic part of their work in terms of burnout, on several different levels in their school community. Experienced burdening was situated in social interactions with the members of the school community." (p. 1105)

Recently, Akbari and Moradkhani (2010) explored relationship between teaching experience, and teacher efficacy among 447 Iranian EFL teachers. The results showed that experienced teachers experienced a significantly higher level efficacy.

As cited in Bruce 2009, "Strategies to avoid burnout include reducing stress, keeping personal health strong, building a strong social network, obtaining clear expectations in all facets of one's professional life, improving time management, participating in a mentoring program, and self-reflecting on personality characteristics that may be contributing to stress and burnout." (p. 57).

#### ***Teachers' self-efficacy***

Dewey (1903) claimed that all teachers should have "some regular and representative way in which he or she can register judgment upon matters of educational importance, with the assurance that this judgment will somehow affect the school system" (p. 199). Bandura's (1977) stated that one's self-efficacy beliefs are affected by two important

components: human agency and triadic reciprocal causation. The theory of human agency proposed that human beings are capable of shaping their lives (Bandura, 1982).

Still, this mechanism that through which human agency works is a multi-directional model that in which personal factors (e.g. cognition, and attitudes), and the external factors influence on each other (Bandura, 1997). In this mechanism, social setting, insight, and behavioral achievement influence on a teacher's judgment about his or her capabilities to positively affect student learning (self-efficacy).

Markley (2004, as cited in Ghasemi & Hashemi, 2011) indicated about the significant role of English language teachers in their academic success and learners' learning that highly depends on teachers and their methodologies in their classes. Strong self-efficacy makes teachers to be less critical about students' errors (Ashton & Webb, 1986), to work more with students who feel stress (Gibson & Dembo, 1984), and to be more patient with students' difficulty (Meijer & Foster, 1988; Podell & Soodak, 1993; Soodak & Podell, 1993). Moreover, teachers show greater enthusiasm for teaching (Allinder, 1994; Guskey, 1984; Hall, Burley, Villeme, & Brockmeier, 1992).

Self-efficacy could be related to a number of significant factors related to education, including student achievement (e.g., McLaughlin & Marsh, 1978; Muijs & Reynolds, 2002), student motivation (e.g., Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989), educational innovations (e.g., Cousins & Walker, 2000), classroom management skills (Wool-folk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990), and teacher stress (Greenwood, Olejnik, & Parkay, 1990).

Moafian and Ghanizadeh (2009) investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and emotional intelligence among 89 EFL teachers from several private language institutes in Mashhad, Iran. Their findings showed that there was a significant relationship between teacher self-efficacy and emotional intelligence. Further, Vaezi and Fallah (2011) explored the connection between self-efficacy and anxiety in a sample of Iranian EFL teachers in private language institutes. The results showed an important negative correlation between self-efficacy and stress.

Akbari and Moradkhani (2010) studied relationship between teaching experience, academic degree and teacher efficacy among 447 Iranian EFL teachers. The results of data analysis revealed that experienced teachers (with more than three years of teaching experience) had a significantly higher level of efficacy, efficacy for classroom management, efficacy for student engagement, and efficacy for instructional strategies compared to their novice counterparts.

Rastegar and Memarpour (2009) explored teacher self-efficacy with respect to teacher emotion and demographic variables in an EFL context in Shiraz, Iran. The results showed a positive correlation between teacher emotional intelligence and self-efficacy.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Generally, researches point out to two main findings: 1) teachers are more in danger than other workers to burnout symptoms (see De Heus & Diekstra, 1999; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998), and 2) burnout affects teachers around the world (Byrne, 1999; Rudow, 1999).

In Iran, these days, most teachers are facing different social problems such as inflation that makes them feel social stressed and tension. Blasé (1982) has shown that stress and burnout affect teachers' job satisfaction, and reduce efficiency when working with students. Moreover, it seems that teachers with a high self-efficacy are happier, more creative, and more effective in their duties as teachers.

Teachers' methodologies and their actions in the class and the way they recognize and arrange instruction extremely depend on their ideologies of effective teaching and their ideas about teacher efficacy (Ghaith & Shaaban, 1999; Chacón, 2005). Then, the teachers' ideas of an effective teacher can highly affect their teaching and accordingly their learners' learning (Dembo & Gibson, 1985; Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000).

Understanding of teachers' perception of self-efficacy and the impressions of this knowledge play an essential role in teachers' decision-making and their action and methodologies that they use in the class (Pajares, 1992). Since language learning mostly takes place in formal language setting and as a foreign language, knowing these issues are very important in Iranian context (Kariminia & Salehizadeh, 2007).

Subsequently teachers have a key role in all societies and the success of learners' future depends on teachers' affective conditions, the most important significant of the present study is helping teachers enhance their self-

efficacy and reduce their burnout, by determining the relationship between burnout and self-efficacy. Consequently, the learners can make more benefit from their teachers and the whole class.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Consequently, the study addresses the following research questions:

- 1) Is there any significant relationship between teachers' self-efficacy, and their feelings of burnout?
- 2) Is there any significant relationship between teachers' report of burnout to their age?
- 3) Is there any significant relationship between teachers' burnout with regard to their gender?
- 4) Is there any significant relationship between teachers' burnout and their years of the experiences?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

Participants of this study were 326 EFL teachers from two big provinces of Iran. Selection was done from all available professional experienced teachers having university education (Bachelor: 184; Master: 136 and PhD: 6). They were both males (102) and females (224) and aged between 20 and +40 years old with a range of between -1 and +10 years of teaching experience. Their field of study was Teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL) (239), English Translation (57), and English literature (30). All of them were supposed to pass Teaching Training Courses (TTC) whether in University or Institute.

### *Instruments*

The needed data were gathered through the application of one standard and one researcher-made questionnaires. In addition, demographic form asked about the participants' demographic information including age, gender, and years of teaching experience.

#### *1. Teacher's burnout scale*

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach & Jackson 1981, 1986) that is one of the universal instruments used for assessing burnout was used in this study. The questionnaire consisted of three sub-dimensions; emotional exhaustion sub-dimension (EE, 9 items, maximum score – 54), desensitization sub-dimension (D, 5 items, maximum score – 30), and personal accomplishment sub dimension (PA, 8 items, maximum score – 48). Higher emotional exhaustion and desensitization sub-dimensions and lower personal accomplishment sub-dimensions cause high burnout status (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Prior research confirmed the validity, reliability of this questionnaire (Iwanicki & Schwab, 1981; Gold, 1985). Additionally, reliabilities for data gathered from each of the three scales ranged from .76 to .90 (Iwanicki & Schwab, 1981) and .72 to .88 (Gold, 1985). Reliabilities for data in the present study were similar and acceptable (EE: .89, DP: .71, PA: .71).

#### *2. Teacher's self-efficacy scale*

For measuring teachers' self-efficacy a researchers made questionnaire was designed, by Motallebzadeh, Ashraf and Tabatabaee Yazdi (2013) which checked Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy, based on the (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy 2001) and (Bandura, 1997) Instrument Teacher Self-efficacy Scale, and (Murdoch, 1997) Good Teacher's questionnaire. This 30-item researcher-made questionnaire was conducted according to the following 5 subscales: efficacy to influence decision making (2 items, maximum scores \_ 10), instructional efficacy (15 items, maximum score – 45), disciplinary efficacy (2 items, maximum score – 10), efficacy to enlist parental and community involvement (3 items, maximum score – 15), and efficacy to create a positive school climate (8 items, maximum score – 40). Each item is measured on a 5-point scale: "nothing, very little, some influence, quite a bit, a great deal." The Self-Efficacy questionnaire used in this study was given to two linguists and specialists to judge its validity. Some items were modified and others were deleted until the researchers came up with a final draft of 30 items, and the reliability was estimated using Cronbach's Alpha .90.



### Procedure

In this study, 236 participants who are all Iranian ELT teachers in different language schools from two big provinces of Iran (Tehran and Khorasan Razavi) were selected. They were from both genders and from different ages with different years of experiences. In this study, for collecting the data, questionnaires in the form of papers and online (using Google drive) were spread up to different English Language teachers. These teachers were from different subfields of the study within English Language field. Collecting data started at April 2013 and lasted for about 2 weeks. The probable needed time for filling out both questionnaires was about 10 minutes.

Gathering data was summarized by the use of SPSS software (Version 16). Then, the correlation between these two variables was calculated. To analyze the data further, linear regression analysis was conducted to find out to what extent self-efficacy might have predictive power in teachers' overall burnout.

### RESULT

Table (1) presents categorization of sub-scales of burnout and self-efficacy scales and their related Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients based on the data collected from the 616 participants of the study.

*Table 1: Classification of different items of burnout and self efficacy scales, cronbach alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ )*

Scales/sub-scales	Items	( $\alpha$ )
<b>Burnout</b>		
Emotional Exhaustion	1, 4, 9, 10, 15, 16, 18, 20, 22	.89
Reduced Personal Accomplishment	3*, 6*, 7*, 12*, 13*, 17*, 19*, 21*	.71
Depersonalization	2, 5, 8, 11, 14	.71
<b>Self-efficacy</b>		
Efficacy to Influence Decision Making	1, 2	.82
Instructional Efficacy	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17	.87
Disciplinary Efficacy	18, 19	.71
Efficacy to Enlist Parental and Community Involvement	20, 21, 22	.71
Efficacy to Create a Positive School Climate	23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30	.74

\* Scored in reverse order

Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted to examine the role of teachers' self-efficacy in their burnout. The results indicated significant negative correlations between self-efficacy and burnout ( $r = -0.61$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This is in accordance with Vaezi and Fallah (2011) that discovered a significant negative correlation between self-efficacy and job stress among a sample of Iranian EFL teachers in private language institutes. In addition, as table 2 revealed all sub-scales of teacher self-efficacy were negatively correlated with teachers' burnout.

*Table 2: correlation between teachers' self efficacy and burnout*

Burnout	( $r$ )
Total Self-efficacy	- 0.58**
Efficacy to Influence Decision Making	- 0.24**
Instructional Efficacy	- 0.56**
Disciplinary Efficacy	- 0.45**
Efficacy to Enlist Parental and Community Involvement	- 0.40**
Efficacy to Create a Positive School Climate	- 0.50**

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Moreover, two components of teacher's burnout, namely Emotional Exhaustion, and Depersonalization were negatively associated with teachers' self-efficacy as follows: self-efficacy and (1) Emotional Exhaustion ( $r = -0.42$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and (2) Depersonalization ( $r = -0.49$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), but the third component, namely (3) Reduced Personal Accomplishment, is positively correlated with teachers' self-efficacy ( $r = -0.45$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

These findings are in accordance and agreement with the study of Hakanen, Bakker and Schaufeli (2006) that revealed both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization correlated negatively with turnover and health among Finnish teachers. On the other hand, a positive relationship was found between personal achievement and self-efficacy ( $r = .45$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

To analyze the data further, linear regression analysis was conducted to find out to what extent self-efficacy might have predictive rule in teachers' overall burnout. The results indicated that teachers' total score of self-efficacy was negatively predictor of burnout. In this analysis, Total Self-efficacy and its constructs explained 38% of the variance in teachers' burnout. Of these variables Instructional self-efficacy and Efficacy to create a positive school climate made the largest unique contribution.



Considering different provinces, the results revealed significant negative correlations between self-efficacy and burnout in Tehran ( $r = -0.62$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and Khorasan-Razavi ( $r = -0.58$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). These indicated that the higher significant negative correlation in case of province was for Tehran. To know any relationship between burnout and teachers' gender, independent sample T-test was used. According to mean differences between male and female teachers, result showed that burnout among female teachers is higher than among male teachers ( $\text{sig.} = 0.03 < 0.05$ ). This finding is in accordance with Anderson and Iwanicki's (1984) but in contrast with that of Borg and Riding (1991) result which revealed significantly higher levels of burnout among male teachers. In this regard, Schwab and Iwanicki (1982) found that male teachers reported more frequency and intense feeling of depersonalization towards their students compared to female teachers.

Moreover, the result revealed significant differences between male and female teachers regarding self-efficacy ( $\text{sig.} = 0.03 < 0.05$ ). In this case, male teachers seem to be more efficient than female that is in accordance with burnout results of this study. On the other hand, the more efficient teachers, the less sense of burnout was observed.

In addition Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted. The results revealed significant negative correlations between self-efficacy and burnout for both genders. Male ( $r = -0.62$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and Female ( $r = -0.60$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The result showed that correlation is higher in Male groups. To investigate the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and burnout and their age, Pearson product-moment correlation was run again. The results revealed significant positive correlation between burnout and age ( $r = 0.90$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

More detailed analysis showed that there was a significant negative correlation between teachers' burnout and self-efficacy among male teachers of the age between 26-30 ( $r = -0.32$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), but for the case of female teachers the correlation was significant in age groups of 20-25 ( $r = -0.31$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), 26-30 ( $r = -0.37$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and 31-35 ( $r = -0.41$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Further, findings of the present study indicated a significant positive correlation between EFL teachers' age and their burnout ( $r = 0.9$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). In other words, teachers' burnout tends to increase overtime. This is consistent with previous research that demonstrated that age is an important factor in predicting teacher burnout. Moreover, no significant correlation was seen between EFL teachers' self-efficacy and their age.

Moreover, the study revealed significant correlation at the level of B.A. ( $r = -0.51$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and higher in male teachers. Also the correlation is significant at the M.A. level ( $r = -0.73$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), but higher in females. As a result, these findings revealed feeling of burnout was higher for M.A. teachers and no sign of burnout for PhD teachers.

Furthermore, qualitative data that gathered using two open-ended questions revealed that teachers perceived financial issues as being the most demanding and problematic element of their work in terms of burnout (27%), for example, one teacher stated that "payment principles don't appreciate your efforts." Additionally, many teachers stated lack of self-confidence and motivation as the reasons of burdening (12.8%). Several teachers believed that they had some trouble with the materials and books they taught (10%).

## **DISCUSSION**

The current study investigated the possible relationships of burnout, and self-efficacy with some socio-demographic and occupational characteristics of Iranian EFL teachers working at different institutes. The findings proposed that some EFL teachers, mainly younger feel more success in their profession, and they could be more successful at reducing the level of burnout. This may have suggestions for teachers' well-being, motivation and teaching efficiency and accordingly emphasize the value of setting up some courses for EFL teachers to increase efficacy.

To efficiently deal with teacher burnout, EFL teachers, should develop skills in controlling their stress levels. In addition, the role of language institute managers to provide assistance and support from others (e.g., colleagues, supervisors) are of utmost importance. Qualitative data, which was collected through open-ended questions to capture the things that promoted teacher burnout experiences, supported these findings in terms of self-efficacy gains. Many teachers indicated a desire to increase their effectiveness and specially recorded Iranian teachers' reports of burnout, mainly in fifteen aspects.

To summarize, the qualitative data analysis revealed that teachers consider different factors as the main cause of burnout among teachers. They have different priorities and this range of priorities leads to considering different factors as the underlying causes of burnout among teachers. It seems that different teachers get burned out differently and it makes the task more grueling. All the aforementioned factors have to be considered by all policy makers, managerial sectors and even syllabus designers in all processes of their decision making. To obliterate all these underlying causes, cooperation among different educational sections seems necessary. It means to reduce the amount of burnout among teachers the involvement of different groups is necessary.

Furthermore, teachers proposed different kinds of reasons for burdening and low level of self-efficacy. For example they indicated financial issues as the most demanding and problematic reasons of burdening. Moreover, several teachers believed that they had some trouble with the materials and books they taught. A lack of professional and qualified teachers, educational rules and policies, not positive and friendly atmosphere among colleagues/supervisors and managers, students with behavior problem and not qualified supervisors and managers were characteristic of the reasons that were considered as burdening by the teachers.

In addition, data revealed clearly that the majority of teachers reported that modernized work place and being up-to-date could be the best solution as one stating that "using internet for being updated on regular basis, taking part in teacher development courses like TESOL, exchange experiences with my fellow teachers". Twenty one percent of teachers complained about their low salaries. They compared their salaries to the cost of living.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study illustrated that all five constructs of self-efficacy were reversely correlated with teacher burnout. Therefore, the results confirmed our hypotheses. In this study, burnout was at least moderately correlated to efficacy to influence decision making, instructional efficacy, disciplinary efficacy, efficacy to enlist parental and community involvement, and efficacy to create a positive school climate as sub-scales of self-efficacy. Further, findings of the present study indicated a significant positive correlation between EFL teachers' age and their burnout. In other words, teachers' burnout tends to increase overtime. This is consistent with previous research that demonstrated that age is an important factor in predicting teacher burnout.

The results also indicated a negative correlation between EFL teachers' self-efficacy and years of teaching experience, as well as age. In other words, teachers' self-efficacy tends to decrease over time and with every year of teaching. This is not in accordance with findings of Chester (1996) who revealed that beliefs are mediated by the teachers' age and prior experience. These results were also in contrast with those of Campbell (1993) who showed teachers with more experience were more efficacious.

It was also found that there was significant difference in the teachers' self-efficacy with respect to gender. In this case, male teachers seem to be more efficient than female that is in accordance with burnout results of this study. On the other hand, the more efficient teachers, the less sense of burnout was observed. Moreover, the results of the present study indicated that there were significant burnout differences among EFL teachers with respect to gender. In other words, male teachers' burnout level was significantly higher than that of the females. This finding is in contrast with Anderson and Iwanichi's (1984) but in accordance with that of Borg and Riding (1991) result which revealed significantly higher levels of burnout among male teachers. Moreover, in this regard, Schwab and Iwanicki (1982) found that male teachers showed more intense feeling of depersonalization towards their students compared to female teachers. This finding is consistent with the findings of Pierce and Molloy (1990). They mentioned that teachers with positive self-concept are more productive, happier and more effective in their job. Pierce and Molloy (1990) also reported that male teachers perceived themselves as less self-confident than female teachers.

## (De)LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study, like any other researches, suffers from some limitations that may raise some new questions for further research in the field. The most important limitation included in the study would be the working conditions under which all the teachers participating in the study are working including the commuting difficulties to work, the payment, or the physical condition of the working place and above all the colleagues and the manager. Furthermore, this study did not consider high school or university teachers due to the accessibility and availability of the teachers and the working places to the researcher. Consequently, it is going to merely focus on English teachers in language institutes. Therefore, it can be claimed that the findings of this research could be well fit with institutional EFL teachers.

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## THE EFFECT OF KEEPING PORTFOLIOS ON WRITING ABILITY OF ADVANCED EFL LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT

The present study attempted to discover the impact of keeping portfolios on the improvement of the advanced English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' writing. In order to have homogeneous groups, a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) proficiency test was given to 60 participants of the study and 48 of them were selected, and then they were randomly assigned to comparison and experimental groups. Since the study concentrated on writing ability a writing pretest was administered to both groups to make sure they were also homogeneous in terms of writing ability. The experimental group was exposed to portfolio assessment and instruction while the comparison group received the traditional writing instruction and assessment. After 10 sessions of treatment, a posttest similar to the pretest was administered. The result of the study indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the groups. The conclusion was that keeping portfolios can contribute to progress of the students in terms of writing ability and it can be used as a promising testing and teaching tool in English language classes.

**KEY WORDS:** writing ability, portfolio instruction, portfolio assessment.

### INTRODUCTION

Based on Brown (2004), in the field of second or foreign language teaching and learning, writing is a unique skill with its own conventions and features. Writing effectively and clearly in a logical and well-developed organization is a main purpose of every writing treatment. Unlike the other skill, assessing writing is not a simple task. The traditional methods of assessing writing were not really successful in helping students in improving their writing ability. But, developing alternative assessments like portfolios have had high washback effect on writing classes. Chapelle and Brindley (2010), state that portfolio is purposeful collection of students' work over the time and contains their language performance at different stages of completion, as well as the students' own observations on his or her progress. Assessments may be focused on many purposes, but the most important role is always to improve instruction for each student. According to Gordon (2008), writing is an aid and support for other skills; it focuses on accuracy and communication of meaning. Morrison-Saunders, Bell and Retief (2012) point out that since most of university works are around writing, it is considered as a fundamental skill to the university students in academics experiences.

#### *Direct and indirect methods of gathering data for assessment*

Allen (2008) states that generally there is two basic ways to assess students' writing: first one is direct assessment which is based on an analysis of student products, in which they demonstrate how well they have mastered learning outcomes; next one is indirect assessment which is based on an analysis of reported views about students mastery of learning outcomes. Cooper (1984) also believes that direct assessment requires the examinees to write one or more essays, typically on preselected topics and indirect assessment requires them to answer multiple-choice items. He also states that direct assessment is sometimes referred to as a "production" measure and indirect assessment as a "recognition" measure. In Fraidan (2005) point of view, while direct approach of assessing writing has been criticized for its subjectivity, indirect approach is popular for being objective and producing the same result in the future.

#### *Formal approach to scoring writing*

To make plan for administering an approach to writing assessment there may be varieties of scoring methods and combination of methods like holistic, primary trait and analytic assessment for different purposes in different writing



tasks. Bacha (2001) believes that holistic and analytic scoring instruments or rating scales have been used to identify students' writing proficiency levels for different purposes in EFL/ESL programs.

*Table 1: A comparison of holistic and analytic scales in terms of qualities of test usefulness (Weigle, 2002)*

Quality	Holistic Scales	Analytic Scales
Reliability	lower than analytic, but still acceptable	higher than holistic
Construct Validity	assume that all relevant aspects of writing ability develop at the same rate and can thus be captured in a single score; correlate with superficial aspects such as length and handwriting	more appropriate for L2 writers as different aspects of writing ability develop at different rates
Practicality	relatively fast and easy	time-consuming; expensive

Breland (1983) quotes from Diederich (1974) that in analytic scoring, the writing samples scored by experts representing several different academic disciplines. Primary trait scoring is also known as focused holistic scoring, and it is resemble to holistic scoring. Brown (2004) states that this kind of scoring focus on task at hand and assigns a score based on the effectiveness of the text's achieving that goal, for example if the goal or content of writing is to write an persuasive essay, the score evaluation would rise or fall on the achievement of that function.

### ***Writing ability test***

While some scholars talk about intensive and extensive writing, some others have known them as controlled and free composition. Brown (2004) clarified intensive or controlled writing as a form-focused writing, grammar writing or simply guided writing and talks about extensive or free writing in which learners can exercise a number of options in choosing words, structure, and discourse that is freed from strict control of intensive writing. According to Farhady, Ja'farpour, and Birjandi (2009), controlled writing is utilized to recognize or complete grammatical sentences to assess the learner's ability to convey certain thoughts in writing; it consists of some type of written model with directions for conversations or language uses in rewriting the model. They also believe that free writing or composition writing includes a topic for the examinees to write a composition of a definite length. To Hyland (2003), in controlled writing fixed patterns from substitution table will be employed and in free writing patterns have developed by learners to write essay, letter, and so on.

### ***Portfolios***

khodadady and Khodabakhshzade (2012)note that portfolio is a collection of texts that writer has produced in a definite period of time. According to Davis and Ponnampuruma (2005), a portfolio is gathering various forms of evidence of achievement of learning outcomes; the student portfolio for assessment aims is a set of reports, papers, and other material, together with the student's consideration on his or her learning and on strengths and weaknesses. Based on Aydin (2010), students usually have positive reactions toward portfolio; it helps learners to analyze literary texts, write in different styles, demonstrate an awareness of the target language culture, improves proficiency skills, content knowledge, and grammatical competence; it also reduces writing anxiety, and promotes students' motivation to learn a foreign language.

Syafei (2012) believes that there are several types of portfolio: First, showcase portfolios which are usually used to show a student's best work to parents and school administrators. Next, collections portfolios which are student's work to present how students deal with day to day class assignments or *working folders* which may contain rough drafts, sketches, works-in-progress, and final products and finally, assessment portfolios which are presented as reflections of specific learning goals that consist of systematic collections of students' work, student self-assessment, and teacher assessment. According to Davis and Ponnampuruma (2005), Portfolio assessment has five stages:

1. Collection of evidence of learning outcomes achievement during day-to-day learning activities.
2. Reflection on learning to promote learning, personal and professional development, and improvement of practice.
3. Evaluation of evidence or quality of the evidence.
4. Defense of evidence of how well the portfolio has reflected the achievement of the learning outcomes.
5. Assessment decision or Pre-validated rating scales to assess the evidence.

Moya and O'Malley (1994) use both formal and informal assessment methods, emphasizes on both the processes and products of learning, try to understand student language progress in the linguistic, cognitive, metacognitive, and affective domains, it contains teacher, student, and objective input, and also stresses both academic and informal language development. These are the characteristics that make portfolios as a popular alternative assessment in the frame work of communicative language teaching.

However, testing and rating writing is a long process; it seems to be more delicate than other skills and needs more time and attention. In this way there are different kinds of writing assessment such as direct, indirect, formal, informal, and Portfolios assessments which are also direct method of writing assessment. This study attempted to investigate the impact of keeping portfolios on students' writing progress.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

Given the importance of the writing ability in learning a new language and the opportunities that portfolios provide, the present study addresses the following question:

“ Does keeping portfolios have any significant effect on EFL students' writing ability ?” To what extent?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

The participants of this study were 60 advanced students from 3 language institutes in Mashhad, Iran. After administering a TOEFL proficiency test, 48 of them were randomly assigned in two experimental and the comparison groups. Although both male and female had participated in this study but gender was not considered as a moderator. They were advanced EFL learners who were tested on the effect of portfolio assessment.

### *Instrumentation*

The instruments used in this study included a proficiency test which was the truncated version of TOEFL (TOEFL, published by ETS, 2010) proficiency, a pretest, and a posttest as well. At the beginning of the study since the researchers aimed to apply their treatment on advanced students, they were given a TOEFL proficiency test. After the participants had assigned in two groups, a writing pretest was also administered to both groups to make sure they were homogeneous in terms of writing ability. To explore the utility and efficiency of the treatment a writing posttest was conducted at the end of the research. In both pre/posttests the participants were asked to write a paper based on the same topics between two groups. Since the researchers used a modified version of TOEFL as the proficiency test, it was not verified in terms of reliability, the same is true about the vocabulary pre and post- tests.

### *Design and Procedure*

Since the purpose of this research was to investigate the impact of keeping portfolio on improvement of writing skill, an experimental method was selected. Through administering a language proficiency test between 60 advanced students who attended the TOEFL proficiency class in 3 language institutes in Mashhad, Iran. Those students whose scores fell between on standard deviation above and below the mean were included in the study. Out of the 60 students, 48 of them were selected and their close homogeneity was confirmed by utilizing the statistical technique of t-test. In order to fulfill the research the treatment applied in 10 sessions between two experimental and comparison groups. In comparison group students received traditional writing assessment; every session learners were given a topic to write about, the teacher read and scored the students' papers. But in experimental group, after choosing the topic, learners wrote up their first drafts, then, under each assignment teacher wrote his comments about the different aspects of students' written tasks. Therefore, the students gained information about their strengths and weaknesses of their essays. They also were asked to self-assess or reflect on their writing in the classroom and evaluate themselves. Then, at home, the students revised and redrafted their writings based on teacher's comments and their own reflection.

## RESULT

At the beginning of the research, a writing pretest was administered in order to determine the ability of the subjects in terms of writing skill. This would enable the researchers to investigate the possible impact of the treatment on the improvement of the writing ability of the experimental group. The descriptive statistics of the writing pretest are reported in Table 2.

*Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the Two Groups on the Writing Pre-test*

Group				
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Post-test	Control	24	11.93	2.13
	Experimental	24	11.91	2.42

To guarantee the homogeneity of the subjects regarding their current writing ability, the researcher ran a t-test. As it has been shown in Table 3, the t- observed of 0.129 was lower than the t- critical of 2.02 at 0.05 level of significance for 46 degrees of freedom. Thus it could be claimed that the two groups were not significantly different in terms of writing before undergoing the treatment.

*Table 3: Comparison between Variances and Means of the Two Groups on the Writing Pre-test*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F observed	F critical	t observed	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	t critical
Pre-test Equal variances assumed	1.28	.001	-.129	46	0.86	0.02	2.02

After the instruction, the subjects in both groups sat for the post test. The descriptive statistics of the post test for both groups are presented in Table 4.

*Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of the two Groups on the Writing Post-test*

Group				
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Post-test	Control	24	12.56	2.31
	Experimental	24	15.31	2.28

The researchers ran an independent t-test (Table 5) to analyze the means of two groups on the posttest. Since the t observed value of 6.25 at 46 degrees of freedom was greater than the t critical of 2.02, the null hypothesis could be safely rejected at 0.05 level of significance leading to the conclusion that the treatment was effective enough to make a significant difference between the experimental and comparison groups. Consequently, it could be concluded that keeping portfolios would certainly improve students' writing ability.

Table 5: Comparison between variances and Means of the Two Groups on the Writing Post-test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F observed	F critical	t observed	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	t critical
Post-test Equal variances assumed	1.02	1.69	6.25	46	0.02	2.75	2.02

## DISCUSSION

Portfolio assessment and instruction could be used in writing classes on the one hand to resolve the teaching-testing incoherence (Walker & Perez Riu, 2008) prevalent in most EFL/ESL writing classes and on the other hand to boost students' achievement in writing ability. In sum, this study demonstrated the potential of portfolio assessment to help students foster their English writing ability. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were utilized to find out the impact of keeping portfolios on EFL learners' writing ability. The results showed that portfolio assessment and instruction as a process-oriented teaching and assessment tool improved the students' overall writing ability and the sub-skills of focus, elaboration, organization and vocabulary. The students also perceived the positive effects of portfolio assessment on the product as well as the process of English writing. The positive effects of portfolios on students' writing might be due to the "opportunities they afford students to become actively involved in assessment and learning" (Genesee & Upshur, 1996, p.99). In line with Murphy (2006), learning processes can be improved if formative assessment procedures are applied appropriately.

The students in the experimental group were actively involved in assessment and learning in the process-oriented portfolio program. They revisited, reflected on and revised their writing during the term and put their selected pieces of writing in their portfolios. In line with Hagstorn (2006), the constructivist approach in which formative assessment procedures are incorporated into teaching and learning, assessment should be viewed as a process designed for learning rather than a product separated from learning.

Keeping portfolios can be used in EFL classes as a mechanism whereby learning, teaching and assessment are linked. They can be used to boost the development of EFL/ESL students' writing ability. Students' genuine writing performances during the term should be the target of the evaluation. In fact, assessment should be seen as a collaborative formative process which helps students as they move toward their writing goals.

## CONCLUSION

As mentioned earlier, the main aim of this study was to find out the impact of keeping portfolio on students' writing. The results of quantitative data analysis indicated that portfolio assessment affected the students' achievement in their overall writing as well as their achievement in terms of focus, elaboration, organization, vocabulary, etc. To some extent, the results are also in accord with Fahed Al-Serhani 's (2007) findings that portfolio assessment significantly improves students' writing performance in general and the product skills of purpose, content, organization, vocabulary, sentence structure and mechanics in particular. Similarly, Khodashenas and Salehi (2012) find that portfolio-based writing instruction and assessment is an appropriate alternative in terms of writing. They conclude that, Portfolio assessment help students foster their English writing ability since they receive useful comments from teacher and actively involvement in process of assessment by themselves. It is also consistent with Elahinia's (2004) findings that portfolio assessment significantly improves students' overall writing ability.

There are several limitations to this study. First and foremost is that the portfolio score is considered to be the average of scores on the five selected pieces of writing. In other writing portfolio programs quantitative grades could be accompanied by a qualitative profile of students' efforts and achievements, hence reporting assessment results in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Second, age, gender and affective factors which are left untouched in the present study could be dealt with in further research to see if they moderate the effect of portfolio assessment on writing and its sub-skills. Third, the participants in this study were all in the advance level of proficiency which limits the generalizability of the result only to this proficiency level. Finally, the time span for this study is limited to only ten sessions of instruction, about five weeks which may affect the external validity or generalizability of the result.

Some suggestions could be generated from this study for future research on portfolio-based writing assessment and instruction. Firstly, since most EFL/ESL teachers in Iran are unfamiliar with portfolio-based assessment/instruction, and teachers play an essential role in this field, more research should be undertaken to explore the teachers' perception of this new approach to assessment. Secondly, due to the limit of time and space, the current study only lasted for ten sessions (five weeks). However, time might make a difference regarding learners' attitude, strategy and writing ability. To put it another way, some effects might not occur in such a short time. Therefore, further research needs to be carried out for a longer period of time, for instance, a semester or even longer.

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## CONSIDERING CHALLENGES IN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF E-ASSESSMENT

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### ABSTRACT

The world stepped into the era of online information and technologies that virtually have impact on all sides of human life including economics, education, social and cultural sides (Shojaei, Motamedi, & Nekoueizadeh, 2013). The idea of having our assessments computerized is obviously attractive and e-assessment is emerging as a major driver to e-learning for administrators, instructors and learners. E-Assessment (sometimes known as Online Assessment, Computer-based Assessment or Computer Assisted Assessment-CAA) certainly has advantages, disadvantages and associated problems. Expansion of virtual e-assessment is one of the most appropriate approaches to make higher education easier and more convenient for learners by accessing to self-assessment. The existence of maladministration assessment at any educational level has the greatest threat to the validity and reliability of any examination and consequently to the authenticity and recognition of issued diploma. Therefore, there are many debates over how e-assessment should be designed and administered, and this leads to curriculum design and policy. By considering that e-assessment systems must be stable in order to generate valid and reliable assessments results, this paper tries to replicate and discuss a conceptual framework for implementation of authentic e-assessment in web-based courses.

**KEY WORDS:** E-assessment, Authentic e-assessment, framework for implementation

### AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT IN WEB-BASED COURSES

The two most important reasons for using authentic competency-based assessments are (a) their construct validity and (b) their impact on student learning, also called consequential validity (Gielen, Dochy, & Dierick, 2003). Construct validity of an assessment is related to whether an assessment measures what it is supposed to measure. With respect to competency assessment this means that (a) tasks must appropriately reflect the competency that needs to be assessed, (b) the content of an assessment involves authentic tasks that represent real-life problems of the knowledge domain assessed, and (c) the thinking processes that experts use to solve the problem in real life are also required by the assessment task (Gielen et al., 2003). Based on these criteria, authentic competency-based assessments have higher construct validity for measuring competencies than the so-called objective or traditional tests. Consequential validity describes the intended and unintended effects of assessment on instruction or teaching (Biggs, 1996) and student learning (Dochy & McDowell, 1998). As stated, Biggs's (1996) theory of constructive alignment stresses that effective education requires instruction, learning, and assessment to be compatible.

If students perceive a mismatch between the messages of the instruction and the assessment, a positive impact on student learning is unlikely (Segers, Dierick, & Dochy, 2001). This impact of assessment on instruction and on student learning is corroborated by researchers as Frederiksen (1984, "The Real Test Bias"), Prodromou (1995, "Backwash Effect"), Gibbs (1992, "Tail Wags the Dog"), and Sambell and McDowell (1998, "Hidden Curriculum"). Frederiksen (1984) and Prodromou (1995) implied that tests have a strong influence on what is taught, because teachers teach to test, even though the test might focus on things the teacher does not find most important.

Some consider authentic assessment as a synonym for performance assessment (Hart, 1994; Torrance, 1995), while others argue that authentic assessment puts a special emphasis on the realistic value of the task and the context (Herrington & Herrington, 1998). Reeves and Okey (1996) pointed out that the crucial difference between performance assessment and authentic assessment is the degree of fidelity of the task and the conditions under which the performance would normally occur. Authentic assessment focuses on high fidelity, whereas this is not important issue in performance assessment. These distinctions between performance and authentic assessment indicate that every authentic assessment is performance assessment, but not vice versa (Meyer, 1992).



Savery and Duffy (1995) defined authenticity of an assessment as the similarity between the cognitive demands-the thinking required-of the assessment and the cognitive demands in the criterion situation on which the assessment is based. A criterion situation reflects or simulates a real-life situation that could confront students in their internship or future professional life. Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000) argued that dealing only with the thinking required is too narrow. In their view, students need to develop competencies because real life demands the ability to integrate and coordinate knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and the capacity to apply them in new situations (Van Merriënboer, 1997). Birenbaum (1996) further specified the competency concept by emphasizing that students need to develop not only cognitive competencies such as problem solving and critical thinking, but also meta-cognitive competencies such as reflection, and social competencies such as communication and collaboration.

In light of the constructive alignment theory (Biggs, 1996) authentic assessment should be aligned to authentic instruction in order to positively influence student learning. Authentic assessment requires students to demonstrate relevant competencies through a significant, meaningful, and worthwhile accomplishment (Resnick, 1987; Wiggins, 1993).

Computing-mediated distance education introduces extraneous factors that could affect the validity of the course assessment system. One of these factors is identified as the usability of the web site. Usability deals with how well a system satisfies user needs and requirements. It applies to all the aspects of a system with which a user might interact, including installation and maintenance procedures (Orde, 2001). Another factor is attitude. Weller (2002) examines technical barriers in the assessment process of a web-based course, and points out the tension between individuality and robustness in submissions and the detection of plagiarism. Clarke et. al. (2004) state that feedback to students on their assignments is an essential activity. They point out that tutorial support must be a crucial part of good distance course, where emails should be considered as a non-intrusive means of communication. Orde (2001) offers some suggestions to develop online courses, for instance: to consider a description of learners; to provide readily available technical support; to eliminate group activities easily done face-to-face; and to record and grade interactions such as e-mail and group discussion contributions. To Orde, the testing portion of Course Info requires that each quiz item be individually entered and submitted. If this feature of the software is used, the ID students advise allowing multiple attempts. To Orde, formative evaluation is an essential component and necessary to online course development.

Gatlin and Jacob (2002) discuss advantages of digital portfolios as part of one university's authentic pre-service teacher assessment. Fenwick and Parsons (1997) assert that effective assessment must be intricately woven throughout the teaching-learning process. Collaborative learning activities enable subjects to share their abilities and limitations, providing a better quality product than one that is the mere sum of individual contributions. Group interactions, following the indications for collaborative work given in a course, facilitate vicarious learning, which is hard for some subjects to experience if they do not interact with their peers (Bandura & Walters, 1963; Vygotsky, 1986).

Tools for objective testing, within virtual learning environments and within dedicated assessment engines (e.g. Question Mark Perception) allow teachers to orchestrate frequent assessment testing (e.g. online objective testing) which can be used both to offer flexibility in the time and place of assessment and/or to encourage students to spend more 'time on task' out of class. Time on task has been correlated with enhanced student learning (Chickering & Gamson, 2001) with many studies showing that frequent objective testing enhances the performance of students in final exams (cited in Haigh, 2007).

Computer-supported assessment also makes it possible to enrich and make assessment tasks more authentic, for example, incorporating multimedia presentations and to enable better alignment of tests to student's levels of understanding (Conole & Warburton, 2005). For instance, as a test of their understanding, students learning a foreign language might watch a recorded video of current affairs program and answer objective questions relating to the content (Nicol, 2009). Adaptive testing involves modifying the nature of the test based on the responses the student has made to earlier tests. Although modifying interactions in this way can be achieved in paper tests, this is far more efficient in computer-supported environments. Some researchers have also attempted to use computer programs in specific disciplinary domains (e.g. mathematics) to automatically generate multiple variations of the same class of problem types (Bennett, 1999).

## **E-ASSESSMENT CHALLENGES**

A major problem of learning and education policy in educational system is the separation of ‘academic’ and ‘practical’ subjects. Regrettably, learning and education policy is separated from ‘practical’ subjects. E-assessment has undoubtedly to play a major role in defining and implementing curriculum change in education. Governments have strong commitment to implementation of high quality e-assessment by good initial progress has been made in education system; therefore, there is a need to be vigilant that the design of e-assessment systems is driven by considerations (Shojaei et al., 2013).

It should be emphasized that there is a significant relationship between how to perform e-assessment and what the outcomes are in education because use of lonely technology will not lead to effectively teaching-learning outcomes (Shojaei et al., 2013). Therefore, for implementation and administration of viable and practical e-assessment platform in educational system should be studied from different viewpoints as below:

### ***Economic issues***

The high price of paper around the globe has already made official administrators both in the ministry of education and in the ministry of Sciences; Research and Technology use e-assessment in educational environments instead of traditional paper and pencil tests (Shojaei et al., 2013). Running e-assessment plays a valuable role in educational measurement, and especially in distance education (ED). Because the data are often easily collected and analysis of them can be automated by coding the questions and responses, costs can be significantly avoided in e-assessment implementation. On the other hand, e-assessment costs involving in providing electronic equipment (e.g. computers), reliable software, bandwidth, training specialized administrators, and spending a lot of time in developing test questions. Additional costs of maintenance, secrecy, security, and trouble-free operations are also involved (Scottish Qualifications Authority, 2004). In the short to medium term, e-assessment tools can be expensive to implement, and traditional assessment methods may be less expensive. Once created, however, e-assessment applications become less expensive, being easy to operate and score, and reusable from year to year in different combinations (Ridgway et al., 2004).

By considering that e-assessment systems can be more cost-effective than traditional assessment methods but third developing countries get into trouble for equipping their educational system by e-assessment because of hardware, software, training skilled administrators and instructors, and maintenance costs.

### ***Technical requirements***

Due to the variety of e-assessment systems being applied for different purposes, technical requirements of such systems are also different. However, there are basic technical requirements that should be met by all e-assessment systems such as: software; connectivity and bandwidth; data storage and transfer; security; accessibility; and lastly technical standards.

The e-assessment runs from software installed on a computer and connection speeds to the Internet need to be considered. Security is regarded as of prime importance in the administration of e-assessments because security increases issues such as privacy, confidentiality, authentication of transferring data via e-assessment system.

Usability of the assessment system is of dominant importance in the effectiveness of the assessment delivery; subsequently modern e-assessment should ideally be administered anytime, anywhere and on any operating system. One of the threats in using e-assessment systems refers to the specific platform on which the e-assessment runs. An assessment system loses its value if learners find it difficult to use.

Administrators in designing an e-assessment system should provide simple, clearly explained and consistent navigational facilities that allow the candidate to navigate through the items in the assessment as freely as permitted by the assessment principles. Designing e-assessment systems should match the user needs, user control over presentation where applicable, consistent navigation, functionality, positioning and names of buttons and icons, and also alternative input or navigation methods where practicable. Depending on the specific e-assessment system in use, dedicated testing centres may be needed with an on-going requirement for technical support throughout the assessment period (Sangi & Malik, 2007). The reliability of e-assessment systems is easily threatened because e-assessment system requires reliable hardware, software, network and power systems at all testing centers. Through administering e-tests at multiple educational centers, synchronizing data management and operational security issues among centers is very important to impede jeopardizing the e-assessment system’s reliability.

### ***Security and Privacy***

The e-assessment database is a large pool of related components from which assessments can be built; including test items, scoring keys and assessment algorithms (Anzaldúa, 2002). Therefore, it is vital that steps are taken to ensure security of e-assessment database. On the other hand, according to Rowe (2004), cheating online becomes easier, since what or who the student brings to the assessment site cannot be seen. Therefore, one of the major challenges of an e-assessment system is the ability to securely provide a test which is delivered to only legitimate students that means secure log-in of users based on pre-defined users' identification such as usernames/passwords. Responses by administrators to the sub-project survey have indicated the importance of alternative network links and increased security measures while online exams are being conducted (Sangi & Malik, 2007). In fact, the user security process is fallible to security threats which plague existing online summative assessment systems (Warren & Hutchinson, 2003; Sangi, 2008).

The problem of having a secure, fair and effective e-assessment system is not new. Several solutions have been applied to avoid this problem over the years. Marias et al., (2006) classify the security of e-assessment into four main types. The first is Web security: this type of security is concerned with the security of servers where the web application is running. The second is user security: which is concerned with the authenticity and identity of the users. The third is location security: which is related to the correct/supervised location that e-assessment should be performed. The fourth is data security: refers to privacy and confidentiality of assessment data. In Gilbert et al., (2009) recommendations to ensure data security in summative e-assessments are divided into two classes, security of test materials and results; security of assessment data transferred over networks. Several solutions have been discussed by the authors varied from the simplest cheapest way of using passwords to the more complex and more expensive techniques of adding physical instruments to the assessment system such as, Biometric authentication and using video conferencing setups (Barker & Lee, 2007). Maintaining users' privacy is another concern which aims to protect specific users' data not to be accessed by other users. A big issue in this context is to find a good compromise of providing adequate information of students' performance to teachers and keeping specific details secret (Bull & McKenna, 2001). Then for maintaining the reliability and validity of an online test, security measures should not jeopardized by accessing to the results data, including back up results data.

### ***Plagiarism***

One obstacle which can prevent teaching staff from utilizing technological solutions to run student assessment is the worry about securing transfer of test materials over the network. Because it is so easy to plagiarize using the Internet sources, learners may plagiarize without recognizing that they are doing so, even though they believe that plagiarism is ethically wrong (Kraus, 2002). These "casual plagiarists" may also plagiarize due to poor time management skills (Beasley, 2004), information overload (Collberg & Kobourov, 2005), or lack of academic preparation prior to college (Adeva, Carroll & Calvo, 2006; Jackson, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2006). Many students, however, make self-serving decisions to plagiarize with the hope of materially improving their grades (Beasley, 2004; Braumoeller, 2001; Hart & Friesner, 2004; Hughes & McCabe, 2006; McGowan, 2005). Computer security is the generic name for the collection of related components such as assets, threats, goals and preventive measures designed to protect the system (Stallings, 2000). In general, every computer system is required to protect three primary assets, i.e. the hardware, software and data assets (Pfleeger & Pfleeger, 2003). Plagiarism is a concern for many thinking of using CAA, (Weller, 2002); but Rovai, (2000) and Carroll, (2002) suggest that assessment design is the key to deterring plagiarism. O'Hare and Mackenzie, (2004) assert that there is a level of imagination and rigor required for the design of assessment online compared to that for more traditional forms of assessment. Weller (2002) suggests that the use of portfolios can help to counter plagiarism, as these places less reliance on single assessment items.

### ***Administrative/ operational issues***

The administration of e-assessment requires careful and continual record-keeping. To ensure the reliability of the system, a well-trained staff is needed at all testing centers (Scottish Qualifications Authority, 2004). In addition, Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) assumed that automated policies and security procedures are essential, with electronic and manual student authentication procedures. Specialized skills are required to produce high quality e-assessments. This is while many instructors fear that e-assessment will de-skill their profession. Some are threatened by the introduction of e-learning and e-assessment, and suspect the motives involved. Such fears need to be handled by the institution.

### ***Social/Ethical issues***

The electronic manipulation of information in e-learning systems raises major social and ethical issues (Marais et al., 2006). E-assessment platforms provides stress free and safe environment for examination than traditional exam environment. E-assessment contexts are fair to learners in contrast to traditional teacher-based evaluation that is susceptible to subjective assessment. By considering the point that facilities in e-assessment provide complementary environment for better education but low-speed internet connection and abrupt disconnection cause severe concern for learners that result in their mal-performance. It should be mentioned that information technology (IT) literate learners are more succeed in cyber shot space to respond electronically than illiterate learners. Therefore, illiterate learners by creating a sense of fragility, defensive, and raising of inhibition within themselves through answering questions directly affect their capacity to succeed in the e-assessment platforms, and online assessment leads to underestimate illiterate learner's ability.

One of the most important issues that should be noted is the law of copywriting that unfortunately is ignored to some extent in third developing countries because gain access to, manipulate, copy, and misuse the designed e-assessment environments is easy therefore, careful policy decision for preventing to abuse is tangible.

## CONCLUSION

Today, e-assessment is one of the available tools for learning but its application and development face challenges and obstacles. In the same line, in this paper, the authors tried to identify what challenges and infrastructures exist for the expansion of authentic e-assessment in educational system and what solutions make e-assessment success considering the fact that e-assessment is a need for improving e-learning in educational system. On the one hand, governments have strong commitment for implementation of high quality e-assessment in educational systems. Consequently, there needs to be vigilant that the design of authentic assessment systems is driven by identification internal and external hinder conflict factors. As noted, internal factors and external factors play a major role in defining and implementing consistent e-assessment in web-based courses. It should be noted that there are many internal as well as external factors which influence implementation of e-assessment, however, in this study, only some notable affected factors, which play a fundamental role, are considered.

In nutshell, although the importance of e-assessment has been emphasized by the majority of the researchers, little has also been written about how e-assessment can be wisely used and implemented in educational system to enhance student learning. The government of developing countries should invest as much money on using e-assessment, as medium supporting educational system, and administrator and instructor training for supporting the educational system shift from traditional assessment to reliable and valid electronic assessment.

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#### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION AND EFL LEARNERS' USE OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Aasa Moattarian



## **ABSTARCT**

Being able to communicate effectively is the optimal goal of all language learners; therefore, despite difficulties they face and restrictions they have while expressing themselves, they rely on employing diverse communication strategies (CSs). This descriptive study was set to analyze the Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' use of CSs in oral and written performances. To this end, 60 university students of EFL were selected. The participants' oral and written performances were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively using Dornyei's (1995) taxonomy of CSs. The results of the study revealed that medium of communication plays a significant role in the use of communication strategies. The most frequent problem areas that led to the use of communication strategies were "lexical gaps", "problems in discourse management", and "uncertainty in conveying the message", which can be considered by language teachers and material designers.

**KEYWORDS:** interlanguage, communication strategies, communicative competence, strategic competence, oral performance, written performance

## **INTRODUCTION**

People communicate with others from the first moment of their birth, by crying, touching, and later on by use of words. However, there are always some deficiencies; gaps exist between what the speakers have in mind and their linguistic performances. Corder (1981) asserts that due to their willingness to communicate, speakers try to find ways for solving problems. The ways which help people communicate in the presence of such deficiencies are called communication strategies (CSs).

Theoretical antecedents of CSs can be traced back to interlanguage studies and learner errors in early 1970s when Selinker (1972) introduced the notion of second language communication strategies in his seminal article entitled "Interlanguage". He argued that learners' insufficient knowledge of language and at the same time willingness to communicate leads to the use of CSs. Later, Corder (1981, p.103) suggested a working definition for CSs as: "systematic techniques employed by the speaker to express his meaning when faced with some difficulty".

Studies on CSs enjoy a four-decade history. Different studies have been conducted considering such variables in the use of CSs as communication medium, language proficiency level, ethnic and sociolinguistic factors, psycholinguistic factors, and cognitive factors. Varadi (1973) was the first scholar who studied CSs empirically. He asserted that in order to study CSs a learner should interact with a native speaker. Tarone (1977) adopted an interactional approach and contended that CSs are used when two speakers do not share the same meaning systems; therefore, to study CSs, interaction between a native and a nonnative speaker is not necessary (as cited in Ellis, 1994).

Speaking is the most basic means of communication; therefore, for most people knowing a language means being able to speak it. However, speaking appears to be demanding for foreign language learners (Lazarton, 2001). In order to speak, one should not only know the language, but also social and pragmatic rules to perform appropriate structures of the language (Martinez-Flor, Uso-Juan & Alcon-Soler, 2006). CSs are inevitable in oral communication for language learners. These strategies keep speakers flexible, and confident, and make their communication more effective. Therefore, the use of CSs in oral communication has been investigated in various studies (Nakatani, 2005; Phothongsunan, 2010; Puffer, 2006; Wannaruk, 2003, to name a few). Writing also plays a crucial role in communication. In the past, writing was thought to be noninteractive and decontextualized. Today, however, it is believed to be an interactive process since the writer, reader, and the text are all involved in the process of writing (Massi, 2001). Therefore, studying CSs in written communication is of great significance. Aliakbari and

Karimi (2009) investigated the use of CSs in the written performances of EFL learners at different proficiency levels. They found that the higher the proficiency level, the more reconceptualization strategies and the less substitution strategies were used. They also noted that the use of lexical CSs varied by the participants' language proficiency. Chimbanga (2000) investigated the use of CSs by university students of Biology. He found that students were eager to use L2-based strategies like 'circumlocution', 'paraphrase', and 'generalization' and concluded that those who took the risk of applying resource expansion strategies irrespective of grammatical problems were more successful in achieving their goal of communication.

Lots of studies have been conducted to investigate CSs considering different variables; however, the existing literature shows that there is still room for researchers to investigate the use of CSs by language learners. For instance, some studies can be found in which both oral and written performances are compared (e.g., Lai, 2010, Yarmohaamdi & Seif, 1992); however, we still need to create a more comprehensive view of learners' performances beyond just the differences in these two mediums. The reasons behind the use of CSs should be investigated as well. In fact, this study tackled how differently CSs are used by Iranian EFL learners in their oral and written performances. Accordingly the research question addressed in this study was:

- How do communication strategies used by Iranian EFL learners vary by medium of communication?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

One hundred and fifteen, 21 male and 94 female, Persian speaking university students aged between 19-25 were randomly selected. In order to have a homogenous group of participants, measures of central tendency were used. Those whose scores were between -1.5 and + 1.5 standard deviations were considered as the participants. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the participants' performance on the placement test.

*Table 1: Descriptive statistics of placement test*

Descriptive Statistics				
N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD.
115	16.00	53.00	33.26	8.40

The results turned out to be 70 participants. Then 60 were randomly selected as the final participants of the study.

### *Material*

To collect data in this study two tasks, one for oral and one for written data elicitation, were designed by the researchers. Nunan (2004, p. 58) based on an analysis of communicative use of language contends that "Many communication activities can be stimulated through the use of pictures". In order to check the comparability of oral and written performances in both tasks, pictures were used as visual aids to elicit data. An important reason for choosing pictures was that they displayed the intended point; deviations from the suggested topics were thus prevented. In order to verify the tasks in terms of reliability, they were piloted in a similar situation to that of the present study.

### *Procedure*

The participants were asked to perform one task for oral, and one for written data elicitation. To avoid misunderstandings, before performing the tasks, participants were briefed on the process they had to undergo in Persian (their mother tongue). Since appeal for help was eliminated in written performances due to manageability purposes, participants were informed that during the writing sessions they were not allowed to ask any questions. After completing the written task, were assigned to groups of five to attend group discussion sessions. The purpose behind holding group discussion was to reduce participants' anxiety and also to make the situation as authentic as possible. All the discussion sessions were sound recorded and transcribed, and all paralinguistic strategies were jotted down at the moment for later analysis. In order to ensure that paralinguistic strategies were not neglected, all the group discussion sessions were observed by the researchers and a graduate TEFL student who had been briefed on the process and aim of the study to record the paralinguistic strategies. Finally, the performances were analyzed based on Dornyei's (1995) taxonomy of CSs.

## RESULTS

Analyzing the data based on Dornyei's taxonomy (1995), the researchers found 1934 instances of the twelve CSs defined by Dornyei. Moreover, 176 of the sentences which the participants had used to compensate for their communication needs could not be accommodated within the existing taxonomy. Close examination of those sentences revealed that some techniques had been employed systematically which led the researchers to suggest the following four new strategies:

*Appeal for approval:* in oral communication, sometimes compensating for the linguistic gaps, the participants stopped talking and asked if they were understood. In fact, when they were not sure if they had conveyed the message, they sought for approval; for example, "he can search for other information as well. *Do you know what I'm saying?*"

*Use of redundant notes:* in both oral and written performances some participants used some excessive notes. Examination of 'redundant use of language' revealed that the participants used this strategy to make sure that the interlocutor understood them; for example, "you can take a *trip or travel* to another country\*".

*Use of nonlinguistic means along with other communication strategies:* in this strategy the participants, while adopting a CS, tried to express the meaning by using nonlinguistic means too; for example, "you can see *whole* (using hands to show all of the people) the people\*".

*Paraphrasing:* using this strategy, the participants tried to paraphrase the sentence to convey a message; for example, "we can know about their ideas and share the ideas about ..... *We can know how they think about it.*" This way, in this study the performances were analyzed based on a sixteen item taxonomy as presented in Table 2

Table 2: Extension of Dornyei's taxonomy of CSs (1995)

Strategy	Definition
1 Message abandonment	leaving a message unfinished because of language difficulties.
2 Topic avoidance	avoiding topic areas or concepts which pose language difficulties
3 Circumlocution	describing or exemplifying the target object or action
4 Approximation	using an alternative term which expresses the meaning of the target lexical item as closely as possible
5 Use of all purpose words	extending a general, empty lexical item to contexts where specific words are lacking
6 Word coinage	creating a nonexistent L2 word based on a supposed rule
7 Use of nonlinguistic means	mime, gesture, facial expression, or sound imitation
8 Literal translation	translating literally a lexical item, an idiom, a compound word or structure from L1 to L2
9 Foreignizing	using a L1 word by adjusting it to L2 phonologically and/or morphologically
10 Code switching	using a L1 word with L1 pronunciation or a L3 word with L3 pronunciation in L2.
11 Appeal for help	turning to the conversation partner for help either directly or indirectly
12 Time gaining	using filling words or gambits to fill pauses and to gain time to think
13 Appeal for approval*	seeking for the interlocutor confirmation to continue the utterance
14 Use of redundant notes*	using redundant notes to fill the possible existing gaps
15 Use of nonlinguistic means along with other CSs*	accompanying the use of mime and facial expression with the use of other CSs
16 Paraphrasing*	using the sentences with the same meaning

Note \* strategy added to Dornyei's taxonomy

Since the researchers aimed at figuring out the differences between performances by different mediums, each and every sentence was closely examined and the use of each CS was identified and counted. In order to find out whether the differences between the use of each strategy in oral and written performances were statistically significant at  $p < .05$ , chi-square tests were applied, the results of which are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Results of chi-square tests for the use of CSs in oral and written performances

		Oral performances	Written performances	$\chi^2$	Df	Sig.
1	Topic avoidance	366	208	43.491	1	.000
2	Time gaining	326	-	-	1	-
3	Literal translation	250	202	5.097	1	.024
4	Approximation	176	137	4.859	1	.027
5	Use of nonlinguistic means along with other CSs	75	-	-	1	-
6	Paraphrasing	64	0	-	1	-
7	Use of all purpose words	57	10	32.970	1	.000
8	Use of nonlinguistic means	52	-	-	1	-
9	Message abandonment	50	2	44.308	1	.000
10	Code switching	33	11	11.000	1	.001
11	Use of redundant notes	25	8	8.758	1	.003
12	Circumlocution	18	14	.500	1	.480
13	Appeal for approval	14	-	-	1	-
14	Appeal for help	10	-	-	1	-
15	Word coinage	5	5	.000	1	1.000
16	Foreingizing	2	0	-	1	-

As shown in Table 3, for strategies which could not be used in written performances chi-square tests were not applicable. The differences between the use of all CSs, except for *word coinage* and *circumlocution*, in oral and written performances were statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). The researchers also noticed that all the 16 strategy types were applied in oral performances; whereas, in written performances only 9 types were used. By comparing the frequencies of CSs used in oral and written performances, it was revealed that more strategies were used in oral performances than written performances (72% of the strategies were used in oral and only 28% in written performances). In Figure 1, the distribution of CSs in the oral and written performances is illustrated.

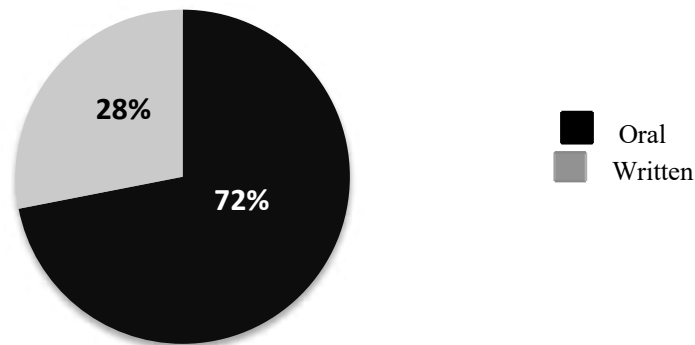


Figure 1: CSs used in oral and written performances

To examine whether the observed differences between the use of CSs in terms of medium of communication were statistically significant, a chi-square test was performed whose result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Result of chi-square test for the use of CSs in different mediums of communication

	Oral performances	Written performances	$\chi^2$	Df.	Sig.
Total	1523	597	4040.470	1	.000

The value obtained from the chi-square test was indicative of the fact that the difference between the use of CSs in oral and written performances was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

A detailed discussion of all the numerical analyses is presented in the following.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the statistical analyses mentioned above, it can be inferred that the use of CSs significantly vary by the medium of communication.

Although some strategy types were obviously not applicable in written communication (*use of nonlinguistic means*), and some were eliminated in written performances due to manageability purposes (*appeal for help*, *appeal for approval*, and *time gaining*), in oral performances more strategy types were used than in written performances. Consequently, the total number of CSs used in oral performances was more than written performances, as shown in Figure 1. This is related to fundamental features of personal involvement in oral and written communication. Findings of this study confirm the findings of many previous studies (García, 2011; Khamis, 2010; Warschauer, 1996; Yarmohammadi & Seif, 1992; Zhao, 2010, to name a few) that argue CSs are used distinctively in different mediums of communication. Analysis of the data also revealed that, participants employed CSs to compensate for three main gaps: "lexical deficiency", "problems in discourse management", and "uncertainty in conveying the message".

To compensate for lexical deficiencies, the participants used *time gaining*, *approximation*, *code switching*, *circumlocution*, *word coinage*, *appeal for help*, *use of all purpose words*, and *foreignizing*. These CSs comprised 40.12% of the total number of CSs used by the participants. Discourse management, which indicates management of available resources in interaction, includes the strategies learners adopt to convey the message they have in mind to meet their communicative goals in different environments (Schegloff, 1968; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973 as cited in

Condon & Cech, 2010). One of the problems participants encountered in this study was “deficiencies in discourse management”, for which they adopted *paraphrasing*, *use of nonlinguistic means*, and *message abandonment*.

Goodboy and Myers (2008) argue that participants are sometimes not sure whether they can convey the message; therefore, they need to be confirmed; they may also employ a strategy to make sure that their interlocutor will understand them. Moreover, participants employed '*appeal for approval*', '*use of redundant notes*', and '*use of nonlinguistic means*' along with other CSs in order to make sure that their interlocutor understood them.

It should also be noted that finding out about the strategies used by foreign language learners provides a more comprehensive view of interlanguage communication, which can help language teachers, and material designers to understand the problem areas which should be catered for in the classroom.

## CONCLUSION

This descriptive study aimed to investigate the use of CSs in different mediums of communication. CSs are used to tackle communication problems; therefore, studying CSs leads to finding out problem areas. Knowing the problem areas, language teachers are recommended to design class activities in ways which help learners overcome such communication problems. Since strategic competence plays a crucial role in successful communication, foreign language teachers and material designers are expected to improve students' strategic competence in order to enable them to communicate effectively.

Although the research has reached its goal, there were some unavoidable limitations. A notable shortcoming was that due to manageability purposes, some strategies like *time gaining*, *appeal for help*, and *appeal for approval* were not considered in written performances. Moreover, in this study data obtained in one shot design; therefore, some affective factors like motivation, anxiety, etc. played some role. If there were opportunity to collect data in time series design the researchers could generalize the findings more confidently.

For further research, researchers may take gender, age, language proficiency, and task variability into account. Moreover, following the performances with think aloud sessions, the researchers will find out what were the mind processes the learners underwent before choosing a CS.

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## THE EFFECT OF TELLING SHORT STORIES ON LEARNING GRAMMAR AMONG EFL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN IRAN

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### ABSTRACT

The role of storytelling in the acquisition of grammatical rules and structures has not clearly been discovered, but it is claimed that it is one of the most effective techniques for conveying information in a compelling and memorable way. There are many reasons to tell stories in our classes as they can give relief from the routine and stimulate the mind, they are a great motivator for teachers as well as for students, they can also foster understanding and acceptance of the foreign language and culture. This study aims at investigating the effect of teacher's telling short stories on the acquisition of grammatical rules and structures of the Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) learners. The sample of the study consisted of 30 female intermediate students who were randomly chosen from one of the public high schools in Isfahan and assigned into experimental and control groups, 15 in each. Grammatical point that was related to conditional sentence (type III) was taught traditionally in the control group; however, in the experimental group, it was taught by telling short story. Data of the study were collected via a pre-posttest design for equivalent groups. The tests were identical and consisted of 15 multiple choice items. The analysis of the collected data through applying t-test revealed that telling story has a positive effect on learning grammar structures but the experimental group didn't outperform the control group significantly on the measure. In other words, there wasn't a significant difference between the two groups in terms of the acquisition of grammatical rules and structures.

**KEY WORDS:** Telling short stories, Learning grammar, Iranian EFL learners

### INTRODUCTION

Teachers have been debating on what is the best method for teaching grammar for generations. Many people, including language teachers, hear the word "grammar" and think of a fixed set of word forms and rules of usage. They associate "good" grammar with the prestige forms of the language, such as those used in writing and in formal oral presentations, and "bad" or "no" grammar with the language used in everyday conversation or used by speakers of nonprestige forms.

Language teachers who adopt this definition focus on grammar as a set of forms and rules. They teach grammar by explaining the forms and rules and then drilling students on them. This results in bored, disaffected students who can produce correct forms on exercises and tests, but consistently make errors when they try to use the language in context.

Other language teachers, influenced by recent theoretical work on the difference between language learning and language acquisition, tend not to teach grammar at all. Believing that children acquire their first language without overt grammar instruction, they expect students to learn their second language the same way. They assume that students will absorb grammar rules as they hear, read, and use the language in communication activities. This approach does not allow students to use one of the major tools they have as learners: their active understanding of what grammar is and how it works in the language they already know.

The communicative competence model balances these extremes. The model recognizes that overt grammar instruction helps students acquire the language more efficiently, but it incorporates grammar teaching and learning into the larger context of teaching students to use the language. Instructors using this model teach students the

grammar they need to know to accomplish defined communication tasks. So, in order to make a grammar lesson effective, beneficial, and interesting a teacher should use some new and fascinating techniques in the classroom. Since the meaning is an important device in teaching grammar, it is important to contextualize any grammar point (Celce-Murcia & Hilles, 1988).

Story telling seems to be one of the most enchanting and culturally rich resources that can easily be used in language classrooms. Stories offer a change from routine classroom activities. They are precious resources to develop students' abilities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They can also be used to teach a variety of language items such as sentence patterns, vocabulary, and pronunciation. As stated by Lo and Fai Li (1998:8), learning English through stories also provides a non-threatening atmosphere for students, who usually are tense when speaking English in a formal classroom setting.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Storytelling is almost as old as language itself. In fact, some cultures still use spoken stories to pass on information to younger generations because the language is not written down. Storytelling is also not just for children; it covers the entire age range of the population and covers all aspects of life. Stories also give new insights into the target culture. They are the means through which cultural themes are presented effectively. Since they provide authentic texts, they are motivating. According to Hill (2001:29) "There are many advantages of using stories in the classroom through using contemporary popular stories, which are already familiar to teenagers, the teacher can meet the challenges of the teenage needs in the classroom. Since stories are motivating, in many forms they may constitute a powerful subculture with their own rituals."

Pederson (1995) considers storytelling as the original form of teaching and states that there are still societies in which it is the only form of teaching. He mentions that although some attempts have been made to imitate or update it, like the electronic storytelling of television, live oral storytelling will never go out of fashion and a simple narrative will always be the cornerstone of the art of teaching.

Brian Ellis(1997) in his article "*Why Tell Stories*" believes that storytelling is the perfect embodiment of whole language pedagogy and it teaches higher level of thinking skills, addresses the needs of students with different learning styles, provides opportunity for cooperative learning and building social skills and most importantly storytelling has been shown to build intrinsic motivation and self-esteem, even in the students who are labeled hard to reach.

Deacon and Murphy's *Deep Impact Storytelling* (2001) discuss why giving a course depth through storytelling is important. They describe ways to help teachers deepen the impact of storytelling through language and thinking activities that include shadowing, summarizing, student retelling, action logging, and newslettering. They Share one "split" story and student reactions to it as a way of exemplifying the ideas provided.

The study by Hui-Ling Huang on *The Effects of Storytelling on EFL Young Learners' Reading Comprehension and Word Recall* (2006) has indicated the necessity of teacher intervention in EFL reading; the teacher's story interpretation through contextualized storytelling as a multi-sensory approach could result in perceptible benefits in young learners' reading comprehension. The teacher is thus encouraged to incorporate storytelling in teaching and experience the magic of this ancient art in modern language classrooms, even though it may place some extra burden on the teaching preparation. Despite the effective framework of storytelling for vocabulary learning, the findings of this study on word recall did not support the theoretical assumption.

According to Fitzgibbon and Wilhelm (1998), teachers are increasingly being provided with an array of creative storytelling materials and ideas for second language learning. They discuss benefits which include enhanced student enjoyment, lower affective filters, authentic and enriched language input, and more inclusionary, collaborative classrooms. Stories appear to enable students to draw upon their own experiences and to organize information in personalized ways, thus better comprehending and retaining information and concepts.

In terms of grammar learning, storytelling may serve as a steppingstone to the learning of syntax as it demonstrates grammatical and syntactic features in meaningful context. As Mallan (1991) points out, storytelling demonstrates a varied use of tense and linking devices in organizing ideas. With a deliberate design of learning activities, the teacher can draw learners' attention to specific linguistic features in the story presentation (Taylor, 2000; Wajnryb, 2003).

### ***The Importance of Teaching Grammar***

Grammar is central to the teaching and learning of languages. Grammar explains the types of words and word groups that make up sentences in any language and makes it possible for us to talk about language. In fact, grammar is the way in which sentences are structured and the language is formatted, so while studying correct grammar may be a bit boring, it really is worth the time and effort. If we don't know the rules of grammar, then we will never be able to communicate clearly and effectively in English language. People associate grammar with errors and correctness. With the use of incorrect grammar sentences can become meaningless and their message is unclear. So, knowing about grammar helps us understand what makes sentences and paragraphs clear and interesting and precise. Grammar can be part of literature discussions, when we and our students closely read the sentences in poetry and stories. And knowing about grammar means finding out that all languages and all dialects follow grammatical patterns.

Grammar teaching has often been regarded as a structure based formal activity. But it no longer has much credibility when we believe the precise focus on a particular form leads to learning and automatization (Skehan, 1996). After the integration of several sources and techniques, which are mainly based on communicative activities, the teaching of grammar gained a new insight. In communicative tasks, the learners comprehend, manipulate, produce or interact in the target language while their attention is basically on meaning rather than form (Nunan, 1989). Swan (1998) suggests that we should consider the needs of the students in teaching grammar. Furthermore, he states that the principles of comprehensibility and acceptability should be considered.

### ***The importance of story telling***

By stories, we mean the incidents or events in the news or on TV, stories about people and things our students know and care about. One of the best opportunities to use stories is, lessons on the supposedly dry subject of grammar (as well as punctuation and usage). A story provides a realistic context for presenting grammar points and holds and focuses students' attention in a way that no other technique can. Stories can be used for both eliciting and illustrating grammar points. The former employs inductive reasoning, while the latter requires deductive thought, and it is useful to include both approaches in lesson planning. In addition, a well-told story is the perfect context for a structure-discourse match, but the technique can also be used effectively for a structure-social factor match. However, when teachers include grammar stories in their lessons, students have a better understanding of real world and grammar lessons are not so boring for them. (Baker & Green, 1977)

There are many reasons why we want to tell stories in our classes. Stories provide students with opportunities to listen to language in context rather than in bits and pieces. Stories also introduce new vocabulary and language forms within rich networks of associations. Equally important, stories can have a deep impact on a person's construction of knowledge and self. However, storytelling consists of more than just telling stories. It may include not only creating a story but also the use of pictures, acting, singing, story writing and so forth.

According to Chambers (1970) there are a number of ways in which storytelling can enhance intercultural understanding and communication. Stories can...

- allow children to explore their own cultural roots
- allow children to experience diverse cultures
- enable children to empathize with unfamiliar people/places/situations
- offer insights into different traditions and values
- help children understand how wisdom is common to all peoples/all cultures
- offer insights into universal life experiences
- help children consider new ideas
- reveal differences and commonalities of cultures around the world
- Promote a feeling of well being and relaxation
- Increase children's willingness to communicate thoughts and feelings
- Encourage active participation
- Increase verbal proficiency
- Encourage use of imagination and creativity
- Encourage cooperation between students
- Enhance listening skills

### ***Integrative Grammar Teaching***

Integrative grammar teaching combines a form-based with a meaning-based focus. Spada and Lightbown (1993:205) have also argued "that form focused instruction and corrective feedback provided within the context of communicative interaction can contribute positively to second language development in both the short and long term". Thus, integration of form and meaning is becoming increasingly important in current research. Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurrell (1997:14) call it "a turning point" in communicative language teaching, in which "explicit, direct elements are gaining significance in teaching communicative abilities and skills". Of course, depending on the students and their particular needs, either form or meaning can be emphasized. But in having various students with different needs in the same group, or having various needs in the same students, an integrative grammar teaching approach creates optimal conditions for learning for everyone in the classroom. Musumeci (1997) mentions the idea of connecting *form* and *meaning* in grammar teaching as a developing trend in reference to the proficiency oriented curriculum. She points out that students should be able to learn explicit grammar rules as well as have a chance to practice them in communication in the authentic or simulation tasks. Interestingly, Musumeci advocates giving students a chance to look at the language on a sentence level to see how certain grammatical rules are applied.

Integrative grammar teaching, which presupposes students' interaction while learning, can be viewed as a cognitive process of learning an L2 that reflects the sociocultural theory proposed by the Russian psychologist Vygotsky (1978). In talking about the development of a child's brain and his socialization, Vygotsky argues that there is a strong relationship between learning and cognitive development, in which cognition develops as a result of social interaction and sharing the responsibility with a parent or a more competent person. From an early age, children look to their parents for clues to acceptable social behavior. This brings us to Vygotsky's *zone of proximal development* (ZPD) in which there are two main stages of an individual's development. The first stage is what a child or learner can do by himself; the second stage is his potential, what he can accomplish with the help of another, more competent person. The distance between two points is called the *zone of proximal development*. Vygotsky also introduces the notion of a *mediator* - a person who helps students to accomplish what they cannot do by themselves. According to Appel and Lantolf (1994) and Lantolf and Pavlenko (1995), the role of the mediator in teaching an L2 is placed on an L2 teacher, whose task is to direct students in the right direction and help them reach the second stage in the ZPD.

Similar to Vygotsky's theory is the often-criticized Krashen's (1981, 1985) *Input Hypothesis*, also well-known as the "*i + 1*" hypothesis. According to this hypothesis *i* represents students' current level of L2 proficiency, and *+1* is level of the linguistic form or function beyond the present students' level. Krashen's *Input Hypothesis* and Vygotsky's *Zone of Proximal Development* are basically describing the same cognitive process of social interaction in students' development. For Krashen, optimal input should be comprehensible, i.e. focused on the meaning and not on the form. In this study students will be focusing on the form, but actively, through *communicative, meaning-based, exploratory assignments*. Even though well-criticized for lack of empirical evidence (Faerch & Kasper, 1986; Gregg, 1984; McLaughlin, 1987, etc.), the significant contribution of the Input Hypothesis to the field of applied linguistics is that it shows how teachers can focus on the actual level of students, adjusting the complexity of the material so that learners will be able to reach what initially was beyond their level.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Teaching grammar is now the most challenging task that any Iranian teacher may face in her/his daily classroom. Many do not wish to teach grammar explicitly but they are aware that students need an understanding of the rules to achieve fluency as well as accuracy. Unfortunately, many students leaving schools and entering universities do not have adequate English proficiency to excel in their studies. One possible solution is integrated approach to grammar teaching where there is a focus on the form but the activity is meaning based.

The primary purpose of this study, then, is to determine whether story telling activities is effective or help comprehension of grammar. Among many factors attributed to the listener, language proficiency and teaching grammar through context are two factors under investigation in this research, the extent to which story-telling activities affect the improvement of learner grammar is also examined in this study

The technique that is going to be used is teaching grammar using story telling activities. In any case, by this method of teaching grammar, we can challenge students and stimulate their interests by letting them choose favorite stories and that is in itself, a major success to breaking the traditional view of grammar classes as dull and boring.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is an attempt to answer the following questions:

1. Does using storytelling for teaching grammar have any significant effect on the acquisition of grammatical rules and structures by Iranian EFL learners?
2. Is there a significant difference between teaching grammar traditionally and teaching grammar through storytelling with regard to their influence on the acquisition of grammatical rules and structures by Iranian EFL learners?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Subjects*

The participants in this study were 30 Iranian under-intermediate EFL learners (based on Nelson Solution Test), aged 17-18, studying in the fourth grade in one of the high schools in Isfahan and were homogenous with regard to their English proficiency level. The sample included female participants with the same native language, that is, Farsi. The learners participated voluntarily and then were randomly assigned into the two groups (one experimental and one control) involved in the study (15 students each).

### *Instruments*

In order to answer the questions of the study, for the main experiment ,a story containing some grammatical points related to conditional sentence ( type III ) were chosen , then the teacher wanted the students to answer the questions that were at the end of the passage . The story was chosen according to the length and difficulty level. Also, a pre-test and an identical post-test including 15 item-multiple choice test was selected and administered to two groups. It should be mentioned that the grammatical point (conditional sentence type III) was taught to the control group based on the exercises of their textbook.

### *Procedure*

In the first place the students were divided into two group of experimental and control, 15 each. Then a pre-test of the grammar test was conducted immediately before starting the experiment to both groups to evaluate the subjects' ability in grammar. The researcher developed a 15-item-multiple choice test on conditional sentences (type 1, 2, 3) and the modal verbs usage that only 5 of them tested conditional sentence type3. Test items had 4 choices only one of which was correct. In scoring, (1) point for each correct answer and (0) for each wrong answer was allotted.

The treatment consisted of two levels: the method of telling short story and the traditional method alone. The experimental group undertook the first level of the treatment and the control group undertook the second level. For the main experiment, a story which contains some grammatical points related to conditional sentence ( type 3) was chosen (the learners were taught conditional sentences type 1 &2 in grade two), then the teacher taught new vocabulary from the story, told the story and wanted the students to answer the questions that were at the end of the passage .The answer of all of the questions related to conditional sentence . Traditional teaching was conducted to the control group. It means that after introducing the grammatical point, examples and patterns related to that point is read and some exercises were done.

To be sure of the efficiency of the treatment, the researcher administered a post-test, an achievement test, both to the experimental and the control group about two weeks after the treatment. The post-test was identical to the pre-test as it had the same type of items, number, and structure.

## RESULTS

The purpose of this study is to find out the impact of using storytelling as a teaching strategy on EFL learners' grammar acquisition and to investigate if there is significant difference in students' achievements between traditional method and storytelling method of grammar teaching. The data were collected through a pretest-treatment-posttest design for equivalent groups and analyzed via the statistical package SPSS.

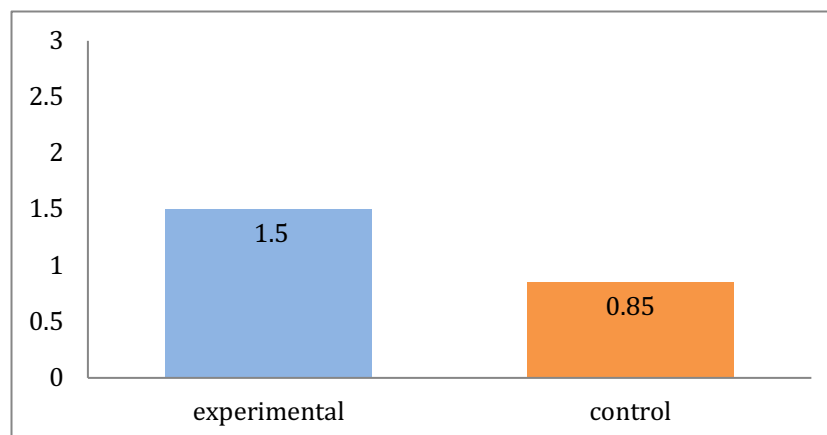


To determine if there are any significant differences in the students' achievements between the means of the two groups (experimental and control) on the pre- test, the researcher used the pre- test for the two groups so as to emphasize homogeneity between them. And an independent-samples t test was carried out to compare the two groups. Table 1 shows the results:

*Table 1: The independent samples t- test for revealing the differences between two groups on pre- test*

Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Computed T	DF	Sig.
Experimental	15	1.5	1.45	1.42	28	0.16
Control	15	0.85	0.86			

Table (1) shows that there is no significant difference between experimental group and control group on the pre- test, because the computed T (1.42) is smaller than the critical T (2.131), so we accept the null hypothesis (Ho) that there is no significant difference between the means of the two groups. This result can be represented in the following diagram. (Figure 1)



*Figure 1: The differences between the means of pre- test for the experimental and the control groups*

To answer the first question of the study and determine if there are any significant differences in the students' achievements between pre and post tests among the experimental group due to storytelling strategy, the researcher used the paired samples t- test. Table 2 shows the results:

*Table 2: The paired samples t- test to show the differences between pre- test and post –test results among the experimental group*

Measurement	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Computed T	DF	Sig.
Pre-test	15	1.5	1.45	-2.68	14	0.19
Post-test	15	2.92	1.32			

Table (3) shows that there are significant differences between the pre-test and the post-test among the students of the experimental group in favour of the post test, because the computed T (-2.68) is bigger than the critical T (1.96) at  $\alpha=0.05$  , so we reject the null hypothesis (Ho) that there is no significant difference between the means of measurement (pre- test and post-test). This indicates that using storytelling in English language instruction to the intermediate students has a positive effect on students' acquisition of grammatical rules. This result can be represented in the following diagram. (Figure 2)

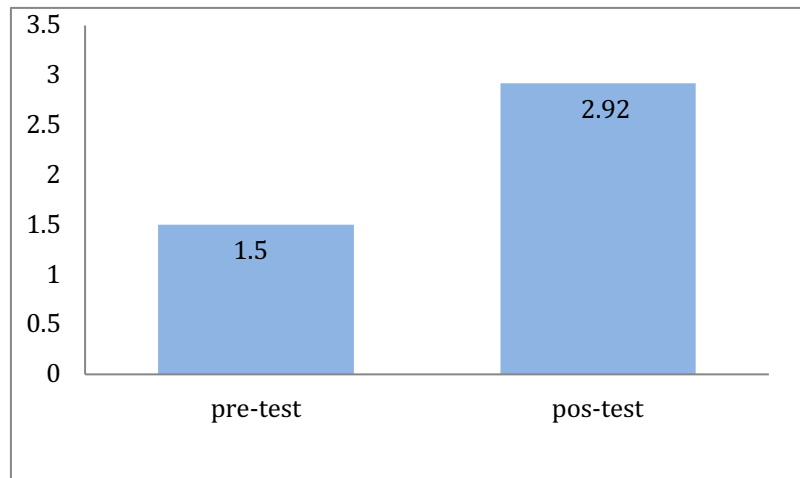


Figure 2: The differences between the means of pre- test and post- test for the experimental group

Then the researcher used the paired samples t- test to discover if there are any significant differences in the students' achievements between pre and post tests among the control group due to traditional method. Table 3 shows the results:

Table 3: The paired samples t- test to show the differences between pre- test and post –test results among the control group

Measurement	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Computed T	DF	Sig.
Pre-test	15	0.85	0.86	-3.27	14	0.00
Post-test	15	2.85	1.87			

Table (3) shows that the computed T (-3.27) is bigger than the critical T (2.94) at  $\alpha=0.01$ , so there are significant differences between the pre-test and the post-test among the students of the control group in favour of the post-test and the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) that there is no significant difference between the means of measurement (pre- test and post-test) is rejected. This result can be represented in the following diagram. (Figure 3)

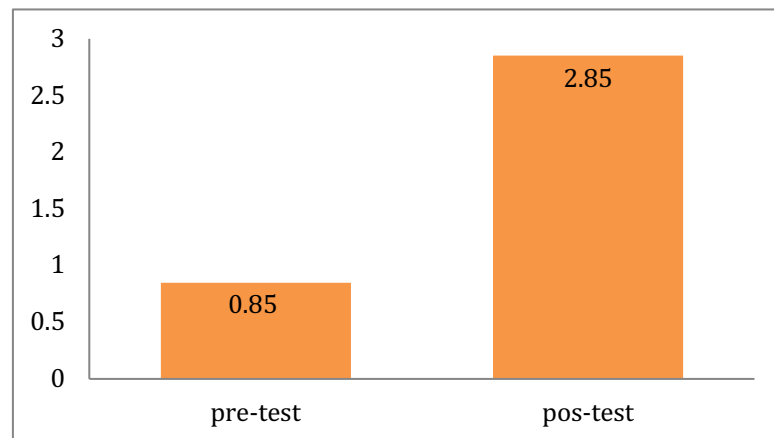


Figure 3: The differences between the means of pre- test and post- test for the control group

To answer the second question of the study and determine if there are any significant differences in the students' achievements between the means of the two groups (experimental and control) due to using storytelling method as shown by the post- test, the researcher used the independent samples t- test. Table 4 shows the result:

Table 4: The independent samples t- test for revealing the differences between two groups on post- test

Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Computed T	DF	Sig.
experimental	15	2.92	1.32	0.11	28	0.90
control	15	2.85	1.87			

As Table (4) shows, there is not statistically significant difference between experimental group and control group on the post- test, since the computed T (0.11) is smaller than the critical T (2.131) the, so we accept the null hypothesis (Ho) that there is no significant difference between the means of the two groups. This result can be represented in the following diagram. (Figure 4)

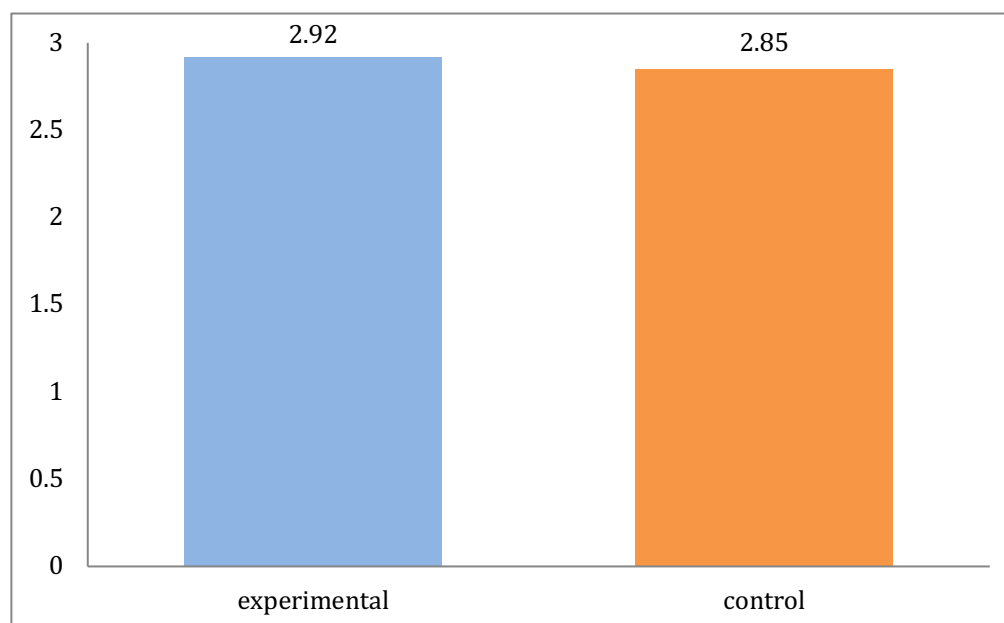


Figure 4: The differences between the means of post- test for the experimental and the control groups

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate two research questions: (1) whether teaching grammar through storytelling have any significant effect on the acquisition of grammatical rules and structures by Iranian high school EFL learners; and (2) whether there is a significant difference between teaching grammar traditionally and teaching grammar by using storytelling with regard to the influence they exert on the acquisition of grammatical rules and structures by Iranian high school EFL learners. The findings revealed that using storytelling had a positive impact on the acquisition of the grammatical rules, as suggested by the post-test results. Moreover, the findings indicated that teaching grammar using storytelling was not significantly different with regard to the influence they exerted on the acquisition of the grammatical rules and structures by Iranian high school EFL learners. Of course, this is true according to the results of this study. It seems that the students in higher levels benefit less than lower level proficiency level because, according to Thanajaro (2000) they have the ability to organize new information and helping methods have little additional effect on them. Moreover, since the low proficient learners do not have enough experience with the new language they are learning, they need to be helped in whatever way possible. Although the results of this study did not turn out to be as expected, it is evident that storytelling is one of the most basic ways of sharing knowledge, of making sense of experiences, and of seeing oneself in relation to others. In the classroom, storytelling is an important activity with strong links to literacy. As professional storyteller Jeff Gere (2001) points out, "Storytelling can encourage students to explore their unique expressiveness and can heighten a student's ability to communicate thoughts and feelings in an articulate, lucid manner." In our fast-paced, media-driven world, storytelling can be a

nurturing way to remind children that spoken words are powerful, that listening is important, and that clear communication between people is an art.

Every study, evidently, has some shortcomings imposed on it because of some limitations. This research is no exception. To support the results obtained through this study, there are some suggestions made for further studies in order to complement the findings of this study. They are as follows:

1. The participants in this study were intermediate learners. Some other studies can be conducted with participants of other proficiency levels, that is, elementary, lower-advanced, and advanced, to find out whether or not the same results will be obtained.
2. The focus of attention in this study was teaching grammar. Other studies can be carried on in the areas of reading and writing and find out how the participants react in those structures.
3. The material used in this study was a short story that was suitable for the intermediate level. In other studies of this kind we can use some complicated and longer passages can be used to see if the groups will still response in the same way or differently regarding their proficiency level , because with longer text , the situation may be different
4. The participants of this study were monolingual speaker of Persian; in other studies researchers can employ bilingual participants and understand whether or not the same results will be obtained. The rational for this is that since bilinguals' cognitive ability is higher than monolinguals (Bialystok, 1992; Romaine, 1989), they may or may not benefit more from such activities.

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**THE IMPACT OF JOURNAL WRITING ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF ADULT IRANIAN EFL  
(ENGLISH AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE) LEARNERS WITH LOW EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI)  
INDEX**

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**ABSTRACT**

In this research, the intention was to testify 'Dialogue Journal Writing' (DJW) as an active reflective practice among adult learners with low Emotional Intelligence (EI). Among the various individual differences that the adult learners bring to the EFL classrooms, "EI" trait has been mostly focused upon as one social skill needed for learning a language. However, in a bulk of research, rarely have the researchers put emphasis on maximization through educational tools that they have had at their disposal. Here, the intention was to capitalize on low EI adult learners' active and conscious role through active learner-teacher written dialogue communication. Thus, 126 adult academic students were randomly selected through cluster sampling from academic students and homogenized through a standardized Nelson TOEFL test. Through Bar-On's EI questionnaire (1980), the target groups were screened. Students' performances were compared on two successive posttests after the treatment induction. The results indicated the outperformance of the experimental group for the two posttests. (Time 1: Sig. 2-tailed=.001< 0.05 & time 2: 0.02<0.05). As to the interconnectivity effect of gender and EI level, the MANOVA results showed the outperformance of females over the males especially, at lower and medium EI just in the first post test. At last, two qualitative assessments including informal interviews and a semi structured questionnaire were triangulated with the results. The findings indicated that DJW could efficiently help adult EFL Iranian learners who suffer from lower EI to participate more in learning tasks and get better achievements. The pedagogical implications for utilizing DJW in EFL settings have been fully discussed at the end.

**KEYWORDS:** Emotional intelligence, self-awareness, Dialogue journal writing, academic achievement

**INTRODUCTION**

Psychologically speaking, adults are usually considered as unmotivated and uncooperative and mostly confronted with affective barriers to their learning. Among the crucial learner variables in EFL settings, in a multitude of research articles in recent years, just few studies have been directly devoted to affective domain. A bulk of research has indicated that the focus of present educational system is on rational and/or cognitive aspects such as memory and problem solving skills and that lip service has been paid to the important contribution of the emotional mind (Nelsend 2003). Tunkey (2002) accentuates that the research studies conducted so far to explore the relationship between Emotional intelligence (EI) as a pertinent affective factor on language performance shows that the extent to which EI can be put into practice to improve language teaching and learning needs more deliberation. But what does EI exactly involve? And how can it orient EFL learners to better educational achievements? Does it move parallel with IQ or takes a different route?

Goleman (1995) as one of the pioneers of the personality trait, 'EI', asserts that it refers to the learners' ability to recognize and regulate emotions in both themselves and in others. It entails the innate ability of a person and can be improved by external factors such as the environment. It can help people to be better students. It can be as much powerful and even at times more powerful than IQ in predicting success in various life challenges. The possession of high IQ rating is not the sole indicator when it comes to being successful in all fields (Goleman1995). It is believed

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that those learners having a lower index of EI trait are less able to get across their messages for their intended situations. Nevertheless, the research papers which discuss EI theory seem not to pay enough attention to the ways as to how of maximizing learning among those who suffer from lower EI. In this research project, the intention is to assess EI as one personality factor among a group of adult learners by the active learner-teacher written dialogue writing termed as '*dialogue journal writing*' (DJW). The authors want to investigate the issue in more details and testify the effect of DJW on the academic achievements of some EFL learners with lower EI. Below, an operational definition of the term DJW is given very briefly to clarify the issue.

According to Peyton (1992), '*journal writing*' is *an ongoing or constant written conversation in which adult ESL/EFL learners and their teacher exchange their messages or impressions regularly over their learning progression*. What '*journal writing*' generally seeks for is not directly pertained to pedagogy but it also refers to the recently-developed concepts like alternative-assessment, portfolio assessment and self- monitoring practices in which the students esp. adults come to the forefront to actually control their improvements in learning which in effect this might activate a sense of belonging through active participation both inside and outside of class. The applicability of such reflective practices in real situations like classroom and home is however a little vague.

### **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Reflective or insightful approaches toward language learning have been mostly put forward by constructivists like Vygotsky since 1978 up to the recent decades. The main intention behind constructivists current with Vygotsky was that '*learning is largely a social activity and learners create their own learning through their experiences and beliefs*.' Such interaction between the teacher-student doesn't take place occasionally but it is an ongoing process through which the teacher monitors and takes care of the whole process of teaching-learning procedures for a whole term (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Richards, 1990; Short & Kauffman, 1994). Richards & Lockhart (1996) mentioned some sources for such critical reflections over the course including reflective journals, learning logs, lesson reports, autobiographies, collaborative dairy keeping, audio and video recording, teacher narratives, portfolios, observation and action research. Gibb's model (1988) of reflective frameworks in self-awareness approaches might be a great help here to mention. He elaborated on six successive stages of such reflective processes in resolving a problematic situation:

- A: Description: What happened?
- B: Feeling: What were you thinking/ feeling?
- C: Evaluation: What was good/bad about the situation?
- D: Analysis: What sense could you make of the situation?
- E: Conclusion: What else could you have done?
- F: Action plan: If it rose again, what would you do?

By definition, reflection is '*a natural activity in which individuals are engaged to a greater or lesser extent*' (Cottrell, 2003). Moon (2005) offers a definition of reflection as "...a form of mental processing that we use to fulfill a purpose or to achieve some anticipated outcome" (Moon, 2005, p.1). Moon argued that this process is generally used to help understand complex or unstructured ideas that do not have an obvious solution.

Lowenstein (1987, p. 87) traces the history of personal journal writing to the development of '*self consciousness*' for the purposes of self-understanding, self-guidance, expanded creativity, and spiritual development. Interestingly, the '*journal writing*' practice arrived in language teaching strands from various previous professions like chroniclers, travelers, pilgrims, creators, apologists, confessors, and prisoners, (cited in Thomas Mallon, in his popular *A Book of One's Own: People and Their Diaries* (1984).

### ***Pushing movements for journal writing approaches***

The main reasons behind the popularity of journal writing to other professions including language learning (LL) was that after the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the growth of psychology and psychotherapy encouraged scholars to look inside people's minds, in order to scrutinize their feelings, and explore their dreams. Phil Rich (1999), a Clinical Director of the Stetson School, believes that Journal writing provides a way to put thoughts down on paper where the learners can be seen and this in turn gives substance to feelings. He implies that journaling is an effective technique

for self expression since it fosters personal growth, and can be a valuable companion on the road to self discovery. He asserts journal writing can provide a place to express and explore innermost thoughts, feelings, ideas, questions, and concerns, and later return to reminisce or re-examine.

Still another reason for a support towards journal writing approaches was that of growth in personal spirituality dating from the 1980's that linked personal journal writing to creativity, expansion of consciousness, and the deepening of spiritual awareness and growth (Santa- Maria, 1983; Solly and Lloyd, 1989; Baldwin, 1990; Wakefield, 1990, Cameron, 1992; Rainer, 1997). Hiemstra (2001) mentioned several benefits that was another cause for journal writing as a reflective approach to become more popular. He asserted the mind trackers of this device were able to see tangible evidence of mental processes in their subjects; On the other hand the journal keepers had a safe place to practice writing without restrictions of form, enabling the articulation of connections between new information and what they already know, and making meaning. Building confidence was another benefit mentioned by Hiemstra that was termed as '*the nurturing of voice and spirit*'.

Now one may ask what inside factors can trigger best use of such capabilities in adults to have more control over their learning. Such realizations have occurred for people in their routine everyday life activities. When it comes to education, the first thought that comes to mind is how such reflective devices can put in operation in language classes. Do really students at older age benefit more from such reflective approaches? What mechanisms can help a teacher-student interaction? Which groups of learners can gain more in this way? What other factors can mediate in the process? Should we consider other socio-ethnographic factors like gender, education level, marital status in the learning process through such interaction or not? How can such reflective tools as DJW be promoted for the target group of the present study? These and some other relevant issues on the association of reflection and language development in adults with lower EI has been at issue in the present research. Below, the research studies done specifically on EI trait centering on language studies are mainly put forward to scrutinize the issue in more details.

#### ***What is Emotional intelligence?***

Emotional intelligence is generally defined as the ability to perceive, control and evaluate emotions. Some researchers believe that emotional intelligence is an inborn capability while others suggest that it can be learned and thus strengthened for extending further learning. The most recent definition that attempts to cover the whole construct of EI describes it as the ability, capacity, skill, or potential to feel, use, communicate, recognize, remember, describe, identify, learn from, manage, understand and explain emotions (Hein, 2007).

In their seminal article, "Emotional Intelligence", Peter Salovey & John D. Mayer defined emotional intelligence as, "*the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions*" (1990).

Goleman (1998) the founder of EI defines it as the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others for motivating ourselves and managing emotions in ourselves and in our relationships. He believes that we have two ways of knowing: The rational and the emotional. Both of these ways of knowing are intertwined, but emotional intelligence is a greater determiner of success in life. His EI model includes: 1. Knowing one's emotions, 2. Managing emotions, 3. Motivating oneself, 4. Recognizing emotions in others, 5. Handling relationships

Gardner (1983) suggested that all individuals have personal intelligence profiles that consist of a combination of several different intelligence types, including linguistic. Gardner (1999) has described Linguistic Intelligence as sensitivity to spoken and written language and the ability to use language to accomplish goals, as well as, the ability to learn new words.

#### ***Recent research accounts on EI promotion within ELT domains***

In order to follow those studies which had focused on aspects of EI promotion, a comprehensive search gave us the following results.

In EFL, there was a bulk of research on EI trait and various aspects of academic achievement like Rostami, N. 1383, khosravi, Z 1378, Kouhsar et al, 1386. Jamali Nesari, et al (2011) worked on EI traits and learning English vocabulary. Among the research studies, among those working on EI and EFL aspects of successful oral participation we found another interesting work by khazade A. et al (1386) and Pishghadam and Ghonsooli (1387). According to Hassanzadeh R. et al (2011) two of the EI main components, intrapersonal intelligence (independence, assertiveness, self-actualization, self-regard, and self-awareness) and general mood (optimism and happiness), and language achievement are positively correlated. Fahim and Pishghadam (2007) showed educational success and intrapersonal, general mood and stress management dimensions have positive correlations.

In the recent literature, a shift of emphasis overbearing EI findings from students to teachers' mentality was seen in some major work like Nelson and Low (2005). In their research, they supported the view that the main reasons behind the success for those teachers who model emotional intelligence are exemplified by intentional reflective and not reactive behavior, more flexible behavior, assertive and not aggressive or passive communication, more optimistic and thus not pessimistic or negative viewpoints which are really helpful for the learning environments. Such reliance on skills and positive habits, they believed, aids the teachers with higher EI. Abdollahi (2001) maintained the same standpoint by relating the probable success of those teachers with high EI by creating a pleasurable classroom through a dynamic group discussion with the students. In Saeidi's and RimaniNikou's (2012) article on EFL Teachers' EI and their students' language achievement, a significant relationship was found between the two variables. That is, the higher teachers' EI, the more students' language achievement.

In settings apart from Iran, other studies related to EI accounts and ELT were also prominent like Vanett and Jurich (1997), Pierson (2003), Santa-Maria, M. (1983), Lowenstein, S. (1987), among others. Kerka, S. (1996), Hiemstra, R. (2001), Peyton (1977) and Yayli, D. (2009) had worked on the effect of journal writing in EFL/ESL settings. Parker et al(2004) found positive relationship between success and intrapersonal, stress management and adaptability intelligences.

In the present research, it has been tried to testify the effect of reflective thought activators on EI promotion among those adult students who lack a plausible EI level in social settings.

The authors believed through applying DJW the teachers might be able to stir confidence, autonomy and self-awareness among those adults with lower EI which in effect this might bring more success in their language learning processes.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The questions put forward at this research project were thus:

1. To what extent can constant dialogue journal writing help the adult students with low EI to have more achievements in the learning situation?
2. Can gender as a subsidiary variable predict success in EFL adult learners through journal writing? Do Male and female learners with different EI levels benefit equally from journal writing?
3. What are the students' overall impression on 'dialogue journal writing' as an active task-report tool?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

The participants included 126 adult Iranian EFL learners (male / female) between the ages of 20 and 25 who were randomly selected via cluster sampling from among 400 adult students attending in Sabzevar both public and private universities. Their majors were law and Family management.

### ***Instrumentation***

A pre-test including a validated TOEFL proficiency test version of Nelson was first administered among all the subjects to cater for their probable variability concerning language proficiency. The validated Nelson English Language Test battery was chosen at elementary level. A typical test of this series entails 50 items comprising a 37-item grammar section along with 13 items on vocabulary knowledge.

At the second stage, a translated version of Trait Emotional intelligence (EI) questionnaire by Bar-On (1980) into Persian was administered among the remaining 156 subjects. The translation to Persian was prepared and checked by two EFL professors in order to ensure that all the items were fully understood by all the subjects. The intention was to select those students who had a lower EI index compared with their classmates with higher EI. The validity for the self report trait EI in relation to personality was psychometrically demonstrated as discriminately reliable in Iranian Context by Dehshiri, (1385). Its Chronbach Alpha was reported %73 which shows an acceptable index. The whole

90- item inventory examined 15 different scales including inter-personal skills, intra-personal skills, adaptability, stress management, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, self-respect, independence, problem-solving, emotional self-awareness, inter-personal skills, assertiveness and reality-testing among others.

### Procedures

Initially, a pre-test including a validated TOEFL proficiency test version of Nelson at elementary level was first administered among some 180 subjects to homogenize the population. The aim was to cut the scores at two extreme poles highest and the lowest 20 % scores from the experimental phases of the study in order to ensure maximum control over the homogeneity of the subjects concerning their language proficiency. Thus, 24 students who were not within the homogenized selected sample at level of elementary level were excluded at this phase of the study.

After administering the EI questionnaire, those that were included in the two extremes of very low vs. very high EI index were advertently deleted from the experimentations due to the purposes of the study. 30 subjects were also excluded at this phase of the study. The remaining 126 subjects went through a three-month treatment inducement stage for journal writing practices.

Those subjects whose EI total score was between -1 and +1 standard deviation from the mean or one standard deviation above and below the mean were classified as 'medium EI'. Accordingly, high EI learners were those whose score was between +1 and +2 standard deviation from the mean and consequently low EI ones included those with -1 and -2 SD from the obtained mean. The measured scores in each level have been specified in Table 1 Mean for the total EI scores was estimated as 312.03 with SD= 37.2.

*Table 1: The criterion for classifying the subjects' total EI index*

+3	>	+2	+2	>	+1	+1 ( $\mu=312.03$ )	-1	-1	>	-2	-2	>	-3
Standard Deviation			Standard Deviation			Standard Deviation		Standard Deviation			Standard Deviation		
Too high EI index			High EI Index			Medium EI Index		low EI Index					Too low EI Index

In order to check the normal distribution of the population in the study, One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was run for the obtained scores in SPSS ver.20. The distribution was decided normal since the p-value ( $0.599 > 0.05$ ). Table 2 indicates the normal distribution of the subjects. Since the data followed a normal distribution,  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the medium level scores was devoted to EQ lower group in order to increase the number of subjects and maintain a more plausible research population in terms of number for the purposes of the present research.

*Table 2: One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for distribution checking*

		EQ Scores
N		126
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	312.0317
	Std. Deviation	37.21783
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.068
	Positive	.046
	Negative	-.068
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.767
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.599

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

Having administered the EI questionnaire, the researchers decided on four groups (2 exp. and 2 con.). Those that were included in the two extremes of very low vs. very high EI index were advertently deleted from the experimentations due to the purposes of the study. 28 subjects were excluded at this phase of the study. The remaining 126 subjects constituted the subjects targeted for the purposes of the current research project. Table 3. shows the distribution of the groups comprising a plausible distribution of subjects having trichotomous low/medium/ high EI index for both experimental and control groups.

*Table 3: A cross-tab exhibiting the general distribution of the population and sample size for each research group*

Research Groups	Number of subjects	Gender		EI index level and gender		
		Male	Female	High	Medium	low

Experimental	67	27	40	Total: 12	Total: 25	Total: 30
				M 5	F 7	M 10
					F 13	F 20
Control	59	25	34	Total: 12	Total: 14	Total: 33
				M 7	F 5	M 12
					F 6	F 21
	Total: 126	Total: 52	Total: 74			

During the experimental stage, which lasted for nearly four months, the subjects were required to initiate a dialogue communication with their instructor. The subjects were asked to do the proper ordinary given tasks in each session plus reporting their impression over their work as to what problems they have faced while doing the due tasks. Afterwards, the instructor responded to the reports following a strict format touching the students' areas of difficulty and gave proper solutions and more reassurance that everything was ok and went well at the right time. Journal writing along with continuous task report by the learners were paralleled and continuously assessed by the instructor during an academic three-month period. The subjects were first provided with necessary knowledge in their ordinary courses. They were then asked to do the proper given tasks in each session plus reporting their work as to what problems they faced while doing the due tasks.

In the present study, students and their teachers were continually participating in a dyad conversation through which they presented their impressions and probable problems during the course.

Two successive posttests of achievement type were finally used to verify the learners' progress rate after the treatments. The reason for administering two successive posttests of achievement type was to make sure if the applied treatments in this research can bring about progressive progress among the learners.

#### DATA ANALYSES AND RESULTS

After the interventions, statistical analyses of the variables were conducted to test the first hypothesis as to the effect of journal writing and overall progress concerning reading skills in English. T-test was selected as the statistical measurement device in order to test the first null hypothesis;

H01: 'Dialogue Journal writing can't bring about success in linguistic achievements among adult students with lower emotional intelligence (EI).'

The acceptance level was set at .05 with 95% confidence and reliability. Since it was intended to examine the mean of the groups and due to the fact that the groups under study were independent of one another *independent sample t-test* was selected as the statistical measurement. The other factor leading to the use of t-test was that the data used in this study were all interval.

Measuring the dependent variable with both groups was performed at two stages with one month interval. So two post-tests were involved in statistical analyses. (Time 1 & Time 2)

The achievements by target group ie., those students with lower EI levels whose achievements were probably affected by the induced reflective treatments of journal writing were statistically investigated. Just the subjects with a low EI level in the experimental vs. control group were included in the data analyses for both time 1 and time 2 post tests.

Table 4 below depicts the results for the independent T-test for Time 1 comparing just the low Eq level subjects together.

**Independent Samples Test***Table 4: T-test for independent samples experimental \* control groups among lower EI levels (time 1)*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
time1 Equal variances assumed	.237	.628	3.397	61	.001	3.41591	1.00568	1.40492	5.42689
Equal variances not assumed			3.413	60.999	.001	3.41591	1.00083	1.41464	5.41718

Apparently, as the table 4 clearly shows the obtained p value (Sig. 2-tailed=.001) was less than (.05). Also, the observed T-value of (3.397) is enough above the t-critical 1.64 at 95% probability level. The same statistical analyses were rerun for Time 2 post testing among the same groups of lower EI levels. This time also the sig level for 2-tailed T was less than the critical 0.05. (.02<.05) and the observed T-value is larger than the t-critical with 95% confidence. So, we were safe at rejecting the null hypothesis and accepted the alternative one as to the positive effects of journal writing practices among the target group i.e. subjects with a low EI Table 5 shows the statistical results for the T test analyses for time 2 post testing.

**Independent Samples Test***Table 5: T-test for independent samples experimental \* control groups among lower EI levels (time 2)*



	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
time 2									
Equal variances assumed	.407	.526	2.389	61	.020	2.25530	.94403	.36761	4.14300
Equal variances not assumed			2.399	60.994	.020	2.25530	.94007	.37552	4.13509

In this research project, the researchers wanted to investigate the association of gender and EI levels with final linguistic achievements too. The second Null hypothesis investigated in the present survey was as the following:

- H02: Gender can't predict any differences in achievement among male and female EFL adult learners across EI levels after receiving journal writing practices.

Here since the impact of two independent variables (EI levels and gender) was involved on the performance of two post-tests in one month interval, Two-Way ANOVA (MANOVA analysis) was selected for statistical analyses at 0.05 Alpha.

The results of a two-way ANOVA with EI level (3 levels) as one independent variable and the subjects' gender (2 levels) as a second independent variable revealed a significant interaction,  $F(4,509) = .015$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . (Table 6)

#### Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: time1  
Table 6: Two-Way ANOVA for Time 1 post-test testifying EI vs. Gender

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	237.208 <sup>a</sup>	5	47.442	2.685	.029	.180
Intercept	9587.460	1	9587.460	542.691	.000	.899
eqlevel	2.341	2	1.170	.066	.936	.002
gender	8.319	1	8.319	.471	.495	.008
eqlevel * gender	159.325	2	79.663	4.509	.015	.129
Error	1077.657	61	17.667			
Total	13444.750	67				
Corrected Total	1314.866	66				

a. R Squared = .180 (Adjusted R Squared = .113)

The mean scores for gender at three EI levels at Table 7 below clearly shows that females gained better results compared with males at two EI levels of low and medium.

Dependent Variable: time1

Table 7: Descriptive statistics for EI vs. Gender as two independent variables for time 1 posttest

Eqlevel	gender	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
low EQ	1.00	11.700	1.329	9.042	14.358
	2.00	14.888	.940	13.008	16.767
medium EQ	1.00	11.500	1.213	9.074	13.926
	2.00	15.308	1.166	12.977	17.639
high EQ	1.00	15.200	1.880	11.441	18.959
	2.00	10.536	1.589	7.359	13.712

The same statistical procedure was re-run for time 2 post test. Again, the mean variability for females was higher than males at two lower and medium EI levels. However the interaction of EI and gender this time wasn't statistically significant. ( $F(2,73) = .07, p > 0.05$ ). The critical value for F. ratio at 0.05 was 4.49 which all the obtained F-tests didn't exceed this critical value. So we couldn't have any significant evidence to prove the cross effect or interaction of gender and EI level together on the overall improvement of the experimental group after the treatments for a second time. Table 8 and 9 below shows the MANOVA analysis at time 2 post-test for one month interval. Possible implications have been given in the next section.

### 3. eqlevel \* gender

Dependent Variable: time2

Table 8: Descriptive statistics for EI level vs. gender at time 2 post-test

Eqlevel	gender	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
low EQ	1.00	12.575	1.128	10.319	14.831
	2.00	14.675	.798	13.080	16.270
medium EQ	1.00	12.292	1.030	10.232	14.351
	2.00	14.250	.989	12.272	16.228
high EQ	1.00	15.800	1.595	12.610	18.990
	2.00	12.429	1.348	9.732	15.125

### Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: time2

Table 9: Two-Way ANOVA for Time 2 post-test testifying EI vs. Gender

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	92.768 <sup>a</sup>	5	18.554	1.458	.217	.107
Intercept	10300.383	1	10300.383	809.422	.000	.930
Eqlevel	5.769	2	2.884	.227	.798	.007
Gender	.722	1	.722	.057	.812	.001
eqlevel * gender	69.513	2	34.757	2.731	.073	.082
Error	776.262	61	12.726			
Total	13447.000	67				
Corrected Total	869.030	66				

a. R Squared = .107 (Adjusted R Squared = .034)

Paralleled qualitative results for the informal interviews with the teachers and the target group of the present survey were performed at the end. Both positive and negative viewpoints by the stakeholders were referred to, though the final codings were pointed towards the positive points of the continuum, there were also some negative aspects which have all been discussed along with possible implications of utilizing reflective techniques like dialogue journal writing and keeping in the following section.

## DISCUSSION

The current research project was mainly carried out to investigate the effect of reflective practices like dialogue journal writing on the possibility of EI development practices among those adult English learners who suffer from lower levels of this prominent aspect of the mind. At first place, the statistical measures gave us enough evidence to prove the overall effectiveness of the induced treatment on the subjects. Concerning this result, Vygotskian viewpoints on learning as a social activity is again more strengthened. Here, the main role that the instructors may possess was focused upon through an ongoing active process to change the learning behavior of the learners by their self-initiated screening activities with the teachers' supervision. As Cochran-Smith & Fries (2005) have specified, the research movements on teacher development are highlighted through school-based enquires which focus on learning in its social context.

In the present survey, the researchers made use of journal logs in order to investigate the critical reflective thinking on the achievement of some learners specifically those who in normal times can't communicate their thoughts easily through class channels along with their classmates or their teachers. Other still reflective mechanisms therein involve learning logs, lesson reports, autobiographies, collaborative dairy keeping, audio and video recording, teacher narratives, portfolios etc. (Richards & Lockhart, 1994).

In this research project, three questions were specifically followed. The first and the foremost enquiry was to investigate the effect of reflective practices on the overall linguistic performance of a group of adult learners with a relatively low EI index. The first question is here then rephrased for a recall.

**Question 1:** To what extent can constant dialogue journal writing help the adult students with low EI to have more achievements in the learning situation?

The results of statistical analyses all proved the outperformance of the experimental over control group among the target group including learners with lower level Eq. Without any doubt, there is now wide recognition that reflective practices like journal writing can be a good vehicle for self-understanding, self-guidance, expanded creativity, and spiritual development.

**Question 2:** Can gender as a subsidiary variable predict success in EFL adult learners through journal writing? Do Male and female learners with different EI levels benefit equally from journal writing?

Concerning the nature of reflective journal writing, gender can be a crucial issue since as Pica (1991) declares; it is possible that interactions in matched-gender pairs differ from interactions in mixed-gender pairs, both in the amount and type of interaction. The gained results from MANOVA (time 1) analyses let us reject the null hypothesis safely as to the interaction between gender and EI level concerning the linguistic improvement of males and females after the induced treatment. The statistical analyses all were weighted for females rather than males thus they indicated that those female learners esp. at lower and medium EI levels achieved better results compared with their matched EI levels among their male counterparts. Since two post-tests were taken within a one month interval, a second time post test was also administered. However, as previously mentioned in the result section, the interaction of EI and gender this time wasn't statistically significant. ( $F. 2.73 = .07 > .05$ ). Possible reasons might be that though females benefitted more from the reflective practices from the outset, in the long run, they couldn't prove completely adaptable to the treatments compared with their male counterparts. A very crucial point to consider here is to probe into the underlying psychological variables that might have been also in process along with the EI trait within each individual subject. Mayer and Salovey (1997) proposed that emotional skill develops partially within the context of interpersonal relationships. Among such inter-related and complex situations, the interaction of individual traits such as gender with EI must be paid more attention as to what hindering factors have been in action to change the result towards the outperformance of males at the end. Still another implication could be that in the present research study, trait EI typology and not ability EI has been investigated. As Austin, (2004) accentuates, there is a distinction between trait EI (or "emotional self-efficacy"), which concerns emotion-related traits and self-perceived abilities measured via self-report questionnaires, and ability EI (or "cognitive-emotional ability"), which concerns actual emotion-related abilities measured via maximum-performance tests. In this study, EI index has been measured and evaluated through self-report questionnaires which accordingly assessed the trait EI among the selected participants and not ability EI which is cognitive-emotional based. Since gender is also concerned with cognition, it is probable that more assessments must have been done to assess ability EI for the EQ level classification and then probe into its interaction with EI level of ability type.

One last interpretation could be obtained considering Roxburgh, 1996 and Simon, 1995 as many gender differences in situ are initiated by differences in the experiences, responsibilities, and types of stressors that pose differential challenges to the two genders. Females, more often than their male peers, are simultaneously exposed to family- and job-related stressors as a result of their dual roles as mothers and professionals. Fluctuations might have occurred due to such family-type reasons too.

**Question 3:** What are the students' overall impression on 'dialogue journal writing' as an active task-report tool?

Finally, some informal interviews with both teachers and the learners were performed through open-ended semi structured questionnaire. Informal interviews with the learners were finally done to inquire about their opinions of this way of communicating with their teacher. About 85% of the students had a positive impression on utilizing dialogue journal writing as a useful tool for maximizing class participation esp. among those suffering lower EI index. They enumerated the following benefits in their talks. Some of their viewpoints are briefly given below:

A: They believed they had found a unique opportunity to talk interactively to their teacher; the occasion that to their opinion they had never experienced before. They said they felt great.

B: Most of the students asserted they liked the teachers' written explanation directed towards themselves. They liked the air.

C: Nearly most of the learners enjoyed this means of communication because all their language problems were resolved by the teacher.

D: Some students had benefitted from compensation strategies which they had taken in the process of utilizing dialogue journal writing in which the teachers' verbal aids were considered an appeal for authority on the part of the learners seeking for help. They enquired on their various strategies for learning English. They corrected some of their naïve learning strategies.

E: Students with lower EI index were interviewed individually in order to let them transfer their feelings without any threatening atmosphere. They really wished for such two-sided communication due to its stress-free situation.

F: Students accentuated they had become more orderly, focused and more organized in their lesson.

Although the learners really had positive views on the whole process of journaling, some complaints were also reported like the following:

- A. Teachers' responses to their question sheets were sometimes similar to their classmates' when they compared their own sheets to those of their classmates.
- B. Teachers sometimes evaded some points as to the students' suggestion over class management procedures.
- C. Some students didn't like weekly or sometimes daily reports on their tasks. They thought it was tedious.
- D. We liked to communicate some of our points anonymously, while in this way the teachers knew who had made a point.

Possible reasons behind such negative viewpoints though could be the nature of feedback by the teachers which in the long run can change into a monotonous verbatim of their previous responses without their immediate awareness of such repetitive responses to the same subject.

The teachers were generally satisfied with the reflective tools such as journaling due to its various benefits. To the teachers, the main vantage points involved advancing critical thinking among learners, promoting communication skills, enhancing intellectual growth among many others. The interviewed teachers were all agreed upon the accelerating effects of journaling for the learners' writing performance if they urged the learners to focus on meaning rather than the form. In the long run, they accentuated, this could help the learners overcome their various blocks in writing skills communicatively. In the questionnaire, the teachers were asked if it is possible for DJW to be applied for all age groups. The responses showed that they liked to agree enthusiastically for DJW practices to be enforced and run for all age groups. However, one of the two teachers asserted that it is the matter of time if it is going to be run for adults. Since adults are usually pressed for time, this could be a hindrance point for those age groups. In response to another question as to utilizing DJW for multi-level classes, both teachers agreed forcefully that such reflective practices can really bridge in the gap among learners with various levels and language proficiencies. Among the reasons brought was more efficient time management for class periods. Still another positive aspect could include the opportunity that the learners can gain in reading their other classmates' journals published by the teacher supervision.

## CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, the gained benefits for journaling practices specifically for adults have also been verified by many researchers in the field. Stress reduction and health maintenance has been mentioned by Bruce (1998). Adams (1998) also talks about journaling as a therapy for enhancing psychological healing and growth. Most adult education

students may not need psychotherapy or medical recovery assistance, but some can use whatever helps them to release pent-up emotions, counter anger or frustration, and overcome or reduce the stress so typical in today's busy work world and lifestyle. Peyton (1987) even adds that other academic disciplines improve if journal writing is systematically included in the curriculum.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Concerning the DJW processes, there are usually two drawbacks reported in the literature: First, this activity requires considerable time commitment by the teacher to read and respond meaningfully to each learner's entry. To lessen the workload, the teacher can require learners to write two or three times a week instead of daily. This might have a probable impact on the final results, by prospect. Second, some adult students may be reluctant to participate in journal writing continuously. If this were the case, the ESL/EFL instructor may want to engage the learners in the process of writing for an extended period of time which due to time restriction and four-month schedules of academic semesters, the authors had to manage it during just one semester for the target group. Maybe further research work on other aspects of the whole self-report dialogue journal writing processes through longitudinal case studies in language centers that allow for longer periods of time.

### **POSSIBLE SUGGESTIONS**

In this regard, some promising suggestions might be considered. One way could be to hold in-service courses for teachers in order to train them for reflective thinking and dialogue practice mechanisms which really benefit the class time. Through participating in journal writing courses together collaboratively, teachers may augment more dialogic skills. Still another proposition can be to lessen the workload for the teachers. As the learners sometimes get tired of writing, so do their teachers. Meanwhile, this might have been the reason for not providing suitable phrases or providing repetitive verbiage on the part of the teachers. They can require their students for instance to write and report their feelings and impressions two or three times a week instead of daily.

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**A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FOCUS ON FORM AND FOCUS ON FORMS  
INSTRUCTIONS ON CONDITIONAL SENTENCE LEARNING BY IRANIAN PRE-INTERMEDIATE  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

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**ABSTRACT**

This quasi-experimental study attempted to compare the effectiveness of focus on form instruction with focus on forms instruction on conditional sentence learning to Iranian pre-intermediate English as a foreign language (EFL) learners. To this end, six intact classes involving 97 participants who had gained pre-intermediate level scores on the proficiency test and showed relative unfamiliarity with the target structures on the pretest were assigned into three groups. The study employed a pretest, posttest, delayed posttest design and multiple choice type achievement tests were used to measure the effects of treatment. The focus on form group received textual enhancement, contextualized explicit teaching, and dictogloss; the focus on forms group received explicit deductive grammar instruction. Moreover, the control group was taught reading passages containing the conditional structures. The findings indicated a significant difference among the performance of the three groups on both immediate and delayed posttests with focus on form group outperforming the focus on forms and the control groups. The findings also showed a significant difference between the mean scores of the two posttests of each group. Finally, this study suggests that a focus on form instruction can lead to higher accuracy in learning grammatical knowledge in comparison to focus on forms.

**KEYWORDS:** focus on form, focus on forms, planned focus on form, textual enhancement, dictogloss

**INTRODUCTION**

Among the issues in second and foreign language teaching and learning, there has always been significant controversy about whether and how to include "grammar" in second/foreign language instruction/acquisition (Doughty & Williams, 1988). In this regard, with the appearance of form-focused instruction (FFI), as a modification of communicative language teaching, a shift occurred from incidental and implicit grammar teaching instruction to formal and meaningful grammar teaching syllabus. Long (1988) suggested that FFI can be of two types: Focus on form, and focus on forms. Long (1991) defined focus on form as "an instruction that draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication" (p. 45-46). On the other hand, focus on forms instruction refers to teaching isolated linguistic forms in separate lessons in accordance with a structural syllabus.

Further, Ellis (2001) used FFI as a cover term to refer to any planned or incidental instructional activity that is aimed to direct language learners to linguistic form. Compared to Long's taxonomies of FFI, Ellis (2001) categorizes it in terms of three types including "focus on forms", "planned focus on form", and "incidental focus on form". Thus, it includes both traditional approaches to teaching forms and more communicative approaches.

In focus on forms instruction, the primary attention is on form and instruction is the intensive treatment of preselected forms. In planned focus on form, however, the teacher decides in advance what forms should be focused on, but the primary attention lies on meaning rather than on form. In incidental focus on form, attention is distributed among a wide range of forms that have not been preselected, but the primary of attention is to meaning (Ellis, 2001).

***Focus on Form Instruction***

Focus on form instruction suggests that learners need to develop communicative use while attention to form should not be overlooked by them. This kind of instruction stresses on the integration of form and meaning without excluding either of them for successful language learning (Izumi & Bigelow, 2001). After focus on form instruction was put forward, many researchers have proposed various options for integrating a focus on grammar and a focus on

communication and many strategies have been used for this purpose (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). Some of these techniques are presented below.

### ***Textual enhancement***

Textual enhancement is one of several techniques of input enhancement manipulated in this study. In textual enhancement, readers/learners attend to particular information in a text with typographical cues including coloring, boldfacing, underlining, italicizing, changing the font type, enlarging the font size, or any combination of these techniques (Wong, 2005). Textual enhancement aims to present more salient features of written input to which learners may not usually attend in a text and to make form-meaning connections for the target language.

### ***Dictogloss***

Dictogloss is a kind of collaborative output task designed to encourage students to produce language forms cooperatively by reconstructing a text. Nassaji and Fotos (2011) defined collaborative output as "instructional options that push learners to produce output by performing tasks that require them to pay attention to both meaning and grammatical forms." (p. 103). In a dictogloss, teachers usually read a text to their students at a normal pace. Students listen to the text and note any words or phrases related to the content. Then, they work in small groups to reconstruct the text in terms of grammatical accuracy and cohesion (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011).

### ***Focus on Forms Instruction***

Focus on forms instruction "is equated with the traditional teaching of discrete points of grammar in separate lessons" (Sheen, 2002, p.303). The primary purpose of the activity designed for this kind of instruction is to learn a pre-selected form. It is based on analytic syllabus and the teacher and students are aware of what the linguistic target for the lesson is.

Focus on forms has also been defined as "instruction involving a structure of the day approach, where the primary focus is on the form that is being targeted" (Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2002, p.420). In this type of instruction, learners are required to focus their attention on some specific form intensively in order to learn it. It also offers different means for understanding of grammar (including explaining grammar rules in the L1, identifying differences between the L1 and the L2).

### ***Studies on Form-Focused Instruction***

Many different models and strategies are designed for conducting a form-focused study. Lee (2007) examined the effects of input enhancement on learners' reading comprehension and learning of passive forms. The results showed that in the form correction task the participants with enhanced texts performed better than those with the unenhanced texts. The findings also revealed that manipulation of printing in bold had positive effects on Korean students' acquisition of passive voice in English. Moreover, in another study, Jourdenais, Ota, Stauffer, Boyson, and Doughty (1995, cited in Nassaji & Fotos, 2011) showed that the learners of enhancement group performed better than unenhanced group in both noticing and subsequent production of the target forms.

Mayo (2002) investigated the effect of two focus on form tasks (a dictogloss and a text reconstruction) in advanced EFL level. Although the two tasks had been claimed to be effective and encouraging learners to produce language and reflect on its form (Kowal & Swain, 1994; Swain 1998), the quantitative analysis of the data indicated that the text-reconstruction task was a suitable form-focused task for this group of learners.

Sheen (2001) conducted an on-going comparative research for the last school year in an elementary school in Quebec. For the study, two sixth grade classes were taught, one of which was considered the control group with the usual focus on form instruction. The experimental group was taught as usual except that the researcher was allowed to provide a focus on forms for approximately one hour a week. Both groups achieved very similar results in pretest. After two months they took a posttest in the form of oral interviews which were broadly similar to the pretest. The result of this study showed that a focus on forms approach helped students in the experimental group to make solid progress in the two targeted grammar areas, while the control group, which was taught based on a focus on form, continued producing largely incorrect forms, thus allowing fossilization to continue to develop.

Some research studies have also been conducted in Iran (Abdolmanafi, 2010, Charanli, 2010, Mokhberi, 2011, etc.) to investigate the effectiveness of focus on form instruction on learning some target forms; however, to the best of the researchers' knowledge no studies have so far compared the effectiveness of a combination of input enhancement, delayed explicit focus on form and an output-based task (a dictogloss) as a model for focus on form instruction with explicit deductive grammar teaching as a model of focus on forms instruction on conditional sentence learning by Iranian pre-intermediate English language learners.

### ***Conditionals***

The present study focused on conditionals as the target structures because of the syntactic and semantic complexities embedded in conditional constructions (Chou, 2000). The difficulty degrees of conditionals in English can be related to the structures themselves. Mindt (1996) also argued that conditionals complexity and particular tense uses in comparison with other sentential patterns turn them into fairly problematic constructions, both in first and second language acquisition. Moreover, conditionals consist of main clauses and subordinate clauses which are difficult for students to comprehend because of the syntactic complexity (Lord, 2002).

Nayef and Hajjaj (1997) suggested three points in teaching conditionals: "forms of the verbs, the time reference of the verbs, and the meaning of the condition in each of the patterns" (p.140). They also pointed that the difficulty of conditionals lies in the interaction of forms (verb form changes) and meanings. It seems that asymmetry between forms and functions in conditionals may cause serious problems for L2 learners. Likewise, the agreement of the forms of two verbs in the two clauses of a conditional sentence is the source of difficulty for learners (Ke, 2004). So, the present study centered on all the three basic patterns of conditionals.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In order to compare the effectiveness of focus on form and focus on forms instructions on the conditional sentence learning of Iranian pre-intermediate English language learners, the following research questions were developed:

1. Is there any significant difference among the language learners who were instructed through focus on the form, focus on the forms, and control group in learning of conditionals in the immediate posttest?
2. Is there any significant difference among the language learners who were instructed through focus on the form, focus on the forms, and control group in learning of conditionals in the delayed posttest?
3. Is there any significant difference between the immediate posttest and the delayed posttest scores of the language learners who were instructed through focus on the form, focus on the forms, and control group in learning of conditionals?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

To accomplish the objectives of this study, 112 male and female EFL learners of six intact classes from two private language institutes in Iran were given a homogeneity test (44 males in three intact classes and 68 females in three intact classes, respectively). These learners were at pre-intermediate level of language instruction based on the screening system used by the two institutes' authorities but for increasing homogeneity of the students of two institutes, all the learners were given a homogeneity test. In the test, a table of interpreting scores acts as a guideline for teachers to choose which level is suitable for their students. From among the initial participants, 105 learners gained the scores range of pre-intermediate level in the test.

In the next step, learners were pretested by means of a multiple-choice test to determine their level of knowledge with regard to the target structures. One hundred and one learners met the necessary condition. Four learners were absent in one of the phases and their scores were omitted from the study, thus making the final number of data providers 97. These six intact classes were put into three groups randomly; two groups as the experimental groups (focus on form group,  $n = 33$  and focus on forms group,  $n = 32$ ), and the third as the control group ( $n = 32$ ). Each of these three groups included one female's class and one male's class and all learners had Persian as their first language.

### ***Instrumentation***

As mentioned above, *Solutions* placement test with a reliability of .80 was used to find out the degree of homogeneity with regard to the language knowledge of the three groups. This test has been designed to assess students' knowledge of the key language as well as their receptive and productive skills. The next instrument used in

this study was an achievement test containing 30 items, 20 of which were related to the target structure and were used for statistical analyses. The other ten items were not related to the targets of the study. The items were taken from *Objective test in English as a foreign language*, *Nelson English language tests*, and *Grammar in use tests*. This test was also used as a delayed posttest two weeks after the treatment to compare the recall of the target structures in posttest and delayed posttest.

A third instrument was a 30 item multiple-choice type achievement test on English conditional sentences parallel with pretest administered to the participants after the treatment as a posttest. Both tests were piloted on 20 learners similar to the sample of the current study with the difference that these students were familiar with the target structures. The reliability of the pretest and posttest scores was calculated through KR-21 method which turned out to be 0.72 and 0.70 respectively. A time allocation of 20 minutes was also estimated for both tests.

For treatment, in the experimental group 1 (focus on form group), one passage for textual enhancement purpose and one passage for dictogloss purpose were extracted for each type of conditional structures. As a whole, six passages were extracted for this group. In focus on forms group five types of exercises and drills (fill in the blanks, consolidation drill, matching, chain drill, and correcting order) were acquired for each type of the target structure. In control group, two passages for reading comprehension purpose were extracted for each structure. Most of the passages used in this group were the same as the passages of the focus on form group.

### ***Procedure***

This study was conducted in the summer of 2012 at two private language institutes which adhered to a meaning driven syllabus with almost similar educational conditions and facilities. In these two institutes, each session lasted 90 minutes and the classes met two times a week. The instructional treatments were provided during three training sessions for each group, each of these sessions lasted approximately 60 minutes.

All groups (six intact classes) received the instructions from the same instructor who was also one of the researchers. The two instructional treatments were matched for the target structure, and all three groups were matched for instruction time. Each session focused on one type of conditional structure. Before the treatment, two tests were administered. A homogeneity test was administered to all three groups to find out whether the participants were at pre-intermediate level. Another test was a pretest administered to discover whether the participants had almost similar familiarity with three main forms of conditional sentence structures. One session after the pretest, the learners participated in the study treatment. At the beginning, the researcher-instructor presented overall instructions about the experiment in each group. In each session for the focus on form group (experimental group 1), input enhancement activity, delayed explicit focus on form, and dictogloss for each structure were presented to participants for focus on form purpose.

For input enhancement activity, in each session the participants were provided with one reading passage which contained one type of conditional structure. The target forms were typographically enhanced through bolding, italicizing and underling. In detail, the If-clauses including the word *if*, two verbs of if-clauses and comma (if necessary) used in the passages given to this group is visually enhanced. After reading the passages the participants were asked to complete certain tasks. The task required the learners to use the conditional sentences in the different contexts. It should be mentioned that the primary attention was on meaning.

After being exposed to the target structure, the learners were taught the features of language they had already attended to meaningfully in a contextualized explicit instruction. For example, one sentence of the passage containing an if-clause which had been textually enhanced was considered and the structure was explained to the learners. This was followed by an output-oriented task which was a dictogloss. The teacher read aloud a text containing the target structures three times. The participants initially listened to the reading, next took notes, and later checked their notes and reconstructed the original text which contained the target structure with the other members of the group.

Experimental group 2 received focus on forms instruction. In this group, first, the participants were provided with grammar rules of the target structure, and then five activities related to focus on forms instruction were done by the

participants individually or in group. The types of exercises were traditional drill (fill in the blanks), consolidation drill, matching, chain drill, and putting the words in correct orders. It should be mentioned that the grammar rules were explained in participants' mother tongue (Persian) and in each of these phases if a student used the target structure wrongly, the teacher corrected it or asked the student or the other student to take part in its correction.

In control group, the members were provided with two reading passages, containing the target structures, in each session and did reading comprehension exercises for about 60 minutes; it should be reiterated, however, that they were not taught the target structures explicitly. All the passages used for both focus on form and control groups in this study incorporated different topics and were taken from different sources including Chinese speakers' acquisition of English conditionals: Acquisition order and L1 transfer effects., *Interchange* (3<sup>rd</sup>ed). Some passages used as dictogloss were also retrieved from: [http:// www.Englishpage.com](http://www.Englishpage.com).

After the treatment, all the participants were unexpectedly tested on the target structures with an immediate posttest. Two weeks after the posttest, a delayed posttest which was the same as the pretest was administered to examine both short- and medium-term effects of the instructions. It should be mentioned that before starting the study all of the test items, exercises, and passages used in this study has been also checked by another teacher who had more than five years of experience in English language teaching. As a result, some of the items were modified to be more suitable for learners of pre-intermediate level. The readability of all of the passages used in the study was also calculated based on Flesh-Kincaid Reading Ease. The result showed that all used passages were relatively suitable for pre-intermediate level learners.

## RESULTS

The results of the study are presented in the following two main sections: (1) result of the pretest, (2) results of testing the hypotheses.

### *Result of the Pretest*

Table 1 shows the group statistics results of the three groups in the pretest. In order to decide upon the homogeneity of the variances of the two groups, a Levene's test was deployed. It indicated that the three groups were homogeneous in terms of their variances,  $F(2, 94) = 1.028, p = 0.362 > 0.05$ . Therefore, in order to ensure that there was no significant difference among the three groups in terms of their knowledge of the conditional structures, an ANOVA was conducted. The comparison of the means in the pretest,  $F(2, 94) = .434, p = 0.649 > 0.05$ , indicated that there was no statistically significant difference among the performance of the three groups in the pretest indicating the relative unfamiliarity of participants with the target structures.

*Table 1: Group Statistics for the Achievement Pretest*

groups	N	Minimum	Mean	Median	Maximum	Std. Deviation
Focus on Form	33	2	4.61	5.00	8	1.713
Focus on Forms	32	1	4.28	4.00	8	1.631
Control Group	32	1	4.59	5.00	7	1.388
Total	97	1	4.49	4.00	8	1.575

### *Results of Testing the Hypotheses*

The comparison of the mean values of the three groups in the immediate posttest indicated that the difference between the means of the three groups was statistically significant. Table 2 shows the group statistics for the immediate posttest.

*Table 2: Group Statistics for the Immediate Posttest*

Groups	N	Minimum	Mean	Median	Maximum	Std. Deviation
Focus on Form	33	6	13.06	13.00	20	4.077
Focus on Forms	32	5	11.28	11.00	19	3.245
Control Group	32	3	6.91	7.00	11	2.161



Total	97	3	10.44	10.00	20	4.148
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Levene's test for homogeneity of variances showed a significant value of 0.003 for the immediate posttest. The ANOVA results demonstrated that there were significant differences among the mean scores of the three groups,  $F(2, 94) = 30.404, p = 0.000 < 0.05$  (see Table 3).

Table 3: ANOVA Results for the Immediate Posttest

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	648.872	2	324.436	30.404	.000
Within Groups	1003.066	94	10.671		
Total	1651.938	96			

Since the ANOVA results indicated a significant value of 0.000, the multiple comparisons among groups were performed by using least square differences (LSD) to determine which groups were significantly different from each other. As the first line (row) of Table 4 shows, the mean difference (MD) of focus on form and focus on forms group was 1.779 which revealed that focus on form group was better than focus on forms group. Moreover, when focus on form group and control group were compared with each other, the result showed that there was a significant difference between them ( $MD = 6.154, sig = .000$ ). As line two shows, the mean difference of focus on forms and control group was 4.375 which revealed that focus on forms group was better than control group.

Table 4: Multiple Comparisons(LSD) for the Immediate Posttest

(I) group		(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
LSD	focus on form	focus on forms	1.779*	.810	.031	.17	3.39
		control group	6.154*	.810	.000	4.55	7.76
	focus on forms	focus on form	-1.779*	.810	.031	-3.39	-.17
		control group	4.375*	.817	.000	2.75	6.00
	control group	focus on form	-6.154*	.810	.000	-7.76	-4.55
		focus on forms	-4.375*	.817	.000	-6.00	-2.75

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Regarding to comparison of the mean values of the three groups on the delayed posttest, group statistics showed a significant difference between the mean scores of the three groups (see Table 5).

Table 5: Group Statistics for the Delayed Posttest

Groups	N	Minimum	Mean	Median	Maximum	Std. Deviation
Focus on Form	33	5	10.48	10.00	19	4.154
Focus on Forms	32	3	7.91	7.00	18	3.383
Control Group	32	3	5.75	6.00	9	1.778
Total	97	3	8.07	7.00	19	3.778

Table 6: ANOVA for the Delayed Posttest

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	365.534	2	182.767	17.095	.000
Within Groups	1004.961	94	10.691		
Total	1370.495	96			

Levene's test for homogeneity of variances showed a significance value of 0.001 for the delayed posttest. As Table 6 displays, the ANOVA results demonstrated that there were significant differences among the mean scores of the three groups,  $F(2, 94) = 17.095, p = 0.000 < 0.05$ .

As Table 7 shows, the post hoc LSD test displayed the notably significant differences between focus on form group and focus on forms group ( $MD = 2.579, sig = 0.002$ ) which revealed that focus on form group was better than focus

on forms group. Moreover, when the delayed posttest scores of focus on form group and control group were compared, a significant difference was found ( $MD = 4.735$ ,  $sig = .000$ ). As line two shows, the mean difference of focus on forms and control group was 2.156 which revealed that focus on forms group was better than control group.

Table 7: Multiple Comparisons (LSD) for the Delayed Posttest Scores

			Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
(I) group	(J) group	Lower Bound				Upper Bound	
LSD	focus on form	focus on forms	2.579*	.811	.002	.97	4.19
		control group	4.735*	.811	.000	3.12	6.35
	focus on forms	focus on form	-2.579*	.811	.002	-4.19	-.97
		control group	2.156*	.817	.010	.53	3.78
	control group	focus on form	-4.735*	.811	.000	-6.35	-3.12
		focus on forms	-2.156*	.817	.010	-3.78	-.53

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 8 also shows a significant difference between the mean scores of each group in the immediate and delayed posttests.

Table 8: Summary of Paired Samples Statistics for the immediate posttest-delayed posttest scores

groups			Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
focus on form	Pair 1	delayed posttest	10.48	33	4.154	.723
		immediate posttest	13.06	33	4.077	.710
focus on forms	Pair 1	delayed posttest	7.91	32	3.383	.598
		immediate posttest	11.28	32	3.245	.574
control group	Pair 1	delayed posttest	5.75	32	1.778	.314
		immediate posttest	6.91	32	2.161	.382

As shown in Table 9, there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the immediate and delayed posttests in focus on form group ( $t = 7.023$ ,  $df = 32$ ,  $sig.$  (two-tailed) =  $0.000 < 0.05$ ). It could be concluded that the participants gained better scores in the immediate posttest with the mean of 13.06 than in the delayed posttest with the mean of 10.48. There is also a significant difference between the mean scores of the immediate and delayed posttests in focus on forms group ( $t = 6.573$ ,  $df = 31$ ,  $sig.$  (two-tailed) =  $0.000 < 0.05$ ). It showed that the participants obtained better scores in the immediate posttest with the mean of 11.28 than in the delayed posttest with the mean of 7.91.

In control group,  $t = 4.773$ ,  $df = 31$ ,  $sig.$  (two-tailed) =  $0.000 < 0.05$  revealed that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of these posttests in control group. Table 9 also displays that the participants of control group gained better scores in the immediate posttest with the mean scores of 6.91 than in the delayed posttest with the mean scores of 5.75. Based on the indicated results, it can be concluded that the participants of all three groups had better performance in the immediate posttest than in the delayed posttest.

Table 9: Paired Samples T-test of the Immediate posttest-Delayed Posttest Scores

groups			Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
						Lower	Upper			
focus on form	Pair1	delayed posttest–immediate posttest	-2.576	2.107	.367	-3.323	-1.829	-7.023	32	.000
focus on forms	Pair1	delayed posttest–immediate posttest	-3.375	2.904	.513	-4.422	-2.328	-6.573	31	.000

control group	Pair1	delayed posttest– immediate posttest	-1.156	1.370	.242	-1.650	-.662	-4.773	31	.000
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## DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was mainly to compare the relative effects of the two instructions of focus on form including textual enhancement, contextualized explicit grammar teaching, and dictogloss with focus on forms including explicit deductive grammar instruction in learning of the three basic patterns of conditional sentence learning of Iranian pre-intermediate students.

In the first and second questions concerning the existence of a significant difference among the three groups in the immediate as well as the delayed posttest, the results indicated that the students who were taught based on focus on form instruction outperformed those who were taught based on focus on forms instruction in both immediate and delayed posttests. Therefore, the results suggested that the manipulation of focus on form instruction could facilitate the participants' learning of conditional structures. The findings also revealed that, the control group, which received non-formal instruction, did not significantly improve their scores on the posttests. The results are in accordance with the Long's claim that a focus on form approach is more effective than both focus on forms and focus on meaning (Long & Robinson, 1998 cited in Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). There are four interpretations of why the focus on form instruction might be more effective than focus on forms instruction in this study. First, when learners read the enhanced passages, they tended to naturally pay attention to the highlighted target forms unknown to them. It is in accordance with the Sharwood Smith's view (1993) that the effects of focusing learners' attention to specific aspects of input can lead to further cognitive processing. Second, contextualized explicit teaching of the target structures created an opportunity for the teacher to explain the grammar points by the use of the enhanced text. Third, using dictogloss as a collaborative output task helped learners to reflect on their own language output, and encouraged them to cooperate with their peers in the group and learned from each other. Finally, this model of focus on form instruction was designed in such a way that provided learners with opportunities to do both input and output tasks for learning the target structures.

In the third question concerning the possible existence of a significant difference between the immediate posttest and the delayed posttest scores of the three groups, results revealed that in all three groups the gains were not maintained in the longer term. However, the findings lead us to assume that focus on form instruction has more lasting positive effect than focus on forms instruction. More specifically, the results of this study suggest that lasting instructional effects can be obtained through providing learners with opportunities to use the target form in a meaning-oriented task in combination with appropriate form-focused treatment.

## CONCLUSION

First of all, this study can conclude that although both instructions are effective, focus on form instruction is more effective than focus on forms instruction. Moreover, though the time lag of two weeks between immediate posttest and delayed posttest revealed that the gains were not maintained in the medium term, the improvements in the mean scores of the two posttests when compared to the pretest suggested that for the two experimental groups, especially focus on form group, learning of the target structures had taken place to a great extent. So, it cannot be denied that focus on form instruction has more lasting positive effect on grammar learning than focus on forms instruction. This conclusion seems to be consistent with Spada's (1997) claim that when grammar points introduced through formal instruction are accompanied with communicative exposure for the learners, their accuracy of use improves and their awareness of the forms becomes longer-lasting. This study also brings into light the advantage of integrating form and meaning in EFL contexts and the facilitative function of combination of input enhancement, explicit teaching, and collaborative output task in L2 learning. In this study, the focus on form instruction included the combination of two techniques of textual enhancement and dictogloss with the former being a kind of input-based task and the latter a kind of output task. It is in accordance with Swain's (2005) claim that the most effective strategy for most teaching situations is to use all the techniques and resources available and not to limit oneself to one type of activity. The study also support the current view which encourage teachers to combine different techniques of focus on form as a design for focus on form instruction, such as rule instruction (Alanen, 1995) and output tasks (Izumi, 2002).

Although there have been a lot of research studies in the literature regarding the comparative examination of the effect of different types and techniques of focus on form, very little research has directly compared the effectiveness of focus on form and focus on forms approach (Ellis, 2002). Moreover, it is difficult to compare the results of this study with the results of other studies which investigated FFI together with a communicative task because different studies use different numbers of grammatical structures, different types and techniques of focus on form instruction, and use different ways to measure learning. However, the findings revealed that focus on form instruction is more effective than focus on forms and focus on meaning on the learning of grammar, lending support to findings in previous studies on the effects of different types of focus on form instruction on the grammar learning. Therefore, the present study could be considered as an additional support for focus on form instruction in comparison with focus on forms instruction.

However, the findings should be interpreted by taking into account the limitations of the study. The first limitation is related to the sample size. It should be noted that the number of participants is not large enough to generalize the conclusions to all pre-intermediate English language learners. Moreover, the use of intact groups imposes its own limitations on generalizability of the findings. Second, the placement test which was used to check the homogeneity of the participants was the Solution Placement test which is lesser known and used standard test. Third, this study only focused on learning three grammatical structures through some techniques of focus on form and focus on forms instructions by the pre-intermediate English language learners; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to the whole grammar or other structures in English. Hence, future research necessity to investigate the effects of different techniques of focus on form and focus on forms instructions in learning of various grammatical structures on learners with different proficiency levels. Moreover, the effects of longer duration of treatment need to be addressed to gain more understanding on the effect of long-term retention on the conditional structures.

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## ON THE IRANIAN EFL GRADUATES' RECOGNITION OF SEMANTIC OPAQUENESS OF EUPHEMISTIC EXPRESSIONS IN ENGLISH

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to probe into the semantic opaqueness of English euphemisms and investigate it in view of the maxims of cooperative principle based on the mindset of Iranian EFL graduates. For this purpose, data from 100 Iranian EFL graduates on 60 English euphemistic expressions were collected and analyzed. The results indicated that interlocutors do not constantly observe the CP maxims but recurrently flout them, while using euphemisms. In this vein, considering the rate of flouting, the manner maxim ranked first and the quantity maxim ranked last. Besides, concerning EFL learners' recognition of semantic opaqueness in English euphemisms, the supremacy of flouting of the manner maxim revealed that interlocutors have frequent tendency to do flout and say vague things to avoid unpleasant and embarrassing issues in a direct way. So it supported the idea that EFL learners' recognition of English euphemisms can characterize the semantic opaqueness of English euphemisms. It was finally concluded that due to semantic opaqueness, a potential threat to EFL learners could be their being unenlightened about the implications of the shades of meanings of euphemisms when they are exposed to them, or when they are recognizing or producing discourse.

**KEYWORDS:** Cooperative principle, euphemism, maxim, semantic opaqueness.

### INTRODUCTION

It seems axiomatic that in every culture there are a fair number of words labeled as frivolous, vulgar, or uncaring. Also, there are certain things that are not supposed to be mentioned directly. Such roundabout type of language is known as euphemism in linguistics, which comes in a variety of forms and is used for a variety of reasons.

According to Kenworthy (1991), the word euphemism "is taken from Greek and means good speech" (p.20). Also, Abrams (1999) holds that "euphemisms are devices to replace unpleasant words or expressions by conventionally more acceptable ones" (p.83). Besides, Thomas (1989) believes that "euphemism can be figuratively called 'a whitewashing device' which is a mirror of morality, customs, lifestyle, and social psychology in everyday life" (p.103).

The relationship between euphemism and culture is also largely noticeable. Euphemism, as a cultural-linguistic product, displays its multiple mapping relations with culture (Rawson, 1995). Likewise, as a social tool, it is widely used to show courtesy; to help to fit to the proper context; and to express the ideas more politely (Allan & Burridge, 2007). Meanwhile, conducting investigations into the euphemisms in view of the pedagogical and socio-pragmatic implications can be noteworthy, as at the educational level, learning euphemisms well means more than merely mastering the pronunciation, words, and grammar (Alkire, 2002). In the same vein, learning euphemisms could mean learning to see the world as the native speakers of language see and understand it (Allan & Burridge, 1991).

In brief, though euphemism can be defined from varied perspectives (Allan & Burridge, 1991, 2007; Rawson, 1995; Alkire, 2002), the definitions share some features, as follows:

1. Euphemism is a kind of polite, roundabout, and gracious mode of expression.
2. Euphemism is used to mitigate the unpleasantness of reality.
3. The main purpose of euphemism is to shun directly speaking out the unpleasant or taboo reference like death, illnesses, and the supernatural.

### *Chronological aspects in the study of euphemisms*



In a valuable legacy, Mencken (1936) explained why hundreds of euphemisms were born and popularized based on the historical and sociocultural backgrounds. Besides, Enright (1985) put forward a collection of essays providing clues for a comprehensive study on English euphemisms in various fields. Later on, Dingfang (1989) expanded the study scope of euphemisms and proposed distant, relevant, sweet-sounding, and self-defending principles. Alternatively, Allan and Burridge (1991) studied euphemisms from a pragmatic perspective, assuming that a perspective on the human psyche was gained from euphemisms as a protective shield against the disapproval of natural beings. On the other hand, Hodge and Kress (1993) investigated the dichotomy of 'euphemistic' and 'derogatory' and claimed it as one of the very effective techniques in naturalization of ideologies. More to the point, Rawson (1995) widely accounted for the characteristics, definition, classification, and scope of euphemisms. Also, Holder (1995) in the study of euphemisms endeavored to unmask the language of deceit and highlighted human tendency to use roundabout terms in preference to bluntly accurate words.

At the chime of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Hong-hui (2000) indicated that euphemistic wording can meet the requirements and accomplish the communicative task. Alternatively, van Dijk (2004) resorted to social, cognitive and discourse analysis of the text to uncover ideology in discourse, and used 'euphemism' to elucidate 'positive self-representation' and 'negative other-representation'. Also, Ham (2005) studied euphemism formation by extracting examples from Austen's *Emma*, Lawrence's *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, and Walker's *Well Groomed*. Then, the rules by Warren (1992)'s model of classification were tested against euphemisms which transpired that improvements were required to account for deconstructing euphemisms.

In a more recent study, Jangjorn (2004) investigated the Internet users' techniques in avoiding impolite words on the Web boards, the most common ways of which were shown to be pausing, changing letters, clipping, spelling, employing loanwords, and using metaphors. Alternatively, Fernandez (2006) examined the euphemistic language on obituary pages from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the results of which indicated a tendency to present sentimental obituaries in which the taboo of death could be accounted for by various conceptual metaphors. At the same time, Rahimi and Sahragard (2006) took van Dijk's framework in the analysis of euphemisms and investigated the discursive structures which lead to ideologically based prejudiced statements in emails addressing the death of the late Pope, John Paul II.

More recently, Hai-Long (2008) paid particular attention to the relationship between cross-cultural communication and euphemisms as well as the necessity of teaching euphemisms and argued that there were not enough instances of euphemisms in EFL textbooks and materials. In the same vein, MirzaSuzani (2009) paid attention to the translation of euphemism addressing issues of background, classification, and semantic equivalence, based on which euphemism study was not restricted to the lexicon, but extended to the level of sentence and discourse.

### ***Grice's maxims of cooperative principle***

Grice (1975) considered verbal exchanges as oriented to a set of purposes, for achieving which the participants should cooperate with each other. Also, he described cooperative principles as "make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (1989, pp. 26-27). For further explanation of the CP, he proposed four maxims as follows:

- A. Maxim of Quantity: Give the right amount of information.
  - a. Make your contribution as informative as is required;
  - b. Do not make your contribution more informative as is required.
- B. Maxim of Quality: Try to make your contribution one that is true.
  - a. Do not say what you believe to be false;
  - b. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
- C. Maxim of Relation: Be relevant.
- D. Maxim of Manner: Be perspicuous and specific.
  - a. Avoid obscurity of expression;
  - b. Avoid ambiguity;
  - c. Be brief;
  - d. Be orderly.

For the most part, the CP accounted for the relationship between the literal and actual meanings, but it could not explain why people violate the maxims so as to express themselves in an indirect way, so Leech (1983) proposed the

PP from the pragmatic viewpoint based on which it was justified why speakers resort to such oblique methods as, for example, instead of saying tersely "Give me a light." they say "Could you give me a light?" He connected illocutionary acts with politeness in the verbal exchange wherein to be polite means to be tactful, modest and nice to others and the more indirect the illocution, the more polite it should be reevaluated.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Considering the semantic facet of euphemisms, a potential threat to the learners could be that they might be unenlightened about the implications of the shades of meanings of euphemisms when they are exposed to them, or when they are recognizing or producing discourse. This may be mainly due to an important feature of euphemisms called semantic opaqueness (or noncompositionality) defined by Moon (1997) as "the degree to which a multiple-word item cannot be interpreted on a word-by-word basis, but has a specialized unitary meaning" (p.44). Therefore, this study primarily aimed to probe into the semantic opaqueness as a part of the pragmatic function of euphemisms in English and investigate this feature through the maxims of CP. In this vein, it was also aimed to examine which maxims of CP might be flouted most and least via the use of euphemisms and euphemistic expressions. The results could provide the readers with a lucid idea about the euphemisms while flouting the CP maxims and pave the way for further studies at discursual and socio-pragmatic levels.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this study, the following research questions were made:

1. Do Iranian EFL graduates observe or flout the maxims of CP while using social euphemisms in English?
2. To what extent do EFL graduates observe or flout the maxims of CP while using social euphemisms in English?
3. Which maxims of CP are flouted most and least by Iranian EFL graduates?
4. Does Iranian EFL graduates' recognition of English euphemisms characterize the semantic opaqueness of social euphemisms in English?

### RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

In the current study, the following null hypotheses were addressed:

1. EFL graduates may not observe or flout the maxims of CP while using social euphemisms in English.
2. At no time may EFL graduates observe or flout the maxims of CP while using social euphemisms in English.
3. There is no difference among CP maxims in terms of being flouted by EFL graduates.
4. The Iranian EFL graduates' recognition of English euphemisms may not characterize the semantic opaqueness of social euphemisms in English.

### METHODOLOGY

#### *Participants*

Following a quantitative research design, the data were collected from 100 participants ranging between 23 to 35 years of age in 2012. They comprised 100 MA and PhD students of TEFL at Islamic Azad University, Shiraz Branch and Fars Science and Research Branch. The nonrandom purposive selection of participants from the graduate programs was based on the assumption that in comparison with undergraduates, they should hold and carry higher experiences and analytic abilities in their judgment, as well as detailed familiarity with linguistic and pedagogical issues. It was also expected that participants from the graduate programs could develop their potential insights into more effective procedures related to the recognition and appreciation of euphemisms.

#### *Materials*

In this research, instances of euphemistic expressions were taken from *Rawson's dictionary of euphemisms and other double talks* (1995), and Allan and Burridge's *Euphemism and dysphemism* (1991). Likewise, Grice's maxims of CP (1975) in Logic and Conversation were employed as the frameworks for developing the questionnaire items. Also, some online data banks and relevant Internet sites were used, and for analyzing the data the SPSS software was employed.

#### *Instruments*

A questionnaire containing 60 items on euphemistic expressions in view of the CP maxims was designed and validated under the supervision of experts such as Professor Yarmohammadi (See Appendix 1). To improve the quality of the data, it was exceedingly attempted that the relevancy and clarity of the questions be taken into account. In the same vein, to demonstrate the internal consistency of the items, the Cronbach's alpha reliability was calculated

which yielded a reliability estimate of 0.86 for the questionnaire that was statistically satisfactory regarding the purpose of the study.

#### Data collection procedures and data analysis

To collect the data, a questionnaire comprising an inventory of 60 items on English euphemisms together with the maxims CP was employed. The participants were put in a relaxing atmosphere and the necessary instructions on the items of questionnaire were given. The participants' options were based on their recognition of the observance or flouting of the four-fold maxims of CP. They were required to decide on the matter of the observance or flouting of each expression, and tick one or more of the options in front of the respective item. Next, the participants' opinions were collected to investigate the mindset of the graduates about English euphemistic expressions in view of the observance or nonobservance of the CP maxims. The data gathered were sorted out and categorized and the results were analyzed.

### FINDINGS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Data analysis

Chi-square test was run to examine the significance of the differences between the frequencies of the *observance* or *flouting* of the multiple maxims of CP.

#### Observance and flouting of the maxims of CP

Concerning the first two research questions, Chi-square was used to examine the significance of the differences between the frequencies of the *observance* or *flouting* of the maxims of CP. Thus, the observed frequencies of the *observance* and *flouting* of the maxims of CP together with the expected values of the *observance* and *flouting* of the maxims were given. Also, the modified values, based on the correction factor proposed by Hatch and Farhady (1981), were calculated and provided to the different frequencies. Then the  $\chi^2$  value obtained for each participant was compared with the critical value to decide if the null hypothesis could be rejected. In Table 1,  $\chi^2$  and the results of the observance and flouting of the CP maxims are represented:

Table 1: Chi-square on the Observance and Flouting of the CP Maxims for Each Individual Participants

Participant No.	Freq. of CP Maxims Observed (OUT OF 60)	Value (Modified) Based on Correction factor	Value (Expected)	Freq. of CP Maxims Flouted (OUT OF 60)	Value (Modified) Based on Correction factor	Value (Expected)	$\chi^2$ (Obtained)	$\chi^2$ (Critical) P=0.05	Result (Null Hypothesis)
	OBS	+/-0.5	N/2	FLT	+/-0.5	N/2		df=1	+/-
1	13	13.5	30	47	46.5	30	18.15	3.84	-
2	13	13.5	30	47	46.5	30	18.15	3.84	-
3	5	5.5	30	55	54.5	30	40.01	3.84	-
4	28	28.5	30	32	31.5	30	0.15	3.84	+
5	37	36.5	30	23	23.5	30	2.81	3.84	+
6	32	31.5	30	28	28.5	30	0.15	3.84	+
7	14	14.5	30	46	45.5	30	16.01	3.84	-
8	0	0.5	30	60	59.5	30	58.01	3.84	-
9	0	0.5	30	60	59.5	30	58.01	3.84	-
10	10	10.5	30	50	49.5	30	25.35	3.84	-
11	1	1.5	30	59	58.5	30	54.15	3.84	-
12	1	1.5	30	59	58.5	30	54.15	3.84	-
13	4	4.5	30	56	55.5	30	43.35	3.84	-
14	9	9.5	30	51	50.5	30	28.01	3.84	-
15	19	19.5	30	41	40.5	30	7.35	3.84	-
16	8	8.5	30	52	51.5	30	30.81	3.84	-
17	14	14.5	30	46	45.5	30	16.01	3.84	-
18	15	15.5	30	45	44.5	30	14.01	3.84	-

19	14	14.5	30	46	45.5	30	16.01	3.84	-
20	9	9.5	30	51	50.5	30	28.01	3.84	-
21	9	9.5	30	51	50.5	30	28.01	3.84	-
22	4	4.5	30	56	55.5	30	43.35	3.84	-
23	27	27.5	30	33	32.5	30	0.41	3.84	+
24	35	34.5	30	25	25.5	30	1.35	3.84	+
25	27	27.5	30	33	32.5	30	0.41	3.84	+
26	20	20.5	30	40	39.5	30	6.01	3.84	-
27	37	36.5	30	23	23.5	30	2.81	3.84	+
28	16	16.5	30	44	43.5	30	12.15	3.84	-
29	11	11.5	30	49	48.5	30	22.81	3.84	-
30	20	20.5	30	40	39.5	30	6.01	3.84	-
31	0	0.5	30	60	59.5	30	58.01	3.84	-
32	1	1.5	30	59	58.5	30	54.15	3.84	-
33	16	16.5	30	44	43.5	30	12.15	3.84	-
34	15	15.5	30	45	44.5	30	14.01	3.84	-
35	2	2.5	30	58	57.5	30	50.41	3.84	-
36	9	9.5	30	51	50.5	30	28.01	3.84	-
37	24	24.5	30	36	35.5	30	2.01	3.84	+
38	0	0.5	30	60	59.5	30	58.01	3.84	-
39	13	13.5	30	47	46.5	30	18.15	3.84	-
40	14	14.5	30	46	45.5	30	16.01	3.84	-
41	29	29.5	30	31	30.5	30	0.01	3.84	+
42	1	1.5	30	59	58.5	30	54.15	3.84	-
43	0	0.5	30	60	59.5	30	58.01	3.84	-
44	36	35.5	30	24	24.5	30	2.01	3.84	+
45	20	20.5	30	40	39.5	30	6.01	3.84	-
46	13	13.5	30	47	46.5	30	18.15	3.84	-
47	12	12.5	30	48	47.5	30	20.41	3.84	-
48	6	6.5	30	54	53.5	30	36.81	3.84	-
49	25	25.5	30	35	34.5	30	1.35	3.84	+
50	0	0.5	30	60	59.5	30	58.01	3.84	-
51	32	31.5	30	28	28.5	30	0.15	3.84	+
52	16	16.5	30	44	43.5	30	12.15	3.84	-
53	0	0.5	30	60	59.5	30	58.01	3.84	-
54	0	0.5	30	60	59.5	30	58.01	3.84	-
55	1	1.5	30	59	58.5	30	54.15	3.84	-
56	2	2.5	30	58	57.5	30	50.41	3.84	-
57	9	9.5	30	51	50.5	30	28.01	3.84	-
58	5	5.5	30	55	54.5	30	40.01	3.84	-
59	19	19.5	30	41	40.5	30	7.35	3.84	-
60	8	8.5	30	52	51.5	30	30.81	3.84	-
61	6	6.5	30	54	53.5	30	36.81	3.84	-
62	14	14.5	30	46	45.5	30	16.01	3.84	-
63	14	14.5	30	46	45.5	30	16.01	3.84	-
64	8	8.5	30	52	51.5	30	30.81	3.84	-
65	9	9.5	30	51	50.5	30	28.01	3.84	-
66	4	4.5	30	56	55.5	30	43.35	3.84	-
67	28	28.5	30	32	31.5	30	0.15	3.84	+
68	35	34.5	30	25	25.5	30	1.35	3.84	+
69	26	26.5	30	34	33.5	30	0.81	3.84	+
70	25	25.5	30	35	34.5	30	1.35	3.84	+
71	20	20.5	30	40	39.5	30	6.01	3.84	-
72	16	16.5	30	44	43.5	30	12.15	3.84	-
73	16	16.5	30	44	43.5	30	12.15	3.84	-
74	11	11.5	30	49	48.5	30	22.81	3.84	-
75	20	20.5	30	40	39.5	30	6.01	3.84	-
76	0	0.5	30	60	59.5	30	58.01	3.84	-
77	1	1.5	30	59	58.5	30	54.15	3.84	-
78	18	18.5	30	42	41.5	30	8.81	3.84	-
79	15	15.5	30	45	44.5	30	14.01	3.84	-
80	2	2.5	30	58	57.5	30	50.41	3.84	-
81	25	25.5	30	35	34.5	30	1.35	3.84	+
82	6	6.5	30	54	53.5	30	36.81	3.84	-
83	12	12.5	30	48	47.5	30	20.41	3.84	-
84	13	13.5	30	47	46.5	30	18.15	3.84	-
85	2	2.5	30	58	57.5	30	50.41	3.84	-
86	1	1.5	30	59	58.5	30	54.15	3.84	-
87	28	28.5	30	32	31.5	30	0.15	3.84	+

88	15	15.5	30	45	44.5	30	14.01	3.84	-
90	0	0.5	30	60	59.5	30	58.01	3.84	-
91	2	2.5	30	58	57.5	30	50.41	3.84	-
92	15	15.5	30	45	44.5	30	14.01	3.84	-
93	0	0.5	30	60	59.5	30	58.01	3.84	-
94	22	22.5	30	38	37.5	30	3.75	3.84	+
95	8	8.5	30	52	51.5	30	30.81	3.84	-
96	12	12.5	30	48	47.5	30	20.41	3.84	-
97	0	0.5	30	60	59.5	30	58.01	3.84	-
98	11	11.5	30	49	48.5	30	22.81	3.84	-
99	0	0.5	30	60	59.5	30	58.01	3.84	-
100	20	20.5	30	40	39.5	30	6.01	3.84	-
Total	1260	1259.5	3000	4740	4739.5	3000	2017.24	3.84	-

Since the critical value of  $\chi^2$  with 1 d.f. is 3.84 for the 0.05 level, so we can feel fairly confident that the null hypothesis claiming that the individuals may not observe or flout the maxims of CP is rejected. In other words, since there is a significant difference between participants in terms of their positions regarding observance and flouting of the CP maxims the data support the idea that the individuals may observe or flout the maxims of CP in specific occasions. To put it another way, in 81 cases out of 100 cases (i.e., 81%) the individuals held that the maxims of CP are either observed or flouted, and as a result, the difference between frequencies of observance and flouting appeared to be significant (since in 81% of the cases calculated, the value of Chi-square at the probability level of 0.05 was larger than the critical value). Alternatively, only in 19% of the cases the value of Chi-square at the probability level of 0.05 was smaller than the critical value. In Table 2, Chi-square and total frequency for observance and flouting of the CP maxims are illustrated:

Table 2: Chi-square and Total Frequency for Observance and Flouting of the CP Maxims

	Observed <i>f</i>	Expected <i>f</i>	<i>O-E</i>	$(O-E)^2$	$(O-E)^2 / E$
Maxim Observance	1260	3000	-1740	$(1260-3000)^2$	$(1260-3000)^2 / 3000$
Maxim Flouting	4740	3000	1740	$(1740-3000)^2$	$(1740-3000)^2 / 3000$

2017.24

Considering  $\chi^2$  in Table 2, the null hypothesis in a chi-square goodness-of-fit test states that the sample of observed frequencies supports the claim about the expected frequencies, so the bigger the calculated chi-square value is, the more likely the sample does not conform to the expected frequencies, and therefore we would reject the null hypothesis. Also, it could mean the data may deviate a large amount from the model or from what we thought. To verify the results obtained, the SPSS was employed to calculate the Chi-square for total frequencies, considering the number and opinion of the participants. The results are illustrated in Table 3 and Ta

Table 3: Chi-square Table from the Output (Number and Opinion)

		Opinion		Total
		1(OBS)	2(FLT)	
Number	1260.00	1260	0	1260
	4740.00	0	4740	4740
Total		1260	4740	6000

Table 4: Chi-Square Results for Number and Opinion

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6000.000 <sup>a</sup>	1	.000		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	5993.974	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	6167.480	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
N of Valid Cases	6000				

Table 3: Chi-square Table from the Output (Number and Opinion)

		Opinion		Total
		1(OBS)	2(FLT)	
Number	1260.00	1260	0	1260
	4740.00	0	4740	4740

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 264.60.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

In Table 4, as  $P < .05$ , we can feel confident that the null hypothesis claiming that the individuals may not observe or flout the maxims of CP is rejected since the difference between frequencies of observance and flouting appears to be significant.

#### Flouting of the Maxims of CP

In regard with the last two research questions, particular attention was paid to the maxim of *manner* as it could be an illuminating factor in revealing the semantic opaqueness of euphemistic expressions. Likewise, due to the lack of mutual exclusivity in the participants' options as well as the existence of some overlaps in their options of flouting of the CP maxims, the application of Chi-square test was practically impossible that will be discussed later. Table 5 represents participants' comprehensive profile on the frequency of the flouting of the maxims of CP:

Table 5: Participants' Comprehensive Profile on the Frequency of the Flouting of the Maxims of CP

Participant No.	Freq. of the Type(s) of CP Maxims Flouted (OUT OF 60)				Result
	Quality (Ql)	Quantity (Qt)	Relation (R)	Manner (M)	
1	9	8	2	42	M>Ql>Qt>R
2	13	4	3	42	M>Ql>Qt>R
3	7	17	12	34	M>Qt>R>Ql
4	9	2	9	24	M>Ql=R>Qt
5	8	0	1	19	M>Ql>R>Qt
6	1	1	1	27	M>Ql=Qt=R
7	11	17	15	33	M>Qt>R>Ql
8	16	9	10	14	Ql>M>R>Qt
9	9	22	11	3	Qt>R>Ql>M
10	10	1	8	31	M>Ql>R>Qt
11	17	11	16	3	Ql>R>Qt>M
12	13	10	7	12	Ql>M>Qt>R
13	19	16	11	22	M>Ql>Qt>R
14	20	9	8	15	Ql>M>Qt>R
15	9	1	2	28	M>Ql>R>Qt
16	11	6	9	18	M>Ql>R>Qt
17	15	13	16	24	M>R>Ql>Qt
18	14	13	16	24	M>R>Ql>Qt
19	14	13	16	23	M>R>Ql>Qt
20	6	11	15	17	M>R>Qt>Ql
21	7	11	15	16	M>R>Qt>Ql
22	2	20	24	17	R>Qt>M>Ql
23	28	1	11	26	Ql>M>R>Qt
24	6	11	12	4	R>Qt>Ql>M
25	27	2	11	26	Ql>M>R>Qt
26	9	1	1	28	M>Ql>Qt=R
27	6	0	0	14	M>Ql>Qt=R
28	8	3	3	29	M>Ql>Qt=R
29	9	7	14	15	M>R>Ql>Qt
30	10	2	1	25	M>Ql>Qt>R
31	18	7	28	22	R>M>Ql>Qt
32	19	5	44	23	R>M>Ql>Qt
33	21	3	10	25	M>Ql>R>Qt
34	16	0	10	21	M>Ql>R>Qt
35	13	9	25	14	R>M>Ql>Qt
36	8	12	13	16	M>R>Qt>Ql
37	13	5	6	33	M>Ql>R>Qt
38	24	18	21	3	Ql>R>Qt>M
39	20	9	4	15	Ql>M>Qt>R
40	6	4	5	23	M>Ql>R>Qt
41	10	3	4	21	M>Ql>R>Qt



42	14	7	9	28	M>Ql>R>Qt
43	13	8	12	27	M>Ql>R>Qt
44	10	14	12	19	M>Qt>R>Ql
45	27	2	9	22	Ql>M>R>Qt
46	8	8	4	40	M>Ql=Qt>R
47	12	5	4	41	M>Ql>Qt>R
48	8	19	11	32	M>Qt>R>Ql
49	8	4	9	22	M>R>Ql>Qt
50	16	9	10	15	Ql>M>R>Qt
51	2	2	1	25	M>Ql=Qt>R
52	11	17	15	32	M>Qt>R>Ql
53	9	11	14	22	M>R>Qt>Ql
54	10	1	11	38	M>R>Ql>Qt
55	16	17	11	3	Qt>Ql>R>M
56	13	11	7	16	M>Ql>Qt>R
57	20	9	8	16	Ql>M>Qt>R
58	19	16	12	23	M>Ql>Qt>R
59	9	9	1	29	M>Ql=Qt>R
60	8	9	11	19	M>R>Qt>Ql
61	16	14	16	24	M>R=Ql>Qt
62	16	13	16	22	M>Ql>R>Qt
63	14	8	11	23	M>Ql>R>Qt
64	7	11	15	17	M>R>Qt>Ql
65	8	13	16	19	M>R>Qt>Ql
66	2	19	28	14	R>M>Qt>Ql
67	27	1	12	28	M>Ql>R>Qt
68	6	11	12	5	R>Qt>Ql>M
69	27	2	11	19	Ql>M>R>Qt
70	12	11	9	5	Ql>Qt>R>M
71	9	1	1	28	M>Ql>R=Qt
72	12	14	0	24	M>Qt>Ql>R
73	8	3	3	29	M>Ql>R=Qt
74	9	7	14	15	M>R>Ql>Qt
75	1	2	12	25	M>R>Qt>Ql
76	18	8	22	27	M>R>Ql>Qt
77	19	5	22	42	M>Ql>R>Qt
78	21	3	10	26	M>Ql>R>Qt
79	16	0	10	22	M>Ql>R>Qt
80	13	5	18	23	M>R>Ql>Qt
81	8	5	10	22	M>R>Ql>Qt
82	7	19	12	30	M>Qt>R>Ql
83	12	5	4	33	M>Ql>Qt>R
84	8	8	15	40	M>R>Ql=Qt
85	22	9	19	27	M>Ql> R>Qt
86	15	8	9	28	M>Ql> R>Qt
87	10	3	8	19	M>Ql>R>Qt
88	16	0	10	22	M>Ql>R>Qt
90	18	7	22	26	M>R>Ql>Qt
91	18	5	44	23	R>M>Ql>Qt
92	3	10	21	25	M>R>Qt>Ql
93	12	11	18	21	M>R>Ql>Qt
94	2	0	19	18	R>M>Ql>Qt
95	16	11	18	15	R>Ql>M>Qt
96	15	10	21	24	M>R>Ql>Qt
97	18	9	15	18	M=Ql>R>Qt
98	13	10	17	16	M>R>Ql>Qt
99	9	11	22	35	M>R>Qt>Ql
100	1	6	9	24	M>R>Qt>Ql
Total	1347	792	1193	2198	M>Ql>R>Qt

Based on the assumptions of  $\chi^2$  procedure, all the categories have to be considered mutually exclusive; that is, each observation could appear in one and only one of the categories in the table. For example, one participant could not concurrently give both a *Manner* and *Quality* answer for the CP maxims in the questionnaire survey. Nevertheless, as

many participants had selected two or more of the categories simultaneously, this condition made it impossible to go on with the  $\chi^2$  procedure. Therefore, it was decided to analyze the data simply based on the descriptive statistics, as shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of the Flouting of the Maxims of CP

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Number	5530	792	2198	1572.53	535.036
Valid N (listwise)	5530				

The minimum occurrence of the flouting of the CP maxims is 792, which belongs to the quantity maxim, whereas the maximum occurrence is 2198, which belongs to the manner maxim. Figure 1, shows CP maxims and the percentage of the frequencies of flouting for each maxim.

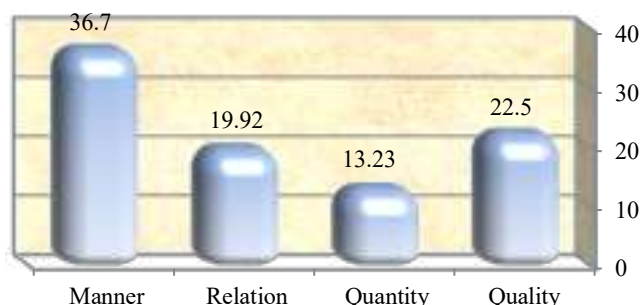


Figure 1: CP Maxims and Percentage of the Frequencies of Flouting

As shown above, the manner maxim ranks first in terms of flouting of the CP maxims, and 36.7% of the cases of flouting of the CP maxims allocate to this maxim. On the other hand, the quantity maxim with 13.23% ranks last among other maxims of CP. Also, it is noteworthy that due to Grice's (1975) four categories overlapping with each other, euphemisms may flout more than one maxim of the CP simultaneously, so when, say, the quantity maxim is flouted, the expression will be unclear by providing less or more information, and hence, the manner maxim is flouted immediately. From this view, almost all the examples cited above primarily flout the manner maxim when they are placed under the flouting of other maxims.

## CONCLUSION

The current study aimed to probe into the semantic opaqueness of English social euphemisms as a central issue and scrutinize it in view of observance or flouting of the maxims of Grice's cooperative principle. To be more specific, the main aim of the current study was to investigate whether any maxim(s) of cooperative principle is/are observed or flouted during the use of euphemisms, and to what extent these *observances* or *floutings* may occur. Moreover, the study aimed to reveal which maxims of CP are flouted most and least by Iranian EFL graduates.

By analyzing the findings in the study, it was indicated that the maxims of CP cannot be observed by learners at all time, taking into consideration what people say is likely to maintain, enhance, or damage their own face, as well as taking into account the effect of their utterances on others. In the same vein, it was shown that it is not the case that the users' euphemistic utterances scrupulously follow the maxims of CP so that they could reduce the amount of interpretive work that recipients would have to do. In fact, in order to meet certain communicative needs, participants seldom speak by faithfully observing all four maxims of the CP. Hence, an intriguing way to deal with the maxims of conversation is to flout one of them. When a maxim is flouted, a speaker doesn't observe the maxim, but cannot be accused of violating it either, because the transgression is so flagrant that it is entirely obvious that the speaker knows s/he is not observing it and realizes everyone else in the conversation knows it too.

The results of the data analysis, moreover, proved to be in line with Grice's (1975) claim that people occasionally flout one or more of the maxims of the CP to meet a certain communicative need, and that there will be no

conversational implicature if people *always* follow the maxims of CP. What's more, in order to maintain effective communication, users of language may be supposed to do their best to preserve certain regulative goals, and if a speaker manifestly appears not to observe these precepts of good communicative behavior, then a reason may be that s/he intends the hearer to infer from his/her utterance some meaning(s) additional to the conventional sense of the words and other signals s/he has uttered.

With reference to the frequencies of the flouting of the CP maxims, the results indicated that the manner maxim ranked first in terms of flouting of the CP maxims while using euphemisms. That is, 36.7% of the cases of flouting of the CP maxims allocated to the manner maxim, which, by far, put it in the first rank in comparison to the other maxims of CP. On the contrary, the quantity maxim with only 13.23% ranked last among the CP maxims. Considering the supremacy of the manner maxim one point is noteworthy. Since flouting of the manner maxim, by definition, refers to giving obscure and ambiguous information, under particular communicative conditions, the speaker may say something obscure to avoid mentioning something unpleasant and embarrassing directly. Thus, the hearer should carefully infer the conversational implicature of the speaker and his/her real intentions, according to the specific context. This is the reason why many euphemisms might tend to flout the manner maxim so as to achieve the mild, indirect and pleasant-sound effects. From this view, almost all examples cited in the study primarily flouted the maxim of manner when they were placed under the flouting of other maxims, which could recurrently verify that EFL learners' recognition of euphemisms could characterize the semantic opaqueness of social euphemisms in English. Another point is that due to the maxims overlapping, euphemisms may flout more than one maxim simultaneously. For example, when flouting the quantity maxim, the expression would be unclear by providing less or more information, so the manner maxim would be flouted immediately.

#### ***Pedagogical implications***

Considering semantic opaqueness as a central feature of euphemisms in the study, a potential threat to academic settings could be EFL learners' being unenlightened about the implications of the shades of meanings of euphemisms or lack of familiarity with them when they are exposed to them, or when they are recognizing or producing discourse. This is because the educators' lack of familiarity with euphemisms in language use and usage may create an academic lacuna which could result in a dearth of attention to the high levels of linguistic development.

Linguists, translators, teachers, and educators can benefit a lot from studies on euphemistic expressions as well as extensions of the multiple maxims of CP. The current study due to its concern with cultural qualities could provide readers with the ability to enhance comprehensiveness in detecting potential inculcations beyond idiomatic power of euphemistic expressions. Moreover, the semantic opaqueness feature of euphemisms can suggest criteria for classifying languages based on the strategies they provide for reality distortion. Another important insight gained is to unravel how language can be a strong device in distorting the unwelcome realities, and in covering social, cultural, and political taboos.

The findings of the study can also give some insights into the linguistic, pedagogical, and sociopragmatic factors which determine the strategies applied in translation. In this vein, there are a number of factors, including rhetoric, stylistic and contextual ones that affect the pragmatic inference of euphemism by its receiver and the expressive effect of it. Considering stylistic factor, translators should always remember the stylistic differences in rendering the same euphemism into different writing styles. With reference to rhetoric factor, one should try to employ the equivalent of euphemistic expression in target language. And concerning contextual factor, appropriateness to the occasion and contextual cohesion are major concerns to the translation of euphemisms.

Based on the above discussion the following pedagogical statements can be made:

1. Learners are advised to learn the contrast between the use of euphemism and direct expressions in language; they should also be able to distinguish the taboo subjects in English that give rise to most of euphemisms in language.
2. The students should recognize basic rules and principles of euphemisms' formation; likewise, they ought to identify different classifications of euphemisms based on the scope of source, scope of sense, and sphere of application.

3. Learners should learn euphemisms' chief properties including semantic opaqueness, beautification, politeness, and disguising; also, they should know why it is used, and what it connotes as compared to the original word it stands for.

4. EFL learners are advised to appreciate the use of CP in euphemistic and direct language as primary principles guiding people's communication to maintain the social equilibrium and the friendly relations between interlocutors.

5. As the field of translation would benefit from learners' awareness of euphemisms and the differences in SL and TL cultures, so it is evocative to put further emphasis on the cultural aspects of euphemisms in the translation works in future.

6. In order to develop their insights into effective learning techniques, learners are advised to become conscious of different aspects of the linguistic, historical and the cultural overtones in texts with euphemistic expressions.

### ***Suggestions for Further Research***

This study could set groundwork for further research on the linguistic, pedagogical, and sociopragmatic functions of euphemisms in EFL context. In this vein, more detailed research could be done on the related issues such as adopting strategies for translating euphemisms in particular genres, employing other pragmatic or theoretical frameworks, and investigating the impact of euphemisms on language awareness and acquisition. Besides, the study could raise some more challenging questions for the continued research such as the following:

1. What is the role of euphemisms in enhancing 'critical thinking' as an important indication of cognitive competency?

2. How can learners' awareness of euphemism be reflected in everyday use of language?

Additionally, the following topics and issues are proposed as further suggestions:

1. Conducting a comparative study can reveal similar and/or different aspects of English and Persian euphemisms in use, means of formation, and communicative functions.

2. By performing a comparative study the cultural differences or the national characteristics reflected by euphemisms in Persian and English could be disclosed.

3. A comparative study may uncover the effect of euphemisms on the EFL learners' awareness of the English language skillfully in cross-cultural communication.

It should be mentioned that the research made is indisputably open to further discussions and hence, it is hoped that it could evoke more attention on the recognition, perception, and interpretation of euphemisms and direct expressions.

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### Appendix 1

No.	Direct Term in English	Term Used as Euphemistic Expression in Context	Maxim(s) of CP Flouted			
			Qt	Ql	R	M
1	<i>fat</i>	Liz looks <i>traditionally built</i> .				
2	<i>fired</i>	Some office workers had to be <i>rightsized</i> .				
3	<i>old age</i>	Bill is in his <i>golden years</i> .				
4	<i>poor nation</i>	The immigrants came from an <i>emerging nation</i> .				
5	<i>old</i>	Her flat is a year <i>new</i> .				
6	<i>poor students</i>	The conscientious teacher attempted to push the <i>underperformers</i> .				
7	<i>illegal worker</i>	He was working as an <i>undocumented worker</i> abroad.				
8	<i>genocide</i>	Some soldiers were accused of <i>ethnic cleansing</i> .				
9	<i>failed to</i>	The young man <i>fell short</i> to meet the required qualifications for job.				
10	<i>-She isn't pretty.</i>	-Do you think she is pretty? -She is quite <i>knowledgeable</i> .				
11	<i>clumsy</i>	Tom was <i>gravitationally challenged</i> in writing skills.				
12	<i>toilet paper</i>	Where could I find some <i>bath tissue</i> ?				
13	<i>cheating</i>	The dishonest guy had a constant tendency toward <i>peer homework help</i> .				
14	<i>-Your zip is down.</i>	-Your <i>fly</i> is <i>undone</i> .				
15	<i>simultaneous existence of mental and physical health issues</i>	The patient suffered from <i>co-morbidity</i> .				
16	<i>drug addiction</i>	Unluckily, he fell into <i>chemical dependency</i> .				
17	<i>war</i>	The <i>peace process</i> between the two opposing sides lasted for eight years.				
18	<i>torture</i>	He had to confess under <i>persuasion</i> .				
19	<i>garbage man</i>	For over 25 years, he has been working as a <i>sanitation engineer</i>				
20	<i>picky eater</i>	Mary is <i>specific about what she eats</i> .				
21	<i>cancer</i>	The doctors diagnosed her disease as <i>the big C</i> .				
22	<i>used cars</i>	He is interested in <i>pre-owned</i> .				
23	<i>garbage dump</i>	His main job is to work in a <i>sanitary landfill</i> .				
24	<i>killing of innocents</i>	The army officer banned soldiers from <i>collateral damage</i> .				
25	<i>having both mental illness and drug problems</i>	The patient was <i>dual-diagnosed</i> .				
26	<i>benefits and treatments in times of sickness</i>	The sick man enjoyed <i>wellness</i> .				
27	<i>having sex</i>	It was inconsiderate to show individuals <i>acting like rabbits</i> .				

28	<i>bribe</i>	He was provided with some <i>motivation</i> to do the job right away.				
29	<i>lesbian</i>	She is known to be a <i>woman in sensible shoes</i> .				
30	<i>short</i>	It didn't appeal to her to look so <i>vertically-challenged</i> .				
31	<i>ghetto/ slum</i>	The poor man had to live in a <i>culturally-deprived environment</i> .				
32	<i>torture</i>	The imprisoned man could no more resist against <i>enhanced interrogation technique</i> .				
33	<i>very poor/ bad</i>	The proposed suggestion was an <i>ill-advised</i> way to deal with the problem.				
34	<i>mental illness center</i>	He had to be kept in a <i>mental health center</i> for several years.				
35	<i>sex change</i>	It is startling that <i>gender reassignment</i> is on vogue in some communities.				
36	<i>divorced</i>	Jack met his <i>pre-loved</i> by accident.				
37	<i>attacking</i>	A new series of <i>active defending</i> was on track by military forces.				
38	<i>find a toilet</i>	Where can I <i>powder my nose</i> ?				
39	<i>vomit bags</i>	The passengers were informed how to use <i>motion discomfort bags</i> .				
40	<i>pregnant</i>	Bev's friends surprised when they heard she <i>was in the family way</i> .				
41	<i>lazy</i>	The newly-employed clerk proved to be <i>having a rather relaxed attitude to work</i> .				
42	<i>poor people</i>	Unfortunately, the number of <i>economically deprived</i> is increasing rapidly.				
43	<i>supporter of woman's having abortion</i>	The doctor was a <i>pro-choice</i> .				
44	<i>Blindness</i>	Braille was suffering from <i>visual impairment</i> .				
45	<i>-Some fruits are luscious, but others are not.</i>	<i>-Some fruits are luscious, but others could be better.</i>				
46	<i>liar</i>	Don't be such <i>economical with the truth</i> .				
47	<i>pornographic movies</i>	The children were banned from watching <i>adult movies</i> .				
48	<i>unemployed/ jobless</i>	My cousin is presently <i>between jobs</i> .				
49	<i>disruptive</i>	She failed the test due to being <i>unable to concentrate</i> .				
50	<i>loud and arrogant</i>	Frank is <i>having strong opinions about everything and not being afraid to voice them</i> .				
51	<i>killed/ massacred</i>	The natives were <i>neutralized</i> .				
52	<i>spy</i>	He is acting as a <i>source of information</i> .				
53	<i>death penalty</i>	The murderer was sentenced to the <i>capital punishment</i> .				
54	<i>taxes</i>	The people protested against rising <i>user's fees</i> .				
55	<i>out of control</i>	She was so adamant that everybody knew her <i>above critical</i> .				
56	<i>burglary</i>	The police accused the thieves of <i>covert operation</i> .				
57	<i>official lying</i>	The president was well-known for his <i>plausible denial</i> .				
58	<i>cleaning dirty money</i>	Some people collect huge wealth through <i>launder</i> .				
59	<i>death insurance</i>	The employee was given <i>life insurance</i> .				
60	<i>has been dead</i>	John's mother <i>has gone the way of all flesh</i> for five years.				
Total						
Percentage (%)						

### Pictures on Extrovert and Introvert EFL Learners Vocabulary Retention

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study attempted to investigate the comparative effect of two different types of a vocabulary learning strategy, "vocabulary notebooks with definitions" and "vocabulary notebooks with pictures", on the vocabulary retention of extrovert and introvert EFL learners. To begin with, a group of 180 students took the Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI) from among 160 students were selected to take a piloted sample Proficiency Test of Key English Testing (KET) as a proficiency test to select homogeneous participants in terms of their English proficiency level. After that, 60 introvert and 60 extrovert students were selected to compromise the participants of the study. Each of these groups was divided into two classes with 30 participants (totally 4 classes). One extrovert and one introvert classes were going to implement the vocabulary notebooks with definitions and the other extrovert and introvert classes were going to implement vocabulary notebooks with pictures. Prior to the instruction, a piloted researcher-made vocabulary pretest was administered. After teaching the vocabularies in class, for homework the students used their vocabulary notebooks. Students in this group were to make notebooks to write just vocabulary definitions and use them in meaningful contexts. In case of the two other classes, the participants were to make the words' definitions visualized by paintings or cutting pictures from different sources and glue them in their notebooks. Two weeks after the end of the instruction, a piloted researcher-made post-test was administered to investigate the participants' retention of vocabularies. The outcome reveals that: There is a significant difference between the effect of keeping a vocabulary note book with definitions and a vocabulary notebook with pictures on extrovert EFL learners' vocabulary retention. The extrovert students keeping note books with pictures outperformed the extrovert students keeping note books with definitions on the post-test of vocabulary retention.

**KEYWORDS:** vocabulary notebook with definitions and pictures, extrovert, introvert, vocabulary retention

## **INTRODUCTION**

Teachers and students of second and foreign languages agree that vocabulary acquisition is a major goal of language learning (Walters, 2004). Many scholars (Meara, 1980, 1982; Read, 2000; Stoffer, 1995) believe that not only the acquisition of a large number of vocabulary items but also retention of them may be considered as of the most difficult aspects of learning a second language for most L2 learners.

According to Richards and Schmidt (2002) retention of vocabulary does not necessarily mean memorizing but the ability to recall or remember vocabulary after an interval of time. Peter (2007) believed that when students want to learn new words, they need to notice unknown words and pay enough attention to them. Retention of new words is further determined by the way in which these words are processed, whereby deeper and elaborate processing results in better word retention. In spite of the fact that keeping a vocabulary notebook is listed as a single vocabulary learning strategy in Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy, it seems clear that the very act of keeping a vocabulary notebook will involve the practice of a variety of different vocabulary learning strategies (Walters & Bozkurt, 2009).

"Notebook with Definitions" is a student-made notebook which is totally non-pictorial and mainly focuses on definitions, in addition to other information in a dictionary. (Hall, 2004). Vocabulary Notebook with Pictures, as another type of vocabulary notebook in this research, is a student-made notebook mainly focuses on pictures made by students. Levine and Reves (1990) stated that "it seems to be easier to recall the visual image of the word even in the context of long term memory" (P. 40).

The students can use any sources to prepare relevant pictures for each single word (Edyburn, 2010). It can also be included in other information in a dictionary if the students like. In order to understand foreign language learning, it is necessary to examine not only the linguistic properties of the language but also the psychological, sociological characteristics and personality types of the learner (Falk, 1978, p. 353). One of the important facets of the affective domain of second language acquisition is the intrinsic side of affectivity: personality type within a person that contributes greatly in some way to the success of language learning. In recent thinking (Arnold, 1999; Dornyei & Skehen, 2003), there is no doubt at all about the importance of examining personality types in building a theory of second language acquisition. Extraversion/Introversion has attracted the most attention in L2 research (Dornyei, 2005, p. 26).

According to Dewaele (as cited in Gan, 2008), Extroversion /Introversion dimension has received widespread acceptance in the psychology community over the past several decades (p. 24). According to Eysenck (as cited in Gan, 2008), "Extroverts tend to be outgoing, sociable and risk-taking. They take chances and act on the spur of the moment and tend to be aggressive; introverts tend to be quiet, unassertive and seldom behave in an aggressive manner" (p. 25).

## REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

### *Vocabulary Notebooks*

In spite of the fact that keeping a vocabulary notebook is listed as a single vocabulary learning strategy in Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy, it seems clear that the very act of keeping a vocabulary notebook will involve the practice of a variety of different vocabulary learning strategies.

Fowle (as cited in Walters & Bozkurt, 2009) points out that learners may use multiple determination strategies to discover meaning and other aspects of unknown words: they may use monolingual or bilingual dictionaries, guess from context, or seek the help of teachers or classmates. Consolidation strategies are also used when adding to the information in the notebook, and when studying new words in the notebook. Use of the notebook in class work also supports the use of consolidation strategies, as students return to the notebook to retrieve words, use the words in classroom activities, and share their words with their classmates. Thus, vocabulary notebooks offer learners the chance to expand their repertoire of vocabulary learning strategies, and they have the potential to enhance vocabulary learning, perhaps more than any other single vocabulary learning strategy used on its own (p. 404).

### *Vocabulary Notebooks with Pictures*

As mentioned before this study took place in elementary levels which most of the books contain too many concrete vocabularies, using pictures is really an interesting way to elicit meanings. There are many researchers such as Blessman and Myszcza (2001), and Marzano (2001) who have really advocated that pictures make an impact on students' learning.

Carter, Hardly and Hardly (as cited in Sams, 2011) reported that getting pupils to visualize vocabulary before testing improved scores. Sams (2011) also mentioned that "as a pupil, I used to draw and label vocabulary to help me learn" (p. 16). My research combines this practice with another visualization technique (the keyword strategy) as Nation (2001) discusses. This technique involves "linking a first language word which the unknown word sounds like with the meaning of the unknown word, by picturing an image involving both the first language word and the meaning" (p. 11).

Sams (2011) has Pointed to the fact that "It is experienced drawing or applying pictures roots the items in students' mind and one is more likely to be able to visualize and retain an image which has been personally created" (p. 17). These visual images also provide powerful cognitive prompts to vocabulary development as this task engages both sides of the brain (Edyburn, 2010, P. 23).

### *Vocabulary Notebooks with Definitions*

Students can form notebooks to write just vocabulary definitions and use them in meaningful contexts. A dictionary can be an excellent source to use in discovering meanings of unfamiliar words, particularly for determining the appropriate meaning of words that have multiple, or specific, technical definitions. In line with the mention points, Obermeier (2008) stated that combining target and native languages in definitions proved to be significantly more helpful than the translations or monolingual definitions alone; it appears that the interaction of native and target languages might be a powerful factor to help learning.

### *Personality Traits*

Individual differences in personality are important in predicting individuals' behavior in umpteen real world conditions (Eysenck, 2004). Traits represent implicit connection between noticeable behaviors and internal dispositions or preferences to act, these associations picture the individual's unchanging patterns of behavior and delineate differences between rather than within individuals, this in turn may lead to various types of feelings, thinking, and behaving in different ways and among different people (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2007).

The issue of personality types, including temperament, is as old as psychology. Eysenck's original research found two main dimensions of temperament: "Neuroticism/Stability and "Extroversion/Introversion" (Boeree, 2006).

### ***Extroversion***

Sharp (1987), held that extroversion can be defined by believing that they are fully interested in the external objects, responsiveness, and a ready acceptance of external happenings. They are flexible in a way that they can have effect and at the same time be affected by events taking place around them. They are tolerant of noise and crowd and also find it fascinating. Their attention is mostly on their friends and the world they live in.

Comparing to introverts, extroverts are harder to condition and the consistency of their conditioned responses are less likely to be seen. Consequently, they were more likely to be impulsive and punishment does not prove to have any effect on their learning (Zuckerman, 2005).

### ***Introversion***

People having introverted personality type are not willing to associate with groups. Some people suffer early traumatic experiences that for example cause them to act in the background as a defense mechanism. Whatever the reason, the interior forces that keep the person quiet can be very effective, while at the same time the situation in which you are situated may invite you to participate actively (Bergin, 2006).

In comparison with the extroverts, the introvert has weak inhibition, in case of trauma such as car crash their brains don't protect them fast enough so they won't forget easily. Instead, they are highly alert and learn well, and so remember everything that happened (Boeree, 2006).

### ***Vocabulary Learning***

The term vocabulary refers to a list or a set of words for a particular language or a list of words that individual speakers of a language might use. No one can learn a language without knowing its vocabulary (Hatch & Brown, 1995).

Decarrico (2001, p. 285) points out that "vocabulary learning is central to language acquisition whether it is a second, or a foreign language". Vocabulary learning is a vital element for being able to communicate whether in first or foreign language. Vocabulary is basic to communication and often seen as the greatest source of problems by second language learners. "When students travel, they don't carry grammar books, they carry dictionaries" (Krashen, cited in Lewis, 1993).

Vocabulary is what makes the essence of a language, without it speakers cannot convey meaning and communicate with each other in a particular language (Laufer, 1986). Lexical problems frequently interfere with communication; moreover, communication breaks down when people do not use the right words (Allen, 1983). Moreover, McCarthy (1990, p. 12) points out, "no matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful ways".

### ***Vocabulary Retention***

Wei (as cited in Jenpattarakul, 2012, p. 443) stated that nowadays long-term retention has received wide attention as one of the greatest problems in learning new words. Quinn and Irvings (1997) mentioned that the hardest way to learn the new words is to try to memorize a list of unrelated words and their meanings. The students need not only learn a lot of words, but to remember them.

Khabiri and Pakzad (2012) stated that as it is obvious in the domain of vocabulary learning, the problem is not just in learning second language words; rather in remembering them. Bahrick (1984) stated that how well people remember something depends on how deeply they process it.

Craik and Lockhart (1972), Craik and Tulving (1975) (cited in Nemati, 2009, p. 15) mentioned that according to "Depth of Processing Hypothesis", the more cognitive energy a person exerts when manipulating and thinking about a word, the more likely it is that they will be able to recall and use it later. This hypothesis implies that it is not important how recently learners have learnt something. What is of more importance in learning is, in fact, the depth of processing; in other words, students must be taught on how to process information deeply. Such implications extend to pedagogy as well, suggesting that exercise and learning strategies which involve a deeper engagement with words should lead to higher retention compared to shallow activities. Rubin (1987), O'Malley and Chamot (1990) (as cited in Marefat & Ahmadi Shirazi, 2003) stated that "Language learning strategies are any set of actions, plans, tactics, thoughts or behaviors that the learners employ to facilitate the comprehension, storage, retrieval, and use of information" (p. 47).

#### ***Retention Techniques in Vocabulary Notebooks as a Strategy***

Out of different vocabulary retention techniques by which students use to store vocabularies in long-term memory and recall or retrieve easily, some techniques such as following are examined:

1. *Pronouncing the word correctly* refers to figuring out the pronunciations of the new words and speaking aloud and consistently.
2. *Using word study and context* refers to remembering the new words or expressions from collocation, word family or derivation, idiom usage, breaking down the new words, and context where the words are located.
3. *Making visual picture* refers to either mental or actual picture of what has been heard or read. For example, to remember "taciturn" which means speaking very little and unfriendly, the students have to create the picture of their friends who have this characteristic, and whenever they see this word, they will close their eyes and make a mental picture of those friends. Another example is that when the students want to remember "pinnacle" which means the highest point, they will close their eyes and think of the picture of the mountain especially its top.
4. *Repeating and reviewing* refer to rehearsing and practicing the learned words by saying, listening, speaking and writing several times over spaced intervals until the students reach the stage of automatic use (Lenier and Maker, 1984; Nemati, 2009; Oxford, 1990; Thornbury, 2008; cited in Jenpattarakul, 2012, P. 445).

#### ***Impact of Context on Vocabulary Retention***

Engelbar and Theuerkauf (1999) mentioned that various studies in previous years have shown that explaining the meaning of words in context is a very good method for learning vocabulary and this has been proven to be more successful than other methods, such as learning from lists. Already in the early 1980s Doye (1980) points out, using the new word in a semantically typical linguistic context is an excellent way for working out the meaning of a word.

Chern (cited in Walters, 2004, p.243) described four types of context cues available to readers: sentence-bound cues, parallelism cues, forward cues and backward cues. Sentence-bound cues are also labeled local cues, while the remaining three are labeled global cues. Parallelism cues point to grammatical relationships and semantic similarity between words. Forward cues help in understanding an unknown word in the following text, while backward cues aid understanding of an unknown word in the preceding text.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. There is no significant difference between the effect of keeping a vocabulary notebook with definitions and a vocabulary notebook with pictures on extrovert EFL learners' vocabulary retention.
2. There is no significant difference between the effect of keeping a vocabulary notebook with definitions and a vocabulary notebook with pictures on introvert EFL learners' vocabulary retention.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Participants***

To fulfill the objective of this study, 120 female elementary EFL learners with the age range of 12-15 studying in Alvand Language School (Tehran, Iran) were selected. These participants were non-randomly selected and homogenized through a KET which is suitable at elementary level among 160 learners. The participants whose scores were one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean were selected.

They were divided into two experimental groups, each group contains 60 participants. (60 extroverts in one group and 60 introverts in the other one) and then into four classes (30 introvert learners and vocabulary notebooks with definitions, 30 extrovert learners and vocabulary notebooks with definitions, 30 introvert learners and vocabulary notebooks with pictures, 30 extrovert learners and vocabulary notebooks with pictures).

Before administrating the KET and vocabulary pre and post-tests, a group of 30 students with almost similar characteristics to the target sample were used for the piloting of these tests.

### ***Instrumentation***

#### ***Proficiency Test of Key English Testing (KET)***

The English language proficiency test used in this study was a sample of the Key English Test (KET) adopted from *KET practice tests* by "Capel and Ireland" (2008), Oxford University Press.

The KET test covers two skills reading, writing. It also measured the subjects' vocabulary and grammar level. It consisted of 55 questions in 9 parts and each question carried one mark. The reading section (in parts 4 and 8) consisted of 12 questions including multiple choice and completion. In part 5, there was a cloze test with 8 multiple choice questions. In the writing section (in part 9), the participants were presented with some kind of information in terms of postcard. They were supposed to write a paragraph of 23-35 words.

The KET Test was already piloted with 30 students of the same level and almost similar characteristics to the subjects of the study. The reliability, item facility, and also choice distribution of the test were checked.

Analysis of the results showed that ten malfunctioning items were found. After omitting these ten items the KET has 55 items. The administration of the whole test took 1 hour. It should be mentioned that the listening and speaking parts of KET was not administered because of not having permission from institute officials to perform these parts.

#### ***Vocabulary Pretest***

Prior to the instruction, a researcher-made test including 30 multiple-choice items was administered. The test content is based on those vocabularies which are going to be taught during the instruction. The purpose of pretest is to make sure that participants are not familiar with these vocabularies. Furthermore, the result of the pretest was compared with the result of the post-test at the end of the treatment.

The test was already piloted with a group having almost similar characteristics to the target group and after running item analysis no item was discarded. The reliability of the test was also estimated.

#### ***Vocabulary Post-test***

At the end of the treatment, with a 15-day interval a piloted researcher-made post-test (the parallel form of pretest) was administered in order to investigate the students' retention of vocabularies. It was similar not identical to the pretest. Like the pretest, the test included 30 four-option items. The test was already piloted with a group having almost similar characteristics to the target group and after running item analysis no item was discarded. The reliability of the test was also estimated.

#### ***Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI)***

The EPI is a questionnaire to assess the personality traits of a person. It was devised by the German psychologists Hans Jürgen Eysenck and his wife Sybil B.G. Eysenck initially conceptualized personality as two, biologically-based categories of temperament which include: "Extroversion/Introversion" and "Neuroticism/Stability". This test consists of 57 Yes/No items and is scored based on the EPI rating scale. Those who fill out the EPI receive three different kinds of scores: the E score which is related to how much extrovert a person is, the N score measuring the neuroticism, and the Lie score which tries to measure how socially desirable a person has wanted to prove to be. The E score is computed out of 24 since it consists of 24 items, the N score is out of 24, and the Lie score is out of nine.



The Yes/No answers should be given based on the usual way of acting or thinking of an individual. This instrument is originally written in English. To avoid any linguistic confusion and misunderstanding, the translated Persian version of the questionnaire by "Seena Institute of Behavioral Sciences and Research" was used in order to make sure of the participants' full comprehension. The answer key and the standard rating scales were also provided in the battery.

Scale reliabilities are robust, and confirmatory factor analyses demonstrated good factor structure (D' Apollonia, Galley, & Simpson, 2001). In addition, the instrument shows reasonable predictive validity to the actual course performance of students (Barker & Olsen, 1995, 2002; Garcia & Pintrich, 1994). The test was piloted and its reliability was calculated by SPSS (0.81 on Cronbach's Alpha).

#### *Let's Go (5) Textbook*

All of the subjects in this research study, received instruction based on "Let's Go 5", by "Nakata, Frazier, Hoskins, and Graham", Oxford publication (2008). This textbook is used in Alvand Language School for elementary learners which contains 8 units and mainly focuses on vocabulary, grammar, at an elementary level. This book has a pertinent CD to practice the pronunciation and repeat the sentences and also a workbook. For the purpose of this study, students dealt with all six units of this book.

#### *Longman Elementary Dictionary and Thesaurus*

Longman Elementary Dictionary and Thesaurus (2010, Pearson Publications) was used by "vocabulary notebooks with definitions" group. Students in this group had to form notebooks with vocabulary definitions and use the definitions in meaningful contexts.

The dictionary was used as a source in discovering meanings of unfamiliar words, particularly for determining the appropriate meaning of words that have multiple, or specific, technical definitions. The dictionary also provides example sentences which is an important segment in vocabulary presentation, because it increases information processing loads. It helps learners effectively to elaborate relevant syntactic information, and thus the target words can be restored in the long-term memory in more complete forms, which leads to a better access to them (Obermeier, 2008).

#### ***Procedure***

To accomplish the purpose of the study the following procedure was pursued:

To begin with, a group of 180 students took the Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI) from among 160 students (80 on extrovert side and 80 on introvert side) were selected as those who merited more features on the extroversion and introversion.

Following the administration of the Eysenck Personality Inventory, the 160 students which were selected took a sample KET as a proficiency test in order to enable the researcher to select homogeneous participants in terms of their English proficiency level. The sample test had already been piloted using 30 students with almost the same characteristics as the target sample before the actual administration and Cronbach  $\alpha$  was run in order to make sure that the test had appropriate reliability and thus, was suitable for the target sample. After calculating item facility, item discrimination, and choice distribution ten items were shown to be malfunctioning. Thus, they were discarded from the test battery.

It should be mentioned that the listening and speaking parts of KET was not administered because of not having permission from institute officials to perform these parts. After administration of the KET, 120 students' scores fell between one standard deviation below and above the mean, from among 60 introvert and 60 extrovert students were selected to compromise the participants of the study.

The 120 subjects were divided into two groups: one extrovert (60 participants) and one introvert (60 participants). Since 60 is too large a number for the students in one class, two classes of 30 and 30 for each group was used. This means that, each of these groups was divided into two classes with 30 participants (totally 4 classes). One extrovert and one introvert classes were going to implement the vocabulary notebook with definitions and the other extrovert and introvert classes were going to implement vocabulary notebook with pictures.

Prior to the instruction, a researcher-made test including 30 multiple-choice items was administered as pretest. The test content was based on those vocabularies which were going to be taught during the instruction. All the participants were taught using the same material and they received the same amount of instruction. The course



consisted of 18 sessions of 90 minutes spanning over a period of six weeks. For the purpose of this study, students dealt with six units of Let's Go (5).

It should be mentioned that Let's Go (5) consists of 8 units the 2 remainder units were not considered in this study to allow a two-week time span between the instruction and administering the post-test. A six-week schedule for the implementation of the vocabulary notebooks were drawn up, adapted from Schmitt and Schmitt (1995). Fifty words were highlighted and singled out from six units which were presented to the students and to be recorded in the notebooks, along with some aspect of the words knowledge.

The participants in both groups were taught how to organize a vocabulary notebook. As mentioned before, 50 target words were chosen from the course book that was to be covered during 12 sessions. For teaching these 50 words, the researcher followed the usual routines in vocabulary teaching classes, which generally consisted of arranging words in a hierarchical order from easy to difficult, writing the target words on the board, explaining the meaning of words, and writing their parts of speech. This process is followed by making example sentences using the words, sometimes by the students, and sometimes by the teacher.

After teaching the vocabularies in class and making sure about participants' understanding, for homework the students were going to use their vocabulary notebooks. The participants of both groups could also be enriched with some of other aspects of word knowledge, for example its pronunciation, synonyms.

#### ***Vocabulary Notebooks with Definitions***

Students were going to look the words up in a Longman Elementary Dictionary and thesaurus. Students in this group were to make notebooks to write just vocabulary definitions and use them in meaningful contexts.

The "Longman Elementary Dictionary and Thesaurus" is a source to discover meanings of unfamiliar words and to provide example sentences as an important segment in vocabulary presentation and increases information processing loads. It also helps learners to elaborate relevant syntactic information, and thus the target words can be restored in the long-term memory in more complete forms, which leads to a better access to them (Obermeier, 2008, p. 418).

#### ***Vocabulary Notebooks with Pictures***

In case of the two other classes, the participants were to make the words' definitions visualized by paintings or cutting pictures from different sources and glue them in their notebooks, (everything except writing the exact definitions). As mentioned before, this study took place in elementary levels in which most of the book contains concrete vocabularies, so using pictures is really an interesting way to elicit meaning of unknown words (Blessman & Myszcza, 2001; Marzano, 2001).

The implementation schedule also included activities for incorporating the notebooks into classroom activities. Each week, time set aside for students to share the information in their notebooks with their classmates, and to test each other on the notebook words.

At the end of each week of treatment, the teacher collected the notebooks and checked if the students added the assigned information such as, arranging pictures. The relevancy of pictures in the other groups the information which was copied from dictionary and correctness and also relevancy of the sentences as examples for each vocabulary were checked.

The notebooks would be returned to the students on the following session. Students were totally aware that their notebooks would be graded as part of their final score. Two weeks after the end of the instruction, a piloted researcher-made post-test consisted of 30 multiple-choice items based on those 50 vocabularies presented during the instruction was administered to investigate the participants' retention of vocabularies. The time allocated to this test was 15 minutes and range of scores was from 15.

The data obtained from the post-test were analyzed in order to study the impact of two independent variables (keeping notebooks with definitions and keeping notebooks with pictures) and two moderator variables (extrovert and introvert) on the dependent variable (vocabulary retention) of this study.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Tables 1 to 11 are presented to address and discuss the research questions, respectively. Following the piloting of the KET on 30 subjects with almost similar characteristics to the target group, the mean and standard deviation were calculated and were found out to be 25.23 and 9.71, respectively. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the KET in the pilot phase.

*Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the KET Piloting*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SCORE Valid N (listwise)	30 30	8	42	25.23	9.71

The reliability of the test scores gained in the KET piloting phase. The Kuder-Richardson 20 formula (K-R 20) was employed for this purpose and an acceptable reliability of .81 was calculated. After deletion of the 10 malfunctioning items, the reliability of the test shifted to .88.

### *Descriptive Statistics of KET Administration*

After the procedure of piloting the KET test, it became an instrument to homogenize the students for this study. On the whole, 160 students participated in the test administration. After the administration of the test, descriptive statistics were conducted just as was done in the piloting phase. Table 2 shows these statistics with the mean of 22.26 and the standard deviation of 7.06.

*Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the KET Main Administration*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
TOTAL Valid N (listwise)	160 160	8	38	22.26	7.06

The reliability of the KET in this actual administration for homogenization of the subjects was calculated too (Table 3). An index of .85 reassured the researchers of the reliability of this test.

*Table 3: Reliability of the KET Administration*

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.85	45

### *Dividing the Learners into the Two Groups*

From among the 160 students who took the test, 120 students' scores fell between one standard deviation below and above the mean, from among which 60 introvert and 60 extrovert students were selected to compromise 120 participants of the study.

### *Checking the Normality*

Four assumptions should be met before one decides to run parametric tests. The data should be measured on an interval scale; the subjects should be independent that is to say none of them participates in more than one group, the data should enjoy normality distributions and the groups should have homogeneous variances (Field, 2009). The present data are measured on an interval scale and none of the subjects participate in more than one group. The assumption of normality is also met. As displayed in Table 4 the values of skewness and kurtosis are within the ranges of  $\pm 2$ .

*Table 4: Normality Test*

Groups		N	Mean	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
		Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Extrovert Definition	Pretest	30	8.35	7.416	.506	.427	-.807	.833
	Posttest	30	16.42	8.277	-.878	.427	-.168	.833
Introvert Definition	Pretest	30	7.53	6.947	-.350	.427	-.817	.833
	Posttest	30	16.57	6.530	-.999	.427	1.140	.833
Extrovert Picture	Pretest	30	8.03	10.154	-.214	.427	-.795	.833
	Posttest	30	22.17	10.829	-.910	.427	.489	.833
Introvert Picture	Pretest	30	7.42	10.208	.219	.427	-.845	.833
	Posttest	30	15.30	13.907	-.621	.427	-.149	.833

The assumption of homogeneity of variances will be discussed when reporting the results of the one-way ANOVA.

### Vocabulary Pretest

Prior to the instruction, a researcher-made test including 30 multiple-choice items was administered as pretest. The test content was based on those vocabularies which were going to be taught during the instruction. The test was already piloted with a group having almost similar characteristics to the target group and after running item analysis no item was discarded. Table 5 shows descriptive statistics of vocabulary pretest piloting.

Table5: Descriptive Statistics of Vocabulary Pretest Piloting

Vocabulary Test	Participants	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre-test	30	30	6.66	8.606	1	4

This study includes four groups; extrovert students and introvert students who keep vocabulary note books with definitions and extrovert students and introvert students who keep vocabulary note books with pictures. A one-way ANOVA is run to compare the four groups' means on the pretest of vocabulary in order to prove that they were homogenous in terms of the vocabulary knowledge prior to the main study.

As displayed in Table 6 the results of the one-way ANOVA ( $F(3, 116) = .65, P = .58 > .05; \omega^2 = .009$  it represents a weak effect size) indicates no significant differences between the mean scores of the four groups on the pretest of vocabulary. Based on these results it can be concluded that the four groups were homogenous in terms of the vocabulary knowledge prior to the main study.

Table 6: One-Way ANOVA Pretest of Vocabulary by Groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	17.117	3	5.706	.657	.580
Within Groups	1007.050	116	8.681		
Total	1024.167	119			

Table 7 displays the means of the four groups on the pretest of vocabulary.

*Table 7: Descriptive Statistics Pretest of Vocabulary by Groups*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Extrovert Definition	30	8.35	2.723	.497	7.33	9.37	4	14
Introvert Definition	30	7.53	2.636	.481	6.55	8.52	2	12
Extrovert Picture	30	8.03	3.187	.582	6.84	9.22	2	13
Introvert Picture	30	7.42	3.195	.583	6.22	8.61	2	13

**Post-test of Vocabulary Retention**

At the end of the treatment, with a 15-day interval a piloted researcher-made post-test (the parallel form of pretest) was administered in order to investigate the students' retention of vocabularies. It was similar not identical to the pretest. Like the pretest, the test included 30 four-option items. Table 8 shows descriptive statistics of vocabulary post-test.

*Table 8: Descriptive Statistics of Vocabulary Post-test Piloting*

Vocabulary Test	Participants	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Post-test	30	30	6.73	8.433	3	30

A one-way ANOVA is run to compare the four groups' means on the post-test of vocabulary in order to investigate the effects of personality types of extrovert and introvert and teaching vocabulary through definitions and pictures on the retention of vocabulary items by Iranian EFL learners.

As displayed in Table 9 the results of the one-way ANOVA ( $F(3, 116) = 28.94, P = .000 < .05; \omega^2 = .41$  it represents an almost strong effect size) indicates significant differences between the mean scores of the four groups on the post-test of vocabulary.

*Table 9: One-Way ANOVA Post-test of Vocabulary by Groups*

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	858.356	3	286.119	28.942	.000
Within Groups	1146.750	116	9.886		
Total	2005.106	119			

Table 10 displays the means of the four groups on the post-test of vocabulary.

*Table 10: Descriptive Statistics Post-test of Vocabulary by Groups*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Extrovert Definition	30	16.42	2.877	.525	15.34	17.49	10	20
Introvert Definition	30	16.57	2.555	.467	15.61	17.52	10	20
Extrovert Picture	30	22.17	3.291	.601	20.94	23.40	14	27
Introvert Picture	30	15.30	3.729	.681	13.91	16.69	6	20

Although the F-value of 28.94 denotes significant differences between the means of the four groups on the post-test of vocabulary retention the post-hoc Scheffe's tests should be run to compare the means two by two in order to probe the two research questions raised in this study.

### *Testing the Hypotheses*

Based on the results displayed in Table10 it can be concluded that:

A: There is a significant difference between the effect of keeping a vocabulary note book with definitions and a vocabulary notebook with pictures on extrovert EFL learners' vocabulary retention (Mean Difference = -5.75;  $P = .000 < .05$ ). The extrovert students keeping note books with pictures (Mean = 22.17) outperformed the extrovert students keeping note books with definitions (Mean = 16.42) on the posttest of vocabulary retention. Thus the first null-hypothesis **is rejected**.

B: There is not any significant difference between the effect of keeping a vocabulary note book with definitions and a vocabulary notebook with pictures on introvert EFL learners' vocabulary retention (Mean Difference = 1.26;  $P = .49 > .05$ ). Thus the second null-hypothesis **is supported**. The mean scores for the introvert students keeping note books with definitions and pictures are 16.57 and 15.30 respectively.

(I) Groups	(J) Groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Extrovert Definition	Introvert Definition	-.150	.812	.998	-2.45	2.15
	Extrovert Picture	-5.750*	.812	.000	-8.05	-3.45
	Introvert Picture	1.117	.812	.597	-1.19	3.42
Introvert Definition	Extrovert Picture	-5.600*	.812	.000	-7.90	-3.30
	Introvert Picture	1.267	.812	.490	-1.04	3.57
Extrovert Picture	Introvert Picture	6.867*	.812	.000	4.56	9.17

\*.The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

*Table 11: Post-Hoc Scheffe's Tests Posttest of Vocabulary Retention by Groups*

## DISCUSSION

Through the analysis of the data, it was found that the subjects in the four groups of the study showed some vocabulary gains but it was revealed that the significant improvement occurred in the vocabulary retention of the extrovert learners received vocabulary notebooks with pictures, in comparison to extrovert using vocabulary notebooks with definitions and the two introvert groups of learners.

Using pictures fixed the meaning of the words in the minds of learners, as Monroe (as cited in Robinson, 2011) says, "When students create or use their own pictures, they participate actively and process ideas themselves". She also acknowledges that drawing or using pictures are effective tools for students to refer back to what they have previously learned.

These visual images also provide powerful cognitive prompts to vocabulary development as this task engages both sides of the brain (Edyburn, 2010).

As Sams (2011) claims "It seems logical that this process of longer-term memory through visualization worked because pupils were creating their own personal connection with the vocabulary". Carter, Hardly and Hardly (as cited in Sams, 2011) reported that getting pupils to visualize vocabulary before testing improved scores. Nation (2001) pointed that "This strategy (using pictures) has two strengths; firstly, it provides a bi-directional link with the unknown word since it aids recall of the meaning if given the word and vice versa, and secondly, it provides a highly personalized and therefore memorable method of recall.

Sams (2011) has Pointed to the fact that "It is experienced drawing or applying pictures roots the items in students' mind and one is more likely to be able to visualize and retain an image which has been personally created". These visual images also provide powerful cognitive prompts to vocabulary development as this task engages both sides of the brain (Edyburn, 2010).

Though extrovert learners in this research were better performers, Hutchinson and Gul (1997) found that extrovert students with the desire to participate in group learning situations more are not always those who can really outperform introverts. They also concluded that while the personality traits of introvert students are not considered by the teacher, the innate competence and ability of the students will be mostly hindered and they will not act as they can really do. This is while they concluded that using a proper and convenient method by the teacher can help the introvert students to stick to their real competence and try their best in learning situations.

## CONCLUSION

The outcome of the post-test and pretest analysis clarified that keeping vocabulary notebooks with pictures had a significant effect on extrovert EFL learners' vocabulary retention.

Since all learners were homogenized with respect to their English reading and writing proficiency and then randomly assigned to the four groups prior to the treatment, the final significant difference among the achievement post-test could be attributed to the difference in the types of vocabulary strategy they used.

Also, the extrovert students keeping notebooks with pictures outperformed the extrovert students keeping notebooks with definitions on the post-test of vocabulary retention. According to Ones, Dilchert, Viswesraran, and Judge (2007), hundreds of the primary studies and many of the meta-analyses conducted since the mid-1980s have indicated high support for using personality measures in staffing decision. Further, they maintained that personality conducts can predict and explain attitudes, behavior, performance, and other outcomes in organizational settings.

Therefore, while personality characteristics affect performance in many fields, it seems logical to claim that the teaching/learning profession is not an exception. They concluded that using a proper and convenient method by the teacher can help the introvert students to stick to their real competence and try their best in learning situations.

It is worth mentioning at the end, the rules and restrictions which exist in some language schools in Iran did not allow the teacher –herself being a female– to have male learners in her classes as well as female learners. Hence, the



results of this research cannot be necessarily generalized to male EFL learners. Furthermore, since the participants under study were young adults, the results may not be generalized to older learners.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study was an attempt to carefully analyze the subject of test bias. Different sources of bias have been mentioned by different scholars, to be taken into consideration while constructing and administering a test. The most comprehensive account of these sources has been given by Bachman (1990:pp.271-278). He considers cultural background, background knowledge, cognitive characteristics, native language, ethnicity, sex, and age as different sources of bias. In this study, the researcher went through two of these sources of bias namely the impulsivity – reflectivity cognitive styles and sex, and by providing two null hypotheses attempted to find out the effect of these sources of bias on the test takers' performance on a multiple – choice test. After collecting data by the use of a TOEFL test and Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire, two t-tests were run to confirm whether the difference between the means of different groups (i.e. male, female, on the one hand, and impulsive / reflective, on the other hand) is statistically significant or not? The statistics and results showed the rejection of the first null hypothesis and the acceptance of the second one. The first null hypothesis being rejected indicates that the impulsivity -reflectivity cognitive styles of test takers influence on their performance on multiple – choice items test. The second null hypothesis, being accepted, indicates that test takers' sex does not affect their performance on multiple-choice items test.

**KEYWORDS:** Test bias, Cognitive style, Impulsivity, Reflectivity, Gender, Multiple – choice Test.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The historical background of all the trends of testing including the essay – translation, discrete – point, integrative, and communicative approach show that the main concern in all of these trends has been to assess one's true language or communicative ability. However, this task cannot be accomplished easily. And this is largely due to the factors other than communicative language ability which affect performance on language tests. Such a challenge has been described by Bachman (1990) as follows: "Performance on language tests is affected by a wide variety of factors and an understanding of these factors and how they affect test scores is fundamental to the development and use of language tests" (p.81). In order to interpret test scores as indicators of a given language ability, a language testing specialist must be sure that they are influenced as much as possible by that ability. Any factors other than the ability being tested that affect test scores are potential sources of error that decrease both the reliability of scores and the validity of their interpretations. Therefore; it is essential that we be able to identify these sources of error and estimate the magnitude of their effect on test scores. Bachman (1990: 146) classifies these sources of error into three broad categories: (1) test method facets; (2) attributes of the test taker that are not considered part of the language abilities we want to measure, and (3) random factors that are largely unpredictable and temporary. The second category in this classification (i.e. attributes of individuals that are not related to language ability) include individual characteristics such as cognitive style, knowledge of particular content area, and group characteristics such as sex, race, and ethnic background. The individual attributes are likely to affect test scores (Hansen & Stansfield, 1981; Stansfield & Hansen, 1983; Hansen, 1984; Chapelle & Roberts, 1986). Test scores may also be affected by group characteristics such as sex (Clearly, 1968; Cole, 1973; Swinton & Powers, 1980; Farhady, 1982). These attributes are systematic in the sense that they are likely to affect a given individual's test performance. To the extent that an individual test score is affected by test method facets, attributes other than the abilities we want to measure, and

random factors, any inference we make about his/her level of language ability on the basis of his / her test score will be in error to some degree.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Tests as devices to reinforce learning and to motivate students are usually constructed as a means of assessing students' performances (Heaton, 1988: 24). However, students' performances are affected by different factors including individual characteristics such as impulsivity – reflectivity cognitive styles and group characteristics such as sex. The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which test performance is influenced by factors (i.e. the impulsivity – reflectivity cognitive styles and sex) other than language ability. In fact the exact purpose of this study is to find out how and to what extent the impulsivity-reflectivity cognitive styles and sex affect performance on one of the most common testing techniques namely multiple – choice test.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

A problem related to measurement theory is that of determining the extent to which test performance is influenced by test method and test takers' characteristics. If studies demonstrate that these extraneous factors influence learners' performance on language tests, then language test developers need to take into consideration the effects of these factors while developing tests or interpreting learners' test scores. As this study is an attempt to investigate the extent to which test takers' impulsivity-reflectivity cognitive styles and sex can affect performance on multiple-choice items, its findings would no doubt help those involved in testing to minimize the effects of the factors, and thus make a fairer assessment of the learners' true language ability. This would help language teachers as well in that any development or advancement in language testing would never let language teaching go unaffected. As Upshur (1971: 435–42) noted several years ago, there is an intrinsic reciprocal relationship between research in language acquisition and developments in language teaching on the one hand, and language testing on the other. That is, language testing both serves and is served by research in language acquisition and language teaching.

### **REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE**

#### ***Test Bias***

##### ***Introduction***

Problems related to bias were among the very first to be addressed in the emerging field of language testing (Bachman 1990: 272). A lot of studies have been carried out to investigate the nature and potential sources of test bias, but there still remains a lot unknown about it. This problem has been articulated by Oller (1979) as follows: "Part of the difficulty is the lack of adequate data. For instance, until recently (Oller & Perkins, 1978) there was no data on the relative importance of language variety bias, or just plain language bias in educational testing in general. There was always plenty of evidence that such a factor must be important to a vast array of educational tests, but how important?" (p.85).

##### ***What is Test Bias?***

Bachman (1990) defines test bias as "the possible systematic differences in test performance that are the result of differences in individual characteristics, other than the ability being tested of test takers, are defined as test bias." (p. 271). Angoff (1993) reviewed the literature on item bias and summarized various definitions as follows: "an item is biased if equally able or proficient individuals, from different groups, do not have equal probabilities of answering the item correctly" (p.4). Angoff quotes Shepard et al. (1981) who viewed biased items from a social perspective and defined it as "a kind of invalidity that harms one group more than another" (p.318). Scheuneman (1975) discussed normal items and believed that "an item is unbiased if, for all individuals having the same score on a homogenous subtest containing the item, the proportion of individuals getting the item correct is the same for each population group being considered." (p.2)

Item response theory which is also known as latent trait theory and item characteristic curve theory was developed to explain how and why certain items favor particular groups (i.e. are biased). Khodadady (1999: 132) contends that due to the influence of external factors such as the gender and ethnicity of test takers on item functioning, item response theory was introduced (Lord & Novick, 1968). The theory tries to estimate item difficulty and other item characteristics without "being affected by the sample of students responding to the items" (Roid & Haladyna, 1982: 216). Lord (1980) explicates the underlying assumption of the item response theory (which accounts for the distinction between biased and unbiased items) as follows: "If each test item in a test had exactly the same item response function in every group, then people of the same ability or skill would have exactly the same chance of getting the item right, regardless of their group membership. Such a test would be completely unbiased. If, on the

other hand, an item has a different response function for one group than for another, it is clear that the item is biased "(p.212)

***Cognitive Style (Learning Style) as a source of bias:***

Cognitive style has been defined in many ways. Some of the definitions are as follows: The term "learning style refers a person's general approach to learning and problem solving" (Reid, 1995: 1997). Learning styles are "relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment" (Keef, 1979: 4). They are "the overall patterns that give general direction to learning behavior" (Cornett, 1983: 9). "Learning style is the biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that make the same teaching wonderful for some and terrible for others" (p. 3).

Brown (1994: 104) contends " the way we learn things in general and the particular attack we make on a problem seem to hinge on a rather amorphous link between personality and cognition; this link is referred to as cognitive style". Witkin et al. (1977: 10) define the term "cognitive style" as "characteristic self-consistent mode of functioning which individuals show in their perceptual and intellectual activities." Ausubel (1968: 170) defines cognitive style as "self-consistent and enduring individual differences in cognitive organization and functioning." Ellis (1990: 114) defines cognitive style as "a term used to the manner in which people perceive, conceptualize, organize, and recall information." He (1994: 499) also states that "the idea of learning style comes from general psychology. It refers to characteristic ways in which individuals orientate to problem – solving." Shumin Kang (1999), discussing the topic of learning style, mentions that: "Learning styles are internally based characteristics of individuals of the intake or understanding of new information (Reid, 1995). All learners have individual attributes relating to their learning processes. Some people may rely heavily on visual presentation, others may prefer spoken language, still others may respond better to hands-on activities. It is evident that people learn differently and at different paces because of their biological and psychological differences (Reiff, 1992).

***Impulsivity VS Reflectivity***

It is common for us to show in our personalities certain tendencies toward reflectivity sometimes and at other times impulsivity. Psychological studies have been conducted to determine the degree to which, in the cognitive domain, a person tends to make either a quick or gambling (impulsive) guess at an answer to a problem or a slower, more calculated (reflective) decision (Brown, 1994).

Impulsive and reflective cognitive styles are considered to be an individual's different style of forming concepts, solving problems, and thinking. They are ways in which individuals select hypotheses and process information. R/I describes the disposition to reflect on the solution to a problem where several alternatives are possible and there is high uncertainty over which is correct (see Kagan, Rossman, Day, Albert, and Phillips (1964) for the initial development of R/I). As Kagan (1966) explained, the "impulsives" reach decisions and report them very quickly with little concern for accuracy. Others, of equal intelligence, are more concerned with accuracy and consequently take more time to reach a decision. These are "reflectives."

As a cognitive style impulsivity is a dimension of fast, spontaneous and unplanned performance in cognitive tasks (Kagan 1965). According to Gilpin and Larsen (1981), Kagan (1965) and Porteus (1942) impulsives in psychological literature are described as those easily carried away by new and exciting ideas, and by the prospects of immediate gratification. They tend to act quickly without thinking through the consequences of planning ahead. Reflectives, on the other hand, like to stand back to ponder experiences and observe them from many different perspectives. They tend to postpone reaching definite conclusions for as long as possible. They are thoughtful people who like to consider all possible angles and implications before making a move. Moreover, they tend to adopt a low profile and have a slightly distant, tolerant unruffled air about them (cited in Pirouznia 1994). According to Fontana (1995), reflective children tend to make fewer errors than impulsive ones particularly on challenging and difficult tasks, since they show a strong desire to be right first time, and seem able to tolerate the ambiguity, say, of a long silence in front of the class while they think out the right answer before responding. Impulsive children on the other hand, adopt a "shotgun" approach, firing off answers in the hope that one will be right and that in any case errors will provide appropriate feedback from the teacher to help them to get nearer to the solution next time.



*Impulsivity / Reflectivity and Information Processing:*

People process information in various ways. The majority of the research literature tends to favor some factors related to information processing behaviors as the likely antecedent (s) of R/I. In a number of studies analytic and global processing has been the main concern.

Zelnicker and Jeffry (1976) state that reflective children by attending to the detailed information of a stimulus tend to process information analytically. On the other hand, impulsive children tend to process information globally by attending to a stimulus as a whole. This result was revealed in a series of experiments. In the first, reflective children recalled significantly more detailed information from five sentences than the impulsive ones. In the second, a variant of the Matching Familiar Figures Test was given which included stimuli that could be processed either analytically or globally. Again reflectives were better at analytic processing while impulsives were better at global processing. In the final experiment, impulsive children used a large number of dimensions (global processing) as a first hypothesis in a concept attainment task. However, reflective children were more likely to focus on a single dimension (analytic processing).

Loper and her colleagues (1982) in another study administered a conceptual style task with a modification in which children were reinforced specifically for either global or analytic processing. The results indicated that both impulsive and reflective children were capable of offering either a global or an analytic hypothesis under appropriate reinforcement. Inductive reasoning as a means of processing information, in a study was found to be more effective with reflective persons (Kagan, Person, and Welch, 1966), suggesting that generally reflective persons could benefit more from inductive learning situations. Perhaps the success of inductive teaching methods therefore varies depending on the I/R index of individual students.

*Other Studies on I/R*

It has been found that children who are conceptually reflective tend to make fewer errors in reading than do conceptually impulsive children (Kagan, 1965; Messer, 1976). However, impulsive persons are usually faster readers than the reflective ones, and eventually master the “psycholinguistic guessing game” (Goodman, 1970) of reading in a way that their impulsive style of reading may not necessarily deter comprehension.

A study conducted at the University of Michigan (Doron, 1973) sought to examine the relationship between R/I and reading proficiency in students of English as a second language. Kagan’s Matching Familiar Figures test was used to measure R/I in a sample of ESL student; Doron then administered reading tests of comprehension and speed to the same subjects to determine the correlation between R/I and reading. She discovered that reflective students were slower and more accurate than impulsive students, and suggested that this fact be taken into account in the teaching of reading in ESL (Brown, 1974). Pirouznia’s study (1994) provides continuing evidence for the positive relationship between reflectivity and EFL reading comprehension. In her study, reflective students were perfect and error detection and the mean differences between reflective and impulsive students across grade levels were significant.

***Native Language, Ethnicity, Sex, and Age as other sources of Test Bias***

Ethnic, sex, and age biases in the use of tests for selection decisions have been extensively discussed in the measurement literature (for example, Clearly, 1968; Cole, 1973; Linn, 1973; Flaughher, 1976). These factors, along with native language background, have also been the focus of research in language testing (Bachman, 1990: 278). In studies examining native language background as a factor in performance on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), Swinton and Powers (1980) and Alderman and Holland (1981) both found differential performance across different native language groups. Swinton and Powers found different factor structures for European and non-European language background groups on the structure, written expression, reading, and vocabulary sections of the old five-part TOEFL. Alderson and Holland compared the performance on individual TOEFL items of individuals whose total TOEFL scores were comparable, and found significant differences across different native language groups. Several studies have examined the effects of multiple background characteristics on language test performance. Farhady (1982), for example, found significant relationship between sex, university status, academic major, and nationality, and performance on several measures of language ability. Similarly, Spurling and Ilyin (1985) found that age, language background, and high school graduation have small but significant effects on cloze, reading, and listening test.



In this study, gender and sex refer to the condition of being male or female. In the classification of different sources of test bias, it was mentioned that one of these sources is sex. Though few studies have been carried out on actual foreign or second language performance of males and females, those that exist show the superiority of one sex (i.e. male or female) on specific types of tasks, and for the other sex having superiority on some other tasks. Some SLA studies that have reported sex-related differences are as follows:

Farhady (1982) found that female subjects significantly outperformed male subjects on a listening comprehension test. Eisenstein (1982) also showed that females performed significantly better than males on a dialect discrimination task and in the extent to which they could recognize dialects of greater or lesser prestige. Maccoby and Jacklins (1974) authoritative survey of all extent researches in the area showed that where a gender difference is found, it is nearly always girls who are ahead. To straighten this position, Jespersen, in a section on the "volubility of women", quotes examples from research done on reading speed which found that women tended to read a given passage faster than men and to remember more about the passage after reading it (Jespersen, 1972: 252). Shipman (1971; Stanford research Institute, 1972) found girls clearly ahead on a number of language measures. These studies are representative of the many that have been carried out on child language and show that at any given age, girls will be found to be superior in terms of comprehension, size of vocabulary, reading ability, and handling of complex expressions, etc.

### ***Multiple – Choice Items***

Multiple choice items are said to be the simplest type of fixed response objective item (Hudson, 1973), the most commonly used short answer format (Tuckman, 1975), the most popular form of test item (Popham, 1990), and the most highly regarded objective test item (Mehrens & Lehman, 1991) in measurement and evaluation. Multiple choice items are utilized in almost all pure and applied fields of knowledge ranging from literature and fine arts to medicine. The widespread application of multiple choice item tests stems from their capacity to address the most important processes of cognition and their practicality to be put to almost all educational and non-educational purposes: diagnosis, placement, proficiency, selection, awards, certification, licensure, and employment (Haladyna, 1994). Brown (1976) stated that multiple choice items can be used to measure complex "intellectual" or "reasoning" skills as did Anderson (1972).

Khodadady (1999: 1-3) states that multiple choice items are used in almost all fields of knowledge to measure the mental process of knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Multiple choice items are not the product of measurement and evaluation per se. Whatever is done, thought, felt, seen, etc., by human beings has a multiple choice format in real life. For example, the underlying reason behind a person's preference, to study a book, to write about a topic, to speak with a certain person, to attend a particular meeting and to eat a certain dish can be identified by recognizing his interests, attitudes and aptitudes. Hypothetically speaking, the person's favorite book can be regarded as the best book for him selected among an infinite number of books rivaling as alternatives within the context of his interest. Similarly, selecting a particular dish among all other possible alternatives mentioned in a menu can be justified in terms of that person's tastes. Farhady et al. (1995: 92-93) contend that multiple choice form items are probably the most widely used types of items. They are applicable to a wide variety of skills. Multiple choice items can measure simple learning outcomes more effectively than true-false or matching item can.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study aims at answering the following research questions:

1. Do the test takers' impulsivity – reflectivity cognitive styles affect their performance on multiple – choice items?
2. Does test takers' sex affect their performance on multiple –choice items? If so, to what extent?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

The participants in this study were 82 graduate and undergraduate students from different fields of study who took the placement test for TOEFL preparation classes held at Tehran University. They were all within the age range of 19-33. First, on the basis of sex, they were divided into two groups: males with 42 and females with 40 subjects. Then, on the basis of their grades on Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire,

they were divided into two groups of reflective and impulsive personality made up of 47 and 35 participants respectively.

### Instrumentation

Two instruments were used in this study:

*Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire*: A questionnaire prepared by Eysenck (1975) to assess the participants' degree of impulsivity / reflectivity. It includes 30 items and in front of each item three answers including 'Yes', 'No', and '?' are presented. The participants are instructed to answer each item by putting a circle around the 'Yes' or the 'No' as quickly as possible. If they find it impossible to decide one way or the other for any reason, they are asked to put a ring around the '?'. The key for scoring this questionnaire is given in table 1.

Table 1: The key for scoring Impulsivity – Reflectivity questionnaire

1,	-	11,	-	21,	+
2,	+	12,	-	22,	+
3,	+	13,	+	23,	+
4,	-	14,	+	24,	-
5,	+	15,	+	25,	-
6,	-	16,	+	26,	+
7,	+	17,	+	27,	-
8,	+	18,	+	28,	+
9,	+	19,	+	29,	+
10,	-	20,	-	30,	+

In this key, the numbers refer to the item numbers in the questionnaire and the sign tells whether it is a 'Yes' or 'No' answer that should be given a point. As an example, consider question 1: "Do you like planning things well ahead of time?" Because there is a minus sign after the number 1 in the key, you give the subject a point if s/he answered with a 'No'. If s/he answered 'Yes', s/he scores nothing; if s/he responded with a '?' s/he scores 1/2. The second question is reverse scored: 'Do you usually make up your mind quickly?' This time, because the sign is a plus, it is the 'Yes' which scores 1 and the 'No' which scores zero; the '?' again scores 1/2. To summarize then: if there is a plus sign the 'Yes' scores 1, if there is a minus sign the 'No' scores 1. In either case a '?' is scored 1/2. As there are thirty items in this questionnaire, so the possible range of scores is 0 to 30. To assess the participants' degree of impulsivity reflectivity, Eysenck (ibid: 66) provides the following scale:

#### AVERAGE

I 30 29 28 27 26 25 24 23 22 21 20 19 18 / 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 R

In this scale, those who score 17 or less are considered as reflective and those who score 18 or more are considered as impulsive. The score 17.5 indicates that the subject is in the average domain (i.e. not being a true impulsive nor a true reflective).

*TOEFL test*: As this study was an attempt to find out how and to what extent the impulsivity – reflectivity cognitive styles and gender affect performance on multiple – choice items, and as all the items of a TOEFL (IBT) are in the form of multiple – choice, a TOEFL test (1998) was used as the second instrument of this study.

### Design

The study was conducted on the basis of the ex post facto design (Best 1977), as all the requirements for such a design were fulfilled:

1. There is no treatment.
2. There is no control over the independent variable.
3. The relationship between the variables is not a cause – effect relationship.

### Procedure

#### Data collection

The procedures applied to collect the data are as follows:

Phase (1): Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire was administered to 105 participants to assess their degree of impulsivity- reflectivity. As 23 of these participants failed to fulfill the requirements of participating in this study, (i.e. not being a university graduate or undergraduate, and concerning I/R, falling in the average domain, i.e. scoring

17.5) they were excluded from the rest of the study. The answers given by the 82 remaining participants were scored and 47 participants fell in the reflective domain (i.e. scoring 17 or less) and 35 in the impulsive (i.e. scoring 18 or more). Before the main questionnaire, there were some personal questions about sex, age, and field of study. It turned out that out of 82 participants, 42 were male and 40 were female.

Phase (2): To assess the participants' performance on a multiple- choice test, a TOEFL test was employed. 105 participants took the test, and again for the abovementioned reasons, 23 of them were excluded from the study.

#### *Data Analysis*

To analyze the data, in addition to descriptive statistics, t – test was also used as the appropriate statistical test to confirm whether the differences between the scores are statistically significant or not. To be more exact, first, on the basis of TOEFL scores, the mean of each group (i.e. male, female, impulsive, and reflective) was calculated. Then, to confirm whether the differences between the means are statistically significant, two t – tests were conducted (the first one to compare the means of males and females and the second one to compare those of the impulsive and reflective groups).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Testing the first null hypothesis comprised of a comparison between the performance of the impulsive and reflective participants on the aforementioned multiple – choice items test. These statistics are given in table 2.

*Table 2: Descriptive statistics for the impulsive and reflective groups*

GROUP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Reflective	47	397.2340	73.6827	10.7477
Impulsive	35	342.2857	65.7126	11.1075

As it can be seen in this table, the mean of the 47 participants who form the reflective group is 397.23. And the mean of the other 35 participants forming the impulsive group is 342.28. To see whether the difference between the means of the groups is significant or not, a t-test was run. The statistics obtained are  $t=3.49$ ,  $df=80$ ,  $p<.001$  (2-tailed).

*Table 3: Descriptive statistics for the impulsive and reflective groups*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tail)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Interval Difference	Confidence of the	
								Lower	Upper	
Mark Equal Variances assumed	.602	.440	3.496	80	.001	54.95	15.72	23.67	86.23	
Equal Variances not assumed			3.555	77.352	.001	54.95	15.46	24.17	85.72	

As mentioned before, the level of significance in this study was determined at the 5% (0.05) level of significance. This means that if p (the probability that the result occurred due to chance factors) is 0.05 or smaller, the result is said to be significant, i.e. the result is unlikely to have occurred by chance and is likely to be repeatable. If p is greater than 0.05, the result is said not to be significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that the result of this test is highly significant indicating that the difference between the means of the two groups was due to the independent variable (i.e. the impulsivity- reflectivity cognitive styles). The above-mentioned statistics and results demonstrate that the first null hypothesis of this study is rejected; implying that the performance of test takers on a multiple – choice test is affected by their impulsivity / reflectivity cognitive styles. Testing the second null hypothesis comprised of a comparison between the performance of males and females on the aforementioned multiple – choice test. The descriptive statistics for each group were obtained. These statistics are given in table 4.

Table 4: Descriptive statics for males and females

sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Male	42	371.1905	79.4555	12.2603
Female	40	376.5000	71.2003	11.2578

As shown in table 4 the mean of the male group with its 42 participants is 371.19 and the mean of the female group with its 40 participants is 376.50. Table 5 summarizes the statistics obtained from the t-test. Since the p value of this test (sig (2-tailed) = .751) is greater than our level of significance. (0.05), it can be concluded that the result of this test is not significant indicating that the difference between the means of the two groups was likely (a.75 probability) to be due to chance factors rather than the independent variable (i.e. gender). So the second null hypothesis of this study is accepted, i.e. test takers' gender does not affect their performance on multiple – choice tests.

Table 5: T- test for the performance of males and females

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	sig	t	df	Sig. (2-tail)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Mark	.871	.354	-.318	80	.751	-5.31	16.69	-38.5	27.90
Equal Variances assumed			-.318	79.712	.751	-5.31	16.64	-38.4	27.82
Equal Variances not assumed									

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

### Conclusions

The results of this study confirm the effect of cognitive characteristics (as one source of test bias) on the performance of test takers on M.C test. The great difference between the means of the two groups (i.e. impulsive and reflective) and the low P value (a.001 probability) encourage the researcher to claim that this result was just due to the independent variable. Concerning the first hypothesis, the researcher came to the conclusion that reflective participants performed better than the impulsive ones on the multiple – choice test. Several reasons might account for this. The most tangible and important reasons are the features of each style and also the nature of multiple – choice tests. Having characteristics of impulsive – reflective and features of multiple – choice items, it can be concluded that the result of the present study was somehow predictable; that is, answering a multiple choice item just requires the psychological process of recognition, and in responding to such an item, there is no “obstacle” (utilizing other psychological processes) to the hurried and premature decisions of impulsive examinees. Thus, in this type of test item, the speed with which the impulsive examinees take a decision is very high and this adds to the probability of having more mistakes. However, this is not the case with reflective subjects. As they always think before making a decision, so the presence or absence of this “obstacle” makes no (or little) difference.

Concerning the second null hypothesis, a difference was noticed between the means of the two groups (i.e. male and female), but it was not statistically significant enough to reject the hypothesis. So, the researcher couldn't find enough evidence to confirm the effect of gender on the test takers' performance on multiple –choice tests. However, this is not to say that this factor undoubtedly doesn't have any influence on the performance of test takers on M-C test in particular and language test in general, and this area (i.e. gender as a source of test bias) is open to further research. A different or larger sample will perhaps show other results.

### Implication

The findings of this study can be useful for English teachers (involved in language testing) in that their judgment about students' scores on difference types of test including multiple – choice items should not be merely attributed to their language ability, but factors such as the impulsivity – reflectivity cognitive styles of test takers should be taken into consideration. The findings may also be of many uses to curriculum developers, syllabus designers, and test developers. Taking insights from such studies, they will be able to justifiably change the linguistic approaches to both language teaching and testing. In that case, psycholinguistic approaches would be the focal point of language teaching syllabuses and language testing materials. The results of such studies can help ESL / EFL professionals deepen their understanding of the nature of human differences in learning, so that they can use more effective

procedures in teaching and testing different groups of learners. In the researcher's opinion, the ultimate goal of such studies will be individualized teaching and testing, i.e. each learner or group of learners with the same learning style must be taught and tested through their individual characteristics.

To make ESL / EFL learning / teaching successful, educators must understand and respect individual's diverse learning styles and make efforts to create optimal learning environment for learners. Testing is, no doubt, one part of learning / teaching process, so here again individuals' different characteristics such as the impulsivity – reflectivity cognitive styles, sex, age, background knowledge, etc (as different sources of test bias) must be taken into consideration, otherwise tests will be biased for or against various test takers.

### **Delimitation**

The first limitation of this study is its confinement to just one of testing techniques (i.e. multiple – choice test). Another limitation is that the researcher limited himself to the test takers' impulsivity – reflectivity cognitive styles and sex without taking into consideration the other sources of bias including age, background knowledge, cultural background, ethnicity, and native language.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to examine the English language needs of Medical students at Tehran University of Medical sciences. Analysis of the needs took place for three groups: 320 undergraduate students, 30 postgraduate students and 20 university instructors. A triangulation approach to collect data was used in which a combination of the quantitative (using the questionnaires) and qualitative (interviews) methods was employed. The questionnaire was slightly modified version of the one used by Farhady (2007). Interviews were held with randomly selected 10 participants in each groups. The obtained data from the questionnaires were analyzed through a variety of descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Comparisons across the groups were then made through inferential statistics such as ANOVA. The findings revealed that Instructors gave highest importance to all four categories: current language skills, current academic skills, future academic skills, and future career skills. Undergraduate students basically rated all four kinds of skills as moderately important. As such, the postgraduate students group can be seen to diverge completely from ratings given by the Instructors and Undergraduate students in the current language and academic skills categories, and to a lesser degree as it relates to future career and academic skills. The results of interviews indicated that Instructors regarded English language as important in medical fields and Undergraduate students stated that the general English books courses were dissatisfied but Postgraduate students indicated that Language skills and specialized skills importance were also top priority for all Undergraduate students.

**KEYWORDS:** Needs Analysis, Needs Assessment, English for specific purposes ESP courses, Medical Students, IRAN

## **RESEARCH STUDIES IN NEEDS ANALYSIS**

Typically, needs analysis is done on language programs serving adults in academic and professional programs. The following overview provides a sampling of recent studies in needs analysis conducted in different parts of the world. This overview will first present studies conducted within the field of medical English and then present other studies in English for specific purposes. Boshier (2002) conducted a needs analysis study to determine why many ESL students enrolled in a nursing program were not succeeding academically. Interviews, observations, and questionnaires were used to gather information about the objective needs of students. The findings indicated that communicating with clients and colleagues in the clinical setting was perceived as the greatest difficulty. Based on the needs analysis, a course on Speaking and Listening in a Health-Care Setting was developed to respond to what was identified as students' area of greatest difficulty. The content of the course was divided into four units: assertiveness skills, therapeutic communication, information-gathering techniques, and the role of culture in health-care communication. A variety of methods and materials drawn primarily from sources for developing health-care communication skills was used to develop the curriculum.

Mazdayasna and Tahririan (2008) investigated the foreign language learning needs of undergraduate medical sciences students studying in faculties of nursing and midwifery in Iran. A total of 681 undergraduate students as well as 168 subject-specific instructors and 6 EFL instructors participated in the study, which was designed on a qualitative-quantitative survey basis using interviews and questionnaires. Extensive qualitative and statistical analysis of the data revealed that most of the students perceived that they needed to master the foreign language before they attended their specialized courses because they needed to use Persian and English sources to study their subject. Over one-third of the students expressed their dissatisfaction with the number of students in each class, with the teaching methodology used, the method of evaluation, and the amount of foreign culture taught in the class and

content of the textbook. Equally, the subject-specific instructors' responses revealed total dissatisfaction with their students' language skills. It can be inferred that this course does not fully prepare the students to embark on their studies because it does not sufficiently take into account their (1) learning needs, (2) present level of foreign language proficiency, (3) objectives of the course, (4) resources available in terms of staff, materials, equipment, finances and time constraint, (5) the skill of the teachers and the teacher's knowledge of the specific area.

Salehi (2010) investigated the English language needs of Engineering Students. The purpose of the study was three-folds: to evaluate students' needs, to evaluate the psychometric qualities of the developed questionnaire, and to explore the possibility of writing a textbook based on the insights gained from the study. To evaluate the students' needs, wants, and lacks (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), a questionnaire was administered to 225 students at Sharif University of Technology when they took their final exams. Students' scores were made use of with respect to one dimension of the questionnaire which dealt with students' self-assessment of themselves most of which correlate positively with their final scores. Another purpose of the study was to evaluate the questionnaire itself in terms of its statistical properties. In other words, a construct validation study was conducted. There were distinct parts to this questionnaire. A confirmatory factor analysis using Principal Components Analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation was applied to see if different needs were neatly delineated by the questionnaire. Having applied a CFA with PCA using a three-factor solution, it was seen that items loaded on the expected factors with high loadings. In terms of students' needs, here are the findings: Translation was not deemed appropriate. Note taking was not considered important in their future careers. Technical writing was considered to be very important. Unfortunately, the skill has been totally ignored in the English curriculum in the university. Eslami (2010) investigated the English language needs for Academic Purposes (EAP) in Iran. She believes EAP plays a highly important role in countries where English is used mainly for academic purposes. However, EAP programs have been developed without conducting a systematic needs analysis from both the students' and instructors' perspective. The purpose of this study is to describe the perception that EAP students and instructors have of the problematic areas in EAP programs. A total of 693 EAP students majoring in different academic fields and 37 instructors participated in this study. Survey information included respondents' perception the importance of problematic areas in EAP programs. The results show discrepancy between the perceptions of EAP learners in different academic fields and between learners and instructors. The study has implications for curriculum design and instructional delivery of EAP courses for college level students.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The researcher formulated the following research questions:

1. What are the specific English language needs of Iranian medical students?
2. What language skills do medical students need to develop in high level of education?
3. What language skills and sub-skills students' vocational future lack?

## METHODOLOGY

To obtain more reliable data from the participant via different sources, a triangulation approach to collect data was used in which a combination of the quantitative (using the questionnaires) and qualitative (interviews) methods was employed. Triangulation is a procedure long used by researchers, for instance, ethnographers, to work within a tradition to help validate their data and thereby, eventually, to increase the credibility of their interpretations of those data (Long, 2005). The process involves the researcher to compare two or more different sources, methods, investigators or theories, and sometimes combinations thereof (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Long 2005). In this study, the data sources are of two kinds: one is the language instructors and the other is the students. By triangulating these sources and methods of collection of data, the obtained information would be more reliable and as put forward by Jick (1979) would depict a more complete, holistic and contextual portrayal of the unit(s) under study. In the present study, interviews were done with 30 that were randomly selected from each of the three levels at the Medical University of Tehran (i.e., Instructors, postgraduate students, and undergraduate students). The methodology underlying the research was both quantitative (through the implementation of the questionnaire) and qualitative (the interviews).

### *Participants*

The required data were collected through two channels: semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire. The questionnaire was slightly modified version of the one used by Farhady (2007) and is applied by the researcher and it was developed in three versions, one for the Undergraduate students and the other for the instructors and, one for postgraduate students.

All the items of the questionnaires categorized into three main parts: 1) the undergraduate students' present status in terms of their English language proficiency and educational level; 2) the perceived needs of postgraduate students in academic context and 3) the perceived needs of the future of students in the occupational context. All the items in the questionnaires were in Likert-scale form within the range of not important, fairly important, just important and very important.

The questionnaire used in this study was originally developed in three different versions to be used with the instructors, the undergraduate students, and the postgraduate students of three faculties in Medical University of Tehran and related hospitals. The questionnaires were piloted in the second semester of the academic year 2013. The reliability of the questionnaire according to the present context and situation was calculated by piloting the questionnaire with a population of 15 numbers from the Tehran Medical Sciences University. The participants gave the questionnaires during their final exam and gave enough time to complete them. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sub sample of the participants. Interviews were held with randomly selected 30 undergraduate students and 30 postgraduate students and 30 Instructors at Tehran University of Medical Sciences. Semi-structured interviews lasted 45-60 minutes, conducted in order to elicit their perception about language skills at the university. Interview questions addressed what they thought about academic listening, writing, requirements for their writing, how they get about writing a paper, how they solved their writing difficulties and so on. Questions asked were not in a fixed order, nor were they asked by repeating exact phrasing for each question. They were asked and answered in Persian, the participants' mother tongue. All interview data was later transcribed into English, with each participant given a pseudonym. The interviews were semi-structured and the main theme of the questions based on the items in the questionnaire in order to elaborate on some of the issues and gather some supportive data to clarify the already mentioned aspects in the questionnaire. The interview participants were 30 numbers in each group (Instructors, postgraduate students, Undergraduate students). The main goal in interviewing the graduate students was to find out which areas of the English language skills they are in need of more, hence predicting the most necessary subject matters to be included in the syllabus of undergraduate ESP courses. During the interviews, the participants could have the questionnaire with themselves which help them elaborate on their ideas which they had already expressed in the questionnaire. The questions of the interview were the required skills and knowledge of students about language skills.

### ***Questionnaire Development***

The following steps were taken to the development of the questionnaires: The questionnaire used in this study was the adaptation and modified version of one used by Farhady (2007). A few items from the original study were deleted and some background questions were added to obtain more information about the participants. To ensure the appropriateness and comprehensibility of the questionnaire items, four instructors and four postgraduate students were consulted. The questionnaires were piloted in the second semester of the academic year 2013. The reliability of the questionnaire according to the present context and situation was estimated after piloting the questionnaire within a population of 20 students. Then, the items were translated into Farsi. After checking the translation for accuracy, they were evaluated by 20 students attending their ESP classes at Tehran Medical Sciences University and some of their opinions were considered while preparing the last draft in Farsi. A total of 320 undergraduate students and 30 postgraduate students and 20 instructors majoring in TUMS were selected through purposive sampling. The students were taking ESP as a compulsory course during their university studies at Tehran university of Medical Sciences. The questionnaires were used in forms of three groups of participants: one for the instructors, another for undergraduate students and the other for the postgraduate students of the Medical University of Tehran.

### ***Interviews***

The interviews asked students about the language skills needs about ESP course and their teachers' attitudes. To search for the rival explanation, interviews were performed with randomly selected instructors, as well. They were asked about English level of students and language skills at university and vocational future. The students from the Medical University of Tehran list were called individually in an attempt to obtain the permission to conduct in-person interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with a sub sample of the participants. The interview participants were 10 that were randomly selected from each of the three levels at the Medical University of Tehran (i.e., Instructors, postgraduate students, and undergraduate students) total 30 participants. These Semi-structured interviews, each lasting 45-60 minutes, were conducted in order to elicit their perceptions about language skills at the university levels. The constituting questions addressed what they thought about academic listening, writing, requirements for their writing, how they get about writing a paper, how they solve their writing difficulties and so on. The questions asked were not arranged in a fixed order, nor were the students asked through repeating exact phrasing for each question. The questions were asked and answered in Persian, the participants' mother tongue. The main theme of the interview questions was developed on the basis of the questionnaire items in order to elaborate on some of the issues raised in such quantitative data, also to gather supportive data that can clarify the already mentioned aspects in the questionnaire. All interview data were then later transcribed into English, with each participant given a pseudonym. Both the students from the TUMS list as well as their instructors were called individually in an attempt to receive their consents and permission to conduct in-person interviews.

### ***Procedures***

The first questionnaire was distributed among 20 university instructors at Tehran University Medical sciences and second questionnaire was distributed among 30 postgraduate students at Tehran university medical science and the third questionnaire developed to probe the language skills of the subjects was distributed among 320 undergraduate students at Tehran Medical Sciences University who made copies. The researcher called the officials at the hospitals and explained to them the nature of the study and informed them that his assistant would hand them the questionnaires. When the assistant went to each selected hospital, he also explained orally to the heads of Human Resources at each hospital the nature of the study. The cover page of the questionnaire also contained written explanation about the nature of the study. The researcher and the assistant made daily follow up phone calls to each hospital in order to ensure the maximum possible response rate. As mentioned, there were over 320 undergraduate students, 20 university instructors and 30 postgraduate students participating in this study. All the undergraduate students studied at Tehran University medical science consisted of different proficiency levels. This variance was due to the fact some of the undergraduate students might had English courses apart from the ones needed for university. This discrepancy was useful, because in this way researcher could had a collection of ideas from different viewpoints around the same subject. In TUMS all the students from all language proficiency levels had to pass the same course, therefore, there might be sharply different attitudes about the course among the students. TUMS has been placed among the best universities in Iran; to enter this university, the candidates passed the national university entrance exam with the highest rankings possible.

### ***Data analysis***

The data obtained through the data collection phase were of two distinctly different types; one was the numerical data gathered via the questionnaire and the other one was the qualitative data gathered during the interviews. Analyzing the data of these two sources requires different analysis approaches. The obtained data from the questionnaires were analyzed through a variety of descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations since the nature of this part of study was descriptive. Comparisons across the groups were then made through inferential statistics such as T-Tests. All the data obtained from the quantitative phase were analyzed using SPSS software. Analyzing the qualitative data was a time-consuming task which required plenty hours of close scrutiny. Content analysis was followed in order to extract the underlying themes of the datasets produced by the interviewees. In this way, first the categories of data were developed from the interviews transcriptions and notes and then each category was further analyzed to determine major themes. Open and selective codings were thus used as the major procedures for data analysis.

## **RESULTS**

The main objective of the questionnaire was to find out about the participants' perception of the purpose of English language future communicative needs of Tehran Medical Sciences University students in medical fields. Information about the four skills was important to compare and contrast their usage in the medical field. The data showed in total, 55 % of participants in the study were females and 45 % were males.

### ***The findings of the Research Questions***

#### ***Questionnaire Analysis***

Q1: What are the language needs of the medical students of TUMS in the undergraduate level in terms of skills and language areas?

*Table 1: One-Sample Test (Instructors' views)*

	Test Value = 2.5	
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		Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
Groups	var							Lower Upper
Instructors (20 samples)	Language skills requirement(current)	3.27	0.53	6.49	19	.000	.7687	.5211 1.0164
	educational skills(current)	2.90	0.56	3.21	19	.005	.4000	.1396 .6604
	Language skills requirement(future career)	3.19	0.61	5.00	19	.000	.6875	.4000 .9750
	Specialized skills(future career)	3.18	0.52	5.77	19	.000	.6767	.4314 .9220
	Reading and Writing Text spices(During the study)	2.85	0.77	2.03	19	.056	.3500	-.0092 .7092
	Reading and Writing Text spices(future career)	3.04	0.85	2.85	19	.010	.5444	.1458 .9431

The data on Table 1 showed t-test on Instructors' views. Since t-test calculated for all components in comparison with the t-test table (1.96) is larger. Therefore, it can be concluded with 95% confident level Instructors mean views on language needs students studying the language skills they learn, assuming the mean ( 2.5), there are significant differences( $p < 0/05$ ).

*Table 2: One-Sample Test (Postgraduate Students views)*

		Test Value = 2.5							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	T	f	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Groups								Lower	Upper
Postgraduate Students (30 samples)	Language skills requirement (In studying)	1.86	0.69	-5.111	9	.000	-0.64	-0.90	-0.38
	Specialized skills	1.78	0.67	-5.874	9	.000	-0.72	-0.98	-0.47
	Relationship with cases (Except in special field)	2.03	0.54	-4.847	9	.000	-0.48	-0.68	-0.27
	Language skills importance (in career situation)	2.82	0.73	2.375	9	.024	0.32	0.04	0.59
	Specialized skills importance(in career situation)	2.66	0.68	1.282	9	.210	0.16	-0.10	0.42

The data on Table 2 showed the results of the test statistics on Postgraduate Students views. Since test statistics calculated for all components in comparison with the test statistics table (1/96) is larger. Therefore, it can be concluded with 95% confident level Postgraduate Students mean views on language needs students studying the language skills they learn, assuming the mean ( 2/5), there are significant differences( $p < 0/05$ ).

Table 3: One-Sample Test (Undergraduate students' views)

		Test Value = 2.5							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95 Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Groups								Lower	Upper
Undergraduate students (320 samples)	Individual assessment of English language ability	2.62	0.55	3.992	319	.000	.1228	.0623	.1833
	Language skills importance	3.02	0.64	14.622	319	.000	.5227	.4523	.5930
	Specialized skills importance	2.92	0.70	10.793	318	.000	.4207	.3440	.4974
	Language skills importance (in career situation)	3.06	0.63	16.019	318	.000	.5631	.4939	.6322
	Specialized skills(future career)	2.97	0.64	12.896	318	.000	.4653	.3943	.5363

The data on Table 3 showed the results of test statistics on Undergraduate students' views. Since test statistics calculated for all components in comparison with the t-test table (1.96) is larger. Therefore, it can be concluded with 95% confident Undergraduate Students mean views on language needs students studying the language skills they learn, assuming the mean (2.5), there are significant differences( $p < 0.05$ ).

Q2: Do the current ESP courses offered at this university meet the needs of the students in the higher levels of education?

Table 4: Frequency distribution answers of Instructors to Medical students need language skills (career future)

Improving Language skills	Not important		fairly important		just important		very important	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1. Listening and comprehension(general)	1	5.0	2	10.0	8	40.0	9	45.0
2. Listening and comprehension(proficiency)	2	10.0	4	20.0	7	35.0	7	35.0
3. Speaking (general)	1	5.6	1	5.6	10	55.6	6	33.3
4. Speaking(proficiency)	1	5.6			6	33.3	11	61.1
5. Reading and comprehension(general)			4	20.0	7	35.0	9	45.0
6. Reading and comprehension(proficiency)			3	15.0	7	35.0	10	50.0
7. Technical Writing (general)			2	10.0	9	45.0	9	45.0
8. Technical Writing(proficiency)			2	10.0	9	45.0	9	45.0
MEAN(Percent)		3.28		11.33		40.49		44.93

The data on table 4 revealed that 44.93% of the Instructors submitted that the Improving Language Skills were very important needs of Students in their career future; 40.49% was of the view that Improving Language Skills were just important items; 11.33% of the Instructors said that Improving Language Skills were fairly important while; 3.28% of the Instructors claimed that they were not important. This result indicated that more than 84% of the Instructors agreed that Improving Language Skills were high needs of Medical Students in their career future



*Table 5: Frequency distribution answers of Instructors to specialized skills (career future)*

Improving specialized skills	Not important		fairly important		just important		very important	
	Fr equenc y	Percent	Freq uenc y	Percent	Freq uenc y	Percent	Frequ ency	Percent
9. Web Search			1	5.0	11	55.0	8	40.0
10 . comprehension graphs and tables			3	15.0	7	35.0	10	50.0
11. Taking notes from texts			3	15.0	10	50.0	7	35.0
12. Lecture notes			1	5.0	10	50.0	9	45.0
13. Summary writing			3	15.0	9	45.0	8	40.0
14. Translation			5	25.0	9	45.0	6	30.0
15. Writing Scientific Articles			2	10.0	9	45.0	9	45.0
16. Technical Letter writing	1	5.0	2	10.0	9	45.0	8	40.0
17. Preparation of career reports			2	10.0	11	55.0	7	35.0
18. Resume Preparation			5	25.0	5	25.0	10	50.0
19. comprehension film and tape	1	5.0	5	25.0	5	25.0	9	45.0
20. Preparing research proposals	1	5.0	3	15.0	7	35.0	9	45.0
21. Preparation of the Bulletin catalog and brochure etc	1	5.0	10	50.0	5	25.0	4	20.0
22. Marketing and Commercial Affairs			6	30.0	8	40.0	6	30.0
23. Papers presented at conferences	1	5.0	3	15.0	9	45.0	7	35.0
<b>MEAN(Percent)</b>		<b>1.67</b>		<b>18.00</b>		<b>41.33</b>		<b>39.00</b>

The data on Table 5 revealed that 39.00% of the Instructors submitted that Improving specialized skills were very important needs of students in their career future; 41.33% was of the view that improving specialized skills was just important items; 18.00% of the Instructors said that Improving Language Skills was fairly important while; 1.67% of the Instructors claimed that they were not important. This result indicated that more than 80% of the Instructors agreed that Improving specialized skills were high needs of Medical Students in their career future.

Q3: Do these courses meet the needs of the students' vocational future?

*Table 6: Frequency distribution of Postgraduate students to language skills importance (Career and Academic Future)*

	Not important		fairly important		just important		very important	
	Frequ ency	Perc ent	Frequ ency	Perce nt	Frequ ency	Perce nt	Frequ ency	Perce nt
1. Listening and comprehension(general)	10	3.1	58	18.2	162	50.9	88	27.7
2. Listening and comprehension(proficiency)	12	3.8	44	13.8	148	46.4	115	36.1
3. Speaking (general)	13	4.1	54	17.1	139	44.0	110	34.8
4. Speaking(proficiency)	17	5.4	47	14.8	152	47.9	101	31.9
5. Reading and comprehension(general)	10	3.1	41	12.9	165	51.7	103	32.3
6. Reading and comprehension(proficiency)	10	3.2	32	10.1	148	46.7	127	40.1
7. Writing (general)	11	3.5	81	25.6	150	47.3	75	23.7
8. Writing(proficiency)	18	5.7	61	19.2	140	44.2	98	30.9
<b>MEAN(Percent)</b>		3.99		16.46		47.39		32.1
							9	

The data on Table 6 revealed that 32.19% of Postgraduate students submitted that Improving Language skills were very important needs of Students in their career and academic future; 47.39% was of the view that Improving specialized skills were just important items; 16.46% of Postgraduate students said that Improving Language Skills were fairly important while; 3.99% of Postgraduate students claimed that they were not important. This result indicated that more than 79% of Postgraduate students agreed that Improving Language skills were high needs of Medical Students in their career and academic future.

Table 7: Frequency distribution of Postgraduate students to specialized skills importance (Career and Academic Future)

specialized skills (Career and Academic Future)	Not important		fairly important		just important		very important	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
9. Web Search	5	1.6	35	11.0	165	51.7	114	35.7
10. comprehension graphs and tables	9	2.8	63	19.8	156	49.1	90	28.3
11. Taking notes from texts	13	4.1	53	16.6	156	48.9	97	30.4
12. Lecture notes	10	3.1	79	24.8	135	42.5	94	29.6
13. Summary writing	17	5.4	70	22.1	140	44.2	90	28.4
14. Translation	12	3.8	45	14.2	148	46.7	112	35.3
15. Writing Scientific Articles	15	4.7	49	15.4	139	43.6	116	36.4
16. Technical Letter writing	15	4.7	52	16.4	139	43.7	112	35.2
17. Preparation of career reports	21	7.4	65	22.9	119	41.9	79	27.8
18. Resume Preparation	18	5.8	53	16.9	141	45.0	101	32.3
19. comprehension film and tape	11	3.5	60	19.0	160	50.8	84	26.7
20. Preparing research proposals	21	6.7	60	19.2	142	45.4	90	28.8
21. Preparation of the Bulletin catalog and brochure etc	28	8.8	89	28.1	124	39.1	76	24.0
22. Marketing and Commercial Affairs	37	11.7	96	30.4	110	34.8	73	23.1
23. Papers presented at conferences	23	7.3	48	15.1	118	37.2	128	40.4
MEAN(Percent)		5.43		19.46		44.31		30.83

The data on Table 7 revealed that 30.83% of Postgraduate students submitted that specialized skills were very important needs of Students in their career and academic future; 44.31% was of the view that Improving specialized skills were just important items; 19.46% of Postgraduate students said that Improving Language Skills were fairly important while; 5.43% of Postgraduate students claimed that they were not important. This result indicated that more than 74% of Postgraduate students agreed that Improving Language skills were high needs of Medical Students in their career and academic future.

*Table 8: Comparison of the frequency responses and the percentage of Instructors, Postgraduate Students and Undergraduate Students required Skills of Medical Students at university and vocational status*

Groups	Required Skills of Medical Students	Not important	fairly important	just important	very important
<i>Instructors</i>	Improving Language skills(current)	2.50	13.75	38.13	45.63
	Improving Academic Needs(current)	15.71	12.21	36.09	35.97
	Improving Language skills(Career future )	3.28	11.33	40.49	44.93
	Improving Specialized skills(Career future )	1.67	18.00	41.33	39.00
<i>Postgraduate Students</i>	Improving Language skills(at University)	42.33	33.44	19.65	4.59
	Improving Academic Needs (at University)	41.53	39.66	15.93	2.91
	Improving Language skills(job status)	10.03	23.91	39.29	26.76
	Improving Specialized skills( job status)	12.69	34.61	33.62	19.05
<i>Undergraduate Students</i>	Improving Language skills	5.16	17.61	45.66	31.56
	Improving Academic Needs	6.01	22.69	44.99	26.27
	Improving Language skills ( career future )	3.99	16.46	47.39	32.19
	Improving Academic Needs (Career and Academic Future)	5.43	19.46	44.31	30.83

The data on Table 8 are analyzed in discussion section.

## DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing the data, the needs of the Postgraduate Students and Undergraduate Students were determined as well as the extent of the relationship among these needs and their Instructors' perception of them. This study set out to explore Medical students' needs of English. Based on Perceived importance of required second language skills of medical students among university Instructors, Postgraduate students and Undergraduate students, when compared in terms of frequency responses varies considerably. The most marked difference among the three groups of raters ( Instructors, Postgraduate students and Undergraduate student is due to the Postgraduate students' ratings. Postgraduate students rated current language skills, current academic skills as unimportant, future academic skills as important, and future career skills as moderately important. As such, the post graduate students group can be seen to diverge completely from ratings given by Instructors and Undergraduate students, in the current language and academic skills categories, and to a lesser degree as it relates to future career and academic skills. The postgraduate students marked Language and specialized skills as equally important for success in their current academic studies and their future jobs. The chance to improve certain language skills and specialized skills were a top priority for all postgraduate students. They had a marked preference for being trained on issues involving 'Language skills 'and specialized skills' in career situation. Language skills and specialized skills importance were also top priority for all Undergraduate students. Required Skills of Medical Students by Instructors marked Improving Language skills (current) and career future and Improving Academic Needs (current) as top priority. In contrasts, the postgraduate students group can be seen to diverge completely from ratings given by Instructors and Undergraduate students, in the current language and academic skills categories, and to a lesser degree as it relates to future career and academic skills. Also postgraduate students' interviews expressed fully that the role of Instructor is to draw on students' knowledge of the content to generate communication in the classroom and to help students develop academic language skills which are useful in the study of their disciplines rather than to help them acquire knowledge of their subjects. Postgraduate students' interviews also revealed that the Instructors' objective is to help learners use English effectively in the study of their major disciplines in medical sciences. The discipline-based English books should be developed with a future perspective and with demonstrative practical functions for vocational careers. The Postgraduate Students' assessments of the most difficult specialized skills implies the necessity of directing attentions to those areas in which Medical students have more problems in career and academic future. Including Translation, Writing Scientific Articles, Technical Letter writing may be one solution to this problem. In general all Postgraduate Students were disagreeing on language lessons were learned and to improve further steps should be taken to achieve

a high level language. While the degree of importance was lower for undergraduate students group; nonetheless, undergraduate students basically rated all four kinds of skills (current language skills, current academic skills, future academic skills, and future career skills) as moderately important, just like the Instructor group, albeit, as just stated, to a lesser degree. This implies the necessity of making the ESP Medical students conscious of the part language and specialized skills may play in their career achievements. The results also indicated that, according to Undergraduate students' perceptions, they need knowledge of language in their future career, more than half of the Undergraduate Students agreed that Improving Language skills and Improving Academic Needs were high needs of Medical Students at university, the most important academic English language skill for the Undergraduate students' study is web search, followed by Writing Scientific Articles, and then Translation. It also has an implication for course designers or authors to reconsider the current lack of emphasis on the development of Improving Language and academic skills. Some insights into postgraduates' students, undergraduate students and Instructors' expectations and needs were provided through interviews, which complemented the findings of the questionnaires.

The results of Instructors' interviews indicated that Instructors regarded English language as important in medical fields because science is changing and developing and English is the lingua franca of medical sciences. The results of Undergraduate Students' interviews revealed that the general English books courses were dissatisfied. Nearly all English classes are Instructor-led tutorials in which Undergraduate students are passive. This implies reconsidering the kinds of teaching approaches used in such classes. To sum up, the current study explored Instructors, Postgraduate Students and Undergraduate Students' perceptions about the importance and use of English language skills for the students' academic and career needs in the context of teaching English. Since the Instructors' views did not match the Postgraduate student's self-perceptions of their language abilities, need for doing further research in a wider scope with a larger population is felt in order to investigate the match between Instructors and subjects' views regarding the difficulty of different aspects of language for ESP students. This may enable course designers or material developers to focus their attentions more on those aspects of the language with which the subjects have more problems.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The results of the current study might be treated with circumspection with regard to the following de(limitations): The following limitations might somehow influence the values of the reliability, validity and correlation coefficients of the tests, and the generalizable extent of the results of the research to other situations and participants.

1. The size of the statistical population of this study (20 university Instructors and 30 Postgraduate Students participating in this study except Undergraduate Students) among Instructors and Postgraduate Students are too small to generalize the findings.
2. The effect of the participants' gender on the results of the research has been ignored.
3. There were not enough sources regarding the issues such as language skills ,academic skills and Specialized skills in career and Academic Future .

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**INVESTIGATING THE WORD ASSOCIATION BEHAVIOR OF PERSIAN SPEAKERS: THE CASE OF  
IRANIAN CHILDREN AND ADULTS**

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**ABSTRACT**

Throughout the years, word association methods have established themselves as valuable resources for gaining knowledge in various domains of research. This study, therefore, was an attempt to compare and contrast the word association behavior of children and adults in Persian language. To this end, 24 four to six-year-old children recruited from a day care center and 23 undergraduates studying at an institute of higher education in Shiraz, Iran were given a single-response free word association test. The analysis of the responses to the word association test revealed that both age groups had an inclination towards generating syntagmatic responses, and the concrete stimulus words elicited more syntagmatic responses than the abstract words; Moreover, in all word class types under scrutiny (e.g., nouns, adjectives, and verbs), syntagmatic responses outnumbered the other three types of responses. The findings of this study bring into question the generality of the syntagmatic/paradigmatic shift phenomenon for a language like Persian.

**KEYWORDS:** word association, syntagmatic responses, paradigmatic responses, free word association task

**INTRODUCTION**

Word associations, initially used for investigation of human thought and personality (Koff, 1965), are renowned from the field of psychology (Wettler, Rapp, & Feber, 1993, cited in Rapp, 2002). In essence, knowledge about words and word associations (i.e., their relationship to one another) is crucial to various domains of research.

The significance of word association methods in experimental psychology is well documented. Computer-based psychological research has taken advantage of word association methods in the creation and investigation of word association networks (De Deyne & Storms, 2008), semantic networks (De Deyne, Navarro, & Storms, 2012), knowledge organization systems (Peters & Weller, 2008), and other related studies (Altarriba, Bauer, & Benvenuto, 1999; Rapp, 2002; Eakin, 2010).

Word associations have also been used in the study of deaf children (Frick, 1966), mental retardates (Keilman & Moran, 1967), and, recently, children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Language Impairment (McGregor et al., 2012).

These are not the only disciplines that have shown a keen interest in word association methods. Cognitive psychology, psycholinguistics, and applied linguistics are disciplines that have found word association tests quite useful in gaining insights into the very nature of human cognitive system and semantic knowledge. The sizable number of word association studies conducted in the above-mentioned disciplines does not allow us to list them all here; however, a few lines of research pertinent to the current study are going to be presented below after summarizing the rudiments that seem necessary for a better understanding of the discussion that follows.

Wolter (2001) identified three categories of word associations: paradigmatic, syntagmatic, and phonological or 'clang' responses" (Khazaeenezhad & Alibabae, 2013, p. 108). Paradigmatic responses, which reflect within-category associations (e.g., dog- cat), are the same part-of-speech as the stimulus word; therefore, we can substitute one of the two words in the association for the other one without affecting the grammaticality of the sentence (Rapp,

2002). Syntagmatic responses, on the other hand, show thematic or within-event associations (e.g., dog-bone) and are not necessarily the same part-of-speech as the prompt word. Syntagmatic responses often appear within a phrase or in a syntactic structure (Rapp, 2002; Rahimi & Haghighi, 2009). Phonological responses, also called clang responses are "semantically unrelated but similar-sounding words" (Khazaenezhad & Alibabae, *ibid*). Clang responses also include orthographical responses, which are associations based on the spelling or physical form of the word. McCarthy (1990), as cited in Rahimi and Haghighi (2009), speaks of another type of responses called encyclopedic responses, which have to do with the respondent's personal experience or knowledge about a given word.

It is evident from earlier studies (Woodrow & Lowell, 1916; Brown & Berko, 1960; Ervin, 1961) that the word association responses of children differ consistently from the association responses of adults. Children have shown a general inclination towards syntagmatic responses, while adults are more likely to produce paradigmatic responses. This developmental change within word association responses has come to be known as the syntagmatic-paradigmatic (S-P) shift. It is assumed that the shift is largely due to schooling and an increasing mental age (Cronin et al., 1985).

Some scholars conceive of the differences in the associative responses of children and adults as being semantic in nature (Brown & Berko, 1960). According to these scholars, "children are said to give more 'contiguity' responses and more 'whole-part' responses while adults are said to give more 'coordinate', 'contrast', and 'similarity' responses (Brown & Berko, 1960, p. 2). In addition to these differences, children's associations are heterogeneous-by-part-of-speech, yet adults' associative responses are homogeneous-by-part-of-speech (Brown & Berko, 1960).

The present study, therefore, aims at investigating the word association behavior among Iranian children and adults in order to come up with the differences that exist between the two populations in the type of associative responses.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The word association studies carried out to date have been conducted, for the most part, in English or other European languages. It is, therefore, of great interest to investigate the word association behavior in a language structurally and culturally different from languages already studied (Sharp & Cole, 1972). Moreover, the very few studies conducted on this issue in Iran have focused solely on Iranian undergraduate EFL learners (Rahimi & Haghighi, 2009; Mohammadi, Alavinia, & Pouyan, 2012; Khazaenezhad & Alibabae, 2013). No published studies have been reported on word association behavior among young children in Iran as compared with adults; consequently, this study is the first one to be conducted on both children and adults in Iran, and it is of particular significance as a developmental study.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The present study was an attempt to seek answers to the following research questions:

- 1) Are there any differences between the associative responses of children and adults in Persian language?
- 2) Does concreteness affect the type of elicited responses?
- 3) Do different word class forms (nouns, verbs, and adjectives) elicit different response types?
- 4) Is the syntagmatic/paradigmatic shift phenomenon generalizable to the Persian language?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

The participants for this study were 24 four to six-year-old children (13 girls, and 11 boys) recruited from Bachehaye Emrooz Day-care Center located in a middle-class residence area of Shiraz, Iran, and 23 freshmen (18 females, and 5 males) studying at Zand Institute of Higher Education. The freshmen, aging from 18 to 46, were in the second semester of their studies.

The gender variable was not controlled for the present study owing to the fact that previous studies had not shown any significant differences in the response behavior of male and female participants. Among children of different age groups, this study showed particular interest in the investigation of four to six-year-olds due to the fact that according to Lenneberg (1964), as cited in Keilman and Moran (1967, p. 42), "in the normal child, language is said to be essentially established by the age of four".

### ***Instrumentation***

Free word association tests have proved to be "the most direct and immediate reflection of human understanding behind the linguistic forms or semantic meanings" (Yuping, 2010, p. 75); in addition, they are time efficient and easy to administer.

Therefore, a single-response free word association test was adopted for the present study, wherein the participants are generally asked to respond to every stimulus word presented to them with the first word coming to mind.

The researchers have chosen to administer a twelve-item word association test. The stimulus words for the test were taken from children's association frequency tables formulated by Woodrow and Lowell (1916). One advantage of Woodrow and Lowell's stimulus list is that 90 of its stimuli were taken from Kent and Rosanoff's (1910) adult frequency tables; therefore, it is appropriate for both age groups specified in this study as it has taken into consideration both children and adult populations. Besides, it has been applied in earlier studies yielding distinctive differences between the associative responses of children and adults.

The stimulus words selected for the present study belong to three different word class forms (nouns, verbs, and adjectives) and two concreteness categories (concrete and abstract). The stimuli appeared in a constant order for all the participants. Table 1 represents the stimulus words and the order in which they were presented.

*Table 1: Stimulus words classified by concreteness and word class*

Stimulus Word	Concreteness	Word Class
table	Concrete	noun
laugh	concrete	verb
red	concrete	adjective
mountain	concrete	noun
eat	concrete	verb
black	concrete	adjective
illness	abstract	noun
dream	abstract	verb
thirsty	abstract	adjective
anger	abstract	noun
wish	abstract	verb
beautiful	abstract	adjective

### ***Procedure***

For children, the test was administered in the form of an interview, in which the first author acted as both the interviewer and the experimenter. The children were interviewed individually outside their classroom in the corridor. Prior to the interview, the interviewer gave each individual a set of oral instructions in Persian, the English translation of which is as follows: "we are going to play a game. I am going to show you 12 picture cards one at a time. Look at each card and tell me the first word that you think of". After providing two examples, as practice words, and ensuring that the participants have understood the game, the interviewer immediately started the test. The responses for each child were recorded by the interviewer on separate response sheets. The interview time was ten minutes per person, and the picture cards were presented in a constant order for all the children.

As for the adult participants, the written-written method of data collection for word association tests (Wolter, 2001, cited in Rahimi & Haghighi, 2009) was adopted. The adult participants were tested in their classroom. They were informed that they were taking part in a study. After giving oral instructions in Persian, the participants were provided with a sheet of paper with written instructions on the top and a list of 12 stimulus words with slots to provide the answers. The participants were asked to jot down the first word that came to mind for each stimulus word. The participants were told not to contemplate deeply or too long on the stimulus words or not to go back to previous stimuli. Also, they were asked not to discuss the responses with their classmates. The time allotted for the

test was approximately ten minutes.

### **Data Analysis**

For the sake of data encoding, the elicited responses were classified into association types based upon traditional models of word association tests. Therefore, the associative responses in this study were classified into four types: paradigmatic responses, syntagmatic responses, clang-other type responses, and encyclopedic responses.

Paradigmatic responses belong to the same word class as the stimulus word and can be further classified into synonymy (x has the same meaning as y, e.g., happy-glad), antonymy (x is the opposite of y in meaning, e.g., cold-hot), hyponymy or subordination (x is a kind of y, e.g., dog-pet), hypernymy or superordination (x incorporates y as one of its kind, e.g., pet-dog), co-hyponymy or coordination (x and y are kinds of z, e.g., cat-dog), and meronymy (x is part of y, e.g., kitchen-house).

Syntagmatic responses, which bear a collocational or sequential relationship with the stimulus word, are, in turn, classified into lexical, grammatical, and restricted collocations. In lexical collocations, lexical items play a significant role in forming repeated patterns. Grammatical collocations, on the other hand, rely on syntactic structures such as prepositional or verb particles (e.g., buckle up), and restricted collocations are lexico-grammatically restricted in a way that very few words can co-occur with them (e.g., auburn is only used to describe hair color).

In clang responses, associations are often made based on the form of the word rather than its meaning. Clang responses are of two types: phonological (associations made based on sound play or rhymes, e.g., think-thank, up-cup), and orthographic (associations based on the spelling or the physical appearance of the word, e.g., there-three, beat-beet). On the other hand, other-type responses incorporate unrelated responses, blank and 'I don't know' responses, anecdotal responses, and responses that are repetition of the prompt word.

Finally, encyclopedic responses are associated with one's personal knowledge about the word. For instance, if the word *fire* is elicited in response to the stimulus word *disaster* just because the respondent reminds his/her house catching fire as a child, the response can be considered as encyclopedic (Pigott, 2006).

However, classification of the elicited responses into paradigmatic/syntagmatic types is more complicated than it might appear at first glance as we often encounter ambiguous responses and we have no further access to the participants to ask for clarification. Therefore, in order to maintain consistency in our paradigmatic/syntagmatic classification, the elicited responses were classified as paradigmatic if their lexical class was the same as the stimulus word and as syntagmatic if their lexical class was different, yet the responses were classified as syntagmatic when they could form a syntactic string with the stimulus word (e.g., telegraph office).

In addition, the following lemmatizations were made to keep consistency in classification:

- 1) Inflected forms were regarded as the repetition of the stimulus word and were, therefore, classified as clang-other type responses.
- 2) Derived forms (e.g., dwell-dweller) were regarded as words separate from the stimulus word rather than the repetition of the stimulus word.
- 3) In case of multiple responses, only the first response was considered and others were excluded.
- 4) In multi-word responses, which appear in the form of phrases, only the head word was taken into consideration (e.g., 'single males' was counted as *males*).

After classifying the elicited responses, the frequency of each association type was calculated. Chi-square analysis was also administered to determine whether the observed differences between the associative response types were statistically significant at .05 probability level ( $P < .05$ ). The data were further analyzed in terms of stimulus words' quality (concreteness vs. abstractness) and word class forms (nouns, verbs, and adjectives), the results of which were tabulated.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 2: Frequency of association responses as a function of age

Association Age	Syntagmatic			Paradigmatic						Encyclopedic	Clang					
	L	G	R	S	A	HO	HE	M	C		P	O	B	U	RE	AN
Children	128	0	0	3	7	1	0	1	38	78	0	0	9	15	2	6
Adults	155	0	0	6	2	3	1	2	21	82	0	0	1	2	1	0

L: Lexical collocation  
G: Grammatical collocation  
R: Restricted collocation  
S: Synonymy  
A: Antonymy  
HO: Hyponymy  
HE: Hypernymy  
M: Metonymy  
C: Coordination  
P: Phonological association  
O: Orthographic association  
B: Blank response  
U: Unrelated response  
R: Repetition  
A: Anecdotal

As Table 2 demonstrates, for both children and adults, a consistent pattern was detected for all the four association response types. In both age groups, syntagmatic responses had the highest frequency of occurrence (adults: 155, children: 128), encyclopedic responses had the second highest frequency of occurrence (adults: 82, children: 78), paradigmatic responses came third (adults: 35, children: 50), and clang-other type responses had the lowest frequency of occurrence (adults: 4, children: 32). The Chi-square test revealed that the significance for *P* value was less than .05 ( $P < .05$ ), indicating that the differences in the frequency of association responses of the children and adults were statistically significant (see Table 3).

Table 3: Chi-Square Tests for association responses as a function of age

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26.858 <sup>a</sup>	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	29.876	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.998	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	564		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 17.62.

It follows from Table 2 that, among the syntagmatic responses, all the elicited responses belonged to the category of lexical collocations, yet there were no instances of grammatical or restricted collocations. This might be justified in two ways: first, grammatical collocations and particularly restricted collocations are not very frequent in the Persian language; second, the particular choice of stimulus words in this study might have elicited certain types of association responses in preference to others. As demonstrated in Table 2, among the paradigmatic responses, coordination was dominant in both age groups (adults: 21, children: 38). This is in accordance with Atchinson's (2003) view, as cited in Rahimi & Haghighi's (2009), that coordination has proved to be the commonest type of pragmatic response. As for the clang-other type responses, there were no instances of phonological associations observed. This is, of course, in line with Rahimi & Haghighi's (2009) view who maintain that phonological responses are not very frequent. Among the elicited responses, orthographic associations were not observed either. This is probably due to the very nature of the oral-written method of test administration often adopted for children in which orthographic responses are less activated in the absence of visual stimuli (Rahimi & Haghighi, 2009). However, unrelated responses were more frequent than their counterparts in both age groups (adults: 2, children: 15). (see Table 2).

Table 4: Frequency of association responses based on stimulus word class and quality

	Quality		Word Class		
	Concrete	Abstract	Noun	Adjective	Verb

	Ch	A	Total	Ch	A	Total	Ch	A	Total	Ch	A	Total	Ch	A	Total
<b>Syntagmatic</b>	74	84	158	54	71	125	46	58	104	43	53	96	37	48	85
<b>Paradigmatic</b>	29	11	40	21	24	45	17	13	30	22	11	33	13	11	24
<b>Encyclopedic</b>	21	40	61	57	42	99	23	18	41	21	37	58	36	28	64
<b>Clang</b>	17	2	19	15	2	17	13	3	16	9	0	9	11	0	11

As far as the stimulus word quality (abstractness/concreteness) is concerned, the analysis of responses revealed that concrete words elicited more syntagmatic responses (adults: 84, children: 74) than did abstract words (adults: 71, children: 54). This is while abstract words elicited more paradigmatic responses (adults: 24, children: 21) than concrete words (see Table 4). The result from the Chi-square test indicated a significance difference in the response types elicited by concrete vs. abstract stimuli (see Table 5 below).

Table 5: Chi-Square Tests for association responses based on stimulus word quality

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	13.167a	3	.004
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	13.261	3	.004
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	7.863	1	.005
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>	564		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 17.74.

Finally, the elicited responses were analyzed from the stimulus word class perspective (nouns, adjectives, verbs) in order to determine if there are any significant differences in the response frequencies. The results of the analysis revealed that the nouns elicited the highest number of syntagmatic responses, followed by the adjectives, followed by the verbs in both children and adults (see Table 4). However, the Chi-square test suggested that the differences in the frequency of the responses elicited by the stimuli belonging to different word class families were not statistically significant ( $P > .05$ ), implying that the observed differences might be due to chance alone (see Table 6).

Table 6: Chi-Square Tests for association responses based on stimulus word class

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	10.450 <sup>a</sup>	6	.107
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	10.585	6	.102
<b>Linear-by-Linear Association</b>	.007	1	.935
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>	571		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 11.60.

These findings, together, highlight that, in Persian language, syntagmatic associations take priority over paradigmatic ones, the very fact which assumes the possibility for the existence of a language-specific acquisition route for word association knowledge that is typical of Persian speakers and a highly specified organizational pattern for their mental lexicon. However, further studies are required for a better understanding of the hidden depths of this consistency in the elicited responses. Moreover, a closer investigation of the developmental changes in the type of association responses from childhood to adulthood sounds necessary. A comparison of association responses elicited from speakers of other languages could be of great help in this regard (Yuping, 2010).

## CONCLUSION

The present study aimed at exploring the differences in the word association responses of Iranian children and adults and the influence of the stimulus word class and quality (concreteness/abstractness) on the elicitation and type of association responses. To this end, four research questions were posed.

In reference to the first research question, it must be pointed out that despite the existence of statistically significant differences in the frequency of children and adults' responses, both age groups are likely to follow a consistent pattern in their word association behavior in Persian, i.e., syntagmatic responses > encyclopedic responses > paradigmatic responses > clang-other type responses. This general tendency towards syntagmatic responses is in line with Rahimi and Haghighi's (2009) conclusion that Iranian students tend to respond syntagmatically to word association tests.

In response to the second and third research questions, it is worth mentioning that all the word quality and class types seem to elicit the same types of responses, mainly syntagmatic ones. The very fact that concrete and abstract nouns,



verbs, and adjectives elicit similar types of association responses in Persian, may lead us to conclude that concreteness and word class types do not influence the type of association responses that much.

As for the fourth question, the results of the study points to a consistent pattern of responding, i.e., a tendency towards syntagmatic associations in both age groups under scrutiny in Persian. This is, of course, in accordance with the view that for non-native speakers of English, association responses are often syntagmatic rather than paradigmatic (Deigan et al, 1996, cited in Rahimi & Haghighi, 2009). This very fact casts doubt on the generality of the syntagmatic-paradigmatic shift phenomenon emphasizing the need for re-evaluation of the syntagmatic-paradigmatic shift for non-native speakers (Wolter, 2001, cited in Khazaenezhad & Alibabae, 2013).

Why this study revealed such a consistent response pattern for the Persian language, might have been affected by the choice of stimulus words or methods of test administration or there might have been educational, cultural, societal, or linguistic reasons for it (Rahimi & Haghighi, 2009), the investigation of which is beyond the scope of this study. In fact, this study focused, for the most part, on the 'what' aspect of the issue rather than the 'why' aspect. Therefore, while we have to exercise extreme caution in drawing absolute conclusions about Persian language simply based on the findings from the present study, the results of this study could be illuminating and might have various pedagogical implications.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Several factors might have imposed limitations upon the present study which are going to be enumerated below:

1. Due to the absence of children and adults' frequency tables in Persian language, the stimulus words chosen for this study were taken from Woodrow and Lowell's (1916) children's association frequency tables formulated basically for English language, the very fact that might have influenced the results from this study.
2. For time considerations, a short word association test consisting of merely 12 items was administered for this study. More precise results might have been gained if the number of stimulus words could be expanded.
3. Finally, the relatively small number of participants in this study might have limited the results. If the researchers had not been pressed for time, they could have interviewed a larger number of participants, which would add to the accuracy of the obtained results.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Web 2.0 refers to web sites that use technology beyond the static pages of earlier web sites allowing for creating, collaborating, editing and sharing user-generated content online. With the emergence of Web 2.0 tools, a large body of societies has embraced the new wave of technology. One of these affected sections is education in general, and language pedagogy in particular. Accordingly, in this era of fundamental changes, it is necessary to rethink the effective use of Web 2.0 tools in language learning and teaching. Accordingly, the present study investigated the Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes towards implementing Web 2.0 tools in teaching various language skills and components in Iranian EFL context. In so doing, a questionnaire was distributed among 112 Iranian EFL teachers. The main focus of the questionnaire was on the most important Web 2.0 tools, namely Blogs, Social networks, Emails, Podcasts and vodcasts, and Wikis. The findings showed that Iranian EFL teachers had positive attitudes towards the use of such tools in English language classrooms. Implications are discussed.

**KEYWORDS:** Language pedagogy, Web 2.0 tools, EFL teachers' attitudes, Iranian context

## **INTRODUCTION**

As Web-based technology evolved from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0, everyday lives have increasingly integrated with Web-based tools. Web 2.0 tools have become a vehicle of innovation in different areas of education, as a part of life. Consequently, the traditional methods of education are gradually shifting toward web-based educational methods. This new paradigm provides new and effective dimensions in education, and language pedagogy as well. The large body of literature on the incorporation of Web 2.0 tools in education (Beldarrain, 2006; Grosseck, 2009; Usluel & Mazman, 2009; Chong, 2010; Grosseck & Holotescu, 2010; Arnold & Paulus, 2010; Lai & Eugenia, 2011; Chandra & Watters, 2011; Gokcearslan, & Ozcan, 2011; Brown, 2011), and in language pedagogy (Heift & Schulze, 2003; Palfreyman, 2006; Yang & Chen, 2007; Bran, 2009; Küfi & Özgür, 2009; Pop, 2010; Baltaci-Goktalay & Ozdilek, 2010; Girgin, 2011; Abdous, Facer & Yen, 2011; Eyyam, Meneviş & Doğruer, 2011; Kovacic, Bubas & Coric, 2012) indicates the effectiveness of these tools in education in general, and in language pedagogy in particular. Bran (2009) referred to the authentic contexts provided by the use of Web 2.0 tools in language learning environments as a beneficial feature for the students to create, collaborate, and connect with other people all around the world with no limit in time and place. According to Pop (2010), implementing Web 2.0 tools in language pedagogy resulted in higher levels of motivation, confidence, and disposition which are crucial factors in communicative foreign language learning. Yang and Chen (2007) also believed that Web 2.0 based language learning program helped enhance students' knowledge of computer, increase their interest in learning, improve their English language abilities, and provide a broad learning range and possibilities.

In addition to the literature concerning the effectiveness of Web 2.0 tools in language learning and teaching, assessing the stakeholders' attitude towards implementing Web 2.0 tools in language pedagogy as an important issue that has been addressed in foreign language learning research. According to Küfi and Özgür (2009), students had positive attitudes towards interactive web environment use in learning English. In contrast, Girgin (2011) found that despite learners' pleasure in using web 2.0 tools in their English classrooms, they were more comfortable with the face to face traditional methods of teaching in gaining language competence. Positive attitudes of teachers toward using web 2.0 tools play a crucial role in implementing these tools in education. Baltaci-Goktalay and Ozdilek (2010) found pre-service teachers' positive attitudes and high level of acceptance of web 2.0 tools in education. According to Eyyam, Meneviş and Doğruer (2011), teachers mostly used some well-known web 2.0 tools such as

Wiki, Social Networks and Instant Messaging Software in their classrooms, but they were not eager to use some other useful but less known tools. On the other hand, there still exists some misperception about the Web 2.0 tools. Brown (2011) argued that having too many tools and not enough time to use them makes student confused.

Teachers' epistemological beliefs, their views about the nature of knowledge and learning, and the effectiveness of Web 2.0 tools may affect their teaching approaches. It worth mentioning that different Web 2.0 tools address diverse needs of English language learners, and each may be suitable for tasks of different complexity. They can be implemented to organize the learning content, support learning activities, and address different learning styles (Kovacic, Bubas & Coric, 2012). Despite the numerous research on the effectiveness of Web 2.0 tools in language pedagogy and also positive attitudes of teachers towards using Web-based tools in language learning classrooms, still there are some controversies about the implementation of Web 2.0 tools in English language learning environments in Iran. The field seems to lack a unified theory of the use of Web 2.0 tools in language pedagogy and the scope within which such tools can be applied. On the other hand, due to social and cultural constraints, much needs to be done to see how such factors affect the success or failure of the use of such tools in different cultures and languages. To this end, this study is going to investigate Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes toward implementing web 2.0 applications in teaching various language skills and components in Iranian EFL context.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

A researchers-made questionnaire was distributed among 112 English language teachers teaching in different private language institutes and universities in Iran. The sample included 80 females and 32 males, with B.A and M.A degrees. Their age ranged between 26 to 46 years, with 1 to 27 years of experience.

### *Instruments*

To achieve the objectives of this study a researchers-made questionnaire was used. The main focus of the questionnaire was on the main Web 2.0 tools, namely blogs, social networks, podcasts, vodcasts, and wikis. The questionnaire comprised of two parts; the extent to which teachers were familiar with the mentioned Web 2.0 tools, and the extent to which teachers would agree or disagree with statements about learning English through using Web 2.0 tools in foreign language classrooms. It is presented in the appendix.

### *Procedure and Data Analysis*

To achieve the goals of this study, a questionnaire comprising of a list of the most studied Web 2.0 tools in the literature was designed and piloted among 15 EFL teachers with M.A degree. They were asked to identify the tools with which they were the most familiar. According to the data gleaned from the pilot questionnaires, five tools – blogs, wikis, social networks, emails, and podcasts and vodcasts- were the most familiar to the participants. The main questionnaire consisting of 34 items was prepared based on Bachman's (1991) Framework of Communicative Language Ability, in winter 2012. The questionnaires were distributed among the participants in spring 2012, they were asked to answer the questionnaire considering the five mentioned tools. (The reliability of the questionnaire was estimated at 0.92).After collecting the data, certain statistical techniques were run, which are presented and discussed at length in the following section.

## RESULTS

The questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively to calculate percentage of familiarity of the participants with these tools, and  $X^2$  value, df, and level of significance of each item to recognize the participants' attitudes towards implementing these tools in language teaching.

### 3.1. Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes towards implementing Web 2.0 tools

*Table 1: Percentage of the participants' familiarity with Web 2.0 tools*

	Very little%	Little%	Average%	Much%	Very much%
Blogs	0	13.4	37.5	33	16.1
Emails	0	0	15.2	40.2	44.6
Social networks	7.1	14.3	8	25.9	44.6
Podcasts & Vodcasts	0	12.5	40.2	27.7	19.6
Wikis	0	8	33	29.5	29.5

As Table 1 shows, the participants were familiar with emails and social networks more than the other four tools. Blogs were also the least known Web 2.0 tools to the participants. Wikis were recognized as the third most known Web 2.0 tool to the participants, followed by podcasts and vodcasts respectively.

3.2. Iranian EFL teachers' attitude toward teaching and learning different skills and components of language by the use of Web 2.0 tools

*Table 2: The Pearson chi-square test results for the items concerning language skills and components.*

<b>Web 2.0 tools help our students</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Asymp.Sig</b>
enhance their textual knowledge.	78.071	3	.000
enhance their sensitivity to dialect.	102.821	4	.000
enhance their sensitivity to social register.	17.357	3	.001
enhance their sensitivity to cultural norms.	47	3	.000
enhance their reading comprehension skill.	121.482	4	.000
enhance their speaking skill.	54.214	3	.000
enhance their writing skill.	104.429	3	.000
enhance their listening skill.	99.786	4	.000
increase their vocabulary knowledge.	109.929	3	.000
improve their knowledge of grammar.	22.357	3	.000
have coherence and organization in their writings.	80.786	3	.000
enhance their communicative competence.	721.929	3	.000
become familiar with the differences between the target and the native culture.	46.214	3	.000
achieve an acceptable level of language proficiency.	76.786	3	.000
develop their foreign language pragmatic competence.	43.357	3	.000

As the results of the above table shows, participants agreed that Web 2.0 tools have positive effect on learning different components and skills of language. As it is evident, it is believed that these tools are much more helpful enhancing vocabulary knowledge, and reading comprehension skill, writing skill, sensitivity to dialect, and communicative competence.

*Table 3: The Pearson chi-square test results for the items to which Web 2.0 tools can be tailored.*

<b>Web 2.0 tools and activities can be tailored to</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Asymp.Sig</b>
the students' personality traits.	52.929	3	.000
the students' learning strategies.	88.357	3	.000
the students' needs.	48.714	3	.000
the students' affective features.	20.696	2	.000
the teachers' teaching strategies.	11.375	2	.003

As is evident from the above table, the participants agreed that Web 2.0 tools are highly compatible to the students' learning strategies and personality traits.

*Table 4: The Pearson chi-square test results for the items concerning affective factors.*

<b>Classes using Web 2.0 tools and activities</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Asymp.Sig</b>
make students feel more motivated in learning the foreign language.	41.375	2	.000
reduces the students' anxiety.	43.357	3	.000
are more interesting to the students than the traditional ones.	58.196	2	.000
are more interactive than the regular classes.	35.589	2	.000
are authentic.	48.714	3	.000
have fixed but dynamic Curriculum.	46.357	3	.000

As the table 4 shows, classes using Web 2.0 tools and activities seem to be more interesting, interactive and authentic. These classes can be more motivating and less stressful to the students than the regular ones.

*Table 5: The Pearson chi-square test results for the items concerning tasks and activities.*

<b>Tasks and activities designed by the use of Web 2.0 tools</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Asymp.Sig</b>
are more challenging.	38.786	3	.000
are more meaningful to the students.	41.786	3	.000
have more information gaps.	41.929	3	.000
are authentic, personalized, and learner-driven.	62.643	3	.000

As it can be inferred from the above table, tasks and activities designed by the use of Web 2.0 tools include the essential features of a communicative language classroom. Authentic, personalized, and learner driven tasks and activities were the most agreed features from the participants' points of view.

*Table 6: The Pearson chi-square test results for the items concerning the students' performance.*

<b>In classes using Web 2.0 tools, students</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Asymp.Sig</b>
become more creative.	49.143	2	.000
receive more feedback from teachers and peers.	11.643	2	.003
collaborate more with each other.	21.714	2	.000
Can design the materials based on their needs.	7.196	2	.027

The results of the above table shows that most of the participants agreed that students can collaborate more with each other so that they become more creative and can even cooperate in designing their learning materials.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this section, the results of the study are discussed at length. Before that, however, the summary of the findings are presented in 5.1.

### *Summary of the findings*

The results from Table 1 showed that the participants were highly familiar with the Web 2.0 tools including blogs, social networks, wikis, emails, and podcasts and vodcasts. Among the mentioned tools, emails and social networks were the most known to the participants. The results attained from Tables 2 showed that the participants believed Web 2.0 tools could help students in learning the four macro skills, namely reading comprehension, writing, listening, and speaking. They agreed that these tools could also help students enhance their vocabulary knowledge and sensitivity to dialect the most. Looking at Table 2, one could easily figure out that among the four macro skills, development of reading comprehension skill seemed to be more in line with the features of the so-called tool. On the other hand, Web 2.0 tools should be tailored to the needs and personality traits of the students both from a linguistics perspective as well as an educational direction if they are expected to be effective. As illustrated by Table 3, most of the teachers agreed that these tools could be tailored to students' learning strategies, and personality traits. This may result in classes which respect all students with different learning styles and personality traits. Moreover, affective factors as a critical aspect of language learning and teaching have always been important to the curriculum developers. As it is evident from the results demonstrated by Table 4, the participants agreed that using these tools makes the classrooms more interesting, authentic and dynamic which would result in a more effective learning. Participants also agreed that these tools have a positive effect on the foreign language classrooms' atmosphere, tasks and activities and on the students' cooperation in the classrooms. From the results of table 5 and 6, it can be inferred that using Web 2.0 tools motivates students to collaborate in designing their own tasks and activities which results in more authentic and personalized tasks, and makes students more creative.

### *Discussion and Conclusion*

As it was stated earlier, though Web 2.0 potentials in Education and Language pedagogy has been highlighted (Palfreyman, 2006; Yang, 2007; Bran, 2009; Pop, 2010; Abdous, 2011; Girgin, 2011), there are still some controversies about the implementation of these tools in language pedagogy. Since Web 2.0 tools have not been originally designed for education, lack of an adequate design for the appropriate use of these tools in language pedagogy turns to be one of the major constraints. Accordingly, the aim of this study was to investigate the Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes towards implementing these tools in English language classrooms and to see how this constraint can be overcome.

Web 2.0 technology prepares more effective environments on interactive and collaborative cooperation of the students, though not designed especially for practical educational aims. Moreover, this technology is important to the studies of teaching and learning for quality learning in education about the efficacy of technology, significance of active participation, critical thinking, social interaction, collaborative learning and two way communications (Beldarrain, 2006). Language pedagogy as a subset of educational system can benefit from these technologies if these tools are designed in a way compatible to learning language skills and components. Since the most important features of these tools are social interaction, collaboration, creativity, information sharing, and authenticity, they can be easily compatible to Communicative Language Ability models, e.g. Canale and Swain (1980), Bachman (1991).



Canale and Swain (1980) suggested a set of three competences which combine to produce communicative competence. The first, grammatical competence, included “knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence grammar semantics and phonology”. The second competence was sociolinguistic competence, comprising of “sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse”. The third competence was strategic competence, which related to “verbal and non-verbal communicative strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence”. Bachman (1991) defined authenticity as the appropriateness of a language users’ response to language as communication. Because this definition was too broad, Bachman and Palmer (1996) divided it into two parts; one relates to the target language use which refers to authenticity, and the other relates to learners’ involvement to the test. They defined interactiveness as “the extent and type of involvement of the test taker’s individual characteristics in accomplishing a test task” (p.25). On the basis of these definitions, Web 2.0 tools can be served as potential authentic and interactive tools in communicative language learning and teaching. Furthermore, the most Web 2.0 tools enjoy features which are highly in line with both instructional and situational authenticities delineated by Bachman (1991).

Finally, as displayed in Tables 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 and emphasized in previous sections, Web 2.0 tools each may enjoy potentials more compatible for the development of certain language skills and components and for certain ages and personality traits under conditions and in certain contexts. These besides the constraints on the way of using these tools in English language Education should be taken into considerations in the justification, development, and implementation of any task, test, and activity for the language classrooms.

#### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Like any other researches, there are some limitations for this study. As it was stated earlier, web 2 tools enjoy intrinsic cultural and social constraints that call for a cautious use in educational contexts in general and language teaching and learning contexts in particular. Furthermore, a few of web 2 tools were investigated in this study. Further tools might divulge the potentials and possible constraints of web 2 tools more. Finally, this study was carried out in Iranian EFL context. Any generalization about the findings of this study should be limited to the given context.

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### Appendix

Please put a check mark in the appropriate box.

- Gender: male ☐ female ☐
- Age:..... ☐
- Degree of education: Bachelor ☐ M<sup>er</sup> ☐ Ph.D ☐
- Years of experience:..... ☐

#### 1. To what extent are you familiar with the following internet tools in EFL teaching?

Degree Tool	None	Very little	Little	Average	Much	Very much
Blogs						
Podcasts						
Social networks						
Vodcasts						
Wikis						

#### 2. Do you agree or disagree with the statements about learning English using web 2.0 tools?

(Strongly disagree (SD) Disagree (D) Neutral (N) Agree (A) Strongly agree (SA))

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA
<b>Web 2.0 tools help our students</b>					
1 enhance their textual knowledge.					
2 enhance their sensitivity to dialect.					
3 enhance their sensitivity to social register.					
4 enhance their sensitivity to cultural norms.					
5 enhance their reading comprehension skill.					
6 enhance their speaking skill.					
7 enhance their writing skill.					
8 enhance their listening skill.					
9 increase their vocabulary knowledge.					
10 improve their knowledge of grammar.					
11 have coherence and organization in their writings.					

12	enhance their communicative competence.					
13	become familiar with the differences between the target and the native culture.					
14	achieve an acceptable level of language proficiency.					
15	develop their foreign language pragmatic competence.					
	<b>Web 2.0 tools and activities can be tailored to</b>					
16	the students' personality traits.					
17	the students' learning strategies.					
18	the students' needs.					
19	the students' affective features.					
20	the teachers' teaching strategies.					
	<b>Classes using Web 2.0 tools and activities</b>					
21	make students feel more motivated in learning the foreign language.					
22	reduces the students' anxiety.					
23	are more interesting to the students than the traditional ones.					
24	are more interactive than the regular classes.					
25	are authentic.					
26	have fixed but dynamic Curriculum.					
	<b>Tasks and activities designed by the use of Web 2.0 tools</b>					
27	are more challenging.					
28	are more meaningful to the students.					
29	have more information gaps.					
30	are authentic, personalized, and learner-driven.					
	In classes using Web 2.0 tools, students					
31	become more creative.					
32	receive more feedback from teachers and peers.					
33	collaborate more with each other.					
34	Can design the materials based on their needs.					

## THE ARCHETYPE OF THE HERO'S JOURNEY IN ODYSSEY

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### ABSTRACT

The Odyssey is a classic representation of an epic in literature. With that understood, it is no surprise that the main character of the story helps to define an epic hero. A character must express certain virtues to be considered such. Strength, courage, and nobility are almost prerequisites. Cleverness is an added bonus. Odysseus possesses many characteristics and virtues that make him a true representation of an epic hero. The Hero's Journey is never an easy one. This particular journey, as detailed in Homer's The Odyssey, is one of struggle, loss, heartache, pain, growth and triumph. It is comprised of many steps that Odysseus has to overcome and battle through in order to achieve his final goal of reaching his home and his loved ones, from the Call to Adventure to the Freedom or Gift of living.

**KEYWORDS:** archetype, Odyssey, hero's Journey, Jung, Campbell

### INTRODUCTION

Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell are two of the most prominent explorers of the psycho analytical and mythological origins for human and social behavior.

Carl Jung expanded the unconscious mind to emphasize the mythological forces working within the individual to shape his or her personality. Jung formed the concept of archetype and collective unconscious to explain the commonality of dream images and situations found in all people. Jung believed individual and social behavior and thought have their roots in a common palette of characters and situations the mind retains from early human consciousness development. To Jung, the archetypal hero represents the psyche's quest for individuation, the process that makes each person unique (Jung, 1959).

Joseph Campbell built on Carl Jung's concept of the collective unconscious to encompass all the world's mythologies. Campbell studied the world's religions, art, and stories and discovered common threads throughout all, including the hero. Campbell believed that mythology is the collective "dream" of mankind, the "song of the universe." (Campbell, 1970). Campbell's work highlights mankind's common search, both personally and socially, for meaning and truth through the ages.

### THE ARCHETYPE

An archetype is a recurring pattern of character, symbol, or situation found in the mythology, religion, and stories of all cultures. In the context of archetypes, Campbell defined his work as a search for "the commonality of themes in world myths, pointing to a constant requirement in the human psyche for a centering in terms of deep principles." (Campbell, et al 1988). Jung defined his concept of the archetype as a formula that is the result of "countless experiences of our ancestors. They are, as it were, the psychic residue of numberless experiences of the same type" (Strauch, 2001). Both men felt that the experience of being human can be examined collectively across time, space, and culture, and that our commonality can be traced to the most primitive origins of the human consciousness, where the archetypal themes originate in modern men and women.

Archetypes can be thought of as the precursor to conscious thought, existing in the unconscious mind as expressions of psychic happenings, but without a basis in the physical world. Humans didn't "invent" archetypes, but they do express archetypes in the conscious world of art, literature, and religion (Dundes, 1984).

Unconscious energies are given form in this way. Therefore, the hero is not someone "out there" in the world; he is all of us and our need to grow and mature.

The following paragraphs describe several of the archetypal characters that can occur in the stories, myths, etc.

## EXAMPLES OF ARCHETYPES

**Outsider**-The outsider archetype also takes the form of the rebel (Preminger and Brogan, 1993). This is the character which, by virtue of what he or she is or thinks, is an outsider to the community. The character often displays an attitude of radical freedom, a feeling of powerlessness, or anger over perceived injustice. This frequently results in behavior that can be viewed by the community as outrageous or rebellious. The classic Italian folk tale about the puppet named Pinocchio presents the outsider archetype in the form of the misfit. Another example might be the character often played by Clint Eastwood in his early Western movies. In that case, the outlaw archetype is often combined with the rescuer, or hero, archetype.

**Innocent**-The archetypal character named innocent represents something beyond simply "one who isn't guilty" (Rasmussen, 1998). The innocent is one whose purity has not (or at least not yet) been compromised by knowledge of the world and its evils. Thus, the innocent can take the form of the child, the naive youth, the saint, or the mystic. This character usually carries the symbolism of optimism, simplicity, goodness, or faith. An example of this archetype might be Beatrice, one of Dante's guides in the Divine Comedy. Another example, much more recent and probably more familiar to most of you, would be Dorothy from the movie The Wizard of Oz. (Note that Dorothy also represents another archetype -- the explorer. Just like Odysseus, she's in search of a way home.)

**Ruler**-The ruler archetype also appears as the leader, the commander, the boss, or the manager. The ruler strives to be in control of the circumstances, assumes responsibility, and/or shows leadership. The objective of the ruler archetype is usually order, harmony, and control. Gilgamesh is an instance of the ruler archetype. So is Priam, from the Iliad, even though he's an older, more defeated version of the ruler (Tallman, 2005).

**Trickster**-The trickster archetype can also be called (or appear as) the jester, the clown, the comedian, or the fool (in the Shakespearean sense of the fool (Garry and Shamy, 2005)). The trickster is one who relies on his or her wits and is willing to cross boundaries, break taboos, or say the unmentionable. Typically, this transgression of barriers is executed using humor, sarcasm, or irony, all of which are heavily dependent on language and its openness to multiple or ambiguous meanings. Odysseus is a trickster character: in the Odyssey, he relies on his wits and cleverness to get him out of one tight spot after another; and, in the Iliad, it was he who proposed the idea of the Trojan Horse, the ruse by which the Greeks were able to defeat the Trojans. A contemporary example of the trickster archetype would be Axel Foley, the character played by Eddie Murphy in the Beverly Hills Cop movies.

**Magician**-The magician archetype can also appear as the healer/shaman, the sorcerer, the visionary, or the innovator. This is the character that has much knowledge of the physical world, and knows how to use it to forge solutions to problems. (This knowledge will sometimes be portrayed as magical in the sense of fantastical, but it can also be magical in the same sense that electricity or magnetism is magical (natural forces that are unseen and sometimes difficult to understand.)) The magician also will frequently act on hunches or intuitions. The sorcerer king Soumaoro from the tale of Sundiata is an example of the magician archetype, but so is Faust from the poem by Goethe.

**Sage**-The sage archetype can also appear as the oracle, the teacher or mentor, or the expert. This character is usually portrayed as knowledgeable and/or understanding, the source of wisdom or the guardian of truth. Frequently the sage will appear as an old man or old woman, whose years symbolize his or her wisdom. Utnapishtim, from the Epic of Gilgamesh, is an example of the sage archetype: Gilgamesh seeks him out to learn the secret of immortality, and Utnapishtim instead tries to teach him a different kind of wisdom. The figure of Virgil as used by Dante in the Divine Comedy can also be seen as a sage. (Kostera, 2012)

**Protector**-The protector archetype can take the form of the caregiver, the helper, the altruist, or the parent figure. The protector usually displays the qualities of compassion, generosity, and/or protectiveness. This archetype appears to have a need to meet the needs of others. You could probably consider Beowulf as an example of the protector

archetype, at the same time that he is also an instance of the warrior. The protector also frequently appears in stories in the guise of a mother figure or a father figure, each of which can also be thought of as archetypal characters in themselves (Jung, 1990).

**Explorer**-The explorer archetype can also come in the form of the seeker or the pilgrim. This character is usually on some kind of quest or in search of something: a way home, self-knowledge, a key to happiness or wisdom, or a "better way," whatever that might be. The narrator/protagonist in Dante's Divine Comedy is a primary example of the explorer archetype. In that case, the archetype takes the form of the seeker of spiritual revelation. Odysseus, from the Odyssey, is also an explorer, on a quest to get home, but as you saw above he also represents another important archetype, the trickster (Plotkin, 2008).

**Creator**-The creator archetype also comes in the form of the artist or the inventor. This archetype is usually recognized by its importance in the generation of life and fertility, or in its creativity, imagination, and deliverance of something new or of enduring value. The creator archetype often acts out of inspiration or even out of dreams or fantasies. Examples of the creator archetype would include any of the gods or goddesses who are described as taking part in the creation of the world in the various creation myths in your textbook. Also, any of the fertility deities, such as Isis or Inanna or Ceres, would be ongoing examples of the creator archetype. A different kind of example might be Sundiata or Aeneas, each of whom are said to have created new empires (Knapp, 1986).

**Warrior**-The warrior archetype can also take the form of the rescuer, the hero, or the crusader for a cause. This character is usually notable for his or her courage, competence, and sense of self-worth or self-reliance. The warrior archetype (and its variations) is quick to respond to a challenge or to aid those in distress. Because the warrior is willing to commit violence to achieve his or her task, this character exists somewhat outside the mainstream of the community. However, the community is generally willing to accept the warrior's violent capacities, as long as they don't begin to present a problem for the community. Achilles, from the Iliad, is an obvious example of the warrior archetype, as is Roland (McGonagle, 1996).

**Intimat**-The archetype can take the form of the best friend, the lover, the spouse, or the connoisseur (Isaac, 2008). This is the character that finds satisfaction and fulfillment through intimacy or a passionate commitment of some kind a bonding with someone or something else. While the object of devotion is often another creature (human or animal), it can also be something like food, to whom the gourmand, for instance, is passionately devoted. Examples of the intimate archetype would be Enkidu, who becomes Gilgamesh's fast friend, or Patroclus, bosom friend of Achilles whose death drives Achilles to fight.

**Martyr**-The martyr archetype can also appear as the scapegoat who is usually reborn or resurrected in some way (Knapp, 2010). This is the character whose individual sacrifice (whether of life or of something else having great value and importance) purchases something of even greater value to the community as a whole or to the central character of the story. In this sense, Enkidu can be seen as a martyr, since his death serves eventually as an impetus to a greater wisdom for Gilgamesh (and, by implication, for all of humankind). The Egyptian god Osiris can be seen as a martyr in the guise of the dying god. The story of his death, the scattering of his dismembered body in the waters of the Nile, and his reconstitution and resurrection through the efforts of his wife, Isis, symbolically represent the gift of fertility that comes from the waters of the Nile, upon which Egypt has always depended for its survival.

### ARCHETYPAL LITERARY CRITICISM

Archetypal criticism argues that archetypes determine the form and function of literary works that a text's meaning is shaped by cultural and psychological myths. Archetypes are the unknowable basic forms personified or concretized in recurring images, symbols, or patterns which may include motifs such as the quest or the heavenly ascent, recognizable character types such as the trickster or the hero, symbols such as the apple or snake, or images all laden with meaning already when employed in a particular work.

Archetypal critics find New Criticism too atomistic in ignoring inter textual elements and in approaching the text as if it existed in a vacuum. After all, we recognize story patterns and symbolic associations at least from other texts we have read, if not innately; we know how to form assumptions and expectations from encounters with black hats, springtime settings, evil stepmothers, and so forth. So surely meaning cannot exist solely on the page of a work, nor can that work be treated as an independent entity.

Archetypal images and story patterns encourage readers (and viewers of films and advertisements) to participate ritualistically in basic beliefs, fears, and anxieties of their age. These archetypal features not only constitute the intelligibility of the text but also tap into a level of desires and anxieties of humankind (Sugg, 1992).



### **THE HEROIC ARCHETYPE**

The heroic archetype is a literary or movie character that is all-round good. He or she will save people, do the right thing, protect that which is good and will fight any monster that comes his or her way. They are one of the basic paradigms in tales and mythology from across the world, but particularly in European culture. Such examples of the hero archetype range from Achilles to Beowulf via superheroes like Superman and 1980s action heroes (Simon, 2007).

The roots of the hero archetype go back to ancient Greece and the beginnings of many polytheist and animist religions. They are based, like many other archetypes, on folktales linked to Gods and ancestors. Over time, the attributes and deeds of these ancestors have changed as the stories are repeated down the generations. These social developments are linked to Carl Jung's ideas on archetypes and collective dreams (Wood, 2005).

There are a number of basic characteristics for the hero archetype. Traditionally, the hero is strong of both physique and moral character. They may have special fighting or intellectual skills that allow them to function as a hero. This runs from martial arts skills to weapon knowledge. They are moral and do good. They do not have to be intellectual giants, but they are skilled and resourceful while doing the right thing.

Types of heroes include action heroes and superheroes. The action hero does not have to be special, but fights his or her way to defeating the main villain (Aylestock, 2009). There are also types of the hero archetype that deviate away from the traditional mold. Other variations on the hero archetype include the wannabe hero and the anti-hero. The wannabe hero is a wide-eyed idealist who, due to a lack of skills or the wrong circumstances, fails to become a hero. He or she often looks up to the main hero. The wannabe hero often dies heroically trying to emulate the hero. Examples include Don Quixote (Tallman, 2005).

The anti-hero is a character lacking many of the good qualities of the hero. They often do the right thing eventually, but their lives and personal back stories are more dubious and less wholesome than that of Superman or Spiderman. The anti-hero is often morally compromised. In a monomyth, the hero begins in the ordinary world, and receives a call to enter an unknown world of strange powers and events. The hero who accepts the call to enter this strange world must face tasks and trials, either alone or with assistance. In the most intense versions of the narrative, the hero must survive a severe challenge, often with help. If the hero survives, he may achieve a great gift or "boon." The hero must then decide whether to return to the ordinary world with this boon. If the hero does decide to return, he or she often faces challenges on the return journey. If the hero returns successfully, the boon or gift may be used to improve the world. The stories of Osiris, Prometheus, Moses, Gautama Buddha, for example, follow this structure closely (Campbell, et al, 2003).

Campbell describes 17 stages or steps along this journey. Very few myths contain all 17 stages—some myths contain many of the stages, while others contain only a few; some myths may focus on only one of the stages, while other myths may deal with the stages in a somewhat different order. These 17 stages may be organized in a number of ways, including division into three sections: Departure (sometimes called Separation), Initiation, and Return. "Departure" deals with the hero's adventure prior to the quest; "Initiation" deals with the hero's many adventures along the way; and "Return" deals with the hero's return home with knowledge and powers acquired on the journey.

### **STEPS OF MONOMYTH**

***The Call to Adventure***—The hero begins in a mundane situation of normality from which some information is received that acts as a call to head off into the unknown.

***Refusal of the Call***—Often when the call is given, the future hero first refuses to heed it. This may be from a sense of duty or obligation, fear, insecurity, a sense of inadequacy, or any of a range of reasons that work to hold the person in his or her current circumstances (Campbell, 1949).

**Supernatural Aid-** Once the hero has committed to the quest, consciously or unconsciously, his guide and magical helper appear, or become known. More often than not, this supernatural mentor will present the hero with one or more talismans or artifacts that will aid them later in their quest.

**The Crossing of the First Threshold-**This is the point where the person actually crosses into the field of adventure, leaving the known limits of his or her world and venturing into an unknown and dangerous realm where the rules and limits are not known (Packer, 2010).

**Belly of the Whale-**The belly of the whale represents the final separation from the hero's known world and self. By entering this stage, the person shows willingness to undergo a metamorphosis (Smith, 1997).

**The Road of Trials-**The road of trials is a series of tests, tasks, or ordeals that the person must undergo to begin the transformation. Often the person fails one or more of these tests, which often occur in threes (Rochelle, 2001).

**The Meeting with the Goddess-**This is the point when the person experiences a love that has the power and significance of the all-powerful, all encompassing, unconditional love that a fortunate infant may experience with his or her mother. This is a very important step in the process and is often represented by the person finding the other person that he or she loves most completely ( Monaghan, 2011).

**Woman as Temptress-** In this step, the hero faces those temptations, often of a physical or pleasurable nature, that may lead him or her to abandon or stray from his or her quest, which does not necessarily have to be represented by a woman. Woman is a metaphor for the physical or material temptations of life, since the hero-knight was often tempted by lust from his spiritual journey (Jobling, 2010).

**Atonement with the Father-**In this step the person must confront and be initiated by whatever holds the ultimate power in his or her life. In many myths and stories this is the father, or a father figure who has life and death power. This is the center point of the journey. All the previous steps have been moving into this place, all that follow will move out from it. Although this step is most frequently symbolized by an encounter with a male entity, it does not have to be a male; just someone or thing with incredible power (Salla, 2002).

**Apotheosis-**When someone dies a physical death, or dies to the self to live in spirit, he or she moves beyond the pairs of opposites to a state of divine knowledge, love, compassion and bliss. A more mundane way of looking at this step is that it is a period of rest, peace and fulfillment before the hero begins the return (Leeming, 1998).

**The Ultimate Boon-**The ultimate boon is the achievement of the goal of the quest. It is what the person went on the journey to get. All the previous steps serve to prepare and purify the person for this step, since in many myths the boon is something transcendent like the elixir of life itself, or a plant that supplies immortality (Indick, 2004).

**Refusal of the Return-**Having found bliss and enlightenment in the other world, the hero may not want to return to the ordinary world to bestow the boon onto his fellow man.

**The Magic Flight-**Sometimes the hero must escape with the boon, if it is something that the gods have been jealously guarding. It can be just as adventurous and dangerous returning from the journey as it was to go on it (Okum, 2009).

**Rescue from Without-**Just as the hero may need guides and assistants to set out on the quest, oftentimes he or she must have powerful guides and rescuers to bring them back to everyday life, especially if the person has been wounded or weakened by the experience (Bartle, 2004).

**The Crossing of the Return Threshold-**The trick in returning is to retain the wisdom gained on the quest, to integrate that wisdom into a human life, and then maybe figure out how to share the wisdom with the rest of the world.

**Master of Two Worlds-**This step is usually represented by a transcendental hero like Jesus or Gautama Buddha. For a human hero, it may mean achieving a balance between the material and spiritual. The person has become comfortable and competent in both the inner and outer worlds (Ellwood, 1999).

**Freedom to Live-**Mastery leads to freedom from the fear of death, which in turn is the freedom to live. This is sometimes referred to as living in the moment, neither anticipating the future nor regretting the past.

## THE HERO'S JOURNEY

The phrase "the hero's journey," to describe the monomyth, first entered into popular discourse through two documentaries. The first, released in 1987, *The Hero's Journey: The World of Joseph Campbell*, was accompanied by a 1990 companion book, *The Hero's Journey: Joseph Campbell on His Life and Work* (with Phil Cousineau and Stuart Brown). The second was Bill Moyers's series of seminal interviews with Campbell, released in 1988 as the documentary (and companion book) *The Power of Myth*. The phrase was then referenced in the title of a popular guidebook for screenwriters, released in the 1990s, *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure For Writers*, by Christopher Vogler. Though they used the phrase in their works, Cousineau, Moyers, and Vogler all attribute the phrase and the model of *The Hero's Journey* to Joseph Campbell (Leeming & Sader, 1997).

### **THE HOMERS ODYSSEY**

Odyssey is one of the most popular classic epic poems in the field of socio-cultural development. Its narration gains credit in the way to attain the means of structuring and restructuring the life of Greece as whole. The concept of Odyssey is an amalgamation of cultural entities and diversified mythological representation. The elements of myth and cultural depiction are very clear by the elaborative description of Odysseus. The dominance of cultural entity and mythical elaborations are the basis for understanding the character of Odysseus

### **THE 12 STAGES OF A HERO'S JOURNEY IN ODYSSEUS**

**Ordinary World-** In the case of Odysseus in the "Odyssey", our hero's ordinary world can not wholly be defined or looked at as "ordinary". However, for this book and tale of Odysseus, it is the closest thing to fit for this segment of the journey. His ordinary world is living on the island of Ogyia, retained by the goddess Calypso, who ever tries to win over his heart, and never does (Breyfogle & Grene, 1999).

**Call to Adventure-** Odysseus' call to adventure takes place while he is still in his ordinary world. Hermes travels from Mt. Olympus to tell Calypso that Zeus has declared that Odysseus is to be set free from her detainment of him. She assents to what her fellow immortal has told her, and she grudgingly relates the news to Odysseus that he is at liberty to finally leave her (Houston, 2009).

**Refusal of the Call-** When Odysseus is told this; he reacts to her in a very stubborn and pessimistic view of things. He talks about how he does not trust her devious mind and suspects her of hatching some trick against him, for he does not believe that she would ever willingly let him go without making sure something bad were to befall him. So with this he for a time refuses her statement that he is emancipated from Ogyia (Leeming, 1998).

**Mentor-** Odysseus' mentor figure is perhaps the single most significant factor of the lengthy poem that Homer writes for us. For the King of Ithaca mentor and helper throughout his journeys, from the beginning of the Trojan War until he finally returns to Ithaca to reclaim his throne, is the bright-eyed goddess, Pallas Athena. She prompts him to have the courage to be able to act in many situations, she knows all and often uses this omnipotence to aid Odysseus, and she is the one who also aids his son, Telemachus, first by providing the impetus for him to search for news of his father around Achaea in the very first books of the "Odyssey". Throughout Odysseus' heroic journey, the immortal Athena plays a major role in the events that occur, by taking on the look of Mentes and other people along the journey of Odysseus (Dimock, 1989).

**First Threshold-** The mighty Odysseus' first threshold is agreeing to leave the island of Calypso, after he has collected her binding oath, and as he sets sail homeward bound for Ithaca. The strong and just Prince begins his voyage home with the thought in mind of stopping off at some benevolent land and making friends and peace with those people, who will then help him furnish a ship and crew to finally assist him in his voyage home. This period of beginning to sail for home, after a long period of stagnation and frustration at not being able to get back to his homeland, comprise what is Odysseus' crossing the 1st threshold of his heroic journey (Miller, 2006).

**Tests, Allies, Enemies-** Odysseus' tests, allies, and enemies segment of his journey does not consist of many events. Although he faces many enemies and feats that he must overcome throughout his struggles getting home from Priamis city of Troy, at this point he faces only one major foe that definitely provides a non-superficial test for him to pass, and only one entity, being the Phaeacians, as his ally. As he begins his journey, Odysseus travels safely for

many days; however the immortal curse bestowed upon him by the relentless and unforgiving Poseidon, god of the seas and earthquakes, is yet to befall him. At around the 29th day into the story of the "Odyssey", Poseidon is seething up on high about the release of Odysseus from the caption of Calypso, and still infuriated by the transgression that the hero waged against his son Polyphemus the Cyclops, he wrecks his raft and Odysseus drifts to the shores of Scheria. This is the island of the Phaeacians, and after meeting the King of these peoples' daughter, Naussica, he is welcomed by King Alcinous and Queen Arete. After he stays at this great land which Homer portrays as being like the perfect utopian society, relating all of his past adventures and stories to the royal court and palace of Phaeacia, he is given a great many gifts and set off in a great ship of these people to sail him quickly home. He finally reaches Ithaca with these great oarsmen rowing him on in their own ship, and finds that he faces another challenge on coming home, perhaps even more trying than all the previous perils that he has faced outside of Ithaca, sailing around the great and mighty seas (Leeming, 2005)

**Approach to the Inmost Cave-** Odysseus approaches his inmost cave when he returns to his homeland and finally touches the ground of Ithaca once again. As he wakes up, after being dropped off by the Phaeacian sailors, he is immediately confronted by Athena and she drapes him in the guise of an old man, and advises him to first go to the swineherd Eumaeus' field and home. He is now back finally on his own land, the homecoming that he has longed for intermittently, for the past twenty years! It must be with great concentration and self-control that he can keep himself from running to his palace and proclaiming his return, an act which would probably have been fatal for him. So he learns from his loyal Eumaeus all that has befallen his kingdom during his absence, primarily the troubles of the suitors lying in wait to marry his bride Penelope. After learning all this, and meeting his son Telemachus for the first time grown-up, these two lay a plan and trap so that they may slowly test the suitors and all the servants of the palace for their loyalty and their resolve before finally slaying all that have wronged the great and now returned Odysseus (Myrsiades, 1987).

**Supreme Ordeal-** Odysseus' supreme ordeal is obviously facing the suitors and all those that have wronged him. He scrupulously and painstakingly draws out the time between when he first arrives and when he will attack. He remains under the guise of the old man, even up until the time when he kills the first suitor. Only he, the hero, knows when the time will come for the attack. The only other person that knows it is coming is Telemachus, and he is only told to be ready for the sign from Odysseus, whenever he decides that he will wreak his ultimate revenge and unfurl his rage. Eventually Odysseus finds out who is loyal to him and who is not, then finally decides to do the deed that he has waited for with thoughts of blood for about two or days. He kills all of the suitors in a battle in the main courtyard of the palace, then has the disloyal maids also executed (Barnes, 1959).

**Reward-** His reward is winning back his place of power and being able to be with his wife again, his son, and his surviving father.

**The Road Back-** Odysseus' road back can be symbolized by his journey on the road to see his father Laertes and bring him back so that he may live with him finally in peace in the palace. Odysseus has to face his last enemy in this denouement section of his journey in the object of the suitor's angry fathers who come after him with a hord from the city to kill Odysseus for his slaughter of the suitors. Odysseus, Telemachus, and even Laertes, of course with the help of the mentor Athena, fend of these aggressors and kill them too (Dougherty, 2001).

**Resurrection-** He is resurrected when he defeats this last enemy and can now take a reprieve from the constant threat of fighting and danger that has plagued him for two decades.

**Return with the Elixir-** The return with the elixir is when Odysseus and his loyal friends finally defeat his last threat to their survival, and peace is wrought over the entire place of Ithaca by Athena and the rest of the immortal gods up on high (Hamilton, 1990). This second version starts off with the Trojan War, so it gives a different perspective on the hero.

1. Ordinary World: The peaceful island of Ithaca is the ordinary world of Odysseus. Here Odysseus is the well respected and loved king of the island. He is married to his love, Penelope, whom he adores with his heart (Anderson, 1991)
2. Call to Adventure: Odysseus is summoned to join Agamemnon and other Achaeans to attack the city of Troy. They are going to Troy to retrieve the wife of Menelaus, Helen, after she is taken by Paris, the prince of Troy (Pucci, 1998).
3. Refusal of the Call: At first Odysseus refuses this invitation because he does not want to leave his quiet and peaceful homeland and leave behind his wife and his newly born son (Salla, 2002, 24).
4. Mentor: The mentor of Odysseus is, without a doubt, Pallas Athena, the bright-eyed goddess. Athena helps Odysseus innumerable times throughout his travels. The daughter of Zeus endows Odysseus with advice for which he is greatly faithful and devoted to her (Nortwick, 2009).

5. First Threshold: The Trojan War is the first threshold of Odysseus. At the war Odysseus becomes renowned for his cunning, bravery, prowess, and this mind. His mental and physical attributes are of equal importance to these heroes (Heubeck, 1990).

6. Test, Allies, Enemies : The journey home is an amalgam of tests, allies, and enemies for Odysseus. There are many tests, not to mention many temptations, through which Odysseus thrives through. The people which befriend Odysseus are the ones who give him food, clothes, and shelter like King Alcinous, and Circe. Obviously throughout the story there is one main enemy who is against Odysseus, this is Poseidon. There are also many small enemies who Odysseus meets on his travels. Scylla, Charybdis, and the Lastrygonians are some of his adversaries, but the most important is the cyclops, Polythemus, who condemns Odysseus to his long, arduous journey home. Primarily speaking Odysseus encounters new tests, allies, and enemies on each new land he falls upon on his trek back to Ithaca (Littleton, 2005).

7. Approach to Inmost Cave: The approach to the inmost cave is when the son of Laertes, Odysseus, finally arrives home at last. At first he does not acknowledge the fact that he is home. When he does come to that fact, he knows he cannot run home and exclaim that he is back. He knows he must bury his great feelings until the time is right (Stanford, 1954).

8. Supreme Ordeal: Getting back to his peaceful home of Ithaca and reuniting with Penelope and Telemachus is the ultimate ordeal of Odysseus. Before he can do that, he must drive the careless suitors from his once proud household.

9. Reward: The reward for Odysseus is when he arrives home and then defeats the complacent suitors. Also Odysseus is abounding with riches in presents from the aristocrats of Phaeacia.

10. Road Back: The road back for our hero, Odysseus, is when he cleanses his house of the incarnadine stains from the vile blood of the suitors and removing their bodies to the outside. After this is done, Odysseus goes to see his sick and emaciated father to bring his spirits back to life.

11. Resurrection: Now Odysseus is once again in his rightful position as King of Ithaca. This can be seen as a resurrection for Odysseus.

12. Return with Elixir: The returning with elixir for Odysseus is partly when he restores peace and tranquility to his house. The other part that fulfills this is when Odysseus is reunited to crestfallen Penelope (and his father later on) he brings back happiness to them once again (West, 2007).

Once again, there is more than one way to do these types of character studies. Here is one view of the character arc of Odysseus.

1. Limited Awareness - Odysseus is living a placid life in the land of Ithaca with his lovely wife, Penelope, and his young son, Telemachus. He is not at all aware of what role that war will play in his life.

2. Increased Awareness - Odysseus' awareness is augmented when Agamemnon and Menelaus come to him ascertaining if he will join them with their warfleet to Troy.

3. Reluctance to Change: At first Odysseus refuses this invitation because he does not want to leave his quiet and peaceful homeland and leave behind his wife and his newly born son.

4. Overcoming: After some convincing Odysseus gives in and embarks on a journey that will take him twenty years to next lay eyes on his homeland once again.

5. Committing: At the Trojan War Odysseus is seen as one of the most respected and important warriors of the Achaeans.

6. Experimenting: The war home and the journey home is what I say as Odysseus' experimenting. At these situations Odysseus gets a chance to show his bravery and his mind (Morris, 1997).

7. Preparing - The journey home is when Odysseus prepares himself for when the times comes of him reaching the shores of Ithaca. There are many temptations which put Odysseus' love for Penelope on the line. Through each one he struggles and triumphant.

8. Big Change: The big change for Odysseus comes when the ruler of all gods, Zeus, permits his long awaited return to Ithaca to continue once more. Prior to this Odysseus thought that reaching home was almost impossible for him. His grieving heart sank more and more each passing day until Hermes, with his wing-tipped golden sandals, flew down to Ogygia, and told Calypso to release Odysseus.

9. Consequences: Calypso had no choice but to release her captive to voyage home. After she tells Odysseus to leave he constructs a makeshift raft to carry him back to his homeland.

10. Rededication: Odysseus' thoughts and actions are redirected to try to return to Ithaca to reunite with Penelope.

11. Final Attempt: The battle between the suitors and Odysseus, Telemachus, and his allies serves as Odysseus' final attempt.



12. Mastery: Odysseus defeats the suitors and restores tranquility to his house. Thus completing his arduous journey that lasted twenty long enduring years (ibid: 326-344).

## CONCLUSION

The 'Odyssey' itself is a form of archetype, an epic journey with various conventions, the crossing of water, obstacles, super natural elements. As for specific archetypes in the odyssey, it's best to simply consider character archetypes. Most, if not all of the characters in the Odyssey follow an archetype, For example Odysseus himself, the galliant and intelligent hero, Athene the mentor, the sirens as 'femme fatals' and Posidon as the antagonist, or 'baddie'.

1. Ordinary World, The hero's normal world before the story begins Odysseus as King in Ithaca.
2. Call to Adventure, The hero is presented with a problem, challenge or adventure.  
He does not want to leave and uphold his oath in having to sail to Troy (so he pretends to be insane)
3. Refusal of the Call - The hero refuses the challenge or journey, usually because he's scared  
Odysseus pretends to be insane and plows a field using salt; but the Greeks force his hand by placing the baby Telemachus in from of the plow. O must turn the oxen aside or kill his own son.
4. Meeting with the Mentor: The hero meets a mentor to gain advice or training for the adventure  
This could be his interactions with Circe as she consults him about his journey. More likely - it is his interactions with Athena as she is constantly weaving in and out of the myth helping both Odysseus and Telemachus.
5. crossing the First Threshold - The hero crosses leaves the ordinary world and goes into the special world: Odysseus in the Underworld
6. Tests, Allies, and Enemies: The hero faces tests, meets allies, confronts enemies and learn the rules of the Special World. All of his "quests" the cave and the Cyclops, Circe and the Underworld, the Cattle of the Sun God, the bag of winds, the Sirens, etc.
7. Approach :The hero has hit setbacks during tests & may need to try a new idea.  
Odysseus's disguise as a beggar allows him to reconnoiter the palace so he can plan his revenge.
8. Ordeal: The biggest life or death crisis the battle royal with the Suitors.
9. Reward: The hero has survived death, overcomes his fear and now earns the reward,  
Odysseus's home coming to his wife and son.
10. The Road Back: The hero must return to the Ordinary World.  
His plans to reconquer his kingdom - he must meet the challenge by the families of the suitors whom he has killed.
11. Resurrection Hero: another test where the hero faces death – he has to use everything he's learned.
12. Return with Elixir: The hero returns from the journey with the “elixir”, and uses it to help everyone in the Ordinary World.

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## USING SOCIAL NETWORKS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING IN IRAN

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### ABSTRACT

Social networks (SNs) have become an important tool in online communication. Students spend hours using social networks every day, so the scholars in the field of education in general and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context in particular are trying to integrate SNs in language learning and use them to their advantage. Hence, this research sought to find out to what extent students are familiar with SNs in Iran and are willing to use them as learning tools. Moreover, to what extent teachers believe that SNs can be helpful in teaching different components of language. To this end, two questionnaires were designed; one for students and one for teachers. The results showed that students are active users of SNs and believe SNs are good environments to learn and practice English. Teachers in Iran also recognized SNs as useful tools that can help students in their language learning. It concludes that SNs do have the potential to empower students in their learning English.

**KEY WORDS:** English teaching and learning, social networks, Iranian EFL Context

### INTRODUCTION

The advent of digital age has changed the way people communicate in the last decades. Whether in the form of emails or social networks (SNs), technology has been integrated with communication to challenge the way individuals associate with one another (Richardson & Hessey, 2009). Web 2.0 applications have impacted our life in many ways. E-learning or learning through internet is a by-product of these technologies that had a great impact on education and consequently language learning.

Until recently, studies in second language learning have not paid due attention to the learners as a social being (Holliday, 1994; Norton & Toohey, 2003; Palfreyman, 2003). A significant body of literature has developed concerning learners individually, focusing on the strategies they use to learn language both inside and outside the classroom, with less attention to the context of their learning (Oxford, 1990; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Wenden, 1991; Dickinson, 1992; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995).

Web 2.0 technologies offer “numerous opportunities to create innovative, engaging and pedagogically effective learning opportunities” (Conole & Culver, 2009). Internet with its universal features has improved language learning. The students clearly favor electronic sources for language learning; learning language through online technologies can increase the engagement; attendance and motivation of students (Hartman et al., 1991; Palfreyman, 2006; Roohi 2009; & Mohammadi et al, 2011), as well as giving them the chance to express their own preferences, construct their own settings, and present their identities (Girgin, 2011).

Social networks are among the latest examples of communications technologies that are very popular among university students (Kabilan, et. al 2010) and have the potential to become a valuable resource to support their language learning (Roblyer et al., 2010). Social network websites have many applications; they allow each user to create a personalized profile, select other users as friends, send private messages, join groups, post and/or tag pictures, and leave comments on these pictures as well as on either a group or an individual's wall or even create pages for different events. There are also so many third-parties or applications on the social networks platform like Facebook, such as games, polls and quizzes. One feature of social networks that makes them a potentially powerful tool for language learning is that they function primarily as communication tools (Roblyer et al., 2010). As Bakhtin

(cited in Brown, 2007) notes language is “immersed in a social and cultural context and its central function is to serve as a medium of communication.”

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Using social networks in educational and instructional contexts can be considered as a potentially powerful idea simply because students spend a lot of time on these online networking activities (Mazman, 2010). Mason and Rennie (2007) comments that it is no longer a question of whether to take advantage of these electronic technologies in foreign language teaching or not, the question is how to promote students’ learning using them. Studies showed that social network tools support educational activities by making interaction, collaboration, active participation, information and resource sharing, and critical thinking possible (Mason, 2006; Selwyn, 2007; Ajjan & Hartshorne, 2008).

Based on some studies students believe that SNs like Facebook could be utilized as an online environment to facilitate the learning of English (Kabilan, 2010; Girgin, 2011). Students agree that this online environment can be an appropriate tool to help learning different language skills, enhance their motivation, confidence, and attitudes towards learning English that can bring about successful application of CALL (Kabilan et. al, 2010; Vandewaetere & Desmet, 2009).

One of the problems that students encounter in learning language is the lack of opportunities for authentic communication due to non-personalized course content, and complains about being forced to follow a strict curriculum (Bartlett & Bragg, 2006; Donmus, 2010). Integrating social networks into existing learning practices can provide informal learning contexts and create new opportunities for language learning (Bartlett & Bragg, 2006). The texts that are produced in social networks are authentic materials. Social network sites provide the users the tools to construct their own experience, rather than passively reading the existing material (Mason & Rennie, 2007) Students become autonomous; they can be independent from books and teacher.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Unlike all the potentials enumerated above, research on social networking in language teaching is still limited and the need for research on social networks in post structural language learning has been recently recognized. In recent works less attention has been paid to the contexts that the learners are a part of; and in particular to the strategies related to the social context (Oxford, 1990) have been discussed less in later work (e.g. Chamot & O’Malley, 1996) than the more individual centered categories of ‘cognitive’ and metacognitive strategies. The use of available online technologies for education to date has been limited to face-to-face practice in an online context (Conole, 2009).

The education community still continues to struggle to establish the role these innovations can play in effective language teaching and learning. Students come to classes as all equipped with the newest technologies available, but often they have to leave them at the door (Roblyer, 2010), because the field still seems to lack a unified theory and scope of the uses of social networks in language pedagogy. On the other hand, due to social and cultural restraints much needs to be done to see how such factors affect the success and failure of the use of these tools in different cultures and contexts.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

As suggested by tenets of reflective practice (Schön, 1983), combining the view of students and instructors is valuable for exploring the potential learning opportunities offered by SNs; and students can be most critical of their experience with SNs. Accordingly, the following questions guide the current study:

1. What are the attitudes of Iranian university students towards using SNs to practice their English outside the classroom?
2. What are the views of Iranian language teachers towards using SNs to achieve their teaching goals?
3. What aspects of language do Iranian teachers identify that can be truly practiced in the classroom?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

The population involved in the present study comprised undergraduate university students at Ilam University and a number of English teachers. The majority of subjects that participated in the study were modest users of English since they were students and teachers of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). Based on Oxford Quick Placement Test (2002), 100 EFL undergraduate BA students were assigned to two intermediate and advanced levels of language proficiency (females: 34, males: 66, age range: 18 to 29, mean age: 22). Furthermore, 50 teachers that taught English in university and English teaching institutes took part in the study. They had between 1 to 12 years of experience teaching English. Their age ranged between 21 and 35 with the mean of 27.5.

### *Instruments*

Two questionnaires were used to collect the data. One questionnaire was designed for the students and one for the teachers. The questionnaire for the students was designed in three parts. The items in the first section of the questionnaire (questions 1–5) established some basic information about the respondent, including their level of proficiency, popular SNs and applications, the amount of time that students spend on SNs weekly, how long they have been a member of SN, and the language they use in their interactions in the SNs. The first part elicited data about the social networks and the applications in SNs that were mostly used by the students. These items built up a picture of the kind of SNs and the degree of involvement of students in these web sites. The second part attempted to investigate students' belief towards the usefulness of SNs in improving different skills and components of language (9 items). And the last part was related to affective domain, and the degree that SNs can enhance confidence, motivation, and interest of learners.

In the second questionnaire teachers were asked about their opinions about the potentiality of applying SNs in their classes. First, we used Backman model of components of language (1991), and asked the teachers to what extent applying SNs can be helpful in learning each component of language (items 1-13). Following this section teachers were inquired about their opinion about expediency of SNs and their applications in the affective domain (confidence, motivation, interest of learners, and autonomy) and in the process of learning in the classroom. The reliability estimates of the two questionnaires were 0.89 and 0.94 respectively.

### *Procedure*

The study was conducted in December 2012 among the students of Ilam University and teachers of language institutes of Ilam. The questionnaires were filled voluntarily by the students during their class time. It took up to 15 minutes for the questionnaires to be filled. The questionnaires were returned on the spot. After receiving the first set of questionnaires, the teachers were asked to fill the questionnaires in their break time; they also returned the questionnaires right away. The collected data were analyzed by the SPSS statistic software version 20.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This paper examines whether SNs are an effective tool for improving second-language learning in Iran. For the analysis of the collected data, frequency and percentages were used; whereas for the description of likert items, mean scores, standard deviation and percentages were employed to describe the students' and teachers' views on SNs as a learning environment for learning English. The data collected by the first part of students' questionnaire revealed the most popular SNs in Iran. Facebook is the world leader among SN sites, and as table 1 shows it is the most popular SN among the TEFL students. 63% of students were member of Facebook, while 57% were members of Google+. Youtube (37%) and Twitter (11%) are next popular SNs. My Space did not have any members among the students. Many students have accounts in multiple SNs.

*Table 1: Percent of members of different SNs*

Social network	%
Facebook	63%
Google +	57%
Youtube	37%
Twitter	11%
My Space	0%

Table 2 shows the applications of SNs and the extent the students use them. Messaging and chat were the most popular applications; 55% of students used messaging regularly, and 44% were regular users of the chat application. The participants use SNs more for their one to one communication; Roblyer (2010) relates the potential of SNs for learning English to their power of communication that frees students from time and distance limitations. Messaging and chat applications are the most popular applications. Messaging is even more popular than chat application,

probably because it provides students an asynchronic meaningful communication which reduces dynamic social context cues that may intimidate students, such as frowning and hesitating (Finholt, Kiesler & Sproull, 1986), besides, it provides students a chance to reflect on their own writing before communicating. Hartman *et al.*, (1991) also reports that students prefer computer mediated communication to face-to-face meetings. Those students who may self-conscious to initiate discussions with their teachers or with other students any use this communication tools which are powerful features of SNs as an alternative, this results in greatly increased student-teacher and student-student interaction.

Photo sharing and giving comments are used most regularly after messaging and chat respectively. Creating group pages is an application that is not used heavily; this can be related to the fact that educational pages like class instruction are less authentic and personalized. Authenticity in language learning is especially important in foreign language contexts (Beauvois, 1998). Table 2 clearly shows that the applications that provide students with more communicating opportunities most easily are utilized more, because using these applications students express their ideas in a more natural and authentic communicative function, rather than just attempting to please the teacher (Cohen & Miyake, 1986).

*Table 2: Facebook applications used regularly by students*

Applications	Percent	Ratio (%)
Messaging	55%	24.66
Chat	44%	19.73
Photo sharing	38%	17.04
Giving comments	25%	11.21
Film sharing	24%	10.27
Game	24%	10.27
Creating group page	13%	5.82
Total	-	100

Regarding the membership in different SNs, 87% of the respondents were at least members of one or more SNs, while the rest (13%) of students didn't use any SNs and was not a member in any online social networks. Table 3 shows the length of time that students have been using SNs. 22.2% of students has been a member of SNs more than three years. And 18.5% have joined SNs recently (between 1 to 3 months). In other words, many have joined SNs and many are joining these communities. Several other studies revealed this growing desire to join SNs among students (2006; Kolek & Saunders, 2008; Mazman, 2010).

*Table 3: Length of time being a SN's member*

	Not a member	Months								Total
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-18	18-24	25-36	More than 36	
Percent (%)	13.0	18.5	3.7	5.6	9.3	5.6	14.8	7.4	22.2	100%
Cumulative percent (%)	0.0	18.5	22.2	27.8	37.1	42.7	59.5	66.9	87.0	87%

We further checked the time students spend in SNs. The self-reported information (Table 4) demonstrates that only 14.8 of students do not log in to their SN account and never use them. 85.2% of students use the SN or SNs that they are a member at least 1 to 3 hours weekly. 68.5% of students spend at least 4-6 hours weekly, and 16.7% spend more than 12 hours in a week in their SNs. The details of table 4 reveal that Iranian students are avid users of the social networks, and online social networking is deeply embedded in their lifestyle.

*Table 4: Hours spent in SNs weekly.*

	Hours used weekly						Total
	Never	1-3 hours	4-6 hours	7-9 hours	10-12 hours	More than 12 hours	
Percent (%)	14.8	20.4	33.3	11.1	3.7	16.7	100

Next we inquired the student about their use of language with their Farsi speaker and English speaker friends (in reading, writing, speaking and listening). Table 5 shows the data regarding the language used by students. The mean score was calculated by assigning values to the likert scale as shown in the table. Mean score of these values shows that students use a mix of Farsi and English more frequently (mean, 3.31). Tendency to use English (mean, 3.07) is greater than Farsi (mean, 2.60). Although, as their native language using Farsi is easier for them, TEFL students



prefer to use their English more when communicating with their peers and their native and international friends. SNs give the Iranian students the independent opportunity to use the foreign language with other language learners or cross-cultural communication around the world, which many suggest fostering student autonomy (Soh & Soon, 1991; Barson, Frommer & Schwartz, 1993; Sayers, 1993). Paramskas (1993) asserts that that is why SNs help Student enthusiasm, initiative, and personal commitment.

*Table 5: Language used for SNs interaction with Farsi speakers and English speakers.*

Language used	scale					Mean score
	never 1(%)	seldom 2(%)	sometimes 3(%)	frequent 4(%)	always 5(%)	
Using Farsi	9.8	17.1	39.0	24.4	9.8	2.60
Using English	2.3	22.7	31.8	27.3	15.9	3.07
Using English and Farsi	7.3	14.6	31.7	22.0	24.4	3.31

When asked to rate the usefulness of SNs in their improvement in different aspects of language skills and components, students tended to highly agree with each item. A 5-level Likert scales of ‘Strongly disagree’ to ‘Strongly agree’ was used, similar values to the last part were assigned to the likert scale (strongly disagree 1, disagree 2, slightly agree 3, agree 4, strongly agree 5) to calculate the mean and SD of each item. The percentage of students that agreed or strongly agreed with each item was also included in table 6 as well as mean and SD.

According to table 6, in students’ view SN environment are suitable for improving speaking skills (mean 3.74) more than the other language skills. Reading (mean 3.62), writing (mean 3.41), and listening (mean 3.16) have the highest means respectively. In case of sub-skills of language, students agreed that SNs are good places to improve one’s vocabulary (mean 3.77). And 46.3% of students agreed or strongly agreed that through the SNs they can improve their grammar. Thus, as can be seen from the mean scores for all items in Table 6, the general opinion of the students is that social network platforms can be supportive of their language learning. Unlike traditional classrooms that favor those students who speak up most quickly, most often, and are most willing to interrupt, SNs allow students to contribute at their own time and pace (Selfe & Meyer, 1991; Tella, 1992).

*Table 6: Students beliefs about SNs as a leaning environment.*

		SA/A(%)*	Mean	SD
SNs	improve writing in English	55.5	3.41	.73
	improve reading in English	68.5	3.62	.73
	improve speaking in English	35.8	3.74	1.05
	improve listening in English	32.1	3.16	1.03
	Improve English vocabulary	69.8	3.77	.912
	improve grammar	46.3	3.29	1.10
	improve your communication skills	79.7	4.00	.77
	Make learning English easier	61.5	3.65	.96
	Makes you more familiar with the English culture	72.2	3.88	.83

\*SA/A, strongly agree or agree.

primarily are stages of communications, including cross-cultural communication. Therefore they provide a great opportunity for improving communication skills and raising cultural awareness. Students believed that SNs can improve their communication skills (mean 4.0), make them familiar with English culture (mean 3.88), and make learning English easier (mean 3.65). Abrams, 2006 and Lomicka, 2006 assert that Chat, email and other forms of electronic communication, which are prominent features of SNs promotes cultural, pragmatic and linguistic competence by providing meaningful communication and providing an environment for students to use the language with native speakers or other learners.

Regarding the items that were concerned with the affective domain, motivation and attitudes of students was inspected in their writing, reading, and communicating. Table 7 represents the data related to affective domain of learning. In case of the confidence 72.2% of students think that their confidence in writing increases in SNs context. 65% agreed that their confidence enhances in communicating and 57.4 agreed that their confidence enhances to read English material. So, students had very positive view that SNs boost their confidence in learning English in different aspects.

The case with motivation was the same. As the content of the table shows even a larger number of students believed that their motivation in reading (72.2%), writing (64.8%), communicating (73%) would be enhanced using SNs. Socializing and communication in highly interactive space of SNs makes learning English more interesting and



authentic. 77.4 of students had the same opinion that SNs make learning English more interesting, because SNs increase engagement, attendance, as well as motivation of students (Mohammadi et al., 2011).

Most highly students agreed that SNS make learning English more interesting. This can be linked to the fact that most of the interactions in SNs are not much formal, as they happen between friends and peers. Studies on informal social interaction and its place in foreign language learning suggest that it enhances language proficiency and confidence (Kurata, 2011). When students confirm that SNs enhance their motivation and confidence, and make learning English more interesting, it automatically means that they think SNs as good places to practice their knowledge of English. Therefore, unsurprisingly 70.3% agreed that SNs are a good place to practice English.

*Table 7: Effect of SNs on motivation, confidence, and attitudes of students*

	SA/A	Mean	SD
1. Enhance your confidence to write in English	72.2	3.61	.94
2. Enhance your confidence to read material in English	57.4	3.81	.77
3. Enhance your confidence to communicate in English	65.5	3.90	.93
4. Enhance your motivation to communicate using English	73.6	3.98	.82
5. Enhance your motivation to read English material	72.2	3.92	.88
6. Enhance your motivation to write in English	64.8	3.70	.96
7. Makes learning English more interesting	77.4	4.05	.86
8. Practice in English	70.3	3.96	.95

\*SA/A, strongly agree or agree.

Given the students eagerness for using SNs in their language learning, language teachers need to be able to willing and ready to use SNs in language instruction, therefore teachers opinions was investigated in a separate questionnaire. As for the second questionnaire, similar to the first questionnaire mean and SD were computed as well as the percent of respondent that agreed or strongly agreed with each item. Generally all the items had high means and were highly agreed with.

The lowest mean belongs to item A10 (mean 3.11); teachers agreed less on the usefulness of practicing English in SNs to improve coherence and organization in students writings. Probably, because nearly all the exchanged texts and writings are most often informal and short, and not more than a few sentences. More than any English skill, component, or competence, teachers accepted that SNs are good for students to learn vocabulary (A8, mean 4.20), which makes sense as new words can be practice in meaningful short texts, such as comments, which is suitable for learning vocabulary. After vocabulary, teachers recognize SNs as a good environment to practice writing (A6, mean 4.00). Improving reading comprehension skills (mean 3.88) and getting familiar with the differences between the target and the native culture and enhance their sensitivity to cultural norms (mean 3.97) are also items that had a high percent of agreement. In SNs students are exposed to language variation and have the opportunity to put their pragmatic knowledge in practice. Blattner and Fiori (2009) described the premier SN of the world (Facebook) as a potential language instruction tool to promote socio-pragmatic competence. On the whole teachers seem to be very positive towards the effectiveness of integrating the SNs in their teaching approaches to improve language skills and components.

*Table 8: Teachers view about improving language skills and components.*

	SA/A (%)	Mean	SD
A1. Enhance their textual knowledge	48.5	3.42	.97
A2. Enhance their sensitivity to dialect and social registers.	61.8	3.61	1.07
A3. Become familiar with the differences between the target and the native culture and enhance their sensitivity to cultural norms.	80.0	3.97	.95
A4. Enhance their reading comprehension skill.	71.4	3.88	1.02
A5. Enhance their speaking skill.	60.0	3.54	1.09
A6. Enhance their writing skill.	74.3	4.00	.80
A7. Enhance their listening skill.	55.9	3.41	1.45
A8. Increase their vocabulary knowledge.	85.7	4.20	.99
A9. Improve their knowledge of grammar.	48.5	3.45	.88
A10. Improve coherence and organization in their writings.	34.3	3.11	1.07
A11. Enhance their communicative competence	65.7	3.85	1.08
A12. Achieve an acceptable level of language proficiency.	57.1	3.48	1.09
A13. Develop their foreign language pragmatic competence.	54.3	3.48	1.01

Teachers also agreed to a great extent that SNs can be personalized settings that can accommodate to students personality traits, learning strategies, needs, and affective features. As it was established students already agreed that SNs give them motivation, confidence, and interest them. Moreover, teachers believed that SNs have good compliance with their teaching strategies (mean 3.57) as well as students' learning strategies (mean 3.54). SNs were seen as an independent learning environment that can be easily utilized in the classroom and be in line with teachers' teaching instructions.

*Table 9: The compatibility of SNs with individual aspects*

	Mean	SD
(SNs' tools and activities can be tailored to):		
B1. The students' personality traits.	3.41	1.13
B2. The students' learning strategies.	3.54	1.09
B3. The students' needs.	3.57	1.00
B4. The students' affective features.	3.64	1.06
B5. The teachers' teaching strategies.	3.57	1.06

Similar to students, teachers also believed that one of the most important features of SNs that can help in learning is that they make English learning more interesting than the traditional methods of teaching (mean 4.20), and motivate students to learn English (mean 4.14). As Oroujlou and Vahedi (2011) maintain taking the motives of students into account can make language learning interesting. Students are self-motivated to use SNs and that is what makes learning language interesting in both students' and teachers' view. SNs differ from the traditional classes that had a blackboard and chalk system since they foster community and collaboration.

*Table 10: The compatibility of SNs with Affective features*

	Mean	SD
<b>Social networks:</b>		
C1. Make students feel more motivated in learning the foreign language.	4.14	1.06
C2. Reduces the students' anxiety.	3.91	1.06
C3. Are more interesting to the students than the traditional ones.	4.20	1.02
C4. Are more interactive than the regular classes.	3.80	1.13
C5. Are authentic.	3.62	1.11
C6. Have fixed but dynamic Curriculum.	3.31	1.05
<b>Tasks and activities designed by the use of social networks' tools:</b>		
D1. Are more challenging.	3.88	.79
D2. Are more meaningful to the students.	3.77	.87
D3. Have more information gaps.	3.68	.90
D4. Are authentic, personalized, and learner-driven.	3.91	1.06
<b>In classes using social networks, students:</b>		
E1. Become more creative.	3.85	.91
E2. Receive more feedback from teachers and peers.	3.91	.91
E3. Collaborate more with each other.	4.08	.88
E4. Can design the materials based on their needs.	3.74	1.19

There are so many advantages that make using SNs in the classroom beneficial. In teachers view using SNs in the classroom reduces anxiety, there is lots of interaction between users, the material offered is authentic, and can help teachers have a dynamic curriculum. The tools and applications of SNs can make learning more challenging, meaningful, create more information gap, and the material they offer are more authentic, personalized, and learner-driven. Teachers agreed that classes that uses SNs are more creativite, get more feedback from peers, more collaboration, and offers material that are designed based on their needs. Providing an interactive environment which creates independent and collaborative opportunities is especially important in for foreign language learning when learners where exposure to target is limited.

## CONCLUSION

The data that were drawn two questionnaires showed that Iranian students are active users of SNs and being part of SN's community is gaining more and more popularity with the TEFL students of Ilam University. The data showed that they use a good deal of English and also a mix of Persian and English in their interactions, besides they are highly eager to use SNs in the process of their language learning, and exercise what they have learned about language in SNs. they believe that their interactions in SNs enhances their confidence and motivation in using English, and helps them improve different language skills and components. Thus this is safe to claim that SNs are an excellent tool for fostering new social relations between the learners, resulting in improving their proficiency. When

online social networking of students combines with their education, their education can get innovative and entertaining. This helps students to gain very positive attitudes and get motivated to learn and use their English. Teachers also thought SNs as good places for practice that is interesting for students, motivates them, and is makes them confident in language learning. They were many advantages of using SNs that teachers highly agreed with them. They had a positive view that SNs can be effective in improving the language skills of students, and have many advantages that helps facilitating language learning, such as being creative and challenging, having authenticity and being learner centered, have the potential of adjusting themselves with learners different personality treats. Therefore planning to use SNs in classroom and integrating them into foreign language learning seems very beneficial and facilitating for Iranian classrooms, where classes are often crowded and learning language is mostly a passive experience.

Although the findings of the study are encouraging, the mere readiness of students and teachers to exploit SNs pedagogically does not guarantee the successful integration of SNs in Iranian language learning context. Further investigation into ways of integrating the SNs in the classrooms is necessary by all means.

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**L2 IDIOM LEARNING IN THE CONTEXT OF DISTANCE LEARNING: A FOCUS ON  
TEXTUAL AND PICTORIAL GLOSSING AND HYPERLINK**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the effects of textual and pictorial glossing and hyperlink on L2 idiom comprehension in distance learning context. The participants, 60 Intermediate female English as a foreign language (EFL) students, were randomly assigned to 4 groups of 15. All groups received two stories a week through Email. Each group received the stories with a different mode of presentation. Two groups were provided with hyperlinked idioms: pictorial and textual hyperlink. The other two groups received instruction through glosses, pictorial and textual glosses. At the end of the treatment period, a multiple choice test was administered to measure receptive knowledge of idioms. The findings showed that the pictorial groups outperformed the textual groups in both hyperlink and glossing conditions on the comprehension test. The present study may have implications for teachers, learners, material writers, textbook authors, CALL package designers and distance learning planners in that it may encourage them to add pictorials to the verbal input.

**KEY WORDS:** idiom learning, distance learning, gloss

**INTRODUCTION**

In today's society, the web-based environment of education has provided learners with the opportunity to improve their knowledge of second language (L2) and enhance their communicative competence by the use of various web-based services such as: Email, chat, online dictionaries, online magazines, electronic banking, electronic books, electronic shopping, private online language tutoring courses, etc. Furthermore, the internet has made it possible for learners to choose and manage the process of their learning regardless of the physical location of them.

Another side of this study is idioms. Idioms are one of the crucial culturally integrated constituents of any language. Idioms have received considerable attention from pedagogical point of view in recent years (e.g., Abel, 2003; Boers, 2001; Cooper, 1999; Gibbs, 1980). Researchers and instructors have offered many presentation modes to instruct idioms including L2 definition, L1 explanation, etymology elaboration, pictorial elucidation, glosses, etc.

Nevertheless, the issue of applying the most effective presentation mode of teaching idioms has generated a substantial amount of controversy among researchers. Boers (2001) states that associating an idiom with its etymology has been shown to enhance retention. He believes that the simple question 'Where might this expression come from?' has a facilitative role in helping learners to call up in their minds a concrete scene. On the other hand, Fotovatnia and Khaki (2012) point out the pedagogical value of pictures for the teaching of both meaning and form of decomposable idioms. Boers, Piriz, Stengers, and Eyckmans (2009), in a small-scale experiment, addressed the question of whether pictorial elucidation helps retention of the form of idioms, i.e. their precise lexical composition. Results revealed that the addition of pictorial elucidation contributes little to learners' retention of linguistic forms.

The objective of the present study is to investigate the effect of four presentation modes (pictorial hyperlink, pictorial gloss, textual hyperlink, and textual gloss) on SL idioms learning. Previous studies on idioms have demonstrated the positive effect of these modes on L2 idiom learning in classroom context. This study is an attempt to compare them with each other in order to see which one is the most effective in the context of distance learning.



## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

By the use of the Internet and the World Wide Web, learners have the opportunity to manage the process of their learning based on their need and purpose. In addition, one culturally integrated aspect of any languages is idioms. Also, there are many modes of idiom presentation. The debate is about which mode is the most effective and compatible mode in distance learning context.

### ***Idioms***

An appropriate use of idiomatic expressions is a sign of language fluency. Many advanced language learners are unable to utilize these expressions appropriately, or they avoid using them. In the literature, idioms have been defined by many linguists and lexicographers in different ways. According to Cooper (1999), an idiom is an expression whose meaning cannot always be readily derived from the usual meaning of its constituent elements. Likewise, Abel (2003) holds that a decomposable idiom is an idiom whose individual components contribute to its figurative meaning, whereas the constituents of a nondecomposable idiom do not make such a contribution. In an attempt to offer a tentative idiom classification, Andreou and Galantomos (2008) believe that Greek idioms can be categorized as figurative idioms, idiomatic expressions based on historical and cultural knowledge in general, and pure idioms (i.e. non compositional idioms).

### ***Different presentation modes of idiom***

Mayer (1997) mentions differences among delivery media, presentation modes, and sensory modalities. He refers to delivery media as the system used to present instruction, such as a book-based medium versus a computer-based medium. Presentation modes refer to the format used to represent the presented instruction, such as words versus pictures, and modality refers to the information processing channel that a learner uses to process the information such as acoustic versus visual information processing. According to Mayer (2008), a central challenge of psychology and education is the development of the science of instruction aimed at understanding how to present material in ways that help people learn.

### ***Multimedia***

Providing appropriate and relevant pictures depicting concrete and relevant scenes makes materials more appealing and may foster comprehension and retrieval of L2 idioms and words. In addition to pictures, using videos, sounds, animated pictures, drawings, and video clips becomes common ways of presenting idioms or words.

The term multimedia means different things on different levels. On the level of technology, it means the use of multiple delivery media such as computers, screens, and loudspeakers. On the level of presentation formats, it means the use of different forms of representation such as texts and pictures. On the level of sensory modalities, it means the use of multiple senses such as the eye and the ear (Mayer, 2005, pp. 49-70).

To demonstrate the importance of pictures in education, Yeh and Wang (2003) conducted a study to compare the effectiveness of three types of vocabulary annotations on vocabulary learning of EFL college students in Taiwan: text annotation only, text plus picture, and text plus picture and sound. The results of the study showed that the version with text plus picture was the most effective type of vocabulary annotation. Similarly, Yushi (2006) investigated the effects of additional pictorial cues in L1 and L2 glosses, and how these additions affect vocabulary learning in a multimedia environment. 195 students from two universities in Japan participated in his study. The students were randomly divided into four groups using four different gloss types: the first group read a story with L1 text-only glosses; the second group read it with L2 text-only; the third group used L1 text-plus-pictorial cues in the glosses; and the fourth group had as their glosses L2 text-plus-pictorial cues. The results showed a significant difference between picture and no-picture groups, suggesting the beneficial effects of pictures with regard to learners' retention of the meaning of words.

Finally, Zarei and Salimi (20012) found evidence supporting the effective role of pictures in L2 vocabulary recognition and production. They compared the effectiveness of three methods of vocabulary presentation: picture, song, and the keyword method on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary recognition and production. Results showed that the group instructed through picture had the best performance.

### ***Gloss***



Glossing is another useful mode of idiom and word presentation. Generally, glosses are categorized into two types: Computer-based or multimedia-based glosses versus paper-based glosses. Many researchers have examined the effectiveness of glosses in enhancing vocabulary and idioms knowledge of L2 learners, and have compared various kinds of glosses.

Shahrokni (2009) compared the effect of online textual, pictorial, and textual pictorial glosses on the incidental vocabulary learning of 90 adult elementary Iranian EFL learners. 3 groups of participants were exposed to the research treatment. During 3 sessions of instruction, 5 computerized reading texts including 25 target words were studied. The participants read the texts for comprehension and, at the same time, were able to consult the glosses attached to the target words. Results showed that a combination of text and still images resulted in significantly better incidental vocabulary learning.

In a similar attempt, Yousefzadeh (2011) compared computer-based glosses with traditional glosses. Two groups of participants received instruction in the following conditions: The Computer based group were instructed through computer. i.e. new words were presented with their pictures and L1 translations and the traditional group received material on the paper only with L1 translation. The results indicated the superiority of computer-based glosses.

### ***The impact of CALL in foreign language learning***

New technologies offer students a venue for additional interesting and engaging activities in second or foreign language learning. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) provides a motivating and safe environment of learning which may improve students' achievement. Within this context of electronic learning (e-learning), students have the opportunity to choose and manage their learning and to keep interaction and connectivity. To show the powerful role of e-learning, Bielawski and Metcalf (2003) state that e-learning is powerful because it is able to provide the right information to the right people at the right times and places. Furthermore, integrating technologies with language pedagogy may develop learner autonomy and help learners to become independent. Raya and Fernández (2002) emphasizes the effective role of new technologies which can help learners to take a more active part in determining their own objectives and syllabi, as well as the path and timing they choose. They state that by teaching students the necessary skills, they can find information when they need it as well as use it appropriately based on their requirements and purposes.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION**

The present study addresses the following research question:

Are there any significant differences among the effects of various presentation modes (pictorial hyperlink, pictorial gloss, textual hyperlink, and textual gloss) on L2 idiom comprehension in distance learning context?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

The participants of this study were 60 female EFL students at intermediate level of proficiency. All the participants were native speakers of Persian studying in Iran Language Institute in Kermanshah, Iran. Randomly, they were divided into four groups. Each group contained 15 participants who received one of the treatment conditions via the internet.

### ***Instruments***

In this study, the following instruments were utilized:

In order to homogenize the participants in terms of their level of proficiency, a Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency was used. It contains 100 multiple-choice items including 40 grammar items in a conversational format, 40 vocabulary items requiring the selection of a synonym or completion of a sentence, and reading passages followed by 20 comprehension questions.

To make sure that the participants had no prior knowledge of the target idioms, an idiom pretest was administered. The test included 121 items containing idioms which were to be presented during the treatment. The participants had

to write the English or Persian translation of the idioms. Results revealed that, 20 idioms were familiar for the participants. Therefore, these 20 idioms were excluded for the post tests. All the items of the tests were selected from “*Can You Believe It? Stories and Idioms from Real Life, Book3*” (Huizenga, J., 2000).

The course book used to present idioms was titled “*Can You Believe It? Stories and Idioms from Real Life, Book3*” (Huizenga, J., 2000). The book was published by Oxford University Press. It contained 14 amazing real stories from around the world. Each story included 7 to 10 idioms and 2 to 5 phrasal verbs. For the purpose of this study, phrasal verbs were included in the instruction phase but excluded from the posttests.

A 30-item multiple choice idiom test was administered to compare the effects of textual gloss, textual hyperlink, pictorial gloss, and pictorial hyperlink on the comprehension of idioms and to measure the participants' receptive knowledge of idioms. The time allocated to this posttest was 30 minutes.

### **Procedure**

In order to achieve the aim of the study, the following procedures were followed. First of all, to homogenize the participants, a multiple-choice MTELP was administered to 80 participants. The analysis of the scores indicated that 20 of the participants had to be excluded from the study because of a different proficiency level. So, 60 female intermediate learners took part in the study. Second, to minimize the effect of the participants' background knowledge of the target idioms, a pre-test was administered in the second week of the spring semester 2013. The pre-test contained 112 idioms and the participants were asked to write the meaning of the idioms in English or Persian. Furthermore, they were asked to write their Email address to take part in the virtual course of idioms. Then, the participants were divided into four groups randomly. All the groups received 2 stories a week in pdf format through Email. Each story contained 7 to 10 idioms. The instructor taught the same content to all the students enrolled in the course. However, there were some obvious differences in the way content was delivered. Each group received the content with a different mode of presentation. That is to say, the meaning of the idioms was clarified through various modes for each group:

In group A (textual gloss group), the participants received instruction through textual gloss. To be exact, this group was provided with materials in which the meaning of the target idioms was clarified in a glossary at the end of each story. Participants were asked to read English definition of idioms in a list. In group B (textual hyperlink group), the same materials were sent to the participants. However, the selected mode of presentation for this group was textual hyperlink. When the participants clicked on a hyperlinked idiom, a new page appeared and showed the idiom and its English definition. The third group, group C (pictorial gloss group), were exposed to the same materials. However, for this group, relevant and clear pictures which depicted target idioms were provided in a glossary at the end of each story. Also, group D (pictorial hyperlink group) were provided with the same materials. They had access to the pictures of idioms by just one click. In other words, when the participants clicked on a hyperlinked idiom, a new page appeared and showed the idiom and its picture.

The fourth phase was the administration of the posttest. A 30-item multiple choice idiom test was administered to all groups to compare the effects of the four presentation modes (textual gloss, textual hyperlink, pictorial gloss, and pictorial hyperlink) on SL idiom comprehension.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

The aim of the research question was to investigate whether or not there are any significant differences among the effects of various presentation modes (pictorial hyperlink, pictorial gloss, textual hyperlink, and textual gloss) in distance learning context on L2 idiom comprehension. To do so, a One-Way ANOVA procedure was used. Descriptive statistics, including the mean, standard deviation, etc. are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for the ANOVA on idiom comprehension

groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Pictorial hyperlink	15	24.3333	3.65800	.94449	22.3076	26.3591
Pictorial gloss	15	23.7333	5.57375	1.43914	20.6467	26.8200
Textual hyperlink	15	19.0000	3.33809	.86189	17.1514	20.8486
Textual gloss	15	18.8000	4.45934	1.15140	16.3305	21.2695
Total	60	21.4667	4.96587	.64109	20.1838	22.7495

Based on Table 1, it can be observed that the highest mean on the idiom comprehension test belongs to the pictorial hyperlink group ( $\bar{X}$  = 24.33) followed by the pictorial gloss group ( $\bar{X}$  = 23.73). The third highest mean belongs to the textual hyperlink group ( $\bar{X}$  = 19). The group instructed through the textual gloss has the lowest mean ( $\bar{X}$  = 18.80). To see whether or not the differences among the groups are statistically significant, the One-Way ANOVA procedure was used. The obtained results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: ANOVA on learners' idiom comprehension

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	398.267	3	132.756	7.036	.000
Within Groups	1056.667	56	18.869		
Total	1454.933	59			$\omega^2 = .23$

In Table 2, based on the observed F value and the significance level ( $F(3,56) = 7.03$ ,  $P < .05$ ), we can safely claim that there are significant differences among the means of the groups. So, the null hypothesis developed in chapter one is rejected. At the same time, the index of the strength of association ( $\omega^2 = .23$ ) shows that 23% of the total variance in the dependent variable (idiom comprehension) is accounted for by the independent variable (mode of presentation). This means that the remaining 77% of the variance is left unaccounted for. To locate the significant differences, a post hoc Scheffe test was used, the results of which are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Multiple comparisons for the ANOVA on idiom comprehension

(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Pictorial hyperlink	Pictorial gloss	.60000	1.58615	.986	-3.9719	5.1719
	Text hyperlink	5.33333*	1.58615	.016	.7614	9.9053
	Text gloss	5.53333*	1.58615	.011	.9614	10.1053
Pictorial gloss	Text hyperlink	4.73333*	1.58615	.040	.1614	9.3053
	Text gloss	4.93333*	1.58615	.029	.3614	9.5053

Textual hyperlink	Text gloss					
		.20000	1.58615	.999	-4.3719	4.7719

As the above table shows, there are statistically significant differences between both of the pictorial groups and the textual groups. In other words, the pictorial groups outperformed the textual groups in both hyperlink and glossing conditions on the idiom comprehension test. At the same time, there are no statistically significant differences between the pictorial groups. It can be claimed that pictures (regardless of whether they are hyperlinked, or glossed) can positively influence idiom comprehension in the distance learning context.

### **Discussion**

Regarding the research question of this study, the outcomes supported the positive effect of pictures on L2 idiom comprehension in the context of distance learning. This finding of the present study is consistent with a number of studies some of which were reviewed in chapter 2, such as Fotovatnia and Khaki (2012), who pointed out the pedagogical value of pictures in the teaching of both meaning and form of decomposable idioms. Also, Yushi (2006); and Zarei and Salimi (2012) showed the positive effect of pictures in teaching and learning L2 words. Likewise, Kost, Foss, and Lenzini (1999); Shahrokni (2009); and Yousefzadeh (2011) supported the superiority of multimedia gloss in improving L2 learners' comprehension of L2 words. All these studies confirmed the significant effect of picture elucidation in idiom comprehension and word learning. Also, the results of the present study are in accordance with the claim of the cognitive theory of multimedia learning (CTML) (Mayer, 1997, 2001). According to Mayer (2005), human beings process knowledge through two channels: a visual-pictorial and an auditory-verbal (dual-channels assumption); each channel has a limited capacity for processing (limited capacity assumption); and active learning involves carrying out a synchronized set of cognitive processes (active processing assumption). The cognitive theory of multimedia learning specifies five cognitive processes in multimedia learning: selecting relevant words from the presented text or narration, selecting relevant images from the presented illustrations, organizing the selected words into a coherent verbal representation, organizing selected images into a coherent pictorial representation, and integrating the pictorial and verbal representations and prior knowledge. In other words, presentation of the information visually and textually might lead to a deeper level of learning. In this study, pictorial groups were provided with the textual form of idioms in addition to related pictures. They had the opportunity to integrate the textual form of idioms with concrete visual pictures. This may have engaged L2 learners' mind in processing and integrating written form of an idiom and its relevant picture simultaneously.

### **CONCLUSION**

The present study attempted to investigate the effects of various presentation modes namely; pictorial hyperlink, pictorial gloss, textual hyperlink, and textual gloss on L2 idiom comprehension in distance learning context. The findings showed that the pictorial groups outperformed the textual groups in both hyperlink and glossing conditions on the comprehension test. To conclude, the addition of relevant and clear pictures makes materials appealing and facilitates comprehension of L2 idioms.

### **Implications**

As multimedia make materials appealing, using this presentation mode can be useful for both teachers and learners. The present study may also have implications for material writers, textbook authors, CALL package designers and distance learning planners in that it may encourage them to add pictorials to the verbal input.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The following limitations and delimitations need to be taken into account about the present study:

1. The first and the most important limitation was the difficulty of finding 60 homogeneous participants who had access to computer and internet, and enjoyed a satisfactory level of familiarity with computer-based learning for this self-access study.
2. The sex of the participants was limited to female learners; therefore, the results of the study may not be generalizable to male learners.
3. The participants of this study were limited to the intermediate level learners. So, care must be exercised in generalizing the results beyond its proper limits.
4. Another factor to be taken into account is the small sample of the participants. This further limits the generalizability of the findings.

5. Modes of idiom presentation are classified into different types. It is impossible to compare all the modes in one study. This study has chosen to focus on only selected modes of presentation.
6. There are many ways of conducting distance education; this study was carried out through only one way of distance learning (instruction through Email).
7. The result of this study may be affected by other variables, like age, personality and social factors. These factors have not been taken into account in the present study.

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## REALIZATION OF PRAGMATIC MARKERS IN PERSIAN

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### ABSTRACT

Pragmatic markers (PMs Hereafter) have been a polemic issue in pragmatic research over the past few decades. Although a substantial amount of research has been devoted to PMs in English and some other languages to define, classify and categorize PMs, we are still far from developing an inclusive typology. Drawing on data from a written and spoken corpus in Persian and the current classifications of PMs in literature such as Gonzalez (2005), Akkaya (2007), Brinton (2008), and Fraser's (2009), the present study tried to find out how such markers are realized in Persian. In so doing, attempt has been made to follow a reductionistic approach. The analysis is based on a dichotomy of interpretational/non-interpretational and notional/ non-notional particles. The study will, also, discuss the areas of convergence and divergence in Persian and English and the theoretical and pedagogical implications.

**KEYWORDS:** Pragmatic markers; Interpretational; Non-interpretational; Notional; Non-notional

### INTRODUCTION

Within the realm of pragmalinguistics, Markers, in general, and Pragmatic Markers (PMs), in particular, have been extensively studied (e.g., Erman, 2001; Norrick, 2001; Chiu, 2002; Martinez, 2002; Cuenca, 2003; Gerner, 2003; Hinkel, 2003; Aijmer, 2004; Grenoble, 2004; Muller, 2004, 2005; 5; Fraser, 2005a,b; Gonzalez, 2005; Akkaya, 2007; Choi, 2007; Brinton, 2008; Feng, 2008; Jalilifar, 2008; Fraser, 2009; Norrick, 2009; Argaman, 2010; and Bell, 2010).

Among the works done on markers, studies carried out on PMs have passed an evolutionary route from 1996 to 2009. These markers have been investigated extensively for their occurrences, types, functions and classifications. Fraser (1996) primarily used the terminology *Pragmatic Markers* and tried to propose a typology of PMs in English. Later, from 1997 to 2009, he made an attempt to give a more inclusive and comprehensive typology by adding new types and subtypes of pragmatic markers to the previous ones. Furthermore, other researchers (e.g., Erman, 2001; Gonzalez, 2005; Akkaya, 2007; and Feng, 2008) have tried to give a thorough all-embracing taxonomy of PMs, considering variant variables in different contextual settings.

Some of the above-mentioned studies have investigated markers from a number of variant perspectives such as, *cross-linguistic study of markers* (e.g., Ozbek, 1995), *typological study of markers* (e.g., Lee, 2002 and Fraser, 1996), *markers of variant sociolinguistic contexts* (e.g., Grenoble, 2004; Choi, 2007; Feng, 2008), *bilingual markers* (e.g., Hlavac, 2006), *markers , discourse coherence and relevance theory* (e.g., Andersen, 2001), *markers , gender and age* (e.g., Andersen, 1997 & 2001; Erman, 2001; Chiu, 2002; Akkaya, 2007;), *multi-functionality of markers* (e.g., Erman, 2001;; Muller, 2005; Cuenca, 2008; Bell, 2009; and Bolden, 2009), *new typology of markers* (e.g., Fraser,



1996, 1997; Goatly, 1997; Lee, 2002; Brinton, 2008; Feng, 2008; and Fraser, 2009), *markers implications for translation* (e.g., Danish, 2008), *synchronic and diachronic study of markers* (e.g., park, 2003, Korean pragmatic markers), *markers in different pedagogical settings* (e.g., Martinez, 2002; Hinkel, 2003; Muller, 2005, SLA; and Jalilifar, 2008), *markers and emotional intensity* (e.g., Argaman; 2010), *markers signaling metaphor* (e.g., Goatly, 1997;), *universality of markers* (e.g., Fraser, 2005a), and finally, *markers in spoken mode of speech* (e.g., Andersen, 1997; Norrick, 2001; Aijmer, 2004).

With all the studies done on PMs, the development of a theory of PMs is yet in its infancy and we are still far from having a comprehensive taxonomy of PMs which can account for all the markers cross-linguistically. Further, to the researchers' knowledge, Persian context has been intact to such cross-linguistic investigations on PMs. As Schiffirin (2001, 2003) points out, cross-linguistic studies help us to have a more vivid and inclusive picture of the behavior of PMs. Having this in mind and based on a sound analytical framework, i.e. Fraser's (2009) classification of PMs, attempt was made to scrutinize types and functions of PMs in Persian.

### ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The reference framework employed in this study to analyze the data was Fraser's (2009) framework of PMs categorization, in which he characterized PMs as:

Syntactic, lexical, phonological linguistic devices which play no role in determining the semantic meaning of the basic propositional content of a discourse segment of which they are a part, but do have a critical role in the interpretation of the utterance. (p. 892).

He distinguished four major categories for PMs: A) Basic Markers (BMs): which give information about the intended use of an utterance (e.g., *I admit, please, My promise*), B) Commentary Markers (CMs): which help the speaker in conveying his/her attitudes towards something (e.g., *frankly, amazingly, apparently*), C) Discourse Markers (DMs): which help the speaker in relating two adjacent pieces of discourse (e.g., *but, so, in addition*), and D) Discourse Management Markers (DMMs): "which signal a meta-discourse comment on the structure of discourse" (Fraser, *ibid*, p.893).

Discourse management markers, in turn, were divided into three subcategories: 1) Discourse Structure Markers (DSMs): which, with consideration of the total structure of discourse, indicate the contribution of the next discourse parts (e.g., *first, then, in summary, I add*), 2) Attention Markers (AMs): which signal that the topic is going to be changed but do not indicate the type of change and in many cases occur before topic orientation markers (e.g., *ah, alright, anyway, anyhow, hey, in any case, in any event, now, now then, oh, ok, so, so good, well, well then*), and 3) Topic Orientation Markers (TOMs).

Topic orientation markers indicate four types of immediate changes in the topic of discourse: a) Returning to a Prior Topic (RPT): for example, *back to my point, returning to my (previous) point, to return to the prior topic, I would like now to go back to what I was discussing, that point notwithstanding, if I might return to my prior point* and so on, b) Adding to or Continuing with the Present Topic (ACPT): for example, *as I was saying, I haven't finished yet, if I might go on, let's go on, not incidentally, to continue, let's say on the present topic, shall we* and so on, c) Digressing from the Present Topic (DPT): for example, *before I forget, by the way, I almost forgot, I just remembered, I totally forgot, incidentally, in passing, parenthetically, speaking of, that reminds me, to update you* and so on, and d) Introducing a New Topic (INT): for example, *but, if I might change the topic, let me broach an entirely new topic, not to change the topic but, on a different note, to change the topic, turning to a new topic* and so on.

Below is the figure illustrating Fraser's (2009) pragmatic markers categorization in brief:

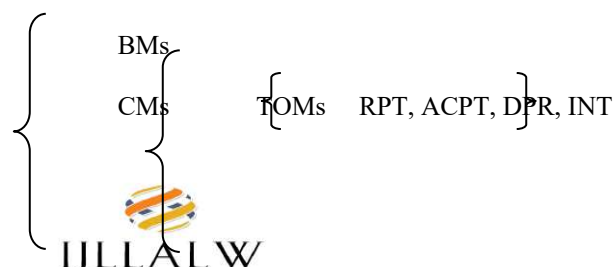




Figure 1: Fraser's (2009) framework of PMs

## METHODOLOGY

### Corpora

Two corpora in Persian have been combined and made the main corpus: a Conversation Corpus (about 50,000 words), and a Speech Corpus (about 90,000 words), which will be explained in details in the following sections.

### Conversational corpus

The collected corpus of Persian conversations was audio-recorded and transcribed. Each conversation lasted between 5 to 15 minutes, depending on the interlocutors' desire to last the conversation or to finish it soon. Also, there were three to six adult interlocutors (both male and female) in each conversation whose age ranged from 20 to 30. Every interlocutor was asked in advance to volunteer for the study. Also, they declared their approval of being audio-recorded.

### Speech Corpus

This corpus consisted of 120 academic and political speeches which were downloaded from Internet and transcribed, as well. The speeches were given by different lecturers, academic people and politicians from 2000 to 2010.

### Data analysis

The collected data in Persian were analyzed qualitatively according to the types and functions of PMs proposed by Fraser (2009). In addition, the Persian PMs which had not been taken into account by Fraser's (2009) were identified and classified, using some new terminologies or borrowing some terminologies from other researchers in the field.

## RESULTS

Following Fraser (2009), four distinct types of PPMs plus their subtypes were found. As they served only one main function, they were considered as **Uni-Functional Markers (UFMs)**. The first type of PPMs was **Basic Markers**, which serve the same functions as their counterparts in English, i.e. they give information on the intended application of the following utterance. The examples of Persian BMs are illustrated in (1) and their function is the same as their counterparts in English. Examples of this type are as follows (1):

- (1) *Pišnæhâd midæhæm* 'I suggest', *Tosie mikonæm* 'I advise', *Xâheš mikonæm* 'Please', *Tæʔkid mikonæm* 'I emphasize', *Ey kâš* 'I wish', *Piš bini mikonim* 'We predict', *Tæbrik ærz mikonæm* 'I congratulate', *Dærxaste bænde ʔin ʔæst* 'My request is', *Qol midæhæm* 'My promise', *Moteʔæsefæm* 'I am sorry', ...

They are illustrated in the following examples(2):

- (2) a) *Qæbul dâæm ke bâæd bištær tælâš mikærdæm.*  
'I accept that I had to put more attempt.'  
b) *Tælâše mâ ʔin æst ke jælæsât be moqe šoru šævæd væ xâtæme yâbæd.*  
'Our attempt is to start and finish the meetings on time.'  
c) *Omidvârim ke ʔin mævâne ʔ ræfʔ šævænd.*  
'We hope that these obstacles will be removed.'

The second type of PPMs was **Commentary Markers**, which convey the speaker's attitudes towards the following utterance. Members of this group are indicated in (2).

- (2) *Hætâ* 'Even', *Hæd-e-ʔæqæl* 'At least', *Dær hæqiqæt* 'In fact', *Mote ʔæsefâne* 'Unfortunately', *ʔehtemâlæn* 'Possibly', *Fæqæt* 'Just', *Hætmaen* 'Surely', *Bedun-e-šæk* 'Undoubtly', *Bædihi ʔæst ke* 'It is clear that', *Lâzem ʔæst ke* 'It is necessary that', *Bârhâ væ bârhâ* 'Repeatedly', ...

They are exemplified in (3):

- (3) a) *ʔælbæte, xâstæn tævânestæn ʔæst.*  
 'Of course, when there is a will, there is a way.'  
 b) *Xošbæxtâne, komite ʔelmi ʔæmælkærde xubi dâste.*  
 'Fortunately, the scientific committee has had a proper function.'  
 c) *Be tore koli, se no ʔfæ ʔâliæt dær ʔin ræveš vojud dâraed.*  
 'Generally, there are three activities in this method.'

The third type of PPMs was **Discourse Markers**, which relates two adjacent discourse segments together. They are shown in (4).

- (4) *Væli* 'But', *Be hæmin sæbæb* 'Because of this', *ʔælâve bæ* 'In addition', *Hæmçenin* 'Also', *Bænâbær ʔin* 'Therefore', *Bærâye mesâl* 'For example', *Yâ* 'Or', *Væ* 'And', *ʔælâræqme* 'Despite of', *ʔgær çe* 'Although', *ʔebâræt ʔæst ʔæz* 'Such as', ...

They are illustrated by the following examples (5):

- (5) a) *Moşkelâte mâ ziâdan, mæseælæn, kæmbud-e væqt vase tæhvîl-e perože.*  
 'There are a lot of problems, for instance, lack of time to deliver the projects.'  
 b) *ʔin mozu be læhâze næzæri mærbut be næzær miresæd, zirâ be færagir budæn-e ræftâr-e sâzmani ʔeşâre dâraed.*  
 'This topic seems related theoretically, because it points out the pervasiveness of the organizational behavior.'  
 c) *ʔæz kâr ʔexrâj şode bud. Lezâ, be donbâl-e şogle jadidi bud.*  
 'He was fired. So, he was looking for a new job.'

The Fourth type of PPMs was **Discourse Management Markers**, "which signal a meta-discourse comment on the structure of discourse" (Fraser, 2009, p.893). This type of PPMs includes three subtypes:

**A) Discourse Structure Markers (DSMs):** which indicate "the contribution of the following discourse segment within the overall structure of discourse" (Fraser, ibid, p.893). They are illustrated in (6):

- (6) *Be tor-e koli* 'Generally', *ʔælqese* 'To put it in nutshell', *Ruy-e hæm ræfte* 'all in all', *ʔævælin mored-e mohem* 'First and most important', *Dær næhâyæt* 'Ultimately', *bæ ʔd* 'Next', *Dær ʔebteda* 'First', *Sepæs* 'Then', *ʔæz suy-e digær* 'On the other hand', ...

Examples of which are shown below (7):

- (7) a) *Se nokte ro dær næzær begir: ʔvælæn, hædæfmand bâš. Dovomæn, ...*  
 'Consider three points: Firstly, specify your goal. Secondly, ...'  
 b) *Dær ʔin motâleʔe do ræveš be kâr gerefte šod. Yeki, ræveš-e peimâyeš ʔæs [...]. Digæri, ræveše tætbîqi-e kæmmi ʔæst ...*  
 'Two methods were applied in his study. One of them is the survey method [...]. The other is the quantitative comparative method...'

- c) *Be tore xolâse, gofte mišævæd ke mâlekiæt dær ʔin se bæxš-e dolæti, tæ ʔâvoni, xosusi tâ jâyi mored-e ʔehteram-e qânun ʔæst.*

‘In short, it is said that the ownership in the state, cooperative and private sectors are honored by the law to some extent.’

**B) Topic Orientation Markers (TOMs):** which imply the prompt changes in the topic of discourse. They are of four types:

**i. Returning to a Prior Topic (RPT):** As in (8)

- (8) a) *Qæblæn-æm goftæm ke æslæn be riskeš nemi-ʔærze.*  
‘I previously said that it does not worth a risk.’  
b) *Hæmântori ke ʔærz šod, šæbæke rustâ-yi be ʔonvâne yek pâilot dær Nogærân mored-e bæhre-bærdari qærâr gereft.*  
‘Returning to what is said before, the rural network was exploited in Nograd as a pilot.’  
c) *Hæmântor ke gofte šod, tærbiaet mædæni yeki ʔæz vojuh va foru ʔ-e jâme ʔe-ye mædæni ʔæst.*  
‘As it was said, the civil nurturing is one of the offshoots of the civil society.’

**ii. Adding to or Continuing with the Present Topic (ACPT):** As in (9)

- (9) a) *Mævâd-e lâzem-e keik-o goftæm. Dær ʔedâme, tærz-e tæhiyye ro migæam.*  
‘I mentioned the ingredients for baking a cake. Continuing, I’ll explain how to bake it.’  
b) *Negâr ʔin ʔævâxer xeili sær-hâl nist [interrupted by somebody]; dâštæm migoftæm bâvæd ye kâri bærâš bokonim.*  
‘Recently, Negar was not in good mood [interrupted by somebody]; as I was saying, we have to do something for her.’  
c) *ʔetelâ ʔâti ʔæz in qæbil bærârâye tæ ʔmin-e bo ʔd-e šenâxti kâfi nist. ʔælâve bær ʔân, bærxi qâbeliaet-hâ væ tævânâyi-hâ-ye fekri væ šenaxti niz mored-e niâz ʔæst.*  
‘Such information and knowledge are not enough to provide the cognitive aspect. Added to that, cognitive and reflective abilities and capacities are needed.’

**iii. Digressing from the Present Topic (DPT):** As in (10)

- (10) a) *Ræftim pârk xoš gozašt, râsti šenidi hæràj-e tâbestuni šoru šode?*  
‘We went to the park. It was fun. By the way, have you heard about the beginning of the summer sale?’  
b) *Mæs ʔulin æz sâzmân-e sænješ ʔâmædænd væ dær tærqib-e sâyere goruh-ha dær peivæstæn be tærh besiâr mofid bud. Be hæxer hâl, tæbliq bæxši ʔæz kâr ʔæst.*  
‘Authorities of Sanjesh Organization came and they persuade other groups to join the plan. Anyway, propagation is a part of the whole task.’  
c) *Næmâyeš færdâ bærgozâr miše, tu pærântež ʔærz konæm xedmætetun ke belit-hâ tæmum šodæn.*  
‘The play will be held tomorrow. Parenthetically, I should mention that all the tickets were sold.’

**iiii. Introducing a New Topic (INT):** As in (11)

- (11) a) *Možu ʔi ke emruz tofiq peidâ kærdæm xedmæt-e šomâ ʔærz konæm, negâhi be vaz ʔæst-e bâzâr kâr-e kešvæ [...] ʔæst.*  
‘The new topic that I want to talk about is having a glance at the state job vacancies...’  
b) *ʔin mored hæm hæł šod. Možu ʔ-e bæ ʔdi ke mixâm dær moredeš tozih bedæm moškelat-e refâhi-e.*  
‘This problem was solved. The next topic that I want to explain about is welfare problems.’  
c) *Væ ʔemâ, dustân-e ʔæziz, ʔemruz jâme ʔe-ye bæšæri bâ no ʔi ʔæz nejâd-pæræsti movâjeh šode ʔæst...*  
‘But (to introduce a new topic), dear friends! Today, men society is confronted with a kind of racism...’

**C) Attention Markers (AMs):** which signal that the topic is going to be changed. However, they do not suggest the type of changes. Also, most of the times, they precede Topic Orientation Markers. As in (12)

- (12) a) *Xânom-hâ va ʔâqâyân, Hæmântor ke gofte šod, šærâyet-e ʔomumi-e jæhân bâ sor ʔet be samt-e tæqirat-e ʔæsâsi piš mi-rævæd.*  
‘Ladies and gentlemen, as it was said (TOM, RPT) the world’s general condition rapidly goes towards drastic modifications.’

- b) *Tævæjoh dâšte bâšid, emruze kudækân hæšâs-tær ʔæz hæmiše hæstæn.*  
 ‘Attention! Today, the kids are more sensitive than ever.’  
 c) *Hâlâ, mixâm beræm sære ʔæsle mætlæb.*  
 ‘Now! I want to talk about the main topic.’

#### OTHER PMS USED IN PERSIAN CORPORA

Although Fraser’s (2009) classification of PMs covers a large number of markers existing in Persian Corpora, there are still some markers which have not been taken into account by this latest classification of PMs. Below, they are elaborated on.

The first PM which is frequently used in Persian Conversation and Speech Corpora is the marker *ʔenšâ ʔellâh* and its synonyms such as *ʔægær Xodâ bexâhæd*, *ʔægær Xodâ tofiq dæhæd* and so on. This marker equals the phrase ‘God willing’ in English. In the present study, they are called **Expectation Markers (EMs)**, hereafter, since Persian speakers as well as English speakers use this marker to show some sort of expectation of an action to happen while they seek God’s will simultaneously. Using this marker, they show their hope towards the compliance of their requests by God. This marker is often used before a discourse segment, and indicates a concept beside the concept carried by the following adjacent discourse segment; as in (13).

- (13) a) *ʔenšâ ʔellâh, ʔemtehânet ro pâs miši.*  
 ‘God willing, you will pass your exam.’  
 b) *Xodâvænd hæmeyer mâ râ tofiq dæhæd ke ʔæz ʔin doran be næhv-e ʔæhsæn ʔobur konim.*  
 ‘May God help us pass this era successfully.’

The second marker which means ‘for the love of God’ in English and is mostly used in Conversation Corpora is *mæhz-e rezâ-ye Xodâ*. It indicates the speaker’s dissatisfaction of the current situation. The speaker employs this marker in order to put an end to the continuation of the unpleasant situation. They are called **Speaker Dissatisfaction Markers (SDMs)** from now on. Like EMs, this marker also carries a concept in addition to the concept of the next discourse segment which follows it. It is illustrated in the Example (14).

- (14) a) *Mæhz-e rezâ-ye Xodâ, bæš kon!*  
 ‘For the love of God, enough is enough!’

Like the found PPMs based on Fraser’s (2009) framework, Expectation Markers and Speaker dissatisfaction Markers serve only one function in their contexts. Hence, they can be put under the umbrella of Uni-Functional Markers. However, there are other found PPMs which serve more than one function in different contexts. They are called **Multi-Functional Markers (MFMs)**. And, the following PPMs are of this type.

The third type of PPMs which are often used before a discourse segment, and indicate a concept beside the concept carried by the following adjacent discourse segment is called **Address Form Markers (AFMs)** (used by Akkaya, 2007). Address form is defined by the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1985) as “The word or words used to address somebody, in speech or writing” (cited in Akkaya, 2007, p.3). The examples of this type which are mostly found in the Persian Conversation Corpora are *ʔâqâ*, *bâbâ* and *bâbâ jun*. These address forms literally mean ‘Sir’, ‘Daddy’ and ‘Dear daddy’ which are used in order to address male addressees in English; However, Persian speakers use them to address both male and female addressees. They are illustrated in the example (15).

- (15) a) 1) *ʔâqâ, lotfæn ye adams bedid.* (A girl to a male seller)  
 ‘Sir, give me a gum please.’  
 2) *ʔâqâ, ye bæhs-e jædid konim.* (A boy to her male and female classmates)  
 ‘Guys, let’s start a new discussion.’  
 b) 1) *Bâbâ/ Bâbâ jun, kei bæ-mi-gærði?* (A girl to her father)  
 ‘Daddy/Dear daddy, when are you going to be back?’  
 2) *Bâbâ/ Bâbâ jun, dæst ʔæz særæm bardarin!* (A girl to her mother)



‘Mother, leave me alone please!’

As it is clear in the above examples, the address forms *Āqa* and *Bābā* which are specific to males are used to address males in a, 1) and b, 1). In this context, they can be called **Gender-Specific Address Forms (GSAFs, hereafter)**. Nevertheless, these male-specific address forms can be used to address females in a, 2) and b, 2). In these two examples, they can be called **Gender-Neutral Address Forms (GNAFs, hereafter)**.

Last but not least, the PPM which is frequently used in Persian Conversation Corpora is the marker *Āeslæn*. It roughly means ‘Never’ in English. ‘Never’ functions as an adverb negating its discourse segment, within which it is used. However, the marker *Āeslæn*, like *Āqa*, is one of MFMs in Persian and its function will differ considerably. According to the different meanings it gets in different contexts, this multifunctional marker can play the role of 6 different markers: a) CM, b) AM, c) TOM (INT), d) TOM (DPT), e) DM and f) SDM, the examples of which are illustrated in (16).

(16) a) *Āeslæn, Āestebāh kærdim Āemtehân ro hæzf kærdim.*

‘In fact, we made a mistake when we cancelled the exam.’

In this example, *Āeslæn* is a CM, which comments on the following discourse segment. It conveys the attitude that the message carried by the next discourse segment is the sheer truth.

b) *Āeslæn ye ċizi! Āæge Āæz dær-e pošt berim kæsi nemi-fæhme.*

‘Hey guys, let me say something! If we go in through the back door, nobody will find out.’

As *Āeslæn* is content void in this example, there is no one-to-one equivalence for this marker in English. It can be roughly translated to the phrase ‘Hey guys!’ whose function is to attract the attention of addressees towards the upcoming discourse segment. Hence, this marker plays the role of an AM in this example.

c) *Āirani-hâ be guyeš-hâye ziâdi tækællom mikonænd. Āeslæn, guyeš ċist?*

‘Iranian people speak with a wide variety of dialects. But (to introduce a new topic), what is a dialect?’

In this example, *Āeslæn* plays the role of a TOM whose function is to introduce a New Topic. In fact, this marker puts an end to the topic carried by the previous discourse segment and indicates that a new topic is going to be posed by the speaker.

d) *Āeslæn, Āin hærfâ ro vel kon xâhešæn!*

‘(To change the topic), Please forget about these words!’

Here, *Āeslæn* is content void, as well and cannot be translated literally into English. However, it plays the role of a TOM which signals Digression from the Present Topic.

e) *Hæme Āæz dars-e teori xæste šodæn. Āeslæn, biâyd kelâs ro Āæmæli bærgozâr konim.*

‘Everybody is tired of theoretical class. So, let’s have a practical class.’

Using *Āeslæn*, here, the speaker tries to make a link between its previous and its following discourse segment. In this example, this marker as a DM can be translated to ‘So’ which conveys that the message ‘holding the practical class’ is just due to the message that the previous discourse segment carries, i.e. ‘students are tired of theoretical classes’.

f) *Āeslæn, tænhâm bezâr. Pæšimunæm kærdi!*

‘For the sake of God, leave me alone. You made me regret!’

Here, the role of *Āeslæn* is to convey a concept beside the one which is carried by the next discourse segment. Using the marker, the speaker tries to show his dissatisfaction with the current situation.

## A NEW TYPOLOGY OF PRAGMATIC MARKERS IN PERSIAN

Based on the above results obtained from the Persian Corpora, two broad types of Persian Pragmatic Markers (PPMs) were discovered in the Persian Corpora: a) **Uni-Functional Markers (UFMs)** and b) **Multi-Functional Markers (MFMs)**. Uni-functional markers are those markers which have only one function in every context of use, for instance, *Xošbæxtâne* ‘Fortunately’ functions as a CM, *Āevvæl* ‘First’ functions as a DSM, *Qol midæhæm* ‘I promise’ functions as a BM and so on. However, Multi-functional Markers are those markers whose functions change in different context of use, for example, *Āeslæn* can function as CM, DM, AM, SDM and TOM. Other examples of MFMs are *Āqa* and *Bābā* which can function either as a GSAF or GNAF.

Using new terminologies and borrowing some terminologies from other researchers in the field, PPMs are reclassified here into three main types: a) **Cataphoric Markers (CpMs)**, b) **Conjunct Markers (CjMs)**, (used by Brinton, 2008) and c) **Parallel Markers (PIMs)** (used by Fraser, 1996).



The first type of PPMs is called **Cathaphoric Markers**, here, since the function of such markers is to describe a proceeding or forward discourse segment. They are the forms which are used by the speaker in order to aware the hearer of “the intended use of an utterance”, i.e. **Basic Markers**, “attitude towards an action or state”, i.e. **Commentary Markers**, or “meta-comment on the structure of discourse”, i.e. **Discourse Management Markers**, that is going to be conveyed by the following discourse segments (Fraser, 2009, p. 892-3).

As it was stated before, Fraser (2009) divides Discourse Management Markers into **Discourse Structure Markers**, **Topic Orientation Markers**, and **Attention Markers**. Also, he separates Topic Orientation Markers into four subtypes of markers which are used in order to **Return to a New Topic**, **Add to or Continue with the Present Topic**, **Digress from the Present Topic** and **Introduce a New Topic**.

Below, the subtypes of Cathaphoric Markers are exemplified:

(17) **Cathaphoric Markers:**

- A) **Basic Markers:** *Pišnæhâd midæhæm* ‘I suggest’, *Tosie mikonæm* ‘I advise’, *Xâheš mikonæm* ‘Please’
- B) **Commentary Markers:** *Dær hæqiqæt* ‘In fact’, *Mote ʔæsefâne* ‘Unfortunately’, *ʔehtemâlæn* ‘Possibly’
- C) **Discourse Management Markers:**
  - a) **Discourse Structure Markers:** *Dær næhâyæt* ‘Ultimately’, *Bæ ʔd* ‘Next’, *Dær ʔebteda* ‘First’
  - b) **Topic Orientation Markers:**
    - 1) **Return to a New Topic:** *Qæblæn-æm goftæm* ‘I previously said’, *Hæmântori ke ʔærz šod* ‘Returning to what is said before’, *Hæmântor ke gofte šod* ‘As it was said’
    - 2) **Add or Continue with the Present Topic:** *Dær ʔedâme* ‘Continuing’, *Dâštæm migoftæm* ‘As I was saying’, *ʔælâve bæ ʔân* ‘Added to that’
    - 3) **Digress from the Present Topic:** *Râsti* ‘By the way’, *Be hæ ʔ hâl* ‘Anyway’, *Tu pærântez* ‘Parenthetically’
    - 4) **Introduce a New Topic:** *Mozu ʔi ke emruz tofiq peidâ kerdæm xedmæt-e šomâ ʔærz konæm* ‘The new topic that I want to talk about’, *Mozu ʔ-e bæ ʔdi ke mixâm dær moredeš tozih bedæm* ‘The next topic that I want to explain about’, *Væ ʔæmâ* ‘But’
  - c) **Attention Markers:** *Xânom-hâ va ʔâqâyân* ‘Ladies and gentlemen’, *Tævæjoh dâšte bâšid* ‘Attention!’, *Hâlâ* ‘Now’

The second type of PPMs is **Conjunct Markers**. They are called *Conjuncts* or *Connectors* by Brinton (2008), since their role is to connect two pieces of discourse segments. Fraser (2009) also calls them *Discourse Markers*, and elucidates that the speakers use these markers in order to “signal the intended relationship between two adjacent discourse segments” (p.893).

Below, the examples of this type are illustrated in (18).

- (18) **Conjunct Markers:** *Væli* ‘But’, *Be hæmin sæbæb* ‘Because of this’, *ʔælâve bæ* ‘In addition’

And, the third type of PPMs is **Parallel Markers**. Parallel Markers are those forms which carry a message beside the message that is carried by its following discourse segment. Fraser (1996, p. 21) defines it as a marker “whose function is to signal an entire message in addition to the basic message”. Three sub-types were found for this marker in Persian Corpora: *a) Address Form Markers (AFMs)*, *b) Speaker Dissatisfaction Markers (SDMs)*, and *Expectation Markers (EMs)*.

**Address Form Markers**, as the first sub-type of PPMs, defined in the dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics (1997) as “the manner of referring to someone in direct linguistic interaction” (Cited in Akkaya, 2007, p. 3). Two types of AFMs were found in Persian Corpora: **Gender-Specific Address Forms (GSAFs)** and **Gender-Neutral Address Forms (GNAFs)**. Gender-specific Address Forms are those markers which are used in order to address people according to their gender. However, Gender-neutral Address Forms are those markers which are employed in addressing people regardless of their gender.

The second sub-type of PIMs is **Speaker Dissatisfaction Markers**, which are used by the speaker in order to show his/her annoyance of a dissatisfactory situation.

Finally, the third sub-type of PIMs is **Expectation Markers**, which are employed by the speaker in order to show some sort of expectation of an action to happen while they seek God's will, simultaneously. Using this marker, they show their hope towards the compliance of their requests by God.

Below, the subtypes of Parallel Markers are exemplified in (19):

(19) A) **Address Form Markers:**

a) **Gender-Specific Address Forms:** *Xânom* 'Madam', *âqâ* 'Sir', *Doktor* 'Doctor'

b) **Gender-Neutral Address Forms:** *âqâ*, *Bâbâ*, *Bâbâ jun* (They do not have fixed equivalences in English, since their meanings will change according to the contexts in which they are applied.)

B) **Speaker Dissatisfaction Markers:** *âeslæn* 'For God's sake', *Mæhz-e rezâ-ye Xodâ* 'For the love of God', *Læ?næti* 'Damned'

C) **Expectation Markers:** *?enšâ?ellâh* 'God willing', *?ægær Xodâ tofiq dæhæd* 'God willing', *?ægær Xodâ bexâhæd* 'God willing'

The following figure taxonomically reports the new typology of PPMs which accounted for the corpora of the present study:

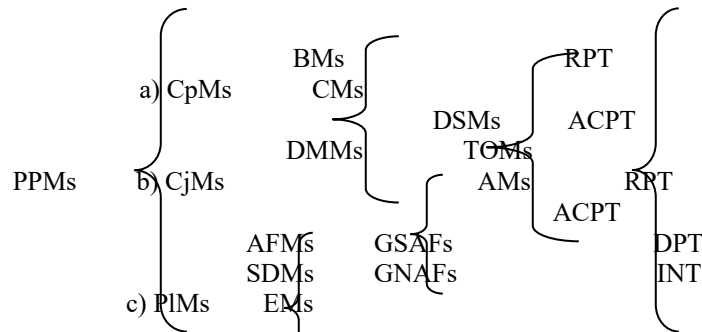


Figure 2: A typology of PPMs

## THE DETERMINANTS AFFECTING THE DISTRIBUTION AND OCCURRENCE OF PPMs

Considering the detected Persian Pragmatic Markers, four determinants were found affecting the occurrence of certain PPMs: a) Modes of speech, b) Level of formality, c) Sociolinguistic orientation, and d) Types of genres.

Regarding modes of speech, i.e. written or spoken, there are certain PPMs which are more frequent in one mode of speech. The marker *Bâbâ jun*, *âqâ*, (Address forms to address both males and females), for instance, is specifically used in spoken mode of speech and they are infrequent in written forms.

Also, level of formality is another determining factor which affects the occurrence of PPMs. For example, *Bebin* (It means 'See' and it is an imperative form to attract other's attention) is a marker which is particularly used in informal situations such as a conversation. However, it is rarely used in, for instance, formal speeches.

Furthermore, there are some markers which are socio-linguistically oriented, i.e. some variations of PMs are frequent in a society due to some social norms. For example, the marker *?enšâ?ellâh* 'God willing!' and its synonyms such as *?ægær Xodâ bexâhæd*, and *?ægær Xodâ tofiq dæhæd* are among those frequent PPMs which are regularly used by Persian speakers who believe in God and expect God to help them achieve their goals.

Finally, there are some PPMs which are generic-specific, i.e. they only occur in particular genres. For instance, the Attention Markers such as *Besiâr xob* 'well!', *Hâlâ* 'Now!', *Tævæjjoh konid* 'Attention!' and so on, only occur in conversation or speech genres and their distribution in research articles in journal genre, for instance, is almost zero. Also, Expectation Markers such as *?enšâ?ellâh* 'God willing!' and Address Forms such as *Xânom-hâ væ ?âqâyân* 'Ladies and Gentlemen' frequently occur in conversation or speech genres but they do not occur in research articles in journal genre.

## DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

As it was stated before, the main concern of this research was to study, identify and classify Pragmatic Markers based on Fraser's (2009) model of PMs. In doing so, the following points were revealed.

First, the results indicated that the detected Persian Pragmatic Markers accounted for almost all types and subtypes of PMs in Fraser's classification, i.e. Basic Markers (e.g., *Qol midæhæm* 'My promise'), Commentary Markers (e.g., *Dær hæqiqæt* 'In fact'), Discourse Markers (e.g., *ʔælâræqme* 'Despite of'), Discourse Structure Markers (e.g., *Dær ʔebteda* 'First'), Topic Orientation Markers to Return to a Prior Topic (e.g., *Qæblæn-æm goftæm* 'I previously said'), Topic Orientation Markers to Add to or Continue with the Present Topic (e.g., *Dær ʔedâme* 'To come'), Topic Orientation Markers to Digress from the Present Topic (e.g., *Râsti* 'By the way'), Topic Orientation Markers to Introduce a New Topic (e.g., *Mozuʔ-e bæʔdi ke mixâm dær moredeš tozih bedæm* 'The next topic that I want to explain about'), and Attention Markers (e.g., *Hâlâ* 'Now!').

Second, it was found that there are other PMs presented in Persian Corpora which have not been taken into account by Fraser's framework. To put it in nutshell, the detected markers were of two types: a) Uni-functional Markers such as *ʔenšâʔællâh* 'God willing' as an Expectation Marker, *Mæhz-e rezâ-ye Xodâ* 'For the love of God' as a Speaker Dissatisfaction Marker, and b) Multi-functional Markers such as *ʔâqâ* 'Sir' as a Gender-Specific Address Form and *ʔâqâ* 'Guys' as a Gender-Neutral Address Form, and *ʔæslæn* 'In fact' as a Commentary Marker, *ʔæslæn* 'Hey Guys' as an Attention Marker, *ʔæslæn* 'But' as a Topic Orientation Marker to Introduce a New Topic, *ʔæslæn* (To change the topic) as a Topic Orientation Marker to Digress from the Present Topic, *ʔæslæn* 'So' as a Discourse Marker, and *ʔæslæn* 'For the love of God' as a Speaker Dissatisfaction Marker.

The findings of the present study, also, supported the theory of multi-functionality for some of the markers found in Persian Conversation Corpora. The multifunctionality of markers proposed primarily by Schiffrin (2003). Further, there are some researchers in the field (e.g., Erman, 2001) whose main focus has been on the analysis of different functions of specific PMs in different contexts of use, which support the multi-functionality feature of PMs. Erman (2001, p. 1338) takes this feature as granted and points out that "the importance and multi-functionality of Pragmatic Markers in everyday conversation is not a controversial issue".. Hence, PPMs might be multi-functional, i.e. gaining different pragmatic values and functions in specific genres and mode of speech, such as daily conversations.

The results of this study, also, revealed that no single taxonomy is all inclusive and a thorough classification of PMs needs typological (cross-linguistic) studies and mixed research methodologies. Although the main thrust of this study was to propose a more detailed and inclusive classification of Pragmatic Markers, the findings cannot comprehensively account for all languages. Indeed, the concern of this study was to see how the study of Pragmatic Markers in different linguistic contexts helps our better understanding of the field. De fina (1997), for instance, investigates some Spanish marker such as *bien* (well) and concluded that functions of the markers can differ across languages. The diversity of PMs taxonomies (e.g., Gonzalez, 2005; Akkaya, 2007; and Feng, 2008) in literature also justifies that in order to have a typology which can account for other languages, a cross-linguistic investigation of PMs or the combination of variant existing taxonomies is needed. In order to find a much more representative and inclusive classification of PMs other methodologies should be synthesized into the study and the scope of the corpora should be widened into other contexts of use and languages. In this regard Schiffrin (2003) states that marker research in general and pragmatic markers research in particular, utilizes a variety of data resources that allow analysts to focus on markers across contexts, across languages and/or over time.

Finally, a closer analysis of the behavior of PMs demonstrates that distribution and occurrence of PMs in certain linguistic contexts is a function of a number of determinants such as modes of speech, level of formality, sociolinguistic orientation and types of genres; a thorough analysis of which requires another study.

## CONCLUSION

Pragmatic Markers have been of paramount importance in pragmatic research since the early adaptation of the terminology. Although a substantial amount of research has been devoted to investigate their use, frequencies, and categorization in English (Erman, 2001; Gonzalez, 2005; Akkaya, 2007; and Fraser, 2009) and other languages like Chinese (an Feng, 2008), we are still far from developing an inclusive typology. Furthermore, more research needs to be carried out to see how the given particles are realized in other unexplored languages and cultures. One such unexplored area is Persian. Considering the above issue, attempt was made first, to define, classify, and taxonomize Persian PMs, drawing upon the latest classification of PMs in literature, i.e. Fraser's (2009). Second, borrowing some terminologies from Akkaya (2007), Brinton (2008) and Fraser's (2009) and coining some new terminologies, a new typology of Persian PMs was introduced based on the markers detected in Persian corpora. Finally, as it was revealed from the findings, markers in general and pragmatic markers in particular seem to have certain lexical, syntactic and though considered as semantically bleached, semantic behaviors, a coherent picture of which requires a thorough scrutiny not only in terms of the use, position and function, but in terms of how and on what basis they are preferred over, say, other types of markers. In other words, the prompt behind most of such studies have been bottom up than psycholinguistically oriented considerations. Hence, until we come up with both a top-down mental mechanism besides the textual behavior of the markers, our knowledge of the PMs use and constraints will not be inclusive.

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## **THE EFFECT OF SUPERVISORS' FEEDBACK-GIVING TECHNIQUES ON IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS' SELF-EFFICACY**

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### **ABSTARCT**

The drive to learn English among students to compete in a global society demands efforts of schools' supervisors for betterment of teachers' performance within the classroom which is supposedly in connection with their own attitude toward them. Bandura (1997) proposes that undertaking innovating contexts suitable for improvement of rational abilities is strongly based on the aptitude and self-efficacy of teachers. Teachers' beliefs on their perceived efficacy affect their dedication to the school and how they confront the hindrance of their job. The current study has been conducted to identify degree of self-efficacy of Iranian English teachers in general; and uncover the impact of various techniques supervisor employ to provide teachers with feedback, in particular. Additionally, the study had the purpose of obtaining interference of some characteristics of teachers with the way they perceive feedback from supervisor. The required data for the study were collected applying a researcher-made Likert-scale questionnaire consisted of 30 items. The participants were 30 male of female teachers of varying experiences and university degrees belonged to different age groups. The obtained data were analyzed through SPSS software (version 16). The numerical results proved teachers' sense of efficacy was influenced significantly by feedback-giving techniques applied by supervisor and the change was positive. Moreover, interference of variables of gender, age, experience and level of qualifications with sense of efficacy among teachers was noticed.

**KEYWORDS:** Feedback-giving Techniques; Self-efficacy; Supervisor

### **INTRODUCTION**

It seems not a big claim if teachers are considered as the most influential group of professionals for the improvement of education. . Besides, Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, which is indicated as opinions about one's own competence to succeed in certain circumstances of learning or accomplishing performances at prospective levels (Bandura, 1986, 1997), have been represented as a serious factor in performing effectively (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy 1998), in the level of individual commitment (Coladarci 1992), and in eagerness to teaching (Allinder 1994).



Therefore, it could be of value to investigate which strands affect teachers' performance most, particularly the ones which promote their self efficacy. However, the issue of the effect of supervisors' feedback, whether constructive or destructive, raises a question about the degree of that effect on female and male teachers. Also, it needs to be discussed if teachers of different experiences take the comments of supervisors equally. Therefore, the purpose of the researcher is to find out the possible effects of supervisors' feedback-giving techniques on teachers' sense of self-efficacy. Generally, it seems many teachers do not accept whatever they perceive from supervisors and act defensively and think of the attitude of supervisor toward themselves and criticize the supervisor rather than accepting his/her critics as helpful advices. However, it sounds as if supervisors inevitably involve their personal views in their observations and giving feedback they behave as if they are judges rather than mentors who aim at raising the quality of the program.

In spite of the fact that majority of what teachers experience happens within the classroom, it seems their thoughts, and emotions could directly or indirectly be under influence of the environment of their workplace and other professionals like other teachers and supervisors. (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Johnson & Papay, 2011; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; Weiss, 1999) However, the issue of encountering unpredictable situations which affect teachers' thoughts and emotional states could not be denied as well. It seems that the environment is the most influential factor on teachers' interpretations and feelings about their profession. In line with other researches on teacher's self efficacy, the purpose of this study is therefore to investigate the effect of supervisor's techniques in giving feedback as one of the influential factors on teachers' sense of self-efficacy.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Due to the researchers' own experience on receiving different types of feedback from supervisor, each of which has its own effects, it seemed of value to investigate what other researchers have found in terms of self-efficacy and feedback. It could be said that the idea of the role of school leaders or supervisors within the schools or institutes and the way they influence teachers has been of much concern among researchers. Edmonds (1979) believes, "There are some bad schools with good principals, but there are no good schools with bad principals (In Stone, 1992, p. 2). According to him, school leaders have the most influential and essential role in the school's achievements. Having done a research through 44 primary schools in east of the United States, Hoy, Tarter, and Witkoskie (1992) identified role of organizational support significant for effectiveness of school.

Consequently, teachers show more motivation and interest in improving their performance and try to solve their problems with much more determination and deficiency in providing support from the management hinders teachers' sense of self-efficacy and self-confidence (Lortie, 1975).

### *Self-efficacy*

The teachers' belief that they possess the ability to influence student learning and achievement for all students, including those students who may be considered unmotivated and difficult is commonly referred to as teacher self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1997; Guskey, 1987; Hoy, 2000; McLaughlin & Marsh, 1978). In a study of teacher efficacy, Yang (2011) stated that:

There are two kinds of locus of control, internal locus of control and external locus of control.

People with internal locus of control believe that their own actions determine the rewards that they obtain. People with external locus of control believe that their lives are not determined by their own behavior but by sources outside themselves-fate chance and luck. Teachers with Internal locus of control are capable of teaching difficult or unmotivated students and make great achievement in their teaching, while teachers with external locus of control are less confident in their teaching ability and believe that the environment has more influence on student learning than their teaching ability. (p.2)

Based on Bandura's definition (1986) it is individual's opinions about their capabilities and skills which could be defined as self-efficacy not their real capabilities and skills. In other words, whatever belief one may have on his/her success and proficiency seems to have either positive or negative impact in person, the former is constructive and the latter is destructive.

### *Teacher self-efficacy*

Preceding researches have also defined the role of sense of self-efficacy in forming students' approaches toward school and the subject. In other words, they claim that the stronger is the teachers' efficacy; students show the more considerable interest to the school and the subject material. In addition to forming students' approach and idea,



teacher efficacy has been related to the level of individual commitment (Coladarci, 1992, cited in Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998, p. 9) and eagerness in teaching (Allinder, 1994) demonstrated by the teacher.

As Brookfield (1995) stated effective teachers concentrate on their job, make benefit of various educational strategies, manage their time to teach at a suitable pace and check students' understanding regularly, focus on the objectives of the lesson, and apply humor to keep students involved within the class activities. According to Lowman (1996) efficient teachers are the ones whose first aim is to develop students' learning and make students interested and enthusiastic in learning. He also emphasized that successful teachers show interest and enthusiasm to their job. High teacher self-efficacy has constantly been defined to attribute to positive performances of both student and teacher, and have a constructive effect on educational enhancements (e.g., Ross, 1995; Soodak & Podell, 1996), resulting in the notion that teacher self-efficacy is a vital feature in enhancing and developing educational system and teacher education (e.g., Ashton, 1984; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000; Ross, 1998; Scharmann & Hampton, 1995; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). However despite all the studies which relate teacher's sense of self-efficacy to students' accomplishments, the fact that school leaders or supervisors are effective in enhancing or lowering teachers' self-efficacy is researcher's main reason for doing researches in this area.

To summarize, high-efficient teachers are more hardworking, enthusiastic, and confident and their classes are much more fruitful. They are approachable and friendly to students.

### ***Feedback***

It sounds that teachers' perceptions on feedback they receive from supervisors are somewhat personal; therefore, they must be subjective and changeable with different circumstances and over time. However, the value and prominence of giving feedback with the target of reinforcing and directing the recipient could not be ignored. Feedback aims at promoting the recipients' self-awareness on how they are perceived by others (Herold & Greller 1977). Feedback is to help the recipients modify their perceptions, evaluations, and performances (Atwater & Yammarino 1995).

Some researches have studied how employees' choices to follow feedback are influenced by characteristics of the source of feedback, (Morrison & Vancouver 1993), their rational processes in organizing and making use of feedback (cf. Atwater & Yammarino 1995), and issues affecting raters' truthfulness and incentive (cf. Ilgen, Barnes-Farrell, & McKellin 1993). Along with these studies, some found it necessary to search in the area of issues affect motivation of a supervisor for giving feedback.

It sounds as if through giving feedback supervisors feel like having control over teachers particularly if their feedbacks lead to positive changes in teachers' performance. However, it could be concluded that poor performance of teachers followed by receiving feedback could be a sign of powerlessness for the supervisors.

Generally, the need for authority, attachment and praise is the main reason for getting feedback and benefit from its possible outcomes. It could be said that school leaders whose desire is to achieve authority tend to develop their influence according to the results of the feedback. The ones who seek praise try to gain their subjective goals which may be in line with the goals of their teachers and finally, those who look for attachment consider friendship with teacher prior to other goals.

This proposes that for both supervisors and teachers, no matter they are source or recipient of feedback, and the judgmental nature of feedback could be of more importance than particular aspects of feedback. According to Baron (1988) feedback could be of two aspects: Constructive and Destructive.

### ***Constructive Feedback***

Constructive feedback sounds to be a careful well-thought-out one which aims to help the workers to have a more detailed look at their own performance and their effects on others. According to Baron, constructive feedback is supposed to be explicit, thoughtful, and relates employees' poor performance to uncontrollable peripheral issues which inevitably affect the performance. Constructive feedback attributes good performance to internal factors like employees' effort, determination and aptitude. In a study, Martocchio and Dulebohn (1994) stated that new workers

whose simply controlled performance was evaluated and their received feedback was based on that, showed higher level of efficacy in their work and better learning.

#### *Destructive Feedback*

Destructive feedback seems to be the one which is delivered in a subjective way and harms feeling of the receiver; hence there must be no chance for the information provided to be considered as a useful and effective one. Doing various studies, Baron (1988) claimed that those who receive destructive feedback have lower degree of self-efficacy on their following responsibilities than those who receive constructive feedback. He added that destructive feedback not only prevents compromise and collaboration with the source but also provides feeling of resentment and distress and lead the recipient to show disagreement, resistance and avoidance.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- 1) Do supervisor's feedback-giving techniques have any effect on teachers' level of self-efficacy?
- 2) Is the effect of supervisor's feedback-giving techniques on female and male teachers' self-efficacy the same?
- 3) Can supervisors' feedback-giving techniques affect self-efficacy of teachers' of different experiences similarly?

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### *Participants*

To gather the necessary data for this research, the researcher selected 50 EFL teachers who worked in an English Institute in Mashhad, Iran. The participants' age ranged from 25-55. They all had bachelors or masters degrees but not necessarily in English. Participants were selected from both novice teachers and experienced ones and were both male and female. They taught different levels from Elementary to Advance. They were asked to answer a questionnaire on self-efficacy. Thirty of the respondents to the questionnaire were observed by the supervisor and received feedbacks from him but in different predetermined ways. After they received comments from the supervisor, they were asked to fill the previous questionnaire again.

#### *Instruments*

One questionnaire on self-efficacy was used in this study, but for two times. The questionnaire applied in this study was a researcher-made one based on Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy's self-efficacy questionnaire (2001), Bandura's Teacher Self-efficacy Scale (1997), and Murdoch's Good Teacher's questionnaire (1997). However, the inventory was a researcher-made questionnaire which was localized based on the Iranian EFL teachers' specifications. There were 30 items in the questionnaire which were grouped within five subscales: (1) efficacy to influence decision-making -2 items (2) instructional efficacy-15 items, and (3) disciplinary efficacy-2 items, (4) efficacy to enlist parental and community involvement -3 items (5) efficacy to create a positive school climate-8 items. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated by Cronbach's alpha which was 0.90 and the participants were expected to only mark the questions.

#### *Procedure*

In this study it was decided to select participants who were new at work in order to be compared with the experienced ones. Therefore, it could be possible for the researcher to confirm the idea that new teachers feel more positive while they receive feedback from supervisors (Chester & Beaudin, 1996). Regarding the experience, teachers were divided into 3 groups: the ones with less than a year of experience, those who had worked more than a year but less than 5 years and those with more than 5 years of teaching experience. Also, the researcher aimed to discover whether there was any difference between male and female teachers' sense of self-efficacy after receiving feedback from the supervisor.

The required data for this study was collected from teachers through one questionnaire which included questions to which participants were required to indicate their opinions. Later on, during the same term, supervisor observed the classes of some of them randomly (the required number of participants for this study is 30). Normally only the observed teachers remained as the participants of the current study. Having received feedback, the observed teachers were requested to fill in the previous questionnaire which was on self-efficacy, so that the researcher could find if the techniques supervisor manipulated for giving feedback had any effect on teachers' feeling of self-efficacy. The techniques supervisor used to give his ideas to the teachers were as follows: a group of teacher got a short friendly and informal feedback through SMS or E-mail. They received feedback in one or two days after being observed. Some others received feedback in person. All of them received feedback on the following day of being observed. And the third group received supervisors' comments through a form containing some questions marked by supervisor. The forms were given to them within utmost 2 days after being observed. The number of teachers in each

group was 15. And the comments of supervisor fell in the same fields for all of them. The whole process of investigating the level of teachers' self-efficacy and the degree to which it was affected by supervisors' feedback-giving techniques which was the purpose of this study lasted about 3 months because there were some intervals between observations. However, the estimated time required for answering the questionnaire for each participant was less than 10 minutes.

## RESULTS

A paired-sample t-test was conducted to calculate the impact of the feedback on teachers' self-efficacy. As it is shown in Table 1, there is a positive significant effect of supervisor's feedback on teachers' sense of self-efficacy ( $\text{sig} < 0.05$ ).

Table 1: General Effect of Feedback on Self-Efficacy

		Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Total Self-Efficacy - TSE2	-5.400	12.912	2.357	-10.222	-.578	-2.291	29	.029

There was a statistically significant increase in self-efficacy of teachers from Time 1 which was before receiving feedback ( $M=103.87$ ,  $SD=15.909$ ) to Time 2 which is after receiving feedback ( $M=109.27$ ,  $SD=21.089$ ),  $t(29)=-2.291$ ,  $p < .05$  (two-tailed). The mean increase in self-efficacy was -5.4 with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -10.222 to -.578.

2.

3. Table 2 shows that the effect of feedback among teachers who received it through SMS/Email and Formal Form was significant and positive. It seemed that regardless of positivity or negativity of the comments, teachers preferred indirect receiving of feedback ( $\text{sig} < 0.05$ ). Sense of efficacy is not very different among male and female teachers and gender by itself does not affect sense of efficacy.

4.

5. Generally, the more experienced the teachers, the higher sense of efficacy they have. Also, the table shows that efficacy of naïve teachers had been reduced after receiving feedback from supervisor, however it was not significant.

Table 2: Feedback-giving Techniques

			Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
sms/mail	Pair 1	Total Self-Efficacy - TSE2	-8.700	9.821	3.106	-15.726	-1.674	-2.801	9	.021
formal form	Pair 1	Total Self-Efficacy - TSE2	-9.600	12.249	3.874	-18.363	-.837	-2.478	9	.035
Inperson	Pair 1	Total Self-Efficacy - TSE2	2.100	14.019	4.433	-7.929	12.129	.474	9	.647

Also, in this study, participants were grouped into 4 ranges of age in order to find the effect of feedback-giving techniques on teachers' self-efficacy: 20-25, 26-30, 36-45 and above 45. The results showed that receiving feedback from supervisor, self-efficacy of those aged between 20- 25 has reduced, though not significantly. In the other groups, efficacy has enhanced but not significantly. There is a significant effect of age on sense of self-efficacy only among those aged more than 25 and less than 30 ( $\text{sig} < 0.05$ ).

Since the observed teachers were of different levels of qualifications, university degree was another variable to be checked to find the effect of which on teachers' self-efficacy. Self-efficacy of teachers with M.A degree was higher than teachers whose university degree was B.A and self-efficacy of teachers of groups enhanced after receiving feedback from supervisor, though not significantly.

To sum up, regardless of positivity or negativity of feedback; it seemed as if feedback had significant effect on teachers' sense of efficacy. As cited in Yang, 2011, in the area of English teaching, there has been not enough attention to teachers, while teachers, apart from the techniques and resources they might use, have significant role in developing English language teaching (Freeman, 1991). The results also revealed a significant role of supervisor in the process of education. However, factors such as age, gender and experience could reduce or enhance this influence. And there seemed more emphasis was required to the role of both teachers and supervisors.

## DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to find the effect of supervisor's comments on sense of efficacy of Iranian EFL teachers working in English institutes. According to the obtained data of the current study, teachers are influenced by supervisor's feedback-giving techniques, regardless of positivity or negativity of the feedback. As in a study on feedback, Pekkanli (2011) stated:

Communication and the quality of the feedback are important factors because the ways they are presented can determine its acceptance by the teacher candidate. It is claimed that "when supervisors deliver critical feedback to subordinates, it is hoped that the recipients will focus on the content of the message to gain information about ways of improving job performance.(p.1157)

Teachers seemed to be in favor of having their performance being complemented and their negative points ignored by the supervisor. Teachers also seemed to give value to the way they received feedback from supervisor. In other words, even if the comments they received were negative and critical, they were not very affected unless they find the tone of feedback insulting. Therefore, as the results of the study proved, teachers prefer receiving feedback through indirect techniques rather than direct way of meeting supervisors in their rooms.

However, analysis of the obtained data of current study revealed that other factors such as age, gender, years of experience and level of qualification of teachers interfere the way they perceive supervisor's feedback. The results of the current study vindicated that feedbacks provided by supervisor could generally enhance teachers' self-efficacy, though men were more open to the comments and despite the fact that they might have received negative comments, they took the comments less critical. Also, results lead us to consider experience as an effective factor in the way teachers took the comments, regardless of technique through which they received feedback. Furthermore, despite the varying range of age among teachers, obtained data revealed that age does not interfere in the way teachers take comments from supervisor. Also teachers' university degree did not seem to be effective on teachers' self-efficacy after receiving feedback from supervisor.

To summarize, the data analysis revealed that teachers are vulnerable to the way they receive feedback from supervisor. However, there might be different factors which could intensify or decrease the effect of feedback-giving techniques applied by supervisor. All the findings of this study imply that there is a need to have more careful attention to the affairs between supervisor and teachers of an English school and their cooperation might affect teachers' performance and consequently students' improvement.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to investigate the effect of supervisor's feedback-giving techniques on EFL teachers in an English school. The whole process of observing teachers by supervisor and providing them with feedback took a semester. The results analyzed by SPSS software (version 16) proved a significant effect of feedback-giving techniques on sense of efficacy among teachers. The idea that teachers are influenced by supervisor's feedback is presented in a study by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007):

Vicarious experiences are those in which the target activity is modeled by someone else. The impact of the modeled performance on the observer's efficacy beliefs depends on the degree to which the observer identifies with the model. When a model with whom the observer closely identifies performs well, the self-efficacy of the observer is enhanced. When the model differs, for example in terms of the level of experience, training, gender, or race, then even witnessing a very competent performance may not enhance the self-efficacy beliefs of the observer.(p. 6)

The results of the current study vindicated that teachers' sense of efficacy was influenced by feedback-giving techniques applied by supervisor. Significant positive change in teachers' self-efficacy after receiving feedback was noticed and the results proved enhancement in self efficacy of teachers. It seems supervisors provide teachers with

feedback with the hope that teachers will merely focus on the content of their comments and make benefit of their comments in order to improve their performance (Pekkanli, 2011). However, findings of this study highlighted the effect of feedback-giving techniques claimed that teachers as recipients of feedback do not merely pay attention to the content of feedback; and the way they receive feedback is of crucial importance, either. Also, based on the findings of this study teachers were not in favor of receiving feedback in person and in privacy of supervisor's room, no matter the content of feedback was positive or negative. It seemed possible to state that indirect techniques applied by supervisor to give feedback were more constructive and approved by teachers.

This study was conducted to investigate the effect of feedback on variables of age, gender, experience, and university degree of teachers for each of which different effect of feedback was noticed. According to the results of the study, there is no significant difference between self-efficacy of male and female teachers after receiving feedback from supervisor. The findings of the current study on general self-efficacy of experienced and inexperienced teachers is in accordance with the study of Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2006) who expected that less experienced teachers were of lower self-efficacy. However, the study revealed significant positive effect of experience on self-efficacy of teachers whose experience was between 1 to 5 years. In case of age, teachers who aged 25-30 showed higher self-efficacy after receiving feedback from supervisor. It should be added that supervisor's age is in the same range. And finally, teachers' level of qualification has no significant effect on their sense of efficacy. However, according the gathered data, teachers of higher university degrees seem more efficient than the ones of lower university degrees.

The results of this study, in line with many other studies, suggest more attention to teachers' satisfaction with the school environment which could affect their whole performance within the classroom. It is required to conduct studies on teachers' perceived sense of efficacy in relation to their attitude toward students and parents. Further research is required to find the effect of supervisor's comments on teachers' performance within the classroom. The results of this study invite further exploration into comparing the effect of direct feedback-giving techniques applied in this study with indirect feedback-giving techniques such as providing teachers with constructive messages on school's bulletin board or in school's journal. Furthermore, it would be of desirable value to attempt to find the possible effect of human relationship between supervisor and teachers and whether it affects teachers' performance. Lastly, replication of the current study within public schools could be helpful for the pedagogical purposes.

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## **LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES AS PREDICTORS OF L<sub>2</sub> IDIOMS COMPREHENSION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The present study was an attempt to investigate types of language learning strategies as predictors of L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension. The participants were 112 male and female Iranian undergraduate B.A. and M.A. students majoring in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, English Translation, and English Literature at the University of Qom; Islamic Azad University, Takestan Branch; and Mofid non-profit University. Data were gathered through the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP), an idiom comprehension test, and the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and analyzed using multiple regression procedure. The results showed that cognitive and affective learning strategies were the best predictors of L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension. In other words, cognitive and affective learning strategies together could account for approximately 43% of the total variance in L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension. These findings may have implications for language learners, teachers, researchers, syllabus designers, and materials developers. Since cognitive learning strategies were found to be the most commonly used strategies by successful idiom learners in this study, they should be taken into account more in L<sub>2</sub> idiom comprehension. At the same time, teachers should make learners aware of affective and social strategies because they have not received much attention in classrooms.

**KEYWORDS:** Idioms, idioms comprehension, language learning strategies

### **INTRODUCTION**

Over the last two decades, vocabulary has received a great deal of attention in language learning and teaching. During the nineties, the focus shifted from single words to word strings, phrases, and idioms (Mäntylä, 2004). It is believed that lexicon is not only single words but a dynamic system which includes larger lexical items, language chunks, or word strings (Read, 2000). Consequently, idioms have become important not only to language researchers but also to language teachers. Pollio, Barlow, Fine, and Pollio (1977), and Cooper (1999) emphasize the importance of idioms in foreign language learning and hold that most English speakers produce 10 million novel metaphors and 20 million idioms in their lifetime of 60 years. Surprisingly, Anglin, Miller, and Wakefield (1993) postulate that more than half of the compound entries are idioms. In addition, Levorato (1993) and Levorato and Cacciari (1992) coined the term “figurative competence” to focus on the production and comprehension of idioms. This type of competence refers to the ability to decode and encode figurative expressions.

However, idioms are not defined clearly and comprehensively. This lack of clear and exact definition of idioms causes teachers and learners some difficulty dealing with idioms (Grant & Bauer, 2004). Idioms should be defined more clearly to remove this difficulty. Irujo (1986) defines an idiom as a conventionalized expression whose

meaning cannot be determined from the meaning of its parts. One clear, specific, and systematic definition is Fernando's (1996, p. 38) definition that "conventionalized multi-word expressions are often, but not always non-literal". Lennon (1998) asserts that idioms are the colorful side of language used while we are communicating our thoughts and feelings. They are used to make language much livelier and richer. However, according to Akbarian (2012), studies in psycholinguistics (Gibbs, 1993) and in applied linguistics (Boers & Demecheleer, 2001; Kövecses & Szabo, 1996) have revealed that many idioms are not as arbitrary as they are traditionally thought to be. It means that those learners who are aware of the lexical components of unfamiliar idioms are sometimes able to guess the meaning correctly.

Another concern of the present study is language learning strategies. Over the past decades, a gradual shift from the teacher-centered classes to more learner-centered classes has resulted in more focus on learners and learning. One consequence of this shift is focus on the use of language learning strategies (LLS) by learners and teachers in L<sub>2</sub> learning and teaching (Lessard-Clouston, 1997). Cohen and Weaver (1998) suggest that interest in language learning strategies started with the publication of papers mainly concerned with the "good language learner". Consequently, language learning strategies have become an integral part of various theoretical models of language proficiency (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). As Holec (1981) and Wenden (1998) claim, language learning strategies not only enable learners to learn an L<sub>2</sub> effectively and efficiently, but also help develop their abilities of independent and autonomous learning, which are believed to be another important factor leading to successful learning. Oxford (2002) also argues that using language learning strategies makes learning quicker, easier, more effective, and more fun.

Language learning strategies have been variously defined by various researchers such as O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Oxford (1990), and Ellis (1995). One of the most comprehensive definitions, among many others, is proposed by Oxford (1990), based on which learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations. Ellis (1995) argues that strategies refer to some kind of mental activity or behavior that can occur in a particular phase of the learning or communication process.

Griffiths (2004) offers language learning strategy theory, which asserts that other things being equal, the strategies which different learners use may account for at least part of their differential success rate. Chamot and O'Malley (1987) argue that research in language learning strategies in the second language acquisition literature has put much emphasis on the patterns of learning strategies used by successful language learners. Then, less successful language learners may benefit from applying the same strategies in their own learning, and successful language learners become better by taking advantage of strategies which are available to them (Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1978; Rubin, 1975).

Although idioms are considered as an integral part of each language and many researchers have worked on idioms, there is a paucity of research on the effectiveness of language learning strategies in the comprehension of L<sub>2</sub> idioms. The purpose of the present study is to fill part of the existing gap in this area. It aims to investigate the contribution of language learning strategies to L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### *Idioms*

In the past, when language was studied through its structure rather than meaning, idioms were studied on the basis of their form, and form was on the basis of idioms' definition. Idioms were considered as frozen and multi-word expressions that have little or no structural variation. Idioms were also seen as dead expressions because there was no relationship between their meaning and origin. But after the emergence of the functionalist approach to the study of language, the focus shifted from idiom structures to idiom meanings (Mäntylä, 2004).

Cooper (1999) asserts that although L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension is very difficult, learning idioms is essential for second or foreign language learners because idioms are used in all forms of discourse. According to Ellis (1997), the knowledge of idioms and the ability to know how to use idioms in a second language are important indicators of language learners' communicative competence.

Moon (1996) and Mäntylä (2004) classify idioms into four major groups according to their level of lexical transparency or idiomaticity: transparent idioms, semi-transparent idioms, semi-opaque idioms, and opaque idioms. Idioms are considered as one of the most difficult areas of L<sub>2</sub> learning for both teachers and learners (see, for example, Cieslicka, 2006; Kövecses & Szabo, 1996; Zarei & Rahimi, 2012). There are different factors involved in idioms comprehension that should be taken into account. However, three major factors influencing idioms

comprehension are proposed by Rohani, Ketabi, and Tavakoli (2012). They are semantic transparency, familiarity, and context. Another factor affecting L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension is learners' knowledge of their first language. This factor is also called *transfer*. Irujo (1986) examined whether second language learners use knowledge of their first language to comprehend idioms in the second language. Findings revealed that identical idioms were the easiest to comprehend. Similar idioms were comprehended almost as well, but showed interference from language learners' L<sub>1</sub>. Different idioms were the most difficult to comprehend, but showed less interference than similar idioms.

### ***Language Learning Strategies (LLS)***

Researchers have started to study language learning strategies since 1960s. The cognitive approach to language learning has affected language learning strategies research (Williams & Burden, 1997). Zarei and Elekaei (2012) argue that the effect of language learning strategies on language learning is undeniable. Many researchers have conducted research on the relationship between language learning strategies and language proficiency. Major findings have revealed that the use of appropriate language learning strategies helps language learners to improve their language proficiency or achieve general or particular language skills (e.g., Akbari & Talebinenezhad, 2003; Bremner, 1999; Chamot & Kupper, 1989; Cohen, 1990; Wenden & Rubin, 1987; and Wharton, 2000). As an example, Akbari and Talebinenezhad (2003) conducted a study on the relationship between language learning strategies by Iranian learners of English and their foreign language proficiency. They found a positive relationship between the use of language learning strategies by the subjects and their proficiency.

Brown (2007) points out that some learners are successful and others are not regardless of teaching methods. At the same time, it is undeniable that learners' learning is influenced by their abilities, techniques, or strategies used during learning. There is a high correlation between language learning strategies and successful language learning. However, not all language learning strategies are effective for all second language learners. As Cotterall (2000) argues, learners are different, so they choose different strategies based on their understanding of which strategies can possibly contribute to their learning.

Like the various definitions of learning strategies, there are also different classifications of learning strategies (Bremner, 1999). One of the most comprehensive classifications of language learning strategies was proposed by Oxford (1990) suggesting that language learning strategies contain six categories of L<sub>2</sub> learning behaviors. Based on Oxford's (1990) classification, language learning strategies can be generally divided into two main categories: direct and indirect strategies. Memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies are considered as direct strategies. Metacognitive, affective, and social strategies are indirect strategies. Unlike direct strategies, indirect strategies do not have a direct effect on the target language, but have a significant effect on language learning. Brown (2007, p. 141-142) offers a similar classification.

The present study uses Oxford's (1990) and Brown's (2007) classification because, as Ellis (1994, p. 539), and Rausch (2000, p. 2) claim, this classification is the most comprehensive, multi-leveled, and theoretically well-conceived classification with a hierarchical ordering of language learning strategies.

There is a wide variety of factors influencing the selection of language learning strategies. Among these, biological, cognitive, affective, socio-cultural factors, and also level of proficiency are strongly correlated with the selection of language learning strategies (Ames & Archer, 1988; Lucas, Pulido, Miraflores, Ignacio, Tacay & Lao, 2010; Oxford & Burry-stock, 1995; Vandergrift, 2005).

Language learning strategies used by learners can be assessed through various procedures like interviews, students' diaries, think-aloud procedures, and questionnaires. Among the above procedures, questionnaires have been used mostly for assessing learners' strategies (Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford & Nykios, 1989). One of the most common and standardized questionnaires was developed by Oxford (1990). This questionnaire is called the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL).

Many studies have also been conducted on both language learning strategies (LLS) and idioms. Cooper (1999) studied the on-line processing strategies used by nonnative speakers of English who were asked to give the meaning of idioms presented in a written context. The findings showed that most of the participants engaged in a heuristic approach to idioms comprehension. Bulut and Celik-Yazici (2004) investigated the strategies used by learners in processing L<sub>2</sub> idioms. They reported that L<sub>2</sub> learners recalled the strategies acquired during first language acquisition

to construct L<sub>2</sub> idiom meanings. Other findings showed that learners made a guess to interpret L<sub>2</sub> idiom meanings and moved from context. Cooper (1999, p. 246) identified a number of other strategies, used by learners to understand the meaning of L<sub>2</sub> idioms, including the following: (the frequency of use is mentioned in parentheses)

- Guessing from context (28% of the time)
- Discussing and analyzing the idioms (24%)
- Using the literal meanings of idioms (19%)
- Using background knowledge (7%)
- Repeating or paraphrasing the idioms (7%)
- Connecting L<sub>2</sub> idioms to L<sub>1</sub> idioms (5%)
- Other strategies like personal discussion and meta-analysis of the idiom (2%)

Cooper's results showed that guessing from context (28%) was mostly used by learners which led to a correct answer 57% of the time. The least used strategy was referring to an L<sub>1</sub> idiom (5%) which led to a correct answer 8% of the time. According to the study, successful strategies respectively were:

- Guessing from context (57% of the time),
- Using the literal meaning (22%),
- Using background knowledge (12%), and
- Referring to an L<sub>1</sub> idiom (8%).

Based on Cooper's findings, it can be concluded that L<sub>2</sub> learners used compensation and cognitive learning strategies the most.

Meanwhile, Mäntylä (2004, p. 87-89) also suggests that there are many techniques that can be used for comprehending and learning idioms:

- Using images and imagination
- Making a relation between meaning and form
- Using actions, objects, and pictures
- Using guessing or inferencing strategies
- Using contextual clues
- Using keyword method

On the whole, despite the relative plethora of research on various aspects of both idioms and language learning strategies, there seems to be a paucity of research on the direct relationship between language learning strategies and idioms. This study aims to bridge part of the existing gap. It attempts to investigate the relationship between language learning strategies and idioms and examine which learning strategies contribute best to L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

The present study addresses the following research question to fill the above mentioned gaps:

Which language learning strategies are better predictors of L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

The participants of the present study were initially 118 male and female Iranian B.A. and M.A. students majoring in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, English Translation, and English Literature at the University of Qom; Islamic Azad University, Takestan Branch; and Mofid non-profit University. The age of the participants ranged from 20 to 30 years old. A general proficiency test (MTELP) was administered to homogenize the participants' level of English language proficiency. After the administration of the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency and taking the results into account, the number of participants was reduced to 112. Six participants were excluded from the study because they had a different level of proficiency.

### *Instruments*

To collect data for the present study and answer the research questions, the following instruments were utilized:

a) *Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP)*: In order to homogenize the participants, the vocabulary subtest of the Michigan test of English language proficiency was administered. MTELP is one of the

popular tests for measuring ESL or EFL learners' level of language proficiency. The test is a three-part, 100-item multiple-choice test containing 40 grammar items in conversational format, 40 vocabulary items requiring the selection of a synonym or completion of a sentence, and reading passages followed by 20 comprehension questions.

*b) L<sub>2</sub> idiom comprehension test:* In order to assess the participants' comprehension of idioms and their receptive knowledge of idioms, a multiple choice test containing 30 items of L<sub>2</sub> idioms was used. All of the idioms used in this test were selected from the *American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms*.

*c) Already established L<sub>2</sub> idiom comprehension test:* Since the idiom comprehension test was developed by the researcher, its validity had to be established. To this end, an already established L<sub>2</sub> idiom comprehension test was also used.

*d) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) Version 7.0:* In order to assess the general language learning strategies used by second language learners, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) version 7.0 was used. SILL refers to a self-scoring questionnaire developed by Oxford (1990) based on her strategy taxonomy with 50 strategy items on a five-point Likert scale from 'Never' to 'Always'. This version of SILL is designed to collect information about language learning strategies used by non-native speakers of English who are learning English as a second or foreign language. By the use of this instrument, the following six types of strategies proposed by Oxford (1990) could be examined: memory (items 1-9), cognitive (items 10-23), compensation (items 24-29), metacognitive (items 30-38), affective (items 39-44), and social learning strategies (items 45-50). It is worth noting that a number of studies using SILL for collecting their data have found reliability indexes ranging from 0.91 to 0.95 (Oxford, 1996).

### ***Procedures***

The procedures followed in this study were divided into five main stages. First, 118 participants majoring in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, English Translation, and English Literature at the University of Qom; Islamic Azad University, Takestan Branch; and Mofid non-profit University were selected. In the second stage, the 40-item multiple-choice vocabulary subtest of the Michigan test of English language proficiency was used to make sure that there were no significant differences among the participants in terms of their vocabulary knowledge. The time allocated to this test was 45 minutes. Data from those who scored more than one standard deviation above or below the mean were excluded from all subsequent analyses. As a result, the number of participants was reduced to 112.

Next, the L<sub>2</sub> idiom comprehension test was administered; the participants were asked to answer a 30-item multiple choice test of L<sub>2</sub> idioms in 30 minutes. In the fourth stage, an already established L<sub>2</sub> idiom comprehension test was administered to check the validity of newly developed tests. The time allocated to this test was also 30 minutes.

At the end, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was administered to collect data about types of second language learning strategies used by the participants. They were asked to choose from the five-point Likert scale for every statement from 'Never' to 'Always'. The collected data were organized and prepared for further statistical analyses.

Since the idiom comprehension test was developed by the researcher, its validity and reliability had to be established. To this end, KR-21 formula was used to estimate the reliability of the test. The reliability index of the idiom comprehension test turned out to be 0.84 (see Appendix). A correlation procedure was used to check the validity which the scores of the participants on the idiom comprehension test were correlated with their performance on the idiom comprehension test of which the validity was already established. The validity index of comprehension test turned out to be 0.82 (see Appendix). To analyze the collected data, the multiple regression analysis procedure was used.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Results***

The study sought to investigate which types of language learning strategies are predictors of L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension. A multiple regression procedure was used to answer this question. To do so, initially a correlation

procedure was run to see the degree of the relationship between L<sub>2</sub> idiom comprehension scores and types of language learning strategies, the results of which are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Correlations among L<sub>2</sub> idiom comprehension scores and language learning strategies

		Idiom comp.	memory	cognitive	compensation	metacognitive	affective	social
Pearson Correlation	Idiom comp.	1.000	.288	.608	.419	.495	-.197	-.004
	memory		1.000	.626	.338	.519	.321	.249
	cognitive			1.000	.674	.659	.127	.137
	compensation				1.000	.398	.061	.189
	metacognitive					1.000	.082	.210
	affective						1.000	.470
	social							1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Idiom comp.	.	.001	.000	.000	.000	.018	.483
	memory		.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.004
	cognitive			.	.000	.000	.090	.075
	compensation				.	.000	.262	.023
	metacognitive					.	.194	.013
	affective						.	.000
	social							.

As Table 1 shows, L<sub>2</sub> idiom comprehension has the highest correlation with cognitive strategies (i.e., .608) and the lowest correlation with social strategies (i.e., -.004). A stepwise multiple regression was run (Table 4.2) which showed that cognitive and affective strategies entered into the regression equation (stepwise criteria: probability of  $F \leq 0.050$ ).

Table 2: Variables Entered/Removed<sup>a</sup>

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Cognitive	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter $\leq .050$ , Probability-of-F-to-remove $\geq .100$ ).
2	Affective	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter $\leq .050$ , Probability-of-F-to-remove $\geq .100$ ).

a. Dependent Variable: idiom comprehension

Based on model summary (Table 3), it can be seen that cognitive strategies and L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension share 36% of the variance. Cognitive and affective strategies together share 43% of the variance with L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension. In other words, cognitive and affective strategies explain 43% of the total variance in L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension.

Table 3: Model Summary<sup>e</sup>

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.608 <sup>a</sup>	.370	.364	5.11253	.370	64.654	1	110	.000



2	.669 <sup>b</sup>	.447	.437	4.81238	.077	15.149	1	109	.000
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a. Predictors: (Constant), cognitive

b. Predictors: (Constant), cognitive, affective

c. Dependent Variable: idiom comprehension

The ANOVA procedure was used to test the null hypothesis that the predictive power of the models is not significant. The results of the ANOVA performed on the model are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: ANOVA<sup>a</sup> on L<sub>2</sub> idiom comprehension test

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1689.934	1	1689.934	64.654	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	2875.173	110	26.138		
	Total	4565.107	111			
2	Regression	2040.773	2	1020.386	44.060	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	2524.334	109	23.159		
	Total	4565.107	111			

a. Predictors: (Constant), cognitive

b. Predictors: (Constant), cognitive, affective

c. Dependent Variable: idiom comprehension

Based on Table 4, significant results were shown.

To find out how strong the relationship between L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension and each of the six predictors is, the standardized coefficients and the significance of the observed t-value for each predictor were checked. Table 5 shows the results.

Table 5: Coefficients<sup>a</sup> of language learning strategies

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-4.199	2.639		-1.591	.114
	cognitive	.429	.053	.608	8.041	.000
2	(Constant)	4.636	3.365		1.378	.171
	cognitive	.454	.051	.644	8.969	.000
	affective	-.572	.147	-.280	-3.892	.000

a. Dependent Variable: idiom comprehension

Based on Table 5, cognitive and affective strategies, among six types of language learning strategies, account for a statistically significant portion of the variance in L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension. Cognitive strategies are the best predictors of L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension; for every one standard deviation change in the cognitive strategies score, there will be .60 of a standard deviation change in idiom comprehension score. Affective strategies are another predictor of L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension; every one standard deviation increase in one's affective strategies score will cause .28 of a standard deviation decrease in one's idiom comprehension score. It can be concluded that cognitive strategies are positive predictors and affective strategies are negative predictors of L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there are no significant differences in the predictive power of the language learning strategies in idiom comprehension is rejected.

## DISCUSSION

The present study attempted to investigate types of language learning strategies as predictors of L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension. One of the findings of the present study was that cognitive learning strategies were the best predictors of L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension. The participants employed more cognitive learning strategies for L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension compared to other categories of language learning strategies. This result is in line with that of Chamot and O'Malley (1987), Oxford (1990), Lachini (1997), Bremner (1999), and Khabiri and Azaminejad (2009), who argue that the most popular strategies with language learners are cognitive learning strategies. This finding also supports Ehrman and Oxford's (1995) finding that cognitive learning strategies had a significant correlation with the participants' speaking and reading proficiency. In addition, the finding of the study also lends support to Tajeddin's (2004) findings; he studied the relationship between language learning strategies and performance on the cloze test (passage). He found that the cloze had a significant correlation with only cognitive language learning strategies. Meanwhile, it corroborates the findings of Cooper (1999), showing that L<sub>2</sub> learners employed cognitive learning strategies to comprehend L<sub>2</sub> idioms the most. It is also in line with one finding of Mäntylä (2004), which showed that non-native speakers used 3 main strategies to comprehend L<sub>2</sub> idioms. The most frequent strategy was a direct translation equivalent in L<sub>1</sub>. The second one was looking for links between literal and figurative interpretations. The third most popular strategy was guessing. The first and second most popular strategies are related to cognitive strategies.

However, this finding of the present study contradicts Klassen's (1994) finding that compensation learning strategies were the most frequently used category by learners. It is also in conflict with Park's (1994) result, which revealed that cognitive learning strategies were minimally used by learners. The finding also differs from that of Vossoughi and Ebrahimi (2003), who found that the most commonly used learning strategies by both monolingual and bilingual groups were metacognitive and social learning strategies. The finding of the present study is in conflict with Rezaei and Almasian's (2007) finding, which indicated that metacognitive learning strategies were the most preferred category of strategies for both high and low creativity groups. Finally, the finding is different from that of Takeuchi (2003), who reported that successful language learners tended to employ more metacognitive learning strategies than other categories.

Another result of the present study was that affective learning strategies were also a significant predictor of L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension. However, they had a significantly negative correlation with L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension. Moreover, the participants made use of affective learning strategies for L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension the least. This finding corroborates the findings of Park (1994), Oxford and Ehrman (1995), Mochoizuki (1999), Wharton (2000), Vossoughi and Ebrahimi (2003), and Khabiri and Azaminejad (2009), that affective learning strategies were used the least. It also provides support for Rezaei and Almasian's (2007) finding that both high and low creativity groups and both high and low proficiency groups used affective learning strategies the least.

There could be two reasons why learners used affective and social learning strategies minimally: first, L<sub>2</sub> researchers may have used some methods to identify language learning strategies that failed to measure learners' affective and social learning strategies properly. Second, successful learners might hesitate to consider these as real strategies (Oxford, 2002). Another possible reason for these results is that many English language teachers were trained in the use of direct strategies such as cognitive strategies when they were younger learners; now they feel that these strategies require more emphasis than affective learning strategies. Consequently, students are taught how to use cognitive strategies and are not well aware of affective learning strategies. Since the participants of the study were Iranian, one possible reason for these findings may be related to the Iranian educational system where classes are more teacher-centered. In these classes, students' affective factors are not taken into account and direct strategies such as translating, analyzing, or reasoning, which are categorized as cognitive learning strategies, are focused on more by teachers and students.

Unlike the above results, this result of the study contradicts that of Sedaghat (2001), who showed no significant correlation between affective learning strategies and attitude. This study is also not in line with some non-L<sub>2</sub> research which indicated that a number of the best learners used affective and social learning strategies (McCombs, 1988). Meanwhile, it is different from Nikoopour and Amini Farasani (2010), who found that from among six categories of language learning strategies, metacognitive learning strategies were used frequently and EFL learners minimally used memory learning strategies.

The observed discrepancy between the findings of the present study and those of the above-mentioned studies could be partially attributed to the following factors. It is worth noting that the cultural differences might be one reason for differences between the results of the present study and the above studies. The participants of the present study were Iranian learners. Iranian learners are rarely given opportunities to raise their awareness of affective learning strategies. They do not feel comfortable discussing their feelings and attitudes with others. Moreover, Iranian

learners are given little (if any) opportunity to take risks. As a result, they tend to learn language through practicing formulas and patterns. This reason lends a support to the present study in which cognitive learning strategies were used the most in L<sub>2</sub> idioms learning.

The differences in the learners' level of proficiency might affect language learning strategy use. In this study, the participants were intermediate level. As a result, they may not have been able to apply indirect strategies such as metacognitive, social, and affective strategies. They may not have been proficient enough to self-monitor and self-evaluate. Sex differences may be considered as another factor contributing to such differences in the findings. Sex differences were not taken into consideration in the present study although they might have affected the learning strategy use and choice.

One of the possible reasons that may justify why learners used cognitive strategies the most and affective learning strategies the least is that learners preferred to use more familiar strategies and had an inclination to avoid trying less familiar ones. On the other hand, in the Iranian learning context, cognitive learning strategies are more focused on at the expense of affective and social learning strategies. In addition, teachers usually provide learners with Persian equivalents of L<sub>2</sub> idioms. It motivates them to use analyzing, reasoning, transferring, and translating strategies. Iranian learners are also trained to summarize, take note, and highlight important information. These strategies are mainly categorized as cognitive learning strategies.

## **CONCLUSION**

The present study attempted to investigate types of language learning strategies as predictors of L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension. The research question sought to investigate types of language learning strategies as predictors of L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension. The multiple regression analyses indicated that cognitive and affective learning strategies were significant predictors of L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension. Participants who made more use of cognitive learning strategies had better performance on the L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension test. In other words, cognitive and affective learning strategies together could account for approximately 43% of the total variance in L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension. This significant relationship can be accounted for on the basis of two considerations. First, cognitive learning strategies are direct strategies and involve the mental processing of language directly. Language learners need to have the direct mental processing of language to comprehend L<sub>2</sub> idioms. Second, cognitive learning strategies include information processing strategies like analytic, bottom-up skills, and synthesizing skills. They might be more closely related to L<sub>2</sub> idiom learning (Tajeddin, 2004). In addition, based on the results of previous studies and those of the present study, strategies like reasoning, analyzing, translating, and transferring, which are referred to cognitive learning strategies, help learners to comprehend L<sub>2</sub> idioms better.

On the other hand, it can be concluded that affective learning strategies including strategies to control learners' feelings (e.g., I feel relaxed when I cannot understand L<sub>2</sub> idioms) have a significantly negative correlation with L<sub>2</sub> idioms learning. This is probably due to lack of awareness of these strategies on the part of the learners, which is in turn because the educational system focuses on the cognitive and metacognitive learning processes, and ignores the affective and interpersonal factors involved in the learning process. As a consequence, learners do not consider this category of language learning strategies as real strategies leading to successful learning (Rezaei & Almasian, 2007). Another possible reason is teacher-centered classes in which learners are not allowed to employ more affective learning strategies.

In short, it is believed that language learning strategies are a new area of research in English language learning and teaching (for example, Green & Oxford, 1995; Nyikos & Oxford, 1993; Oxford & Cohen, 1992). More research studies are required to explore the effectiveness of six categories of language learning strategies in different English language tasks.

To sum up, the findings showed that language learning strategies can be significant predictors of L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension. At the same time, the findings suggested that there are differences among the various language learning strategies as predictors of L<sub>2</sub> idioms comprehension.

## ***Pedagogical implications***

The present study can have implications for learners, teachers, syllabus designers, material developers, and researchers. Teachers can share their experiences and language learning strategies with learners while doing language tasks. They should provide students with a rationale for why they need to learn how to use language learning strategies. They can also integrate different language learning strategies with each other. However, they should begin training students to adopt the most successful learning strategies rather than all possible ones. Learners should be given opportunities to discuss language learning strategies which they use to do different language tasks. They should be provided with language learning strategies and an awareness of how and when to use them to make their language learning better and faster. Particularly, they should be given an awareness of the effective language learning strategies to better comprehend L<sub>2</sub> idioms.

Since the focus has shifted from teacher-centered classes to learner-centered classes, material developers should develop materials which:

1. teach different categories of language learning strategies to learners,
2. specify which language learning strategies may be more effective in doing a particular task,
3. explain how and when language learning strategies can be used,
4. provide tasks and exercises which allow learners to make use of different language learning strategies, and
5. give a degree of freedom to learners and teachers to use their own preferred language learning strategies.

In addition, since many English language materials ignore idioms and/or introduce them in vocabulary lists (Irujo, 1986), materials developers should provide sections and exercises focused on idioms independently. These exercises should motivate learners to apply various effective language learning strategies.

Researchers should also conduct more studies on the effect of language learning strategies on different aspects of language and provide learners, teachers, syllabus designers, and materials developers with information about effective and less effective language learning strategies.

On the whole, since cognitive learning strategies were found to be the most commonly used strategies by successful idiom learners in this study, learners, teachers, researchers, syllabus designers, and materials developers should put more emphasis on this category of learning strategies. For example, they may develop and use activities which promote memory-enhancing strategies (e.g., mnemonic technique). At the same time, teachers, syllabus designers, and materials developer should make learners aware of affective and social strategies because they have not received much attention in classrooms. Activities for teaching L<sub>2</sub> idioms should provide students with different categories of language learning strategies.

### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are some limitations which are involved in the present study:

1. The participants were both females and males at different ages; therefore, the age and sex of the participants were not taken into account.
2. There were only 120 participants. So, the generalizability of findings must be treated cautiously.
3. The level of proficiency of the participants was limited to intermediate and upper-intermediate levels.
4. The participants' background knowledge may have affected their use of language learning strategies and idiom comprehension; however, it was not the concern of this study.

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*Appendix: Tables*

**Table 3.1.** Descriptive statistics for idiom comprehension test

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	KR-21 r
Idiom comprehension	112	2.00	28.00	16.6607	6.41304	41.127	0.84
Valid N (listwise)	112						

**Table 3.2.** Correlations between newly developed idiom comprehension test and an already established test

		Idiom comprehension	Criterion
Idiom comprehension	Pearson Correlation	1	.824**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	112	112

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## THE STUDY OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN EFL STUDENTS' SELF-CONCEPT AND THEIR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN EFL CLASSROOMS

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims at investigating the relationship between the EFL intermediate students' self-concept and their academic achievement (grammatical knowledge). Accordingly, two groups of university students were selected as the low and high self - concept participants. This was done by their responses given to a questionnaire developed by Marsh (1990), to measure self - concept. After selecting the participants, the researcher utilized a standard Oxford Proficiency Test (OPT), measuring grammatical knowledge in the case of conditional sentences to evaluate some aspects of academic achievement of the participants at the end of the study. By analyzing the data were gathered from the participants. That is, to say the high self- concept students were found to be more inclined to proficient in grammatical aspect of English. It was found that there is a statistically significant correlation between the students self -concept and their academic achievement. Based on the findings of this study and many other studies conducted on this issue, foreign - language teachers should consider academic self - concept as a powerful motivating force that can optimize language learning processes and more importantly consider enhancing student self -concept as one of the primary goals of language education.

**KEYWORDS:** Self-concept, Academic achievement, Grammatical knowledge

### INTRODUCTION

One's self-concept (also called self-construction, self-identity or self-perspective) is a collection of beliefs about oneself that includes elements such as academic performance, gender roles and sexuality, racial identity, and many others. Generally, self-concept embodies the answer to "Who am I?".

Carl Rogers (1959) believes that the self concept has three different components:

- The view you have of yourself (Self image)
- How much value you place on yourself (Self esteem or self-worth)

- Would you wish you were really like (Ideal self)

Psychologist Carl Rogers also paved the way for this concept. According to Rogers, everyone strives to become more like an "ideal self". The closer one is to their ideal self, the happier one will be. Rogers also claimed that one factor in a person's happiness is unconditional positive regard, or UPR, from others. Evidence of UPR in self-concept research is apparent in studies by Benner and Mistry (2007) and Tiedemann (2000). Research has indicated that adolescents whose mothers and teachers had high expectations for their future educational attainment experienced more academic success than those whose adult influences have lower expectations.

Despite a lack of clear distinction among self-related perceptions, current researchers agree that self-concept has a multidimensional nature (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Marsh, Byrne & Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton, 1976). Researchers also agree that self-concept is not innate, but rather it is formed through an individual's experiences and interaction with the environment (Bong & Clark, 1999; Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Marsh & Shavelson, 1985), where "significant others" play an important role (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton, 1976; Sanchez & Roda, 2003). Sanchez and Roda (2003) defined self-concept as a component of human personality development.

An important theory related to self-concept is the self-categorization theory (SCT), which states that the self-concept consists of at least two "levels," a personal identity and a social identity. In other words, one's self-evaluation relies on both one's self-perceptions and how one fits in socially. The self-concept can alternate rapidly between the personal and social identity. Research by Trautwein et al. (2009) indicates that children and adolescents begin integrating social comparison information into their own self-concept in elementary school by assessing their position among their peers. Gest et al.'s (2008) research findings reveal that peer acceptance has a significant impact on one's self-concept by age 5, affecting children's behavior and academic success. Both of these research examples demonstrate the social influences on a person's self-concept.

Academic Self-concept (ASC) refers to the personal beliefs someone develops about their academic abilities or skills. A person's ASC develops and evolves as they age. Some research suggests that ASC begins developing in early childhood, from age 3 to 5, due to parental/family and early educators' influence, while other research contends that ASC does not develop until age 7 or 8, when children begin evaluating their own academic abilities based on the feedback they receive from parents, teachers and their peers.

There are a variety of social factors that contribute to development of an ASC and developing a positive ASC has been related to people's behaviors and emotions in other domains of their life, influencing happiness, self-esteem, and anxiety levels to name a few. Due to the significant impact ASC has on a person's life, it has been argued that educational systems should foster positive self-concept development in children. These research findings are important because they have practical implications for parents and teachers. Research indicates that parents and teachers need to provide children with specific feedback that focuses on their particular skills or expressed abilities in order to increase ASC. Other research suggests that learning opportunities should be conducted in a variety of mixed-ability and like-ability groupings that down-play social comparison because too much of either type of grouping can have adverse effects on children's ASC in the way they view themselves in relation to their peers.

Academic self-concept has been shown to be an important affective variable that has a reciprocal relation with academic performance in a large number of studies (Guay, Marsh, & Boivin, 2003; Marsh, Hau, & Kong, 2002). Many researchers have reported a positive correlation between student academic self-concept and performance in the language learning class (Liu, 2008; Marsh, Relich, & Smith, 1983; Muijs, 1997).

Ireson, Hallam and Plewis (2001) reported that ability grouping in English setting fostered the English self-concept of lower-performing students and lowered the English self-concept of higher-ability students, whereas the grouping practice in mathematics and science settings had no effect on the corresponding academic self-concepts. Liu, Wang, and Parkins (2005) established that the academic self-concept of lower-performing secondary students was lower than that of their higher-ability counterparts immediately after being grouped. However, three years later, these students had a more positive academic self-concept than their high ability peers, while a more pronounced decline in academic self-concept was found for highly able students.

Consistent findings were reported in another study by Kulik and Kulik (1992) that the effects of ability grouping on student' self-concept are negligible overall. However, they also concluded that homogeneous grouping tends to have slightly positive effect on below-average students and students and slightly negative effect on high-group students.

Various studies have examined the effects that success and failure can have on an individual's self-concept. Individuals often form their self-concept based on past experiences of success or failure, attributing the outcome to their own personal worth. By doing this, individuals can commit the fundamental attribution error. In this case, the error may arise when the person falsely believes that a specific aspect of who they are determined the positive or negative outcome. By attributing a negative outcome to oneself, self-concept can be unnecessarily harmed. However, attributing positive outcomes to oneself can increase self-concept. These attributions can even have an effect on self-perception, achievement behaviors in the future, and expectancies. Austin and Vispoel (1998) found strong links between where an individual attributed success or failure and, specifically, musical self-concept.

Changes in self-concept can be mediated and predicted by various factors. One important factor in academics is evaluation of performance by peers, or peer academic reputation (PAR). Gest, Rulison, Davidson, and Welsh (2008) found evidence for the predictive ability of PAR with regard to students' in upper grades academic self-concept. If a student has a reputation for success or failure in the academic setting, the student may develop a negative self-concept. This shows that it is may not only be the actual success or failure that has an effect, but may also be the secondary effects of poor academic reputation among peers that influence students' self-concept.

Liu and Wang (2005) suggested that student' academic self-concept tends to decline from early to mid-adolescence as this can be a difficult phase of self-questioning and adjustment. A similar finding was obtained by Marsh (1989), who suggested that self-concept reaches its lowest point in middle adolescence. However, he also found that self-concept increases through early adulthood. Guay et al. (2003) contended that as elementary students grow older; their academic self-concept becomes more stable.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Self-concept research has attracted the interest of researchers in various disciplines because numerous research studies conducted over the past decades have suggested that academic self-concept and academic performance are interrelated. Some studies have shown that academic self-concept functions as a significant predictor of students' academic performance (Choi, 2005; Liu, 2008; Muijs, 1997). Other studies intended to examine the causal relationships between the two variables (Barker, Dowson, & McInerney, 2005; Helmke & van Aken, 1995; Marsh, Trautwein, Ludtke, Koller, & Baumert, 2005). Most studies have supported the contention that academic self-concept and achievement have a reciprocal relationship. Changes in one variable may lead to changes in the other.

The academic achievement/self-concept relationship has been reported in numerous studies by Marsh and his colleagues (Marsh et al., 1988; Marsh & Yeung, 1998; Marsh et al., 2001). Nevertheless, they rarely focused on the relation between English self-concept and language-related ability. Rather they were more interested in examining the relationship among self-concepts in specific content areas and different academic achievement measures, e. g., math achievement and English achievement, to see how they correlate with each other. As an example, Marsh et al. (1983) found that math achievement had a higher correlation with math self-concept (.55) than with self-concept in reading (.21). They also found a correlation of .22 between reading achievement and self-concept in the corresponding area. In a study conducted by Liu (2008) in the Taiwanese EFL context, there was a correlation of .41 between student English self-concept and language proficiency, with a higher correlation (.46) for females than for males.

Byrne (1988) noted that social comparison plays a vital role in the development of self-concept. Students are inclined to form their perceptions of selves using their classmates or schoolmates as a reference group. Trautwein, Ludtke, Marsh, Koller, and Baumert (2006) suggested that academic self-concept may differ as a function of not only their own academic achievement but also the achievement of their reference group. Researchers found that academic self-concepts of students may be enhanced when they are placed in a high-achieving group and "assimilation effects" occur in this case (Marsh, Kong, & Hau, 2000; Trautwein et al., 2006). To the contrary, when students' academic self-concepts are negatively affected by the above-average performance of their high-achieving group members, "contrast effects" occur. Marsh and his collaborators (Marsh, 1991, 1994., Marsh & Hau, 2003; Marsh & Parker, 1984) proposed the Big-Fish-Little-Pond effect (BFLPE) to explain these frame-of-reference effects and contended that academic self-concept is positively correlated with academic performance; however, the average ability level of students' peers in class or school can have a negative effect on the formation of specific academic self-concepts.

According to the self-concept model posited by Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton (1976), the construct was hierarchical and multifaceted in nature such that self-concepts in specific domains such as English, math, history, and science are the subcomponents of one general academic self-concept. Considerable studies have been conducted to test and support the multidimensionality of the construct (Lau, Yeung, & Jin, 1998; Marsh, 1994; Marsh, Byrne, & Shavelson, 1988; Marsh, Relich, & Smith, 1983).

Since it has become a universal practice to group college students for English instruction, it is important to conduct more in-depth investigation into the variables that affect student learning in the homogeneously grouped setting. The current study analyzes one of the important affective factors, the academic self-concept, which has been shown to be correlated with foreign-language achievement, and examines whether and how it changes in ability-grouped classes' context. The objective of this research is to provide foreign language instructors with more information about the role of this variable in foreign-language performance with the hope that this can benefit student learning in the English setting in the long run.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The main question to be addressed in this research is as follow:

Is there any correlation between EFL students' self-concept and their academic achievement in EFL classrooms?

### **RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

The purpose of the present research is to investigate correlation between EFL students' self-concept and their academic achievement in EFL classrooms. The result will confirm one of the following hypotheses:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is correlation between EFL students' self-concept and their academic achievement in EFL classrooms.

H<sub>0</sub>: there is no any correlation between EFL students' self-concept and their academic achievement in EFL classrooms.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Participants***

To gather the necessary data for the study an intact EFL intermediate class of about 30 students were selected. The age range and the sex of the students as the moderator variables were not accounted for. In terms of their English proficiency all the participants were homogeneous. This is determined by conducting a pre-test on the grammar. The test was given to the participants to check their knowledge of grammatical structures.

#### ***Instrumentation***

In This study, Marsh Academic self-concept questionnaire and Oxford Placement Test (OPT) are as measures of students' self- concept and English language proficiency respectively. The questionnaire was developed by Herbert Marsh (1990), and includes 30 questions about academic self-concept which perceived by students themselves. The questionnaire items were selected from the established instrument guided by a general understanding of the students' and their cultural background knowledge. The original academic self-concept questionnaire (ASCQ) consisted of two 15 items subscales: academic confidence (15 items), and students' academic effort (15 items). The academic confidence (AC) subscale assessed students' feeling and perceptions about their academic competence in general. The academic effort (AE) subscale assessed students' commitment to and involvement and interest in school works. The questionnaire items are presented in Appendix.

The next instrument was OPT. It was a Standard English language test which was administered to check the grammatical knowledge of students. It was administered to determine the proficiency level of the students. The OPT was administered by two university EFL professors to check for the homogeneity of the General English proficiency level of the participants. This was done to insure that all the students participating in the research were at roughly the same level of English Language proficiency. The reliability of the test was calculated afterwards which happened to be 0.89. All the students were administered the proficiency test in a single testing session. The 30 items test included grammatical questions about conditional sentences.

#### ***Procedure***

The study was conducted at the beginning of the term. In order to determine the participants' level of language proficiency, an OPT was administered. Right from the beginning of the course, the self –concept questionnaire was distributed among a group of 65 students to select the required participants of the research. The participants were required to fill the questionnaires out. The questionnaires then were collected for the purpose of analysis.

The purpose of the researcher was to group the participants into two groups, including those who were found to be the students having a high degree of self-concept based on their responses to items in the questionnaire, and those who indicated a low degree of self-concept. That is, the questionnaire was distributed among a population of 65 EFL students taking the same course. From among these students, 15 were selected as the ones having the highest degree of self-concept (HSC) and 15 others as the lowest self-concept (LSC). This was done based on the scores they obtained from answering the self-concept questionnaire.

After dividing the participants into two groups of 15, the researcher who have taught English language as a general course in university, divided the participants into two groups, one of them was control group (LSC) which had not received any teaching of grammatical knowledge in the case of conditional sentences which were the focus of this research as an important part of academic achievement in English language curriculum in Iranian university, and the second class or experimental group(HSC), which they have received teaching about conditional sentences as a part of grammatical knowledge, and after 4 weeks of treatment( teaching grammatical knowledge), the post test was administered. In order to determine if there was a significant relationship between the students' obtained scores on the final exam in the form of OPT and the subjects' level of self-concept determined by the self-concept questionnaire, the researcher calculated the correlation coefficient of the scores obtained on the OPT.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to see if there is a significant relationship between the performance of the students on the OPT and their academic self-concept, the researcher run a t-test on the results obtained by the high self-concept students on the OPT and that of the low self-concept subjects on the same test. The following table provides the results obtained from the t-test.

### T-Test

*Tables 1 & 2: one sample t – test results on the OPT*

**One-Sample Statistics**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
OPT,LSCA= Placement Test Low Self-Concept A	15	7.5000	3.59092	.80296
OPT,LSCB= Placement Test High Self-Concept B	15	15.9000	2.22190	.49683

**One-Sample Test**

	Test Value = 0					
						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
OPT,LSCA= Placement Test Low Self-concept A	9.340	19	.000	7.50000	5.8194	9.1806
OPT,LSCB = Placement Test High Self-concept B	32.003	19	.000	15.90000	14.8601	16.9399

Based on the results given in table one, the mean and the standard deviation of the scores obtained from the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) given to the low self- concept students were 7.50 and 3.59. The mean and the standard deviation for the high self - concept group on the same test (OPT) were 15.90 and 2.22 respectively. At the 95% confidence interval of difference one can conclude that as P is less than 5% ( $P < .05$ )  $p = 0$ , the difference between the means obtained from the t-test is statistically different. That is to say, the means of the OPT given to the low and high self-concept students were 7.50 and 15.90 respectively. There is a difference value of 8.40 of the mean of the two groups on the same test. Based on the data provided in tables one and two, it can be concluded that it is highly likely that the students' self-concept influences their grammatical knowledge in the form of conditional sentences. To see if there is a significant correlation between the participants' self-concept and their proficiency in their English classes Pearson correlation statistics was also run on the results obtained from their responses to the items in the questionnaire distributed among them and their scores obtained from the OPT. Based on the results represented



in the following tables , one can come to the conclusion that there is a high correlation between the participants self - concept and their performance on the OPT. Put it another way, the correlation is significant at the %5 level. One can compare the results given in the following two tables to come to the same conclusion provided above.

*Tables 3 & 4: Correlations between the students' self-concept and their academic achievement*

**Correlations**

		LSCA=Low Self -concept	OPTLSCA= Placement Test Low Self -concept A
LSCA=Low Self -concept	Pearson Correlation	1	-.192
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.417
	N	15	15
OPTLSCA= Placement Test Low Self -concept A	Pearson Correlation	-.192	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.417	
	N	15	15

Table three: **Correlations**

**Correlations**

		HSCB=High Self -concept	OPTLSCB= Placement Test High Self -concept B
HSCB=High Self -concept	Pearson Correlation	1	-.497*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.026
	N	15	15
OPTLSCB=Placement Test High Self -concept B	Pearson Correlation	-.497*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.026	
	N	15	15

\*, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

These findings are in part in line with the findings of Liu (2008). He found that the more successful learners regarding the academic achievement had higher self - concept than less successful ones in academic achievement tasks. To sum up concerning the main question raised in this study one can be safe to conclude that there is a significant relationship between self - concept and academic achievement in EFL classrooms.

In the same line many experts believe that one main area of concern should be the attitudes and self-concept of students to learn and use L2. Byrne (1988) noted that social comparison plays a vital role in the development of self-concept. Students are inclined to form their perceptions of selves using their classmates or schoolmates as a reference group. Trautwein, Ludtke, Marsh, Koller, and Baumert (2006) suggested that academic self-concept may differ as a function of not only their own academic achievement but also the achievement of their reference group. Researchers found that academic self-concepts of students may be enhanced when they are placed in a high-achieving group and “assimilation effects” occur in this case (Marsh, Kong, & Hau, 2000; Trautwein et al., 2006). To the contrary, when students' academic self-concepts are negatively affected by the above-average performance of their high-achieving

group members, "contrast effects" occur. Marsh and his collaborators (Marsh, 1991, 1994., Marsh & Hau, 2003; Marsh & Parker, 1984) proposed the Big-Fish-Little-Pond effect (BFLPE) to explain these frame-of-reference effects and contended that academic self-concept is positively correlated with academic performance; however, the average ability level of students' peers in class or school can have a negative effect on the formation of specific academic self-concepts.

The findings of the present study are yet in line with another two studies carried out by Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton (1976); the construct was hierarchical and multifaceted in nature such that self-concepts in specific domains such as English, math, history, and science are the subcomponents of one general academic self-concept. Considerable studies have been conducted to test and support the multidimensionality of the construct (Lau, Yeung, & Jin, 1998; Marsh, 1994; Marsh, Byrne, & Shavelson, 1988; Marsh, Relich, & Smith, 1983).

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study aimed at investigating the relationship between self - concept and academic achievement of the intermediate EFL students. For this purpose, two groups of intermediate EFL Persian students were selected as the participants of the study. There were fifteen students in low self- concept group and 15 in high self - concept group. Their level of self- concept was determined based on their responses given to a self - concept scale questionnaire developed by Marsh (1990). Based on the results obtained from the participants' responses to the self-concept questionnaire and their performance on a standard oxford placement test, it was concluded that there was a high correlation between the participants self - concept and their academic achievement. Based on the findings of this study and many other studies conducted on this issue, foreign - language teachers should consider academic self - concept as a powerful motivating force that can optimize language learning processes and more importantly consider enhancing student self -concept as one of the primary goals of language education. However, the researchers do not claim the results obtained from this study are absolutely conclusive. Put it another way, as people come to learn a new language in a foreign context, not only their self-concept may influence their academic achievement in general and their grammatical knowledge in particular but also many other factors including their motivation, attitudes towards the language they are going to learn, the context in which they are going to master the new language are extremely influential in this regard. So the story of second language acquisition is interestingly comparable to the story of the elephant which was supposed to be described by a group of people in a dark room. And they all came to different descriptions of the whole body because they just touched parts of the body. The same story still is the case for SLA. As it is the case with almost all studies done in the field of teaching English as a foreign language, this study is not free of limitations. That is to say, because of the eluding nature of self - concept which is defined differently by different people one cannot claim to provide all inclusive criteria to list the problems with which EFL teachers wish to come to a conclusion in evaluating self - concept as an approach in EFL contexts. Therefore, the authors of this paper have not intended to come to an absolute conclusion about the perceived problems with which EFL teachers might face in using self – concept's measurement in their real classes. ALL in all, it is hoped that this survey be of use for all colleagues. All defects of this paper are of ours. That is, no fault is to the participants in this study.

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#### *Appendix*

1. English is one of my best subjects.
2. I am hapless in English classes.
3. People come to me for help in most schools, subjects.
4. I often need help in English.
5. I look forward to English classes.
6. I am too stupid at school to get into a good university.
7. I look forward to English classes.
8. I do badly on tests that need a lot of reading ability.
9. If I work really hard I could be one of the best students in my school; year.
10. I have trouble understanding anything with English in it.
11. Work in English classes is easy for me.
12. I get bad marks in most school subjects.
13. I enjoy studying for English.
14. I am not very good at reading.
15. I learn things quickly in most school subjects.
16. I do badly in tests of English.
17. English is one of my best subjects.
18. I am stupid at most schools subjects.
19. I get good marks in English.
20. I hate reading.
21. I do well in tests in most school subjects.
22. I never want to take another English course.
23. I get good marks in English.
24. I have trouble with most school subjects.
25. I have always done well in English.
26. I have trouble expressing myself when I try to write something.
27. I am good at most school subjects.
28. I hate English.
29. I learn things quickly in English classes.
30. Most school subjects are just too hard for me.

H.W.Marsh, 1999.

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**USING MECHANICAL TECHNIQUES VERSUS DISCUSSING YOUR FEELINGS WITH SOMEONE ELSE VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES ON IRANIAN'S READING COMPREHENSION**

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the present study was to shed light on the issue of vocabulary strategy training. We have investigated the effect of Using Mechanical Techniques as a direct vocabulary learning strategy and Discussing Your Feelings with Someone Else as an indirect vocabulary learning strategy instruction on the development of lexical knowledge of Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) students. To reach the goal of the study, two groups of EFL language learners at pre-intermediate language proficiency level were randomly assigned into two groups of A and B. The group (A) was taught vocabulary through Using Mechanical Techniques as a direct vocabulary learning strategy and the group B was taught Discussing Your Feelings with Someone Else as an indirect vocabulary strategy for developing their vocabulary storage in reading comprehension. Data analysis was conducted through samples t-test statistics. It demonstrated that the group A outperformed the group B. To summarize, teachers are encouraged to implement using Mechanical Technique vocabulary strategies because of their easy and effective application particularly at the early stages of vocabulary learning.

**KEYWORDS:** Vocabulary Learning Strategy, Using Mechanical Techniques Strategy, Discussing Your Feelings with Someone Else Strategy

**INTRODUCTION**

Vocabulary is absolutely vital to language as it labels objects, actions, ideas, emotions with which people can convey the intended meaning. Calls for helping learners improve the way they go about learning vocabulary have been made on a number of grounds. Sokmen (1997: 225) argues for helping learners learn how to acquire vocabulary on their own, noting that it is "not possible for students to learn all the vocabulary they need in the classroom". Second language (L2) acquisition depends crucially on the development of a strong vocabulary. In the second language acquisition (SLA) sub-discipline known as second language vocabulary acquisition (SLVA), researchers have

focused their attention on the need for second language learners to optimize their vocabulary knowledge (Singleton, 1999; Schmitt, 2000).

In order to communicate well in a foreign language, students should acquire adequate words and should know how to select and perform them accurately. Word knowledge makes a learner to deeper and better understanding meaning of a concept. Word knowledge is an essential component of communicative competence and it is important for both production and comprehension in a foreign language. (Reese, 1984) stressed the importance of vocabulary learning in second language acquisition. Unlike native speakers, second language learners (L2) go through a more conscious and demanding process of acquisition of vocabulary. They experience lexical gaps, the words they read which they simply do not understand or concepts that they cannot express as adequately as they could in their first language (L1). Sokoli, Stravoli (2006) believes vocabulary learning to be a vital part of each student's life.

To facilitate vocabulary learning, EFL learners gear a number of strategies that share some traits with the overall language learning strategies; however, some others remain very characteristic of vocabulary learning alone (Coady, 1997; Zimmerman 1998; Nation, 2001; Chamot, 2001; Thornbury 2002). Cunningsworth (1995: 38) regards helping learners develop their own vocabulary learning strategies as "a powerful approach", which can be based on sensitization to the systems of vocabulary, encouragement of sound dictionary skills and reflection on effective learning techniques. Vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) are a part of language learning strategies which are receiving more attention since the late 1970s and their investigation has advanced our understanding of the processes learners use to develop their skills in a second or foreign language. Language learning strategies have received much attention in the studies that were conducted by Chamot (1987), Cohen (1998) and Oxford (1990).

According to Schmitt (1997), vocabulary learning strategies are even more important in second language learning with the increasing nature of vocabulary acquisition and its emphasis on large exposure to the language. In order to learn and use English efficiently, learners need to expand proper learning strategies for long-term learning. Language learning strategies are directly or indirectly connected to the self-direction to a great extent. They are seen as the conscious choices of learners to solve problems and organize knowledge and skills (Cohen, 1998; McDonough, 1999), and according to Oxford (1990, 2001), they are often said to contribute to autonomous learning. Wenden (1991) believes that one of the characteristics of autonomous learners is their ability to apply learning strategies properly and independently. Furthermore, utilization of vocabulary learning strategies has been found to affect students' performance in language learning (Sarani and Kafipour, 2008).

#### **DIRECT AND INDIRECT VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGY**

There are many and various classifications of language learning strategies. O'Malley et al. (1985) declared the use of 24 strategies employed by learners of English as a second language in the United States. They divided these strategies into three main categories: "Metacognitive", "Cognitive", and "Socio-affective" strategies. In fact, there is another accepted classification as suggested by (Oxford, 1990). She distinguished between the direct and indirect strategies. In L2 lexical teaching and learning, there are two types of vocabulary learning: Indirect learning and direct learning. Indirect or incidental learning is defined as the type of learning that is a byproduct of doing or learning something else; whereas, direct or intentional learning is defined as being designed, planned for, or intended by teacher or students. In terms of vocabulary learning, indirect learning always means the approach of learning vocabulary through texts, working on tasks or doing other activities that are not directly related to vocabulary. In contrast, the direct learning always focuses on vocabulary itself, and combines with all kinds of conscious vocabulary learning strategies and means of memorizing words. Vocabulary form, collocation, parts of speech are mainly the results of incidental learning, while the sense of a word, meaning symbolizing and innuendo between words need intentional learning (Nation, 1990).

#### **VOCABULARY AND READING COMPREHENSION**

The role of vocabulary in reading comprehension is a complex one. To understand text meaning, one must be able to decode the printed message (Adams 2004, Alderson 2000, Day & Bamford 1998). The presence of high density of unknown words in a text may seriously hinder comprehension (Curtis 1987, Nation, 2001). Fast and efficient word recognition, word encoding and lexical access are necessary for a higher level of meaning construction (Adams

2004, Just & Carpenter 1987, Lesgold & Perfetti, 1978). The main difference between skilled and less skilled readers lies in slower and inefficient lexical access and semantic processing (Bernhardt 2005, Grabe & Stoller 2002, Nassaji 2003, Segalowitz et al. 1991).

A number of studies have revealed consistent correlations between vocabulary and comprehension (Laufer 1992a, 1992b, Qian 1999, 2002, Nation 2001). Stahl (2003: 246) contends that studies from readability formulae have 'found that the most important factor in determining the difficulty of a text is the difficulty of the words.' Vocabulary size is thus a strong predictor of reading comprehension. Within the context of L2 research in reading, findings on the reading processes and vocabulary threshold have consistently indicated the importance of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension (Fukkink et al. 2005, Garcia 1991, Koda 1994, Laufer, 1997, Zhang 2000, 2002a, 2002b; see Alderson 2000, Bernhardt 2005, Koda 2005 & Nation 2001, for reviews).

## REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Research by Coady et al. (1993) with 79 students studying English in a university academic preparation program found that two experimental groups, which had received special training in high frequency vocabulary, achieved better ESL reading comprehension at the end of the experiments than did a control group which had not received such a treatment. The study was carried out to verify the proposition that 'there is a positive and significant relationship between knowledge of high-frequency words and reading proficiency. Based on the results of their study, Coady et al. (1993) argued that special training in the 2000 most frequent English vocabulary items could improve learners' reading proficiency.

Sarani and Kafipour (2008) stated psycholinguistic strategy is the most frequently used strategy for the purpose of retaining new words while current training setting is communicative approach. They stated that the current communicative university training setting which depends relatively little on the requirement to memorize a lot of materials is not followed and practiced correctly by lecturers and students in Iran. Hamzah, Kafipour, and Abdullah (2009) conducted a research study entitled "vocabulary learning strategies of Iranian undergraduate EFL students and its relation to their vocabulary size". They found that Iranian EFL learners are medium users of VLS. However, they discussed that it may be due to the study skills course, they pass in the first semester of their studies. According to them, this course makes freshmen familiar with different learning techniques and strategies in order to have a better learning.

Seddigh and Shokrpur (2012) explored the use of VLS by Iranian medical students and noticed that female students used more VLSs than male ones and the difference was especially noticeable and significant in the case of guessing and note-taking strategies. Their results indicated that guessing and dictionary strategies had the highest frequency usage, while social and study preferences represented the lowest frequency use.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Investigating EFL Iranian learners' vocabulary learning strategies may help in identifying many aspects about their foreign language learning. Additionally, recognizing proficient EFL learners' best practices may help in delineating them for less proficient ones in an attempt to improve their opportunities and overcome their difficulties in learning the foreign language. The focus on vocabulary learning strategies comes from the importance of vocabulary for their language performance. Identifying aspects of EFL Iranian learners' linguistic self-image centers attention on how they generally feel about their language performance and how their feelings empower them in their learning; something which can be of absolute significance for EFL teachers to know of. Recognizing EFL Iranian learners' perceptions of their learning environment may also provide some additional insight for teachers and course designers into how to stand up to its challenges.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

Which one of two strategies, using Mechanical Techniques versus Discussing Your Feelings with Someone Else Vocabulary Learning Strategies is more effective on developing the Iranian's reading comprehension skill?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

The original participants in the current study were 120 EFL university students studying general English course that students of non-English major should pass, from Omidiyeh Islamic Azad University (mostly in the second semester) based on non-random judgment sampling. The age of the participants ranged from 20 to 25. . Both genders were



represented in the classes comprising 30 male and 34 female students, altogether. The participants were all Iranian, Farsi native speakers, homogeneous in respect of nationality, mother tongue and both cultural and educational background. They participated voluntarily in a homogeneity test adapted from Objective Placement Test (Lesley, et al 2005) as a homogeneity test and finally, sixty four students whose scores were one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean ( $M = 30$ ) were selected. Then they were randomly divided into two groups; group A (18 female and 14 male) received direct vocabulary learning strategy (Using Mechanical Technique), while group B (12 female and 20 male) were taught through indirect (Discussing Your Feelings with Someone Else) vocabulary learning strategy.

### ***Instruments***

Three instruments were used to measure the variables of this study. Initially, in order to arrive at dependable, reliable and valid measurement of the participants' reading comprehension proficiency, the subjects in the two groups took the Objective Placement Test of Interchange (Lesley, Hanson & Zukowski- Faust, 2005), which was used as a standardized measurement to check the homogeneity level of the subjects in terms of language proficiency. The test contained 40 multiple-choice of vocabulary items. In order to verify the reliability of the test, the researchers selected 40 students from different departments in Omidyeh Islamic Azad University to participate in test. Calculating the reliability coefficient of the test through KR-21 formula, the researchers found the reliability of the homogeneity test at ( $r = .74$ ).

A second test including also 40 items was administered to both groups at the end of treatment period after ten sessions. This test indicated 40 multiple-choice items of vocabulary achievement test which was developed by the researcher based on the materials taught in the classrooms. The vocabulary items in the test were selected mainly from the new lexical items of reading comprehension texts. The reliability of the test was  $r = .89$  based on KR-21 formula. Another instrument was the reading tasks and activities as the course materials which the researchers were afforded to both the group A and group B. These reading tasks and activities were extracted from the *Select Readings* (pre-intermediate level) written by Lee and Gunderson (2002).

### ***Procedure***

For collecting the data of this study, 120 Iranian university students from different majors but non English major studying English course from Omidyeh Islamic Azad University in Iran, were selected. In this study, the treatment period lasted for ten sessions and in both classes the three instruments were administered. On the first session, the students in group A received introduction on *Using Mechanical Technique* and for students in group B *Discussing Your Feelings with Someone Else* vocabulary learning strategy was explained in the first session. The instruction was conducted by the corresponding researcher (teacher) for both classes. The next sections introduce the treatment period of the two strategies briefly.

#### ***Using mechanical techniques***

To remember what has been read, according to Oxford (1990), mechanical techniques were adjusted as a helpful technique in manipulating, flashcards, with the new word written on one side and the definition written on the other, are both familiar. To contextualize a new expression and get writing practice, learners wrote the new expression in a full sentence on a flash cards. Flashcards were moved from one pile to another depending on how well the learner knew them. Separate sections of the language learning notebook were used useful for words that have been learned and words that had been not reviewed by the learners. Following Oxford (1990), recommendations, the researcher asked students to read and practice the words when they had some free time. For example, they were required to read them on the bus, in lines, etc.

#### ***Discussing your feelings with someone else***

According to Oxford (1990), language learning is difficult, and learners most of the times need to discuss this process with other people. So learners like to speak and negotiate their daily events with other people. In this study, students used diaries to understand and kept track of their thoughts, attitudes, and vocabulary learning strategies, and if they felt at ease enough, they shared their diary entries during group discussion by dividing learners in several groups in class once or twice a week. Discussions of feelings could also took place outside of class and continued it with a friend, a family, and so on (Oxford, 1990).

## RESULTS

After the treatment, to find out the answer of research question, that is, the effectiveness of Using Mechanical Techniques and Discussing Your Feelings with Someone Else vocabulary learning strategies on reading comprehension of the two groups and compare their probable improvement, both groups took part in the vocabulary and reading comprehension test as posttests after completing the course. In this way, the study compared the role of the Using Mechanical Techniques versus Discussing Your Feelings with Someone Else vocabulary learning strategy through using independent-samples t-test, in order to find out whether these strategies influence vocabulary knowledge of Iranian EFL university students at the pre-intermediate level of English reading proficiency or not. Therefore, an independent sample t-test analysis was run on the mean score of the two groups. The results of t-test analysis for the effect of these two strategies in reading comprehension as an independent variable indicated statistically significant differences that are shown in Table 1. The data obtained through post-test (Table 1) were analyzed (using SPSS 11.5 software) in different steps.

*Table 1: result of the t-test (of both groups)*

Group	N	Mean	SD	T	df	p
A	32	35.42	1.98	5.89	49	.00
B	32	30.64	2.91			

The results of the post-test in the two groups compared through t-test showed that the mean scores of group A ( $M = 35.42$ ,  $SD = 1.98$ ) was significantly different from group B ( $M = 30.64$ ,  $SD = 2.91$ ). In other words; group A outperformed group B on the post-test. Also, critical  $t$  ( $t = 2.000$ ) was less than observed  $t$  ( $t = 5.89$ ) based on  $df = 49$ . Therefore, there was a significant difference between direct and indirect group in developing vocabulary learning at pre-intermediate level. In other words, Using Mechanical Techniques strategy was more effective than Discussing Your Feeling with Someone Else in vocabulary improvement of Iranian EFL learners at intermediate level.

According to the findings of the study during the research, the students were satisfied in applying and using Mechanical Techniques strategy which was used more by the participants in Group A. In comparison to the students in Group A, the students in Group B who were taught by Discussing Your Feelings with Someone Else could not considerably develop their vocabulary learning.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of two vocabulary learning strategies; namely, Using Mechanical Techniques and Discussing Your Feelings with Someone Else on reading comprehension performance of the Iranian EFL students. To achieve this goal, the researchers conducted a study, consisting of 64 participants from two classes of male and female. The results of the  $t$ -tests demonstrated statistically significant difference between the group (A) and group (B) in reading comprehension achievement post-test of the two groups at the end of instruction. It indicated that the Using Mechanical Techniques vocabulary learning strategy is more effective in improving EFL vocabulary storage and reading comprehension achievement of university students with pre-intermediate proficiency.

Stemming from the above conclusions, this study identified a number of implications beneficial to pedagogical contexts, especially the ones in which EFL learners and teachers are involved. Teachers should help students in selecting the most appropriate strategy for developing skills. Using Mechanical Techniques strategy is suitable and effective in first stages of developing vocabulary of EFL learners as compared to Discussing Your Feelings with Someone Else strategy because of easy application as we experienced it in this study. The results indicated that generally there is a great difference between the learners who are instructed to use Using Mechanical Techniques strategy and Discussing Your Feelings with Someone Else vocabulary learning strategy.

Given the impact of Using Mechanical Technique vocabulary learning strategy on reading comprehension, vocabulary learning strategy should receive much more attention in L2 classrooms. To do so, teachers can use materials including graded readers, word lists, vocabulary cards, definitions, and all pedagogically sound vocabulary activities to expand EFL learners' vocabulary storage to assist their reading comprehension.

Concerning the implications related to curriculum developers and material producers, it can be stated that they should definitely work in cooperation with both teachers and students decide what learning strategies they need to identify. It should be the curriculum developers' responsibility to allocate enough time in the curriculum for teachers to conduct strategies research in their classes. As for materials writers, they are recommended to pay more attention

to word power sections in designing their textbook and find more fascinating ways to acquaint learners with new words. As the final word for this section, doing all the above-mentioned tips requires that educators and materials writers implement changes in classroom teaching, curriculum design, assessments, and educational policies. Only then can we claim that we have attained what we have intended.

### **LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The participants of the current study were adult, pre-intermediate learners studying General English at university; replications should be made using participants of diverse age groups and proficiency levels. The same basic design could also be carried out using tests of other versions and even learners of other languages. The significant effect of vocabulary learning strategy especially Using Mechanical Techniques on reading comprehension found in the current study calls for a more comprehensive investigation of the reasons behind. Such investigations may also help educators understand some of the major causes behind the poor reading habits of many EFL learners. Future research should also consider carrying out other studies exploring the effects of other vocabulary learning strategies on reading comprehension or on other language skills. In addition, gender differences seem to be another virgin area to be investigated in relation to vocabulary learning strategy. Such investigations will help EFL teachers and materials writers at the university level to provide their students with tools they need to succeed in their future career as English teachers, translators, or whatever future job they may take on.

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**THE EFFECT OF ESP KNOWLEDGE ON READING COMPREHENSION AND RECALL OF IRANIAN  
COMPUTER SCIENCE STUDENTS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of carrying out this research was to find out if English for specific purposes knowledge of the students affects their reading comprehension and recall. The study was conducted in two phases. First, about 120 students studying computer science in Islamic Azad University of Sabzevar took a placement test and based on that about 76 students at intermediate level were chosen for this study. All these subjects had already passed a general course in English for a semester. All of them were taught computer texts in an ESP course for about one semester. In the second phase of study which was carried out almost at the end of the ESP course, six reading comprehension texts – two general, two computer and two engineering- were given to subjects on separate sessions. They were supposed to read the texts and write their recalls in Persian. Finally, all recall protocols were analyzed. The result of two paired t-tests showed that ESP Knowledge had effects on reading comprehension and recall of the texts. The subjects did remember the computer texts better than general and engineering texts. Overall, the results supported the role of background knowledge in reading comprehension and recall in EFL and ESP situations.

**KEYWORDS:** ESP knowledge, Reading Comprehension, Recall, Background Knowledge, ESP Reading

**INTRODUCTION**

***The Definition of Reading***

As the most important language skill (Carrell 1988a; Grabe & Stoller 2001), Richards and Renandya (2002:273) point out that reading receives special focus in foreign language teaching. In fact, there are two important reasons for this emphasis. First, reading comprehension is one of the most important goals in most foreign language settings. Second, reading texts help learners to accomplish various pedagogical purposes.

There are various definitions of reading, among which are the following; Grabe and Stoller (2002: 9) defined reading as “..... the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately”.

***Reading Process***

Goodman (1988: 11) believes in two views on reading. The first view accepts reading as “..... matching sounds to letters”, and the second view states that “nobody knows how reading works”. MacLeish (1968: 43) suggests that “[t]he readers of all written languages are “getting sounds from the printed page”. He believes that this is the writer who encodes meaning to sound and then from sound to orthography. In this view, the reader is the one who decodes from orthography to sound and later from sound to meaning.

Harmer (2001) states that a reader is able to see what is beyond the literal meaning of words since he uses a variety of clues to understand what the writer is suggesting. Schema, which is defined as background knowledge that enables the reader to make predictions for more successful interaction play a vital role in the interpretation of the written texts since successful interpretation relies heavily on shared schemata.



Chastain (1988) believes that the reading process means as active cognitive system operating on printed material in order to comprehend the text. He states that during the reading process, the writer tries to activate background knowledge and linguistic knowledge to create meaning and then the reader's task is to activate background knowledge and linguistic knowledge to recreate the writer's intended meaning. Then the reader should go beyond the printed material to get the writer's intended meaning.

### ***Models of Reading***

#### ***Bottom-Up Models***

According to Grabe and Stoller (2002), the reader makes a piece-by-piece mental transition of the information in the text. Anderson (1999) states that, the reader recognizes letters first and then recognizes the words, and in the end the reader gets the meaning intended by the writer by combining the words that were recognized earlier. In other words, according to (Parsan 1997; Alderson 2000), the bottom-up process of reading is defined as a serial model where the reader begins with the printed word, recognizes graphics stimuli, decodes them to sound, recognizes words, and decodes meaning.

#### ***Top-down Models***

Contrary to bottom-up models, in top-down models it is expected that the reader brings her background knowledge to the text. Grabe and Stoller (2002) stress that top-down models assume that reader goals and expectations direct the reading and that accounts for why top-down model assume the readers someone who has a set of expectations about the text information from the text to confirm or reject the expectations.

In top-down approaches the importance of schemata, the reader's contribution to the text is emphasized (Alderson 2000). Schema theory concerns with what readers bring to text while they read and play an important role in bottom-up processes. Schema theory attempts to describe the efficiency of prior background knowledge. Prior knowledge of the readers affects the comprehension of the text.

#### ***Interactive Models***

Since there were some criticism against bottom-up and top-down models, the theorists were led to develop a new approach, the interactive model. Interactive models combine the characteristics of both bottom-up and top-down models (Anderson 1999). In interactive models, readers should be fast and efficient in recognizing letter and words. Harmer (2001) states the difference between top-down and bottom-up models this way. In the former, the reader looks down on something from above, while in the latter, the reader tries to understand the text by being in the middle of it.

### ***Schema Theory***

Schema theory was developed by Gestalt psychologist Bartlett "..... who observed how people, when asked to repeat a story from memory, filled in details what did not occur in the original but conformed to their cultural norms" (Cook 1997: 86). Schema theory stresses that readers are expected to combine their previous experiences with the text they are reading.

Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) consider the role of background knowledge in language comprehension as schema theory, and state that any text either spoken or written does not itself carry meaning. Carrell and Eisterhold (1983: 556) claim that "..... A text only provides direction for .... Readers as to how they should retrieve or construct meaning from their own, previously acquired knowledge."

The very important role of background knowledge on reading comprehension is noted by Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) and Anderson (1999), that a reader's comprehension depends on her ability to relate the information that she gets from the text with her preexisting background knowledge.

### ***Schema***

Background knowledge-prior knowledge- consist of two main components: "our assimilated direct experiences of life and its manifold activities, and assimilated verbal experiences and encounters" (Swales 1990: 83).

Schemata are accepted as interlocking mental structures representing readers; knowledge (Perkins 1983; Zaker 1987; Anderson and Pearson 1988; Cook 1997; Alderson 2000; Brown 2001; Harmer 2001). In the reading process, readers integrate the new information from the text into their pre-existing schemata (Nattall 1996, Wallance 2001). Schemata influence how they recognize information and how they store it. According to Harmer (2001), only after the schema is activated is one able to see or hear, because it fits into patterns that she already knows.



#### *Schema Types*

Carrell and Eisterhold (1983), Carrell (1987; 1988b) and Alderson (2000) distinguish between schemata types. By formal schema, they point to background knowledge relating to the formal and rhetorical organizational structures of different types of texts. Carrell (1985) says reading comprehension is affected by the reader's formal schemata .

Content schemata is defined as background knowledge of the content area of the text that a reader brings to a text (Carrell & Eisterhold 1983; Carrell 1987; Alptekin 1993; 2002; 2003; Singhal 1998; Stott 2001) such as knowledge about people, the world, culture, and the universe (Brown 2001). According to Alderson (2000), readers need knowledge about the content of the passage to be able to understand it.

#### *ESP*

ESP is an approach to language teaching which aims to meet the needs of particular learners. In recent years there has been a growing demand for ESP which is essential for professional development. Different theorists such as Dudley-Evans, St John (1999), Strevenza (1988), Anthony (1997) and a lot more have defined ESP. here, we take some of the definitions into consideration. Hutchason and Waters (1987) theorize, "ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reasons for learning (p.19). Anthony (1997) states that many non-specialist ESL instructors use an ESP approach based on analysis of learner needs and their own personal experience of using English for real communication.

Lorenzo Fiorilo (2005) states the students' abilities in their subject-matter fields improve their ability to acquire English. Since their subject matter they are associated with is expressed in English, their knowledge gives them the context they need to understand English. So, this is the teacher's responsibility to make the most use of students' knowledge of subject matter to help them understand and learn English.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES**

The study aims to investigate the effects of background knowledge –ESP knowledge- on reading comprehension of a ESP students. So, the following research questions and hypotheses were considered.

#### ***Research Questions***

1. Do computer science students comprehend and remember reading texts of their own field of specialty better than general English texts?
2. Do computer science students comprehend and remember reading texts of their own field of specialty better than engineering reading texts?

#### ***Research Hypotheses***

H1: computer science students comprehend and remember computer texts better than general texts.

H2: Computer science students comprehend and remember computer texts better than engineering texts.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***The subjects***

The study was conducted in Islamic Azad University of Sabzevar at computer branch. 120 ESP students studying computer science took part in this study. All these participants had already passed a general English course in the previous semester. And this term all were going to pass an ESP course in computer science. At the beginning of the term all students took a placement test and based on the placement test 76 students at intermediate level were chosen for this study.

#### ***Instrumentation***

##### ***Placement test***

As it was stated before, Oxford placement test was used to choose the students at the same level for this study. The test has about 90 questions and the time allowed is 45 minutes. The grade between 21 and 30 is considered as

intermediate level. The reliability of the test is 0.809 as reported by Brian Winstler, SAKAI Hideki and ABE Mariko (2009).

#### *Six reading Comprehension texts*

Six reading comprehension texts –two general reading comprehension texts (GTs), two computer specific reading texts (CTs) and two engineering specific reading tests (ETs) were chosen from some original books. The length and readability of these texts were almost the same (see table 1. Below). Many factors have been established to measure the readability but in fact their aim, construction and validity are not very different (Anderson & Urquhart, 1984). One typical readability is the Fog Index whose formula is:

$$\frac{\text{No. word}}{\text{No. sentences}} + \frac{\text{no. 3syllable words}}{\text{no. words}} \times \frac{100}{1} \times 0.4$$

And the result is interpreted as 12- = easy, 13-16 = undergraduate, 16+ = postgraduate. This formula is based on the number of words in a sentence.

The subjects were asked to read and recall the texts.

*Table 1: The readability and length of the texts.*

Texts	Text length	Readability
GT 1	110 Words	11.3
GT 2	83	11.4
CT 1	71	12.4
CT 2	63	11.3
ET 1	96	11.8
ET 2	93	11.3

#### **Procedure**

In the first phase of the study, a placement test was given to about one hundred twenty ESP students who studied computer science in Islamic Azad University of Sabzevar. Before the exam, the students were provided with enough information about the test. They were informed that there were 90 questions in the test and they are supposed to finish it according to the time limit announced. Then each subject was provided with an answer sheet and a booklet of questions. The answer sheets were collected and were graded. The purpose of this exam was to decide the level of the subjects in the study. The students with the score among 21 to 30 were considered intermediate learners. 76 subjects among the total number of 120 participants were chosen for this study.

In the second phase of this study which was also held on separate days almost at the end of semester, the subjects were supplied with two general reading texts (GTs), two computer texts (CTs) and two engineering texts (ETs). Empty sheets were also given to them to write their recalls on. They were already informed of what they were supposed to do. The subjects were asked to consider the following points when writing the recalls.

- (1) The students should not read the text longer than ten minutes and they should not go back to the text while they are writing the recalls.
- (2) The subjects should write their recalls on a separate sheet.
- (3) They should write their recalls in full sentences.
- (4) They should write their recalls in Persian.
- (5) They should write whatever they remember about the text.
- (6) They have enough time to write their recalls.

The same procedure was followed for the rest of the texts. Then, all recall protocols were collected. And two separate raters corrected the papers.

As put forward by Alderson (1987), the idea unit is the unit of text analysis and widely used in reading comprehension oriented research. Thus, as a test of comprehension students can be asked to write a recall protocol of a text they have read, which in turn is scored in terms of the number of idea unit it contains. So in

order to correct the recall protocols, each text was parsed into idea units. For the ease of scoring, an effort was made to establish a unit in which there was only one bit of information expected to be significant for the analysis as recommended by Alderson (1984). It was also set that every parallel or paraphrased sentence is to be accepted. So all recall protocols were analyzed and graded based on these idea units, the length and the number of idea units for each text is shown in table 2. These idea units were verified by two independent judges.

*Table 2: The number of Idea Units in Each Text*

Texts	Length	Number of Idea Units
GT1	110	16
GT2	83	14
CT1	63	11
CT2	71	10
ET1	93	10
ET2	89	10

Examples of idea units are given as follows.

*Table 3: Examples of idea units*

Computer text (2 idea units)

The program and the number must be stored in main memory/ while the program runs./ (As illustrated above the sentence contains 2 idea units as separated off by two virgules.)

General text (1 idea unit)

/Children do not always practice good hygiene./

Based on this criterion, any sentence presented in this way but in Persian was given a point. Two scorers scored the recall protocols and using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, the inter-rater reliability was found to be .88.

### **Data Analysis**

In order to analyze the data, the researcher made use of the SPSS. As stated already, the main aim of this study was to confirm that the background knowledge of the subjects –here their ESP knowledge about their specific course of study- has a role in their reading comprehension and recall protocols. To get the appropriate results the application of two paired t-tests was necessary. The first t-test was used to compare the means of the GTs with CTs and secondly to compare the means of CTs with ETs. The values of t-observed for the comparisons of means and that of t-critical were calculated and tested for the significance of the comparisons.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The data gathered were analyzed using the SPSS statistical software. At first, descriptive data for the study group on general texts, computer texts and engineering texts were computed. As stated earlier, the main aim of this study was to confirm that the background knowledge –ESP knowledge- has a role on their reading comprehension and recall protocols. In order to confirm the hypotheses the application of two paired t-tests was necessary. The first t-test was used to compare the means of GTs and CTs and the second to compare the means of CTs and ETs. The values of t-observed for the comparison of means and that of t-critical were calculated and tested for the significance of the comparisons. This section presents and describes the data collected for the study group. Means and standard deviations of the variables will be followed by the results obtained through t-tests.

*Table 4: Descriptive statistics for study group on GTs*

	Discipline	Statistic	Std. Error
General English Test	Mean	7.4331	.20033
	5% Trimmed Mean	7.5638	
	Median	7.5625	
	Variance	3.050	
	Std. Deviation	1.74639	
	Range	8.44	
	Interquartile Range	2.12	
	Skewness	-1.198	.276
	Kurtosis	1.622	.545

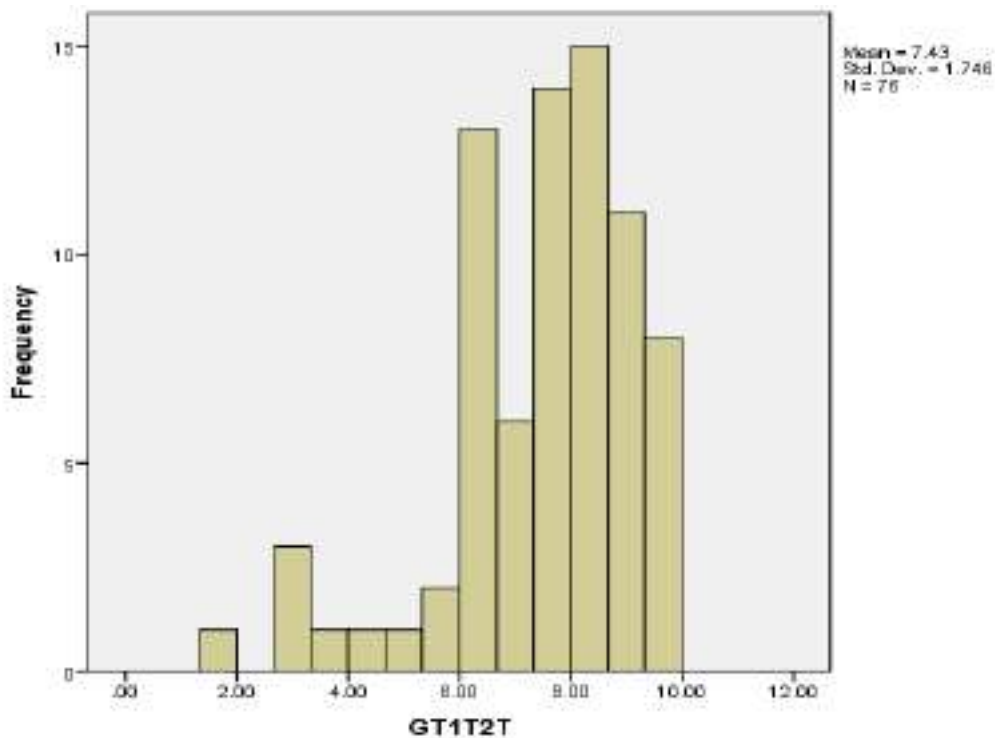


Figure 1: The frequency of scores on GTs

Descriptive statistics for study group in general texts is presented in table 4 and illustrated in Figure1. As it is indicated in Table 4 the mean is 7.4 and standard deviation is 1.7.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics for study group on CTs

	Discipline	Statistic	Std. Error
Computer	Mean	8.2878	.23485
	Median	8.7500	
	Variance	4.192	
	Std. Deviation	2.04736	
	Interquartile Range	2.28	
	Skewness	-1.277	.276
	Kurtosis	2.796	.545

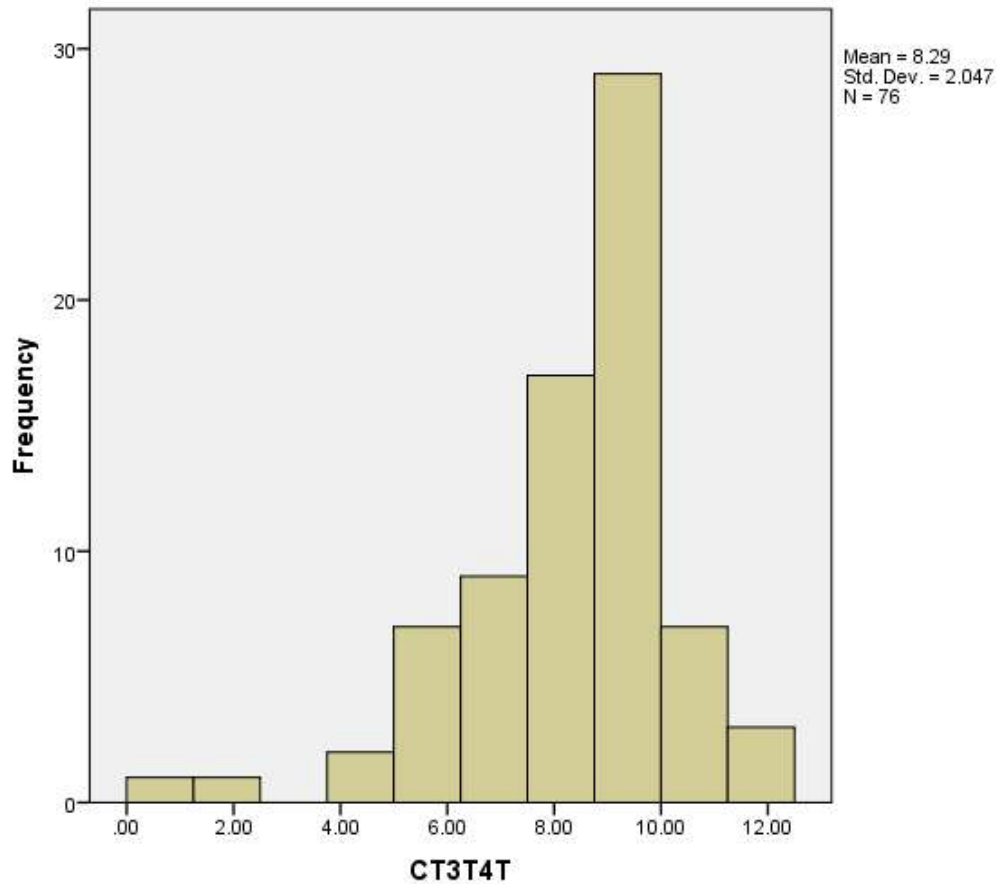


Figure 2: The frequency of scores in CTS

Table 5 and figure 2 presents and illustrates the descriptive statistics for the study group on CTs. As it is clear in the table the mean is 8.2 and the standard deviation is 2.04.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics for study group on ETs

Discipline		Statistic	Std. Error
Engineering English Test	Mean	4.2611	.39875
	Median	2.8125	
	Variance	12.084	
	Std. Deviation	3.47624	
	Range	16.75	
	Interquartile Range	3.16	
	Skewness	1.930	.276
	Kurtosis	3.459	.545

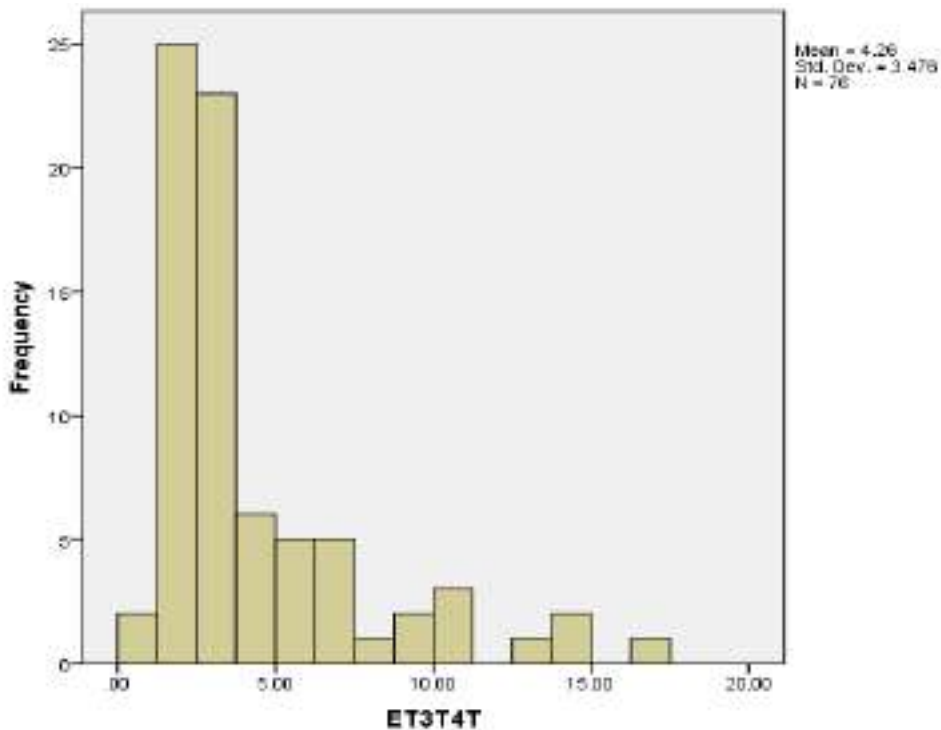


Figure 3: The frequency of scores in ETs

The descriptive statistics for study group on ETs is presented in Table 6 and illustrated in Figure 3. The mean is 4.2 and the standard deviation is 3.4.

Table 7: T-test result for GTs and CTs, CTs and ETs

			Paired Differences				T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
			Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
						Lower				Upper
Pair 1	GT1T2T CT3T4T	-	-.85477	2.05005	.23516	-1.32323	-.38631	-3.635	.001	
Pair 2	CT3T4T ET3T4T	-	4.02673	4.13657	.47450	3.08148	4.97197	8.486	.000	

To investigate the probable effects of background knowledge –ESP knowledge- on reading comprehension of Iranian ESP students in computer science, six texts –two (GTs), two (CTs), and two (EGs) texts- were assigned to students. Their comprehension was assessed through recall protocols. The first hypothesis says computer science students comprehend and remember computer texts better than general texts. As it is seen in table 7 the observed –t for GTs and CTs is -.38631 with degree of freedom of 75 which is significant at .001. This finding is in line with what has been previously stated regarding the role of background knowledge in enabling the readers to make predictions for successful interaction and interpretations of written texts since successful interpretation heavily relies on shared schemata.

The second hypothesis states that computer science students comprehend and remember computer texts better than engineering texts. As it is indicated in table the observed-t for CTs and ETs is 8.486 with degree of freedom of 75 at 0.000 level. So, computer science students did comprehend and remember CTs better than ETs. In other words, the background knowledge of the content area of the text that A READER brings to a text (Carrell & Eisterhold 1983) such as knowledge about people, the world, culture, and the universe helps better comprehension of the texts.

Overall, as it is stated by Lorenzo Fiorilo (2005), students' abilities in their subject-matter fields improve their ability to acquire English. Their knowledge about the content area gives them the context they need for understanding



English. It seems that the students in this study did make use of their knowledge of subject matter to understand the texts since they understood and remembered CTs better than both GTs and EGs.

## CONCLUSIONS

Due to the importance of reading in EFL, a lot of studies have been carried out to find out what variables may influence this skill. The studies have generally shown that a host of factors ranging from linguistic knowledge to and extra-linguistic knowledge can crucially affect the rate and amount of reading (Grabe, 1991; Perffetti, 1985; Smith, 1978). Of all the factors, the role of background knowledge in reading comprehension has been the focus of attention for many researchers (Bransford & Johnson, 1972, 1973; Kintsch & Van Dijk, 1975; Rumelhart, 1977; Kintsch, 1977; Thorndyke, 1917; Mandler & Johnson, 1977; Carrell, 1983). Most of these studies have shown that background knowledge plays a significant role in the ease of comprehension.

One research method which is frequently employed in this regard is recall protocols. Bernhardt (1991) and Swaffaret *al.* (1991) suggest the use of recall protocols as a measure of holistic or overall reading comprehension. The technique of summarizing a text is widely used as a research measure as well as for assessing reading comprehension in both first and second language acquisition.

In line with foregoing studies, in this study recall protocols were used. About seventy six students attended the experiment. A placement test was assigned to 120 students and based on this test seventy six students at intermediate level were chosen for this study. To gain this aim, six texts –two GTs, two CTs and ETs- were given to the subjects in both groups to be read and recalled. The purpose was to see if the ESP knowledge had any effect on the subjects' recall.

Table 4, 5 and 6 shows the descriptive statistics for the recall of the GTs, CTs and ETs. The mean differences are 7.4, 8.2 and 4.2 respectively. The small difference of means in GTs and CTs shows that there is not a big difference in performance of this group in these two texts but as you see the mean of ETs is 4.2 which show a great difference in the performance of subjects in these texts in comparison with GTs and CTs.

Turning back to the two hypotheses of this study it can be seen that the first hypothesis concerns the effect of background knowledge on computer science students reading comprehension and their recall. As indicated in Table 7, the observed *t* which is -3.6 with the d.f. of 75 is significant at 0.001 level; therefore, this hypothesis is confirmed. The computer students comprehended and recalled computer texts better than general texts.

The second hypothesis is related to the effect of background knowledge on computer learners' reading comprehension and their recalls. Again as can be seen in Table 7, the observed *t* (8.4) with the d.f. of 75 is significant at 0.000 level. So, the second hypothesis is confirmed too. In other words, computer students also comprehended and recalled computer texts better than the engineering ones. These findings are in line with the previous findings regarding the role of background knowledge in reading comprehension and their recall of the texts. Previous research has shown that the better a reader is to access background knowledge about either the content area of text (Bransford & Johnson, 1972, 1973) or the rhetorical formal structure of a text (Kintsch & Van Dijk, 1975; Kintsch, 1977; Rumelhardt, 1977; Thordike, 1917; Mandler & Johnson, 1977), the better he or she will be able to comprehend the text, to store it in long term memory, and to recall it.

## LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

This study is only a scratch on the surface of the role of background knowledge in comprehension and student's recall. Of course further studies can be done related to the present hypothesis. Here are some suggestions.

In this study we examined how much information was remembered. We must also examine how much of what kind of information is remembered, and what kind of information is further created from the repeated reading. In the present study, students were above eighteen years old and of different ages. Other studies can be done regarding the age of the students to see whether the factor of age has any roles in recall protocols of students.

In this study, the students' field of study was computer. The same study can be carried out with students from other fields of ESP. Still, we do not know if the results would be different with other ESP fields.

In the present study, the readability and content familiarity were considered; still we do not know if formal schemata have had any effects on recalls. Further research can be carried out regarding the role of formal schemata in reading comprehension and recall protocols.

To make sure of the findings of this research, it is advisable to replicate this study implementing another scoring procedure known as tree diagram construction (Mousavi, 1999) for recall protocols analysis. Furthermore, one can work on the analysis of recall protocols in terms of the kind of information retrieved and the number of correct and incorrect recalls.

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NOMINAL ELLIPSIS IN THE NOVEL THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE HOBBIT  
(A FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR APPROACH)

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper identifies the Nominal Ellipsis obtainable in the narratives: novel. Some reasons to select this genre: (1) novel is a routine and creative language always read by people not limited amongst the ages; (2) novel has certain features in social location, social function, and schematic features; and (3) novel offers a wide range of opportunities to analyze different types of Ellipsis; it offers a plentiful spoken and written textual data. The Ellipsis analysis involves: (1) Deictics; (2) Numeratives; and (3) Ephitets. In the three chapters-92.082 words of the novel, there are 41 Nominal Ellipsis. The results reveal that the Deictics occupy the first rank. It is dominated by the Specific deictic; The second rank is Ephitets. It is dominated by the Adjectives; and the last one is the Numeratives. It is dominated by the Cardinal. The study adopts the grand theory of cohesive relationship as provided by Halliday and Hassan (1989). It explains the Ellipsis relationship within the novel. The theory has classified the data visible so that different types of the Ellipsis can be understood in their use. It is certainly beneficial for researchers for further analysis.

**KEYWORDS:** Cohesion, Nominal Ellipsis, Narrative Text: Novel

**INTRODUCTION**

Novel is one type of the narratives. Ann (2001:21) explains that the narratives can be classified based on: (1) *social location*; (2) *social purpose*; and (3) *schematic feature*. The *social location* of the the narratives is found across all aspects of culture life in **novels**, short stories movies, sitcoms, and radio dramas; the *social function* is to entertain and instruct via reflection on experience. It deals with problematics events which individuals have to resolve for better or worse; and the *schematic feature* is Orientation, Complication, Evaluation and Resolution.

The paper presents analysis of Ellipsis in the novel because: (1) Novel offers a wider range of opportunities analysis. The novel provides linguistic phenomena with their authentic co-texts and contexts; (2) Grammatically the concept of tie within sentences in ellipsis is linguistic features which are required for the production of a text. Halliday (1989:4) states that the concept of a tie makes it possible to analyze a text in terms of its cohesive properties, and give a systematic account of its patterns of texture. Halliday and Hassan (1989) and van Dijk (1992) are concerned with the principles of connectivity which bind a text together and force co-interpretation. Thus, it can be identified that features of the texts can be presupposed and interpreted as a coherent and cohesive unit; (3) Ellipsis in the novels is a unique thing. Here the Ellipsis can be identified, such as: types of Ellipsis; the occurrences of Ellipsis presupposing and presupposed to the antecedent. Burton (1997) says that when a sentence is actually used by a speaker (i.e. when a speaker actually utters it), almost anything can be omitted, provides that the omitted elements can be understood from text in which it is used. Based on this, the omission from sentences of required elements capable of being understood in the context of their use is called Ellipsis. Here are some examples:

*Kim's car had broken down and mine had too.* (Gunther, 2013)

The word *mine* is a possessive form. The elliptical element is a countable noun. It functions as a Head substituting *my car* in the antecedent. It refers anaphorically to the word *car*.

*'I didn't know you'd written a novel. I hope you'll write another [novel]?' (Thompson, 2004)*

The word *another* is categorized as a post-deictic. The elliptical element is in a countable noun - a *novel*. It refers anaphorically to the previous sentence. Through modification, *another* acts as a Head substituting *another novel*. Based on the reasons above, the researcher conducted a research for the novel entitled: Ellipsis in The Novel *The Lord of The Rings: The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien. This research focuses on analyzing Ellipsis. There are three formulations of the research which deal with, which are as follows:

1. What types of Ellipsis are used in the novel?
2. What elements does the Ellipsis presuppose in the novel?
3. What is the Nominal Ellipsis frequently used in the Novel?

## NOMINAL ELLIPSIS

*Nominal Ellipsis* means ellipsis within the nominal group. When the *Nominal Ellipsis* occurs, it is possibly referred to the antecedent nominal group. There are multivariate structures of the nominal group. On the logical dimension the structure of the nominal group is that of a Head or Thing with optional modifying elements. Here in the nominal group, the modifying elements can precede the Head and follow it, and these are referred to as Premodifier and Postmodifier. Halliday and Hasan (1989) give an example: *those two fast electric trains with pantographs*. The elements are arranged in structures as follows:

<i>those</i>	<i>two</i>	<i>fast</i>	<i>electric</i>	<i>trains</i>	<i>with</i>	<i>pantographs</i>
Deictic	Numerative	Epithet	Classifier	Thing	Qualifier	
					Process	'Range'
						Thing
Premodifier				Head		Postmodifier

The Head is *trains*, the Premodifier is *those two fast electric* and the Postmodifier is *with pantographs*. The modifiers consist of: *Those* (Deictic), *two* (Numerative), *fast* (Epithet), *electric* (Classifier), and *with pantographs* (Qualifier).

Halliday (1985) describes that nominal group involves a measure of something. 'Measure' nominals include collectives, e.g. *a pack of cards*; partitives, e.g. *a slice of bread*; and quantitatives, e.g. *a yard of cloth*. Here is an example in structures:

<i>a</i>	<i>pack</i>	<i>of</i>	<i>cards</i>
Numerative			Thing
Modifier	Head		Postmodifier

The measure word *pack* is a Head with the *of* phrase as Postmodifier. However, the Thing is not the measure word but the thing being measured: the *cards*.

In similar way to the measure type are nominal groups expressing a facet, of a thing: e.g. *the back of the house*, *my side of the bed*, *the north face of the Eiger*. The facet word (*back*, *side*, *face*) is the Head; it would be possible to interpret these also as Thing (i.e. Head = Thing), but they could be considered as embedded Deictics, with the faceted noun (*house*, *bed*, *Eiger*) as Thing. Here is an example in structures:

<i>The</i>	<i>front</i>	<i>of</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>house</i>
Premodifier	Head	Postmodifier		
Pre-Deictic			Deictic	Thing
Deictic	Thing (Facet)			

In the experiential structure, Numerative is made a Head of the logical structure, as in

	<i>three</i>		<i>of</i>	<i>those</i>	<i>enormous</i>	<i>spiders</i>
--	--------------	--	-----------	--------------	-----------------	----------------

<i>Another</i>	<i>two</i>	<i>cups</i>	<i>of</i>	<i>that</i>	<i>Good strong</i>	<i>tea</i>
<i>Pre-Numerative</i>				<i>Deictic</i>	<i>Epithet</i>	<i>Thing</i>
<i>Deictic</i>	<i>Numerative</i>	<i>Measure (Thing)</i>				

Here the Numerative is embedded; and since it is embedded, it comes to the front and may be followed by a fully structured nominal even beginning with a Deictic. Based on these, the Deictic is normally a determiner, the Numerative is a numeral or other quantifier, the Epithet is adjectives and the Classifier is a noun, and the Qualifier is normally a relative clause or prepositional phrase. (Halliday & Hasan, 1989). The explanation above is the same as what Gerot and Wignell (1995) state “A nominal group is a group of words which has a noun as its Head word and includes all additional information related to that noun”, and Bloor and Bloor (2004:31) say “A nominal group with a noun (or pronoun) as its Head and that noun may be modified”. The noun in the nominal group has function referred to as the ‘Thing or Head, and it is normally served by the *Common noun*, *Proper noun* or *Personal pronoun*. *Personal pronoun* is a reference item; *Proper nouns* designate individuals. Bloor and Bloor (2004) traditionally describe they are as individual names of persons (e.g. *Picasso*, *Shakespeare*, etc), and they may sometimes be accompanied by descriptive modifiers; *Common noun* usually refers to a class of entities (e.g. *cities*, *planets*, *persons*, *corporations*), or non-unique instances of a certain class (e.g. *a city*, *another planet*, *these persons*, *our corporation*). Bloor and Bloor (2004:20) defines that a *Common noun* might be described as an item that may be preceded by *the*. And Halliday and Hasan (1989) say that *Common nouns* designate classes; they are often further specified, and this is the function of the elements: Deictic, Numerative, Epithet and Classifier.

*Common Noun* may be omitted and the function of Head is taken on by one of these other elements. Bloor and Bloor (2004:97) state that the grammar of Nominal Ellipsis permits the omission of Head nouns in a nominal group, and Lobeck (1987a) defines that ...restrictive modifiers in Noun Phrase can be optionally included in the ellipted constituent. Based on this, *Nominal ellipsis* involves the upgrading of a word functioning as Deictic, Numerative, Epithet or Classifier from the status of Modifier to the status of Head. Halliday and Hasan (1989) give an example, as follows:

[1] *Four other Oysters followed them, and yet another four.*

Here the word *four*, which is a Numerative acts as Modifier, is upgraded to function as Head. Similarly in

[2] *Which last longer, the curved rods or the straight rods? - The straight are less likely to break.*

The word *straight* is an Epithet, functioning as Modifier in the question but as Head in the response. Both *another four* and *the straight* are elliptical nominal groups. If we want to fill out an elliptical nominal group, there are two ways of doing so. One way is to ‘push down’ the element functioning as Head in Modifier, and add the ‘missing’ Head in its place. So this process *another four* in the sentence above would become *another four oysters*. The other way of doing it is to keep the elliptical group as it is and add a partitive Qualifier; this would give *another four of the oysters*. This is called *Partitivity*.

### THE NOTION OF PARTITIVITY

There are several definitions to be found within each of the approaches that resort to the partitive notion. Lobeck (2005) states that *Partitivity* is combinable with a partitivity Prepositional Phrase (PP). Jackendoff (1977:110ff) says that the partitive construction contains a silent nominal element (see also Olsen 1987; Sauerland & Yatsushiro 2004; Fitzpatrick 2006). Jackendoff (1977) assumes a structure such as the following for partitivity constructions: *ART/Q PRO of NP* as in *Those / few PRO of the men*. Halliday and Hasan (1989) say that the partitive is possible only under certain conditions: generally, when the elliptical group designates some aggregate - *a subset, fraction, quantity or collective* - that is different from that designated by the presupposed group, such as: *one of the three*, *any of Fred's*.

A different view, Sleman (1996:34) states that Partitive does not necessarily have to mean combinationable with a partitive Prepositional Phrase (PP). She makes reference to specificity by pointing out a link between a set and contextually active superset is established. For example:

[3] *Have you read all his books? No, I have only read the third.*

In this example, the elliptical noun phrase (or rather its referent) is a subset of a previously evoked set, that is, the *books*.

### PRESUPPOSITION

Presupposition is treated as a relationship between two propositions, (Yule, 1998:26) as in *Mary's dog is cute*. It presupposes *Mary has a dog*. The identity of a presuming reference item (presupposition) may be retrievable from a number of different contexts. (Egins, 2004:34). For example, *She did not hear the story as many women have heard*



*the same*. Here we presuppose the referent *the same* refer back to *the story*. It refers back to the whole of the preceding paragraph. Besides that, the presupposition may be cataphoric as in *Because Alice won't; Mary has to dust the furniture*. Here the elided elements in an antecedent refer cataphorically to the presupposed words *dust the furniture*. Occasionally, the presupposition may be exophoric as in *if a housewife on seeing the milkman approach calls out: Two please !* She is using exophoric ellipsis. Halliday and Hasan (1989:144) state that it is the context of situation that provides the information to interpret this. An elliptical nominal group is cohesive. It points phorically to another nominal group which is presupposed by it. There may be other elements in the presupposed group which likewise do not occur in the *elliptical one*; Halliday and Hasan (1989) give example, as follows:

[4] *Here are my two white silk scarves. I can lend you one if you like.*

Here *one* presumably presupposes not only *scarves* but also the garnishings *white* and *silk*; it could be filled out as *one white silk scarf*, or *one of my white silk scarves*. The word *scarves* is the thing. In ellipsis, the Thing is always presupposed. See another example:

[5]

*Here are my two white silk scarves* }  
 a. *Where are yours?*  
 b. *I used to have three.*  
 c. *Can you see any black?*  
 d. *Or would you prefer the cotton?*

In [5a] *yours* (Deictic) is Head, an s (Thing) but also *silk* (Classifier), *white* (Epithet) and possibly *two* (Numerative): The word *three* in [5b] presupposes *scarf*, *silk* and *white*. In [5c] the elliptical group is *any black*; this presupposes *scarf* and *silk*. Finally, in [5d] only *scarf* is presupposed. Based on this, the range of possible presuppositions is dependent on the structure of the nominal group. It extends over that part of the presupposed group which could follow the element acting as Head in the elliptical group.

## TYPES OF NOMINAL ELLIPSIS

Halliday and Hasan (1989) classify types of Nominal Ellipsis in the words or words classes that function as Head in the elliptical group. Those are (1) Deictics; (2) Numeratives; and (3) Epithets.

### DEICTICS

The deictic element indicates whether or not, some specific subset of the Thing is intended; and if so, it is either (1) Specific; (2) Non-specific; or (3) Post-deictic.

**(1) Specific deictic.** Specific deictic indicates some specific subset of the thing. Gerot and Wignell (1995) say that it has the function of stating 'which thing'. It specifies how the thing in question can be identified in relation to the context. For example, if someone says '*the snake*', he or she can be referring either to a particular snake which is in the near context or to all snakes in the generic sense (*the snake is a reptile*). The deictic occurs first in the nominal group. Halliday and Hasan (1989) state that the words functioning as specific deictic are mostly of the class of determiner; with the demonstrative, possessive and indefinite determiners forming a network of systemically related categories ... to be part of a wider system, and those functioning as Post-deictic are adjectives. Payne and Huddleston (2012:412) point out that most determiners can occur in elliptical noun phrase. According to Lobeck (1995), Sleeman (2003), and Lombart Huesca (2002), the singular demonstrative cannot license noun ellipsis. Based on this, in the class of the determiner in the nominal group, the Specific deictics consists of (i) *demonstratives* and *the*, and (ii) *possessives*. The demonstratives include *this*, *that*, *these*, *those*, and *which*, and the possessives functioning as pronominals include *my*, *your*, *etc.*, as Head includes *mine*, *yours*, *ors*, *his*, *hers*, *[its]*, *theirs*, and as nominals includes *smith's*, *my father's*, *etc.* Then, most determiners can occur in elliptical noun phrase, except the singular demonstrative, such as *this* and *that* can not license noun phrase. Payne and Huddleston (2012:412) give an example:

[6] *Those cards are Kim's; these are yours.*

The word *these* is a demonstrative element licensing noun ellipsis. It refers anaphorically to *Those cards*.

Halliday and Hasan (1989) explain that the demonstratives all occur elliptically, with very great frequency. Since they are themselves reference items, they are often anaphoric; but wherever the nominal group could be ‘filled out’ with a noun Head, or by the substitute one(s), a demonstrative functioning as Head is ellipsis. Look at another example by Halliday and Hasan (1989) as in

[7] Just ask **Janet** how to polish **the brassware**. **Hers** sparkles.

The word *hers* is a possessive pronoun as Head referring anaphorically to Janet and the *brassware*. Here there is a double cohesive tie. the word *hers* presupposes both a person *Janet* as possessor, and a thing possessed *the brassware*.

**(2) Non-specific deictics.** Non-specific deictic is unspecified sub-set of the thing is being identified. (Gerot and Wignel:1995). Non-specific deictic conveys the sense of all, or none, or some unspecified subset. (Halliday, 1985). The Non-specific deictics are *each, every, any, either, no, neither, a, and some*, as well as *all* and *both*. (Gerot and Wignel, 1995; Halliday and Hasan, 1989; Gunther, 2013). These deictics occur as Head of an elliptical nominal. Jackendoff (1971) defines with a different term, ellipsis in noun phrase (nominal group) must include the projection immediately dominating noun and its complements, such as *The students attended the play but [some/all/each/etc[e]] went home disappointed*; However, the ellipted complement is not allowed here, such as *Few students of foreign languages attended the play but [all [e] of chemistry] showed up*. This is an ungrammatical feature, the ellipsis in noun phrase doesn't immediately dominate Noun and its complements. Halliday and Hasan (1989) give some examples:

[8]

a. **His sons** went into business. **Neither** succeeded.

b. The flat has **a sitting-room, a dining-room and one bedroom**. **Each** has a window overlooking the park.

The words *neither* is presupposing the antecedent *his sons*, and *each* is presupposing two or more sets expressed through a coordination.

**(3) Post-deictics.** The words functioning as Post-deictic element in the nominal group are not determiners but adjectives. Halliday and Hasan (1989) state that the Post-deictic identifies a subset of the class of thing by referring to its fame or familiarity, its status in the text, or its similarity or dissimilarity to some other designated subset. (Gerot & Wignel, 1995; Halliday, 1985). For example: *Those are the identical two boys*. The word *identical* is as post-deictic. It means the same boy as before. Here the Post-deictic may be followed by a numerative, unlike adjectives in their normal function as Epithet which must follow any numerative elements. Halliday (2004) states among the words most frequently occurring as Post-deictic are: *other, same, different, identical, complete, entire, whole, above, aforementioned; certain, famous, habitual, necessary, normal, etc.*

The adjectives used regularly and elliptically in deictic are *same* and *other* as in *I'll do the same*. Here *the same* is an elliptical nominal group as a Head. Besides that, the Post-deictic *other* combines either with Specific deictic (e.g. *the other, that other, etc*) or with Non-specific (e.g. *any other, another, etc*), and in plural form (e.g. *others*). Halliday and Hasan (1989) give examples:

[9] I've used up these **three yellow folders** you gave me. Can I use **the other**?

The phrase above does not mean ‘*the other three*’. With a Specific deictic, *other (s)* refers to the last remaining member(s) of a set, and therefore it presupposes that all others must have been specified.

[10] **A group of well-dressed young men** suddenly appeared on the stage. **One of them** bowed to the audience; **the others** stood motionless.

The item above is semantically plural. It must refer to more than one set. Here *one of them* and *the others* both presuppose *well-dressed young men*.

The elliptical use of *other* illustrates very well the indeterminacy which may arise in the extent of presupposition. For example:

[11] I see you've sold **those two large red china dogs**. Have you **any others** ?

The absence of further evidence we could not tell whether to presuppose as *china dogs, red china dogs or large red china dogs*.

Finally we may note that elliptical nominal groups with Deictic as Head may also be exophoric, either in the generalized sense or specifically to the context of situation. For examples:

- [12] a. *Some say one thing, others say **another**.*  
 b. *I'll have **the usual**, please.*

## NUMERATIVES

The elliptical Head noun is permitted in English when the Head noun follows certain closed-class items, like numbers, quantifiers, and my own. (McShane, 2005:8). The Numerative indicates some numeral feature of the subset: either quantity or order, either exact or inexact. The Numerative tells us 'how many'. For example: Quantity: *the two snakes, lots of snakes*; Order: *the second snake, a subsequent snake*. (Gerot & Wignell, 1995). Numeratives can be realized by numerals such as *two or second*, or by such expressions as *many, several, few, and lots of*. (Bloor & Bloor, 1995). Numerative element functions regularly as the Head in ellipsis. The Numerative element in the nominal group is expressed by numerals or other quantifying words, which form three subcategories: *Ordinals*, *Cardinals*, and *Quantifiers*. The *Cardinals* are such as: *one, two, etc.*, and the *Ordinals* are such as *first, next, last, second, etc.* They are often used elliptically, generally with *the* or *a possessive* as deictic. The *Quantifiers* are such as *all, many, some, most of, a lot of, etc.* (Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Wiese, 2004). Halliday and Hasan (1989) describe Numerative' function in elliptical forms, as follows:

The Ordinals are often ellipsed, generally with *the* or *a possessive* as deictics, as in

- [13] *Have another chocolate. - No thanks; that was **my third**.*

The Ordinals are often cataphoric to a Qualifier which indicates the domain of the ordering, for example, to *leave* in

- [14] *Smith was the first person **to leave**. I was **the second**.*

The Numerative like Deictics in elliptical use may be exophoric, for example: *Smith was the first **to leave***. Here a person understood. The presupposed item will be assumed to be a general category of which the item referred to, here *Smith*.

Cardinal numerals are also frequent in ellipsis, and may be preceded by any Deictic that is appropriate in number, eg: *the three, these three, any three, all three*, and also by Post-Deictic adjectives as in *the usual three, the same three*. Here are in sentences:

- [15] *Have **another chocolate**. — No thanks; I've had **my three**.*

The indefinite Quantifiers are items such as *much, many, more, most, few, several, a little, lots, a bit, hundreds, etc.* Like other items with a numerative function, they are very frequently used in ellipsis; being indefinite, they are usually not accompanied by a deictic. For example:

- [16] *Can all cats climb trees? - They all can; and **most** do.*

## EPITHETS

Epithet indicates some quality of the Head, e.g. *old, long, blue, fast* (Arnold 1985:163). It can answer two main questions: "What do you think of the head?" and "What is the head like?" (Thompson 2000:183). The Epithet can be in *attitudinal Epithet (subjective ones)* and *experiential Epithets (objective one)*. (Gerot and Wignell, 1995). The *attitudinal Epithet* is an expression of the speaker's subjective attitude towards the Head, e.g. *splendid, silly, fantastic, etc.*, and the *experiential Epithets* has interpersonal dimension, or the speaker's objective attitude towards the Head, e.g. *old, big, small, etc.* Halliday (1995) explains that the principal difference between the two is that *experiential Epithets* are potentially defining, whereas *attitudinal ones* are not. Take the example of *long* in *long train*. If I say *a long train*, you cannot tell which particular train I am talking about, because the deictic *a* is not-

specific; but if I say *the long train*, the Specific deictic - *the* indicates that you can tell, and that the necessary information is contained in *the experiential Epithet* - *long*. Besides that, it tends to find that *the attitudinal one* comes first before *the experiential*; however, this is a tendency not a rule. Here is an example of Epithet: *those two loathsome, big snake*. The adjective - *loathsome and big* are Epithet.

The function of Epithet is typically fulfilled by an adjective, The most usual adjectives found in ellipsis are in comparative and superlative forms. (Halliday and Hasan, 1989). They describe Epithets' function in elliptical forms, as follows:

The superlative adjective precedes other epithets and, like ordinal numerals, it is usually accompanied by *the* or *a possessive deictic* as in

[17] Apples are **the cheapest** in autumn.

Here *the cheapest* is an elliptical group presupposing some item such as fruit.

The superlative is elliptical, the presupposed group may still be within the clause. This only happens in equative clauses of the identifying type, which are probably the most frequent environment for elliptical superlatives as in

[18] a. **That clown is the finest** I've ever seen.

b. They are **fine actors. That clown is the finest** I've ever seen.

In [18a] we assume that the presupposed item is *clown*, so although *the finest* is elliptical the presupposition is within the clause, but in [18b] *the finest* is ambiguous; it may mean '*the finest actor*' or '*the finest clown*'. The superlative may also take the form of a *mass noun*, with the interpretation *the ...-est kind of*, as in

[19] 'I told you **butter** wouldn't suit the works.' 'It was **the best** (butter).'

A superlative repudiates all numeratives, including cardinal, in the presupposed group. It may itself be singular or plural, and if plural may be preceded by its own cardinal as in *the three youngest*.

Comparative adjective doesn't take *the*. It is not identifying but attributive, as in

[20] a. Mary is **the cleverer**.

b. Mary is **cleverer**.

The word *the cleverer* in [20a] is not common and the word *cleverer* in [20b] is not an elliptical clause. It presupposes by reference, but not by ellipsis; it cannot be 'filled out' by a noun Head or a noun substitution. look at the three clauses here. *apples are cheap*, *apple are cheaper* ('*than pears*') and *apples are cheapest* ('*in autumn*'). Those are all attributive clauses. Here those consisting of adjectives (*cheap*, *cheaper*, and *cheapest*) are not elliptical forms. A nominal group with a true comparative as Head is elliptical under conditions; these are less common than elliptical superlatives, The presupposed nominal group may be count singular, count plural or mass as in

[21] I'll buy you some **prettier**.

Superlative and, less often, comparatives may presuppose exophorically, as in *you take the biggest* ('*of the things in front of you*').

Finally, other items functioning as Epithets are adjectives that are neither superlative nor comparative. These items do not very often occur as Head in ellipsis, as follows:

[22] a. **The green** suits you very well

b. **Green** suits you very well.

In [22a] *the green* is elliptical. Here we could have *the green one*, with substitution instead of ellipsis, and in [22b] *Green* is noun.

## METHODOLOGY

The research is using a qualitative-quantitative descriptive method. Good (1963) states that descriptive studies may include

present facts or current conditions concerning the nature of a group of persons, a number of objects, or a class of events, and it may involve the procedures of induction, analysis, classification, enumeration, or measurement. The data taken from the novel *The Lord of The Rings: The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien. It is published by Houghton Mifflin company, USA in 1982. It is selected because the novel gives a plentiful spoken and written data for Ellipsis analysis; it covers a wide range of different types from informal to formal conversations. The researcher analyzed three chapters in the novel. The first chapter is **An Unexpected Party** 8.636 words, the second chapter is **Roast Mutton** 5.254 words, and the third chapter is **A Short Rest** 2.876 words. Thus, the whole data analyzed was 92.082 words. Then the data of the Nominal Ellipsis were sorted in: (1) Deictics (Specific, Non-specific and Post-deictic), (2) Numerative (Cardinal, Ordinal and Quantifier) and (3) Epithet (Comparative, Superlative and Adjective). These are coded as the tabel 1.

*Tabel 1: Types of Nominal Ellipsis*

Type of Ellipsis Analysis	Coding
Nominal Ellipsis	E
(1) Deictic as Head	1
i. specific deictic	11
ii. non-specific deictic	12
iii. post-deictic	13
(2) Numerative as Head	2
i. ordinal	21
ii. cardinal	22
iii. quantifier	23
(3) Epithet as Head	3
i. superlative	31
ii. comparative	32
iii. adjective	33

The data is also classified in the Distance in sentences cataphorically or anaphorically. These are cohesive items intervened or not intervened by other sentences or phrases. These can be classified: (1) 'Immediate' (Presupposing an item in a contiguous sentence); and (2) 'Not immediate'. The Not immediate consists of: (1) 'Mediated' (having one or more intervening sentences that enter into a chain of presupposition); and (2) 'Remote' (having one or more intervening sentences nor involved in the presupposition), or both. These are Coded: Immediate (o), Mediated (M), Remote Non-Mediated (N), Cataphoric (K), Anaphoric (A). Most of the data are anaphora (A), so the researcher writes only cataphora (K) put in Type column in Table 2.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The three chapters of the novel-92.082 words were sorted and classified in the Nominal Ellipsis functions: (1) Deictics, (2) Numeratives, and (3) Epithets. It resulted in the tabel 2 below.

*Tabel 2: The Nominal Ellipsis Data*

Sentence	Cohesive	Type	Distance	Presupposed
Number	Item			item
<b>Deictics</b>				
1	these	E.11	o	The best rooms
2	those	E.11	o	such particularly excellent fireworks
3	yours	E.11	o	your service
4	At yours and your family's	E.11	o	your service
5	my father's	E.11/K	o	my grandfather's escape
6	those	E.11	o	trolls
7	William's	E.11	o	a voice
8	These	E.11	M2	Moon-letters are rune-letters
9	William's	E.11	o	a voice
10	Tom's	E.11	o	a voice

11	William's	E.11	o	a voice
12	William's	E.11	o	a voice / 18
13	Any	E.12	o	some cake-seed cake
14	Some four	E.12	N1	the four dwarves
15	each	E.12	o	the twelve dwarves
16	None	E.12	o	The dwarves
17	most of all	E.12	o	some elves
18	each	E.12	M2+N1	The dwarves
19	None	E.12	o	any more writing
20	none	E.12	N2	the very sight of dwarves
21	another	E.13	o	an uninvited dwarf
24	another	E.13	o	one side
23	others	E.13	o	white stones
24	another	E.13	N5	a beautiful grey ring of smoke
25	all the same	E.13	o	Expert Treasure-hunter instead of Burglar
26	the like	E.13	o	the most marvellous and magical toys
<b>Numeratives</b>				
27	Two	E.22	o	three angry trolls
28	One	E.22/K	o	two of the songs
29	Two	E.22	o	an inn
30	FIVE	E.22/K	o	another dwarf
31	four more	E.22	o	more dwarves
32	Lots	E.23/K	o	Lots of dwarves
33	the last green	E.21	o	the trees
<b>Ephitets</b>				
34	more	E.32	o	the very sight of dwarves
35	one of the best	E.31	o	funny queer fits
36	the feet of the nearest	E.31	o	the great mountains
37	a nasty, dirty	E.33/K	o	wet hole
38	his solid	E.33/K	o	comfortable father
39	secret once	E.33	N2	the secret entrance.
40	a small	E.33/K	o	curious key
41	Yellow	E.33	N2	The one with the yellow stockings

Then, the data are classified in the (1) Types of Nominal Ellipsis used; (2) Elements of the Ellipsis presupposed the antecedent; and (3) What Nominal Ellipsis frequently used in the Novel, the results are indicated and discussed in the Table 3 below.

*Tabel 3: Data Analysis of the Nominal Group*

Deitics			Total	Numeratives			Total	Ephitets			Total
specific deitics	Non-specific deitics	Post-deitics		Ordinals	Cardinals	Quantifiers		Superlatives	Comparatives	Adjectives	
12	8	6	26	1	5	1	7	2	1	5	8
46,2%	30,7%	23%	63,4%	14,3%	71,4%	14,3%	17%	25%	12,5%	62,5%	19,5%

**DEICTICS.** The data indicates that the novel involves three sub-sets of the Deictics: (1) *Specific deictic*, (2) *Non-specific deictic*, and (3) *Post-deictic*. The *Specific deictic* dominates in the novel. There are 46,2% data indicating *Specific deictics*. This is followed by 30 % *Non-specifics* and 23 % *Post-deictics*. The *Specific deictics* occupy the highest rank. Those are dominated by possessive pronouns and demonstrative forms, such as: *these, those, yours, my father's, william's, etc.*, and other sub-sets: *Non-specific deictics* spread as in: *any, some four, each, and none*, and *Post-deictics* are dominated by *another/others*. Besides that, the *Anaphoric* forms are more dominant than the *Cataphoric* ones (The data are showed in the Table 2). There are only one data showing the Cataphora (K). This becomes the deictics' elliptical features. Here are some examples:

[23]

- *The best rooms* were all on the left-hand side (going in), for *these* were the only ones to have windows, deep-set round windows looking over his garden and meadows beyond, sloping down to the river. (HBT.1)
- He hung his hooded cloak on the nearest peg, and "Dwalin at *your service!*" he said with a low bow. "Bilbo Baggins at *yours!*" (HBT.3)

(The words *these* and *yours* refer anaphorically to the elements in the group *the best rooms* and *your service*).

The cohesive items based on the Distance are most frequently used in *Immediate* and some are found in *Mediated* and *Remote-non mediated* forms as in



#### Immediate

[24]

*"Kili at your service!" said the one. "And Fili!" added the other; and they both swept off their blue hoods and bowed. "At yours and your family's!" replied Bilbo, remembering his manners this time. (HBT.4)*

The words *"At yours and your family's!"* are Deictics. Those refer anaphorically to the elements *your service*. The cohesive elements are not being intervened by other sentences (*Immediate*); The complete elements are *At your [service]* and *your family's [service]*.

#### Mediated

[25]

*"Moon-letters are rune-letters, but you cannot see them," said Elrond, "not when you look straight at them. They can only be seen when the moon shines behind them, and what is more, with the more cunning sort it must be a moon of the same shape and season as the day when they were written. The dwarves invented them and wrote them with silver pens, as your friends could tell you. These must have been written on a midsummer's eve in a crescent moon, a long while ago." (HBT.8)*

The word *these* refers to the elements *Moon-letters*. There are two intervening sentences that enter into a chain of presupposition (*Mediated*); The complete elements are *these [moon-letters]*. The element *moon-letters* is ellipsed as it has already been recovered at the antecedent.

#### Remote-Non-Mediated

[26]

*Trolls simply detest the very sight of dwarves (uncooked). Bert and Bill stopped fighting immediately, and "a sack, Tom, quick!" they said, before Balin, who was wondering where in all this commotion Bilbo was, knew what was happening, a sack was over his head, and he was down. "There's more to come yet," said Tom, "or I'm mighty mistook. Lots and none at all, it is," said he. (HBT.20)*

There are two intervening sentences not involved in the presupposition (*Remote*). The *none* refers anaphorically to the elements *the very sight of dwarves*. Although the elements *of the dwarves* are ellipsed, it can be understood because the word *none* refers to the *dwarves*. Thus, The complete elements are *none [of the dwarves]*.

**NUMERATIVES.** The data indicates that Numeratives involves three sub-sets: (1) *Ordinals*, (2) *Cardinals* and (3) *Quantifiers*. The *Cardinals* occupy the first rank amongst the other sub-sets. It has 71,4% and both the *Ordinals* and *Quantifiers* have the same percentages 14,3%. The *Cardinals* are rather contrastive than the other sub-sets. Here are examples: *three angry trolls – two (HBT.27)*, *two of the songs – one (HBT.28)*, *an in – two (HBT.29)*, *another dwarf – five (HBT.30)*, and *more dwarves – four more (HBT.31)*, and the *Ordinals* and *Quantifiers* are such as: *the trees – the last green (HBT.33)*, *lots of dwarves-lots (HBT.32)*.

Besides that, the data indicates that the *Anaphoric* forms are more dominant than *Cataphoric* ones. In the seven elliptical numerative forms, there are three data indicating *Cataphoric* forms as in *...one or two of the songs (HBT.28)*, *another dwarf had...- it was five (HBT.30)* and *lots of dwarves-lots (HBT.32)*. Those are in *Cardinal* and *Qualifier*; Based on the Distance amongst sentences, the data indicates that the whole sentences/phrases' ties are *Immediate* forms or not in *Mediated* or *Remote (Non-Mediated)* ones. For examples:

#### Immediate

[27]

*At first they had passed through hobbit-lands, a wild respectable country inhabited by decent folk, with good roads, an inn or two, and now and then a dwarf or a farmer ambling by on business. (HBT.29)*

The *two* is a *Cardinal*. It presupposes elements *an inn*. Here the elements *an inn* presupposed in a contiguous phrase. It is not being intervened by other sentences. The complete elements are *an inn or two [inns]*.

[28]

"There's more to come yet," said Tom, "or I'm mighty mistook. Lots and none at all, it is," said he. "No burra-hobbits, but lots of dwarves. That's about the shape of it!" (HBT.32)

The word *lots* is a *Quantifier*. It presupposes elements *lots of dwarves*. Here the elements *dwarves* presupposed in a contiguous sentence. It is not intervened by other sentences. The complete elements are *lots of dwarves*.

**EPHITETS.** The data indicates that in the Ephitets involve three subsets: (1) *Superlatives*, (2) *Comparatives*, and (3) *Adjectives*. The *Adjectives* dominate in each sentences' tie. There are 62,5% data indicating *Adjectives*. This is followed by 25% *Superlatives* and 12,5 % *Comparatives*. The *Adjectives* are such as: *wet hole – a nasty, dirty* (HBT.37), *comfortable father – his solid* (HBT.38), *the secret entrance – secrete once* (HBT.39), *curious key – a small* (HBT.39), *the one with yellow stockings – yellow* (HBT.41); the *Superlatives* are such as: *funny queer fits – one of the best* (HBT.35), *the great mountains – the feet of the nearest* (HBT.36), and the *Comparatives* are such as: *the very sight of dwarves – more* (HBT.34). In the eight Ephitets, There are four data showing the *Cataphora* (K) such as: *wet hole - a nasty, dirty* (HBT.37), *comfortable father - his solid* (HBT.38), and *curious key - a small* (HBT.40). Besides that, the ties amongst sentences/phrases (Distance) are most frequently used in *Immediate*, and some are found in a *Remote-non mediated*, and a *Mediated* form. For examples:

#### Immediate

[29]

"Also," went on Gandalf, "I forgot to mention that with the map went a key, a small and curious key. Here it is!" he said, and handed to Thorin a key with a long barrel and intricate wards, made of silver. "Keep it safe." (HBT.40)

The word *a small* is an *Adjective* and the ellipsed element is the *key*. Here the *key* presupposed in a contiguous sentences / phrase or it is less being intervened by other sentences. The complete elements are *a small [key] and curious key*.

#### Remote (Non-mediated)

[30]

... that is the secret entrance. You see that rune on the West side, and the hand pointing to it from the other runes? That marks a hidden passage to the Lower Halls. "It may have been secret once," said Thorin. (HBT.39)

The word *the secret* is an *Adjective*. It is upgraded in its status to be a Head. It refers to the elements *the secret entrance*. It is intervened by two sentences not involved in the presupposition. The complete elements are *secrete entrance once*.

#### Mediated

[31]

"The one with the yellow stockings," said Bert. "Nonsense, the one with the grey stockings," said a voice like William's. "I made sure it was yellow," said Bert. "Yellow it was," said William. (HBT.41)

The word *yellow* is an *Adjective*. It is upgraded in its status to be a Head. It refers to the elements *the one with the yellow stockings*. It is intervened by one sentence that enters one presupposition *the grey stocking*. The word *the yellow* presupposes the elements *The one with the yellow stockings*.

#### CONCLUSSIONS

The Nominal Ellipsis presupposes the antecedent. The presupposed elements are in cataphora or anaphora. Most of the Nominal Ellipsis occur anaphorically. There are six data indicating cataphoras.

The Nominal Ellipsis immediately dominates the noun and its complements as the presupposed elements. Here the upgraded identity/status occurs e.g. the elements-the Deictics, Numeratives, or Ephitets to be a Head.

In analysis of the three chapters - 92.082 words, there are 41 Nominal ellipsis in the novel *The Lord of The Rings: The Hobbit*. The data indicates that the *Deictics* are 63,4%; the *Epithets* are 19,5%; and the *Numeratives* are 17% (Tabel 3).

The *Deictics* occupy the first rank. These are dominated by *Specific deictics*: the possessive pronoun and demonstrative forms. In the twenty six cohesive items based on Distance, there are only one indicating *Mediated* and three *Remote-non mediated* and the remains are in *Immediate*.

The *Ephitets* occupy the second rank. These are dominated by Adjectives. In the eight cohesive items of the *Ephitets* (Distance), There are two indicating *Remote-non mediated* and the remains are in *Immediate*.

The *Numeratives* occupy the third rank. The *numeratives* are dominated by *Cardinals*. It is contrastive. The data got is 71,3%, and the other subsets: *Ordinal* and *Quantifier* are only 14,3%. In the seven cohesive items of the *Numeratives* based on Distance), The whole are in *Immediate*. It indicates that cohesive items in sentences are not intervened by other sentences.

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## APPENDIXES

1. The best rooms were all on the left-hand side (going in), for these were the only ones to have windows, deep-set round windows looking over his garden and meadows beyond, sloping down to the river. (HBT.1)
2. Not the man that used to make such particularly excellent fireworks! I remember those! Old Took used to have them on Midsummer's Eve. (HBT.2)
3. He hung his hooded cloak on the nearest peg, and "Dwalin at your service!" he said with a low bow. "Bilbo Baggins at yours!" (HBT.3)
4. "Kili at your service!" said the one. "And Fili!" added the other; and they both swept off their blue hoods and bowed. "At yours and your family's!" replied Bilbo, remembering his manners this time. (HBT.4)
5. "I have often wondered about my father's and my grandfather's escape. I see now they must have had a private Side-door which only they knew about. (HBT.5)
6. Yes, I am afraid trolls do behave like that, even those with only one head each. After hearing all this Bilbo ought to have done something at once. (HBT.6)
7. "Dawn take you all, and be stone to you!" said a voice that sounded like William's. But it wasn't. (HBT.7)
8. "Moon-letters are rune-letters, but you cannot see them," said Elrond, "not when you look straight at them. They can only be seen when the moon shines behind them, and what is more, with the more cunning sort it must be a moon of the same shape and season as the day when they were written. The dwarves invented them and wrote them with silver pens, as your friends could tell you. These must have been written on a midsummer's eve in a crescent moon, a long while ago." (HBT.8)
9. "No good roasting 'em now, it'd take all night," said a voice. Bert thought it was William's. "Don't start the argument all over-again. Bill," he said, "or it will take all night." (HBT.9)
10. "No good boiling 'em! We ain't got no water, and it's a long way to the well and all," said a voice. Bert and William thought it was Tom's. HBT.(10)
11. "The one with the yellow stockings," said Bert. "Nonsense, the one with the grey stockings," said a voice like William's.(HBT.11)
12. "No good roasting 'em now, it'd take all night," said a voice. Bert thought it was William's. (HBT.12)
13. "A little beer would suit me better, if it is all the same to you, my good sir," said Balin with the white beard. "But I don't mind some cake-seed cake, if you have any." (HBT.13)

14. He had only just had a sip-in the corner, while the four dwarves sat around the table, and talked about mines and gold and troubles with the goblins, and the depredations of dragons, and lots of other things which he did not understand, and did not want to, for they sounded much too adventurous-when,ding-dong-a-ling-dang, his bell rang again, as if some naughty little hobbit-boy was trying to pull the handle off. "Someone at the door!" he said, blinking. "Some four, I should say by the sound," said Fili. (HBT.14)
15. Thereupon the twelve dwarves-not Thorin, he was too important, and stayed talking to Gandalf-jumped to their feet and made tall piles of all the things. Off they went, not waiting for trays, balancing columns of plates, each with a bottle on the top, with one hand, while the hobbit ran after them almost squeaking with fright: "please be careful!" and "please, don't trouble! I can manage." (HBT.15)
16. The dwarves rushed out of their great gate; but there was the dragon waiting for them. None escaped that way. The river rushed up in steam and a fog fell on Dale, and in the fog the dragon came on them and destroyed most of the warriors-the usual unhappy story, it was only too common in those days. (HBT.16)
17. For some elves tease them and laugh at them, and most of all at their beards. (HBT.17)
18. Elves know a lot and are wondrous folk for news, and know what is going on among the peoples of the land, as quick as water flows, or quicker. But the dwarves were all for supper as soon 'as possible just then, and would not stay. On they all went, leading their ponies, till they were brought to a good path and so at last to the very brink of the river. It was flowing fast and noisily, as mountain-streams do of a summer evening, when sun has been all day on the snow far up above. There was only a narrow bridge of stone without a parapet, as narrow as a pony could well walk on; and over that they had to go, slow and careful, one by one, each leading his pony by the bridle. The elves had brought bright lanterns to the shore, and they sang a merry song as the party went across. (HBT.18)
19. "That remains to be seen," said Gandalf. "Is there any more writing?" "None to be seen by this moon," said Elrond, and he gave the map back to Thorin; and then they went down to the water to see the elves dance and sing upon the midsummer's eve. (HBT.19)
20. Trolls simply detest the very sight of dwarves (uncooked). Bert and Bill stopped fighting immediately, and "a sack, Tom, quick!" they said, before Balin, who was wondering where in all this commotion Bilbo was, knew what was happening, a sack was over his head, and he was down. "There's more to come yet," said Tom, "or I'm mighty mistook. Lots and none at all, it is," said he. "No burra- hobbits, but lots of these here dwarves. That's about the shape of it!" (HBT.20)
21. And what would you do, if an uninvited dwarf came and hung his things up in your hall without a word of explanation? They had not been at table long, in fact they had hardly reached the third cake, when there came another even louder ring at the bell. "Excuse me!" said the hobbit, and off he went to the door.(HBT.21)
22. The tunnel wound on and on, going fairly but not quite straight into the side of the hill - The Hill, as all the people for many miles round called it - and many little round doors opened out of it, first on one side and then on another. (HBT.22)
23. Bilbo was astonished. The only path was marked with white stones. Some of which were small, and others were half covered with moss or heather. (HBT.23)
24. Then Bilbo sat down on a seat by his door, crossed his legs, and blew out a beautiful grey ring of smoke that sailed up into the air without breaking and floated away over The Hill. "Very pretty!" said Gandalf. "But I have no time to blow smoke-rings this morning. I am looking for someone to share in an adventure that I am arranging, and it's very difficult to find anyone." "I should think so - in these parts! We are plain quiet folk and have no use for adventures. Nasty .disturbing uncomfortable things! Make you late for dinner! I can't think what anybody sees in them," said our Mr. Baggins, and stuck one thumb behind his braces, and blew out another even bigger smoke-ring. (HBT.24)
25. Burglar wants a good job, plenty of Excitement and reasonable Reward, that's how it is usually read. You say Expert Treasure-hunter instead of Burglar if you like. Some of them do. It's all the same to us. (HBT.25)
26. Altogether those were good days for us, and the poorest of us had money to spend and to lend, and leisure to make beautiful things just for the fun of it, not to speak of the most marvellous and magical toys, the like of which is not to be found in the world now-a-days. (HBT.26)
27. But just at that moment William came up behind and popped a sack right over Thorin's head and down to his toes. And so the fight ended. A nice pickle they were all in now: all neatly tied up in sacks, with three angry trolls (and two with burns and bashes to remember) sitting by them, arguing whether they should roast them slowly, or mince them fine and boil them, or just sit on them one by one and squash them into jelly: (HBT.27)
28. I wish I had time to tell you even a few of the tales or one or two of the songs that they heard in that house. (HBT.28)
29. At first they had passed through hobbit-lands, a wild respectable country inhabited by decent folk, with good roads, an inn or two, and now and then a dwarf or a farmer ambling by on business. (HBT.29)
30. It was not four after all, it was five. Another dwarf had come along while he was wondering in the hall. (HBT.30)
31. Bilbo rushed along the passage, very angry, and altogether bewildered and bewuthered-this was the most awkward Wednesday he ever remembered. He pulled open the door with a jerk, and they all fell in, one on top of the other. More dwarves, four more! And there was Gandalf behind, leaning on his staff and laughing. (HBT.31)
32. "There's more to come yet," said Tom, "or I'm mighty mistook. Lots and none at all, it is," said he. "No burra- hobbits, but lots of dwarves. That's about the shape of it!" (HBT.32)
33. The trees changed to beech and oak, and hire was a comfortable feeling in the twilight. The last green had almost faded out of the grass, when they came at length to an open glade not far above the banks of the stream. (HBT.33)
34. Trolls simply detest the very sight of dwarves (uncooked). Bert and Bill stopped fighting immediately, and "a sack, Tom, quick!" they said, before Balin, who was wondering where in all this commotion Bilbo was, knew what was happening, a sack was over his head, and he was down. "There's more to come yet," said Tom, "or I'm mighty mistook. (HBT.34)
35. "Excitable little fellow," said Gandalf, as they sat down again. "Gets funny queer fits, but he is one of the best, one of the best-as fierce as a dragon in a pinch." (HBT.35)
36. The far bank was steep and slippery. When they got to the top of it, leading their ponies, they saw that the great mountains had marched down very near to them. Already they I seemed only a day's easy journey from the feet of the nearest. (HBT.36)
37. In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandi hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort. (HBT.37)
38. Still it is probable that Bilbo, her only son, although he looked and behaved exactly like a second edition of his solid and comfortable father, got something a bit queer in his makeup from the Took side, something that only waited for a chance to come out. (HBT.38)
39. "There is a dragon marked in red on the Mountain, said Balin, "but it will be easy enough to find him without that, if ever we arrive there." "There is one point that you haven't noticed," said the wizard, "and that is the secret entrance. You see that rune on the West side, and the hand pointing to it from the other runes? That marks a hidden passage to the Lower Halls. "It may have been secret once," said Thorin. (HBT.39)
40. "Also," went on Gandalf, "I forgot to mention that with the map went a key, a small and curious key. Here it is!" he said, and handed to

Thorin a key with a long barrel and intricate wards, made of silver. "Keep it safe!" (HBT.40)

41. "The one with the yellow stockings," said Bert. "Nonsense, the one with the grey stockings," said a voice like William's. "I made sure it was yellow," said Bert. "Yellow it was," said William. (HBT.41)



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# ON THE FAMILIARITY OF IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS AND LEARNERS WITH POST-METHOD, AND ITS REALIZATION

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## ABSTRACT

One of the most dramatic changes English Language Teaching has witnessed is the demise of the concept of method and its replacement by Kumaravadivelu's post-method based pedagogy free from the constraints of methods. However, the emergence of this principled teaching practice, which is founded upon the parameters of particularity, possibility, and practicality, has not been unanimously certified by all the scholars. That's why this research attempts to verify its actual appearance in Iran as an EFL context by means of a questionnaire and an interview. The reliability of the instrument was calculated using Cronbach alpha reliability estimation calculations. The participants were 254 male and female teachers of English in the English language institutes all over Shiraz, Iran. The findings of the study raised doubts about the feasibility, possibility or practicality of a fully post-method based teaching pedagogy and questioned its emergence into Iranian context. The study proved that there is a long distance to the actual manifestation of post-method principles, especially its possibility and practicality parameters. The findings also showed that Iran's teaching is mainly based on eclectic teaching. The results of the present study can be beneficial to teaching theorizers to re-modify their theories. Besides the policy makers of the Iranian educational system can benefit from this study to adapt their educational needs to the reality of classrooms and hasten the emergence of current paradigms in accordance with the international practices.

**KEY WORDS:** Post-method condition, method, principled approach, possibility, practicality, particularity, macro-strategies, micro-strategies.

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays it has been admittedly certified both by the educational system of Iran, and the society or population at large that English has gained an integral role among the Iranian nation. The proof to this claim is the escalating demands on behalf of the nation for learning the language which has come to be used as medium of instruction and source of updated knowledge in many schools, institutes and universities, libraries and educational places. Also with the emergence of the issue of globalization, the need to learn English as the international language has been more widely recognized as urgent. English is known as the language of international transaction, trade, negotiation and communication as well. In spite of the awareness of its importance, our educational system has not been totally successful at keeping up with the international competition. A case in point is our students' inability to suit themselves to the international

competition forced by globalization (Yarmohammadi, 2000; see also Bagheri, 1994; Rahimi, 1996). We might have also been behind schedule regarding the modifications that the second language teaching profession has been undergoing.

The second language teaching field has been always experiencing changes throughout history as the nature of science justifies and, in effect, necessitates such changes. According to Akbari (2008), one dramatic recent shift which has not been unanimously agreed upon among scholars is the emergence of the “*post-method condition*” (Kumaravadivelu, 1994). This condition has pronounced “The Death of the Method” (Allwright, 1991) and emergence beyond the dark ages of methods (Brown, 2002, p. 17), as the search for the best method was in practice futile (Allwright, 1991; Brown, 1994; Kumaravadivelu, 1994; Nunan, 1991; Prabhu, 1990; & Pennycook, 1989), and has defined new roles and relationships for all involved in the process of learning or teaching the language, among them, learners and teachers (Kumaravadivelu, 1994).

Teachers and learners have been assigned some specific and mainly fixed roles and demands in line with the underlying assumptions of the feeder method according to method-based language teaching curricula. These roles have been prone to change with the introduction of new teaching methods, to suit the particular demands of the method in vogue. Accordingly, context-sensitive post-method pedagogy ‘demands a re-visioning of their roles as post-method practitioners’ (Kumaravadivelu, 2001) in accordance with the parameters of practicality, particularity and possibility. However, the actual and practical existence or emergence of such rectified roles, traits, and behaviors, integral for any pedagogy to be called post-method, is open to debate (see, e.g., Akbari, 2008; Bell, 2003, 2007; Larsen-Freeman, 2005; & Liu, 1995), and central to the purpose of this study.

### ***Statement of the problem***

There have been opposing ideas about the actual manifestation of this transition from method to post-method pedagogy and the real practicality of post-method based instruction, and some studies have been carried out to prove or disprove either side’s claims (see, for instance, Akbari, 2008; Bell, 2007; Larsen-Freeman, 2005; & Liu, 1995). But have we really stepped into the post-method era? This article aims at exploring into the nature of activities, roles and characteristics of English teachers and learners undertaken in an EFL context to see to what extent the basic features of a post-method pedagogy have been actualized or are on the way to implementation in Iran.

### ***Significance of the study***

Due to the importance of English language teaching in the eye of both the educational system and the society in Iran, the findings of the present study can be significant from theoretical and practical perspectives. Theorizers, policy makers, language-planners, curriculum designers, textbook developers, language instructors, teachers, and also learners and their parents can benefit from the information obtained from this study. In other words, the issue addressed in this study might be of use to two groups of people. This study can provide us with informative insight into aims and objectives, content and material, methods and activities, books and textbooks, and tests regarding language teaching and learning in Iran. New measures can also be taken in near future to pave the way so that the transition might be possible or accelerated to enable us make up

for any imperfections compared to the international trend i.e. socio-political awareness raising and learner or teacher empowerment. This study can also sensitize us to the exigencies of adoption of a more context-specific approach toward teaching English and making our academia more and more aware of the most recent fashions in the realm of teaching. On the other hand, it could make scholars in the field halt to rethink, and reconsider or re-substantiate their hunches and claims by providing information about an EFL context.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *An overview of language teaching methodologies in Iran*

Teaching English in a country like Iran, which belongs to the expanding circle of Kachru's World Englishes Model (1990), is a laborious task. Learning English deems necessary in Iran due to several reasons. To put it in a nutshell, English is the language of international technological and scientific information, commerce, negotiation, communication, and economic or cultural transaction e. g. via the Internet. In Iran English is mainly taught in two different educational contexts: Public schools and language institutes (Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006). A brief look at the latter one, which is the setting of this study, is in order here.

### *Teaching English in private institutes*

Farzin-nia reported, as cited in Razmjoo and Riazi (2006), the first formal English language institute which was founded in 1925 in Iran as Iran-America society. After the revolution, it was known as ILI, the three letters standing for: Iran Language Institute, which is still probably the most rooted and powerful one in the region. The main reason for the prevalence of institutes has been the inefficacy of public schools in meeting the demands of the huge number of English learners. In fact, the educational system of Iran, though being able to recognize the exigency of providing students with English competence, has actually acted inefficiently, and all the ambitions of learners have not been fulfilled at schools. That's why almost in all families, there are pupils who have taken their chances on learning English optimally in language institutes. The teaching materials, mainly including textbooks used worldwide are offered in these institutes in three different levels of age range: Kids, young adults or teenagers, and finally adolescents or adults. The applicants attend classes two to four times a week, each time two hours, based on the nature of a course, whether it is normal or intensive. Newcomers are evaluated by means of placement tests and oral interviews to determine their exact level of proficiency. Course assessment is carried out based on midterm and final exams and also class activity. Here the syllabus is prepared beforehand and the procedures of its implementation are explicated in teacher training courses conducted by the institutes. Of course, the malleability of guidelines and their range of application procedures differ from institute to institute depending on the management board. Some grant teachers more freedom to practice their work but in a constrained way within the bounds of the frameworks ruled out by the institutes. But some other set strict rules and niggle at teachers for unscrupulously practicing the prescribed material.

### *Method and post-method concepts*

In 1963, Edward Anthony-in his hierarchical three-partite model consisting of *approach*, *method*, and *technique*-defined method as an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material. Richards and Rogers (2001, p. 20) modified the definition of method by assigning it an umbrella term which encapsulates the concepts of approach, design, and procedure. The definition adopted by most researchers is what Brown (2002) puts as: "A set of theoretically unified classroom techniques thought to be across a wide variety of contexts and audiences" (p. 9). The criticisms against the concept of method began in the 1960s, by Kelly (1969), and

Mackey (1965). These criticisms reached their peak in 1980s, paradoxically when scholars were busy searching for the *best method* or what Richards & Rodgers (2001) call “the language teaching problem” (p. 244), a search which began approximately a century ago. The futility of this search was explicated in detail by Prabhu (1990) in the erudite article: “There Is No Best Method”. Labels such as “century old obsession”, and “misguided” (Stern, 1985, p. 251), and “interested knowledge” (Pennycook, 1989), were used to demonstrate the limits of method. “The Death of the Method” (Allwright, 1991) was an article published on the wake of criticisms which revealed growing dissatisfaction with ephemeral methods.

Acclaiming the demise of the concept of method, Kumaravadivelu (1994) announced the emergence of what he calls “*post-method condition*”. In fact the alternative to method (Kumaravadivelu, 1994) was a method-neutral approach or in Brown’s words “a principled approach” (2002). Efforts to devise method-free frameworks has resulted in appearance of Stern’s three dimensional framework (1992), Allwright’s Exploratory Practice (2000, 2003a, & 2003b), Kumaravadivelu’s macro-strategic framework (1992, 1994, 2001, 2003a, 2003b, and 2005), and Brown’s principled teaching (2001, 2002, & 2007). The framework adopted by the researchers in the present study is Kumaravadivelu’s framework based on three pedagogical principles of *practicality*, *particularity*, and *possibility* (1994, 2001, 2003a, 2003b, 2005). The first parameter (practicality), assumes a dialectical relationship between theorists having their professional theories and practitioners generating their personal theories, and enables teachers to construct their own theory of practice embarking on what Prabhu (1990, p.172) calls teachers’ *sense of plausibility* (emphasis original). The second one accentuates the need for a context-sensitive language education which takes into account local linguistic, socio-cultural, and political particularities. The last principle addresses the empowerment of both teachers and students to facilitate the process of identity formation and social transformation.

To implement these pedagogic principles in classroom, Kumaravadivelu has proposed the macro-strategic framework which consists of 10 macro-strategies and numerous micro-strategies. (Kumaravadivelu, 1992, 1994, 2003a, 2003b, 2005). Post-method pedagogy has also tried to modify the roles of both learners and teachers (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, 2003a, 2005). Learners-formerly as passive recipients of knowledge-are becoming active and autonomous players (Kumaravadivelu, 2003a, p. 176), and teachers who were just transmission models or passive technicians are assuming the role of reflective practitioners or even transformative intellectuals (Kumaravadivelu, 2003a, pp.16-17). The issues of social justice and transformation are dealt with by embarking on critical pedagogy through exposing the politically discriminatory foundations of education (Giroux, 1983). However, on its way to implementation, post-method pedagogy will face two sorts of barriers: Pedagogical-concerning the eradication of deeply rooted transmission model of teaching-and ideological- dealing with issues such as marginalization and self-marginalization (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, 2003a).

### ***Empirical studies done***

Liu (2004) chose a sample of 448 EFL teachers randomly to explore the degree of their familiarity with methods, degree of their method use, and degree of their preference to a special method. Based on the findings, a multidimensional theoretical framework was proposed to conceptualize language teaching methods in post-method era. In another study, Hazratzad &

Gheitanchian (2009) selected 594 Iranian EFL teachers to explore any probable relationship between teachers' positive or negative attitudes towards post-method and their students' achievement. The results revealed that while it was expected that the positive attitudes of teachers towards post-method pedagogy would cause better achievement among their students, there existed no such correlation.

### ***Contribution of related literature to the present study***

Although there seems to exist enough evidence in favor of the existence of post-method condition, some prominent figures have expressed doubt regarding its emergence. Claims have been made so as: Methods are not dead in teachers' opinions (Bell, 2007), rather method and post-method are complementary (Bell, 2003), proposed frameworks are just "addition to method, not an alternative to method" (Liu, 1995), and "these macro-micro strategies constitute a method" (Larsen-Freeman, 2005). Akbari (2008) has also criticized post-method for being far from reality and staying at the level of discourse or theory. He believes that post-method, by being inordinately demanding for teachers, has defeated its own purpose of achieving parameters of practicality and possibility. Based on what was mentioned so far, ambivalence has been observed about the actual representation of post-method in real lives of the academia, and main body of research has so far concentrated on theoretical aspects of post-method. The present study tries to delve into the extent to which post-method has been able to penetrate into pedagogical settings, e.g. an EFL context like Iran. Because little attempt has been devoted to practicing aspects of post-method pedagogy, the present study tries to "become more practical in adopting the language of practice" (Akbari, 2008) by conducting an empirical research on this issue, and moving beyond lip-service to practice.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study tries to probe into the current situation of Iran's English language learning and teaching context to see to what extent the claimed transition from method-based pedagogy to post-method has been in practice witnessed in this EFL context. This study fulfils its aims in two perspectives. First, it investigates the representation of post-method teaching according to learners' roles and in learners' lives. Second, it attempts to explore the manifestation of post-method characteristics in teachers' lives and also in teachers' opinions.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. To what extent do our teachers in private institutes bear the traits necessary for a teacher to be called a post-method teacher?
2. To what extent are our English learners real post-method learners?
3. To what extent have the principles of post-method based pedagogy including the parameters of practicality, particularity, and possibility emerged in Iran's private language institutes?
4. What is Iranian teachers' perception of their teaching practice? Do they teach based on one specific method, a number of eclectic methods, or general principles?

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Participants***

The participants of the study were 154 English teachers from private institutes in Shiraz (a large city southern Iran) on the basis of their availability. There were 95 female and 59 male teachers.



They range in age from 22 to 35 with a mean age of 28. They had from 1 to 12 years of teaching experience with an average of 5.57. 42 teachers held an M.A. degree and the rest had a B.A. in English Linguistics, Teaching and Literature.

### ***Instruments***

#### ***Questionnaire***

A questionnaire consisting of the main tenets of post-method pedagogy namely the principles of particularity, practicality, possibility, the role of teachers, and the role of learners was constructed by the researchers for the study. It consists of 22 items (11 favorable and 11 unfavorable) which follow the Likert scale.

The maximum score that can be obtained, which implies the highest degree of conformity to tenets of a post-method based pedagogy, equals 110. The minimum score indicating the lowest degree of conformity to post-method principles amounts to 22. Thus the participants' responses falls between the range of 22 to 110 and the neutral score is 66.

#### ***Validity of the questionnaire***

In order to determine the validity of the instrument, in a pilot study, the researchers randomized all the items of the questionnaire and distributed them among 154 teachers of institutes. After collecting the data, the researchers conducted the data analysis to calculate the validity coefficients in terms of factor analysis (see Table 1).

*Table 1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Questionnaire*

1	The parameter of particularity (4 statements)
2	The parameter of practicality (4 statements)
3	The parameter of possibility (6 statements)
4	The role of teacher in post-method based pedagogy (4 statements)
5	The role and contribution of learners in the learning process (4 statements)

#### ***Reliability of the questionnaire***

The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated by the researchers using Cronbach alpha (CA). Based on the data which was gathered for the study, the overall internal consistency of the questionnaire turned out to be 0.888. Using SPSS, Cronbach alpha was employed to calculate the reliability index of the present scale in this administration. To compute the reliability index of the present questionnaire, the scale was given to 154 participants of the study.

#### ***Interview***

The second instrument was an interview comprising of three questions conducted to investigate the exact nature of teaching practice in Iran's language institutes. The researchers interviewed 60 teachers by asking the following questions:

1. Is your teaching practice based on one specific method for instance Audio-Lingual Method or Communicative Language Teaching?
2. Is your teaching practice fed by an eclectic selection of a number of methods?
3. Is your teaching practice grounded on a number of general principles, e.g. your own or some other scholars' theories of practice, free from the constraints of method?



Before conducting the interview the researchers explained the difference between post-method based pedagogy and method based one and explicated the exact meaning of principled teaching and theories of practice to eradicate any doubts or misunderstandings. The results of the interviews were analyzed in the form of qualitative content analysis. The content of the interviews were scrutinized to categorize the factors that were stated by the interviewees.

### ***Data Collection and Analysis***

Data collection was arranged at times suggested by the management of the institutes' permission by administering the questionnaire. All participants were encouraged to ask questions so that they did not have any problems with respect to the content and language of the questionnaire. Moreover, the observed principles were discussed with the teachers to eradicate any doubts about the originality of the data. The data collected through language teachers' questionnaire were analyzed through descriptive statistics utilizing minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation. The interview was also analyzed based on the frequency measures of the responses.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In this section the results of the study are presented and explained. The items of the questionnaire were examined in percentage to demonstrate teachers' belief about the principles representing post-method pedagogy. To have a better picture or idea of the respondents' answers to the items, the first two (strongly agree and agree) and the last two (disagree and strongly disagree) were added up together (see Table 2). Of course items number 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 12, 17, 19, 20 and 21 are negative and for interpretation their results should be reversed. The mean of the questionnaire items mounted to 70.35 and the standard deviation was 14.51. Because the mean is less than half the standard deviation over the neutral point, one can't conclude that teachers have a positive attitude toward post-method principles.

As to teachers' claim, post-method tenets are not greatly appreciated or implemented in Iran. For instance almost one third of teachers agree with the following items representing principles of post-method (see table 2): "I give learners institutional, political, social and cultural awareness" (Item 2), "I generate my own theory of teaching" (Item 14), "My teaching is in line with the notion that every class context is unique" (Item 5), "I have a fair degree of autonomy in pedagogic decision making" (Item9), "My learners are active and autonomous" (Item 18).

*Table 2: Teacher Attitude in Terms of Frequency (F) and Percentage (P)*

Items	SA+A		U		D+SD	
	F	P	F	P	F	P
1. My role is to transmit knowledge without altering the content.	33	21%	34	22%	87	57%
2. I give learners institutional, political, social and cultural awareness.	46	30%	46	30%	62	40%
3. I can't generate my own theories to teach in class.	52	34%	55	36%	47	30%
4. I am not interested in the sociopolitical context and its power dimensions.	53	35%	59	38%	42	27%
5. My teaching is in line with the notion that every class context is unique.	70	45%	53	35%	31	20%
6. My role is to help students gain a sense of ownership of education.	77	50%	45	29%	32	21%
7. My teaching does not vary from context to context.	29	19%	59	38%	66	43%
8. My learners don't have a role in pedagogic decision making.	35	23%	56	36%	63	41%

9. I have a fair degree of autonomy in pedagogic decision making.	65	42%	44	29%	45	29%
10. I'm not interested in sociopolitical issues in my classes.	58	38%	48	31%	48	31%
11. I observe, analyze, and evaluate my teaching to generate my own theories.	47	31%	47	30%	60	39%
12. My learners don't search for language beyond the classroom.	39	25%	51	33%	64	42%
13. My teaching is sensitive to a particular group of learners in a particular institutional or socio-cultural context.	74	48%	51	33%	29	19%
14. I generate my own theory of teaching.	51	33%	43	28%	60	39%
15. I try to tap the sociopolitical consciousness of learners as change agents.	51	33%	49	32%	54	35%
16. I try to bring about social, cultural, and political change and transformation.	57	37%	50	32%	47	31%
17. I don't adjust my teaching to the particular conditions of different contexts.	16	11%	48	31%	90	58%
18. My learners are active and autonomous.	60	39%	52	34%	32	27%
19. I'm not interested in making my own theory of practice.	49	32%	47	30%	58	38%
20. I don't encourage learners to investigate how language as ideology serves vested interests.	56	36%	59	38%	39	26%
21. The system doesn't recognize my role to teach autonomously within constraints of institutions, curricula, and textbooks.	47	30%	47	30%	60	40%
22. My learners explore the Internet and bring to class their own topics.	32	21%	58	38%	64	41%

Table 3 demonstrates teachers' attitudes regarding the five principles of post-method based pedagogy. The parameter of particularity, which deals with the importance of context, is recognized by at least half of the Iranian private institute teachers. This also certifies for the roles adopted by post-method teachers. Almost half of Iranian teachers admit that the roles they assume are in line with those of a post-method teacher. There is no unanimous agreement over existence of post-method learners, as the statistical percentages are evenly distributed among the opponents, proponents, and abstainers. Another point worth mentioning is teachers' reluctance to bring about socio-political change or transformation (30% agree with possibility parameter), or to put it more exact, to get involved in issues which might jeopardize their life or status. Here one can infer that the two principles of particularity and possibility contradict but not complement each other. In fact, by claiming to localize or contextualize teaching practice, the parameter of particularity is paradoxically defeating its own purpose, because contextualization of the prescribed parameter of possibility is at times odd and impossible in many contexts, hence it might not be localized at all. The parameter of practicality which stresses the importance of involving teacher generated theories of practice in pedagogy has also received little acceptance, maybe because this is much demanding necessitating that the teachers be proficient, experienced or skillful enough to be able to make up their own theories or due to the constraints imposed upon institutions or textbooks.

Table 3: Teacher Attitude Regarding the Five Principles of Post-method

Principles	SA+A		U		D+SD	
	F	P	F	P	F	P
1. Particularity (Items 5, 7, 13 & 17)	75	49%	53	34%	26	17%
2. Practicality (Items 3, 11, 14 & 19)	51	33%	48	31%	55	36%
3. Possibility (Items 2, 4, 10, 15, 16 & 20)	47	30%	52	34%	55	36%
4. Teacher role of (Items 1, 6, 9 & 21)	72	47%	43	28%	39	25%
5. Learner role (Items 8, 12, 18 & 22)	55	35%	54	35%	45	30%

An interesting proof to the previous criticisms leveled at post-method due to its heavy reliance on profuse proficiency and experience of teachers is the statistical analysis of correlation between teachers' experience and their agreement with the five principles of post-method. The relationship between the principle of practicality and teacher experience was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. There was a strong positive correlation between the two variables,  $r = .74$ ,  $n = 154$ ,  $p < .0005$ , with high level of teaching experience leading to an ability or propensity for generating theories of practice.

The results also lend support to Akbari's claim that only teachers who are at the third stage of Fuller's three stages of teacher development will have the capability of but not necessarily the willingness to act in line with post-method pedagogy (2008). In fact it is experience that endows the teachers with the ability to generate their own theories of practice which are ongoingly modified and re-modified based on their teaching analyses and evaluations of classroom teaching acts using their own sense of plausibility.

The findings of the study raise doubts on the emergence of some principles of post-method, and reaffirm the criticisms on post-method regarding its practicality. The advocates of post-method are summoned once again to halt to reconsider some of the main tenets of their theories and think deeper about their theories feasibility according to the constraints and needs of actual language classrooms and the wider institutional, social, cultural, and political context.

### ***Interview***

According to the results of the interviews which have been scrutinized and analyzed by the three researchers, all the interviewees unanimously believed that they didn't make use of one specific method in their language teaching practice except for scarce occasions when they had to resort to just one special method due to the specific needs of the particular learner. Rather they drew upon eclectic methods to practice their act of teaching based on particular contextual needs or conditions. Almost 10 teachers claimed that they utilized general principles guiding their teaching action in a rather sporadic manner sidelined by the prioritized principles of eclectic based teaching due to institutional constraints. Teachers attributed their non-adherence to principled teaching to, above all their reluctance or lack of proficiency and confidence needed for making a comprehensive theory of practice, and also to the limitations imposed on them by institutions, classroom conditions, time and budgetary issues, and textbooks. All in all, one can conclude that the impediments on the route to the realization of post-method based pedagogy are much more onerous than one can conceive.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study tried to verify the emergence of post-method pedagogy and its degree of materialization in English institutes of a prominent city of Iran, i.e. Shiraz. The present study

raised uncertainty about the actual emergence or practice of post-method based pedagogy and the immaculate fulfillment of all its principles. In fact existence of post-method based on the principles of particularity, practicality, and possibility (and especially the last two principles) in the EFL country of Iran seems far reaching, impractical if not impossible. A high degree of contextualization or exclusion of some parts is needed perhaps at the expense of distorting the whole principles or tenets. While the current study focused on English teachers in Iran, a sample of the expanding circle of Kachru's World Englishes (1990), the issues touched on can also be witnessed in many other parts of the world. The insights gained from this study are also beneficial to the educational systems, policy makers, language planners, and a host of other academic entities involved in or affecting language teaching practice. Teachers and theorizers can also rely on the findings of this research. The former by becoming informed on new currents in language teaching practice and re-visioning their teaching acts based on new paradigms, and the latter by revisiting the rationales and foundations of their theories to make modifications and adaptations necessary to facilitate and hasten a more sensible transition. Among the limitations we can refer to the reluctance or unwillingness or perhaps fear that most teachers had before volunteering to participate in the study especially when conducting the interview. They just consented to being interviewed as soon as the researchers reassured them that the questions were not politically laden and that they were going to be left unanimous so that their lives were not at all at risk.

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## THE COMPARATIVE EFFECT OF PEER METALINGUISTIC CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK ON ELEMENTARY AND INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' SPEAKING ABILITY

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### ABSTRACT

The present study was an attempt to compare the effect of peer metalinguistic corrective feedback on elementary and intermediate EFL learners' speaking ability to find out which level benefits more from this type of feedback. To this end, 117 female EFL learners at Grade 3, Al-zahra High School in Kermanshah, Iran were non-randomly chosen. The homogeneity of the participants was attained through a piloted Preliminary English Test (PET). Then, based on their scores, two groups with different levels of language proficiency (35 elementary and 32 intermediate students) were chosen as the target groups of the study. The participants' performance on the speaking part of the PET test was considered as the pre-test scores. The students were given the routine instructions while peer metalinguistic corrective feedback was practiced in the two classes. After the instructional period that lasted for a semester, the researchers used another PET speaking test as the post-test. The scores of both groups were rated based on the speaking rating scale of PET which was used for the pre-test, too. The analyzed results through an ANCOVA test showed that intermediate learners benefited more significantly from the treatment than the elementary group. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

**KEYWORDS:** Metalinguistic Corrective Feedback, Peer Feedback, Proficiency level, Elementary Learners, Intermediate Learners, Speaking.

### INTRODUCTION

With the growing need for international communication in the information age, many language learners seemingly attend language classes to improve their speaking ability. According to Folse (2006), for most people, the ability to speak a language is synonymous with knowing that language since speech is the most basic means of human communication. Even though many students have mastered basic speaking skills, some students seem to be much more effective in their oral communication than others. And those who are more effective communicators experience more success in school and most probably in other areas of their lives. Celce-Murcia (1991) states that, "today, language students are considered successful if they communicate effectively in their second or foreign language" (p. 125).



According to Thornbury (2007), spoken interaction involves producing and negotiating language rather differently from the way it is used in writing. Speakers and listeners are simultaneously involved in both producing and processing spoken interactions. They are under time-constraints, meaning that they must process language as they go, with no opportunities to go back and make changes. Speakers must also take account of relationships with others, adjusting their language according to the meanings they wish to get across, and responding to verbal or non-verbal signals from their listeners.

It is believed that during classroom interactions learners receive comprehensible input, opportunities to negotiate for meaning, and opportunities to produce modified output (Oliver, 1995; Swain, 1995). Meanwhile, research reveals that exposure to input alone is not sufficient for learners to acquire the target language items to a high level of proficiency (e.g., Long, 1996; Long & Robinson, 1998; Norris & Ortega, 2000). This especially applies to those features which are semantically redundant, syntactically complex and cognitively demanding. To compensate for learners' failure to notice some aspects of input, researchers have attempted to direct learners' attention to some linguistic features in the input which are problematic for learners. Corrective feedback is among the techniques which are believed to facilitate L2 development by providing learners with both positive and negative evidence (Long, 1996).

The term corrective feedback is defined by (Russell & Spada, 2006) as "any feedback provided to a learner, from any source, that contains evidence of learner error of language form" (p. 134). An influential study on the use of different types of corrective feedback by Lyster and Ranta (1997, pp. 46-48) has shown that teachers generally use six different feedback types when correcting learners' errors: 1) explicit correction: "the explicit provision of the correct form" where the teacher clearly indicates that what the student has said is incorrect (e.g., "Oh you mean", "You should say"); 2) recasts: "the teacher's reformulation of all or part of the student's utterance, minus the error"; 3) clarification requests: "indicate to students either that their utterance has been misunderstood by the teacher or that the utterance is ill-formed in some way; 4) metalinguistic feedback: "comments, information or questions related to the well-formedness of the students' utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form"; 5) elicitation: "teachers elicit completion of their own utterance by strategically pausing to allow students to *fill in the blank*"; 6) repetition: "the teacher's repetition, in isolation, of the student's erroneous utterance" (usually with adjusted intonation).

Although traditionally students received different types of corrective feedback mostly from their teachers, by the advent of new approaches in language teaching teachers try to train students to give feedback to each other to increase opportunities for students' intragroup interactions. Celce-Murcia (1991) lends support to student-to-student interaction by saying, "it is important to strive for a classroom in which students feel comfortable and confident, feel free to take risks, and have sufficient opportunities to speak" (p. 126). Other researchers and teachers suggest some effects on adopting peer feedback in class. They believe that it provides diversity with teaching compared with the traditional way of giving teacher feedback. Also, they mention that in peer

feedback session, students do not just listen to teachers' instructions, but work with their peers to do more practices; therefore, students' anxiety becomes lower and learning motivation can be higher. Moreover, they believe that peer feedback equips students with social affective strategies such as listening carefully, speaking at the right moment, expressing clearly, and appreciating others (Atay & Kurt, 2007).

However, according to Ellis (2009, p. 106), "there is no corrective feedback recipe" for all students and teachers cannot generalize one specific method to all learners. Also, Tedick and de Gortari (1998) suggest that teachers should practice a variety of feedback techniques as different techniques might appeal to different students in terms of their needs, proficiency level, age, and classroom objectives. As learners are progressing in the process of language learning, their proficiency level changes from time to time. These changes range from novice level to intermediate, advanced, higher advanced, and superior level. Considering these changes, it seems useful to use different types of corrective feedback which suit that particular level of proficiency. In fact, it seems to be the case that knowing learners' level and previous knowledge is necessary for teachers to avoid discouragement on the learners' side. Allwright (1975, as cited in Cohen, 1990) maintains that, "level of proficiency takes an important role in error correction because if the explanation of errors is beyond their level of proficiency, it will bring limited or no advantages" (p. 60).

### ***Speaking Skill***

Speaking as an active and productive language skill seems to be of most people's interest these days. People who know a language are referred to as speakers of that language, as if speaking included all other types of skills, and many, if not most foreign language learners are primarily interested in learning to speak (Ur, 2006).

Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information (Brown, 2001; Burns & Joyce, 1997). Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking. Speaking requires that learners not only know how to produce specific points of language such as grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary, i.e. linguistic components, but also understand when, why and in what ways to produce language, i.e. sociolinguistic competence (Cunningham, 1999).

Levelt (1989) identified three autonomous processing stages in speech production: (1) conceptualizing the message, (2) formulating the language representation, and (3) articulating the message.

Wilson (1997) claims that those who can translate their thoughts and ideas into words are more likely to succeed in school. Students who do not develop good listening and speaking skill will have life-long consequences because of their deficit. He also pointed out that speaking skills do not need to be taught as a separate subject. These skills can easily be integrated into other subject matters. This is because, students learn talking, clarify thoughts by talking, comprehend better with discussion of reading, write better after talking during writing conferences, develop confidence by speaking in front of peers, and provide a window to their own thinking through their talk.

Speaking in L2 has occupied a peculiar position throughout much of the history of language teaching, and only in the last two decades has it begun to emerge as a branch of teaching, learning and testing in its own right, rarely focusing on the production of spoken discourse (Bygate, 2002).

Graham-Marr (2004) mentions many reasons for focusing on listening and speaking when teaching English as a foreign language, not least of which is the fact that we as humans have been learning languages through our ears and mouth for thousands upon thousands of years, far longer we as humans have been able to read. Although not a set curriculum in most schools, speaking skills have been found to be a fundamental skill necessary for a child success in life.

Brown and Yule (1983) draw a useful distinction between two basic language functions. These are the transactional function, which is primarily concerned with the transfer of information, and the interactional function, in which the primary purpose of speech is the maintenance of social relationships.

Nunan (1999) mentions another basic distinction when considering the development of speaking skills: distinguishing between dialogue and monologue. The ability to give an uninterrupted oral presentation is quite distinct from interacting with one or more other speakers for transactional and interactional purposes. While all native speakers can and use language interactionally, not all native speakers have the ability to extemporize on a given subject to a group of listeners. Brown and Yule (1983) suggest that most language teaching is concerned with developing skills in short, interactional exchanges in which the learner is only required to make one or two utterances at a time.

The interactional nature of language was examined by Bygate (1996). He distinguishes between motor-perceptive skills, which are concerned with correctly using the sounds and structures of the language, and interactional skills, which involve using motor-perceptive skills for the purposes of communication. Motor-perceptive skills are developed in the language classroom through activities such as model dialogues, pattern practice, and oral drills and so on. Bygate (1996) suggests that, in particular, learners need to develop skills in the management of interaction as well as in the negotiation of meaning. The management of the interaction involves such things as when and how to take the floor, when to introduce a topic or change the subject, how to invite

someone else to speak, how to keep a conversation going and so on. Negotiation of meaning refers to the skill of making sure the person you are speaking to has correctly understood you and you have correctly understood him.

Nunan (1996) claims that a successful oral communication should involve developing some features which can be summarized as follows:

- The ability to articulate phonological features of the language comprehensibly;
- Mastery of stress, rhythm, intonation patterns; an acceptable degree of fluency;
- Transactional and interpersonal skills;
- Skills in taking short and long speaking turns;
- Skills in the management of the interaction;
- Skills in negotiating meaning;
- Conversational listening skills (successful conversations require good listeners as well as good speakers);
- Skills in knowing about and negotiating purpose for conversations.

### ***Feedback***

According to Williams and Burden (2000), behavioral psychologists were the first to recognize the power of feedback as a motivating influence. Any action or lack of action by another significant person may be interpreted as a form of feedback. Thus feedback can be given by means of praise, by any relevant comment or action or even silence. According to Lyster and Ranta (1997) feedback is how a speaker reacts to the errors of a language learner's utterance. Ur (1996) defines feedback as information that is given to the learner about his or her performance of a learning task, usually with the objective of improving this performance. Chastain (1988) states that teacher should be aware of giving feedback to the students. Any kinds of feedback can be negative or positive, but it is the teacher's task to choose that type of feedback that leads to positive students' attitudes.

Over the past few decades, language teachers and language learning researchers have been attempting to discover what is needed in order for a language student to be successful in the learning of the target language. According to Krashen (1985), one requirement for success in language learning is input of the target language, or what is called positive evidence, but as Long (1990) argues, exposure to the correct form of language is not enough for language learning, because the learners do not necessarily notice what is correct.

In all our interactions with others or even within ourselves, we receive information about our actions. In educational settings, teachers provide feedback to help students to be prepared for future tasks, improve performance and correct erroneous actions. Furthermore, students may generate their own internal feedback through their learning activities. Feedback is vital to any

effective learning environment if it addresses specific goals or outcomes and affords opportunity for learners to change.

### ***Corrective Feedback***

Although the provision of corrective feedback in the foreign language classroom seems natural in the process of learning a language, the role that corrective feedback plays in the classroom and the attitudes language teachers have towards it have not been the same through the years, or even from one teacher to another. On the other hand, in the theoretical ground, corrective feedback has also been an area of research and discussion in language acquisition and learning over the last decades, which has contributed to the debate about this issue.

For the sake of clarity, one of the first definitions of corrective feedback is that of Chaudron (1977) who considers it as "any reaction of the teacher which clearly transforms, disapprovingly refers to, or demands improvement of the learner utterance" (p. 31). Other synonyms of corrective feedback more commonly used are "error correction", "negative evidence", and "negative feedback". However, Han (2008) suggests that error correction implies an evident and direct correction, whereas corrective feedback is a more general way of providing some clues, or eliciting some correction, besides the direct correction made by the teacher. Ellis, Loewen and Erlam (2006) describe corrective feedback as follows:

"Corrective feedback takes the form of responses to learner utterances that contain error. The responses can consist of (a) an indication that an error has been committed, (b) provision of the correct target language form, or (c) metalinguistic information about the nature of the error, or any combination of these" (p. 340).

### ***Participants in the Corrective Feedback***

Considering the participant(s) in the corrective feedback interaction, according to Lyster and Ranta (1997), there are the following possibilities:

**Self-correction** is possible when the learner realizes that he has committed a mistake and repairs it by providing a correct form in place of the wrong one. Self correction seems to be preferred to correction provided by others: it is face-saving and allows the learner to play an active role in the corrective event.

**Peer-correction** occurs when one learner corrects another one. This kind of correction is appreciated for a number of reasons. Its most important advantages are the following: both learners are involved in face-to-face interaction; the teacher obtains information about learners' current abilities; learners co-operate in language learning and become less teacher-dependent; peer correction does not make errors a public affair, which protects the learners' ego and increases their self-confidence.

**Teacher-correction** occurs when the person who corrects the errors is the teacher. The teacher knows the problem and the solution, and can define and put things simply so that the student can understand the mistake. The student should trust and respect his/her place as a fluent speaker of English.

### ***Metalinguistic Corrective Feedback***

According to Ligthbown and Spada (2006), "metalinguistic corrective feedback contains comments, information, or questions related to the correctness of the student's utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form" (p. 126). Metalinguistic corrective feedback generally indicates that there is an error somewhere. Metalinguistic corrective feedback information generally provides either some grammatical terminology that refers to the nature of the error, for example 'is it masculine?', or a word definition.

Metalinguistic corrective feedback points to the nature of the error but attempts to elicit the information from the student. The following example from Ellis, Loewen, Elder, Erlam, Philip, and Reinders (2009) represents a metalinguistic feedback:

"Learner: He kiss her.

Researcher: Kiss- You need past tense.

Learner: He kissed" (Ellis et al., 2009, p. 319).

In other words, the teacher does talk about the student's utterance, but without explicitly telling the student where the error is, or what the correct form should be. Teacher simply tells the student that the sentence is not quite right, leaving the student to rethink and find the correct answer. Teacher may also give a hint. When it comes to the discussion of learners' uptake, which according to Ligthbown and Spada (2006) is "how students immediately respond to the corrective feedback" (p. 125). Lyster and Ranta (1997) found that metalinguistic corrective feedback as a kind of corrective feedback, along with elicitation, not only resulted in more uptake, they were also more likely to lead to a corrected form of the original utterance.

### ***Definition of Language Proficiency***

There is not a universally agreed-upon definition of language proficiency, but there are some scholar's idea about it at hand. Gasparro (1984, cited in Chastain, 1988) advocates proficiency as a goal and defines it as "the ability to use the language outside classroom independently of the materials and activities of the course" (p. 108). According to Clark (1972, as cited in Farhady et al., 2001) language proficiency is "the use of language for real life purposes without regard to the manner in which that competence was acquired" (p. 26). Bachman (1995) states that the distinguishing characteristic of language proficiency is its recognition of the importance of context beyond the sentence to the appropriate use of language" (p.



82). Cummin (1981, cited in Oller, 1983) believes that a communicative approach toward teaching and testing better reflects the nature of language proficiency than one which emphasizes the acquisition of discrete language skills. Hadley (2003) defines proficiency as "an idealized level of competence and performance attainable by experts through extensive instruction" (p. 2). Lee and Schallert (1997) also believe that theoretically, the construct of language proficiency is not a simple one as it relates to language competence, metalinguistic awareness, and the ability to speak, listen, read, and write the language in contextually appropriate ways.

### ***Levels of Language Proficiency***

When one wants to categorize something or put something in different levels, a criterion is needed. Language proficiency is not an exception. A criterion is needed to categorize language proficiency into different levels. Hadley (2003) mentions that as early as 1970, Woodford coined the term 'common yardstick', which was later on referred to a project to define language proficiency levels for academic contexts. The work begun by the common yardstick project was continued in 1981 by the ACTFL to find a design for measuring and communicating foreign language proficiency. Along with ACTFL rating scales of language proficiency, there was another scale called ILR (Interagency Language Roundtable), which was formed by cooperation of FSI (Foreign Service Institute), Britain and German organizations, representatives of U.S.A., and academic groups (pp. 9-12).

ACTFL defines and measures language ability in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The guidelines set by ACTFL provisional proficiency guidelines describe four proficiency levels: Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, and Superior. The ILR scale contains eleven proficiency levels, from zero to five as it was shown in the previous page. When considering these two rating scales, two points should be taken into account. First, it should be remembered that moving from intermediate level to advanced level is much more difficult than moving from novice level to intermediate. The second point can be better described by the findings of Abbasian (1997). According to his findings, language proficiency possesses a 'level dependent' nature; that is, the skills and components of language proficiency are much more discrete at the lower levels than they are at higher levels at which they are integrated.

Omaggio (1986) states that there are three interrelated assessment criteria of language proficiency: global tasks/functions, context/content, and accuracy (as cited in Chastain, 1988). Huges (2003) describes these criteria further. He says that global tasks /functions are considered as different functions that a learner uses the language for. They can range from narrating objects, or basic greeting for novice level to describing a person or place for intermediate level, narrating in different time frame for advanced level or finally having discussion and argument in superior level. Context as the second criterion refers to circumstances or setting in which a person uses the language. Novice level learners are able to use present tense and only in predictable situations and settings. Higher-level learners can be flexible and are able to use the language in unpredictable situations and can even discuss political issues. Learners at superior level can handle unexpected problems in culture as well. Content

refers to the topic or themes of conversation. The content for novice level can be giving autobiography information and personal experiences, and for higher levels, the range of content is as wide as those of native speakers.

Accuracy is the next criterion for assessing language proficiency. Accuracy refers to the acceptability, quality, and precision of the message. When assessing accuracy, one should consider the following factors: fluency, grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, pragmatic competence, and sociolinguistic competence. The degree to which the speaker relies on the listener for filling in the gaps in the message due to imperfect control of the language is one way to assess accuracy. Huges (2003) also adds another criterion to the aforementioned ones. He introduces 'text type' as another criterion in assessing language proficiency. He says that this criterion refers to the structure of discourse. Novice level learner can produce isolated words or phrases, while sentence-length discourse can be the product of intermediate level learners, and those in advanced level produce paragraph-length text type.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Given the importance of speaking skill as part of language learning by EFL learners and the role of corrective feedback in language learning, this study intended to answer the following question:

Is there any significant difference between the effect of peer metalinguistic corrective feedback on elementary and intermediate EFL learners' speaking ability?

## **METHODOLOGY**

A thorough description of the participants, procedure, and instrumentation carried out for this study are presented in this section.

### ***Participants***

This study was conducted with 117 female EFL learners at Grade 3, Al-zahra High School in Kermanshah, Iran. They were selected non-randomly. They ranged from 16 to 18 years old and were at different levels of language proficiency. Based on the scores obtained from a PET test, 67 learners were chosen to be the main participants of the study and were put into the two experimental groups. Moreover, thirty other students who shared the same characteristics with the intended participants were chosen to participate in the piloting of the proficiency test (PET). It is worth mentioning that there were two raters who were EFL teachers with 7 and 10 years of English teaching experience at language schools and had MA TEFL degree.

### ***Instrumentation***

In order to obtain measurable data with which the results of the present study could be statistically analyzed, the following instruments were utilized:

**Preliminary English Test (PET):** This test which is a language proficiency test designed for people who can use everyday written and spoken English at an intermediate level was administered for homogenizing the participants at the beginning of the study. PET is one of the standardized tests among the series of Cambridge ESOL. This test is divided into three sections: Reading and Writing, Listening, and Speaking. All sections were administered in this study and each question carried one mark. The allocated time for this test was around two hours: 1 hour and 30 minutes for reading and writing, 30 minutes for listening, and 10-12 minutes for speaking.

**Text books:** The text books utilized in this study were the New Interchange books (3rd ed.) designed for elementary and intermediate students. Each book consists of 16 units. In this study, students studied the first 5 units. Although the speaking activities were the focus of this study, other skills were covered as well as their routine requirement of their course.

**Treatment:** Providing peer metalinguistic corrective feedback on learners' spoken utterances, i.e. learners were trained to provide some comments, information, or questions related to the correctness of their classmates' utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form.

**Post-test:** At the end of the treatment, the researcher used the speaking section of another PET test, with exactly the same characteristics discussed above under PET, as the speaking post-test.

**Rating scale:** The analytic rating scale of the PET speaking test was used in order to rate the participants' pre-test and post-test performances. The rating scale included five criteria each carrying three marks i.e., from 0 to 3. The criteria included grammar and vocabulary, discourse management, pronunciation, interactive communication, and global achievement.

### ***Procedure***

The following procedures were carried out to conduct the research:

First, the PET test was piloted on a sample of 30 students similar in characteristics to the target group of the study. Then, Item Analysis including Item Facility (IF) and Item Discrimination (ID) of all the items in the PET test was done and the reliability of the test was estimated. The analyses showed that there were six malfunctioning items; therefore, to make the test more reliable, those malfunctioning items were removed from the test. The reliability of the test was estimated both before and after removing the six malfunctioning items. Accordingly, the researchers considered the PET test as an appropriate instrument to homogenize the participants.

After that, the piloted PET test was administered to 117 participants of the study. It is worth mentioning that the participants' scores on the speaking section of PET were used for the pre-test. Once the administration of the proficiency test was done, the total scores obtained by the participants were calculated out of 100; so that based on the existing norms of the PET test, the researcher could choose the main participants of the study and put into the two experimental groups, each containing a distinct level of language proficiency: 35 students who obtained the

overall score between 45 and 69 were selected as the elementary group, and 32 students whose scores fell between 70 and 89 were considered as the intermediate group to take part in the study. Before the course started, the researchers held a briefing session in which the content as well as the learning activities and tasks and the objectives of the course, along with the nature of Peer Metalinguistic Corrective Feedback (PMCF) were discussed with the students. Then, the two classes underwent the same treatment which was providing PMCF on speaking errors. This was done by providing some comments, information, or questions related to the correctness of their classmates' spoken utterances, without explicitly providing the correct form. For example, when one of the students said, "I visit my friend yesterday", her partner only asked her, "what is the correct form of the verb in past tense?". In other words, she talked about her partner's utterance, without explicitly telling her where the error was, or what the correct form should be. The peer simply told her partner that the sentence was not quite right, leaving her to rethink and find the correct answer. The teacher also gave a hint whenever it was necessary.

The learners attended the classes twice a week for about four months that is to say for one semester. The allocated time for each session was one hour and forty-five minutes. Throughout the semester, besides teaching other skills, speaking activities of the text books were focused and PMCF was applied in both experimental groups.

After applying the PMCF as the treatment for one semester, an oral interview was administered to both groups. This was the speaking section of a PET test with the same characteristics of the one used for the pre-test. The students' interviews in both groups were recorded to be rated by the same raters and the same rating scale used for homogenizing the participants at the onset of the study. Finally, the pre-test and post-test speaking scores of the two groups were compared through an ANCOVA test and analyzed to test the null hypothesis of the study.

## **RESULTS**

This study was aimed to determine whether PMCF affects EFL learners' speaking ability at different levels of language proficiency to the same degree or not. In this study, the researcher deliberately manipulated one variable which is considered to be the independent variable; that is PMCF, to compare its effect on speaking achievement of intermediate and elementary EFL learners. So, the study enjoyed two-experimental-groups posttest only design.

### ***Testing the Null Hypothesis***

To test the research hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the effect of peer metalinguistic corrective feedback on elementary and intermediate EFL learners' speaking ability, the researcher had to run ANCOVA to control for the initial difference between

the two groups prior to the treatment. Firstly, the assumption of normality of the distribution had to be checked. The following table shows the descriptive statistics of the four sets of scores:

*Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the two experimental groups' scores*

	N	Minimum	Std. Deviation	Mean	Maximum
intermediate pretest scores	32	6.00	1.55543	10.8750	13.50
elementary pretest	35	4.50	1.04379	6.8857	9.00
elementary posttest	35	4.50	1.11860	7.1857	9.50
intermediate posttest	32	7.50	1.36700	11.2969	13.50
Valid N (listwise)	32				

Quite expectedly, both groups improved their speaking after the treatment which is a logical result of the treatment (intermediate: 10.87 vs. 11.29, elementary: 6.88 vs. 7.18). The following table shows the result of the normality check:

*Table 2: Tests of Normality*

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
intermediate pretest scores	.131	32	.179	.939	32	.072
elementary pretest	.144	35	.065	.968	35	.398
elementary posttest	.137	35	.093	.971	35	.485
intermediate posttest	.103	32	.200*	.965	32	.363

As depicted above, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov sig values for the four sets of scores are above .05 level of significance. The same result is observed by Shapiro, Wilk test. Hence, the four sets were reasonably normally distributed.

The second assumption concerns homogeneity of variances, which was checked through Levene's test. The following table shows the result:

*Table 3: Levene's Test of equality of error variances<sup>a</sup>*

Dependent Variable: posttest scores			
F	df1	df2	Sig.
2.152	1	65	.147

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Design: Intercept + pretest + proficiency grouping

As shown in the above table, the variance of the dependent variable was equal across groups ( $p = .147 > .05$ ). Therefore, the assumption was met.

There are two assumptions for ANCOVA that were checked: linearity of the relationship between the dependent variable and the covariate, and homogeneity of regression slopes. The following graph shows the linearity of the relationship.

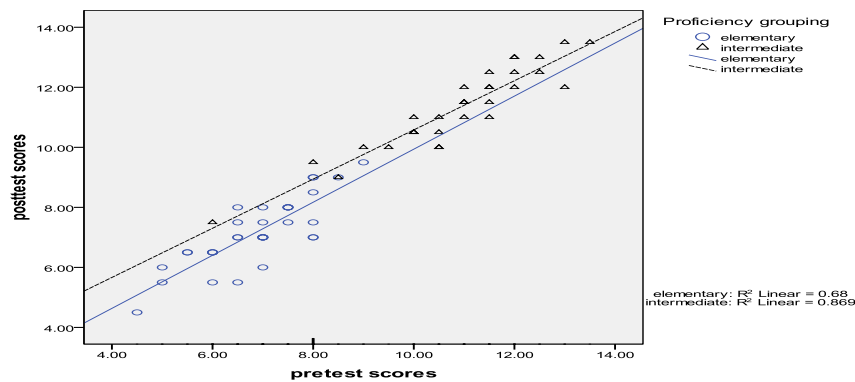


Figure 1: Scatter plot showing the relationship between the pretest and posttest scores of the two groups

As displayed above, the relationship was linear for both groups, with all the cases spread along a straight line. So, the assumption was not violated. The second assumption can be checked both visually and statistically. Shown in the above figure, the two slopes are very similar. If the two lines were noticeably different in their orientation, that might suggest an interaction between the covariate (the pretest scores) and the treatment. Therefore, the assumption is met. Homogeneity of regression slopes was checked statistically as well. The following table shows the result:

Table 4: Tests of between-subjects effects  
 Dependent Variable: posttest scores

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	361.804 <sup>a</sup>	3	120.601	358.341	.000
Intercept	4.171	1	4.171	12.392	.001
Proficiency grouping	.570	1	.570	1.693	.198
Pretest	71.921	1	71.921	213.697	.000
Proficiency grouping * pretest	.104	1	.104	.309	.580
Error	21.203	63	.337		



Total	5991.500	67			
Corrected Total	383.007	66			

As the above table manifests, the interaction between grouping variable and pretest scores turned out to be non-significant ( $F=.309$ ,  $p=.58>.05$ ). Therefore, the second assumption is met statistically. The main results of ANCOVA are reported in the following table:

Table 5: Tests of between-subjects effects

Dependent Variable: posttest scores

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	361.701 <sup>a</sup>	2	180.850	543.223	.000	.944
Intercept	4.392	1	4.392	13.191	.001	.171
Pretest	79.166	1	79.166	237.791	.000	.788
Proficiency grouping	2.845	1	2.845	8.547	.005	.118
Error	21.307	64	.333			
Total	5991.500	67				
Corrected Total	383.007	66				

a. R Squared = .944 (Adjusted R Squared = .943)

What is intended to be checked is whether the two groups were significantly different in their posttest scores. The sig value corresponding to proficiency grouping variable turned out to be less than .05 ( $F=8.54$ ,  $p=.005<.05$ ). Therefore, the difference between the two groups was significant after controlling for the pretest scores of the groups, with effect size as big as .118 implying that 11.8 percent of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable, which is a medium size according to the Cohen's (1988) guidelines (.01=small, .06=medium, .14=large). The conclusion, hence, is that the hypothesis is rejected.

In the above table, the influence of the covariate is assessed as well. The corresponding sig value came out to be  $.000<.05$ , with the effect size .788 which is a large effect. It means that 78 percent of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the covariate.

The following table shows the adjusted means on the dependent variable for each of the groups:

Table 6: Estimated marginal means

Dependent Variable: posttest scores

Proficiency grouping	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Elementary	8.787 <sup>a</sup>	.142	8.503	9.072
Intermediate	9.545 <sup>a</sup>	.153	9.240	9.850

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: pretest scores = 8.7910.

As illustrated above, the depicted means are closer after being adjusted. By virtue of the mean scores and the significance of the difference, the conclusion is that the intermediate learners benefited significantly more from the treatment than the elementary level learners.

## **CONCLUSION**

The results of this study revealed that PMCF had a positive effect on EFL learners' speaking performance. Although the results of the present study confirmed the effectiveness of PMCF, as a type of corrective feedback, researchers have conflicting ideas regarding the efficacy of feedback. This means that students can learn from their mistakes, but this depends on adopting an appropriate feedback method. Thus, a substantial amount of research has been done over the last two decades into the value of different kinds of response offered to students' errors, both in L1 and increasingly in L2 (e.g., Doughty & Varela, 1998; Long, Inagaki & Ortega, 1998; Mackey, 1999; Muranoi, 2000; Havranek & Cesnik, 2003; Ellis et al., 2006; Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

The findings of this study support the claims made by those researchers who supported the idea of providing different students with different kinds of feedback e.g., Tedick and de Gortari (1998) suggest that teachers should practice a variety of feedback techniques as different techniques might appeal to different students in terms of their needs, proficiency level, age, and classroom objectives. In other words, the findings of this study showed that students at different levels of proficiency do incorporate metalinguistic suggestions to improve their speaking skill, but intermediate students benefited more from this strategy than elementary learners. Therefore, although teachers can take advantage of applying metalinguistic feedback in their speaking classes, this procedure would be more helpful for intermediate students. The result of the present study is similar to previous studies conducted by other researchers. In 1993, Carroll and Swain conducted a study with 100 Spanish-speaking learners of English as an L2 at intermediate level. The design had five groups with group (A) receiving direct metalinguistic feedback, performing significantly better than all the other groups. Similarly, Ellis et al. (2006) found that metalinguistic corrective feedback was more effective than other types of feedback on lower-intermediate EFL learners.

According to Elexy and Dennick (2004), feedback is effective if the students can hear it, understand it, and most important, act upon it in order to improve what they do. Therefore, based on the above-mentioned results, it can be concluded that metalinguistic corrective feedback procedure is more understandable and tangible to be acted upon by learners at higher levels of proficiency.

On the other hand, one point suggested in the literature is that if students are trained and given guidance and support, the interaction in the peer response would be useful and the given comments can be constructive. As Berg (1999) stated, "training is important for successful peer response" (p. 230); otherwise, most of the peers cannot give feedback to their classmates' errors appropriately due to the lack of understanding the subject matter and their proficiency level. Due to this fact, the researcher held a briefing session for the students before the treatment and provided them with necessary guidance throughout the procedure of treatment. Although all the participants could improve their speaking ability, the findings of the present study showed that the students with higher proficiency level demonstrated greater improvement than their class counterparts. Their higher level of English proficiency might have enabled them to better internalize what they had learned in the peer training session as well as in the peer feedback sessions and to use this internalized knowledge in the post-test more successfully than those in lower level of proficiency.

Moreover, one of the main aspects of peer feedback is communication. As Han (2002) mentioned, in communicative language teaching, corrective feedback remains an important vehicle for facilitating L2 knowledge construction and enhancing knowledge use. In fact, this aspect of the research treatment might have been another reason for the students' speaking improvement. Also, it can be concluded that intermediate students benefited more from this procedure because due to their higher language proficiency, they have been more successful communicators of English, hence they benefited more from this procedure. Rabiee (2006) mentioned in her research that the 120 students participating in the study, after receiving peer feedback and teacher feedback, found peer response activities more beneficial and interesting and they believed that peer feedback interactions provided them with an opportunity to work together in small groups.

Consequently, this study can be considered as another experimental evidence for the effectiveness of providing metalinguistic corrective feedback on EFL learners' errors which is in line with some other researchers' findings.

However, what the findings of this study offered to the literature was that peers could provide metalinguistic corrective feedback on their classmates' speaking errors at higher proficiency levels more efficiently than lower levels of language proficiency. The results of this study support the ideas by Rollinson (2005) who found peer feedback a collaborative group response as a potentially rewarding option. In his research, he discovered that peer feedback can be beneficial if there are considerations of age, cultural background, class size, and interlanguage level which may significantly influence overall outcomes.

## **LIMITATIONS**

The limitations imposed to the present study were as follows:

1. The participants of this study were limited to female learners because the researcher is female and is not allowed to teach in male schools. Therefore, the results may not be generalized to male population.
2. Another limitation was that, as there were a limited number of students in the classes assigned to the researcher, random selection of the participants was not possible.
3. In order to homogenize the participants, the researcher administered the Preliminary English Test. Although it was more appropriate to have all the subsections of the test administered in one session to keep factors influencing test performance controlled, due to the time limitation in each session and also the regulations of the school, the researcher was not able to administer the entire PET package in one session and this might have influenced the examinees' performance.

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## COMPREHENSIBLE OR INCOMPREHENSIBLE LANGUAGE INPUT

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### ABSTRACT

One of the essential issues in second language acquisition which has been the focus of many studies in the last three decades is language input and its role in SLA. While the importance and the role of language input have been advocated by various theories of language learning, there has been a controversy over the extent of its importance. Krashen (1982) claimed that language acquisition can happen in formal and informal language learning settings only if language learners are directly involved in intensive exposure to a type of input which is comprehensible. In contrast to this claim, other researchers also considered comprehended input (Gass, 1988, 1997) incomprehensible input (White, 1987), and comprehensible output (Swain, 1985) to provide the necessary language input for SLA. In the same line, the present paper aims at providing an overview with regard to the importance of language input from different theories of SLA.

**KEY WORDS:** Language input, Second language acquisition, Comprehensible input, Incomprehensible input

### THE ROLE OF INPUT IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

There are many internal as well as external factors which influence SLA. Among them, the language input that learners receive in SLA is one of the external factors which plays a fundamental role. Corder (1967) is one of the pioneers among SLA researchers who underscored the importance of language input for SLA by drawing a distinction between input and intake. According to Corder, language input refers to what is available to be utilized by language learners for SLA which should be differentiated from intake which is that part of the input which is comprehended by the language learners.

The question of the role of language input in SLA has been of prime importance in much SLA research and theory. In fact, the review of the related literature on language input and SLA reveals that much work in this area of research has been concerned with the importance, the role, and the processing of linguistic input (Doughty & Long, 2003; Grady & Lee, 2011; Long, 1982; Nassaji & Fotos, 2011; Patten & Benati, 2010; among others). From this large pool of research, it

can be deduced that SLA simply cannot take place in a vacuum without considering having exposure to some type of language input (Gass, 1997).

However, while the importance and the role of language input has been advocated by various language learning theories, there has been a controversy in the field of language acquisition between those theories that attribute a small or no role to language input and those attributing it a more important role. According to Ellis (2008), theories of SLA attach different importance to the role of input in language acquisition process but they all acknowledge the need for language input. In many approaches to SLA, input is considered as being a highly essential factor while in other approaches it has been neglected to a secondary role. In fact, what has been changed in relation to the role of input in language learning from the viewpoint of various language learning theories is the conceptualization of how language input is processed by language learners (Doughty & Long, 2003).

In this relation, Ellis (2008) considered the role of language input in SLA based on behaviorist, mentalist, and interactionist theories of language learning. The behaviorists view language learning as environmentally controlled by various stimulus and feedback that language learners are exposed to as language input. Indeed, the behaviorists consider a direct relationship between input and output. They ignore the internal processing of the mind for language acquisition. For the behaviorists, language acquisition is controlled by external factors among which language input which consists of stimuli and feedback is central (Ellis, 2008). Mentalist theories also claim that input is needed for SLA but because the learners' brains are equipped to learn any language with innate knowledge, language input is merely considered as a trigger that activates the internal mechanism (Ellis, 2008). Interactionists theories of SLA highlight the importance of both input and internal language learning processing. They view language acquisition as the result of an interaction at the discourse level between the learners' mental abilities and the linguistic environment and input as the role of affecting or being affected by the nature of internal mechanisms (Ellis, 2008).

Other theories that underscore the important role of language input in SLA are the information processing and skill-acquisition theories (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). According to Nassaji and Fotos (2011), the role of language input in information processing theories is important because it is the information embedded in the input and its frequency that help language learners acquire the target language. Moreover, language input is essential in skill-acquisition theories because it forms learners' initial declarative knowledge which refers to the knowledge about the language. Other researches in spoken languages also indicate that the amount of language in the input and its frequency are indeed highly relevant for the acquisition of language (Hart & Risley, 1995).

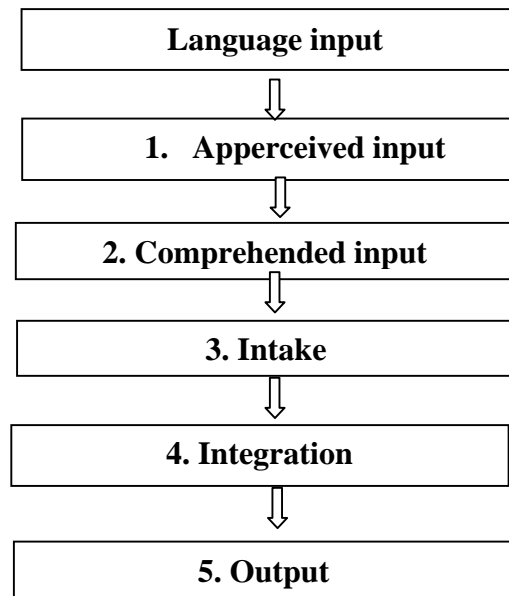
Gass (1997) also considered the role of language input in the input-interaction model, the input hypothesis, the universal grammar model, and the information processing model which treat the role of language input in different ways. In the input-interaction model, the language input that language learners receive is strengthened by the manipulation of the input through interaction which forms a basis for SLA. Within Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis, SLA takes place merely by means of comprehensible input which the language learners receive. That is, only the language input that is a little beyond the learners' language competence is useful for SLA. The third model is the universal grammar which asserts that language input is important but there must be something in addition to language input. This is the innate capacity which helps language learners acquire the second language. The last model is the information processing model in which the learner must first notice that there is something to learn. Then, the learner's

attention is drawn to those parts of the input which do not coincide with the internalized competence. In this model, language input is necessary for providing information for language construction (Gass, 1997).

The role of input in SLA has been highlighted as constituting the primary data for SLA (Long, 1982; Pica et al., 1987; VanPatten & Williams, 2007). Patten and Benati (2010) have emphasized that language input is a major source of data for language learners to construct their competence or mental representation of the language based on the examples embedded in the input. Grady et al. (2011) also highlighted the role of input in SLA by noting that in some cases of SLA there are indications that at least some features such as lexical development are directly shaped by the input. In other words, the language acquisition process is dependent upon the availability of appropriate language input.

Besides the role of language input in SLA which has been considered from the perspectives of different language learning theories and models, language input has also been given the initial role to provide the necessary data for SLA in some frameworks. Among the researchers who have studied the role of language input in SLA, Gass and Selinker (1994) proffered a framework which indicates the importance of input in SLA process.

Within the framework introduced by Gass and Selinker (1994), there are five levels for turning input into output: apperceived input, comprehended input, intake, integration, and output which account for SLA process. According to their model (Figure 1), language input refers to various sources of second language data which the learners are exposed to.



*Figure 1: Gass and Selinker's model (1994) for second language acquisition*

The first stage of the SLA model which is concerned with input utilization is called apperceived input. In this stage, some of the language input is noticed by the language learner because of some particular features such as frequency, affect, prior knowledge, and attention (Gass &

Selinker, 1994). The second stage is the comprehension of that bit of language input which is apperceived. Then, in the third stage which is a mental activity, the language input is comprehended and internalized by the language learners which refers to intake. The fourth stage is the integration of the intake with the prior knowledge to arrive at the fifth stage which is the output in the form of written or spoken language.

Likewise, Ellis (1997) introduced a basic computational model of SLA with an initial focus on language input. In this model, language learners are first exposed to language input which is then processed in two stages. First, some parts of the input that are comprehended by the language learners turn into intake. Second, some of the intake which finds its way to the long term memory is then turned into knowledge which results in spoken or written output. While Gass and Selinker's (1994) and Ellis's (1997) theoretical frameworks for SLA attach the initial importance to language input, they differ from each other in the number of stages that language input is processed in the minds of language learners.

In a nutshell, comparing the theories and theoretical frameworks for SLA based on the role of language input reveals that the importance of language input is highlighted by various theories and theoretical frameworks for SLA. In the same line, one of the most influential SLA hypothesis concerned with the role and importance of language input in SLA is the input hypothesis (Krashen, 1981, 1982, 1985). As a matter of fact, most of the studies on the type of language input and SLA have been developed to either support or criticize Krashen's input hypothesis which first claimed the important role of comprehensible input for SLA. Indeed, input hypothesis triggered numerous studies in the investigation of issues related to the type of language input for SLA (Ying, 1994).

### **KRASHEN'S INPUT HYPOTHESIS AND SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

One of the important psychologically oriented theories of language learning was established by Krashen (1981, 1982, 1985). He proposed a 'monitor model' of second language learning including five hypotheses: the input hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis. The hypothesis related to this study is the input hypothesis which is put forth.

As was discussed above, language input is considered as a highly essential factor in the SLA process. In this relation, the input hypothesis continues to make strong claims regarding the role of language input and the necessity of exposure to comprehensible input in SLA. The input hypothesis claims that for SLA to take place, language learners must have exposure to a type of second language data which they can comprehend. Krashen identified comprehensible input as "the only causative variable in SLA" (Krashen, 1981, p. 57). According to Krashen, for SLA to take place, language learners must have exposure to comprehensible input which contains language structures that are beyond their current level (I+1). Based on Krashen's claims regarding language input and SLA, the basic assumptions of the input hypothesis can be summarized as follows: (1) access to comprehensible input as a potential type of language input is the main characteristic of all cases of successful SLA, (2) greater quantities of comprehensible input seem to result in faster or better SLA, and (3) lack of access to comprehensible input results in little or no SLA.

Few researchers (Long, 1982; Ellis & He, 1999; Gass & Varonis, 1994) have advocated the input hypothesis by suggesting modified input, interactionally modified input, and modified output as

three potential sources of comprehensible input for SLA. Accordingly, modified input refers to a type of language input which has been modified or simplified in some ways before the language learners are exposed to it, interactionally modified input originates from input modification that occurs when language learners experience difficulty comprehending a message in interaction with interlocutors, and modified output refers to language learners' efforts to modify their output to make it more comprehensible to the interlocutor (Long, 1996).

Another aspect of the input hypothesis in relation to acquiring the language in informal setting (out of the classroom environment) is the importance of direct exposure to a source of language input. According to Krashen (1981), language acquisition can take place in informal environment if language learners are directly involved in intensive exposure to language input. Later, it will be discussed that this aspect of the input hypothesis which emphasizes the necessity of exposure to language input for language learning to occur has also been emphasized by Krashen's critics. Nevertheless, empirical evidence related to the sources of language input, quality, and quantity of the input has not been provided neither by Krashen nor his critics.

### **CRITIQUES OF THE INPUT HYPOTHESIS**

Despite the significant influence that the input hypothesis has had on the researches around the role of language input in SLA, it has received strong criticisms from several researchers.

Serious concerns regarding the input hypothesis were expressed by McLaughlin (1987). McLaughlin claimed that the concept of a learner's level is extremely difficult to define which limits the application of this rule in the classroom since individual differences come into play when determining the learners' current levels. In fact, determining the current level of each language learner and providing  $i+1$  language input for each of them separately in the classroom seems to be very difficult to fulfill. Krashen did not provide solutions regarding this issue. There are also some problems regarding how to provide language learners with language input which matches their  $i+1$  level.

The input hypothesis has also been challenged by many researchers particularly because it has made a large number of claims about the type and the qualitative aspect of the necessary language input in a wide array of SLA phenomena without providing solid empirical evidence. In other words, because Krashen's input hypothesis limits SLA to merely exposure to comprehensible input, the criticisms directed at the input hypothesis are mainly around the nature and the type of language input that can constitute the primary data for SLA. In fact, although second language researchers and the critics of Krashen's input hypothesis highlight the important role of input in SLA and agree on the fact that language input is a necessary ingredient in SLA (Salaberry, 2003), they claim that SLA is not achieved merely through comprehensible input. Other types of language input such as incomprehensible input, comprehended input, and



comprehensible output are also considered to enhance the process of SLA through providing the necessary input.

White (1987) considered the necessary language input which constitutes the primary data for SLA to be either comprehensible or incomprehensible. In his incomprehensible input hypothesis, White underscored the point that it is the input incomprehensibility or comprehension difficulties which can provide important negative feedback to the learner that is necessary for the constitution of SLA. When language learners encounter language input that is incomprehensible because, for example, their inter-language rules cannot analyze a particular second language structure, they have to modify those inter-language rules to understand the structure (White, 1987). In this way, the incomprehensible input enhances the process of SLA. It can be concluded from what White (1987) has put forth in relation to comprehensible or incomprehensible input that when an aspect of the language input is comprehensible, the acquisition of the missing structures would not occur. In fact, the incomprehensibility of some aspects of the given language input to the language learners draws their attention to specific features to be acquired.

Gass (1988, 1997) also emphasized that crucial importance should be given to the concept of comprehended input rather than comprehensible input. According to Gass, only that part of the language input which is comprehended is involved in the SLA process. In other words, the primary language input which is necessary for SLA may be beyond the boundaries of comprehensible input. In the same line and as was discussed earlier, in Gass and Selinker's (1997) and Ellis's (1994) theoretical models for SLA, language input which is apperceived by the language learners and then is turned into comprehended input and intake is not limited merely to language data (input) which should necessarily be comprehensible. Indeed, language learners are exposed to a body of second language input which may or may not be within the range of  $I+1$ . Out of this initial body of language input, some of the input is noticed by the language learners because of frequency, affect, prior knowledge, and attention (Gass & Selinker, 1997). Hence, the qualitative aspect of language input in Gass and Selinker's (1997) and Ellis's (1994) theoretical models for SLA is not limited to language input that is necessarily at the language learners'  $i+1$  current language proficiency level.

In addition to incomprehensible input and comprehended input, Swain (1985) also argued in her comprehensible output hypothesis that in addition to comprehensible input, comprehensible output can also provide the necessary data for SLA. The comprehensible output hypothesis states that language learning takes place when the language learner faces a gap in his/her linguistic knowledge of the second language. By noticing this gap, the language learner tries to modify his/her output. This modification of output may end in learning a new aspect of the language which has not been acquired yet. Although Swain does not claim that comprehensible output is solely responsible for all or even most parts of the language acquisition, she highlights the point that under some conditions, comprehensible output facilitates SLA in ways that it can provide the necessary input. As a matter of fact, although Swain (1985) acknowledged that without comprehensible input language learners are not able to make connections between forms and meanings for SLA development, she provides evidence of the immersion programs in which comprehensible input alone does not lead to SLA. This view contrasts sharply with Krashen's input hypothesis where the role of production, or output, is minimized.

The input hypothesis maintains that increased comprehensible input will result in more language acquisition, and that increased output will not. However, no clear empirical evidence has been provided for this assumption. In this regard, Romeo (2000) showed support to Swain's

comprehensible output hypothesis when he indicated that output of some kind is seen as a necessary phase in language acquisition. On the one hand, teachers need students' output in order to be able to judge their progress and adapt future materials to their needs. On the other hand, learners need the opportunity to use the second language because when faced with communication failure, they are forced to make their output more precise. These arguments suggest that if comprehensible input is necessary, then so is comprehensible output which can be utilized as a source of input in SLA process. This view goes against Krashen's input hypothesis.

To come to the point, what can be concluded and summarized from Krashen's input hypothesis and his critiques' concerns is that the importance of language input for SLA is not questioned and some type of language input is required for SLA. Accordingly, in addition to modified input, interactionally modified input, and modified output which are considered as various types of comprehensible input for SLA, comprehended input, incomprehensible input, and comprehensible output can also provide the necessary language input for SLA. Hence, without debating on the right or wrong of Krashen's theory which is beyond the scope of this study, the premise taken is that some types of language input is necessary for the study without delving into the psychological aspects of the language input.

## **CONCLUSION**

There are many internal as well as external factors which influence SLA. Among them, the language input that learners receive in SLA is one of the external factors which plays a fundamental role. However, according to Ellis (2008), although SLA theories attach different importance to the role of language input in language acquisition, they all acknowledge the need for language input.

In view of the above, the present paper was set to provide an overview regarding the role of language input in SLA. As it is concluded, SLA, cannot simply take place in vacuum without having exposure to some sort of language input. While comprehensible input might be the best type of language input for the low level language learners, language learners with higher language proficiency levels may best benefit from incomprehensible language input.

In a nutshell, the controversial issues in relation to language input are the type and the amount (quantity) of language input necessary for SLA which have also been highlighted by Gass (1997). As a matter of fact, although the importance of input in SLA has been emphasized by the majority of the researchers, little has also been written about the type and amount of language input for SLA. In fact, the studies on the role and importance of language input in SLA fall short of providing evidence of the sources of language input which can provide the necessary language input for SLA.

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## **DEVELOPING ESL STUDENTS' ACCENTS: AMERICAN ENGLISH VS. BRITISH ENGLISH**

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### **ABSTRACT**

For many years, English as a Second language (ESL) students have been subject to different puzzling audio books and software with American and British English accents on one hand, and a variety of the teachers' non-native and native-like accents inside the classrooms on the other. The paper aims at investigating the relationship between General American accent defined by Shitara (1993) as the most "neutral" accent of American English which is free of regional characteristics and Received Pronunciation (RP) stated by Wells (2008) as the standard British English accent and pinpointing the extent of ESL students' tendency to one of the two mentioned accents in order to help teachers select the most appropriate methods for teaching listening and speaking in ESL classrooms. To fulfill these purposes, sixty freshmen undertaking a full-course of study in Lang. Lab. 2 in Islamic Azad University of Dezful were selected and through a standard proficiency test derived from NTC's TOEFL Test, it was observed that the students were homogeneous. Then, they were given a common text to recite so that their tendency to one of the two Standard English accents could be realized. Afterward, the specific sounds features of General American and RP were elicited and the students' recordings were rated based on the articulation of those features. Based on the frequency, One sample T-test and the Mean Ranks posed by Hatch and Farhady (1982), it was observed that the students were more capable of articulating American features rather than the British ones. Hence, the null hypothesis which stated "There is no relationship between American and British English accents." was rejected, and the first hypothesis was verified. That is, the ESL students are more talented to utilize American English accent than the British English accent. The pedagogical implications of the present study are 1) recognizing the ESL students' tendency to American English accent inherited from the students' past experience including their former instructors, course books and other materials; 2) providing the students with an academic atmosphere wherein American English system including the related course books, audio and visual materials and efficient instructors is dominant.

**KEY WORDS:** General American, British English, Received Pronunciation.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The ESL students get, more or less, involved in some puzzling issues rooted in the differences between American and British English accents. This is exacerbated by their exposition to a whole

variety of written literature in the forms of textbooks and software recommended by their teachers. Likewise, the teachers' unreal and non-native accents would not be helpful either. In other words, unwitting tendency of teachers to intermingle the two accents is bound to yield a non-native model as a result. There are various ways via which one can go through with tackling the issue. One is to take an informative approach by enlightening ESL students about the appropriateness of each accent on the basis of his or her academic ability and other intrinsic considerations.

### ***The Importance of Research***

Recognition and proper understanding of the tendency of ESL students to one of the two main English accents (American English and British English) is crucial for identifying the most appropriate textbooks and other learning materials to lay the foundation for effective learning. This has to be complemented by provision of service from experienced and knowledgeable teachers having a native-like pronunciation and accent. The effective performance of such teachers is likely to be instrumental in motivating the learners to follow a set pronunciation pattern that is as closed to a native (near-native) accent as the circumstances allow. By the same token, it might help enhance the learning efficiency and learning curve by adjusting the whole activities to suit the ESL students' accent preference. Such an approach is thought to make a crucial psychological impact on the ESL students which is expected to enhance their academic performance and interests.

### ***Objectives***

To assess the quality of present teaching method for the ESL students' vis-à-vis the use of American English and British English accents in the classrooms.

To consider the tendencies of the ESL students' in using one or the other accent for the best result.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

According to Lippi-Green (1997, pp.12, 251-285), when a group defines a standard pronunciation, speakers who deviate from it are often said to "speak with an accent". However, everyone speaks with an accent. Accents such as BBC English or General American or Standard American may sometimes be erroneously designated in their countries of origin as "accentless" to indicate that they offer no obvious clue to the speaker's regional or social background. Based on Matsuda (1991, pp.100, 1329-1407), People from the United States would "speak with an accent" from the point of view of an Australian, and vice versa. Furthermore, Morley (1996, pp. 140-160) believes that many teachers of English as a second language neglect to teach speech/pronunciation. Many adult and near-adult learners of second languages have unintelligible speech patterns that may interfere with their education, profession, and social interactions. Inadequate instruction in speech/pronunciation can result in a complete breakdown in communication.

Crawford (2008) states that English has been given official status by 28 of the 50 state governments. The use of English in the United States was a result of English colonization. The first wave of English-speaking settlers arrived in North America in the 17th century. Since then,



American English has been influenced by the languages of the Native American population, the languages of European and non-European colonists, immigrants and neighbors, and the languages of slaves from West Africa. According to Safer (2006), General American is the accent typically taught to people learning English as a second language in the United States, as well as outside the country to anyone who wishes to learn "American English," although in much of Asia and some other places ESL teachers are strongly encouraged to teach American English no matter their own origins or accents.

Based on Tolkien (1955), English is a West Germanic language originated from the Anglo-Frisian dialects brought to Britain by Germanic settlers from various parts of what is now northwest Germany and the northern Netherlands. The resident population at this time was generally speaking Brythonic—the insular variety of continental Celtic which was influenced by occupation by the Romans. This group of languages (Welsh, Cornish, Cumbric) cohabited alongside English into the modern period, but due to their remoteness from the Germanic languages, influence on English was notably limited. Initially, Old English was a diverse group of dialects, reflecting the varied origins of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms of England.

Based on Fowler (1996), the form of English most commonly associated with the upper class in the southern counties of England is called Received Pronunciation (RP). It derives from a mixture of the Midland and Southern dialects which were spoken in London in the early modern period and is frequently used as a model for teaching English to foreign learners. It may also be referred to as "the Queen's (or King's) English", "Public School English", or "BBC English" offered by Roach (2006) as this was originally the form of English used on radio and television, although a wider variety of accents can be heard these days.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to fulfill the purpose of this study which is to consider the extent of the ESL students' tendencies to one of the two major English accents (American English and British English), one is expected to focus on the following questions:

Are there any relationships between American English and British English accents?

Is American English accent more widespread than British English accent among ESL students?

## HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis 1: ESL students are more talented to utilize American English accent than British English accent.

Null Hypothesis: There is no relationship between American English accent and British English accent.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

The investigation of the ESL students' attraction to American or British English accent was intended for 60 typical intakes in Islamic Azad University, Dezful in Iran, undertaking a full-course of study in Lang. Lab. 2. The criterion for selecting this population sample was a

proficiency test consisting of grammar, reading comprehension and vocabulary in English. Sixty students graduated from high school and entered the university as freshmen were selected for this study. Each student was told separately to recite a short given text based on what they had learnt earlier. The selected sample was drawn from the intakes without a prior knowledge of the investigation. This meant performing lectures and rehearsals with a minimum distraction. The researcher who was simultaneously acting as a teacher recorded the whole process. This meant recording of recitation and the voices to draw as authentic picture of the reality as possible.

### ***Instruments***

To use necessary items for proficiency test, 20 vocabulary questions 20 grammatical items and 10 questions on reading comprehension were elicited from NTC'S Practice for the TOEFL provided by Broukal and Nolan-Woods (1997) . It is to be noted that due to the limitations of the study which might have affected the result of the study, the mentioned sample TOEFL test was not verified in terms of reliability. All together, the proficiency test consisting of 50 questions, each of which had a two- point mark with the total of 100 points. Regarding the results of the proficiency test on 60 students, the Mean was 83.45. The Minimum and maximum score ranged between 72 and 97 respectively. Likewise, the Mode was equal to 84, the Standard Deviation 6.82, and the Kurtosis offered by Kurtz (1983), referring to the degree to which scores congregate in the tails of the distribution, was - 0.784. Therefore, homogeneity and normal distribution were apparently observed among the participants' scores and the presented data.

### ***Procedure***

Based on Rogers (2000), the term accent is used to refer solely to *phonetic* aspects of a dialect. Likewise, an accent is shaped by the phonetic ability to produce certain sounds and features and the inability to produce certain sounds due to the fact that they are not present in the speakers' native language phonetic inventory (Ben Said, 2006). Hence, having observed the homogeneity existing among the selected subjects' proficiency levels, the researcher provided them with a short text so that he could check the phonetic features articulated by them on the basis of what they had acquired subconsciously from their instructors, course books and related audio and visual materials. It should be stipulated that the way he asked them to rehearse the text was expected to be as implicit and authentic as possible. In other words, students were not allowed to access the hints about how to shift their accents to one of the two mentioned Standard English accents while articulating the given text based on their own accents. The suggested text included the words having distinctive speech sounds regarding American and British English accents. Hence, the articulation of speech sounds could determine the students' tendency to one of the two mentioned accents. According to Shitara (1993), General American is a notional accent of American English perceived by Americans to be the most "neutral" and free of regional characteristics and to lack certain non-standard features. Based on her findings, General American includes nine phonetic features: 1) rhotic which maintaining the coda [r] in words like pearl, car, and court; 2) flapping which involves a rapid movement of the tongue tip from a retracted vertical position to a horizontal position, during which the tongue tip brushes the alveolar ridge regarding /t/ and /d/ ; 3) reduction of vowel contrasts before historic /r/; 4) yod dropping that is the elision of the sound [j] in most varieties of English like juice, chew, rude, blue; 5) Split which has to do with /ɔr/ sound in some words like origin, Florida, horrible, quarrel, warren; 6) Daniel Jones's /oʊ/ in some words like go, so, know; 7) h-dropping in some

words like head or horse; 8) Mary-marry-merry merger; 9) father-bother merger. Conversely, Received Pronunciation (RP) which was defined by Wells (2008) as the standard accent of Standard English in England, with a relationship to regional accents similar to the relationship in other European languages between their standard varieties and their regional forms includes twelve phonetic features: 1) lot-cloth split in words like *often* (the Queen's speech to President Sarkozy, 2008); 2) horse-hoarse distinction with an extra diphthong /ɔə/ appearing in words like hoarse, force, and pour offered by Wright (1905); 3) "GOAT" vowel with the transcription /əʊ/ presented by Wells (1997) instead of Daniel Jones's /oʊ/, reflecting a change in pronunciation since the beginning of the century; 4) foot-strut split in pairs like put/putt presented by Wells (1982); 5) non-rhotic presented by Wells (1982); 6) non-h-dropping offered by Wells (1982); 7) no weak vowel merger pinpointed by Wells (1982); 8) no Mary-marry-merry merger presented by Wells (1982); 9) no father-bother merger mentioned by Roca and Johnson (1999); 10) non-yod-dropping presented by Wells (1982); 11) no flapping offered by Wise (1957); 12) /rV/ in some words like origin, Florida, horrible, quarrel, warren, borrow, tomorrow, sorry and sorrow provided by Pointon (2010). In addition to the mentioned differences between the two standard types of English accents, there are still other differences in accordance with the articulation of some vocabulary items in American and British English accents some of which were used in the text given to the students. The pronunciation of some words like *laboratory*, *castle* offered by Wise (1957) and *going to* are considered as such. After finding the mentioned American and British features from the students' recordings, the researcher was reported to determine a scale for scoring those phonetic features and then to insert them in a list. Accordingly, their recordings were rated on the basis of PTE Academic Score Guide (2012, p.21) in such a way that 2 indicated **Satisfactory**, 1 represented **Average**, and 0 meant **Weak**. Since all participants were non-native and their recordings were not like those of the native or near native speakers, no more scores could be allocated to each uttered speech sound feature. Based on the rated *General American* speech sounds features among 60 students, 51 students had satisfactory accents which equaled 85 percent; 4 participants' recordings were average which equaled 6.7 percent, and 5 students had weak accents comprising 8.3 per cent. Regarding the General American speech sound features, they were reported to be satisfactory except "laboratory" and "gonna". In other words, the students were capable of articulating most of the General American speech sounds. "Laboratory" was the most frequent variable uttered in the average level, and "gonna" had the maximum frequency for weak level.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Having finished all calculations, the researcher was expected to analyze and interpret the results of each calculation deliberately. It is to be noted that 60 freshmen studying *Lang. Lab 2* were selected so that their existing accents and tendencies could be checked separately. In order to show homogeneity among the participants, the researcher held a proficiency test designating the students' general knowledge. Then, they were given a common text to rehearse as authentically as possible so that their accents could be analyzed. Having recorded their voices separately, the researcher was recommended to utilize an analytic scale comprising three levels each of which was shown through a specific score for scoring General American and Received Pronunciation specific sound features. Accordingly, the satisfactory level was shown by 2, Average level by 1 and Weak level was illustrated by 0. Afterwards, the audios were rated based on the mentioned scale by the researcher. In order to see if the mean of each General American speech sound feature was satisfactory, the researcher was expected to utilize a One-sample T-test posed by Hatch and Farhady (1982). Likewise, *Daniel Jones's* /ou/, *father-bother-merger*, *castle* and *can't* had the maximum mean, 1.83, which was so close to satisfactory level among all

General American specific features. So it could be realized that the students were more efficient in applying these speech sounds features, but not in uttering “gonna” whose mean was 0.33. Similarly, in order to hold a One-sample T-test, he was supposed to get the means related to the variables. It was observed that all variables were more than average and close to satisfactory level except for “gonna” since  $t$  was positive for each variable except “gonna”. It is to be noted that  $\alpha=0.05$  and sig. was lower than 0.05 for each variable, so the mean was more than 1 for each variable. In accordance with the rated **RP British** speech sounds among the same students, just 5 students had satisfactory accents including 8.3 per cent, and 55 participants’ recorded accents were weak which equaled 91.7 per cent. No one’s accent was average. Regarding the above figure, most RP speech sound features were reported to have weak frequency. In other words, the students were not capable of uttering most of the RP speech sounds. With regard to the mentioned data, the means of all features, except “no flapping” were close to 0.5 or lower than 0.5 which represented almost weak level. So it could be deciphered that students were not capable of articulating RP British speech sounds features properly. Moreover, in order to hold a One-sample T-test, the researcher was committed to get the means related to the mentioned variables. It was noticed that all variables were lower than average and close to weak level. It is to be noted that  $\alpha=0.05$  and sig. was lower than 0.05 for each variable, so the mean was lower than 1 for each variable. In addition, since  $t$  was negative in each variable, it was realized that the variables were weak. In order to prove that there is a meaningful difference between the means of General American and RP English specific speech sounds features ranks, the researcher was suggested to use Friedman test. It should be stipulated that the mean of each speech sound feature rank would determine the priority of the mentioned feature to other speech sound features. That is, the higher the mean of each rank was, the superior it could be considered to other features. Accordingly, among all General American and RP specific phonetic features, the *Mean Rank* of *can’t* (*AmE*) was the highest, 25.97, and it meant that the rater had been more satisfied with the articulation of this specific feature than that of other features. Likewise, the *Mean Rank* of *laboratory* (*BrE*) was the lowest, 10.67. So it meant that the students were not capable of uttering this feature appropriately, and the rater was dissatisfied with its articulation among all participants rather than the articulation of other speech sounds. In addition, *gonna* had the lowest *Mean Rank* among all General American phonetic features. It meant that the rater was dissatisfied with its articulation, and the participants were not able to utter this feature. Furthermore, the *Mean Rank* of *no flapping* was the highest among all RP specific speech sounds features. Concerning the data resulted from Friedman test, as  $\alpha=0.05$  and Sig. was lower than 0.05 for the comparison of Mean Ranks related to General American English features, RP British English features and also the Mean Ranks of all mentioned American and British features, it was realized that the Mean Ranks were not equal. In other words, there was a meaningful difference among the Mean Ranks of General American features; similarly, there was a meaningful difference among the Mean Ranks of RP features. In addition, there was a meaningful difference between the Mean Ranks of General American and RP phonetic features.

Table 1: General American and RP Features Ranking by Friedman test

Test Statistics American		Test Statistics British		Test Statistics Total	
N	60		60		60
Chi-Square	339.002		190.155		1123

Df	15	17	33
Asymp. Sig.	0.001	0.001	0.001

To show the meaningful difference between the Mean Ranks of General American and RP specific features, the researcher applied a Mann-Whitney test presented by Fay et al (2010), and then he utilized a T-test by all General American and RP specific features.

*Table 2: General American and RP Features Mean Ranks*

Ranks				
	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Accent	General AmE	60	85.33	5120.00
	RP	60	35.67	2140.00
	Total	120		

The above table indicates that the Mean Rank of General American accent equals 85.33 which is higher than that of RP accent which equals 35.67. Hence, the students' American accent efficiency has been superior to their British accent capability.

*Table 3: Illustrating the Meaningful Difference Between the Mean Ranks of General American and RP Using Mann-Whitney Test*

Test Statistics	
	Accent
Mann-Whitney U	310.00
Wilcoxon W	2140.00
Z	-8.89
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001

Based on the above table, as  $\alpha=0.05$  and Sig., 0.001, is lower than 0.05, it can be realized that the students' articulation of American and British accents has not been the same, and since the Mean Rank of General American specific phonetic features is higher than that of RP features, it can be stated that their American English accent efficiency seems more satisfactory in comparison with their British English accent.

*Table 4: Descriptive Data for T-test*

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Accent.sum	American	60	25.3333	7.75617	1.00132
	British	60	4.5500	8.97534	1.15871

*Table 5: Consideration of American and British English Accents Mean Ranks Equality Based on a T-test*

		T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Accent	Equal variances assumed	13.571	118	0.001	17.75070	23.81596



The above table shows that the variances of American and British English accents are equal, and based on that, the mentioned T-test has been implemented. As  $\alpha=0.05$  and Sig. is lower than 0.05, the means of the two accents cannot be equal, and, of course, there is a meaningful difference between them. Apparently, the mean of American accent is higher than that of British one. So the students' American English accent is reported to be stronger than their British English accent.

To be aware of the certainty of the collected data and the rated recordings, the researcher was expected to let another interrater score the audios on the basis of the presented analytic scale for the recorded voices. In accordance with the rated **General American** speech sounds features among 60 students by the second rater, 49 students had satisfactory accents which equaled 81.7 percent; 5 participants' recordings were average which equaled 8.3 percent, and 6 students had weak accents comprising 10.0 per cent. Based on this figure, all General American speech sounds features were satisfactory except "laboratory" and "gonna". As a matter of fact, the students were capable of uttering many General American speech sounds. "laboratory" was the most frequent variable articulated in the average level, and "gonna" had the weakest frequency level. In order to see if the mean of each General American speech sound feature was satisfactory, the researcher was expected to utilize a One-sample T-test. Apparently, *Daniel Jone's /ou/*, *father-bother-merger*, *castle* and *can't* had the maximum mean, 1.80, which was so close to satisfactory level among all General American specific features. So it was realized that the students were more efficient in applying these speech sounds features, but not in uttering "gonna" whose mean was 0.33. Similarly, in order to hold a One-sample T-test, he was supposed to get the means related to the variables. It could be observed that all variables were more than average and close to satisfactory level except for "gonna" since  $t$  was positive for each variable except "gonna". It is to be noted that  $\alpha=0.05$  and sig. was lower than 0.05 for each variable, so the mean was more than 1 for each variable. In accordance with the rated **RP British** speech sounds by the second rater among the same students, just 5 students had satisfactory accents including 8.3 per cent, and 55 participants' recorded accents were weak which equaled 91.7 per cent. No one had an average accent. Most RP speech sound features were reported to have weak frequency. In other words, the students were not capable of uttering most of the RP speech sounds. According to the mentioned data, the means of all features, except "no flapping", "non-rhotic" and "travel" were close to 0.5 or lower than 0.5 which represented almost the weak level. So it was observed that students were not able to articulate RP British speech sounds features properly. In order to hold a One-sample T-test, the second interrater was committed to get the means related to the mentioned variables. Based on the One-sample T-test, all variables were lower than average and close to weak level. It is to be noted that  $\alpha=0.05$  and sig. was lower than 0.05 for each variable, so the mean was lower than 1 for each variable. In addition, since  $t$  was negative in each variable, it could be realized that the variables were weak.

To elucidate that there is a meaningful difference between the means of General American and RP English specific speech sounds features ranks, the second interrater was recommended to use Friedman test. It is to be noted that the mean of each speech sound feature rank determined the priority of the mentioned feature to other speech sound features. Accordingly, among all General American and RP specific phonetic features, the *Mean Rank* of *Daniel Jone's /ou/* and *father-bother merger* was the highest, 25.98, and it means that the second rater was more satisfied with the utterance of this specific feature than that of other features. In addition, the *Mean Rank* of



laboratory (*BrE*) was the lowest, 10.67. So it meant that the students were not capable of uttering this feature appropriately, and the rater was dissatisfied with its articulation among all participants rather than the articulation of other speech sounds. In addition, *gonna* had the lowest *Mean Rank* among all General American phonetic features. It meant that the rater had been dissatisfied with its articulation, and the participants were unable to utter this feature. Furthermore, the *Mean Rank* of *no flapping* was the highest among all RP specific speech sounds features. Concerning the following table resulted from Friedman test, as  $\alpha=0.05$  and Sig. was lower than 0.05 for the comparison of Mean Ranks related to General American English features, RP British English features and also the Mean Ranks of all mentioned American and British features, it could be grasped that the Mean Ranks were not equal. It meant that there was a meaningful difference among the Mean Ranks of General American features; besides, there was a meaningful difference among the Mean Ranks of RP features. In addition, there was a meaningful difference between the Mean Ranks of General American and RP phonetic features.

Table 6: General American and RP Features Ranking by Friedman test

Test Statistics American		Test Statistics British	Test Statistics Total
N	60	60	60
Chi-Square	300.217	213.745	1147
Df	15	17	33
Asymp. Sig.	0.001	0.001	0.001

To reveal the meaningful difference between the Mean Ranks of General American and RP specific features, the second interrater applied a Mann-Whitney test and a T-test including General American and RP specific features.

Table 7: General American and RP Features Mean Rank

Ranks				
	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Accent	General AmE	60	84.79	5087.50
	RP	60	36.21	2172.50
	Total	120		

It was evident that the Mean Rank of General American accent equaled 84.79 which was higher than that of RP accent which equaled 36.21. Hence, the students' American accent efficiency seemed better than their British accent capability.

Table 8: Representing the Meaningful Difference Between the Mean Ranks of General American and RP Using Mann-Whitney Test

Test Statistics	
	Accent
Mann-Whitney U	342.500
Wilcoxon W	2172.500
Z	-8.676
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001

Concerning the above table, as  $\alpha=0.05$  and Sig., 0.001, was lower than 0.05, it should be stated that the students' American and British accents were not identical, and since that the Mean Rank of General American specific phonetic features was higher than that of RP features, it could be stated that their American English accent efficiency was more satisfactory rather than their British English accent.

*Table 9: Descriptive Data for T-test*

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Accent.sum	American	60	24.4000	8.26715	1.06728
	British	60	6.4500	8.77096	1.13233

*Table 10: Consideration of American and British English Accents Mean Ranks Equality Based on a T-test*

					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Lower	Upper
Accent	Equal variances assumed	11.536	118	0.001	14.868	21.031

The above table shows that the variances of American and British English accents are equal, and based on that, the mentioned T-test was implemented. As  $\alpha=0.05$  and Sig. was lower than 0.05, the means of the two accents could not be equal, and, of course, there was a meaningful difference between them. The mean of American accent was higher than that of British one. So the students' American English was better than their British English accent.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Whatever was discussed up to now, was the consideration of the students' tendency to one of the two standard English accents. Needless to say that the students' interest to American or British English accent will be determined by checking General American and RP specific phonetic features in each participant's recording. In accordance with General American, it should be considered as a notional accent of American English perceived by Americans to be the most "neutral" and free of regional characteristics and to lack certain non-standard features. RP, conversely, is the standard accent of Standard English in England, with a relationship to regional accents similar to the relationship in other European languages between their standard varieties and their regional forms. Likewise, according to the null hypothesis, no relationship exists between American English accent and British English accent, and regarding H1, ESL students are more talented to utilize the American English accent than the British English one. In order to start the survey, the researcher was expected to let the participants rehearse a common text with no hint by the teacher. To actualize it, sixty freshmen who were in the same level were selected, and through a common proficiency test, it was proved that the students' proficiency levels were almost the same. Then, they were given a common text to recite so that their tendency to one of the two Standard English accents could be realized. According to General American as one of the two Standard English accents, some of its specific sounds features were elicited and the students' recordings were rated based on the articulation of those features. Similarly, the specific sound features related to RP were scored. Based on the frequency, One sample T-test and the Mean

Ranks, it was observed that the students were more capable of articulating American features rather than the British ones. Regarding the above result, it can be concluded that the ESL students are more talented to utilize American English accent than British English accent.

The researcher could realize the ESL students' tendency to one of the two Standard English accents, American English, which was inherited from the students' past experience including their former instructors, course books and other materials. However, there have been some pitfalls in performing the mentioned accent. In other words, the students couldn't implement well-formed American English accent absolutely due to the fact that remained a few unsolved problems such as the articulation of *gonna* or *laboratory* that should be taken account. Accordingly, the students are recommended to profit by an educational system on the basis of their tendency and current efficiency of applying American English accent, particularly, while dealing with listening and speaking skills. In other words, they are supposed to be provided with an academic atmosphere wherein American English system is dominant. If so, the course books, audio and visual materials will be selected based on their taste, American English, and they benefit from those instructors who are quite efficient in applying American English system appropriately and have a near American English accents while rehearsing different texts as ideal models. Even those teachers who are not capable of articulating a proper American English accent can be trained specifically to prepare for attending the mentioned synapses. No doubt, being exposed to such an ideal situation, students will never intermingle the accents since there is a united educational system which has been designed on the basis of their interest and real ability. Likewise, they will abide by this system automatically in such a way that they can speak like natively American speakers.

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# THE INVESTIGATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE ADOPTION OF ICTS AMONG ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN ESL CONTEXT

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## ABSTRACT

As language and technology are two major focuses of reform in education, teachers of English language have to cope with the challenge of technological and pedagogical shifts occurring in the teaching profession. Extracted from his PhD thesis the purpose of the researcher in the present study is to investigate the factors affecting the adoption of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) among English teachers in English as a Second Language (ESL) context by means of a quantitative study. First, using a validated and reliable questionnaire consolidated and inspired by other researches done in the field, the researcher elicited the point of view of 217 English teachers about the mentioned factors. The data collected from the questionnaire was entered into SPSS software for further analysis. One sample t-test, multiple regression and ANOVA were used for analysis and testing of the hypotheses. The results demonstrated that three factors proposed by the researcher were confirmed as active on the adoption of ICTs among teachers. The priority of the factors based on their views was: perceived usefulness, ICT knowledge to use and support language teaching and learning, respectively. Finally, based on the findings of the study and other reviewed guidelines, the researcher proposed some useful suggestions for English teachers and English Language Teaching (ELT) policy makers in the context to implement ICT tools in English classes.

**KEYWORDS:** Information and Communication Technology, English Teaching, ICT Adoption

## INTRODUCTION

English Language Teaching (ELT) is an area that has changed over the years, moving from a very teacher - centered approaches to learner-centered ones (Richards, 1985). This indicates that the teacher should create a situation in the class where the teacher is like a facilitator, not a director. The teacher should act as a resource person in order to meet the expectations of individual learner styles using a variety of methods which suit different personality types, socio-economic backgrounds, proficiency levels, etc. Kaushik and Bajwa (2009) mention that teachers need to make learners link classroom instruction with their home environment. Somewhere else Sindkhedkar (2012) states that the objective of teaching English in India should not be 'producing bookworms' or 'linguistic robots'. Sarwal (2011) states that in India, the greatest challenge in the field of English teaching remains the teaching of language skills. He adds that after studying English for 12-15 years, the students fail to correctly express themselves in both writing and speech. He identified several major problems facing English classes: large classes, an

examination system that promotes product-oriented learning, lack of learner-centered teaching, non-use of **multimedia** in English classes, etc. To begin with, what is important is to motivate the students by creating awareness among them regarding the importance of English and then gradually helping the students to achieve their goals. The basic objective should thus be to make the students independent. It has rightly been said, if you give an individual a fish you feed him for a day, but, if you teach him to fish you feed him for life. It is up to the teacher to make the student realize that by gaining competence in English he will hold the master-key to success in the contemporary world. In other words, learning a second language is not looked at as an urgent requirement unless the learners have strong motivating factors (Tilfarlioglu & Öztürk, 2007). In close relationship with this aspect of learner psychology is the development of revolutionary ideas in the English language teaching profession as it moves from traditional methods towards more humanistic methods like CLT and integrative approach to language teaching and blended teaching; in an attempt to illustrate the movement of English teaching, Warschauer (2002) made a table in which the movement is shown very well as it starts from behaviorist Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and moves towards integrative CALL. As is shown in the behaviorist CALL, the mainframe computers were used for drill making, repetition, etc and this can be named as instructional technologies. In, the next era of communicative CALL, they were used to create some offline software and programmes to present the material for the learners communicatively which can be called information technologies. And the last column in the Table belongs to integrative CALL in which the online programmes and software are at the service of learners for interaction so that all skills are integrated which is related to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Drills, practices, repetitions and feedback are all among the benefits for mainframe computers whereas tasks and inferential practices are for micro computers; and, finally, social contexts and real materials which are available on the net and computers. ELT as an area has evolved a great deal over the years, moving from teacher-centered approaches to learner-centered ones (Richards, 1985). ELT projects have been introduced throughout different parts of the world (Markee, 1997). Innovations have brought about changes in materials such as the supplementary materials, the self-study materials, the authentic materials, etc and technology devices such as language laboratories, tape recorders, video recorders, computers, etc. More recently, the use of technology as a tool to develop the different language skills has received great attention (Melor, 2011) so that ELT teachers are frequently exposed to new practices. Apart from curricular changes that come officially- usually from the Ministry of Education in various countries- workshops and short training programmes introduce new techniques and activities and promote new materials.

Apart from those mentioned above, the education authorities in India are aware of the development and are active in promoting educational reforms. The government of India has framed certain policies and proposals and as per them the use of ICTs is to be encouraged in elementary and secondary school education. Within these Acts, there are also programmes like SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA), GyanDarshan, GyanVani, EDUSAT and many others which sponsor the inclusion of ICTs in schools by teachers. In fact, since the 1950s, Indian policy documents have identified the need to use different forms of media to promote learning. At the beginning it was Radio broadcasting, gradually progressing towards more technologically developed ICTs like broadband and computers. Meanwhile, the government of India has initiated various ICT- based programmes for promoting primary and secondary education (Vyasulu,



2010). So, a teacher not trained in technology will feel inadequate in terms of practical teaching. This means the role of an English teacher in the government school has significantly changed in the digital era.

As a teacher of English for several years the researcher has observed teachers resisting technologies as well as teachers accepting technologies. For listening lessons, conversation practice, formal speaking sessions and other laboratory related lessons, some of the teachers welcomed technologies while others avoided them. It is realized at times that despite being aware of the fact that by using technologies they can easily visit websites, download authentic material and use it in the class; some of the teachers resist them while some adopt them as an aid during their teaching. Therefore, discussing ICTs with the practicing teachers in the field is very important. Despite the developments in educational technologies, coming across a standardized English classroom equipped with new technologies is a distant dream. Over the years, some distinction is being established between teachers already comfortable with ICTs and those still cultivating interest in them. Prensky (2001) identifies the difference between a digital-native and a digital-immigrant in the words that for the former technologies are completely natural and easy, but for the latter they are very strange and sometimes intolerable. As an example a digital native teacher can easily bookmark a favorite site and even have a kind of backup for the future follow up in a personal computer; but, an immigrant digital has to print out the pages he is interested in. In the field of ELT it is not enough to have an ICT-integrated classroom with facilities and equipment to ensure that the teachers will be prepared to use them. There are some key factors which English teachers need to accept related to the use of technology, namely the ICTs in their classrooms.

Ability, knowledge and attitudes are among those important factors which are emphasized and discussed for the adoption of ICT. As Baylor and Ritchie (2002) state: “regardless of the amount of technology and its sophistication, technology will not be used unless faculty members have the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to infuse it into the curriculum” (p.398). Teachers should become effective agents to be able to utilize ICT tools in the classroom, which is possible via positive teacher attitude thereby **adopters** feel more comfortable with using them and usually integrate them into their teaching (Bullock, 2004). Positive attitudes often stimulate teachers with less technology knowledge to learn the required skills for employing ICT-based tasks in the classroom setting. Otherwise, a lack of technology knowledge and skills may give rise to anxiety and lack of confidence; consequently, teachers may feel uncomfortable with technology (Finley and Hartman 2004, Groves and Zemel 2000). In brief, for teachers to take initiative in curricular change and to effectively apply technology for meaningful instruction, teachers’ attitudes are one of the most significant internal **factors** described by researchers (Ertmer 1999).

## REVIEW OF LITRATURE

The theoretical framework of the present study to some extent is based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). TAM (see Figure 1) was specifically designed to explain individual technology acceptance and use across a wide range of organizational contexts, computer technologies, and user populations (Davis, 1989). TAM postulates that two particular beliefs, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, are of primary relevance for computer acceptance behaviors. Also more recently, Legris, Ingham and Colletette (2003) pointed to the fact that though TAM has been a useful model to examine ICT usage, it needs to include other variables as well.

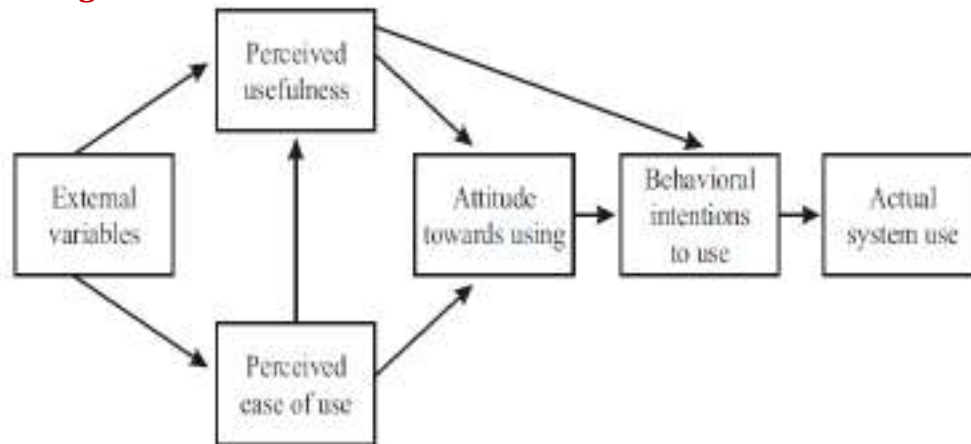


Figure1: Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Davis et al. (1989)

Before a new idea or technology can be used, it must first be adopted, but when a new product, technique or technology becomes available in education this does not mean that educators, trainers or students will automatically flock to adopt and use it. Even if its developer can show through a wealth of evidence that this innovation will greatly improve the learning process, there is still no guarantee that it will be used, as many curriculum designers and educational technologists have discovered. To investigate the issues concerned with adoption of new technology or ideas it is useful to think of these as innovations and then to consider them through the lens of innovation theory.

Rogers (1995) believes that people's attitudes toward a new technology are a key element in its diffusion. His *Innovation Decision Process theory* states that an innovation's diffusion is a process that occurs over time through five stages: Knowledge, Persuasion, Decision, Implementation and Confirmation. Accordingly, the innovation-decision process is the process through which an individual (or other decision-making authorities) passes (1) from the knowledge of an innovation, (2) through forming an attitude toward it, (3) through a decision to adopt or reject it, (4) to the implementation of the new idea, and finally (5) to the confirmation of that decision (Rogers, 1995, p. 161). Personal characteristics such as educational level, age, gender, educational experience, experience with the computer for educational purpose and attitude towards computers can influence the adoption of a technology, observes Schiller (2003). To successfully initiate and implement educational technology in a school's programme depends strongly on the teachers' support and attitudes. It is believed that if teachers perceived technology programmes as neither fulfilling their needs nor their students' needs, it is likely that they will not integrate the technology into their teaching and learning. According to Berner (2003), Na (1993) and Summers (1990) as cited in Bordbar (2010), teachers' computer competence is a major predictor of integrating ICT in teaching. Evidence suggests that a majority of teachers who reported negative or neutral attitude towards the integration of ICT into teaching and learning processes lacked knowledge and skills that would allow them to make "informed decision". If there is no technical support for teachers, they become frustrated resulting in their unwillingness to use ICT (Tong & Trinidad, 2005).

It is believed that if teachers perceived technology programmes as neither fulfilling their own needs nor their students' needs, it is likely that they will not integrate the technology into teaching and learning. Evidence suggests that teachers' attitudes and beliefs influence successful integration of ICT into teaching (Hew & Brush, 2007; Keengwe & Onchwari, 2008). If teachers' attitudes are positive toward the use of educational technology, then they can easily provide useful insight about the adoption and integration of ICT into teaching and learning processes.

Woodrow (1987) points out that integrating technologies in to the educational curriculum has the potential to change the process of education drastically. He also suggests that any successful change in educational practice necessitates the development of positive user attitudes towards the new technologies: integrator, who manipulates the ILS sequence so that it better matches the classroom instruction. In his model Woodrow sees the actual use of the technology depends on several things: attitude towards use, ease of use and usefulness. Teachers' development of ICT literacy has been first revealed by educators and experts, such as Davis et al, (1989) emphasized by government initiatives involving increasing investments in ICT facilities and professional training projects. ICT literacy is "using digital technology, communication tools, and/or networks to access, manage, integrate, evaluate and create in order to function in a knowledge society" (ETS, 2002). Most ICT training projects accent teachers' development in technical capabilities in isolation and fail to link teachers' technical capabilities to integrate ICT as a pedagogical tool across curriculum. Fewer training projects aim at developing their cognitive ICT-related capabilities of problem solving and information processing. Constructivism believes that ICT literacy is built and developed when the use of concrete representations of ICT knowledge is made and best performance can be induced in a supportive environment. In order to balance teachers' confidence with ICT as a technological and that with ICT as a pedagogical tool for quality teaching and learning, teachers shall be placed in an ICT-demanding environment. When teachers as competent and confident ICT users and teachers as less competent and confident ICT users work out pedagogical content and method using ICT, they all can construct their individual ICT literacy upon their prior knowledge and knowledge structure and their everyday experience. In integration of ICT and English courses, teachers' professional and personal experience of use of ICT and knowledge of English content are two most important factors toward the construction of their pedagogical beliefs. These beliefs, in turn, will justify their decisions on the role of ICT in English teaching and learning and finally lead to changes of their instructional practices. Teachers as less competent and confident ICT users are expected to improve their professional performance upon ICT-integrated problem-solving tasks and pedagogical reasoning on such tasks. Once their Knowledge of content Topics and ICT-related cognitive and technical capabilities increase, they need to blend their experience with the capabilities and apply appropriate ICT to their pedagogical approaches and hence are more likely to contribute constructively and efficiently to English Teaching.

Dudeney and Hockly (2007) mentioned the term "technophobe" (p.8) referring to teachers who have hesitations towards utilizing new technologies. In their view, "a large part of the negative attitudes teachers have towards technologies is usually the result of a lack of confidence, a lack of facilities or a lack of training, resulting in an inability to see the benefit of using technologies in the classroom" (p.9). As stated by Garrett (1991), "conservative teachers fear that the technologies will weaken or interfere with their control of the class are willing to consider only those technologies-based materials which perform electronically the most traditional teaching tasks" (p.92). On the other hand, skillful, knowledgeable, confident and enthusiastic teachers may face some external restrictions concerning technologies integration such as lack of technical support,

curriculum restrictions or lack of the suitable technological means in their schools (Usluel, Mumcu, & Demiraslan, 2007).

A study carried out with 150 English teachers on their attitudes to educational technologies showed that in spite of teachers' awareness of the importance of using educational technologies, they are not willing to use it in their classes (Gömleksiz, 2004). A recent study in Cyprus with 100 science teachers indicated that only a small number of teachers have integrated educational technologies resources in their lessons (Isman, Yaratana & Caner, 2007).

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Reviewing all these factors and considering the factors which are important for the field of ELT in the world and namely in this city, the researcher chose the aforementioned factors for the investigation of the study. But, in this case he included the items related to the field of English teaching because the ICTs used for ELT are different from those used in other fields like Math and Science. Moreover, the studies conducted up to now are in other fields of education like math and science which are far from the purpose of this study.

Finally, unlike the previous studies which have relied only on the data qualitatively extracted from the participants and have focused only on frequency counts and descriptions, the present study goes for a deeper analysis of the main causes by doing a thorough study through a hypothesis testing research. Based on the above problem to be investigated by the researcher the main objectives for the entire work were determined.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Regarding the above mentioned problems and the main objectives determined by the researcher, the following research questions arise:

1. Is 'perceived usefulness' one of the factors affecting ICT adoption among English language teachers?
2. Is 'supporting the teachers to use ICT' in English classes a factor affecting ICT adoption among English teachers?
3. Is 'ability to use ICT' one of the factors affecting ICT adoption among English language teachers?
4. What are the proportions for each of the factors affecting ICT adoption to determine English teachers attitude towards ICT?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

The population of the present study comprises English language teachers in ESL context who are teaching English at the Secondary and Senior Secondary schools in Chandigarh city in 2011 and 2012 academic calendar. In order to choose an appropriate sample from among the population, the researcher used Morgan sampling table and chose 217 English teachers in his study. To

choose an appropriate sample from the population the researcher decided to use cluster sampling. For this, the researcher initially divided Chandigarh city into five different geographical locations: north, south, west, east and central city. Finally, he distributed the questionnaires among the English teachers in these areas.

### ***Instrument***

Using previous literature and data, a 35 item, 5-point Likert-scale ranging from completely agree to completely disagree questionnaire was constructed and validated by the researcher. The scale asked the teachers to describe their attitudes towards the factors affecting the adoption and use of ICTs in ELT. During preparation of the Questionnaire, the researcher used Dornyei (2007) as a resourceful guideline.

### ***Procedure of the study***

The researcher went through the following steps to determine the results of the study:

Firstly, thanks to the experience the researcher had about the concerns in ELT, he made a non-participant observation of those secondary and senior secondary schools which were the focus of the study in order to eliminate the availability factor from the next part of the study.

Secondly, in order to prepare the second step i.e. the questionnaire, the researcher planned a valid and reliable questionnaire. Using the data elicited from the teachers and the administrative wings, the researcher combined this information with the previously done studies on the factors affecting ICT adoption in ELT and education. Next, the outcome was given to a panel of experts for confirming the validity of the instrument. The questionnaire was given to a small pilot sample in order to remove or modify some weak items to make it reliable. To calculate Cronbach's alpha for the whole questionnaire, the reliability icon in SPSS software was used. All the items in the questionnaire were entered into the software and 0.872 was the output for Cronbach's alpha which shows the questionnaire is highly reliable.

Thirdly, male and female teachers were chosen randomly to respond to the prepared questionnaire. There was no treatment during the research and by conducting a survey the researcher just finds out the relations and differences between the variables; then, describes the findings according to the reality elicited from the respondents.

Fourthly, the researcher entered the obtained data into SPSS software in order to analyze them and come to a logical end. During the manipulation of the data, some special methods and procedures were used.

Finally, based on information drawn from the respondents and other similar studies done, the researcher suggests some solutions and guidelines to overcome the problem.

# DATA ANALYSIS

To analyze the first hypothesis one sample t-test was run according to the following table.

Table 1: One-Sample t-test for the first question

	Test Value = 45					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
perceived.usefulness	38.082	216	.000	15.75115	14.9359	16.5664

As can be noted from table number 1, the level of significance ( $\alpha = 0.000$ ) for the test and for it is less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ); hence, we can conclude that the test is meaningful.

So, it means that there is a significance difference between the means for perceived usefulness of ICT in English teaching among English teachers of Chandigarh city and the population means (45); hence, it can be concluded that the responses ticked by the teachers for perceived usefulness of ICT in English language teaching are different among them statistically.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for the first question

	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Perceivedusefulness	217	60.7512	.41361	6.09286
Valid N (listwise)	217			

As reported in the tablenumber 2 and obtained mean (60.751), and for it is bigger than the population mean (45), it can be stated that from the point of view of English teachers in Chandigarh, Perceived usefulness for the ICT adoption is one of the factors affecting the ICT adoption and use in English language teaching. So, the first hypothesis for the research is confirmed and the null hypothesis is rejected.

Supporting and motivating the teachers to adopt and use ICT in English classes is a factor affecting ICT adoption among English teachers.To test the second hypothesis, one sample t-test was used and brought in the following table.

Table 3: One-Sample t-test for the second question

	Test Value = 45					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
support	31.376	216	.000	11.225	10.520	11.931

Based on the table number 3 in which the significance level of the test ( $\alpha = 0.000$ ) is less than 0.05, we can conclude that the test is meaningful so that we can conclude that there is a



significant difference between the mean of their attitude towards the effect of supporting English teachers to use ICT in English teaching among them in Chandigarh city and the population mean; hence, it can be stated that the responses toward the effect of supporting English teachers to use ICT in English teaching are statistically different.

Table 4: One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
support	217	35.2258	5.27043	.35778

As shown in table number 4 and the obtained mean (35.225) and for it is bigger than the mean for the population (24), it can be stated that from the point of view of English teachers in Chandigarh city, supporting the teachers to use ICT in their English classes is a factor affecting ICT adoption in English classes. So, the research second hypothesis is confirmed and the null hypothesis is rejected.

Ability to use ICT is one of the affective factors for ICT adoption among English language teachers. To analyze the third hypothesis one sample t-test was run according to the following table.

Table 5: One-Sample Test for Ability

	Test Value = 45					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Ability	15.242	216	.000	14.322	13.634	15.010

As the data indicated in table number 5 in which the significance level of the test ( $\alpha = 0.000$ ) is less than 0.05, we can conclude that the test is meaningful so that we can conclude that there is a significant difference between the mean of their attitude towards the effect of English teachers' ability to use ICT in English teaching among them in Chandigarh city and the population mean; hence, it can be stated that the responses toward the effect of English teachers' ability to use ICT in English teaching are statistically different.

Table 6: One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Ability	217	50.3226	5.14396	.34919

Based on the table number 6 and the obtained mean (50.322) and for it is bigger than the mean for the population (36), it can be stated that from the point of view of English teachers in Chandigarh city, English teachers' ability to use ICT in their English classes is a factor affecting ICT adoption in English classes. So, the research third hypothesis is confirmed and the null hypothesis is rejected.

The proportion for each of the considered factors to determine their attitude towards ICT adoption in English teaching is different. To test the above hypothesis, a multiple regression can be use based on the following table.

Table 7: One-way ANOVA

Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	8333.912	3	2777.971	73.910	0.000
Residual	8074.650	213	37.909		
Total	16408.562	216			

Based on the data obtained in table number 7 and the level of significance ( $p < 0.000$ ) which is less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ) it can be concluded that from the point of view of English teachers in Chandigarh city, statistically, there is a significant relationship between the considered factors and their effect to determine their attitude and the proportion for each of the factors can be different; So, running the regression to analyze them is possible.

Table 8: The coefficients related to the fourth derivational hypothesis

	Unstandardized Coefficients		standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
( Constant )	0.949	0.452		2.101	0.037
Perceived usefulness	1.036	0.009	0.474	121.384	0.000
Support	0.827	0.010	0.327	82.913	0.000
Ability	0.988	0.010	0.381	95.818	0.000

Based on the data presented in the table number 8 and the degree of beta coefficient entered to the regression, it can be observed that the proportion of each factor to determine the attitude towards the use of ICT in English language teaching is: perceived usefulness of ICT in English language teaching (0.474), supporting and motivating the teachers to use ICT in English classes (0.327) and the ability of the teachers to use ICT in their English classes (0.381).

In other way, for the level of significance in the test is less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ), we can say that the above relationships are significant. Because the degree of the relationships is positive, it can be stated as much as the teachers' attitude in perceived usefulness of ICT in English teaching, supporting and motivating the teachers to use ICT, and the ability to use ICT in English teaching increase, their attitude toward using it also increases.

So, the hypothesis of the study was confirmed and the null hypothesis was rejected. Also, for the beta coefficient in perceived usefulness of ICT in English teaching is bigger than other factors, we can state that this factor has the highest proportion to determine the teachers' attitude towards the adoption of ICT in English teaching in Chandigarh city; and, supporting the teachers to use ICT in their classes which has the lowest beta coefficient comparing to other factors has the

lowest proportion among the factors to determine the English teachers attitude towards using ICT in their classrooms.

## **CONCLUSION**

The rise of technologies has complicated its adoption and integration by teachers in classroom. The effective integration of technology into classroom practices poses a challenge to teachers than connecting computers to a network. For successful integration of ICT into teaching, the review highlights factors that positively or negatively influence teachers' use of ICT. These are personal, institutional and technological factors. Research has revealed that these factors are related to each other. On a personal level, there are numerous factors that influence teachers' use of ICT. Teachers' feelings, knowledge and attitudes influence their use of ICT in teaching. Research has shown that teachers' attitudes towards technology influence their acceptance of the usefulness of technology and its integration into teaching. If teachers' attitudes are positive toward the use of educational technology then they can easily provide useful insight about the adoption and integration of ICT into teaching and learning processes. At the school level, factors such as support, funding, training and facilities influence teachers' adoption and integration of technologies into their classrooms. Teachers' professional development is a key factor to successful integration of computers into classroom teaching. ICT-related training programmes develop teachers' competences in computer use, influencing teachers' attitudes towards computers and assisting teachers to reorganize the task of technology and explaining them how new technology tools are significant in student learning . On the technological level, for successful adoption and integration of ICT into teaching, teachers must perceive technology as better than previous practice; consistent with their existing values, past experiences and needs; ease to use, can be experimented with a limited basis before making a decision to adopt. Finally, the results of the innovation become visible to the others. Many teachers are hesitant to change an existing programme to something they only know through discussion and reading and not through observation. These three characteristics or attributes of teachers' adoption and integration of ICT into teaching provides information of factors supporting their use of technology as well as barriers to ICT integration. The key factor in the studies is teachers' attitudes toward technology or intentions to use technology in their classrooms. If teachers have negative attitudes toward technology, providing them with excellent ICT facilities does not guarantee ICT adoption.

## **PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIAN CONTEXT**

In the light of its findings, this study has several useful implications and suggestions and future research. However, the remarks thereof are not meant to be viewed as conclusions rather suggestions which are based on the researcher's understanding and the conclusions of the investigation.

Due to the government-driven ICT policy, most Indian secondary and senior secondary schools have computers with Internet access in each classroom, as well as multimedia labs that are equipped with computers, LCD projectors, and other technology for education. Despite this well-developed technology infrastructure, however, teachers are lacking guidelines on how they can make the best use of the present technology for their class use. Through the literature review, I attempted to learn more strategies on how technology can be wisely used to enhance student language learning that is more interactive and at a higher level of thinking based on diverse cases of technology-integrated classrooms.

Examining the uses of technology in the ESL/EFL classroom through a literature review, I had assumed that more research on the effective uses of technology in the classroom could be conducted to guide EL teachers to improve their teaching. Based on what I realized during the literature review, I would like to suggest the following for future practices in the Indian EL classroom.

First, technology integration should always go with a firm theoretical base that carefully considers the effectiveness of language teaching and learning. Reviewing the cases of other countries, I noticed that the technology uses in the EFL classes had gradually changed with the paradigm shift from the behaviourists' to the constructivist's way of looking at pedagogy. That is, technology has been the medium supporting the educational shift; first, an educational paradigm shift, followed by technology application. Therefore, from most of the studies, I saw the theories consistently reflected on the overall application the technology uses. On the contrary, in Indian government initiative, technology advancements have led educational innovation before theoretical discussions become mature. Accordingly, there are some teachers in the field who cannot keep up with the new teaching and learning theories. Projecting the copy of the textbook through the latest project cannot be called an educational innovation. The Indian government should invest as much money they have invested on technology innovation on teacher re-training programmes.

Second, the number of teacher-researchers should be increased to improve teaching and learning in real EL classes. I recommend that more teachers be given opportunities to be trained through systematic programmes cultivating their skills in ICT use. Schools are the very places where educational reform starts, and the teachers should be the first in line of the new movement by researching how students in the real field can best learn with technology. This will facilitate balanced matches between theories and practice to bring realistic innovations into EFL classrooms.

Third, technology use in the classroom should encourage students to develop higher levels of thinking skills. EL classes focusing only on the college entrance examination cannot provide students with enough opportunities to practice authentic language uses. EL classrooms should be the places where students can enjoy thinking and creating their own interactions based on meaningful contexts, not the places where students cram fragmented knowledge through rote memorization.

The teacher has an important role to play in the teaching/learning paradigm shift, with ICT facilitating the development of a higher level of cognitive skills in evaluating arguments, analyzing problems and applying what is learnt.

Although teachers play an important role in the learning environment, they are often not consulted regarding changes to teaching learning procedures (Bangkok, 2004). In fact, the teachers' needs under changing conditions have to be continuously assessed and activities to satisfy these have to be developed. So, professional development is necessary for teachers to enable them to effectively use technology to improve student learning. Staff development should

be collaboratively created, based on faculty input and school needs. It must prepare teachers to use technology effectively in their teaching.

According to Fullan (1992), teachers who have a strong engagement towards their own professional development are more motivated to undertake activities, which lead to a better understanding of the goals of an innovation. Similarly, Fullan pointed out that teachers who are actively involved in their own professional development are more able to implement changes in their teaching.

Hence, having a recognition system for innovative and effective use of ICT integration in schools will motivate teachers to use ICT in teaching. For example, formal certification of in-service professional development that leads to diplomas or degrees could provide an incentive for teachers to upgrade and update their skills in and knowledge of ICT integration.

Another study done by Ahluwalia and Gupta (2011) shows that English teachers are not ready to adopt ICTs in Panjab, India. English teachers need to not only possess such basic ICT skills as word processor, PowerPoint, video editor and access to the Internet, but also develop pedagogical knowledge to efficiently integrate ICT into English curriculum. The integration of ICT will lead to diversification not only in English content, contexts and pedagogical methods, but also in teaching environment. ICT will extend the boundary of English teaching and characterize it as interactive, flexible and innovative.

School heads and committees should focus on special cooperative sessions for ICT use to be held on a regular basis during English teachers' free time and encourage the teachers to resolve their problems and issues facing in the class regarding ICTs.

At least, one knowledgeable and active ICT expert should be present all the time when teachers are using the technologies in order to assist them. It is much more effective when the expert provides the teachers with some predetermined useful websites for English teaching recommended by any valid source.

***Some websites for downloading audio and video files:***

• [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) • <http://teachertube.com> • [www.engvid.com](http://www.engvid.com)  
• [www.bbclearningenglish.co](http://www.bbclearningenglish.co) • [www.britishcouncil.org/kids.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids.htm) •  
[www.britishcouncil.org/central.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/central.htm) • [www.bestofgooglevideos.com](http://www.bestofgooglevideos.com)

Besides, enough time allotted to use of ICTs in the school calendar for English teachers will motivate them to use ICTs enthusiastically

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## L2 VOCABULARY LEARNING THROUGH COLLABORATIVE TECHNIQUES

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### ABSTRACT

The present study examined the effects of selected collaborative techniques on second language (L2) vocabulary comprehension and production. The participants of the study were 86 adult pre-intermediate level English learners in institutes in Qazvin. They were in five groups and each group received instruction through one of the following collaborative techniques for 21 sessions. The collaborative techniques included Jigsaw, Rotating Circles, Snowball, Think-Pair-Square, and Word Webbing. Two separate one-way ANOVA procedures were used to analyze data. The results showed that word webbing was the most effective technique on both vocabulary comprehension and production. The findings of the present study may have theoretical as well as practical implications.

**KEY WORDS:** collaborative learning, vocabulary learning, jigsaw, rotating circles, snowball, think-pair-square, and word webbing.

### INTRODUCTION

Mankind is social and likes to learn in a social context; thus, collaborative learning is a proper response to this tendency in human nature. Dillenbourg (1999) defines collaborative learning as "a situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together and solve a problem" or "mutual engagement of participants in a coordinated effort to solve a problem together" (p. 6).

Collaborative learning has many advantages. It increases self-esteem and motivation among students, improves complex and cognitive thinking, creates positive feelings among students and about school, and makes responsible students. Most teachers have the same point of view. They believe that students learn better in collaborative groups than in traditional classroom settings (Jacobs, Power, & Loh, 2002).

However, some teachers believe collaborative method is problematic for several reasons. They do not like missing their traditional role in the classroom. Others insist that collaborative learning is not suitable for students. They believe that students learn at different speeds, some of them take

over the group. This study investigates the role of collaborative leaning techniques on reading comprehension to see which techniques are effective on reading comprehension.

Another side of this study is vocabulary learning through collaborative techniques. Collaborative activities facilitate vocabulary learning. Many language teachers are aware of the significant role of collaborative interaction in vocabulary learning. They present more than one technique and strategy in the classroom. What is less obvious is which of the collaborative techniques is more conducive to vocabulary comprehension and production. The present study addresses this issue.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Vygotsky (1986) places great emphasis on the value of social interaction. Vygotsky (1978) notes that human is social in nature; so his cognitive skills develop in a group setting. He argues that “learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers” (p. 90).

Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (1991) add that students work together in small groups to maximize their own and others’ learning. Students work in a group where each member has a different level of knowledge and skill. Students would be able to convey their knowledge to the other members of the group if their work was based on a specific learning purpose.

To Barkley, Cross and Major (2005), “collaborative learning has come to mean students working in pairs or small groups to achieve shared learning goals” (p. 4). Three features of collaborative learning are intentional design, co-laboring, and meaningful learning. In intentional design, teachers divide students into different groups and may use pre-structured activities or design a new structure of their own. Co-Laboring is a Latin meaning of collaboration, it means that all students in the group must engage in an activity as a team. The last feature is meaningful learning in which all students work together on a collaborative assignment, so they increase their knowledge and information during collaborative activities. These three features are important and vital to collaborative meaning (Barkley, Cross, & Major, 2005).

Collaborative learning is rooted in Piaget’s theory, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) Theory, Communicative Language Teaching, and Input Hypothesis. Apple (2006) defines ZPD as the limit to which someone can learn something with others’ help. Hiep (2007) recommends the use of cooperative learning activities in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). CLT activities are based on pair or group work. He points out that CLT is a learner-centered approach, so it is collaborative learning in nature and wants students to learn together in pairs or in groups.

There are various advantages to collaborative and cooperative learning. They have different effects on the learning process of which most are beneficial. According to ZPD Theory, group work increases social skills. Older children help younger ones and practice how to learn as a team. Vygotsky (1978) believes that children learn together and increase their individual skills in group activities.

Gokhale (1995) adds that interest and critical thinking rise among collaborative groups. Students can become critical thinkers. Students become able to share their knowledge and be responsible for their own learning. Pair and small group activities give more time to students for speaking in the target language. In addition, learners feel more comfortable and less anxious when they interact with peers in the group. Their self-confidence increases through group activities

(McDonough, 2004). Wills (2007) refers to some of the psychosocial advantages of cooperative learning. He holds that group working reduces the fear of failure among students. Students can access the stored information much easier and quicker during a cooperative learning situation. DelliCarpini (2009) adds that “cooperative learning creates multiple opportunities for comprehensible input and output” (p. 44).

Despite the advantages of collaborative learning, there are also arguments against collaborative learning. According to Tinzmman, Jones, Fennimore, Bakker, Fine, and Pierce (1990), teachers do not like collaborative learning because they know that a collaborative classroom is noisier than a traditional classroom and they do not want noisy classrooms. Another reason is the preparation time for collaborative learning. Some teachers do not know how to use time appropriately in a collaborative classroom, so they think collaborative learning wastes the time of the class. The third reason is individual differences among students. Some teachers believe students with individual differences cannot be grouped together. They argue that teachers think some students may not accept responsibility in a group.

Tinzmann, et al. (1990) mention several roles for teachers in a collaborative classroom. The first role is as a facilitator. Teachers help students connect new information to their prior knowledge. Teachers can facilitate collaborative learning by designing different tasks. The second role for the teacher is modeling. Modeling may involve thinking aloud and demonstrating. The last role is coaching. Teachers help students to provide a strategy and use it in the learning process. The teacher is a supporter, an observer, a change agent, and an advisor in a cooperative classroom (Wang, 2007). Students also play different roles in collaborative learning such as facilitator, time keeper, checker, encourager, recorder, summarizer, elaborator, and observer in their own groups (Farrell & Jacobs, 2010).

It is believed that there are more than 100 techniques used in collaborative learning. Each of these techniques has different effects and is useful for students and teachers in diverse situations. Using these techniques depends on the task and group size. Teachers should know the goals of the teaching and learning, then select suitable cooperative techniques in their classrooms (Keyser, 2000).

A number of studies have investigated various aspects of collaborative learning and techniques. Pamela (1994) investigated cooperative learning in multicultural university classrooms. The results showed the cooperative learning strategies have positive effects on the learning process, especially in multicultural classrooms. Moreover, the cooperative response technique was more powerful than the other cooperative techniques.

Critical thinking is one of the most important factors in collaborative learning. Gokhale (1995) investigated this factor. He compared individual and collaborative learning, but he also implemented critical thinking in both of these groups. The findings showed that students worked corporately better than individually, and that students in the collaborative group answered critical thinking questions better than the ones in the individual group.

Researchers have investigated different factors which influence a collaborative interaction, like age, gender, high or low ability, motivation, etc. Webb (1991) studied the role of gender in collaborative interaction. The results showed that boys like to receive request for help, but there were no differences in girls' and boys' abilities.

Adeymi (2008) investigated cooperative learning and problem solving strategies with juniors in secondary school. This study investigated three teaching strategies (cooperative learning, problem solving and conventional). The results showed that students like cooperative learning and problem solving strategies more than the conventional strategies.

Kim and McDonough (2011) implemented collaborative learning to different kinds of tasks. They studied the role of pre-task modeling on collaborative learning interaction. They divided students into two groups. One group received videotaped models of collaborative interaction before carrying out the task. The other group did not use pre-task modeling. The findings showed that the first group was more successful in completing the tasks and demonstrated more collaborative pair dynamics modeling.

Wang (2011) studied collaborative learning as a new method for improving college students' autonomy in China. He had two groups of students. The first group included 64 students who worked corporately, whereas the second group included 62 students who were taught in a traditional way. The findings showed that collaborative learning increased autonomy, and students learned better than the traditional way.

There are also a number of studies on vocabulary learning via collaborative interaction. One of these studies is Huong (2006) in Vietnam. Huong (2006) investigated learning vocabulary in collaborative groups at a university. The results showed that learning vocabulary was affected by group work.

Newton (2001) investigated vocabulary learning through communication tasks. One of the options was cooperative learning in pre-task. Students looked for meaning of the words in dictionary corporately. The finding showed that cooperative learning helped to improve vocabulary learning process in pre-task.

This short historical perspective on collaborative learning shows that there are some gaps in research on collaborative learning techniques. Researchers have studied different collaborative techniques in their research, but they have not focused on which technique is more effective in vocabulary learning or reading comprehension. The present study is an attempt to partially fill this gap.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present research intends to answer the following research questions:

1. Are there any significant differences among the selected collaborative learning techniques (Jigsaw, Rotating Circles, Snowball, Think-Pair-Square, and Word Webbing) on L2 vocabulary comprehension?
2. Are there any significant differences among the selected collaborative learning techniques (Jigsaw, Rotating Circles, Snowball, Think-Pair-Square, and Word Webbing) on L2 vocabulary production?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

The participants were 86 male and female EFL learners, at language institutes in Qazvin, ranging in age from 17 to 21 years old. The learners' level of proficiency was pre-intermediate to intermediate. Participants were studying in five classes. Each group was randomly assigned to a different treatment condition. These treatments were different kinds of collaborative techniques for reading comprehension and vocabulary.

### ***Instruments***

The following materials and instruments were used in the present study:

The participants were administered a KET (Key English Test) test before the treatment. The test contained 41 multiple-choice items. To minimize the effect of their prior vocabulary knowledge, a vocabulary pretest containing 150 items was administered before the treatment. These lexical items were contextualized in 150 English sentences. Learners were required to write the meaning of the underlined words in Persian. The time allocated to this pretest was 50 minutes. Those words the meaning of which the participants did not know were selected for inclusion in the posttests.

The instructional materials included five units of Top Notch (2 a). The book is used for pre-intermediate learners at language institutes. A total number of 150 vocabulary items and 5 reading texts were presented in 18 sessions, spanning one semester.

At the end of the experimental period, all participants were given two posttests; a 30-item vocabulary test in multiple-choice format was used to measure the participants' receptive lexical knowledge. Another 30-item vocabulary test in fill-in-the-blanks format was utilized to measure the participants' production knowledge.

### ***Procedures***

Initially, the participants were selected based on criteria such as proficiency level and the relevance of the treatment to their main instruction as well as the willingness of their instructors to cooperate. Since the participants were learners at institutes and had been given placement tests before hand, and since they had received the same instruction, their homogeneity was almost certain. Still, before they received the treatment, a KET test was administered to homogenize the participants in terms of their vocabulary knowledge. To make sure that the participants had no prior knowledge of the target words, the vocabulary pretest containing 150 items was also administered before the treatment. The instructional materials included 5 units of Top Notch (2 a). The participants were in 5 groups. Each group was randomly assigned to one of the following treatment conditions:

Group A was instructed through the Jigsaw technique. There were 15 learners in this group. They were divided into four groups. This technique was taught in eight steps:

**Step 1.** A task was divided to different subtasks.

**Step 2.** The class was divided into groups of 3 or 4 members randomly.

**Step 3.** Each group worked on one subtask.



**Step 4.** One student from each Jigsaw group joined the expert group.

**Step 5.** They discussed the subtasks that they worked on. The subtasks were selected randomly.

**Step 6.** The students returned to their Jigsaw groups.

**Step 7.** They presented other subtasks to their groups. They helped other members of the group with the subtasks they had learnt about in the expert group.

**Step 8.** At the end, each group had the whole task; the parts of tasks completed each other like different parts of puzzle by experts.

Group B received instruction through the Rotating Circles technique. Rotating circles technique is based on physical movement. The number of learners was 18 in this group. They were divided into three groups. Each group was subdivided into two groups. There were 3 members in each subdivided group. The participants of this group were taught in five steps:

**Step 1.** The class was divided into groups of 6 members. Each of these groups of 6 was subdivided into 2 groups randomly.

**Step 2.** One subgroup was seated in an inner circle, with each student facing outwards. The other subgroup was seated in an outer circle. Around them each member faced inward towards a member of the inner circle.

**Step 3.** Each member of the inner circle had different subtasks. For about 5 minutes, the inner circle members discussed with the outer circle members opposite them.

**Step 4.** The outer circle was rotated one seat clockwise, so there was a new pair.

**Step 5.** The previous two steps were repeated until the outer circle was rotated by one complete turn.

Group C was instructed through the Snowball technique. Snowball technique is useful when the aim is to generate ideas. There were 20 participants in this group. This technique was taught in four steps:

**Step 1.** Each student received a task. They received the same task. They had to work within a preset period of time (5 minutes, more or less).

**Step 2.** They worked on the task in pairs, they shared ideas.

**Step 3.** Pairs then formed groups of 4 to share their ideas and knowledge.

**Step 4.** Snowball was finished there or was continued to groups of 8, until they solved their problems.

Group D (n = 16) received instruction through the Think-Pair-Square technique. Think-pair-square technique is another collaborative technique for generating ideas. This technique was taught in five steps:

**Step 1.** A task was given to class.

**Step 2.** Each student had a period of time to think about it and write her/his words.

**Step 3.** The student turned to a partner and shared their knowledge and ideas.

**Step 4.** Pairs joined another pair to compare their conclusions.

**Step 5.** They continued with another pair or stopped this process.

Group E was instructed through the Word Webbing technique. Word webbing technique is a graphic organizer strategy that provides a visual of how words or phrases connect to a topic. There were 17 learners in this group. Four students were in each group, but one group contained 5 participants. It was taught in six steps:

**Step 1.** Students were divided into groups of 4 or 5 randomly.

**Step 2.** Each group received a butcher paper and different color markers.

**Step 3.** One student drew a circle in the middle of the paper and wrote the main idea in it.

**Step 4.** Each student added a concept to it with different color markers. They wrote subtopics in the corners.

**Step 5.** Each student selected one corner and wrote her/his words. All students had a chance to add their ideas.

**Step 6.** Papers displayed around the classroom and each group reported their word-web.

At the end of the experimental period, posttests were administered. The 30-item vocabulary test in multiple-choice format was used to measure the participants' receptive lexical knowledge. And the 30-item vocabulary test in fill-in-the-blanks format was utilized to measure the participants' productive vocabulary knowledge. The time allocated to this posttest was 30 minutes. To answer the research questions, two separate one way ANOVA procedures were used.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Investigation of the first question*

The aim of the first question was to investigate the effect of selected collaborative techniques on L2 vocabulary comprehension. To this end, a one-way ANOVA was run. Descriptive statics are given in Table 1.

*Table 1: Descriptive statistics for the ANOVA on Vocabulary Comprehension*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Jigsaw	15	18.46	3.66	16.43	20.49
Rotating circles	18	20.33	3.18	18.75	21.91
Snowball	20	21.95	2.68	20.69	23.20
Think-pair-Square	16	21.81	2.45	20.50	23.12
Word webbing	17	23.11	3.70	21.21	25.02
Total	86	21.20	3.45	20.46	21.94

Based on Table 1, word webbing group has the highest mean, followed by snowball group, think-pair-square group, and rotating circles group. The participants of the jigsaw group have the lowest mean. To see whether or not the observed differences among the groups are statistically significant, a one-way ANOVA procedure was used. The results are shown in Table 2.

*Table 2: The results of the ANOVA on Vocabulary Comprehension*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	205.347	4	51.337	5.153	.001
Within Groups	806.886	81	9.962		
Total	1012.233	85			

As it can be seen in Table 2, the F-value and the significance level ( $F_{(4,81)} = 5.15$ ,  $p < .05$ ) suggest significant differences among the collaborative groups. To locate the significant differences between the means, a post hoc Tukey HSD's test procedure was used, the results of which are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Multiple comparisons of means on Vocabulary Comprehension

(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Jigsaw	Rotating circles	-1.86	1.10	.445	-4.94	1.212
	Snowball	-3.48*	1.07	.015	-6.49	-.47
	Think-Pair-Square	-3.34*	1.13	.033	-6.51	-.18
	Word webbing	-4.65*	1.11	.001	-7.77	-1.53
Rotating circles	Snowball	-1.61	1.02	.517	-4.47	1.24
	Think-Pair-Square	-1.47	1.08	.652	-4.50	1.54
	Word webbing	-2.78	1.06	.078	-5.76	.19
Snowball	Think-Pair-Square	.137	1.05	1.00	-2.81	3.09
	Word webbing	-1.16	1.04	.795	-4.07	1.73
Think-Pair-Square	Word webbing	-1.30	1.09	.759	-4.37	1.76

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

A look at Table 3 makes it clear that there are significant differences between jigsaw group and snowball group, between jigsaw group and think-pair-square, and between jigsaw group and word webbing group. It means the jigsaw group is the worst group among these five collaborative techniques in vocabulary comprehension.

#### *Investigation of the second question*

The second research question sought to investigate the effect of selected collaborative techniques on L2 vocabulary production. A one-way ANOVA procedure was used. Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics for the ANOVA on Vocabulary production

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Jigsaw	15	9.86	2.44	8.51	11.22
Rotating circles	18	10.77	2.60	9.48	12.07
Snowball	20	13.05	2.68	11.79	14.30
Think-Pair-Square	16	11.12	1.99	10.06	12.18
Word webbing	17	15.70	2.31	14.51	16.89
Total	86	12.18	3.14	11.51	12.86

Based on Table 4, word webbing group has the highest mean, followed by snowball group, think-pair-square, and rotating circles. The Jigsaw group has the lowest mean. To see whether or not the differences among the groups are statistically significant, the one-way ANOVA was used, which yielded the following results (Table 5).

Table 5: The results of the ANOVA on Vocabulary Production

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	359.949	4	89.987	15.151	.000
Within Groups	481.074	81	5.939		
Total	841.023	85			

Table 5 shows that there are significant differences among the five groups ( $F_{(4,81)} = 15.15$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). To locate the differences among the means, a post hoc Tukey HSD' test procedure was used. The results are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: Multiple comparison of means for the ANOVA on Vocabulary Production

(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Jigsaw	Rotating circles	-.91	.85	.822	-3.28	1.46
	Snowball	-3.18*	.83	.002	-5.50	-.86
	Think-Pair-Square	-1.25	.87	.606	-3.70	1.18
	Word webbing	-5.83*	.86	.000	-8.24	-3.43
	Snowball	-2.27*	.79	.041	-4.48	-.06
Rotating circles	Think-Pair-Square	-.34	.83	.994	-2.68	1.98
	Word webbing	-4.92*	.82	.000	-7.22	-2.62
	Think-Pair-Square	1.92	.81	.139	-.35	4.20
Snowball	Word webbing	-2.65*	.80	.012	-4.89	-.41
Think-Pair-Square	Word webbing	-4.58*	.84	.000	-6.94	-2.21

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 6 makes it clear that the participants of snowball and word webbing groups have performed significantly better than the participants of both jigsaw and rotating circles groups. In addition, the participants of word webbing group have outperform those of snowball and think-pair-square groups, suggesting that word webbing is the most effective technique in vocabulary production.

## Discussion

There are few studies on the comparisons among collaborative techniques. Most researchers have investigated only one collaborative technique or have compared one technique with the traditional method. One of the techniques used in the present study was jigsaw. It is one of the most popular and well-known collaborative techniques (Jacobs & Hannah, 2004; Littlewood, 2009). Walker and Crogan (1998) reported that jigsaw improves academic performance. Their findings somehow contradict the results of the present study because in the present study jigsaw turned out to be the least effective technique on both vocabulary comprehension and production. Hanz and Berger (2007), however, could not show the positive effect of jigsaw on academic performance. To Moskowitz, Malvin, Schaeffer, and Schaps (1985), jigsaw has no positive effects on students. The findings of the present study support their results. It seems that the use of jigsaw could not improve vocabulary comprehension and production in the present study. Jigsaw is like a puzzle; all students are responsible for completing this puzzle. Expert groups encourage individual accountability among students (Jacobs & Hannah, 2004). However, sometimes one of the students in the expert groups cannot convey information well or does not listen to others correctly, and this affects all his/her teammates and the technique fails. This may be one of the reasons why jigsaw had no positive effect in the present study and was not successful.

Rotating circles is a newer collaborative technique and is not as popular as jigsaw. The rotating circles group did not have good results on vocabulary comprehension and production posttests. This might have been because the teacher and students were less familiar with this technique. The teacher could have failed to apply this technique like other collaborative techniques in the present study. This technique is based on physical movement (Littlewood, 2009). The findings of Littlewood's study are different from the results of the present study. He showed that the rotating circles technique could decrease social loafing and improve the learning process. However, Iranian students are not used to physical movement in their classrooms. They learn to sit without many movements and listen to their teachers. This might explain why the rotating circles group failed in the present study. In addition, physical movement may not be suitable for all levels of students. It may be better for kids but not necessarily for older learners.

In addition, snowball turned out to be the second best technique in vocabulary comprehension and production. This finding lends support to Farrell and Jacobs (2010), who believe that students like this technique and take part in this activity eagerly.

Another collaborative technique used in the present study was think-pair-square. It led to good results, but not as good as snowball and word webbing groups. Littlewood (2009) points out that think-pair-square decreases premature closure in group activities. Walsh and Sanchez (2010) compared think-pair-square with other collaborative techniques for child development. The results were the same as the results of the present study.

The last and one of the best techniques in the present study was word webbing. Pierson, Cerutti, and Swab (2006) believe that word webbing is suitable for developing and reviewing vocabulary. The results of the present study support their opinion. Word webbing had the best effect on vocabulary comprehension and production in the present study. This technique is more visual, so it is useful for vocabulary learning. This technique shows how ideas are connected to other ideas and how they are organized. This technique was new for Iranian students. They liked to try it. So, part of the beneficial effects of this technique could be attributed to its novelty.

There are some factors, which may have affected the results of the present study, like quality of interaction among students, level of proficiency, culture, and so on. Tinzmann, et al. (1990) point out that there are three conditions for collaborative classrooms. They believe without these three conditions collaborative learning fails. First, students should accept their responsibility in their group. Second, they should learn to face to face interact and help their teammates. Third, they need to learn group process skills. Not all these conditions were present for all the five groups in the present study. These conditions were not equal in the five collaborative groups. This may partly explain the differential performance of the participants of these groups on the posttests.

Another possible reason could have been teachers' ability to implement each of the five collaborative techniques. Some of these techniques may have been hard for teachers to implement in class. Jigsaw was probably more familiar for teachers, hence more easily applicable. However, rotating circles was hard for teachers. This could be the reason why the rotating circles group did not produce good results.

Another factor may be interaction among students. The nature of collaborative techniques requires that students be active in their classes. However, some students may avoid group work. All these factors create an unfavorable condition in collaborative classrooms. The present study faced with the last problem, especially in the jigsaw group. This could be one of the reasons why the jigsaw group failed.

Still another factor which could have contributed to the obtained results may have been the learners' proficiency level. As an example, in the course of the treatment, it was observed that rotating circles was not suitable for students' level of proficiency and students were not serious about following this and were not comfortable with this technique. They thought the teacher did not support them. DelliCarpini (2009) is of a similar opinion. Along the same line, Letendre (2009) argues that jigsaw is a collaborative technique useful for advanced learners.

## **CONCLUSION**

To conclude, based on the obtained results it appears that collaborative techniques are not equally beneficial. They seem to have differential effects on various language skills and components. It can also be concluded that there are a multitude of factors which can potentially influence or moderate the effect of each of the aforementioned collaborative techniques on language learning.

The findings of the present study can have implications for teachers and learners. The present study can help teachers and learners to understand the importance of collaborative techniques in language learning. Not only do they help learners to be stronger, but also they make vocabulary learning more enjoyable. Snowball and word webbing are powerful techniques for improving vocabulary learning.

The knowledge of how collaborative techniques affect various language skills and components may enable teachers to find new ways of teaching by collaborative techniques and increase students' motivation and attitude for attending classes. These techniques can increase learners' motivation to learn and make the learning process more meaningful.

The findings can have implication for learners, too. Students can be more active in the learning process by collaborative techniques. They learn more by less effort. They become responsible for their teammates. They also learn how to investigate, solve a problem, make a decision, interact, and share their knowledge and responsibility.

All in all, this study may have shed some light on some of the issues surrounding collaborative learning techniques and the effect they exert on language learning. At the same time, it has to be acknowledged that this study might have had several limitations. For one thing, the four vocabulary tests (KET, vocabulary pretest, vocabulary comprehension, and vocabulary production) were not validated. The reason was that the psychometric characteristics of the KET test were taken for granted because it was used as an already established criterion. The validity and reliability of the three other tests were not checked because they were all directly based on the specific treatment, so they were assumed to be content valid. Nonetheless, the psychometric characteristics of the data collection instruments could have affected the outcome of the study. Another point to be acknowledged is that due to time constraints, the participants received treatment for only a semester. It may be cogently argued that some of these techniques may have long-term effect. So, their effect may not be evident immediately after instruction. This acknowledgment, coupled with the controversies already surrounding this issue, may warrant further research in an area waiting to be further explored.



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# A CONSTRUCTIVISM APPROACH TO THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THREE SMART TEST TEMPLATES: TESTA, HOT POTATOES, WONDERSHARE QUIZ CREATOR

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## ABSTRACT

Nowadays. E-learning is becoming more and more common among students; therefore, the issue in e-learning environments must be given a full attention. Research approves that constructivism learning theory, whose main focus is on knowledge construction based on learner's previous experience and his/her social interaction is a good fit for e-learning and ensures learning among learners. The relationship between technology and constructivism is the complementary one, the employment of each one promoting the other. Constructivism is an approach maintaining that learning takes place in contexts, while technology refers to the designs and environments that involve learners. In this process it is unavoidable that teachers and administrators need to be actively involved in creating e-learning environments. But implementing the proper template to this end is the issue, which has been neglected i.e. teachers have used templates, which are not in line with the accepted approach to learning in digital environment, i.e. constructivism. The most used and advised templates by the teachers and administrators in Iran, TESTA and Hot Potatoes, were selected To examine the extent to which they satisfy the constructivists' learning stipulation. The third template, Wonder Share Quiz Creator, as an unknown template was also added. To this end, Richards' maxims of teaching for language teachers were set as the bases of describing the templates potentialities.

**KEY WORDS:** Constructivism, Smart test templates, TESTA, Hot potatoes, Wondershare quiz creator

## INTRODUCTION

IT technology is being increasingly used in ESL/EFL teaching, and the expanding growth of ESL/EFL websites is a sign to how important IT technology has become. Yet, realizing the potential of this exciting and constantly expanding medium is not a straightforward undertaking. Traditionally, schools have established situations, where individuals "learn how to learn "major learning processes including formulating questions, accessing potential source of information, evaluating and organizing it, and finally, applying the information to answer some questions. The "revolution", originated from humanistic approach and tracked by cognitive theory was brought to a point that is nowadays – constructivism. According to constructivists, learners build their own individual understanding of the world.

In recent years ,Constructivist learning has grown as an eminent approach to teaching as the need for 'deep' as contrasting to 'surface' learning has gained eminence as a characteristic of what is known to be professional competence. Constructivist approaches to modeling the learning

process are based on the assumption that people are active learners and actively construct their knowledge for themselves (or with teachers, peers, etc.). In Constructivist approaches, learning is not viewed as a simple acquisition process based on teacher transmission of information but as a process through which meaningful learning is attained as the learner constructs and reconstructs conceptions of a phenomenon based upon his/her personal existing and previous knowledge or experience. Concepts of self-regulated learning and assessment for learning are also interweaved into constructivist theory. Some researchers suggest that the role of the teacher has changed from the transmitter of knowledge to one which supports self-regulated student learning, more attention ought now to be paid to how this role change might be achieved (Van Eekelon et al., 2005:447-448; Nichol & Macfarlane-Dick 2006:199).

In pedagogies grounded on constructivism, the teacher's role is not only to witness and assess but also to participate with learners while they are carrying out activities and posing questions to the students for deeper commitment and the advancement of constructive reasoning. Learners compare their form of the truth with that of the teacher and peer learners so that to get to a new, socially tested version of the truth. Consequently, it is assumed, the quality of active interaction is serving to determine the extent to which 'deep' or 'higher-order learning' is established.

Nowadays, constructivism is the most accepted approach to language learning and its main influence on educational psychology is the learner-centered approach, which highlights the autonomy of learners in the process of their learning. The approach to teaching and education is often developing as researchers learn more about how students learn and which teaching methods appear to be the most effective. Consequently, the traditional curriculum is also gradually changing. Rote memorization, for example, was once a habitual part of the traditional curriculum and is less frequently seen today.

Education, in Iran, has already been administrator –oriented, which means, it is the administrators who decide on the whole materials, activities and whole process of learning and teaching for all classes in all situations. Teachers and learners sole responsibility is performing the instructions received from the administrators whether or not it satisfies their needs or ambitions. The traditional curriculum contains the presentation of information in the form of blocks or units, which are broken into smaller units of information and offered by the teacher to the students. Traditionally, discussion between learners and teachers are less accepted, and the acceleration of class discussion is also not a part of the traditional curriculum. These are considered inadequate by some educators, who think that students should develop critical thinking, and skills to internalize the information use, from the functionalists' perspectives.

The traditional curriculum can also be deeply standards-based, with testing used to assess fulfillment and achievement. Such curriculum has also been criticized by educators, as standards-based curricula, which are the form of "teach to test" in which students are fed with information, which will only assist them pass a test, but not essentially with information, which they can use in their real life.

### ***Learner Autonomy & Self-directed Learning***

Self-directed learning is regularly recognized as an important educational aim for quite different reasons, from the enhancement of school learning to the critical assessment of the claims of

democracy. Most reasons suggest that self-direction is important in learning during life. Consequently, process-oriented teaching, which aims to promote self-directed long-life learning, requires a comprehensive and multidimensional theoretical basis. The significant role of experiences in the social and cultural environment, prior knowledge, and the emotional aspects of education are highlighted, and linked to self-directed learning in life.

### ***Collaboration in the Constructivists' Context***

Bruner (1986) states that "learning in most settings is a shared activity, a sharing of the culture". Therefore, collaboration is an important notion in constructivist learning settings. Collaboration represents and provides the social aspect of learning: Therefore, learners are enabled to "develop their own strategies and understandings through combined exertion and have the chance to derive new understanding through the give-and-take of interaction, argument and discussion" (Vygotsky, 1978; Watson & others, 1999).

### ***Assessment in Constructivism Paradigm***

Assessment is a multi-perspective phenomenon, with occasional conflicting theoretical and professional perspectives. In recent years online or e-assessment of language skills has developed with the spread of e-learning and online testing within foreign language teaching and learning settings. Although much of the assessment done in online environments is assessment of learning, assessment for learning can help motivate learners by raising their awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, rather than simply measuring them.

Nowadays, we hear and see a lot about the instructions and justifications both in the ministry of education while higher education emits to extend the use of technology in educational settings in Iran. It is a good sign of administrators' understanding the importance and merits of IT implementations in education. But what is actually done in practice is providing the hardwares with no attention to user's ability/capability in applying the new medium in education. As a result, the instruments remain useless because of staff of knowledge in producing and implementing appropriate softwares. Therefore, at first it seems vital to make the users be familiar with both the theoretical basis of computer assisted learning (CAL) and proper templates satisfying those learning and teaching requirements in general and second language acquisition (SLA) in particular. Consequently, to have a good selection of templates, they should be evaluated by the dominant learning approach of the day, constructivism. Richards (1995) as a prominent constructivist, has summarized the constructivism's concepts in eight maxim:

***The Maxim of Involvement:*** Follow the learners' interests to maintain student Involvement

***The Maxim of Planning:*** Plan your teaching and try to follow your plan.

***The Maxim of Order:*** follow the lesson plan"

***The Maxim of Encouragement:*** Seek ways to encourage student learning

***The Maxim of Efficiency:*** Make the most efficient use of class time.

***The Maxim of Conformity:*** Make sure your teaching follows the prescribed method.

***The Maxim of Empowerment:*** Give the learners control.

Since in the constructivism's environment teaching and assessment are not seen separated but integrated, it is believed that the principles of teaching settings ought to be observed in e-assessment environments, created by e-assessment template creators. The purpose of this research is to have a comparative study of three e-assessment creator templates to find the best one, which meets the postmodernist educational necessities based on Richard's (1995) maxims of teaching. To this end, the present study intends to shed some lights on three Smart test templates: Hot



potatoes, J Quizzes and Testa. They are reported to satisfy these basic requirements: They are user friendly, simply available, having easy access by the testers & testees, and proving effective acceptability for teachers, learners and administrators.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Technology and Constructivism***

To comprehend the potential of technology application in improving the teaching-learning process, the effect of constructivism on classroom activities has been studied by many scholars (e.g., Black & McClintock, 1995; Richards, 1998; Brush & Saye, 2000). Other researchers have advocated that constructivist strategies make use of technologies for greatest effect in learning (e.g., Duffy & Cunningham, 1996). Based on Jonassen, Peck and Wilson (1999), technology stands for “the designs and environments that engage learners”. Hence, the focus of both constructivism and technology are on the establishment of learning environments.

### ***Current Constructivist-based Trends in Educational Technology***

There is a great drive toward more of a Constructivist approach in applying instructional technologies. There are many such devotees, and they provide a persuasion dispute. “One way forward is to switch our attention from the design of software packages (which act solely as storehouses of information) to an interactive problem-based environment in which the learner assumes the key role. With this profile in place, the learning task can be tailored to the student’s capabilities rather than the student having to fit in with the software designer’s generalized understanding of how learning should take place. The creation of these rich learning environments will also have to ensure that texts, reference sources, multimedia and communication facilities are fully integrated” (Shield, 2000). Learning, which happens in authentic and real-life settings, and based on the learners' need, is a "primary catalyst of knowledge construction" (Camp & Doolittle 1999). Technology has impacted the pedagogies of Social Constructivism significantly. According to Desai, Hart, and Richards (2008) instructional design is a critical factor in the creation of effective online instruction. “One of the most important steps in creating a successful e-learning environment includes the development of flexible technology-based course content” (Desai et al., 2008). Instructors need to spend a significant time and effort on creating a successful e-learning environment. "Instructors find that e-learning is much more labor intensive and they have to acquire unusual skills, experience, and dedication to be successful than comparable traditional learning" (Desai et al., 2008).

A high degree of interaction between learner and teacher is critical to the success of instruction (Desai et al., 2008). In a traditional setting, classroom communication would have not required much consideration, but technology requires the teacher to keep on active in communicating to learners in order to sustain attention and drive.

Learner participation in group work is a part of social interaction in an online learning environment. Email, texting and instant messaging are common forms of communication practices within virtual group work, all of which provide a “Social Presence” (Desai et al., 2008). Traditionally, a social presence was communicated by discourse and social clues such as facial expressions, non-verbal clues and inflection (Nevgi et al., 2006). Technology requires “a distinct



interaction with learners and high technology devices” providing “a strong interaction between the learner, learner/instructor, and the content as well as other learners” in the distance education environment (Desai et al., 2008).

Since e-learning is becoming increasingly popular among learners, the issue of learning in e-learning environments must be given a full attention. Research approves that constructivism learning theory, which emphasizes on knowledge creation based on learner’s prior knowledge, is a good fit for e-learning because it confirms learning among learners (Harman & Koohang, 2005; Hung, 2001; Hung & Nichani, 2001; Koohang & Harman, 2005). Koohang (2004) states that appropriate instructional design that includes learning theories and principles is critical to the success of e-learning. Broderick (2001) states that “Instructional Design is the art and science of creating an instructional environment and materials that will bring the learner from the state of not being able to accomplish certain tasks to the state of being able to accomplish those tasks.” Instructional design has always relied on learning approaches and theories, namely behaviorism, cognitivism, humanism, and constructivism. In the last two decades, constructivism has been at the center of attention, because it encourages active learning through knowledge construction (Gagne, Briggs, & Wager, 1992). The issue of including learning theories in e-learning instruction design has always been critical, for this reason, it has consistently been reported in the literature (Egbert & Thomas, 2001; Koohang & Durante, 2003; Pimentel, 1999; Randall, 2001). The literature has also constantly acknowledged that constructivism learning theory is a fitting match for e-learning setting (Harman & Koohang, 2005; Hung, 2001; Hung & Nichani, 2001; Koohang & Harman, 2005).

#### ***Assessment-based Instruction***

One of the critical components of the education is assessment. People within the educational community, i.e. policymakers, educators, learners, parents and administrators, have different ideas regarding the application of assessment strategies (Dietel, Herman & Knuth, 1991). Some consider traditional assessment methods more effective, while others believe non-traditional assessment tools superior.

#### ***Constructivists' Assessment-based Stipulation***

Since constructivists claim that each learner construct his/her own learning, they are concerned in assessing learner’s learning process instead of overt knowledge or skills we can easily see (Jonassen, 1992). One principle of assessment in a constructivist design is not to separate evaluation as a single process. Learning in constructivists design is as a cyclical process. As the form of a circle has no start and no end, then the spot of where to assess could become indistinct. Assessment is not as an ending activity in constructivists design, but rather an ongoing process that assistances the students continue to teach themselves how to learn (Holt & Willard-Holt, 2000).

#### ***Templates' required potentialities in constructivism settings***

Aghighi & Motamedi (2013) proposed that, it seems any software, template or application offering learning environment in postmodern digital age should satisfy Richards’ maxims in virtual educational environments. They set these maxims as the base, and also took some other supporting theories and approaches into account to define the characteristics or potentialities of a working template in constructivism’s educational settings. They are presented in the following table.

Table 1: Templates' required potentialities

Template's potentiality	Satisfying the maxims of....	Maxim's weight	Total weight
Providing different forms of feedback	Involvement	2	20
	Encouragement	6	
	Accuracy	6	
	Empowerment	2	
	Relevance	3	
	Efficiency	1	
Inclusion of variety of activities	Relevance	3	7
	Involvement	2	
	Empowerment	2	
Simple manipulation and clear Instruction	Involvement	2	3
	Efficiency	1	
The customized appearance of the template player	Involvement	2	4
	Empowerment	2	
Potentiality to Provide activities and tasks for practicing Language skills and sub skills	Planning	2	2
Potentiality to check learners' understanding in all language skills area	Planning	2	2
Time limiting for each activity	Efficiency	1	3
	Planning	2	
Offering the activities based on the learners abilities	order	6	6
Easy to generate content	Efficiency	1	1
Donating rich results	Efficiency	1	1
Online availability	Efficiency	1	1

## RESEARCH QUESTION

The present research study intends to find an answer to the following question:

Which E-assessment template is more in line with the postmodernist educational concepts such as collaboration, learner-centered (personalized) environment and assessment for learning?

## METHODOLOGY

Descriptive method is preferable, because it involves gathering data that describe events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data collection (Glass & Hopkins, 1984). Indeed, the descriptive component is critical to educational research, because educational events cannot be reduced to a controlled laboratory environment. The types of questions generated in educational research, particularly with respect to the constructivist paradigm and social implications, require descriptions that help explain the data and direct emergent prescriptions for educational events. (Nelson & McLellan 1996). A structured observation method, using a list of required templates' potentialities defined by Aghighi and Motamedi (2013) was implemented.

### ***Materials***

Three smart test templates including TESTA, Hot potatoes and Wondershare Quiz Creator were implemented for creating e-learning environment. The content was brought from a general English book entitled: ESAP.

- *TESTA*

Testa is an online test management system designed for creating multiple choice exams to make it available via URL and on a webpage. Testa helps administrators and teachers prepare and hold the exam faster and easier. Immediate feedback is available for the students by using Testa. The disadvantage of Testa is not being an interactive application. In addition it can be used for one form of test (multiple choice tests) and other forms of activities are not available.

- *Hotpotatoes*

It is not a freeware, but it is free of charge. It is for non-profit educational users who want to make their pages available on the web. This application has six interfaces, which are JMix, JMatch, JCloze, JCross, JQuiz and The Masher. This application will assist you to create interactive multiple-choice, short-answer, jumbled-sentence, crossword, matching or ordering and gap-fill exercises and make them available on a web page. HOT POTATOES uses advanced JavaScript but it does not expect the users to know anything about JavaScript or HTML or any other programming language to get things done.

In brief, HOT POTATOES is a tool that assists the teacher to embrace the technology in classrooms. It will give new opportunities to empower students to reach new heights. It is also believed when the teachers keep students away from technology, they take away the opportunities that are readily available overseas.

- *Wondershare Quiz Creator*

Wondershare Quiz Creator is a multipurpose software tool designed to help teachers and trainers to produce Flash-based, high-quality exams and surveys. The program supports various types of questions, such as multiple choice, multiple response, fill in the blank, sequence, short essay, etc. Questions are created independently and stored in the program's database, allowing teachers to use and reuse them in different quizzes as many times as needed.

### ***Procedure***

Describing the templates needed carefully working them out. To this end, the Help sections of each template were first carefully explored and studied both to have a list of the templates potentialities and get familiar to work them out. The researcher tried to create different qualified activities using the templates potentialities. While creating e-content via selected templates, the researcher described their potentialities for satisfying the related maxims. In the cases templates believed to possess a potentiality, but the researcher seemed to be unable to work them out efficiently, he tried to get help by searching the web. In addition, contacting support center of the templates was also a good idea which only Wondershare Quiz Creator provides such support with nearly immediate response. Then, the described templates were quantitatively evaluated in comparison with each other.

*Table 2: Quantitative description of templates potentialities*

Template's potentiality	Total score of the potentiality	TESTA	Hot Potatoes	Wonder Share
Providing different forms of feedback	20	10	15	20
Inclusion of variety of activities	7	1	5	7
Simple manipulation and clear Instruction	3	2	2	3
The customized appearance of the template player	4	1	2/5	4
Potentiality to Provide activities and tasks for practicing Language skills and sub skills	2	1	2	1/5
Potentiality to check learners' understanding in all language skills area	2	1	1/5	1/5
Time limiting for each activity	3	1	2	3
Offering the activities based on the learners abilities	6	0	0	6
Easy to generate content	1	1	1	1
Donating rich results	1	1	0	1
Online availability	1	.5	.5	1
Total score	50	19/5	31/5	49

As the table clears, TESTA is far from the constructivism idealization of educational settings; therefore, it couldn't be accounted as a template belonging to postmodern era. Hot Potatoes show minimum potentialities to satisfy the digital age stipulation of educational environment. In comparison with the two other templates, Wonder Share indicates more potentialities to be convenient with the idealization of postmodern approaches to learning.

## DISCUSSION

Template's potentiality		Satisfying the maxims of....	Maxim's weight	Total weigh
Providing different forms of feedback		Involvement	2	20
		Encouragement	6	
		Accuracy	6	
		Empowerment	2	
		Relevance	3	
		Efficiency	1	
Templates description				
TEST A	<p>Proper pictures, sounds and links to web pages can be added to the stem of the questions and choices.</p> <p>Providing these forms of feedback by TESTA is not as straightforward as other templates. Since, TESTA uses a web based editor which users who are not familiar with such editors may fail to add desired feedback to the questions.</p> <p>There are two basic ways to add sound and video to the activities: Inserting an object, and adding a link. Adding a link is the simplest approach meaning that the file is separated from the software, so it may results in some problems in playing if the file is missed. Inserting the file means that the file becomes embedded in the software and will be corrupted if the software be corrupted.</p> <p>Links to other Web pages in the exercise provide rich and interesting input that provides an opportunity to comprehend and/or produce meaning.</p> <p>TESTA lets users add link to web pages only to questions and web pages can't be linked to the choices to provide more information. Of course we should be aware that TESTA is a test manager software not learning and teaching template, therefor linking to web pages even from the test stem will violate its purpose.</p>			10
Hot Potatoes	<p>Proper pictures, sound, multimedia and link to web pages are added (not inserted, as illustrated above) to all parts of the activities, including the text, questions, choices and the feedback.</p> <p>A positive point is that a link can be added to the pictures of the activities to web pages or even local files.</p>			15
Wonder Share	<p>Proper pictures sound multimedia and links to web pages are inserted to all parts of the activities, including the questions and choices. It is possible to use pictures for feedback.</p> <p>A positive point is that, wondershare provides the possibility of capturing screen image, so users can easily insert the picture of the screen to their questions.</p> <p>Wondershare lets the users to insert (not add) the sound to questions and feedback sessions. By using wondershare, users are free to insert the pre-prepared sound files or directly record a sound to the software.</p> <p>Videos can be inserted to only the questions part of the activity. They can't be used as an answer or as a feedback.</p> <p>Wondershare also lets the users add link to web pages in all parts of the activities including text, questions, and answers and feedbacks, but adding links to pictures is not allowed.</p>			20
Inclusion of variety of activities		Relevance	3	7

		Involvement	2	
		Empowerment	2	
TESTA	TESTA is limited to provide only one activity, i.e. multiple choice items test format.			1
Hot Potatoes	Hot Potatoes offers a good variety of activities consisting five different exercises useful for practicing some language activities. This application will assist the teachers to create interactive multiple-choice, short-answer, jumbled-sentence, crossword, matching or ordering and gap-fill exercises			5
Wonder Share	Wondershare offers a good variety of activities consisting nine different exercises useful for practicing some language activities. The program supports various types of questions, such as multiple choice, multiple response, fill in the blank, sequence, short essay, etc.			7
Simple manipulation and clear Instruction		Involvement	2	3
		Efficiency	1	
TESTA	TESTA is set up and handled easily. It has a clear and direct control panel which allows the administrator to create and publish his/her test easily. However applying some template facilities such as adding pictures and publishing in the web needs some web knowledge.			2
Hot Potatoes	HotPotatoes is set up and handled easily. It has a clear and direct control panel which allows the users to create and publish their tasks in different types. However, knowing a little programing is needed if one tries to publish his/her activities containing multimedia and sound on the web.			2
Wonder Share	Wondershare is set up and handled easily. It has a clear and direct control panel which allows the users to create and publish their tasks in different types and publish them in different formats involving Publish flash quizzes to Quiz Creator Online; Upload the published Flash quiz to the web; Generate a SCORM quiz package for LMS; Produce stand-alone EXE file for CD and Export to Word or Excel files for paper-based testing. Inserting pictures. Sounds and multimedia needs no programming knowledge, so that everyone can benefit all wondershare facilities.			3
The customized appearance of the template player		Involvement	2	4
		Empowerment	2	
TESTA	The appearance of TESTA is not customizable, i.e. that users can't alter the appearance of the software by changing the size, color, icons and... of the player.			1
Hot Potatoes	HotPotatoes lets the users to personalize the appearance of the software through making changes in color, output font, and size and background picture of the template.			2.5



Wonder Share	Wondershare is a flash format based template; It means that its appearance is attractive and eye-catching. The Wondershare player is highly customizable to meet the styles of the users. It lets the users to customize the size and color of the player with variety of options as well as the size and color of the output font. Users can edit the toolbars and background picture as well as choices and pictures position.			4
Potentiality to Provide activities and tasks for practicing Language skills and sub skills		Planning	2	2
TESTA	<p>This software lacks a special module for reading comprehension activities. However reading comprehension activity can only be presented in the form of multiple choices.</p> <p>Finding correct spelled word, correct order of the Jumbled words and correct order of Mixed-up sentences are the available exercises in TESTA for writing activities.</p> <p>Designing listening activities are thinkable by means of TESTA, but it should be noticed that a link is added to the sound files, so you may miss the task if the file which is located in other place is lost or corrupted.</p> <p>No module of TESTA can be used to design exercises for neither speaking activities in general nor pronunciation in particular.</p> <p>Only multiple choice exercises is available in TESTA for working out vocabulary and grammar.</p>			1
Hot Potatoes	<p>This software possesses a special module for reading comprehension activities which other templates lack such facility.</p> <p>Exercises like completing words with missed letter, in spelling level and sequencing the scrambled words to make a sentence are available but ordering sentences to make a paragraph and free essay writing are not possible by means of Hotpotatoes modules.</p> <p>Designing listening activities are thinkable by means of hot potatoes modules. But it should be noticed that a link is added (not inserted as illustrated above) to the sound files.</p> <p>No module of HotPotatoes can be used to design exercises for neither speaking activities in general nor pronunciation in particular.</p> <p>All five module of this template except J Cross, which is adjusted only for practicing vocabulary activities, are ready to provide variety of activities for practicing and assessing vocabulary and grammar activities.</p>			2
Wonder Share	<p>This software lacks a special module for reading comprehension activities. However other modules can be used for this purpose.</p> <p>Exercises like completing words with missed letter, in spelling level and sequencing the scrambled words to make sentences or ordering sentences to make a paragraph are possible by means of Wondershare modules. Besides free essay witting is the feature is found in wondershare, so users can think of presenting such an interesting activity using this platform.</p> <p>Designing listening activities are possible by means of Wondershare modules. Since, sounds and videos are inserted in the software, the concern of missing the files is reduced. On the other hand inserting the files is very easy and straightforward and doesn't need users to know any programing. Besides, it will be published easily wherever you wish, on the web, on LMS or stand-alone EXE file for CD.</p> <p>The only weak point of this template about presenting listening activities is that the sounds or videos can be presented only in the stem of the question. It would be better if the sound was also presented in choices unit.</p> <p>No module of Wondershare supports designing exercises for neither speaking activities in general nor pronunciation in particular.</p> <p>All module of this template except Short Essay are ready to provide variety of activities for practicing and assessing vocabulary and grammar.</p>			1.5
Potentiality to check learners 'understanding in all language skills area		Planning	2	2
TESTA	<p>Reading and Listening comprehension is checked through selecting correct answers. Checking free writing essays is not possible. Speaking neither can be practiced nor checked by means of this software. Learner's vocabulary and grammar knowledge are also checked through selecting correct answers.</p>			1

Hot Potatoes	Reading and listening comprehension is checked through selecting correct answer, selecting true or false choice and matching and filling in the blanks. Writing, at the level of spelling, can be checked through selecting true choice and filling in the blanks. At the level of sentence writing, correct order of the sentences is checked by means of JMix module. But checking paragraph and free essay writing are not available in this template. Speaking is the skill, which neither can be practiced nor checked by means of this software. Student's vocabulary and grammar knowledge is evaluated through selecting correct answer, selecting true or false choice, matching and filling in the blanks tasks.			1.5
Wonder Share	Reading and listening comprehension is checked through selecting correct answer, selecting true or false choice, matching and filling in the blanks activities. At the level of spelling, it can be checked through selecting and filling in the blanks exercises. In spite of offering writing activities, checking free essay writing is not available in this template. Speaking neither can be practiced nor checked by means of this template. Student's vocabulary and grammar knowledge is evaluated through selecting correct answer, selecting true or false choice, matching, sequencing and filling in the blanks.			1.5
Time limiting for each activity		Efficiency	1	3
		Planning	2	
TESTA	TESTA can set time only once for all questions.			1
Hot Potatoes	Assigning time as much as needed to activities is an essential part of planning. It can set time once for all questions.			2
Wonder Share	This application lets the users have two choices for assigning a time limit. First they can assign a time to all activities, second they can do this for each activity alone based on the activity level of difficulty and learners' abilities.			3
Offering the activities based on the learners abilities		order	6	6
TESTA	To have a successful learning, activities should be presented based on learners' ability. This software lacks such capability. One test is offered for all.			0
Hot Potatoes	This template lacks such a capability.			0
Wonder Share	Offering the activities based on the learners current abilities is the feature hardly found in other template. This is the feature, which more promotes the personalization aspect of learning. This application poses such a helpful potentiality.			6
Easy to be used by the learners		Efficiency	1	1

TESTA	It is easy to be worked out by the learners after a brief explanation.			1	
Hot Potatoes	Learners have no problems engaging in the exercises provided by this template.			1	
Wonder Share	It is highly easy and interesting for the learners to working on the activities provided by this application in flash format.			1	
Donating rich results			Efficiency	1	1
TESTA	TESTA presents almost a complete details about the learner performance on the test for the both test taker and the teacher. The details include the information about number of questions, number of correct answers, number of incorrect answers, number of unanswered questions, total grade, answered and unanswered questions. It also provides information due to the learners' position between the other test takers. But the results were better to be forwarded to parents.			1	
Hot Potatoes	Hotpotatoes provides no detailed result of the work done at the end. It just provides ongoing feedback on the task is being done, since Hotpotatoes is not intended to be as a testing template.			0	
Wonder Share	Wondershare presents details about the performed test for the both test taker and the teacher. The details include the information about total questions, full score, passing rate, passing score, learner score, correct answer, answered questions and elapsed time. However, can be regulated in such a way that to ignore such statistics and play the role of learning template what is desired in constructivism. It also has the potentiality to send an e-mail containing the results to both teacher and learner / parents.			1	
Online availability			Efficiency	1	1
TESTA	It can be easily available online, but containing sound and video may cause some problems.			.5	
Hot Potatoes	It can be easily uploaded on personal blogs or websites to be available online, but added sound and video may cause some problems (as illustrated above).			.5	
Wonder Share	It can be easily published online on personal blogs and web sites or on LMS services. It can also be published as an auto-play exe file for CD delivery.			1	

## CONCLUSION

It goes without saying that each template has its own advantages and disadvantages, and they all have been developed with a rational behind, for instance templates like TESTA have been

developed when cognitivism has been the accepted learning approach and transmission of knowledge has been main process of teaching, but nowadays constructivism is the prominent approach to learning and knowledge is constructed through social interaction, TESTA and similar applications are less qualified for the purpose, simply because they are not capable enough to satisfy the educational requirement of the day such as collaboration. Hence, it is suggested to teachers and everyone who is interested in producing e-content for e-learning environment be familiar, in advance, with rules of the game.

Collaboration, assessment for learning, learner-oriented (personalized learning) and teacher facilitator are main concepts of constructivism, which can be promoted via providing variety of proper feedback: hence, templates' capability to provide variety of feedback in different forms is a critical property of any template. However, the quality of feedback and their effectiveness are the issues depended on teachers and content creators.

The weak point of all templates is that they all are not mature enough to support exercises promoting speaking in an interactive manner, hopping developer find a solution to this insufficiency. But, one word is certain: Wondershare Quiz Creator seems to be more in line with level of idealization in the post-modernists' era.

### **LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

One of the limitation of the study is that deciding on the criteria of simple manipulation of the templates and easiness of working out by learners, the researcher has evaluated the templates based on his personal understanding of the literature, which are certainly different from those of the others.

While there are a considerable number of templates other than those evaluated, which may possess more noticeable features in line with the dominant approach, this study has focused on restricted number of templates because of certain limitations.

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# THE EFFECT OF CULTURE TEACHING ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' READING ABILITY

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## ABSTRACT

Regarding the huge corpora of studies and theories about the interrelationship between language and culture, choosing more effective texts for teaching culture to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students to improve their reading skill is the main concern of this paper. In other words, the current study is an attempt to find out whether teaching culture through culture-teaching informative texts as direct channel of teaching culture or short stories as indirect channel of teaching culture in EFL environments can improve ELLs reading skill more effectively. So in a quasi-experimental design consisting of two groups of Iranian EFL students in which direct and indirect cultural texts were used separately, the performance of participants in a multiple choice test of reading general passages was statistically analyzed. The results indicated that teaching culture through direct cultural texts has more positive effect on Iranian ELLs reading skill than teaching it through short stories.

**KEY WORDS:** Culture, direct cultural texts, short stories, reading skill, English Language Learner (ELL), English as a foreign Language (EFL)

## INTRODUCTION

There are many definitions of culture in different disciplines. CARLA (Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition) for the purposes of the Intercultural Studies defines culture as "the shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through a process of *socialization*. These shared patterns identify the members of a culture group while also distinguishing those of another group."

Damen, L. (1987) has cited "Culture: learned and shared human patterns or models for living; *day- to-day living patterns*. These patterns and models pervade all aspects of human social interaction. Culture is mankind's primary adaptive mechanism" (p. 367). Culture in sociological fields can be defined as *the ways of thinking, the ways of acting*, and the material objects that together shape a people's way of life. For Georg Simmel (1858–1918), a major German sociologist, philosopher, and critic culture referred to "the cultivation of individuals through the agency of external forms which have been objectified in the course of history".

According to anthrobase there are two extremes of the definition of culture in anthropology: A) within ecological anthropology culture is described as a "tool" used by society to keep its "adaptation to nature". This "tool" consists of "*concrete, physical tools, but also knowledge, skills and forms of organization*." B) A number of anthropologists have a purely *cognitive* definition of

culture. The idea is that "culture may be limited to *the communicative and meaningful aspects of social life: from language to the meaning carried by symbols, persons, actions and events.*"

Oxford Dictionary defines culture as "The arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively; that which is excellent in the arts, manners, etc." It is defined in wiktionary .org as "The arts, customs, and habits that characterize a particular society or nation; The beliefs, values, behavior and material objects that constitute a people's way of life;..." So, in accordance with the above definitions there are various views toward culture like the way for socialization, adaptive mechanisms and tools, the agency of external forms, communicative and meaningful symbols, persons, actions and events.

So, when culture is:

- A) our shared human models for living and interactions, day- to-day living patterns, the ways of acting learnt through socialization;
- B) our cognitive constructs, the ways of thinking, affective understanding, arts, etc.

and when, according to many studies (e.g. Swender&Duncan (1998), Muyale-Manenji. F. (1998)) language and culture are interrelated, it can be hypothesized that if there is a positive effect of culture teaching on EFL learners' reading skill, there will be two ways, among others, through which ELLs reading skill can be improved. According to two categorized definitions of culture in this paper, one might be teaching culture directly through every-day life, informative-comparative texts and the other through literary texts as art.

Regarding culture as the fifth skill beside listening, speaking, reading and writing, Dr. Thomas Garza (2008) in "Foreign Language Teaching Methods" has stated that "It may generally be accepted in the language-teaching community that culture is an integral part of language instruction, but there is little consensus on *what*, much less *how*, we should teach it." Now this study is an attempt to see the effect of culturally informative texts versus short stories on students reading skill.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

When language is understood as a social practice rather than mere codes one way in which culture has often been understood is as knowledge that people have about a particular society, about cultural artifacts or works of art, about places and institutions, about events and symbols and in short about ways of living. In other words, it is a framework in which people live their lives and communicate their meanings and feelings. As a sociocultural approach places a large value on learners' experiences, social participation, use of mediating devices (tools and technologies), and position within various activity systems and communities of practice (Gee, 2008), Lantolf (2000) explains,

"Sociocultural theory holds that specifically human forms of mental activity arise in the interactions we enter into with other members of our culture and with the specific experiences we have with the artifacts produced by our ancestors and by our contemporaries. Rather than dichotomizing the mental and the social, the theory insists on a seamless and dialectic relationship between these two domains. In other

words, not only does our mental activity determine the nature of our social world, but this world of human relationships and artifacts also determines to a large extent how we regulate our mental processes.”

There are different models and approaches which investigate the effects of culture and interaction in target language contexts and environments like “Intercultural Interaction Model” (Culhane, S.F. 2004) ,“social interaction model of Vygotsky (socio-cultural theory) and ‘interaction approach in second language acquisition’ (Mackey, 2012 in Williams (Ed.)), ‘optimal distance model’ of second language acquisition (Brown, 1980) and ‘input-interaction-output model’ (Block, 2003). In general, through intercultural language learning, students engage with and learn to understand and interpret human communication and interaction in increasingly sophisticated ways. Intercultural language learning is best understood not as something to be added to teaching and learning but rather something that is integral to the interactions that already and inevitably takes place in (ESL)classrooms and beyond. But in EFL contexts and environment with students of different language and culture background the story is somewhat different, as the distinction between ‘General SLA’ and ‘Instructed SLA’, ‘Naturalistic SLA’ and ‘Instructed SLA’, ‘Acquisition’ and ‘Learning’. So, sociocultural theories must be an amendment for the conventional viewpoint that considers learning as largely uninfluenced by context. It must be a companion for SLA. While in sociocultural theories (SCT) and approaches language learning and teaching are mostly placed in target context and culture, in teaching culture in EFLformal classrooms, it is target culture that must be brought into language learning and teaching context. However, “the fundamental psycholinguistic process of second language acquisition is the same whether learners enter classrooms or acquire language outside of them.” (Gass, 1989, cited in Lantolf,2012). There are many leading researchers like Van Lier(1994), Erlam (2008), Nieto (2009) and many others who try to bridge theory, research and practice gap, though some are “cautious about such direct connection” (Ellis, 2008 cited in Lantolf, 2012), and in almost all books and research papers the final section is devoted to classroom praxis, but in fact teaching culture is a very critical job, firstly for the concept of culture and the practice of teaching and acquisition.

Lantolf (2012) compares SLA with SCT (Social Cognitive theory) and summarizes that “SLA focuses on and privileges learning over teaching. All developmental mechanisms are inside the learner [the container], while SCT focuses on dialectical unity of teaching/learning. Obuchenie is a central mechanism in development”. Obuchenie is Russian and is the noun associated with obuchit' (to teach or instruct) and with obuchit'cya (to learn). Take away the prefix "ob" and you're left with uchit' (which can be translated both as to teach [the first meaning] and to learn or memorize) and uchit'cya (to learn or to study). Besides, Ellis (2008) sates that “Sociocultural SLA proposes that L2 learning occurs intermentally as well as interamentally.... It emphasizes the social and cultural nature of learning while also recognizing that language is a mental phenomenon.” Widdowson (2000) distinguishes two functions of language: as a “subject”; i.e. the language teachers teach, “a pedagogic construct”, “an externalized language the linguist describes”, and an “object”; i.e. what language “users do” with language, “an experienced language that is a reality for the user”.

Culture has also been learned and studied in other disciplines as well. According to Dennis O'Neil (2012), anthropologists can learn about the culture of another society through a combination of five things:

1. Proper mental preparation (including adopting the cultural relativity perspective)
2. Participant-observation

3. Competence in using the host culture's language
4. Long-term residence
5. Luck in being at the right place at the right time."

He further asserts that although there some ways to study another society and its culture like fieldwork and first hand observation, called ethnography, systematic comparisons of similar cultures, called ethnology, the best way to really get to know another culture is participant observation; that is to live in target society as an active participant rather than simply an observer, to physically and emotionally participate in the social interaction of the host society. So, it must be best learned directly. But when it comes to language and culture teaching and learning in EFL classrooms the significance of 'direct' and 'indirect' might be redefined.

It has been said that culture is like an iceberg, that only ten percent of it is visible and the other ninety percent is hidden below the surface. For this reason, ESL teachers must make intentional efforts to teach cultural understanding. Borrowing from Bachmann (1990) there can be two "channels" to teach culture in EFL classrooms; i.e. visual and aural, in two "modes"; i.e. receptive and productive. Different combination of these channels and modes leads to different methods. For instance, EFL teachers can give students some cultural topics and bring a discussion of culture into the classroom and talk about target culture or provide them with videos and cultural internet texts and images or ask students to have a native target English speaker pen pal to write and chat and get to know the target culture in many other ways. But the method used in a formal EFL classroom in this study is to provide students with texts and ask them to read and answer the questions. But what kind of texts?

Culture, as the matter of fact, penetrates every aspect of our beings. Nieto (2009) states that "culture is complex and intricate. It cannot be reduced to holidays, foods or dances, although these are of course elements of culture..... culture is not simply rituals, foods and holidays of specific groups of people, but also the social markers that differentiate that group from others.... This view of culture implies that differences in ethnicity, language, social class and gender need not in and of themselves be barriers to learning. Instead, how these differences are viewed in society that can make the difference in whether and to what extent young people learn." "... [Teachers] they need to first acknowledge student's differences and then act as a bridge between their students differences and the culture of the dominant society.... A bridge provides access to a different shore without closing the possibility of returning home.

Furthermore, teaching culture directly (explicitly) or indirectly (implicitly) has different psycholinguistic mechanism on memory storage. Semantic memory which is kind of explicit memory, is the system for storing knowledge of the world and much of which can be accessed "quickly and effortlessly. It includes our memory of the meanings of words—the kind of memory that lets us recall not only the names of the world's great capitals, but also social customs, the functions of things, and their color and odor. It also includes our memory of the rules and concepts that let us construct a mental representation of the world.

On the other hand, implicit memory which is both unconscious and unintentional, cannot be exploited for "actions and reasoning". It is a memory "to perform events and tasks, or to produce a specific type of response. This type of memory is shown through activation of the sensory and

motor systems needed to perform a certain task. Procedural memory is a kind of implicit memory.

Moreover, Gay (2000) defines culturally responsive teaching as taking advantage of the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them; it teaches to and through the strengths of language learners. So, one of the best ways for teaching culture directly to students can be providing students with informative texts in an EFL classroom and then comparing different aspects of western culture with their native culture. This style of comparison-and-contrast through informative texts can also raise their consciousness, cognitive attention (Tomlina & Villa, 1994) and awareness to cultural differences and culture learning effectively enough. On the other hand, as one aspect of culture refers to art and literature, we can select short stories to teach culture. But since stories essentially have their own literary mission and application and their basic function depending on the genre basically is to narrate a plot or teach a theme, they can be indirectly used for the purpose of culture teaching to EFL students.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The current study has aimed to compare the effect of culture teaching via direct versus indirect cultural texts on EFL learners' reading ability. In other words it tries to see if the Iranian ELLs who are taught target culture by culturally informative- comparative texts outperform or underperform in a general reading test than the ones who are taught culture by short stories.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Method and Design*

The selected research design in this study was quasi-experimental in which two experimental groups, randomly-selected, participated. One group was taught culture through culturally informative-comparative texts and the other group was taught culture through short stories.

### *Participants and Materials.*

From a population of Persian monocultural, Iranian female language learners, aged 20-35, university students, the university graduated or holders of high school diploma, 4 classes of low-intermediate language proficiency level according to International House language level, equal to B1 according to CEF (Common European Framework), in one of the language institutes in an urban area in Isfahan city of Iran were chosen. To determine their level of English language proficiency, students passed a placement test consisting of two parts: a short written test, with a handy answer sheet for quick marking, followed by a more detailed oral test, similar to CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) placement test - Cornelsen. Its interview comprises some questions to test their pronunciation, language use and usage, fluency, ability to communicate, vocabulary and grammar. All four classes followed the regular program (with CLT method) of the institute, teaching same units (first three units) of one of EFL series of books (Total English, by Richard Acklam and Araminta Crace) at pre-intermediate level in 20 sessions. Since each group consists of 35 EFL learners and the number of students in each class was less than 35, two classes were selected for each treatment.

The participants in group 1 (two classes out of four) were taught English in the same program as group 2 but were taught cultural points through 10 texts which gave direct cultural information



about shopping, foods, holidays, driving, schooling and education, greeting, entertainment, party holding, exhibitions, child breeding, pet keeping, marriage and some other social family matters of the U.K., and some American culture information texts, from some credible Internet sources like [www.learnenglish.de/britishculture](http://www.learnenglish.de/britishculture) or in comparative style, comparing British culture with some other cultures like oriental and Arabic culture; for example a passage in book 'Paragraph Development' by Martin L. Arnaudet and Mary Ellen Barrett, p. 20. While group 2 were taught cultural points through 10 short stories by some writers like Langston Hughes or Pearl S. Buck from the book 'Oral Reproduction of stories' by Dr. Abbas Ali Rezai and some contemporary shorter stories from websites like [www.eslfast.com](http://www.eslfast.com) or [www.rong-chang.com/eslreadand](http://www.rong-chang.com/eslreadand) <http://www.readtheory.org>.

### ***Procedure***

There are some techniques for teaching culture developed by researchers like Taylor & Sorenson, 1961 (Culture Capsules, based on eight cultural categories, proposed by Taylor and Sorensen, namely Subcultural, Technology, Economic Organization, Social Organization, Political Organization, World View, Esthetics), Meade and Morain, 1973 (Culture Clusters), Fiedler et al., 1971 (Culture Assimilators), Gorden's prototype 1970 (Mini-Dramas, offered as the prototype audio-visual unit of the Cross-Cultural Communication Packet (CCCP)), Helen Wilkes, 1983 (Cultural Consciousness-Raising) and many others such as Kinesics and Body Language, Cultoons, Audio-motor Units, Critical Incidents/Problem Solving Media/Visuals, Celebrating Festivals etc. According to Christine Elmore (1997) in order to put teaching culture into classroom practice, we need to follow specific strategies including:

- "The lecture
- Native informants
- Audio-taped interviews
- Video-taped interviews/Observational dialogs
- Using authentic readings and realia for cross-cultural understanding (a four-stage approach to a cultural reading of authentic materials is very effective to lead students through the process of guided exploration and discovery : 1- Thinking, 2- Looking, 3- Learning, 4- Integrating)"

So, in the present paper the researcher used authentic reading texts and realia, and raised EFL students' cultural consciousness with combination of culture capsule and Cultural Consciousness-Raising. Thus, in addition to the syllabus of the term, on the basis of CLT (communicative language teaching) direct and indirect cultural texts were taught similarly. The teachers first engaged students by asking some related questions to activate their schema and prepare the learners. Then she pre-taught new key words of the text, after that, she asked them to skim if it was direct, if short story, read extensively, in limited time, subsequently she asked some general comprehension questions or called them to tell the plot summary of the story and asked students to look through the text for more details and do the exercises or she asked some more detailed and in-depth questions. Finally, she managed a class discussion about the cultural point of the story with students and highlighted them and asked ELLs to examine and compare with their own national or local culture. And then a 16-item multiple-choice reading comprehension tests of two general passages with culture hue at the level of low-intermediate was given to two groups.



## SCORING AND DATA ANALYSIS

In this study, the input of statistical analysis consisted of scores of students' answers to 16-item multiple-choice reading comprehension questions of two general passages selected from EFL graded tests by ETS on websites like <http://englishteststore.net>. Students received one mark for each correct answer and lose 1/3 mark for incorrect answer. Table 1 below shows the obtained scores of the subjects in reading comprehension of both groups. The frequency of scores is also enclosed in the table.

Table 1: Students' reading comprehension scores

Score	Frequency in Direct Group (G1)	Frequency in Indirect Group (G2)
14.66	3	2
14.33	2	1
14	1	2
13.33	3	2
13	4	2
12.66	3	3
12.33	3	
11.66	1	1
11.33	3	2
11	4	2
10.66	2	2
9	1	2
8.66	2	2
8.33	2	
8		3
7.66	1	3
7		2
6.66		
6.33		3
6		1

Information about the mean, standard deviation and standard error mean of the two groups are shown in Table 2. below

Table2: Group Statistics

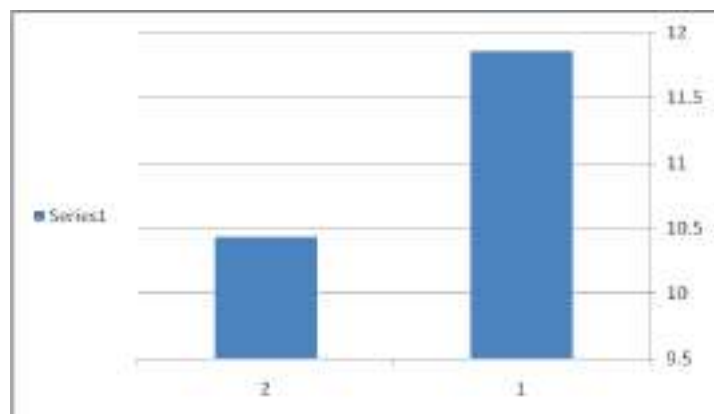
Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	SEM
SCORES 1.00	35	11.86	1.97	0.33
2.00	35	10.44	2.75	0.47

The higher mean of group 1, with mean difference of 1.41 implies that they have outperformed on reading test over group 2. The mean difference is confident enough, because in the 95%-confidence interval for mean difference is from 0.26 to 2.56. Besides, Direct group's lower standard deviation score shows that their scores are less dispersed from the mean value than that of Indirect group. Then, a t-test was used for assessing the difference between the means of scores obtained by the two groups. The type of utilized t-test is independent or uncorrelated because the two sets of scores come from two different samples. So, it is used to calculate whether the means of two sets of scores taken from Direct and Indirect groups are significantly different from each other. Table 3.illustrates the results obtained from the t-test application.

Table 3: Independent Sample Test

	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
SCORE Equal variances assumed	2.4591	0.016	1.4155	0.576

The t value for equal variance is 2.4591 and has the two-tailed significance level of 0.0165 which is less than two-tailed probability value; i.e. the two-tailed P value is less than 0.05, by conventional criteria, this difference of two groups' performance is considered to be statistically significant. The mean of reading scores of students taught through direct cultural materials (M=11.8631, SD=1.9742) is significantly higher (t=2.4591, two-tailed p=0.05) than that of students taught through indirect cultural materials (M=10.4476, SD=2.7544) and this fact is demonstrated in graph 1 below.



Graph 1: Mean difference between Direct and Indirect group (G1 and G2)

## DISCUSSION

There would be innumerable factors involved in students' skill to read in EFL. Among these numerous factors, ELLs' culture knowledge of target language has been picked out in the present study to see how we can better improve it in order to take advantage of it for accelerating EFL reading ability of Iranian ELLs. Direct culture teaching may have such effects on the function of ELLs' cognition that leads to more efficient ability to read in EFL.

'Implicit Learning' and 'Explicit Learning' are two terms that are largely investigated and accepted in cognitive psychology (for example, Eysenck, 2001). Implicit learning is learning unintentionally without learner's awareness. For instance, learners are exposed to input data for processing meaning but being investigated for learning any L2 linguistic properties. However, it cannot promise that learning is absolutely without awareness. Since researchers believe that any learning is impossible without some degree of awareness (Ellis, 2008).

Explicit learning, on the other hand, is an intentional conscious process. For instance, learners are given an explicit rule and asked to use it or they are asked to discover an explicit rule from data provided. These two types of learning, as a result, lead to implicit and explicit knowledge. (Ellis,

2008). Learning involves both implicit and explicit knowledge, which interact at the level of performance. Although Ellis (1990), believes that implicit and explicit L2 knowledge are different in kind and are held separately in brain he, Ellis et al. (2009), postulated three different interface kinds between implicit and explicit L2 knowledge:

- “1. According to strong interface position, explicit knowledge can be converted into implicit knowledge when learners practice explicit and declarative rules.
2. According to non-interface position, implicit and explicit knowledge are held separate in brain and each involves rigidly distinct mechanisms and thus cannot be converted to each other.
3. According to the weak interface position, explicit knowledge can assist the acquisition of implicit knowledge by making some aspects of input salient and noticeable to learners.” (Rassaei et al. (2012))

Moreover, according to Richards & Schmidt 2009, the interface hypothesis is a concept in second language acquisition that describes the various possible theoretical relationships between implicit and explicit knowledge in the mind of a second language learner. There are three basic positions in the interface hypothesis: the no-interface position, the strong-interface position, and various weak-interface positions. The no-interface position states that there is no relationship between these two types of knowledge; in other words, knowledge that has been learned explicitly can never become fast, automatic language knowledge. This position has been largely discredited, and the debate has now focused on the strong- and weak-interface positions. The strong-interface position states that explicit language knowledge can always become implicit language knowledge, and that such knowledge becomes implicit through repeated practice. This position is most often associated with skill-building theories of second language acquisition. The weak-interface positions state that explicit language knowledge can become implicit to some extent, but that these are limited by various developmental factors.

According to Ellis et al. (2009), there are four instruments used to assess implicit and explicit *knowledge*. “Measuring Implicit and Explicit Knowledge of a Second Language” Ellis discusses five knowledge tests, namely the Elicited Oral Imitation Test, the Oral Narrative Test, the Timed Grammaticality Judgment Test (TGJT), the Untimed Grammaticality Test (UGJT), and the Metalinguistic Knowledge Test. Ellis explains the test features that distinguish between implicit and explicit knowledge. The experimental results indicate that these tests can be used for measuring either implicit or explicit knowledge. He used EI - and TGJT for measuring implicit, and UGJT and MKT for explicit knowledge of grammar in a study.

Dupuy and Krashen(1993) investigated implicit learning of vocabulary by asking learners to read a book and then test them to see if they learned any new vocabulary in the process. In this study, as well, students were given culturally comparative-informative texts and short stories, used as reading texts for the purpose of teaching target culture. As a consequence, students were investigated for any development of their reading ability in EFL in Iran which is monocultural. As to the interrelationship of language and culture, the outperformance of group 1, treated by direct cultural texts, could result in improving students’ cultural knowledge more effectively than group 2, treated by short stories as indirect cultural texts. Moreover, G 1 students’ better scores on general reading test at the end of the treatment could be due to their more efficient implicit learning than G 2 students’ as well. Besides, we can say students’ explicit learning and knowledge of (learning) culture has stronger interface with their implicit knowledge of (learning) reading in Direct group. That is using direct cultural texts for the purpose of teaching culture to students through reading, can increase EFL learners’ both explicit knowledge; i.e. cultural knowledge, and

implicit knowledge; i.e. knowledge of reading, more successfully than using short stories as indirect cultural texts for the same purpose.

The most well-known of Skill-based theories of second language acquisition is based on John Anderson's adaptive control of thought model (VanPatten & Benati, 2010). In this model, skill acquisition is seen as a progression from declarative to procedural knowledge (Richards & Schmidt 2009). Second language acquisition is seen as a progression through three stages, declarative, procedural, and autonomous (VanPatten & Benati, 2010). So higher development of EFLs' reading skill in G1 can be interpreted as higher progression in these three stages by direct cultural texts than short stories as indirect ones.

## **CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH**

In the light of the above findings, the research question posed in the current study can be answered that teaching culture through comparative-informative texts has more positive effect on Iranians EFL learners' reading skill than through short stories. In other words, the findings indicated that teaching culture through direct cultural texts had a distinct advantage over indirect cultural texts in improving EFL reading skill.

The present study can also lead to some more research shedding more light on the underlying cognitive mechanisms by which the students treated by direct cultural texts outperform in reading test in comparison to short stories. Follow-up research can pursue the relationship between teaching cultures through other media like videos or internet chats on other skills like writing. Moreover, due to the limitations of this study like gender, nationality, context and setting, further researches can investigate the same issue on both genders, different levels of language proficiency or on immigrants or recently-immigrated students into an English speaking country with other instructional and instrumental tools. As a matter of fact, SLA studies always merit attention of researchers to develop the art of teaching English to students the best feasible effective way.

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## COMMUNICATION OF MULTIPLE IDENTITIES THROUGH AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING

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### ABSTRACT

Identities are always in process, constructed across contexts and over time. Who we are is shaped both by various contexts and our perceptions of “self” within those contexts and by how we are perceived or positioned by others (McCarthy & Moje, 2002). “Autobiographical self” is the identity which people bring with them to any act of writing, shaped as it is by their prior social and discursive history. In the current paper, the researcher analysed the autobiographical section of the introduction to a book in order to unveil the writer’s identities. The study was conducted within the social constructionist theory and a combination of literary, linguistic and interpretive approaches were used in analyzing the data. The writer of the autobiography communicated series of identities by varying her linguistic choices. As a result, multiple identities were discovered from the analysis of the data ranging from individual, academic to social roles. The findings of the study were the identities that the writer constructed in her writing. From the analysis, the writer of the autobiographical extract can be identified mainly as: a narrator, an academic, a researcher, a writer, a wife and a mother.

**KEY WORDS:** Identity, Identity construction, Communication, Autobiographical writing, Autobiographical self, Social constructionist theory.

### INTRODUCTION

Generally, writing is not only about presenting content, it also entails representation of self. According to Ivanic (1998), the totality of our writing is influenced by our life-histories. She added that each lexical item we employ in writing reflects our encounters or multiple past experiences. Writing is not some neutral activity which we just learn like a physical skill, but it implicates every fibre of the writer’s multi-faceted being (ibid). As individuals, we write our stories as a way of constructing lives and claiming identities. Thus, identity and language are linked through personal narratives and life stories. Narrative inquiry focuses on lives and lived experiences. It takes as its object of investigation the story itself (Riessman, 1993) and allows for systematic study of personal experience and meaning. Personal stories, though are not merely a way of telling someone about one’s life, but rather they are the means by which identities may be fashioned (Rosenwald & Ochsberg, 1992). In the process of talking about ourselves as writers we are influenced by societal values, and attitudes about what writing is, and who writers are (Brandt, 2001; Clark & Ivanic, 1997). Drawing on their conception of the autobiographical self as one aspect of writer identity, Clark and Ivanic suggest that writing is affected by writers’ life histories and a sense of their roots even as they write. Life histories shape the sense of self-esteem and status with which they approach all aspects of social life, including writing.

The act of telling an autobiographical narrative is a performance that can position the narrator and the audience in various ways. The narrator assumes a particular version of the social world in which he or she exists and positions himself or herself and the audience with respect to each other. Langelier (2001) and MacLean (1988) theorize narrative as performance in a similar way. In the telling of a personal narrative, the teller creates a two-way narrative contact between teller

and audience. The narrator takes the experience of the narrated event and makes it the experience of those listening to the story. There is a constitutive aspect of narrative, referred to by Butler (1990) as a “performativity”. With this concept, the “self” emerges as a person and repeatedly adopts characteristic positions with respect to others and within recognizable cultural patterns in everyday social actions. As the positions that partly constitute the self depend on social contexts that shift over time, and on the unpredictable counter positioning of others, the self is an ongoing, open-ended, and often heterogeneous construction (Wortham, 2001).

The fact is that who we are affects how we write and whatever we are writing, whether it is a letter to a friend, a dissertation or an autobiography. This means the subject positions and social relations which are set up for us as a consequence of our social class, ethnicity, gender, physical build, abilities and disabilities, and the way these are constructed in the socio-cultural context in which we live. These socially-constructed possibilities for self-hood, according to Ivanic (1998), in turn shape our life-history of experiences, events, encounters and opportunities; hopes, fears and disappointments; values, beliefs and allegiances; self-confidence, anxieties and desires, and the tensions and contradictions in our lives (all these have bearing on our writing).

The main claim of this paper is that writing is an act of identity in which people align themselves with socio-culturally shaped subject positions and thereby play their part in reproducing or challenging dominant practices and discourses, and the values, beliefs and interests which they embody.

## **THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The present study is situated within the social constructionist theory. The choice of this theory is appropriate as it incorporates communication, identity construction and autobiographical writing which are pivotal to the study. As social constructionist theorists have convincingly argued, possibilities for self-hood and the patterns of privileging among them shape and constrain actual people writing actual texts. These possibilities for self-hood do not exist in a vacuum but are themselves shaped by individual acts of writing in which people take on particular discursive identities.

Bakhtin (1981) theorized that individuals engage in internal dialogue that may aid in the process of constructing and reconstructing ourselves as we struggle to make meaning of experiences and actions. Giddens (1991) points out that the diversity of socially available options for the self is a characteristic of what he calls “the late modern age”. What Giddens means is that the self, like the broader institutional contexts in which it exists, has to be reflexively made. Yet this task has to be accomplished amid a puzzling diversity of options and possibilities and against the backdrop of new forms of mediated experience, self-identity becomes a reflexively organised endeavour. The reflexive projection of the self, which consists in the sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives, takes place in the context of multiple choices. Giddens’ (1991) claim is a powerful way of conceptualizing continuity and change in a person’s identity over time. It locates identity in events and experience, rather than perceiving it as a quality or attribute. According to Giddens, the self consists not of a person’s life-history, but of

the interpretation they are currently making of their life history. Giddens added that the self is in this way doubly socially constructed: both by the socially constrained nature of the life experience itself, and by the social shaping of the interpretation. Ivanic (1998) suggests that writing makes a particularly tangible contribution to the reflexive projection of the self, with a three-way interplay between the writer's life-experience, their sense of self, and the reality they are constructing through their writing.

People who take a social constructionist view of identity reject the idea that any type of identity – political, sexual, emotional – is solely the product of individuals' minds and intentions, and believe that it is the result of affiliation to particular beliefs and possibilities which are available to them in their social context (Gergen & Davis, 1985). But identity is not socially determined but socially constructed (Ivanic, 1998). This means that the possibilities for the self are not fixed, but open to contestation and change.

A critical view of the social construction of identity not only recognizes the powerful influence of dominant ideologies in controlling and constraining people's sense of themselves, but also recognizes the possibility of struggle for alternative approaches. For individuals alone, contestation of damaging constructions of their identities may well be doomed to failure; however, without this possibility of contesting dominant constructions of reality, our social identities, the prospect for humanity would be extremely bleak. These issues of power and power struggle are relevant to all aspects of the social construction of identity, among which language, literacy and writing exist alongside other forms of social action.

Identities are also linked to language and associated with particular discourses (Gee, 1990). Sarup (1996) suggests that identity is constructed in and through language. Gee (1990) has theorized that this linkage may constitute an identity kit that signals we are members of particular groups. For Gee, discourses are ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, beliefs, attitudes, social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions and clothes. Depending on the setting, we can take on different identities, yet the relational nature of identity suggests that there are relationships between our various selves and with groups. Drawing largely on work around writers and academic writing, Clark and Ivanic (1997) suggest that writers bring with them cultural and linguistic elements related to opportunities and life chances that may provide affordability or lead to failures which in turn impact writer identity. Insistence on standardization by society and schools condemns those who have difficulty with mechanical aspects of written language, and it places teachers in the impossible position of having to perpetuate the hold these beliefs have over society (ibid). Thus, viewing oneself as a writer is related to the sense of power and status writers bring with them as part of their life-history. Writers differ in how much they feel themselves to be not just writers but also authors with the authority to say something.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this section, the writer places the current study in the context of work done by other researchers with the view of showing how the present study is both similar and different from previous ones. Many studies across a wide spectrum of academic disciplines have focused on identity construction. The present paper looks at the issue of identity construction in autobiographical writing. Kehily (1995) is similar to the present work, in that, it looks at the way people use narratives to construct individual identities through the personal narratives of storytelling and autobiography. However, Kehily goes beyond the current study since it draws upon

the work of the gender and sexuality group that met at the Department of Cultural Studies of the University of Birmingham. The group aimed to explore issues of gender and sexuality in relation to identity construction. Group members identified broad themes collectively then wrote stories individually. They also drew upon and used photographs to reconstruct memories of the past in the context of the present. While the present paper focuses on autobiographical writing, Kehily (1995) relies on the use of stories and self-narration in the process of identity construction.

Ros (2004) also uses narrative accounts to explore intercultural experiences and the perception of the self by second language (L2) users. Extracts from the autobiographies of three Chicano writers from the 1980s: Richard Rodriguez's *Hunger for Memory*, Ilan Stavans's *On Borrowed Words* and Gloria Anzaldua's *Borderlands: La Frontera* were used to illustrate the socialization processes that take place when acquiring a second or third language and the creation of bilingual identities. The current paper is similar to Ros (2004) as the former also uses a narrative extract from a writer's work. However, the latter has a different feature as its data analysis follows post-structuralist and post-modern theories of cultural and language identity. The narrative analysis of Ros (2004) was on the one hand based on the theory of language which highlights the unequal relationships of power between different speakers, and on the other, on the premise that identities are multiple and subject to change over time.

Brockmeier and Carbaugh (2001) look at the issue of narrative identity from the perspective of scholars from psychology, philosophy, social sciences, literary theory, classics, psychiatry, communication and film theory. Brockmeier and Carbaugh's work was based on views on the importance of narrative as an expressive embodiment of our experience, as a mode of communication and as a form for understanding the world and ultimately ourselves. Brockmeier and Carbaugh (2001) share some similarity with Kehily (1995) and Ros (2004) in the sense that they all focus on the process of autobiographical identity construction. What all the writers highlight is that the construction of self draws on a particular genre of language usage: narration.

Afful and Mwinlaaru (2010) explored the connection between identity construction and the linguistic features of a Master's Dissertation acknowledgement, written by a student of Literary Studies. The element of similarity between Afful and Mwinlaaru (2010) and the present study is that both writers of the Dissertation Acknowledgement and the autobiographical extract, vary linguistic choices at the lexical, grammatical and discoursal levels, in order to construct numerous and different identities. However, the area of distinction between the current study and Afful and Mwinlaaru (2010) is that while the latter applied identity theory from social psychology and social language from Applied Linguistics in analyzing the data, the former was conducted within the social constructionist theory.

Mpungose (2010) investigated the construction of professional identities of Principals in the education service through life stories. According to him, such identities are constructed and developed over an extended period of time, ranging from the time of the principals' entry into the teaching profession to their appointment as school managers and leaders. While the current study did both literary and linguistic analysis of an autobiographical piece of writing, Mpungose (2010) used a life history approach to collect data from six selected school principals in KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. Mpungose (2010) discovered that the principals constructed their professional

identities from their personal and professional knowledge. The study also revealed that professional identity involves professional socialization and development which according to Brott & Kays (2001) is a social learning process that includes the acquisition of specific knowledge and skills that are required in a professional role and the development of new values, attitudes and self-identity components.

Mpungose (2010) is similar to Eliot and Turns (2011) in the area of professional identity construction. However, while the former was based on employees in the education service, the later investigated engineering students. Eliot and Turns (2011) explored the process students employed during portfolio construction to identify themselves as engineers and as future professionals. Analysis of the survey responses revealed that participants had two primary frames of reference for the construction of professional identity during portfolio creation. The external frame of reference which focused on students' understanding of the expectations of potential employers and recruiters and the internal frame of reference which focused on students' emerging realizations of their own values and interests as professional engineers.

While Afful and Mwinlaaru (2010) and the current study analyzed written texts, Mieroop (2008) investigated the way speakers constructed their identities as representatives of their companies (institutional identity construction) in relation to the way they projected an identity onto their audiences. The speaker then presented his company in the complementary role of seller of a product and as such a link is established between the identities of the speaker's company and the audience. This discursive co-construction of identities is crucial for the way both identities received meaning. The two cases, on one hand, show similarities in the general pattern of the two identity constructions and the way they are interwoven with one another, but on the other hand also demonstrate that there are many unique and diverging ways of constructing and linking identities.

## DATA SOURCE AND SAMPLE

The data used in the present study is an autobiographical extract from the introduction to the book entitled *Writing and Identity: The discursual construction of identity in academic writing* (Ivanic, 1998). The writer devoted the initial part of the detailed and impressive introduction to her book to communicating her identities before she touched on issues pertaining to the content of her book. The autobiographical segment of the introduction is an exposition of who the writer really is. The autobiographical extract can be seen below:

<sup>1</sup>*Who am I as I write this book?* <sup>2</sup>*I am not a neutral, objective scribe conveying the objective results of my research impersonally in my writing.* <sup>3</sup>*I am bringing to it a variety of commitments based on my interests, values and beliefs which are built up from my own history as a white English woman aged 51 from a middle class family, as an adult educator in multi-ethnic, central London in the 1970s and 80s, as a wife and mother, as someone who only seriously engaged with the academic community in my late thirties, now a lecturer in a department of linguistics, teaching and researching in the field of language, literacy and education.* <sup>4</sup>*I am a writer with a multiple social identity, tracing a path between competing ideologies and their associated discourses.* <sup>5</sup>*I have an idea of the sort of person I want to appear in the pages of this book: responsible, imaginative, insightful, rigorous, committed to making my research relevant to adults who return to study.* <sup>6</sup>*At any rate, that is the sort of person I think I want to be as a member of the academic discourse community.* <sup>7</sup>*I would want to appear responsible, imaginative, insightful, rigorous and committed in most of my social roles, but not all.* <sup>8</sup>*For*



*example, I'm not sure how important it is to me in my role as a mother to be rigorous.<sup>9</sup> There are also parts of my identity as a mother which I do not think I portray in my academic writing, such as being loving.<sup>10</sup> As the coordinator of the Language Support Unit at Kingsway College in London for 11 years, as instructor in developmental education at San Joaquin Delta College, Stockton, California for a year, and as someone involved in the various developments in the UK National Adult Literacy Campaign since 1974, I see the purpose of my professional life—my vocation—as contributing to work which helps adults develop the Literacy Research Group at Lancaster University.<sup>11</sup> My reason for focusing on writing rather than any other aspect of their studying process is that students themselves perceive writing as their main stumbling block.*

The extract above illustrates the writer's autobiographical self which according to Ivanic (1998) is associated with a writer's sense of his roots, of where he is coming from, and that this identity he brings with him to writing is itself socially constructed and constantly changing as a consequence of his developing life—history.

## **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

Qualitative researchers use the life history approach to gather events and happenings in people's lives as their data and then use its analytical procedures to produce explanatory stories (Polkinghorne, 1995). The present study uses literary and linguistic analysis and interpretive approaches to unearth the identities of the writer of the autobiographical extract under discussion. Generally, writers see themselves to a greater or lesser extent as authors. This aspect of writer identity is associated with the writer's "voice" in the sense of the writer's position, opinions and beliefs. In the written mode of communication, the self as author is particularly significant since writers differ considerably in how far they claim authority as the source of the content of the text, and in how far they establish an authorial presence in their writing.

The extract in focus is a narrative account written by a scholar, depicting her life and character (Murfin & Ray, 1998). The extract is introduced by the rhetorical question, "*who am I as I write this book?*" The obvious answers to this fundamental identity question can be found within the context of the extract and they define the writer's identities (Stryker & Serpe, 1982). In the extract, the writer communicates her identities through the first person pronoun "I". The writer is the narrative voice (the persona) telling a story about herself. The extract is therefore written in the first person narrative point of view (Torto, 2005). This is a narrative technique in which the narrator appears as the pronoun "I", recollecting his or her experiences. One advantage of the first person narrative style is that the reader is likely to accept what the narrator presents in the text.

The second sentence of the extract "*I am not a neutral objective scribe conveying the objective results of my research impersonally in my writing*" sets the stage for a subjective presentation of the writer's identities. The extract is about the writer's life; it is therefore presented from a personal or individual point of view. The writer draws heavily on her own experiences, feeling and thinking in the construction of her identities. The word "*scribe*" in the second sentence is an archaic form. It is no longer in current use in the English language. By the use of archaism in the extract, the writer has evoked an image or attitude associated with the past.



The third sentence of the extract is long and complex. The first structure *“I am brining to it a variety of commitments based on my interests, values and beliefs”* is an independent clause which is introducing the sudden outburst of identities. In the clause, the phrase *“my interest, values and beliefs”* is indicative of the writer’s subjective stance. What follows the independent clause is a relative clause *“which are built up from my own history”* which is post-modifying *“my interests, values and beliefs”*. Again, the writer sounds subjective with reference to *“my own history”*. There is a spontaneous expression of multiple identities presented in parallel structures: *“as a white English woman aged 51 from a middle class family, as an adult educator in multi-ethnic, central London in the 1970s and 80s, as a wife and mother, as someone who only seriously engaged with the academic community in my late thirties, now a lecturer in a department of linguistics, teaching and researching in the field of language, literacy and education”*. The writer has employed parallelism, a rhetorical device, by presenting her ideas in grammatically similar constructions. Parallel constructions create a sense of balance that can be meaningful and revealing. By using parallelism, writers implicitly invite their readers to pay attention to the parallel elements or ideas (Murfin & Ray, 1998). The writer of the current extract has presented a litany of identities based on her life-history. This multiplicity of identities is in consonance with identity theorists who argue that the self consists of a collection of identities, each of which is based on occupying a particular role (Stryker, 1968; Stryker & Burke, 2000). These role identities are said to influence behavior in that each role has a set of associated meanings and expectations for the self (Burke & Reitzes, 1981).

The fourth sentence *“I am a writer with a multiple social identity, tracing a path between competing ideologies and their associated discourses”* introduces another dimension to identity construction in the extract: social identity. While identity theory focuses on the self as comprised of the various roles an individual occupies, social identity theory, on the other hand, postulates that the groups to which people belong can provide their members a definition of who they are (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995).

In the fifth sentence, the writer also enacts multiple identities. She uses series of adjectives to depict a list of attributes: *“I have an idea of the sort of person I want to appear in the pages of this book: responsible, imaginative, insightful, rigorous, committed to making my research relevant to adults who return to study.”* Sentence six emphasizes the writer’s conviction to enact the qualities she has mentioned in the fifth sentence: *“At any rate, that is the sort of person I think I want to be as a member of the academic discourse community”*. The seventh sentence reiterates the attributes *“I would want to appear responsible, imaginative, insightful, rigorous and committed in most of my social roles but not all.”* In literary analysis, repetition is for emphasis. The writer is therefore stressing these identities and by this style he is placing them at the forecourt of the readers’ attention.

The eighth sentence *“For example, I’m not sure how important it is to me in my role as a mother to be rigorous”* is complementing the contrastive structure *“but not all”* that ends the seventh sentence. The writer thinks she should make some exceptions in relation to the multiple attributes she has already mentioned. She thinks she can be a rigorous academic; however, in the ninth sentence she modifies the generalization of her rigorous identity; she adds another identity *“loving mother”*. The five identities: responsible, imaginative, insightful, rigorous and committed to research, portray the writer as an academic; nevertheless, she appeals to the reader to consider her social role as a mother as loving.

Sentence ten, like sentence three above, is long and complex. Sentence ten is in two parts: The first part comprises similarly constructed grammatical structures arranged in a sequence suggesting some correspondence between them. The writer, again, employs the parallelism device at this part of the extract to present her multiple identities: *“As the coordinator of the Language Support Unit at Kingsway College in London for 11 years, as instructor in developmental education at San Joaquin Delta College, Stockton, California for a year, and as someone involved in the various developments in the UK National Adult Literacy Campaign since 1974, I see the purpose of my professional life—my vocation—as contributing to work which helps adults develop the Literacy Research Group at Lancaster University.”* Although repetition often plays an important role in establishing parallelism, the device is used in this context with subtle variations. The parallel structures are expressing a similar idea and they serve as introduction to the second part of sentence ten which is the main clause: *“I see the purpose of my professional life—my vocation—as contributing to work which helps adults develop the Literacy Research Group at Lancaster University.”* This clause is indeed independent and it is stating a fact about the writer’s autobiographical self (my professional life – my vocation). The clause also accentuates the writer’s contribution to knowledge. The writer’s subjective stance in the extract is also realised in the clause.

The eleventh and final sentence of this autobiography states the reason for the writer’s choice of vocation: *“My reason for focusing on writing rather than any other aspect of their studying process is that students themselves perceive writing as their main stumbling block”*. It is obvious that the writer has observed that students’ interests, attitude and knowledge in writing leaves much to be desired. The writer has chosen her profession in order to render a helping hand to students in the area of writing. The eleventh sentence is the epilogue of the display of multiple identities by the writer.

## **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

The current study has analysed the autobiographical section of the introduction to a book on writing and identity. The writer of the autobiography communicated her multiple identities by varying her lexical items and grammatical structures. The method of analysis was a combination of literary, linguistic and interpretive approaches. The study was conducted within the framework of the social constructionist theory which posits that self-hood shapes and constrains writing. Social constructionist theorists are also of the view that identity is located in events and experiences and that the “self” is socially constructed by the socially constrained nature of the life experience itself. The findings of the study were the multiple identities that were constructed by the writer through her autobiographical writing. The writer’s identities were constructed through the roles she performed in her professional life. The roles range from personal, academic, institutional, literary to social.

The current study has established series of facts concerning writing and identity. First, personal stories are the means by which identities may be fashioned. Second, a writer’s autobiographical self at any moment in time is the product of their past experience and encounters in all their richness and complexity. Third, a writer’s autobiographical self is constantly evolving over time. Fourth, a writer may construct a quite different discursive self from one text to another,

depending partly on the different demands of different occasions for writing. Finally, the autobiographical self is perhaps the closest thing to what people mean by “my identity” since this is unique to each individual.

The present paper has a number of implications. In the first place, it has implications for the theories of identity and social construction as it proves the fact that identity construction is a multi-faceted dynamic process embedded in social structure and manifested in discourse. Secondly, this paper contributes to the “self” in autobiographical writing. The paper has proved that who we are affects how we write and whatever we are writing. The paper also claimed that writing is an act of identity and that autobiographical self is the identity which people bring with them to any act of writing and this is shaped by their social and discursive history. Finally, this paper stimulates interest in research in literary analysis of academic texts.

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## MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES AS PREDICTORS OF SELF-EFFICACY

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### ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to investigate types of intelligences as predictors of self-efficacy (general self-efficacy). The participants were 148 male and female Iranian B.A. students majoring in teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL) and Translation at Takestan Azad University, Zanzan University, Zanzan Azad University, Payame Noor University of Zanzan, Payame Noor University of Abhar, and Shaheed Rajaei Teacher Training University. The instruments included a 100-item Michigan test, Gardner's MI questionnaire, and a 12-item General Self-efficacy scale. Data were analyzed through multiple regression analyses. Results indicated that musical and linguistic intelligences were predictors of general self-efficacy.

**KEY WORDS:** Multiple Intelligences, self-efficacy, general self-efficacy.

### INTRODUCTION

The Multiple Intelligences Theory (MIT), proposed in the early 1980s by Gardner, provided evidence that there are several independent ability areas, unlike traditional general intelligence concentrating on a narrow range of two logical-mathematical and linguistic intelligences. He redefined the concept of intelligence as a "biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture" (Gardner, 1999, pp. 33-34).

Most previous studies in the field of second and foreign language learning have been conducted from the learners' perspective, and learners play a vital role in investigations. The application of multiple intelligences theory (MIT) is suggested as a structured way to address and understand the holistic nature of learners' diversity (Christison, 1996; Arnold & Fonseca, 2004). Besides MIs, another issue of increasing importance is learner beliefs about their potentials known as self-efficacy (SE). Bandura (1997) defines self-efficacy as "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (p. 3).

Although many studies have been conducted on MI and self-efficacy, few of them have explored the interrelationship between MI and self-efficacy, especially in foreign language learning situations. This justifies the need for studies relating MI theory aimed at fostering learners' intelligence profiles to learners' self-efficacy. Therefore, the present study aims to answer the following research question: Which type of multiple intelligences is a better predictor of generalized self-efficacy?



## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Multiple Intelligences***

During the last two decades, Gardner's MIs has been appreciated in language learning. Gardner (1983) suggested several intelligences to be at work simultaneously; so he changed the perception of a general factor of intelligence. He claims that humans possess a number of distinct intelligences that are manifested in different skills and abilities. Gardner (1983) believes that each person possesses at least seven basic intelligences. Armstrong (2002, p. 6) explained these intelligences as follows:

Linguistic intelligences: the ability to use words effectively.

Logical/mathematical intelligence: the capacity to use numbers and reason effectively.

Spatial intelligence: the ability to recognize form, space, color, line, and shape.

Bodily/kinesthetic intelligence: the ability to use body to express ideas and produce things.

Musical: The ability to recognize and perceive musical forms.

Interpersonal intelligence: the ability to understand the feeling and intention of other people.

Intrapersonal intelligence: the ability of self-knowledge and self-understanding.

Haley (2004) showed that through the implementation of MIT, students achieve greater success rates and develop a high degree of satisfaction and positive attitude toward the content. To find empirical evidence for this claim, a number of investigations have been done. Green's study (1999) supports this view by finding that the MI-based classrooms successfully produced environments with rich materials in which learners were motivated in the process of their learning. Temiz and Kiraz (2007) tried to find out whether the implementation of MIT has any effect on Literacy Education (LE). The results showed a positive relationship between them.

In another study, IKiz and Çakar (2010) studied the relationship between multiple intelligences and the academic achievement levels. Academic achievement scores turned out to be related to students' multiple intelligences. Results also contribute awareness to the self knowledge and self-efficacy of the students and to developing programs to improve their academic achievement.

The MIT, which provides a new approach in education, is the most important theory in the area of personal development area (Tirri & Komulainen, 2002). Nowadays, teachers apply the MI-based educational program since it addresses a variety of ways people learn (Shore, 2004; Kallenbach, 1999). The relationship between multiple intelligences and the learning of second language skills is a burgeoning area of research. In this regard, Ahmadian and Hosseini (2012) showed a statistically significant relationship between L2 learners' MI and their writing performance. In another study, Marefat (2007) concluded that kinesthetic, existential, and interpersonal intelligences were the best predictors of writing scores. However, Sadeghi and Farzizadeh (2012) indicated contrary results, that the components of MI did not have a significant relationship with the writing ability of the participants. Similarly, Hajhashemi and Eng (2012) reported no significant correlation between MI and the performance in reading competency.

In a study by Panahi (2011), the relationship between MI and the grammar knowledge of male and female EFL learners was examined. Results showed a significant relationship between MI of the learners and their grammar knowledge. In another study, Zarei and Mohseni (2012)



investigated the relationship between four types of intelligence and grammatical and writing accuracy of EFL learners. The results indicated that intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences were predictors of grammar accuracy, and intrapersonal intelligence was also a significant predictor of the learners' writing accuracy.

Another aspect of MI theory is the relationship between MIs and language learning strategies. In this regards, Hajhashemi, et al., (2011) reported a low positive correlation between MI and different strategy types. It was also revealed that the highest correlation was between meta-cognitive strategies and MI, followed by compensation and cognitive strategies.

### ***Self-efficacy***

Self-efficacy is grounded in a larger theoretical framework known as Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), in which there are bidirectional interactions between the cognitive, behavioral and environmental or situational contexts (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Self-efficacy beliefs are not a stable attribute of an individual, but they are an active and learned system of beliefs held in context. The concept of self-efficacy is concerned with judgments of one's capability to produce a given pattern of behavior (Schunk, 1981).

According to Bandura (1994, 1997) and Bandura et al., (2003), learners can construct their self-efficacy beliefs through four sources of experiences including mastery experiences, vicarious experience or modeling, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states. Mastery experiences are the most influential factor for developing self-efficacy and it helps learners determine the level of effort necessary for a success (Bandura, 1997).

The concept of self-efficacy has been widely investigated in various aspects of second and foreign language learning. Pintrich and De Groot (1990) showed that self-efficacy facilitated cognitive engagement. The study conducted by Mohsenpour, et al., (2008) revealed a negative relationship between self-efficacy and learning strategies. However some other researchers were against this claim by finding a positive relationship between these variables (e.g. Ames & Archer, 1988; Elliot, 1999).

Carroll, et al., (2009) examined the structural relations among self-efficacy, and academic aspirations. The results showed that academic self-efficacy and self-regulatory efficacy had a strong relationship with academic achievement. However, a negative relationship between social self-efficacy and academic achievement was reported. According to Newby-Fraser and Schlebusch (1997), self-efficacy has a significant negative correlation with level of stress.

### ***General self-efficacy***

Although Bandura (1997) originally focused on task-specific self-efficacy with a stronger predictive power than general self-efficacy, numerous experiences in different domains of functioning have generated more generalized beliefs of self-efficacy that have explanatory value as well (Bosscher & Smit, 1998). This has been supported by many studies (Chen, et al., 2001; Scholz, et al., 2002; Sherer, et al., 1982; Yildirim & Ilhan, 2010). General self-efficacy (GSE) refers to a broad and stable sense of personal competence which effectively deals with a variety of stressful situations (Luszczynska, et al., 2005; Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995; Sherer, et al., 1982).

### ***Multiple Intelligences and Self-Efficacy***

Many studies (Chan, 2007; Mikolajczak & Luminet, 2007; Penrose, Perry & Ball, 2007; Rastegar & Memarpour, 2009) have explored the connection of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy of teachers. In this regard, Penrose, et al., (2007) and Rastegar and Memarpour, (2009) concluded that there is a positive significant relationship between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy of teachers. Another study (Moafian & Ghanizadeh, 2009) in Iranian context supported the findings of this study, reporting a significant relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence and their self-efficacy while three subscales of emotional intelligence were found to be good predictors of teachers' self-efficacy. Chan (2007) also found that individuals who exhibited higher emotional intelligence had higher self-efficacy. However, Nikoopour, et al., (2012) concluded that all subconstructs of trait EI were moderate predictors of self-efficacy. In an attempt to investigate the effect of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy beliefs on high school students' achievement, Yazici, Seyis and Altun (2011) found gender, age and self-efficacy as the major predictors of learners' academic achievement.

Through the use of MI, students' sense of responsibility and efficacy as learners will be improved (Kolata, 2003). Traub (1998) showed that MI theory should be implemented with caution since educators have adapted MIT and applied its concepts in class without evidence about its efficacy. Many studies have examined the relationship between multiple intelligences and self-efficacy of learners.

Young (2003) suggested a new approach to improving mathematics achievement by the integration of MIT and self-efficacy theory. He claimed that learning through intellectual strengths increases students' mathematics achievement both directly from their increased understanding and indirectly by raising students' self-efficacy for mathematics.

Teacher self-efficacy construct, which refers to teachers' beliefs about their abilities to control the reinforcement of their actions within themselves or in the environment (Bandura, 1977; Rotter, 1990), plays a major role across diverse teaching conditions (Klassen, et al., 2009). It has been related to students' own sense of efficacy (Anderson, Greene, & Loewen, 1988; Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998) as well as student outcomes such as achievement and motivation (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998). In Yazdanimoghaddam and Khoshroodi's (2010) study, the possible relationship between English language teachers' teaching efficacy and their multiple intelligences were examined. Based on the results, it was concluded that the linguistic and musical intelligences were the two main predictors of teachers' teaching efficacy whereas the other domains of intelligences, although intercorrelated, did not significantly contribute to the construct of teachers' teaching efficacy.

Mahasneh (2013) investigated the relationship between multiple intelligence and self-efficacy of students. Results indicated that there was a significant positive correlation between self regulatory and the bodily/kinesthetic, intrapersonal, logical, interpersonal, visual, musical, existential, and verbal linguistic intelligences. In another study, Beichner (2011) showed a relationship between multiple intelligences and students' academic self-efficacy. He reported higher self-efficacy for students in classrooms where teachers used two of their three dominant MI than the other two groups: classrooms where the teacher used one of their three dominant MI and the group in which none of students' dominant MI were emphasized. To conclude, although

there are a number of studies that explore the relationship between self-efficacy and multiple intelligences, they are few, and there are still some gaps.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION**

In order to fill the above mentioned gaps, this study aims to answer the following research question:

Which type of multiple intelligences is a better predictor of generalized self-efficacy?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

This study was conducted with 148 male and female Iranian B.A. students majoring in TEFL and Translation at Islamic Azad University of Takestan, Zanjan University, Islamic Azad University of Zanjan, Payame Noor University of Zanjan, Payame Noor University of Abhar, and Shaheed Rajaei Teacher Training University.

### ***Instruments***

In this study, the following instruments were utilized: An already established MTELP (Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency) was used to specify the participants' level of proficiency and to homogenize them. It included 100 multiple choice items consisting of 40 grammar items; 40 vocabulary items; and four reading passages followed by 20 reading comprehension items.

A Multiple Intelligences questionnaire, based on Howard Gardner's MI Model, was administered to the participants to specify their intelligence profile. It measured seven dimensions of Gardner's MI theory. It comprised a set of 35 statements with 5 statements for assessing each of the intelligences. This questionnaire is available at [http://www.businessballs.com/freepdfmaterials/free\\_multiple\\_intelligences\\_test\\_young\\_people.pdf](http://www.businessballs.com/freepdfmaterials/free_multiple_intelligences_test_young_people.pdf)

Furthermore, a general self-efficacy, consisting of 12 items, which is the modified version of Sherer's General Self-efficacy (SGSES) was administered, with reported range of internal consistency of  $\alpha = 0.69$  (Bosscher & Smit, 1998).

### ***Procedure***

Initially, the MTELP was utilized; those students whose scores were less than one standard deviation away from (mean = 30.425, SD=10.7) the mean were selected as the sample of the present study. As a result, 32 of the participants were excluded, leaving a total number of 148 numbers.

In another session, Gardner's MI questionnaire and generalized self-efficacy were administered. The participants were required to complete both questionnaires by choosing among 5 alternatives, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Results***

The research question attempted to see which types of MIs are predictors of general self-efficacy scale. To this end, a multiple regression analysis was used. The results of the descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1.

A correlation coefficient was run between general self-efficacy of the students and their types of MI to see the degree of the relationship between them. Of all the seven predictors, only linguistic and musical intelligences account for a statistically significant correlation with general self-efficacy ( $r_{\text{linguistic}} = .249, p < .05$ ;  $r_{\text{musical}} = .287, p < .05$ ).

The result of the model summary (Table 2) shows that musical intelligence shared 8 % of variance with general self-efficacy while, together, the linguistic and musical intelligences account for around 14% of the total variance with general self-efficacy.

*Table 1: Descriptive statistics for general self-efficacy and multiple intelligences*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
GSE	38.2905	7.53699	148
Linguistic	2.8176	1.31985	148
Logical/math	2.8514	1.03256	148
Musical	2.9797	1.17496	148
Bodily/kinesthetic	3.5068	1.22611	148
Spatial / visual	3.0608	1.10796	148
Interpersonal	3.6622	1.09764	148
Intrapersonal	3.3378	1.23748	148

*Table 2: Model Summary<sup>c</sup>*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.287 <sup>a</sup>	.082	.076	7.24414
2	.382 <sup>b</sup>	.146	.134	7.01293

a. Predictors: (Constant), musical

b. Predictors: (Constant), musical, linguistic

c. Dependent Variable: GSE

Based on Table 3, the results of the ANOVA ( $F_{(1, 146)} = 13.12, p < .05$ ;  $F_{(2, 145)} = 12.39, p < .05$ ) show that the predictive power of both models is significant.

*Table 3: ANOVA<sup>c</sup> on general self-efficacy*

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
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1	Regression	688.778	1	688.778	13.125	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	7661.729	146	52.478		
	Total	8350.507	147			
2	Regression	1219.236	2	609.618	12.395	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	7131.271	145	49.181		
	Total	8350.507	147			

a. Predictors: (Constant), musical

b. Predictors: (Constant), musical, linguistic

c. Dependent Variable: GSE

*Table 4: Coefficients<sup>a</sup> of Multiple Intelligences*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	32.801	1.628		20.148	.000
	musical	1.842	.509	.287	3.623	.000
2	(Constant)	28.692	2.012		14.258	.000
	musical	1.860	.492	.290	3.779	.000
	linguistic	1.439	.438	.252	3.284	.001

a. Dependent Variable: GSE

Table 4 contains the unstandardized as well as standardized coefficients of the two models, along with the observed t-values and significance levels. The first model shows that for every one standard deviation of change in one's musical intelligence, there will be about .28 of a standard deviation change in one's general self-efficacy. The second model shows that when musical and linguistic intelligences are taken together, for every one standard deviation change in one's musical and linguistic intelligences, there will be .29 and .25 of a standard deviation change in one's general self-efficacy, respectively. Meanwhile, all the standardized coefficients are statistically significant.

These results indicate that two types of intelligences including musical and linguistic intelligences are predictors of general self-efficacy.

### **Discussion**

The findings of some previous studies are partially similar to the results of the present study, in that they also emphasize MI as predictors of self-efficacy. Yazdanimoghaddam and Khoshroodi (2010) concluded that linguistic and musical intelligences are the two main predictors of teachers' teaching efficacy. This is in partial accordance with the findings of the present study since the same two types of intelligences turned out to be predictors of general self-efficacy.

Furthermore, the findings of the present study partially approve those of Shore (2001). Shore (2001) investigated the relationship between MI and students' self-efficacy. It was concluded that MI-based classrooms would have a positive effect on self-efficacy in ESL courses. Although a relationship was found between MIs and self-efficacy, the present study does not lend full support to that finding. Shore's study showed a relationship between writing self-efficacy and interpersonal, intrapersonal, bodily-kinesthetic, and linguistic intelligences.

A number of factors might have contributed to the results obtained in this study. This study was conducted with a small sample size of participants (180) while in studies like Mahasneh (2013), the number of participants was 576, and in Carroll, et al., (2009), the participants included 935 learners. The other possible factor resulting in different findings may be gender differences. In the present study, gender was not considered as a variable, but the previous studies on multiple intelligences like Nikoopour, et al., (2012), Schneider and Arikan (2009), and Razmjoo (2008), Hanafiyeh (2013) have emphasized gender differences among the participants in MI-based instruction. Another possible factor, which was not controlled in the present study, includes learners' level of proficiency; this study was conducted with B.A level students.

## **CONCLUSION**

The present study attempted to investigate types of multiple intelligences as predictors of self-efficacy. Findings showed that musical and linguistic intelligences are predictors of general self-efficacy. Based on the results of this research, it is concluded that learners' multiple intelligences made a contribution to predicting self-efficacy and some of the intelligence types are a better predictor of self-efficacy. This means that the enhancement of learners' MI will increase their level of self-efficacy and attention to learners MI profiles will raise learners' beliefs about their ability.

## ***Implications***

The findings of the present study may have implications for teachers, learners and materials developers. The findings of the present study seem to imply that teachers find better ways to help learners explore their ability as language learners and support them in developing their sense of self-efficacy. And it helps learners and teachers in planning activities to relate students' self-efficacy and their MI profiles and support learners with the best possible instruction. It also has some implications for materials developers and syllabus designers in developing materials and course books to improve the specific MI types that are directly related to self-efficacy.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

There were a number of limitations in this study. One of the most important ones was finding homogenous students at the same level of language proficiency. In this study, the participants were homogenized in terms of their language proficiency based on their obtained score on the Michigan test; other elements affecting their proficiency level were not considered here.

Furthermore, the participants were selected from among B.A. level learners of English majoring in TEFL and translation. Therefore, care must be exercised in generalizing the results to other learners.

Finally, the participants of the present study included both female and male learners; so gender was not a variable. Besides this variable, the findings of the study may have been affected by some other variables like cultural and social factors, which were not considered in this study.



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# THE CONTRIBUTION OF WORD FORMATION, CODE-MIXING, MULTIPLE-CHOICE, AND GAP-FILLING TASKS TO L2 VOCABULARY COMPREHENSION AND PRODUCTION

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## ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate the effect of various task types including Multiple-choice cloze task, Gap-filling task, Word formation task, and Code-mixing task on L2 vocabulary comprehension and production. A sample of 80 adult Iranian intermediate level learners participated in the study. They were in 4 groups; each group read the reading passages under one of the four conditions of Multiple-choice cloze, Gap-filling, Word formation, and Code-mixing tasks. At the end of the treatment, two posttests were administered. A 30-item vocabulary test in multiple-choice format was used to measure the participants' vocabulary comprehension. Another 30-item vocabulary test in fill-in-the-blanks format was utilized to measure the participants' vocabulary production. Two separate one-way ANOVA procedures were used to analyze the obtained data. The results showed an effect of task type, the word formation task was more effective than the other task types in vocabulary comprehension and production. It also turned out that those who were involved in the Gap-filling task were the least successful in both vocabulary comprehension and production. The present study may have theoretical as well as practical implications for the teachers, researchers, and syllabus designers.

**KEYWORDS:** Task-based language teaching, vocabulary learning, task type

## INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary knowledge occupies an important position in second language learning. Numerous attempts have been made to solve the challenges facing learners in reference to vocabulary learning. However, doubts remain over their effectiveness in improving learners' vocabulary comprehension and production (Song, 2011).

One approach which is claimed to be beneficial in coping with the problems of vocabulary learning is task-based language teaching (TBLT). In this adaptable approach of language teaching, tasks are employed as the main pedagogical tool to teach diverse language elements. Language learning occurs through the process of completing tasks, and learners master the target language more effectively when they are exposed to meaningful task-based activities in a natural way. Proponents of task-based language teaching believe that the uptake of vocabulary, as one of the key elements in second language learning, can be enhanced by employing proper pedagogical

tasks. However, designing effective pedagogical tasks has always been a huge challenge for second language (L2) researchers and teachers.

Current second language (L2) instruction research has encouraged the use of different tasks in (L2) classrooms. Task-based language teaching provides learners with access to both explicit and implicit learning experience. It has the ability to integrate meaning-focused communication with form-focused instruction. However, the positive impact of utilizing different task types on vocabulary learning is still open to question. The fact that this debate over the effectiveness of diverse task types in promoting vocabulary uptake remains unresolved indicates a need for further examination and research in this regard. The present study attempts to investigate whether employing different task types can influence the uptake of new vocabulary items.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Task-based language teaching is considered as a powerful approach for maximizing language learning and teaching, which employs tasks as its main pedagogical tools to structure language teaching. In TBLT, learners are to use language to perform meaningful tasks and, thus, language which is meaningful to learners can pave the way for the learning process (Willis, 1996).

In defining task, we should draw a distinction between real-world tasks and pedagogical tasks, where the former refers to the tasks which the learner could possibly be required to carry out in the real world, and the latter refers to the tasks which would be highly unlikely for the learner to perform outside the language classroom (Rashtchi & Keyvanfar, 2007). Although pedagogic tasks seem to be of little real-world value, Widdowson (1987) argues that “tasks can be thought of as an investment to be drawn on to meet unpredictable communicative needs.” (p. 68)

Nunan (1989, p.10) states that task is “a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form”. Willis (1996, p. 53), on the other hand, stresses that task is “a goal-oriented activity in which learners use language to achieve a real outcome”. While these definitions vary somewhat, they all emphasize the fact that pedagogical tasks involve communicative language use in which the user's attention is focused on meaning rather than grammatical form (Ellis, 2000).

In TBLT literature, there are many kinds of task categories. Willis (1996) offers six main types of including listing, ordering and sorting, comparing, problem solving, sharing personal experiences, and creative tasks (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 234). Furthermore, According to Rashtchi and Keyvanfar (2007, p. 115) there are different classifications of task types including the following:

- ❖ Form-focused activities ( exercises)
- ❖ Meaning-focused activities ( tasks)
  - Focused tasks
    - Grammatical
    - Consciousness-raising
  - Unfocused tasks



- ❖ Pedagogic tasks ( Interactionally authentic)
  - Information-gap
  - Opinion-gap
  - Reasoning-gap
- ❖ Target tasks (situationally authentic)

Focused tasks have two objectives: one is to encourage communicative language use and the other is to encourage learners to use some specific predetermined linguistics item(s) (Rashtchi & Keyvanfar, 2007, p. 112).

Unfocused tasks can be classified based on the degree of their similarity to real-life situation. Some tasks correspond to the everyday life of learners and, thus, they are said to have situational authenticity. On the other hand, some tasks are rather artificial in the sense that they are unlikely to happen in everyday life; but, they tend to elicit the kind of language that corresponds to the language of everyday-life interaction. These kinds of pedagogic tasks are said to have interactional authenticity (Bachman, 1991).

A large body of research has been carried out on the application of tasks in various aspects of language learning. This study is focused on the effectiveness of tasks on receptive and productive L2 vocabulary learning. Ellis and He (1999) found that the interaction between output and dialogic interaction could contribute to productive as well as receptive vocabulary knowledge. Similarly, de la Fuente (2002) found that only negotiated interaction that incorporated output appeared to have promoted both receptive and productive learning of words, and increased productive word retention.

There is a belief that learners' pushed output can contribute to vocabulary learning in a number of ways. In this regard, Swain and Lapkin (1995, p. 376) argue that output tasks can lead to the noticing of linguistic shortcomings, "pushing" learners to modify output. Actually, output has a very interactive and significant role on vocabulary acquisition. There is also a theoretical claim that output may serve as a crucial means to strengthen connections between the lemma (the particular form that is chosen by convention to represent the lexeme) and the lexeme (the set of all the forms that have the same meaning). Such strengthened connections between the lemma and the lexeme enable learners to have easy access to and efficient control of vocabulary knowledge stored in their L2 language system. As Nation (1990, p. 86) puts it, "when L2 learners are engaged in output production, they are required to actively solve problems of word form or of word meaning on their own. Through such active processing of lexical information, a learner can achieve faster, more precise and automatic use of vocabulary knowledge than when just hearing or reading L2 vocabulary."

Maftoon and Haratmeh (2012) used a pedagogical approach to investigate the relative effectiveness of tasks with different involvement loads on the vocabulary knowledge of Iranian EFL learners. The goal was to investigate the way that the construct of involvement load is related to the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1985) and the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1996) to see whether the involvement load or input/output-orientation of tasks is the determining factor in task effectiveness. Contrary to the predictions of the Involvement Load Hypothesis (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001), the results of the study indicated that involvement load is not the only determining factor in task effectiveness, but input/output-orientation of tasks is also a decisive parameter in task effectiveness. While Laufer and Hulstijn's proposal is the first valuable step towards building a theory of vocabulary learning, the results of the study indicated that

involvement index may well not function independently of the task type, i.e., input or output orientation of a word-focused task.

Newton (1995) carried out a case study examining the vocabulary gains made by a group of adult learners of English as a second language as a result of performing four communicative tasks. Gains were measured on comparisons of pre- and post-tests of vocabulary from the worksheets from the four tasks. He found that the placement of a word on task worksheets and the nature of a task, whether a split information task or a shared information task, both had a strong effect on the use and learning of new vocabulary.

Joe (1998) examined the effects of text-based tasks and background knowledge (prior vocabulary knowledge and a disposition to use generative learning tactics when tackling new vocabulary) on incidental vocabulary learning. 48 adult ESL learners were randomly assigned to one of three treatments (a) reading and retelling a text with explicit generative training and without access to the text during recall, (b) reading and retelling a text without explicit generative training but with access to the text during recall, and (c) neither reading nor retelling a text. All subjects sat a pre-test (individual interviews and a read and retell task) and post-tests (individual interviews and two multiple-choice tests) designed to tap partial vocabulary knowledge gains. Results indicated that the process of reading and retelling a text promotes incidental vocabulary learning and that generative processing enhances vocabulary learning with greater levels of generative processing leading to greater vocabulary gains for unknown words.

Rott (2004) investigated whether L2 readers' sensitivity towards a new lexical form is heightened if they are repeatedly pushed to produce output and are immediately provided with relevant input in input-output cycles. Fourth-semester learners read three texts, with four target words each, under the following conditions: (a) cued-output task, (b) self-selected output task, and (c) un-enhanced (control) reading. Results showed that four input-output cycles did not contribute to retaining more robust form-meaning connections (FMCs) than the normal reading condition. In all three conditions, FMCs varied in strength and completeness, requiring different cues for retrieval.

Newton (2001) argued that rather than removing difficult words, teachers should consider a number of cooperative options for exposing learners to new words during task-based interaction. He examined data from a number of classroom tasks where learners had to deal with new words during task performance without access to a dictionary or teacher's intervention. The results suggested that not only rich language use results from negotiating new words, but that the meanings of many of these words are retained in the days after the task performance.

Kim's (2011) study consisted of two experiments investigating the involvement load hypothesis in vocabulary learning. Experiment 1 compared the performance of 64 adult English as a second language (ESL) learners from a range of countries at two different proficiency levels (i.e., matriculated undergraduate students vs. students in an Intensive English Program) to ascertain the effectiveness of three vocabulary tasks with different levels of task-induced involvement. Experiment 2 investigated whether two tasks hypothesized to represent the same level of task-induced involvement would result in equivalent initial learning and retention of target words by

20 adult ESL learners at two different levels of proficiency. The results of Experiment 1 showed that a higher level of learner involvement during the task promoted more effective initial vocabulary learning and better retention of the new words. The findings of Experiment 2 indicated that when different tasks had the same involvement load, they resulted in similar amounts of initial vocabulary learning and retention of new words.

These studies show that researchers seem to have a consensus as to the role of task based instruction in vocabulary learning. Despite this consensus on the general role of task-based instruction in vocabulary learning, there seems to be a paucity of research on how difficult task types can affect L2 vocabulary, particularly in an EFL context. In response to this paucity, the present study addresses the effects of Input-oriented and Output-oriented tasks on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary comprehension and production.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

More specifically the present study aims to answer the following questions:

Q1. Which task type (Multiple-choice cloze task, Gap-filling task, Word formation task, and Code-mixing task) is more effective on L2 vocabulary comprehension?

Q2. Which task type (Multiple-choice cloze task, Gap-filling task, Word formation task, and Code-mixing task) is more effective on L2 vocabulary production?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

A sample of 113 Iranian male and female EFL learners participated in the study. They were studying English at Sokhane Ashna and Shokohe Andisheh institutes in Tehran. The subjects were selected from the intermediate level of proficiency, and their age ranged from 18 to 30. After the administration of the Michigan test of English language proficiency, 33 participants were excluded from the study because of either a different language proficiency test score, or not writing their names on the papers. There remained 80 learners to take part in the study.

### *Instruments and materials*

To conduct the present study, the following instruments were employed: a Michigan general language proficiency test was administered to homogenize the participants and to validate the posttests. The sample of Michigan test used in this study contained 25 multiple-choice items. It was an already established and verified in terms of reliability.

The target words for this study were selected from reading passages taken from Cambridge ESOL Examinations. To make sure that the participants had no prior knowledge of the target words, and to minimize the effect of their prior vocabulary knowledge, a vocabulary pretest containing 100 items was given to all the participants. These lexical items were contextualized in 100 English sentences. Each item contained one of the target words and required students to supply the Persian equivalent of the italicized words in the sentence. Those words the meaning of which the participants did not know were selected for inclusion in the posttest, and the familiar words were excluded from the posttests.

The instructional materials were ten reading passages taken from Cambridge FCE (First Certificate in English) examination. The passages were in an appropriate difficulty level to roughly match the learners' ability. Each passage contained 10 target words. Each of the four groups read the reading passages under one of the four conditions of Multiple-choice cloze task, Gap-filling task, Word formation task, and Code-mixing task.

At the end of the experimental period, a vocabulary comprehension posttest was administered to compare the effects of Multiple-choice cloze, Gap-filling, Word formation, and Code-mixing tasks on L2 vocabulary comprehension. It was a 30-item vocabulary test in the multiple-choice format. A 30-item fill-in-the-blanks vocabulary test was also used to measure the participants' productive knowledge of vocabulary. In the fill-in-the-blank test, the first letter of each word was given with its translation in Persian. This was done to ensure that the learners could produce the target words and to prevent the possibility of learners providing either partial synonyms or other words that fitted the context without necessarily being the intended words.

### ***Procedures***

Initially, a total number of 113 participants were selected. To homogenize the participants, a Michigan test of English language proficiency was administered. It was an already established and verified test in terms of reliability. As a result, 33 participants, who had scored more than one standard deviation away from (above or below) the mean, were excluded from subsequent statistical analyses, and there remained 80 approximately homogenous participants to take part in this study. The participants were divided into four groups. Each group was randomly assigned to one of the treatment conditions as follows:

- Group A: Multiple-choice cloze task
- Group B: Gap-filling task
- Group C: Word formation task
- Group D: Code-mixing task

To make sure that the participants had no prior knowledge of the target words and to minimize the effect of prior knowledge, a vocabulary pretest containing 100 items was administered prior to the treatment. The participants were required to supply the Persian equivalent of the italicized English words in 100 sentences. Each sentence contained one of the target words which had been extracted from the reading passages the learners were supposed to receive as treatment. The words which turned out to be familiar to more than three participants were excluded from the subsequent vocabulary comprehension and production post-tests.

In the next phase, the treatment began. Each group of participants received their treatment under one of the following conditions. The four task types consisted of the Multiple-choice cloze task (Group A); Gap-filling task (Group B); Word formation task (Group C), and Code-mixing task (Group D).

The participants of Group A, the Multiple-choice cloze group, received ten cloze texts. Each text contained ten gaps and was followed by ten four-option multiple choice questions. The

Participants of this group were required to fill the gaps in each text by choosing the right words from a list of ten four-option multiple choice items.

The Gap-fill group (Group B) was provided with ten cloze texts. In each text ten target words were deleted, leaving ten gaps. The target words and their English explanations were provided in random order as a list on a separate page along with five distractors in each text. The task for this group was to read the text and complete the ten gaps with the most appropriate words from a list of 15 words.

Group C was treated with Word formation task. They received ten texts. Each text contained ten gaps, each gap corresponding to a word. The 'stems' of the missing words were given along with the text and had to be transformed to the target and missing words. The types of word formation involved not only the addition of affixes (e.g. 'honest' to 'dishonesty'), but also internal changes ('strong' to 'strength') and compounding (e.g. 'rain' to 'raindrop'). The misuse of capital letters and other punctuation marks was ignored, but correct spelling was important.

Ten cloze texts were given to the participants of Group D, the Code-mixing task group. In each text, ten words were deleted, leaving ten blanks and missing words. The Persian equivalent of each missing word was provided in parentheses after each blank. These Persian equivalents were the clear hint to the missing words. The task for the learners was to fill each of the blanks with the English equivalent of the Persian words given in parentheses.

The experimental period lasted for 8 weeks, of which 5 weeks were allocated to the treatment, two weeks to the Michigan test and the pretest, and one week to the posttests. It needs to be noted, however, that not all the class time was used for the treatment each session. Since the learners were taking their general English course, only a third of each class time every week (about 45 minutes) was allocated to the experiment.

At the end of the experimental period, two post-tests were administered. A 30-item vocabulary test in multiple-choice format was used to measure the participants' vocabulary comprehension knowledge. Another 30-item vocabulary test in fill-in-the-blanks format was utilized to measure the participants' vocabulary production. To validate the post-tests, and to avoid creating learner sensitivity toward the target words, the Michigan proficiency test was given to a group of 30 students with characteristics similar to the target groups (EFL learners studying at the intermediate level) concurrently with the post-tests. To check the validity of the posttests, the correlation between these tests and a Michigan test was checked. The validity index of the comprehension and production posttests turned out to be .83 and .82, respectively. The reliability of the post-tests was also estimated through the KR-21 formula. The reliability index of the vocabulary comprehension and production post-tests turned out to be .42 and .66, respectively.

The validated post-tests were then administered to the 80 approximately homogeneous participants. The obtained data were then summarized and submitted to statistical analyses. Two separate one-way ANOVA procedures were run on the immediate posttest of vocabulary comprehension and production.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### *Investigation of the first Research Question*

The first research question sought to investigate the effect of various task types including Multiple-choice cloze task, Gap-filling task, Word formation task, and Code-mixing task on L2 vocabulary comprehension. To do so, a one-way ANOVA was used. Descriptive statistics are summarized in *Table 1*.

*Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for the ANOVA on Vocabulary Comprehension*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Code-mixing	20	22.4500	2.64525	.59150
Word formation	20	24.7500	2.51050	.56137
Multiple-choice	20	21.5000	2.72416	.60914
Gap-filling	20	20.2000	2.83957	.63495
Total	80	22.2250	3.11783	.34858

*Table 1* indicates that the highest mean on the vocabulary comprehension test belongs to the Word formation group ( $\bar{x} = 24.75$ ), followed by the Code-mixing group ( $\bar{x} = 22.45$ ). The third highest mean belongs to the Multiple-choice cloze group ( $\bar{x} = 21.50$ ), and the Gap-filling group ( $\bar{x} = 20.20$ ) has the lowest mean.

In order to see whether the observed mean differences among the selected groups are statistically significant, the one-way ANOVA procedure was used. The results of the ANOVA procedure are summarized in *Table 2*.

*Table 2: the ANOVA Procedure on Vocabulary Comprehension*

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	221.050	3	73.683	10.239	.000
Within Groups	546.900	76	7.196		
Total	767.950	79			$\omega^2 = .25$

In *Table 2*, the observed F-value and the significance level ( $F_{(3,76)} = 10.23$ ,  $p < .05$ ) indicate that there are statistically significant differences among the four groups. Therefore, it can be safely claimed that there are significant differences among the effect of these four task types on vocabulary comprehension.

At the same time, the index of the strength of association ( $\omega^2 = 0.25$ ) indicates that 25 percent of the total variance in the dependent variable (vocabulary comprehension) is accounted for by the independent variable (task types). This means that the remaining 75 percent of the variance is left unaccounted for.

In order to locate the differences among the study groups, a post hoc Scheffe test was utilized. The results are summarized in *Table 3*. As it can be observed in *Table 3*, the mean score of the



Word formation group is significantly better than the mean scores of the Multiple-choice and the Gap-filling groups, suggesting that the participants of the word formation group have outperformed their counterparts in the two groups, but the mean scores of the latter two groups do not differ significantly from each other.

Table 3: Multiple comparisons for the ANOVA on vocabulary comprehension

(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Code –mixing	Word formation	-2.30000	.84830	.070	-4.7254	.1254
	Multiple-choice	.95000	.84830	.741	-1.4754	3.3754
	Gap-filling	2.25000	.84830	.080	-.1754	4.6754
Word formation	Multiple-choice	3.25000*	.84830	.004	.8246	5.6754
	Gap-filling	4.55000*	.84830	.000	2.1246	6.9754
Multiple-choice	Gap-filling	1.30000	.84830	.507	-1.1254	3.7254

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The result further indicates that although there is a difference between the means of the Code-mixing group and the Word formation group, the difference is statistically insignificant. Moreover, the result shows that there are no statistically significant differences between the Code-mixing group and the Multiple-choice group, as well as between the Code-mixing group and the Gap-filling group. The following graphic representation of the results (*Figure.1*) shows the differences among these groups more conspicuously

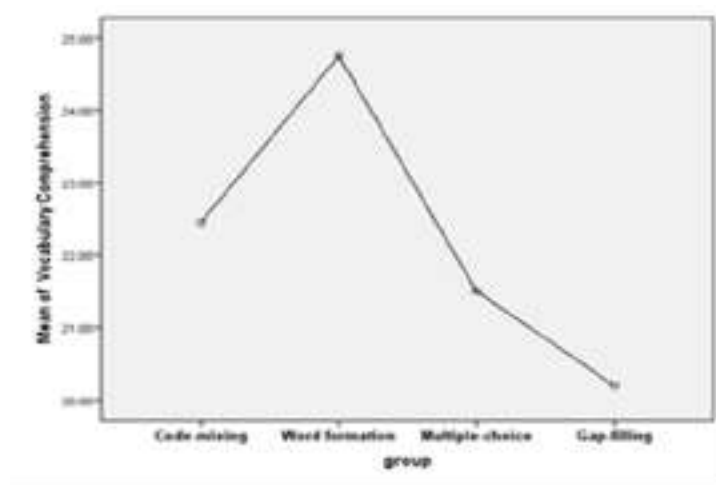


Figure1: Means Plot on the Vocabulary Comprehension

### Investigation of the second Research Question

The aim of the second research question was to examine the effect of various task types including Multiple-choice cloze task, Gap-filling task, Word formation task, and Code-mixing task on L2 vocabulary production. To this end, another one-way ANOVA procedure was run. The descriptive statistics are presented in *Table 4*.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for the ANOVA on Vocabulary Production

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Code-mixing	20	22.5500	4.09717	.91616
Word formation	20	22.9000	3.89196	.87027
Multiple-choice	20	19.3500	4.01674	.89817
Gap-filling	20	18.2500	3.29074	.73583
Total	80	20.7625	4.27013	.47742

Table 4 indicates that the highest mean ( $\bar{x} = 22.90$ ) belongs to the Word formation group, followed closely by the mean of Code-mixing group ( $\bar{x} = 22.55$ ). The Multiple-choice group has the third position ( $\bar{x} = 19.38$ ). The participants of the gap-filling group have the lowest mean ( $\bar{x} = 18.46$ ), which is noticeably lower than the other groups. To see whether or not the observed differences among the groups are statistically significant, the one-way ANOVA procedure was used. The obtained results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: The results of the ANOVA on vocabulary production

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	321.437	3	107.146	7.277	.000
Within Groups	1119.050	76	14.724		
Total	1440.487	79			$\omega^2 = .19$

As it can be seen in Table 5, the F-value and the significance level ( $F_{(3,76)} = 7.27$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) are indicative of significant differences among the means. Moreover, The index of the strength of association ( $\omega^2 = 0.19$ ) shows that 19 percent of the total variance in the dependent variable (vocabulary production) is accounted for by the independent variable (task types), and that the remaining 81 percent is left unaccounted for.

Another post hoc Scheffe test was utilized to locate the differences among the groups. The results of the multiple comparisons are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: Multiple Comparisons of Means for the ANOVA on Vocabulary Production

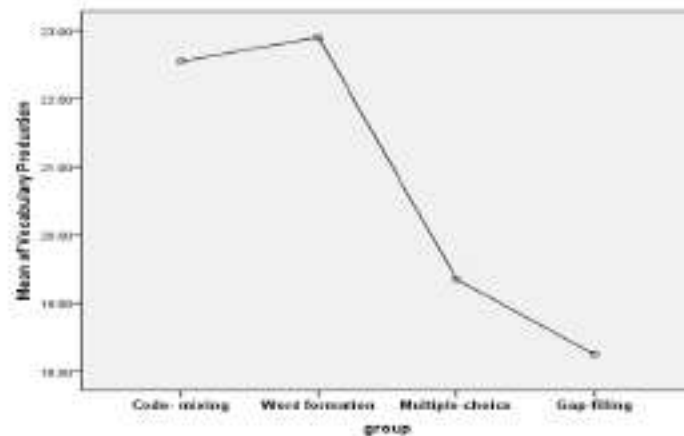
(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Code -mixing	Word formation	-.35000	1.21344	.994	-3.8194	3.1194
	Multiple-choice	3.20000	1.21344	.082	-.2694	6.6694
	Gap -filling	4.30000*	1.21344	.008	.8306	7.7694
Word formation	Multiple-choice	3.55000*	1.21344	.043	.0806	7.0194
	Gap -filling	4.65000*	1.21344	.004	1.1806	8.1194
Multiple-choice	Gap -filling	1.10000	1.21344	.844	-2.3694	4.5694

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Based on *Table 6*, the difference between the Code-mixing group and the Gap-filling group is statistically significant, with the Code-mixing group outperforming the Gap-filling group. It is worth noting that there are no statistically significant differences between the Code-mixing group and the Word formation group, as well as between the Code-mixing group and the Multiple-choice group.

Moreover, the Scheffe test indicates that the mean score of the Word formation group is significantly better than the mean scores of the Multiple-choice and the Gap-filling groups, but the mean scores of the latter two groups do not differ significantly from each other. In other words, the participants of the Word formation group have outperformed those of the Multiple-choice and the Gap-filling groups, suggesting that Word formation task is the most effective task on vocabulary production.

The following graphic representation (*Figure 2*) shows the differences among the groups more conspicuously.



*Figure 2: Means Plot on the Vocabulary Production Test*

## DISCUSSION

Considering the findings of the study, we can conclude that there is a large gap between receptive knowledge from input-oriented tasks and output-oriented tasks in a way that productive tasks are more effective than receptive tasks on both vocabulary comprehension and production. This result is in contradiction with Krashen's input hypothesis, avowing that input alone is sufficient for the development of both receptive and productive second language knowledge. In addition, based on Krashen's natural order hypothesis, speech emerges. In other words, even productive knowledge develops naturally from receptive knowledge. This implies that input-oriented activities alone are not only capable of creating language knowledge, but also even more effective than output-oriented activities on the development of both receptive and productive language knowledge. Drawing on the distinction between receptive and productive knowledge of vocabulary, the finding of this study seems to support the role of output.

At the same time, there are studies that are in line with the findings of this study. In an experimental study, Ellis and He (1999) found that the interaction between output and dialogic interaction could be a beneficial factor for learners to acquire productive as well as receptive vocabulary knowledge. Similarly, de la Fuente (2002) found that only negotiated interaction that incorporated output promoted both receptive and productive learning of words, and increased productive word retention.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that in spite of the teacher-centered tradition of instruction in Iranian context, applying output-oriented tasks gives sufficient room to students to show themselves. In other words, if treated with output-oriented tasks, students become more engaged in the learning of the target language elements, and they take more active roles in the learning process. It can be concluded that employing output-oriented tasks can keep students motivated, and facilitate students' learning processes.

In the Iranian context, language instruction is mainly based on the input. Target language elements are mostly learnt through the receptive skills. There is no sufficient room for students to show their abilities through productive skills. On the other hand, employing output-oriented tasks necessitates learners to produce the intended language items. The production of the target language items through output-oriented tasks may have a greater level of appeal to learners due to their novelty. This sense of motivation and enthusiasm may partially account for the dominance/superiority of the output-oriented tasks over the input-oriented tasks.

Based on the obtained results, we can claim that this study lends support to the output hypothesis proposed by Swain (1985). The output hypothesis suggests that successful second language acquisition requires not only comprehensible input, but also comprehensible output, language produced by the learner that can be understood by other speakers of the language. It has been argued that when learners have to make efforts to ensure that their messages are communicated (pushed output), this puts them in a better position to notice the gap between their productions and those of proficient speakers, fostering acquisition (Richards & Schmidt, 2002).

The findings of the present study can have implications not only for teachers and learners, but also for materials developers. The knowledge of the effects of diverse task types on vocabulary learning can help teachers make more informed decisions as to which task types to choose to engage their learners in. Moreover, the results may be helpful in improving learners' autonomy. Given the superiority of output-oriented tasks over input-oriented tasks, learners can be allowed to experience greater levels of autonomy by being actively engaged in productive activities and assume more responsibility for their own learning rather than being passive bench-bound recipients of information.

Furthermore, the results of the current study might provide useful insights for the developers of instructional materials and syllabus designers in their selection of effective word-focused tasks in EFL General English materials. It can hardly be denied that adequate and sufficient vocabulary knowledge leads to good comprehension. Thus, given the importance of vocabulary in EFL General English classes, any word-focused task that helps learners to develop their vocabulary knowledge would certainly be welcomed.

And finally, this study could possibly lay the groundwork for a great deal of research to touch on the effect of different word-focused tasks on various aspects of vocabulary knowledge.

All in all, despite the apparent areas of discrepancy as to which task type is more beneficial than which other types, there seems to be almost a consensus that, overall, tasks are effective and

conducive to language learning in general and vocabulary learning in particular. Yet, the discrepancies among the findings of various studies as to the effectiveness of different task types on vocabulary learning, coupled with areas of gap between the findings of this study and those of other similar studies warrant more studies in the future.

## LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In the present study, the following limitations and delimitations should be taken into account:

1. There are various types of tasks considered as pedagogical tools in task-based language teaching approach. It was impossible to compare all task types in one study. Therefore, this study was confined to a limited number of selected tasks. This implies that the findings of this study may not be generalizable to other task types.
2. Due to time and administration limitations, only 80 language learners participated in the present study. Therefore, care must be exercised in generalizing the findings.
3. The students who participated in this study were male and female. This means that the participants' gender was not a variable.
4. The proficiency level of the participants was constrained to intermediate level. Thus, care should be taken in generalizing the result to learners of other proficiency levels.
5. The present study investigated the effect of different types of task on students' vocabulary comprehension and production; this means that the other language skills (e.g. reading comprehension, listening, speaking, etc.) were not of concern here.
6. While participants were carrying out the selected tasks, their performance could be affected by many different factors including their personality type, level of anxiety or motivation, and their learning styles. Additionally, it was impossible to impose complete control on the students' probable practice outside the classroom.
7. The vocabulary pretest (one hundred-item check-list) used in this study was not verified in terms of reliability. Therefore, more trustable findings will be reached using vocabulary pretest verified in terms of reliability.

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## TEAM-TEACHING EFFICACY IN AN EFL CONTEXT: DOES THE AGE MATTER?

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### ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to explore and compare the effectiveness of team-teaching as a model of coteaching in the promotion of children and adults English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' general proficiency in Iran. Two classes of children and two of adults learners were chosen and based on the achieved scores in the pretests were assigned to control and experimental groups. The students of the control groups received instruction from one teacher, and those in the experimental groups were taught by a couple of teachers through team-teaching model. The results of the final achievement tests were analyzed through T-test computation. Findings revealed that implementing team-teaching was gratifying and beneficial in enhancing the achievement of adults and children impacting the group homogeneity in different manner. Team-teaching experience made all of the students in the experimental groups exhibit a tendency towards having two teachers in the following semesters.

**KEY WORDS:** Coteaching, Team-teaching, Coteaching Models, Language Proficiency

### INTRODUCTION

Delivering profitable and satisfying pedagogy has been the highlight of educational systems for decades. Many models and approaches have been put forward in recent years to improve the students' achievement as such are consultant model, collaborative pedagogy, differentiated instruction, and coteaching. The last one that is the focus of the current study has been emerged from half a century ago with the aim of cultivating and raising the students' academic attainment.

The notion of the present-day coteaching might be embarked upon many tendencies and movements from 1950s (Friend & Cook, 2010). One of the first trends was the educators' willingness to replace the traditional single teacher instruction with more effective approaches of pedagogy (Hanslorvsky, Moyer, & Wager, 1969, cited in Friend & Cook, 2010). Villa, Thousand, and Nevin (2004) stated that coteaching was established in 1960s to open up the opportunities for children to learn. Some years later and during 1980s, the educators felt the need to have a special educator collaborating with a general one to improve the students' achievement, especially for those with disabilities (Chapple, 2009). The purport to enhance the achievement of students in the late 1980s and 1990s contributed to the popularity of what today is called *coteaching* (Friend & Cook, 2010).

Since the early 1990s, the major characteristics of co-teaching have been identified to define and describe what coteaching really is (Dieker & Murawski, 2003; Vaughn & Schumm, 1995; Walther-Thomas, 1997). Bauwens and Hourcade (1995) defined cooperative pedagogy as a process of "two or more educators possessing distinct sets of knowledge and skills working together to teach a heterogeneous group of students in the general education classrooms" (p. 46). They believe that this model has the capacity to develop the potentiality of students and teachers

(Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995). To Friend and Cook (2007) collaboration is “a style for direct interaction between at least two co-equal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work towards a common goal” (p. 7). As Villa, Thousand, and Nevin (2008) put it, coteaching refers to a situation when “two or more people sharing responsibility for teaching some or all of the students assigned to a classroom” (p. 3). All of these definitions and those proposed by other experts emphasize on working together, shouldering the same responsibilities, preplanning, and equal status of instructors in the same classrooms to achieve common goals.

Having these characteristics and factors in mind, this study, in the first place, seeks to find the efficiency of team-teaching among children and adults students in Iranian context and then, attempts to compare the effectiveness of coteaching in the classroom of children with that of adults’ learners in terms of students’ progress. Moreover, it explores the students’ and teachers’ evaluation of experiencing coteaching classes.

### ***Co-teaching models***

In the last two decades different approaches of co-teaching have been proposed by scholars. Villa et al. (2004) described supportive, parallel, complementary, and team-teaching as four approaches of coteaching. The first one, supportive teaching, is when one teacher as the main leader presents the instruction and the other teacher supports him/her. The teachers teach the lessons and generate supports to different groups of learners in a single classroom in parallel teaching; the instructors can move within and between the groups. As the name suggests, in complementary teaching, one of the instructors who assists the main teacher works as a complement and presents instruction, materials, and so forth when needed. Finally, in team-teaching all of the coteachers are responsible for presenting the information.

Six approaches to coteaching were described by Friend and Cook (2007): one teach, one observe; station teaching; parallel teaching; alternative teaching; team-teaching; and one teach, one assist. In the first approach, one of the teachers provides instruction and the other observes the students. The second approach is station teaching wherein some stations are provided and students move between the stations to learn. There can also be one station for students to work independently. In parallel teaching the class is divided into two or more groups, and each teacher works and teaches independently. In the forth approach viz. alternative teaching, one of the instructors teaches to a large group and the other to a small group of learners. It is added that the students in the small group work on something different from the other one. Teaming, or team-teaching, is similar to the team-teaching model proposed by Villa et al. (2004), wherein both teachers are responsible for delivering instruction, planning, assessing, grading and so forth. The last one is one teaching, one assisting when one of the teachers as the main instructor delivers the instruction and the other helps students. In a metasynthesis qualitative research, Scruggs, Mastropieri, and McDuffie (2007) identified this model as the one that is mostly adopted by coteachers. The following figure clearly manifests these approaches:

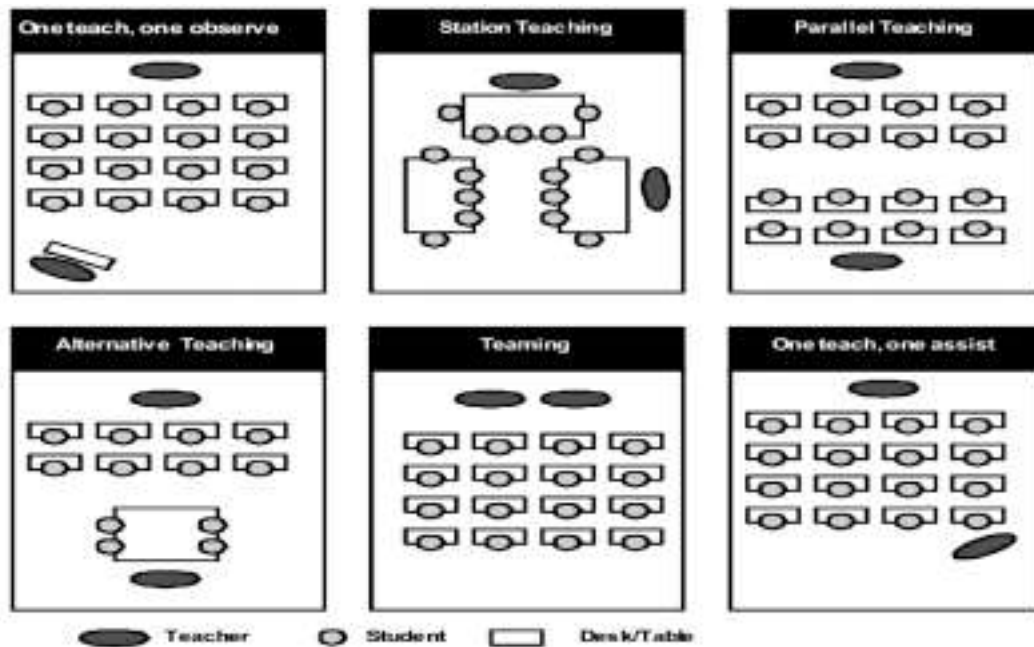


Figure 1: Co-teaching approaches. Adopted with permission from Friend & Bursuck (2009).

## REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Numerous studies have been qualitatively conducted to theoretically investigate the approach from various perspectives (e.g. Adams & Cessna, 1993; Weiss & Lloyd, 2003). Murawski & Dieker (2008) maintained that the essential strategies of implementing beneficial coteaching are preplanning, volunteerism, administrative support, and teacher training.

Simmons and Mageria (2007) who utilized observations and interviews to see if coteaching was truly implementing in a school district found diverse intensity of incorporating this approach. In first place, the researchers recommended the administrators to update the teachers' training. Further, they suggested "keeping effective coteaching pairs together, providing common planning time, encouraging special education coteachers to become part of content departments, and tracking student outcomes" as the effective strategies in improving coteaching pedagogy (p. 1).

Isherwood and Barger-Anderson (2007) conducted a qualitative study to identify the factors and characteristics of 15 general education and 5 special education teachers that influence the development of their works. They found coteachers' close relationships, obvious and predetermined responsibilities of teachers, and receiving support from administrators as the considerations that can positively impact the expansion and accomplishment of this approach.

Teachers or students' perception of coteaching has been another realm for studies during the previous decades (e.g. Keefe & Moore, 2004; Kohler-Evans, 2006; Salend, Gordon, & Lopez-Vona, 2002). In a study conducted by Austin (2001), 139 general and special education teachers were interviewed to find out their perceptions toward coteaching. The researcher reported that general education teachers referred to coteaching as a favorable approach for facilitating classroom management. Special education teachers also found coteaching beneficial in fostering the content knowledge. Both groups noted small and cooperative group learning as the most glorious experience in students' learning. Finally, general and special education teachers cited coteaching as an invaluable experience. Wilson and Michaels (2006) reported that both students with and without disability were in favor of attending in another classes with coteachers. The participants also added that they got higher scores when receiving coteaching.

Additionally, many classroom studies have been quantitatively conducted to probe the effectiveness of coteaching, among them a plethora of research failed to indicate the efficacy of practically implementing the approach. Beam (2005) studied the usefulness of coteaching in intermediate classrooms of students with disability. No difference was found in the behavior of students and their outcomes after implementing coteaching. Gale (2005) found no meaningful difference in the performance of students with disability in standardized tests, nor in their behavior when confronting with coteaching. Fontana (2005) probed the impact of coteaching on eighth grade students with disability. The students' performance in English and Math classrooms were analyzed. Moreover, the researcher collected data from teachers through one survey. The final results showed no enhancement on students writing, but considerable growth in students' self-concept and math. The surveys also showed the teachers' positive view towards coteaching. Idol (2006) found that coteaching did not significantly affect students with disability and students without disability performance on high-stakes tests.

The outcomes of a study performed by Murawski (2006) revealed no meaningful difference in the achievement of students with disability when receiving coteaching and solo-teaching. Potter (2011) discovered that there is no significant difference in the reading achievement of students with mild disabilities who received coteaching and those who received instruction from a single teacher. Aliakbari and Mansoori Nejad (2010) explored the effectiveness of coteaching in promoting the grammatical proficiency of Iranian junior high school students. They reported no evidence of meaningful difference in the achievement of the students in either group. The researchers suggested that implementing coteaching in Iranian context, in the realm of grammatical proficiency is dubious. Aliakbari and Mansoori Nejad (2010) maintained that "cultural background of students" could be the reason of non-significant results of coteaching in Iran (p. 8). Aliakbari and Bazayr (2012) conducted a classroom study to explore the efficacy of parallel teaching in a public school in Iran. The upshots of the study indicated that adopting parallel teaching is not effective in the promotion of the students' general proficiency in the given context. Among the reasons of non-significant outcomes, the researchers referred to the fact that "coteaching models are somehow new to the state education system in a way that participants culturally felt shocked by the innovation" (Aliakbari & Bazayr, 2012).

In contrast, there is a body of classroom research that proves the usefulness of coteaching (e.g. Bear & Proctor, 1990; Hadley, Simmerman, Long, & Luna, 2000; Marston, 1996). Through a quasi-experimental study, Jang (2006) reported that team-teaching promoted the students outcomes in Taiwan. Khaled Haghighi and Abdollahi (2013) sought the efficacy of team-teaching and station teaching in the promotion of students' reading comprehension in an EAP situation in Iran. In this experimental study, 52 sophomore students were selected and based on their performance in the pretest were assigned into three homogeneous groups. There were two experimental, receiving team-teaching and station teaching, and one control group, who were taught by one single instructor. The students' performance in the final test was analyzed through one-way ANOVA, and it became clear that both team-taught and station-taught groups outperformed those in the control group. But, no statistically meaningful difference was found regarding the two experimental groups. The researchers referred to prior planning and teacher training as key reasons of the accomplishment of the adopted models. Reviewing the related studies in the realm of coteaching, it is emerged that the investigation of co-teaching efficacy in

the area of language proficiency in private language institutes in Iran is absent from the present-day literature.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

As with a large growth of schools, institutions, and colleges the students' desire to continue education is growing as well. The result, then, is an ongoing extensive number of students with wide variety of needs, expectations, and challenges to be fulfilled. Among the many delivery service systems, i.e. inclusion, consultation, differentiated instruction and team-working provided to meet these diverse yet interrelated needs and challenges, one that has received widespread attention during recent decades is coteaching. Furthermore, students gain their knowledge of English through various ways, among them private language institutes play noteworthy roles in enhancing students understanding and knowledge.

A number of studies have been performed to investigate the efficiency of co-teaching in the students' reading performance, high-stakes tests, grammatical proficiency and so forth. Contrasting results were reported from previous classroom studies, and the efficacy of practically exploiting co-teaching strategies still remained unclear. Few studies investigated the efficacy of co-teaching in Iran (Aliakbari & Mansoori Nejad, 2010; Aliakbari & Bazayr, 2012; Khales Haghighi & Abdollahi, 2013); further exploration is still needed to clarify the effectiveness of various models of co-teaching. Therefore, the ultimate goal of this study is to ascertain whether co-teaching as one of the manifestations of service delivery system among children and adults could enhance students' proficiency more favorably in comparison with single instructor-teaching system. Besides, it aims at discovering if implementing team-teaching affect the promotion of children and adults differently.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions are addressed in the current study:

- 1) To what extent does implementing team-teaching impact the enhancement of children and adults general language proficiency in Iranian context?
- 2) How do the teachers and students in the experimental groups regard the experience of team-teaching instruction?

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Design***

A mixed-method design was employed for this study. To provide answer for the first research question, a quasi-experimental design and to explore the second research question semi-structured interviews were conducted with the teachers and students of the experimental groups in the end of the study.

#### ***Participants***

The participants for the study were chosen from one private language institute, viz. Tarannom Language Institute in Ilam, western city, Iran. The method of choosing the participants was convenience sampling. There were two groups of students, control and experimental, studied English as a foreign language for three sessions a week in winter 2012. There were 29 students in the control groups and 30 students in the experimental groups. It is added that the children were 7 to 10 years old, and the adults were 18 to 30 years old. The following table summarizes the sampling distribution.



Table 1: The distribution and number of students in each group

		Children		Adult	
		Control	Experimental	Control	Experimental
Gender	Female	6	7	7	9
	Male	7	9	9	5
Mean age		8.9	8.2	25.5	24.3
Mean score in the pretest		87.2	86.4	85.93	86.47
Mean years learning English		2.7	2.9	3.1	3.4

Furthermore, three teachers who had experience of five and seven years of teaching English in EFL contexts ran the classes in the control and experimental groups. Two of the teachers had MA degree and the other teacher was an MA student in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). The criteria for choosing the teachers were their experience, inclination for participation, academic knowledge, and teaching qualification.

### Materials

The main materials used in the current study were English Time (Rivers, & Tokoyama, 2005) and Touchstone (McCarthy, McCarten, & Sandiford, 2005). The first one, English Time (Rivers, & Tokoyama, 2005) of the series includes seven books for different proficiency levels of 5 to 12 years old learners. The book English Time 5 (Rivers, & Tokoyama, 2005) was practiced in the study. Furthermore, Touchstone 2 (McCarthy, McCarten, & Sandiford, 2005) was the main book of the course for adults' learners.

### Instruments

Two proficiency and two achievement tests were utilized as the instruments. All of the students took part in two tests, viz. pretest and posttest. The aim of the pretests was determining the homogeneity of the students in each group in terms of English language proficiency before initiating the instruction. The goal of posttests was investigating the achievement of students in the control and experimental groups. The tests for children learners included oral tests (speaking and listening using picture cues) with time restriction of 20 minutes, and paper tests included sentence and reading comprehension tests, with time restriction of 50 minutes. The tests for the adult students also included oral tests (speaking and listening in oral interviews), reading comprehension, grammar, true/false, close passage, and structure tests. Oral tests were completed in 30 minutes and paper tests in 75 minutes. All paper tests were piloted with the time intervention of two weeks, then, the *Threshold-loss agreement* was adopted and calculated through Brown's (1996) formula to ensure the reliability of the tests. Moreover, to seek the reliability of the oral interview tests, each test was scored by at least two raters. To ensure the inter-raters' reliability, the *Kappa statistics* were adopted. Table 2 presents the *kappa coefficient* ( $k$ ) for the reliability of each test. It worth noting that all the paper tests were prepared by tests administrators and teachers in the institute. As noted, all the tests were standardized before being used in the study.



Table 2: The calculation of K for the reliability of the pre- and posttests

	Tests	<i>K</i> for Paper Tests	<i>K</i> for Oral Tests
Children	Pretest	.71	.85
	Posttest	.79	.74
Adults	Pretest	.81	.87
	Posttest	.86	.76

Kappa lies on a scale of -1, 0, and 1. The Kappa=1 denotes complete agreement, 0 indicates agreement by chance, and -1 indicates less than chance agreement. Moreover,  $0.61 < K < 0.80$  denotes substantial agreement,  $0.81 < K < 0.99$  indicates almost perfect agreement. Therefore, the calculated K's for the tests adopted denote a high level of agreement. Experts' judgment was determined to prove the validity of the tests. The experts were asked to share their ideas about the content relatedness and the items preciseness and clearness. Having known the experts ideas, the test administrators implemented the changes needed, and removed or modified some items. Finally, upon the agreement of the experts, the tests were made ready to use in the real study.

### *Procedure*

Firstly, to determine the homogeneity of the control and experimental groups of children as well as adults' learners, two pretests were taken. Based on the students achieved scores in the pretests, the teachers divided the students into four classes, including two experimental and two control groups. In order to ensure that the experimental and control groups were homogeneous, Independent-Samples T-test was run.

The study was conducted in 20 sessions and in the last session the final exam was held. The children took part in the classrooms on Saturdays, Mondays, and Wednesdays, and the adults participated in the classrooms on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays in winter 2012, starting in January 8, to February 23. Thirteen children constituted one experimental group in the study. As the first experimental group of the study, they were co-taught by a couple of teachers through team-teaching. While, the other group of children considered as the control group, included 15 students, were taught by only one of the teachers. The other class of the experimental group comprised 16 adults' learners who received coteaching strategies of instruction. Finally, the last group also consisted of 13 adult learners in the control group, received instruction by one of the teacher-researchers.

Among various approaches of coteaching suggested by scholars, team-teaching model presented by Friend and Cook (2007), wherein both teachers are engaged in implementing the instruction, was employed in the study. The coteachers taught the lessons cooperatively and collaboratively and both of the teachers were responsible for planning, analyzing, and incorporating the instruction. The procedures and methods of teaching the content, in the experimental groups, were planned cautiously by the coteachers in advance. Coteachers crystallized their roles and tasks in the classroom, and tried to analyze individual learner's needs and share responsibilities before the class began in each session. Moreover, they emphasized and made students aware of the fact that both teachers are of equal authority in delivering instruction, assessing, managing classroom discipline and students' behavior as well as in scoring.

One week after the study ended, skilled and experienced interviewers conducted semi-structured interviews to seek answer for the second research question. Data needed from the students were

gathered through focus group interviews with 6-7 students in each group. It helped the participants to think together, challenge each other, and react to the salient points. The data from the teachers were also gathered in a friendly situation through semi-structured interviews. The average time for interviews with students was 20-23 minutes, and about 14-17 minutes with the coteachers. There were specific pre-determined core questions; however, the interviewers, who used interview schedules, allowed elaboration in the questions and answers to gather in-depth information. All interviews were audio-taped to ensure the accurate documentation of the data. Audio-tapes were then transcribed for analysis.

### **Data analysis**

To find answer for the first research question, the sum of the oral and paper tests were analyzed using the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS). To find answer for the second research question, a portion of data was transcribed. The portion was carefully reviewed and a list of answers including the advantages, disadvantages, recommendations, difficulties and so on was compiled. The list was analyzed as to be categorized and combined into larger units. The most frequent answers were then categorized into three groups of advantages, suggestions, and essentials. To ensure the reliability of the findings, the transcriptions were given to two experts to analyze the data. The results were compared and the agreed-upon answers were considered valid for the research question two.

## **RESULTS**

Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were run to analyze the students' achieved scores in the pre- and posttests. Tables 3 and 4 reveal the children's performance in the pretest and posttest. Tables 6 and 7 present the adults performance in the tests.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of the Children Performance in the Pretest and Posttest**

		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>
<i>Marks</i>	<i>Pretest</i>				
	<i>Coteaching</i>	13	86.40	5.853	1.511
	<i>Solo-teaching</i>	15	87.20	5.647	1.458
	<i>Posttest</i>				
	<i>Coteaching</i>	13	90.87	3.85	.995
	<i>Solo-teaching</i>	15	84.80	6.19	1.59

**Table 4: Inferential Statistics of the Adults Performance in the Pretest and Posttest**

	F	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Std. Difference	Error	Effect Size (Cohen's d)
Pretest	.016	27	.785	1.935		–
Posttest	1.583	27	.004	1.882		1.19

The descriptive and inferential statistics of results of the adult learners' pretest and posttest from the Independent-Samples T-test are demonstrated in Tables 5 and 6.

**Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of the Adults Performance in the Pretest and Posttest**

			N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Marks	Pretest	Coteaching	16	86.47	5.167	1.334
		Solo-teaching	13	85.93	5.431	1.402
Marks	Posttest	Coteaching	16	89.27	5.161	1.33
		Solo-teaching	13	84.07	4.967	1.10

**Table 6: Inferential Statistics of the Adults Performance in the Pretest and Posttest**

	F	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Std. Difference	Error	Effect Size (Cohen's d)
Pretest	.016	27	.78	1.93		–
Posttest	.294	27	.006	1.729		1.02

## DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

As was noted earlier, two control and two experimental groups were chosen for the study. Before beginning the study, pretests were held to capture the students' initial differences and to ensure that the control and experimental groups were homogeneous. Table 3, presents the mean score of the children in the control and experimental groups. The average score of the former is 87.20, and that of the latter equals 86.40. To see whether or not this difference is meaningful, T-test was adopted. As it is shown in Table 4, the sig=.706; thus, the claim of the homogeneity of the experimental and control groups, before initiating the instruction, is verified. Table 5 indicates the descriptive statistics of the adults pretest results. The experimental group generated a mean score of 86.47, and the control group achieved 85.93 as the average score. The sig=.785 in Table 6 reveals that the difference between the average scores is not statistically meaningful; accordingly, it can be claimed that the two groups were nearly homogeneous.

In the end of the semester, all students participated in the final achievement tests to figure out the efficacy of the treatments. Table 3, provides the descriptive statistics of the achievement score of the students in the children group. Although, the mean score of the experimental group, ( $\Sigma=90.87$ ) is higher than the control group ( $\Sigma=84.80$ ); the statistical analysis of T-test was exploited to determine the meaningfulness of this difference. The  $\text{sig}=.004$  in Table 4 indicates that the difference was statistically significant. Consequently, it proves that delivering instruction through team-teaching is considerably effective in enhancing students' proficiency in children.

Furthermore, to provide information about the magnitude of the provided information, effect sizes were calculated. In so doing, the *Cohen's d* formula, which can be used to figure out the differences between the means of two groups, was adopted. According to Cohen (1988) a value of .2 is generally considered a small effective size, .5 a medium effective size, and .8 or more a large effective size. So, the effect size of 1.19, presented in Table 4 yields a high level of effective size, suggesting that coteaching is a highly effective procedure for influencing children's outcome.

Descriptive statistics of the adults' performance is demonstrated in Table 5. It is crystallized that students of the experimental group obtained higher average scores ( $\Sigma=89.27$ ) comparing with those in the control group ( $\Sigma=84.07$ ). However, to ascertain if the difference between the two groups is statistically significant, the Independent-Samples T-test procedure was run (see Table 6). The  $\text{sig}=.006$ , indicates that the difference between the students' performance in the posttest was statistically meaningful. All in all, the findings indicate that employing team-teaching is considerably beneficial in fostering the adults' general proficiency.

The comparison of the standard deviation of the scores in the pre- and posttests indicates that the standard deviation of the children was 5.8 in the pretest that was reduced to 3.85 in the posttest; whereas, the standard deviation of the control group in the pretest equaled 5.6 and increased to 6.19 in the posttest. It suggests that implementing coteaching increased the homogeneity of the learners; while, the single teaching lowered the students homogeneity in the end of the study. The standard deviation of the adults in the experimental group was 5.1 in the pretest that remained constant in the posttest; the control groups' standard deviation was 5.43 and decreased to 4.96 in the final test. Put it differently, no considerable change was reflected in the homogeneity of the adults' learners in the experimental and control groups. The calculated effect size for adult groups is 1.02 that is a large effect size. It denotes that implementing coteaching is considerably effective in the promotion of the students' proficiency.

To sum up then, the findings revealed that employing team-teaching as a model of co-teaching procedure was effective in fostering the children and adults general proficiency; although, it affected the groups homogeneity in a different manner. To explore and highlight the differences between implementing team-teaching in the children and adults classrooms, and to find answer for the second research question, the teachers' and students' viewpoints were sought in an open-ended questionnaire. The following table summarizes the teachers and students' perspective on team-teaching.

Table 7: The summary of students' evaluation of team-teaching

Advantages	Essentials	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potentially effective</li> <li>• No time is wasted</li> <li>• Coteachers can devote great deal of time to analyze the students needs</li> <li>• Coteachers can observe and analyze other's classrooms</li> <li>• Coteachers can share experiences</li> <li>• Coteachers can cover the others' weaknesses</li> <li>• Coteachers spend less energy</li> <li>• Increasing the students' motivation</li> <li>• Increasing the students' interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior planning</li> <li>• Match coteachers</li> <li>• Creating and developing the culture of having two teachers</li> <li>• Administrators support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing the students mindset</li> <li>• Making the students' ready for coteaching</li> <li>• Involving parents for making the students ready</li> <li>• Implement coteaching from the students childhood</li> </ul>

Having the opportunity to share experiences is a major benefit of teaching cooperatively and collaboratively from the co-teachers' point of view. Most teachers implement their own procedures and techniques in teaching and in managing classrooms. They feel no need in observing, and analyzing other teachers' techniques and strategies of teaching and managing. Nonetheless, employing coteaching models and strategies of instruction enabled the teachers to make use of observing, and analyzing the couple's methods in teaching.

They also maintained that the model enabled them to support and cover the weaknesses of the paired one in the classroom. Moreover, they posited that less energy is needed to convey the message and to manage the classroom; hence there remains a considerable deal of time that can be devoted to analyzing the students' needs and progress. Nevertheless, they asserted that prior planning, especially in establishing and maintaining communication when presenting information, sharing responsibility, changing the roles, and so forth, is of utmost importance when co-teaching is implemented. Prior planning was also referred to as an inseparable element in studies where positive outcomes were reported (e.g. Bear & Proctor, 1990; Khales Haghighi & Abdollahi, 2013; Marston, 1996; Walther-Thomas, 1997).

For coteaching to be effective and successful the culture of having more than one teacher should be created and developed (Aliakbari & Bazayr, 2012; Aliakbari & Mansoori Nejad, 2010; Friend, 2007). One reason of non-efficacy of coteaching in Iran was the students' background culture. To overcome the obstacle, the administrators and coteachers tried to prepare the students' mindset for having two teachers before initiating and during the study. To the coteachers, amending the stereotypical conception of classrooms among children, that is individual instruction, occurred after one or two sessions. Whereas, the coteachers spent much time to change the traditional one-teacher instruction viewpoints in adults' classroom and letting them cope with the new situation. Stated otherwise, the children dealt with the new model of instruction effortlessly and easily. This might be due to the fact that the children's mindset about classroom environment, instruction, and teachers' roles is not fixed yet. They are more flexible in coming up with new ideas. However, having accepted two teachers instead of one, the students' motivation and interest in learning, as they expressed, were enhanced.

The majority of students referred to team-teaching as a novel, yet effective approach. Most of them stated that employing match coteachers in the classroom is potentially beneficial for enhancing the students' proficiency. They further noted that no time is wasted when two teachers attend and teach in one classroom. Many of them cited that the presence of coteachers can properly support the students, for instance one of the teachers covered grammar in the best possible way; while, the other one widened the students' vocabulary. Finally, all the students who were co-taught declared their willingness to having two teachers instead of one, in the following semesters.

Although contrasting results were reported in the previous studies, the most instructional benefits were reported for students in the presented study. One interpretation that can be put on the positive findings in the current paper, as mentioned before, might be due to preparing the students' mindset before initiating the instruction. Another interpretation can be related to the context where the studies took place. Two of the previous studies in Iran were conducted in state schools, wherein teachers do not have much flexibility in changing the routine conditions and might receive less administrative support comparing with private schools, institutes, or universities; however, this study was carried out in a private language institute where teachers are allowed to implement changes for better conditions, and gained sufficient administrative support.

### **IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The ultimate goal of educational systems is to fostering the students' attainment. The upshots of the current study will yield the insights to positive educational changes especially in private language institutes by helping educators, administrators, and teachers to realize the significance and efficacy of team-teaching in EFL classrooms. Consequently, administrators and educators who are committed to advance the quality of delivering instruction and are minded for employing constructive instructional strategies and approaches may benefit from the findings of this study. In addition, it was revealed that the children accept the culture of coteaching easier than adults; thus, this study suggests the teachers, educators, and administrators to start implementing coteaching instruction from the learners' childhood.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The current study, like the majority of studies, is faced with some limitations. The participants of the study were chosen from one private language institute in Ilam-Iran. Therefore, the outcomes may not be generalized to other populations in other contexts. To offer evidence of the effectiveness of team-teaching in Iranian EFL classrooms, further studies can replicate the current study with a larger number of participants. By adding more students and teachers remarking insights could be found.

Another limitation that may have affected the results is that this study was conducted in one semester in winter 2012 and with students of elementary levels. The interested researchers can longitudinally investigate the efficacy of this approach in other situations and with other participants. This study can also be repeated with students of different proficiency levels. Yet



another limitation was that only one model of coteaching was adopted in the present study. Future research will need to explore and compare the effectiveness of different models of coteaching in EFL classrooms.

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## A COMPARISON OF EFFECT OF PICTORIAL STORYTELLING AND PLAYING GAMES ON IRANIAN KINDERGARTNERS' VOCABULARY RECOGNITION

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed at comparing the effects of two methods of storytelling and game playing on Iranian EFL kindergartner learners' vocabulary recognition as well as the methods' superiority over each other. 40 Iranian EFL kindergartner learners between the ages of 5 to 6 who were attending the kindergarten's pre-school classes were selected. They were assigned randomly into two experimental groups: storytelling and game playing. Each group received 8-sessions of treatment. Two point-to tests based on Jung's picture association test were used for the pretests and posttests. Based on the findings of a test of within subjects effects and an independent *t*-test, it was concluded that both the methods were effective and story-based group did slightly better. Implications are for kindergartner teachers, elementary level teachers, material developers, and parents who want to train bilingual children.

**KEYWORDS:** kindergartner, vocabulary recognition, storytelling, game playing

### INTRODUCTION

In today's global community, the study of foreign languages is a necessity (Omari, 2001). According to Chou, Wang and Ching (2012), in its role as a global language, English has become one of the most important academic and professional tools. Recent studies have highlighted the advantages of an early start in second or foreign language learning (Blondin et al., 1998; Edelenbos & De Jung, 2004; Johnstone, 2000). Basically, children are potential in acquiring and learning a foreign language, and even they learn it more quickly than those who are learning the foreign language after puberty (Mc Laughlin, 1978). According to Omari (2007) in kindergarten certain methods of foreign language teaching are more suitable than others because these years bridge the gap between early childhood and first grade. Segers, Takke, and Verhoeven (2004) mention that storybook reading in kindergarten plays a significant role in children's language and literacy development. Repeated exposure to new words, either within the text of a single book or through repeated readings of the same book, facilitates children's learning of those words (Elley, 1989; Penno et al., 2002; Robbins & Ehri, 1994; Senechal, 1997). Gaming is also a characteristic of human nature (Demirbilek, Yilmaz, & Tamer, 2010). Wright, Betteridge and Buckby (2006)

review the advantages of games for learning English and find out that games help and encourage learners for language learning in order to sustain interest and work.

### ***Children's First Language Acquisition and its Similarities with Second Language Acquisition and Learning***

One remarkable thing about first language acquisition is the high degree of similarity in the early language of children all over the world (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). While more is known about how children learn their mother tongue, researchers are just beginning to understand the processes of children's second language learning. Some researchers argue that the processes of first and second language learning in children share some important similarities (Gordon, 2007). Some 2<sup>nd</sup> language researchers believe that there is a natural learning sequence in 2<sup>nd</sup> language acquisition, parallel to 1<sup>st</sup> language developmental sequences (Lightbown, 1985). Krashen (1985) and other authors see this natural development to be the product of the language acquisition device, assumed to operate in adulthood, allowing childlike internalizations of the rules underlying the target language. Other authors stress the role of universal grammar in constraining the developmental sequence (Healy & Eugene Bourne, 1998).

### ***Critical Period***

The idea of a "Critical Period" was first introduced by Penfield and Roberts (1959). According to them, a child's brain is more plastic compared with that of an adult, before the age of 9, a child is a specialist in learning to speak; he can learn 2-3 languages as easy as one. Lenneberg (1967) believes that after laterization (a process by which the two sides of the brain develop specialized functions), the brain loses plasticity. Lenneberg claims that laterization of the language function is normally completed at puberty, making post-adolescent language acquisition difficult. Ausubel (1969) considers that children may be better able to acquire an acceptable accent in a new language and that they have certain cognitive advantages, too. Chase (1997) adds that learning ability decreases after ages eleven and twelve. He mentions that it is developmentally appropriate to teach languages during early childhood and early elementary years because of children's natural ability to acquire language during this stage in life.

### ***Early Bilingualism, and two methods of children tutoring: Story-telling and Game-playing***

There is a considerable body of research, as is assured by Lightbown et al. (2006, p.25), on children's ability to learn more than one language in their earliest years. The theory of bilingual facilitation is based on the framework proposed by Ben-Zeev (1977) and elaborated by Hakuta and Diaz (1985). Hakuta and Diaz characterized bilinguals as having enhanced "cognitive flexibility." Their essential idea is that bilinguals show a greater readiness to reorganize linguistic input and impute linguistic structure.

Teaching a language to young learners brings a number of challenges most of which stem from the characteristics of young learners that are different from those of older learners (Cameron, 2003); hence, taking these characteristics into account while determining the language instruction is of utmost importance. Young learners tend to learn implicitly rather than explicitly (Cameron, 2001; Halliwell, 1992; Keddle, 1997; Pinter, 2006; Scatterly & Willis, 2001). They can understand meaningful messages, but cannot analyze the language as a system yet. Children are good observers and they make use of such contextual clues like movements (body language), intonation, mimics and gestures, actions and messages in order to understand and interpret the language itself (Brewster et al., 2002; Cabrera & Martinez, 2001; Halliwell, 1992; Scatterly and Willis, 2001). A further characteristic is that young learners enjoy fantasy and imagination (Pinter, 2006). Games and cartoons suit well in fostering young learners' imagination and



fantasy. Cameron (2001) believes that learning characteristics of children need to be reflected in the design of teaching curricula. According to Semonsky and Spielberger (2004) the kindergarten and first grade teachers use many manipulative things in their teaching that appeal to the children's senses. Children are encouraged to hear, touch, smell, taste and see the actual objects they are using in their foreign language.

Young learners are quick to learn vocabulary, slower to learn structures (Demircioglu, 2010) and The primary role words play in language is to convey meaning (Balota, 1990). De Groot (2010) believes that from the viewpoint of a beginning learner vocabulary knowledge may be considered the most crucial language component: the chances of getting one's basic needs fulfilled in a foreign language environment are substantially better if the learner possesses some well-chosen basic vocabulary in the language concerned than when, instead, he or she masters the language's grammar flawlessly. Jane Feber (2008) believes that vocabulary instruction is important and although there may be no single right way to teach vocabulary to children, some common conditions do need to be met. For example, children need multiple exposures to vocabulary words taught with a variety of direct and indirect instructional methods. These include exposing children to a wide variety of books that appeal to their interests, introducing words in context, and utilizing mnemonic devices. she adds that students need to be actively involved in learning vocabulary which means that students need to see, touch, and feel the words to work with them actively. Since games and activities appeal to students, these seemed like a logical way to help them acquire vocabulary. Creating a classroom atmosphere in which words are fun, and playing with words is encouraged can be a powerful antidote to the very natural fear of making mistakes that can so easily inhibit learning (Thornbury, 2002).

Justice, Meier, and Walpole (2005) believe that the theoretical perspectives of vocabulary development are first, Incidental exposure to novel words is a critical mechanism for word learning; second, word learning is a gradual process, and third, adult input variations can influence the rate of novel word learning. Justice et al. (2005) also mention that although successful vocabulary instruction in elementary classrooms should emphasize explicit teaching of those words needed to access and succeed in the general curriculum, vocabulary instruction should also foster incidental learning opportunities. For younger children who are not reading, incidental exposure to new words occurs through conversations with others, overhearing words spoken in one's environment, and by being read to. Indeed, adult-child storybook reading interactions provide highly contextualized exposures to novel words in a routine that is authentic, familiar, and often motivating to young children (Roth, 2002). New words can be learned with the help of pictures, too. Al-Seghayer (2001) claims that the contribution of visual stimuli to vocabulary learning can also be attributed to a specific process which links vocabulary system of human beings to their imagery system, and this process is closely related with the organization of linguistic knowledge and imagery system in our minds.

Storybook reading is an important factor in vocabulary growth (Bus, Van Ijzendoorn, & Pellegrini, 1995), both at home and in the school environment. Reilly and Ward (2000, as cited in Tavit & Soylemez, 2008) believe that stories have lots of repetition which reinforce the acquisition of language items in the classroom and they build up the child's confidence as the language classroom atmosphere is non-threatening. Stories are also useful tools to enhance



comprehension by visuals, touching and seeing things. Reilly and ward also mention that Good picture books are a rich source for understanding new vocabulary and actually understanding the meaning of a story even if one doesn't understand each word.

Current language learning theories follow the premise that children learn best through discovery and experimentation and being motivated to learn in a playful and relaxed context (Griva, et al., 2010). Language learning can be linked with natural activities such as play, since young children can learn languages as naturally as they learn to run, jump and play (Baker, 2000, as stated in Griva, et al., 2010). One of the numerous benefits that come with using games to help students develop and improve in their oral skills is that they engage children in cooperative and team learning (Ersoz, 2000). Lee (1995) believes that teaching vocabulary through games encourage children's interaction and provide opportunities for real communication by bridging the gap between the classroom and the real world. Lee also mentions that games are highly motivating and help students to make learning fun and relaxed. They make the lesson less monotonous, since they maintain students' attention and interest in the language without getting bored and sustain their effort of learning. There is a competitive element that enhances effective learning as games keep learners interested in winning (Nguyen & Khuat, 2003, as stated in Griva, et al., 2010)

### **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

We seldom stop to marvel at the speed and ease with which children learn their first language. The phenomenon is nothing short of a miracle. All normally developing children master the complexity of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary of their first language with first four or five years of their lives. While their first language facility surprises no body, we often marvel at how quickly children learn a second language; like the case of immigrant children who speak English without a trace of an accent after having been in an English-speaking environment for a relatively short time. As it was argued by a lot of authors and researchers in the literature, this ability of the children has got a time-limit. So, the researcher's main motive and purpose for doing this research is to reap the benefits of this time-limited capability by using two of the most appropriate methods for the children i.e. story-telling and playing vocabulary games. The researcher wants to examine which of these techniques will give a better answer. This study can thus lead to development of certain guidelines for teachers who are teaching English at the kindergartens to five-six year old kids.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES**

Based on the above-mentioned literature, this study addressed the following research questions:

1. Has pictorial story-telling got any significant effect on kindergartners' foreign language vocabulary recognition?
2. Have physical activities through games got any significant effect on kindergartners' foreign language vocabulary recognition?
3. Is there any significant superiority in using pictorial story-telling method to teach foreign language vocabulary at the recognition level over playing vocabulary games method, or vice versa?

Based on the above questions, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

1. Pictorial story-telling has not got any significant effect on kindergartners' foreign language vocabulary recognition.

2. Physical activities through games have not got any significant effect on kindergartners' foreign language vocabulary recognition.
3. There is no significant superiority in using pictorial story-telling method to teach foreign language vocabulary at the recognition level over playing vocabulary games method, or vice versa.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

The participants of this study were 60 Iranian kindergartners between the ages of 5 to 6 and a half. They were chosen from Bojnourd, Naghme-ye-Shadi kindergarten. They were divided into two groups. There were 11 girls and 19 boys in story-telling group, and 12 girls and 18 boys in game-playing one; thus, among 60 participants, there were 23 girls and 37 boys. They hadn't passed any English courses before.

### ***Sampling Procedures***

The study was a pretest-posttest as well as a comparison-group one. It was quasi-experimental because the convenience sampling was used as the kindergarten in which the study was done had got two classes each containing about thirty 5 to 6-year-old kindergartners. However, they were randomly assigned into two experimental groups called story-telling and game-playing. Thus, there were two independent variables named story-telling group and game-playing-group as well as one dependent variable named vocabulary recognition. Each of the groups consisted of 30 participants totaled 60. Both groups were taught by the researcher herself.

### ***Instrumentation***

In order to achieve the goals of this study, a point-to test is used by the researcher. This test is something like Jung's picture association test. Association tests are methods for discovering complexes by measuring the reaction time and interpreting the answers to given stimulus words or pictures (Routledge, 1979). Picture association tests involve the presentation of a series of stimulus pictures to a respondent who is asked to quickly supply the word that first comes to his mind after seeing the stimulus picture. Presumably the respondent would give the word that he most closely associates with the stimulus picture (Gupta, 2004). The researcher's reason to choose Jung's test was that the participants in the study were kindergartners, so, they were not literate in either their mother tongue or the target language. According to Tavit, Muge, and Soylemez (2008), kindergartners are children who have not started compulsory schooling and have not started yet to read and write. In this test they heard the words read by the researcher and were just needed to point to the right picture on the flashcards set in front of them and got a 'one' or a 'zero.' Two point-to tests were done during the study, a pretest at the first session, to assure that the participants are homogeneous, and hadn't known any of the chosen vocabulary, and a posttest which aimed to measure and compare the amount of grasp of vocabulary by each group. The aim of this research was to test the respondents at the recognition level, so the researcher just asked the pupils to point to the picture as they heard the related word, without saying anything.

### *Procedure*

The participants in both treatment groups named the story-based and game-playing groups had two classes each week totaled 8 sessions during 4 weeks. Each class session lasted about 30 minutes to avoid the kindergartners' boredom. 8 stories were selected from the book *First Friends*, class book1, by Susan Lannuzzi for the 8 sessions of the class with story-based group. And the games selected for the game-playing group were "Chinese whisper," "What's missing," "Draw it relay," and "Balloon toss." The participants took the pretest at the first session and the posttest in session 9. Two points should be noted: (1) No student took the tests (pre- and post-test) twice, and (2) both groups were taught by the researcher herself. The sampling method used in this study was convenience sampling. However, random assignment to groups was used by the researcher. As Mackey and Gass (2005) argued, to assess the feasibility and usefulness of the data collection methods and make the necessary revisions, the whole study was piloted before the beginning of the main study.

### *Story-based Group*

The participants of the story-based group were required to listen to 8 stories accompanied by related pictures during 8 sessions; each session, 1 story. The stories were chosen from a book named *'First Friends' class book no. 1*, by Susan Lanuzzi. The researcher first showed the participants the flashcards of the vocabulary to be taught and said the words loudly and asked the pupils to repeat them. The repetition's aim was to absorb the pupils' attention to the words and not to prepare them for those words' production. At the next step she gave them pages with the story's comic strips, and asked them to look at comic strips. The pictures of the comic strips were big, colorful, and easy to follow. The researcher then told the story of the comic strips with a loud voice. Her voice was louder than usual to take the pupils' attention, because they were so excited and energetic, and some of them were really naughty. And also the loud voice had a dominant role, too, for the kids to take the orders. As the researcher explained the story, she pointed to the pictures and sometimes did some gestures for better understanding. The story was told twice; the first time the teacher just explained it, and the second time she wanted the students to participate and repeat some parts. At the end of the session the researcher again repeated the vocabulary with the flashcards. And finally she gathered the pages in order to prevent any extra work on the vocabulary at the participants' homes and any derangement in the course of study. At the ninth session, the researcher took the point-to test to assess the grasped knowledge of the participants.

### *Game-based Group*

For the game-based group four games were selected; two of them were played at each session during the eight sessions of the treatment. At the beginning of the sessions the same vocabulary as the story-based group were worked accompanied by flashcards; the researcher showed the flashcards and said the words loudly and asked the students to repeat. Again The repetition was to absorb pupils' attention to the words and not to prepare them for those words' production.

The games were done with the aid of the flashcards. The pupils were sat in two rows so for "Chinese whisper", the researcher showed one of the flashcards to the first student of each of the rows and asked him or her to whisper it to his or her classmate, sitting next to him or her, and this process continued till the last member of the row. The group had won, if the last member would have shouted the word sooner than the other squad. The next game was "What's missing". The researcher set the cards on a table in front of the class and asked the participants to gather in front of the table and look at the cards, then asked them to close their eyes. The researcher promptly hid one of the cards, asked the pupils to open their eyes and guess the missing card. At "Draw it relay", the children were divided to two groups; the researcher told two different words to the

groups and asked them to rush to the board and draw it. The team, who was speedier, was the winner. In “Balloon toss” game, the researcher used a soft ball and tossed it to different children, showed them the flashcards, and asked them to say the words.

## DATA ANALYSES AND RESULTS

### *The Normality Tests*

The assumption of normality is empirically tested through one sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. As shown in Table 1, by considering the fact that  $0.848 > 0.05$ , the researcher came to this conclusion that the data did enjoy normal distribution.

*Table 1: One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test*

Pretest	Posttest			
40	40	N		
1.6250	11.9000	Mean		
1.67466	2.50947	Std. Deviation	Normal Parameters(a,b)	
.184	.134	Absolute	Most	Extreme
.184	.134	Positive	Differences	
-.166	-.099	Negative		
1.164	.848	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		
.133	.468	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		

The assumption of homogeneity of variances has proved through Levene's Test for Equality of Variances.

### *Independent T-Test Pretest*

Based on the results displayed in Table 2, It could be concluded that story-based group did not differ significantly from game-based group ( $p=0.926$ ,  $df=38$ ,  $t=0.093$ ). The calculated p-value is equal to 0.926 which is more than 0.05.

Table 2: Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Pretest	Equal variances assumed	.142	.709	.093	38	.926	.05000	.53644	-1.03596	1.13596
	Equal variances not assumed			.093	37.228	.926	.05000	.53644	-1.03670	1.13670

***The first two Research Questions***

Based on the results displayed in Tables 3 and 4, it could be concluded that the effects of the within-subjects is significant ( $p=0.0005$ ,  $F(1,38)=476.257$ ). The effect was significant because  $F=476.257 > 251.1$ , and  $p=0.0005 < 0.05$ . Thus, the null-hypotheses as pictorial story-telling has not got any significant effect on kindergartners' foreign language vocabulary recognition and physical activities through games have not got any significant effect on kindergartners' foreign language vocabulary recognition were rejected.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Group		Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Pretest	Game based	1.6500	1.81442	20
	Story based	1.6000	1.56945	20
	Total	1.6250	1.67466	40
Posttest	Game based	11.2000	2.16673	20
	Story based	12.6000	2.68328	20
	Total	11.9000	2.50947	40

Table 4: Tests of Within-Subjects Effects

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power <sup>a</sup>
Testperiods	Sphericity Assumed	2111.512	1	2111.512	476.257	.000	.926	476.257	1.000
	Greenhouse-Geisser	2111.512	1.000	2111.512	476.257	.000	.926	476.257	1.000
	Huynh-Feldt	2111.512	1.000	2111.512	476.257	.000	.926	476.257	1.000
	Lower-bound	2111.512	1.000	2111.512	476.257	.000	.926	476.257	1.000
Testperiods * Group	Sphericity Assumed	10.512	1	10.512	2.371	.132	.059	2.371	.323
	Greenhouse-Geisser	10.512	1.000	10.512	2.371	.132	.059	2.371	.323
	Huynh-Feldt	10.512	1.000	10.512	2.371	.132	.059	2.371	.323
	Lower-bound	10.512	1.000	10.512	2.371	.132	.059	2.371	.323
Error(Test periods)	Sphericity Assumed	168.475	38	4.434					
	Greenhouse-Geisser	168.475	38.000	4.434					
	Huynh-Feldt	168.475	38.000	4.434					
	Lower-bound	168.475	38.000	4.434					

Also, as it can be seen in figure 1, both the story-based and game-based groups have got improvements from pretest to posttest.

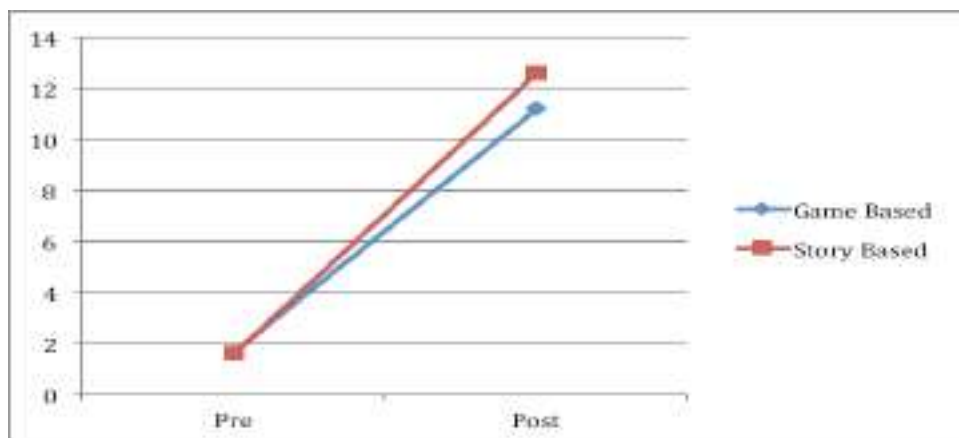


Figure 1: Pretest and Posttest of the Means of Both Groups



**The third Research Question**

Based on the results displayed in Table 5, it could be concluded that the story-based group outperformed the game-based group ( $t = -1.81$ ,  $df = 38$ ,  $p = 0.077$ ). The p-value is equal to 0.077 which is slightly bigger than 0.05, thus the third null hypothesis as There is no significant superiority in using pictorial story-telling method to teach foreign language vocabulary at the recognition level over playing vocabulary games method, or vice versa was rejected.

Table 5: Independent Samples T-Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Posttest	Equal variances assumed	1.580	.216	-1.815	38	.077	-1.40000	.77119	-2.96120	.16120
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.815	36.386	.078	-1.40000	.77119	-2.96347	.16347

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The research questions in this study were concerned with effectiveness of using stories or games on foreign language vocabulary recognition of children, without producing the words to learn. And also they were concerned with the significance of difference in the effect of these two methods. The analyses indicated that both groups, story-telling and game-playing, were effective, and the story-based group did slightly better. The findings of this study support the scholars' claim that story-telling and game-playing promotes learning a foreign language. The results of this study, regarding the participants' improvement seen at the posttest, supports the positive effects of story-telling in young learners' language development. This supports the scholars' claims cited in the literature part, such as Grave (1990), Wright (1997), Elley (1989), Seedhouse and Li (2010). There were a lot of story books for beginners in the market, but the researcher tried to find something which was meaningful, interesting, exciting and funny; because, according to Gerngross and Puchta (2009), the content of what the children are offered in the new language is of crucial importance in motivating them to work out the meaning of what they hear. On the other hand, as it was supported in previous studies such as Krashen (1986) and Linse (2005), the researcher tried to find pictorial stories to provide comprehensible input. The findings of this study support the scholars' claim that storybook reading is an important factor especially in vocabulary growth. This was supported in previous studies such as Bus et al. (1995), Brett et al. (1996), Robbins et al. (1990), Penno et al. (2002), Reilly et al. (2000, as cited in Tavil et al. 2008). According to Ur (1996), children in general learn well when they are active and when action is channeled into an enjoyable game. Some researchers like Alcorn (2003) believed that games require participation, competing in order to achieve certain goals and have special goals. Thus, the games in this study were all competing, and this competition added a lot of excitement to the class. And also the goals of the games used in this study were simple and obtainable. Children learn best through discovery and experimentation and being motivated to learn in a playful and relaxed context as is cited in Griva, et al. (2010). All the games used in this study put

the children in a pending position in this way motivated them. In Chinese whisper, all the participants were awaiting their turn to become aware of the words through whispering. In What's missing, children were awaiting with eyes closed, shivering with excitement, while the researcher chose one of the flashcards and hid it. Then, they compete with their classmates in guessing the missed card. In Draw it relay, the participants were awaiting to hear their group's word, then rush to the board and draw the related picture, while others in the group shouting and trying to help them to draw it better. In Balloon toss, children were awaiting their turn all playtime long, the ball might hit them at each second. So, the researcher used the pending element to motivate and excite the participants more. All the four games engaged children in cooperative and team learning (Eroz, 2000) and they had a competitive element that enhanced effective learning as they kept learners interested in winning (Nguyen and Khuat, 2003; as stated in Griva, et al., 2010). Ur (1996), as is stated in the literature, believes that an instructor should not confuse using games as method of teaching a language with a situation where the language learning activity is called a "game" which conveys the message that it is just fun not to be taken too seriously. The researcher felt to some extent that using mere games as a language teaching method was likely to lead on this anti-educational and demoralizing situation mentioned by Ur; although, the researcher tried to use some games in which the emphasis was on vocabulary. After this research was done, the researcher came to conclusion that games are better to be considered as an assisting power for the main method.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

After attending the classes for at least ten sessions, the researcher was sure that story-based group would pass the post-test with better results because that group revealed a deeper understanding during the class time. As the researcher experienced, pupils of story-based group were more attentive to the vocabulary's meaning, while at the next group, game-playing, children were more cautious about winning a contest. But the researcher's expectancy did not happen and both groups took the test with tiny difference. If the researcher was to choose between these two methods the better one, she believed story-telling would work better; although, their combination could be the best choice. With story-telling pupils can gain a better understanding of the sense of the words meanwhile game-playing can add variety and excitement to the learning procedure.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Like any study, this research faced a number of limitations which have to be taken into consideration while attempting to generalize its findings. First, in each of the two classes, which were attended by the researcher, there were thirty children which the researcher kept 20 of them as a pilot group, and there was no opportunity for the researcher to module up the groups into smaller squads. In the case of smaller groups, with more supervision, the results may be changed. Second, during the main study the pilot group were attending the classes too. There was no opportunity for the researcher to isolate them, because the classes should pass their regular way with all the classmates together. Third, the research is done in just one kindergarten with children coming of almost the same level of society; thus, the results may not be necessarily generalizable to children of all societal levels.

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## THE IMPACT OF METALINGUISTIC KNOWLEDGE AND PROFICIENCY LEVEL ON PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to investigate if proficiency level and metalinguistic knowledge affect Iranian EFL learners' degree of pragmatic competence. Participants included 92 junior students at Shiraz Azad University. The elicitation instruments used for data collection were a. Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT), used to measure the testees' proficiency level, b. a Grammaticality Judgement Test (GJT), to show their metalinguistic knowledge, and c. the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) developed by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990), to investigate their level of pragmatic competence. Based on their scores on the OQPT, the participants were divided into three groups of high, mid, and low proficiency. The data collected from the administration of the above mentioned three tests were then analyzed by the descriptive statistics, Repeated Measures ANOVA and correlation. The results revealed that proficiency level is not the factor which determines the students' degree of pragmatic competence as there was no significant relationship between the students' proficiency level at different groups and their performance on the DCT. However, it was observed that the students' pragmatic competence is significantly affected by their metalinguistic knowledge.

**KEYWORDS:** Proficiency level, Metalinguistic Awareness, Metalinguistic Knowledge, Pragmatic Competence

### INTRODUCTION

For the past 40 years, the question of to what extent the overall second language (L2) proficiency contribute to pragmatic competence has been an ongoing discussion in the study of L2 pragmatics; however, only a very small number of studies have examined the pragmatic and grammatical awareness of second or foreign (L2) language learners in an integrated paradigm. The main reason for this was the teaching methodology used, in which grammar was central to learning. An increasing consensus among educators and researchers (Alderson & Steel, 1994; Germain & Seguin, 1995; Hammary, 1991; Larsen-Freeman, 1995) was that a number of learners lacked



linguistic accuracy in performance. They maintain, this linguistic accuracy stems from the knowledge of grammar, proficiency, and knowledge about grammar, Metalinguistic Knowledge (MK) or Metalinguistic Awareness (MA).

Proficiency level, as defined by Bachman & Palmer (1996), is learner's knowledge of L2 grammar and vocabulary, a subcomponent of general language ability. MK often measured through grammaticality judgments, particularly those which require error correction (Alderson et.al, 1996; Ellis, 1991), is proposed by Hu (2002) and Ellis (2004) as learners' explicit knowledge about the syntactic, morphological, lexical, phonological and pragmatic features of the second language. The comprehension of pragmatic meaning can be differentiated from linguistic comprehension in view of the fact that it requires the listener to understand not only the linguistic information, such as vocabulary and syntax, but also contextual information such as the role and status of interlocutor, the physical setting of the conversation and the types of communicative acts that would likely occur in that context (Rost 2002). Bardovi-Harlig, and Mahan-Taylor (2003) defined pragmatics as “using socially appropriate language in a variety of informal and formal situations”. Pragmatic ability, which is an important part of the language proficiency construct (Bachman, 1990; Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980), is the ability to use language appropriately according to the communicative situation.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Researchers working in different areas of L2 acquisition have examined pragmatic development from several perspectives. In a recent study, Kasper (2001) identified four general theoretical approaches that have been taken to account for pragmatic development in second and foreign language learners: a comprehensive model of communicative competence, information processing hypotheses, sociocultural theory, and language socialization theory. The approach important for this study concerns the relation between pragmatic competence and grammatical competence, so, the focus of the present study is the first option, that is, it focuses on a comprehensive mode of communicative competence. Pragmatic ability in a second or foreign language is part of a nonnative speaker's communicative competence and therefore has to be located in a model of communicative ability (Savignon, 1991). In Bachman's model (1990), 'language competence' is subdivided into two components, 'organizational competence' and 'pragmatic competence'. Organizational competence comprises knowledge of linguistic units and the rules of joining them together at the levels of sentence ('grammatical competence') and discourse ('textual competence'). Pragmatic competence is subdivided into 'illocutionary competence' and 'sociolinguistic competence'. 'Illocutionary competence' can be glossed as 'knowledge of communicative action and how to carry it out'.

## **REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE**

Rahimy and Moradkhani (2012) found that using GJ tasks enhances knowledge of grammatical patterns in Iranian learners of English at university level. Correa (2011) considered Metalinguistic Knowledge as explicit, verbalizable knowledge of grammatical rules and investigated the relationship between MK and subjunctive accuracy by learners of Spanish at three levels. She found MK indeed is positively correlated with accuracy in the use of subjunctive structure as hypothesized. Fatahi Milasi & Pishghadam (2007) explored the role of explicit knowledge in general language proficiency and the interplay of explicit and implicit knowledge in grammaticality judgements and found that there was a strong relationship between both groups' performance on the two measures. Analysis of the response patterns on GJT indicated an intricate interplay between explicit and implicit knowledge of the test-takers. Also, in a study, Alderson, Clapham and Steel

(1997) investigated the metalinguistic knowledge of university modern languages students and compared this knowledge with the students' level of foreign (French) language proficiency. As they reported, the relationship between metalinguistic knowledge and proficiency was weak. Elder and Manwaring (1997) widened the scope of the research done by Alderson, Clapham, and Steel (1997) by giving the Metalinguistic assessment Test and tests of language proficiency to students learning three different languages at elementary as well as advanced levels. The findings supported the existence of a weak relationship between the metalinguistic knowledge and language proficiency.

Refusals are speech acts that function as a response to another act such as a request, an offer, an invitation and a suggestion. The speech act of refusal is a face-threatening act and requires a high level of pragmatic competence because it tends to risk the interlocutor's positive or negative face (Brown & Levinson, 1978). To check the pragmatic transfer of refusal strategies, Qadoury (2011) compared two groups of Iraqi native speakers of Arabic, and American native speakers of English by their responses to a modified version of 12- items written discourse completion task. This was the same as what Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) did with Japanese and American speakers. In both studies, data were analyzed according to frequency types of refusal strategies and interlocutor's social status and was found that EFL learners expressed refusals with care represented by using more statements of reason/explanation, statements of regret, wish and refusal adjuncts in their refusals than the native speakers and they were more sensitive to the lower status interlocutors. The majority of studies that have looked at the relationship between grammatical and pragmatic competence show higher proficiency learners to be generally better at drawing inferences (Carrell, 1984), using speech act strategies (Trosborg, 1995), and comprehending illocutionary force (Koike, 1996). However, Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei (1998) state that a good level of grammatical competence does not imply a good level of pragmatic competence. In short, the literature presents two generally accepted claims about the relationship between grammatical competence and pragmatic competence: (1) grammar is not a *sufficient* condition for pragmatic competence; however, (2) grammar is a *necessary* condition for pragmatic competence.

Xu, Case, and Wang (2009), in a study examined the influence of length of residence in the target language community and overall L2 proficiency on L2 pragmatic competence with a reference to L2 grammatical competence. A questionnaire consisting of 20 scenarios was administrated to the participants measuring their pragmatic and grammatical competence. Results revealed that both length of residence and overall L2 proficiency influenced L2 pragmatics significantly with overall L2 proficiency demonstrating a stronger influence. Findings also showed that there was a strong and positive correlation between pragmatic and grammatical competence for advanced participants and all participants as a group.

To investigate the relationship between pragmatic competence and organizational competence, and to see the possible effect of the learner's field of study on this relationship, Abuali (1995) examined two groups of subjects (native speakers of English and non-native speakers) participating in the preliminary phase and six other groups of Farsi speaking university students participating in the main phase of the study. The subjects were from different fields of study. The results of the study supported the idea that the EFL learners' field of study affects their language competence and also showed a positively moderate correlation between pragmatic competence and organizational competence.

## PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As pragmatic competence represents a part of overall L2 proficiency, the common-sense assumption would be that an increase in overall L2 proficiency would be followed by an increase in L2 pragmatic competence. However, several studies (Kreutel, 2007; Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Kasper 1997; Bouton, 1996; Boxer & Pickering, 1995) have shown that learners of high grammatical proficiency will not necessarily possess comparable pragmatic competence. Even grammatically advanced learners may use language inappropriately and show differences from target-language pragmatic norms. Regarding this, the present study is aimed at finding the relation between the two important factors of metalinguistic knowledge and pragmatic competence, and also their correlation with learners' language proficiency level to see if knowledge about language can play a significant role in the degree of pragmatic comprehension of Iranian learners of English as a foreign language. In doing so, this study is aimed at finding the answer to the following questions:

R.Q.1. Are there any significant differences between the performances of high, intermediate, and low proficient students on a grammaticality judgment test?

R.Q.2. Are there any significant differences between the performances of high, intermediate, and low proficient students on a discourse completion test?

R.Q.3. Is there any significant relationship between the performance of different groups of proficiency level in a metalinguistic knowledge test and the pragmatic competence test?

R.Q.4. Are there any relationships between the students' proficiency level, metalinguistic knowledge, and their performance on discourse completion test?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

Ninety-two male and female junior students of Shiraz Azad University were randomly selected to participate in this study. They were all Persian speakers, learning English as a foreign language. The participants were divided into three groups of high, intermediate, and low proficiency based on their scores in the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) (2005). The mean of the scores was calculated and in order to have three homogeneous groups the top and low 27% of the total number of the participants were considered as group one (high) and group three (low) respectively, and the mid 46% were considered as group two (mid). So, the participants who scored 43 and above were included in the high proficient group (level one), those who scored between 36 and 42 (inclusive) were considered as belonging to the mid group (level two), and those who scored 35 and below were considered as low proficient students (level three). This way, there were 25 participants in level one, 42 participants in level two, and 25 participants in level three (Table 1)

Table 1: Groups of students according to the OQPT

level	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
1 level	25	43	55	49
2 level	42	36	42	39
3 level	25	30	35	32.5

### *Instrumentation*

The participants were required to perform on the following three tests:

#### *1. Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT)*

Used as a placement test, the OQPT contains 60 multiple-choice items. The participants are supposed to choose the correct choices in 35 minutes.

### *2. Grammaticality Judgment Test (GJT)*

Used to assess Metalinguistic Knowledge, the GJT contains ten ungrammatical sentences. It has three phases each having one point. In phase 1, the participants are to find the grammatical error in a given sentence and underline it. In phase 2, they are asked to provide the related rule in either L1 or L2. In the third phase, they should write the correct form of the grammatically ill-formed part. No time limitation is set. A total score of thirty is assigned, three for each item.

### *3. Discourse Completion Test (DCT)*

The DCT, already used by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1985), and Yamagashira (2001), is a written role-play questionnaire consisting of 12 situations. Each situation presents respondents with a detailed description of the context and the social status between the interlocutors. The refuser's social status relative to the interlocutor in each group of situations involves three levels: high, equal, and low. Each situation consists of a gap in which only a refusal would fit. The gap is followed by a rejoinder which is said to limit the range of allowable responses a DCT can elicit and thereby facilitate rating (Rover, 2005). The 12 DCT situations are divided into four types: three requests, three invitations, three offers, and three suggestions.

### *Is 'Discourse Completion Test' a Reliable Data Collection Instrument?*

According to Nurani (2009), in pragmatic research, Discourse Completion Test (DCT) is one of the data collection instruments whose reliability is questioned. This is due to several weaknesses of DCT. Firstly, the authenticity of the situations is limited. Then, the hypothetical nature of the situations in DCT simplifies the complexity of interactions in real conversation. Moreover, what people claim they would say in the hypothetical situation is not necessarily what they actually say in real situations. In addition, DCT is not able to bring out the extended negotiation which commonly occurs in authentic discourse due to the absence of interactions between interlocutors. Beebe and Cummings (1996) claim that although the absence of feeling and interaction, insufficient social and situational information such as detailed background of the event and comprehensive information on the role relationship between the speaker and the hearer lead DCT to some drawbacks, the naturalness is only one of many criteria for good data and it does have weaknesses hardly discussed. Natural data clearly represent spontaneous speech; nevertheless, natural data collection is not systematic. The social characteristics of the participants such as age, ethnic group, and socioeconomic status are often unknown, and the time consuming nature of data collection contributes to the main weaknesses of natural data. Moreover, it is inconsistent in applying ethnographic data collection methods.

Beebe and Cummings (1996) add that it is true that absence of naturalness leads to lack of psychosocial dimension of DCT; however, it cannot be ignored that DCT provides several important strengths. DCT allows researchers to collect a large amount of data in a relatively short time. Furthermore, they state that DCT creates model responses which are likely to occur in spontaneous speeches. DCT also provides stereotypical responses for a socially appropriate response.

### *Administration Procedure / Data Collection*

Firstly, the participants were given the Quick Placement Test according to the results of which they were divided into three groups of high, intermediate, and low proficiency. It took 35 minutes. After

that, the grammaticality judgment test was administered. There was no time limit for the task. The third task was the Discourse Completion Test which revealed how much competent the participants were in dealing with pragmatics of the L2. As it was mentioned in the review of the related literature section, all the three tests were used by other others in the field several times and high levels of validity and reliability were reported for them. However, to double check the reliability of the DCT, the verbalizations were marked independently by the author and an experienced university instructor, and finally, the interrater disagreements were resolved through discussion.

#### ***Scoring Procedure of Grammaticality Judgment Test***

The verbalizations were marked independently by the author and an experienced university instructor. In view of Schmidt (1990), a somewhat relaxed view of what constituted a correct rule was adopted so as to avoid an overly restrictive definition of correct metalinguistic knowledge and to allow scope for the participants to express their understanding. A verbalization was accepted as correct if it expressed the essential information. Thus, a correct rule might be given in a nontechnical language, or cover a somewhat broader or narrower scope than the preset rule statement (Green & Hecht, 1992). For example, a verbalization like “You use *a* when you mention a person or a thing for the first time” was considered just as good as the more precise statement “The indefinite article is used before a singular count noun to indicate that the referent is not identifiable in the shared knowledge of the speaker and the hearer.”

#### ***Scoring Procedure of Discourse Completion Test***

To analyze the data obtained from the administration of the DCT, the researcher used the same semantic formulas as Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1985), and Yamagashira (2001) did (see appendix E for a complete list). The total number of semantic formulas of any kind used for each situation was obtained and the frequency of each formula for each situation was counted. A list was made. Grammatical accuracy was not examined.

#### ***Data Analysis***

The data collected from the administration of the above mentioned three tests were then transferred to SPSS Version 16 (1998) for statistical analysis. The significance level was set at .05. In analyzing the data, the descriptive statistics and Repeated Measures ANOVA was used to find the relationship between proficiency level and Grammaticality Judgment Test, and proficiency level and the participants’ performance on Discourse Completion Test. The relation between the students’ proficiency level, metalinguistic knowledge, and their performance on Discourse Completion Test was computed using correlational analysis.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 2 shows the correlation between proficiency and metalinguistic knowledge in different levels. The correlation between proficiency and metalinguistic ( $r = .68$ ,  $p = .000$ ) was significant at level one for the high proficient students; whereas, in levels two and three the correlation was not significant. That is, there was no correlation between the performances of mid and low proficient students and their metalinguistic knowledge.



Table 2: Correlation between proficiency and metalinguistic knowledge

proficiency		metalinguistic knowledge
Level 1	Pearson Correlation	.684**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Level 2	Pearson Correlation	.031
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.845
Level 3	Pearson Correlation	.336
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.101

Table 3 shows the correlation between the performances of high, intermediate, and low proficient students on Discourse Completion Test.

Table 3: Correlation between proficiency and Pragmatic Competence

proficiency		pragmatic
Level 1	Pearson Correlation	.315
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.126
Level 2	Pearson Correlation	.142
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.369
Level 3	Pearson Correlation	.159
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.447

The table indicates that there is no correlation between the students' proficiency level and their pragmatic comprehension of context. Another correlation showed the relationship between the metalinguistic knowledge and the pragmatic competence of the students of different proficiency levels. Table 4.

Table 4: Correlation between metalinguistic knowledge and pragmatic competence

metalinguistic knowledge		pragmatic
Level 1	Pearson Correlation	.488*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013
Level 2	Pearson Correlation	.343*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.026
Level 3	Pearson Correlation	.562**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003

The results show that, for the three groups of high, mid, and low proficiency, there is a significant correlation between the scores on Grammaticality Judgement Test which is an indicator of metalinguistic knowledge, and the scores on the Discourse Completion test as an indicator of pragmatic competence; however, this correlation is more significant for the high and the low proficiency groups. To find the relationship between the students' proficiency level, metalinguistic knowledge, and pragmatic competence, a correlation was run in the SPSS programme. As clear in Table 5, each two of the variables have a significant relationship with each other.



Table 5: Correlation between proficiency level, metalinguistic knowledge and pragmatic competence

		proficiency	metalinguistic	pragmatic
proficiency	Pearson Correlation	1	.541**	.306**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.003
	N	92	92	92
metalinguistic	Pearson Correlation	.541**	1	.492**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	92	92	92
pragmatic	Pearson Correlation	.306**	.492**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.000	
	N	92	92	92

### Findings

1. As the results in Table 2 indicated, there is no correlation between proficiency and metalinguistic knowledge for the mid and low proficient students; however, this correlation is significant for the high proficient group about .68. This is in line with what Sorace (1985) found about the relationship between metalinguistic knowledge and use of specific structures on different tasks. According to him, there was “a highly significant correlation between knowledge and use in non-beginners”, [high proficient students].

So, we can infer that, in low and mid levels, the students’ proficiency is not yet high enough to help them understand the knowledge about language. It shows that there is a positive correlation between the linguistic knowledge and the metalinguistic knowledge of the participants, in that, the higher their linguistic knowledge is, the higher their metalinguistic knowledge will be. Moreover, the absence of correlation between proficiency and metalinguistic knowledge in mid and low levels may also mean that teaching about language (teaching the grammatical points deductively) is not preferred for the students of low proficiency and that, this would be possible as students’ linguistic knowledge improves and they acquire enough understanding about the metalinguistic knowledge.

2. The absence of correlation between proficiency and pragmatic competence in the three levels (Table 3) is a great evidence that, the L2 learners, even the high proficient ones, perform poorly when it comes to interacting in a real situation. This fact highlights the need to differentiate pragmatic competence from linguistic competence. As Eslami – Rasekh and Eslami – Rasekh (2005) found, the explicit teaching of pragmatics does influence the EFL learners’ appropriateness. David (2008) also recommended that English language teachers should move beyond linguistic processing of meaning to pragmatic meaning in language teaching and learning, and that authentic language samples must be used by English language teachers to provide practice for students in expressing themselves pragmatically, not just linguistically. So, any students need to be exposed to the real situations through explicit instruction on pragmatics in classroom and watching films.

3. As mentioned earlier, the comprehension of pragmatic meaning can be differentiated from linguistic comprehension because it requires the listener to understand not only linguistic information, such as vocabulary and syntax, but also contextual information, such as the role and status of the interlocutor, the physical setting of the conversation, and the types of communicative acts that would likely occur in that context (Rost, 2002; Van Dijk, 1977).

Here (in Table 4), as the students improve in proficiency from level three (low) to level two (mid), and from level two (mid) to level one (high), as their metalinguistic knowledge increases, their pragmatic competence also increases, however, the proportion of this increase is less from level three to level two (.56 to .34) compared with level two to level one (.34 to .49). Xu, Case, and Wang (2009) found that, there was a strong and positive correlation between pragmatic and grammatical competence for advanced participants and all participants as a group.

4. The positive relationship between scores on Grammaticality Judgement Test vs. the test of L2 proficiency, Discourse Completion Test vs. test of L2 proficiency, and Grammaticality Judgement Test vs. Discourse Completion Test, ( Table 5), for the entire sample indicates that in general, as the students' proficiency level increases, their understanding of the knowledge about language (metalinguistic knowledge) also increases; however, this increase in proficiency knowledge more weakly leads to an increase in pragmatic competence, whereas, the more metalinguistic knowledge the students acquire, the better they can perform in situations that need pragmatic competence.

## CONCLUSION

The insignificant differences between the performance of the three proficiency groups (high, mid, and low proficient) on Discourse Completion Test indicates that pragmatic failure can occur in an interaction between individuals from the three groups. That is, even high proficient students couldn't perform well in situations where pragmatic comprehension was needed. They even risked committing pragmatic failure and sometimes were considered rude. Foreign language teachers should be aware that fluency in a language involves both a mastery of linguistic knowledge and pragmatic knowledge. Even language learners with a fairly advanced level of proficiency can produce pragmatic failures. This study illuminates several areas where ESL/EFL students might appear inappropriate (i.e., confrontational, presumptuous, vague) when making a refusal. To help our students achieve optimal pragmatic success, teachers need to make students aware of specific *speech act sets* and the accompanying *linguistic features* that are necessary to produce appropriate and well-received refusals, and other important speech acts. Therefore, explicit teaching of L2 pragmatics in the language classroom might be necessary. Language teachers should adopt teaching materials or language activities focused on conscious raising. Moreover, language learners should be taught to be aware of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic behavior (Kasper, 2001).

Before generalizing the findings of the study, we must be aware of some limitations. According to McNamara (2007), if pragmatics is to be understood as language use in social settings, tests would necessarily have to construct such social settings. There are many differences between written and spoken language with regard to hesitation phenomena, tone of voice, facial expression, gesture and a number of other nonverbal cues that interlocutors use to contextualize their utterance and convey their meaning. The present study used DCT as a research tool. Data obtained from a written role play questionnaire might be different from naturally occurring data. So, future studies need to employ other research tools such as role plays or simulation to support the use of Discourse Completion Task.

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## ON IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS' DOMINANT TEACHING STYLES IN PRIVATE LANGUAGE CENTERS: TEACHER-CENTERED OR STUDENT-CENTERED?

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### ABSTRACT

The significance of learning English as an international language is widely acknowledged in diverse areas particularly in educational settings (Farhady, 2010). Effective language learning is undoubtedly appreciated in an educational setting and teaching styles contribute to fulfillment of this ambition. Teaching style is viewed as teachers' identifiable and consistent behaviors and techniques in classroom (Conti, 1986). Generally speaking, every teacher follows particular styles in classroom depending on the learners, subject matter, and course objectives. Grasha (1996) proposed a model for teaching style in which teachers' teaching styles are categorized into five groups. It is worthy of note that this model provided the theoretical framework for the current study. Acknowledging the great impact of teaching styles on learners' achievement and varying teaching styles in different context, this survey study aimed at describing English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' dominant teaching styles at private language centers. To this end, 103 EFL teachers working at private language centers in Iran were randomly selected to fill out the teaching style inventory (TSI) developed by Grasha (1996). Using descriptive statistics, the findings of this study showed that EFL teachers dominantly implement formal teaching style in private language centers. The implications of the findings are also discussed.

**KEY WORDS:** teaching styles, private language centers, teacher-centered, student-centered

### INTRODUCTION

Learning English as an international language plays a pivotal role in current educational system of Iran, international marketing, and diplomacy. It is worthy of note that despite other Asian countries like Japan in which English is used as medium of internationalization, the significance of learning English is restricted to educational setting in Iran (Farhady, 2010). As such, language learning is extensively recommended in educational settings and English is an indispensable course offered at all levels of education from Junior High to university.

One of the determining factors in learners' successful learning is teaching styles (Knowles, 1980). Large bodies of supportive evidence stress the effect of teaching style on learners' achievements (Conti, 1985; Miglietti & Strange, 1998). Teaching style refers to "a predilection toward teaching behavior and the congruence between educators' teaching behavior and teaching beliefs" (Heimlich & Norland, 1994, p.34). In fact, teaching styles are reflections of an amalgamation of teachers' theoretical assumptions and actual teaching practice. Jarvis (2004)



provides a more vivid account of teaching style and believes that a style “is the totality of one’s philosophy, beliefs, values, and behaviors, and it incorporates the full implementation of this philosophy; it consists of substantiation and support of beliefs about values and attitudes toward elements of the student learning and teacher learning exchange” (p. 40).

The categorizations of teaching style have been recurrently stated in literature using different terminologies (Akbari & Karimi Allvar, 2010). For example, Flanders (1970) grouped teaching styles into Direct style (didactic) and Indirect style (student-centered). Similarly, Bennett (1976) identified informal (student-centered) and formal (teacher-centered) teaching styles. Moreover, Campbell (1995) proposed another categorization of teaching styles, which includes Didactic, Socratic and Facilitative teaching styles. Didactic teachers are dominant authorities in educational settings. Socratic teaching style is again a teacher-directed approach and students' questions determine the direction of teaching process. Facilitative teachers create a pleasant environment and students are responsible for their own learning.

In the same vain, Grasha (1996) asserted that teachers' teaching style is a representation of teachers' value system and needs. Regarding the role played by teachers in a class, Grasha introduced a framework based on which teachers' teaching styles are grouped into five classes: (a) formal authority teaching, (b) expert, (c) personal model, (d) delegator, and (e) facilitator.

The framework formulated by Grasha (1996) is the theoretical background of this study and his categorization of teaching styles could be traced back to the traditional dichotomy of teacher-centered and student-centered teaching styles. More specifically, an expert model possesses the knowledge that students need and is concerned with transmitting correct information to students. A formal authority model is mainly involved with providing feedback to students and establishing rules and expectations. This teacher is assumed as an expert in his field of study, responsible for preparing materials and managing the students. The personal model teacher assumes himself as a model for students and students have to emulate his approaches.

The facilitator teacher focuses on teacher-student interaction, tries to guide students by asking questions and suggesting options, and encourages students to make informed decisions. In this style, the teacher is a good listener trying to enhance teacher-student interactions and critical thinking. The delegator teacher is characterized as a resourceful person who is available at the request of students. Fostering autonomy in learners is of primary significance for the delegator teaching style. The summary of this classification in terms of teacher-centered and student-centered could be observed in Table 1.

*Table 1: Grshas' teaching styles (Psychology Factsheet, 1996)*

<b>Teacher-centered styles</b>	<b>student-centered styles</b>
The Expert style	the facilitator style
The personal style	the delegator style
The Formal Authority styles	



As seen in Table 1, the expert style, the personal style, and the formal authority style are attributed to teacher-centered styles whereas the facilitator style and the delegator style are defined as student-centered styles. However, the issue of concern is that teachers' teaching styles might differ depending on the context and students' needs and that no single teacher is following only one style in an educational setting. Grasha (2002) maintained, "Each style is not a box into which faculty members fit; rather, all of the dimensions shown are present in varying degrees within the attitudes and behaviors of teachers" (p.140).

Therefore, teaching style could fall into four clusters: Expert/Formal Authority (38%); Cluster 2: Personal Model/Expert/Formal Authority (22%); Cluster 3: Facilitator/Personal Model/Expert (17%); and Cluster 4: Delegator/Facilitator/Expert (15%). Moreover, drawing a clear border between teacher-centered and student-centered styles might be a demanding task if not impossible and teachers might represent an amalgamation of both teacher-centered and student-centered teaching styles.

Teaching styles have been studied in diverse contexts and from different angles. In here, a summary of the most relevant studies into teaching styles are discussed. According to the literature, teachers' teaching styles vary depending on the context of teaching (e.g. public schools or private centers) (Korthagen, 2004), the subject matter, or the curriculum (Cunningsworth, 1995), and learners' learning styles (Oxford, 2002). Of influential factors in teaching styles are demographic variables including age, gender, students' learning styles and level of education (Brew, 2002).

In an investigation into the impact of gender on teaching styles in Iran, Karimvand (2011) found that male teachers practice a more authoritarian teaching style compared to female teachers. The other variable affecting teachers' teaching style is self-efficacy. Soodak and Podell (1997) discovered that experienced teachers show more resistance to change in their perception of personal efficacy and use different types of activities. This is less true of less experienced teachers.

Grasha invented a personality type inventory, which has been used by Larenas, Moran and Rivera (2010) in a quest for the relationship between teachers' personality type and teaching style. They selected their respondents from both public and private sectors. The findings of their study indicated that public sector participants tended to follow a facilitator teaching style and an extrovert personality type; yet private sector participants showed a more authoritative teaching style and an introverted type of personality.

In an investigation into educational backgrounds and teaching styles of athletic training educators in entry-level CAAHEP accredited athletic training programs, Rich (2006) studied 338 athletic educators in the US. The investigator used Grasha' teaching style inventory to collect data .The findings showed that athletic educators predominantly use a personal model and none of the educators practices delegator style of teaching.

Campbell and Yong (1993) conducted a study on foreign language institutes in the People's Republic of China. They found that a composition of the audio-lingual method and traditional teacher-centered grammar translation method were practiced in these institutes.

Riazi and Razmjoo (2006) studied language-teaching methodologies used in Shiraz EFL institutes. They used both qualitative and quantitative instruments to collect data. Detailed

observation and a questionnaire addressing EFL learners about the effectiveness of instruction in the institutes in which they registered were used to gather data. Findings of this study showed that EFL teachers tend to practice communicative language teaching in private language institutes.

Faruji (2012) examined EFL dominant teachers' teaching styles in private language centers using Grasha' teaching style inventory and interview questions on 24 respondents. Her findings indicated that EFL teachers are performing Formal Authority Style, Expert Model Style, Facilitator Style, Personal Style, and Delegator Style, respectively. Kassaian and Ayatollahi (2010) conducted a study on the optimal level of teachers' guidance among Iranian EFL instructors. Their findings showed that teachers' levels of guidance vary depending on the nature of courses (English for specific purposes or general English).

Asadollahi and Rahimi (2012) investigated Iranian EFL teachers' teaching styles in high schools. They used Teaching Activities Preference (TAP) questionnaire developed by Cooper (2001). This study revealed that "male and female teachers were different in extroverting, sensing, and feeling styles of teaching while female teachers used activities related to these styles more than their male counterparts did" (p.157).

Currently English is a course offered in both junior high and high schools in Iran. However, learning English is increasingly in demand in diverse areas of society and due to some limitations and shortcomings in high schools, Iranian students tend to attend private language centers to learn English. The other justification encouraging people to enroll in private language centers to learn the language could be sought within teaching methodologies and styles EFL teachers perform. Iranian EFL teachers prevalently follow grammar translation method (GTM) in high schools, which heavily relies on vocabulary memorization and translation activities (Dolati & Mikaili, 2011). In GTM-oriented classrooms, the focus is on reading passages and reading activities. As such, few listening and speaking activities are practiced in GTM classes. Since in high schools GTM is regularly practiced, many language learners interested in learning spoken and communicative language attend private language centers.

Substantial research evidence confirms that teachers' teaching styles are not all the same and teachers adopt various styles to create effective teaching (Baily, 1984). In addition, effective teaching styles contribute to effective learning (Knowles, 1980). Although teaching styles have been looked upon from several points of view, studies into EFL teachers in private language centers are still sparse. Hence, this study attempts to determine EFL teachers' dominant teaching styles in private language centers in Iran.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

To keep abreast of the latest developments both in theory and practice in teaching language, to incorporate the latest research findings into theory and practice of language pedagogy and in response to the demands placed on language teachers by the society, in the Iranian context, some attempts have been underway to shift away from traditional teacher-centered classes to learner- and learning-centered ones. Given that each of these approaches entails different teaching styles,

which are not necessarily compatible with the other approaches, the current research seeks to determine whether in Iranian language centers a real change has taken place or not. Specifically, an attempt is made to determine whether these language centers are teacher-centered or learner-centered in terms of the teaching styles adopted by language teachers.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Sampling procedure*

Population of this survey study included the teachers teaching at private language centers. To select the samples, the researchers used convenient sampling and selected two available cities: Yasuj and Gachsaran. Then, because the language centers in these two cities were scattered, the researchers applied random cluster sampling to choose the participants of the study. According to Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, and Razavieh (2010) cluster sampling is a kind of probability sampling in which the chosen unit is a group of individuals who are naturally together. That is a number of individuals who share similar characteristics with regard to the variables in the study and formulate a cluster.

In this study, the selected unit is English private language centers in which language skills are taught in Yasuj and Gachsaran. Based on a list of the ministry of education, there are 50 English private language centers in Yasuj and Gachsaran of which 13 centers were randomly selected. Thirteen clusters comprised 110 EFL teachers. Thru one -stage cluster sampling, all the teachers in 13 language centers were surveyed.

The participants of this study were different in terms of level of education, teaching experiences and field of study. Demographic information about the participants is given in Table 2. The majority of samples were female (63%) and the rest male (37%). Their teaching experiences ranged from one year to fifteen years. All of the EFL teachers had the experience of teaching all four language skill: speaking, listening, reading and writing.

*Table 2 Demographic Information of participants*

Variable	f	%
<b>Gender (n=103)</b>		
Male	37	35.92
Female	66	64.07
<b>Years of teaching experience</b>		
One year or less	14	13.59
2-5 years	55	53.39
6-10 years	25	24.27
10 or more than 10	9	8.73
<b>Level of education</b>		
B.A.	61	59.22
M.A.	37	35.92
Ph. D.	5	4.85
<b>Age of the teachers</b>		
18-23	26	25.24
24-35	67	65.04
36 and more	10	9.70

### ***Instrumentation***

To collect the data use was made of teaching style inventory (TSI) that is a forty-item questionnaire designed by Grasha (1996). In this questionnaire a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree is used. This inventory is a standard quantitative tool to categorize teachers' instructional behavior into five styles: (a) expert, (b) formal authority, (c) personal model, (d) facilitator, and (e) delegator. On the whole, TSI showed an acceptable internal consistency ( $\alpha=0.75$ ). In fact, each subsection of TSI is composed of eight questions and teachers were required to mark the choice that best described their teaching preferences (see appendix A). That is, eight questions were pertinent to each teaching style of expert, formal authority, personal model, facilitator, and delegator.

Once the questionnaires were completed and gathered, the scores given to the items of each subscale were tallied and five groups of scores were obtained. The scores of each subcategory of TSI reflect teachers' teaching style.

### ***Data collection and analysis***

The current study was carried out from March 15, 2012 to Jun 20, 2013. To collect the data, the researchers first contacted the managers of the selected private language centers in Yasuj and Gachsaran and then the two previously mentioned questionnaires were administered in person. To ensure the full cooperation of the participants, the researchers offered a small gift to the participants. These small incentives helped the researchers to obtain responses that are more accurate. Thru one-to-one administration, the instruments were simultaneously handed in to one hundred and ten participants and the researchers explained the aims of the study and asked them to provide accurate responses. Finally, one hundred and three questionnaires were found complete and seven questionnaires were left out due to missing data.

In this quantitative study, the researchers made extensive use of Statistical Package for Science (SPSS) 16 to carry out data analysis. In particular, descriptive statistics were used to shed light on EFL teachers' dominant teaching styles.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This study investigated EFL teachers' dominant teaching styles in private language centers. Data were analyzed though SPSS and the descriptive statistics are provided in Table. 3.

*Table 3: EFL teachers' teaching styles (descriptive statistics).*

Teaching styles	N	minimum	maximum	mean	standard deviation
Formal authority	103	22	40	30.20	5.03
Personal model	103	19	37	29.95	3.30
Facilitator	103	20	38	29.84	3.85
Expert model	103	17	37	29.17	3.77
Delegator	103	15	38	27.45	3.84

According to the results of this study, EFL teachers dominantly use formal authority teaching style Formal (mean =30.20, SD=5.03). However, delegator model is the least dominant teaching style EFL teachers employ in private language centers. After formal authority teaching style, EFL

teachers preferred to adopt personal model (mean=29.95, SD=3.30), facilitator style (mean=29.84, SD=3.85), expert model (mean=29.17, SD=3.77), respectively.

As mentioned earlier, formal authority teaching style is a teacher-centered style of teaching. In teacher-centered approach, the teacher is the authority in the classroom whereas in a learner-centered approach the students can participate in decision-making processes and teachers are primarily concerned with facilitating learning rather than controlling students (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994). Because in Iranian high schools, EFL teachers prevalently employ GTM to teach students, Iranian language learners prefer to attend private language centers to learn spoken language and communicate in English. Unlike GTM, that is a reading-based method, in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) “everything is done with communicative intent” (Larsen-Freeman cited in Rao2002, p.81) and students are provided with opportunities to voice their opinions and participate in decision-making processes. Therefore, in CLT teachers establish a mutual relationship with the students to develop learning. However, contrary to the researchers' expectations, the results of this study indicated that EFL teachers manipulate formal authority teaching style, that is a teacher-centered style in private language centers. EFL teachers tending to practice Formal Authority Style heavily rely on transmitting accurate knowledge to students. They are assumed to be experts in their field of study, responsible for preparing materials, managing the class, setting rules, providing students with appropriate feedbacks and doing tasks in standard ways (Grasha, 2002).

The results of this study were in line with those of Faruji (2012) on EFL teachers' dominant teaching styles in English language centers. One reason for this finding could be that the overall educational system of Iran is strongly affected by behavioristic approaches to learning. Iranian teachers still practice traditional methodologies and styles in educational settings to maintain their dominance over the students and to be the locus of control (Pishghadam & Navari, 2010). It is worth noting that teachers' philosophy of teaching affects their teaching styles and in such a traditional system, conventional teaching or teacher-centered styles are encouraged and practiced. In Iran, parents and educational authorities expect teachers to be the locus of control and students' latitude is not allowed. The findings vouch the results of an investigation on foreign language institutes in the People's Republic of China by Campbell and Yong (1993). Their results revealed that Audio-Lingual Method, a teacher-centered, method is followed in foreign language centers in China. Interestingly, this finding could be supportive evidence for the tendency of teachers to adopt a teacher-centered methodology in such countries.

The other justification for applying a teacher-centered teaching style in private language centers is that the nature of subject being learned is different in an EFL class. As Littlewood (1984) puts it, developing communicative ability is the primary goal in a foreign language learning environment. Unfortunately, an informal language environment is not available for most EFL learners. Therefore, EFL teachers shoulder the huge responsibility of creating an environment where EFL learners are exposed to language even minimally (Krashen, 1976). Under such circumstances, EFL teachers should teach students thru communicative tasks and activities. Undoubtedly, EFL teachers are required to establish a rapport with students and build a warm environment to ease learning; yet they should be meticulous in terms of controlling students' inevitable misbehaviors. Thereupon, EFL teachers need control everything to contribute to a successful teaching and learning environment.

The results of this study do not support the findings of a study on athletic educators' teaching styles by Rich (2006). This inconsistency might be because teachers of different subjects exhibit

varying teaching styles and behaviors. Additionally, the findings of the current study do not lend support to the results of an investigation into EFL teachers' methodologies in private language institutes in Shiraz. This discrepancy could be attributed to the setting of data collection. This could be due to the fact that Shiraz is a metropolis and language learning is deep-rooted in this city. Normally teachers might be provided with better facilities in terms of teacher training courses in larger cities and are, thus, in a position, to acquire the latest teaching methodologies and skills.

## **CONCLUSION**

This descriptive survey study was aimed at determining EFL teachers' dominant teaching styles in private language centers. The data were analyzed thru SPSS and descriptive statistics and it became clear that EFL teachers predominantly have formal authority style (a teacher-centered style). The findings of this study could have implications for EFL teachers in that it could provide them with a profile of their performances, in the light of which they could improve their teaching practices. However, further studies are required to discover the impact of proficiency level of students on EFL teachers teaching styles. This study used a quantitative instrument to gather the data to draw a snapshot of teachers' dominant style.

Every research project may suffer from some limitations and the current investigation is no exception. Due to the fact that the participants of this study were selected thru cluster sampling from small districts, the findings will have limited generalizability. Moreover, some variables beyond the control of the researchers might affect the overall results of this study. Further, the instrument used in this project was a questionnaire and a superficial picture of teaching style was depicted. More studies could be done to shed light on how teachers teach and what factors affect how they do this.

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# EXCESSIVE ORIENTATION TO EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH AN OBSTACLE FOR INNOVATIVENESS AND CRITICALITY IN ELT METHODOLOGY

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## ABSTRACT

This article has been aimed at discussing the ways in which experimental methodological research in English language teaching (ELT) in many contexts is problematic. It also addresses how excessively orienting Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) student researchers and teacher researchers towards experimental studies, at the expense of engaging them in thought-provoking argumentative writing and theorizing, has rendered them incapable of discovery-learning and critical thinking in their field of specialization. A discussion has also been presented about different educational philosophies and how they apply to our EFL context in Iran. In summary, it has been argued that our ELT context in Iran is highly dominated by strict adherence to experimentally-oriented thinking and researching away from provision of opportunities for ELT-specializing students to practice thinking through an argumentative genre. Consequently, rarely have they developed the ability and self-confidence to *doubt* and think beyond and above what they have read in books or been dictated upon by other western scholars. This has given rise to a trend of thinking the only product of which has been the habit of *believing* what the so-called [omniscient] Big Names have too much confidently argued to be the TRUTH.

**KEW WORDS:** theory-construction; criticality; innovativeness; argumentative genre

## INTRODUCTION

A comparison between three outstanding educational philosophies clearly reveals how each of them differentially advocates a distinctive approach to educating people. These educational philosophies are called classical humanism, re-constructionism, and progressivism (Clark, 1987). At one end exists classical humanism which, although dating back to very old eras in the history of education, is still widely prevalent in some parts of the world where education is merely an exchange of information from the knower to the learner. At the other end of the continuum, lies progressivism which rightly propagates the need for developing critical thinking and reflectivity in learners. This is what will result in discovery-learning by enhancing the habits of self-regulated problem solving and reflection.

In the field of English language teaching (ELT) in particular, such criticality and reflectivity in methodological research and theorizing are suppressed by excessively orienting English teachers and ELT university students towards experimental studies within the limits of pretest-intervention-posttest cycles. This article, therefore, aims at providing a critical analysis of this situation and proposing some hints for enhancing innovativeness, criticality, and agency in both English teachers and ELT-specializing students.

## EDUCATIONAL VALUE SYSTEMS

There are three educational value systems which reflect particular socio-political and philosophical beliefs (Clark, 1987). Clark adopts Skilbeck's (1982) conceptual framework through which he has identified three broad value systems which permeate educational processes. These value systems in education are *classical humanism*, *reconstructionism*, and *progressivism*. Each is elaborated below.

*Classical humanism* is concerned with the one-way exchange of knowledge from the knower, i.e. the teacher, to the learner for the purpose of promoting intellectual capacities and cultural values. The learner is considered a person who receives and, later, applies and uses what the teacher has taught him or her. The teacher is the only agent who decides what is worth teaching and learning and how it is to be taught and learned, with little room left for creativity, decision-making, and criticality by the learner. Although Clark (1987, p. 5) presents Skilbeck's (1982) analysis of the classical humanist approach to education as characterized by "the ability to analyze, classify, and reconstruct elements of knowledge, so that these capacities can be brought to bear on the various challenges likely to be encountered in life", in some educational systems based on classical humanism the product of learning closely corresponds the first two levels of Bloom's (1956) six-level taxonomy of objectives for the cognitive domain (Richards and Schmidt, 2002), i.e. the levels of 'knowledge' and 'comprehension'. Of course, not very pessimistically, the second level (comprehension) may not accrue in many cases. Rarely do learners reach the final level of 'evaluation' in such contexts – Bloom's taxonomy consists of six levels, namely, knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Unlike classical humanism which is knowledge-oriented (Clark, 1987), *reconstructionism* is society-oriented (ibid). This educational philosophy, in Clark's (1987) words, "is an essentially optimistic ideology which believes that man can improve himself and his environment...and that social, economic, intellectual, and spiritual advance can all be planned for. Education is seen as an important agent for bringing this about." (p.14). Reconstructionism is also objective-oriented. That is, it breaks knowledge down into achievable objectives towards which teachers and learners strive. In this philosophy "human beings must be seen as persons, as purposive agents, to be valued as equals irrespective of their level of ability or achievement" (ibid).

The third educational philosophy is *progressivism*. It is "a learner-centered approach to education" which sees the learner "as a whole person and not just as a disembodied intellect or as a skilled performer" (ibid). It emphasizes the provision of learning experiences and opportunities in which children can learn from their own learning and by their own efforts.

The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to learn; the man who has learned how to adapt and change; the man who has learned that no knowledge is secure, that only the process of seeking knowledge gives a basis for security (Rogers, 1969, cited in Clark, 1987, p. 49).

Therefore, unlike classical humanism which considers knowledge “a set of closed truths and fixed facts” (ibid), progressivism sees knowledge as:

A creative problem-solving capacity that depends on an ability to retrieve appropriate schemata from a mental store, to utilize whatever can be automatically brought to bear on a situation, and to bend existing conceptual structures to the creation of novel concepts that offer a working solution to the particular problem in hand (ibid, pp. 49-50).

The greatest emphasis in progressivism is placed upon “learning by doing rather than by being taught” and upon “learners as active participants shaping their own learning” (ibid, p. 50).

### **THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE SYSTEM INSPIRING OUR SCHOOLING**

There are a number of ways in which our educational system corresponds with classical humanism or, to some extent, re-constructionism, away from progressivism. Of course, a comprehensive discussion of all of these ways is beyond the scope of this article. Therefore, I will scratch the surface with reference to some of them.

First, from the perspective of teachers, one could argue that teachers themselves have been reared and educated in a memorization-reproduction-oriented way. They themselves, in most cases, have not developed the skills for critical thinking and analysis which are the pre-requisites for innovativeness. To what extent are such teachers able to help their learners develop the habits of criticality and reflectivity while they are studying or learning?

Second, the *methodologies* which are used for teaching mostly encourage memorizing discrete, non-integrated, unanalyzed pieces of information the only product of which is knowledge acquisition. To what extent, if any, have we encouraged our students to stop to wonder whether, and to what extent, what they are told or what they read is actually correct? To what extent have we helped them realize the fact that nobody is God? Do we really teach them how to become *thinkers* or do we, in reality, *force* them to become *learners and imitators*? Both the way teachers themselves have been educated and the methodologies they adopt for teaching their students inculcate in the students’ minds the habit of imitating and non-critically accepting whatever they hear, see, or read. Having been educated through such *methods and methodologies*, can such students, some day in future, be expected to have any well-thought-out hypotheses about the validity of the prospective methods which they, as would-be teachers, would adopt for their own professional practice? In other words, can they develop in their future students the skills and habits of being critical and evaluative, habits which they themselves *lack*? Are our university students specializing in TEFL real critics of ELT methods or do they only assemble some pieces of information such as review of literature, treatment, data collection and analysis, and discussion to submit a paper as a course requirement?

Third, the way we assess and evaluate the performance of our students renders them memorizers, regurgitators of stuff remembered from books, and, in a nutshell, *non-thinkers*. Are our students judged and evaluated by what they have thought and contributed themselves, even if they are not

perfectly right, or by how exactly they have copied verbatim and by rote the contents of the course book? Are our students normally encouraged to risk presenting arguments of their own and are such risks valued by educators? Even disappointingly, students are sometimes penalized for using their own opinions in answering questions and for not using the exact words they have read in books. Here exists a very critical difference between our evaluation criteria and those followed in developed countries where novelty in thinking, originality and genuineness in ideas, and being critical and analytic are highly valued.

### **PROBLEMS WITH EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES CONDUCTED IN OUR CONTEXT**

Although the merits of experimental design for research purposes cannot be ignored because of the high degree of “control of extraneous variables” (Mitchell and Myles, 2004, p.127) and also due to “control of the target language and target structures to be learned, control of exposure, control of instruction (explanation), control of tasks, and control of response measurement” (Hulstijn, 1997, pp.139-40, cited in Mitchell and Myles, 2004, p.127), Mitchell and Myles (2004) argue that:

It is questionable how far you can isolate variables that would be interacting in a natural context, and therefore how far results obtained in that way mirror what happens in real life with real languages. Moreover, because of the highly controlled nature of laboratory experiments, the questions being asked tend to be very specific and local, with the resulting danger of ignoring how different aspects of the learning process might interact (p. 127).

De Graaff (1997, p. 272, cited in Mitchell and Myles, 2004, p. 128) maintains that “However, the more controlled the design and the more specific the learning task, the more we bear the risk of not studying L2 acquisition any more, but only participants’ capacity to carry out some kind of cognitive puzzle.” Therefore, one of the disadvantages of experimental studies is the high degree of control they entail. But the question that arises at this point is how this disadvantage, apart from being an inherent drawback of experimental studies for adequately explaining the L2 acquisition process, is related to our present discussion. The answer lies with the fact that such a degree of control and a priori determinism in specifying research questions, variables and procedures severely narrows the researcher’s peripheral vision in looking for a “complex unpredictable” (Larsen-Freeman, 1997) array of interactions and interrelationships among a complex unpredictable constellation of variables. Such a peripheral vision is exactly what a researcher or scholar uses when s/he engages in the complex process of hypothesis generating and consequently theory-construction about second language acquisition (SLA) processes. Especially in our own ELT context it has mistakenly been fashionable to think that experimental studies must be legitimized by a related review of literature which, although useful in itself, may sometimes simplistically be considered a theoretical panacea at the expense of any self-initiated theorizing and innovativeness on the part of the researchers themselves. In other words, the confining stipulations of conducting experimental studies such as the requirement that a researcher must always continue what other previous researchers have done up to a certain point and be inspired by the existing literature on the research question in hand severely restrict our researchers’ freedom to proceed with their possibly novel ideas and hypotheses, to the point that, in many cases, they completely abandon their initial research questions because of the limitations



they encounter during the carry-out of their studies until they come up with totally new questions which are infinitely different from what they were initially supposed to do, let alone the mirage of their becoming theorists and innovators.

A further problem with TEFL experimental studies in our context and actually many other contexts in general relates to the accuracy with which such studies are carried out. The accuracy of these studies may be considered problematic on several grounds as follows.

First, in many cases such studies are conducted by TEFL university students as course requirements. Due to the practical limitations in carrying out genuine experimental studies in many ELT contexts such as availability and accessibility of samples of subjects, time limitation, facilities and financial problems, commitment and collaboration of participants, such studies do not adequately represent reliable studies. Second, student researchers themselves may not have the ability, expertise or commitment to put their full investment in the studies. This is because, in many cases, such students do not have good reasons and motives for carrying out experimental studies except a pass score in their own course. They, therefore, sometimes *wrap the task up* very quickly while they seem to be doing sound experiments. Also, sometimes teachers do experimental studies to get promotion, again with the same or similar problems of truthfulness and trustworthiness. Next, experience in reading the reports of such studies and being consulted by their conductors, who are M.A. and even Ph.D. students, has shown that, in many cases, the researcher students do not have enough training in the basics and principles of research such as design, data analysis, statistical concepts and procedures, randomization, interpretation of results, and so on. For example, some student researchers or teacher researchers make attempts to homogenize intact-group classes simply by administering a general language proficiency test prior to the treatment. And they naively think that this can account for an absence of randomization.

In summary, these problems and the like are very likely to yield experimental studies which do not enjoy acceptable indexes of reliability and are likely to suffer low internal and external validity. Finally, such studies mostly take the form of methods-comparison studies, sometimes as mere replications of previous studies. Rarely do such studies reveal genuine questions arising out of deliberation, reflection, and sound theoretical argumentation. All these render researchers *knowledge consumers* rather than *knowledge producers* and *real thinkers*.

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR METHODOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN ELT**

Especially in contexts representing 'Expanding Circle' countries (Kachru, 1985), it is still fashionable to think that only one method which is related to a particular theory of learning or theory of language is superior to other methods, therefore, rejecting other rival stances. For example, it has become fashionable to reject any method or methodological issues affiliated to the behaviorist psychology and accept anything related to communicative language teaching (CLT), at least among practitioners with lower academic education. Most people in the field of ELT in these contexts believe that there is an alleged "best method", in Richards' (2001) terms, for teaching English which outweighs other methods and underlying theoretical principles. Therefore, every university student specializing in TEFL engages or is required to engage in methods-comparison studies in pursuit of that best method – a phenomenon resulting in their being *theory-users* rather than *theory-constructors*. This is because as long as one takes a "classroom as experimental laboratory" perspective (Breen, 2001) with certain pre-specified and controlled variables in mind, s/he is bound to be a servant of the principles of the experiment-

based mode of thinking. Breaking such confines requires engaging in thought-provoking argumentation and critical theorizing and theory analysis. This is likely to result in multi-dimensionality in thinking and knowledge productivity. It is this sort of orientation to research that lets us know that we cannot totally and simplistically reject the behaviorist psychology simply because others have done or said so, i.e. criticized it. Even if others have rejected it, they have been able, or at least encouraged, to think and argue analytically and convincingly rather than support or reject the totality of a theory by blindly imitating other people or based on the findings of a single laboratory-based experimental study.

Such narrow-mindedness has prevented those involved in English language teaching (ELT) in many countries from becoming self-actualized thinkers and has oriented them towards being greedy reviewers and narrators of the available literature.

There seems to exist a vicious cycle which is very difficult to get out of. This knowledge-dependency which is prevalent in our context has taken away from us the self-confidence to think critically, act confidently, and generate the knowledge which we are otherwise supposed to *faithfully* borrow from others.

We have been schooled in a tradition which emphasizes *knowing* and *memorizing* only. Rarely does it encourage critical reflection and thinking. When applied to ELT methodology, this tradition has always based English language teacher education and teacher research on the assumption that others have supplied the necessary theoretical underpinnings and principles upon which teachers and researchers can draw for their own teaching practices and research purposes. Hardly ever are we judged by what we have dared say about what we ourselves believe to be true about language teaching methods and methodology away from the dictatorship of the outer professional world.

I do not intend by any means, however, to deny the importance and relevance of what others have said and done which is already available to us in the form of ELT literature. What I am trying to downgrade is strict and illegitimate adherence to conducting *pretest-treatment-posttest* experimental studies in many EFL contexts in pursuit of either “best methods” (ibid) or testing and verifying what other people have argued to be the best methods. Such are the sources of non-criticality and non-creativity which have rendered our students at all levels of education imitative. Although such experimentation, in many cases, is justifiable and necessary, it is, by itself, not all that is sufficient for an academic in TEFL to become a discovery-oriented scholar.

Why can't our practitioners base their experimentations on SLA theories generated in our own ELT/EFL context? Why shouldn't we educate theoreticians whose theories and theoretical innovations would generate a large body of research, as is the case with many western scholars? Why is it that our share of ELT methodology is only review of, and doing research based on, the literature provided by others? To what extent, if at all, have our own scholars been able to propose original theories of first and/or second language acquisition, models of curriculum design, and language teaching methods? How many new scientific terminologies and ideas have we been able to coin with reference to methodology in ELT and other applied linguistics areas? Almost all method-related concepts and distinctions have been experimentally researched by

English-major students in our own context. But the question that arises is what percent of these research-generating ideas and concepts, e.g. focus-on-form versus focus-on-forms (Long, 1991), comprehensible input (Krashen, 1981) versus comprehensible output (Swain, 1985), different negotiation strategies (Ellis, 2008), etc. belongs to our professional TEFL community? How much theory have we contributed to the repertoire of ELT literature? In other words, how much our strict adherence to experimental studies has contributed to theory construction, novelty of ideas, and originality of thoughts away from attempts to verify other scholars' thoughts and theories?

Even a well-conducted experimental study which is supposed to provide the researcher with useful findings about the effectiveness of particular methods must be preceded by deep conceptual reflection and reasoning. Otherwise, it would not be well-grounded. It is through analyzing and critically reflecting on other people's theories, rather than doing laboratory-based experimentation, that one can gain a deeper understanding not only of those arguments and theories but also of how much one had realized such theories before and how deeply s/he understands them now. This is because in laboratory-based research we are led by the limits of the design and variables of the study to ignore so many potentially insight-providing nuances that emerge only through reflection and critical analysis. For example, suppose that the counterarguments by which the theoretical underpinnings of audio-lingual approach were called into question were replaced with counterarguments derived from a methods-comparison study following an experimental design. Would the latter counterarguments be as appealing and convincing as the former?

## **TWO APPROACHES TO THEORY-BUILDING**

Two broad approaches to theory-building have been identified (Long, 1985, cited in R. Ellis, 2008, p. 926): the " 'research-then-theory' approach and the 'theory-then-research' " approach. According to Ellis, "This corresponds to the difference between an inductive (empiricist) approach to theory-building and a deductive (rationalist) approach." (ibid) There is considerable debate over which approach to theory-building is more defensible. For example, Ellis (2008) referring to Beretta's criticism of the research-then-theory approach maintains:

Beretta (1991:505) referred to this approach [the research-then-theory approach] as a 'bottom-up strategy' and argued that researchers should seek plentiful data before proceeding to formulate a theory. He [Beretta] argued that the tendency of researchers to formulate theoretical statements prematurely constitutes a weakness of this approach (p.927)

Another weakness of this approach, according to Ellis (ibid), is that "it leads to theories that are particularistic rather than general (i.e. theories that seek to explain only a limited set of data)". Gregg (1993, cited in Ellis, ibid) also argues that this approach to theory-building results in "shallow theories (i.e. theories that stick as closely as possible to what is observable and, therefore, do not address phenomena)". Ellis (2008) also quotes Long's (1985) evaluation of this approach observing that:

researchers in the research-then-theory approach are less likely to be 'wrong' because their theoretical claims are based firmly on empirical evidence – always providing, of course, that their observations are valid and reliable – but the end result of their efforts may be 'limited' and perhaps ultimately 'irrelevant' (p. 927).

The second approach to theory-building, i.e. the theory-then-research approach, has been positively evaluated for 'lending itself to the construction of deep theories (i.e. theories that go beyond what has been observed by acknowledging the importance of those aspects of nature that cannot be observed (Gregg, 1993); for allowing for predictions to be formulated, tested, and modified (Ellis, 2008); for the adoption of a theory from outside the realm of SLA research such, e.g. the emergentist and skill-building models adopted from cognitive psychology and the constructionist models derived from socio-cultural theory (ibid); and for being more likely to bring about a paradigm shift and being associated with scientific revolutions (ibid).

However, we are not intending to argue in favor of either one approach to theory-construction as being superior to the other one because maybe it is safer to think that both approaches are needed and each has its own 'strengths and weaknesses' (Long, ibid). Such strengths and weaknesses have already been referred to above. Therefore, as Jordan (2003, cited in Ellis, 2008, p. 928) has argued, maybe a pluralist approach to theory development is more advantageous.

The points that I would like to emphasize are twofold. The first point is that engaging in such theoretical mind-exercising activities, i.e. theory-then-research approach, better directs our TEFL students towards becoming authorities in the field in several ways. First, they deeply understand other scholars' theories. Second, they have to read a lot. Third, they have to be analytic and evaluative. Fourth, they practice formulating ideas of their own. Fifth, they can overcome their fear of proposing wrong ideas. Sixth, they can purify and expand their understanding of mainstream ideas and concepts in the field. Seventh, they develop self-confidence in their ability to become thought-generating scholars. Many other advantages can be added to these, of course. The second point that I am trying to emphasize is that in both approaches to theory-construction research alone does not have anything to offer unless it leads to the formulation of some testable and falsifiable statements in the form of a *theory*. Therefore, the question of '*To what extent does strict adherence to the research-then-theory approach as the only adopted approach lead to the development of ELT theories and the enlightenment of our researchers' minds?*' seems pertinent! That is, the dominance of the research-then-theory approach in contexts such as ours in Iran, contrary to its real purpose in other contexts, is not looked upon as a means of helping students become *thinkers and theorists*. Rather, it is considered a *research-for-research* approach. Why is it the case that we are not used to assuming agency and having a voice in the world of theory-construction and novelty-creation in ELT methodology and L1 and L2 acquisition?

## CONCLUSION

University students of TEFL and English teachers in our country receive a lot of training on different theories and methods concerning ELT. But there are very rare, if any, cases of students or teachers who have the ability and courage to transcend the boundaries of *receiving and unquestionably believing* what they encounter in the literature and make novel contributions of their own to the field of language learning or teaching. Very rarely do we have specialists who propose new ideas in the field. We are most often fully aware of other people's theories, even more than those theorists themselves. But we are often unable to analyze, synthesize and evaluate those theories and/or methods and come up with novel ones of our own. Sometimes popular

authorities in the field of language teaching methodology are not even aware of the contents of their own books, even though they have authored those books. This means that they do not emphasize memorizing or even knowing much information. Rather they have developed the habits and skills of discovery-learning and making novel contributions of their own. In other words, one does not have to keep so much information in his mind, something a machine can do much more efficiently, but he does have to learn how to think critically and synthesize all that he has studied into new ideas of his own. But we know much more information about ELT methods than there exists in a library without being able to reach a point of theorizing and methods-inventing of our own. Why is such the case? Maybe it is because we are accustomed to working within the limits of experimental studies, in a direction pre-specified by others, looking for hard evidence based on narrow-ranging classroom research away from speculative work and discovery-learning in creative ways.

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# THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL SCHEMATA AND PROFICIENCY LEVEL ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' CLOZE TEST PERFORMANCE AND RECALL OF PASSAGE

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## ABSTRACT

The emergence of socio-cultural perspectives in language education on the one hand and the recent trends towards more contextualized and authentic forms of language tests on the other hand have led practitioners to take more into account issues of culture in language teaching practices and of course in designing appropriate tests; tests which are namely fair and not biased toward individual test takers' cultural values. This study is therefore an attempt to find out if cultural schemata and proficiency level affect Iranian EFL learners' cloze test performance and recall of the passage. Participants included 144 freshman students at Islamic Azad University of Shiraz. They took a 50-item placement test (Oxford Placement Test) measuring their proficiency level, and two cloze tests (one culturally familiar and the other culturally unfamiliar). They were also asked to write whatever they recalled from the text after they finished the cloze test. The results revealed that both cultural schemata and proficiency level significantly affected cloze test performance and recall of the passage. It was also observed that more proficient students were less affected by cultural familiarity of the passage, and the cloze test scores correlated very highly with recall scores. Based on the findings of the study, test developers should be more sensitive to individuals' cultural differences and proficiency level when designing cloze tests as integrative measures of reading ability.

**KEY WORDS:** cultural achemata, proficiency level, cloze test performance, recall of passage

## INTRODUCTION

Language testing has generally followed the trends in language teaching methodology, while language teaching is affected by advances in linguistics and psychology. As a result, language testing has to a great extent been directly and indirectly influenced by epistemology in general psychology and related fields, such as educational measurement, innovations in psychology and education. This trend has caused test-makers to change their methods, from discrete point tests, which are still in use in many areas, to integrative testing (Farhady, Jafarpur, & Birjandi, 1994). Among the types of integrative tests, the cloze test is perhaps the most representative (TalebiNezhad & Dastjerdi, 2006).

As Nielsen (2011) asserts, cloze tests measure reading comprehension, and not just a readability level of the text because they provide empirical evidence of how easy a text is to read and

understand for a specified target audience. However, the cloze procedure has several advantages over other types of reading assessment. For example, cloze tests are very easily created and administered. They are also based on silent reading, which is the predominant and most natural form of reading. Moreover, they can be constructed from materials that teachers use for instructional purposes or from authentic texts and they do not require the writing of specific comprehension questions. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, cloze tests often exhibit a high degree of consistency; though this consistency may vary considerably depending on the text selected, the deletion starting point and gap rates that are employed (Alderson, 1979; Sciarone & Schoorl, 1989).

Researchers have not yet had an agreement on what cloze tests really measure. As asserted in Tremblay (2011), some researchers have proposed that cloze tests tap low-level lexical and grammatical competence (e.g., Alderson, 1979; Markham, 1985), whereas others have argued that cloze tests can also measure higher level discourse competence (e.g., Bachman, 1982; Fotos, 1991; Jonz, 1990). Although no firm consensus has been reached as to what aspects of linguistic competence cloze tests measure, their scores have been found to correlate highly with standardized proficiency scores and therefore are claimed to provide an excellent overall picture of proficiency since they reflect the degree to which language skills are used in a meaningful context. In the same vein, a number of researchers have also found them to be particularly useful tools for measuring reading comprehension (Cecilia, 2003). In general, "Today, cloze tests are widely used in some places such as Iran & China as part of some large-scale language tests such as TOEFL and IELTS", (Ajideh & Mozaffarzadeh, 2012, p.143).

Written recall task has also been recommended as a measure of reading comprehension and is generally considered as an integrative test in that several features combine to convey the meaning upon which a response is then based. It requires readers to read a passage silently and then to write down everything they can remember from the text. There is evidence that a recall protocol provides data that reflect the nature of the reading process in terms of encoding, restructuring and analyzing information.

Although the written recall task and cloze test are both integrative tests, they differ in the nature of their response modes. According to Savignon (1983) cloze tests entail a discrete-point response mode whereas recalls have a global response mode. Both have proved to be affected by different factors which need to be controlled if we want to construct valid and reliable tests. Cloze may be influenced by the level of the difficulty of the text, the amount of the text on either side of the blank, text redundancy, personal characteristics, cultural schemata, and many others. Research also reveals that recall of the text is affected by factors such as the text structure, memory, the topic of the passage, the conditions under which the test is administered, scoring procedures, and so on. For example, Yuh-Fang Chang (2006) compared readers' performance on the immediate recall task and a translation task in order to explore the effect of memory on readers recall. The results showed that the requirement of memory in the recall task hinders the test takers' ability to demonstrate fully their comprehension of the reading passage.

Among the factors mentioned above, cultural familiarity of the passage and proficiency level, are claimed to cause variations in test takers' performance on cloze tests and written recall tasks.

Therefore, the present study intends to investigate these two factors and see to what extent they may affect students' performance on a cloze test and the recall of the passage once the cloze test is taken.

### **CULTURAL SCHEMATA**

Schema is generally defined as the background knowledge one has about the topic one is reading and may have an effect on the interpretation of the passage being read. The background knowledge may consist of personal history, cultural beliefs, attitudes, interests, so on and so forth. Cook (2001) states “for a reader to make sense of a text a particular piece of background information is required and a person who does not possess the information does not get much out of the text” (p.12).

Schemata can be of two types; formal and content schemata. The former is the knowledge of language and linguistic conventions, including knowledge of how texts are organized, and what main features of particular genres are. The latter, however, is the knowledge about the content of the passage readers need to have in order to be able to understand it. Such knowledge does not simply need to be available- it needs to be activated by the reader, or the text, if it is to be used in accurate understanding.

Some studies report that a match between background knowledge presupposed by the text and that possessed by readers leads to a better comprehension than a mismatch (Johnson 1981; Steffensen, Joag-Dev, & Anderson, 1979). Other studies show that providing students with background knowledge facilitates understanding of unfamiliar texts (Gatbonton & Tucker, 1971; Johnson, 1982). The combined provision of background knowledge and previews for students particularly enhances L2 reading comprehension (Chen & Graves, 1995).

Rezaei, Barati, and Youhanaee (2012) in a study investigated the effect of content familiarity and test format on Iranian English learners. The subjects of this study were sampled from advanced students studying at different language institutes in Isfahan, Iran and based on an OPT test 70 students were considered as the target participants. Each participant was given a test of reading comprehension with familiar content and unfamiliar content. It became clear that content familiarity facilitates comprehension. In the same vein, Keshavarz, Atai, and Ahmadi (2007) investigated the contribution of content and background knowledge, vocabulary and syntactic knowledge, and L2 proficiency to reading comprehension and recall. 240 male Iranian EFL learners participated in the study. Each participant was tested with a familiar, and an unfamiliar text. The authors found that familiarity with content was significantly correlated with reading comprehension test scores and recall scores. Chihara, Sakurai, and Oller (1989) changed several culturally unfamiliar words (e.g. Nicholas, Athen, Klein) from two English texts into more familiar words (Ben, Osaka, Daiei) for the Japanese participants. Leaving all other words intact. They controlled other possible intervening variables such as the content and syntactic complexity of the two texts. The results of the cloze test showed that the participants performed significantly better on the modified, that is culturally familiar, cloze texts than on the original texts.

Partially replicating Chihara et al.'s (1989) experiment, Sasaki (2000) investigated how schemata activated by culturally familiar words might have influenced students' cloze test-taking processes. She changed several unfamiliar words in the original cloze test passage to more familiar ones in the modified version. Unlike Chihara et al., however, students were asked to give

verbal reports of their test-taking processes, and to recall the passage after they had completed the test. Results demonstrated that those who read the culturally familiar cloze text tried to solve more items and generally understood the text better, which resulted in better performance, than those students who read the original text. When students read content familiar text, they might have enjoyed the situational interest aroused by the text. Tomlinson (1998), for example, maintained that when students see elements of their local culture in classroom materials, they feel much more engaged and identify themselves with the context of the text. As the last example we can mention Carrell (1981), who examined the comprehension of advanced ESL Japanese and Chinese subjects using folktales from different cultural orientations. Her findings showed that the cultural origin of the text affected the subject's recall of information from the texts, as well as the subjects' judgments of the level of difficulty of the texts.

### **PROFICIENCY LEVEL**

L2 proficiency has been conceptualized in different ways, none of which, according to Stern (1983), provides a completely satisfactory expression. Stern (1983) states that "until 1970 or so, proficiency was defined as the knowledge of phonology, vocabulary, and grammar; however, more recent definitions of proficiency include semantic, discourse, and sociolinguistic features". The description of proficiency is therefore an important step in the studies of second / foreign language testing since the proficiency level of testees has been manipulated as a variable in most language testing research. In addition to the role of content (cultural) schemata in EFL reading comprehension, the potential interaction between content and learners' proficiency also concerns researchers in EFL reading. Carrel (1984) suggested that the nonnative readers in her study failed to use background information because they were linguistically bound.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The present study tends to investigate the impact of cultural schemata and the proficiency level on cloze test performance, and recall of the passage. The main purpose we are after is to indicate the effect of cultural familiarity of the passage on cloze test performance. In fact written recall task is added to double-check the same effect as another test of reading comprehension. In this vein, the present study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- R.Q.1. Do participants perform better on a cloze test when the passage is culturally familiar or when it is unfamiliar?
- R.Q.2. Do participants perform better on a recall task when the passage is culturally familiar or when it is unfamiliar?
- R.Q.3. Are there any relationships between the students' proficiency level and cultural familiarity of the passage in their performance on cloze tests?
- R.Q.4. Are there any relationships between the students' proficiency level and cultural familiarity of the passage in their performance on a written recall task?
- R.Q.5. Is there a relationship between students' performance on a cloze test and written recall?
- R.Q.6. Is there an interaction between cultural familiarity and proficiency level in cloze tests and written recall tasks?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

One hundred and forty four freshman students at Shiraz Islamic Azad University participated in this study. The participants were divided into three groups of high, intermediate, and low proficiency based on their scores on Oxford Placement Test (OPT) (Allan, 2004). The mean of scores was calculated and one half of standard deviation was added to and subtracted from it in order to have three homogeneous groups. So the participants who scored 30 and above were included in the proficient group (group 1), those who scored between 25 and 29 (inclusive) were considered as belonging to the intermediate group (group 2), and those who scored 24 and below were considered as low students (group 3). In this way, there were 54 participants in group 1, 46 in group 2, and 44 in group 3.

### ***Instruments***

To indicate the participants' proficiency level, the standardized Oxford Placement Test (Allan, 2004) was administered to all participants. The original test includes 200 tests items from which we chose the second part including 50 items for two main reasons: 1. The second part looks more like a cloze test. 2. With only 50 items we would not have problems of time and the participants would not get bored and tired. For cloze test administration, we needed to construct two kinds of cloze tests, one, culturally familiar, and the other, culturally unfamiliar. For this purpose, we made use of a cloze test taken from Sasaki (2000) as the unfamiliar cloze for our participants. In his study, he administered it as the familiar cloze to Japanese students. The cloze test was constructed based on fixed-ratio method (every 5<sup>th</sup> word was deleted). Then some modifications were made in terms of wordings of the passage in order to make it culturally familiar for Iranian participants. Care was taken to ensure that there would be similar passages in all other aspects such as, difficulty level, number of words, and the places of all the blanks. Both cloze tests consisted of 50 blanks.

### ***Administration procedure***

First the Oxford Placement Test was administered to all the participants to determine their proficiency level. The participants were given about 25 minutes to answer the questions in the OPT.

It was not possible for the researcher to administer both cloze tests (culturally familiar and culturally unfamiliar) to the same participants because there was the possibility of practice effect. So each group of proficiency level was further divided into two groups in order to give one, culturally familiar cloze test, and the other, culturally unfamiliar cloze test. It should be noted that the two groups of each proficiency level were selected in such a way that they would have equal means. The cloze tests were administered after an interval of two weeks from the proficiency test. Based on the pilot study done before, participants were given 35 minutes to perform on the cloze tests.

All participants were also asked to write down whatever they remembered from the passage either in their mother tongue or the target language. This way, it was intended to eliminate the possible effect of L1 or L2 on the participants' quality and quantity of recall. This procedure was done after all cloze tests were collected from the participants. They were instructed to write the recall on a separate piece of paper.

### ***Scoring procedure***

To score the cloze test the exact word method was used. The participants were expected to guess the exact word used in the original passage. This type of scoring method was used because it is

easier than the other methods. For written recall task first the idea units of the passage were all identified. As a whole there were 66 idea units. Then the recall papers were studied, and then one point was given to each idea unit if it was recalled verbatim or in a close paraphrase or correct translation.

### Data analysis

In order to make sure that the two groups of proficiency were homogeneous and there was no difference between their performances on the proficiency test, an independent t-test was run. The results showed that there was no statistically significant difference between them. In order to indicate the relative effect of participants' level and cultural familiarity of the passage on the cloze test performance, a two-way ANOVA was run. The same procedure was also followed for participants' performances on recall task in order to measure the same thing. Finally a correlation between the scores of recall task and cloze test was taken.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first research question in this study examined whether cultural familiarity of passage affects students' cloze test performance or not. Table 1 displays the result of the two-way ANOVA run in order to answer this question. Based on the table it can be concluded that cultural familiarity of the passage significantly affects students' cloze test performance. The findings are in line with what Carrell and Eisterhold (1983), Chihara et al. (1989), Chen & Graves, (1995), Anderson (1999), and Sasaki (2000) noted in their studies. They mentioned background knowledge and familiarity with the passage as the very important factor on the reader's reading comprehension ability.

Table 1: Two-way ANOVA

Dependent variable: cloze

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3529.895	5	705.979	26.036	.000
Intercept	46690.218	1	46690.218	1271.905	.000
Culture	663.293	1	663.293	24.462	.000
Level	2740.108	2	1370.054	50.527	.000

The second research question in this study examined whether cultural familiarity of passage affects students' recall task or not. Statistical statistics two-way ANOVA was run in order to answer this question. As it is shown in Table 2, the result was (.000) and significant at ( $p < .5$ ). So, like what Carrell (1981) and Yuh-Fang Chang (2006) found, the cultural familiarity of the text significantly affected the subject's recall of information from the texts.

Table 2: Two-way ANOVA

Dependant variable: recall

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	2085.892	5	417.178	22.002	.000
Intercept	14789.334	1	14789.34	779.992	.000
Culture	549.840	1	549.840	28.999	.000
Level	1528.752	2	764.376	40.313	.000



Table 3 displays the results of an independent t-test run to answer the third research question which was if the effect of cultural schemata on cloze test performance varies among different proficiency levels. Results reveal that the lower two groups (intermediate and low) are significantly affected by cultural schemata but not the high group. As Carrel (1984) suggested, the nonnative readers in her study failed to use background information because they were linguistically bound. According to this table, participants with higher proficiency level in this study are also less affected by cultural schemata. This may be due to the students' using their higher proficiency level to compensate for the unfamiliarity of the passage.

*Table 3: Independent t-test*

level	culture	mean	Mean dif.	Sig. (2-tailed)
High	1	24.91	1.826	.290
	2	23.9		
Inter.	1	19.37	4.556	.002
	2	14.81		
Low	1	16.41	6.545	.000
	2	9.86		

The fourth research question asked if the effect of cultural schemata on recall task performance varies among different proficiency levels. Table 4 displays the results of an independent t-test run to answer the question. The results reveal that all groups of proficiency level are more or less affected by cultural schemata. The relationship which was observed was the same as that of the cloze test. As students' proficiency level decreases, culture affects more significantly their performance on recall task.

*Table 4: Independent t-test*

level	culture	mean	Mean dif.	Sig. (2-tailed)
High	1	16.04	3.696	.015
	2	12.35		
Inter.	1	12.41	4.074	.003
	2	8.33		
Low	1	7.95	4.000	.000
	2	3.95		

The fifth research question asked if there is any interaction between the two variables of the study. As results in Table 5 show, there is no interaction between these two variables at all.

*Table 5: The interaction between culture and level*

Test	Source	Sig.
Recall cloze	Culture*level	.975
	Culture*level	.100

The correlation which is reported in Table 6 is .67 and it shows that scores of cloze test on recall task both as tests of reading comprehension are highly correlated. The scores of cloze test and recall task was also correlated separately for each proficiency level. According to Table 7 the correlation is only significant for the two lower groups but not for the higher ones, and scores of lower proficiency groups were more highly correlated. The former case may be interpreted as a

result of memory, and the latter shows that students who received low grades on cloze test have also received low on recall task.

*Table 6: Correlation*

Correlations	Recall
cloze Pearson correlation	.670**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
N	144

*Table 7: Correlation between groups*

level	Recall
1 cloze Pearson correlation	.246
Sig. (2-tailed)	.099
N	46
2 cloze Pearson correlation	.563**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
N	54
3 cloze Pearson correlation	.848**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
N	44

## CONCLUSION

So, as far as the results of the study implicated, different levels of English proficiency had a determining effect on the success in performing integrative measurements. In better words, it was observed that cultural schemata as well as proficiency level have a direct effect on the testers' cloze test performance and recall of the passage therefore it can be argued that the findings of this study clearly depicts that, contrary to the stereotype, the design and construction of appropriate integrative tests can be quite a demanding task and requires much expertise at least for beginner and intermediate test takers. Part of the challenge is due to the fact that attempts to contextualize language tests may lead to bias toward particular proficiency groups and cultural backgrounds. For advanced test takers; however, this is not a major threat. Proficient test takers in this study were less affected by cultural familiarity of the test.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The interested researcher(s) can investigate the effect of cultural schemata on other versions of cloze test such as: C-test, and can compare the effect of cultural schemata on participants' cloze test performance and traditional reading comprehension test. The participants of the present study were university students. The interested researcher can do the same research using different participants such as high school students, or investigate whether the effect of cultural schemata on cloze test performance and recall task varies among different age groups.

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## SPEECH ACTS IN AMERICAN ENGLISH AND PALESTINIAN ARABIC

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### ABSTRACT

This study attempted to examine how both English and Arabic realize certain speech acts, mainly authoritative speech acts, promising and thanking. For this purpose, an analysis of spontaneous naturally-occurring utterances comprised of declaratory speech acts, commissives, and thanking in both English and Arabic was conducted. In the light of this analysis, the study highlighted interesting differences displayed by the two languages as to how they realize the given speech acts at the level of structures and lexical items used. The study also showed that cross-cultural and pragmalinguistic characteristics of Arabic speech acts as compared with their counterparts in English are of paramount importance for sociolinguistic, contrastive, semantic and translation studies.

**KEY TERMS:** Speech act, commissives, locutionary act, illocutionary act, perlocutionary act, performative utterances, naturally-occurring utterances.

### INTRODUCTION

Our daily talk includes speech acts or utterances that serve certain functions. We perform speech acts when we promise, thank, apologize, or introduce someone, for example.

In inter-cultural interactions, speech acts are tricky to execute because people are not always aware of the cultural norms that regulate the conventions of the other language; they may simply resort to their native language conventions and convey them to others. Therefore, it is crucial that people become aware of not only knowledge of the language but also of the culturally appropriate ways to perform the speech acts in that language. Sometimes what conveys a message in one language might not produce the same one when presented in another. An example of potential misunderstanding between an English and an Arab interlocutors would be when the former invites the latter saying *Would you like to have a cup of tea?* and the Arab person declines the invitation saying just *Thank you*. The English person would probably not understand it as a refusal and would say *thank you, yes or thank you, no*. This is because the utterance used in polite English as a response to an invitation always includes *thank you* regardless of whether one accepts or turns down the invitation.

Clearly, speech acts are very culture specific and differences in this field would produce potential misunderstanding among people. As Gass and Neu (2006) put it, "Speech acts are realized from culture to culture in different ways, and these differences may result in communication difficulties that range from the humorous to the serious". Similarly, Gass and Selinker (2008: 288) claim that all "languages have a means of performing speech acts and

presumably speech acts themselves are universals, yet the form used in specific speech acts varies from culture to culture". This goes in line with Wolfson's (1986: 119) notion that "speech acts differ cross culturally not only in the way they are realized but also in their distribution, their frequency of occurrence, and in the function they serve".

Accordingly, the present study attempts to investigate performative utterances in both English and Arabic. The focus will be on three functions of performative utterances: declaratory or highly authoritative speech acts, promising and thanking. The assumption here is that each of the two languages has more than one way of expressing each of the three functions or speech acts under investigation, in terms of their structure, inclusion or exclusion of performative verbs. Differences are anticipated at the structural and lexical level, particularly in colloquial Arabic, mainly because speech acts are culture-specific expressions. In this connection, Hudson (1980: 111) says, "if speech act categories are cultural concepts, we might find them to vary from one society to another."

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***General Background***

Utterances are formed of words or lexical items in any given language. Utterances have functions to express depending on the situation and occasion which trigger these utterances. These functions are put in what Austin (as cited in Searle, 1969: 23) calls "illocutionary acts". When utterances have certain verbs, they are described as 'speech acts', i.e. they perform acts on the given occasion. In English, Searle (1969: 28) mentions a list of such performative verbs which illocutionary acts contain (e.g. "state", "describe", ... etc.).

A speech act as an utterance has been described by semanticists (of course for the first time by Austin 1962) as having three acts: the locutionary act, in which the utterance as a linguistic construction of words has sense and is not ambiguous; the illocutionary act which refers to the utterance used to perform a certain act such as "a greeting, a statement, a prediction, a promise, a prohibition, or whatever" (Allan, 1986: 104); the perlocutionary act, which is the effect that the utterance can bring about in the addressee's or hearer's state of feeling or reaction. "The perlocution of an utterance is the causing of a change to be brought about, perhaps unintentionally, through, or by means of, the utterance" (Hurford et al, 1983: 243).

Sperber and Wilson (1986: 243) go even further saying that "language can be influential in performing actions (i.e. speech acts), such as bringing about and executing obligations, or affecting others' thoughts and actions, or even generating fresh affairs and further social interactions."

Utterances that function as speech acts cannot be described as true or false, though they may take the form of statements. Rather, "the uttering of the sentence is, or is part of, an action" (Austin, 1962, as cited in Palmer, 1981: 161). So statements or utterances can perform lots of functions such as promising, warning, christening, apologizing, thanking ... etc. Utterances performing such functions are described as performatives. In this regard, and in order for speech acts to be successful as communicative acts, Cohen (1994) as cited by Morsi, 2010, P.6) points out that the



successful planning and production of speech act utterances depend on the sociocultural and the sociolinguistic ability of the speaker. Cohen (1994) defines the Sociocultural ability as the respondents' skill at selecting speech act strategies appropriately with the given culture involved, "the age and sex of the speakers, their social class and occupations, and their roles and status in the interaction" (22). By Sociolinguistic ability, Cohen (1994) refers to appropriately selecting the linguistic forms or expressions that are used to realize the speech act.

Performative utterances, or performatives, can be classified as direct or indirect speech acts. A direct speech act has illocutionary force made explicit by means of a verb, such as promise, warn, apologize, congratulate, among others, whereas the illocutionary force of an indirect performative utterance is made implicitly, i.e. without a performative verb. Yet, the two types " have the same illocutionary point " (Allan, 1986: 165).

Speech acts may be explicitly or implicitly performative. This means that we can use a verb which denotes, for example promising, when we utter ' I promise to visit you '; or we can just say ' I will visit you "; in which case no explicit verb of promising is mentioned. According to Grundy (2000: 53) " .... Non-explicit, even very implicit, ways of using language performatively are the norm. "

To illustrate how utterances function as such, i.e. as direct or indirect speech acts, we cite here the utterances given by Allan (ibid, 165-6) in which she shows how the same command can be issued or effected in three ways which depict three illocutionary forces, but all have the same illocutionary point:

" I order you to leave immediately. "  
" Go out ! "  
" Out ! "

provided they are uttered with proper prosody and in the right context. She also gives a good list of explicit performative verbs:

*" abjure, abolish, accept, acknowledge, ... , withdraw " . (pp. 167-8)*

A good test for a performative utterance is the insertion of the adverb ' hereby ' between the subject and the performative verb, e.g. I hereby submit my resignation.

Performatives can be negative in meaning and in structure as follows:

- I hereby refuse your resignation.
- I hereby don't agree to your resignation.

English direct performative utterances must have the performative verbs in the present tense in the case of explicit speech acts, but this is not necessarily the case in implicit speech acts. The examples above illustrate the case of explicit speech acts.

The following utterance exemplifies an indirect speech act with no explicit performative verb:

- I'll lend you some money when I cash my salary.

In this example (will + v) express a promise, though a conditional one.

- The following statement can also exemplify an indirect speech act.
- This watch is yours.

Here we can imagine a situation in which someone, for example, gives a watch as a present to his wife, sister or friend. So the speech act of giving a present has been performed by means of a statement. Speech acts might have the form of a question, but the intention of the speaker who utters the question is to perform something else, for example, a request. Thus,

- Can you pass the salt? does not question the ability of the addressee to pass the salt. Rather, the speaker in uttering this question wants the hearer to realize and recognize that this is a request to pass the salt. In natural language we can get things done by people through different ways. For example, directives (directing people to do something) can take a number of forms. Holmes (1992: 289 – 90) speaks of an indefinite number of possible utterances which could express a directive. She cites some examples of how to get people to sit down which range from orders and commands to declaratives as follows:

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| - Sit down                                | imperative                    |
| - You sit down                            | you imperative                |
| - Could you sit down?                     | Interrogative with modal verb |
| - Sit down, will you?                     | Imperative + interrogative    |
| - Won't you sit down?                     | Interrogative with negative   |
| - I want you to sit down.                 | Declarative                   |
| - I'd like you to sit down.               | Declarative                   |
| - You'd be more comfortable sitting down. | Declarative                   |

In this context language can be seen as defined by Halliday (1973: 7) as " meaning potential ": " that is as sets of options ". But people take into consideration the factors against which they decide on their choices of options, which include the social context, the social distance, the social values and culture, and the interactants themselves: who is saying what to whom, in what capacity, and for what purpose, and the shared assumptions and knowledge of the world. One important remark about the functioning of utterances as speech acts is the intention of the speaker concerning the message he wants to convey. An utterance may express or have more than one illocutionary force. Kempson (1977: 59) points out a few linguistic actions of the sentence:

" There are four large bulls in that field. " She explains that this sentence " may be used as a warning (to a walker who is about to cross the fence), a statement (to a new assistant on the farm), a boast (to a fellow farmer), or a threat (to a boy who is misbehaving). "

The same also applies to other forms of utterances, i.e. imperatives and interrogatives. Kempson (ibid, p. 67) explains that " we can use an interrogative form to give information or to make a request for action, and we can also use an imperative both to give information and to request information. "

### ***Previous Studies***

To the best of my knowledge few studies were conducted in this area, though not strictly contrastive in nature and focus. The first study was conducted by Khalil and McCarus (1999) and dealt with performative utterances cited from MSA written genres: “plays, short stories and formal/legal documents, texts that should provide a higher incidence of performatives “ (p. 8). In the second study, El-Zeini (2001) has examined expressions of gratitude in colloquial Cairene Arabic. She also cites some other studies that have dealt with the same topic, i.e. expressions of gratitude (EOGS) in Arabic, in addition to some more other linguistic functions. But she points out that Hussein’s study (1995) "is the only one that describes EOGS as a speech act in Arabic " (p. 173).

In an attempt to examine the cultural differences in the implications of expressing thanks, Hinkel (1994) investigated the ability of 199 non-native speakers of English (Chinese, Arab, Indonesian, Korean, Japanese and Spanish) to judge the appropriateness of giving thanks in common situations similarly to native speakers of English. The study revealed that 199 non-native speakers ranked expressions of thanks for appropriateness significantly different from the 34 non-native speakers of the control group. Hinkel’s study (1994) showed that native speakers were very consistent in their judgments of the relevant thanking expressions whereas respondents whose native languages were heterogeneous showed no consistency in their rankings of the thanking expressions studied.

Morsi (2010) investigated how Egyptians living in the United States utilize their vernacular Arabic to express gratitude and indebtedness in return for a favor or generosity. She explains the strategies and various expressions Egyptians used in her study. The instances of expressing thanking in her study and responses to it as used by Egyptian Arabic speakers living in the United States show that these Egyptians recourse to repetition, redundancy, and plenty of formulaic expressions which include blessings and supplications as strategies to convey sincerity and gratitude to their addressees.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study is meant to answer the following two questions:

1. How do English and Arabic realize certain speech acts (i.e. authoritative, promising and thanking)?
2. What differences do English and Arabic display as to how they structurally and lexically realize such speech acts?

### **METHODOLOGY**

The English and Arabic corpora of this study comprise spontaneous spoken utterances that are authentic and contextualized. The English examples were collected from Tillitt and Bruder's book entitled "Speaking Naturally: Communication Skills in American English" <sup>1</sup>, in addition to references which contain discussions on speech acts. As for the Arabic examples, these have been collected from both MSA (Modern Standard Arabic) and daily social interactions, as observed and heard by the researcher in his daily interactions with native speakers of Arabic in Bethlehem

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<sup>1</sup> Many English utterances have been borrowed from Tillitt and Bruder's book entitled "Speaking Naturally: Communication Skills in American English" , Cambridge University Press (1985).

Governorate. The researcher for this part of the corpus has focused on how native speakers of Arabic would perform thanking and promising or committing themselves to doing things in their daily transactions. Of course, most, if not all, of this part focuses on Palestinian dialect, of which Bethlehem regional dialect is exemplary. The thanking (expressing gratitude) utterances consist of expressions collected by the researcher from villagers and peasants or expressions used by females in their social interaction. The colloquial ones are more realistic in this regard because they are frequently used in the most natural context. The collected Arabic and English utterances have been respectively presented to a panel of seven native speakers of Arabic and another panel of seven native speakers of English working at Bethlehem University in the West Bank to appeal to their intuitive knowledge and to get their feedback on the basis of their immediate reactions. Both panels, with very few exceptions, judged the given utterances as authentic and natural.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *English Language*

#### *Declaratory (Performative) acts:*

Consider these examples:

1. I hereby pronounce you guilty.
2. The court/jury hereby permits you to stand down. (Allan, 1986: 168)
3. We hereby authorize you to pay on our behalf a sum not exceeding \$ 500. (Allan, p. 168).
4. You are hereby authorized to pay .....
5. Out!
6. I don't grant your request. (Allan, p. 171)
7. I refuse your request. (Allan, p. 171)

Declaratory acts in English as the examples above show can have three types or forms:

- Form 1 consists of subject (first person) + (hereby) + performative verb+ other words:

e.g. I (hereby) pronounce you guilty.

- Form 2 consists of a declarative statement which can be either an active voice statement consisting of a subject (the name of an institution or an authorized body + (hereby) + a performative verb + other words:

e.g. The court/jury (hereby) permits you to stand down. It could also be a passive voice statement.

e.g. (1) You are (hereby) authorized .....

(2) Notice is hereby given that trespassers will be prosecuted.

It should be noted that " the person(s) responsible for illocution is (are) represented by the agency of the performative clause. Thus, it is a necessary condition on the explicit performative clause that S (speaker) is agent for himself or another, whichever takes responsibility for enforcing the illocution in the performative " (Allan, 1986: 169)

- Form 3 has no subject (overt subject) and no explicit performative verb or object ..... etc. It is enough to use a particle, for instance, as this example shows:

- " Out! " in the sense " I declare the ball out! uttered by a referee.

The above examples under forms one and two have performative verbs in the simple present tense. However, performative verbs can occur in the present progressive as well, as in:

- I am betting you £10 Arsenal will win.

Another important point is that declaratory performative verbs can occur as negative performatives, as in:

- " I don't grant your request, " provided it is uttered with the appropriate prosody. In addition, the verb ' refuse ' can be used to express a negative performative act as in:

- I refuse your request.

### *Commissives*

Examples:

- I (hereby) promise to come to the party.
- " I am hereby promising you not to scatter chips on the carpet " (Allan, 1986: 170).
- " I do promise to come more often " (Allan, p. 170)
- I will not scatter chips on the carpet anymore.

It is clear that commissives in English can occur in the simple present and the present progressive when they have explicit performative verbs as in:

- I (hereby) promise to come to the party.
- I am (hereby) promising you not to scatter chips on the carpet.

They also occur in the emphatic-do form as in:

- I do promise to come more often.

It is conditional that the performative clause occurs in the indicative mood. When commissives have no explicit performative verbs, they occur in the future with will:

- I will not scatter chips on the carpet any more.

Allan (1986: 174-5) sums up the necessary conditions on the form of explicit performative clauses in English as follows:

1. The clause complies with the normal rules of English grammar.
2. The main verb in the performative clause must be a performative verb which spells out the illocutionary point of U.

3. The performative verb must be in the present (non-past, non-future, non-perfect) tense, because the illocutionary act is defined on the moment of utterance.
4. A performative clause must be 'realis', i.e. designate an actualization of the illocutionary act. Therefore, (a) a performative verb can only co-occur with root modals which are 'realis', and not with 'irrealis' epistemic modal auxiliaries; and (b) a performative clause must be in the indicative mood.
5. The subject of the performative clause is conditioned by the fact that the speaker S is agent for either himself or another, whichever takes responsibility for enforcing the illocution described by the performative verb. More often than not this controls the form of the SU NP.
6. It is often said that a performative verb necessarily occurs in the simple aspect; and it does normally do so, perhaps for the same reason that the simple aspect is normal in on-the-spot reporting of football matches, baseball games, etc. However, there are occasions where a performative may occur in the progressive aspect. Conditions 2-6, and 7 below, constitute sufficient conditions on the form of the performative clause.
7. A performative verb can typically be preceded by the adverb 'hereby' meaning "in uttering this performative." This adverb will precede the negative performative 'not' or auxiliary verb + n't or a negative performative.

(pp. 174-5)

- We also note that: (i) a performative clause may be either positive or negative, in the sense of denoting an act of doing or not-doing respectively; and (ii) a performative clause may be emphatic.

#### *Thanking*

Thanking as a speech act can occur on numerous occasions. Leech in this connection (as cited in El-Zeini, 2001: 172) defines thanking as "a convivial function whose goal of stating appreciation helps maintain a polite and social atmosphere."

For the purpose of this study, thanking on the occasions of giving a gift, doing a favour, helping and asking about someone's health for the English part of the study will be examined as illustrated by Tillit and Bruder (1985). Informal language or utterances will be the focus of the discussion.

#### Thanking for a gift:

Native speakers of English receiving the gift usually say three things:

- " 1. an expression of thanks;
2. a compliment on the gift itself, showing that the recipient likes the gift; and



3. a question relating to the gift (its origin), use, maker ... etc) to show interest in the gift “ .

Examples:

1. When receiving roses:

- Oh, thank you! I just love roses. Are they from your garden?

2. When receiving a picture:

- It's beautiful! Thank you very much. I've always wanted a picture from Japan. Did you get it in Osaka?

- “ Another way of thanking for a gift is to use an expression of thanks and then to state that a gift was not necessary or expected:

- Oh, Thank you. But you really didn't have to. “

(p. 37)

#### Thanking for doing a favor or for helping

In this situation someone volunteers to do something to help another party, a friend, or anybody who may be in need of help or who might ask to give him/her a hand in doing any of his/her little businesses. People who receive help find themselves obliged to say something in return for this help. Sometimes in case of receiving “ bigger “ favours, that is, ones involving more time or effort, the beneficiary ... may also give a gift to the doer of the favor “. (ibid, p. 38)

#### Expressions of gratitude native speakers of E. use in informal situations:

- Thank you very much.
- Thank you so much.
- Many thanks.
- Thanks, you've saved my neck.
- Thanks, love!
- Thanks a million!
- Thanks a lot for ....
- I really appreciate your help!
- Thanks!

#### Expressions of gratitude when someone tries to help but fails the attempt:

- “ Thank you very much for trying, at least.
- Thank you so much for your efforts.
- Thanks anyway.
- Thanks a lot. “ (Tillitt & Bruder, 1985: 41)

Syntactically, expressions of gratitude as evident from the examples above, can vary in structure:

1. the verb ‘ thank ‘ + object (a pronoun referring to the person offering help) + adv. P. (usually very (so) much.
2. I + adv + V + obj. (NP): I really appreciate your help.
3. NP —————> modifier + (N-plural): Many thanks.
4. N (PL) + a word expressing affection: Thanks, love!
5. Thanks + a comment: Thanks, you've saved my neck.
6. Thanks + NP which functions as an adverbial: Thanks a million.

a lot for trying at least.



I declare the establishment of the state of Palestine.  
I declare Palestine a State. (Uttered by President Arafat)  
An active simple present tense has been used.

(2) *yahallu-l-barlamān*

Is dissolved the parliament.  
The Parliament is dissolved.  
(Simple Present Passive)

2. Perfect:

- *zawwajtuka ibnati*

I married you daughter-my.  
I married you my daughter.  
(I marry you my daughter).  
or (I give you my daughter's hand in marriage)

- *bi<sup>3</sup>tuka sayyarati*

I sold you car-my.  
I sold you my car.  
(I sell you my car)

3. Imperative:

- *iðhabū fa'antum a-ṭ- ṭulaqā'.*

Go-you, you free.

Go, you are free.

(was uttered by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) when he freed captives, once his enemies, after conquering Mecca).

- *liyutlaq sarahu-s-sujanā'*

Let release freedom of prisoners.  
Let prisoners be released.  
(I order prisoners be released)  
(uttered by a king/president of a state)

4. Nominal Clauses:

- *'anti ṭāliq* (You divorcee)

You are divorced  
(uttered by a Muslim husband to his wife to divorce her)

- *'anta mafusulun mina-l-<sup>3</sup>amal*

You dismissed from the work (job).  
You are dismissed from your job.  
(You are fired from your job)  
(uttered by an employer, a boss or a manager)

*Arabic declaratory or performative acts:*

The focus here is on colloquial expressions of promising or pledges. But for the sake of contrast, some examples of formal commissives will be discussed.

1. Formal Commissives:

- *sawfa 'azūruka*

Will I visit you  
(I will visit you)

No performative verb. Will + V constitute the promise, same as in implicit or indirect commissives.

- *'a<sup>3</sup>iduka biḏālik*

I promise you with that.  
(I promise to do (that))  
(Here an explicit performative verb is used in the simple present tense, same as in English).

- *wa-Allah-i la 'ahḏuranna*

by Allah emphatic particle I come + emphatic particle.  
(I will certainly come).  
(Three emphatics are used: a solemn oath + emphatic particle (L) prefixed to the verb (come) + emphatic “anna” suffixed to the same verb.

- *la-ka <sup>3</sup>alayya 'an 'abḏula juhdi.*

For you on me to exert effort – my  
(I promise you to do my best)  
Structure: PP + PP + Particle + simple present + Obj.

- *'i<sup>3</sup>tabir ḏālika 'amran mulziman lī*

Consider (you) that a matter binding to me.  
(illocutionary force: I commit myself to this matter)  
Structure : (imperative + clause)

2. Informal (colloquial) Commissives:

- <sup>3</sup>ala 'eini w <sup>3</sup>ala rāsi

On my eyes and on my head  
( I promise) or (With pleasure!)  
Structure : PP and PP (no subject + no verb)

This expression denotes emphasis and strong commitment. The body parts mentioned in the two prepositional phrases are two of the most important organ's of one's body. The connotation is that the speaker strongly, solemnly and respectfully commits himself to keep his promise.

Similarly is the following expression:

- min-l-<sup>3</sup>ein hāy la-l-<sup>3</sup>ein hāy

From this eye to this eye.

This is uttered with the speaker's finger pointing to each eye. The implication is that the request (the thing wanted by the hearer (interlocutor)) will be granted or done, and that the speaker will not be able to look the hearer in the eye if he (speaker) does not keep his promise.

Structure : (PP + PP)

- <sup>3</sup>ala ha-l-kašim

On this nose.  
(I promise)

Again a body part is referred to make a promise. In Arabic, the nose as a body part connotes honour and pride; therefore, when someone makes a promise touching his nose with his finger, his promise is to be taken very seriously. Hence, we find an Arab who says:

*Qawmun humu-l- 'anfu wa-l- 'aḏnābu gayruhumu      wa man yusawwi bi 'anfi-n-nāqati-ḏ-  
ḏanabā*

(My) People are the nose; others are the tails. Who equalizes the she-camel's head with the tail?

Structure : (PP → P + NP)

- 'amrak ya sīdi

Your order master – my.  
Your order my master.  
(I promise to grant your request)

This promise is made to someone who enjoys high respect for being a dignitary or a close friend.

Structure : Nominal clause → GP + vocative

- wa law ! 'ana mahsū bak

a particle of exclamation I am yours.

(I promise, with pleasure !)

This is also a promise made to someone who is thought of highly by the speaker making the promise.

Structure : Exclamatory particle + nominal clause.

- 'ayy *kaṭa* ' *raji<sup>3</sup>nī*

If you find any defect, I am responsible.

This is said during a transactional exchange. It is a pledge made by the speaker to emphasize the good quality of his services (goods) and that he will be responsible for any defect discovered when the consignment is delivered to the hearer.

Structure : Conditional sentence (utterance)

- *rah* *yiwasalak* *Lahad* *indak*

Will reach you to your place.

It will reach you to your place.

(It will be delivered direct to you)

This is an implicit promise: future tense.

- 'ana *mahsub* *šawārbak*

I am for your moustache.

(I promise)

This is another promise which refers to a bodypart i.e. the hearer's moustache. The reference connotes high respect, and, therefore, it will be taken as a solemn promise and commitment on the part of the speaker.

Structure : a declarative statement

- w *rahmit* ' *abūy fi trābu gir* ' *azūrkum*

And grace father-my in soil-his will I visit you.

(I swear on my father's grave to visit you)

This is a very solemn promise made by a swear on the speaker's father's grave to fulfill the visit to the hearer. The speaker cannot but do so.

Structure : (a swear (on something) + an emphatic word (*gir* which is equivalent to will)+ verb.

- *tawakkal* *ala Allah*

Depend on Allah

(Trust in God)



(I promise)

“ This is a promise which is made implicitly, but it denotes the speaker’s good intention to fulfill his promise using a religious expression. “

Structure: Imperative clause which has positive religious assurances.

*Informal expressions of gratitude in Arabic:*

El-Sayed (1990), as cited in Eli Hinkel (1994) points out that thanking and responses to it in Arabic culture are utilized as a way to establish closer social relationships. “Expressing thanks establishes social reciprocity and group belonging between the speaker and the addressee”. The following occasions or situations were selected as is the case with the English part of the study.

- Expressions of gratitude for a gift

- *šukran*

(Thank you)

- *šukran jazilan*

Thanks a lot.

Many thanks!

- *rabbna ydīmak fouq rāsi*

Allah-our keep you above (on) head-my

" May God protect you for me! "

This is uttered by wife to husband, or sister to brother in return for a gift, usually in a village or a rural area.

- *ykaθθir kirak ‘afdālak ʾalina kθīra*

Increase (Allah) bounty-your, favours-your on us many

(may Allah (God) increase your bounty; you always overwhelm us by your favours.)

This is uttered to someone who is superior to the speaker because the hearer repeatedly gives generously.

The following expression functions in the same way:

- *gamartna bkaramak w lutfak*

You overwhelmed us by your generosity and kindness.

- *min yadd ma nī<sup>3</sup>damhāš*

From a hand that we do not miss

May Allah save your hand.

(May Allah protect you for us)

(very often said by a mother to son; or sister to brother)

- *Allah ywassī<sup>3</sup>ha <sup>3</sup>alik*

Allah enlarge it upon you.

" May Allah give you more and more! "

(Very often said by a needy person when offered a gift or charity from a friend or a relative).

- Expressions of gratitude when receiving favours, assistance or help:

- *hāḏa ma<sup>3</sup>rūf ma bansā tū l <sup>3</sup>umri*

This is a favour that I will never forget all my life.

(This is said when someone does a great favour to the speaker)

- *yislamu 'idik, gallabtak ma<sup>3</sup>āy*

Save hands- yours, bothered I you with me

May Allah save your hands; I have bothered you.

(said when someone gives a hand to someone else (the speaker), usually said by a female)

- *ykiff <sup>3</sup>annak šarraha*

Drive away (Allah) from you evil-its.

May (Allah) protect you against its evil (the fire).

This is said when the speaker gets his cigarette lit by the hearer.

Usually the hearer reciprocates by saying.

- *wa la tqāsi harrha*

You no suffer heat – its.

(May you never suffer its burns)

- *Allah yiqaf ma<sup>3</sup>ak*

Allah stand with you.

May Allah be with you.

(May Allah (God) help you)

(Usually said by a female)

- *Allah yirda<sup>3</sup>alik w yihmīk*

Allah be pleased on you and protect you.

(May Allah be pleased with you and protect you!)

(Usually said by a female)

- *Allah yib<sup>3</sup>id a z-zālmīn<sup>3</sup>annak*

Allah drive away oppressors from you.

(May Allah keep oppressors away from you)

(Usually said by a female)

- *Allah yinišlak min kull dīq wa yij'allak fi kull tarīq sdīq*

Allah save you from every distress and make for you in every road a friend.

(May Allah save you from every distress and give you a good company wherever you go!)

(Usually said by a female in return for a big favour)

- *Allah ytawwil<sup>3</sup>ūmrak*

Allah extend your life-span

(May Allah let you live long!) (May you enjoy longevity!)

- *Yisqik min zamzam*

Drink you from zamzam

(May Allah enable you to drink from the water of Zamzam (at the Holy Mosque of Meccaa in Saudi Arabia). (said by the speaker when offered a drink of water)

Expressions of gratitude after a visit to ask after someone's health:

The most common expressions heard in our area and dialect are the ones in these exchanges:

Visitor to patient + when leaving: *biruh<sup>h</sup> aš – šarr in ša'a Allah*  
Go the evil, if Allah wills.  
Get better, Allah willing  
(May you get better soon)  
(Get better soon)

The patient usually reciprocates: *Allah la ywarrīk šarr*

May God not show you evil.  
(May Allah bestow health upon you)  
(May Allah protect you against evils)

Visitor when leaving: *mšafa wi m<sup>3</sup>āfa 'inša'a Allah*

May you recover, God willing!  
(May you recover soon!)

Patient reciprocates: *šukran, Allah yib<sup>3</sup>id-l-marad<sup>3</sup>annak*

Thanks, may Allah keep off disease from you.  
(Thanks! May you remain healthy and sound)

It is clear from most of the expressions of gratitude used by Palestinians in their daily interactions that the most frequent expressions used are of the supplicant form. This comes to confirm the findings of El-Zeini (2001: 172). These supplications include the mention of Allah (God), commonly at the beginning, or in an invocative expression at the end of the supplication. In case this mention is not explicit, it is implicitly understood. Usually, in addition, those supplications include a simple present tense.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

### ***Declaratory (Performative) Speech Acts***

Declaratory (performative) speech acts in English can have the following characteristics:

- a) Explicit performative in which there is a performative verb in the present tense (simple or progressive, active or passive. The subject can be first speaker (I, we) or an institution, a body, a group, a court ... etc, acting as the agent.
- b) There is no evidence of implicit declaratory acts, i.e. in which there is no preformative verb;
- c) A particle alone can be used (with the subject and verb ellipted);
- d) The adverb ‘ hereby ‘ is optionally inserted between the speaker and the verb in explicit performative acts;
- e) The emphatic ‘ do ‘ can be used with the performative verb, in which case it must precede the verb.

In contrast, Arabic declaratory (performative) speech acts are characterized by the following;

- a. Explicit performative verbs can be either simple present (imperfect) or simple past (perfect);
- b. Declaratory acts can come void of verbs, i.e. they can be nominal clauses which include no verbs at all;
- c. Subjects of explicit verbs are implicitly understood as ‘ I ‘ or ‘ we ‘;
- d. Declaratory acts can have explicit performative verbs in the passive form. It is understood that the speaker is the agent who has the authority or empowerment to do so, i.e. to perform the act.
- e. A particle alone does not function as a performative speech act in Arabic.

### **Commissives**

Commissives in English can be either explicit or implicit speech acts. In case of explicit speech acts a commissive verb (simple present or progressive, active or passive) is used. In implicit speech acts, we find (will + verb) instead of explicit verbs. An emphatic ‘do’ can precede the commissive verbs in English.

In Arabic, on the other hand, commissives vary in structure from a prepositional phrase, a nominal clause, a conditional clause to utterances which start with a performative verb as in English. The performative verb can be explicit (simple present) like 'a'id' (I promise), 'ata'ahhad (I pledge) or a future tense (with sawfa (will) + verb (will + verb). Sometimes the dividing line between commissives and assertives in Arabic tends to disappear, as in the following speech act laka 'alyy 'an 'aḏ ul juhdi (I promise to exert all effort) see this example above). Moreover, in Arabic commissives, there is reference to body-parts such as head, eye, nose, and neck, for these refer to and connote honour, pride and strong commitment.

In addition, double emphasis can be prefixed and suffixed to the performative verb as *la'ahduranna* ( I will certainly come), in which the emphatic *lām* (L) is prefixed to the verb, and the emphatic (*nnā*) is suffixed to the verb itself, but this is a case of a formal commissive speech act, which we do not hear in layman's daily interactions; even we can have the same example in a triple emphatic form in which the verb is preceded by the oath “ *wa-llāhi* (I swear by God).

### **Thanking**

Thanking as a speech act in English informal exchange, varies from one word to many. It can come as a plural noun alone (thanks!), or as a noun phrase (Many thanks, or a verb clause (Thank you) + an adverbial qualifier (so/very much). Sometimes, an expression of gratitude can be followed by a comment to acknowledge the importance or vitality of the hearer's effort, help, gift or favour.

In Arabic, however, the speech act of thanking in informal situations, i.e., in daily social interactions or transactions which occur in the colloquial dialect, we find completely different expressions than in English. In most cases, religious formulae are found which take the form of a supplication with an explicit mention of the name of Allah (God) at the beginning. In cases, where the name of Allah is not mentioned, it is implicitly understood or taken for granted, and can be recovered very easily.

In all cases of thanking, the expressions show politeness, acknowledge the hearer's help, favour or gift, and express deep indebtedness to him. In most cases as well, supplications are uttered with verbs after God's name. Thanking in colloquial Arabic expresses strong positive feelings and sentiments toward the addressee, and they are face threatening on the part of the speaker.

The data has shown that in informal or colloquial Arabic speech acts people rarely, if at all, use performative verbs. In fact, performative verbs more often than not, are used in the standard dialect (variety) of Arabic. They are used as such in formal situations, and as Stubbs (1983: 157) puts it, though not in connection with Arabic speech acts, “ At the very least they differ in style and emphasis. In other words, the actual use of explicit performative verbs depends on the formality of the context, on the emphasis expressed or on the functions of an utterance in denying a preceding utterance .”

To conclude, this paper has attempted to examine how both English and Arabic realize certain speech acts, mainly authoritative speech acts, promising and thanking. For the sake of the study, the researcher collected some data which consisted of declaratory speech acts, commissives, and thanking in both English and Arabic. As for speech acts of thanking, these were confined to informal expressions (expressions we hear in everyday social use of either language). But these have also been specified in terms of occasions on which they are used: receiving gifts, help, favours and showing interest in someone's health. Structures of speech acts were analyzed in a way that could serve the purpose of the study. Finally, a contrast (pointing out the differences) between English and Arabic was made.

Arabic dialects (colloquial, social and regional) are full of speech acts which have to be explored by researcher. It seems that this area is still fresh ground for research. Cross-cultural and pragmalinguistic characteristics of these speech acts contrasted with their counterparts in English are of paramount importance for sociolinguistic, contrastive, semantic and translation studies.

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## Appendix I

### Transliteration of Arabic Letters

#### A. Consonants

Arabic Letter	Symbol
ء	'
ب	b
ت	t
ث	<u>t</u>
ج	j
ح	h
خ	k
د	d
ذ	d
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	š
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	<u>t</u>
ظ	<u>z</u>
ع	<sup>3</sup>
غ	g
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
ه	h
و	w
ي	y

#### B. Vowels:

Short Vowels	Long Vowels
َ fatha a	ا ā
ُ damma u	و ū
ِ kasra i	ي ī

#### Abbreviations

Modern Standard Arabic	MSA
Arabic Genitive Construct	AGC
English Genitival Constructions	EGC
Compounding	COMP

## LEARNING DISTRACTIONS AND MISERIES THROUGH PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION IN ESL CLASSROOMS

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### ABSTRACT

Classroom observation is a significant part of educational measurement in teacher evaluation system across the country. The purpose of the study is to investigate the feeling and anxiety of learners in participant observation and what is expressed in the questioner's sheet. Our goal is to identify physical and emotional behaviors that are linked to students learning. We explored the effect of observation modes on inferences about the level or ranking of teaching in similar levels or in classrooms for one term. A qualitative research method is being employed in the study. Sampling is purposive in selecting the classes for observation and answering the questioner's and all the informants are aware of the effect feeling of an observing when they answer the questions. This topic is very specific and never mentioned in any previous study.

**KEY WORDS:** learning distractions, miseries, ESL classrooms

### INTRODUCTION

Classroom observations are useful exploratory strategies because human observations can intuitively discern the high level of behavior and make appropriate judgment on limited information that may be difficult to automatically be decided from raw sensor data.

Participant observation refers to a form of sociological research methodology in which the researcher takes on a role in the social situations under observation. Covert observation involves the researcher fully participating in the activities of the social group without informing them, thus the research is carried out secretly, and share in the lives and activities of those being studied by learning their language and interpreting their behavior (Becker, 1985).

The researcher could gain access into the group through contact with a gate keeper who would introduce him or her to the group. Overt participation on the other hand is when the researcher is open about the purpose of his presence and is given permission to perform this research by the person in the highest state of authority. Participant observation involves examining social behavior as it occurs rather than as it is reported through interviews and questionnaires (Encyclopedia).

Much has been written on the roles used by the participant observer (Adams & Preiss, 1960; Bryman & Burgess, 1999; Gans, 1999). Gold (1958) extended the idea of participant observation into four major roles: (1) the complete participant, (2) the participant as observer, (3) the observer as participant, and (4) the complete observer.

As mentioned in International Encyclopedia of the social science (2008); the *complete participant* rarely reveals that research is being conducted; however, in this circumstance it is difficult for the participant observer to pose questions. The *participant as observer* role involves researcher and researched being aware that their relationship stems from research activity. The *observer as participant* consists of the observer making the research purpose clear from the start of investigation. Finally, the *complete observer* role entirely removes the researcher from any form of participation so that the purposes of the research are not revealed. Major goal of observation in this study is to understand whether and how teacher's instructional practices changed overtime. Specifically to what extent teachers increased their use of instructional strategies that enhance students learning. We need to know how a teacher taught the materials in his/her style, approach, method and rapport with the students. We need to know how receptive the students were and what was going besides those things we expected.

Student's emotion toward learning can have a drastic effect on their learning experience. (Ivon Arroyo). Students evaluate the effective inferences agents on both affective and emotional outcomes. Previous projects have produced computational tutors that recognized and responded to models of emotion. Projects have tackled the sensing and modeling of emotion in learning and educational gaming environments. A dynamic decision network was used to measure student emotional state based on variable such as heart rate, skin conductance and eyebrow position. Studies have evaluated the impact of affective interface agents on both affective and motivational outcomes based factors (gender, ethnicity).Lack of engagement was shown empirically to correlate with a decrease in learning (Hoda Eydgahi).

Researchers can maximize their abilities to grasp motives, beliefs, customs and such. (Rothe, 1993) The most widely used procedure or research method has been the systematic classroom observation based on interactive coding system. That you can apply what you learn from observation to modify your program in order to adapt your environment and teaching strategies (Dr. Peter j. Dirr). There are different observation methods; checklist, inventories, internal rating, holistic rating, narrative descriptions, questionnaires, models, open ended questions.

### **ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION**

Bernard (1994) lists five reasons for including participant observation studies all of which increase the study's validity:

1. It makes it possible to collect different types of data. Being on a site over a time familiarizes the researcher to the community, thereby facilitating involvement in sensitive activities to which he/she generally would not be invited.
2. It reduces the incidence of reactivity" or people acting a certain way when they are aware of being observed.
3. It helps the researcher to develop questions that make sense in the native language or are culturally relevant.
4. It gives the researcher a better understanding of what is happening in the culture and lends credence to one's interpretations of the observation. Participant observation also enables the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data through surveys and interviews.
5. It is sometimes the only way to collect the right data for one's study.

However class observations cause problems for teachers and trainers;

-They tend to be judgmental, relying, on trainers subjective judgment rather than developing.

-Participant observation cause considerable stress and upset on part of instructor.

-Teachers don't like it; they think it is threatening, frightening.

-The checklist focused on too much at once.

-There was no continuity from the first to second observation and visits are not linked.

-As Barbara B. Kawalich (2005) illustrates, different researchers, understanding of what they observe based on representation of events and the subsequent of what occur.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Several problems have been identified when conducting participant observation. Researcher must always remember that they are located in a social setting for the purpose of social science. They are involved and detached. This will help them to overcome the risks of over identifying with other participants and "going native" in the setting by no longer questioning the actions and activities that are observed (Encyclopedia, 2008). The researcher needs to collect data that are reliable and valid (Shaffir & Stebbins, 1991). Ethical problems are also frequently raised for the researcher through being placed in a marginal role with the result that stress and anxiety have to be managed throughout a study. This is frequently the case in covert studies where the researcher is unable to take notes or to use a range of other methods of research and often violates principles of informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality (Burgess, 1989; Lauder, 2003). The participant observer therefore needs to manage the study by being aware of the problems encountered in the research process by engaging in critical self-reflection of the research experience (Bourdieu, 2003) and by bringing the study to a successful close.

It is evident that language learners at different stages have problem with observers. In one hand observation increase the amount of teacher new strategy usage. On the other hand it increases learner's anxiety decrease their concentration during the class. However numerous studies have been done on learner's anxiety and teacher's dissatisfaction; Marrian and Caffarella (1999, p.139), Edgar Schein, As Adler (1994, p.380), Johnson and Sackett (1998).

In contrast to previous studies we want to use this factor in qualitative method. In attempt to end this study duty to see how this element is perceived by the learners and to what extend it affects the student's concentration.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

\_Will the participant observation distract student's attention hence attending in classroom?

\_Will participant observation infer scores due to this model of observation?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants study design***

For the purpose of this research a purposive sampling is used, and to elaborate on details more, a qualitative study is used. Our participants Four classes in pre-intermediate and four in intermediate levels of Zabansara English Institute (120 students) where chosen purposively , to be able to speak English and answer perfectly, to be observed so later they can answer the interview questions in more details. Eight part time English educated teachers were selected because of their experience and knowledge in teaching English. The teaching team was informed about the TTC and observation would focus on TTC framework of the institute. Furthermore, the teachers were asked not to change their teaching behaviors during the observed classes.

### ***Instrument***

This study tries to understand students through their reaction to participant observer and by answering interview questions that is done after observation. The reason for this is to understand students real feeling by entering the observer into the classroom and its side effects on learning process. Because participant observation is one of the rules of evaluating the instructors obeying TTC framework of the institutes this observations are necessary, on the other hand If these observations are going to have a negative effect on learning process the supervisors must think of it and find a solution. Data for different students and teachers can be summed after the interviews.

### ***Procedure***

The observations for the study were done by the supervisor, who visited the classes twice a term, a total of 16 observations (20-30 minutes each) were recorded. This study is based on semi-structure in-depth interview from twenty four informants. The data are transcribed and the coded for analysis. In- depth interview is to receive adequate information besides to express their feeling, opinions, views, and thoughts. Meanwhile the researcher gets to the point rapidly and the vogue responses are made clear. In order to gain the validity, interview questions were examined by two PhD teaching English field and their comments were taken into account. The informants in the interview confirmed to transcribe comments of their own.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The observations revealed that usually all classes in different levels were somehow disturbed and confused by the entrance of the observer. But in higher level classes it was obvious that they adapted to the new environment more quickly than the lower levels. They found themselves and became calm after five minutes and try to concentrate on their study and to the instructor. In lower levels this adaptation took around 10-15 minutes and still they more concentrated on observer rather than their instructor. While speaking they just looked at observer, couldn't complete their sentences completely and they were somehow confused. Although higher level students were not so, and either they tried to do their best toward the participant observer.

The questionnaires' were analyzed in relation to the purpose of the study and to analyze data, comparative method is applied in this study. Dick (2005) highlighted that constant comparison is the heart of process qualitative research. The comparison was done between the ideas of informants and concepts as they emerged. Analysis of informants is as follow;

1. Describe your feeling about your English class.

First and foremost, all respondents state that they have a good feeling toward their English class. They like it first because they are enthusiastic in learning new subjects and usually they like their teachers that attracts them toward the class. Likewise, some as a sample stated that;

-I have good feeling to my English class and I like it very much.

-I really like it, it's enjoyable.

-All the classes in zabansara are perfect and I enjoy them.

-They are enjoyable and useful.

It is clear that every one of informants really have a good feeling toward their English class and enjoy it.

## 2. What you like best about your English class?

Most of the respondent's state that they like their teacher, either emotionally or technically.

-Being with good teacher like Mr. Firoozkoohi.

-My friend and my teacher, they are very important to me.

-My class is very good and my teacher makes me relax.

-Our teacher is very good.

On the other hand some of them said they like discussions and speaking parts in the class.

As a sample they some higher level students said;

-I feel very good and nice about free discussions.

-Free discussions; because I think it improve our speaking.

-Interesting discussions are the best part.

## 3. What disturbs you in your English class?

All of the respondents stated that nothing usually disturb them in their classroom.

-Nothing bothering me in the class.

-Nothing, but other class's noise and voice of the TV.

-Nothing, because I come here with love.

All of them clearly stated that no disturbance happened to them during their classroom and that can reveal that everything physically and emotionally is appropriate in the classroom and if there be a disturbance is very small.

## 4. Does the presence of your observer disturb you in your English class?

What we can see understand from the answers of the questionnaire's, we can see that most of the students have positive attitude to this question. That mean more or less they have stress by the presence of the observer in their classes. As some of them mentioned:

-I was stressful.

-So, so.

-Yes I have stress.

But in higher levels this disturbance conditions is reduced. And as the questionnaire's mentioned they have less stress or disturbance less than the lower levels, because they have more self confidence and can speak better than the lower levels.

Of course these students were few but usually they could speak English perfect. From these reactions we can conclude that one of the reasons of having stress during the presence of the



participant observer can be the amount of self concept or self confidence that the students have toward themselves.

5. What are the effects of the presence of observer on you and your classroom?

As we analyzed question four, lower level informants have been more disturbed than the higher level classes, and this is directly stated in this answers;

-I think class is better in these situations.

-Every student tries to become better.

-I try to speak correct.

They usually have stress and the effect of this stress can directly be on the student's concentration and learning process.

Stress can disrupt learning process and memory development (long term potentiating, LTP) as it forces the brain to revert to more primitive survival needs.

6. When you find yourself in stressful situations, do you primarily worry or do you actively seek a solution?

As we analyze the responses of the questionnaires, the higher levels usually stated that:

-When I find myself in stressful situations, I try to solve it.

-I try to seek a solution.

-I usually seek a solution because there isn't any problem that we cannot solve it.

Lower levels stated that:

-I get sad.

-When I have stress, I usually cry.

-I get confused.

Again we can conclude that the higher level students with higher self steam can with the problems better and earlier than the lower levels, so the presence of participant observer can have a more disturbance effect on the students who have lower self steam.

7. How your instructor does play a role your feeling when an observer comes to your classroom?

Most of the informant stated that they feel better when they have friendly instructors that could make them relax. Regarding to the first research question we can conclude that almost all the students who come to the institute usually like their English classes and they have good feeling toward them. THE best thing they like about their classes in the second question is that they first like their teachers and the class environment, and their goal is to speak better. By the third question, nothing special disturbs their concentration while they were in their classroom. In question number four we concluded that usually all the students have a kind of stress and anxiety when observer comes to the classroom, but in question five as we stated, higher level students were less disturbed although they have stress by the presence of the observer, moreover by question six we can see that they can adapt to the new environment sooner because they have higher self confidence.

## CONCLUSION

Although this study is a small scale study due to the limitations of time and number of informants and their short answers to the questions, it provides a glimpse into how students feel by the

entrance of participant observers into class environment. It is argued that this problem may originate from their self confidence, environment or teachers. Thus, finding of this study suggest further research on self concepts. Moreover, results show that great number of factors can affect the class disturbance but why participant observer has the most. Finally, it is worth mentioning that there is no mismatch between what is observed and gained by the observer during the class and what they wrote as the answers to their questionnaires sheet. It is hoped that adopting different research designs, efficient ways of observations be established to avoid the class distractions or learning disturbance.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study has some limitations related to sample of classrooms that may limit the generalization of findings. First the number of the level of the classes needed for observation. Second, though English is a critical course for long-term success, the generalizability of our results remains unknown. Third, the study use a single method of observation and so, how these findings can generalize to other protocols is not known.

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## THE EFFECT OF CONVERSATIONAL SHADOWING ON TEACHING AND LEARNING CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

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### ABSTRACT

As a matter of fact, conditional constructions easily replicate the human intelligent to anticipate various circumstances and to suppose consequences on the basis of known or imaginary conditions. The main purpose of the current study is to consider whether or not conversational shadowing has any impact on the acquisition of English conditional sentences. This study has pedagogical implications for English instructors aiming at educating learners. To fulfill the purpose of this study, 60 English learners at intermediate level from five intact classes in one language institute were chosen. The participants were homogenized in terms of their language proficiency by a standardized proficiency Nelson English test. The standardized proficiency pretest signified that the selected groups were unfamiliar with the target structures prior to the posttest. During the study, the experimental group metacognitively centralizing their attention to language form and meaning of conditional sentences by shadowing everything that their instructor says during interaction and communication. The paired sample t-test computed between the means of the pre-test and post-test showed that there was a statistically significant difference between the performances of the selected group on the post-test. Thus, the analysis of the students' answers in the post-test showed that conversational shadowing had positive impact on teaching and learning the conditional sentences.

**KEYWORDS:** conversational shadowing, pre-test, post-test, conditional sentences

### INTRODUCTION

There are so many languages used in the world, but people all over the world use English as the international language. Bloomfield (1995) noted that English, as the international language, is used in almost every country in the world. English is an essential language for every activity like trading, education or even in science and technology. On the other hand, Hall (1993) assumed that grammar is a description of certain organizing aspects of a particular language. Thus, for using English language, people should be familiar with grammar, as basic part of language, to communicate with each other and improve the ability in understanding many kinds of knowledge.

In view of the above, conditional sentences are one of the important parts of English grammar. Conditional sentences are often used to describe unreal situations, i.e., situations that are the

opposites of the fact. Conditionals are different from other structures as they have two clauses: a subordinate clause (if-clause or 'protasis'), which states the condition of reasoning and a main clause (or 'apodosis'), which features the outcome of inferences (Traugott et al., 1986). Conditional sentences, as intricate syntactic and semantic structure in the international language, have attracted the attention of a lot of language acquisition researchers. Second language learners are engaged in difficulties to produce, comprehend and imitate of this structure. By the way, second language scholars such as Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) reported that learners of English as a second language (ESL) have difficulties in acquiring English conditionals due to the syntactic and semantic complexities embedded in conditional constructions. In fact, Celce-Murcia, and Larsen-Freeman. (1999) cited a survey done by Covitt (1976), stating that conditional sentences ranked fifth among the serious teaching problems encountered by ESL teachers in the Los Angeles area. With all the problems associated with the difficulties of teaching and learning conditionals, this study, by considering that conversational shadowing is an important second language teaching method in the field of language teaching, mainly attempts to demonstrate the tangible its effect on learners' oral performance for using conditional sentences. According to Murphey (2001), shadowing is a technique in which learner wishing to learn a skill by selecting only certain words and phrases through communicate and interaction with another (mentor), while that person is employing their expertise on a value-producing assignment.

## **THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES**

Conditionals in English have been one of the focuses of study not only in linguistics but also in psychology and philosophy. In linguistics, it has been analyzed from different perspectives, for example, functional grammar (Dik, 1990; Cuvalay, 1996), and semantic and pragmatic analysis (Beck, 1997; Fintel, 1997). There has been a lack of agreement over the meanings and uses of conditionals (Werth, 1992).

Among the most difficult grammatical structures for ESL learners, conditionals stand fifth after articles, prepositions, phrasal verbs, and verbals (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman 1999). Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) cite a survey conducted by Covitt (1976) that found conditionals ranked fifth (behind articles, prepositions, phrasal verbs, and verbals) among the most serious teaching problems encountered by ESL teachers in the Los Angeles area. The main difficulties lie in the following aspects:

- a. Form
- b. Meaning
- c. Oversimplified explanations
- d. Time-tense relationships

The learners usually find problems with form and meaning. The form causes problems because conditional sentences consist of two clauses (i.e., if and result clauses), which can switch places. The if-clause (If-C) is the antecedent, in which the speaker states the condition of reasoning, and the then-clause (result-C) is the consequent in which the speaker states the outcome of inferences (Traugott et al., 1986:5). English conditional sentences can be divided into sentences of real conditions and sentences of unreal conditions. The real conditionals can be further divided into those that express some type of factual relationship and those that present a predictive relationship. The unreal conditionals are used to express extremely unlikely or hypothetical situations and situations that are assumed to be contrary to known facts or counterfactual (Zhang, 2005).

The conditional or rather the dependent clause can start with words such as *if, unless, provided (that), providing (that), even though, even if, whether or not, as long as*, and *on condition that*. Conditional sentences directly reflect the language user's ability to reason about alternatives, uncertainties, and unrealized contingencies. An understanding of the conceptual and behavioral organization involved in the construction and interpretation of these kinds of sentences provides fundamental insights into the inferential strategies and the cognitive and linguistic processes of human beings. (Traugott, 2009) Conditional sentences, which are used for a variety discourse functions, from cognitively and linguistically dimensions are intricate structures make big problems for teachers and learners. Until now, much research has been down on conditionals but it is not easy to suggest how conditional sentences should be taught practically. This part of the paper has an attempt to consider previous researches that have been done about difficulties inherent in the teaching and learning of conditionals.

Conditional sentences are common syntactic configurations, which express causal relationships, potentialities, possibilities, and evidence relationships in discourse concerned with explanation and argumentation. In English, a conditional sentence is often expressed in the form of 'If A, then C.' (Li, 1995). The typical English conditional construction is *if p, then q*. The *if*-clause is the *antecedent*, in which the speaker states the condition of reasoning and the *then*-clause is the *consequent* in which a speaker states the outcome of inferences (Traugott, as cited in Chou, 2000). The word *then* can be omitted without distorting the meaning of a conditional sentence.

There are four main conditional types that they differ distinctly from each other with respect to their time reference (present, past and future) and in relation with the actual world (factual, possible and counterfactual). It should be mentioned that each type of conditionals is functionally distinctive and distinguishable. The Present Factual expresses a true and unchanging relationship that is not bounded in time. A Future Predictive expresses future plans or contingencies. Present and Past Counterfactuals refer to impossibilities with reference to the present or the past (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999).

Norris (2003) assumed that verb forms in conditional sentences often do not retain their normal references to time (p.43). Consider these examples:

- (a) If it rains, we will stay at home.  
(Future reference: it is only a prediction)
- (b) If it rained, we would cancel the game.  
(Present reference: But it is not raining / Future reference: Raining is not strongly negated; there is still a chance that it will rain.)
- (c) If it was / were to rain, we would have to go inside.  
(Future reference: But it is highly unlikely that it is going to rain.)
- (d) If it had rained, they would all have got wet.  
(Past reference: But it did not rain, so they did not get wet.)

Maule (1988) believes the simplistic approach of introducing only type 1, 2, and 3 conditionals does more harm than good. If students are taught only a few simplified forms, they will be



unequipped to encounter or express the variety of forms that exist in the English language. Ur (1989), in reply to Maule's (1988) article, says that she teaches the traditional three types because although they do form the minority in actual usage, they do "occur frequently enough to be considered useful" and because "they are difficult." Consequently, this study attempts to consider fundamental types of conditional sentences as below:

*Zero Conditional:* This conditional form is used to describe universal statements like facts, rules and certainties. In a zero conditional, both the condition and consequent clauses are in the simple present tense. An example of such sentences is: *If you heat water, it boils.*

*First Conditional:* Conditional sentences of this type are also called potential or indicative conditionals. They are used to express a hypothetical situation that is probably true, but the truth of which is unverified. In the first conditional, the condition is in the simple present tense, and the consequent can be either in past tense or present tense, usually with a modal auxiliary verb preceding the main verb, e.g., *If the acceleration is good, I will buy it.*

*Second Conditional:* This is usually used to describe less probable situations, for stating preferences and imaginary events. The condition clause of a second conditional sentence is in the past subjunctive (past tense), and the consequent clause contains a conditional verb modifier (like *would, should, might*), in addition to the main verb, e.g., *If the cell phone was robust, I would consider buying it.*

*Third conditional:* This is usually used to describe contrary-to-fact (impossible) past events. The past perfect tense is used in the condition clause, and the consequent clause is in the present perfect tense, e.g., *If I had bought the a767, I would have hated it.*

By the way, Ur (1989) explains that the conditional type 1 is not just non-past: the present tense after 'If' actually refers to the future and the past form in type 2 refers to unreal present or at least non-past time, and finally type 3 deals with past time. The students need to know about the oddities of these particular types of conditionals. Present factual and future predictive (conditionals zero and one conditionals) take fewer grammatical features than present counterfactual and past counterfactual (two and three conditionals). Apart from the various conditional forms, the second language learners have problems with the time-tense relationship with if-clause and main-clause. In a study, Covitt (as cited in Norris, 2003) proved that oversimplified explanations, form, meaning, and time-tense relationship are the serious problems relevant to learning the conditional sentences.

Likewise, Nayef and Hajjaj (1997) summarize three points in teaching conditionals: "forms of the verbs, the time reference of the verbs, and the meaning of the condition in each of the patterns"(p.140). They assert that in conditional sentences the agreement of the forms of the two verbs in the two clauses is the source of difficulty for the learners.

According to the study conducted by Ford and Thompson (1986), if-clauses account for nearly 80% of conditional sentences in their corpora, encompassing four functions in both oral and written discourses: offering options for future follow-up activities, introducing contrasts, providing examples for generalizations and making inferences. As social functions, initial if-clauses can also be used to give directives, speak humorously and sarcastically, and offer apologies, commands, advice, and instructions (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). In spoken discourse, Ford (1997) examined conditionals and their functions based on 55 conditionals

from casual conversations of adult native speakers of English, coming up with several social discourse functions of conditionals:

1. Initial If-clauses may connect a comment to the statements said earlier, so it plays a connective role.
2. Conditionals introduce new understanding to the previously spoken stuff which focused on a single idea.
3. If-clauses usually moderate the tone of the message, moving it away from disagreement toward being less confrontational by using softening hypothetical information.
4. If-clauses usually express requests and suggestions rather than commands. They can be used after directives, proposals and offers to bring about effective actions. Conditional sentences can also express desirability. According to Mayes's (1994), findings, conditionals help us explore the relationship between language and the human mind reflecting the psychological thoughts and the state of the speaker (e.g., sorrow, regret, disbelief, cynicism).

Berent (1985) worked on the order of acquisition of conditionals to predict learners' difficulties. Two experiments were conducted to compare the production and comprehension of real, unreal, and past unreal (i.e., types 1, 2 and 3) conditional sentences for 55 advanced and low-advanced adult ESL learners. The findings showed that despite the complexity of structure in type 3, the learners had less difficulty in comprehension than in production.

Therefore, these theoretical and methodological problems show that instructors and learners are confronted with a problem in how to teach and learn conditionals properly and practicality. Thus, this intent study aims to reflect the efficiency of conversational shadowing in learning and teaching conditional sentences. In fact, Shadowing defines as the act or task of listening in which the learner tracks heard speech and vocalize it as clearly as possible, while listening attentively to the incoming information (Tamai, 1997). Learners repeat what they hear after a brief time to shadow and monitor what they shadow simultaneously. This process engages not only the language areas but various other large portions of listener's brain (Kadota, 2007). Shadowing trains the rehearsing process, allowing them to hold the phonological information longer in the phonological loop (Kadota, 2007).

The effectiveness of shadowing in classrooms has been investigated throughout the field on second language acquisition (Kuramoto & Matsuura, 2002), Lambert (1992), Murphey (2001), Mochizuki (2006), Toda and Liu (2007), Tamai, (1992, 1997, 2001, 2005), Suzuki (2007). For example, Tamai (1997) compared shadowing and dictation, and concluded shadowing improved learners' listening proficiency faster than dictation.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

-To what extent does teaching through conversational shadowing improve the language learners' performance in term of using conditional sentences?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

The participants of this study were 60 English learners from five intact classes in one language institute whose English knowledge was determined to be at the intermediate level based on the placement test given to them by the institute. However, in order to make sure that the participants were at the intermediate level prior to the main data collection, a Nelson proficiency test was given to them. After the scores were obtained, 30 Of them whose scores were one standard deviation above or below the mean were selected as intermediate level.

### ***Instrument***

The first instrument of this study was a proficiency test that was used to confirm that there was no significant difference between the language knowledge of the selected group as participants. The designed test consisted of three sections: grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension questions (10 multiple choice items in each section). Before administrating the proficiency designed test, it was piloted with another group of learners in another language institute to assure its reliability ( $r = 0.80$ ).

The second instrument was a 30-item proficiency test in the form of multiple-choice questions was used to check the learners' knowledge of the use of English conditional sentences, which was administered to the participants after the treatment. It worth mentioning that an item analysis was done and some items were modified, deleted, or replaced by some new ones. Its face and content validity was proven through the expert opinion of the supervisor and English instructors and for ensuring that the post-test is reliable, we used Cronbach's Alpha reliability that its reliability was significantly high and equaled to 0.88.

### ***Procedure***

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following processes were done:

#### ***Pre test***

In order to check the homogeneity of the selected group as participants of this study a proficiency test (Nelson) was administered and the results showed that participants were homogeneous in terms of their language proficiency.

#### ***Treatment***

Based on conversational shadowing as teaching method, a lot of conversations in the form of English conditionals were taught in the classroom context. In fact, conversational shadowing makes an opportunity for learners by exposing to a lot of conversations as ESL context and engaging them actively in conversation. Interactive shadowing, which includes selective shadowing, adds questions and comments from the listener into the conversation making it more natural and showing more involvement on the part of the listener (Murphey, 2001).

#### ***Post test***

When the treatment was over, a proficiency test was administered to assess the participants' knowledge on the four types of conditional sentences. The purpose was to examine whether there has been any significant difference in the scores of the learners after the treatment.

## **RESULTS**

The Nelson test, pre- and post-test were piloted for four types of conditional sentences in order to reflect the purpose of this paper, which is to investigate the effect of conversational shadowing on enhancing learner oral performance in terms of the use of conditionals.

In order to ensure the reliability of the pre-test and post-test, we used Cronbach's Alpha reliability. According this test, pre-test reliability was 0.80 and post-test reliability was 0.88, which highly significant.

*Table1: Reliability Statistics (pre-test)*

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.806	30

*Table2: Reliability Statistics*

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.881	30

The process of data analysis began with analyzing the data obtained from pre and post-tests. A paired sample t-test was run to compare the scores on pre-zero conditional to post-zero conditional session in order to show the efficiency use of conversational shadowing on teaching conditionals. As displayed in Table 3 the mean scores for pre-test and post-test of conditionals through conversational shadowing are 3.60 and 4.87 respectively but their correlation is .006 and low.

*Table3: Paired Samples Statistics*

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-zero conditional	3.60	30	1.545	.282
	Post-zero conditional	4.87	30	1.525	.278

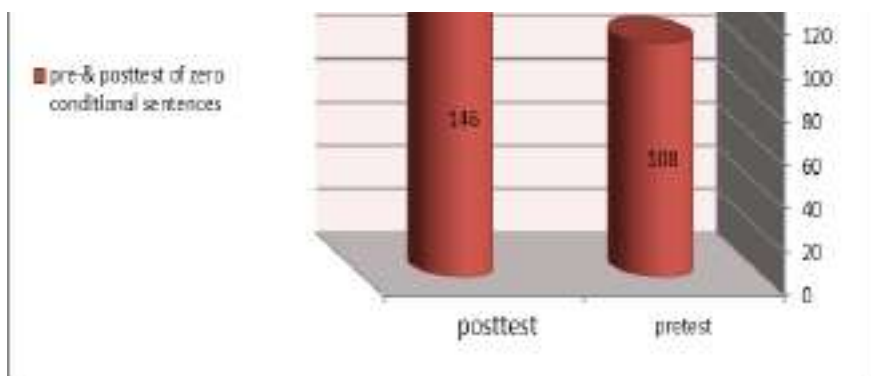
*Table4: Paired Samples Correlations*

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Pre zero conditional & Post zero conditional	30	.006	.976

The results of the paired sample t-test of zero-conditional (T-value= 3.205, P-value= .003<.05) revealed a significant difference from pre-zero conditional to post-zero conditional session. Thus, it can be concluded that the conversational shadowing method has positive impact on teaching and learning zero-conditional.

**Table5. Paired Samples Test**

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre zero conditional - Post zero conditional	-1.267	2.164	.395	-2.075	-.458	-3.205	29	.003



*Figure1: The comparison between pre- & posttest of zero-conditional sentences*

For answering the research questions raised before, data were analyzed and the following tables were elicited. From Table 7, paired sample t-test revealed a significant difference from pre-first conditional to post-first conditional session, where T-value=2.188 and P-value=.009<.05). In table 8 we showed mean of pre-test (=5.73) and post-test (=4.50). Their correlation is .284.

It should be mentioned that the comparison between pre- & posttest of first conditional sentences shows the efficiency of conversational shadowing method on teaching and learning conditionals.

*Table 6: Paired Samples Statistics*

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 2	Pre-first conditional	4.50	30	2.097	.383
	Post-first conditional	5.73	30	1.911	.349

Table 7: Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 2	Pre-first conditional & Post first conditional	30	.284	.128

Table 8: Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences							
				Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Mean	Lower			
Pair 2	Pre-first conditional - Post-first conditional	-1.233	2.402	.439	-2.130	-.336	-2.812	29	.009

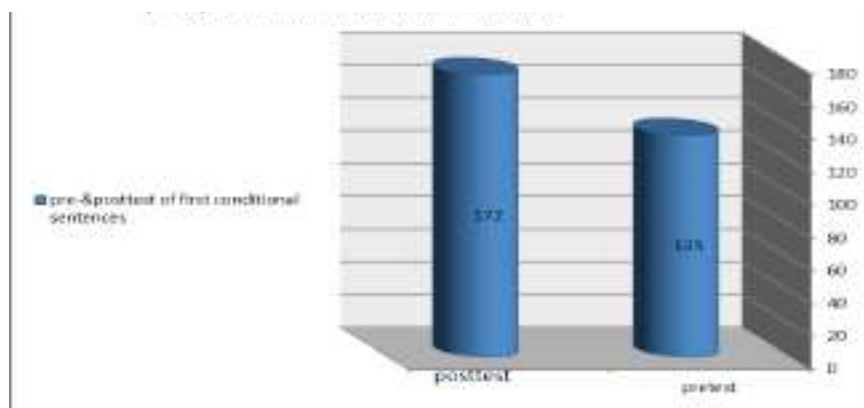


Figure 2: The comparison between pre- & posttest of first conditional sentences

In order to answer the research question raised before, data were analyzed and the following tables were elicited. From Table 11, paired sample t-test revealed a significant difference from pre-second conditional to post-second conditional session, where T-value=5.253 and P-value=.028<.05. In table 9 we showed mean of pretest (=6.50) and post-test (=4.57). Their correlation is .401.



Table 9: Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 3	Pre- second conditional	4.57	30	1.977	.361
	Post-second conditional	6.50	30	1.676	.306

Table 10: Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 3	Pre-second conditional & Post-second conditional	30	.401	.028

Table 11: Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 3	Pre- second conditional Post-second conditional	-1.933	2.016	.368	-2.686	-1.181	-5.253	29	.000

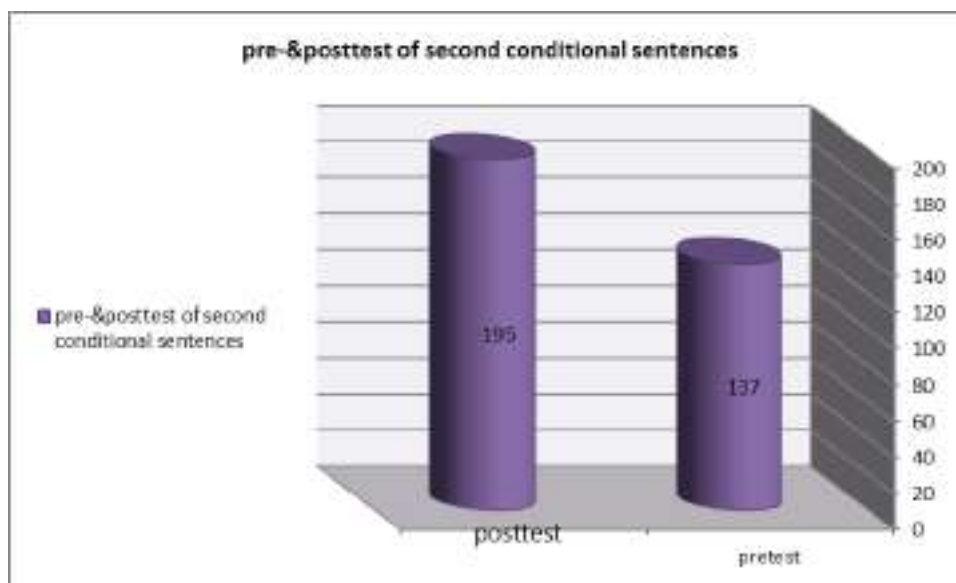


Figure 3: The comparison between pre- &amp; posttest of second conditional sentences

From Table 13, paired sample t-test reveal a significant difference from pre-third conditional to post-third conditional session, because T-value=1.233 and P-value=.231(>.05). In table 11 we showed mean of pretest (=5.20) and posttest (=4.70). Their correlation is .081.

Table 12: Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 4	Pre third conditional	4.70	30	1.878	.343
	Post third conditional	5.20	30	1.972	.360

Table 13: Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 4	Pre third conditional & Post third conditional	30	.324	.081

Table 14: Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	d	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 4	third conditional- post third conditional	-.500	2.240	.409	-1.336	.336	-1.223	29	.231

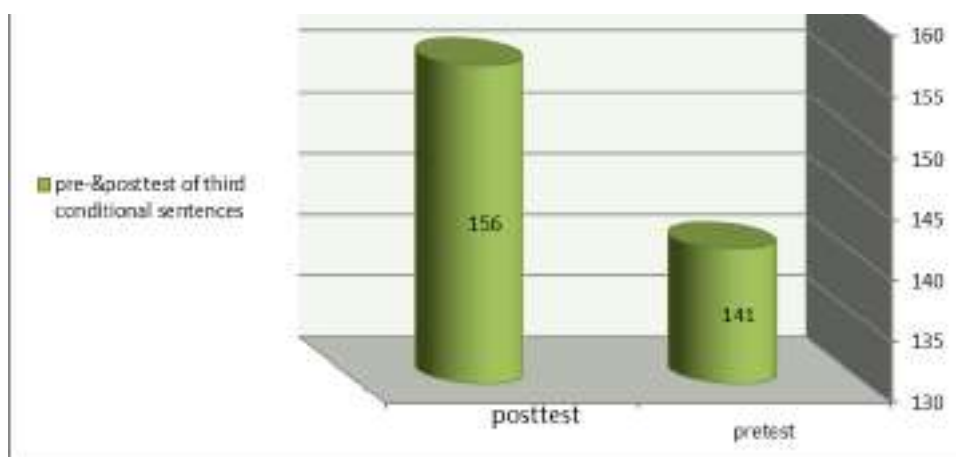


Figure 4: The comparison between pre- & posttest of third conditional sentences

## DISCUSSION

As it can be deduced from the above-mentioned data, the post-test group which was being taught four type conditional sentences through using conversational shadowing has performed better. Thus, it can be concluded that the treatment (taught through conversational shadowing) was effective method. The finding of the study answered the research questions by improving conversational shadowing in teaching and learning procedure. In fact, conversational shadowing make sufficient environment in which learners exposed to the different types of conditional sentences as ESL contexts where English is spoken as the media of daily communication or education. All the details related to the results of pre-test and post-test proved the effectiveness using conversational shadowing in teaching and learning.

## CONCLUSION

This paper, by elaborating the impede issues involved in the teaching and learning English conditionals, was provided to consider that conversational shadowing as an method has positive effect on enhancing learners' oral performance in terms of the use of relative clause. The results reflected an insight that conversational shadowing supports learning of learners. The findings provided some pedagogical implications for teaching conditionals in developing and improving conversational shadowing. In real, conversational shadowing, as an important second language teaching method in the field of language teaching has tangible effect on learners' performance by engaging them in their own learning.

## LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Like any other research, this study may be confronted with some unavoidable limitations:

- 1-Regarding to limitation of time, the current study was performed during a semester
- 2-The findings of this study cannot be generalized to other groups due to the small sample size
- 3-Affective independent variables such as age and personal variables are not taken into account due to the limited number of the available participants
- 4-Limited this study to learners from intermediate level of education and to only one English structure

It would be worthwhile to replicate this study with bigger sample of participants include learners from different levels of education and from different social groups with longer-term research design for improving external validity and generalizability of this research.

This study only investigated the impact of conversational shadowing on oral performance of conditional sentences therefore; other studies can focus on the impacts of conversational shadowing on other skills including listening, reading and writing and other English structures.

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## THE OBSTACLES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF WEB-BASED TRAINING IN THE AGRICULTURAL HIGHER EDUCATION: FACULTY MEMBERS' PERSPECTIVE

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### ABSTRACT

Recently, higher education systems seek to use network-based and Internet-based information technologies in education, teaching and learning. This type of education is presented through electronic means such as the Internet, intranet, extranet, and hypertext. Although e-learning has been increasingly accepted in developed countries, in developing countries there are still many obstacles for web-based training. E-learning in Iran higher education system has been started since 2003, however, its development has been very slow. The present study is a survey research. The participants of the study are faculty members, graduates and PhD students in Agriculture in Bu Ali Sina University. Total number of participants were analyzed. The accuracy of indicators and items in the questionnaire (Face Validity) has been confirmed by specialists. A questionnaire was used to collect data. Reliability was calculated by using Cronbach Alpha. In this study, Factor analysis is used to achieve the key factors. The results show that deficiency of executives, Lack of learners' motivation, infrastructural barriers, restriction of credit, and software and hardware limitations are the main problems in the development of web-based training. At the end of the article, some recommendations are presented aiming to accelerate electronic training in Iran's higher education system.

**KEY WORDS:** Higher Education, Faculty of Agriculture, E-Learning, Web, Iran

### INTRODUCTION

Electronic learning, another term for distance learning, is any learning system where teaching behaviors are separated from learning behaviors. The learner works alone or in a group, whom is guided by study material arranged by the instructor in a location apart from students. Students have the opportunity to communicate with an instructor with the aid of a range of media (such as text, telephone, audio, video, computing and Internet technology, etc). Electronic learning may be



combined with various forms of face-to-face meetings.

These guidelines define distance learning as all learning situations where learners and instructors are not together as they would be in a traditional setting. Thus, distance learning can occur in many configurations. It can be synchronous (instruction delivered and received simultaneously), or it may be asynchronous (instruction delivered and received at different times). Students may receive distance learning privately, or they may gather in groups/classes to receive it.

Electronic learning, also is named distance learning, has become a pervasive and growing phenomenon. Innovative uses of technologies create more effective techniques to distribute learning in non-traditional ways. As a result, new organizational structures and learning arrangements are appearing throughout higher education. Many traditional institutions have added distance learning programs. Educators are forming new institutions that deliver distance learning exclusively. Academic institutions and corporations are combining resources to bring electronic learning to workplaces. Academic institutions are pooling course offerings through distance learning so students have opportunities to create a degree program that uses course offerings from multiple schools. All of these emerging delivery structures bring questions about the quality of the education being delivered.

Arbaugh (2002) defined e-learning as the use of the Internet by users to learn specific content. Other researchers define e-learning as using modern Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and computers to deliver instruction, information, and learning content (Selim, 2007). The stakeholders of e-learning are learners, faculty, administrative and technical staff, and employers (Ozkan & Koseler, 2009).

These guidelines highlight quality issues specific to distance learning. Since electronic learning has become more prevalent, it is difficult to distinguish it from campus-based learning. Remote access to learning materials, databases and libraries, electronic communication, computer-connected workgroups, archived lectures, and other features of distance learning increasingly are used in campus-based instruction.

E-learning efforts and experiments currently receive much attention across the globe. The availability of electronic and web-enabling technologies also dramatically influences the way we view the learning strategies of the future (Kramer, 2000; Hitz, 1995).

Accordingly, the Educational Management Information System and simulated period are all aspects of electronic learning. So, the most comprehensive definition of e-learning can be provided is: The use of information technology to manage, design, present, select, communicate, navigate, guide, support and develop learning (Beneke, 2001). E-learning is any targeted web-based technology program to teaching people by which we can learn any interesting thing anytime and anywhere. E-learning is the confluence of distance education, computer-based training and Internet technologies. Since 1998 that Web Pages Show was developed, this type of training improved much (Beneke, 2001).

The existing face-to-face learning paradigm is no longer the only educational paradigm due to the advent of e-learning that makes it possible to receive education without being restricted by time and space (Hyeoncheol & Injin, 2007). Inoue (2007) indicates that “isolation and disconnectedness in the online environment may be to blame for student dropout, as well as the feeling of isolation that may lead to loss of motivation to learn” (cited from Doris, Supawan, &

Greater numbers of students on traditional campuses encounter and choose non-traditional learning methods. "Technology-delivered education" often describes learning on today's campus, as well as distance learning. Therefore, many of those issues are relevant for technology-delivered education of all sorts, whether or not it is distance learning.

When examining the literature at the intersection of teaching and learning with information and communication technology (ICTs), one is struck by the relative lack of focus upon the potential problems and drawbacks of the incorporation of technology into educational work-life (i.e. Granger, Morbey, Lotherington, Owston, & Wideman, 2002; Hassini, 2006; Liaw, Huang, & Chen, 2007; Marbach-Ad & Sokolove, 2001; Marbach-Ad & Sokolove, 2002; Mazzolini & Maddison, 2007; Ruthven, Hennessy, & Deaney, 2005).

Virtual education system is not limited to any specified courses, expertise, time and age and due to extent of their activity can activate training in all stages and levels. This is why it is not limited by space and time and can invited all those interested in learning to the options easier than ever in education, public institutions, universities and industry. This type of training has been welcomed not only in formal education, but also in all institutions requiring education (Mayer, 2005).

Information technology has created new opportunities for education. More than 1000 institutions in 50 countries provide e-learning options (Sharma & Kitchens, 2004). E-learning is a useful tool for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. E-learning is an "innovative approach to education delivery via electronic forms of information that enhance the learner's knowledge, skills, or other performance" (Siritongthaworn, Krairit, Dimmitt, & Paul, 2006, p. 139).

E-learning is raised as an alternative way to enhance the traditional training approach and in this learning type more varied experiences are given to students and more teaching facilities are provided for faculty members (Wilson, 2003). For the past few years, there has been a growing understanding of the important role of information and communication technologies (ICT) in higher education. Various new models of education are evolving in response to the new opportunities that are becoming available by integrating Web-based technologies (Barak & Rafaeli, 2004; Light, Nesbitt, Light, & White, 2000; Ward & Newlands, 1998). Though Web-based technologies are considered to be commonly used for educational purposes, the transition from traditional teaching to ICT-enhanced environments is not obvious and ought to be further investigated.

Electronic learning is as an individual patient education in which learners are able to achieve educational goals due to their talents. In fact, they learn how to learn that one of its educational goals (Hewitt-Taylor, 2003). E-learning should be considered as a method for providing more flexible learning and creating more opportunities for students which facilitates tracking progress for learners and their activities and it can provide an opportunity creating new effective learning environments (Yaghoubi, 1391).

ICT can serve as a tools for designing new learning environments (Donovan & Nakhleh, 2001),

integrating virtual models (Dori, Barak, & Adir, 2003), and creating learning communities (Gordin, Gomez, Pea, & Fishman, 1997; Rafaeli, Barak, Dan-Gur, & Toch, 2004). However, not all teachers are convinced that ICT should be an integral part of their teaching strategies (Galanouli, Murphy, & Gardner, 2004). Galanouli et al. (2004) declared that resisting change is a state of mind for many teachers and one of the most difficult barriers for effective ICT integration.

Because enabling technologies present many opportunities as well as challenges in the realizing of e-learning, it is imperative that educators and institutions planning to embark on the development of e-learning systems, have a clear and accurate understanding of the capabilities, limitations and influences of these technologies (Cloete, 2000). Creative approaches and competent strategies to manage these limitations at the instructional design, the user levels as well as integration to other systems, need to be established and understood in order to ensure a degree of quality comparable to that of traditional learning. Without the integration of well-established methods and techniques, many of the e-learning efforts may be futile, leaving frustrated facilitators and badly educated students in their wake (Cloete, 1999).

The expansion of e-learning products is one of the fastest growing areas of education since it allows cutting down the costs and it improves the cost-effectiveness of education (Gilbert, Morton, & Rowley, 2007). Despite the proliferation of papers into distance learning in the last past decade, most research has considered technical, financial and administrative aspects and less research was focused on didactic issues. More recently, methodological issues were addressed by researchers, considering various approaches for delivering online courses (EL-Deghaidy & Nouby, 2008). The model of a training based on self-instructional materials and independent study was deeply revised and the focus of distance learning research enlarged to the application of innovative didactic methods such as cooperative learning, having the constructivist learning theory as a reference (Amhag & Jakobsson, 2009; So & Brush, 2008; Wheeler, Yeomans, & Wheeler, 2008).

Faculty resources and faculty management should be consistent with the school's stated mission. A mission-directed commitment to distance learning may require the addition of new faculty with the requisite skills and experience. Whether through the hiring of new faculty or through developing extant faculty, distance learning technologies and pedagogies must be incorporated into the institution's capabilities.

Gaining faculty commitment is vital to successful implementation of a program. It often is helpful to begin with the involvement and development of a small cadre of faculty who are highly respected by their peers. These early-entry faculty members then can become resources to assist the development of additional faculty.

The roles faculty will perform should be determined first. Individual faculty members may have roles that are different from, and more specific than, their traditional, on-campus roles. In some cases, distance learning providers have unbundled the traditional faculty role to create specialists in such tasks as creation of course goals and structure, creation of learning materials and experiences, delivery of instruction, or learning assessment. When such unbundling occurs, appropriate faculty management processes must be put in place, including processes that help people in these separate roles to interact with each other. Faculty management must be tailored to the specific performance demands of learning situations, pedagogy, technology, institutional culture, etc.

The Internet information technology offered tools for developing collaboration and cooperation activities in distance learning (Jara et al., 2009; Macdonald, 2003), facilitating student interactions in a constructivist perspective linked to Vygotsky's theory (1978). Cooperation implies an engagement to peers through social interaction (Amhag & Jakobsson, 2009; Hew & Cheung, 2008) and collaboration activities delivered in the virtual social environment offered the student the possibility to develop understanding through their own constructs, becoming active learners. Chao, Saj, and Hamilton (2010) believe that collaborative course implementation is the best way to design high quality online courses.

Implementing distance learning programs requires new technical and pedagogical skills. The school must provide resources to expand and develop these skills in the faculty. Distance learning demands on faculty in terms of planning and administrative assignments also may differ from traditional practice. Distance learning modules may not fit neatly into standard units the institution uses to manage faculty workloads and assignments. The school's reward system should recognize the demands placed upon the faculty involved in distance learning activities.

The faculty's composition and qualifications are essential components to creating high-quality distance learning programs. The school's faculty should understand and embrace the change from a teaching-centered to a learning-centered environment; with learners, rather than students, and with facilitators and designers of learning experiences, rather than teachers. The former concentrates on achievement of learning goals and seeks the most effective means to accomplish them. The latter focuses on the organization and delivery of information.

Reporting on successful initiatives and interventions is common, often alongside obstacles and problems that must be 'overcome' in order to expand access or enhance the adoption of ICTs (Banwell et al., 2004; Dexter, Seashore, & Anderson, 2002; Duggleby et al., 2004; Granger et al., 2002; Hennessy, Ruthven, & Brindley, 2005; McCarney, 2004; Rogers, 2000; Ruthven et al., 2005). Rarely front-and-center is that ICTs in education might create the conditions of possibility for the expansion of existing problems, or for the development of entirely new challenges in the work-life of university educators. As noted by Nichol, Watson, and Waites (2003) in their editorial introduction to their special issue of the British Journal of Educational Technology, there is a significant gap between the "optimistic rhetoric" that dominates discussion about ICTs in education, and the rather more problematic reality (see also Reynolds, Treharne, & Tripp, 2003). This led to the central issue addressed here, namely what experiences and impacts do "Teaching Assistants" report with regard to email in the context of their work at the university?

Recent studies have shown that "the successful implementation of educational technologies depends largely on the attitudes of educators, who eventually determine how they are used" (Albarini, 2006). Indeed, understanding the intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions, and including moderating factors (specifically, the cultural dimensions) that influence educators' attitudes towards ICT and adoption in higher education is, therefore, a focal point of interest but is under-researched in recent educational studies of information-accessing behavior (see for instance, Chang and Lim (2002)). As Li and Kirkup (2007) propose, "how far culture influences people's perception of the Internet and their use of it (. . .) needs further research". As Venkatesh (2000)

notes, there is a significant and growing body of research regarding the importance of the role of intrinsic motives in technology use (see for instance, Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw (1992); Finneran and Zhang (2005) and Sanchez-Franco and Roldan (2005) for a review).

Other limitations in the use of computers in Iran higher education are: lack of proper understanding of virtual learning environments, lack of proper infrastructure and telecommunication, lack of enough bandwidth to transmit and receive information. Moniee (2004) in his article argued that system of supply and demand for higher education still does not have an accurate understanding of virtual spaces and it is not well acquainted with the features and functions; and, basic IT skills are not still well known (Moniee, 2004). In this system, the success of learner is associated with technical skills in the use of computers and networks (Shuster, 2003).

Distance learning requires significant financial resources for technology and support. Faculty members and administrators require assistance to manage the logistics of distance learning and support systems must be developed for the distance learning delivery system. An integrated team of computer service technicians, counselors, site administrators, distribution clerks and information resource (library) personnel should support distance learning faculty. The magnitude of these costs often is underestimated by people initiating distance learning programs. There is a significant relationship between attitude and familiarity, and knowledge of the use of information technology. It is believed that proficiency in Internet services, and researchers' attitudes toward distance learning through the Internet causes this type of education to be highly appreciated. It is stated that the most important students' problems to access to information resources are lack of library with the relevant information and not having enough time for extra reading. Therefore, the barriers to the development of web-based education in third world countries can be found in Table 1.

*Table 1: Influencing factors of the barriers and limitations in the creation, implementation and development of e-learning*

<b>Influencing factors of the barriers and limitations in the creation, implementation and development of e-learning</b>	<b>Author/organization and the date of studies</b>	<b>Results of the study</b>
Barriers, constrains and issues (Technical, human, educational, cultural, infrastructure, credit, pedagogical, social and executive)	Sadri Arhami (1382)	Technical, infrastructure and executive limitations
	Salajeghe (1377)	Technical limitations and telecommunication barriers
	Musa Khani (1380)	Technical limitations and telecommunication barriers
	Chizari (1380)	Technical limitations and telecommunication barriers
	Ghaedi et al (1382)	Technical limitations and telecommunication barriers
	Howard (2008)	telecommunication barriers
	Cahill (2008)	Credit constraints
	Caponen (2008)	Human, Cultural and social constraints
	Salim (2007)	Technical and infrastructure limitations
	Barak and Rafaeli (2003)	Cultural and educational constraints
Barriers, constrains and issues (Technical, human, educational, cultural,	Light et al (2000)	Cultural and educational constraints
	Ward (1998)	Cultural and educational constraints
	Venkatesh (2000)	Cultural constraints



infrastructure, credit, pedagogical, social and executive)	Davis et al (2000)	Cultural constraints
	Fineran and Zhang (2005)	Cultural constraints
	Sanchez Francho (2004)	Cultural constraints
	Hinmann (2003)	Technical limitations
	Farahani (1380)	Technical and infrastructure limitations
	Panitz (2008)	Credit constraints
	Chao (2010)	Cultural and motivational constraints
	Li (2007)	Cultural constraints
	Gamble (2009)	Cultural constraints
	Freisen (2006)	Executive, educational, human and technical limitations
	Oliver (2001)	The educational and executive limitations
	Soltani (1383)	human limitations
	Naghavi (1386)	human limitations
	Yaghubi (1387)	Technical and educational limitations
	Mohamadi (1388)	Technical and infrastructural constraints
	Martines (1997)	Technical and infrastructural constraints
	Ozkan (2009)	The educational and executive constraints
	Galanouli (2009)	The educational and executive constraints
	Jara (2008)	The educational and executive constraints
	Mc Donald (2003)	The educational and executive constraints
Barriers, constrains and issues (Technical, human, educational, cultural, infrastructure, credit, pedagogical, social and executive)	Albarini (2009)	Cultural constraints
	Chang (2002)	Cultural constraints
	Razzaghi (1385)	Executive, credit, infrastructure, technical limitations and pedagogical challenges
	Salim Abadi (1385)	The educational, credit, infrastructure, cultural and technical limitations
	Jafari (1386)	Technical and infrastructural constraints
	Jokar (1386)	Technical and educational limitations
	Lynch (1999)	human limitations
	Sepehri (1389)	Executive, credit, infrastructure, cultural, educational and technical limitations
	Bagheri Majd (1391)	Pedagogical barriers of education
	Razzaghi (1385)	Technical and infrastructural constraints
	Jahangard (1382)	Executive, credit, infrastructure, technical limitations and pedagogical challenges
	Lorgani (1387)	Executive, credit, infrastructure, cultural and technical limitations
Barriers, constrains and issues (Technical, human, educational, cultural, infrastructure, credit, pedagogical, social and executive)	Shea (2005)	Executive, credit, infrastructure and political constraints
	Anstead (2005)	Executive, educational, infrastructure, cultural, motivational and technical limitations
	Kramer (2000)	Technical limitations
	Anstead et al (2008)	The educational limitations
	Gulati (2008)	Executive, educational, infrastructure, cultural, motivational and technical limitations
	Hitz (1995)	Technical limitations



	Gholozade (1385)	human and Credit constraints
	Fazeli (1383)	Lack of enough funds
	Feizi (1386)	Issues of Iran telecommunications infrastructures
	Rose (2001)	Technical and executive limitations
	Sharma (2001)	Technical, infrastructure and credit limitations
	Zhang et al (1999)	Technical, infrastructure and credit limitations
	Wilson and More (2005)	Technical, infrastructure and credit limitations
	Murphy and Dooley (2000)	Technical, infrastructure and credit limitations
	Grant (2004)	Technical, infrastructure and credit limitations
	Kurtus (2004)	Cultural and social constraints
	Beneke (2001)	Cultural and social constraints
	Alston et al (2003)	The educational limitations
	Kelsey (2005)	The educational limitations
	Dilon and Walsh (1992)	The educational limitations
	Sung et al (2004)	human and educational limitations
	Liblian (2004)	human and educational limitations
	Wilson (2003)	The educational limitations
	El-Deghaidy and Duby (2008)	Technical and credit constraints
	Amhug (2009)	Technical and credit constraints
	So and Brush (2008)	Technical and credit constraints
	Willer (2008)	Technical and credit constraints
	Rezaee (1388)	Technical, infrastructure, credit and executive
	Arbaugh (2002)	Technical and infrastructural constraints
	Sharma (2004)	executive and educational limitations
	Siritongthaworn (2006)	Technical and educational limitations
	Granger (2001)	Teaching-learning and pedagogical barriers
	Hoseini (2007)	Teaching-learning and pedagogical barriers
	Marbakh (2001)	Teaching-learning and pedagogical barriers
	Marbakh (2002)	Teaching-learning and pedagogical barriers
Barriers, constrains and issues (Technical, human, educational, cultural, infrastructure, credit, pedagogical, social and executive)	Mazolini and Madison (2004)	Teaching-learning and pedagogical barriers
	Ruthven et al (2005)	Teaching-learning and pedagogical barriers
	Donovan and Nakhleh (2001)	Technical and executive limitations
	Dori et al (2003)	Technical and executive limitations
	Gordin (1997)	Technical and executive limitations
	Rafaeli (2004)	Technical and executive limitations
	Gilbert (2007)	Credit and economic constraints
	Hew and Chung (2008)	cultural and motivational limitations
	Hyeoncheol and Injin (2007)	Technical and motivational limitations
	Inoue (2007)	Technical and motivational limitations
	Doris (2010)	Technical and motivational limitations

In the educational system of Iran, the use of ICT to increase the access to learning is one of the changes that is slowly being created. Nowadays, despite many problems e-learning is increasingly growing in Iran, and every year more and more universities are taking advantage of these methods in education and teaching. In 1382, the first web-based training began at Shiraz University for some engineering majors. Subsequently, some of the top universities decided to

hold their e-learning courses. We can say that there is a growing wave of e-learning is shaping; and, it seems that in the next few years some courses will be offered through e-learning. Present study analyzes the problems of web-based training in agricultural colleges of Iran. This study has three purposes:

- 1 - Identification of different (technical, human, administrative) barriers of development of e-learning in the College of Agriculture
- 2 – Identification of the different (technical, human, administrative) solutions of development of e-learning in the College of Agriculture
- 3 - Assessing the educational needs of students and teachers for the optimal use of e-learning in teaching and learning

## **METHODOLOGY**

The present study is a survey research.

### ***Participants***

The participants of the study are faculty members, graduates and PhD students in Agriculture in Bu Ali Sina University. Total number of participants were analyzed. The University is located in West of Iran, in the province, and it is one of the oldest universities of Iran. The university currently has 13 colleges 56 Departments of Education 14,000 students and 424 Faculty members (University Website: <http://www.basu.ac.ir>). This university is ranked 12th in University Rankings of Iran. In this study, frequency, distribution and relationships among the variables are reviewed and evaluated by selecting and studying samples chosen from the community.

### ***Research Instrument***

A questionnaire was used to collect data; but beside it, interviews, observation and documentary studies have also been operated. The accuracy of indicators and items in the questionnaire (Face Validity) has been confirmed by specialists. To evaluate the reliability of the study, questionnaire was distributed among a number of training scholars and computer software experts and web scientists.

### ***Data Analysis***

The results were reviewed and Cronbach Alpha was obtained 0.78 which is an acceptable figure. Due to the nature of the research the data were described and analyzed. In describing the data, descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, median, mode, standard deviation, variance, means and other items were used. In the data analysis, factorial analysis was used to obtain the key factors. Furthermore, a number of hypotheses have been tested.

## **DATA DESCRIPTION**

Based on the collected data, 74.6 percent of faculty members were male and the rest (25.4 %) were female. The mean age and SD was 39.06 years and 5.942, respectively. They are all instructing in different fields of agriculture. Also, 3.2 percent of the respondents are full professors, 12.7 percent of them are associate professors, 82.5 percent are assistant professor and

the rest (1.6 percent) are instructors. Note that they have the average of 7.43 years of teaching experience. Faculty members largely used computer in their house than university, workplace, college and the department. They had an average of 6 hours and 10 minutes per day of computer use. According to the results, only 33.3 percent of faculty members prefer to use the written and printed texts (books, reports, journals and magazines), and the rest (66.7 %) were interested in the use of electronic text (e-journals, CD, DVD, etc).

Table 2: Faculty members' familiarity with four language skills, Computer software, various programs internet and the level of internet access

Four skills	Familiarity with the four English language skills (percent)					
	Very low	Low	moderate	high	Very high	Ordinal average
Reading	0	3.2	23.8	39.7	33.3	4.03
Writing	0	7.9	41.3	44.4	6.3	3.49
Listening	3.2	15.9	44.4	31.7	4.8	3.19
Speaking	7.9	14.3	55.6	15.9	6.3	2.98
Computer software	Faculty members' familiarity with each of the computer software					
word processors such as Microsoft Word	0	1.6	11.1	46.0	41.3	4.27
Presentation program such as Corel Presentation and Power Point	1.6	4.8	11.1	49.2	33.3	4.08
Operating system software like Windows, Linux	7.9	7.9	34.9	31.7	17.5	3.43
Spreadsheet programs like Excel, Lotus, Pro, Quarto	14.3	15.9	33.3	27.0	9.5	3.02
Statistical software packages like Minitab, MSTAT, SAS, SPSS	11.1	28.6	23.8	33.3	3.2	2.89
Graphics software like AutoCAD, Corel, Photo Shop	14.3	41.3	27.0	12.7	4.8	2.52
Databases like Clipper, FaxPro, Access, Oracle	36.5	31.7	17.5	12.7	1.6	2.11
Various internet programs	Faculty members' familiarity with each of the internet programs					
E-Mail	0	4.8	9.5	30.2	55.6	4.37
WWW	3.2	4.8	20.6	38.1	33.3	3.94
Chat	20.6	19.0	20.6	27.0	12.7	2.92
FTP	28.6	25.4	23.8	17.5	4.8	2.44
Discussion Group	47.6	23.8	20.6	6.3	1.6	1.90
USENET	52.4	28.6	12.7	3.2	3.2	1.76
GOPHER	50.8	36.5	6.3	4.8	1.6	1.70
Location of student access to computers and the internet	Faculty members' access to computers and the internet					
House	1.6	6.3	14.3	22.2	55.6	4.24
university	4.8	6.3	22.2	41.3	25.4	3.76
Workplace	4.8	6.3	25.4	36.5	27.0	3.75
college	6.3	4.8	34.9	30.2	23.8	3.60
department	11.1	7.9	28.6	34.9	17.5	3.40

1= very low, 2 = low, 3 = moderate, 4 = high, 5 = very high

Knowledge of English language is a necessity factor for the use of the Web in education. Unfortunately, English language teaching in Iran is not favorable. Many faculty members are unable to take advantage of English sources. However, research findings show faculty members' reading skills is at upper intermediate level (4.03 out of 5), writing skill is moderate (3.49 out of

5), listening skill is moderate (3.19 out of 5) and speaking skill is poor (2.98 out of 5). The faculty members also participated in internet application courses. So that 20.6 % of the faculty members have passed training courses such ICDL, Catia, Minitab, Lingo, Photoshop, ARC, GIS, and PC user. Many faculty members in Iran are familiar enough with the software. Their highest rate of familiarity is with Microsoft Word (4.27 out of 5). Then, the faculty members are familiar with the following software respectively; software like Corel Presentation and Power Point (4.08 out of 5); operating systems like Windows and Linux (3.43 out of 5); statistical software packages such as Minitab, MSTAT, SAS and SPSS (3.02 out of 5); spreadsheet programs such as Excel, Lotus, Pro and Quatro (2.89 out of 5); graphics software such as AutoCAD, Corel and Photo Shop (2.52 out of 5); databases such as Clipper, FoxPro, Access and Oracle (2.11 out of 5). In fact, the faculty members in Iran have relative dominance to their required software. The results show that the faculty members use average of the Internet applications is at an acceptable level. Based on the average correlation, the faculty members make most use of the followings, respectively; E-Mail (4.37 out of 5); WWW (3.944 out of 5); Chat Programs (2.92 out of 5); FTP (2.44 out of 5); Discussion Group (1.90 out of 5); USENET (1.76 out of 5); and, GOPHER (1.70 out of 5). The results are shown in Table 2.

### ***Barriers and restrictions of creation, operation and development of e-learning in the College of Agriculture***

Table (3) shows the barriers and restrictions of creation, operation and development of e-learning in the College of Agriculture in Bu-Ali Sina University. However, the main problems and limitations of e-learning in Iran are: lack of technical and administrative support to maintain e-learning equipments (4.60 out of 5 0.133), old computer system (4.63 out of 5 and coefficient of variation = 0.136), inability of faculty to change the order of presentation of the course (4.38 out of 5 and coefficient of variation = 0.156), low ability of learners to perform individual operations which finally leads to spending more time with the faculty (4.30 out of 5 and coefficient of variation = 0.160), fluctuation in Internet speed and lack of real speed (3.95 out of 5 and coefficient of variation = 0.225). In the contrary, the following items are in the lowest priority: low speed internet and the actual bandwidth (ordinal average of 3.71 out of 5 and coefficient of variation of 0.319), lack of faculty access to individuals to solve problems in the field of e-learning (ordinal average of 3.17 out of 5 and coefficient of variation of 0.317), excessive dependence students' learning on computers and neglecting from teachers' guidance (ordinal average of 3.11 out of 5 and coefficient of variation of 0.323), limited access to computers and online communication with faculty members (ordinal average of 3.03 out of 5 and coefficient of variation of 0.435).

Table 3: Barriers and limitations in the creation, implementation and development of e-learning (Percent)

Num	Item	mean	SD	CV	prior
1	Lack of administrators attempt for culture-building in the field of e-learning	4.60	0.610	0.133	1
2	Old computer system	4.63	0.630	0.133	2
3	inability of faculty to change the order of presentation of the course	4.38	0.682	0.156	2
4	low ability of learners to perform individual operations which finally leads to spending more time with the faculty	0.430	0.687	0.160	3
5	fluctuation in Internet speed and lack of real speed	3.95	0.888	0.225	4
6	lack of giving priority to the e-learning in the comprehensive program of ICT development in the country	3.38	0.851	0.252	5
7	lack of coverage of optic fiber in the entire country	3.81	0.965	0.253	5
8	low potential for evaluating progress in learning courses	3.41	0.891	0.261	6
9	poor time management tools and planning for individual students	3.49	0.914	0.262	7
10	lack of attempt of administrators for culture-building in developing e-learning in the countries	3.52	0.948	0.262	8
11	low e-learning system for the continuity of learning activities by faculty members	3.57	0.946	0.265	9
12	lack of faculty interest for e-learning	3.65	0.970	0.266	10
13	the low proportion of structure with the needs of individuals or groups in the e-learning system	3.14	0.840	0.268	10
14	lack of funds for the development of e-learning in universities	3.57	0.962	0.269	11
15	low rates of encourage for e-learning system in the relationship between the learner and teacher	3.30	0.891	0.270	12
16	deficiency or absence of local manufacturing facilities, and components required for e-learning	3.22	0.870	0.270	13
17	lack of development of e-learning at high management level and those involved in educational planning	3.46	0.947	0.274	13
18	low e-learning system in terms of providing feedback by the faculty members	3.57	0.979	0.274	13
19	lack of experienced faculty on the e-learning and e-teaching units	3.44	0.947	0.275	14
20	high cost of setting up an educational technology equipment	3.37	0.938	0.278	15
21	lack of policy for the implementation and appropriate strategic management of the development of educational technology in universities	3.35	0.936	0.279	15
22	lack of full cooperation of the Ministry of Science and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology regarding the development of electronic learning	3.43	0.979	0.285	16
23	unfamiliarity of faculty with methods of communicating with students using e-learning	3.54	1.013	0.286	16
24	less compatibility applications with a network of e-learning	3.41	0.978	0.287	17
25	absence or lack of incentives for virtual teaching	3.27	0.937	0.287	18
26	possible limitations of laboratory sessions through e-learning	3.48	0.998	0.287	19
27	lack of necessary policy to certify or endorse the content, quality and structure of electronic courses in universities	3.41	0.978	0.287	20
28	unfamiliarity of planners and administrators with the concept of e-learning applications	3.48	1.014	0.291	21
29	lack of transparency in e-learning goals	3.54	1.029	0.291	22
30	high cost of the electronic library in the universities	3.40	1.009	0.297	23
31	the low level devices for e-learning system to express ideas for teachers and learners	3.27	0.971	0.297	23
32	lack of (user friendly) software and non-dynamic in the e-learning courses	3.25	0.967	0.298	24
33	high cost of Internet service	3.32	0.997	0.300	24
34	the low level of the learner or instructor permission to change the presentation of the course	3.29	0.991	0.301	25
35	lack of a comprehensive program for network security in e-learning	3.41	1.026	0.301	26
36	lack of enough training in the field of educational technology for the faculty	3.43	1.043	0.304	27
37	lack of investment and credit for the development of the needed infrastructure for e-learning	3.62	1.099	0.304	28
38	insufficient faculty expert regarding the new educational technologies	3.52	1.075	0.305	28
39	requiring a lot of time preparing the students	2.90	0.911	0.314	29
40	faculty resistance to change and their worries regarding electronic technology	3.37	1.067	0.317	30
41	the high costs preparation and production of material for the content of e-learning and	3.25	1.031	0.317	31

	updating them				
42	low speed internet and the actual bandwidth	3.71	1.184	0.319	31
43	stakeholders' opposition with e-learning methods	3.32	1.060	0.319	32
44	lack of faculty access to individuals to solve problems in the field of e-learning	3.17	1.025	0.323	33
45	excessive dependence students' learning on computers and neglecting from teachers' guidance	3.11	1.193	0.384	34
46	limited access to computers and online communication with faculty members	3.03	1.319	0.435	35

### ***Factor analysis of barriers and constraints, operation and development of e-learning in the College of Agriculture***

Due to the high number of obstacles and constraints and the need to reduce it to a few key factors, in the present study, the exploratory factorial analysis was used. In this method, the researchers have no prior plan to predict or identify the number and nature of hidden elements beyond the variables. So, the researchers assume that each variable can be covered with any other variable under a specific agent. Despite the strength of this technique for data analysis, it is not possible to use in any situation. Only the qualified data can be used for factorial analysis. KMO and Bartlett's test coefficient should be used for this purpose. If the value of KMO is greater than 0.5, certainly, factorial analysis can be used. In the present study, the coefficient of KMO is 0.710 that is an appropriate figure and Bartlett's test is significant at 99% level (sig = 0.000). (Table 6)

*Table 4: The KMO coefficient and the Bartlett test for students*

Test Name	Value
KMO	0.710
Bartlett	3.726
Sig	0.000

After ensuring the data is proper to perform the factorial analysis, the rotation varimax norm is used to achieve the significant factors. The extracted factors are indicated in table 5 Collectively, these factors explains 60.077 % of the variance related to affecting variables on the barriers and constraints on the development of e-learning in the College of Agriculture, Bu-Ali University. In simple terms, considering these seven factors could explain 60.077 percent of the effective factors in the creation of obstacles and limitations in the launch and development of e-learning in the department of Agriculture.

*Table 5: The number of extracted factors with eigenvalues, percentage of variance and cumulative percentage*

Number	Agent Name	Eigenvalue	Percent of the variance of Eigenvalue	cumulative percentage
1	Deficiency of executive factor	27.429	21.814	21.814
2	Credit constraints	38.923	10.254	32.068
3	infrastructure constraints	47.728	8.382	40.450
4	Cultural constraints	52.325	6.266	46.716
5	The educational limitations	57.228	4.827	51.543
6	human limitations	60.623	4.705	56.248
7	Technical limitations	64.124	3.829	60.077

Loading status of factors is presented in table 6.



Table 6: Variables related to each of the factors influencing barriers of the development of e-learning and factor loadings obtained from the rotated matrix

Priority	Factors Name	Variables	Factor loading
1	Deficiency of executive factor	low potential for evaluating progress in learning courses	0.681
		low e-learning system for the continuity of learning activities by faculty members	0.536
		low e-learning system in terms of providing feedback by the faculty members	0.679
		the low level of the learner or instructor permission to change the presentation of the course	0.547
		low rates of encourage for e-learning system in the relationship between the learner and teacher	0.664
		lack of full cooperation of the Ministry of Science and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology	0.573
		insufficient faculty expert regarding the new educational technologies	0.557
2	Credit constraints	the high costs preparation and production of material for the content of e-learning and updating them	0.732
		high cost of Internet service	0.710
		lack of funds for the development of e-learning in universities	0.750
		deficiency or absence of local manufacturing facilities, and components required for e-learning	0.836
3	Infrastructure barriers	limited access to computers and online communication with faculty members	0.554
		low speed internet and the actual bandwidth	0.797
		lack of coverage of optic fiber in the entire country	0.669
		fluctuation in Internet speed and lack of real speed	0.808
4	Cultural constraints	lack of development of e-learning at high management level and those involved in educational planning	0.545
		lack of necessary policy to certify or endorse the content, quality and structure of electronic courses in universities	0.662
		lack of giving priority to the e-learning in the comprehensive program of ICT development in the country	0.707
		lack of attempt of administrators for culture-building in developing e-learning in the countries	0.703
5	The educational limitations	lack of enough training in the field of educational technology for the faculty	0.545
		unfamiliarity of planners and administrators with the concept of e-learning applications	0.554
		stakeholders' opposition with e-learning methods	0.673
		unfamiliarity of faculty with methods of communicating with students using e-learning	0.677
6	human limitations	requiring a lot of time preparing the students	0.686
		faculty resistance to change and their worries regarding electronic technology	0.673
		lack of experienced faculty on the e-learning and e-teaching units	0.556
7	Technical limitations	lack of technical and administrative support to maintain e-learning equipments	0.591
		possible limitations of laboratory sessions through e-learning	0.515
		lack of policy for the implementation and appropriate strategic management of the development of educational technology in universities	0.507

As it can be seen, 7 key factors cause barriers and limitations in the development of e-learning in the College of Agriculture.

**First factor (Deficiency of executives):** This factor alone explains 21.814 percent of total variance of barriers and constraints in the implementation and development of e-learning in the College of Agriculture and it is the top priority. There are 7 factors with the loading factor greater than 0.5 which are presented below: low potential for evaluating progress in learning courses; low e-learning system for the continuity of learning activities by faculty members; low e-learning system in terms of providing feedback by the faculty members; the low level of the learner or

instructor permission to change the presentation of the course; low rates of encourage for e-learning system in the relationship between the learner and teacher; lack of full cooperation of the Ministry of Science and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology regarding the development of electronic learning; and finally, insufficient faculty expert regarding the new educational technologies.

**Second factor (Restriction of credit):** This factor explains alone 10.254 percent of total variance of barriers and constraints in the implementation and development of e-learning in the College of Agriculture and it is the second priority. There are 4 factors with the loading factor greater than 0.5 which are presented below: the high costs preparation and production of material for the content of e-learning and updating them; high cost of Internet service; lack of funds for the development of e-learning in universities; deficiency or absence of local manufacturing facilities, and components required for e-learning.

**Third factor (infrastructural barriers):** This factor explains alone 8.382 percent of total variance of barriers and constraints in the implementation and development of e-learning in the College of Agriculture and it is the third priority. There are 4 factors with the loading factor greater than 0.5 which are presented below: limited access to computers and online communication with faculty members; fluctuation in Internet speed and lack of real speed; lack of coverage of optic fiber in the entire country; low speed internet and the actual bandwidth.

**Forth factor (cultural barriers):** This factor explains alone 6.266 percent of total variance of barriers and constraints in the implementation and development of e-learning in the College of Agriculture and it is the forth priority. There are 4 factors with the loading factor greater than 0.5 which are presented below: lack of development of e-learning at high management level and those involved in educational planning; lack of necessary policy to certify or endorse the content, quality and structure of electronic courses in universities; lack of giving priority to the e-learning in the comprehensive program of ICT development in the country; lack of attempt of administrators for culture-building in developing e-learning in the countries.

**Fifth factor (educational barriers):** This factor explains alone 4.827 percent of total variance of barriers and constraints in the implementation and development of e-learning in the College of Agriculture and it is the fifth priority. There are 4 factors with the loading factor greater than 0.5 which are presented below: unfamiliarity of faculty with methods of communicating with students using e-learning; unfamiliarity of planners and administrators with the concept of e-learning applications; lack of enough training in the field of educational technology for the faculty; stakeholders' opposition with e-learning methods.

**Sixth factor (human barriers):** This factor explains alone 4.705 percent of total variance of barriers and constraints in the implementation and development of e-learning in the College of Agriculture and it is the sixth priority. There are 3 factors with the loading factor greater than 0.5 which are presented below: requiring a lot of time preparing the students; faculty resistance to change and their worries regarding electronic technology; lack of experienced faculty on the e-learning and e-teaching units.

**Seventh factor (technical barriers):** This factor explains alone 3.829 percent of total variance of barriers and constraints in the implementation and development of e-learning in the College of Agriculture and it is the seventh priority. There are 3 factors with the loading factor greater than 0.5 which are presented below: lack of technical and administrative support to maintain e-learning equipments; possible limitations of laboratory sessions through e-learning; lack of policy for the implementation and appropriate strategic management of the development of educational technology in universities.

As it can be seen, 7 key factors cause barriers and limitations in the development of e-learning in the College of Agriculture. These factors are depicted in figure 1. As the table shows, on the whole, 7 key barriers and constraints are effective in the implementation and development of e-learning in the College of Agriculture University of Bu Ali Sina University. These factors are shown in Figure 1.

## CONCLUSION

New technologies have great potential to transform and shape teaching and learning activities to all higher education institutions and they provide tools to design modern scientific environments which it has never been possible before. For this reason, many universities in Iran want to set up e-courses using information technology capabilities in the form of e-learning or online learning. However, the review of literature shows that the development of e-learning in educational systems is faced with many problems which unfamiliarity of policymakers and educational planners with such problems can impose heavy costs on educational institutions.

This paper aims to familiarize planners, policy makers, students and faculty members with the e-learning issues in agricultural higher education. It was found that strengthening and developing telecommunication infrastructures in educational institutions and providing access to information networks in such institutions is one of the important steps in the development of e-learning; because effectiveness of e-learning depends on the reliability and accessibility of hardware and software. And, lack of good telecommunication infrastructures severely affects the relationship between the learner and the educational system. Therefore, funding for facilities and e-learning tools for universities is a serious necessity. Many researchers have cited lack of hardware and software as one of the major challenges in the development of e-learning (Anstead et al. 2004; Shea et al. 2005; Zhang et al. 2002; Usun, 2006).

Investments in human resources training and training of skilled manpower are another important issue in the development of e-learning. Because development of e-learning will fail without a skilled and capable workforce and resistance of traditional training will be increased and finally, the way of approaching information technology to higher education will be harder. In addition, the nature of academic courses must be considered carefully before e-learning implementation. E-learning cannot be replaced by traditional training. E-learning should be focused on courses and subjects that traditional education system is unable to respond to them. Finally, we can say that to overcome the barriers of e-learning development in universities and educational institutions a holistic and integrated approach is needed. The policies to orient and provide the necessary resources to facilitate the development of long process of e-learning should be determined.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS**

1. The users' skills and technical knowledge of the English language and mastering of software, hardware and networking are necessary factors for the development of web-based training in Iran. Before planning for the development of e-learning, students' familiarity and mastery of computer skills and attending in workshops will be indispensable.
2. Since the shortage of qualified, proficient and competent teachers and experts in the field of e-learning and electronic content production is obvious, it seems training interested teachers and experts is essential.
3. Now, software and educational content and material for the development of e-learning in many academic disciplines have not been developed yet. Necessary steps should be taken in this regard.
4. Based on the research findings, low speed and inappropriate connection are the main problems in the development of e-learning. Accordingly, improved communication infrastructures in Iran to increase internet speed are essential in Iran. Although effective actions have been done in this regard, it's not enough for the development of e-learning and investment is need.
5. In Iran, training the teachers for optimal use of e-learning software is a must. Many professors are both distrustful of e-learning and novice of the necessary software.
6. Given the practical nature of Agricultural fields, holding troubleshooting classes alongside electronic-training sessions is a necessity.
7. Strengthening the Internet Security Systems Network to increase safety and protect the content, material and tests is a necessity in the E-learning network. Currently, e-learning applications and software can easily be penetrated.
8. Currently, many of the students do not have access to high speed Internet at home. It is necessary to provide facilities to access electronic education.

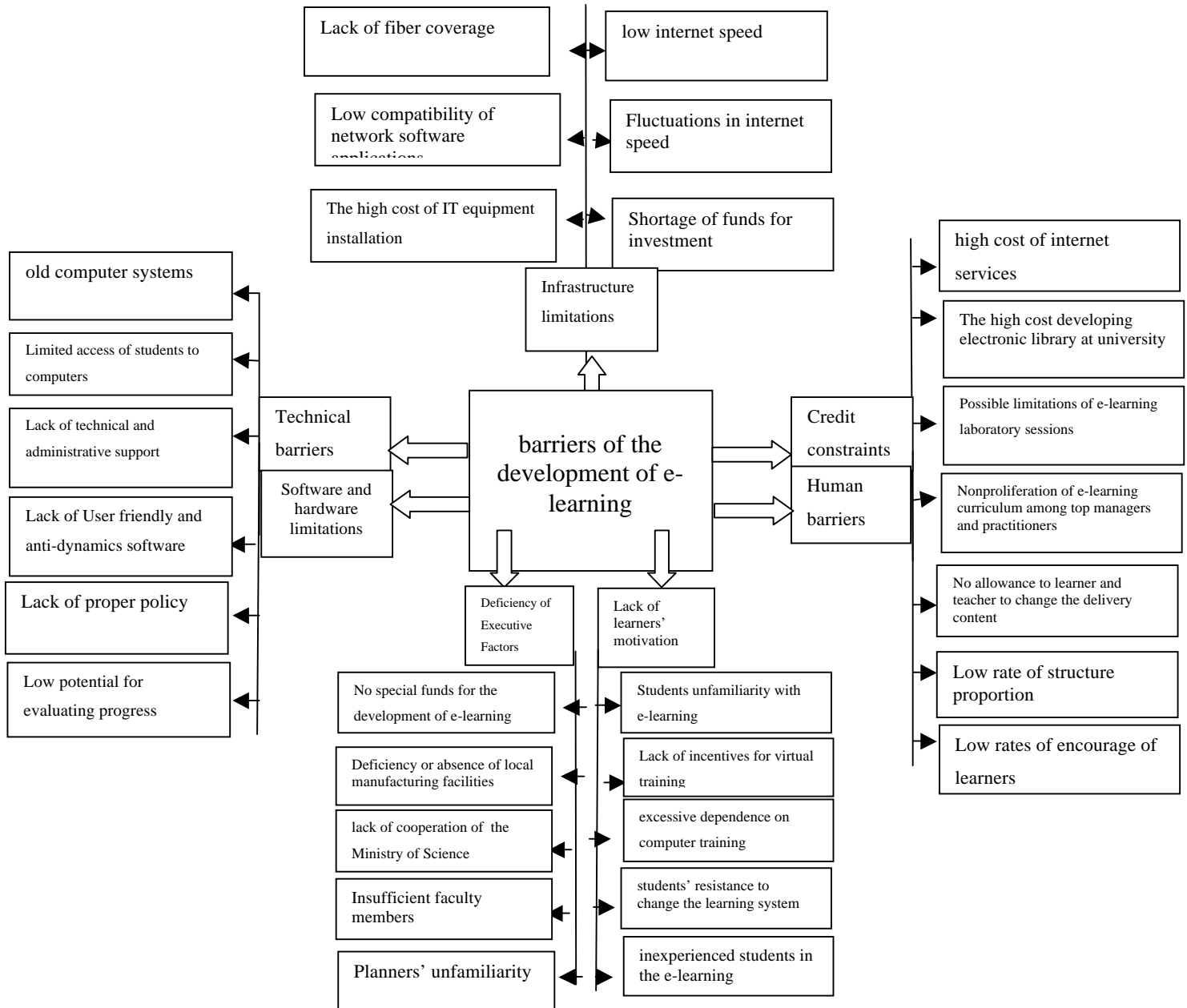


Figure 1: factors influencing barriers of the development of e-learning

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# ESP FOR HELICOPTER PILOTING TEXTBOOK EVALUATION: MEETING STUDENTS' NEEDS, OBJECTIVES, AND WANTS

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## ABSTRACT

On the basis of the importance of textbooks as one of the elements in curriculum which will guarantee effective teaching and learning in English as a foreign language (EFL)/English as a second language (ESL) courses and the necessity of textbook evaluation for selecting appropriate textbooks, this study tried to evaluate an English for Specific Purposes(ESP) book taught in Imam Ali Military Academy, Faculty of Aviation to indicate if ESP students of Helicopter Piloting are satisfied with their textbook in terms of their objectives, needs, and wants in addition to format and design of the textbook. The participants were a group of 70 male students, their age varied from 22 to 24. The materials to be evaluated included the ESP textbook *English for Pilot Students* prepared for the third year pilot students. The data collection instrument utilized was a 38-item questionnaire in a five-scale Likert categorized into 4 options as 1-objectives, 2-needs, 3-wants, and 4-format and design. The researchers also observed the ESP class and an interview was done with some students and teachers to get their ideas as well. The result indicated that ESP students of Helicopter Piloting were satisfied with their textbook in terms of their objectives and needs while they were not satisfied with their textbook in terms of their wants and format and design of the book. Findings of this study may offer insights for those involved in educational administrations, syllabus design, curriculum planning, and materials development to do their best to improve the quality and appropriateness of ESP textbooks, materials, and instructional objectives.

**KEY WORDS:** Needs Analysis, Evaluation, Curriculum, Selection, ESP

## INTRODUCTION

In every teaching context, textbooks play an important role in imparting learning and assisting teachers to fulfill their responsibility. According to Riazi (2003), "textbooks play a very crucial role in the realm of language teaching and learning and are considered the next important factor in the second/foreign language classroom after the teacher" (p. 52). Likewise, as Hutchinson and Torres (1994) put it, "The textbook is an almost universal element of [English language] teaching. Millions of copies are sold every year, and numerous aid projects have been set up to produce them in [various] countries.... No teaching-learning situation, it seems, is complete until it has its relevant textbook ( p. 315).

Arguments have encompassed both the potential and the limitations of materials for 'guiding' students through the learning process and curriculum as well as the needs and preferences of

teachers who are using textbooks. Other issues that have arisen in recent years include textbook design and practicality, methodological validity, the role of textbooks in innovation, the authenticity of materials in terms of their representation of language, and the appropriateness of gender representation, subject matter, and cultural components. Whether believe it or not, when one accepts the value of textbooks, it must surely be with the qualification that they are of an acceptable standard or level of quality and appropriate to the learners for whom they are being used (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994). It is absolutely essential, therefore, that policy makers establish and apply a wide variety of relevant and contextually appropriate criteria for the evaluation of the textbooks that are used in language classrooms (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994).

Textbook as a teaching material usually receives a special attention in English courses. It has always been suggested that the textbook is an almost universal element of English language teaching (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994). Sheldon (1988) agrees with this observation and suggests that textbooks not only represent the visible heart of any English Language Teaching (ELT) program but also offer considerable advantages for both the student and the teacher.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Textbooks play a pivotal role in language classrooms in all types of educational institutions – state schools, colleges, language schools – all over the world (Lamie, 1999). According to Lamie (1999), that is why despite the development of new technologies that allow for higher quality teacher-generated materials, demand for textbooks continues to grow, and the publishing industry responds with new series and textbooks every year. According to Razmjoo (2007) many students working with a textbook feel secure and have a sense of progress and achievement. According to Cunningsworth (1995), Textbooks are an effective resource for self-directed learning, an effective resource for presenting materials by the teachers, a source of ideas and activities, a reference source for students, a syllabus that reflects pre-determined learning objectives, and support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain in confidence (p. 113).

In fact, information on textbook selection is useful since it is sometimes part of the ESL/EFL teacher's responsibility to select the textbook she/he will use in a given class. Such a decision should be made carefully and systematically, not arbitrarily (Daoud & Celce Murcia, 1979, p. 193). They add that even in countries where the choice of the textbook does not directly involve the teacher, teachers may be asked to submit reports on the usefulness of the textbooks they are already making use of in their teaching programs. Several possible criteria and procedures for carrying out a sound selection of appropriate textbooks have been suggested. However, selecting an appropriate textbook is not a wholly objective process. While many guidelines are suggested, the individual subjective judgments of the teachers are central to it.

Tomlinson (2001) contends that textbook evaluation, on the other hand, is an applied linguistic activity through which teachers, supervisors, administrators and materials developers can make sound judgments about the efficiency of the materials for the people using them. It is also believed that textbook evaluation helps teachers move beyond impressionistic assessments and it helps them to acquire useful, accurate, systematic, and contextual insights into the overall nature of textbook material.

The importance of textbooks in English courses is now widely recognized (O'Neill, 1982; Torres, 1994; Haycroft, 1998). Haycroft (1998) believes that one of the primary advantages of using textbooks is that they are psychologically essential for students since their progress and achievement can be measured concretely when we use them (Haycroft, 1998). Secondly, as Sheldon (1988) points, students often harbor expectations about using a textbook in their particular language classroom and program. A third advantage, as O'Neill (1982) and Ur (1996) indicate, is that textbooks are generally sensitive to students' needs. However, because of the vast array of textbooks to choose from, the textbook selection process poses problems on English courses. According to Hycroft (1998), the critical issue in any language course is textbook selection. The magnitude of the problem becomes more curtail when there are numerous textbooks in the same area written by authors from different fields of study.

This can be clearly shown in Iranian ESP textbooks which are frequently written by either field specialists or Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) expert. To this end, textbook evaluation seems to be an inevitable part of any syllabus. The evaluation of textbook has a significant influence on the ability of students to meet their language learning objectives and affects both the process of learning and outcomes (Nunan, 1985).

According to Smoak (1996) with the growth of English for specific purposes (ESP), a large number of textbooks have been published for different areas of specialization by different publishers. Therefore, on the basis of the importance of textbooks as one of the elements in curriculum which will guarantee effective teaching and learning in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second language (ESL) courses and the necessity of textbook evaluation for selecting appropriate textbook, this study tried to evaluate an ESP textbook on "Helicopter Piloting" which has been written by a field specialist and an EFL expert. As Tomlinson (2001) believes, while the quality of EFL textbooks has improved dramatically in recent years, the process of selecting an appropriate text has not become any easier for most teachers and administrators. Program directors and classroom teachers are under pressure to adopt new reading textbooks on a fairly regular basis, and often on a short notice. While publishers' representatives may provide some informed assistance, their need to sell new products clearly influences their recommendations. (p. 224)

English language instruction has many important components but the essential constituents to many ESL/EFL classrooms and programs are the textbooks and instruction materials that are often used by language instructors. As Hutchinson and Torres (1994) suggest, the textbook is an almost universal element of [English language] teaching. Millions of copies are sold every year, and numerous aid projects have been set up to produce them in [various] countries...No teaching-learning situation, it seems, is complete until it has its relevant textbook (p. 315). Other theorists such as Sheldon (1988) agree with this observation and suggest that textbooks not only "represent the visible heart of any ELT program" (p. 237), but also offer considerable advantages - for both the student and the teacher - when they are being used in the ESL/EFL classroom.

Haycroft (1998), for example, suggests that one of the primary advantages of using textbooks is that they are psychologically essential for students since their progress and achievement can be measured concretely when we use them.

Second, as Sheldon (1988) has pointed out, students often harbor expectations about using a textbook in their particular language classroom and program and believe that published materials have more credibility than teacher-generated or "in-house" materials.



Third, as O'Neill (1982) has indicated, textbooks are generally sensitive to students' needs, even if they are not designed specifically for them, they are efficient in terms of time and money, and they can and should allow for adaptation and improvisation.

Fourth, textbooks yield a respectable return on investment, are relatively inexpensive and involve low lesson preparation time, whereas teacher-generated materials can be time, cost and quality defective. In this way, textbooks can reduce potential occupational overload and allow teachers the opportunity to spend their time undertaking more worthwhile pursuits (O'Neill, 1982; Sheldon, 1988).

A fifth advantage identified by Cunningsworth (1995) is the potential which textbooks have for serving several additional roles in the ELT curriculum. He argues that they are an effective resource for self-directed learning, an effective resource for presentation material, a source of ideas and activities, and a reference source for students, a syllabus where they reflect pre-determined learning objectives, and support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain in confidence. Although some theorists have alluded to the inherent danger of the inexperienced teacher who may use a textbook as a pedagogic crutch, such an overreliance may actually have the opposite effect of saving students from a teacher's deficiencies (O'Neill, 1982; Williams, 1983; Kitao&Kitao, 1997).

Finally, Hutchinson and Torres (1994) have pointed out that textbooks may play a pivotal role in innovation. They suggest that textbooks can support teachers through potentially disturbing and threatening change processes, demonstrate new and/or untried methodologies, introduce change gradually, and create scaffolding upon which teachers can build a more creative methodology of their own. Thus, EFL textbooks can play an important role in the success of language programs. In fact, they are the realization of the processes of means/ends specification in the curriculum planning. Sheldon (1988) suggests that "textbooks represent the visible heart of any ELT program" (p. 237). They provide the objectives of language learning; they function as a lesson plan and working agenda for teachers and learners. Cunningsworth (1995) argues that textbooks are an effective resource for self-directed learning, an effective resource for presentation material, a source of ideas and activities, and a reference source for students, a syllabus where they reflect pre-determined learning objectives, and support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain in confidence. He also contends that we should also ensure "that careful selection is made, and that the materials selected closely reflect [the needs of the learners and] the aims, methods, and values of the teaching program" (p. 7).

Textbooks are among the most important resources utilized to achieve the aims of a course which are based on the learners' needs. However, they should not become the aim of the course themselves and set those aims (Brown, 1995). Regarding the importance of the textbooks, one should make sure that those books meet appropriate criteria. In Cunningsworth's (1995) words, we should ascertain that "careful selection is made, and that the materials selected closely reflect the aims, methods, and values of the teaching program" (p. 7).



## **SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

According to what Tomlinson believes the process of materials evaluation can be seen as a way of developing our understanding of the ways in which it works and, in doing so, of contributing to both acquisition theory and pedagogic practices. It can also be seen as one way of carrying out action research (Tomlinson, 2001). Textbooks play a very crucial role and it has generally been agreed that selecting textbooks is the most controversial and challenging issue for teachers and administrators which shows the importance of evaluation (Haycroft, 1998). However, there is little research focused on the differences among textbooks which is written in the same area by different authors from different fields such as ESP textbooks. Therefore, the current study aims at contrasting an ESP textbook for the students of Helicopter Piloting. The findings of this research can largely assist the researchers, material designers, and teachers to suitably select textbooks. Firstly, this study seeks to evaluate the Iranian military academy students' textbook in the field of Helicopter Piloting based on current trends in ELT, curriculum design, and materials development to find out if they conform to the EFL universal characteristics and recent pedagogical principles. Secondly, the study will highlight the main shortcomings of the textbook and offer suggestions to improve both the structure of the course and the design of the textbook.

In Iran, all decisions regarding curriculum, materials and instruction are determined by the Curriculum Development Center of the Ministry of Education and teachers are expected to strictly follow the guidelines created for them by the national government. This book has not been properly revised since it was introduced. Moreover, neither at the stage of introducing this book nor at any other stage was any Need Analysis survey carried out. Therefore, there is an urgent need for updating and evaluating the materials according to recent findings in applied linguistics and curriculum design. But it should be remembered that the implications of evaluation in a nation-wide educational context of university departments are of crucial sensitivity and consequences. (Jahangard, 2007; Razmjoo, 2007; Azizfar, Koosha&Lotfi, 2010). Hence, it is necessary to choose and define the relevant criteria by which the merits and drawbacks which are shown in the textbook are going to be examined. The textbook evaluation criteria developed by the researcher for this study are based on a set of universal characteristics of EFL textbook evaluation which not only correspond to the local needs, but also are flexible enough to be used worldwide.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Decisions related to textbook selection and evaluation are of great importance. It is a fact that selecting and evaluating textbooks in EFL context is of utmost importance. However in Iran, there is limited research conducted to evaluate the textbooks that are already in use or those that are intended for use in future. In most of these studies, the researchers have themselves evaluated different textbooks by means of the checklists and questionnaires suggested by other scholars (Jahangard, 2007; Razmjoo, 2007; Azizfar, Koosha&Lotfi, 2010). However, the primary users of textbooks are the teachers. So, a comprehensive evaluation can only be carried out while the teachers and their view points are also taken into consideration.

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), when we evaluate a textbook with an intention of adoption, we try to match what is offered by the book with the needs of our language program. However, this is no easy job for the teachers. For one thing, teachers may be overwhelmed by the rich contents of the book, which usually has several volumes. For another, teachers do not always have a clear awareness of what their students need. (p. 49)

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following two research questions are posed for the purpose of this study:

**Q1:** Are ESP learners in Helicopter Piloting satisfied with their textbook in terms of their objectives, needs and wants?

**Q2:** Are ESP learners in Helicopter Piloting satisfied with their textbook in terms of format and design?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

The population for this study consisted of a group of students passing their 7<sup>th</sup> semester of Helicopter Piloting at Imam Ali Military Academy, Tehran, Iran. The sample included 70 male students, their age varied from 22 to 24, and all were going to pass their ESP courses related to their above-mentioned major. They were asked to answer a questionnaire including 38 questions related to their needs, wants and objectives in addition to their textbook format and design.

### ***Instruments***

The data collection instrument utilized in this study was a questionnaire prepared by the researcher. In order to do so, several questionnaires suggested by different scholars and adapted, with the addition of new items and a new scoring system on the basis of the objectives, needs and wants of the learners and format and design of the book were scrutinized and the items relevant to the textbooks under study were selected. Finally, a 38-item questionnaire in a five-scale Likert (Strongly Agree, Agree, No Opinion, Disagree and Strongly Disagree) and based on four groups of questions related to objectives, needs, wants, and format and design was prepared and edited with the help of some professors of the field to assure if participants are satisfied with their textbook in terms of their objectives, needs and wants in addition to the format and design of their Textbook. What's more, to get more information the researcher observed the ESP class according to environmental qualifications, and students' qualifications and as the second data collection tool the researcher also prepared teachers' interviews and students' interviews according to some professors' ideas of the field to get enough information about students and teachers of the ESP book. In order to assure the reliability of the test the researcher gave the questionnaire again to a group of 27 to do the same test for the retest process and the questionnaire was given to them to read the questions carefully and select the best option out of the five options.

### ***Procedure***

The aim of this research was to present the main developments of textbook evaluation and needs analysis as related to English for Students of Helicopter Piloting, and to realize the main weaknesses and pitfalls encountered by Military Academy students and to look for the best policies and methods in which most of their expectations, needs and course materials are prepared in the best convincing ways. So, the researcher was decided to evaluate the ESP textbook "*English for Pilot students*" taught at Imam Ali Military academy. To carry out the research the following measures were taken to conduct the study:

First of all, the researcher analyzed the general and specific books related to students of Helicopter Piloting in details and elaborated on the most important positive and negative points. This time-consuming work not only helped the researcher have a good informative view about the books, but also could help the researcher assure the validity of the data collected since it made it possible to compare different comments of students with his own ideas about the books.

In addition, a 38-item questionnaire in a five-scale Likert (Strongly Agree, Agree, No Opinion, Disagree and Strongly Disagree) was prepared and edited with the help of some professors of the field to assure if ESP Students of Helicopter Piloting are satisfied with their textbook in terms of their objectives, needs and wants in addition to the format and design of their Textbook. The questionnaire was given to a group of 70 students to read the questions carefully and select the best option out of the five options considered (Strongly Agree, Agree, No Opinion, Disagree and Strongly Disagree). In order to assure the reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher retested the questionnaire among learners. What's more, it must be mentioned that to assure the "Internal Validity" (the extent to which the result of a study are a function of the factor that the researcher intends) and the "Content Validity" (the representativeness of measurement regarding the phenomenon about which we want information) (Mackey&Gass, 2005, pp. 107-109) the researcher finalized the questionnaire based on experts' comments of the field and edited the questionnaire based on the research questions and hypotheses. The use of a five-scale Likert helped the researcher to assure the "Face Validity" (the familiarity of our instrument and how it is to convince others that there is content validity to it) (Mackey &Gass, 2005, p. 107).

Finally, the researcher observed the ESP class to touch and feel the situation according to environmental qualifications, teachers' qualifications and students' qualifications and did the interview with some of the students and extracted their own and free ideas about their course, textbooks and the other materials of the field. On the whole, the researcher made the best use of both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools.

In order to analyze the data, the researcher considered frequencies and percentages for students' answers given in the questionnaire and used chi-square test to indicate whether differences are statistically significant or not and the null hypotheses about objectives, needs, wants, format and design of the textbook are supported or rejected.

## **RESULTS**

This part of the study includes a complete analysis of the results obtained from the statistics of data collection process about the research questions of the study. The statistics are shown completely in figures and tables and the results obtained from the data are explained in details to prove the researcher's agreements or disagreements on research questions and hypothesis.

### ***Research question one***

The first research question of the study was as follows:

Q1: Are ESP learners in Helicopter Piloting satisfied with their textbook in terms of their objectives, needs, and wants?

### ***Analysis of questions related to objectives***

Table 1 displays the frequencies and percentages of the participants responses to the items related to the objectives of Helicopter Piloting students. Based on these results it can be claimed that

about 19 percent of the students believe that the textbook meets their objectives. Another 33.4 percent agree with this idea, i.e. 52.7 percent of the responses show agreement with the idea that the Helicopter Piloting textbook meets their objectives. On the other hand about 38 percent strongly disagree (15.6 %) or disagree (22.9%) with the idea that the textbook meets their objectives. 8.9 percent of students have taken a neutral position.

*Table 1: Objectives of Helicopter Piloting Textbook*

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>15.6</b>
<b>Disagree</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>22.9</b>
<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>8.9</b>
<b>Agree</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>33.4</b>
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>19.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Results:** The results of the chi-square test ( $\chi^2(4) = 116.47$ ,  $p = .000 < .05$ ) (Table 2) indicate that the above mentioned differences are statistically significant. In other words, the Helicopter Piloting students significantly believe that the textbook meets their educational objectives. Thus, the null hypothesis as ESP learners in Helicopter Piloting are not satisfied with their textbook in terms of their objectives is rejected.

*Table 2: Chi-Square Objectives of Helicopter Piloting Textbook*

	Choices
<b>Chi-Square</b>	<b>116.471<sup>a</sup></b>
<b>df</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Asymp. Sig.</b>	<b>.000</b>
<b>a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 140.0.</b>	

***Analysis of questions related to needs***

Majority of the respondents, i.e. 44.3 percent strongly agree (25.5%) and agree (19.8%) (Table 3) that the Helicopter Piloting textbook meets their needs. On the other hand, 42.5 percent believe that the textbook does not meet their educational needs. About 13 percent of the respondents have taken a neutral position.

*Table 3: Needs of Helicopter Piloting Textbook*

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	127	22.7
	Disagree	111	19.8
	No Opinion	74	13.2
	Agree	105	18.8
	Strongly Agree	143	25.5
	Total	560	100.0

**Results:** The results of the chi-square test ( $\chi^2 (4) = 23.92$ ,  $p = .000 < .05$ ) (Table 4) indicate that the above mentioned differences are statistically significant. In other words, the Helicopter Piloting students significantly believe that the textbook meets their educational needs. Thus, the null hypothesis as ESP learners in Helicopter Piloting are not satisfied with their textbook in terms of their needs is rejected.

*Table 4: Chi-Square Needs of Helicopter Piloting Textbook*

	Choices
Chi-Square	23.929 <sup>a</sup>
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 112.	

***Analysis of questions related to wants***

Table 5 displays the frequencies and percentages of the participants responses to the items related to the Wants of Helicopter Piloting students. Based on these results it can be claimed that about 9 percent of the students believe that the textbook does not meet their Wants. Another 31.9

percent agree with this idea, i.e. 40.9 percent of the responses show disagreement with the idea that the Helicopter Piloting textbook meets their Wants. On the other hand, about 40.6 percent strongly agree (11.9 %) or agree (28.7%) with the idea that the textbook meets their Wants. 18.4 percent of students have taken a neutral position.

*Table 5:Wants of Helicopter Piloting Textbook*

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	57	9.0
	Disagree	201	31.9
	No Opinion	116	18.4
	Agree	181	28.7
	Strongly Agree	75	11.9
	Total	630	100.0

**Results:** The results of the chi-square test ( $\chi^2 (4) = 127.873$ ,  $p = .000 < .05$ ) (Table 6) indicate that the above mentioned differences are statistically significant. In other words, the Helicopter Piloting students significantly believe that the textbook does not meet their educational Wants. Thus, the null hypothesis as ESP learners in Helicopter Piloting are not satisfied with their textbook in terms of their wants is supported.

*Table 6: Chi-Square Wants of Helicopter Piloting Textbook*

	Choices
Chi-Square	127.873 <sup>a</sup>
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 126.0.	

### **Research question two**

The second research question of the study was as follows:

Q2: Are ESP learners in Helicopter Piloting satisfied with their textbook in terms of format and design?

### **Analysis of questions related to format and design**



**Analysis:** Majority of the respondents, i.e. 46.2 percent strongly disagree (18.3%) and disagree (27.9%) (Table 7) that they are satisfied with the format and design of the Helicopter Piloting textbook. On the other hand, 38.9 percent are satisfied with the format and design of their textbook. About 14.8 percent of the respondents have taken a neutral position.

Table 7: Format and Design of Helicopter Piloting Textbook

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	141	18.3
	Disagree	215	27.9
	No Opinion	114	14.8
	Agree	158	20.5
	Strongly Agree	142	18.4
	Total	770	100.0

**Results:** The results of the chi-square test ( $\chi^2(4) = 36.688$ ,  $p = .000 < .05$ ) (Table 8) indicate that the above mentioned differences are statistically significant. In other words, the Helicopter Piloting students significantly are not satisfied with the format and design of their textbook. Thus, the null hypothesis as ESP learners in Helicopter Piloting are not satisfied with their textbook in terms of their format and design is supported.

Table 8: Chi-Square Format and Design of Helicopter Piloting Textbook

	Choices
Chi-Square	36.688 <sup>a</sup>
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 154.	

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

ESP students of Helicopter Piloting are satisfied with their textbooks in terms of their objectives based on the results obtained from the study. Thus, the null hypothesis as ESP learners in Helicopter Piloting are not satisfied with their textbook in terms of their objectives is rejected. This is because of the fact that the discipline-specific content of the book that is completely related to the students' field of study is really helpful to improve their knowledge of their specificity in English. The book has a consistent pattern; so, it can serve as a good learning support. The textbook of Helicopter Piloting includes concepts and knowledge that are familiar to students of this field and also offers something new to make the students involved through

thinking about the subjects in English. Considering this research area, most of the instructors and students believed that there was a proper match between the objectives of the book and objectives of the course. The two parties were also satisfied with the suitability of the textbook. The results of this study were consistent with Garinger's (2002) beliefs in this regard. According to Garinger (2002), the objectives of certain textbooks need to be parallel with the objectives of the course. Moreover, he suggests that the textbook should meet the needs of the learners and also need to be appropriate to the intended audience. In fact, ESP is usually stated to be goal-directed. Students study English for study or work purposes. "This has implications for the kind of activities and topics on the course" (Robinson, 1991, p.2). So, there is a good parallel between the findings of this study and the other related ones in this case.

ESP students of Helicopter Piloting are mostly satisfied with their textbooks in terms of their needs according to the results obtained from the study. Thus, the null hypothesis as ESP learners in Helicopter Piloting are not satisfied with their textbook in terms of their needs is rejected. The reason for this satisfaction is that the textbook which is being taught is in accordance with students' needs and can cover their expectations. It has a task-based syllabus that lets the students experience and learn through doing different tasks and activities. The content of the reading passages are in accordance with the content of their course of studies. The course book can provide enough information about their field of study and most of the discussion they have during the class can help them to match what they learn here with the other points covered in their other Persian courses and the points are in a good harmony. The book is certainly a good and unique source for this course being in hand. Most of the subjects a student of Helicopter Piloting needs to know about are covered in this book. As the author of the book has been both a helicopter pilot and an ELT expert, the book seems to have taken into account both disciplines throughout its various parts. Plenty of exercises following each section provide the students with enough practice in related fields and despite lack of enough time to review them all, most of the exercises can be considered as a self-study activity possible to be practiced out of class. In this respect, most of the students and also teachers were of the opinions that the content of the textbook was motivating and ordering of materials by topics was in a logical fashion. Regarding the appropriateness of the content to the students' needs, background knowledge, major, and their level of proficiency, both parties were positive on the mentioned Helicopter piloting textbook. The results of this category were consistent with the findings of Ghalandari and Talebinejad (2012) that the subject matter of ESP textbooks is compatible to the students' needs and achievement.

ESP students of Helicopter Piloting are not satisfied with their textbooks in terms of their wants since the results obtained from the data indicate it exactly. Thus, the null hypothesis as ESP learners in Helicopter Piloting are not satisfied with their textbook in terms of their wants is supported. To answer why the results obtained in this way it is good to pay attention that although the students may come to university with high motivation and interest, but in classes where no attention is paid to communication skills and practical issues, students have no opportunity to express themselves and ideas and this fact results in losing their motivation and interest. Generally speaking, students do not show any motivation toward learning English. The reason is that the course presented at the university cannot satisfy the students' wants and interests not only because students are in a low level of English proficiency, but also because

these ESP presented courses cannot give them whatever they need for their future jobs. This ESP textbook does not provide the students with opportunities to use the target language to achieve communicative purposes. So, it is important for the book to recycle instruction and to provide frequent and ample exposure to the instructed language features in communicative use. Unfortunately, the book does not consider that the nature of language teaching and learning is based on communication and interaction. Consequently, it requires students' involvement and participation in class activities and discussions.

In addition, in such ESP classes, because of the shortage of time, interaction between students and teachers and especially students and students and pair work is very little or almost impossible. The literature on ESP mostly puts emphasis on the communicative language methodology. For example, Farhady (1995) did not believe that reading ability is the only skill that Iranian students need to improve. He also puts emphasis on the communicative aspect of teaching in the ESP context. Similarly, Grant (1987) points to the communicative aspects of the textbook and believes that as a result of using the textbook, the students should be able to communicate a language. According to Dahmardeh (2009), new words in the textbooks under analysis are presented out of a plausible context as isolated sentences. Sarhady (2009) contends that language functions presented in the textbooks are so context-limited that it is too difficult for students to visualize the situation in which communication has happened. And finally, Azizfar et al (2010) have stated that the materials designers have just focused on the mechanical drills. They believe textbooks are limited to substitution and repetition drills, and students are required to produce simple sentences, and that they are not provided with the opportunity to practice communicatively the language they are learning. However, the findings of this study were not in line with these views.

ESP students of Helicopter Piloting are not satisfied with their textbooks in terms of format and design owing to the obtained results of the study. Thus, the null hypothesis as ESP learners in Helicopter Piloting are not satisfied with their textbook in terms of their format and design is supported. The reason for this dissatisfaction could be based on the reality that when a textbook does not have a good format and design, it affects both students' and teachers' motivation and interest to learn or teach that book. In the field of ELT specifically for ESP classes of pilot students it is important to use colorful, attractive and pleasurable course books. Pictures and illustrations in most cases help the students' visual memory to retain more information. If a course book has enough space on each page and between the lines, the students can take notes and write the important points during the lesson. Unfortunately, in the book for pilot students one of the most important problems is that the sentences of the book are written with no suitable space between the lines and it bothers the readers while reading the text since the page is really crowded by the words. It shows that how a perfect book in terms of format and design can boost the quality of language learning and students' motivation for learning. So, the educational department must increase the students' interest to improve their learning which would be really impossible without a well-designed textbook.

What's more, analyzing the format and design of the Helicopter Piloting textbook, most of the participants were of the opinions that the textbook was not attractive and its illustrations and photographs were not motivating enough to encourage the learners to read about the subject. The students said that their ESP course book should be colorful in order to be understandable. If their textbook did not have a good layout and design, it would affect their motivation and interest to read that book. It is clear that physical appearance of a textbook is very important. McDonough and Shaw (2003) believed that clarity of layout is an important criterion for textbook evaluation.

The pictures and illustrations help the students' visual memory to retain information. Visual materials such as photograph, chart, and diagram not only should have cosmetic value but also instructive value and learning purpose (McDonough & Shaw, 2003). Similarly, Garinger (2002) suggests that both students and instructors want visually stimulated material that is well organized and easy to follow. Therefore, layout, design, and organization should be considered. Thus, the results of this study were not in line with these views and previous studies done in this regard.

There were some limitations in this study and the researcher could not control the following factors:

- ✓ Although ESP students of Helicopter Piloting cooperated well in answering the questionnaire, many of them were not willing enough to answer the interviews questions and only 6 students helped the researcher in this regard.
- ✓ Since the special course for the students of Helicopter Piloting is just held in their 7<sup>th</sup> semester and it is just possible to collect the data in even semesters (second term of the year), it made the researcher miss so much time until the beginning of the term to make it possible distribute the questionnaire, observe the class, collect the data, and do the interviews.
- ✓ As Imam Ali Military Academy is based on a perfect discipline and it has its standard and specific rules, it was only possible for the researcher to observe 1 class and more important, it was a difficult task to retest the questionnaire for the second time since professors of the course were decided to cover most parts of the book due to the time limitation. In addition, it was to some extent difficult to gather learners and some participants were not eager enough to cooperate with the researcher for the retest process as well.

### **PEDOGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

Findings of this study may offer insights for those involved in educational administrations, syllabus design, curriculum planning, and materials development. Different sections of the textbook can be modified by the committee of textbook developers and policy makers of Imam Ali Military Academy in order to improve its attraction and quality. Teachers may also get insights from the findings and employ different strategies to compensate for the weak points of the textbook. However, there are some significant points help course designers and authorities to improve the whole framework of ESP classes in this regard which are as follows:

The method of teaching by the professors is not satisfactory by some students. This can be due to the kinds of reading books in which all students are concerned with a vocabulary list and a passage to read without having enough time to communicate in the class. This limits their capabilities in using their innovation for making new sentences with different words in different situations. Lack of time is a disaster in their field of study for their English classes.

In all classes a traditional approach to teaching was applied by the professors that can be due to the lack of time or the overall structure of the book that were designed for a reading course. It can be investigated if it is possible to apply a more communicative approach for teaching the same material or new material needed in order to improve all four skills of the students to match their future needs more than before.

Another noticeable implication is derivable from the result of text analysis; that is, the texts require modifications and refinements to be according to learners' needs and to be functioning as incentive of efficiency which lead students to reach their goals. Besides, texts can be modified to include more fascinating and more motivating topics to refresh learners' views toward their own ESP courses. This study may provide a good basis for developing comprehensible materials for students in different ESP courses. As a result, in the case of selecting passages for a course, syllabus designers should consider the learners' interests in reading comprehension. They can design appropriate textbooks on the basis of different skills needed for students and based on short-term and long-term goals. It can cause a great development in English teaching in Iranian universities. They can enhance the attractiveness of the books and students' motivation to read technical texts and make the best use of the books.

It is an undeniable fact that there must be clear objectives in ESP courses, and then based on those objectives relevant and perfect materials should be designed and developed to meet learners' objectives. The time allocated to Military Academy ESP courses especially in the field of Helicopter Piloting must be increased since professors are faced with many problems for covering all units of the books.

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## READING STRATEGY REPERTOIRES IN EAP CONTEXTS: STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN ACADEMIC READING STRATEGY USE

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### ABSTRACT

Potential mismatches between learners' and teachers' perception of appropriate reading strategies in academic reading contexts are of singular importance. This study reports a number of these mismatches in the context of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) at the college level. The reading strategy section of Reading and Writing Strategies Questionnaire (Baker & Boonkit, 2004) was submitted to 12 male sophomore EAP undergraduate students of psychology at the University of Tehran, and their responses were analyzed for their exploitation of reading strategies. Students were asked to check how often they would use reading strategies from 1 "Never" or "Almost never" to 5 "Always" or "Almost always" (Likert-scale inventory). Then, the same questionnaire was given to three faculty members of the psychology department who taught EAP courses to psychology students. The results showed that the students did not use strategies as intended, indicating a mismatch between what was reported to be useful to students by their teachers and their uptake of those strategies. Finally, a set of mismatches between the teachers' recommended and practiced reading strategy repertoires and those of students were identified.

**KEY WORDS:** Reading strategy; Perceptions of students; Reading and writing strategies questionnaire; EAP contexts

### INTRODUCTION

Defining language learning strategies (LLS) and learner strategies is well indicative of their significance and features. The dictionary meaning of the word *strategy* carries notions of "planning, directing, and managing things well for a certain purpose" (Hornby, 1990, p. 1270). Research on language learning strategies in second language (L2) learning started in the mid 1970s (Anderson, 2005). Oxford (1990) expands the definition of language learning strategies by stating that "learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (p. 8). Thus, strategies are said to refer to specific actions or techniques and not characteristics that describe a general approach to learning (Wenden, 1987). According to the widely used technical definition from cognitive psychology, strategies are "operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information" (Oxford, 1990, p. 8; Wenden, 1987, p. 7).

A common assumption in strategy use is that effective strategy use helps students self-direct and control their own learning processes inside and outside the classroom. Self-direction is significant for the learners' language development as it reduces their reliance on teacher, and enables them to take responsibility for their own learning and develop more confidence, involvement, proficiency (Oxford, 1990), empowerment (Grenfell & Harris, 1999), and autonomy (Benson & Voller, 1997; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989). To promote opportunities for self-access language learning, researchers (Gardner & Miller, 1999) suggest that teachers raise students' awareness of language learning

strategies that could be employed in handling specific language tasks by discussing with them how to approach these tasks and by playing strategy search games urging students to think of possible uses of strategies in a particular context (Oxford, 1990). Therefore, a number of researchers argue that raising students' consciousness or awareness of the possible uses of these strategies can help them control and self-direct their own learning and develop their autonomy.

Language learning strategies are specific learning actions or behaviors that might or might not be observable. The latter type usually includes mental processes that cannot be captured by an observer (Wenden, 1987). Other strategies such as cooperating with others can be observed. However, some strategies are sometimes used outside the classroom so they cannot be documented easily by the teacher through observations (Oxford, 1990).

Whether observable or not in the students' actions for the purposes of research, the teachability and learnability of these strategies is one of the most investigated issues in research. It has been shown that learning strategies are behaviors that could be learned, rejected, and modified. "They are a part of our mental software" (Wenden, 1987, p. 8) called "learner training", "strategy training", or "learning to learn training", the teaching of learning strategies modifies and extends the teachers' role (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989). The teachers' role is to promote a learning environment that allows students to work on their strategies, train them to identify these strategies and assist their autonomy (Oxford, 1990). According to Wenden (1987), this increases the potential of their learnability and teachability, as shown in studies on strategy training programs, which have concluded that LLS are "readily teachable" (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989). In reference to explicit strategy instruction, Oxford (1989) notes that "strategy training is most effective when students learn why and when specific strategies are important, how to use these strategies, and how to transfer them to new situations" (p. 12).

Anderson (2005) recognizes how language learning strategies are related to success in accomplishing language learning tasks, stating that less successful learners do not progress in their tasks as more successful learners do due to the formers' lack of strategy repertoires, strategy use, and awareness of such strategies. Green and Oxford (1995) connect progress, L2 skills, and the development of strategies by stating that "language learning strategies are specific actions or techniques that students use, often intentionally, to improve their progress in developing L2 skills" (p. 262). Oxford (1990) has argued that a greater emphasis should be placed on identifying effective language learning strategies and on teaching students how to use them successfully. Some researchers have reported the differences between successful and less successful learners based on the language learning strategies they use (e.g., Vann & Abraham, 1990; Vandergrift, 1997). They sum up that good language learners seem to be skillful in monitoring and adapting different strategies, demonstrating flexibility in using strategies to accomplish different language learning tasks.

Oxford (1990) explains how direct and indirect strategies can be used to develop each of the four language skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Language learning strategies are usually connected to each other and do not happen in isolation from each other. Anderson ascertains how strategies are interconnected and views them as a "process" (2005, p. 757). Brown (2002) also gives teachers a practical guide about how to deal with language learning strategies in the classroom. Some research has shown that integrating strategy instruction into regular classroom instruction brings about effectiveness (Anderson, 2005; Cohen, 1998).

Furthermore, research has tended to focus on the use of specific strategies in language skill areas, including listening, speaking, reading and writing. Reading strategies of L2 learners have been the focus of some researchers (Anderson, 2003, 1991; Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002; Sheorey, 1999; Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001). One of these attempts to investigate learning strategies was Mokhtari and Sheorey's (2002) study using the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) as a standardized instrument. Recently, the SORS was used by Anderson (2003) to measure metacognitive reading strategies used by EFL and ESL students while reading academic materials online. The adapted survey was called the Online Survey of Reading Strategies (OSORS), but the SORS classification was kept as global reading strategies, support strategies, and problem-solving strategies such as rereading difficult texts, and adjusting reading rate. To increase learners' online reading abilities, Anderson (2003) finally recommends that teachers focus their students' attention on the OSORS metacognitive reading strategies.

Many studies have focused on the advantages gained from linking the content of an ESL reading course to that of the mainstream course, aimed at benefiting from the discipline-based texts and focusing on developing reading skills by dealing with topics in the mainstream course (Benesch, 1988; Guyer & Peterson, 1988; Kasper, 1994). As found by Kasper (1996), discipline-based texts rather than literary texts have proven to benefit students more and improve their reading comprehension. Kasper explains this in the light of schema theory, arguing that discipline-based materials promote more elaborate schemata, provided that comprehension of literature is subjective in nature.

Therefore, focusing on introducing the English language literature including genres such as poems, stories, novels, etc. does not match the students' needs. Choosing texts on themes from other disciplines can thus enhance the students' objective sense and let them experience real life texts dealing with information and points of view that draw on their schemata. In addition, reporting on the impact of discipline-based content on developing English reading comprehension, researchers (Kasper, 1996) argue that such content encourages students to construct schemata and increase their metacognition of reading process, and also guides them to use more efficient comprehension strategies.

Additionally, the development of efficient reading strategies for students to use should allow for a sequence of instruction, including direct explanation, guided practice, independent use or practice, and group feedback (Kasper, 1996; Nist & Simpson, 1987; Shih, 1992; Weinstein, 1987). Nist and Simpson (1987) argue that group feedback following independent practice enhances self-regulated learning and reading comprehension by allowing self-monitoring and self-evaluating. However, Kasper (1996) claims that such an instructional sequence is insufficient to improve the reading performance of ESL students, arguing that the type of material is more critical and again pointing to the significance of discipline-based materials. We can conclude that group discussions form a scaffold to the reading input, and peer review of writing can also help students edit their work.

According to Baker and Boonkit (2004), in the reading process, reading strategies "are techniques and methods readers use to make their reading successful" (p. 302). Learners can employ such techniques in the reading process which include: "reading for pleasure in English, skimming and scanning, summarizing information, making guesses, prediction, making inferences, underlined words and phrases, and making notes" (Baker & Boonkit, 2004, p. 303)

Previous body of research has identified some of the skills needed to establish a balance between skills and language, which might as well be transferable from L1 if such skills are already well-developed there. These skills are: selecting what is relevant for the current purpose; using all the features of the text such as headings, layout, typeface; skimming for content and meaning; scanning for specifics; identifying organizational patterns; understanding relations within a sentence; using cohesive and discourse markers; predicting, inferring and guessing; identifying main ideas, supporting ideas and examples; processing and evaluating the information during reading; and transferring or using the information while or after reading (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Other skills might be developing private dictionaries and research charts, and questioning or challenging readings (Pally, 2001).

Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) identified a number of macro- and micro-reading skills that EAP students need to develop. The macro-skills include the ability to make use of learners' existing knowledge to make sense of new material and fit new knowledge into their schema. Important micro-skills include recognizing logical relationships, definitions, generalizations, examples, explanations and predictions, and distinguishing fact from opinion. The purpose of this study thus is to examine the frequency of reading strategies among Iranian EFL male second year undergraduate students of psychology in EAP contexts.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The main research question guiding this study is:

To what extent do EFL male second year undergraduate psychology students' reading strategy repertoires match their teachers' recommendations of useful and effective strategies in EAP Contexts?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

Twelve second-year male undergraduate EAP students majoring in psychology at the University of Tehran volunteered to participate in the study. They were asked to check how often they use reading strategies from 1 "Never" or "Almost never" to 5 "Always" or "Almost always" (Likert-scale inventory). Then the same questionnaire

was given to three faculty members of the psychology department who used to teach EAP courses to psychology students.

### ***Instruments***

In order to explore students' exploitation of reading strategies, we elicited responses to the reading strategy section (the first 32 items) of Baker and Boonkit's (2004) Reading and Writing Strategies Questionnaire (downloaded online, Appendix [A]). This questionnaire had been extensively used in learning strategies studies which is a testament to its reliability and validity. Nevertheless, to make sure that the reading section of the questionnaire would still yield consistent responses, we pilot tested it before the final administration and calculated its reliability ( $r = .89$ ).

### ***Analysis of the data***

The data collected by the questionnaire were coded in a database using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 16.0. As the study sample was relatively small, it could not be considered for a significant statistical analysis. Therefore, the questionnaire items were classified according to Baker and Boonkit's (2004) categorization of reading and writing strategies. Tables were generated to summarize the average use of strategies in each category. In reading strategy categories, Oxford's (1990) means were used as cut-off points as to what was low, medium, or high use of strategies. As the scale was from 1.0 to 5.0, the averages ranged from 1.0 to 5.0. A low average use of reading strategies would be within the average range of 1.0 to 1.4, meaning it was never or almost never used. Means from 1.5 to 2.4 reported a low use of reading strategies as they were generally not used. If strategies were sometimes used, they were within the range of 2.5 to 3.4, and the use of strategies was medium. A high use of strategies would fall within the range of 3.5 to 5.0, but if strategies were usually used, the reported averages would be from 3.5 to 4.4. If they were always or almost always used, the averages would be from 4.5 to 5.0. Table (1) provides a picture of how quantitative data from the questionnaire collected from the students and teachers were analyzed using the mentioned cut-off points.

*Table 1: Analysis Key of Quantitative Data Collected Using Questionnaire*

<b>High</b>	<b>Always or almost used</b>	<b>4.5 to 5.0</b>
	<b>Usually used</b>	<b>3.5 to 4.4</b>
<b>Medium</b>	<b>Sometimes used</b>	<b>2.5 to 3.4</b>
<b>Low</b>	<b>Generally not used</b>	<b>1.5 to 2.4</b>
	<b>Never or almost never used</b>	<b>1.0 to 1.4</b>

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This section reports the results of Baker and Boonkit's (2004) Reading and Writing Strategies Questionnaire administered to the EAP class and three EAP teachers of the psychology department. It involved reading strategies used in the process of reading which are classified into general reading behavior, pre-reading strategies, while-reading strategies, and post-reading strategies. Table (2) illustrates the means of students in reporting their reading strategies.

*Table 2: EAP Class Means in Reading Strategies*

<b>Class</b>	<b>General Reading Behavior</b>	<b>Pre-Reading Strategies Mean</b>	<b>While-Reading Strategies Mean</b>	<b>Post-Reading Strategies Mean</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>EAP (n=12)</b>	3.85	3.59	3.19	3.01	3.40

In this EAP class, both the students' general reading behavior and the pre-reading strategies were high as students indicated that they usually used them. On the whole, the means of every set of strategies indicated that students used most of these strategies in their reading habits.

The level of analysis of data obtained from the Inventory of Reading Strategies was taken further to compare the students' positive and negative appropriation of strategies in their reading process as indicated by the students themselves and in comparison with their teachers' recommendations in the inventory. A "POSITIVE USE" meant that the students only used the recommended strategies while a "NEGATIVE USE" indicated that the students used

the strategies that were not recommended. So both the teachers' recommendation and the students' reported use framed the positivity and negativity of strategy use as explained earlier. Negativity should be understood here as the mismatch between teachers' and students' reported use of strategies. The teachers' responses to the items as "Never" were coded as "Not Recommended" and "Sometimes" or "Usually" were coded as "Recommended" strategies. The students' responses to the item as "Never" were dealt with as "Not Used", and "Sometimes" or "Usually" as "Used" strategies. So, if a student reported using a strategy that his teacher had recommended (sometimes or usually), it was considered a positive use. If the student said he did not (never) use a strategy that was not recommended for use, it was still a positive use. On the other hand, if he reported using an item (sometimes or usually) his teacher had not recommended, it was considered a negative use. If he responded that he did not (never) use a recommended strategy, it was a negative use as well.

At this level of the analysis of the results, we considered the students' use of strategies looking at the extent to which they used strategies as taught and recommended by their teachers. The results reported in this section reflect the students' positive and negative use of strategies. Negative use of strategies is also emphasized here as it showed that students did not use strategies as they were expected to. The results revealed a match between the students' and their teachers' ratings as shown here as a positive use of strategies, but there was also a clear mismatch, which was considered a negative use of strategies. Tables (3) and (4) below present the percentages of negative and positive strategy use among EAP students as reported in their questionnaire responses, classifying the items into positive and negative strategies according to the analysis criteria explained earlier.

Table 3: EAP Students' Negative Strategy Use

Strategy Category	EAP Psychology Students (n=12)
<i>Negative Strategy Use</i>	(n)=12
General Reading Behavior	0%
Pre-Reading	8.33%, n=1
While-Reading	25%, n=3
Post-Reading	16.66%, n=2

- Negative and positive strategy uses for each strategy category were computed by dividing the number of reported negative or positive items by the total number of positive and negative strategies.
- "Negative" is a term that Baker and Boonkit (2004) used in their reading and writing questionnaire to mark items that they considered negative in reading and writing processes. However, it was used in this table to keep the same classification they have used in their questionnaire for ease of analysis.

Table 4: EAP Students' Positive Strategy Use

Strategy Category	EAP Psychology Students (n=12)
<i>Positive Strategy Use</i>	(n)=12
General Reading Behavior	0%
Pre-Reading	0%
While-Reading	8.33%, n=1
Post-Reading	16.66%, n=2

As can be seen in Table (3) above, in their reading processes, the students reported using the following reading strategies from the most negatively-used to the least: 1) while-reading (25%), 2) post-reading (16.66%), and pre-reading strategies (8.33%), indicating a major problem in while-reading and after-reading processes.

The reading strategies that were shown to be appropriated negatively by the EAP students were:

- asking about the purpose of texts (pre-reading);
- breaking sentences into words and phrases (while-reading);
- predicting while reading (while-reading); and
- making inferences (post-reading).

## CONCLUSION

The research question of this study looked at the extent to which students' reading strategy repertoires matched their teachers' recommended strategies in EAP courses.

As shown in the study, students did not use strategies as intended, indicating a mismatch between what was reported to be useful to them by their teachers and their ultimate strategy use. "Sources of mismatch" between teachers' intentions and students' interpretations in task-based pedagogy were investigated by Kumaravadivelu (1991) who classified observations of such a mismatch into ten sources: cognitive, communicative, linguistic, pedagogic, strategic, cultural, evaluative, procedural, instructional, and attitudinal. In this study, a set of mismatches between the teachers' recommended and practiced reading strategy repertoires and students' reported strategy use repertoires were identified. As argued by Kumaravadivelu (1991), mismatches between teacher intention and teacher interpretation may be inevitable, but they need not be totally negative, and "a particular mismatch, if identified and properly handled, can give learners an opportunity to negotiate further in order to tease out a problem in their own way" (p. 106).

Even if there was a "negative use" (negative uptake) in reading strategy use, it could still be identified and more effective strategies could be scaffolded by teachers. The students' uptake in strategy use was negative because it was contrary to the teachers' strategy repertoires with regard to what the teacher felt would be useful for them.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR PEDAGOGY

Teachers could use various inventories of reading strategies as needs analysis tools to help them diagnose students' use of strategies and explain why students may not use some of strategies as taught in the course. The study indicated that students had some learning difficulties and instances of bad performance in mainstream courses related to their reading aloud, and slow reading. Students' use of some reading strategies was shown to be negative, pointing to a mismatch between pedagogical goals and students' strategy use. Therefore, teachers could address such learning difficulties and scaffold a positive use or uptake of strategies more often for particular students.

## LIMITATIONS

In considering this study, it is also important to acknowledge some limitations:

1. Classroom observation was not possible to develop a full picture of the contexts of study. Thus we were outsiders in reporting this research, and the study reflected mostly teachers' and students' rhetorical accounts of their classroom activities.
2. Baker and Boonkit's (2004) Reading and Writing Strategies Questionnaire was a de-contextualized inventory as it did not address a specific context for students to consider when they responded to the items. In a sense, it is best to provide students with a specific context so that they report the processes that they go through in carrying out these tasks.
3. It is possible that students responded randomly to the Likert-scale inventories used in this study, which made it difficult to envision how often students really used such strategies.
4. The Inventory of Reading Strategies was originally meant to reflect students' reported strategy use, but teachers were also asked to comment on how useful strategies were to students and how often they should use them. As one of the EAP teachers commented, the inventory was meant for students or learners and not for teachers.
5. The study sample was small and insufficient for a significant statistical analysis. Also, the participants of this study were undergraduate students of psychology, and there may be some variations for students of other disciplines.

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## APPENDIX

English Reading Strategies					
<b>General Reading Behaviour</b>					
1.	I often read texts in my native language.	1	2	3	4 5
2.	I often read English texts.	1	2	3	4 5
<b>Pre-Reading: Before Reading A Text in English, I Do The Following:</b>					
3.	I read the topic or heading of the text.	1	2	3	4 5
4.	I look at the pictures or graphs of the text.	1	2	3	4 5
5.	I think about the reasons why I am reading the text.	1	2	3	4 5
6.	I read the first sentence of the text.	1	2	3	4 5
7.	I try to predict what the text will be about.	1	2	3	4 5
8.	I ask myself about the author's purpose for writing the text.	1	2	3	4 5
9.	I read the provided questions (if any) before I read the text.	1	2	3	4 5
<b>While Reading A Text in English, I Do The Following:</b>					
10.	I read the whole text quickly to understand the main idea.	1	2	3	4 5
11.	I translate the sentences into my native language for the main idea of the text.	1	2	3	4 5
12.	I check my predictions about the text while reading.	1	2	3	4 5
13.	I use the vocabulary and the structure to help me understand the main idea of the text.	1	2	3	4 5
14.	I must understand every word in the text in order to get the main idea.	1	2	3	4 5
15.	I split up (break) sentences into phrases or words for my understanding of the text.	1	2	3	4 5
16.	I take notes, highlight or underline the important points while I am reading the text.	1	2	3	4 5
17.	I use my background (world) knowledge to help me understand the text.	1	2	3	4 5
18.	I scan (read quickly) for the answers to some questions provided with the reading.	1	2	3	4 5
19.	I skip words if I don't know their meanings.	1	2	3	4 5
20.	I guess the meaning of some words from context clues.	1	2	3	4 5
21.	I use a bilingual dictionary (translating from English to my native language) whenever I need to get the meaning of an unknown word.	1	2	3	4 5
22.	I use an English-English dictionary if I need to know the meaning of an unknown word.	1	2	3	4 5
23.	I predict what is going to happen next while reading.	1	2	3	4 5
24.	I read the text in detail.	1	2	3	4 5
<b>Post-Reading (After Reading), I Do The Following:</b>					
25.	I make inferences after finishing reading the text.	1	2	3	4 5
26.	I summarize the text after I finish reading it.	1	2	3	4 5
27.	I discuss what I understand with my friends or teacher.	1	2	3	4 5
28.	I go back to read the details of the text for the answers to understand questions on it.	1	2	3	4 5
29.	I use a dictionary after I understand the main idea of the text.	1	2	3	4 5
30.	I take notes on all the new words and phrases for my vocabulary bank.	1	2	3	4 5
31.	I apply the knowledge from some texts in my everyday activities.	1	2	3	4 5
32.	I give myself a reward when I have finished.	1	2	3	4 5

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-EFFICACY BELIEFS AND ENGLISH ACHIEVEMENT TEST

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between self-efficacy perceptions and English achievement test. The study participants were 138 Iranian female students in two separate schools. Eighty-eight participants were third grade middle school students, and fifty participants were third grade high school students. The students' perception of self-efficacy was measured through a thirty-four item questionnaire called Morgan and Jinks student efficacy scale (MJSES) which was translated into Persian. English achievement tests that were publicly administered throughout country simultaneously were also obtained from school authorities. The results of the study indicated the existence of a positive and significant relationship between middle school students' self-efficacy and their English grades, and a positive and significant relationship between high school students' self-efficacy and their English grades. The analysis also indicated that there is not a significant difference between middle and high school students with regard to the relationship between their self-efficacy and English grades.

**KEYWORDS:** self-efficacy beliefs, achievement test, middle school, high school

### INTRODUCTION

Self-efficacy beliefs have gained increasing significance in educational research, particularly in studies of academic success. In this area, researchers have argued that students' self-efficacy beliefs are correlated with students' academic performances and achievement (Bandura, 1981; Morgan & Jinks, 1999; Pajares & Schunk, 2001). In other words, learners who are more efficacious have higher scores than those of their less efficacious peers. In this paper, the researcher tries to elaborate on this relationship to add to the body of the research in this field.

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Social cognitive theory is an approach to comprehending human cognition, action, motivation, and emotion. This theory posits that individuals are able to reflect on their performances and control them and that they can manipulate their environments instead of just passively responding to them. Social cognitive theory also supposes that individuals' actions are goal-oriented and are done on purpose which is guided by foresight. Meta-cognitive activities also play a significant role in this theory which implies that individuals are self-reflective and able to monitor their experiences and conducts. By regulating and controlling their environment, learners also exert direct control over their behavior and are capable of self-regulation.

Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara and Pastorelli (1996) believe that self-efficacy is derived from social cognitive theory. Bandura (1986) defines self-efficacy as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (p. 88).

The beliefs which individuals hold about themselves are important factors in regulating behavior. Therefore, behavior can be affected in two ways; either individuals engage in activities that they think they are confident and competent in or they refrain from tasks that they feel contrary. In fact, self-efficacy helps to determine how much effort, perseverance and resilience is put on an activity. It means that individuals with higher perception of efficacy have greater effort, persistence and resilience. Emotional reactions may also be determined by efficacy beliefs. For instance, people who have low self-efficacy perceptions believe that a task is hard and hence become stressful and

depressed easily. However, those individuals who hold a high sense of self-efficacy are more relaxed during an activity. Therefore, these factors are strong predictors of people achievement.

Self-efficacy beliefs are divided into three dimensions: magnitude or level, generality, and strength (Bandura, 1997). Magnitude or level is related to the number of stages of increasing difficulty that an individual feels he/she can handle. Generality of self-efficacy is whether success or failure experiences affect self-efficacy beliefs in the same situation or contexts. And, strength of self-efficacy points out to “the resoluteness of a people’s convictions that they can perform the behavior in question” (Maddux, 1995 p. 9).

There are two concepts that overlap with self-efficacy thus hard to be distinguished. The first construct is self-esteem. The most important difference between self-esteem and self-efficacy is that self-efficacy is not a personal characteristic (Maddux, 1995). Self-efficacy is pertinent to certain fields or even subfields of human behavior. Learners can have high levels of self-efficacy in a field such as mathematics, sports, or learning languages, but have low self-esteem. They can also have high self-esteem and feel inefficacious in math and science. The joint factor between self-efficacy and self-esteem is that both of them are assessments. The outstanding disparity between them is that self-efficacy is the assessment of capability, and self-esteem is the assessment of self-worth (Epstein & Morling, 1995). The second construct that overlaps with self-efficacy is confidence. Bandura (1997) points out that confidence is “a nondescript term that refers to strength of belief but does not necessarily specify what the certainty is about” (p. 382). An individual can be confident that he will fail or succeed in math. Self-efficacy is the belief in one’s strength to accomplish specific levels of performance. Confidence is not related to the person’s strength or capability to perform at a certain level.

There are a number of factors which are believed to affect self-efficacy, such as goal setting, information processing, models, encouragement and feedback, socio-economic status, and culture and self-perception.

1. Goal setting: one of the important cognitive processes is goal setting which affects outcome. Individuals who possess a goal are more efficacious for obtaining that goal and work diligently to get it (Schunk, 1995).
2. Information processing: those students who believe they are unable to handle the material taught possibly possess a low sense of self-efficacy. However, those who consider themselves capable of understanding the material are likely to have a high sense of efficacy (Schunk, 1995).
3. Models: learners may become efficacious by watching peers. Watching others doing a task successfully enhances self-efficacy since it makes a proper basis for comparison. However, observing a peer fail will decrease self-efficacy (Bandura et al, 1996).
4. Encouragement and feedback: persuading learners they “can do it” or providing them with positive feedback raises students’ self-efficacy levels (Schunk, 1996). During feedback, convincing learners that their success is the result of their own effort enhances motivation and self-efficacy.
5. Socio-economic status (SES): SES is believed to influence self-efficacy in a number of fields. Tong and Song (2004) conducted a study on 102 low and regular SES Chinese college students. They indicated that the general self-efficacy scores of high socioeconomic-status students were significantly higher than those of their low socioeconomic-status peers.
6. Culture and self-perceptions: Klassen (2004) studied self-efficacy perceptions across cultural groups. He analyzed 20 articles conducted over the course of 25 years. The outstanding finding in these articles was that subjects from Asian countries with collectivist environments possessed lower self-efficacy beliefs than subjects from western countries with individualist cultures.

Maddux and Lewis (1995) offered a number of strategies for self-efficacy information. The first one is verbal persuasion which means encouraging learners to cope with their stress and to risk that might result in success. The second strategy is the use of imaginal and vicarious experiences. Maddux and Lewis (1995) define vicarious experiences as watching of live or taped models doing a task that learners think they are unable to do. Their definition for imaginal experiences is the meetings in which learners visualize themselves coping with a demanding task, such as second language learners having a presentation in front of a group of native speakers. Enactive experiences are almost defined like vicarious experiences but the only dissimilarity is that, in enactive experiences, learners actually do or practice the task alone or with help. The next strategy is the control of physiological and emotional conditions which is offered by Schunk (1996). It can be clearly noticeable when learners are not confident about their abilities in performing a task through observing their physiological and emotional state. Some of those states are sweating, anxiety, nervousness, and increased heart rate. Consequently, through decreasing emotional arousal like anxiety during performing a task, we can raise self-efficacy. Maddux and Lewis (1995) suggest some

strategies for decreasing emotional and physiological arousal among which are breathing techniques, meditation, and relaxation.

Many researchers (Bandura, 1981; Jinks & Morgan, 1999; Pajares & Schunk, 2001) believe that self-efficacy of students can predict their academic success. It is argued that highly efficacious students are confident about their performance, work very hard in order not to fail, do challenging tasks and believe that their failure is due to insufficient effort or lack of enough knowledge that they believe they are capable of (Magogwe & Oliver, 2007). Bandura (1986) further suggested that success plays a significant role in self-belief and can determine one's level of achievement. Schunk (1995) highlighted that if students believe they are capable of performing better, they do not maintain low self-efficacy. Thus, Pajares (1996) asserted that "how individual interpret the result of their performance attainments, informs and alters their environment and their self-beliefs, which in turn inform and alter their subsequent performances" (p. 543). According to Pajares (2000), beliefs that learners build and develop and they consider them to be true are crucial factors in their success or failure in school. This would lead one to infer that research on achievement, on why students achieve or fail to achieve, and on why they do things they do in school should naturally focus, at least in great part, on students' self-efficacy beliefs.

With regard to language learning, the pertinent research studies indicate practical support for strong effects of self-efficacy perceptions on this field too (Yazici, Seyis, & Altun, 2011; Yusuf, 2011; Huang & Shanmao, 1996; Templin, 1999; Templin, Guile & Okuma, 2001; Anstrom, 2000). Based on her study on the key variables in language learning, Cotterall (1999) considered self-efficacy as a crucial variable in success of language learners. If people have high positive self-efficacy about learning a second language, then they believe that they have the power and abilities to reach this goal. On the other hand, people with low self-efficacy feel that they do not have the power and abilities to learn a language, thus admitting failure from the start.

While there are many studies in the literature, (e.g., Magogwe & Oliver, 2007; Yilmaz, 2010; Rahimi & Abedini, 2009; Mango, 2009), investigating the effect of self-efficacy beliefs on students and its relationship with different variables (e.g. learning strategies and proficiency), little attempt has been made to examine the variables as related to English achievement of Iranian middle school and high school students. That is why this study was designed to address this gap in the literature and focus on the relationship between Iranian female students' self-efficacy beliefs and their level of schooling and their scores in English achievement test.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

More particularly, the present research will answer the following questions:

- 1) Is there any relationship between the Iranian middle school female students' self-efficacy beliefs and their grades in English achievement test?
- 2) Is there any relationship between the Iranian high school female students' self-efficacy beliefs and their grades in English achievement test?
- 3) Is there any significant difference between middle school and high school Iranian female students regarding the relationship between their self-efficacy beliefs and their grades in English achievement test?

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study was primarily a correlational research. This quantitative data collection method was used in this study to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy and English achievement tests of middle and high-school female students. Data were collected from a scale that is Morgan-Jinks student efficacy scale (MJSES) and from students' English achievement test.

### ***Participants***



The participants of this study were 138 middle and high school female students. There were three intact classes of third grade middle school female students with eighty-eight participants, and three intact classes of third grade high school female students with fifty participants. They were almost of the same age in two separate schools in east of Tehran. The middle school students were around 15 years old, and high-school students were around 18 years old.

### ***Instrumentation***

A brief survey were conducted to collect demographic information from students including name, gender, age and English language background before the main part of the study that is Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale (1999).

The Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale (MJSES) were used in this study to collect self-efficacy beliefs of students. Learners rated themselves in this survey. "The MJSES is a more extensive inventory that makes use of self-report grades as a dependent variable" (Morgan & Jinks, 1999, p. 225). This questionnaire consists of 34 items and these 34 items have been divided into 3 subscales which are talent, effort and context. It was selected because, as Morgan and Jinks (1999) indicate, the MJSES scale has undergone extensive development to assure validity and reliability. Morgan and Jinks (1999), in their original study to develop this questionnaire, reported the overall reliability .82 and the reliability of each of the subscales of talent, effort and context .78, .66 and .70 respectively. However, these items were slightly modified to fit into the needs of this study. Since the researcher believed that the students were not that much proficient in English, the items were also translated into the Persian language. To further assess the reliability of the self-efficacy survey, a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was computed. The internal consistency of the scale was .74. Therefore, this scale is considered reliable with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .74 since, generally speaking, a value of more than .7 is discussed that possesses an acceptable degree of internal consistency (Pallant, 2002).

In addition, grades of the students in their final English achievement test were collected to find the relationship of these grades with self-efficacy beliefs of students. In order for the data to be reliable, the researcher asked authorities of the school to provide him with students' grades which were administered to them all over the country simultaneously.

### ***Procedure***

Permission was obtained from school authorities and from students' parents before distributing the questionnaire. The survey was distributed to the students to collect demographic information. Then, the researcher described the questionnaire to the students and he helped them with their problems while they were answering the items. The researcher stuck to the detailed procedure of the administration of the questionnaire as was dictated by the original authors in order not to disturb the reliability of the study. The students were enlightened that this questionnaire had nothing to do with their course grades so that they would be encouraged to answer the items honestly. The items were designed for a 4-point Likert-scale response. A certain behavior was stated and followed by a four-interval scale, each one corresponding to the extent to which the respondent believed the statement applied to her to him. An example is "I am a good science student" followed by really agree, kind of agree, kind of disagree, and really disagree. The participants were asked to circle one number that best represented the degree to which the corresponding statement applied to them. 1 represents 'strongly disagree', 2 'disagree', 3 'agree' and 4 'strongly agree'. Therefore, means above 2 represent positive self-efficacy beliefs, with higher results equating to stronger and more positive beliefs.

The Pearson r correlation was computed on the data received from the Liker-scale questionnaire and students' English achievement grades to delineate the degree of relationship between the two variables. The two correlations were also changed into Z-scores to find out whether the difference between them was statistically significant or not. Before calculating the mean score of each subject, the values of some items (Items No. 5, 15, 19, 20, 22, 23 and 28) had to be reversed because they carried an opposite weight to the purpose of this study.

## **RESULTS**

### ***The First Research Question***

Question 1: Is there any relationship between Iranian middle school female students' self-efficacy beliefs and their grades in English achievement test?

Data obtained from the self-efficacy scale and the middle school female students' English grades were used to answer this question. Eighty-eight students filled out the items. A Pearson correlation was computed on the scores obtained from both of these scores, and the results showed a medium correlation between the middle school students'



self-efficacy and their grades in English achievement test. There was a statistically significant positive correlation ( $r=.30$ ,  $p<.01$ ) between scores obtained on the self-efficacy scale and students' English grades. The results indicated that the Iranian middle school female students are also strongly efficacious with a mean of above two ( $M= 3.18$ ).

The descriptive Statistics and correlation between middle school students' self-efficacy beliefs and their grades in English achievement test is summarized in table 1 below.

*Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, and the Correlation: Middle School Female Students' Self-efficacy and English Achievement Test (N=88)*

	English Scores	Questionnaire Scores
<i>English Scores</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>.301*</i>
<i>Questionnaire Scores</i>	<i>.301*</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Mean</i>	<i>18.37</i>	<i>3.18</i>
<i>SD</i>	<i>1.4</i>	<i>.27</i>

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### ***The Second Research Question***

Question 2: Is there any relationship between Iranian high school female students' self-efficacy beliefs and their grades in English achievement test?

Data from the self-efficacy survey and those from the English achievement test were used to answer this question. A Pearson correlation was computed on scores obtained from the self-efficacy scale and those obtained from English test. The results showed a medium association between the two sets of scores. There was a statistically significant positive relationship between self-efficacy and English achievement test ( $r=.41$ ,  $p<.01$ ). The coefficients of correlation found above rejected the null hypothesis and confirmed that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between self-efficacy and English achievement test. High school students were also strongly efficacious with a mean of 3.03.

The descriptive Statistics and correlation between high school students' self-efficacy beliefs and their grades in English achievement test is summarized in table 2 below.

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations, and the Correlation: High School Female Students' Self-efficacy and English Achievement Test (N=50)

	English Scores	Questionnaire Scores
<i>English Scores</i>	1	.410*
<i>Questionnaire Scores</i>	.410*	1
<i>Mean</i>	17.32	3.03
<i>SD</i>	1.97	.25

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### **The Third Research Question**

Question 3: Is there any significant difference between Iranian middle school and high school female students regarding the relationship between their self-efficacy beliefs and their grades in English achievement test?

Data from the first and second questions were used to answer this question. The researcher used the correlation between middle school students' self-efficacy and their English grades on the one hand, and the correlation between high school students' self-efficacy and their English grades on the other hand to see whether there are statistically significant difference between two sets of scores. In other words, the investigator tried to see whether the correlation difference between the first and second questions is statistically significant or not. The table 1 and 2 given above show that the correlation between middle school students' self-efficacy and their English scores was  $r=30$ , while for high school students it was slightly higher,  $r=41$ . Although these two values seem different, is this difference big enough to be considered significant? To figure out whether the difference between these two values was significant, the researcher adopted the formula mentioned in "SPSS Survival Manual" (Pallant 2002). The two correlations obtained from the first and second questions were changed into Z scores by the means of "Transformation of r to z" table. Then, these values were slotted into the equation which is utilized to calculate  $Z_{obs}$  (Pallant 2002). The obtained value of  $Z_{obs}$  was  $-.694$ . The next step was to determine if the  $Z_{obs}$  value is statistically significant. According to Pallant (2002), "If the  $Z_{obs}$  value that you obtained is between  $-1.96$  and  $+1.96$  then you cannot say that there is a statistically significant difference between the two correlation coefficients". Therefore, the null hypothesis (no difference between the two groups) was not rejected since the value of  $Z_{obs}$  that is  $-.694$  was not beyond the specified values. The investigator could conclude that correlation difference between middle and high school students was not statistically significant.

In general, it seems that the results of this study are in line with what other researchers have attained. There is a positive correlation between self-efficacy and English achievement test. The correlation between high school students' self-efficacy and their English achievement test ( $r=.41$ ) was stronger than that of middle school students ( $r=.30$ ). With regard to the strength of self-efficacy, the middle school students ( $M=3.18$ ) are slightly more efficacious than high school students ( $M=3.03$ ). English achievement scores of middle school students ( $M=18.37$ ) were also higher than those of high school students ( $M=17.32$ ).

### **DISCUSSION**

Second and foreign language learners, instructors, and other language practitioners are completely cognizant of the existence of learning self-efficacy. Many research studies have been replicated investigating the association between self-efficacy and language ability in various contexts, sometimes they found a relationship, and other times failed to find one. In this study, the investigator tried to add to the body of existing literature about the relationship between self-efficacy and language ability. Previous studies indicate that there is a statistically positive relationship between students' self-efficacy and language ability (Huang & Shanmao, 1996; Templin, 1999; Templin, Guile & Okuma, 2001; Cotterall, 1999; Rahimi & Abedini, 2009).

This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy and language achievement test in a foreign language environment. Data were gathered from 138 middle and high school students in Iran. A thirty-four item questionnaire was used to measure self-efficacy, and students' English achievement grades to measure their English ability. Pearson correlations showed a statistically significant positive relationship between middle school

students' self-efficacy and their English grades ( $r=.30$ ), and a statistically significant positive relationship between high school students' self-efficacy and their English grades ( $r=.41$ ). The first and second correlations were changed into Z-scores to find the statistically significant difference between the two correlations. The analysis conducted showed that there is not a statistically significant difference between the two correlations ( $Z_{obs} = -.694$ ).

There was a statistically significant correlation between students' self-efficacy beliefs and their English grades. However, when we calculated the coefficient of determination of correlations for the first two questions, the shared variance for the questions was 0.09 and 0.16 respectively. It means that there is not much overlap between the two variables. Self-efficacy beliefs help to explain nearly .09 and .16 per cent of the variance in respondents' scores on the English achievement test. This is not a respectable amount of variance explained when compared with some other studies conducted in this field. When we take a closer look at the data, we can see that means of both questionnaire and English grades were high for both middle and high school students. The problem here is that self-efficacy beliefs contribute to high language ability in some students, but fails to do so in some other. So, according to the results of this study, at least in some cases, there is not a large correlation between self-efficacy and English achievement test and there may be some other factors which are more important than self-efficacy with regard to English proficiency. Therefore, considering success in English proficiency as a result of self-efficacy must be looked at cautiously.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICAIONS**

Teachers and school or institute authorities have to strive to enhance learners' perception of self-efficacy. Many studies have been conducted to enhance or alter students' self-efficacy by a variety of methods. Schunk and his colleagues have offered some useful strategies that can be utilized in a classroom environment. Teachers have to set proximal rather than distant goals for students (Schunk, 1983), combine process goals with progress feedback (Schunk & Swartz, 1993), choose peers with similar characteristics as models (Schunk & Hanson, 1985; Schunk, Hanson, & Cox, 1987), provide effort attributional feedback for students' improvement (Schunk & Cox, 1986), and make learners to self-evaluate (Schunk & Ertmer, 1999). These methods are considered to boost learners' sense of self-efficacy. Therefore, teachers have to cultivate academic self-efficacy in their students. Pajares (2006) believes that this can be done through providing students with successful experience, nurturing optimism, and emphasizing students' skill development. It is recommended teachers provide students with effective modeling practices and select peers for classroom models properly to make sure students view themselves as well in learning ability as to the models. Measuring students' self-beliefs can help authorities to have important insights about their students' academic motivation, behavior, and future choices. For example, a low self-efficacy perception can cause maladaptive academic behaviors, ignorance of courses and careers, and decreased school interest and achievement (Hackett, 1995). Students who possess low self-efficacy perceptions in a specific task are unlikely to choose that task, and they will more rapidly quit when they face difficulty.

The efficacy beliefs of teachers are also relevant to students' achievement. Efficacious teachers build a classroom environment in which academic objectives are met. There also exists emotional support and encouragement necessary to meet challenges and achieve academic mastery. All teachers strive seriously to nurture the self-beliefs of their students since it is apparent that these self-beliefs can have useful or harmful influences. Teachers who only consider teaching as nurturing their students' cognitive skills or who are of the opinion that cultivating their students' often-fragile egos is not their responsibility have to rethink their role as educators of children.

Due to the fact that, young children are incapable of having proper self-appraisals, they mostly count on the judgments of others to build their own confidence and self-worth. When parents and teachers give children challenging tasks and meaningful activities that can be performed successfully and support these efforts with encouragement, they help children to develop a powerful sense of self-efficacy. Parents play an important role in raising self-efficacy of students. Parental involvement and producing of congenial school environments will result in arousal of children's interest in schooling and make them develop high academic self-efficacy. Both the home and the school have the burdensome responsibility of developing physical and psychological environment and of creating a friendly home and school environment, as these are necessary for raising the academic self-efficacy of the children.

The effect of self-efficacy on achievement does not end with schooling. Therefore, schools have the extra responsibility of preparing confident and efficacious individuals for future. As Albert Bandura (1986) has emphasized, “educational practices should be gauged not only by the skills and knowledge they impart for present use but also by what they do to beliefs about their capabilities, which affects how they approach the future. The students who develop a strong sense of self-efficacy are well equipped to educate themselves when they have to rely on their own initiative” (p. 417).

These implications suggest that future research must be focused on the creation of congenial school and home environment, development of teaching skills, and educational practices that are aimed to nurture self-efficacy while at the same time to encourage the adoption of a mastery goal.

### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

One of the limitations of this study was that the number of schools and classes from which the data were collected. In addition, the participants of the present research were all female students in the same district of Tehran. Also, it was not possible for the researcher to randomly select the students, so he chose intact classes. Therefore, it was difficult to generalize the finding of this research to the entire population of students in Iran. Another limitation of this study was the administration procedure. Some of the students did not cooperate with the researcher and they did not take the questionnaire seriously. This may have deviated the results of the study. Last but not the least, the use of questionnaire as the only means of data collection has its own limitations. Although questionnaires are widely used as a data collection procedure in conducting studies, it cannot be used as the only source of the information. However, questionnaire is the only instrument available for collecting self-report data.

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# SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FIRST AND SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN THE CONTEXT OF ARAB LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

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## ABSTRACT

This article aims at investigating the similarities and differences between first language (Arabic) and second language (English) acquisition in the context of Arab Learners of English ALEs. The author compares and contrasts the target languages (Arabic and English) to identify the similarities and differences in the acquisition of L1 and L2. The analyses of the linguistic items taken from L1 and L2 indicate that there are similarities and differences in the acquisition of both Arabic Language as an L1 and English Language as an L2. It is also indicated that L1 has positive and negative impact on the acquisition of L2 as well.

**KEY WORDS:** *First Language Acquisition, Second Language Acquisition, Similarities, Differences, Errors/Mistakes, Overgeneralization, and Crosslinguistic influence*

## INTRODUCTION

Ervin-Tripp (1974, p. 205) came to the conclusion that the first and the second language learning is similar in natural situations. Others, such as Taylor (1983, p. 146), found credible evidence that second language learners use many strategies similar to those used for learning a first language. He found that elementary and intermediate students of ESL use overgeneralization and transfer in learning the target language. When he examined the students' errors, he found that "reliance on overgeneralization is directly proportional to proficiency in the target language, and reliance on transfer is inversely proportional". In other words, early learners transfer and later learners overgeneralize.

This article presents the first and second language acquisition theories aiming at finding the similarities and differences in the acquisition of L1 and L2. This paper is divided into five main sections: section one is the introduction, the literature review is presented in section two, section three is the analysis and the discussion, the conclusion is presented in section four, and finally, the references are in section five. The following section presents the literature review.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

First, a comparison is made between first and second language acquisition. In this comparison, similarities will be presented first, followed by differences between acquiring the L1 and the L2.

### *Similarities between First and Second Language Acquisition*

Ervin-Tripp (1974) challenged the idea that it is not logical to develop a similar theory for first and second language acquisition. She explained that the notion that L1 and L2 acquisition have little in common theoretically has been based on two common misconceptions: the first one is that; the foundation for the L2 is built largely from a transfer



of the rules of the L1. The second misconception is that only the L2 is constructed from prior conceptual knowledge within the learner.

In a discussion of the first misconception, Newmark (1983) argued that learners, who have a need to perform before they are ready, will revert to the L1 syntactic rules more as a result of ignorance than of interference. Their dependence on L1 seems to occur predominantly at the beginning of the acquisition process when there is an intense desire to communicate. Sometimes beginners' level learners will use not only the L1 structures with the L2 words, but the L1 words as well.

According to the second misconception, researchers agree that the L1, like the L2, is constructed from prior conceptual knowledge. Bruner (1978, p. 247) referring to the L1, observed that "language emerges as a procedural acquisition to deal with events that the child already understands conceptually and to achieve communicative objectives that the child can realize by other means".

Similar to Ervin-Tripp (1974), O'Grady (1999) mentioned that, if the human brain is equipped to handle language, then certainly this ability is not confined to the L1 only but it can be for the L2, the L3 and so on. In a study of American children learning French in Geneva, carried out by Ervin-Tripp (1974) to show that the brain uses many similar strategies for L2 acquisition, she mentioned that the subjects in her study used three sources for acquiring French. The first source was peers (where they interact in and out of the classroom); the second source was school (where content-area subject matter was taught in French); while the third source was home (where there is exposure to parents who often spoke French to servants and to the mass media)

Richard-Amato (2003, p. 31) confirmed learners may depend quite heavily on first language knowledge to communicate in the target language at first, but they begin to work within the framework of the target language once they are able to form hypotheses about the new language. He also found that learners make errors mainly due to overgeneralization of the newly acquired structure.

In an attempt to investigate the reason behind overgeneralization and transfer, Richard-Amato (2003, p. 31) mentioned that Taylor pointed out that overgeneralization and transfer are the result of the necessity to reduce language to the simplest possible system. He (Taylor) also referred to Jain's (1969) observation that this phenomenon, overgeneralization, represents an effort to lessen the cognitive burden involved in trying to master something as complex as language. It can be concluded from what is mentioned above that the second language learner like the first language learner, attempts to "regularize, analogize, and simplify" in an effort to communicate.

#### ***Differences between first and second language acquisition***

In general, because second language learners are usually older when they start acquiring a second language they are more developed cognitively than first language learners. Marinova-Todd, Marshall, and Snow (2000) suggested that old learners appear to have distinct advantages in several areas: they tend to learn more quickly than first language learners, they have greater knowledge of the world in general than first language learners, they have more control over the input they receive related to L2 than first language learners, they have the ability to learn and apply rules which facilitate the acquisition process, they already have a first language from which they can transfer strategies and linguistic knowledge.

Some researchers do not support this: Richard-Amato (2003) pointed out that being older may not always be advantageous in learning a second language; Long (1990) mentioned that it seems that older learners have some maturational constraints affecting the language acquisition process; MacIntyre and Charos (1996) mentioned that old learners may find themselves afraid to make errors; Newmark (1983) commented that old learners may have poor attitudes and lack motivation, depending on their feelings and their condition in learning L2; Schachter (1974) and Kleinmann (1977) added that older learners may avoid using certain structures altogether because they are not part of their first language repertoire.

To sum up, the similarities between first and second language acquisition appear to lie in the process itself, and the important differences between first and second language acquisition development appear to centre on affective

factors, cognitive functioning abilities, and certain kinds of knowledge. In the following, the differences and similarities between Arabic language and English language will be presented.

### ***Differences and similarities between Arabic language and English language***

Khurma and Hajaj (1997) mentioned that most common errors committed by Arab learners of English, especially in writing, are related, to the sentences: punctuation, capitalization, word order, expansion, and the use of verb in forming the tenses. For the sake of efficient discussions in section 3, in this section these related problems are presented, in general to give an explanation for the differences and similarities between the structure of linguistic items in L1 and L2.

#### ***Types of mistakes:***

In this section the researcher presents two main types of problems that face Arab learners of English in learning English language as L2. The first one: Problems arise from Arabic interference, which cause (interlingual mistakes). The second one: Problems attribute to the English language itself (Non-Arabic background) which cause (intralingual mistakes).

Types of mistakes committed by Arab learners of English are many and varied. Mistakes are originated in Arabic language will be listed under "Sources of Difficulty" in each sub-section below, but few examples will be given as an introduction, followed by detailed discussion in section 3.

#### ***Statements:***

*Type of mistake*

*Omission of be and have.*

*Verb-subject instead of*

*Subject-verb.*

*Repetition of the subject as a pronoun.*

*Lack of subject-verb agreement.*

*Wrong word-order.*

*Examples*

*\* Ahmed in the house.*

*\* The book with me.*

*\* Was the man a doctor.*

*\* The only son in the family he creates a lot of troubles.*

*\*There is no machines in the field.*

*\*They were drinking enjoyable their tea*

#### ***Negation:***

*Not the man doctor.*

*He does not gone.*

*Not lost anybody his book. Instead of. No one/ Nobody lost his book.*

#### ***Questions:***

*Type of mistake*

*Wrong word order.*

*Difficulty with do.*

*Use of wrong verb form.*

*Wrong question tag.*

*Examples*

*\*Can ride the children?*

*\*Why we learn English?*

*\*Do I must study this lesson?*

*\*Have they never go to a restaurant?*

*\*You visited him, isn't it?*

#### ***Commands:***

*Type of mistake*

*Omission of do.*

*Use of no instead of not.*

*Use don't let's instead for let's not*

*Examples*

*\*Not play here.*

*\*No play here.*

*\*Don't let's go away.*

#### ***Exclamations:***

*Type of mistake*

*Omission of verb.*

*Use of how instead of what.*

*Examples*

*\*How beautiful the girl.*

*\*How a beautiful girl.*

*The differences in forming the simple sentence in English language and Arabic language*

Khurma and Hajaj (1997) mentioned that there are differences in sentence type and structures in both English and Arabic. For example:

a) Arabic belongs to a family of languages, the Semitic family, the members of which have little in common with the Indo-European Languages to which English belongs.

b) All sentences in English-a part from the imperative and question forms that require yes-no answers- have an explicit subject at the beginning, while Arabic has two types of sentences:

- |                      |    |                      |
|----------------------|----|----------------------|
| 1. Nominal sentences | —→ | beginning with noun. |
| 2. Verbal sentences  | —→ | beginning with verb. |

c) Strictly speaking, Arabic has just two tense\_ one indicating finished time or past action and another indicating unfinished or present ( and future) action. Such tenses as the present perfect are non-existent in Arabic.

d) An Arabic grammar has three parts of speech: noun, verb and adjective. Whereas English includes heterogeneous groups each of which belong to a different part of speech in English.

e) Arabic is an inflectional language with

- Prefixes, infixes and suffixes to denote
- Gender (masculine and feminine)
- Case (genitive, subjective and objective)
- Number, tenses etc.

#### *Major sentence types in L1 and L2*

For the purpose of explaining the problem of interference, and for convenience I will use we will use the following terms will be used to refer to the major sentence types:

a) Statements (including negatives): in which the subject is always present and preceded the verb, e.g. The boy will visit his aunt.

b) Questions: which are marked by one or more of the following:

- 1 - **Yes-no** answers. e.g.  
Will you visit us today? Yes, I will.
- 2 - A question word at the beginning e.g.  
Who came here yesterday?
- 3 - Arising intonation, e.g.  
You will speak to the boss?

c) Commands or imperative: in which the subject is implicit or understood, E.g. take this with you.

d) Exclamations: e.g. What a lovely day!

e) Social formulas, e.g. How do you do?

#### *Cross-linguistic influence of L1 in Acquiring L2*

Mourssi (2013c) mentioned that transfer is one of the most important elements which affect interlanguage forms. Investigating it can lead to a better understanding of the source/origin and the development of interlanguage. Researchers were doubtful about the issue of transfer, but some of them have said that it is related to language acquisition and should be discussed. Lado (1957) believed that people rely on their first language when they learn the target language. On the other hand, other researchers Dulay and Burt (1974, p. 24) said that transfer has nothing to do with interlanguage.

In general, Odlin (1989, p. 6), and Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991, p. 5) mentioned that “the study of transfer, or crosslinguistic influence, is peculiar among language acquisition and the phenomenon of language use”. In particular, Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008, p. 4) argued that crosslinguistic influence refers to the influence of one language on another in an individual mind. They illuminated several areas of meaning and crosslinguistic influence which had not been carefully looked at before. Mourssi (2013) referred that Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008) presented interesting findings and an analysis of the relationship between language transfer and SLA. Based on Odlin’s (1989) claims, and Jarvis and Pavlenko’s (2008) findings, the researcher found the positive and negative impact of L1 in the acquisition of L2 in the context of ALEs.

### ***The Importance of Grammar in Learning L1 and its Impact on Learning L2***

Mourssi (2013a, 2013d) mentioned that prescriptive Arabic grammarians think that grammar is the only element which shows how language is used. They also view the traditional grammar of any language as a set of rules, and the major concept in learning language is to learn its grammar first. According to them, the most common and appropriate learning strategy of learning is memorization, which is reflected in the way they learn L2. They think that memorization helps learners to achieve the tasks required in learning the target language better than any other strategy. This affects the methods of teaching followed by teachers of English for Arab learners who try to achieve the objectives of the target task in a proper and a suitable way which matches learners' attitudes. Similarly, it affects the way Arab learners of English acquire a second language in general and second language grammar in particular. This view is also reflected in the SLA research done based on samples taken from Arabic speakers of English (Mourssi, 2012b, 2013b).

Learning English (as an L1 or L2), grammar can be viewed in different ways. Hymes (1972) states, English speakers need to know the rules of grammar with the rules of language use in order to communicate in a language. Dickins and Woods (1988, p. 630) believe that the role of grammar is to convey and interpret meanings. While Fuller and Gundel (1987, p. 70) suggest that grammatical rules (patterns that are studied by syntacticians and morphologists) were basically designed to help people get their meaning across clearly and accurately.

Furthermore, Mourssi (2013) referred that a number of linguists claim that grammar is essential for appropriate communication. Lock (1996, p. 267) posited that language is a resource for communication and claims that grammar lies at the heart of communication and is not an optional add-on to communication. Similarly, Leech and Svartvik (1982, p. 4) viewed grammar as the focal part of language which relates to phonology and to semantics as well. Harmer (1991, p. 23) believed that knowledge of grammar is essential for competent users of a language. Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) asserted that grammar is one of three interconnected dimensions of language which include: grammar, semantics and pragmatics.

Similar to the perspectives offered by Arab language grammarians, Klein (1986) postulated that in order to learn a foreign language, learners should have the ability to analyse the linguistic input in the target language. More recently, Gao (2001, p. 326) describes grammar as a catalyst for second language accuracy and fluency.

Ismail (2010, p. 143) demonstrates that Arab learners of English had positive views about the use of the CCCC grammar model, which is presented in four stages: Confrontation, Clarification, Conformation, and Consolidation. The author also highlighted certain students' beliefs about the importance and the positive influence of explicit grammar teaching for learning the conventions of sentences and utterances. In the following section, discussion will be presented.

## **DISCUSSION**

In this section, a detailed explanation for each types of mistake related to Arabic language as an L1 will be presented first, followed by a comparison between L1 and L2. First, types of mistakes related to L1.

### ***Types of mistakes related to Arabic language***

#### ***Statements***

Where ALEs commit different types of mistakes which include: omission of be and have, verb-subject instead of subject-verb order, repetition of the subject as a pronoun, lack of subject-verb agreement, and wrong word-order (Kharma & Hajaj, 1997). These types of mistakes will be presented one by one in the following.

#### ***Omission of be and have***

Sources of difficulty: This kind of mistakes is frequently made by Arab learners of English in the earlier stages more than advanced stages of learning. It is caused by the absence in Arabic nominal sentences in the present tense of an equivalent of the English verb to be.

- \* The boy active. الولد نشيط. /al-waladu nashit/ The boy is active.
- \* With me a book. معي الكتاب. /ma i Kitabun/ I have a book.

*Verb-subject instead of subject-verb order*

This is very common mistakes committed by ALEs. We get sentences like these:

- \* Reads the boy his lesson. يقرأ الولد درسه. /yaqr'u al-waladu darsahu/ The boy reads his lesson.
- \* Laughs the boy. يضحك الولد. /yadhaku al-waladu/ The boy laughs.

This also applies to the first two patterns when the verb *be* is in the past and future.

- \* Was the man a doctor. كان الرجل طبيباً. /Kana-r-rajulu tabiban/
- \* Will be the boy a man. سيصبح الصبي رجلاً. /sa-yusbihu as sabiyu rajulan/

It is worth mentioning that the intermediate students are committing a few mistakes due to Arabic interference because the mistakes occur in translation from Arabic into English. For example:

- \* I was agreed with you
- \* Was giving the lecture.
- \* left us and ran away.

*Repetition of the subject as a pronoun*

This mistake is probably due to the fact that every verb in Arabic is considered to have a subject, especially in nominal sentences where the predicate is a verb.

The boy is running. الولد يركض. /al-waladu yarkudu/

However, the learners start the sentence with a noun and that the predicate in the verbal sentences is made up of the verb and its subject. Also, these mistakes could occur due to transferred into English.

- \* Amal and Farah they were here an hour ago.
- \* The only daughter in the family, as I mentioned before, she creates a lot of troubles for her parents.
- \* My parents, if they have enough money, they will travel to the UK.

*Lack of subject-verb agreement*

This is an area where one does not expect any mistakes from an Arab Learners of English ALEs in whose language agreement between subject and predicate /verb permeates the whole language and covers: Numbers as in English, Gender and Case. For example:

- \* Children does not care about their future.
- \* This reports contains the all the details.
- \* Women has the right to elect.
- \* The girl were on her way back home.
- \* They reads a story every weekend.

This kind of mistakes (in the last example given) may occur due to the fact that the (s) of the simple present tense is associated with the (s) of the plural, and the inflectional area which is often disregarded or forgotten.

In the first three examples, the mistakes may be explained in terms of coordinated elements. Also, it might be explicable if the subject and the verb were far apart from each other. For example:

- \* The flight between Muscat and Cairo were run per week.
- \* The young boy who was standing with his brother were talking on the phone.

*Wrong word-order*

- \* He can learn from how to win. \* I took from him his ball. \* My friend has also a bike.

*Negation: Source of difficulty*

a) Negation patterns in English and Arabic differ widely, and has not impact on the process of learning English negation by Arab Learners of English in particular. The following mistakes occur due to Arabic interference (in early stages).

- \* Not the man doctor. \* The man not doctor. \* I not went. \* He write not his homework.

b) Mistakes may be common to many other linguistic group learning English as a foreign language.

- \* He don't go. \* He doesn't goes. \* He do not goes. \* He did not goes. \* He did not went. \* He went not. \* He not takes/took his breakfast. \* He is may (be) studying at home.

c) Certain type of negations that may constitute some difficulty to Arabic-speaking students. One special type of negation is the use of, no, nobody, no one, none, and nothing.

*No* has the Arabic counterpart /la/

I have some money.

عندي بعض النقود /'indi ba'du nuqudin/

I have no money.

لا نقود عندي /la nuquda indi/

(Literally: \*No money with me)

Nobody/ No one lost his book can have the Arabic equivalent:

لا أحد فقد كتابه / la ahada faqada kitabahu/

(Literally: \*Nobody/ no one lost his book)

But is more commonly rendered as:

لم يفقد أحدا كتابه /lam yafqid ahadun kitabahu/

(Literally: \*Not (+ past) lose any body his book)

*Questions: Sources of difficulty*

Comparison of question patterns in English and Arabic reveals the following differences.

a) A big problem is word-order, especially when there is an auxiliary verb or be or a modal in the English statement:

*Yes\_No questions:*

- \* Can ride the children? \* Has been the teacher looking.....?

*Wh questions:*

- \*What her fate will be? \*Where the boys are going?

b) The use in English of the operator **do**, and its absence in Arabic.

*Type of mistake*

1- Inversion without do:

2- Omission of do:

3- Redundant do:

*Yes-no questions:*

\*Go you to school every day?

\*Know the girls many games?

\*Do I must study this lesson?

\*Did Maha was eating an

apple?

*Wh-questions:*

\*What bought the girl?

\*Why ran the girl to school?

\*Why we learn English?

\*What Nabil and Isam

bought?

\*Who did want to eat?

\*What do they have found?



4- Use of do instead of be:	*Does the house almost built? *Does the boy playing football?	_____
5- Use of be instead of do:	*Is the girl know many languages? *Was he know the answer?	_____
6- Omission of be:	_____	*How the student going? *What Fatima eating?
7- Redundant be:	*Are the children can ride? *Is the teacher has been looking?	*Who is wanted to eat? *What are they have stolen?
8- Use of do or be instead of other auxiliaries:	_____	*What were they ate yesterday? *Why does he going home?

c) As elsewhere, the Arab Learners of English are liable to use the wrong verb form in the formation of questions. For example:

- \* Does he knew the answer? \* Has the teacher been look at their notebook?
- \* Do the boy know the answer? \* Is the teacher teaching?

d) The Arab Leaners of English are usually confused about question-tags, and he may use only one (isn't it- alaysa kadalik?) in all cases.

#### *Commands: Sources of difficulty*

It seems that the problem with commands lies in the formation of the negative, where there are three areas of difficulty.

a) Omission of **do**:

- \* Not play here. \* Not eat too much.

b) Use of **no** instead of **not**:

- \* No play here. \* No smoke cigarettes.

c) Use of **do not let's** for **let's not**:

- \* Do not let's go away. \* Do not let's be late.

#### *Exclamations: Sources of difficulty*

a) The main mistakes that occurs here is the omission of the verb:

- \* How beautiful the girl! \* How fine the boy.

b) Another mistakes occurs when *how* (used with adjectives and adverbs) is confused with *what* (used before noun), especially when the noun preceded by an adjective.

- \* How a long journey! \* How a beautiful girl!

#### *Social formulas*

"Social formulas are simple acts of communication whereby people establish and maintain friendly relation with one another." Both English and Arabic employ a wide variety of social formulas (Kharma and Hajaj, 1997). Example: How do you do?

There is no special problem for Arab learners of English in this area except differentiating between friendly and formal formulas. Its solution depends on mastery of the forms and using them in the appropriate context.

#### *Comparison between L1 (Arabic Language) and L2 (English Language)*



### Statements

#### Statements in English language

In English the basic statements sentence patterns are the following:

1 – Subject be Adverb	John is there /in the garden.
2 – Subject be Complement	John is kind. ( adjective)
	John is a doctor (noun)
3 – Subject Linking Verb Complement	John looks sad
4 – Subject Intransitive Verb	The boy laughs
5 – Subject Transitive Verb Direct Object	The boy reads a lesson
6 – Subject Transitive Verb Direct Object adverb	The boy put the book in the desk
7 – Subject Transitive Verb Direct Object Complement	They made him a leader
8 – Subject Transitive Verb indirect Object Complement	She gave me a present.
9 - There be Subject Adverb	There is a man at the door.
10 - It be Adjective that	It is important that you come on time.

#### Statements in Arabic

a) The first two patterns are:

(Subject be Adverb) → Ahmed is in the house. أحمد في البيت /ahmadu fi-l-baiti/

(Literally: Ahmed in the house.)

(Subject be Complement) → The boy is active. الولد نشيط /al-waladu nasitun/

(Literally: The boy active.)

In the past, future, infinitive, gerund forms and often in the form of participle, the verb *be* appears in Arabic (it acts as auxiliary and belongs to a special group of verb called أفعال ناقصة)

b) The third pattern (Subject Linking Verb Complement):

Ahmed looks sad. أحمد يبدو حزينا /ahmadu yabdu hazinan/

OR يبدو أحمد حزينا /yabdu ahmadu hazinan/

c) The same apply to the fourth sentence pattern (Subject Intransitive Verb)

The boy laughs. الولد يضحك /al waladu yadhaku/

OR يضحك الولد. /yadhaku al waladu/

d) The fifth pattern (Subject Transitive Verb Direct Object) has a variant with the verb *have*. In Arabic the verb

(أملك) / Amaluk/ (own) is used,

I have ( own/ possess) a book.

أملك كتابا / amliku kitaban/

e) Sentence patterns 5 and 6 – (Subject Transitive Verb Direct Object Adverb) are also quite similar in English and Arabic, except that in Arabic the verb may begin the sentence:

e.g. the boy is reading his lesson .

الولد يقرأ درسه / al-waladu yaqrapu darsahu/

The second form is preferable when the verb is in the past or future, and when the subject is a pronoun, or an indefinite noun:

The boy read his lesson.

قرأ الولد درسه /qara'a l-waladu darsahu/

سيقرأ الولد درسه /sa-yaqra'u-l-waladu darsahu/

f) Sentence pattern 7 (Subject Transitive Verb Direct Object Complement) is also quite similar in English, e.g.:

The committee elected Salim chairman.

اللجنة انتخبت سليما رئيسا

/ al-lajnatu intakabat saliman ra'ison/

g) Sentence 8 (Subject Transitive Verb Direct Object Complement) is also quite similar in English and Arabic In Arabic the sentence may begin with a verb.

The school gave Aziz a prize.

المدرسة أعطت عزيزا جائزة /al-madrasatu a'tat' azizan ja'izatan/

h) As for sentence 9 (there be Subject Adverb) the Arabic equivalent, (يوجد /yujadu/), of *there is/are* is not frequently used in the surface structures.

There is a man at the door.

يوجد رجل بالباب

/ yujadu rajulun bi-l-babi/

i) The impersonal pronoun *it* in English have a counterpart in Arabic, but it doesn't follow exactly the same English pattern.

It is important that you arrive on time.

Usually has the Arabic counterpart:

أنه من الأهمية بمكان أن تصل في الوقت المناسب.

/inna-hu min-al-ahammiyyati bi makan an tasila fi-l-waqt-l-munasib/

(Literally: \* It's of great importance that you arrive on time)

### *Negation*

#### *Negation in English*

a) English contains an auxiliary or model verb, e.g (be, have, shall, will, must, may, etc.) is negated by inserting the negative participle *not* after the auxiliary verb, e.g.

John is playing football.

John is not playing football.

b) Statements with one finite verb (other than *be*) it is negated by inserting the auxiliary *do* and *not* before the verb, e.g.

John plays football.

John doesn't play football.

We come to school every day.

We don't come to school every day.

c) The verb *be* is always negated with the participle *not* only.

Mary is a clever teacher. Mary is not a clever teacher.

#### *3.2.2.2 Negation in Arabic*

a) *Not* in English has several substitutions in Arabic, namely:

لا, ليس, ما, لا la/, /ma/, /laysa/, /lam/, /lan/

b) Arabic employs no counterpart for *do*

c) The negative particle is always placed before the verb in verbal sentences and before the subject in nominal sentences.

أحمد يلعب الكرة / ahmadu yal'abu-l-kurah/

(Ahmed is playing/ plays football)

أحمد لا يلعب الكرة / ahmadu la yal'abu-l-kurah/

(Literally: \*Ahmed not plays/ not is playing football)

d) The particle /laysa/ is employed in nominal sentences.

Whereas /ma/ and /la/ use in both types of sentences.

/lam/ and /lan/ negate only the verb and indicate time-reference.

أكل أنور برتقالة / akala anwaru burtuqalatan/

(Anwar ate an orange)

لم يأكل أنور برتقالة / lam ya?kul anwaru burtuqalatan/

(Literally: \* Not (+past) eat Ahmed an orange)

### *Questions*

#### *Questions in English*

The major types of question in English: These are tag-question, consisting of an operator, plus pronoun with or without a negative particle.

a) Did you take the book?

b) Did you take the book or the pen?

- c) Who took the book? d) Who did you meet?  
e) When (Why/ how) did you go to see John?  
f) The lesson hasn't finished, has yet? The lesson has finished, hasn't yet?

These are declarative question, which are exceptional types of *yes-no* questions.

- g) You have got the book? They will be there. I suppose?

#### *Questions in Arabic*

The previous questions are similar to their counterparts in Arabic, e.g.:

- a) هل أخذت الكتاب؟ /hal akadta-l-kitaba/?  
(Literally: \*Take you the book instead of did you take the book?)  
b) هل أخذت كتابا أم قلمًا؟ /hal akadta-l-kitaba am qalamam/?  
/akadta kitaban am qalamn/?  
(Literally: Took you a book or a pen? Instead of did you take a book or a pen?)  
c) من أخذ الكتاب؟ /man akada al-kitaba/  
(Literally: who took the book)  
d) لم ينته الدرس أليس كذلك؟ /lam yantahi-d-darsu, alaysa kaddalik/?  
(Literally: \* Not (+ past) end the lesson, isn't it?  
e) أخذت الكتاب؟ /akadta-al-kitaba/?  
(Literally: took you the book instead of did you take the book?).

#### *Commands*

##### *Commands in English*

Khurma and Hajaj (1997) mentioned that in English, commands are type of statement sentence which have no explicit grammatical subject and have an imperative finite verb (the base form of the verb). In English commands follow the same order as in statement sentence. We find the following patterns:

- |  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| 1 – Verb adverb                        | Go away                |
| 2 – Verb Complement                    | Be reasonable          |
| 3 – Verb Object                        | Take it                |
| 4 – Verb Object adverb                 | Take it to the water   |
| 5 – Verb Object Complement             | Take him prisoner      |
| 6 – Verb Indirect Object Direct Object | Give him another drink |
| 7 – Verb                               | Jump                   |

-To make the pattern negative we add (do not, or don't)  
e.g. don't go away

-Also, we can add to the pattern (let us or the negative let us not)  
e.g. let's go away.

##### *Commands in Arabic*

In Arabic, the statement sentences follow almost the same pattern except the nominal sentence where the verb /Kun/ (be) is used

- a) (Be ready.) /kun musta 'iddan/! كن مستعدا  
b) /kud hada/ (Take this.) خذ هذا

To make the pattern negative, we add (no) la:

/la ta?kud hada/ (Literally: no take this) لا تأخذ هذا

- The Arabic equivalent to the (let us) pattern is realized by (li) meaning (let us)

/li nadhab li-s-suqi/ (literally: let us go to the market – place) لنذهب إلى السوق

#### *Exclamations*

##### *Exclamations in English*

Exclamations resemble (*wh*) questions but are not followed immediately by a finite verb. In English the commonest exclamations – words are what and how e .g.

What a beautiful dress

#### *Exclamations in Arabic*

In Arabic it is expressed by ( ni ma ) ( how good ) , ( bi sa ) ( how bad ) ( ma ) ( how )

نعم , بنس , ما

/ni'ma-r-rajulu 'amru/ نعم الرجل عمرو

- How good the man Amro instead of How good Amro is!

/bi'sa ma sana'a a mru/ بنس ما صنع عمرو

- How bad what did Amro instead of how bad is what Amro did?

#### **CONCLUSION**

The analyses of the linguistic items taken from L1 and L2 indicate that there are similarities and differences in the acquisition of both Arabic Language as an L1 and English Language as an L2. It is also indicated that L1 has positive and negative impact on the acquisition of L2 as well. It is also concluded that Foreign Language Learners depend on their first language when they analyse the linguistic items of target language. Finally, it is concluded that the similarities and the differences indicated in the acquisition of L1 and L2 shows the importance of grammar as an essential element in the acquisition of Arabic Language as an L1 and English Language as an L2.

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## WORLD ENGLISHES AND LINGUISTIC IMPERIALISM: IMPLICATIONS IN ELT

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### ABSTRACT

This paper is a state of art on the spread of English language around the world resulting in different varieties known as World Englishes (WE) with the review of its origins and states of change until the neo-colonial era. When considering the growth of English, the imperial power of some countries having English as an imperial language is considered influential (Pennycook, 2007). Also, a number of models for the varieties of English, the most significant of which is Kachru's, are discussed in this paper. The last part of the paper reviews the implications of WEs in ELT.

**KEY WORDS:** World Englishes, imperial power, ELT, Nativeness vs. nonnativeness, English varieties

### INTRODUCTION

English language has expanded dramatically around the globe during the past decades. When considering the growth of English, the imperial power of England and more recently the US, English as an imperial language itself, and decolonization must be taken into account (Pennycook, 2007). Each of these issues will be reviewed in this paper.

There are different varieties of English which can be seen and heard today: Indian English, Australian English, Singapore English, British English, American English, Irish English etc. Kachru discusses these varieties of English (World Englishes) in terms of some diasporas; Two main types of which were the first diaspora as a result of the immigration of the English to settler colonies in Australia, North America, and New Zealand (where English was brought in by the native speakers from Europe), and the second diaspora in British colonies such as Africa and Asia where the language was adopted from different users of English who weren't often native speakers (Kachru, Kachru, & Nelson, 2006; Kachru, 2011).

There is a "naming Disease" (Anchimbe, 2009, p. 274) related to the interpretation of the term "World Englishes". While some scholars refer to English as a lingua franca and a subcategory of English as an international language which is itself an alternative terminology to ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) (Halliday, 2009), some others (e.g. Trudgill & Hannah, 2002 cited in Jenkins, 2006) believe that international English is the local Englishes spoken by nonnative speakers and a great many also put the native speakers in this category. Researchers sometimes use "English as a lingua franca" for "English as an international language" to avoid confusion. Bolton (2004) describes three different though interrelated interpretations of the term *World Englishes*: 1) it can be regarded as an umbrella term including all varieties of English around the world also sometimes called "World English", "international English", or "global English", 2) in a narrower sense, it can refer to the specific new Englishes in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean also called "nativized", "indigenized", "new Englishes", or "institutionalized English" (see the outer circle model of Kachru's), and 3) it may refer to the *Kachruvian* approach to the study of English.

Another problem is related to the notion of Standard English (SE) to distinguish between native and nonnative speakers of English and also referring the compromised superiority over other varieties of English. Some scholars critique the SE as it is underestimating local norms and being monocentric by relying too much on American or British norms. Halliday (2009) claims that while nativeness vs. non-nativeness has been refuted by some researchers, it still serves as a basic criterion for labeling English speakers around the world.

## ORIGINS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Estimating the exact birth date of a language is impossible to a great extent since languages undertake numerous alterations and a variety of variables are associated with the evolution of different languages. In addition, almost always languages have a mutual influence on each other (Kachru et al., 2006). By all these, Kachru et al. elaborated on the origins of language in his *Handbook of World Englishes* extensively in terms of four Diasporas. Like High German, Low German, Dutch, Faroese, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, and Icelandic, and Gothic English, now extinct, which belong to the Germanic family of languages, English is a member of this family as well. The root of Germanic languages goes back to Proto-Germanic, which was not a written language. Moreover, Romance and Germanic belong to the Indo-European family of languages. A number of other languages are also Indo-European such as Northern India, Persian, the Slavic languages, Greek, Armenian, the Celtic languages. Indo-European languages seem to date back at 3000 BC, located in Eastern Europe, just north of the Black Sea (Ukraine) (Kachru et al., 2006). People from the original Indo-European tribe emigrated east (into Persia and India), north (to Russia and the Baltic regions), and west (to Greece, Italy, Western Europe, and the British Isles). Always looking for new lands, the Germanic tribes emigrated to the Western Europe and settled in northern Germany, the Low Countries, and southern Scandinavia and England. The Celts had to assimilate to Germanic languages and the ones who didn't adopt Germanic languages moved west and south into Cornwall and Wales and Scotland. That's why today's Irish (Gaelic), Welsh, and Scots Gaelic, are believed to have been remained from the first inhabitants of England i.e. Celts. Germanic invaders had contributed to an Anglo-Saxon language, Old English (also known as Anglo-Saxon) dating back to 450–1150 (Kachru et al., 2006). Old English contained of a lot of inflections and conjugations, three genders, a lot of subcategories of nouns, verbs, and adjectives, and four cases.

Early Modern English was created at the same time as the Age of Discovery. At the age of discovery, Britain attempted to rule the whole world by discovering new areas. Ships and tools were more advanced than before and in order to communicate with new people of the discovered lands, a lighter language with less complex morphology and sounds (e.g. the velar fricative [x], spelled *gh*) was derived from the Old English resulting in Modern English that we have today. Using more of monosyllabic words, simpler morphology, and easier pronunciation are the major characteristics of modern English.

## CHANGES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Change in one language occurs so stealthily that is only noticeable during long time periods and across generations. Though, it must not be forgotten that languages change *constantly* (Hudson, 2000). There are three commonly known periods of change in the history of English language: Old English (until about 1100), Middle English (from 1100 to about 1500), and Modern English (1500 until present).

Like most languages, Modern English differs from the old one in various aspects. One way to find out how different an old version of a language such as English was, one can refer to the literature of that language. Another important factor affecting change in languages is the influence that they have on each other. According to Kachru et al. (2006), English has adopted not-originally-Germanic new words from:

- the other languages in the same region such as Latin or Celtic (e.g. *York, bin*),
- languages with high prestige such as Latin (e.g. *mile, pit, cheap, wine*),
- religious language: with the arrival of Christianity in Britain in 597, English vocabulary was influenced significantly (e.g. *bishop, human, angel, grammar, elephant, talent, rule*),
- Scandinavian languages, prior to the Norman Conquest, through Viking sailors (e.g. *law, die, rotten, odd*),
- the Romance and Celtic languages. The fact that only Germanic has the strong/weak division, irregular verbs, among Indo-European languages, is due to the effect of Celtic and Romance languages (e.g. English place-names with *-by* which are Danish in origin: *Rugby, Derby*).

Hudson (2000) lists eight causes of language change some of which may affect languages at the same time:

1. Ease of articulation, which seems to be the reason for some phonological changes in languages such as assimilation, deletion, alternation, insertion, dissimilation, metathesis, and chain shifts.
2. Expression of new meanings, for the expression of new things, events, and ideas sometimes some words or grammatical features are borrowed from other languages.
3. Desire for novelty is the reason most jargons and the slang were born.
4. Regularization, associated with human children's language learning capacity and creativity aspect of language
5. Redundancy reduction
6. Metanalysis related to backformation
7. Obsolence of meaning, in that obsolete meanings disappear from language when they are not used anymore.
8. Language contact which is, unlike all the above changes, an external cause. Intimate and long contact with one language often results in extensive language change (p.424). For example, a great number of French words came into English after the Norman conquest of Britain and the resulting contact between English and French languages. On the other hand, the use of English as an international language has affected a lot of other languages around the world.

Widdowson (1994) asserts that speakers of English in the postcolonial societies may change and localize English at the grammatical level to fit it into their own contexts and local needs and whereby to own the language and keep away from the norms of native English speakers. Colonizing groups had various attitudes toward spreading English in their colonized societies (Anchimbe, 2009). If the colonizing groups were reluctant in passing their language to their colonies, the colonized people would have no access to the language and inevitably had to fit it to their purposes. This is how some Pidgins and Creoles were invented. Under the reverse situation, learning the colonizing language would be a mean to convey democratic ideas resulting in the advent of new native varieties of the language in such areas. Although exposure to English during colonialism was based on political factors, the use of English was also influenced by the ecological and sociocultural situations of colonized groups.

#### **USAGE DOMAIN OF LANGUAGES**

The usage domain of English is perhaps the main reason for the dominance of English over Welsh, Scottish and Irish in England. There are two important kinds of usage domain for languages. The first domain is "H", used for High languages, which is the variety of language used in formal, written, official, legal, and formal domains such as standard French or standard Arabic. The second domain is called "L", for Low languages, which is the everyday language used in informal settings, family and friends. There is usually a conflict between two languages to gain the domain power to be the High language. There seems to be different reasons why a language is regarded as the High language e.g. greater force of arms or economic power, strength as a result of more population, novelty coming with a new language and culture. The less powerful language is the Low language (substratum) and the high language becomes the superstratum language. In most cases, after some time, the substratum language fades away leaving some shades (Kachru et al., 2006). For instance, the Indo-Europeans immigrated into India from Europe and displaced the Dravidian languages of Indians with Sanskrit and pushed the Dravidians southward traces of which have remained today. The reason is that the Indo-Europeans were more advanced with a higher culture, and regarded as more powerful and H language. Meanwhile, the effect of L languages on the H languages must not be overlooked (e.g. words for transferring alien concepts such as *canoe*), although it is far smaller than the influence of H on L.

In the Middle Ages, among English, Latin, French, Welsh, and Irish, Latin was one of the H languages. As an advantage for all H languages, Legal and religious documents were almost always written in Latin, and its translations were found in other languages. Around 1400, English was regarded as the H language in England due to its power in trade and transportation as well as its population, and political control. However, French and Latin had the full control of H functions, the language of law and religion. Later, by the fifteenth century English was regarded as the language of law.

## MODELS OF ENGLISH VARIETIES

Traditionally, a distinction has been made between ESL (English as a Second Language) countries, where the language has official status, EFL (English as a Foreign Language) countries where this is not the case, and ENL (English as a Native Language) countries. However, this model has recently been criticized due to its limited application in a context of multilingualism.

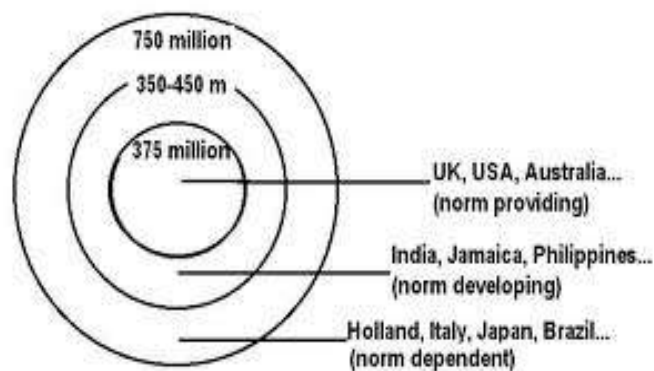
Kachru coined the term "World Englishes". The term "English languages" goes one step further than "World Englishes" or "EIL" and implies that varieties of English have already progressed into different languages. Meanwhile, Kachru points out that the English varieties still have more similarities than differences to "mother" English.

There are alternative models presented by Gorlach (1990) and McArthur (1987) cited in Bauer (2002). The former model goes from the most widespread variety of English (in the center) to the most local varieties (round the rim of the center). The latter is rather similar but the difference is that unlike Gorlach's model, the hub of the circle is seen as being a standard in this one. McArthur also includes creoles like Tok Pisin along with other regional varieties. Instead of showing origins and influences, these models portray a set of differing standards for English holding the common heritage of world English at the hub. They fail to show that there are two very different types of English i.e. varieties spoken primarily by native speakers of English and varieties originally spoken by second-language learners of English (Bauer, 2002).

Kachru (1985) proposed a model of concentric circles (the "Inner," "Outer," and "Expanding" Circles) to describe the spread of English worldwide based on the historical context, status, and functions of English around the world. In his model, Kachru takes some sociolinguistic aspects of English in postcolonial societies into account as opposed with standardization, codification, and linguistic creativity. The Inner Circle demonstrates the societies where English is the first language e.g. the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The Outer Circle shows the postcolonial Anglophonic contexts such as Nigeria and Zambia in Africa, and India and Singapore in Asia. The Outer-Circle is a multilingual community in which English is only one of the languages spoken as an official, co-official, legal, or educational language. English language functions within a non-English culture as a second language (ESL), resulting in the advent of significant variations in English. The Expanding Circle refers to those areas where English is an international and a foreign language (EFL) e.g. English in Japan, Korea, Saudi Arabia, and China (Kachru et al., 2006). He also made a distinction between genetic nativeness and functional nativeness in terms of range (functions of English in societies) and depth (English use by people from different levels of society basilectal varieties to the acrolect).

The Inner Circle societies provide norms such as text books (norm providers) and the Expanding-Circle societies accept these norms. Some Outer-Circle societies such as India and the Philippines sometimes try to establish local norms and hence are called norm-developing. These circles share a number of characteristics and the status of English in each area might change over time.

The Three Circles Model (Kachru, 1985)



Although Kachru's model was criticized for emphasizing on nations and overlooking some areas and simplifying linguistic diversity (Jenkins, 2003), it was quite influential in discussing varieties of language. Modiano (1999) proposed the model of "English as an International Language" (EIL) with centripetal Circles emphasizing on English proficiency as opposed to the geographical view of world Englishes. Higgins (2003) claims that the use of English

in outer-circle countries such as India, Malaysia, and Singapore is not clear because it is different from interlanguages and at the same time different from native varieties. She believes that in categorizing people in terms of English language, we ought to consider their linguistic properties rather than their social identities.

McKay (2011) makes a distinction between a monolithic model of English versus a pluricentric model. In the former the native speaker is an authority and code while in the latter model, the most remarkable proponent of which is Kachru, language contact necessarily entails language change and it is natural to have different varieties of English as a result of its vast spread. This shows that the identity of nonnative English speakers must not be overlooked as being only the norm and standard consumers of native speakers.

### **INTERNATIONAL VS. INTRANATIONAL VARIETIES**

It is also possible to examine the distinction between second and foreign language considering a pair of concepts advocated by members of the East-West Center in Hawaii: *intranational* and *international* languages (Smith 1981 cited in Stern, 1983). The main purpose of the distinction between these two concepts is to show that countries like Britain or America cannot claim to own the English language and have proprietary rights to determine standards of the language. Unlike international language vs. intranational language distinction, the second vs. foreign language learning distinction shows that there is a specified speech community or communities for each reference or contact group. English can be referred to as an intranational language when it is learned and used for wider communication within a country for educational, commercial, and political purposes. For example, English has the status of an official language in Nigeria or Zambia without specified reference group. Also French in Ivory Coast holds the same intranational function (Stern, 1983). On the other hand, when English is learnt in many countries across the world without reference to specified English-speaking territories and as a means of international communication, it is regarded as an international language.

Closely related to the intranational vs. international varieties of English is the concept of "linguicism" employed by Phillipson (1997). He asserts that we can have intralingual and interlingual Linguicism. Linguicism can exist among and between speakers of one language it is called intralingual. For example, when one dialect is privileged and regarded as the 'standard'; and when Linguicism exists between speakers of different languages and is regarded as a standard variety or a variety with high prestige, it is called interlingual. For example, when one language such as Cantonese remains as a mere dialect unsuited for a range of literate or societal functions comparing with English as the language of modernity and progress. Both of these two types of linguicism lead to stigmatizing, downgrading or vanishing a language.

### **LINGUISTIC IMPERIALISM**

Phillipson (1997) defines linguistic imperialism (LI) as a theoretical construct to show linguistic hierarchization, why some languages happen to be used more than others, what structures and ideologies are used more than others, and what structures and ideologies facilitate this processes, as well as the role of language professionals. He also regards Linguistic Imperialism as a subtype of *linguicism*. Linguicism draws upon the sociology of language and education in a way that languages can contribute to unequal access to societal power. In this sense, language is used as a mean to hold and transfer power. There are organizations and budgets which are specialized to achieve this goal. For example, the British Council are exercising 'English Language Imperialism' to maintain the global status of British English as opposed to the spread of American English (Phillipson, 1992).

Phillipson's use of the term 'linguicism' demonstrates a biased system through which a scheme of linguistic hierarchization holds people in their assigned positions based on language use (Jambor, 2007). In other words, linguistic power facilitates the maintenance of hegemony. Cultural, economic and political dimensions mainly shape Kachru's inner/periphery circles of language speakers – relationship and the inner circle countries seem to have political, economic and cultural influences on the outer and expanding circles. Linguicism may be overt or covert, conscious or unconscious.

Knowles cited in Jambor (2007), defined language imperialism as the transfer of power (either military or economical) and some aspects of the dominant culture from a dominant language to other peoples. In most cases this



transfer may not be imposed by the dominant language culture: rather, it may be demanded by the inferior group as a source of prestige, high status, or perceived beauty. Some of the most successful imperial languages are Latin, Arabic, and English. Traditionally, languages were spread due to a superior military power, but recently, economical power is regarded as the source of power.

According to Philipson (1997), much of his inspiration for linguistic imperialism was drawn from Western scholarship, work in peace and development studies, education and social theory, and work on language in the French empire. Also he was inspired by some thinkers and authors at the receiving-end of imperialism such as many African and Indian sociolinguists. Meanwhile, he extracted some ideas from the human rights law against racial, sexual, and linguistic discriminations. Therefore, Philipson is one of the proponents of the smaller language speakers' right such as indigenous language speakers.

## STANDARD ENGLISH

It is likely to assume that varieties of English are new versions of the standard language spoken by native speakers of English. However, some of these varieties are chronologically older than some native Englishes such as Indian English being older than New Zealand English. Due to some facts like the ones mentioned above, Standard English seems to be a controversial issue.

Randolph Quirk is regarded among the first scholars who coined “varieties” of English referring to the English “standards” (Kachru et al., 2006). He believed that English does not necessarily belong to the native English speakers. English in one area cannot exclusively be regarded as more correct than in the other areas because there is no established and accepted criterion for the priority of English in one area over another.

Trudgill (1998) emphasizes on communicability instead of Standard English which depend mostly on societal prejudices according to Anchimbe (2009). By communicability, Trudgill means English can be spoken in any accent only if it is comprehensible. She also emphasizes on degrees of accent tolerance at the onset of communication and later adaptation and accommodation. All native speakers of English can be regarded as the native speakers of non-standard dialects; hence, it is not unacceptable to regard them as the L2 speakers just like non-native speakers.

On the other hand, Bolton (2006) reports that Standard English should be defined in an endonormative way rather than exonormative (determined from outside). He further mentions that the use of non-standard varieties of English may lead to a lack of intelligibility. Ur (2010) believes that the need to have codification for an international variety of English in grammars and dictionaries is inevitable. ELT teachers and textbook writers need criteria for teaching and designing materials out of the most common features of English around the world. However, due to the variety of divergent dialects and accents within a native language, it looks impossible that we be able to create a united set of standards (Trudgill, 1998).

Some members of the Outer Circle such as Kachru (1985) have started challenging the exocentric norms and rethinking the question of standards. English is used by people of Outer and Expanding Circle for the purpose of interacting with others from outer and expanding circles. In most of the interactional situations, no one from the Inner Circle is even involved or even relevant (Kachru, 2011). By all these, there is still a dominance for English and American varieties of English. The reasons for this dominance can be political, military, economic, success, and cultural influences and powers of English native speakers like the Latin and the Roman in the past (Crystal, 1997). According to Crystal (2003) cited in Crystal (1997), English language has spread around the world in such a way that it cannot be regarded as owned by any single nation. In line with Crystal, Phillipson (1992) considers a more comprehensive view of power called imperialism or linguistic imperialism. He attributes the dominance of English to imperialism and asserts that scientific imperialism, media imperialism, educational imperialism, cultural imperialism, and linguistic imperialism are all different types of imperialism being expressed by language. As a result, English as a lingua franca represents the linguistic imperialism and dominance around the world. Linguistic imperialism is also associated with racism, sexism, capitalism, and linguisticism.

In order to make the best of English in areas where it penetrated into, it is needed to be localized, domesticated, and regionalized to that community's need instead of the standard variety. Nativization or indigenization is a kind of adaptation taking place when a language, like English, is used in a different context and fits to its needs in a way that a distinct variety emerges after some time (Richards & Schmidt, 2002).



#### **NATIVENESS VS. NON-NATIVENESS**

The issue of the Standard English is closely related to the idea of nativeness vs. non-nativeness which was coined after colonialism in the 1960s and 1970s bifurcating English speakers into two categories: the norm-setter and the norm-receiver respectively. The native speaker's variety of English is often considered as the Standard English. However, since the non-native varieties have the native speakers of their own, this dichotomy is not accepted as it was in the past (Anchimbe, 2009). Seidhofer (2005) states that English functions as a global lingua franca but as a consequence of its international use, English is also shaped by its nonnative speakers as much as by its native speakers.

In SLA, when one accepts the notion of the native speaker, he or she must have inevitably accepted that only authentic and naturally occurring language should be taught because only native speakers are authentic and can teach English this way (Widdowson, 1994). On the other hand when the emphasis is put on the context of learning in SLA, because the non-native speaker is familiar with the context of language learning, native speakers do not gain the advantage. Linguistic imperialism or native speakerism impose that the native-speaker is the ideal norm and criteria for EFL/ ESL learners. This way, native speakers, who are only a very small minority nowadays, become the authority while many nonnative speakers who happen to become the majority are excluded and underestimated. Also, native speakers themselves speak in various accents and dialects which can be difficult to understand. That's why a native speaker with any ethnic accent may not be an appropriate model for non-native speakers. Even if native speakers can be true models and norms for learning English, in EFL situations, it is not feasible to employ a native speaker teacher and as it is apparent that the majority of EFL teachers are nonnative (Ur, 2010). On the other hand, Ur (2010) believes that it can be discouraging for EFL learners to try hard to become a native speaker because it is impossible to gain an exact native like proficiency no matter how competent they are. In return, Ur (2010) suggested that EFL or ESL teachers should be fully competent without emphasizing on their nativeness or non-nativeness.

#### **NON-STANDARD VARIETIES**

Sometimes the term *stigmatized varieties* is used for varieties other than the Standard language to show social dialects for different groups such as poor or working class, ethnic or racial groups (e.g. African American Vernacular English), regional varieties, and pidgins and Creoles (Tollefson, 2007). They are called stigmatized varieties because they are considered to be unattractive and the deficient versions of the standard. English, like other languages, changes "systematically, pervasively, and constantly" (Hudson, 2000; p. 452). Some factors which affect the change in speech communities are: the population size, the degree of social relationships, removal from general standards, and subordinate bilingualism (Hudson, 2000).

*Vernacular language* is another term used for non-standard varieties. It generally describes the mother tongue of a socially or politically minority group in the context of a more powerful group with a different language. In order to emphasize linguistic autonomy and a parallel position, the term *indigenous* is sometimes used instead of Vernacular to refer to the language of the native inhabitants of a particular region (King, & Benson, 2008). The term *ethnic group* is also sometimes used in Africa for local languages and the term *ethnic minority* is used for the same related concept in Asia.

#### ***Pidgin and creole***

Yule (1985) defines a pidgin as "A variety of a language which developed for some practical purpose such as trading among different languages with who had a lot of contact." (P. 233) Thus, pidgins have no native speakers. When a pidgin develops beyond its role as a trade language and becomes the first language of a social community it is called a creole e.g. Hawaii . Creole develops as the first language of pidgin speakers. Unlike pidgins, creoles have a large number of native speakers e.g. a French based creole spoken by a lot of people in Haiti or English based creoles used in Jamaica. Creoles may evolve as a result of the Creolization process; however, some members of a society may try to use fewer creole forms (decreolization) which is called the post creole continuum.

#### **WORLD ENGLISHES AND ELT**

Application of language varieties and the Standard English in ELT classes can be confusing and must not be taken for granted. The relationship between WEs and ELT in ELT is connected with the medium of instruction in the

classroom, the implicit economic and social value of standard varieties of English, the notion of native and nonnative speaker, and globalization which affects language policies.

Phillipson (1992) mentions the role of language pedagogical practices and ELT specialists in the “hegemony” of English. ELT professionals play important role in the progress and spread of English around the world. According to Tollefson (2007), in choosing the language variety to be used in ELT classes, we must consider two points: first, the variety used by teachers and students as the medium of instruction in the classroom and second, the target language variety of the learners. Most textbooks are either American or British English (as standardized varieties) oriented. In such areas, teachers often teach the British or American Standard English found in textbooks while they speak in the local variety and accent different from the so called standard (Anchimbe, 2009).

Other related issue is the medium of instruction which can be the use of English, bilingual approaches in ELT classes, or non-standard varieties. Auerbach (2000) found that using L1 in the classroom is beneficial at the beginning stages of second language learning for learners with little English knowledge, motivates the weak students who had experienced several language learning failures, improves retention and progress, aids communicative and learner-centered approaches, and is culture friendly. Due to some political reasons, medium of instruction in most ELT settings is standard varieties which are often regarded as the varieties of the upper middle class, while other varieties (stigmatized varieties) are believed as Low languages leading to educational and employment failure of their speakers (Tollefson, 2007).

There is a negative attitude toward including stigmatized varieties in ELT classrooms in that they are assumed to hinder English language learning. Brown (2001) states that a native speaker teacher is better at understanding EFL textbooks which are generally written in one of the Standard varieties of English. Also, there is a negative attitude toward nonnative teachers and underestimating their abilities in comparison with native speaker teachers. On the other hand, adhering to the standard varieties of English leads to the overestimation of errors and overcorrection in the classroom.

Kachru (2011) adds that the American, Australian, British, Canadian and New Zealand norms are different from each other in many ways yet they can interact with each other pretty well. Also it has been observed and documented that varieties (accents or dialects) in different areas of the pluricentric communities such as England cannot always understand each other. It doesn't seem to be possible to impose a standard for all the English speakers around the world based on the Inner Circle norms while the Inner Circle communities include some variations in their regional and social dialects the same as the Outer and Expanding Circles.

Incorporating World Englishes (WE) in ELT profession can also influence the EL teacher training. EFL teacher trainees should be aware of world varieties of English in their training programs. Some language and literature departments such as universities in India and several universities in the USA (e.g., African-American, African, Asian-American, Indian or South Asian) have incorporated WE literatures (such as various Spanish, French, or Arabic) in their undergraduate curricula.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

In addition, assigning exocentric norms can be a great danger to mutual intelligibility. Smith (1992), cited in Kachru (2011), claimed that the more the exposure to different varieties, the more accommodation strategies to these variations in accent, lexicogrammar and discoursal strategies will take place. Internet and media play significant role in this vein. A number of dictionaries have been published incorporating the impact of different varieties in wider dissemination e.g. *Encarta World English Dictionary* included East Africa, Hong Kong, Hawaii, Malaysia-Singapore, South Africa, South Asia, UK Black English and US African-American English in 1999; *The Macquarie Dictionary* in 1997 included lexical items from South-East Asian Englishes (Kachru, 2011).

Interlanguage analysis was the major concern in the past with little attention to the learning processes, individual variables, learners' identity and the social context of English language learning. Recently, student identity constructing in the second language has become an issue (McKay, 2011), part of which can be the inclusion of ethnic varieties in the classroom to make students feel at home and help them build self-confidence.

When one particular group's discourse dominates other groups and make them feel inferior or deficient (McKay, 2011). When compare themselves with native speakers of English as ideals, English learners and bilingual teachers feel inferior and this makes them incapable of participating in most new methods of language learning and teaching like critical thinking.

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## PROFITIOUS MULTIPLICITY OR SPLIT AND CONFRONTATION? TWO RADICAL FEMINIST READINGS OF *THE STORM* BY MCKNIGHT MALMAR

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### ABSTRACT

Whether Looked at as a heaven-sent privilege bestowed on feminism as multiplicity, or a many-headed monster within, that incarnates as a widening gap that wastes feminists' enormous energies in confronting each other, diversity and difference appear as an indispensable element deeply rooted in feminism. The long standing titles as liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism, Psychoanalytic feminism, echo-feminism and Postfeminism, to mention only some out of a longer list, can attest to the diversity. It Permeates the feminist space so inclusively that it leaves almost no recess intact, splitting, among others, postfeminism into postmodern and third-wave feminisms, and radical feminism into the hardly reconcilable offshoots" of radical-Libertarian feminism and radical-cultural feminism. Focusing on two antithetical readings of *the storm*, this article attempts to show how radical-libertarian and radical cultural feminisms diverge in their encounter with a wide range of phenomena covering from sex and gender through family to literary criticism.

**KEYWORDS:** radical feminism, radical-libertarian feminism, radical-cultural feminism, literature, the storm

### INTRODUCTION

Umbrella terms can hardly contain the rich diversity that continues to live, grow and develop underneath, almost indifferent to, and sometimes even, unconscious of the attempts made and energies spent to impose unity, homogeneity and sameness. Diversity seems to be everywhere, and multiplicity feeding on diversity and difference, is as omnipresent. It penetrates deep down the schools, isms, outlooks, policies and agendas for action. Religions are not immune to its influence, philosophies cannot duck its glaring gaze and approaches cannot stand its forking advances.

Feminism for one harbours a rainbow of principles, assumptions, concepts, terms, guidelines, descriptions, definitions, positions and finally, labels. Essentialist feminism, anti-essentialist feminism, liberal feminism, radical-libertarian feminism, radical cultural feminism, black feminism, Marxist feminism, socialist feminism, multicultural feminism, global feminism, psychoanalytic feminism, postmodern feminism, third-wave feminism which also drags behind such labels as first-wave and second-wave feminism, as well as pre feminism, care-focused feminism, ecofeminism and finally posfeminism all serve as labels that are devised by diverse feminist thinkers and critics to shed light on an aspect of feminism interconnected to the other aspects as it may be, refuses total identification with them. In her *Feminist Thought*, Rosemarie Tong, well aware of the diversity and multiplicity enveloping the feminist space, asserts that,

Since writing my first introduction to feminist thought nearly two decades ago, I have become increasingly convinced that feminist thought resists categorization into tidy schools of thought. Interdisciplinary, intersectional, and interlocking are the kind of adjectives that best describe the way we feminists think. There is a certain breathlessness in the way we move from one topic to the next, revising our thoughts in midstream. (Tong, 2009:1)

The multiplicity discernible at the heart of feminism is neither limited to, nor stops at the level of, the categories listed above. It further divides each category into conflicting branches. Ecofeminism, as an interdisciplinary aspect of

feminism moves further into other three branches of spiritual ecofeminism, transformative ecofeminism and global ecofeminism. So is radical feminism. Defining its borders against liberal feminism's emphasis on "eliminate[ing] discriminatory educational, legal and economic policies" (Hole and Levine, 1971:81), and laying emphasis, instead, on uprooting family and organized religion as powerful means in the hands of the patriarchal system to oppress women, radical feminism appears to be a unified body of theory and practice. However, that is only a mirage. Further investigation into the nature of radical feminism proves that it is deeply divided within. The gap between the two main branches of radical feminism, namely radical-libertarian and radical cultural feminism is so wide over such core concepts as sex, gender, reproduction and motherhood that reconciliation between the two is hardly in perspective.

True that the proper domain of feminist activity and theorizing is social, political, economic and natural life; however, none of these aspects of life can dispense with literature. Neither can literature manage without them. Hence, the feminist tackling of life questions will bear its implications on literature, just as its interaction with literature will both reflect its view of social and political life and leave behind its imprints on them.

*The storm* by Kathleen M. Monroe engages in questions like sex, gender and family which prove to be fundamental questions to both branches of radical feminism and the ground on which most of the controversy and heated debates between the two branches occur. Thus, reading the story from their viewpoints can pinpoint the bones of contention, the points of departure and the multiplicity that lurks behind the mirage of unity. The comparison and contrast will hopefully show how each branch constructs its version of truth; how and why disagreements arise between the two, and how the storm can metaphorically represent real life situations and question that of interest though they are to the practitioners of branches, illicit conflicting responses and answers from them. Arguments offered by outstanding radical feminists such as Kate Millett, Shulamith Firestone, Marilyn French, Mary Daly, Margaret Atwood and Adrienne Rich serve as the ground in which this article embeds its assertions.

#### ANDROGYNY VS. FEMALENESS

Concerning gender, the radical-libertarian and radical-cultural feminists do not cultivate the same assumptions; on the contrary the ideal gender women should finally assume is a point of departure between the two main branches of radical feminism. Each has its own agenda, argument, and reasons to support its argument against the other. Radical-libertarian feminists call for androgyny while radical-cultural feminists support femaleness as the gender women should come to have if they are to defy the patriarchal system.

As a forerunner of radical-libertarian feminists' direction on the question of gender, Jorgen Freeman in a then heretic step enthusiastically admired, for her androgynous qualifications what the patriarchal hegemony would consider as a 'Bitch'.

What is disturbing about a Bitch is that she is androgynous. She incorporates within herself qualities defined as "masculine" as well as "feminine" A Bitch is blatant, direct, arrogant, at times egoistic. She has no liking for the indirect, subtle, mysterious ways of the "eternal feminine". She disdains the vicarious life deemed natural to women because she wants to live a life of her own (Freeman, 1973: 52).

Not all radical-libertarian feminists adopted exactly the version of androgyny that Freeman was professing. They made some changes to it. However all agreed that androgyny is a guaranteed way to help women shun the patriarchal yoke. Represented by Alice Echols, all radical-libertarian feminists were convinced that whatever physical dissimilarities may differentiate women from men, they do not determine one's gender; rather, gender is a social construct heavily depending upon the current ideology and power structure that penetrate into a surety's texture. "Women" can simultaneously assume a feminine as well as a masculine gender (Echols, 1983: 445). In line with Freeman and Echols observations, Sulamith Firestone, an outstanding radical libertarian feminist, also called for androgyny. Defining male Psychology and response as "objective, logical, extroverted, realistic, concerned with the conscious mind (the ego) , rational , mechanical , pragmatic and down- to – earth , stable" and female response to reality as " subjective , intuitive , introverted , wishful , dreamy or fantastic, concerned with the subconscious (the id), emotional , even temper a mental (hysterical)" (Firestone , 1970 : 175), she encourages women to construct for themselves an identity that bridges between the two genders, leading to an androgynous identity that can harbor conflicting and contradictory masculine and feminine traits .

Radical-cultural feminists such as Marilyn French and Mary Daly , on the contrary seem to reproduce the male/female binary opposition in their writings , albeit Privileging feminine gender over the masculine gender which is the favorite gender canonized by Patriarchy . For instance, in her *Beyond Power*, French equates femaleness with "Love and compassion and sharing and nutritiveness [sic] (French, 1985:443) as opposed to the masculine values of hatred and possessiveness and struggle and competition and selfishness and ego centrism, and thus asks for a feminine



gender that would put right the wrong that masculine line gender has done the world. Not necessarily the same but closely related with gender is the question of sexuality and consequently that of a family based on heterosexual love and natural reproduction to which now this article turns.

### **HETEROSEXUAL LOVE, ENCOURAGED? DISCOURAGED?**

In their attempt to develop their ideal female identity which thanks to its superiority to the now-dominant masculine identity will both promote women's status and build a far more desirable world for both men and women to live in, the radical- cultural feminists tried to enhance the borders that separated women from men to create a female space within which women would rather turn to themselves than directing their love, energy and attention outside, to men. In a typical move a group of feminists called Radica lesbians offered a sketch of their desirable self-referenced identity which can display their position regarding sex, gender, family and related questions.

Only women can give each other a new sense of self. That identity we have to develop with reference to ourselves, and not in relation to men. This consciousness is the revolutionary force from which all else will follow, for ours is an organic revolution. For this we must be available and supportive to one another, give our commitment and our love, and give the emotional support necessary to sustain this movement. *Our energies must flow toward our sisters, not backwards towards our oppressors.* As long as women's liberation tries to free women without facing the basic heterosexual structure that binds us in one-to-one relationships with our oppressors, tremendous energies will continue to flow into trying to straighten up each particular relationship with a man, how to get better sex, how to turn his head around-into trying to make the "new man" out of him, in the delusion that this will allow us to be the "new woman." This obviously splits our energies and commitments, leaving us unable to be committed to the construction of the new patterns which will liberate us (Radica lesbians, 2000: 236 emphases added).

Thus, radical-cultural feminists reject heterosexual love in favour of lesbianism and auto –eroticism because heterosexuality signifies nothing more than "male sexuality" (Echols, 1984:59) to them. It underlies all sorts of woman oppression because it confines each woman individually within the space of a "one-to-one- relationship" with a man who is, by what can be inferred from the quotation above, stronger and also thanks to his firm connection with other men who control the whole system, defeats, and overpowers her and exploits her as an object rather than treating her as an equal partner.

By generalization, to radical-cultural feminists, what goes on in heterosexual love, goes on in and permeates all aspects of heterosexual life in a heterosexual family. A woman snared in her "one-to-one relationship with {her} oppressor" is objectified and exploited in all levels and the objectification will be a multi-dimensional one. The result will be an economic, social, political, cultural, educational, and psychological oppression of women universally.

Concerning sexuality, radical-libertarian feminists adopt radically different positions from that of radical-cultural feminists. One representative voice heard among others is that of Gayle Rubin.

From Rubin's point of view sex is allowed in all its imaginable forms in chiding among others casual sex, heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual intercourse. She believes that taboos and prohibitions enveloping sex must be eliminated.

Sex is not simply a name for "sins, disease, neurosis, pathology, decadence, pollution or the decadence, pollution or the decline and the decline and fall of empires" (Rubin,1984 :278) ;rather, whatever form it takes, sex is a great – source of pleasure and the undeniable right of every woman to experience. As Tong (2009:67) puts it: "For Rubin, all sex was good; no judgments should be made about the rightness or wrongness of any form of sex."

Although they encouraged heterosexuality among other forms of sex as an experience to enjoy if that was what women would choose, radical libertarian feminists were severely against natural reproduction, motherhood, giving birth and establishing a traditional family consisting of a man, a woman and their children born through pregnancy and biological motherhood. Rather, they insisted on artificial reproduction; reproduction only for pleasure. In addition, there will be no need of a man and a woman as the building block of a reproductive family. Rather, a woman can choose to have her artificially-gestated child with another woman, with a man and another woman, with two men or whatever combinations they choose.

Radical-cultural feminists, on the other hand, for all their insistence on “femaleness” and independence of man, refuse reproductive technology. In what seems a paradoxical move, they turn to natural reproduction as the only sources of power women have to exert on men in their fatal struggle. A typical radical-cultural feminist on the question of reproduction, Azizah Alhibri writes that

Technological reproduction does not equalize the natural reproductive power structure-it *inverts* it. It appropriates the reproductive power for women and places it in the hands of men who now control both the sperm and the reproductive technology that could make it indispensable .... It liberates them from their humiliating dependency on women in order to propagate. (Alhibri, 1984:266)

Both as a source of power and a source of deep natural pleasure, motherhood and natural reproduction are estimated high in the topography of radical-cultural feminism. According to Adrienne Rich, “In order to live a fully human life we require not only control of our bodies... we must touch the unity and resonance of our physicality, our bond with the natural order” (Rich, 1979: 31). The Paradox lies in their simultaneous flee from men and their craving for pregnancy which is possible only through dependence on men. Thus, traditional families consisting of a wife, a husband and the children seem inevitable.

### **THE STORM: THE WINDY BATTLEFIELD OF CONFLICT AND CONFRONTATION**

*The Storm*, a short story by Mcknight Malmar depicts a family, newly constructed and apparently firms enough to stand the storms that usually uproot families. Jannet, the newly-married wife loves her husband, Ben, wholeheartedly. Romantic, hetero-sexual love seems to have permeated the whole family atmosphere and the young couples have their residence in a big mansion far from the maddening crowdedness of urban life.

All is calm and quiet except for those occasions on which Ben receives a letter. Jannet is never so curious or suspicious to inquire into the identity of the one who writes and sends Ben the letters and that remains a mystery until near the end of the story. However, she notices how the reception of each letter upsets Ben and makes a disturbed and absent-minded creature out of him for almost a week and how the whole family atmosphere changes by the unwelcome arrival of each letter.

One day, Ben, the stingy husband, in a generous move buys Jannet some books, biscuits, confectionery and a ticket to send her on a journey to her sisters. Jannet is supposed to spend a month there, but the kind-hearted, loving and devoted woman can hardly tolerate so long away from her husband. Therefore, she decides to go bank a week sooner than Ben expects her, without letting him know about it to give him a big lovely surprise. She arrives on a harsh stormy evening, pushing her way through the strong wind and rain which wets her from top to toe. When the wind slams the door behind Jannet, to her astonishment, she finds out that the lights are turned off. She calls Ben, but there is no response. She picks up the phone to call her much-missed husband, but she finds out that the phone is disconnected. Finding herself lonely and miserable in that dark, isolated, cold mansion, she goes to cellar to find pieces of wood and timber to set a fire with. Opening the trunk, she faces a dead woman put in a sitting position inside.

In her great terror and fright, She rushes out to wish desperately Ben hand been there. She is able to hear strange sounds and once, even to see behind the window what looks like somebody’s face. She nearly dies of terror. After some time, to her great relief, Ben is there, tired, immersed in the rain and gasping. She tells him about what she saw in the basement; while Ben refuses all she says in the name of hallucination, taking her to the cellar even to show her there is nothing in the trunk. Nothing is there of course, no dead body, and they go back to the dining room. In the meantime, she suddenly notices a ring Ben is wearing exactly like the one she saw the dead woman in the trunk had. Understanding what is at stake in a moment of epiphany, she screams. Ben tries to strangle her with his hands, but she is lucky enough to escape from the psychological storm inside the house and take refuge in the terrible storm outside which terrifying as it is, proves to be much safer than the murderous storm within.

Among the numerous aspects of *The storm* that might prove of interest to a feminist interpretation, the questions of identity and heterosexual coupledness, the questions of identity and heterosexual coupledness from a radical-libertarian as well as a radical- cultural feminist point of view are at the center of examination here.

The story receives a considerable amount of its intense effect from the distinction Malmar makes between male and female identities. Developing a masculine identity, Ben is active, strong, intelligent, practical, selfish, egoistic, capable if planning and plotting as well as realizing the plans and plots he makes, independent, cruel, rough, unfaithful, assertive, pragmatic, logical, objective and aggressive. Jannet on the other hand, seems to be exactly Ben’s antithesis in many respects. The feminine identity she represents can be described as passive, weak, gullible, dull, whimsical, unselfish, sacrificing, caring, thinking of no plans and no plots against others and therefore putting

none to practice, dependent, kind. Loving, gentle, careful, cowardly, faithful, easily deceived, emotional, committed to her life and love promises, impotent, psychologically paralyzed, unable to enquire into the nature of events and people, timid, impractical, introversive, intuitive and subjective.

The mere distinction Malmar makes between feminine and masculine identities together with the deep hatred for man and the inclusive support for woman she is capable of engineering to be elicited from the reader, will be received with open arms on the part of the radical- cultural feminists. They will probably foreground such desirable feminine aspects of Jannet's personality as faithfulness, kindness, care, emotionality, honesty, commitment and devotion to compare with Ben's unfaithfulness, dishonesty, indifference, betrayal, lack of devotion, coldness and hateful cruel nature and to show a clear image of feminine supremacy over masculine meanness and inferiority of nature.

However, a group of radical-cultural feminists will probably condemn Jannet (and even Malmar, for creating *this* Jannet) for her lack of intelligence, assertiveness, curiosity, strength, detachedness, will to power and independence of personality. She should not have been so credulous and gullible as to play the part in Ben's plot that he had determined for her. She should not have been so devoted and simple-minded as to do no inquiry into the identity of the one who sent the letters to Ben.

The uprooting attack by radical-cultural feminists on Jannet (and through the creation of Jannet on Malmar) will focus on her choice of a man as the target of her care, energy and love. She should have, instead, turned her attention, care and kindness toward her sister. Instead of making love with Ben, she should have practiced lesbianism. If her life is engendered; if she is nearly murdered; if she finds out that she has been gullible enough to be sent on a planned journey and if she loses a family life to which she was devoted wholeheartedly, that's because she invested her care and love and energy in the wrong place.

The paradox rises when radical-cultural feminists simultaneously call for women's turning away from men and their preservation of the power to reproduce naturally. Their emphasis on sisterhood, lesbianism and concentrating their energy on their female mates leads one to logically infer a deep hatred of heterosexuality and an absolute avoidance of living a heterosexual family life. However, to one's deep astonishment, this is not the case. Radical-cultural feminists insisted on women's reproductive power, probably not aware of the consequences. To naturally reproduce, a woman needs a man's sperm, and that can lead to women's eternal dependence on men; what does not fit the radical-cultural feminists' demand for 'female ness.' Adrienne Rich, an outstanding radical- cultural feminist, had a husband and two children, born naturally to realize radical- cultural feminist, traditionally enough had a husband and two children, born naturally to realize the walking paradox that lives in the heart of radical- cultural feminism.

Therefore, in a radical- cultural feminist approach to *The Storm* Jannet will be simultaneously condemned and admired for her choice of living with Ben. Thus paradoxically, her escape from Ben's house both rescues her from being murdered and introduces her to a storm that deprives her from the power of producing new life which according to radical- cultural feminists is the only advantage women have to help them in the back- breaking struggle for power with men. In addition to her deprivation of Ben who could serve Jannet as the father of her would-be child, escaping from Ben's house into the storm deprives her, a weak, timid, depending, miserable woman, from the protection and support a man's presence could offer her.

Radical-libertarian feminists will oppose radical-cultural feminists in many respects. Setting androgyny as an ideal for identity construction, they will find little in Jannet to admire, in sharp contrast to radical- cultural feminists indeed. A Jannet to admire from their point of view would be one who could combine desirable feminine qualifications with admirable masculine traits. Intelligence, rationality and practicality should have been combined with love, care and consideration, for instance, to set forth a model for women to follow. Malmar's story therefore reproduces the same identities that patriarchy has been producing for thousands of users. *The storm*, from this view point takes side with the patriarchal system by reconstruction and nature. Women represented by Jannet in *The Storm* are timid, credulous, gullible, weak and in want of constant protection and support. Therefore, they should not interfere in affairs that need courage, intelligence, strength and independence. The public sphere with all its social and political space will accordingly belong to men while women should be driven to the "womanish", space which fits their particular identity structure. That is exactly what radical- libertarian feminists will try to eliminate not reproduce as *The Storm* does.

In sharp contrast to the radical-cultural feminist view, radical libertarians will neither criticize nor condemn Jannet for directing her love and energy toward a man. She is free to choose the way she satisfies her desires and discharges her energy. Turning to sisters is only one among many other legitimate choices. She could have turned to autoeroticism as well. She could have chosen casual sex or even to have sex with people for younger or older than her. She could have chosen to have her family life even with two men instead of one, or with two women, or a man and a woman, or any other possible combination. Therefore, Malmar will be exempted from the charge of reproducing a form of married life which has always served, as radical-cultural believe, as a site for woman oppression.

Again, contrary to the radical-cultural belief, Jannet's escape from Ben's house, representing a space controlled by men, should not be considered as depriving her from the only source of power she has, namely, the power to give birth. Rather, it frees her from a stable, powerful anchor which has always served as a crucial component of male superiority and female inferiority. Dependence upon men for their sperm and caring a fetus inside one's womb for nine months together with the paralyzing responsibility of taking care of the baby are exactly the interlinked roots of all discriminations against women. Jannet is so lucky she did not get pregnant by Ben. Out of the house which could function as a place for stifling natural motherhood and biological reproduction, she is free now to enjoy a life not bound to the crippling responsibility of bringing new life to the world. She could instead hope that one day technology could give her a child without the torment of motherhood or wifehood.

## CONCLUSION

*The Storm* as a literary text reveals part of the conflicts and contradictions among the two subdivisions of the same feminist branch to verify the claim that feminism is a space rich with diversity and multiplicity especially if one notices the fact that the story could also metaphorically represent real life situations over which feminism divides and diversifies. Certainly, difference, diversity and even confrontation could be viewed from opposing stances. It can be read as a sign of dispersion which signifies the loss of energy in internal conflicts and the nullification of attempts on the part of those who should have enhanced them. But it can also be interpreted as a sign of richness and the vital flexibility of an approach which is not unaware of the contradictions and paradoxes in the nature of life itself. In the long process of understanding the nature of life, an approach should probably be flexible and therefore multiple and paradoxical if it is to stay.

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# THE DKE MODEL REVISITED: LEARNING L2 VOCABULARY PRONUNCIATION THROUGH 1ST- AND 2ND-HAND EXPERIENCES

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## ABSTRACT

The Designs for Knowledge Evolution (DKE) model was originally proposed by Schwartz et al. (2005) in the domain of statistics learning. In this study, the researcher examined the DKE model in the domain of second language (L2) learning. The researcher applied the DKE model by having 1st and 2nd hand experiences of clicking on words and writing rules. Experimental design was implemented. The study found that adding 2nd hand experience of writing rules improved learning. In addition, the findings also suggest that the implementation of the full DKE model by obtaining both 1st and 2nd hand experiences in our learning activity can eliminate the learning gap between Easterners and Westerners. By examining the DKE model in this experiment, it is proposed that, in a language learning environment, learners provided with both 1st and 2nd hand experiences will get better learning results than those provided with only 1st-hand experience. Instead of implementing traditional instruction methods in English as a second language (ESL) classes, teachers can adapt the DKE model and let students first acquire their 1st and 2nd hand experience before lectures to foster better L2 learning results.

**KEYWORDS:** L2 learning; vocabulary; DKE model; pronunciation; cultural variation; cognition

## INTRODUCTION

### *Importance of the study*

#### *Motivation for better learning*

Cognitive psychology has its limitations on the realm of narrowly defined experimental conditions in research-oriented studies and thus also on the applicable capacities for complex classroom learning (e.g., Cobb, 1992; Lave, 1988). Therefore, the Designs for Knowledge Evolution (DKE) provides not only theoretical framework construction but also practical application capabilities that are designed and developed to be helpful for learners to understand deeper and learn better (Schwartz, Martin, & Nasir, 2005).

#### *Exploring the DKE in the domain of L2*

When Schwartz et al. (2005) proposed the DKE model, they intended to provide an integrative prescriptive learning theory to solve some methodological isolationism problems that Cognitive Psychology research usually has, such as isolation of cognitive mechanisms and isolation of learning outcomes. In their studies, however, the DKE was only implemented and later tested in the domain of statistics learning and teaching. Although Schwartz et al. (2005) mentioned several studies to help form this integrative approach of the DKE model, they merely used statistics learning and instruction as an example to show the effectiveness and advantages that learning may emerge with the DKE. The previous studies of the DKE model have shown the powerful effect that DKE has on statistics learning (Schwartz et al., 2005). Children can deeply understand the concepts of central tendency and variability through the DKE-designed instruction. Furthermore, children who learned these concepts by using the DKE model could outperform college students who have just taken the introductory statistics course in many of these concepts (Schwartz et al., 2005), even in transfer tests that are held several weeks later than the instruction. Therefore, the present study further examines the DKE model to find if it also fits the complex learning of second language (L2). As L2 learning has become an increasingly global trend in today's education, it is important to help instructors effectively teach, and learners substantially learn, a second language (eg. Chaudron et passim, 1988; Lave, 1996;



Harklau, 2002, in Zamel & Spack (Eds.), 2002). By exploring the DKE in the domain of L2 learning, the study hopes to extend the work of DKE in the domain of mere science-related learning to the domain of language learning to benefit ESL and L2 learners and teachers.

#### *Exploring DKE induced by multimedia*

The concepts and tools of multimedia learning have been widely adopted in many learning and teaching circumstances (Mayer, 2001) and have been discussed with many arguments (eg. Salaberry, 2001; Salaberry, 2000). For example, with the advances of computer technology, educators largely utilize and discuss computer-assisted language learning (CALL) to aid L2 learning. Some researchers argue that technologies may not have achieved equal extents of pedagogical benefit in the realm of L2 learning and teaching (Salaberry, 2001). Traditionally, we may use multimedia to convey and receive 1st-hand knowledge, such as listening to a paragraph or to some vocabulary pronunciation on a tape cassette, and 2nd-hand knowledge, such as grammatical rules using a PowerPoint presentation. With the trend of using technologies in language learning, it is not clear what kind of role multimedia plays in the DKE model. This study also intends to explore the DKE with multimedia-triggered 1st- and 2nd-hand experiences.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study are: (1) to explore multimedia-induced first-hand experience and second-hand experience; (2) to test the DKE model in the domain of language learning; specifically, the researcher would like to test the DKE model by examining if, for a given time in a language learning environment, learners provided with both first-hand and second-hand experiences will get better learning results than those provided with only first-hand experience; (3) to provide empirical evidence to support the DKE model in the domain of second language learning; and, (4) to further discuss the applications and implications of the DKE model in L2 learning.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### ***What is DKE?***

##### *Origin of the DKE*

Schwartz et al. (2005) proposed their integrative prescriptive theory that the development of understanding has something to do with the co-evolution of different types of knowledge in response to outside situational stimulation. They argued that for better productive teaching practices, the development of methods and measures that yield prescriptions of learning is essential. And when human beings learn complex ideas (e.g., a complex system, a language, or statistics), multiple cognitive mechanisms and resources get involved because they integrate processes and resources to help with their learning.

##### *Knowledge evolution*

The basic assumption is that human beings' movements from one environment to another help evolve an understanding that can keep on adapting. Therefore, Schwartz et al. (2005) asserted that people's learning should be from both direct experience and communicated experience, and should not be from only either one of them. Learners should not only be able to apply what they have learned but also to evolve new knowledge necessary for the new contexts. As the "goal of school-based instruction should be to prepare students to adapt and learn in the future" (Bransford & Schwartz, 1999, cited in Schwartz et al., 2005, p. 4), this DKE model should be emphasized in today's instructional practices in order to strengthen student's *learning at transfer* adaptation abilities.

#### ***First-Hand and Second-Hand Theories***

The theories of the acquisition and application of first-hand knowledge emphasize direct experience whereas the theories of the acquisition and application of second-hand knowledge emphasize descriptions of experience, which is communicated knowledge.

##### *First-hand experience*

Many people encourage first-hand experience for learning. For example, First Hand Learning, Inc. (retrieved 2007) has been promoting first-hand learning for over 10 years. First-hand learning is learning from direct experience. People figure things out themselves by perceiving the real phenomena around them and thus first-hand learning requires close engagement with the environment. Since learners have their congenital inquisitiveness and curiosities to delve into the world they are interacting with, learners use their own knowledge construction and analytical abilities to connect with the environment. Observations, analyses, and interpretations are important features. Therefore, first-hand learning allows learners to come up with meanings and even questions they may have and, later



on, investigate to find possible answers themselves. For the acquisition of first-hand experience or knowledge, people interact with the phenomena directly. They use a lot of perception and action and tend to get more individualistic, direct, and personal experience. Examples of first-hand theorists include Piaget who did research on children's abstracted understanding and Shepard and Cooper (1986) and Kosslyn (1980) who have largely contributed to imagery studies where perception is emphasized. First Hand Learning, Inc. (2007) states that with first-hand experience, "learners acquire and retain new knowledge most effectively," since this type of learning "makes people think for themselves rather than relying solely on the authority of teachers and textbooks" (2007). Schwartz et al. (2005) argue that first-hand theories are very important to learning, since "no amount of reading is sufficient to learn to drive a car" (p. 7).

#### *Second-hand experience*

For the acquisition of second-hand experience or knowledge, people interpret experiences or descriptions, and often in the absence of original referent (Schwartz et al., 2005). Second-hand information is often presented in a communicable symbolic structure form. Anderson's (1983) research on how people internalize second-hand experience from declarative knowledge (such as words) to procedural knowledge (such as actions) is an obvious example of second-hand theory. As a huge amount of people's knowledge is from second-hand experience, such as reading books, listening to tapes, or watching films, the second-hand theories are also very important to human learning. For prescribing instruction, though, it seems we need to provide the situations where people are able to experience a circumstance, and not just the reading part of the circumstance.

#### *Interaction of first-hand and second-hand experiences*

Schwartz and Black's (1999) study of liquid pouring from different glasses shows that there can be dissociation between the cognitive processes of first-hand and second-hand experiences and the division of them may be of advantage or disadvantage to learning, especially cognition and learning of complex knowledge or systems. In Schwartz and Black's (1996) another study of determining the last gear's clockwise or counterclockwise turn when the first gear's turning was given in a chain of gears, it reveals the interaction of participants' first-hand knowledge and second-hand knowledge. It is obvious that, in this study of gears turning, when people learn they generate first-hand knowledge with perceptual-motor content such as hand gestures to figure out their mental representation of gears' turning directions; and then they induce the second-hand knowledge of the parity rule where they simply count the number of gears presented. Furthermore, both first- and second-hand experiences are imperative just as perception and communication (Schwartz et al., 1995) are both critical to gestural simulation and rule induction. Clearly, from gestural simulations to rule-based descriptions, both first-hand experience and second-hand experience get involved and even more, intertwined, so that the learning and development of complex ideas can be yielded. Therefore, deep understanding postulates both first-hand and second-hand experiences and thus we ought to combine the two in our instructional design.

#### *Features of DKE*

From Schwartz et al. (2005) and the AAA Lab at Stanford University (Complex Learning: Designs for Knowledge Evolution, Retrieved Jan 1st, 2008), the features of DKE can be synthesized to the following points: (1) Learners yield a certain model that can respond to a given situation where they can perceive the differences and create a structured account from what they perceive. (2) Learners examine their models and see what in the models still survives. (3) Learners produce and adapt new models to fit the new context. (4) Learners collocate with their models to further examine useful values that survived.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### *Participants*

Participants were 49 non-Spanish speaking adults (14 men and 35 women) currently enrolled as graduate students at Teachers College Columbia University, Baruch College City University of New York, and New York University. The mean age of the participants is 26.43 years (SD = 2.78). They were conveniently sampled through friends and various TC-Columbia University mailing lists, and then they were randomly assigned to two groups: the experimental group (1st + 2nd hand group, n1=24) and the control group (1st hand group, n2=25). In terms of their native language, 10 speak Mandarin Chinese, 34 speak English, and the rest stated that their native languages are Taiwanese, Japanese, Korean, or American Sign Language. In this sample, 26 participants stated that they can speak

3 languages (the mode group), 6 can speak only one language, 5 can speak 2 languages, 7 can speak 4 languages, 4 can speak 5 languages, and 1 can speak 6 languages.

### Design

#### *Learning activity section for 1st and 2nd -hand experiences*

In the experiment, the researcher designated a learning activity section in the multimedia instruction of a Spanish vocabulary learning lesson, and it is before the lecture. The section includes 1st hand experience or both 1st hand and 2nd hand experiences. The 1st hand experience in the learning activity has both *perception* and *motor* components where the participants listen to the words' pronunciation (and thus with the *perception* component) and they actively get involved in making pronunciation by clicking words listed on the screen (and thus with *motor* component). Specifically, in the learning activity session, participants in both 1st hand group and 1st + 2nd hand group were asked to press each of the 15 Spanish word buttons presented on the screen, to listen to the words, and to practice each pronunciations.

The 2nd hand experience in the learning activity involves *symbolic* and *communicative* components where the participants interact (and thus being *communicative*) with the multimedia-conveyed information and they were asked to use words and symbols (thus *symbolic*) to represent the knowledge they have acquired from the above experience. Specifically, the 1st + 2nd hand group participants were asked to come up with pronunciation rules in respect of these distinct words and to write down the rules in a given Rule Sheet, whereas the 1st hand group participants, without being given a Rule Sheet, were just asked to listen to the pronunciations without doing any further actions. Yet, both groups had a full 10- minute period before they went on to the lecture section. We need both the mechanisms for developing the first-hand knowledge or both first-hand and second-hand knowledge.

#### *Rationale for the Design*

Many researchers have suggested that using multimedia approach to language learning can help with vocabulary acquisition, reading, and with producing information (e.g., Bransford, Goin, Hasselbring, Kinzer, Sherwood, & Williams, 1986; Bransford, Kinzer, Risko, & Rowe, 1989; Leu & Kinzer, 2003; Glaser, W.C., Rieth, H. J., Kinzer, C. K., Colburn, L. K., & Peter, J., 2000; Salaberry, 2000; Salaberry, 2001). Therefore, for the instrument and the instruction in this design, PowerPoint presentation slides were intertwined with multimedia components. In this design, the reason for a part in the measure (the 5th part on the posttest) asking people to actually pronounce the word, rather than merely testing specific memory for the word pronunciation rules, is based on the knowledge that deep understanding not only involves basic memory, but also has to do with the abilities to perceive, plan, act, and transfer (Schwartz et al., 2005).

### Materials

#### *Materials and apparatus*

The materials used in the study included a demographic survey, the Rule Sheet, a learning activity (see Graph 1 for the sample page of the *learning activity* computer screen), a multimedia-induced lecture (see Graph 2 for a sample page of the lecture program), the retention posttest, and the interview questionnaire.

Graph 1: The Sample Page of the Multimedia-induced Learning Activity Computer Screen



Graph 2: The Sample Page of the Multimedia-induced Lecture Computer Screen



The Rule Sheet is a plain sheet of paper with a big table of 3 rows and 2 columns. The headings for those 2 columns are *Rules* and *Example Words*. On the page of the *learning activity* computer screen, there is a table of 3 rows and 5 columns, listing 15 Spanish words in total. The clear instructional heading of “Click on each word to hear it!” is on the top of the page. Participants could hear the clear pre-audio-taped pronunciation of each word they clicked on. These 15 words, *Juego*, *Ganador*, *Ojo*, *Genio*, *Jirafa*, *Gozo*, *Gusto*, *Gimnasio*, *Gasto*, *General*, *Gesto*, *Jardin*, *Cajero*, *Goma*, and *Gitano*, were selected by the researcher and colleagues who have learned Spanish pronunciation rules and the pronunciation sounds were recorded by a Spanish female native speaker. For both groups, participants had 10 minutes for the *learning activity* session. The instructions were clear and explicit. For example, for the 1st + 2nd hand group, participants received the instructions: 1. *Click on each of these Spanish words and listen to how they are pronounced. Listen to the words more than once if necessary.* 2. *Using the worksheet provided, create a set of rules to describe how the “j” and “g” letters are pronounced in Spanish.* 3. *In this session, you have 10 minutes.* The multimedia-induced lecture was entirely PowerPoint-designed slides. There were 20 slides in total. The instruction for the lecture was also clear. In the beginning, there was a slide stating: 1. *Now you are going to have a lecture about some Spanish pronunciation rules.* 2. *In this session, you have 15 minutes.* Both 1st + 2nd hand and 1st hand groups received exactly the same lecture for 15 minutes. In the lecture slides, there were clear headings, rules’ explanations, and practicing example words with multimedia components. On the retention posttest, the highest possible score with all correct answers is 40 and the lowest possible score with all wrong answers is 0. There are 5 main sections of questions with 40 questions in total. All the answers were graded on a true/false (correct/ incorrect) format. The retention posttest was timed and given to participants in both groups for 7 minutes. The apparatus used were IBM compatible Dell laptops with 13.3 inches monitor. Earphones were tested to ascertain their proper functions before use.

#### *The embodiment of first-hand and second-hand experiences*

The study was designed to allow participants to obtain first-hand and second-hand experiences via multimedia. The embodiment of first-hand experience in this study was the perception and clicking part where participants were asked to look at the screen, to choose a Spanish word listed on the page, then to listen to the pronunciation of the word clicked. The embodiment of second-hand experience in our study was the communication and symbol generation part where participants were asked to not only look at the screen, choose a word, and listen to the pronunciation, but also to write down any possible rules they might generate on the Rule Sheet.

#### **Procedure**

##### *Prescreening*

The study was introduced to participants as research about the characteristics of language learning. Each participant was told that he or she would be filling out a demographic survey, learning something in a new second language using a computer, receiving a brief quiz (posttest) about the materials that they have just learned, and finally filling

out another questionnaire. They were told to try to do their best to learn. From the demographic survey, the researcher made sure that all the participants did not know anything about Spanish and have not learned Spanish at all through pre-screening. Also, the researcher ascertained that all participants can use a computer mouse which is necessary for the study. The experiment took place in a lab room at Columbia University.

#### *Process*

Before the experiment, the participants were first given the pre-screening demographic survey to fill out for 5 minutes. Those who can speak any Spanish or have learned any Spanish were excluded from our study. Secondly, both groups of the participants did a learning activity for 10 minutes. In this 10-minute time period, the control (1st hand) group participants were asked to click on those 15 Spanish words on the computer screen to hear their pronunciations as well as to practice pronouncing the words whereas the experimental (1st + 2nd hand) group participants, in addition to doing what the 1st hand group participants were asked to do, were asked to use the Rule Sheet to write down any rules they might have perceived or generated. Thirdly, a lecture of 15 minutes about the pronunciation rules of Spanish letters was introduced and given to both groups through a designed PowerPoint presentation instruction on the computer. Fourthly, trained graduate research assistants administered a posttest for both groups' participants for 7 minutes. All the above sections were timed to ensure equal time spent for both groups.

And finally the researcher interviewed the participants individually for around 10 minutes when they filled out the questionnaire. Participants were asked to try their best to learn those rules from the lecture and to answer the posttest questions. Data were collected for around eight months.

## RESULTS

### *Quantitative data analysis*

#### *Descriptive statistics*

Table 1 shows that with the random assignment of the experimental design of the study, there were no significant differences between participants in the 1st + 2nd hand group and the 1st hand group. There were 24 participants (49 per cent) in the 1st + 2nd hand group and 25 participants (51 per cent) in the 1st hand group. Among the 1st + 2nd hand group participants, 19 of them were women (38.8 per cent) whereas among the 1st hand group participants, 12 of them were women (32.7 per cent). There was no significant difference in gender between these two groups (Cramer's  $V = .168$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Among the 1st + 2nd hand group participants, 6 of them (12.2 per cent) whose native language is English whereas among the 1st hand group participants, 5 of them (10.2 per cent) whose native language is English. There was no significant difference in whether their native language is English or not between these two groups (Cramer's  $V = .060$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p > .05$ ). In terms of age, the 1st + 2nd hand group participants had a mean age of 26.42 (SD = 2.10) and the 1st hand group participants had a mean age of 26.44 (SD = 3.34). There was no significant difference in age between these two groups ( $F(1, 47) = .001$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

*Table 1: Descriptive statistics of number, gender, and native language between two groups*

	Experimental Group		Control Group		Cramer's V	p-value
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage		
N	24	49.0	25	51.0		
Gender (F)	19	38.8	12	32.7	.168	.240
English	6	12.2	5	10.2	.060	.675

#### *DKE model*

Table 2 and Figure 1 show that the 1st + 2nd hand group participants outperformed the 1<sup>st</sup> hand group in posttest scores by 2.67 points ( $t(37.74) = 2.83$ ,  $p = .007$ ). The 1st + 2nd hand group participants had a mean of 38.75 (SD = 2.27) out of 40 and a range of 8. The 1st hand group participants had a mean of 36.08 (SD = 4.10) out of 40 and a range of 14.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of age and posttest between two groups

	Experimental Group		Control Group		t (37.74)	F (1, 47)	p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Age	26.42	2.10	26.44	3.34		.001	.977
Posttest	<b>38.75</b>	<b>2.27</b>	<b>36.08</b>	<b>4.10</b>	<b>2.83**</b>	<b>7.855**</b>	<b>.007</b>

\*\*  $p < .01$

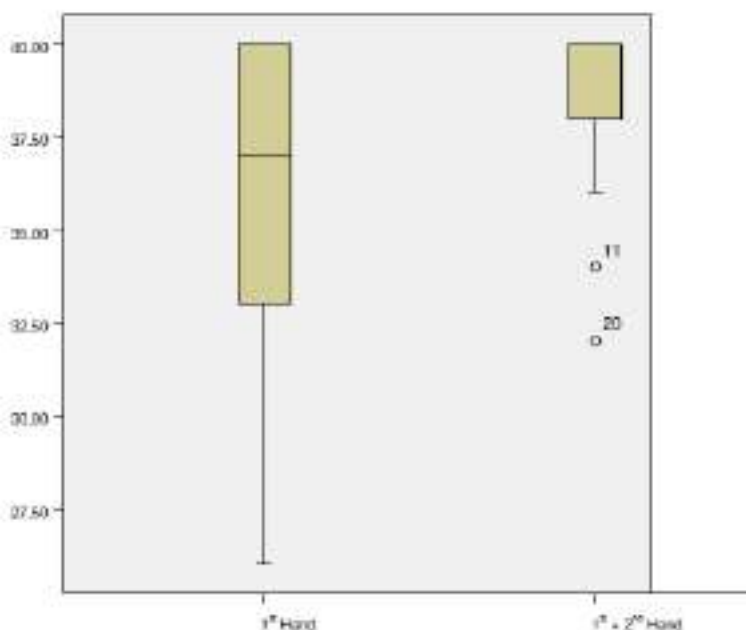


Figure 1: Box-Plot of POSTTEST Scores between two groups

There was also a practical significance in the magnitude of the treatment. As the Eta square is .143, the effect size (ES), a measure of the strength of the relationship between these two variables, can be considered medium to large, according to the standard set by Cohen (1988 & 1992) and Judd and McClelland (1989). The Cohen's  $d = .806$  and the ES  $r = .374$  also suggest a large effect size by Cohen's (1988) standard. Therefore, the implementation of the full DKE model with the acquisition of both first-hand experience and second-hand experience during the learning activity has yielded significantly higher posttest results than that with the acquisition of only first-hand experience. This provides evidence for supporting the full DKE model in multimedia-induced language learning and instruction environment.

#### Cultural variation

Since the research team members had noticed the basic difference in participants' test-taking attitude as well as test results between Easterners and Westerners during the experiment and the posttest, I further examined the possible cultural variation by differentiating participants' cultural background. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the posttest score data, with cultural background (i.e. native language being western or eastern) as a between-subjects factor and treatment groups (i.e. 1st hand group or 1st + 2nd hand group) as a within-subject factor. Figure 2 and Table 3 show that there was a significant interaction between cultural background and treatment groups,  $F(1, 48) = 16.48, p < 0.001$ , consistent with the observation that the difference between the cultural background's native language spoken (i.e. being Westerners or Easterners) was large for the 1st hand treatment group but not as much for the 1st + 2nd hand group. Therefore, though the full DKE model seemed to work for both Easterners and Westerners, it in fact fitted better for Westerners. The findings suggest that when provided with both 1st and 2nd hand experiences, Westerners whose native language is mainly English can perform a lot better in the retention

posttest than provided with only 1st hand experience ( $t(47) = 4.81, p < .0001$ ). Easterners whose native language is mainly Mandarin Chinese, however, showed an insignificant higher posttest score ( $t(47) = 1.28, p = 0.207$ ) with 1st and 2nd hand experiences ( $M = 39.00, SD = 1.85$ ) than with only 1st hand experience ( $M = 37.65, SD = 2.60$ ). For Westerners, the large effect size (Cohen's  $d = 2.704$ ) also showed the significant difference between treatment groups in that 1st + 2nd hand participants obtained a much higher retention posttest mean score ( $M = 38.00, SD = 3.35$ ) than 1st hand participants' retention posttest mean score ( $M = 29.80, SD = 2.68$ ).

Table 3: T-tests of both groups between Easterners and Westerners on posttest

	Easterner						Westerner					
	1 <sup>st</sup> + 2 <sup>nd</sup> hand		1 <sup>st</sup> hand		t(47)	ES	1 <sup>st</sup> + 2 <sup>nd</sup> hand		1 <sup>st</sup> hand		t (47)	ES
	M	SD	M	SD		<i>d</i>	M	SD	M	SD		<i>d</i>
Posttest Score	<b>39.00</b>	1.85	<b>37.65</b>	2.60	1.28	0.598	<b>38.00</b>	3.35	<b>29.80</b>	2.68	<b>4.81***</b>	<b>2.704***</b>

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

Again, these findings provide support for the idea that obtaining both 1st and 2nd hand experiences in learning activity can eliminate the learning gap (with respect to L2 learning retention outcomes) between Easterners and Westerners. Therefore, the full DKE model indeed has its effectiveness on L2 learning and teaching.

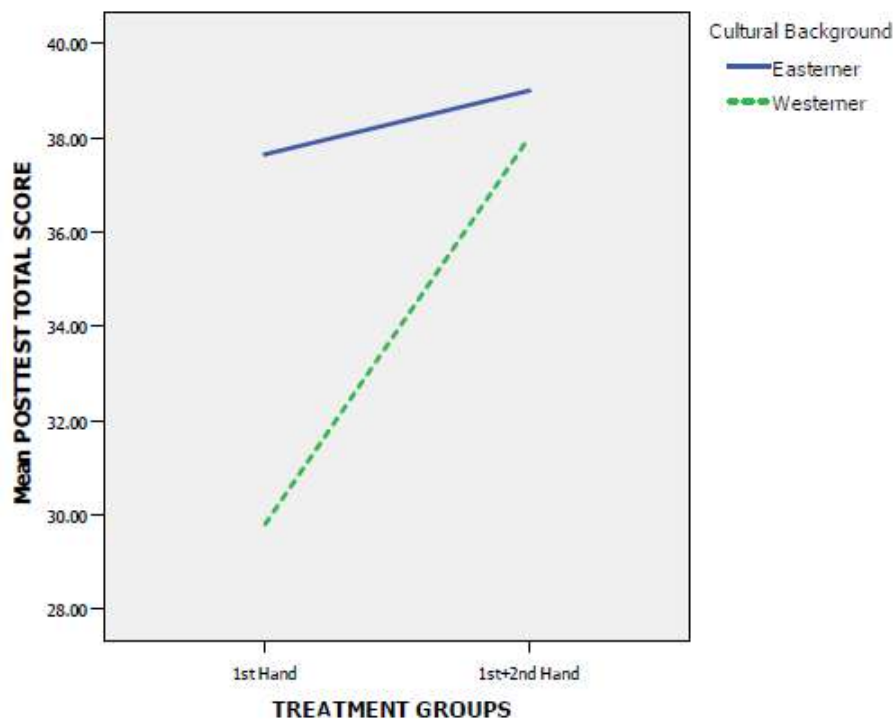


Figure 2: Posttest scores of both groups between Easterners and Westerners

#### Qualitative data analysis

Since the qualitative data collected by the open-ended interview questionnaire, the researcher uses content analysis techniques suggested by Krippendorff (2004), Neuendorf (2002), and Weber (1990) to classify and explore the textual material to reduce it to more relevant, analyzable, and manageable data. With two raters analyzing the data, the inter-rater reliability is calculated. The Spearman's rank correlation coefficient  $\rho = .95$  (Student's  $t(47) = 20.86, p < .001$ ) indicated high degree of agreement among raters.



*Impact of DKE*

From our interview questionnaire, we have found that the 1st + 2nd hand group learners in general reported and stated positive feedback toward the learning activity with both first-hand and second-hand experiences. The 1st hand group learners, on the contrary, merely mentioned more about the lecture. The importance of the DKE model learning activity therefore is obvious.

*“Are there any things that impress you (that you remember the most) during the activity/lecture/ test? Why?”*

For example, when asked if there are any things that participants remember the most during the activity or lecture or test, many 1st + 2nd hand group participants mentioned the learning activity and its impact. Many have shown their deep processing of the information presented and come up with their possible pronunciation rules generated during learning activity. Examples of their mentioning the learning activity, the revelation of deeper processes, and the positive effects of the impact are: “I make assumptions first.” “Helpful because it gives you a chance to learn on your own, and if you are not able, it still helps you familiarize yourself with the material for learning portion.” “I was somehow able to predict what I would be studying in the activity.” “Pre-activity is self-exploration.” “[the pre-activity]...gives me confidence. It can also help me memorize the rules better.” There are also some other advantages of the DKE model instruction design, as one participant said, “I like the interacted way of learning another language....I have more positive emotion during learning.” Another said, “I enjoyed learning this lesson. Inspired me to want to learn Spanish.”

1st hand group participants mostly mentioned a certain pronunciation rule that they remember the most, multimedia-designed lecture, and other parts of the lecture, such as summary. One said, “The summary of the rules.” “...It organizes the rules, helping me memorize what I have learned.” Another mentioned the lecture, saying “The explanations of the rules of pronunciation.” Many stated in regard to multimedia interfaces and designs, “The PowerPoint is interesting.” “Pictures associated with words....makes me understand the meaning of the words.” “Pictures... it makes easier to figure out their meanings.” Though one 1st hand group participant stated, “I realized I always look for rules in language learning,” we should note that they still perform worse in posttest than 1st + 2<sup>nd</sup> hand group participants. We see the drawback of the emergence of the confusion of direct instruction without first developing 2nd hand experience in the learning activity time. One control group participant stated, “There are pronunciation examples [that] don’t fit the rule.” Another doubted, “Exceptions? Because the sounds didn’t reflect what was taught.”

*“Do you think the pre-activity [learning activity] is helpful or unhelpful for your learning? Why?”*

When the above question is asked, we get all positive answers from both groups. For example, some 1st + 2nd hand group participants said: “It’s helpful. Because I extract these rules by myself correctly, if any. I could memorize these rules easier through deep processing.” “Help myself to focus on the pronunciation difference.” “It’s helpful since I can find the rules by myself.” “Yes, a lot. If there weren’t the pre-activity [learning activity], I wouldn’t be able to pronounce the words. It forces me to memorize words in a short time.” “Yes. Let me use my way to interpret.” “I had to explore and figure out how to come up with the rules in the pre-activity [learning activity]. It helps when I go through learning in the lecture part... Learn how to categorize the pronunciation rules and that is considered useful for future learning. And the memory will last on by self-categorizing the rules.” “Yes! Made me more ready for the new information.” “It was helpful because it was like a quiz. A quiz helped me to feel curious about the correct pronunciation.” Even 1st hand group participants liked the learning activity. One said, “It’s a warm-up that helps me get prepared to learn.” Another said, “Listening and reading are helpful for learning.” Still another one said, “Help me say, speak a new word.” Yet, the 1st hand group participants’ responses mainly are about the benefit of the repetition of clicking, reading, and saying out loud those words presented in the learning activity.

*“For you, was there any benefit to creating the pronunciation rules before you went through the lecture?”*

To further probe the benefits and/or drawbacks of creating the pronunciation rules in pre-activity before learners go

through the lecture, we asked 1st + 2nd hand group participants if there was any benefit, or interfering effect on their experience of the lecture, to creating the pronunciation rules before they went through the lecture. We have found that all participants, except one, thought there were many positive benefits. One said, "I can guess and think first." The influence is significant in terms of deeper processing which leads to better retention: "Helping me to learn faster." "I was able to have a schema to sort out the rules in my mind beforehand." "I was able to test my hypothesis, and confirm my guess....Some of them was not right, but still it was impressive for me that I was able to memorize them well." "Let me think first.... Help me use my words to get the idea." Some participants mentioned the learning activity's benefit in attention. "It helped me listen and pay attention to the words without any instruction of rules." "It helps me focus on the pronunciation in the lecture learning part. And it deepens my memorization when I go through the later activities." In sum, 1st + 2nd hand group participants think it is beneficial to come up with their own rules first and have positive feedback toward the obtainment of both 1st and 2nd-hand experiences before the lecture. They said: "It kept the rules fresh in my memory. Since I had to write them down, I think I remembered them easier." "I feel I am better at self- learning now." "Learn from hearing before learning the rule." "Rules are to be remembered. It's easy to apply on new tasks, easier than 'remembering'."

#### *Impact of Multimedia*

The impact of multimedia-induced instruction is also evident. As mentioned above, many participants also mentioned their impressiveness of multimedia-conveyed information when asked the following question.

*Are there any things that impress you (that you remember the most) during the activity/ lecture/ test? Why?*

Many participants mentioned the PowerPoint's dual channel multimedia nature and its effectiveness of helping learners learn. "The PowerPoint is friendly using and helps us learn. I like to use it." "We learn language not from textbooks." "The rules are taught in a clear way, especially with the software....I can practice the pronunciation by clicking the word on the screen... Because that makes my learning more effective." Some also mentioned why the design of this multimedia-based PowerPoint instruction is effective. "Lecture is with various examples with pictures....the design helps long-term memory." "PPT well done." "Pretty pictures." "Cute pictures... Maybe because of the color." "The lecture... was clearly presented. It was presented in a logical way. So I was able to remember just a few key rules." "You can click the words to hear the sound." "They are interactive." "Combine real pronunciation in the text." In sum, benefits of multimedia-based instruction are its multimedia nature of dual channel stimulation (Mayer, 2001) as well as its influence on memorization of vocabularies in a new language, as one participants stated, "I liked the format- colorful and easy to use and .... I enjoyed learning it because it was a quick way to learn a few things about the language."

#### *Rule generated on rule sheet*

19 out of 24 1st + 2nd hand group participants (79.17 per cent) got all 3 correct rules generated in the learning activity. The 3 possible rules that could be generated were: Spanish *j* sound (/h/) and *g* sounds (/h/ and /g/). They also provided correct sample words from the 15 words provided on learning activity screen. Those who did not get all correct rules were either missed one to two of the pronunciation rules or failed to include correct sample words. The Spearman's rank correlation coefficient is small ( $\rho = .024$ ,  $p = .912$ ) for correct rules generated and their posttest scores. Therefore, there is no association between how many correct rules generated in the learning activity and their posttest scores. An example of correct rules generated is in Graph 3.

*Graph 3: Example of Correct Rules Generated on the Rule Sheet*

**Rule Sheet**

Rule	Example Worm
Spoke 1: 1" x 1/2" x 1/2" (1" x 1/2" x 1/2")	1" x 1/2" x 1/2" (1" x 1/2" x 1/2")
Spoke 2: 1" x 1/2" x 1/2" (1" x 1/2" x 1/2")	1" x 1/2" x 1/2" (1" x 1/2" x 1/2")
Spoke 3: 1" x 1/2" x 1/2" (1" x 1/2" x 1/2")	1" x 1/2" x 1/2" (1" x 1/2" x 1/2")
Spoke 4: 1" x 1/2" x 1/2" (1" x 1/2" x 1/2")	1" x 1/2" x 1/2" (1" x 1/2" x 1/2")

How many worms are in each container?

## DISCUSSION

### *Multimedia-induced instruction*

### Teacher's use of technology

There have been discussions about teachers' problems in using technologies to teach language learning (eg. Kinzer & Leu, 1997). This reveals the fact that teachers may lack of the ability to fully use some types of multimedia technologies (Maloch & Kinzer, 2006) and many of them are unfamiliar with, reluctant of, and even afraid of new technologies (Personal communication with Wen-Zao University President, Dr. Lee, Wen-Ruey, on Jan. 5th, 2007). Therefore, use of technologies for instruction should be carefully examined if teachers are to effectively use multimedia-based instruction and materials to help students obtain first- and second-hand experiences for better L2 learning.

### *Motivation for learner's acquisition of first- and second-hand experiences*

From participants' responses and feedback, we see multimedia-induced stimuli and instruction not only help learner with better perception and understanding, but also enhance learner's motivation of learning and their acquisition of first-hand and second-hand experiences. The finding is in line with Mayer's (2001) in that the stimuli from sounds, images, and other means of channels combined (such as haptic channel, tasting channel...etc.) motivate learners more than single-channel stimulus does. Therefore, how to effectively design the instruction by applying the multimedia principles (Mayer, 2001) to facilitate L2 learning will be a reasonable next research focus.

### *DKE model revisited*

### *The importance of DKE*

A critical aspect of first-hand experience is one's ability to perceive. One is ought to differentiate macro or micro things from one another by noticing the key features of their similarities and differences. By using DKE model, we create an environment of pre-activity where learners learn to perceive first to enhance their first-hand knowledge acquisition, so that students may be able to perceive the foci of points that teachers can or intend to guide students to perceive. Therefore, Schwartz et al. (2005) used a powerful approach to distinguishing contrasting cases to help with people's noticing ability. Learners may not be able to tell the differences at first when presented with contrasting cases, but with time and practice, they start to "notice the features that identify the original" (Schwartz et al., 2005, p. 21). Future development of contrasting cases in language learning deserves study and emphasis. As to the aspect of second-hand experience, one is ought to effectively generate, communicate, and memorize the symbolic rules. By using DKE model, we see that learners can come up with better retention results from the interaction of the stimulus of first-hand knowledge in learning activity. The design can encourage learners to develop more precise and complete second-hand description, and alert them to the importance of communicable knowledge. I argue that with carefully designed learning activity where first-hand experience is obtained along with second-hand experience, the learning process throughout the whole instruction will reach a deeper level of learner's cognition, understanding, and learning in L2 learning.

In terms of the importance of the use of both 1st-hand and 2nd-hand experiences, it is clear that learners need both, and it is just like teachers should provide both. Therefore, an instruction with carefully designed DKE model will certainly facilitate learning.

#### *The effect of pre-lecture activity for L2 instruction*

From this study, it is also clear that the well-designed pre-lecture activity (learning activity) has a powerful effect on L2 instruction. One insight from the study is the class time change for teachers. The East Asian language teachers' traditional method of repetition of vocabulary words, rules, or materials in preview or review sessions before lectures can be altered to be a vivid first-hand and second-hand experience provision session for students according to the DKE model. Meanwhile, with the implementation of DKE model in L2 learning, teachers can sit back and relax to observe the class dynamics and the development of learners' acquisition of these experiences during the session as students are perceiving, making actions, and communicating before the lecture part of the instruction.

#### *Cultural variation between Westerners and Easterners*

It appears that there exists cultural variation in the DKE model posttest results between Westerners and Easterners. Westerners seem to benefit more from the full DEK model. Thus, the study adds to the literature of cultural comparison studies in that Westerners and Easterners are indeed different in how they learn a L2 in a multimedia-induced instruction environment and maybe in how they face retention tests. The findings provide support for the idea that obtaining both first- and second- hand experiences in a designed pre-lecture learning activity can eliminate the possible learning gap (with respect to L2 learning and retention outcomes) between Easterners and Westerners. Therefore, the full DKE model has its effectiveness on L2 learning.

#### *Why did DKE work in L2 learning?*

The DKE model, from this study, basically provides a theoretical basis for L2 instruction using multimedia design. L2 learning, like other science learning in other domains, requires real understanding, deep information processing, and knowledge transferring construction. As Schwartz et al. (2005) suggested that the goal of DKE is "to unite the mechanisms of perceptual learning for developing first-hand knowledge with model building for developing second-hand knowledge" (p. 21), I argue that DKE model should definitely work in L2 learning since L2 learning also features the need of both first-hand experience and secondhand experience components. Language is for communication and thus the adaptation of language environment using the knowledge learned should certainly fit the DKE model's evolution assumptions.

Moreover, the goal of learning should not be merely finding the correlations or mappings between the two. Instead, it should be to seek "how the two forms of knowing can complement one another to make a more profound and multifaceted understanding" (Schwartz et al., 2005, p. 21). Therefore, the DKE model appears to be a promising framework that can integrate different forms of our knowing. It also provides a way for learners to get ready for future learning. As long as educators prepare the activities that help students perceive important aspects of L2 learning data along with the activities that encourage the development of different adjusting models (Schwartz et al., 2005), these activities can prepare learners for future learning.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that the implementation of the full DKE model with the acquisition of both first-hand experience and second-hand experience during the learning activity has yielded significantly higher posttest results than that with the acquisition of only first-hand experience. Specifically, obtaining both 1st and 2nd hand experiences in learning activity can eliminate the learning gap (with respect to L2 learning retention outcomes) between Easterners and Westerners. It is also found that the learning activity session of an instruction as well as the well-designed multimedia-based instruction are both important contributors to the effectiveness of L2 learning. This study provides evidence for supporting the full DKE model in multimedia-induced language learning and instruction environment. Apparently, the full-DKE model which consists of a learning activity session that allows learner's acquisition of both firsthand experience and second-hand experience lets learners process the information longer and deeper. And thus it makes learners learn more effectively in terms of retention results of the materials being learned.

After testing the DKE model in the domain of language learning, we also conclude that by implementing the DKE model, for a given time in a language learning environment, learners provided with both first-hand and second-hand experiences will get better learning results than those provided with only first-hand experience. Educators and learners should apply the DKE model to their L2 teaching and learning.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Not all forms of technologies are proper for language instruction. A study by Kinzer, Sherwood, and Loofbourrow (1989) showed that technologies using simulation software may not yield better retention results than expository texts for 5th grade children. There was a significant result in retention scores favoring the expository-text group. They proposed some possible disadvantages in computer simulation instruction, and they include: reading from computer screens and the difficulties of animation in computer simulations of knowledge acquisition for the children. We should therefore be aware of the future designs for DKE using technologies for certain target audience. As situated learning may be the next generation instructional tool and method for language, researchers have to further study and illustrate what types of technologies may be appropriate to help with the emergence of learner's 1st and 2nd hand experiences in language learning. Due to the limitation of time, the study was not able to be carried out over a longer period of time for more participants (for better power for more variables' investigation) and for better instrument and measurement development (eg. the inclusion of more contrasting cases in PowerPoint as stimuli in pre-lecture learning activity). Ideally, we are ought to recruit more participants for some other interesting variables' investigation and to carefully collect participants' retention transfer data after 2 weeks of the treatment. Also, we ought to design and develop pre-tested reliable and valid instrument and measure for the testing of DKE model. However, the statistically significant results undoubtedly encouraged us in believing in the model's influence in L2 learning.

### **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

We can look at a group with only second-hand experience and compare all three treatment groups to see if the DKE model is indeed better for learning and to see if there are differences between the group that has only the first-hand experience and the group that has only the second-hand experience. However, from a cognitive learning perspective, providing only second-hand experience in the beginning of an instruction may not be appropriate as argued by many researchers (eg. Bransford et al., 1989; Bransford & Schwartz, 1999, ...etc.), especially before the first-hand experience.

Further exploration of the DKE model's transfer mechanisms and learners' usage of transferring knowledge in a new environment when they evolve their knowledge and skills will be beneficial to reveal DKE model's power of knowledge evolution. With the development of distant learning technologies (Leu & Kinzer, 2003), the application of DKE model for language learning in information and communication technologies (ICT) may be interesting to further investigate should we value the impact of multimedia learning in online learning environment.

Unlike mere scaffolding in which a successful one is measured through the performance of a task, DKE model in L2 can further prepare people to learn in the future because it offers mechanisms to aid "future learning and adaptation beyond the performance of the original task" (Schwartz et al., 2005, p. 18). Therefore, a better and more precise measure may be our next task as it will increase the validity of DKE model in L2 learning.

During our data collection, principal investigator and the trained graduate assistants have found that there exists this cultural variation in test taking and responding between westerners and easterners. After conducting analysis of variance, it appears that the DKE model is better for Westerners. One has to be cautious about interpreting the results. Would it be just the measurement issue (i.e. test design)? Or are there other reasons that lie behind for Easterners or Westerners? As some researchers (eg., Chen & Stevenson, 1995; Stevenson & Stigler, 1992) have argued that Easterners may be very good and well-trained test-takers, it should be interesting to see if Westerners and Easterners perform differently under the DKE model mainly because of their different test-taking attitudes, skills, and strategies.

To see if there are differences in cultural or language backgrounds, in the use of technologies, and in the interaction of applications of DKE, we will have to build on the study by having a more complex design of 2x2x2, more participants, and more refined instrument in the future.



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